"Just Like Yesterday"

Recollections of Life on the Fort Hood Lands

Volume I

by

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and

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United States Army Fort Hood
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In May 1998 and between November 2000 and October 2001, three consulting historians and two staff historians with Prewitt and Associates, Inc., conducted oral histories to record and preserve history about the Fort Hood lands. The historians interviewed 52 informants in 42 interviews, recording more than 82 hours of oral history on audiotape. Informants ranged from age 67 to 100 at the time of the interviews and included 28 men and 24 women. Transcribed, reviewed, and minimally edited, those interviews are faithfully reproduced in written form.

As participants in and observers of life on the Fort Hood lands before the United States Army established Camp Hood in 1942, the informants recounted history and anecdotes. Most information concerned the first three decades of the twentieth century, covering cultivating crops, raising livestock, attending school and church, doing chores, celebrating holidays, and trading in crossroads communities or larger towns. These interviews were conducted to compile historical information on pre-army history (1820–1950s) on the Fort Hood lands, to serve as an archive for future generations, and to make available the collected documentation to researchers and the general public.

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Abstract

In May 1998 and between November 2000 and October 2001, three consulting historians and two staff historians with Prewitt and Associates, Inc., conducted oral histories to record and preserve history about the Fort Hood lands. The historians interviewed 52 informants in 42 interviews, recording more than 82 hours of oral history on audiotape. Informants ranged from age 67 to 100 at the time of the interviews and included 28 men and 24 women. Transcribed, reviewed, and minimally edited, those interviews are faithfully reproduced in written form.

As participants in and observers of life on the Fort Hood lands before the United States Army established Camp Hood in 1942, the informants recounted history and anecdotes. Some information pertained to the nineteenth century, but most concerned the first three decades of the twentieth century. Almost every interview covered cultivating crops, raising livestock, attending school and church, doing chores, celebrating holidays, and trading in crossroads communities or larger towns.

These interviews were conducted to compile historical information on pre-army history (1820–1950s) on the Fort Hood lands, to serve as an archive for future generations, and to make available the collected documentation to researchers and the general public.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to our informants for their time and patience. Revealing their personal recollections for us, they regaled us with tales that brought delight and that conveyed the very serious struggles of life in rural central Texas. They opened their homes and shared their remembrances with willingness and enthusiasm. We are indebted to our informants because their cooperation put faces on the history of the Fort Hood lands.

The informants made this project gratifying for each of the historians, and other people saw that it ran smoothly. In particular, we thank Douglas K. Boyd, principal investigator, for his oversight, and Sandra L. Hannum for the cover layout and design. Amy E. Dase, Melissa Keenan, and Jane Sevier reviewed the transcripts for minor editing. Dase, with help from Sevier, produced the report. Audra L. Pineda assisted with preparation of the index. Terry Sherrell of Morgan Printing shepherded it through printing.

Substantial recognition goes to Marie E. Blake, who served as project manager from the project's inception until December 2001. Blake organized all materials, coordinated with each of the historians, and found time to interview four informants. Her contributions to this project were invaluable.

Dase took over as project manager in December 2001. Historians Dase, Martha Doty Freeman, William S. Pugsley III, and Thad Sitton made up the corpus of the project team. Each historian interviewed several informants and attended family and community reunions. The historians transcribed their own interviews with the exception of 10, which Martha Berryman transcribed. Jack Rehm and Jim Cazares attended the reunions as well and supplied photographic reproductions of historic images that reunion attendees shared. Charles Locke of Garfield Video Productions provided video services.

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Betty Byrom	Ewing School Reunion	July 4, 2001
Homer Perryman	Pidcoke School Reunion	June 30, 2001
J. W. Shults	Ewing School Reunion	July 4, 2001
J. W. Shults	Friendship Reunion	May 24, 1998
Michael and Nelda Teakell	Clan Graham Family Reunion	June 23, 2001
Hazel Graham Wilkinson	Antelope/Eliga Reunion	May 3, 1998
John Daniel Wolf Jr.	Maple/Brown's Creek Reunion	May 6, 2000
John Daniel Wolf Jr.	Wolf Family Reunion	May 24, 1998

The Fort Hood Cultural Resources Management Program personnel provided support throughout the project. Dr. Cheryl Huckerby, program director, managed the project. Dr. Allan Morton, assistant program director, attended reunions with the historians and aided in collecting historic photographs and potential interview candidates. Stephanie Bandy provided public relations assistance throughout the project. Jennifer Stabler, who formerly worked at Fort Hood, attended two reunions that took place early in the project.

Special thanks also go to the Texas Collection at Baylor University for agreeing to be the permanent repository for the oral history tapes and photographic collection this project generated. Thanks also goes to Zell Kinsey Copeland and Josie Amelia Kinsey Cummings for providing images for the cover.

The Fort Hood Oral History Project

Amy E. Dase

INTRODUCTION

Prewitt and Associates, Inc., (PAI) of Austin, Texas, is contracted to provide cultural resource services to the United States Army, Fort Hood, Texas. PAI prepared this report for the Cultural Resources Management Program within the Environmental Management Office, Directorate of Public Works, in compliance with federal cultural resources laws and Fort Hood's Programmatic Agreement for managing historic properties. The program manages more than 2,200 historic and prehistoric archeological sites on the Fort Hood lands. Since 1995, PAI has been conducting cultural resource investigations for the army, and much of this work has involved historical research and analysis of historic archeological sites. Four technical reports (Blake 2001; Freeman et al. 2001; Stabler 1999; Ward et al. 2000) and two popular books (Pugsley 2001; Sitton 2004) present the results of this work. Fort Hood has used these studies to meet their objective of gathering baseline information and data to meet the requirements set forth in the National Historic Preservation Act and to enhance protection and conservation of cultural resources.

Staff at PAI and the Fort Hood Cultural Resources Management Program began talking about oral history research as early as 1996, and PAI gathered a few oral histories in 1998 in conjunction with other research. The Fort Hood Oral History Project was not officially created, however, until September 2000 and was conceived as a means of compiling historical information on pre-army history of the Fort Hood lands. It was intended to salvage data from one of the most important and nonrenewable sources of historical information—the collective memories of people who actually lived on the Fort Hood lands before the army arrived.

The project's primary goals were to interview knowledgeable informants, record oral histories, and transcribe, edit, and publish the full transcripts of those interviews. This report satisfies those goals. Other important goals of the Fort Hood Oral History Project were to gather and copy historical photographs from private collections and record people's memories of those photographs, conduct videotape interviews with select informants, publish a popular book using the oral history transcripts and historical photographs, and create a portable photographic essay exhibit. Work on these tasks is still underway.

To meet people, copy their historical photographs, and compile lists of potential informants, PAI historians attended reunions that families, former communities, and former schools on Fort Hood lands held. Attending these reunions proved to be extremely important for identifying possible informants about pre-army Fort Hood and other pertinent topics. The project historians met hundreds of people and copied more than 1,000 historic photographs at seven different reunions that were held on or near the Fort Hood lands between 1998 and 2001:

Antelope-Eliga Reunion	Lampasas	May 3, 1998
Friendship Reunion	Friendship Cemetery	May 24, 1998
Wolf Family Reunion	Fort Hood Lands	May 24, 1998
Maple-Brown's Creek Reunion	Gatesville	May 6, 2000

Clan Graham Family Reunion	Killeen	June 23, 2001
Pidcoke School Reunion	Pidcoke	June 30, 2001
Ewing School Reunion	Gatesville	July 4, 2001

Materials the Fort Hood Oral History Project generated consist of original and duplicate audiotapes of each interview; interview transcripts; an index of prints; contact sheets, negatives, and slides of all historic photographs; signed release forms for transcripts and photographs; historians' notes on interviews and historical photographs; and digital and VHS copies of videotaped interviews. At the conclusion of this project, these original materials will be permanently archived at the Texas Collection at Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

METHODOLOGY

The oral history interviews were conducted to compile historical information on pre-army history (1820–1950s) on the Fort Hood lands, to serve as an archive for future generations, and to make the collected documentation available to researchers and the general public. Interview collection and transcription involved several tasks. The first was to create and keep current a master list of potential interview candidates. The project manager maintained and updated this list, which had the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of these people. It included a section for comments that in many cases provided extensive details about an informant such as age, communities associated with, or subject matter the informant knew about. The historians then chose several potential informants from this list.

A second task was to conduct an oral history workshop for the historians who would be interviewing informants. Because several historians were involved, coordination and systematic preparation proved valuable (Kyvig and Marty 1982:113–14). The historians first met in late October 2000 and discussed basic interview procedures and broad themes on which they would like informants to concentrate. Agriculture, community development, and the army's taking of land were considered important themes. One of the historians, Thad Sitton, led the oral history workshop in early November 2000. At this workshop, the historians got experience using first-rate tape recording equipment. Sitton went into detail about the value and limitations of oral history and procedures for interviewing. These procedures included practical matters such as handling interviews with more than one informant, being attentive but passive, stopping an interview when quality declines or when the informant shows fatigue, and other interviewing techniques. Discussion about topics to pursue resumed, and the historians developed a list of specific inquiries to prompt informants. The two major themes the historians sought information about were agriculture and communities. They asked about field crops, livestock, and home produce for profit, as well as for family consumption. Modernization of the farm home was an important subject, and queries were made about electricity, refrigeration, telephones, and indoor plumbing. The historians inquired about all types of farm buildings and structures—dwellings, barns, outhouses, wells, cisterns, corrals, and smokehouses, to name a few. Many questions pertained to processes like cooking on a wood stove; planting, picking, and plowing cotton; washing and drying laundry; and making soap and other home manufactured items for everyday life. To understand local communities, the historians requested information about churches, schools, cotton gins, stores, and post offices. They sought information about social gatherings, recreation, and mutual support.

A third task was to conduct the interviews, which were the nucleus of the project, and transcribe them. The historians first contacted their potential informants with a letter or telephone call advising the person about the project and explaining its purpose. They then contacted these people to see if they were willing to participate in an

interview and to get a sense of their tenure on the Fort Hood lands, familial associations, and areas they might have particular knowledge about.

If a person was willing, as most were, the historian would schedule an interview. The interviews were conducted in May 1998 and between November 2000 and October 2001. Preparation for interviews consisted of reading a brief family history published in county history books or reviewing other background documentation (Coryell County Genealogical Society 1986; Freeman et al. 2001; Killeen-Project 1930s, Inc. 1993; Stabler 1999). The historians made sure that they had extra batteries, high-quality audiotapes, extension cords, and microphones to use with the tape recorders. Usually the interview took place at the informant's home, although some were held at family reunions or local historical association offices. Each informant was required to sign a deed of gift agreement form indicating willingness for the interview to be published and, ultimately, housed as part of the Texas Collection at Baylor University. The goal of each interview was to elicit historical information about the informant's life on the Fort Hood lands and to verify facts the historians knew about. Interviews ranged in length from a brief 13 minutes to 4 hours and 41 minutes. Some of the longer interviews were conducted in two separate sessions. The historians conducted 42 interviews with 52 people, recording about 82 hours and 34 minutes of oral history on high-quality audiotapes. Most of the interviews were with a single informant, although some had two or more informants contributing to the dialogue. Twenty-eight of the informants were men, and 24 were women, and they ranged in age from 67 to 100 years old when interviewed.

When an interview was completed, the original audiotapes were duplicated, and the historian or an assistant would transcribe the material using these duplicate tapes. Transcription was intended to reflect the informant's actual word, speech, and thought patterns as closely as possible. Transcriptions were prepared using the Transcribing Style Guide provided by the Institute for Oral History at Baylor University (1977). Transcription required meticulous attention to sounds and language to produce as close to a verbatim record of the interview as was possible. The transcriptions faithfully keep speech patterns, with words spelled as they were spoken and the structure of the narrative and delivery intact. Each informant had the opportunity to review the transcript and change, add, or delete information. The informants did most of the editing, thus preserving the authenticity of their narratives. Even so, it is important to note that there still may be inconsistencies in spelling, of proper names in particular. After any changes the informants requested were made, the transcripts underwent minimal editing for remaining typographical errors and the like and indexing.

The fourth and final task is to print the transcripts on acid-free paper and give them to the Texas Collection at Baylor University, along with the original and duplicate audiotapes. The archived collection will include correspondence files each historian kept about scheduling informant interviews and transcription reviews. The public, historians, and other researchers will have access to all of these documents at the Texas Collection, where they will be permanently stored.

The Fort Hood Oral History Project is still in progress and was created to be ongoing and expandable. It could be extended to include an array of subjects and issues that could draw on the memories of both former residents and army personnel. For example, Fort Hood's oral history program could document military-related history on Fort Hood lands. Fort Hood has a remarkably rich past, from its earliest days as Camp Hood through the Cold War era. As informants were interviewed, it was obvious that each had knowledge of the army's role in changing the face of the land they had known as home. Many of them had very valuable information about the early days of Camp Hood and later years as well. Along with many other knowledgeable people who worked directly for the army, they could provide much of historical value on this topic. Because these informants and others who remain yet unidentified are precious and increasingly rare resources, pursuing such a project should be a high priority.

Recollections of Life on the Fort Hood Lands

Amy E. Dase

The world of several hundred farming and ranching families changed forever in January 1942, when the United States Army announced a plan to develop a tank destroyer tactical and firing center in Coryell and Bell Counties, Texas. The United States had been at war with Japan and Germany for a little more than a month. The search for a large base on which to train troops to stop the German *panzer* divisions had turned desperate. Local politicians had lobbied the Eighth Corps Area headquarters to select a training site. Congress passed the Second War Powers Act, vastly increasing the government's power to take private lands for military bases. Farmers and ranchers living within the proposed boundaries of Camp Hood were compelled to leave their homes and the lands from which they drew their livelihoods within a few short weeks.

In its haste to obtain a training base under wartime budget constraints, the government generally paid low value for acreage and improvements. All families suffered economically and psychologically from the speed of the land seizure, but beyond that, reactions varied. Some rent farmers and unemployed people rejoiced at the arrival of the army and the construction jobs it brought. Landowners, on the other hand, often were financially and emotionally devastated. Some were angry, others despondent, still others disoriented. But most of them believed that it was their patriotic duty to move and, in any case, they had to do so. They departed their homesteads with their belongings and their memories.

Today we might wonder why they would not have jumped at the opportunity to leave their Depression-era farms and ranches. Why wouldn't they rush to escape the hardships of isolated rural lives? These 52 informants explain why and more. They constitute an illuminating source of information about late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century life in central Texas, about rural institutions, and, most important, about the reactions and perspectives of those who lived such lives.

These first person accounts tell us that harsh conditions prevailed on the Fort Hood lands. These accounts also reveal that there was a great deal of satisfaction in having made the best of otherwise bleak situations. Despite the hardships they endured, none, it seems, would trade his or her experiences. What surfaces in these interviews is an overwhelming sense of the strength, the downright pluck, that carried these people and their families through difficult times.

Over the course of 42 interviews, the informants explored the themes of agriculture, schools, churches, and home life. Many recalled special events and fun times like Christmas, birthdays, baptisms, and leisure activities. They remembered the chores they were expected to do as children, the fear of snakes in the garden, the hard work of picking cotton, and the annual canning of produce. They also shared family stories and their varied experiences with such things as death, girls' basketball, Mexican field hands. Some went into great detail, but others painted with broader strokes. Some knew much about their nineteenth-century forebears, but others, more about their immediate families and neighbors. Because in 1942 the median age of the informants was 19, many of the memories focused on childhood and adolescence. Many could recall games they played, teachers they admired, family pets they treasured, and the looks on their parents' faces when they got into trouble.

The farms and ranches these people lived on were productive but did not necessarily generate much profit. Many informants spoke wistfully of the Depression years. Cash flow had always been minimal, but it was all

but nonexistent in the 1930s. As they always had, these rural inhabitants relied on subsistence—kitchen gardens, food preservation, and beef clubs to provide foodstuffs. They depended on credit with local general stores and on trading items like butter, milk, eggs, chickens, maize, corn, or oats for staples or cash. They counted on neighbors to exchange goods and services. One farmer might have a syrup mill, another would trade livestock for land, and many would help each other at harvest time. Most farms and ranches had yet to modernize. Labor was usually human or animal, not mechanical. Diversified farming practices rather than monoculture crops prevented outright hunger or bankruptcy during the Depression—at least most of the time. Habits forsaken by many as provincial allowed these rural communities to hold on to economic autonomy.

Most of the informants lived with their parents on farms and ranches, but each was associated with one or more particular communities (see Figure). These places usually had a school or a church, sometimes a post office or a store. Many of the hamlets that had once been on the Fort Hood lands were completely defunct by the time these people lived there; others had dwindled, especially if the local school had closed through consolidation. Schools had special meaning for informants. They were venues not only for learning but also for religious worship and socializing. The end-of-school picnic was the social event of the year.

Some informants identified with not only their local communities but also with the larger towns like Killeen, Belton, Gatesville, or Copperas Cove. These hubs drew the inhabitants of outlying farms and ranches because they presented options for trade, school, worship, and socializing. Gatesville and Belton, in particular, served as county seats and afforded access to government and politics.

These histories offer a tapestry of oral traditions of interest to anthropologists, folklorists, and linguists. The informants fuse folk speech, idiom, and vernacular storytelling with folk images, symbols, and myths (Yetman 1970:4). With the audible cassette tapes, the transcriptions capture the shadings of delivery—the inflections, incantations, silences, and vibrations of these voices. Read while listening to the tapes, the transcriptions reveal longing or elation or desperation or mirth. Without the tapes, the reader must be mindful ". . . that no score can ever be so detailed and precise as to provide for the re-creation of the full sound of the tape" (Tedlock 1983:5). But even without the tapes, the informants' conversational narratives become not just prose but poetry that articulates the reality of rural life in the early twentieth century (Tedlock 1983:109).

This report presents a group portrait of human memories. For its historical and linguistic value, these oral histories preserve a part of the past. To that end, this report contains two concise sections with introductory material and a summary of the Fort Hood Oral History Project, followed by 42 fully transcribed interviews, references, two brief appendixes, and an index. The crux of the report is the transcriptions, organized alphabetically. At the beginning of each transcription is the informant's name and date of birth, the name of any community the person was affiliated with, and the interviewer's name. Cited references follow the transcriptions. Appendix A lists informants by the communities with which they were associated. Appendix B lists informants by year of birth. An index of places and surnames completes the report.

Figure. Communities on Fort Hood lands.

John Darel Bay

Date of birth: 12 May 1921
Communities affiliated with: Brown's Creek, Maple
Interviewed by William S. Pugsley III

WSP: This is Bill Pugsley. I'm in the home of Darel Bay in Flat, Texas, just east of Gatesville. It is Tuesday morning around nine o'clock in the morning on April 24, 2001. We're here in his dining room discussing his memories of his days as a youth on Fort Hood lands before 1942. [This interview is part of Prewitt and Associates' Fort Hood Oral History Project sponsored by the U.S. Army Fort Hood and conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University.]

Could you please give me the name of your parents?

JDB: William Isaac Bay. My mother was Maude Bay.

WSP: What was her maiden name?

JDB: Terry.

WSP: Maude Terry Bay? How many kids did they have?

JDB: Seven.

WSP: Would you list them in order, form the oldest to the youngest.

JDB: Florace Bay, Isaac Florace Bay, Arvy, Ruby, Ruth—

WSP: A different person?

JDB: Ruth Bay, yeah. And, uh, well, I've got one out of order there. I had a brother that goes in between there, Vertis. And then Ruth. And then mine, Darel.

WSP: With one R?

JDB: Yeah, and then Oneta. That ought to be seven.

WSP: You're right. Can you take us on a visual trip through your family house? How many rooms, and what was in each of them?

JDB: Well, the home when we moved out of there—it was a large house, large rooms in it. It had, uh, three large bedrooms. Now I mean, one of them was *real* large.

WSP: What would you guess was the size?

JDB: Well, I don't know that—

WSP: Bigger than your living room here?

JDB: Oh, yes, yeah, it was, uh, say—I'd say twenty—I'd imagine twenty-four foot—it was as big as two of them, twenty-four by fourteen, or something of that order. Yeah. Then, then the next one would be smaller and the next one to that. And then there was a long hallway. And then there was a large living room, I guess. We used a bed in it at that time, some, you know, also. It had a heater system, a heat system—it had a wood heater in it. And it had a large dining room, a kitchen, a back screened-in porch, and a large, uh, front porch.

WSP: Sounds like a wonderful big house?

JDB: Yeah, that house was built, it was built, uh, been in the late 1920s.

WSP: Who built it?

JDB: The carpenters on it?

WSP: Was your dad involved in the design of the house?

JDB: Well, yeah, I reckon, yes. I guess they built it, he—well whatever—I reckon like him and whoever helped him work it out. A neighbor that lived there close to us, Fletcher Colvin built the house.

WSP: Fletcher Colvin built the house?

JDB: Uh-huh, him and his boys. I, and maybe somebody else might have helped a little bit, I don't remember, but I know his two boys helped.

WSP: Going through each of the rooms. What kind of stuff was in the kitchen?

JDB: Well, uh, there was a large dining table, with a long bench and sitting place on one side plus some chairs. Then earlier, of course, they had a milk cooler. I can remember when we had a milk cooler.

WSP: What is that?

JDB: What we called a milk cooler was you set your milk in there. You got water up at the top, like that, you had cloth come down on the sides, you know, it just kept that damp, kept it cool in there, in there, just what we called a milk cooler.

WSP: What was coming down the sides?

JDB: A wet cloth, you know, like a sheet-looking stuff, you know. I mean, they'd lay it down, you know, let it be around it, you know, and your milk set in here and water up in here—it would be cooler than the other temperature out here—a milk cooler.

WSP: And the milk wouldn't spoil?

JDB: Well, it would help it, it would sure help it. And we went from that to, uh, an icebox. We got somebody in there that delivered ice to us, blocks of ice. And then from that we went to a kerosene refrigerator.

WSP: What is that?

JDB: It burns kerosene and makes it cold.

WSP: It *burns* kerosene and that makes it cold?

JDB: It's like, uh, you know, these little iceboxes that go in, uh, RV vehicles, you know. You know, they burn on propane and make it cold. Or they've got electric—either one, they've got, uh, AC or DC current. Now this one here didn't, this was just a kerosene burner, it was something that a little fancy.

Yeah. It was the only one I knew of around there that was—that, uh, we was the only one that had one that I know of.

WSP: Okay, hold on one second—

(telephone rings; interruption in taping)

WSP: You had three different coolers in your kitchen. One was a water-cooled storage unit, and the next was—

JDB: Just an icebox.

WSP: With blocks of ice—and the next one was a kerosene cooler—

JDB: Yeah. Then a kerosene refrigerator. It made its own ice, and kept it cool.

WSP: Made its own ice? When did you get that?

JDB: Yes. (pause) I imagine that was probably in the later 1930s, after the middle 1930s, anyway, up in the later—mid, you know, '37, '38.

WSP: Did your farm have electricity?

JDB: No, no electricity.

WSP: These were all devices that ran without electricity?

JDB: You bet.

WSP: What else was in the kitchen?

JDB: Well, maybe a china cabinet or something that way.

WSP: A stove?

JDB: A stove, certainly, in the kitchen, yeah, stove and of course, then wood stove, wood stove.

WSP: Where was the kerosene container on the icebox, how did that work?

JDB: Well, it just set in a deal that uh—oh, I don't actually remember on the icebox. You know, that lamp's got a wick down in it, and it soaks that up to the top, and you burn it and that's—you know, it's all on a wick, only a different type.

WSP: What about the living room? Give me some idea what you remember about the living room?

JDB: Well, a wood heater, and a dresser, a bed in the living room, a desk, an Aladdin kerosene lamp, and a radio in the living room—a battery-operated radio. And that was the last one we had. The one before that, that, the older type. That thing had, oh, several batteries. It had wet batteries and dry-cell batteries, too, on it. Yeah. And, uh, *lots* of control knobs on the thing. You know? And then we went to this later one, this, you know—it just operated off of a car battery, straight. And, uh, beside the little old, uh—I don't know what you'd call it, it wasn't a big couch, it was a small setting thing, and then some chairs, rocking chairs and straight chairs.

WSP: What was the material on the floor?

JDB: Linoleum, I guess you'd call it linoleum.

WSP: Okay, hold on we have a visitor.

(doorbell rings; interruption in taping)

JDB: Now where were we at?

WSP: We were talking about the floor covering in the living room.

JDB: Linoleum, uh. And then we had some just, just wood.

WSP: Parts of the house were just wood?

JDB: I can't remember just what parts, but part of it. It's a whole lot easier to clean than that, uh, linoleum, you know? It would have been finished—it would have had a finish on it of some kind, the woodwork did on the floor.

WSP: Painted?

JDB: Well, varnished floor, or yeah, I guess, or maybe—I don't remember it ever been painted, but maybe, or stained or something. I would think maybe stained like some of that linoleum.

WSP: What material was on the walls? They didn't have sheet rock back then, so what did they use?

JDB: No, just board. You know, regular—it just had a siding on it and just wood walls, I guess, you know. You papered the walls. It was mainly papered, wallpaper.

WSP: What hung on the walls? Did you have particular photographs, or artwork or paintings on the walls?

JDB: Oh, yeah, we had a lot of just little, family, you know, stuff in there like that, but, yeah, not anything that I can remember, uh—I don't remember any paintings of any type out of the ordinary, you know, just little old maybe stuff, small amount of it there. Most of it was just family things hanging around, setting around, *setting* around mainly.

WSP: When you say family things, what would that be, generally?

JDB: A picture of your family, in frames, like, like's on the wall here, something like that.

WSP: What was in the largest bedroom, the one you said was quite large?

JDB: Two, two beds, it had two beds in it and of course a dresser, and also a large trunk, and you know, and uh, uh, maybe a sewing machine—seems like it was in that room, too.

WSP: Whose room was that?

JDB: Well, uh, mainly the kids slept in it, some of, you know, and this uh—my oldest brother, when this house was built that I'm describing now, well it, uh, he was already in college. Okay, he was away from home, well—uh, and uh—the rest of us there, then was in this house for a while, you know, I mean—'course there was older ones, my oldest sister married and, now she was already married when the army camp come in there, and, uh—also my sister next to her was married by the time we're talking about when, uh, at that time.

WSP: Ruth?

JDB: Ruth, yes. And, uh, uh, my brother Arvy, he was already, uh, married, uh, and then Vertis, uh, had went in the military in about like '30 latter '38 or '39. So it just left Ruth and myself, and Oneta actually—

WSP: In the house with your parents.

JDB: Yeah, when, when, uh, the army camp come in there, that's what, there was the three of us, and—I

think the girls that time were maybe using that, uh, you know, room. Then, then I had a room, and then, there's one room left and Mother and Daddy and them stayed in it.

WSP: You still had a couple of spare rooms.

JDB: Well, we had one room back there, uh, yeah, at that time, yeah.

WSP: When your older brothers and sisters came home, would they go back to their old bedroom, or was the arrangement changed?

JDB: Well, no, not much. The one at the college, he went to Stephenville up here, before he started out. That's part of A&M, you know. He didn't come home much. I mean, there wasn't no transportation. We had transportation, all right, but, I mean, that was a long ways to travel.

WSP: Exactly where was your house located, or as close as you can put it on the map.

JDB: Well, it's near Robinette Point on the map of Fort Hood has got over there, and it's, uh—it was in that Tama Valley near Maple School.

WSP: Well, I have a map, let's take look. This is a 1939 Texas state highway map that I copied from Mrs. Tommie Haferkamp's original map. There's Owl Creek. There's Tama right there.

JDB: That's north, right here. Okay, right there close to Tama, not too far from Tama. There's Tama, and what's this branch right here?

WSP: Brown Creek.

JDB: Find Wolf Branch. They didn't call it that then.

WSP: Cowhouse Creek? Stampede? Brown? I don't see Wolf Creek. They didn't label everything on this map. Would it have been that creek on the other side of Tama.

JDB: It would have been west and south of Tama.

WSP: So that's it, there, southwest of Tama, that's the creek.

JDB: Well, where exactly is Tama? Right here? This little dot right here?

WSP: No, this little group of buildings right there.

JDB: Well, I don't know what you're getting this group of buildings from at Tama.

WSP: Didn't Tama come through an intersection?

JDB: No, Silver City sat right on the intersection there. It may be from differences in how they made—well, right where this thing—is this the road there from Gatesville? Not, to Killeen. Right here? Well, this right here was what we called Silver City set right there.

WSP: The group of buildings at that intersection is Silver City?

JDB: Yeah, there was a—a little old store set there, and there were two or three houses around there, uh—now that's the store in the community there when the army camp come in and got it.

WSP: Where would Tama be in relation—

JDB: Tama would be a little northeast of that—an old-timey store. That was the old thing—that store has been out of service for a long time. Belonged to old man John Brashear. They had uh—we've got a book in here on that.

WSP: And did you have a school in Tama?

JDB: No, Maple. Maple is near there, Maple School. Where is Maple School?

WSP: It's the building with the little flag sticking up.

JDB: Okay. Okay. We're right, uh—we're west of the Maple School, a little southwest, just a little more west than we was southwest.

WSP: That would put you—

JDB: We were at Robinette Mountain over there, if you find that Robinette Mountain—

WSP: I think that's Robinette Mountain right there.

JDB: Probably is—well, we were right up against that in little cove right there at Robinette Mountain.

WSP: Were you near the creek?

JDB: Oh, yes, yes, we were near a branch, near the branch sort of there. We was about, oh, one-quarter mile.

WSP: You said Wolf Creek?

JDB: No, Wolf Branch. That's what's on the map, army's got it named that Wolf Branch now. That was in near Egypt Holler—I don't even know whether they even call it Wolf Branch.

WSP: Somewhere along this road right here.

JDB: Uh-huh. Yeah. Well, that would be—here it is, it come on up here and turned like that. We would be right in here somewhere.

WSP: But not quite to where Stampede—

JDB: No, no, we had property back here on this thing. Our home was right in here. That's our home place. It lay from there down back toward the school, from that mountain—from Robinette Mountain back toward Maple School. Corner right over there about a quarter of a mile from the schoolhouse.

WSP: How long had your family been in that location?

JDB: I think they moved there in '25, the fall of 1925, I think that's right.

WSP: And where were they before 1925?

JDB: Hay Branch, that's near Killeen, that's east of Killeen, Hay Branch community near Killeen.

WSP: What made them move?

JDB: Well, I don't know, they traded for that land, bought that land over there, and uh—you know, bought it and sold down there, traded or somehow or another.

WSP: Was he a farmer?

JDB: Farming and cattle, yeah.

WSP: Can you give me an idea of the crops and animals he had?

JDB: Well, you want to get on the crops? Cotton, course, was one of the main money crops, I guess, and the, the rest of it near—nearly was all put up for our own use—corn and, uh, maize. Uh, later we had in there broomcorn, did raise some broomcorn for a money crop, and—then we had other types for

feed, for cattle, you know, we raised to bale, where we could bale it like a type of cane or Sudan and, or any of that sort, to make hay, you know, for cattle. We used to cut it, bring it in, and we'd stack a lot of hay then, you know, put it in big stacks, cover it and feed off the stacks.

WSP: Your basic crops were cotton, being the cash crop, and the others for supporting the cattle?

JDB: Yeah, broomcorn a little for money, broomcorn for money too, definitely.

WSP: What is broomcorn?

JDB: What they make brooms out of, and they used to go up here to Cleburne, Texas, and sell it. You'd thresh it out. It was in a seed, come up in a long deal here and—and had a seed on it, and you had to thresh them seed out.

WSP: At the top of the plant?

JDB: Yeah. Well, you, you pull it—what you did was pull it—they called it pulling broomcorn. And you pull that out. You'd grab a part of it over here and a part here and rip that down. It separates and then you come out with a stalk here about, say, two foot long. And then you thresh the seed off of the end of that. Where it had seeded at the head of that, the top of that. Then they bundle this stuff up and haul it by truck, or get somebody to haul it, take it to market to make brooms out of.

WSP: That's the straw at the end of the broom?

JDB: Straw brooms. In the broom. That's what in it now. A lot of it is that old straw broom. Broomcorn.

WSP: And that was a money-making crop at that time.

JDB: Yeah, it's money. It came in late in the year, now it wasn't in on—

(telephone rings; interruption in taping)

JDB: (laughs) Okay, go ahead. And, uh, then we had, uh—this is the home place I'm talking about here at the—we raised—we had maize on there we raised and planted, got the head of this maize—you know, the maize head—and, uh, we put it in the barn out there, and, uh, mainly to feed the chickens, and turkeys, and poultry, right well, whatever we had.

WSP: Maize? You're referring to a plant that is not corn?

JDB: Yes, maize, maize is altogether different.

WSP: For those of us who think maize is the Indian name for sweet corn, what is the difference?

JDB: Maize is?

WSP: Well, some people think that.

JDB: Well, okay, maize just comes with those little old seeds on it, like cane seed, or if anybody knows what a cane seed is, only it's a bigger seed on it than cane. It has a bunch of little seeds on it and that's what you feed to your chickens.

WSP: Does it come out like an ear of corn?

JDB: No, it's not an ear, an ear of corn, an ear actually comes out. This is in the head, a loose, bloomed-out head. It blooms and then comes into a head, and makes seed, I mean, a little *bitty* seed. I'm talking about a little ol' bitty seed—

WSP: Like peppercorn seeds?

JDB: Well, not—no, no connection with corn! (laughs) No connection. Yeah, we—that was—we always had turkeys to sell for money, too. Turkey. We raised turkeys, and that maize went to feed them turkeys. And cane, we fed some cane heads seeds, too, to turkeys, but mainly was, mainly maize. Millet, now, that's another thing. Millet. We raised a little bit of millet. It's in a head like, like the maize heads are.

WSP: Why would you raise two similar, I mean—what was the advantage of one over the other?

JDB: Just, just a different thing to feed them, it was just an alternate feed, you know? Our horses, mules mainly—our, our, working stock was mules, the horses were mainly for riding, for cattle use. But, uh, uh, fed corn to the mules, mainly, that was their main feed, corn, corn fed.

And hogs, we had hogs there to make, uh—support you a living with—raise your own hogs and feed them—corn-fed hogs—fed them corn, too, mainly, that was what—fed them corn.

WSP: You had mules, hogs, and cattle. What other animals?

JDB: And always a horse or two.

WSP: How many head of cattle?

JDB: Oh, most times run about forty or forty-five, like that, along in there, maybe fifty at most. We didn't let them increase, we'd sell them. Oh, we'd keep a few to build up the herd with them a little bit, you know, some. You wanted the better ones maybe, and like that.

WSP: Roughly, how many acres are we talking about?

JDB: Well, our home place, I don't know, on this home place was something around two hundred and something, now I don't—uh, and then what we called our Brown's Creek place—it was around that Robinette Point there from our home place—it was west of, it's southwest of where our home was at. And that's where mainly our cattle—we had our cattle over there. Now that's what this—we were looking at on the map, and Brown's Creek went through that home, that place over there. That was the other property that he owned. He bought that in '30s sometime or another, along in there. And that's the Depression days we're talking about. Back out here, you know—well, these things were hard, I mean. (laughs) It literally was close out there.

WSP: How did he manage to buy major property? How many acres was that?

JDB: Well—the Brown's Creek place? I guess it must have been three hundred or better, plus, three plus—

WSP: He was going up in the world. He had more—

JDB: Well, somewhat. Somewhat, yes. Uh-huh. Yeah. Like, uh, 'course, uh, there wasn't no lot of cars in there, and we always had an automobile, that's—this is not a bragging thing, for sure, but we had one and a lot of people didn't have. 'Course, I don't know how many, percentage-wise, but I mean about half the people, I'd say, at least, didn't have an automobile over there, in the—at that time.

WSP: What kind of automobile was it?

JDB: Well, I can remember his first, uh, Model T, uh—I think he bought it—I believe the history on this thing is, uh, uh—about like '22 or '23 when he bought his first car and was a Model T. Then he went from that to a Model A. And then from that on up to—well, I remember we owned one Essex—(laughs) an Essex at one time. And then he went to—bought another Ford. Well, that Ford he had over there was a '37 Ford—when he moved out of the army camp he was driving a '37 Ford.

WSP: Did he have a farm tractor?

JDB: Tractor. Well, then when we come out of there, we had tractors, back of course before then it was all mules up till, uh—maybe we got the tractor like in '37 or eight—about '38, I'd say, we got tractor. And then we farmed the rest of the time with the tractor. When we moved out of there that's what we farmed. Farm was all tractor.

WSP: Was there a house on the Brown's Creek place?

JDB: Yes, yes, big, big old house, a big old house.

WSP: Can you give me a description?

JDB: Well, I don't know whether I can—that there was just a big old house. It had a—the thing actually faced west and had a porch all the way across the front of it. Yeah. And had a—some old big rooms in it. Every—houses then, a lot of them, was built with less rooms but big rooms, and uh—

It had a rain cistern, you know, where you caught that rainwater to use, you know, for odds and ends. But we had one at our home, too, a rain tank. This one over there had what you called the old cement, uh—dug down and cemented, you know in, and caught the water off the roof.

WSP: Your other house had what instead?

JDB: At the home place we just had galvanized tanks to hold the water, the rainwater. Mama washed in it all the time, that was wash water. Clothes washed outside. Now that's something we—we can talk about, but—(laughs) this? Okay—that's of course the wash pot days. Had a wash pot, built a fire, heat the water, and put your clothes in it. Had a stick, and you punched them clothes around with old lye soap, made the lye soap at home. Yeah, you put it in there and make your soap up.

WSP: You were describing how your mother made soap.

JDB: Yeah, that's back at the home, back at the home, washing on the washing, yeah. And from that, uh, I don't guess we ever got away from the washing pot, but we did get a deal that you could, uh—it was a tub, you put your clothes in the tub, in this thing—before we washed on a rub board now—this—Getting ahead of myself, here. We washed on the rub board, and—and then you'd put them in the rinse water and up and down—by hand, you know—and wring the water out of it, put 'em on a line.

Then we went to, uh, a machine that, that, you uh—it was wood rollers in it, and there was, uh, gears like thing, or cogs, or whatever you want to call it—and you'd turn this crank so far this way until the clothes would be about to come out, and then you'd back up and go the other way, run them back and forth in that thing to do the washing, let, let the clothes fall down in the tub and then—little bit, you know, and then you'd run them back through in this soapy water, you know, back and forth with this handle. (motions with hand) Turn like this, to wash, wash your clothes.

Yeah, washing by hand, then you went on to this thing. We had a wringer right beside it, and it turned by hand. I mean, was a funny-looking thing—it wasn't fun, but I mean, it was some kind of hard material that—and that run through there like that. And you'd run that and wring the clothes. It was a wringer. And then went to the clothesline with them. (laughs)

WSP: The rollers on the washing part of this were not rubber?

JDB: No, they just—were just wood. Yeah. Yeah, it was made out of wood and just a gear there, you turn the handle, it just—it rolls so far through there to keep them from falling out this side—and maybe might fall out, you just, put them back in there—and run them back through just, back and forth. Like if you had your trousers there, well just, you bring them up out of that soapy water and stick them in that and run them back and forth. That done the thing instead of your rub board. I don't know whether it was good or not, but it done it—(laughs)

WSP: Did you have to do any of these chores?

JDB: I helped some, not as much—I had sisters there that done mainly that, but I mean I, I helped, I helped, helped my mother.

WSP: With the laundry?

JDB: Well, a little bit, but I never did do much of that. My sisters, uh, the one older than me and the one just younger.

WSP: So what were *your* chores?

JDB: Well, uh, mainly helping with the cattle or working in the fields. Helping my daddy on the farm.

WSP: Well, let's talk about the cattle. What were your jobs with cattle?

JDB: Well, just a, just a routine thing on them, just feed them in the wintertime when it was cold, you know—in cold winters, we fed through the winters some to help them out, uh, uh, to keep them going, just seeing after them, you know, seeing—you know, keep them in shape.

WSP: A lot of people have never seen a cow. Help us out here. What are some of the tricks of the trade? What do you have to watch out for?

JDB: Ah, well, some of them get a little bit mean, but most of the time they're not. They don't hurt you, you've just got to learn to stay out of their way. You don't want one of them to get in a fight and run over you, get tromped or nothing that way. You know, if you're roping one you want to be careful, uh, you know, 'cause you might get hurt, and you got—they get mad then. You, you stir them up, and they'll get—They mad and fight you. Come at you and things like that. But that don't—we penned ours a lot. There's a lot to handling cattle, you've got uh—ease, be easy with them, in my mind—idea of it. We always tried to do that, we didn't want to keep 'em wild. We wanted to keep everything just as gentle as we could keep 'em.

And you'd still have some in there that—sometime you'd have to—like with the worms. We had a lot of screwworms in them days. Flies, you know, 'course that's all done away with now, you know, pretty well. But, uh, we had to see about that now—on these calving time, and, uh, you know, well, about the young ones, we had to watch them for worms, doctor them for worms.

WSP: Doctor them for worms?

JDB: You bet.

WSP: How would you recognize a screwworm on a cow?

JDB: Well, in an area there would swell, you'd see it enlarge a little bit—and you'd see—in them, or in any other place you'd see it'd swell or something. Where a cow, a calf, anything, get in a wire, well they'd end up with worms. We had, uh—oh, I believe the brand of it was Peerless, uh, a red-looking liquid—and you'd pour that stuff down in that, uh, where the worm was at, in their cut or whatever, and, uh—then, we had a salve then, that went over that. We smeared over that. That was to keep the flies from blowing that thing back, you know. And that would last awhile, see, but you'd have to go back a few times to get this healed up, you know.

WSP: What was the name of the red liquid?

JDB: Peerless. I believe Peerless is what they called it, if I'm saying that right.

WSP: Peerless was the medicine—

JDB: Medicine that killed them, it'd kill them. I mean it'd hit them worms and you'd see 'em, you'd start with a—you'd pick up a little stick and start raking them out—there'd be a lot of worms in there, in this, you know—and you'd rake them—it sounds bad, but that's what we did. (laughs)

WSP: There was more than one worm in this hole?

JDB: Oh, yeah, yeah, oh, sure, it'd be several in there, yeah, you bet.

WSP: One of your jobs was to put on the medicine and then squeeze the worms out?

JDB: Oh, yeah, doctor them, yeah, you bet. Yeah, or take a little stick or something and rake it out of there to get—soon as you got 'em all out, it killed them. You'd want to kill 'em all, you wouldn't want to leave none of them in there, you'd, you'd—you know, look in there, you'd—sometimes a cow would get a horn cut off—knocked off in a fight or something. Well, flies would blow that place there, and you'd have to doctor in that, in there just keep a doctoring until you got, till it healed. That's what you'd do. As long as they was open, I'll tell you what, in them days a fly was going to get to it, a blowfly.

WSP: Is there a difference between a regular fly and a blowfly?

JDB: Well, well, I guess it was. I think they killed all them out nowadays. I don't—you don't hear of cattle getting this in—no, that was brought in here, done away with—they done away with that pretty well. I don't hear anything anymore. I don't fool with cattle anymore but—

WSP: How did that work? The flies would lay worms and—

JDB: Yeah, I guess that's what you'd call it. They called them blowflies. They'd land on it, and that's where the worms were at, made worms. And I mean it was worms, too, little old worms, oh, I don't know, eighth of an inch, at least, in length, little—big as the end of that pencil there, or something. And they just a working in there. You could see them, I mean, just a—working away. Why they would kill 'em if you don't, uh, get them out of there.

Well that, and then, you know, just uh, taking care of that. That was the springtime, a lot, and on down through the summer that this would all happen. And of course, more calf crops would come in the spring.

WSP: Cash crops or *calf* crops?

JDB: Calf crops, yeah. And then, uh—oh, you'd move them around sometime—we'd bring some from, oh, what we called the Brown's Creek place over to our home place. Well, we probably had more farmland on our home place. The Brown's Creek place didn't have much, uh, uh, you know, what we called farmland over there. Then besides—

WSP: More grazing?

JDB: It had more—it had grazing over there, yeah. We let them—we'd plant Sudan over there and let them come—we'd bring some of them home and let them graze on that Sudan. Yeah. Then just moving them around, and building fences around to keep them from, you know—keep some repaired all the time. There's something to do all the time, I'll tell you that! It only country—out in the country, you can work, you can work more than seven days if it's there! (laughs) Building fences or putting 'em in, or mending old ones, one.

WSP: That was one of your jobs, right?

JDB: Yeah, that was one of them, too. You bet. You betcha, and then of course, plowing in the fields, and

gathering them when they got ready to gather, whatever it was.

WSP: Do you do this roundup on a horse, or were you just walking?

JDB: Well, or we just—no, most of it was done on horse, the biggest part of it, yeah. Yeah, you did it on a horse. We could call a lot of ours in. Now we could—back where our pen was at, we could, uh, you could get there—we salted in that area all the time. We used stock salt, a *loose* salt—more than we'd ever have a box salt—we'd use loose salt, and kept it in a big, old sack. It was an old coarse, real course salt. And then put it out there close to the pen, you know, and you could holler at them a lot, and they'd, you know, and uh, start 'em come in.

WSP: Would you pour the loose salt in some kind of container?

JDB: Yeah, or we had one place down there, if we salted a little ways from the house there. Where it run on the outer banks of the Brown's Creek, there's a rocky area, and there's some flat rocks, and we'd pour it on that flat rock, 'cause salt kills, you know, and it didn't hurt to kill—you know. We salted on them rocks. We didn't just salt anywhere, 'cause that would have killed that grass. Then we had a little deal that we salted in, too. Then 'course, we fed them through the winter, more so—a lot of hay.

WSP: What chore did you like least of all?

JDB: Well—(laughs) cotton picking I would think, of the whole business. That was the hard part. Summer was hot with the cattle, but I want to tell you what, you'd get hot, and it was the hot summertime and you'd get hot as all get-out—but let me tell you, now when you're picking cotton—I believe of all of it, that, that was the worse thing there was, picking cotton. Corn pulling wasn't—(laughs) it wasn't like picking cotton! I know I'd lot rather pull corn, I had—now maize, we cut our maize—this maize I was talking about a while ago—was in the head, and we cut it by hand. Combine now, you know. Well, we had a knife, and you'd hold that head like that, a head about that big—

WSP: About six or eight inches tall, and you'd grab hold of the head of the maize—

JDB: Yes, you bet.

WSP: Then cut it at the stalk?

JDB: No, cut right against, just leave the head, cut the head off and leave the stalk. (with hand motions)

WSP: Your hand movement, shows you pulling toward yourself with the knife.

JDB: Yes. Yes. Something like that. (motions again) Folks would cut the other way, but no you'd pull—

WSP: What would you do with the maize head?

JDB: We'd put it in the barn.

WSP: But immediately after you cut it—what?

JDB: In the wagon, put it in the wagon. Load it in the wagon, and sometimes it was—if it wasn't cured out good, we'd unload it on the ground down there, on a little knoll we had there at home, and we'd let that stuff lay there a couple of days if the weather was right. You didn't want to put anything in the barn that would overheat, cause a fire, you know—too green.

WSP: You would have to wait until—

JDB: Sometimes, if you got in there and cut it too quick, you'd want to not go into the barn with it right then. You'd, uh, lay it on the ground and let the sunshine, let the—you know, lay there and cure like two or three days, and *then* you'd go to the barn with it.

WSP: Because if you put it in the barn green, it would heat up?

JDB: You bet, yeah. You betcha.

WSP: You've heard of barns burning down because of—

JDB: Yeah, oh, yeah, it would. If you had much of it, that would sure do it. It would burn. Yeah, you can overheat feed that way. Feed not cured out enough, you can overheat. Yeah, it will build up a heat in there, stay active, start a fire. It'll sure do it. You'll look—you hunt that out, and you'll find that to be facts. (laughs)

WSP: What time of year is this? Is this in the summertime?

JDB: No, in the fall.

WSP: It'll burn, then, even when it's cool?

JDB: Yeah, well, it's not, no, we hadn't got a norther in here, but, it's, it's, I don't whether it's—but I could be end of summer, I guess. Well, September, along in there, I guess, August, along in there maybe. August, September, well, when school started. We always tried to get—sometimes we would start school over there and have to—they'd let out school to get back where kids could go back and help get their crops out, you know—like after school was starting—I don't know if this is right or not—starting like the first of September, they might go ahead and start then, and go two weeks, and then turn out a week or two to go back and get on them crops, help their family, you know. I'd take everybody working—you couldn't hire nobody.

WSP: Which crops?

JDB: Cotton picking, mainly. Cotton—

WSP: Well, let's get back to your favorite thing. What was it about cotton picking that irritated you?

JDB: Oh, I don't know—well, bending over. You, you had to stand up, you know, bent over—'course, you could crawl, get knee pads and crawl, you know, if your back got hurt, your back standing up, you know, where you're, you know, bent over there. And then, uh, you could use knee pads, you got tired of doing that. But it gets uncomfortable. Oh, I don't know, especially—

WSP: Was the cotton bush very tall?

JDB: Cotton? We'd have cotton from here to—like this, you know—(indicates height) called old ranch cotton—

WSP: Two foot to about three foot high?

JDB: Yeah, Well some of them. About two to three foot, yeah.

WSP: You're talking about picking bolls on the bottom?

JDB: No, we picked cotton out of the lot, we didn't pull the bolls where it all comes out, we picked the cotton, that's picking cotton.

WSP: What's the difference in picking cotton?

JDB: Well, we picked the cotton, pulling it out of the hull it's in. You know, the other way you pull the whole hull and all, and it'd go in with it and then the gin separates it. But then we didn't have no gin, I guess, for bolls, not around here. Not there. West Texas would be the first I'd ever heard of it, well out there, you know, and it was—they called it—they pulled it by boll—and all out there, you know,

the whole boll of cotton. Yeah.

No, we picked there, that was cotton picking, you'd get that lock out of that cotton, you'd grab it and pull the lock of it.

WSP: And stick it where?

JDB: In your cotton sack. (laughs) Then you'd get your sack about full, or as heavy you want to pull it, and go weigh it and put it in the wagon. Seemed like to me that it taken, uh—oh, twelve hundred or thirteen hundred or so, pounds to make a bale of cotton.

WSP: How long would it take you to pull enough cotton for a bale?

JDB: Well, it depended, of course, on how many you had out there. We could, uh—some people could pick three or four hundred pounds a day, you know. If you were a good cotton picker, three and four hundred. You know, with our family, you know, 'course the one that's still left at home there—I don't remember, uh, what we worked that hard, actually, or, uh—but if you pulled three, and there were three of us, nine hundred, and my mother worked in the field some, too, uh, you know, quite a bit! And, uh, like cotton picking she sure did! She done a lot of that, and then go to the house and fix our dinner, and then we'd come on in, later, to eat dinner. But if, we—us kids were getting three—well, four of us, or after we had four, we near—you know, like that we could get a bale, you know, when my other sister, before she, before Ruby left home. Maybe I was still too small then, the way we spread out—you've got to be up pretty good-sized before you can get that three or four hundred, you can't—I wasn't as good a cotton picker—I had a brother that was good at it. He'd get like that four hundred pounds, and I had a sister, a couple of them could, could do that.

WSP: It was Vertis that could do that?

JDB: Vertis, and Arvy—Arvy—he died when he was—he died in '43.

WSP: War-related?

JDB: No, no, he never did go in the service. He had, uh—in fact, he worked over here at American Desk awhile, but he come up with, uh, what they called then TB. And they sent him off out to San Angelo to this sanitarium out there. But they said they couldn't do nothing with him. He had a little lacquer that got in on his lungs, you know, there or something that could, and he died at home.

WSP: From working at the desk company?

JDB: No, I wouldn't say that, I wouldn't know. It might have been, but mainly I think the official thing on it was, well, they called it TB. I imagine that contributed some to it over there, but, you know, might some—

WSP: How old was he at the time?

JDB: He was born—he died in '43, there, let's see, uh—I think he was born in '14, '13 or '14, I can't think which it was. But I've got all that over there.

WSP: About twenty-nine or thirty years old?

JDB: Whatever, twenty-nine, yeah.

WSP: That's pretty young. (pause)

Back to picking cotton—how long would it take you, if you had everyone you described out in the field, how long would it take to pick an acre of cotton?

JDB: Oh, it would—(laughs) an acre of cotton? I don't know how to judge it by an acre of cotton. I could be more right about how long to pick a bale of cotton. Well, if my mother was helping, and—I don't know, we couldn't put out a bale a day there when—of course, the rest of them, like I'm talking about there, maybe when Vertis was still at home we could, uh, maybe put out a bale a day—but see, that throwed me on down younger, because he was born in '16 and throwed me five years behind that—well, back in them days, see, I wouldn't have been very old when he was, you know, up to working, like doing a man's job. When he was getting on up toward grown, like seventeen or eighteen years old, he could put out plenty of work. Well, that would throw me maybe twelve or thirteen or whatever, you know. And you don't get as much out of a twelve or thirteen as you do a seventeen, eighteen, sixteen or whatever. (laughs)

So that would vary, very much different. I never did see them altogether—I mean, doing, what I'm saying—my youngest sister, myself and Ruth, and the next one above me, and then Vertis there and Ruby, maybe, but I was pretty young—see she was born in 1911 and me 1921. There's ten years. Well, you give, say she was twenty-one when she married—I would have been ten years old so I sure wasn't putting out much, and my sister under me was three years difference, so this was a scattered out thing. Maybe that was the reason why kids were scattered out that way they were—(laughs) for the work, to keep us picking that cotton. I don't know. (laughs)

WSP: You in your prime, picking with Ruth and Oneta, would it take you more than a day to pick a bale?

JDB: Oh, yeah, and with my mother helping there, oh, yeah, to pick a bale.

WSP: Maybe a couple of days to pick a bale?

JDB: Yeah, well, I mean, that'd be close to—that's, yeah.

WSP: After you got a bale picked, did you have it ginned immediately, or did you save it up on the property?

JDB: No. When we got a bale out we carried it right to Killeen, Texas, and gin it. We lived ten miles from Killeen, eighteen from Gatesville, and ten miles from Killeen. Our hometown was Killeen.

WSP: Your shopping town was Killeen?

JDB: Shopping town, mainly. The county seat was Gatesville, but shopping town was in Killeen.

WSP: How long was that process, with the drive in?

JDB: Yes, we'd take it and gin it. Well, it taken a good little bit to pull a bale of cotton over there with a pair of mules, just about a day, I imagine, by the time you got over there and got back. Well, not all day, I mean, but the biggest part of the day. Time you got up in the morning and hitched up and went, you know—pretty well, time you went through the gin and all, well—

WSP: Was there some kind of work you had to do to get it into the gin?

JDB: No. No, after you got to the gin, no, they was all taken care of. You just pull it to the gin and they sucked it off with their, you know, deal they had, yeah, cotton head.

WSP: How would they let you know how much cotton you delivered?

JDB: They weighed your bale of cotton, and you could sell it. Some held it at the time, but most of them sold it, you know, for so—much—a pound. I can't tell you that now, I don't know that. I don't remember that. Then of course, you got your seed out of your—you could sell your cottonseed if you wanted to, or bring your cottonseed home. And, uh, we brought some home, uh, good grade of cotton, maybe, or we might replant in another year, you know, for a seed crop, for seed. And then some of it

we'd feed, and, uh, to the milk cows—

WSP: You'd feed *cotton* to the milk cows?

JDB: Cotton*seed*, seed. We'd mix a little cornmeal that was—the meal, not cornmeal, but cottonseed meal that had come out of the cotton—we'd mix it with, uh—make it a little more strength, more richer milk. It was like a cake, cottonseed cake, and all that—you'd feed a little of that for richer milk than, you know. What you put into anything, well, it's the same way with a cow—the better feed you got the better meat most likely you're going to have coming out of that cow, calf, or whatever we're talking about.

WSP: Cottonseed *cake*?

JDB: Cottonseed cake, yeah. Just comes in a lump. Well, it's made different now, it's all cubed or something, but that was a little old rough-looking, rock-looking thing, but real hard, just out of cottonseed, made out of cottonseed—it's a lot of oil stuck in cottonseed—

WSP: This is something the gin could do?

JDB: Yeah, yeah, the gin done it—

WSP: You would ask them to make cottonseed cake out of—?

JDB: Yeah. They'd—well, I don't know whether they done it right there at the gin or not, or just how they done that, I can't, I don't remember that now. But, uh, anyway, uh, when, you know, some cottonseed cake, cottonseed meal—feed that along, we'd feed that to the range cattle, too, to the milk cows. We always kept three or four milk cows.

WSP: Would you take back the bale, or leave the bale there?

JDB: Leave the bale there. Leave it there. You bet. Leave it there at the gin, get your money for it.

WSP: And take back whatever byproduct you wanted?

JDB: If you wanted the cottonseed, or however you want to trade the cottonseed for corn, for, uh, for cottonseed meal, well they'd trade. They had a certain deal they'd make with you, to where you came out with whatever you wanted out of it. And—

WSP: How many bales did you get per acre?

JDB: (laughs) Well, we didn't have that good o' cotton in them days. I'll tell you what, I don't know. It wasn't none of that bale stuff and no half bale, either, to the acre like now. See, now, things are a lot different. You fertilize nowadays in this country over in here, or here in Flat, where we're at now. But no, you take, uh—if you had a third of a bale per acre, you had—you was growing some good cotton. But if you wanted to average the whole thing, you'd probably come out shorter than that. You'd have some down there that might make a half in your heavier soil, but then you'd run out, and you'd vary in there—so maybe a third.

WSP: It could be even less than a third?

JDB: Sometimes it might be one-quarter, things like that. It'd just depend on the year. It would vary from year to year, you'd have a heavy bale of cotton one year and the next no rainfall, so that's all it'd amount to.

WSP: How many acres would be planted in cotton on your place?

JDB: Well, let's see—I think our home place had about a hundred acres or a little better on it. I'd, I'd, I'd say nearly half of that would have been—little better than half would have been cotton on the home place.

WSP: About at fifty acres of cotton?

JDB: Yeah, probably fifty, sixty acres of cotton. Yeah, I imagine fifty acres cotton, maybe, uh, thirty acres corn, the rest in other kind of stuff—I don't know, thirty, thirty-five.

Oh, then, you take everything that was living—we raised just about everything, see, our own. You see, you're talking about your hogs, you had your pork, we had our beef from the cattle—if we wanted to butcher one, we had it there to butcher, and did do some, not much of that, but—then we had our poultry and our chickens—I mean, just what was running loose on the yard—you couldn't put none of them up, but, you know—you didn't have no freezer to put them in, in other words, you couldn't dress them and put them up. You had to eat them fresh, I mean that's what you call fresh.

And then we had a garden galore, I mean to tell you we had a fine garden! Well, we just, we planted about—beans and peas, beets and okra, onions and potatoes, all of it, lettuce, tomatoes, about anything you, you know, name as a food around that growed in this country here.

WSP: Who was in charge of selecting what went into the garden?

JDB: Well, my mother, mainly, or, uh—and my daddy, too, some. Mainly her, I imagine she was probably the wheel horse over that garden. Yeah, we had a fine garden, sure did, and we had a fine orchard.

WSP: What size was the garden?

JDB: Oh, I imagine a half acre, something like that in the main garden. Yeah. Then we might have some other place you'd plant at a different time of year, turnip greens or something that way, or mustard greens, like that, but maybe didn't plant them in the garden, plant them somewhere else maybe. You'd just sow them out, throw them out anywhere.

WSP: Beside the garden, you said you also had an—

JDB: We had the orchard, yeah.

WSP: What was in the orchard?

JDB: Well, just plums, peaches, uh—that was about it, I guess.

WSP: Plums, peaches, any apples?

JDB: No. No, we didn't—there wasn't no apples at all.

WSP: Pears?

JDB: We didn't have any. Some people raised pears, but I don't remember us having any pears.

WSP: Was there reason in particular, why you grew plums and peaches but not apples and pears?

JDB: Well, apples don't grow around here, uh—pears will, I know, but I don't know whether they knew it at them times or not. We didn't have any. But apples, certainly not. No. We don't have no apples here. There are a few scattered apple trees in here that make a little, but they're not—well, it's not feasible, in other words.

WSP: The reason is why?

JDB: Well, they don't grow you no crop.

WSP: Too hot, too cold?

JDB: Well, I don't know, whatever our climate is that—

WSP: It's not an apple climate.

JDB: No, no, it's not an apple climate. (laughs)

WSP: Would you sell any of these plums or peaches?

JDB: No, most of ours, no. We'd give away if your neighbor needed them, neighbors helping neighbors. I'll tell you that, if you had plenty, and your neighbor didn't, they got some of it, too. Yeah. Garden the same way. I mean, uh, the corn, or at roasting ear time and all, yes, help yourself. You know, neighbors or whatever, neighbors helped neighbors, I'll tell you, they done it.

WSP: With food products, it sounds like you were fairly self-supporting?

JDB: We was self-supporting, pretty well, yeah. Now they done a little canning. 'Course lots of canning, uh, fruit jar, in a fruit jar. Our mainly—some people used a can, but ours was mainly done in fruit jars.

They had these pressure cookers, you know, and you'd cook these, uh—whatever you was going to can, vegetables or whatever sort—certain ways, certain to go about all this stuff. You do it a certain way, and put it all them jars. And then, boy, when, uh, when you're not coming out of a garden you open one of these up and it was good eating, too!

WSP: What would you can?

JDB: All kinds of beans and peas, all that, you know, and as far as I guess they canned so much okra, I guess canned about everything. I don't how much you can can, I don't know that much about canning, but—

WSP: That was not something you were involved in?

JDB: No. No. I might help pick it, but I mean the other, I don't uh, know. Yes, we had lots of canning. We had a storm cellar, just dug down in the dirt there, and, uh, we had canned stuff put in that—it stayed cooler in there, see, in the summertime. That's—you go in that thing and it pretty cool all the time. Yeah. It was just down in the ground there, and that's where we mainly stored most of our canned, canned stuff.

Sometimes we'd can beef, some. You can can beef. If I can remember right, I don't know, but they put—

WSP: We were talking about canning, and what kinds of fruits and vegetables your mother would can, along with the canning process itself.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

JDB: Well, I got in there that we canned some of the beef. We put that—yeah—they cooked this meat, and they put so much hog lard, regular old, hog lard that just come out of the hogs, on top of this—the way I can remember it—and it someway or another preserved this meat in there, I don't know. Then you'd take this off and lot of that grease. People used to eat a lot of grease, I tell you that (laughs) in them days anyway. But, that's, uh, that's the way I can remember canning that stuff. You had to have so much, uh, I guess just old hog lard, I don't remember no other kind of lard, myself, when we was growing up. You know, we got into all this other stuff later. We had a whole, uh—when you rendered—when you killed a hog that was our grease to cook with, I mean this hog lard.

WSP: How long would hog lard stay okay?

JDB: I guess it must lasted from about from season to season. We killed in the winter, when it was cold weather, because we cured it outside. Everything that was cured you had to watch, uh, predict the weather, you know, and get a good norther where were going to have some cold to cure that meat.

WSP: Curing means drying it out, am I right?

JDB: Yeah, drying it out.

WSP: What is that process?

JDB: That's what it is, just drying it out, letting it go through a curing process. You know, you'd make the whole hog, I mean you don't waste none of it.

WSP: Were you ever involved in hog killing?

JDB: Oh, yeah.

WSP: What did you do?

JDB: You just go out there with a .22 and shoot it between the eyes, let it drop and take a knife and go over and cut its throat. Let it bleed out—stick its throat, I mean here, where you can get all—let it drain as good as you can. You want to get all the blood drained from that thing, that you can. Then you hang it up. And had a pulley deal, what do you call them, block and tackle? You draw that thing up and, 'course, that's when you take the inside of it out, you split it open, take the inside of it. But *first*, before then—I'm getting ahead of myself—you scraped it. Hot water, you had to have your water hot over here, and you put a tow sack down on that thing, poured water over this tow sack—

WSP: The tow sack is on top of the pig?

JDB: On top of the pig—and, uh, then you, uh, let it heat that. Then you take a knife and let that hair turn loose, and scrape that hair off.

WSP: Why did you want to get the hair off?

JDB: Well, you don't want no hair in your food. (laughs)

WSP: I see. Are you taking stuff out of the pig at this point?

JDB: No, I got ahead of myself there—then you hang it—after you scrape the hog, get all the hair of it, every bit you can get off of it—it's supposed to be all of it—*then* you hang it up, then you take the insides of it out.

WSP: Did you do something in particular with each organ?

JDB: Well, inside you've got your liver, uh—about all we ever saved there. I don't remember nothing else that we saved from inside. You know, your liver, 'course, is inside. We'd—the liver is good to eat, pork liver, and, uh—maybe something else in there, I don't remember. Then, 'course you just cut it up. You had your middlings, and your ham, and your shoulder, and your—whatever.

WSP: The parts you cut off the pig, would you leave them outside, uh, in the cold?

JDB: Well, no, we—no, we had a smokehouse. We didn't ever smoke much of it but, uh, we just had a salt cure, that's what it was, that you put on the meat to help cure that meat. You lay it down there and you taken that, get a handful of it and put, put it on this ham, say, and you rub that real good all over, I mean turn it from this side to that side, and work that cure into that meat. And that—it draws the

water out, is what it does, moisture. You can go out there and look at it later or the next morning or something, and you'll see if there's a low place in that and you'll see moisture standing down in there. You pour that off there, just turn it over and then you go to the other side and do that again the next day or two.

WSP: So you'd drain off the water that's coming out of the hog?

JDB: You're curing it, a salt cure, of some kind they called that, you'd uh, you're curing this meat by pulling that moisture out of it, is what you're doing.

WSP: Would curing make it smaller?

JDB: Well, uh, somewhat smaller, yeah. Somewhat—

WSP: Was the hog in some kind of pan during this process?

JDB: No. We had ours laying down on a table thing out here and just, uh, some kind of cloth laying down here on it, and then you'd have to sort of watch—if it got warm a day you'd want to pull that back over it and watch for flies. That's the reason for the smoke a lot of times, you might want to run stuff off. You'd watch to see flies don't get to it—you know, keep it clean.

WSP: So smoking a ham isn't about putting flavor into it—

JDB: Well, not altogether.

WSP: As much as to keep the flies away.

JDB: Well, they probably would be, and nowadays, it would be counted more, I mean, now smoking would be strictly flavor. But then, I guess it was, might—might have been as much to—you know—maybe.

WSP: Did you have some kind of smoke or anti-fly thing going on?

JDB: No. No, I don't remember that—all I remember putting in there was just building a fire out there and getting some coal and just walking in there with it in a pan of some kind, that you could carry it in there, and it would just let it smoke. You didn't want no, you know—just to smoke, at all, like that.

WSP: A little bit of smoke, but not a big, heavy mesquite smoke?

JDB: No, no. No, not *this* smokehouse. What we called it a smokehouse—that referred to it to smoke meat in for the taste, I'm sure—but we—our smokehouse was to store stuff in. We'd hang our meat up in, when it cured you'd hang it up here. Maybe before—it ain't all-the-way cured when you hang it up. And it may still drip or something. You got your big old middlings and hams and—I'll tell you what, it was good meat! That was a good cured meat, home cured. I don't know, I guess they still do it somewhere.

WSP: From time to time, you would pull something down from the smokehouse, take it in and cook it?

JDB: You bet. Yeah.

WSP: Was there any concern about pork diseases?

JDB: No, not that I ever heard of anything. No, no. No, I don't know of any bacteria picking up—(laughs) nothing. You'd go out there, and there'd be a ham up there and you could take a big old butcher knife and just cut you, uh, a hunk of it off, go in the house and slice it up and fry it, or whatever you wanted to do.

WSP: Oh. so you wouldn't take down an whole leg or something?

JDB: No, no, not necessarily. No, just cut you off a hunk of it. Yeah. Sausage, you had your sausage hanging up. We sacked ours a lot. Be in sacks a foot and half long, and say an inch and a half thick, and three inches across, something that way. Mama would sew up a sack to sack them in. You'd poke them—that meat sausage down in that, let that hang up. You've already got that seasoned, now, before you do all this. And, uh, you'd, uh, when you was cooking, now where you were making these, uh, sausage up there, putting all this, and working it up in there, you'd fry you some, to see till you'd get your taste to suit you. You'd put a little sage in it if you liked sage, you'd put your black pepper, your red pepper for your hot, whatever—if you wanted garlic, I guess, I don't know if they put garlic in it or not. (laughs)

WSP: Would you use only the meat, or would you include some of the byproducts, the other organs—and grind them up—

JDB: To make sausage? Yeah. Yeah, most of what—what we, uh—well, I know—I don't know how they saved, what, how they saved it out of there. Sausage wouldn't have been as good a grade as, uh—sometime they might want to go ahead and put a ham in there, go ahead and grind up ham in your sausage. But that's your better meat of ham, we know that—well, uh, middlings was going to be saved out, but you'd use some of that middling, too.

WSP: What's the middling?

JDB: It's your middle part of your beef, in here. What is—bacon. Bacon. Your middlings is bacon.

WSP: You're grinding up what would be bacon, these days, and putting it in the sausage.

JDB: Well, no—well, maybe a little bit of it. But the way they've got it now sausage are made whole hog sausage. They grind that whole hog sausage—the whole hog up in sausage now. I mean ham, middlings, and shoulder and all. Then they didn't do it that way. You'd save that ham out for your hams. You'd save your—maybe, a lot of your shoulder might go in sausage 'cause you didn't like your shoulders as well, uh, see, as the ham—shoulder most likely, no ham. I don't know as I ever remember any of us at home putting any ham in there, 'cause it was too good a grade of meat. Your sausage—your shoulder would go in, maybe some of that for sausage, and a little of the other—your trimmings off of a whole lot of it there you'd throw in, uh, in your sausage.

WSP: Okay, as you cut through the pig to acquire your best pieces of meat, you cut off pieces of meat that aren't quite the best, not what you want. Where are you tossing these pieces?

JDB: Yeah, in the sausage.

WSP: In a pan or something?

JDB: Yeah, a pan for sausage. And then you've got certain parts in there that's going to go into your lard. See, the fat, the fat of that stuff, you peel, you get that fat out. That's what you make your hog lard out of. Yeah, scraping the fat, the sausage over here—yeah—

WSP: The less agreeable cuts of meat in one place, and they're going to be ground up into the sausage. Would you use any of the internal organs?

JDB: No, no. No, some people used guts to stuff them with, we never did. We never did that. We never did do that, you know. They've got sausage made out of the intestines, and I don't know what. I mean, they may do it nowadays, but we never did at home. We put them in a cloth sack. Mama made them, and put them in there. Yeah, a foot and a half—

WSP: Salami size sack?

JDB: Well, yeah, a little, a little—you didn't want to get them too thick 'cause the curing—you made them sort of—this sack was made three inches by one and a half thick.

WSP: Three inches long by one and a half inches thick?

JDB: Yes, an inch, inch and a half.

WSP: Then you'd twist them and string them?

JDB: No, no, you'd just, they just poke down that sack, you'd just sort of pat that sack out a little flat-like and it would just be a little old—laying like that and about so long. (gesture) Then when you get ready to eat them you just start cutting off the bottom of that, you know, slice it off. And you peel your cloth off of it. Right up. Good sausage! (both laugh)

Ate it every day. (laughs)

WSP: Were there any other parts of the hog that you would eat?

JDB: Oh, done something with the head of it, I don't know—well, I mean, they've known people eating some of the brain, but I never did want it myself, never did sound good to me. Then there's pig feet. There's someway you pickle your feet. Now I don't know nothing about that, I don't know, I don't remember us ever pickling the feet.

WSP: Just your prime meat products?

JDB: Yeah. Yeah, and maybe they'd just—wherever you could trim this stuff off is where you get them sausage, or other, but you don't—I don't remember us pickling feet. We could have, I don't remember it though.

WSP: Or the head?

JDB: Well, trim it off, and I bet you could, I guess, uh—I'll say, I remember my daddy eating the brain, and—but uh, you cook that with egg. Hog's brain—you'd someway or another, I remember him eating some of it, and, uh—they saved some of that at times, I don't know whether they saved it all or not. And you'd have, just small amount of that, now—you're talking about something very small. And, uh, they'd, uh—you fixed it with, with egg. And uh—

WSP: I suspect hog's brain was something that needed to be fresh. Could you keep that, too?

JDB: No, no, you would not keep that, no, no way in the world, you cooked that then. (laughs) In fact, in fact, your liver would come out of there, you just don't keep that. This is where your neighbor comes in when you kill a hog. When your neighbor comes, you give your neighbor some of this other, tenderloin and stuff that—back, down the back, the strip down there—and uh, fresh, uh, well, ribs, the ribs that come off the back area there, in there. Well, okay, you, you always share that with your neighbor, you know?

WSP: You give him part of the liver?

JDB: Well, yeah! Part of the liver, and whatever. You're killing a hog, you bet.

WSP: How long would it take to process a hog?

JDB: Oh, I don't know. I imagine you start—we raised pretty good-sized hogs then, most of the time, getting on up towards four hundred pounds, in that area, around four hundred pounds.

Well, when you started out in the pretty early morning there, after sunup a little bit. Well, time you

went through the whole thing you had spent a day. By the time you'd went through with grinding the sausage, oh, yeah. You take scraping one, it's so long to scrape the hair off of it, and then so much you hang it up, and you've got to wash it out, uh, gut it and wash it. And then you get it down and get it all the, you know—time you get it cut up you've done a lot there.

Then you grind the sausage. You've got to cook your lard. You've got to put this lard in a wash pot, build a fire under it and let it heat, see, to get that—you know, and then you come out with your cracklings, you know? So cracklings—some people keep cracklings and make crackling *bread* out of it.

WSP: What are cracklings?

JDB: It's uh, the what the pieces of meat that's got the fat in them that you've cooked this lard out of. You have saved out of that. You squeeze that, and it'll be just as greasy looking, and you know, you pull it up—you've got a little basket you—you dip that up with, you know, and let your liquid stay in there, see. And you'd see that, that bit dripping. You could mash that, and you could mash—I've seen them hold it over the side of the pot and take some and put it in a rag, even, a cloth, and mash it to get all they could out of that, you know. Get all the juice out of it, liquid out of it. Yeah. And that's come out with your cracklings there, and some people used—they made what's called crackling bread. I don't know whether we ever done that at home, or not.

WSP: Little bits of meat?

JDB: Little old bitty pieces, just odds and ends shaped like that of meat, cooked meat, 'course they made—got the lard off of, and then, throwed it away. See. Now these, these cooks can tell you more about that. (laughs) I just know that was done, and that's about it.

WSP: What part of this whole hog-killing process were you the most involved?

JDB: Myself? Scraping. And hanging it. And my daddy always done the other. I imagine he used the, the main butcher in the cutting up of it and then, then I was just the helper around there—go get this or do that, get, you know, whatever, a lot of little things. I didn't, uh, handle the knifes, I wasn't none of that part of it myself. And my mother, and my daddy most in all that, but cutting up, quartering the meat, you know, the hindquarters and all, he done all of that.

And I've helped grind sausage. Now that had to be run with, grind sausage—an old hand sausage grinder and well, I had to do that and other things.

WSP: They would allow you to do particular parts of the operation. About what age were you at that time?

JDB: Well, uh, time I was, I guess, I was seven or eight years old, on up till 1942—well, I was twenty-one in '42 wasn't I? I was born in 1921.

WSP: Did you sense that your father was training you?

JDB: No, not in particular of that, I don't think. I guess you, you just sort of worked if you wanted to. He didn't say, "Son, look here, this is the way you do that." Now there wasn't none of that. "I'm going to show you how to do this." I don't remember that part, none of that like that. But you could stand and watch for certain, and you'd be right there if you were needed to go get this or go get that, or whatever, you know. But mainly, they would tell you when killing they were—my daddy and mother that normally done—we done a lot of carrying of the things, like I say, turning the sausage mill, and—

WSP: What were your sisters doing?

JDB: About—well, along the same thing, I guess. Maybe wouldn't be one of them there, or something, or maybe not. I believe I had maybe more to do in that—I know the outside part I did. Yeah. Our water, we didn't have no inside water, see? The water had to be brought in a bucket to, in the house, and our outdoor facility was outdoors. And you used the bathroom you'd go to a little out-potty or the bush. (laughs) That's it.

WSP: How far away was the well?

JDB: Oh, the well was in the front yard.

WSP: So it wasn't a long hike?

JDB: No, no, no. No, our well was right there by the house, right close to the house, a few steps, oh, twelve or fifteen foot. The rain cistern was adjoined to the house. For that type water. Our water was handy all right, but you had, you know, no way of getting it—and then, uh, then, oh, we had, of course, water for our livestock in our stock tanks. And we had a spring run out of the side of the mountain over there. Now we didn't—we wouldn't use that at the house, we used the well water.

WSP: That was on the home place? Did you also have water in the Brown's Creek area?

JDB: Yeah. Uh-huh. About, about the same way, only—there was a mill over there, and the mill, it quit. We didn't use it enough to, uh, uh, I guess, to fix it or something, for we had that creek running through, Brown's Creek run there for cattle water. But now sometime that would dry up to where we would—we carried our cows to the Cowhouse and left them. We had property, my—my grandmother had property on the Cowhouse over there. We'd carry them down on that place. My daddy was sort of in charge of that place anyway for her.

WSP: How big was your grandmother's place?

JDB: Yeah.

WSP: Which grandmother?

JDB: Almira her husband was Billy Bay. He died out in about '27, I think, Grandpa Bay did, and Grandma didn't die till up in the 1940s.

They had a hole they called Bay Hole, this is after my, my granddaddy. It's in the army camp still goes by that name. I don't reckon everybody knows it. I mean, from time, you know, when that was old Bay place, other there, what they called Bay Hole. It was a long, long hole water. Well, that—we'd carry cattle down there, and if we had a few dry years, we'd have to drive—we'd leave home with them, what we couldn't handle at home, home, uh, there, we'd drive them down there, put them on that property. And just drive, I mean, drive 'em down there by horse.

WSP: About how many miles?

JDB: Oh, about four, I imagine, four, about four miles.

WSP: Would you run all forty or fifty head of cattle down there?

JDB: Practically all, not all. But we'd keep some at home, a little bit, but then, we'd keep what we couldn't handle with the water we had, the amount of water we had drawn out of the ground. You would limit to the amount. That was what at home, too. We had one on this branch down there, at Wolf Branch, went through our home place. We had, uh, a well down there we could water cattle out of, just a hand-dug well, but it had a good, good vein in there and put out a lot of water. Well, we could water, you know, like six or seven head there plenty easy enough on the home place, you

know, for our milk and maybe one, or two, three more, something. And then Brown's Creek place over there, we'd have a, uh, you know we'd water, keep a few there to water, keep just a few. We had a well over there we could draw out by hand, too. That was hand-drawn, when everything else went out, that's where you went to.

WSP: But are you talking about a windmill, though?

JDB: No, no, they'd—I'm talking about there, a hand—we had to pull it out of there by well bucket. By bucket, yeah, bucket.

WSP: Not even a hand pump?

JDB: No, it didn't have no pump on that. I'm talking about drawing it out of there by rope and bucket. (laughs)

WSP: Was the unit in front of your house a hand-pump unit?

JDB: It's a—it's a—you drawed it out by a long, well bucket. Oh, the thing was, I don't know, four or five foot long, and about like six inch diameter. Draw it out, and then you dump it over in your container. Goes faster than you think, pulling that much water with a pulley. You know, throw it over a pulley and you let that down, it goes down deep! Deep well, this was deep, I guess, called deep, I don't know, two fifty, or maybe, two, two hundred—

WSP: This is the one in front of your house?

JDB: Yeah, by the house, by the house, I'm talking about.

WSP: That's a bucket arrangement as well?

JDB: Yeah.

WSP: Did you have any pumps?

JDB: No, we didn't have no pumps there at home at all.

WSP: Did you know people that did?

JDB: Well, uh, there's not many of 'em around there. Not nobody had none pumped in the house. Some had, a few had windmills around, you know, but it'd just depend, you know. A lot of times the windmill, say, you didn't get no wind, you didn't, you would run out of storage. And, uh, uh, maybe that's what happened over there at the other place, I don't know. That one quit, I don't remember why it didn't get fixed. But we never did use that well no more, we just stopped using a well.

WSP: At Brown's Creek?

JDB: Brown's Creek, yeah.

WSP: You either pulled water out of the creek or—

JDB: Then, well, when the water run out of the creek we had to draw by hand, I, I mean, out of a hand-dug well. We drawed it—that was just with a *little* bucket, now. This is a bucket like a, oh, two-and-a-half- or a three-gallon bucket. You know there. That's different from drawing out of them hand-dug wells.

Now these wells, these wells, that, uh, deep wells, you've got a long bucket on *them*. I mean, they call them a well bucket, too. You've seen them, I'm sure—some will be real long. I've seen them

as—oh, six foot long.

WSP: Would someone drill these narrow shafts with a drill, or what?

JDB: Oh, yeah, holes like that, they'd be cased. They would case them down, you know, keep them from caving in, you know. You bet, casing.

WSP: How deep was a deep well?

JDB: Oh, two, 250 feet. You'd drop it down there, go down that thing, hit the water and sometimes, depend on the water level, that stuff might not be 100 foot down there to it, and then sometimes, it might be 150 foot. You might have a 250-foot well but you might not being drawing water over 100 foot out of it. You know, of course, that's enough to get your water. And then you—them things, they, they pretty good wells. We had a lot more water in them days than you've got now in the vein out here.

WSP: They've pulled a lot out?

JDB: Pulled a lot out. Yep.

WSP: In a two-hundred-foot well, only a hundred feet of it would be full of water?

JDB: Maybe so, maybe so, yeah. Yeah. Maybe, that's why you'd have to have so much room, you didn't want to draw it—you always wanted your well to be deeper than your veins, I mean to go down below.

WSP: The well shaft would store it?

JDB: Yeah, store it, I guess. There was a lot of work around there, I'll tell you what. There was plenty to do. (laughs)

And of course, you think you want your bath, you taken it in a tub. And pour your water over in there, heat it up a little bit. In the wintertime, you had (laughs) sure—had a teakettle.

WSP: What room was the bathing room?

JDB: Well, back mainly on the porch, on the back, uh, was where we done most of the bathing out there. If you could shut it off there, it had a let-down—yeah, that that, uh—yeah, that was the main, main, mainly, I guess, main—I've taken more out there myself. But, it is, it is, uh, well, we used it for sleeping out there, too. See, it was a screened-in porch. And where that kept the flies away from you, you know. (laughs) Well, it had uh—you know, wind could blow in there some, you know, keep a little bit, a little bit better out there. In the summertime I was talking about, the breeze in there. In the wintertime we got some shutters on it if you wanted to let the shutters down, let the—deal raise them up come down on it.

WSP: We've talked about the crops, the animals, and the chores. What did you do for social activities?

JDB: Well, they had—in our community we lived in, uh, we had, 'course, the school there, and, uh, they had things going on at schools there. They had, they, they plays that the people right out of the schools, you know, the actors come right out schools, you know, and they put on school programs, and uh—you know, they done that.

And, uh, then we had, uh—oh, like the end of school, uh, picnics, we had a barbecue, a big barbecue. They'd, uh, donate the beef, and they'd had these, uh, holes dug in the ground to put the wood in, the pans up on top, pan barbecue. What we called pan barbecue, cooked in a big old pan. And then, uh—they'd have, uh, dinner there the next day. The women would bring the—all the trimmings, you know, the, whatever went with all the meat, the cakes and pies, the beans and the pickles, the onions and everything.

WSP: Would they cook the meat the day before?

JDB: Yeah, cook it the night, you'd start in the afternoon before and cook all night. (odd sound on tape) They'd cook all night until next morning, and then they'd be ready to serve by noon that day. They'd have these, uh, they be the school, ending-of-school day. They'd always have, nearly every school around there. There were several of those schools out there, see, and that's when the schools were all around.

WSP: What school did you attend?

JDB: Maple! There, and then I went to Gatesville afterwards, of course. Maple had nine grades. We had—I don't know, I guess this is all in that thing. I've got, uh, the pictures in there of a—the old school my folks went to school, my daddy, Boaz.

WSP: Boaz School. But you went to Maple School.

JDB: Maple, yeah. Maple if I remember right, Maple School was built along around '24, in '24, I guess. I think it was built just before we got into that community ourself. I believe, I think my daddy was a trustee from the time he got there until it closed out. One way or the other he had something to do with it—they'd put him back in that school, the board, or somehow—the president of it, or had been at times, I know, or just a board member or whatever. He was with it all the time. All that time—

WSP: How many students were at that school?

JDB: Oh, I couldn't tell you that. (laughs) Well, you take nine grades, and not know, uh, the school there, let's see—that thing didn't have but four rooms. Well, one of the rooms in it had a partition in it and you could, you could take this sliding doors out—you could take them out and stack them up over here. That made a big room where you could have a stage show.

You know, people coming to the end-of-school and all of this stuff, well, you know, for this graduation and all that, that would give them more room done, you know. Made two rooms together there. That would be like two rooms, and, uh, then they had two more rooms. It was four rooms and a hall, was all that school had in it.

WSP: Are we talking about fifty students? Or a couple of hundred?

JDB: Oh, no, no, no, we'd be looking at more than that. See, I don't know, I'd say, I'd say eighty, seventy-five, eighty, seventy-five, eighty. Oh, I don't know, that may not be. I may be off on that, I don't know. That'd be—yeah, I, I, I'd that's what my guess around about seventy-five, eighty. Our school in there—and some of these other schools like over at Brown's Creek, Harmony, they cut them down on grades, and they went to our schools there. That's what held it up, they made you have so much attendance there before you could have so many higher grades, you know? At one time Maple there was a ten grade, and I guess there wasn't enough going and they cut it back one and left nine. When the army camp come in there and got it, it just had nine. See, in them years, it was just eleven grades, and you finished high school, too. You know, eleven, eleven grades and you was out of high school. Well, you had ten, you had to go my—

Well, my oldest brother and my oldest sister, and my other sister, uh, let's see—my oldest brother went to Killeen, my sister next to him went to Gatesville to finish high school, and my sister just older than me she went to Killeen. I believe Vertis just finished, uh, tenth grade there, was all he went there. He went somewhere else or something. Then my other sister went to Gatesville with me.

WSP: You and your sister went to Gatesville?

JDB: Youngest sister, yeah. My oldest sister and the rest of them all went to Killeen.

WSP: Why did you go to Gatesville?

JDB: Well, we had, uh—when, when me and my youngest sister went there, we got a bus that transported us there. But like my older brother and my oldest sister, and the next to her, there wasn't no transportation. They had to live over there!

The weekend. They'd come home and spend the weekend, then go back to school.

WSP: Your brother and sister lived with some family in Killeen? Would your family pay this other family for room and board? Or was this a neighborly thing?

JDB: I don't know. Maybe. Maybe they paid them, maybe a little bit. I don't know, I don't know what—

WSP: It was like they went to boarding school.

JDB: Well, that's what it was. You'd go—I'm sure they gave them some out of it. I, uh, I don't—can't remember much about my older brother. See, he was born in 1909, he's quite a bit of difference in there. He was gone by the time I was up to, you know, paying any attention to anything. He was done already off to college. He just like not even being at home, actually. And then, uh, my sister next to him, well, well, and she went to Gatesville. I can remember her going to Gatesville High School. Now we had, uh, on my daddy's side some kinfolks that she stayed with up there. She paid them a little, I'm sure. And—but my daddy—not every weekend he could get her, uh, 'cause it rained so much then—the Leon River was between us and Gatesville, and it'd get out, and you couldn't get up there to get her. I remember that. And then she'd have to stay up there, you know, and it might be two weeks before you'd see her, and it might have went longer sometime. I don't know, could have went as high as three, you know. (laughs) But how schools ended, didn't used to be as long as they are now. That's another thing, they had school finish quicker. But—and then, uh, well—well, when me and my youngest sister, see, then—but what the others, now, had to go and stay somewhere to go, and we got to ride the bus to and from Gatesville. It was eighteen miles from our house.

WSP: That was a long trip.

JDB: Yeah, and them old dirt, muddy roads—and they'd cut down and make ruts, and that bus would get in them ruts, when time—boy, they'd go down through there trying to make all the time you could, you know, and stay safe all right. But, you know, and get, get there, you know but—and that thing would be a whipping, you know, following those ruts, you couldn't get out, you know. (laughs) The places you couldn't get out of—(laughs) yeah, you'd be give out just riding that darn thing! (laughs) Whoo!

WSP: Let's go back to your grade school days at Maple School. What do you remember about your school, or your teachers, or the classes?

JDB: Well, I don't know, of anything just a—just school, is all I know. At, uh—you just had to go to school and study, and this stuff—and then go home and study every night by that old kerosene lamp. It wasn't much going on, not too much, not during *that*. It's mainly—every once in a while you'd have Halloween parties, uh, you know, and things, you know, like that a little bit, but—and, uh, besides these schools, end of school, I'm talking about—they'd have a few other things. They'd have a few school plays, just a few. But there wasn't much, too much taking place there. Tell you what, it was just—well, they'd have in the community they'd be a party, occasionally, a little get-together. Yeah, in the Maple community. Later on that's what it went by Maple, Maple community. Yeah. It was a community that just, just didn't have no dances.

WSP: No dances?

JDB: No, it just didn't. They was long—it was right before, not long we moved out of there that I knew of the first dance or so that happened in that community. Most of them were just little—what playing little ring games at a party—do you know what I mean by a ring game? They'd go around in a circle holding hands. I don't know if they had a little thing they sang. (laughs) I don't remember what none of them was, but, you know, and just things like that. It was a type of dancing, all right, but they just held hands and went around in a circle as a group, yeah. It was different from—you know, as I say, they didn't have no dances over there in that community.

WSP: Not couples dancing together?

JDB: Not couples dancing together. That's right, that's right. On later, just before, I remember a couple of times up there they had, maybe three or four times, uh, later part that they did begin, at one party in there held what we did call a country dance. The others was more or less, uh, just be boys and girls go there. Grown people certainly would be there to see about everything was right, supposedly. And, uh, they'd uh—now, this wasn't music, it was—they'd just sing themselves, go around, whatever it was. I can't remember.

WSP: No musicians?

JDB: No, not that. Dances, of course, you know, always had a band, a two-piece band—(laughs) big band. And, uh, might not have that, might have just had a French harp, a jew's-harp or a harmonica, I think you call it, for some of the dances. (laughs) I remember that one over there, one time, one time, an old boy had just a harmonica, and they was dancing. Well, if you've got no entertainment, you make entertainment out of a lot of things, you know?

WSP: What about a radio? You had radios at that time, am I right?

JDB: Well, yes, some around, but I don't remember ever, ever—well, they just didn't use a radio at uh, at the parties, at the ring games, whatever you call it. They just didn't use music, I don't reckon.

WSP: They would sing songs and dance around?

JDB: Yeah. Yeah, I can't even remember. I bet my wife could, but I can't remember none of them now. (laughs)

WSP: Did they have refreshments?

JDB: Oh, maybe a little bit, yeah. Yeah, a little something, you know. Might have, oh, uh, something like Kool-Aid or something that way, and, uh, cookies, or, you know—

WSP: How long would this dance last?

JDB: Oh, they might go on until twelve o'clock. That's late! (laughs) Yeah, twelve o'clock—eleven or twelve o'clock. Now they wouldn't have them during the week. This would be a Friday or Saturday night deal, certainly not on Sunday! We had a good church community. Sure did!

WSP: Tell me about the church community.

JDB: Well, we just had *wonderful* community of church. Sure did.

WSP: Which church did you attend?

JDB: The Baptist church, New Hope, New Hope Baptist Church. (laughs) Yeah, New Hope Baptist Church. And, uh, they had, uh—it was over there, that's close to the Cowhouse, back where my grandma and grandpa's place was at. They had a church at Eliga, a Church of Christ. Had what they called Eliga on the Hill. I don't remember, uh, actually what type of church that was. Then they had a church at

Brown's Creek, and they had these meetings every year, oh, you know, week or two-week meetings.

WSP: Camp revivals?

JDB: Yeah, revivals. And, uh, uh, we made them about all, I reckon, uh—you know, it wasn't just our church—'cause we was Baptists, we didn't mind going to the Church of Christ or anything else—we'd go to—you know.

WSP: If the other churches had a revival, you'd go to them, too?

JDB: Yeah. You bet, we went to that one. We'd never missed that one over at Eliga over there, uh, Church of Christ over there. We'd never miss it. And Eliga on the Hill, we'd go up there to that thing. All these, mainly, the biggest part of it was held at night. Now the, the revivals, some of them were held in the day, but you'd always go at night. You might miss some day service, but you'd always make that night service. That was during working time, that was working, summer, the crops were going—

WSP: Was this on the weekend?

JDB: Oh, yeah, that's when it always ended up, on the weekend. Yeah, they did, people did. I don't know what the city had, uh—how to say that but—they just nearly all, everybody seemed like went to church over Sunday. They just seemed like the biggest part of them went, went to church over—

WSP: Is this where you'd meet people, talk, and trade stories?

JDB: Well, yeah. Well, no, not much, you'd just had the pastor of the church, or—most times they'd bring some other preacher in there to preach at this revival—you know, from some other, some other church, you know somewhere or other, just somebody different, I guess. I know at, uh, you know. I'll tell you, outside we having our churches and our little parties we had, and a few school things we had, or what else—I mean, there wasn't much going on. I mean, we, that, you'd neighbors would visit, that happened.

WSP: Neighbors come over—

JDB: Oh, yeah, come over at night and visit, you know, back and forth, at different, you know, done that. I know, I'll tell you what, I think we got our first radio—and I just barely remember it—in '25. That's the year "Grand Ole Opry" came on, And that was the one I said something about a while ago, that had all these batteries to the thing. It was long and had a lot to it, and you had I bet you a dozen knobs on that thing to turn to tune in that thing. That thing would squeal, and this—it had an old *high* antenna outside. People would come there to our house on Saturday night. They made us kids get outside or be quiet 'cause—so they could hear that music from the "Grand Ole Opry." (laughs) That could have been, I'm talking about—may have been '26, I don't know. But, "Grand Ole Opry" I think went on, I believe we got the radio maybe the same, that same year, or if it wasn't, it was the next year.

And they would. They'd come there and set around, and you'd see them—I can still remember the old men sitting there patting their foot. (laughs) But you kept quiet. You didn't no hollering or playing around there as kids—if we'd get the neighbor kids over there we went outside and played out there, and didn't make no racket.

'Cause you couldn't hear them old radios back then. They'd fade away so you wasn't getting that signal. It'd just fade out. We had an old high antenna out there, the thing was up, oh, higher than, uh—high as this house here at least. And, uh, and, uh, on two poles out there and had old long wires that would go down, and went into the antennae, you know, off of that, and that's where you were getting, getting everything brought into your set on.

WSP: Seems very complicated.

JDB: Very complicated! Yeah, I can still remember that thing. You'd hear it just squeal, you know, 'cause of the static, a lot of static grinding on it. (laughs) You had a lot of knobs up there (laughs) to do anything with it.

WSP: When you got a better radio, did you still have these neighborhood parties, with people coming over—

JDB: Well, they weren't coming there partying, I mean they just come there to listen to the music, that's all.

WSP: Did they continue to come after they had their own radios?

JDB: Well, no, no, later on, time we got our other one, no, time we got the next one, I don't remember nobody coming there. This radio then, we listened to the "Grand Ole Opry" some, and this, later one now, we had, but, uh, during the day mainly we listened to news. But far as turning that thing on in the afternoon, or something, out here, I don't remember just playing it in the afternoon. Most times there wasn't anybody there anyway. But maybe in bad weather they would. But, uh, in the evening, then, there was uh, a few little old shows, uh, uh, programs come on there, you know, that, uh, like "Amos and Andy" that come on there, and they, and my daddy liked to listen to that. His mother stayed there with us some and, uh, she liked to listen to that. I can remember them laughing and getting the biggest kick out of the little tales they'd tell, you know, on this thing. And so we listened to that. That come on, I guess, about five nights a week, you know. We didn't listen to the radio that much, I mean, you kept that thing off because you had a battery and you were going to run that battery down even if you didn't keep it off anyway.

WSP: Were you using a car battery?

JDB: A regular car battery on it, yes.

WSP: So you'd have to buy a new car battery?

JDB: Go get it charged. Carry it to town, get it charged. Yeah. No way to charge anything there. I don't remember but one wind charger being in the community around there—I remember one wind charger, but it broke—and that belonged to my aunt and uncle. I remember that it quit working, you know—wind blowing would put out the charge. But, uh, yes, you'd carry it to Killeen to get it charged. Or you could do another thing, you could, uh, uh, swap it to your car, you wanted to go to that trouble and run it on the car, and charge it up, you know, like that. That was all we had going on. I don't remember what radio we had when we left there. Before we left there in '42, but that same, I was in the service in 1942, the same year.

WSP: You said your community had a good community life. Do you want to talk about that for a minute?

JDB: Oh, yeah, people were good to help the neighbors. That's uh—if a man was sick over here, he had hard luck with his family—of course, these were all mainly farmers out there—the neighbors would take their equipment and go over and farm his land for him, you know? They didn't let him go without a crop or making a crop. If it had to be gathered, they'd gather it, the whole thing. Anybody down on their luck, I'd call it sickness mainly, you went and helped that person out. Sure enough. Or anybody was sick otherwise, they'd, somebody would go sit up with them, and I mean all night and all day.

WSP: Do you remember your mother doing that?

JDB: Yes, very definitely.

WSP: Would your parents send you to do errands for neighbors that needed help?

JDB: Well, I'm sure I have, maybe a little bit, but not—I don't know about that much. Of course it wasn't much, uh, you know, that way, I don't know—

WSP: Mainly your parents were the ones helping out.

JDB: Yeah, mainly, through from uh, sickness I guess, or helping somebody. If we helped somebody with cattle or something that way I would, now that a little bit, but not much of that even.

WSP: What *would* you be doing in that case?

JDB: Oh, well, maybe helping them, like I was talking about, doctoring them or something for worms, castrating and things of that sort.

WSP: Was castrating another chore you had to do with cattle?

JDB: Yeah, I left that out a while ago, yeah, that was always—need a little bull calf, well, you made steers out of them when they were real small. (laughs)

WSP: Did you do that yourself?

JDB: Done some of that myself. Now that chore's my daddy—they'd teach you. He taught me things that way. Oh, yeah.

WSP: Castrating was one of the things he actually taught you?

JDB: Oh, yeah, no, he taught me a lot of things. But when we were talking about the hog killing, I don't know he ever pointed out much of that. (laughs) I wouldn't know how to do one anyway—

No. Yeah, yeah, he showed me how to do that when I was maybe, oh, fourteen or fifteen years old, something like that, you know. Well, I could, I could go to pasture then, and uh, handle about most anything. You know, as long as it wasn't something too rank for me, but I mean, oh, a lot of small things, You'd be around these calves, things like that—you'd be around these over with the other ones, you'd get them over there in a herd, you know, and mess around with there. You could just walk around and grab them calves a lot of times, just grab them, you know. If let them by their mamas there, and you could just walk around and grab it. You didn't never have to rope them. Much of that, you'd save lots, it would just be easy, "Be easy, work them easy." You just kept gentle cattle.

WSP: You could castrate a little calf with the mother standing right near by?

JDB: Oh, yeah. Yeah, sure, yes. You bet.

WSP: Was there a concern about bleeding out, or infection or something?

JDB: Well, then there was. (laughs) Well, flies, yeah, you bet! They'd get back to you, the flies. Yeah, you'd have to go back and keep checking that calf until that healed up. You bet. And sometime, it'd get—you, you wouldn't keep it smeared over with that smear, whatever we called it, smear something—I want to say Sixty-Six or something, but I don't know whether that's right or not. Seems like to me it was Smear Sixty-Six they called that stuff. (laughs)

But, uh, it's an old salve-looking, and old thing, it went on that and it just stayed on there. Well, you'd have to go back and do that and keep them flies off that till it'd heal. That little old thing could go up, I mean, you know, yeah, all that. You know a lot things, you—the teacher of these things, and by that way you just go out there, and—nobody's not having to tell you much or anything about it—you're just watching, you're doing it, and you see it done by somebody else, you follow that pattern. It's—you know. And whatever it's—now something like, uh, castrating there, that's, that's a little, for that you gotta, you don't want to bungle it up.

WSP: But your father *did* spend time showing you how to grab it and how to cut it?

JDB: Yeah, so much of the bag you cut off, you know, and pull the little nuts out and you know, you'd peel them back and feel them, you know, how to do that.

WSP: Are you cutting the whole bag off?

JDB: Cutting the tip end of it off. See, it's like this, you cut down here and you cut and when the bag drops this far, then you cut about like that off and you pull them out—

WSP: You pull the nuts out—

JDB: The two in there you cut, yeah—

WSP: And then you cut them off?

JDB: Cut the cord, yeah, and then that little bag you cut off the end of it, I've tried it. I castrated one twice one time. What it was, we went back over there and we caught the calf, and uh—I was doing the job and I said, "Well, I can't find them." A lot of times you had to mash them in the flank right here a little bit, pull their leg around or something, you'd make them little, the nuts drop down, in other words, come on out—

WSP: The nuts hadn't dropped down yet?

JDB: No, they was already—what we done, Daddy said, I said, "Well, I can't find them." He said, "Oh, something, you're not doing something right." And, uh, "Yeah, I am," or something, you know. But he said, "Well, let me see," you know? And what we done, we were trying to castrate that little calf twice. (laughs) We'd got him one time, see, and he'd growed a little. You can't—it's hard to keep up with this all in your mind, it just—keeping up with them with what's in your head. (laughs) So, yeah, that's what, that's what we'd done, yeah. You could do that. We should have felt and tried to work with it, but you think of it, you make mistakes in any of it—anything you're doing, you know? That's what it come out, we'd done already castrated that little bugger once and so there wasn't nothing there to take out anymore. (laughs) Yeah, I remember that.

WSP: I don't figure that calf was too pleased with you coming round a second time. (laughs)

JDB: Yeah, well I don't guess—

WSP: Did you have to de-horn any of the calves?

JDB: We didn't, uh, we didn't. Some, we didn't fool with that much. We just done it with a saw, uh, mainly. I never did—even later on, I had some de-horning nips, and things there once, but what we done, we just taken a saw and sawed them off. I don't know, our bulls—now we had, uh—

They kept weights on them things in someway or another to keep them horns doing right, you know. They'd put weights out on the tip of them. You wanted the horns left on that bull, we did all the time—they just—bull just wasn't a bull without he had horns, I guess. (laughs) I don't know what else, you know. There's nothing wrong—I mean, they ought to be all de-horned, I mean, 'cause—'course, nowadays it's all different, you put stuff on them, let them horns right off, you know, just a liquid, you know. Yeah.

WSP: But you would put some kind of weight on the end of the bull's horns?

JDB: Yes, shape, shape them. We'd get them—you buy these—we didn't always keep registered bulls, and uh—we'd keep one back, growing, coming up, a small one. We'd buy them, uh, young and let the thing grow up there, and uh—then, uh, that's the one you'd keep the weight on, to tip their horns. I

don't know, I guess they had so much—I don't know what difference—I always wondered about it. I remember seeing these weights and they'd put them on there.

WSP: What direction were you hoping the horns would grow?

JDB: Oh, sort of give them a curve, you know, around, a certain amount of curve.

WSP: So they wouldn't be spiking outward?

JDB: Well, maybe out and down a little bit, maybe, too much, you know. Yeah, I never, never did fool with that, I just, I've seen them, Daddy do that, keeping them weights. I knew he'd done that, you know. There are—people take pride in their animals, you know? Do too nowadays, you know, I guess. They should anyway.

WSP: Did the community have any farm or cattle shows, or anything of that nature you can recall?

JDB: I don't even remember any farm shows, or—we had, uh, outside of going to school, I mean, and that, you know. I had a project one time I was going to school there at Gatesville, and uh, uh—my first one in school, going to ag school was, uh, I raised a Chester White hog. I got her bred and then she had little ones, eight of them I believe it was. That was—it rained that night, and it was freezing. I remember I was down there, I went out there—and it was just an outside pen, and I had brush piled over there, over the back of this thing for protection then, you know.

At the—I never did, uh, I don't think I ever did show them. I just went ahead, and I never did show them. It was unhandy, you know, being out. You couldn't hardly work it—at that time, as far as the way we was getting there, you couldn't hardly do that and go to school—you could take what they had there but you couldn't—it was hard to show your stock.

WSP: More problems than it was worth transporting your stock to a show?

JDB: Things like that. Yeah, yeah, You could hit a hard place, you just couldn't hardly—oh, I don't know. it, uh—I used to go to some of them, I'd go to Dallas to the fat stock show, you know, that they had up there. They'd carry us up there by bus.

WSP: The school would carry you to Dallas?

JDB: The Gatesville school did, not the Maple School. The Maple School didn't have no busses. Well, we had one there, too, an individual owned it, and he'd charge so much a student to haul them to our school. Just a guy that lived in the community, and he had an old, uh, van thing of some kind he'd convert, put the seats down inside of it. He'd go back to Harmony and Brown's Creek community and transport them over there to school. They paid, so much a ride, I guess, or the school paid for it, I don't know how they paid him. But they paid him anyway, so much—I don't know who paid, I guess the school, it come out of school money.

WSP: When you were in high school your last two years in Gatesville, they would take you to Dallas to the stock show?

JDB: Yeah, yeah. Yes, sure did.

WSP: What did you learn when you went up there?

JDB: Well, we just seen—I don't know, not much of anything I don't reckon. Maybe, mainly we was going up there for was, uh, just to see the prize, the good stock that come out of this. That's what you was going to look at.

WSP: Was this the state fair?

JDB: I guess, it'd be the state fair I guess. I guess that's what it was.

WSP: Would have been in October.

JDB: Yeah, it would have been in the fall. Yeah, yeah, I remember going up there to that thing a couple of times. Uh, yeah, they always had a big to-do up there, you know, a big old carnival and things going on around there and something.

And then they had these, boy, livestock in there, you'd never seen the likes of them! They had there pens here, and then the owners of them would be up over them in a deal up here, you know, they had a bunk up here, a little pallet, or bedroll I guess you'd call it. He'd be a sleeping up above them.

WSP: A bunk above the pen where his livestock was?

JDB: Yeah, their hogs or whatever. Some of them had it, but I guess—I don't know whether all of them did or not, some of them had it that way. Some of them had it that way, yeah. Yeah, it was a big old place, or it seemed awful big to me. Maybe it wasn't all that big then, you know, a country boy going to town, anyway, it just seemed awful big. Yeah, it was nice in there, I mean, a lot of hogs and sheep, everything you could think of that could walk I guess.

WSP: Would these shows also showcase the latest farm equipment?

JDB: Well, that up there, that's, I don't remember us seeing any farm equipment up there at that thing at all. Livestock is what—

WSP: Did your dad go up there?

JDB: No. No.

WSP: Just you and the other kids—

JDB: Just the kids, just us and the bus driver and our ag. teacher.

WSP: Did you come back and tell your dad what you saw?

JDB: Well, yes, I suppose, I imagine, I guess I did, some, yeah. Yeah. Of course these things they had up there was a different type of cattle. We had range cattle, and these cattle, well—we didn't feed cattle over there then, like that. I don't know. We didn't put them up, stand them up and feed them. They were range cattle. It's different when you put one in the pen and feed it. I feed—I've got a lamb right out here in the back out here. I don't have any right now but I feed them out there and at the last part when I put them up them things get big, you know? (laughs) You just put them on feed, and I mean *feed*. You want everything else out of them, make that good beef, anyway, as far as I'm concerned, you get them off the grass and run them, bulk feed, get good feed. But, uh, but see, that was a different type of stock up there. That cattle—these old calves weigh, get up there heavy.

We sold most of the time there, we'd, we'd most times sell our calves when they was around four hundred pounds to five, like in there, in that four or five hundred pounds.

WSP: You'd take them down to Killeen or to Gatesville?

JDB: We most times didn't take them anywhere, we'd just get somebody to come out and buy them.

WSP: They would haul them off?

JDB: Haul 'em. Sell them to a buyer. Incidentally, tell you, my daddy was a pair of scales in weighing cattle.

WSP: *He* was a pair of scales?

JDB: Yeah, by guessing at them. He was good, he sure was. About everybody that knew him—I mean, I don't know how he could do that, I don't know how he—a man could do that, it was unbelievable. 'Cause he could—there was other people—he's not the *only* one who could do that—people that study these livestock—these cows all the time, would get good at it. If they had one weighed five or a thousand pounds, whatever it was, they could tell you within just a few pounds of that thing, fifteen or twenty, or sometimes closer. Well, that's the reason they called some of them a pair of scales. (laughs) Sure enough!

Well, you needed to know it. That way you didn't get cheated by some buyer come along and buy them and he's say—you'd say, "Well, this calf weighs 500," and he'd say, "No, 450," well, you're losing 50-pound weight there at a nickel a pound. It's that much.

WSP: He didn't own the scales himself, right?

JDB: No, no, he was just good at guessing at cattle, I guess. And we called it a pair of scales, yeah, yeah, sure did. Yeah, he was good, he was awful good at that. People had to know them things, more than it was in my days coming up. You needed to know how to look at a horse, what a horse was, how good it was, how—look in his mouth and tell his age by his teeth, sure.

WSP: That's something your dad was good at?

JDB: He was good at that, too, you bet he was good!

WSP: Was this a skill he taught you?

JDB: No, no, he, uh, showed me a little bit of it right there at, at the teeth. It was hard for me to understand. I never did, uh, follow it, try to at all. Yeah. But you can—I don't know, there's a lot to it. This—this—well, I don't know how to explain even. It—by looking at a horse's teeth. But they can do it, a man, and they've got people, some left over till today who can do that.

WSP: What are you trying to determine by looking at the teeth?

JDB: Age. The age, you bet. Your—the teeth tell you a lot about the age of the horse, or a mule out here, either one. Fact, cattle. You can tell on cattle, but he was mainly on a horse and mules.

WSP: The only stock you raised for money was cattle? Did you do any sheep or goats?

JDB: No. No.

WSP: Did you have any interest in them at any time?

JDB: Yeah, we did. We talked about it one time. We had a little old—we had deal over there, eighty acres, then. They called it calf pasture. We'd sometimes kick our herd out of the other part and over to that. We'd caught them in there heavy, you know, and let them calve in that, you know, or keep them in that. We'd watch these worms better, you know, doctor better over in this pasture. And it was—it had better fence than the rest of it. We talked about putting some sheep in that one time—but we just never did do it.

Daddy talked to me about it, and, you know—and, 'cause, uh, we sort of done it this way. Growing up, when you get up big, and you help him farm, well, he gives you so much of whatever it produces, you know, on so many acres. You can have twenty acres, twenty-five or something, you know. In other words, have a crop out of this, you know, with raising a—farming out here, well, he'd give you a crop. I had my own cattle. They could give you a calf when it's a baby, you know, when you're pretty young and let that increase on up, you know.

WSP: Your dad was training you by giving you part of his herd so *you* would be responsible?

JDB: Yeah, yeah, he'd give you a calf and then you'd let—

First one I ever sold? I think it, uh, brought about a nickel a pound, and weighed around four hundred, uh, and, uh, but it brought twenty-one dollars.

WSP: Was that considered good?

JDB: Yeah! Yeah, it was for them times, you bet it was! Pretty good, pretty good calf, yeah, it sure was. That, that's about—then, you could get a nickel a pound, well, see, uh, then doing all right. I suspect at the times, might have been cheaper. That's a pretty good calf, though, a little white-faced Hereford, just a little calf.

WSP: When it got up to the right age, you sold it?

JDB: Well, uh, weight. I want to say four hundred or a little bit better, something like that. I don't know, seems like to me it weighed around—well, it brought about a nickel a pound, four hundred pounds, four fives is twenty, but it had to be enough over that to bring twenty-one dollars. That's what I got when they—about twenty-one dollars, out of it—

WSP: Did your dad give you more cattle to handle?

JDB: Well, I kept that—see, I had the mama of that calf. See you've got to raise this little heifer calf up into—that was the calf—first calf she had brought. Okay, that's the first one I ever sold, see? I still had the mama.

WSP: He gave you the mama—

JDB: Yeah.

WSP: And then you—

JDB: No. He'd give you the *calf*, and then let that calf grow—go on and then she was bred and then, then that's the mama there. See. And, uh, what the—my sister, the one just older than me, she had—when she got married—well, she had four or five head. She hadn't sold anything. She kept all of hers instead of—and, and 'course, I got one to sell one to get the money, you know. (laughs) But she was the smartest one of the bunch, I guess (laughs) She—she kept hers, 'cause—when her own—when her and her—married Farmer Thomas—but anyway, uh—they come over there and I helped them load that Brown's Creek place—helped them load that place out and we loaded about four or five head. I can't remember what, but four or five head, she still had them. See, she wasn't selling none of her cattle. Well, you—let me tell you what, on these—you don't have to get very far until they'll increase real fast. You get two and then two, and then you let, well, you're gone then.

WSP: She had a little herd by the time she married.

JDB: Yeah, yeah, you bet.

WSP: What was going into town like?

JDB: Well, it was all right, but nobody had any money in those—in them days, the Depression. That's the Depression days, that's what we're talking about going through this in my time. When I was growing up until '42, we was in—that was the Depression, and then it began to come out, you know, in the latter '40s. Well, uh, you know, you just didn't have much money. You'd go to town, and you'd get a little bit, you know—maybe a quarter, dime, fifteen cents, quarter, something like way, but it would buy something. You could always get an ice-cream cone, or, you know, something, that wouldn't

doing without altogether—or soda pop, you know, get—you know, wasn't, you know, had that—

WSP: Would you say that Killeen was pretty small at that time?

JDB: Oh, yes, definitely. Yeah. Real small.

WSP: Did you ever ride on the train?

JDB: Uh. No, I didn't ride on a train. I don't guess I was ever on a train until I went in the service.

WSP: What was your longest trip then?

JDB: When?

WSP: While you lived at home, what was the longest trip you ever took? Going to Dallas for the stock show?

JDB: Oh. Oh. Well, it would be at—the longest, and—until—yes, and while I was in school that would be my longest trip, until after, later—before I went in the service I went to Houston, couple of times. Now this was before I left Fort Hood, I went to Houston, yeah. But, you know, that was, now that would be, now, I guess Houston is farther than Dallas. But, now, when I was growing up, Fort Worth or Dallas wherever we had that stock show—I can't even tell you in there now—

WSP: What would you go to Houston for?

JDB: Well, we went—my wife had folks down there, and we went down there.

WSP: Did you take your car?

JDB: No, we rode the—well, wait a minute, let's see—no, we rode the—we rode the bus down there. Rode the bus down there, yeah, we sure did. Yeah, I just went, let's see—I went down there, I worked a little while one time, I worked about a month, and, uh—see, I went into the service not too long after we come out of, uh, there anyway, and I worked over at Fort Hood building Hood, see, a little while, uh—and I went into the service in October of '42, went, uh, for my physical.

WSP: For a month during the spring and summer of 1942 you were working on building Camp Hood.

JDB: Well—yeah, yeah, and I went down there awhile and worked down there a little while, and then came back up here. We worked, uh—went over to Fort Hood and worked little while, at uh—then—then I was sent up for my physical and, uh, that was all. I mean, I didn't do, you know, nothing no more.

Now my daddy and them, see, had already moved up here. I never did even help him on that place he had up here, where he bought. When he left the army camp he bought at Hay Valley—that's out of Gatesville there a little ways. He bought a place up there, about—I don't know, three or so hundred acres, I think. But, uh—

WSP: Do you remember moving in 1942?

JDB: Oh, yeah! I moved them. I helped them—army helped us move. Uh—

WSP: How did your parents take it?

JDB: Oh, a little hard, yeah. But I'll tell you on that, uh, you know, this is a funny thing—I know there's people—and you've heard it, and everybody else that's been around has asked question about it. "They didn't pay enough." Well, they *didn't* pay enough, actually. It wasn't.

But, people would do differently. Do it now, they would certainly stand up. They didn't know, and

they were patriotic people. The war had come on. It had started in December 1941. You think about that. And 'course, uh, the timing of this thing was long after that. They was already looking into it at that time, but, uh—

Anyway, this was a *fast* thing. Well, people was running everywhere looking for land. They was! And, and they might have been paid enough if—but you got right here now, something boomed right over here, if it comes in, then that's going to be higher land right over there. You know? And that's what it was. And it's—this is *record*, it's on record. It's—

I'm not faulting nobody. I don't mean—mean to complain about it, but it was *hard* on them. It was hard on people. They had their neighbors, they was—been there. My daddy had been there all his life. Come right down here on the Cowhouse to right up here this—say four miles or something right there where he settled at. Well, that's where he intended to be the rest of his days. And nobody would have wanted to move from something like that. He had a good—some good property, a good home for them days—it wouldn't be nothing now but I'll tell you what, it was good then, it was above average.

WSP: Do you remember him saying anything?

JDB: Oh, not—

WSP: Did he go to any meetings of anything?

JDB: No, not—you mean as far as protesting? No, no.

WSP: Did he take his case to a lawyer?

JDB: Oh, no. On one deal he requested—on the Brown's Creek place he asked them to re-survey that.

WSP: For the size that they said it was?

JDB: Uh-huh. For what the deed called for, I guess, or he wanted to know. They went back and done that. And he didn't collect that money until—oh, it taken a long time. They had to wait and go through this process of doing it, doing it, settling it. The other was slow getting here, but I mean—well, for one thing, uh, we didn't have much money, but the name was good, and he could get anything for his dollar that he asked for. That was certain. My daddy could do that. That's family, my family had a good name, a good name. Bay family had a good name.

WSP: This was something he could take to the bank to get loans?

JDB: I don't know just how he handled it. I'm sure some of it he did, I'm sure he had to go through that, uh—well, I know he didn't have the cash to do it. I mean, there wasn't that much cash money at the time. He didn't—it wasn't there. A few dollars I'm sure, but not much. I mean this is nothing to—well, like I say, nobody much—like that—there just wasn't—that was the thing it—it just wasn't much cash as far as dollars floating around.

WSP: Your grandmother's place went as well, too, didn't it?

JDB: Yeah, it did, you bet. Sure did.

WSP: How did she take it?

JDB: Well, I don't actually remember—see, now that's when I—see, I didn't see her to—to just actually talk to her, along at that time, she was around, but that's when I left out of here. I was going into the service. 'Course the time hers was closed out, I imagine I was done gone, uh—I don't imagine it would have bothered her much. 'Cause she didn't never go on the property anyhow. She wasn't living there, see. She'd been off it for years.

WSP: Where was she living at that time?

JDB: With my daddy, and mother. Yeah. She stayed with them a lot, yes. Then she stayed—he had another boy—there were two boys in that—in my daddy's family there, and, and about four, five girls—four I guess. But anyway, uh—she stayed with my daddy more than any of them. Then she stayed with his brother some, and then a little bit with the girls. But mainly her—she stayed with stayed with us. Then I don't know what she done after then, uh, I don't know. Seemed like she didn't stay with him after he come out of the army camp, uh—she must have stayed with some of the rest of them. There wasn't no rest home or all that stuff back in them times. I was, I was already out of the service, I know, when she died. She lived till I got out in '45, in November '45, I was discharged. I think it was just shortly after that, maybe early 1946 when she died. And she lived a pretty good—

WSP: Not too much longer after the war.

JDB: Yeah, but I never did—you know, never was around her, I didn't hear much. Fact, I didn't hear my mother and dad talk about things. I knew there was, there wasn't enough—far as complaining, I didn't hear no complaints much about it.

WSP: They just dealt with it?

JDB: They just dealt with it and going on. I mean, this is about the least we can do, is uh—if somebody needed it, the government needed it, the army needed it, get it. That uh—we didn't see army personnel in here. We had, uh, we had a brother in there, in there, that was in the Service, but got in the army, well, he got down here in San Anton'. He come home just a very few times in uniform, and he really did stand out, you know. (laughs) That was about it. We didn't see nobody.

WSP: You said you worked on the construction of Camp Hood. What was that like?

JDB: The building over there? Oh, I don't know. I'll tell you what, things were a-turning. They was trying to build and build in a hurry! That's what they was doing.

WSP: What part of that were you working on? What was your job?

JDB: I was helping out—carpenter's helper. Yeah, carpenter's helper is what I went over there to work at. Then, uh, worked there awhile at that and went into roofing, paid, uh—I think, uh, I believe I wasn't a carpenter, but I believe it paid fifty cents an hour, and, uh—the roofers paid a little bit more, seems like it was sixty cents, and the promise of a little raise. And then, uh, friend J. C. Gossett (??) uh—we went over to the roofing part, and take that for more money, and, uh—then worked there a little while, and then that was it.

WSP: Roofing the barracks?

JDB: Yeah, the barracks and stuff. That's what we were helping build was barracks, is the barracks. Yeah. We mainly was just carrying boards, you know, and, uh, you know, going and getting this, going and getting that, and holding this, holding that, or whatever—I don't remember.

WSP: You weren't actually the roofer, were you?

JDB: Oh, now roofer we was. No, now I meant as carpenter's helper. No, we got to the roofing, yeah, this was different. Yeah, we rolled the, uh—we was putting on a lot of this, uh, well, felt—put on a lot of this, what we called roll roofing, uh—we rolled that out and nailed that, then they had to flip it back and then, then put tar under here, put that back and let it would seal, uh, uh—yeah, we was doing that. We was right in like we knew what we was doing. (laughs)

WSP: And it was your first job doing it, too.

JDB: Oh, no, no, we'd worked around a little bit. But we'd had to draw that old tar up on that two-story, worked on some two-story barracks there, and you'd draw that by bucket, and, uh—mop it in with a mop. And we done some of that.

WSP: How long did it take you to roof a typical barracks?

JDB: Oh, I couldn't, I don't know—

WSP: Was it just a blur?

JDB: Just, uh—there was—yeah, that is. I don't know. That, uh—we, uh—several working at it. You know. And, uh, I don't know.

WSP: You and your friend, and several other people working on the same building?

JDB: Yes, yeah, uh-huh. Most all the time we'd built with more than just uh—that, there—maybe four, five, depending on the size of the building. Five, six—

WSP: Did you go home for the night? Or did you live there on base?

JDB: No, uh, me and—me and this friend that I was talking about a while ago, we stayed with my aunt in Killeen. She let us have a room. We lived there with her. (laughs) 'Course, this wasn't—I'm talking about like two months, all we got to do, two, two and a half months or something, maybe three, I don't know. Well, I never figured it out which—well, we come out of there spring, see, of '42, then, uh—I didn't do anything, see like—oh, about, I worked, might could have worked over there, for long as four months, might have.

WSP: February into the spring sometime?

JDB: Yeah, like March and, uh—or maybe like March, April, May, June, July, maybe, something like that. And I worked for a little bit in Houston, like I said there, for about a month down there, and, uh—it was muddy out there. It rained that year, in '42, and the people was getting stuck—and equipment trying to be hauled out there, the lumber, you know, being delivered out there. And of course, they was in a hurry, wanting to get something for them this training to get on. And troops coming in here, I'll guarantee you what, it was a different life.

WSP: How so?

JDB: A different life. Yeah. And, we—it didn't bother—you take like me, it wouldn't bother me a bit, it was sort of exciting to see all of this going on. (laughs) Yeah, it well—army come out there and moved us. They backed up there with them old big trucks and then, uh, put our beds and all this stuff, loaded it in there, you know—we had to move out cattle. Our cattle—we, uh, got a guy, Woodson out of Gatesville up here, to come out with cattle trucks and move the cattle.

WSP: Your dad had already found a new place?

JDB: Yeah, that's when we started moving them. We got a—they—there, there at our home place they give us the barn. This is the funny thing, it was a good barn all right, but we torn that barn down and moved that barn. And me and this friend of mine did, and, uh—we moved it up here and had a carpenter come out there and put it back just like it was. We ruined a little of it, but, then, it just had to buy pieces. But we put it back, he put it back like it was. We had the same barn up there. Yeah. And, uh, I moved the barn myself on the trailer, and, and—but I'd come very near wrecking it, there, had the jack—trailer got to whipping, and, uh—we was on this country road till we got up here at North Fort Hood, and then you picked up pavement. I come up on pavement, when I first got my first experience with that. And that lumber was longer than that trailer, sticking out the back, and 'course it

made the load long, you know? That thing got to whipping, boy, and—

WSP: Because you could go faster on pavement, and it almost caused an accident?

JDB: Oh, yeah. Yeah, that's right. And, uh—you know there on a dirt road there, you couldn't, you weren't going to drive that fast as some old—you had to drive pretty slow. But I got up there, I could speed it up a little bit, you know, gets you smooth, and go on, you know. Boy, I didn't get no place till that stuff went to jerking that car. Pulling that old, that little old stock trailer behind that, uh, that '37 Ford, I'm talking about. (laughs) Yep.

My daddy wasn't too much of a—he drove a Model T, and, uh—when they came out with the shifts on them, for a while he wouldn't even drive one—at all. He bought, uh—well, he got this '37 Ford, now, he drive it, got to driving it. But then he bought him a '42 Chevrolet. That was when they was hard to get. You know, they quit making automobiles. But he got him a '42, uh, uh, Chevrolet.

And it had that shift on the steering wheel? And he didn't like that thing, that's what he didn't like about it. (laughs) And he finally, one—he didn't know how to back up with it, of all things, now, and, uh—he went up to that place—he bought—he had land in close to Jonesboro up here, and had it rented out to some guy up there. He went up there one day to—

He kept cattle on it himself, he just rented out the farm part of it, and, uh—he drove up against the fence where this old boy was plowing there, and, uh, and, uh—and 'course he was in a forward drive gear, you know, and he got ready to go he couldn't get away from the fence. Weldon and Thomas come out there and put it on reverse so he could back up. (laughs) Yep.

He had his, uh—he had a tractor out there, and he had it with a shed made for it where you just drive through it. And he didn't drive that tractor until after I went into the service. He never would touch that tractor.

WSP: He bought it, but he wouldn't touch it.

JDB: I was the only one that ever drove it. I went in the service, and, well, it sat around there, and he—I guess he finally got on it. I kept telling him, you know—he'd drive it, and he'd drive it, you know, and, uh—you know, it would have—Farmall it had a brake pedal you pushed here to turn left—

You know, and one over here to make it turn right, and of course the steering wheel, you know, for sharp turning, you know. Mash the brake, the clutch, and 'course you put it in gear, you know. And stick shift, I'd guess you'd call it. But he didn't ever—boy, he didn't like to drive them things. He, finally, though, he got that thing where he could—uh, that shed where he could go forward all the time, I guess. I don't know. (laughs) He got to driving it.

WSP: He bought the tractor just for you to work with?

JDB: Well, it was his land. But I, yeah, for me to farm it. He gave me, uh, uh—

WSP: A percentage out of it?

JDB: Yeah, uh-huh. I know day over there, he, uh—I went on the service, and I didn't know he had it. And I come back, well, he said, "I've got some money for you out there." And I said, "You have?" He said, "Yeah, buried it out in the smokehouse." Now listen to this.

And he said, "Out of that," they paid so much for the—how much land, if you had so much land plowed up and ready to go, they paid so much for your improved—you know, plowed up land, like it was bedded up to plant. They paid you for so much an acre. It wasn't much, but a little. And he gave me my part of that. Well, he'd taken that money, I guess, and on account of income tax, you know,

stuff he didn't want to run through the bank with it. It was mine, anyway, and it wouldn't have been right it to show up, I guess.

Well, he'd buried it in a can, a jar, jar and, uh, with a lid on it there. And he—and that old salt, come through the floors and got in that soil, I guess—he'd pulled up a board see, in there and buried it, under the, under the floor, and, uh—so went out there to get it, we—that stuff, uh, was partly eat up by the old salt and grime and whatever in that soil. (laughs)

And I went down there to the bank. You could smell it, it had an odor to it, that, I guess off that dirt in under there. And we walked in the bank, Guaranty Bank, and they sort of laughed at me, you know. (laughs) I didn't know for certain it was going to be any good, and I don't guess he did either. But it was.

WSP: The salt had eaten away the paper money? (laughs)

JDB: Yeah. But they just went ahead, and I got every, every bit of it. They gave me, you know—(laughs) but I was worried about it, and I figured he was, too, but what it was going to be any good or not. And 'course, it hadn't been in there, like—well, I don't know—a couple of years it had taken to eat that up. Maybe eat that lid off, you know, and get in there and eat on that money. But it'll sure do it, money will ruin under the ground if moisture gets to it right, in that type of soil.

WSP: He got the money as a result of the move, and he gave you the money when?

JDB: When I got back from the service. Yeah, he kept it and just put it up, see? 'Cause it wasn't his, it was mine. It was my money. That's what it was. See, you take back then, people—that was about when we'd first started paying income tax. Like this, I mean, like that, you know. You know, they never heard—I'd never even hear income—anything about income tax till—(laughs) way about that time, but, uh—well, people's place paid it. I know they always paid some somewhere or another, but, you know. I guess it wasn't enough, I don't know what it was, I never did really understand it.

WSP: Mostly for the upper income brackets then.

JDB: Yeah, it was then. And it come in there later. I know that—he'd begin to—you know, he paid then, and then 'course he bought war bonds and stuff, you know, 'course to help out, you know. They wanted people to do that, and he, he done that, well, you know, what he could but—wouldn't amount—but he done some.

WSP: Yes, that's helpful.

JDB: You bet.

WSP: What do you remember about the weather? Can you recall any particular weather—storms or floods?

JDB: No, not any storms that were unusual. We had 'course high winds, you know, and these little old storms blew up, thunderstorms, but and do things, that—but, uh, I'll tell you what, it just seemed to me like we had colder winters then, uh—records I don't know would show this that way, but I'll declare, it, uh—I just nearly know—cutting across there going to school I was freezing to death. I was cold when I got over there, and I was outdoors a lot, I don't know why it would—boy, it was *cold*! It seemed like to me we got down into that lower temperature than we do at this time of day. I sure think it.

And, I, I'll tell you what, I, I believe our rainfall, I know, most of it was more than right now. More than we get right now. That's the way I see, it, absolutely. I've thought about this lots of times, and I've talked to other people about it. I'm not the only one that thinks that, that we used to have colder weather and longer spells of it and that old long, windy days, seemed to me like, 'cause I remember

like going out to feed them cows over there, and boy it was cold going around that—our house was behind the mountain in here, a cove like, but you went around that point, that's where the Brown's Creek place set, and okay, that's when you really hit the—it was cold when you went around that thing. The wind was coming out of the north, out of the north, and we were protected.

But going to school there, well, I'd cut across around the edge of that field there, sometimes to the farmer road—it was a little bit shorter over there. And boy, it was cold going across that. You're crossing in there, that was cold. And you didn't fool around. I'll tell you what, you could, uh—you know, I'd run all the way to school at lot of times, or just trot along, you know, just jogging along, or whatever you'd call it. And I've done that just about all the way.

WSP: How long was that?

JDB: A mile. One mile.

WSP: You jogged to school just because it was so darn cold.

JDB: Yeah, you bet. You'd just get up and—you didn't want to just walk along there, you were so miserable I mean. Walking is okay, if, if you're comfortable. (laughs) But boy, you get hurt from that cold, you're going to, you get to traveling a little faster. And the most all right, you once get out there to it and get going, it's going to warm your body up, I mean you're pumping that blood, you're going, going to get warm.

WSP: Do you remember any of the creeks flooding?

JDB: Oh, I remember the Cowhouse getting out all over everywhere. Brown's Creek from hill to hill—and outside hills, not just the inner banks, the outer banks. Oh, yes, you bet you! Water running everywhere! And lots of water, I mean! I haven't seen that in—oh, now Leon River up here a few years back, I've seen it up over here on the Leon River, that's—

Leon was always our block going to Gatesville, see, when we were talking about my sister being in school up there—getting out of the bank, yes'ir. And I'll swear, it used to flood more than it does nowadays. It sure did. And Cowhouse, I've seen it out *lots* of times. 'Cause that there was the main home place in there, you know. Oh, yes.

WSP: Is there anything in particular you would do, during the flooding season?

JDB: Just fix the water gaps, where the fenced crossed the creek at, you had to go—you know? We called it a gap, a water gap. We'd go down, tie it back up, if it didn't haul—wash it all off. Most times we fixed ours like a gate. Like on Brown's Creek there, we'd tie a light wire on one side, and it could bust that loose and just swing it back. Then when it was all over you'd go get that, shake the drifts out of it and carry it back over here and tie it back again. You'd tie it strong on one side than the other. They built one over there one time, in—out in the outer banks, between the main bank, that was the creek bank, and the outer bank, I call it. They made out of board and let it swing. The guy that built our house, Fletcher Colvin, and them, he was the main one, that actually had the idea that this was going to work. Well, the rain, it would wash them boards up like that and then when it quit raining it would come back down.

WSP: Just like a tilt-up garage door?

JDB: Yeah, sort of. (laughs) Well, it got so much of that old drifts and moss coming down on the outside of it, it was wrecking that stuff. They had to do away with that, go out there and put a fence back. (laughs) Sure did, it busted up, busted them boards up. You know logs tear them up.

WSP: Instead of the water lifting it up, the drift logs rammed into it.

JDB: Yeah, they got so ragged out there—it don't look good—they swung a cable up here and built it where that water wouldn't wash it out. That didn't—oh, it stayed there awhile, but they just kept patching on it until finally they just done away with it.

WSP: Well, I thank you very much for taking the time. Do you have anything else you'd like to include?

JDB: Oh, I don't know, I bet there'd be a lot of them things I'd like that you got down there, before—later but (laughs) I don't know. 'Course, I do think it was a good community of people.

WSP: Do you remember any stories your parents told about the olden times?

JDB: Well, I don't know.

WSP: Or talking about the suffering, hard times, or chores they did, say before the railroad came. Anything like that?

JDB: Well, of course, I've heard my daddy talking about having to go get horses way off of their property, you know. 'Course that was where he was raised, over on the Cowhouse over there, and, uh—you know, they would graze off of when the fences, you know, everything wasn't fenced. They went to go get—things like that. Oh, they had to—it wasn't nothing, uh—they was all going by, 'course, buggy and horses, and—no long-distance travel either. Uh, tell you—well, the train? I don't know when the train actually got into Killeen. It had been there for years—

WSP: Eighteen eighty-three.

JDB: Eighty-three? Okay, see, he wasn't until—my daddy was born in 1885. But I heard him talking about riding a train from Killeen. Him and his brother went somewhere. They come—my family come there from East Texas. Montgomery County, I believe, Montgomery County. Well, they went back down there, and, uh, uh—to see some of the folks down there.

And I remember him talking about an old black guy down there that they thought the world—oh, they thought a lot of him. He had actually come from the slave times, and back in there. But he, he was there at the train waiting on them boys to get there. Because he wanted to see them. He knew their daddy, see, and he wanted to see these boys, you know. Uh. My granddaddy, who it was, because he come from down there when he come up here. He knew him and he wanted to see his offspring. That's exactly what—

He was there waiting on them at the station. (laughs) I still go down—I haven't been—I've been down there three or four times, it's a—but an old chapel down here at Richards, Texas, is Bay Chapel. And, uh, it was dedicated at a hundred years old several—a good while back, fifteen or twenty years ago.

WSP: That's your family from out East?

JDB: Uh-huh. Yeah. Yeah. That come off of—I've got my, my family tree in there, the Bay part. It come off and give to them from the family. There's a cemetery there they bought, some fought in the Civil War, that some of them buried there, or went out to that. Uh—one time I've been out there.

WSP: Two things just occurred to me. Did your family run into that incident in the mid-1930s when the government tried to cut back on cattle production, and they sent some guys around to—

JDB: Cow killing? (laughs) Yes, sir, we killed some.

WSP: How did that go?

JDB: Well, that was okay, I guess, we picked out what, the worst we had—

(telephone rings; interruption in taping)

WSP: Okay.

JDB: Yeah, we, we, we, killed a few in there, not many. But we let a few go.

WSP: You picked which ones they shot?

JDB: Yeah. Oh, yeah, Get the worst ones you had. Yeah, don't, uh—don't—if you had any sort of—little poor, or, a little smaller in weight, you know, well go ahead. I know, I can remember, I don't remember how many we killed. Maybe we put six or seven head in there. It was more or less what you'd call a cull-out, I guess, uh, that would—maybe wasn't that, maybe five, four.

WSP: Did the government come and tell you how many?

JDB: No. No, No. They wouldn't tell you. I guess, I don't know whether you had a limit on it or not. I don't remember no limit—

Not over five dollars, or something that way. But on the way over there, we went by a house, and some guy there, he said, "Well, wait a minute, I want one of them, and I want to put one of mine in the place of that one." You know, he had one, he had, we had one that he liked better than what he had. So he put his in and got one of ours out. And, uh, that was okay, nothing wrong with that. Because they didn't care, just by head anyway. We went drove them on over there to old Jack Wolf's place, and they put them in a pen. And a guy sat up there on the fence and shot them things with a .22.

WSP: Were you there at the time?

JDB: Well, I guess just a little bit of it, but I left. I guess I must have just helped drive in there, I guess. Then, then it started, and I don't know, for some reason I had to leave, I guess—or whatever, I don't remember now. I didn't stay there for all of it, but I seen some of it. He was setting up there shooting them things. It seemed to me like he didn't miss nothing, uh. He was just dropping them there, uh—looked like to me he was shooting a .22, best I remember. Of course, a long-rifle .22 can do lots of things.

Some people, I guess—I don't know how they—uh, maybe cut some steaks off of the—some of some of them, I think, a hindquarter maybe or something, some of the best part out of them. Maybe they got them a meal or two out of them, something like that.

WSP: What about you guys?

JDB: I don't remember us doing it any, but seems I heard her talking about somebody got some steaks out of it. And then I guess just buried them out there somewhere or another.

WSP: I've heard they even canned the beef.

JDB: Well, that's what I'm talking about, I think somebody did, but I don't know if we did. That was, uh—yeah, but, then, it sort of sounds funny, being a cull like cattle as far as, and, uh—normally we didn't use beef from a cow, we, we butchered the young stuff, four or five hundred pounds choice stuff, calves. Calves, you bet, you get a calf.

WSP: They gave you five dollars a head for mature cows?

JDB: I'm not sure that's right, but it seems to me that's all it was, five.

WSP: That's sure cheap?

JDB: Well, it's not so bad, I don't guess, in a way. (laughs) They were trying to drive that price up on them,

but—and get some of them—I guess it's over too many cows, you know? But when you're talking about a real good calf bringing twenty bucks now, so—of course fifteen bucks is a lot of money, too, in them times.

WSP: Still, relatively, that's a fourth of the price of a mature cow!

JDB: But you're talking about, uh, my goodness, five hundred at four cents a pound, or three, three or four cents a pound—for six, seven hundred—well, one that weighed, uh, uh, seven hundred, uh—three seven's twenty-one. I don't know how five dollars would have—(laughs) see, a cent a pound. (laughs) I don't know how that works in there, but that would be what it was.

Of course, five cents, that would drop it down to a cent. That's what it would be, or probably a little less if one weighed—what I was trying to say there—if one weighed six hundred pounds you were going under. Five hundred pounds you would be all right, if I'm right about the price.

Ask old J. M. he might—I don't know whether he was, how much of that he knew about or not, he there. But now J. M. and them—he's a cowboy fellow, I don't know if you've talked to him much. He's, uh—J, M. is a good. Still now. He's older than me. I'm eighty, fixing to be eighty next month. And he still ropes, tries to take care of things. That's his enjoyment, he likes it, he's been at it for years. He's—

WSP: Is he part of the cattlemen group that still ranches cattle on Fort Hood lands?

JDB: Him? No. Me?

WSP: You?

JDB: No, my family did. I didn't take none of the shares. My sister and her husband got them.

WSP: They got the shares. Do they still run cattle there?

JDB: No. No, they let uh—see, these, uh—they wanted to know if I wanted any. I never did. I run some out there, but I run mine under a different deal. My wife's granddaddy I run under out here awhile.

WSP: You ran cattle under your wife's grandfather's shares—

JDB: Yeah. But they got my daddy's shares, and they come out of the army camp theirself. He—they had my sister and her husband had bought land over here in this—by that Maple schoolhouse. They never did even move on it before the government bought it. I mean they got it, and then they lived over toward Killeen, the old Stafford place over past some gap over there. But anyway, they—well, I'm losing my thoughts—

WSP: We're talking about how you managed to run cattle on the Fort Hood lands.

JDB: Running on the reservation out here. Well, they gave so many shares per the acre that you owned—you know, like that. Well, but my daddy had already died when this all come up. And I remember him telling me, "Watch, there may be something come out of some of that someday." I don't know what he had in mind, but that's the only thing I've ever seen come out of it.

But anyway, J. C. Graham, my brother-in-law—he's not living now—but anyway, he got my daddy's shares. He talked to Mama, and, you know, it was agreeable. So he come up with his shares and them shares, and plus some more of them. He come up with a hundred shares out there, all any one man could have, I understood, at that time.

Well, he run cows on there until, oh, maybe ten years ago or twelve, maybe about fifteen years ago. And then when you're through with these things, some sell them, I think. But you're not supposed to

sell them, you're supposed to turn them in back to the association. Yeah, they got a Cattlemen's Association, it goes to there. Then these shares, in turn, if I'm not behind on it, are give back, distributed equal to the remainder. You know. Like that. So them shares that he had went back, I guess, to the association, or however they done it. I don't know how that was done.

WSP: The last survivors will end up with the most shares?

JDB: No, it didn't. No, It's not necessarily—no, the last survivors of, of, that out there, yeah. Not the *family's* survivors, are last are—my family right now is completely out of it, we got none in it. See, it was give away.

WSP: Given back into the association?

JDB: Association, and then the association goes and gives it to whoever that's dividing it, yeah. And, yeah, it will be who handed on down to, and that could be—that it don't mean the name could be left, uh—well, see the name went from Bay to Graham, see?

WSP: I mean the last survivors in the Association, the last group of members?

JDB: Yeah, that's what, yeah. Because I know a lot of them still got them out there, it's, uh—running them things now. They are some survivors of somebody out there that come out of that thing. Of course, you've got to be vet, supposed to be, rather.

WSP: Is there some point down the road, conceivably, when all the shares will have been turned in, but no one around who could hold them?

JDB: I don't know. It can't run out, if you're going to hold it to families—'cause you're going to heir it. Wouldn't you think? I think so.

WSP: There'd be just a few families that would still be there?

JDB: Yeah, it could. I don't know whether, how big they're going to let it grow under one person. Now, they did have a limit, over how many one person could own, at one hundred. Now, I don't know what it is now.

WSP: Now does a share translate to a cow?

JDB: Yeah.

WSP: One share per cow?

JDB: Well, they way they went someway. It used to be twenty-five acres or something like that, per—you just run one cow to that. See? It would take like four cows per hundred. You'd have to have five head in one share. So you'd have to have a hundred and something acres, if I've got it right, to have one share in that thing. So you had to have a right smart of shares, or get some. You could go to somebody else and let them sign their shares—when they started out—to you. I think J. C. went over to Uncle Boney—he got his shares, he didn't want them so he just let J. C. have them. See?

WSP: If you walked in with a hundred shares, that means twenty head of cattle? A five to one ratio.

JDB: Well, yeah, I believe that's right, I guess. I'm just thinking—I can't think of a thing.

WSP: That's all right. Let's just move on to drought. I know there was at least one big drought in the late 1920s?

JDB: Nineteen twenty-five.

WSP: Yes. And another in the mid- to late-1930s?

JDB: Well, but this one in 1925, I'm not old enough—well, I was old enough, too, but I particularly don't remember nothing about it. But I think it was the same year that we went to this property that the army taken, in '25. That was the year that my daddy—

WSP: The year you moved onto the home place?

JDB: Yeah, the home place. Yeah. Now I don't know, uh, the drought of that, I don't uh—I was only four years old, you wouldn't know—

WSP: Did your parents ever talk about it?

JDB: Oh, yeah, I've heard them talk about it. They went to somewhere or another. My daddy and, uh, uh, I guess my two older brothers went off out in West Texas to pick some cotton that year, in the fall of the year, to make a few dollars. They went off out west of here somewhere or other. Yep. Yep. Yeah. Nothing made here. There was nothing to do here. Yes, and that was when cotton, when you used to pick it all by hand, you know, just pick it. Yeah.

WSP: I wouldn't think they could have found much work in West Texas, if the drought was out there, too?

JDB: Well, I don't guess it was out there like it was here. Evidently, it wasn't, if they had cotton out there on the plains, see, they just went to the plains. They didn't go but just a little way. I guess they went to the plains. They—you know, there might have been some. Used to be a lot of cotton raised back in the even in the Coleman area, I think, and then, in that—not too far from Brownwood in there.

WSP: Maybe it was because of the deep-well irrigation, they had out there.

JDB: Well, I don't believe in them days they were even irrigating. Now we're talking about irrigating, that went in—I don't know when it started, but—I had family that had land out there. I had a cousin that had land at O'Donnell, and it was dry land. I've been there on the place. And then he had irrigated land that was near Hale Center, or something out there. But that irrigating out there, that was a lot, a lot of water.

Good land. You could make a half to a bale an acre. You're talking about irrigated land, you could make good cotton on that. I don't know when irrigating started out there, but I never did know of any, or when it ever got started. I didn't hear of it until later, myself.

WSP: Not everybody had it?

JDB: No. No, The first I was ever around was in the 1940s, myself. I know they had it before then, but, uh, that was the first I knew. I went out there on that place, and I started out across a field. And I was stepping on them beds in that cotton patch out there, and directly it began to getting soft, and I had to turn around and get back out of there. It was giving out from under me because it was getting so wet because they were irrigating up there. I was going across to where they was at, see, just cutting across the cotton patch. I had to come back out and go around the end up there.

I remember in the '30s, I don't particularly remember—I know they had some dry weather over there, but I don't remember no complete crop failures. No. In '25, now, it was what you called a complete crop failure here, in '25. That's what the old-timers tell me. Okay, now I don't remember none in the '30s that was complete—as far as I can remember every year we didn't get out of picking cotton, so—(laughs) so, that about the way it was.

WSP: I've said all I've got to say.

JDB: Well, good talking to you. My goodness, I may have forgot stuff, but I hope, the best I know of, I've said everything like I see it. I mean, I don't believe in varying from the facts. I don't go for that, I try to tell everything like it is, but, uh—the way I remember it. There's a lot I'm forgetting to tell you that I'd probably like to bring up.

WSP: You can give me a call if you remember anything. I'll send you the transcript when I get done. If you say, "Oh, I should have told this story," then write down that note and I'll come back around and we'll just have a chat and put a little bit more on the tape. And I'll transcribe that, too.

JDB: Okay. I wanted you to talk to—now I don't know how much it would help—my older brother. He's ninety-two, lives in Waco. But see, he left here so far back there that I mean he was gone during some of this that I'm talking about here.

WSP: He was gone by the 1930s?

JDB: Yeah. Let's see what year he graduated now—oh, yeah, he was gone by the late '20s.

WSP: Is this Vertis?

JDB: No, Florace, the oldest one, the top of the list. My oldest brother. He was born in 1909.

WSP: Florace? And he lives in Waco?

JDB: Yeah. Yeah, but my sister that's still living out here, the one I was talking about that married a Graham—that's Ruby. She lives out where you're going out there to see J. M. Yeah, before you get to J. M.'s, there's a little ways on this side of there, on that King Road. You go out Highway 16 and turn right on the King Road. Okay. Go right down in front of her house. But I talked to her the other day.

She didn't much—she can't, she's born in 1911 and she's still actually sharper than I am, I guess, about things. But she don't like discussing it someway. I don't mind talking to anybody, It don't bother me to talk to anybody. I don't—I wished I—well, there's a lot to talk about, I'll tell you what, of course there ain't a lot of things to talk about. (laughs) But I don't knock anything.

WSP: Well, it all makes a difference to us.

JDB: It was hard times, I'll tell you. It was what they called hard times. Them people would set down and talk to you about the good old days back there. But I want to tell you what, if we're not better off today, I don't know what. We might not be morally, I'll tell you what. I think we are. There's a lot of things going on in the world that oughtn't to be happening out here, which *then*—

That part was good. I'll go for that. But I mean, there was a hard life. We didn't have this air conditioning in this heat we're sitting under right now, or to turn on tap water and all that stuff, and the telephones.

Well, we had telephones at one time, yeah. Two rings and a short. Somebody had to know whether it was four rings, four longs and two shorts or whatever. Yeah, we had that, but we didn't have that at the last part. Now what happened, I guess, wasn't—the system wasn't able to keep the lines up out there or something. I don't know what happened, but then it went out and we didn't have no telephone.

WSP: But you had it for a while?

JDB: We had it for a while. Yes, into Killeen.

WSP: Would that system connect you into one of the big cities?

JDB: Killeen.

WSP: You were tied into Killeen?

JDB: Tied into Killeen, yeah. Yeah. And my grandmother and them, oh, she worked for that thing. They took part of that—they had stock in that thing at one time over there.

WSP: Stock in the telephone company?

JDB: Yeah. Yeah. This was way back. I don't know how this was. I can't—don't know much about that. She worked at it and—but they had some deal tied up in it. And that went out from under that, what they had it in, a long time ago. Of course, Sprint's got the thing now, you know, but I guess, uh—I don't know how that—I think if somebody would have been trying a bit harder, held on to it, somebody might have made some money out of that. You know. (laughs) Yeah, whatever it was over there, she worked for it, awhile. Her father, my grandfather, died—I never did know him, on my mother's side—when, when she was just real young.

WSP: Your grandmother on your mother's side?

JDB: No, my grandmother lived, my grandmother lived a long time.

WSP: Elmira?

JDB: No, no, that was on my daddy's side. My grandmother on my mother's side was Ella Docia Terry. And, uh, her husband died—

WSP: And his name was?

JDB: All I can tell you was W. J.

WSP: W. J. Terry (??)?

JDB: Yeah. And he died when, Mama had a younger brother, when he was about one year old. Mama was born in '89 and he died in 1901. He was awful young. He was just a four-year-old child. Mama was born in '89 and he was born in the 1901, and I'd say he died at four.

Oh, I'll tell you what, I've wished a lot of times we had the history of this over there. And I think there was one of the family members that lived over there, a cousin, my first cousin—they live in Mississippi and they're trying to get, find out what they can, do a little research on my grandmother Harbour's family. She was a Harbour from over there. Her daddy fought in the Civil War, and he had some property back north—south side of Cowhouse over towards Killeen, back in there, with old rock fences on that old thing in there. And we never did know much about that part of it. We've got a little bit of stuff in there on it. We sure don't know anything about this Terry I'm talking about here, of him, particular, himself. No, no.

WSP: Do you have photographs of the farm back then? The outbuildings, the house, and stuff like that.

JDB: We've got a lot of the house, we have. I don't have it here at the house. Uh. But, uh—

WSP: Have you had your photos copied by one of the history groups?

JDB: Of the house? No, I never did have it done.

WSP: We ought to get that done. We could put that in the collection.

JDB: I don't guess we've got any at all that goes any further than my grandparents' property at all, I mean any pictures. I don't know of any more. All we've got of this other is just a little Kodak. I don't know, there may be one of them here at the house. I sort of believe there is. But I wouldn't know where it's at. I might ought to try to dig it out.

I'll tell you what I *do* have in there. I have a quilt that come from a drawing over there at Maple School, when my mother went, over there, with a bunch of names on it. You'd buy, for a nickel or a dime, whatever it was, buy a chance on the quilt. You'd quilt a piece of that quilt, a size about a foot by a foot or something. Then it's all sewed together. Then when it's over well you draw the names. My mother drawed it.

WSP: I see, everybody donates a square in the quilt.

JDB: I'd thought I'd carry it up there to this deal this year. Yeah. Hang it on a wall, let everybody get a look at it up there, to see what. I got it after my mother died. I went up there, and we was running around there trying to divide stuff up. And I'll tell you what, we wasn't arguing about it, "You take this," and we just done it, you know? And I come out with the quilt somehow or another. I've always wondered how I got that quilt. I did. (laughs)

Me and my brother was arguing over a clock. They had an old clock there. Oh, it wasn't so old, it was the year I was born, '21. That's not old! (laughs) And, uh, he wanted me to take it, on account of that year. And I said, "No," he, he wanted it for something, I knew, for some reason. I forget why. He wanted to give it to his daughter, his youngest daughter—He had two girls. And anyway, I made him take that thing. I know we was arguing about who—oh, I'd liked to have had it, all right, but I can't do them things. It's, uh—oh, I got a few stuff here, I've got an old fiddle in there that come from my daddy, belonged to my daddy. And I've got another one that belonged to my great-uncle, this is that Harbour I'm talking about. And I give it to my daughter that lives in Austin. She put it in a deal on the wall. I haven't seen it since she—I just recently gave it to her, the first of the year there when I give it to her. It's to keep, it's not to get rid of, it's to hang onto.

WSP: Well, I think that about does it. Thank you very much, sir!

JDB: Well, all right.

Melba Goodwin Bennett

Date of birth: 8 April 1919
Communities affiliated with: Plainview, Stampede
Interviewed by Amy E. Dase

AED: This Amy Dase. Today is June 5, 2001. I am interviewing for the first time, Melba Goodwin Bennett. This interview is taking place in her home near Kempner, Texas.

MGB: About six miles from Copperas Cove and eight miles from Kempner, and I receive my mail from Kempner, on a route.

AED: Near Copperas Cove, Texas. Thank you. This interview is part of Prewitt and Associates' Fort Hood Oral History Project sponsored by the U.S. Army Fort Hood and conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University.

I was hoping you could tell me a little bit about your family origins. Where your family came from and when you were born.

MGB: I was born April 8, 1919, at Stampede, out in the country. It is now a part of Fort Hood reservation. My doctor was Dr. Gaddy from Copperas Cove that came and delivered me at home. We had very good neighbors that always came in and helped during childbirth and everything, so no one went to a hospital to have a child. We were all born at home. Two of my brothers and my oldest sister were born at Oakalla: Uel Lambertine, February 11, 1909, Nadine Ruth, June 27, 1912, and John Kermit, April 8, 1914. Dad and Mom and the three of them moved to Stampede in 1915 or 1916, and Gayland Gaddy was born February 13, 1917. I was born in 1919, Alta Faye, May 28, 1921, and Carl Cleveland, January 31, 1924.

There were seven of us children, and I am the only living. Uel passed away in 1970, Nadine in 2000, John in 2000, Gayland in 1999, and Alta Faye in 1928 with leukemia.

We lived there on our home place until I was nearly six years old and we moved about a mile north of there on the Sadler place, we called it, as Mr. Pratt Sadler owned it. We lived there a couple of years.

I went to the Stampede School, which was a one-teacher, later it became a two-teacher school. My oldest brother Uel finished Stampede and went to Antelope School. He rode a horse or walked, and it was about four miles. When my sister Nadine finished Stampede, we moved to Plainview, which was ten miles west of Gatesville. Plainview was just a community. My sister and three oldest brothers and I entered school there where I graduated from tenth grade in 1935, a class of ten.

AED: And your parents purchased the property in Stampede?

MGB: Yes, however, Dad and his two brothers owned land at Oakalla. My mother and father were born at Oakalla. My mother's father John Lawson Cleveland came from Mississippi by train, got off in Kempner, and someway or other he got to Oakalla. I have not, in all my genealogy search, figured out how he got down there. I don't know if it was by horse, or someone took him. But he did end up in

Oakalla and married Nathaniel Wheeler and Winnie Louise Dennis Tobey's daughter, my mother, Ethel Pearl Cleveland, one of six children.

AED: And your mother was from Oakalla?

MGB: The house where she was born is still standing, south of the Tobey Cemetery, in what was known as the Tobey Valley. My father, Horace Carl Berton Goodwin was born and lived west of Oakalla. He was the son of Lambertine Berrian and Martha Adeline Sibley Goodwin, who had three brothers and two sisters. My mother and dad married January 19, 1908.

AED: And they lived there for a while, and then they purchased the property in Stampede, or near Stampede?

MGB: Oh yes. My dad bought some land with his brothers west of Oakalla where my two oldest brothers and my oldest sister were born.

AED: When they moved there, I think it was around 1915 or 1916.

MGB: Nineteen fifteen or 1916, in that area.

AED: I saw the deed.

MGB: I have the deeds of the land. I also have copies of the deeds that my dad owned land in Oakalla and later owned land in the camp area. It was in the Phillip Coe Survey, and I have copies of those deeds and can show you they bought it from Emma and H. L. Wyatt.

AED: I think I saw it because it's in that book.

MGB: Well, it may be in there, yeah, it could be. Oh yes it is, I know it is.

AED: Did they build a home there? Or was there already a house there?

MGB: There was a house as I understand, but they added on to it. It was a—kind of a long one-room house, and they put a partition-like in it, and they added on the kitchen portion of it, I believe, and put up yard fences, built a water tower with a windmill, built barns, built a tank. And I shall always remember when I talk about the tank, the birds would circle over it when going south. What are they?

AED: The geese?

MGB: Yes, the geese would go south. They would circle and light on this tank, and my dad would always hide behind the tank dump and kill them, and we could have duck or goose supper. Yes, my mother cooked them well. And then, when they would go back north in the spring, we'd still have duck again. (laughs) So we'd have another feast. I always thought about the tank dump as my dad could hide behind it.

AED: How far was the tank from the house?

MGB: I would say a good maybe five hundred yards or something like that. I'm just going to make an estimate 'cause us kids rode little wagons and rolled wheels off of the wagons, things like that, playing between the house and the tank. There was a road that went down to the tank. This was a manmade tank. They made a levee-like to stop the water, and this is where the mules and cows got their water.

We had a swing that my dad hung from the tree, the big trees out in the yard. And we would push each other back and forth in the swing like they do in the parks now.

AED: What was the house like? It was a wood house—

MGB: Yes, I have pictures of that house that I'll be happy to show you. It was a wooden house and it had a big—what they call it—potbelly stove for heating, and we always had to cut and carry in the wood. My mother had a wood cook stove, and we always stayed by it too, in order to stay warm.

AED: What was the water source for the house?

MGB: From the windmill. We had a windmill, and my dad put a large tank up on a stand. I can remember quite well, after the camp took over the area, going out there and dropping rocks in that casing that we could hear them splash the water at the bottom. They did tear down the windmill and the tank that held the water, which the windmill pumped. However, we did not have it piped into the house.

AED: So you carried it?

MGB: We carried it to the house in buckets. We always drank water from a bucket, each one had a cup or a long-handle dipper, and we'd go there and get water from the bucket.

AED: So there wasn't indoor plumbing, so you had an—

MGB: We had an outhouse. Yes. I will say this, it was very primitive, I know it's not an outstanding situation, but we had lots of cedars around the house, and if we had to go at night, my mother would always take us, maybe with the dog, and we would go behind the cedar trees and not go all the way to the outhouse.

AED: More convenient.

MGB: Yes, more convenient. But we had what they call—should I say it or not?

AED: Feel free—

MGB: Slop jars! That's what they called it, they sat under the bed, and we would have to carry them out and empty them the next morning. This was a chore as we got older.

AED: Nice to have modern conveniences now.

MGB: Well, I suppose—yes, definitely! (both laugh)

AED: How many rooms did the house have?

MGB: We only had three rooms. We had the sleeping or bedroom with iron bedsteads where the older children slept, three or more in a bed. Then a large room, which I would say was our living and sitting room with a potbelly stove and a bed where my mother and dad and smaller children slept. The third room was the kitchen. The house was in an L-shape. The mattresses were taken outside often to sun, then brought back. We had to wash the quilts. My mother made all the quilts.

She had a quilting frame that my dad made that hung from the ceiling in the living room, but it was hung with twine. I can see it, but I don't know exactly how to call it. It's what they tied oats with—oat twine. They gradually replaced it with better each time it wore out. Mom could roll—or my dad would roll it up, my oldest brother got tall, and he could roll it up, and they rolled way high above our heads, and we could still have the sitting room. It was rolled down during the day when she quilted by hand. We still have some of the quilts she made.

AED: And you didn't have electricity?

MGB: No electricity. I still maintain and keep kerosene lamps for possible failure of electricity.

AED: They work.

MGB: They work. Yes. I can remember carrying the lantern, we always had lanterns. And never a flashlight. My—I can remember my mother's twin brothers that came to our house, and I was a small child. One of them had a flashlight. Was real shocking. We wanted to burn it all the time, and they would not let us.

AED: Radio? Or was that later?

MGB: No, we did not have a radio in our house to my knowledge until after we lived at Plainview a few years. I can tell you a real story that is fascinating I guess. My mother used to get me up from the bed by playing the radio, turning it on at a certain time, and it played "The Star-Spangled Banner," and I would not stay in the bed when "The Star-Spangled Banner" played. I got up! And she knew that I would. That is the way she got me up.

AED: Did you have telephones out there?

MGB: Yes. We did. This was the means of communications in the area. When we moved from the home place where I was born to the Sadler place, we then got a community telephone. It was one that you rang long and short to get to other people's houses. We had, I think maybe, as many as four people on the same line. The telephone was made so that my dad could pull the connection from one phone line and put it over to another line and talk to another person on the opposite side of the community.

My dad was one of the trustees in the community, and he helped build a new school after the school burned on the first day of April, just before we went to school. My dad helped haul the lumber. The men of the community hauled the lumber and rebuilt the school.

AED: Did they haul it from Copperas Cove?

MGB: From Gatesville. Unh-uh, they had to haul it from Gatesville. Copperas Cove at that time didn't even have a lumberyard.

I remember going to Copperas Cove in the wagon with my parents to do what they called shopping. They bought shoes and socks to wear. But we were not permitted to wear our school shoes around the house. We even walked to church barefooted till we got to the creek or Cowhouse River. When we got there we would wash our feet, sit down, put our shoes on, and walk up to church, which was just past the river bridge.

AED: That was the Stampede Church?

MGB: No, it was not, it was a tabernacle called—

AED: Refuge?

MGB: Refuge. Thank you. Thank you. Refuge. It wasn't coming to me.

AED: It was a tabernacle?

MGB: They had built it for a meeting place in the community, and it was right next to Charlie Morse's, and just north of Sam Hinson's land. Near the high bridge crossing on the Cowhouse Creek. That was where it was located.

AED: A tabernacle—how is that different from a church?

MGB: It's not housed in, it's not closed on the sides. They did make some swing-down protection if it were windy or what have you, but they built a framework and covered it with cedar at the top or brush. That was called the brush arbor.

AED: So it had a roof, kind of?

MGB: Yes, it was a roof there, but it was a natural finish. Or they would put some kind of braces, like two-by-fours, or something like that, I do not know where they got the lumber for that, I don't even know. They would put that up and then cover it, when they were going to have a meeting, the men would go out and cut cedar limbs and cover it.

AED: So every Sunday would there be services there?

MGB: Oh yes, we had services there. Mostly with a traveling preacher, someone who would come in, but we did not have a regular pastor or anything like that. It was kinda known, I assume, as it was a Baptist community. Mostly, he would travel and come there. He'd come in a buggy and horse. I do not believe there were services every Sunday, maybe once a month. I do not believe it was every Sunday.

AED: And did they have other events at the tabernacle?

MGB: Not that I know of. Not that I remember. If anything was had, it was at the school.

AED: Did you have revivals that you attended?

MGB: Yes, in the summer, see, I was so young at that time, now I'm sure of that—I can remember being there but do not recall what type of services it was. I just wasn't knowledgeable at that time to know. I really didn't know.

AED: But the school was an important place?

MGB: Oh, yes. They always had a barbecue at the end of school, and all the people came and brought food, and everybody had a good time. Played ball. And things like that, and it was a meeting place.

AED: What did the school look like?

MGB: I have pictures of that school. I have pictures of the entire group and the teachers. And my sister, Nadine, always kept those things because she was a schoolteacher and taught several schools in Coryell County. She taught at Harman, Topsey, Antelope, Mountain, Purmela—there are some others I'm not naming. But I will think of them. As I always enjoyed going to the end-of-school picnic where she taught. And knowing the families and teachers. I knew Antelope quite well, and it was one of the largest schools she taught. In fact, she was teaching there in 1941, when the army came along and took that area for a tank-destroyer training area for Camp Hood.

AED: Was the Stampede school a one-room school?

MGB: It started out as a one-room, and when it got to two teachers, I believe they divided it into two rooms.

AED: Was that the second school, after the first burned?

MGB: When the second one when it was built. I'd have to go back and research some of the history that my sister kept on the school to give you exactness of it because I'm not real sure, and I hate to tell you because I feel sure there are other people that's still living that would know, and I'd prefer having it accurate.

AED: You attended school at Stampede?

MGB: Yes, I did. My first year. I can remember, in particular, one time going when my sister took the flu at school, and I had to help her get home, and we liked to have never crawled through the rock fence and the barbed-wire fence to cut across and get her home 'cause she was so ill.

I can even remember, in particular, one time when my entire family was ill. My grandfather, my mother's father, Grandfather Cleveland, came from Oakalla after his family moved away. He came to live with us at that time, I remember quite well, everyone in my family, my mother and dad, my grandfather, and six kids were ill with flu, and I was not sick. I made soup that my mother said, "Oh, put this in, put a handful of that, and a little dab of this." That is the way she instructed me to make soup.

AED: And you were responsible for feeding them all?

MGB: I had to feed them all because I did not have the flu. I was never sick.

AED: How old do you think you were then?

MGB: Well, I was between six and seven. Because we were living on the Sadler place. We weren't in the house where I was born, we had moved to the Sadler place. That I remember.

AED: That was pretty close to your home.

MGB: Yes, we were only about a—it's about a mile or a little more distance in there, maybe a little more than a mile, but something like that.

AED: And how long were you there? How long did you live there?

MGB: I think about two years.

AED: And then you moved to Plainview. So you still went to the Stampede School, even though you had moved to the Sadler place? And Stampede was still your community?

MGB: Well, when we moved, it was closer to the school, and I went to the Stampede School, when I was living on the Sadler place.

AED: When you were old enough?

MGB: Oh, yeah, when I was old enough to go. I can remember walking back and forth.

The Jim Barnes family lived there before we did. We still have quite a few of the Barneses living. I know Dora Barnes is in a nursing home in Killeen. I talk to her frequently. She married a Bass. We used to go and visit with them. We spent many Saturday nights visiting with families. We would go there, and they played dominoes, or something, never had cards at that time, never saw a card, didn't know what it was, but they played dominoes some. We used to make homemade ice cream, and we kids would sit out on the back porch and eat homemade ice cream. One time I took too big a bite, and it knocked me out. I fell backwards. (both laugh) And they really got worried, they thought I was gonna die. (laughs) It was the ice cream, too cold or big a bite.

AED: The ice cream got you?

MGB: Unh-uh. I took too big a bite they said. Too much at one time, it was cold.

AED: Did the kids play games?

MGB: Oh, yes.

AED: What kind of games would you play?

MGB: Oh, we went outside and played Wolf over the River and Tag and things like that—on Sundays we always met at peoples' houses, and we'd maybe have Sunday dinner together, then we had corncob fights. I hadn't even thought of that in a long, long time, but we had corncob fights. They would

shuck the corn and shell it during the week to feed the cows and horses and everything, but they kept the cobs, I don't know why. The kids had corncob fights on Sundays.

AED: And what would you do—nail each other with the cobs?

MGB: Yeah! You'd run behind the barn and run behind the house and run behind anything you could run behind. And somebody would find you, and they'd throw a cob at you. If you got hit, then you had to go to jail or something, you know, we played that kind of fun and games, I don't know, or I don't remember exactly what we did.

AED: What was Wolf over the River?

MGB: We played Wolf over the River a lot.

AED: What's that? How did you play?

MGB: Two would choose up sides, and there are two rows of people, and you back off so far and then one says, "Wolf over the river, let so-and-so come over." And you hold hands real tight in a row and if that person broke the line, they got to choose someone and take them back to their side. When they broke up that line of people, your game was over. I hadn't even thought about telling that. I'm glad you asked me.

AED: What about sporting activities?

MGB: We really did not have sporting activities till I got to Plainview. I was a fanatical basketball player. I played basketball and softball in high school. Last Sunday I went to the Plainview School reunion at Jonesboro, at a community center, and one of the girls, Elfrieda Apel Schoenewolf, and I talked about our playing basketball. She is from Brady. We played on opposite ends of the court when we first started. She was a guard, and I was a forward. That was when it was a three-divisional court. You jumped in the middle, the referee tossed it up between two players, then got it down to the other end to throw the goal or the guard to it and took it to the other end from the opponents. I can remember one time, our coach Auzie Whisenhunt from Levita, or in that area, was our teacher and coach, and he taught us kids good basketball. He was a real good coach. We went each year to compete in county meet, which was a school competition of all schools in the county. One year we played basketball against a school, and we made sixty-nine points to nothing. And he made us stand and let them make two points, 'cause he didn't believe in skunking a team was really that good.

Mr. Whisenhunt has two daughters, Azalea and Guinevere, that played forward with me, and one of them I know is still living, I believe at Ballinger, but the other one I'm not sure, as I have not seen them in a long time. A girl who graduated with me lives at Ballinger, but she did not attend the reunion this year, neither did she. Out of the ten that graduated from the Plainview school with me from the tenth grade, there are only four of us living. Possibly only three, as I do not know where the other one is, either in South Carolina or not living. We are not sure. Maybe only three of us.

AED: That's great that you could get together.

MGB: Yes. Yes. Very nice.

AED: When I looked in the Coryell County Genealogical Society write up, it talked about the sheep and goat fence?

MGB: Oh. This is a very, very important thing that I didn't even think—the Perkins, a family who lived south of us, later moved to Temple and, I believe, I'm not real sure, but I believe there is one boy still living. He was in my grade. Mr. Richard Perkins bought the first fence weaver. It was a little machine, and they bought wire, put it in the machine, and they would turn a little handle. And it would run

along, wrap around and tie or weave the wire. My dad and Mr. Perkins built the first sheep fence out there in Stampede area.

AED: I had never heard of that.

MGB: I shall try to remember to look and see if I have some actual notes on that, of where it is located. I have maps and can pinpoint pretty well where different people lived. Because I have a list of forty-seven people or families that we turned over to the archeological and genealogical and so forth out at Fort Hood. When Dr. Briuer was out there I furnished him a lot. And then the lady, Miss Brandy? Brandy? No, what's her name? The one that is there now—

AED: Stephanie Bandy.

MGB: Bandy, it's Bandy, something like that. Stephanie.

AED: So they do have some of the information that you are talking about?

MGB: Yes, they do.

AED: Good. I also remember reading about the oil well.

MGB: Okay, when we lived on the Sadler farm, that was the one we moved to from our home where I was born. There was a well drilled east of us. While they were drilling, they hit oil, and it exploded. (laughs) It was a very, very outstanding accomplishment in that area because it was the first oil well. And, of course, everybody wanted to go, but they didn't want us to go. They didn't want us to get close or near because they felt it might be dangerous. They did cap it, and they did get oil from the well, but I don't know to what extent because we moved away. I may have heard some say, but it is not foremost in my mind at all. I just remember that it happened.

AED: That it did happen.

MGB: Yes. That was east of us. About, approximately, maybe four or five miles from us.

AED: And it was sometime in the midtwenties?

MGB: It would have to be. Yes. Somewhere in there because—no, it even maybe. Let's see, my youngest sister was born in 1921, my youngest brother was born in 1924. And it was after he was born. So, see, it had to be between then and when we moved to Plainview in '27. It could have happened, now I'll back up, it could have happened, no, I think I'm right. Somewhere right in there. It's kinda difficult. That's a long time ago. I hadn't thought of some of these things.

AED: You moved from the Wyatt property to the Sadler property. Did your parents buy the Sadler property?

MGB: No. It was rented. So to speak. We lived there on kind of a—third and fourth basis or something. When we moved from there to Plainview I knew why we moved, but there on the Sadler place, I don't know exactly, except that Dad worked the land and a certain portion of it went to the owner. We picked cotton, and the cotton was ginned, and a portion of it was turned over to the owner.

AED: I see. But he still owned the other property?

MGB: Oh, yes. We kept that place, in fact, we still owned that place when the army took it in 1941. My mother and I went from Plainview to what we call Stampede, to our home, and we stayed there three months two different summers.

AED: You did?

MGB: Yes, we—my dad planted tomato plants 'cause we had such nice, loamy, sandy soil. And that hot sand would get so hot we'd have to wrap our feet in wet tow sacks to walk in the sand to keep from burning our feet.

But my mother and I went there, and we still had the house, and my dad took us, as we had the car then. The first car we got was up at Plainview, and it was a touring Chevrolet car that we could all ride in. Dad took us there, and we took enough food to last a month at a time before he returned so we would be comfortable.

I had an attack of appendicitis while I was there and almost died because I was allergic to watermelon, banana, and, let me see, sour pickles. Those were the things that I dearly loved. If we went to any kind of reunion or a get-together, we always had those three things. And I would eat them, and I would get sick. But, when we were there, I ate a watermelon, and I got sick, and my mother worried 'cause we had no outside communications, only if someone just happened to come by.

When we went there we took our pressure cooker and canner, which they had purchased while at Plainview so we could can. We put tomatoes and corn in tin cans and sealed them and processed them to save them. We canned about three hundred cans of tomatoes one summer. I was only twelve years old. We gathered wild grapes and made grape juice and jelly. We made catsup out of the tomatoes and bottled it. And we had a capper. Now this is a real clincher. Dad found a still in the bushes behind the house, so we used the bottles and capper.

When we moved away we leased that land to different people, and I can remember two different families that lived there. We never knew who had the home-brew there. Should I name them or not name them?

AED: Certainly.

MGB: Okay. The Walters and Short Robinette lived there, that was two of the families. The other one—I can't remember However, Mr. Walters's mother lived with them, and she was an old, old, old woman to me. Very old. She must've been in her sixties. (both laugh) She wore a bonnet at the time, and she cried a lot. That I remember. We wondered why she cried, but it was because she was away from her family. And this was away from any close neighbors, and she was having to live there with her son's family. But we did not know at the time why she was crying. I thought, it was sadness. And to me it was real sad.

My mother and I went there, and we worked real hard. My dad leased the place to them, and then after they left we went there and worked and did that work. And my dad would come. We stayed three months, and he came about once a month.

AED: So it was leased out most of the time, from the time you moved away?

MGB: Yes, but the age I was speaking of when I went down there with Mama was not when I was nineteen years old because, no, I left—went away from home at that age to work—it was way back when I was twelve. I had an appendicitis operation when I was sixteen after I was back at Plainview, and I ate banana pudding at a church meeting on a Sunday, and Monday morning I doubled up, and the doctor rushed me—rather Eric Eigand, a neighbor had a car—and rushed me to Waco, and he barely got me there in time to keep my appendix from rupturing. So, it was—I had to be eleven or twelve years old when I was working with my mother down there.

AED: But most of that time, from when you moved until Camp Hood came in, your parents leased the land out?

MGB: Yes, yes.

AED: And there were families living there much of that time?

MGB: Yes.

AED: So your family wasn't using that land?

MGB: Not other than those two years that we went back there and planted the garden. All the time after that from the time I was twelve until the government took the land in 1941, it was leased. That was the lease area in there from when I was twelve until I was eighteen, seventeen or eighteen, six or eight years.

AED: When your folks moved to Plainview was your dad still farming?

MGB: Oh yes. Yes, we went there and leased or rented a place from L. B. Gardner, who was a banker in Waco, Texas. He owned two farms, and they were rather large farms. Dad planted cotton and other crops, but mostly cotton. And he did it on basis of him taking one bale, and Dad taking one bale or something like that.

That is where my little sister died. I had a little sister born in 1921, just two years younger than I. And when she was seven years of age, she passed away with leukemia. They took her to Scott and White in Temple where she was diagnosed to have leukemia, and they said they couldn't do anything for her, they had no cure for it, and she came home and only lasted about, well, I think she was very ill in bed about three months, but the last three weeks she was very serious.

AED: That's sad.

MGB: Very sad. And she was brought back to Copperas Cove for burial. At that time, the men of the Plainview community came and plowed the land—160 acres in one day—as Dad had not been able to plow. He had been taking care of Alta Faye. They all came in and helped him plow the land and kinda put it back in shape and everything. That was in May, as it was to lay the land for the future crops. I have a picture of those who plowed. I was trying to count the number of plows.

AED: Had to be done.

MGB: Unh-uh. Had to be done.

AED: She was buried back over here?

MGB: In Copperas Cove, where my mother and father both were buried later.

AED: They are?

MGB: Yes. And then there's also a tombstone or memorial for my younger brother, Carl Cleveland, who was born in 1924 at Stampede. He did not go in the army when he was old enough. He stayed at home and helped Dad. The county agent, Guy Powell, got him deferred on army duty one or two years, I don't know how long, to help Dad because he raised hogs for the FFA. He had one sow that had sixteen pigs in one litter. They had a hard time coping with all this. They had to feed the pigs, stock, and gather the crops, so he stayed home and helped Dad.

The army took my two older brothers, just older than me. Do you want to know about them?

AED: Sure.

MGB: Okay, when the draft for men began in 1941 for a year of military training, my oldest brother Uel was denied army training because of his health. He had a health problem that we weren't told at the time, but we learned later, and we know what took his life, he had a bad spleen. He also had bad knees. He

married and had one child. He worked in a beet factory in California. However, when he became ill he moved back to Hamilton, Texas, where he died and was buried.

Then my next brother, John Kermit, five years older than me, we have the same birthday, joined the marine corps. He was working in California, falling redwood trees. He did marine training and duty in the Pacific.

Gayland Gaddy, my brother just older than me, was working with the CCC in Arizona during the Depression as there was no work for him near home. He went to a marine base in California but was drafted and sent to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, for training where I was working at that time for a construction company, KNWL, building Fort Leonard Wood army base. Gayland was sent to England, Africa, Sicily, and Italy. He had 671 days of active duty in the army during the war. He was in the mountains of Austria when, May 8, 1945, VE day was declared and with lack of outside communications, he was on duty until May thirteenth. He served with the Nineteenth Engineers.

AED: When your folks moved to these different places, the first place you remember, and the Sadler place, and then to Plainview, do you know, even though you were young, why they were choosing to go to different places?

MGB: Oh, definitely. The first time we moved was to the Sadler place was because the house was larger, there was more land, and there wasn't sufficient room in our house to take care of our family. We had seven children, and it was a necessity. Then we moved from there to Plainview because of schooling purposes. See, Uel was going to Antelope, about four miles away, so we moved to Plainview, and all of us could go to the same school as they had ten grades.

Well, it didn't last very long because Uel completed the tenth grade the next year and then went to Gatesville and stayed with Mr. Witcher, who was a janitor at Gatesville High School, and Uel did janitor work to pay for his room and board so he could finish his high school education.

Then my sister, Nadine, finished the tenth grade at Plainview and went to Lampasas, where she lived with Mrs. Fulton, a widow woman. She milked her cow, did laundry, cleaned her house, to pay for her room and board and attended Lampasas High School where she graduated from the eleventh grade.

My brother Kermit, the next oldest, went to Plainview until his senior year, then he did not go on to finish high school. He went to Gatesville and started a machine shop, the first and only machine shop in Gatesville, I guess, that was ever there. He took my mother's little ol' basic sewing machine and made a little steam engine—one of the first things he did. Then he built a coach, which was a Napoleonic model coach, and it was in a contest that he got from GMAC, now, but it was General Motors at that time he entered the contest. He did not win first place, but he did win a prize. He built a second one, and that one is still in the family. It is a gorgeous thing, I have a picture of it. Carl Boyd Goodwin, my oldest nephew, who lives in San Angelo has it. They built a glass cage for it, and it's in the cage. After he left the machine shop, he went to California. He and two other men went in my dad's 1928 old dilapidated Chevy and made it to California in it. One of the men's wife lives here in Killeen. She is a member of the garden club, and she and I talked about their trip. She's Hazel Whitley, and Harold, her husband, went with my brother to California, I think in 1937, and went out there to log in the logging camp to make money.

Gayland went in the CCC camp in Arizona for three years before he went to the shipyard in California and was drafted in the army and sent to Fort Leonard Wood, where I was working.

I finished high school at Plainview, which was the tenth grade in 1935, with nine other students and rode a bus to Gatesville and graduated from eleventh grade in 1936 with ninety-two students. My mother and dad were not able to send me to college, but I wanted to go, so I stayed at home and

helped Dad with the crops and worked for the county attorney, Eugene Alvis Jr., for office experience and learned typing and shorthand. Nadine had already attended college two years and got a certificate to teach. She taught school at Harman, and when she went to go back to college she said, "You stayed at home and worked and helped Dad gather crops and pick cotton and worked in the field, all because they couldn't send you to college. I will help you." So the very next year, after that, it was Depression years, and everything, it was a very difficult time. My sister still taught school. I wanted to go to college so badly that she said, "If you will get Mom and Dad to borrow the money, or something, I will pay your tuition." So we didn't have to borrow the money then. She had already borrowed money to go to college earlier, and she was paying it back to a lady in Gatesville that loaned her the money.

We went to San Marcos, went up to see the dean, and Nadine applied for a job. But since I had already been working one year for nothing for Mr. Alvis, county attorney, in order to pay for gasoline for me to drive ten miles to work, my mother had me gather eggs every day and sell them. I was taught typing there in his office. I went to the high school and worked for Mrs. E. W. Brooks, the superintendent, two days a week, and helped him so I could take shorthand, and I learned shorthand from a private teacher.

I wanted to go to school so badly that my sister said, "If you want to go to college, I'll take you this summer." I went, and she paid my tuition, we lived in a co-op house with forty-two other college students and worked helping to do the meals, et cetera. We were in Dr. Dean Speck's office, he was then Dean of Men, and we were discussing work, and he said, "Well, what's little sister been doing?" "Well, she was working for an attorney, and she'd been taking court recordings and letters and learned to type and everything." And he said, "Let's put her to work." I went to work for the college librarian as assistant secretary and worked my way through college winter and summer and got forty-two hours of college credit.

AED: Your parents seem pretty supportive of getting an education. Your dad was a school trustee.

MGB: Definitely, definitely.

AED: You made the move to Plainview to get better schooling.

MGB: Definitely. Dad was a trustee and worked hard within the school system to uphold it, build it, and hire teachers and see that it was taken care of. And I know that he's gone there, I can remember when I was just a kid, that he would go there and work, the men would work. And they built the school when it burned and all. So he was definitely supportive. And then when we moved to Plainview, he was also a trustee there.

AED: He was?

MGB: Yes. Very supportive. My mother was known as the midwife of the community of Stampede. When I went to the Antelope reunion this year—the Eliga-Antelope reunion—Gail Edwards wanted to tell Karen, my daughter, something so badly. He says, "I've got to tell her. She doesn't know that her grandmother was a midwife to me." And so—(laughs) it was kinda cute. Anyway, he wanted her to know that.

AED: What do you remember about her doing that?

MGB: She would leave home and be gone overnight sometimes. And I remember when my little sister was born, very explicitly, we had to go to the Perkins' house and spend the night because my mother had to have the doctor come out, and she had to have the baby at home, and we weren't allowed to be there. And of course, we knew nothing about it until the next day. Now you have a little sister. This is the way we were told after spending the night at our neighbor's.

Oh, we had good neighbors. Everybody was so close. And we still look at them as being nearer our friends than our neighbors.

AED: It's different from how it is now.

MGB: Unh-uh.

AED: Tell me, when you were young and lived on the first place, to the best of your recollection, what kind of farming and ranching did your family do? Did you do both?

MGB: No, Dad wasn't much of a rancher because we didn't have built-in fences. We only had wire fences, barbed-wire fences, maybe a couple of strands or something that had barbs on them and they tried to keep them repaired to hold the, should I say stock in that we had, horses, and we did not have very many horses, we had a horse part of the time that Uel rode to Antelope, and we had mules. Dad raised mules. I remember old Jack. He was a big ol' black mule, and he kicked my brother Gayland in the head and almost killed him. He had a scar on the back of his head for a long time where the horseshoe made a scar on his head. Dad used the mules to pull the wagon to and from town to get supplies.

AED: So, they were for transportation.

MGB: They were our transportation. And we did not have any other transportation while we lived on our home place or the Sadler place. We were at Plainview, and it was in 1927 we got our first car. So I was, let's see, seven, eight—I was eight years old or something like that.

AED: But he did have mules. How many would he have at a time?

MGB: Four or five, is all. 'Cause they'd put four to the wagon. There's a little story that my brother Kermit tells when he was only two years old when they moved from Oakalla to the Stampede place, our homestead, he said, "There was a little horse, a little pony or something that was alongside the wagon because it was too little to pull the wagon," and he said he remembered that little horse just keeping up. He was just four years old, and he remembered it.

AED: Did you have any cattle?

MGB: We had cows for milk, and that's all. We didn't raise cattle. I will back up on that to an extent, I can remember in the last days, and especially when it was on the Sadler place, there was a—I don't know what they called it. I think a group got together and formed a meat club where each man took his turn killing and butchering a cow and delivering the meat to the families—that way we had fresh meat. In fact I discussed it at the Plainview reunion with a lady. She said, "You told me one time that you all used to get meat delivered to your house." Okay, the men of the community took turns of killing and delivering meat to the other people, and every so often they had to be responsible for killing a beef and delivering it.

AED: Would that be like a beef club?

MGB: Well, let's call it a club. I think I could call it a club. Yes. I don't know if they called it a beef club. I don't even remember. It may come back to me, but right now I'm not able to recall what they called it. I do remember that maybe every two weeks or something like that, we would have fresh beef delivered to us. Dad took his turn, so he raised some cows.

Now in order to keep the beef fresh so we could use it, we had only—I can remember, before we left the home place, an icebox. It was an old wooden icebox. I don't know where it came from. I remember my grandfather putting ice in it. A man would come by in a wagon delivering ice. They had to do it early so it'd be cool enough to put that ice in that box or wrap it in an army blanket. We could shave off and make ice cones. Using a little juice on it, but we would not use very much of it. We still

have the old, I call it a cleaver, which we shaved the ice to make the cones. We still have that in the family. My mother had what they called a milk cooler, which was made of tin. She stretched a sheet around it and poured water on the top so it would drip down on that sheet and keep cool. She sat it in the window so the wind would blow on it and keep our milk and food cool.

AED: And it was inside the house?

MGB: Inside. We would milk cows and bring in the milk and put it in crocks and put in the cooler. When it clabbered we'd skim it off and churn the butter. I can remember explicitly, my mother really did get me one time 'cause she had just finished the butter and put it up in a dish on the table, I still have the dish, and she gave me a spanking. I'll show you the dish, it is a crystal-like dish with a gold trim around the edges. She caught me getting my hand in the butter, and I got a whipping. (laughs) I remember that very well.

AED: Those are things you don't forget.

MGB: Unh-uh.

AED: Did he have sheep or goats?

MGB: No, we did not have sheep or goats there at all.

AED: Just farming.

MGB: It was all farming.

AED: What kind of things did he grow?

MGB: Cotton, corn, oats, broomcorn, and sugar cane. I can remember after we got to Plainview, I cannot remember on the home place if we had cane or not. But we did have, at Plainview, we had cane, and we had to go out and strip this cane, and cut it, and put it on the wagon and haul it to the syrup mill. We made our syrup because they had a mule or horse that went round and round to get the juice from the cane and then made our own syrup from the juice. Dad also raised wheat and lots of oats and corn. We took the corn to the mill for it to be ground for our cornmeal.

AED: And that was in Plainview?

MGB: Unh-uh. We hauled it to King, I think, that was about ten miles, toward Slater, toward Pearl, or that direction.

AED: When you were living near Stampede, where did you take your cotton and the broomcorn?

MGB: They hauled that to Copperas Cove, I would assume, I think. Or maybe to Pidcoke, 'cause they had a gin at Pidcoke and that was closer. So they could have hauled it there.

AED: As a child there were you involved in any of the picking or sowing?

MGB: I cannot remember having helped in the field when I was a child.

AED: You were pretty little.

MGB: I was too small at that time I'm assuming. Because I don't remember going to the field. I went with my mother to the garden. I remember very explicitly when she and I was down there that three months when I was about ten or twelve years old. We started home with a big number three tub of tomatoes one morning from the garden. It was a long way to walk. It was past the tank dump and a long ways to walk.

AED: So it wasn't close to the house?

MGB: No. It was away. And when we started to the house I saw a rattlesnake, I thought, over the fence in the next pasture. This was a six-foot fence that had been built on the side of our place, down by the roadway. After I saw the snake my mother watched it while I ran to the house and got a pitchfork, and I came back and when I killed it, it was a copperhead. It was not a rattlesnake. I can also remember explicitly in the tomato garden, one day I was picking tomatoes, and right under a tomato plant, a copperhead was there and I didn't see it because of its color, so much like the tomatoes and what have you. I almost got bit by the copperhead.

AED: And then you preserved the produce from the garden?

MGB: That's where we made our two hundred cans of tomatoes. And, let's see, we had this canner.

My mother belonged to a garden club. It was not like our garden clubs are today. It was community garden club. They quilted part of the time. They canned part of the time. They also went and helped families do various things. It was a community working group of women, and they met every so often, and she belonged to it. The home demonstration lady out of Gatesville came and showed them how to can.

This canning situation led into lots of work. I have the canner. It's a sixteen-quart canner that has a petcock on top, and if it would get too hot, it would pop off and let steam out. And you wouldn't let it do that, or it'd pop the cans. We had to be very careful and on a wood stove you had to move it on and off and move it on and off, which was a pretty big chore. And being the age I was, I remember explicitly doing it.

I did find a note the other day where we had turned over a part of the canning things to the museum in Gatesville. I found my notes, and I was happy to know that they are there. I did a cookbook in 1984 and '85, my daughter, Kitty, my sister, Nadine, and my cousin Mary Love, helped and we made it a family cookbook, *Cooking with Goodwin's Generations and Friends*. And one copy is in the museum in Gatesville. We sold over six hundred copies.

So, I said, "There's one more project that I thought I was going to pursue to have in the Gatesville museum." And I've changed my mind. My brother John Kermit, five years to the day older than me, that I told you had the machine shop in Gatesville? He started building cannons when he got out of the marine service. And I have beautiful pictures of them. I have one of his cannons. He had at least forty-some-odd ready to assemble when he got ill and had a wreck and couldn't complete them. And they were sold with his estate. I fell heir to one of the cannons. I was going to put it in the Gatesville museum, and I changed my mind. It may go in the museum at Fort Hood, and it may go in the one they're fixing to build, and I think that is where it will go since they plan to have it for historical items of people who lived where the reservation was built.

AED: That would be a good place for it.

MGB: Unh-uh. I think that's the place it has to go. I think—after I went to that meeting at Fort Hood, I changed my mind right then. I said, It should be there because it is a heritage, to me. I don't want it to go out of the family, if anything should happen, and if I put it there it has to be with the understanding that it would come back to someone of the family of heritage. That's the way I feel.

AED: Did you have chickens?

MGB: Oh yes, definitely. Raised our own chickens. Had our own roosters and everything. They had an incubator and hatched many little chickens.

AED: So you got meat from the beef club?

MGB: It was a community club, I would say.

AED: But you also had poultry. And hogs?

MGB: Oh yes, we had hogs too. We had to feed our own hogs. Had our own hog meat that way.

AED: Did your dad or your brothers or yourself ever hunt for meat?

MGB: We did not have wild animals as such. Now we would kill or trap for possums or trap for animals that came in and they were predators. We would trap for them or kill them like that. But, to eat, I don't think so. We never ate a rabbit. We ate chicken.

A chicken was Sunday dinner. We always had chicken for Sunday dinner. And I learned to wring their necks and dress them when I was a kid. I mean when I was really young. A chore.

AED: Did your family have dogs?

MGB: We always had a dog. Rover. I can remember quite well. Rover was a beautiful two-tone kind of a shepherd-like dog. And I always wanted a dog like that. We had one dog when we lived on the Sadler place. We moved, while we were at Plainview, as I told you, Mr. Gardner had—I said Sadler, and I didn't mean Sadler. When we lived on the Gardner place. We moved from one house to another house because when we moved there, we moved in where the Lees live. And there was a Mr. Nixon and his son and daughter-in-law, I think it was, living there, and he died. When he died, they left, and Mr. Gardner wanted us to have the house, and we moved there. It was about halfway, well maybe, I will say a half a mile from the Hemeline Cemetery. If that will pinpoint where we were at Plainview. About half a mile on the road between the cemetery and Highway 84.

AED: What were some of the other chores you had besides the chickens when you were real young?

MGB: Well, we had to help slop and feed the hogs. My sister milked the cow. That was something I couldn't do. I wasn't the type to (both laugh) or old enough or something. I just couldn't milk the cow. So she always milked the cow. And of course, that helped her work her way through high school, so I said she learned something. If you can really compare it and say you learned a trade, she learned a trade. (laughs)

AED: The milk was for family use, or was it for sale?

MGB: Yes. It was family use. Now I can remember when we got on up to older years, when we moved away and moved to Plainview, I can remember seeing separators. They bought these old-timey separators. And I can remember seeing those operate, but I don't know who owned them or where they were. I just don't remember.

We had good families and neighbors there.

AED: Where would you go, if you were living in Stampede, to go to the post office?

MGB: We had a rural mail carrier, Route 3 out of Killeen, Texas, and I'm on Route 3 out of Kempner now. (laughs) I remember very explicitly going to the mailbox and standing and waiting for Mr. DeWare.

AED: So you had a mailbox at your home?

MGB: Out on the road. It was, I would say, oh, a good mile and a half or something like that from our house to the main road. It was just an old dirt road. And it had a—a mountain before it got to us, and a lot of times that mail carrier had a hard time getting up that mountain. I can remember. And it would be

about, say, maybe, two and a half miles from the Cowhouse Creek to our mailbox. About that far.

AED: They were on horseback?

MGB: No, I think they had a car. I'm not sure. There were cars on the road at that time.

AED: The nearest post office?

MGB: Would've been Killeen, I'm assuming as we got our mail from Killeen.

AED: Copperas Cove?

MGB: Yes, Copperas Cove would've been closer. It was about sixteen miles to Copperas Cove. Yes, it would've been. Copperas Cove did have a post office. You're right.

They had mercantile—Jess Bell owned a mercantile store there.

AED: And you did trade there?

MGB: Yes. Everything that we got was there. Our food, if we bought any extra. We went there one time and we always told the story on my sister Nadine. My dad bought apples for Christmas. We got in the wagon and she started eating an apple when we left Copperas Cove and when we got home she'd still be nibbling on that apple. She wouldn't eat it fast, she would eat it slow so she could have an apple a long time.

This is something that it was a definite thing in my mind, I should have remembered, too. My dad put out over two hundred peach trees at that area. We did sell some peaches. When my mother and I went back there that summer, we sold a lot of peaches. We sold them a dollar bushel.

AED: Fresh? Not canned?

MGB: Fresh, fresh peaches. We gathered them. Had them there. And people would come by and get them. We also had pear trees. Very nice pear trees. None other than Alberta peaches that I can remember, that we sold.

AED: Alberta peaches, you remember?

MGB: We had, definitely, Alberta peaches. And, some white peaches. They were what they would call clingstones and clearstones. In other words, they'd pop off the seeds, or else they stuck on the seeds. And if they were clingstones, my mother would make sweet pickle peaches. She would peel them and put them in jars and pour syrup made of sugar and water which made pickled peaches. She had a lot of canning jars and did many jars of peaches. This was a lot of our livelihood, was canning from summer for winter. We did a lot of that.

AED: You said you would go to Copperas Cove for certain things? Since you weren't extremely close, how often would you go?

MGB: Dad may have gone occasionally. They always went Christmas shopping. And we had a peculiar Christmas, a wonderful Christmas for us kids. My dad bought fruit and nuts and things that he would put in each sack for us, and it was paper sacks underneath the Christmas tree. Mom and Dad put the tree up after we went to bed. They put all the sacks and everything there and all the toys and anything that we got for Christmas was put under the tree after we went to bed, and we never knew when Santa Claus came. So then the next morning we would have a wonderful Christmas. And that's what we had.

Mama always cooked a lot of things. More so at Christmas. She always made a wonderful angel food

cake for my dad because she would use twelve egg whites in an angel food cake. She would use the yellows to make the yellow golden pound cake. She always made those two cakes. My dad was a coconut eater. He always had coconut as a special thing for Christmas where he could cut it open for the milk, and my mother would make coconut cake. Those are the things that I remember that were my dad's specialties. But Mama was a good cook.

AED: What would you have for Christmas dinner?

MGB: We had—we maybe had duck, and we may have had chicken or turkey, always with dressing made with cornbread and biscuit. Dad took the corn to town and had it ground at the mill for our cornbread. We raised chickens and turkeys. Okay, my big thing was, we did raise turkeys, and we gathered their eggs. Uel watched turkeys to the nest a long time. We always had to chase these turkeys and watch them from early morning until they went on their nest. Then come back home, and if we lost that turkey we were in deep trouble. We had to know where they laid those eggs. Nadine and Kermit were closer in age and worked together as a team watching turkeys more than any of us kids. And, I know that Nadine has told me those stories. Then when I visited with Kermit. I call him Kermit, they called him John, while in service. When I was there, he got to telling me about it one time when he and Nadine was watching this turkey. He got to playing and forgot to go with her, and they got lost off. And so they were hollering for each other, and they scared the turkey off the nest, and they got in trouble. (both laugh) So he was telling me about this when I was there in May 1999. It was kinda cute.

AED: What other special things might you do for Christmas?

MGB: My mother made our doll dresses. I have a doll that my sister was given by her cousin Ruth Dawson when she was only seven, I think. Anyway, recently I read the notes on this, and I do have the notes, I will go back and verify them. She gave me this doll out of her cedar chest. And she said, "I want this redressed and reconstructed and put in the museum." I now have the doll and I will give it to my daughter, and she said she will keep trying to have it reconstructed. So we will, hopefully, get it done. We always had dolls at home. My mother always, if nothing else, she'd make a sock doll. And she would make dresses for all of our dolls. And we had some ceramic dolls. We were very careful with our ceramic dolls 'cause they broke easily. Some had ceramic legs, arms, and face. And then put together with material and stuffed with cotton.

AED: What other kind of toys do you remember having?

MGB: What other toys? Wind-tops. I can remember so well, the boys always spun tops. That was another game that they would play when they went to visit neighbors. They'd draw a circle and you had to throw your top and put it in that circle or you weren't in the game. You had to be a good top player. They made tops out of spools after Mom used the thread by driving a wooden peg in the holes.

My mother saved everything. The string from a flour sack, also feed sacks. Her flour sacks were used for her kitchen towels. She made her own towels for the kitchen from the flour sacks, also feed sacks. We didn't have feed sacks for a long time until I was older, but flour did come in sacks, and she always saved every one of those. She would rip the thread that put those together and save every bit of that twine and then the boys used to get some to spin those tops. She also used it to sew with too.

I also remember that my Grandfather Cleveland, because he lived with us so long, was the person in the community that repaired clocks. He also oiled and repaired sewing machines. If they had a treadle sewing machine, they were rich people. We did not have one at that time, but we got one after we went to the Sadler place, we got a treadle machine. I remember my dad buying the first one for my mother, quite well, it was quite an expensive thing. We took real good care of it. My daughter, Katherine, or Kitty, now has it as my mother wanted her to have it.

AED: Oh, she does?

MGB: Yes, she does. It's an antique.

AED: Did she make everyone's clothes?

MGB: Oh, definitely. She made all of our clothes, but she pieced quilts by hand.

AED: And did you have everyday and school clothes?

MGB: Yes. We came home, and changed clothes when we got there before we could do any of our chores or do anything.

AED: Can you describe what your chore clothes might be and what your school clothes might be?

MGB: Yes, it's real strange, and I think I should put this in because it was a daring, outstanding thing to me. My dad would not let us girls wear overalls at the house, or pants. We had to wear some kind of a dress. When we moved to the Gardner farm, yes, we did get to buy some pants to wear to the field because it protected us. It was for protection. But when we came to the house, we went immediately to our bedroom and changed clothes. He thought it was a disgrace for a woman to wear pants like a man.

I can't forget the first time he ever saw me in slacks. He just could not believe that I would wear slacks. And this has always stuck with me. My dad was a very honest, downright out, good person. And he would let you know right from wrong from the minute you were born until. And at the day he died, he was still that good person that would only stand for the truth. I know he said to me one time, "I never ever thought I'd see you wearing slacks." (laughs) And I said "Why?" He said, "Well, because you weren't permitted to wear them at my house." And he said, "I just didn't think I'd see you in them." I never ever wore slacks to church. I haven't till this day. Other than to an affair there, or something, but never church services. I just—that stuck with me from my dad.

AED: Would you say your parents were religious?

MGB: Yes. Dad taught family-practice type at home by reading the Bible at the table a lot. And he taught the boys to read. We were not—the girls were not permitted to read—public-wise. We could read the Bible when we wanted to, but not—we were just taught that it was a man's place to teach Bible. And that was our belief.

We were Church of Christ. At one time we were members of the Baptist church, and I even joined the Baptist church at Arnett, when I was nine years old, I think. I really have to admit I didn't know exactly why, except—what was being said to me at that time, I believed. And I did join a church. And had a happy time going there to church with the family and everything. We'd go on Sundays to church. As time went along, my dad helped build Stanley Chapel, which was in the Plainview community. It was a native rock building. It is still standing. I have pictures of it and very fond memories of it. We went there and I was later, baptized in a creek down on the Baize farm. At the reunion the other day Chess Necessary was there, and he owns the building and has built it into a residence since it was a church. There was also an arbor out by the side of that church that my dad helped build. And we had our camp meetings in the summer a week at a time. And everybody went to the arbor meetings as the building was too hot. We did not have air conditioning.

AED: Is an arbor different from a tabernacle?

MGB: Yes. A tabernacle has sides and can be let down or can be raised up. An arbor is an open framework with a cover on top only.

AED: What would a camp meeting be like?

MGB: Well, a preacher would come and stay in a community. We always were fortunate in getting to have the preacher stay with us, most of the time. And he would stay an entire week. And we'd go to the meetings at night. And then have an all-day meeting on Sunday. Dinner on the ground, so to speak. And services maybe in the evening. We only had the kerosene lights or lanterns.

AED: In the daytime people would go back to their homes? People didn't physically camp there for the week?

MGB: No. We had no campground there at that particular place. Now, since then of course, we've gone to Nolanville campground here, and there are places in the area, but not where we lived, at that time.

AED: You talked about your grandfather living with you.

MGB: My mother's father had no place to go once his family married—his wife died when they lived in or on the Killeen Prairie. When she died, he broke up housekeeping. They lived in Oakalla and moved from there to Killeen for a while. Then they moved to what was called the Killeen Prairie. That is approximately, and I can kinda pinpoint the area because I just kinda know about it—say halfway between Killeen and the West Fort Hood air base. That kinda give you an idea?

AED: Yeah.

MGB: It was that vicinity out in there, they called it the Killeen Prairie. My mother's father had a house out there. When the children were at home. When my grandmother died with cholera, they buried her in Killeen Cemetery. Granddad went to live with his children. Most of the time was spent with us. My dad, like I said, was good and accepted Granddad and invited him into our home.

My mother's twin brothers were on the go. They didn't stay put. One of them bought a car with a rumble seat—(both laugh) and he—he got out and went places and did things. He finally married a girl out in New Mexico. That is where he settled down. It was a long way from us, and they would come just once a year, like at Christmastime. Then another uncle, Arthur Cleveland, moved to Winters, Texas, and he married a woman out there and was county commissioner, for a while before becoming a deputy sheriff in Abilene where he died. Granddad spent some time in Kempner, with his daughter, Eula, who was a telephone operator and married Elmer Murphy, who was a rural mail carrier from Kempner to Oakalla.

And, I would like to—well, I want to finish about Granddad first.

Yes, Granddad worked very hard with Dad. He rode a three-wheeled plow. Now I call it a three-wheel. It had two wheels in the back where he sat down and then one up in front that followed a furrow, and then they had a turning plow that turned the land, and he pulled that with the mules. Granddad made rows for the corn, rows for cotton and everything, before the time came when my Uncle Arthur Cleveland out at Taylor County, Texas, someway or other they managed, I don't know whether it was sell or buy or what, but we got a double-row cultivator. It would plant two rows at a time, and that was quite an advancement. I can remember explicitly, my brother John Kermit left the horses one time. And he said, "Now, sis, you said you could hold them while I go to the house and get a drink, 'cause I've got to have a drink." "But," he said, "don't let them go, 'cause you'll plow up the cotton." And while he was gone, I turned them around, and I plowed up two rows of cotton, and I nearly got killed for it. (both laugh) I could not make the mules stay still. (laughs) So, I was just a kid, may ten or twelve, I wasn't real small, but I mean I was young. So that scared me.

Anyway, Granddad rode that plow. He always plowed for Dad. I can remember my grandfather living with us until—well, until he died at age eighty-four. He died the year that I worked in Brownwood at

Camp Bowie. He had a mustache, which I did not like, and I cannot stand my husband with a mustache now. He knows I don't like it. (both laugh) He will grow it, but says, it stemmed back to I did not like my grandfather's. I had to trim my grandfather's mustache all the time. I had to trim that mustache when I was a little girl growing up. He wouldn't let anyone else do it. When he got sick, had a stroke, and put in the Waco hospital and then they brought him back to our home at Plainview. I was at Camp Bowie, but they called me to come home. He wanted me to shave him and trim his mustache. He would not let his own sons shave him. I had to do it.

AED: That was your duty.

MGB: Well, I had been at home more than any of the kids and kinda grew up with him and waited on him a lot. He was not a person to be helpless or expect too much. He always sat on our front porch a lot while living at Plainview, the last few years of his life. People had cars and would go down the road, and he would sit there, laying kinda back in his chair, sitting back on the two legs with his head against the wall, with his hat down over his face, and if these cars came along he'd say, "Howdy." And if they didn't wave at him, he'd say, "I said howdy, dadgumit." That was his byword, dadgumit. I've never ever heard him cuss. I never ever heard my dad cuss, except one time, and he was at the barn trying to make a cow go through the gate, and he said, "You damned old fool." That's the only thing I ever heard my dad say. (laughs)

AED: You were going to say something—you were going to finish about your grandfather first—and there was something else—

MGB: It'll come back.

AED: Thought I'd check. You had six other siblings, so you had a full house, with your grandfather, and your parents.

MGB: Yes.

AED: What was it like with all those kids out on the farm?

MGB: Well, I can remember quite well, my mother cooked from the garden. We always had to go to the garden and gather for the morning or the noon meal. I used to gather green beans and come sit on the porch and watch the mockingbird. My mother found a worm in the beans one time because she said, "You can't sit on the porch and watch the mockingbird anymore because you weren't watching what you were doing." You like stories? That's a story. (AED laughs) But that was the truth. She told me, "No more sitting on the front porch and watching the mockingbirds."

My mother always grew pretty roses, iris, and blue morning glories. She also had lilacs. I have one of my dad's mother's white lilac bushes. Right out in the back, by that dog.

AED: Isn't that great?

MGB: Yes. It has never bloomed since we moved here. Moving it—it has no other for pollination.

AED: The soil or something?

MGB: It has to be with another bush—

AED: Oh, so it can pollinate, cross pollination.

MGB: Pollination! But someday I want the lilac bush to be moved and put in a group. My mother always grew lots and lots of morning glories. Our house had a side room we called a shed where we had our washing machine, the first one she ever had. And she grew morning glory vines at the window. My

dad bought a washing machine that you had to turn the handle to agitate it. You had to roll it to wring the clothes. My dad bought one for Mom, but we had always washed with a big old black pot out in the yard, even after we moved to Plainview community, we had a black pot to boil the clothes.

AED: And built a fire underneath it?

MGB: Yes. We built a fire. We drew water from a well where we lived. The well was like a cistern type, or it was with a casing. It had a rope and bucket. We always caught rainwater to use for washing as long as we could, then we drew the water from the well and washed our clothes.

AED: Did you help with the laundry?

MGB: Always. Always. My mother had a clothesline, and we always hung clothes outside.

AED: What kind of soap would you use?

MGB: My mother made her own lye soap, and I learned to make lye soap with her. She always made lye soap.

AED: What kind of chores would the boys do that would be different?

MGB: They fed the hogs, the horses, and the cows. It was my chore to gather eggs always. And they helped some. My sister helped my mother in the kitchen and to care for the younger brother and sister. After we moved to Plainview, we had a smokehouse, where we hung our hogs in the wintertime.

AED: You didn't have one in Stampede or on the Sadler place?

MGB: I don't remember too much about it, but we probably did have.

AED: Did you have barns at either of those places?

MGB: Yes. Oh, yes, we definitely had a barn at each place.

AED: You were telling me about the ages of your brothers and sisters.

MGB: There were seven of us. Uel was the oldest. He was Uel Lambertine, born at Oakalla, February 12, 1909, and died February 13, 1970. He was named for our dad's father, Lambertine Berrian Goodwin. Mom and Dad married January 19, 1908, at Oakalla. Nadine Ruth was born June 27, 1912, at Oakalla. John Kermit was born there also, April 8, 1914, and they moved to Stampede when he was between two and four years old. Gayland Gaddy was born January 13, 1917, at Stampede and was named for Dr. Gaddy of Copperas Cove who delivered him. I was born April 8, 1919, and did not get named Melba until I was nine months old, I was told, and did not have a middle name. The only one of seven children without a middle name. They were so happy to find me, they didn't find a name for me. (laughs) In May 1921, my youngest sister was born and that was Alta Faye. She was named Alta for Alta Cass of Lometa, Mama and Dad's friend. January 31, 1924, Carl Cleveland was born, and that was the youngest of seven children. He was named Carl for my father and Cleveland for my mother's maiden name. He was the one that was lost at sea after the war in 1951, near the Golden Gate Bridge in California.

There was one thing that I forgot to tell you, that we did have our own bees. We did have our own honey from the bees. In fact, I found a note from Nadine's own handwriting, and it said, "In 1921, Alta Faye Goodwin, kept in a wagon under a big live oak tree, at the southwest corner of Stampede schoolyard," and she was sitting with her while Mom and Dad helped rob bees in the north school building wall. "For no known reason, Alta Faye screamed and cried, but not able to tell cause. We told Mom and Dad, and when they examined her, they found bee had stung her in the roof of her mouth and left the stinger."

AED: You had bees on your properties? In hives?

MGB: Yes. Dad had built the boxes for the beehives. And he always got to rob them. I had an uncle, my dad's brother, Willie Goodwin, who could rob a beehive and never get stung. He was immune or something about his body that the bees would not sting. But Dad couldn't. They would practically sting him to death. And Uncle Willie would come and rob our bees for us.

This is a letter written by Nadine to my dad when she was taking a trip.

AED: It's a letter to him? To your dad?

MGB: Yes. It's a letter to them, and she addressed it to my dad. And it has Route 3, Killeen, on it. This is the reason it makes it kinda neat to tie in the fact that I was out on Route 3—Killeen at that time, in 1921. They were getting mail out there from Killeen. She wrote this letter in Justin, Texas, August 4, 1921. She said, "Dear Papa. How are you? I am fine. We got here night before last about one o'clock in the night. We got here all right. I counted 1,100 cars in Fort Worth, and I never counted half of them either. We got to Gatesville, and then we went to Gregory," which I'm sure she meant McGregor. "Waco, West Station, Itasca, Grandview, Fort Worth, and Haslet." I'm thinking that's Haskell. I don't know. It may be.

AED: I think there is a Haslet. I don't know where it is, though.

MGB: Well, it's Haskell and Justin. "Write soon. I'll close. Nadine Goodwin." That was his oldest daughter, my oldest sister, that was writing back to him. And she kept or made a copy from the letter that was in Dad's trunk, and I am ever so thankful for it.

Now Nadine was quite a poet, and she wrote lots and lots of poems to me, as her sister. She was always referring to me, different things as her sister. And then I found another one that was written May 30, 1947. As I started to tell you, she taught school at all these different places in Coryell County—Harman, Topsey, Antelope, Longview, Mountain, and Purmela. And in 1946 or 1947, Dr. Ellsworth Lowery in Gatesville did a patch test on her and found that she had possible TB. So they sent her to a state TB sanatorium, near San Angelo, Texas, to be checked and treated. After six months of bed rest she got better and started doing nursing work there, studied to be a nurse, and taught nursing twenty-five years. They retired her medically after she fell in the bathtub and had a brain concussion. She had sixteen major operations. She had many minor operations, and when she came to live with me she had been in a wheelchair for fifteen years. She had had two toes removed and these other operations, which I could tell about. But she had to have lots of medication. She was a very good nurse, but she got the brain concussion, and they medically retired her. She had quite a long life, but passed away April 2000, at the age of eighty-seven.

She married Jeffrey Crump, who was also a nurse at the sanatorium. He had been a patient from Arkansas before becoming a nurse. They were both patients and nurses before they married. Had a good life, but no children. My sister more or less adopted every one of her nieces and nephews, and this is why she has written and kept so many notes. She would write notes on—anything that I wrote her, she had all the letters that I ever wrote her. And I have accumulated a lot of information that I wouldn't even know if had not read the letters and notes. This one poem is one she wrote when she was in bed in 1947. At building number four. They had all the buildings numbered, and she noted this and she called it "The Birds Are Having a Picnic Today" [or "Picnic Time"]. This is in her own handwriting or printing.

Picnic Time
The birds are having a picnic today...
Hear them calling their neighbors
"Come over our way...

The rain washed the trees, no dust can be found.
But we'll not eat up on the wet ground.
It's May time you know; the mulberries are ripe
So we'll feast upon mulberries, suet, an[d] tripe."

By N. R. Goodwin.
May 30, 1947
Written when a patient at Sanatorium, Texas.

AED: So you were pretty close with her when you were younger.

MGB: Very close.

AED: You stayed close, but you started out close as well.

MGB: We started out close. She always referred to people as having been the mother to the Goodwin children in her family because my mother had phlebitis, she wasn't able to walk. I can remember my mother being in the bed as much as three months at a time. She did all the cooking and washing and taking care of us kids for Mom at that time, before I was even old enough to really know that she was doing all the work. See, I mean, to be cognizant of the fact that I should be one of the helpers. I was just another kid, usually played outside with the boys.

I was a tomboy. I ran out like the boys. And I can remember, they always told on me if I did anything wrong. One time I ran with the boys down to the creek, called the Stampede Creek, that was on the map that you were looking at a while ago. We went go down there, and the boys would smoke cedar bark. But I couldn't smoke. I was a girl. One day I had wanted to take a draw off of one of the cedar bark cigarettes, and they let me, and they went to the house and told on me, and my mother whipped me. So it was a no-no for a girl to smoke at that time. That happened at Stampede, while we lived on the Sadler place, and it just came to me.

AED: So your mother was sick.

MGB: My mother was ill, and she had to have gallstones removed at one time. This I remember. We were on the Sadler place at the time she first had gallstone attacks but did not have the operation until we were at Plainview.

AED: So even when you were really little, she was quite ill.

MGB: Yes. Well, see she had so many children there. Every two years she had a child, and at that time giving birth at home was not something you got over overnight and went home. It was something that you dealt with. The family, and to raise that child and be ill at the same time was a chore. So I can imagine all those things that we kids do not know about, it's imagination on our part.

AED: What kind of medicines or remedies might they use for some of the conditions she had?

MGB: We had a man that used to come through and sell Rawleigh products. And—

AED: I don't know what that is.

MGB: You do not know. Okay, I will explain it this way. He sold a vanilla flavoring that you could buy from him.

AED: He sold vanilla products?

MGB: He sold vanilla—no, he sold Rawleigh products. And he sold a vanilla flavoring that I was quite fond of, not imitation. In fact, I can buy that same vanilla now, and it's about seven dollars and ninety-five

cents a bottle and it's very strong and lasts a long time, being a large bottle. And it's good vanilla. I mean it's real stuff. It's not artificial. I will tell you where you can buy it. It's at one of my cousin's places in Lampasas. It's kind of a shoe shop, hardware, gift place up there. I want to go back and buy some vanilla, I'm nearly out. (laughs) Yes.

AED: They used it as a home remedy?

MGB: No. The reason I brought that up is because this Rawleigh man brought our salve. It was in a little tin can that you screwed the top half off. He also had Vicks vapor rub, which we also used. They could buy it at the grocery store—or mercantile store in Copperas Cove at Bell's. I believe they bought it there, 'cause I learned about that in later years. That's what we used. They rubbed Vicks on our chests when we got a cold, and then they'd put a piece of flannel blanket which had been warmed by the stove and put us to bed. And we were covered with heavy quilts almost to sweat out that cold. That's the way we got rid of a cold.

AED: Was your mother, because of her illness, taken to a doctor? Or did you treat her at home?

MGB: Very, very seldom ever. I'm assuming that one of few times she may have gone to the doctor when Dad would take her in the wagon and go into Copperas Cove to see Dr. Gaddy or Dr. Bivins. Those were the two doctors there at the time. And I'm assuming by things that I've known, just to put two-and-two together and what my sister and I would talk about, we were permitted or asked to go to our neighbor's house during the day, and when we'd come home they would be back. That's part of their shopping time that maybe they would go for Christmas, or maybe they would go at other times, and they would be shopping, and we were assuming that they were going shopping.

Now my dad belonged to the Masonic lodge in Copperas Cove. And he did go to their meetings occasionally and do some shopping while he was there. So that's part of the time Mother and Dad were away.

AED: But this man came to your home and sold products. Did you have other peddler-type people come through?

MGB: Yes. Occasionally, like I said, they delivered meat. They delivered the necessary things that people needed as far as medicines were concerned. This is about all I could remember. There may have been more.

There was not any of the women that got together and did sewing and quilting and things like that at Stampede. When we moved to Plainview, yes, Mom had a club there where they did get together. But even there as time passed, people got together and did more things, they had better transportation and more people located near where we lived.

We were in a German community. Everybody there was German. And by the reason of the fact, and I say this with all fairness to them because they're good friends of mine now. We were looked down on somewhat when we went to school. They would call us *stinkouta*, means polecat. And that's the only words that I learned in German. Since I went to Germany for three years, I learned many things about their traits, their ways of living, and I have very, very close and good friends in this area now that are German women. And for that reason I could appreciate them more after I grew up and knew what they were like in their culture. We lived close to a crossroad, and on Sunday morning at a certain time every car in that community would get to that crossroad to go to church. And you had to wait for each other to take their turn, as if it were a light. It was by the Hemeline Cemetery and near where we lived. We would watch those people go to church.

AED: What do you think was the difference between your family and the German families that looked

down? What caused that?

MGB: The reason that I think that it was caused—this was a very short time after the first war. They still had that hatred toward the people, and they—when they came here, they settled together. And they had a togetherness that school was mostly German people, but they were, shall we say, integrated, in a sense. The other people moved in, and my dad and two other men that were kinda different, not German, they were trustees, along with the other German trustees. And we would hear and know that the Germans stuck together on their ideas. We do this, we do this, we do this. But, we broke that barrier in that Dad was the cook at the end of school to barbecue all the meat. He would start cooking the night before and then have it cooked by lunchtime the next day in big vats to serve all the people. That helped break down the barrier.

Then we had this one family that was not German, and the girl and I were of the same age. My brother John, or Kermit, and Eric were the same age, also children between. But if I went and spent the night with Ethel, then Eric was at our house. John Kermit went to Eric's and Ethel came to my house, like that, at night. And we were not German, but Germans lived between us. And then, it gradually, the barrier was broken by reason of growing up and being educated to the fact that they weren't a people of hate. They weren't of differences other than they cooked different, their meals were different, we learned a lot of things from them. We finally learned to work in the field with them. Our cultures were similar, but not exactly alike.

AED: When you lived at Stampede, as a small child, do you recall any people of other races living near by?

MGB: No.

AED: Black or Mexican?

MGB: No. I never saw a Negro until I was at Plainview. And my dad had to hire some Negroes to come in and pick cotton for us one time. I'll never forget this as long as I live. I was scared. Very scared. And I could not pick cotton and be in front of them. I always had to be behind so I could watch them, as I was scared of them. My dad assured me there would be no problems or anything, but I did have that horror. Yet we learned to know them. They moved in a house not too far away from us. It was the only family in the whole community that was colored, or black.

AED: And Mexican families?

MGB: We did not have any Mexican people there to my knowledge. They were of German descent, and then the colored family moved in. They had big, grown women that went to the field with the men. They worked very, very hard. They were good, hard workers.

I think I had a good childhood life, in that we had a good home life. I think this is what made our childhood life so good. We learned to accept my father's and mother's ways of teaching. They were good congenial people, and they mixed well with the community, and we brought people to our homes, and I think that had a lot to do with our family life. Church-wise, school-wise, and their friendship.

AED: Maybe you could tell me a little bit more about your early schooling and what a day might be like at school when you went to the Stampede school.

MGB: Yes, when I went there first 'course we were taught our ABCs and that just—I mean, you know, it was a long time ago, and I can remember so many years ago that we weren't taught in school like they're being taught now. There's a definitely difference because with my sister teaching at different schools. I can remember one in particular, when she taught at Mountain. She stayed and lived with Evalie and Charlie Barton, and they had two cute kids, little Bobby Joe. I have a big picture of him

and his wagon. I remember him quite well as I went there and stayed with her a few times when she was ill. I went and was her substitute teacher. Her school picture was made, and I was in it as a teacher. (laughs) I wasn't even out of high school. (both laugh) But it was kinda an amazing thing. Just recently I was talking to one of the men about it, and he said, "Oh, I know those people." He told me that this little boy, now a grown man with a family, had died, and I didn't know it, which was sad.

AED: But you had time you played and time you learned at school?

MGB: Yes. We had our recesses. This is what you wanted me to cover now. When I went to Plainview, I remember explicitly, my first-grade teacher died. That was a very, very hard time to cope with. One of the trustee's daughters came to school, she was in the high school. And she came into our room and told us about it and she was crying, which made it much more difficult to cope with. We had a very hard time.

We had the desks arranged differently than they do in school now. I mean, it was just definitely different. If you did something wrong in school the teacher may have brought you up and set you by her desk. And had to be taught right there by her desk during that day. It's things like that I remember. You may have stayed in from play. You may not have gotten to play at recess.

Now we had basketball courts that were built outside. There was no inside basketball courts at all.

AED: But they did have a basketball court?

MGB: Oh, yes, definitely. They built them and marked off the courts and dug trenches around and put some kind of white markings. I don't know what it was they used. Maybe flour.

AED: This is at Plainview?

MGB: Yes, at Plainview. I don't remember any kind of activities at Stampede at all. No—

AED: Baseball?

MGB: No, I mean in the way of when we had recess. I do not remember any activity. We just played I guess. I don't remember any activities. I didn't get to go to school there very long, see, it was just a part of a year. I was young. And it's been quite a long time but I don't remember. So I can't really talk about it to any degree of accuracy.

AED: How long was your school year?

MGB: We had nine months I guess. Like, I guess like it is now.

AED: Did you take your lunch with you? Or your dinner?

MGB: Definitely.

AED: What would you take?

MGB: This will just kill you. When I went—now I can remember this real well at Plainview. We had twin girls that lived across the road from us. They were the first to have sliced light bread, and they'd put light bread and peanut butter together, and they'd have peanut butter sandwiches. We couldn't afford it. I had cornbread and syrup. I carried cornbread and syrup for lunch many times. And I was kinda embarrassed to know that they had such good food and everything. So I'd kinda slip around to the end of the group and eat at the end, and I'd hurry and eat, as I had a certain amount of pride. The German kids would come with—they had some kind of sausage that they always had. I think it was German sausage. They had a different kind of food to us. The twins that lived across the road from us were like we were, they were not German. However, they were privileged to have something special.

They had a little more money than most people, and they dressed alike, and they were kinda looked up to. I saw one of the twins, Sophie, when I went to the Plainview reunion meeting the other day. She was just one of us.

AED: Oh, you did?

MGB: Yes, I saw her. And we have stayed in touch with each other all these years. We talk about some of those things occasionally. Once in a while something will come up, a little thing. But I remember they carried the first fruit in their lunch. And they were the first to take a lunch basket. I can remember they were the first in most of those things.

AED: What did you carry your lunch in? Or what did most people carry theirs in?

MGB: We wrapped them up maybe, if we were lucky, we had a newspaper. Now there were kids who rode a horse or had a buggy. This was outstanding in my mind because horses came back to us here in our home in that Karen, our daughter, is such a horse lover. She hauled horses by truck and trailer for over five years all over the U.S. There were three of our neighbors who had horses to ride to school. One neighbor had a buggy, and he was privileged to hitch his horse to the buggy. And, if we were lucky, he would let us ride sometimes a part of the way. But his parents were not permitting him to do it, he just did it on his goodness. And if he got caught at it, he'd get in trouble. So they would come by our house, and he'd go down the road and kinda wait for us. We walked to school three and a half miles. And he was a little bit farther than us, and he rode in this buggy, and he wasn't permitted to whip the horse or make it go faster, but he did ride to school. The buggy had a little seat in the back and we could sit up in that seat and ride. We could not sit with him, but we could sit in the back.

AED: Get a lift.

MGB: Um-hm. We did. Yes indeed.

AED: This is changing the subject quite a bit—

MGB: That's all right.

AED: Do you have any recollections of Prohibition when you were in Stampede or living on the Sadler place?

MGB: That was the thing that I was going to tell you.

AED: Oh, is it? Oh, good. We hit it.

MGB: That was the thing. I'm so happy. I knew it would come back. My mother and I went down to our home and canned for three months. My dad found what these people that leased the place, they found a place off in the bushes where they had been capping beer. They had made their own home-brew and capped their beer. We confiscated the capper and the bottles, and this way we canned or bottled our catsup.

AED: You got the capper—that's how you got it.

MGB: We got the capper. And we capped the catsup. First time my mother ever made catsup. She got the recipe from the club—home demonstration agent at Gatesville. We cooked the tomatoes and made catsup and capped the bottles. We made sixty-seven bottles of catsup one year.

AED: That's a lot of bottles of catsup. (laughs)

MGB: Lots of bottles of catsup. (laughs) And we shared it. And we ate it. And it was really good. It was the first catsup I guess we ever had. But, I mean, to really have it out of a bottle anyway. I remember now why I thought of that capper because I was talking about the canner. We had the canner that my

mother and dad bought. It was an expensive thing for them to buy. It's about this big around. I have it put out here in the garage. The sealer, I gave to the museum in Gatesville. I have a note where it said the sealer was there. Mom and Dad donated it to the museum because it's such an old thing, it couldn't be used anymore as cans cannot be bought anymore. The sealer was donated to the museum, but the canner is still out here, and it can be used to cook with. So I kept it. But I remember the capper now, and I'm glad that you said it. (laughs)

AED: It was because of the beer.

MGB: But we had no idea what they did with the beer with the exception of the capper and bottles. We had a hard time finding caps.

AED: You did.

MGB: Yes, we did.

AED: Why was that?

MGB: Well, caps had to be crimped onto those bottles, and it wasn't legal, if you got that it's because you were making a still. Liquor and stuff, and it was not to be had so—I remember Dad had a hard time with that.

AED: You said that your mom was not involved, and there wasn't a group of women that got together and quilted. Did she have much interaction with other women in other ways?

MGB: Other than to go take care of them when they were ill. She was definitely a—I do know this to be a fact, and she told me this. One time there was a women had a baby at the same time that my mother had one. I don't know which one of us kids was born at that time. But she went every morning and every evening to this neighbor's house to nurse her child back to its health because the mother wasn't able to nurse the child. My mother nursed her baby during that time, too. My mother nursed all seven of her children—never raised them on a bottle. I nursed all four of my children. It was something that she instilled in me. She thought it gave them health that they should have to start, and I agree. It has paid off.

AED: And she was right.

MGB: I think so.

AED: I think that's how it goes. I don't have any other specific questions for you, so if you have other things you—

MGB: We've covered everything quite well.

AED: We've covered a lot of ground.

MGB: We covered a lot of ground.

AED: And maybe you will think of other things, and we can visit again, or you can add them in written form.

MGB: Well I'm going to be very honest with you, I have not mulled this in my mind to tell you anything. It all came as I thought, as you asked some of those questions, I would have not thought about it. It's things that, yes, it's in my mind, yes I know about it, and it will—they'll be things come to me now that I have talked to you about it. When I read that over, it'll probably bring out more.

AED: Maybe you could wind up with something that you—take your time and think about it—some of your—a favorite thing about having lived on the Fort Hood lands. Or having grown up in a rural place.

MGB: Well, if I may say it this way. When I came to work at Fort Hood, I drove down through the reservation from Gatesville for, let's see, about, three years I guess, two or three years anyway. After my husband was killed in the war, my mother and dad moved with my son and I to Hood Village. I believe it was two years they lived with us before moving back to Gatesville. When I'd drive through the reservation, believe me I had memories that wouldn't quit. And I was always telling people, "Well you turn right here to go over there so-and-so." And, "So-and-so lived right there."

And when Dick started training out there, he was a demolition man, and he set off demolitions for the training for nine days before they would go to Korea, during the war. I was working at Fort Hood—this happened to me. Occasionally Dick would have me and G. B. come out to the area where he was setting off demolition. One night while we were sitting there watching, a major found out that I was out there and came over and told me that I couldn't stay in that area. I asked him why. Well, that very night, while I was parked there, we had the glasses rolled up, and we had them down a little bit so we could hear the demolitions, or the firing and everything. There were nine soldiers with bayonets, fixed bayonets, come up to my car and knocked on the window, and they said, Oh, excuse me ma'am, we thought you were the enemy. They were in training. And we did not know we were parked in an area that we shouldn't have been in. The major came and told us we had to leave, and so we left. The man told me then, this major said, "Your husband is crazy." And I said, "Why do you say that?" He says, "'Cause he carries live ammunition in his pocket." (laughs) And I said, "Well, he has to do that in order to get over and set it off." (laughs)

I had a lot of experiences of driving back and forth through there. I had permits to go out to my home place. I had permits to go to different areas. Something that I missed right after the last book signing at Fort Hood—they had planned trips to the cemeteries, and I did not go.

Now, my father's—no—my father's grandfather is buried at West Fort Hood in the Sibley Cemetery. Dad's mother was a Sibley, and her father is buried out there, and there are four other graves. Or there is four in all. His and three other graves in that cemetery. When I went there with my dad the first time in 1946, a man from the engineers took us out there. When we got there it said Silvey, S-i-l-v-e-y, Cemetery. I went to the post engineers and corrected it. So they have it correct now. And it is encased in a high fence. It's well taken care of. And I'm gonna go out pretty soon. I have some pictures that I'll be glad to show you if I ever get straight.

AED: You'll get there.

MGB: I'm hoping. When I worked at Fort Hood, my first daughter was born there in the old Darnall Hospital, before it was Darnall, over on the Battalion Avenue in a barracks building. And then Robert, my youngest son, was born in Darnall. Karen was born in Stuttgart, Germany. G. B., or Bert, was born in Coffee County, Tennessee, at Camp Forrest. His father, Bert Stinson, was in the army and was killed in France, July 1944, and he never saw him.

When Dick and I married, he adopted G. B. We lived at Hood Village. And they would not permit us to continue living there as I married a soldier. Dick, G. B., and I moved into an apartment near Rancier Avenue in Killeen until we got our house built. We moved into our new house at 502 Blake Avenue, where we lived twenty-eight years. It is now a child care center, known as Mother Goose Nursery. In 1978 we moved to this place just five miles from where my mother and dad lived before they moved to the camp area.

AED: I'll bet then you didn't know you'd be back in the country again.

MGB: Well, no, not exactly. I was working at Fort Hood. I went to Washington, D.C., though in 1953 when Dick came back from Korea, they assigned him to ASPD—a military policeman—and worked across the Potomac from me. My boss at Fort Hood said, "Would you like to go there?" I said, "Well, I don't

know." He wrote a letter, and they accepted me at transportation—Building T-7, in Virginia, since I was working in transportation here. Kitty, who was two years old, and I got on a plane and flew up there. Dick and G. B. met us at six o'clock one morning, and we were assigned quarters at Fort Myers, and I was accepted for a position in transportation. And in ten days we were back in Fort Hood packing to go to Washington, D.C. I went up there and worked until Dick received orders back to Fort Hood, and I transferred back. So, I don't know, I lived much of an army life, too.

I set up dependent travel in transportation at Fort Hood in 1948. I wrote the SOP for it and sent military dependents overseas until, I guess it was '52 before they hired another helper. Then I became the first passport agent for the State Department at Fort Hood for twelve years before I retired in 1972. When I first came back to Fort Hood, I worked for signal until a position was open at transportation for me, which I enjoyed very much.

AED: You had a full life with children and a job.

MGB: Dick had two tours overseas, one to Korea, 1951 to 1953, and Thailand, 1963 to 1965, unaccompanied. Each time I stayed home, worked and took care of the children, a three-bedroom house, got the mowing done, and everything with the children helping me.

In December 1957 the three oldest children and I accompanied Dick to Germany for three years, and Karen was born in 1960 before we returned.

Dick retired from the army in 1966 and worked in Corpus Christi naval base, and I stayed at home and worked and retired in 1972. Dick returned to Killeen post office and later to civil service as ammunition officer at West Fort Hood. We moved here in 1978, and he retired from civil service in 1986, twenty-three years ago.

I have always bowled during all the years that I worked and started and directed the first women's bowling tournament at Fort Hood for the first twelve years. I was second woman to be voted into the Fort Hood-Killeen Bowling Hall of Fame in 1998.

In 1980 I was a charter member of the Browning Community Garden Club, which is a state and national federated club, and I have served several terms as secretary, was president, and have served as chairman on many committees, as well as offices in district.

AED: Really.

MGB: Yes, and I am secretary now, but this year will be my last year as secretary. I'm turning it back and just be a member.

I was instrumental and chairman of putting the military highway marker out there on Highway 190 by the Child Development Center. The Blue Star Memorial. I have many pictures and also an album. I had three garden clubs working with me during that time. That was in '90 when I went into the hospital in Lackland for my first pacemaker. I directed part of the work that was being done to put that out there. And it's a very outstanding project that the garden clubs have completed.

After I got the memorial established and all, I worked, and we put a walkway with each person who had served in any of the services and wanted a brick with their name put there in their honor. We have over five hundred bricks in the walkway which I helped complete.

Since that time I have been chairman of Arbor Day or helped with Arbor Day planting trees in the area. At the Kempner post office, at the cemeteries in honor of club members who have passed away.

I helped put the historical marker at the Tobey Cemetery, near Oakalla. I have several relatives buried there. And they took my picture by the marker, as having helped with it.

I have worked a lot toward community activities and some of these days, in this area, we're gonna have a good working community. We have fifty-two houses on this two-mile circle where we live and two being built across the street from us. And I dare say, I'm the only person who has all the names, telephone numbers, and addresses. There are five unlisted I have if I need to call them. I started a get-together of people once a year and a pot luck supper. We did it out here in my back yard and had it about three years and then others took their turn. And we have yard sales once a year, usually in June or July. We made red flags to place at the entrance to indicate those who are participating. Usually about fifteen or twenty participate each year. We have not had it this year yet, but we will. If I can think of anything I have not done, I want to do it.

I bronzed baby shoes before I went overseas when I lived in Killeen. I sold Slim Jims for five years. (laughs) I had several people working for me at that time. I also had an import-export business for about ten years, after I retired, and Dick helped me.

AED: Different and varied.

MGB: I have varied experiences. I helped fold envelopes for a business for several months. However, most of my spare time I have spent on working on our family heritage. I hope to publish a book someday on our family. Each year the Goodwins have a reunion, and we have about a hundred to attend. My daughter Kitty and I have been in charge several years.

Since I am such a bowling fanatic, I still like to bowl and plan to join a senior league, although I have my third pacemaker, three stints, and am past eighty-two years old, I attend the Church of Christ in Kempner and the Browning Community Garden Club.

Frank Aubrey Black

Date of birth: 21 February 1915
Communities affiliated with: Ewing, Ruth
Interviewed by Martha Doty Freeman

MDF: This is May 24, 1998, and I am sitting with Mr. Frank Black from Gatesville, Texas. [This interview is part of Prewitt and Associates' Fort Hood Oral History Project sponsored by the U.S. Army Fort Hood and conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University. Bula Bartek also took part in this interview.] This is Martha Doty Freeman and we're at the Friendship Cemetery, and uh, I'm gonna ask you some first about your family background. When did your family first come to this area?

FAB: Well my grandfather originally came here from Alabama in—shortly after the Civil War, that's in the late '60s or early 1870s, somewhere in there, in that part of time. They settled in what became the Ruth, R-u-t-h, community. My grandfather was the first postmaster there at this little community post office. And this was situated on the south side of Henson Creek. Henson Creek runs east and west through Fort Hood here, not very far back this way (motions northward) toward Gatesville. And they lived in a valley that was called Stovall Valley. It was a small valley ringed with small hills all around. And there's a cemetery still there, and there are grave markers that go back like in the 1870s, so it's been there a long time.

But, I'd say, within this ring there were probably six or seven, maybe eight families with small family farming operations. Part of this was family owned and some of it was owned by people that had large acreage and rented it to tenant farmers. We still had share farming or whatever then. Stovall Valley was crossed by a country road about eleven miles southeast of Gatesville. This was the road that connected Gatesville and Killeen back in those days, before it was lost to Fort Hood. We lived about sixteen miles from Killeen, about eleven miles from Gatesville, general location.

MDF: What was your grandfather's name?

FAB: His name was Josiah Black, he came from Alabama. They came by oxen-drawn covered wagons. I remember a tale of them telling about coming across the Mississippi River on a barge, and lost control, and ran into the trees on the west side of the river and almost lost the wagons. He died in 1929, and as the records show, I think, he was ninety-seven years old when he died.

MDF: Now did he come straight from Alabama to Coryell County?

FAB: Yes, straight here.

MDF: Do you—did you ever hear why he came here?

FAB: Well, I think it was because relatives were already here. My grandmother was a Rainer, there are a number of Rainers who live in the Gatesville area now. My grandfather and one of his brothers both married Rainer women. And I think those Rainers may have preceded them out here. That might have been why they came. The Rainers possibly had settled on homestead land in the Friendship area.

MDF: How is that last name spelled?

FAB: R-a-i-n-e-r, Rainer.

MDF: And where did your grandfather settle at first?

FAB: There—at the location I described, that was their first settlement on the south side of Henson Creek.

MDF: Did you ever see his house?

FAB: Yes. They had a two-story house there when I was a child. It burned down when I was about, oh, fourteen or fifteen years old. It was a big ol' two-story house.

MDF: Can you describe it for me?

FAB: Well, like most houses back in those days they were what we sort of referred to as shotgun houses. You could go all the way through, you know. But in the living room, front room, it had a fireplace, and immediately above that there was a large bedroom, and it also had a fireplace. Downstairs there was a dining room and a kitchen back from this one room. It wasn't really as much room as you'd expect in a big old structure like that. The living room, front room, was also used as a bedroom. This was back before the Indians were completely out of this part of Texas. There were stories about them. People visiting people at night, would put the reins of their horses through a crack in the log walls, you know, so—if the Indians came, the horses would let them know they were there. And they had tales of that. They actually had Indians there, but there never were any raids or any fights or anything. They built a fort, Fort Gates, near Gatesville during that period. That was to protect the people from the Comanches that were here then. But not long after that the Indians were moved farther west and Fort Gates was never really used very much.

MDF: Um, what was the—what was your grandfather's home built out of?

FAB: Well, this was a frame-type house. It wasn't a log house. That's about as much as I can remember. I have a picture of my grandfather and grandmother taken in front of the house, but the unfortunate part, their backs are toward the house, and they were facing away from the house. We lived, my father and our family lived across the road from this old house in a small two-room house right beside the Ruth Cemetery, our fence on the north side was the cemetery fence. After my grandmother died, my grandfather lived either with us or with my uncle. The old house was rented out in later years and it was during this time that someone let some fire fall out of the old wood cook stove and burned it down.

MDF: Were the fireplaces stone?

FAB: Yes, they were. They were stone, both upstairs and downstairs. They chimney served both fireplaces.

MDF: And was there a kitchen in the house, or was it separate from the house?

FAB: It was the back part of the building. I don't know whether it had been attached there or whether it was always part of the house, but, you know, a lot of times they were an additional thing, and sometimes even separate.

MDF: Did the house have porches?

FAB: Had a large porch in front.

MDF: Was it one- or two-story?

FAB: It was just a one-story porch.

MDF: And did they have a cistern or a well?

FAB: Well they had a drilled well with a windmill and the water was piped into this old house kitchen. There was a storage tank that went along with the well. But before they drilled the well they had an old hand-dug well that was lined with rock all the way down. It went down about twenty or thirty feet, something like that. And that old well's still over there. After we didn't use it anymore, we put every kind of junk you could think of in it, and I sure would like to have that opened up and see what's in that well. I know right where it is. But it's in Fort Hood, and can't go in there, kicking around, I think. But there's no telling what sort of historical relics and memorabilia things you'd find, old bottles and whatever.

MDF: When were you born?

FAB: I was born in 1915.

MDF: And when was your father born?

FAB: Eighteen eighty-six. That was fourteen years before the turn of the century.

MDF: And what was his name?

FAB: Frank R. Black. He was nicknamed Noog by his brother after an old horse. I'm Frank A. Black and therefore not a junior.

MDF: And what about your mother, what was her maiden name?

FAB: Her maiden name was Gough—Nellie. That's spelled G-o-u-g-h. And her father was a medical doctor who practiced in the Flat and Ruth communities, and later on at other places. He is buried at the Ruth Cemetery. His picture is among the ones I gave you earlier.

MDF: Um, where did you go to school when you were young?

FAB: I went to school at the Ewing High School. Well there was different—schooling back in those days—these pictures I brought show old schools, like Farmer's Branch which were little one-room schools that taught through the fifth grade, and there was one near where we lived that my father went to and a number of other people back through the years. But along in the '20s they consolidated about four of these small schools into a school that was called Ewing, E-w-i-n-g. And that only went through the tenth grade. Now Friendship School, which is located here near this cemetery, didn't go that far, so lots of the children that went to Friendship School still went on to Ewing School for other grades in high school. But to go to the tenth grade now there at Ewing, then if you wanted to go—and many of the kids never got even through ten grades, but the ones that did, had to go to Gatesville to finish the eleventh grade, which was the top high school grade then. So some of them, let's say, would go to Hubbard, which was one of the old schools, or Friendship, and then to Ewing and then to Gatesville. So it was a progressive thing. Many children never finished high school in those days. I was fortunate enough to go through the tenth grade—1933. I drove back and forth each day. I also carried a neighbor girl who was in the same grade. It was probably because of the store that I was able to finish high school. We bought chickens and eggs from people and I would take the produce into town and sell it and buy groceries and ice for the store after school. We never questioned the ownership of the chickens.

MDF: What did your father raise? Was he a farmer or a rancher?

FAB: Well, basically farming. We raised cotton and corn primarily. Cotton was the basic money crop for people back in those days, corn was primarily used as feed for livestock. We also made cornmeal for bread. There was hay and things of that sort. But he also ran a little country store, and one of the

pictures that I gave you is of this filling station. He operated that store up until the early 1930s, and that was Depression time and finally so many people owed him money that he just finally went out of business. He could hardly turn any of his friends down.

MDF: So, and I notice it says that it was next to the Ruth Cemetery.

FAB: That's right. The Ruth Cemetery's just on the other side of that. (refers to a photograph)

MDF: On the left-hand side?

FAB: Yes. Facing the picture. And our house where we lived was to the right and back in this area.

MDF: To the right of the station.

FAB: Yes. The living room was the bedroom also. One folding and one double bed. This was just a little two-room house, you know. There was a big living room and the kitchen in back. It had a front porch. Later, after my sister was born, we added another room. There was more room for us.

MDF: How many were in your immediate family?

FAB: I was the oldest, and I have a brother four years younger. And my mother died when my younger brother was born. I was four years old at the time. And then after that, a year or so later, my father remarried and my brother and me were raised by our stepmother, who to my brother and me was just like our mother and we felt like we had known her all of our lives. And we also have a half sister, Sara Mae. She is the little girl sitting on the fender of the old Model T Ford in the picture on page 118 in Report 42.

MDF: What was your stepmother's name?

FAB: Her surname was Ella Vaughn, V-a-u-g-h-n. My stepmother was teaching school at a location west of Gatesville teaching through the seventh grade. In those days she only went through seven grades in school and got what they call a second-degree teaching certificate. And she taught school through the seventh grade without any college or any other higher school. She was a great help to all of us kids up until we got up to algebra and things like that, and she couldn't help us much.

MDF: Did you—how old were you when you started working at home and helping out?

FAB: About six, doing little chores.

MDF: What did you do, what were some of your early responsibilities?

FAB: Everybody worked, you know, like on most farms. First chore that I had was milking. My father didn't like to milk, so I was elected. I hated that with a passion. But other than that, we picked cotton, helped hoe and till the farm. Just—in the community there were some larger tracts of land that were planted in wheat and oats and grain of that sort. So when harvest time came, well, the kids would get jobs to make a little money helping what we call shocking the grain after the reaper would dump the bundles. And then we would help load it on wagons to haul to the thrasher, and help run the thrasher filling and draggin' bags and things like that. When I was around ten years old, I could pick as much as my father. Picking cotton was one of the most difficult jobs on the farm.

MDF: So was there quite a bit—was there tenant farming in your area?

FAB: There was a tenant farm right next to us. It was a farm of maybe two hundred acres. It belonged to a Mr. Jud Jones, who lived about a mile away. He had quite a bit of acreage. And this was operated on the sharecrop basis, you know. If a farmer that came in and had his own animals and cultivating equipment, well he would get half of the crop. And if the owner furnished the animals and

equipment the tenant got a fourth of it. So it was a tough thing. You weren't sure you were going to get anything.

MDF: Were there some pretty large landowners over there, people who had substantial acreages?

FAB: There were families there, the Henrys and Browns et al. and they were the people that owned most of the larger farms. They were very aggressive farming people and leaders of the community and things like this. The Browns operated a cotton gin, and they also operated a thrashing machine that went from farm to farm and thrashed the oats or wheat or whatever for people. And that was done on a percentage basis, or if they wanted to pay cash they could have that done. These operations make jobs for many of us kids as we grew up. The Brown family, two families, Bill and Juber, lives in the Ewing community and they had a half brother who lived in the Friendship community named Charlie Brown. These families were the largest and most prosperous families around this part of the county.

MDF: Did they raise a lot of livestock as well as farm?

FAB: Not on the basis as we do today, or there weren't ranches. They weren't ranchers because this is hilly country in here, you know, there's no great expanses. You've seen what we have. So people, most everyone had cattle. They had cows for milk and butter and things of this sort, and usually they would slaughter one for meat. And they also grew hogs and used that for meat and things of that sort. But these people that were affluent then, they did things on a greater scale. You know, they usually had hired people helping them run their big farms.

MDF: What kind of livestock did people have?

FAB: There was horses for the power to pull the plows and so forth. And tractors hadn't come into it when I lived here. I lived here in 1933 and—but the cows were just whatever. They weren't specialized in Herefords or whatever. They were just cattle.

MDF: Mixed breed.

FAB: Yes. Mixed breed cattle.

MDF: Did anyone raise sheep or goats in your area?

FAB: Yes, there were Spanish goats mostly but they were raised for meat purposes. And they were wonderful for running in areas like that out there—(points to nearby wooded area) keep everything trimmed nice and close, Spanish goats. They never, as far as I know, got into the Angora-type goats, and very few sheep. There just wasn't that much land. What was available was put to the best use.

MDF: You left here in 1933. Where did you go? (unintelligible; wind noise; several people talking at once) What happened?

FAB: When I left here in 1933, I was heading for Corpus Christi to pick cotton. When I got to San Antonio I stopped to visit my uncle, a doctor that had two sons, and they talked me into staying there. So then I stayed on in San Antonio and worked in general hotel maintenance work and things of that sort at the old Gunter Hotel, until 1937, when I moved to Houston. I still did the same kind of work for a while there and later went to business school and became a bookkeeper accountant. After that I worked for oil companies. And then I went into World War II in 1942—four years.

MDF: Were you in the army?

FAB: Yes, I was married and living in Houston at the time World War II started. I had volunteered for pilot training in the last part of December 1941 and had passed the tests and physical examination, but at that time the program was full, so I was put on the waiting list. However, in February 1942 when I

reached the age of twenty-seven, my papers were returned because that was the age limit for entering pilot training.

I then was drafted into the army in May of 1942. I received basic training at Fort Sam Houston at San Antonio and Sheppard Field at Wichita Falls. The army was sending everyone to school of some sort at this time. I requested Radio Operator and Mechanics School. I was accepted and then was in the army air corps from then on. I went through this school graduating in around September 1942. At this time everything was being accelerated and were offered a deal whereby if we would volunteer for aerial gunnery school, we would be promoted to staff sergeant upon completion. It was understood that we would be sent overseas. I accepted their program at Fort Myers, Florida, and became a staff sergeant in December 1942.

My next assignment was to a training unit at Tampa, Florida, where they were training crew and forming squadrons flying the Martin B-26 Bombers. This was a twin-engine airplane that was considered hot at the time. They called it the Flying Prostitute—no visible means of support. I was assigned to a crew which consisted of the pilot, co-pilot, bombardier, engineer, radio operator, and two gunners. I was the radio operator as well as the turret gunner.

After completing our training, I was pulled off the crew and assigned as an instructor in the ground and aerial phases of the training. This lasted approximately a year until this program ended. Most of us that had been instructing in the school were then assigned to the last crew to be sent out and sent to Lakeland, Florida, for final training.

During my assignment at Tampa, I had applied for Officer Candidate School, OCS. I hadn't heard anything on this, but to my surprise, about two weeks before we were to ship out, I received orders to report to Miami Beach for OCS. This was another four months of accelerated training. They were turning out hundreds of second lieutenants each month. I graduated in February as a communications officer because of my previous radio training.

I was then sent to Salt Lake City for assignment and while there I attended a cryptographic analyst school. After approximately two months I was assigned to a B-29 bomber unit and was sent to Clovis, New Mexico, where their new group was being formed. This group was then moved to Pratt, Kansas, designated the 497th bomb group. This group, along with three other similar groups, formed the Seventy-third Bomb Wing. The ground element of the group went overseas ahead of the flying element as an advanced unit. We didn't find out where were going until just before leaving. We were then told it was Saipan, Mariana Island, about four hundred miles north of Guam.

After taking about forty-five days to get there—delays along the way waiting for the marines and army to secure the island—we arrived in the dark hours before daytime and was surprised to see the island all lit up like a Christmas tree and we had been blacked out all the way over. Work was progressing twenty-four hours a day building runways and building of all sort. We went to work and by the time the air crew members arrived they moved into new Quonset hut housing that we had erected. By the time the B-29s arrived, the runways were ready and the bombing of Japan began. My job with the unit was maintaining the radio and radar equipment on around thirty B-29s. I had a crew of about twenty people. I was promoted to first lieutenant and captain while there. They called the island secure but there were about three thousand more Japanese killed or captured after we arrived.

I returned home near the end of 1945 after the war was over, and returned to my civilian job. I remained in the air force reserve component during my years of active duty. I was then recalled to active duty during the Korean conflict. I was assigned to Keesler Air Force Base for a year and as luck would have it, I was in charge of the radio operator/mechanic school, the same school I had started in.

I was then transferred to the headquarters of the air force training command at Scott Air Force Base where I had taken my training. My job here was to arrange training in factories on various equipment types in airplanes, engines, radar, fire control systems, et cetera. I remained at this location for approximately one year and then was released from active duty again.

I remained in the air force reserve for approximately ten years, during which time I was promoted to major and lieutenant colonel. Then in 1964 I was offered a chance to return to active duty for a special job in the Pentagon, Washington, D.C. I was assigned as communications officer in the Directorate of Command Central and Communications. My job dealt primarily with the communications units in the air force reserve and air national guard. I was promoted to full colonel while on this assignment.

After ten years of some of the greatest experiences I ever encountered and having completed some of the most worthwhile projects I had worked on, I retired in February 1974. I must have done something right for they awarded me the Legion of Merit upon my retirement. I had thirty-two years both active and reserve duty, and served on active duty during World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. It had been a great ride.

MDF: Did you visit your family back here much after 1933?

FAB: Oh, yes, I always did, even when I was in the military service. I would usually visit back home twice a year at least. Always was in close contact with my family.

MDF: And what was your impression of what the 1930s were like here?

FAB: Well, there's no way to describe it to someone like you. (laughs) My father's farm was purchased for about twenty dollars per acre, and four acres near Gatesville cost him one hundred dollars per acre. They were allowed to remove the old house, windmills, et cetera. Some old houses were dismantled and rebuilt on the new properties. My father's house was one of these.

MDF: I imagine.

FAB: No one felt bad about being poor because no one had anything. Some of these large property owners, were what we called well-heeled. Basically you'd just do the best you could. I was just talking to Mrs. Bula Bartek, coming over here, looking at these pictures, places with small acreages and I wondering how they could have made a living during the Depression. She was raised in Mississippi, and she said it was generally the same down there during that time. In the middle of the Depression the one thing that helped a lot of the people around this area was the three Cs, the Civilian Conservation Corps. But in the beginning, if the people were landowners they couldn't join that organization. So I couldn't join. My father owned a farm. That was later changed, and many people went in and built roads, and bridges and they also built national guard armories, et cetera. You can see what they've done up around Bastrop, near to Austin where you can see some building there that they did.

MDF: Where there any CCC crews around this area?

FAB: Well, they did roadwork mostly here along with WPA workers. People used to be joke about it, they stood—leaned on their shovels. (laughs) And it was a sort of a sore point because farmers didn't have any income at all, and some of these people who had been the ones that had been so-called ne'er-do-wells were making more than the farmers were, so it sort of changed the balance of things.

MDF: What about WPA work, was there any of that in this area?

FAB: Well I never got involved with that. I don't know much about what happened in the WPA. I never

worked in any kind of public-type work. I worked for civilian companies in San Antonio always. I did help pour concrete for the foundation for a nurses home at Fort Sam Houston. This may have been an FHA project.

MDF: Do you—were you here, or did your parents talk to you about what happened when they had to sell their farm and move out?

FAB: Well it was about the most traumatic experience you can imagine. These people had lived, they'd owned these farms for nearly a hundred years. It was 1942 when they finally moved the last ones out of the fort, but see there's—this had a great impact on everything up here. It took away a big taxing base for Coryell County. There's around 250 or [2]60 thousand acres of land in Fort Hood, and most of it's in Coryell County. Many of the families just never recovered. They scattered. Some went to Belton, Temple, Killeen, Gatesville, all over. My father moved up close to Gatesville. I still own some of the property he had back in those days. But I had a similar experience with that when I was working for an oil company in Houston that was bought out by a larger company. Some of the people who had worked for this company most of their lives lost their jobs and others were transferred to Tulsa, Oklahoma. There were three or four of these people who died possibly because of this. And I mean they just couldn't take it. That was a traumatic experience similar to what these people went through moving out of Fort Hood. I was already gone from here before this happened. See I left here in 1933. But I knew many families that still lived here and I knew the impact it had on them.

MDF: How old was your father when—how old were your parents when they moved, when they had to move?

FAB: Well, let's see. That was 1942 when they moved out and he was born in 1896, that would made him fifty-six, and my stepmother was forty-six. It was such a traumatic experience for most people that when the army tried to take some additional acreage west of Fort Hood a few years back the people raised such a howl about it that that the army finally cancelled their plans.

MDF: So what did your parents do after they moved from here? Did they buy another farm?

FAB: Well no. For a while the army took these farms in two stages. When they took most of it, my father moved about two miles north and bought another tract of property and lived there for a year or so and ran a little country store. After the army took over this part, he moved and bought the acreage near Gatesville and he just trafficked in whatever. He raised bees, sold honey, and chickens and hound dogs. But he never—well, part of the time he worked at Fort Hood during World War II. There were lots of jobs at Fort Hood for the civilian people then. And he also worked sometime at an ordnance plant at McGregor that built rocket fuel and boosters and things like that. He worked there on a part-time basis. But he survived and lived to be ninety-seven. He went through it all.

MDF: Yeah, he had another half of his life in another place.

FAB: I also have managed to live a lot and I tell tales about my life.

MDF: I understand, and they're all interesting. (laughs)

BB: They truly are, I never get bored listening to him.

FAB: It's been an interesting life, it really has.

MDF: How large was the Ruth community?

FAB: Well, in its prime I guess about the time they had a post office there, there were maybe fifteen or twenty homes. That would be the top. There was a grocery store and a blacksmith shop and a—there was a First Christian Church. Some folks referred to as Campbellites back in those days. There was a doctor, Dr. Rebel Brown, who practiced medicine there and covered the surrounding countryside in a

horse-drawn buggy. I know he was there in 1915, for he delivered me.

MDF: Oh, Campbellites? Uh-huh.

FAB: This land for the church was donated by the Juber Brown family out of land purchased from the Jones family and the Browns also contributed land for a Baptist church and cemetery called Bethel. The Brown family's also contributed land for the Ewing School, and, you know—they were very active in the community.

MDF: Community people. Did they live on their farms?

FAB: Yes, they were community people and lived there on their property.

MDF: Or did they live in Gatesville, or where—

FAB: No they lived there. All of them lived there.

MDF: Are there any of that—those families still left around here that you know of?

FAB: We just re-fought the Civil War recently. (laughs) One of the Brown families was a captain in the Texas Confederate army, and about a month ago—there's a confederate unit from Waco that goes out and reenact Civil War battles all the time, you know. They have a cannon and they have a unit with musket-loading guns and they dedicated a marker here in the Gatesville City Cemetery to Captain Brown. This was quite a gathering of Browns and friends from all around.

MDF: Who would—can you think who one of the older members of the—of that family would be?

FAB: Well, the one that would be best for all the history was Katherine—and I don't know her married name. She lives in Lorena. She is retired now. Her father was Turk Brown and she has a brother but I can't remember what his first name is. He lives in Austin and I think he works for the State in some capacity. But Katherine—if I could bring up her last name I could find out, of course, if you need to know. But she is steeped in this, and she has a cousin named Bill Brown. He was in the army and retired and is now working as a civilian. He was master of ceremonies at this dedication.

MDF: Do you know if Katherine Brown grew up out there?

FAB: Yes. She grew up primarily in Gatesville.

MDF: Oh, I see. How old is she? Do you know?

FAB: I'd say in her fifties, wouldn't you? Something like that.

MDF: Is there anyone in that family who's older than that? Seventies or eighties? Nineties or—(laughs)

FAB: Let's see. One of the daughters of Bill Brown, Sarah, died about two years ago. She was the oldest. She was up in her nineties, but I think she would have been the oldest one left of that family. And then the—I guess Turk was the oldest one left in the Juber Brown family, and he's been dead for a number of years. He was the father of Katherine. Uh, but it branched out. There are other Brown names, you know, not just that side. But there must have been 150 there at this dedication. These guys fired their musket-loaded guns and the cannon. I kept thinking they were going up to take over the courthouse and re-establish the Confederacy. (laughs) The sound of the cannon fire set off automobile burglar alarms parked on the street. Quite impressive!

Margaret Bert Wilhite Bounds

Date of birth: November 1930
Community affiliated with: Sparta
Interviewed by Thad Sitton

TS: This is Thad Sitton. Today is April 3, 2001. I'm interviewing for the first time Margaret Bert Wilhite Bounds and Ernestine Wilhite Humphrey at Mrs. Bounds' home in Belton. This interview is part of Prewitt and Associates' Fort Hood Oral History Project sponsored by U.S. Army Fort Hood and conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University. [Mrs. Humphrey could not participate in the interview.]

(unintelligible) Right there's fine, see? Just a little microphone.

BWB: Oh, I see.

TS: Tell me, tell me about your family. Your father and your mother, uh—

BWB: Well, he was from a large family. He was the oldest of twelve children in the Wilhite, George Wilhite, family. And they're all dead and gone except one brother, T. A. Wilhite.

TS: Where'd they come from?

BWB: Well, my daddy was born in Hamilton County, and my mother was born down toward Taylor. I don't know what county that is. But at Taylor, I think.

TS: Williamson, I think.

BWB: Williamson, yeah, I guess it is. And he was born April 20, 1896, and she was born August 11, 1897. And they married June 9, 1918. But right after they got married he was called in the service, and he was in the army, I'm not sure how long, but he was back and my oldest sister was born in 1920, September 9, 1920. So—but it was four of us girls, no boys. 'Course, he raised a boy, it was his cousin's son. Well, he had two boys. And his wife died, and he come up here to visit, and when he went back to Yoakum he just left the boys here with my mother and daddy. And the oldest one, he was older, and when he got say, sixteen or so, he went back to live with his daddy and went to work for the railroad. And the youngest one stayed with my daddy and helped him on the farm and whatever. And he married, and he worked on the dams down there around Austin—the Tom Miller and the Roy Inks—but then later he went to work for the railroad in Temple, out of Temple. And fact he was killed in '53, November of '53. They said he fell off the train and it run over him, or anyhow he died.

TS: He was a switchman?

BWB: Uh-huh.

TS: So, he was working the yards?

BWB: Uh-huh.

TS: That's dangerous.

BWB: But then, he was older than us girls. And in fact, by the time I really remember he was there, he had started a family of his own. And I was about three, I guess, when his oldest daughter was born. And we farmed, or my daddy did, and we picked cotton. Well, we chopped cotton and pulled corn, baled hay. Since he didn't have any boys—well, all the kids in the neighborhood, the community, did that, you know. They went and worked in the field. And so, we didn't know any different. That was the style of life at that time.

TS: If you didn't have any boys, the girls would have to chop—well, the girls chopped cotton even if there were boys.

BWB: Yeah. (laughs) But I remember we lived close to a neighbor, and their cotton field was on one side of the road, and ours was on the other, and my nephew, he got sick one day, and so he went over and laid on the neighbor lady's porch, and she let him get by with it. Well, the next day he was sick again, and her son about the same age got sick. So, she gave them a dose of castor oil, and they wasn't sick anymore after that.

TS: So, what he was doing was laying out of work. He didn't think he felt good enough to work out there in the field, right?

BWB: Yeah, the cotton. He found out one day it worked, so he went back a second day. But she gave him a dose of castor oil and—that kind of changed both of them's mind, that they decided picking cotton wasn't so bad.

TS: Well, where were y'all living at this time?

BWB: At Sparta.

TS: You were at Sparta.

BWB: Uh-huh. Yeah, my mother and daddy—well, they'd on North Nolan or Phoenix—both names—well, it's called Phoenix School. And they had lived there when I was born, but then they moved to Sparta in December of '31. I was born in 1930, November of 1930, and they moved over there around Christmas, before Christmas I think, of '31. So, I was raised at Sparta, that's all I knew. And like I say, we had two teachers. Two teachers were teaching when I went. I started in the fall of '36. And then, they—you know, the kids helped pick the cotton crop, so school didn't start until the last of October, something like that. Now, it starts the middle of summer nearly, it seems like.

TS: August.

BWB: Yeah.

TS: Tell me about the Sparta School. What was the Sparta School like? What did it look like?

BWB: Well, it was a little—this doesn't show very much, but that was my—(shows a historic photograph)

TS: Last picture of Sparta School?

BWB: Uh-huh, yes, in '36. Well, '36 or '37.

TS: About eighteen kids and a teacher, two teachers.

BWB: Two teachers. And I know my mother told me not to ever—you know, they'd play Pop the Whip. And, 'course, I was little bitty for my age, anyhow. And so these big old boys would be up there and popping the whip. And so they talked me into playing Pop the Whip one day. And, I remember, when

they popped me loose I went sailing through there about like Superman. But, oh, when I landed my knees were full of gravel, and I couldn't go to school for two days.

TS: Well, the big boys always want to try to talk the littlest kid into being the end of the whip, so they can sling them the furtherest, right?

BWB: Yeah! And it was probably this one—James Hallmark. (refers to a photograph) They were brothers, James and Leslie Hallmark. And this is my sister right here, and this is me over here.

TS: This is Ernestine?

BWB: No, that's Billie, the one between me and Ernestine.

TS: This is you on the far right.

BWB: Uh-huh. And there was Hallmark kids and Cockrell kids. These two York boys rode a horse about five miles to come to school. Well, the Gobble's kids did, too, but in a different direction. They come from towards Taylor's Branch. And the York boys come from towards Brookhaven, which was another little community kind of northwest of us.

TS: How far did you have to go to get to school, and how did you get to school?

BWB: Ah, about a mile was all we had to go. And it's real funny, Mother would—you ever hear of asphidity? That's supposed to keep you from having anything. Well, my mother would tie asafetida bags on us, and we'd get out of sight and we'd tie them on the end of the turn-row fence. And then that evening, when we come back, we'd put 'em back on, like we'd been wearing them all day. But we had mumps and measles and all the kids' diseases that went around that year. I imagine she wondered how we got 'em with—

TS: How those diseases made it through the asafetida bag.

BWB: (laughs) Ooh! I would hate to've been the teacher, all warm, and those things get to smelling. But my first-grade teacher just passed away about two weeks ago, Mrs. Tolly Helms Moore. She was Miss Tolly Helms when I started, and she got married toward the end of the year, and then the next year by the end of the year, she had a little girl. And so—and my daddy was trustee for the school, and he'd ride horseback. Well, one [trustee], there were three of them. They was him and Charlie Northam and John Light. But Daddy would always go and take the census, school census.

TS: If you see me writing when you mention a name, I just want to remember to ask you to make sure I've got the spelling right, so just don't pay any attention about that. When I write something, that's what it means.

BWB: Okay.

TS: What did the trustees do? What did your daddy do as a trustee?

BWB: Well, they hired the teacher, and they kind of made—you know, if the parents had complaints, well, they would take it to the teacher and try to work something out, you know. But I don't remember them having any trouble with kids, much. 'Cause most the kids knew if they got in trouble at school, they got in trouble at home when they got home. (laughs) We's always told that. 'Course the teacher never did paddle me, but they always told me, if you get in trouble at school, you're in trouble when you get home, too.

TS: What did the school look like? It was two classrooms?

BWB: Well, uh, no, 'cause one year it had three teachers, see. So it was—but they turned that into, that room

into, had built a stage and it opened up and you could—you know, we had plays in there and box suppers and school activities—community activities, really, in the schoolhouse. And sometimes the local musicians. I know the Northams, several of them, played musical instruments, and they would bring them and we would have a musical, they called it. Now, they'd probably call it a jamboree or something else. Probably the young people would call it jamming, even, now.

TS: So, it was really kind of the Sparta community center, as well as the school.

BWB: Yeah, uh-huh. And then we had a church was about a half a mile of that school, a Church of Christ. And it had a tabernacle out beside it. Oh, kind of back of it, really. And, 'course, the richest people in Sparta was Mr. and Mrs. Byron Denman. 'Course, they had inherited it. But they—I remember she was, oh! And I'm not making fun of her, but you'd talk to her, "Well, how do you feel today, Mrs. Denman?" "Oh, I feel worse than I did yesterday." Ever' day she felt worse. And she'd have a diamond on every finger, and she'd have a little knot here on her head, and she had to fix that all during church. (laughs)

TS: And she would kind of flash that around during church?

BWB: Yeah. They didn't have any kids, and back during the war you know you couldn't hardly buy any chocolate candy. And now they think chocolate candy is good for dogs, but I remember they had two bulldogs, Ben and Bill, and they'd buy candy for them. And me and my sister that's in this picture, we'd say, Boy, we wish we was Byron Denman's dogs! (laughs)

TS: They got chocolate.

BWB: They got chocolate candy. Well, I don't know if they ate it, but anyhow he bought it for them, he said. 'Course, he may have taken it home, and they may have eaten it at home. But anyhow, you couldn't hardly get chocolate candy, then.

TS: Well, how come he was so rich, what did he do?

BWB: Well, they had inherited, mostly. She was a Walton, and she was an only child, and the Waltons had land, and it was handed down. And so, really, they didn't either one really work for it, but it was inherited.

TS: They were landowners. Did they have renters?

BWB: Yes, and he would lease out the land or rent out the land, you know, and different people would work it. You know, make a corn crop or hay—mostly corn and hay, I remember. And they had electric lights 'cause they had a Delco system. Why, I don't reckon we had electric lights until I was a junior in high school. But they did.

TS: Yeah, that was the only way you could have electric lights if you lived out in the country.

BWB: Yeah. Yeah. Well, now, we had a battery radio that my mother and daddy listened to gospel music and sometimes the "Grand Ole Opry." And, back in the war, news, you know, any news that come on. But you just sit down and listen to it like you do now, on the TV, you saved that battery until very important news.

TS: You'd listen to the news, or you'd listen to one program that everybody'd agreed on to listen to?

BWB: Uh-huh, mostly the "Grand Ole Opry" or gospel music. Now, the Stamps Quartet would have a singing school in Dallas, but it'd come on the radio station. Sometimes it'd go on one night, it would go on all night. I remember we'd set up until about midnight listening to that, then we just had to go to bed. And my daddy led singing in church, all time, and I remember one time that we's having a

revival in the summertime and we's sitting out. The preacher was preaching under the tabernacle, and my daddy got up to lead the song, and, uggk! Grabbed his head. I thought, He's having a heart attack. An owl had messed on his head! And he had to go to the neighbors and wash his head and get cleaned up before he come back over.

TS: This was outside or inside?

BWB: Outside, under the tabernacle.

TS: Okay, the brush tabernacle.

BWB: Well, it had a roof on it. Some of 'em had brush tabernacles, but this one had a wood roof, shingles or something. Yeah. It didn't have no sides on it, just poles to hold the roof up.

But the school, you went in on different sides. You know, like the steps went into one room, and then the steps that went into the other room would be on the other side. And we'd play baseball, and we'd get up a team, and then we'd play other schools. Like Brookhaven or Union Hill or Tennessee Valley or something like that. Even in the summer the men would get up a ball team, and they would play other communities. Sometimes they would play on the ball field that was there by the schoolhouse, and sometimes they would be at another school, playing. Because usually the school would have a ball field, you know.

TS: You remember watching any of those games?

BWB: Oh, yeah, I played in some of them. In fact, one year I was the only girl on the team, and I got a broke finger, I guess a knuckle. I reached up. I had the glove in this hand, but I automatically reached up, and that ball hit the top of my finger, and, oh, that hurt!

TS: Trying to catch a line drive.

BWB: Yeah, and instead of throwing the glove hand up I threw the other hand up, and—it was just a reaction.

And then one time the men chose up sides, they kind of divided, and one Sunday afternoon—they had to dress as women—had to have heels and a purse, and you had to carry that purse with you. Now, you could set it down while you were batting, but you had to pick it up and carry it with you when you run, or you was automatically out. That was so funny! It sure was.

TS: Well, that must have drawn a crowd.

BWB: It did, it did. People from other communities, even, come to see that.

TS: Whose idea was that? I've never heard of that one.

BWB: Some of the men. They thought, you know—and they sold cold drinks, and they made a little money to buy other gloves and balls and things like that.

TS: The idea was to attract a crowd from those other communities.

BWB: Uh-huh. It was so funny, though, because they'd have a purse, you know. It'd be so big and a little handle stand up, and he'd set it down and then hit the ball and then reach down and grab that purse.

TS: And run to first base with the purse.

BWB: Well, had to go to all the bases with it. But, yeah, that was so funny.

TS: Well, what did y'all do at recess at Sparta School?

BWB: Well, we played hopscotch, Wolf over the River, King's X—kind of a chase, you know, but if you said King's X, they couldn't catch you, you wasn't out, then. And on rainy days, lots of times we'd have quizzes or something, you know. Really be about our lessons, but we didn't think of it as lessons 'cause it was recess. I remember, the first year I was in school—see, I was in school with—I was in the first, and second, third, and fourth, you got to hear all of that. Well, it wasn't long until I was learning second-grade stuff and listening and catching on to some of the other kids. So, it was really kind of beneficial, too, that I went to a two-teacher school.

TS: That went on, that always went on. If you were bored, if you were caught up with what your class was doing, you could hear the upper class.

BWB: You could get some of theirs, yeah.

TS: Well, how many grades did your teacher—your teacher would have had several grades in the room?

BWB: Four, four. And then the other teacher would have had fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth. And then they changed to one teacher, and she had the whole crowd in there. But a lot of times, she would let the older kids hold the first-grade and second-grade classes. She would oversee them, but they would have them to read, you know. And I think—'course, I know they couldn't do that now, there's too many kids, but the kids miss out on some stuff like that, because the older kids read to them. Why I knew—the upper grades, some of their—they'd make book reports, and I would remember something about that book report, even though I was in first or second grade, but I'd remember. And it stuck with me, too, a lot of times. And then the teacher would go down here to the Bell County library, and she'd bring books to school to cover all grades. Well, I'd start out with whatever grade I was in, and I read all below me. If I was in the second, I read the first-grade level, and then I'd read the others. I'd always get a reading certificate every year. And you had to read thirty books at least to get one.

TS: My goodness.

BWB: And then you got a gold seal on it. And I would get one ever' year, 'cause—I don't read as much, now, 'cause of the TV, but I still read a lot.

TS: Well, those schools could work really well. I'm serious. And this is why, this is one of the reasons why, that you're talking about.

BWB: Yeah, because they heard repeated and repeated, and they're bound to learn something from it. I know I could spell words—when I's in the first I could spell words like the second grade and some of the third-grade kids was learning to spell.

TS: When there were more, how did the teacher deal—well, you just told me one way, the older kids would sometimes instruct—but when there were two teachers, how would a teacher deal with four grades in the same classroom at the same time? How would she teach with four different grades? What would she do?

BWB: Well, she might have one learning spelling and one learning math. And then she'd have one class reading and another one studying geography, or something like that. But there was always, one grade was always performing, and she—

TS: So, she'd be working with one of her four grades, and meanwhile the other three would be doing some assigned task, and then she'd rotate through—

BWB: The assignment, uh-huh. Yeah. And we didn't have a water well, so we had a big tank and a fountain. And the boys would go over to the neighbors and bring water over and pour it in that tank.

TS: This was inside the school?

BWB: No, outside. And we had outside toilets, too, and I remember one year we had a Mrs. Hamilton, we just had a one-teacher school at that time, and it had rained, oh, it was muddy. Well, she would ring one bell, and that would mean the girls would go to the bathroom and the boys would go to the water fountain. And she'd wait awhile and she'd ring another bell and, well, vice versa, the girls would go get a drink and the boys would go to their bathroom—or toilet, really. But anyway, this particular day, she rang the bell and the girls went to the bathroom, and the boys went to get a drink of water, but they come back, and they started chunking mud balls at that outdoor toilet. And we couldn't come out. They're just throwing big mud balls about that big. And so, the next day, I think there was twenty-one boys in school that year, and anyhow she whupped about half of them one day and half of them the next. I said if I'd of been one of them that had got a whupping the next I wouldn't have come to school, I don't think. But they did, and she whipped them, too, for chunking at us. But she'd set there and ring that bell, and they'd just keep throwing them.

TS: So, they got completely out of control.

BWB: That particular time. But most of the time they was pretty well, you know, pretty tight schedule of working and—like I say, I don't remember really having any problems, discipline problems with kids, you know. I don't even remember a kid talking back to her, back then. Because seem like then your teacher was a very, very—well, sacred's not the word, but to be respected in other words and do what she said and everything. And now, I think, kids sometimes do as they please, which—not all of them, 'cause you see a lot of good kids that go along and make good grades and are obedient kids and try to do what's right and all.

Oh, I remember, when we went—after I got in high school, well, we had to ride a bus, a school bus. And it started out at Brookhaven, which was about fifteen miles up the country, and it would come down and pick up kids in between Brookhaven and Sparta, then it'd pick up Sparta kids and Union Hill kids and then go on in Tennessee Valley and pick 'em up and then go on to Belton. Jim Bundrick was our first one, he lived in Brookhaven, so he just brought the—and then Rush Bounds and then Virgil Moore. I got tickled, he would—most of them would work like in a furniture store while they were not driving the bus. I know Watson's Furniture Store, Mr. Bundrick worked there, and that Mr. Bounds might of went home and done farming, I don't know. But that Virgil Moore, I got tickled at him, he would sit down in the beer joint, and one day he was so drunk that two of the high school boys made him get off the bus, they wouldn't let him drive. They didn't know how to drive! One of them shifted the gears, and the other one guided it. And after I got older I thought, My goodness, if my kids had done something like that! But they thought they was doing the right thing. And he did get fired for drinking on the job.

TS: Was the bus coming into Belton? Where were you going to school?

BWB: Belton, Belton High School. Uh-huh. Yeah, I went to—now, they had a Tyler—most of the town kids went to Tyler Elementary. That's where HEB is, now, was the Tyler Elementary. And my kids went to school there their first few years that they went to school. Well, they went to other schools and the high school, too, but Tyler was usually their first grade.

TS: How did the kids get to Sparta? You said some of them rode that lived farther away, but you walked. You remember anything about walking to school?

BWB: Yeah.

TS: What do you remember?

BWB: I remember—now, if it was real cold or just pouring down rain, our daddy would take us in the car, sometime. But other than that we walked every morning. We got up and walked. But there was kids

that had to walk a lot farther than we did—you know, two or three miles. But I remember the Gobble boys and the York boys rode horseback to—well, the Gobbles lived up on Taylor's Branch and the York boys lived up—

TS: You said the Gobble boys, what did they ride?

BWB: Rode horseback.

TS: And what did this girl ride, that you were saying?

BWB: A one-eared donkey. (TS laughs) And she'd just ride it bareback. 'Course, that made her dress stink like a donkey. Get in that hot schoolroom, and, boy, it really would smell.

TS: Well, people when they got around—how was the school heated?

BWB: It was a big, tall, big-around black stove, and the boys—well, I guess, the trustees would have the wood cut and brought there in a pile, and then the boys would go bring it in late in the evening for the next day, you know, so it would be dry in case it rained or any other bad weather, or snowed, well, it would be dry. And that's where we went and dusted the erasers was on the wood pile.

TS: Well, you had to beat the erasers out ever' so often.

BWB: Uh-huh, yeah, sure did.

TS: The girl that rode the donkey would pick up a donkey smell?

BWB: Oh, very much. Well, riding it and sweating, even if it was hot. And if it rained, with a little bit of wet, why, it did smell.

TS: Did any of the boys—I've heard that sometimes the boys would run trap lines on the way to school. Did anybody do that at Sparta?

BWB: Yeah, and there was two boys that went hunting one night, and they killed a skunk, and ooh! they smelt like—the teacher sent them home the next day, she didn't even let 'em stay 'cause they smelt like—oh, you couldn't stand it, ooh! Looks like they would of—well, I guess they got it all over their body, even, but smelt like they wore the same clothes.

TS: It takes awhile for that to wear off.

BWB: Oh, yeah.

TS: You get in it, you don't just wipe yourself off.

BWB: Unh-uh, you don't even just wash, either. Now they think tomato juice will take it off. I don't know, I haven't been sprayed by a skunk.

But, see, where my daddy's farm was, what Fort Hood didn't take, Belton Lake did. About where his farmland was, well, our peach orchard, even, is about eighty-five foot under water now. So, I couldn't very well go pick peaches or pick cotton anymore. (laughs)

TS: So, part of it's dry land, and part of it's under the lake.

BWB: Uh-huh, yeah, where our house stood is part of that Balorea (??). Have you ever heard of that Balorea? It's lights, they come on after Thanksgiving and stay on until after—oh, it's just a trail—ah, it's not a trail, it's a road, and it goes in over there pretty close to where we lived and comes out at Doss Springs over there, around the mountain, like. And it's just lights, and some of them have designs, you know, Christmas designs.

TS: So, it's a Christmas, it's a Christmas display?

BWB: Uh-huh, with several miles of it. 'Cause now they have sponsors. Used to, just individuals did it, but now they even have sponsors that help them decorate. And, oh, this past Christmas, it was outstanding. But that's where our—out there, well, there used to be an officers' club out there about where the house set, but I don't think it's out there anymore. I think they've built up like park equipment and probably barbecue things where people can go out on a Sunday or a holiday or something and stay out there.

TS: What sort of social—you mentioned this before and I was curious—what sort of social things would go on at the school, at Sparta School?

BWB: Well, Halloween was always a big thing, we'd have a Halloween party and the games and bobbing apples. Then, Thanksgiving was a big deal. Christmas we put on a play—well, sometimes at Thanksgiving we would put on a play. I remember being an angel, one time, I wasn't but about six years old, and they said, Boy, you sure outgrew that, didn't you? (TS laughs) I don't know if they were referring to that I was a changed person, or what.

TS: Not angelic.

BWB: Yeah. But, anyhow—and then they'd have box suppers. You know what a box supper is?

TS: Sort of. How did they work?

BWB: Well, the women would fix a box, decorate it real pretty, and then she'd fix like chicken or maybe have potato salad or maybe fruit or cake or something in there, and the men would bid on them. And if they knew which box belonged to someone they wanted to eat with, they would really bid.

TS: So, it would be the girls doing the boxes, unmarried girls doing the boxes?

BWB: Well, some of them would be even the wives and they'd manage to—

TS: The husbands were expected to get the box. Well, what happened Christmas? I know the school—

BWB: Well, we'd have a play, and we'd have a big Christmas tree. I remember that thing would be—you know, we had high ceilings. And they would go out, the boys would go out and cut a tree, or maybe the trustees did, sometimes, some years. And they'd put the tree up, and we'd make loops out of construction paper and popcorn. And those red berries, we'd string them. We weren't allowed to use candles, which I understand, now. Then, I couldn't really understand why they didn't just let us put candles on there, but that wouldn't of been safe. But we'd have a Christmas play. You know, all the kids would be in a Christmas play, and we'd draw names and have gifts under the tree for whoever—like I'd draw somebody's name, I would take, and it was a girl or a boy, I would take an appropriate gift. And like I say, sometimes they would have, well, they called them party games. And I guess that's what they were, 'cause most of them didn't believe in dancing that went there. And so—

TS: In the school? Would that be a school affair, or was it just using the school?

BWB: It was just using the school. 'Cause, sometimes it would be in the summertime, you know, and they would let 'em use the school for social pleasures like that.

TS: What would go on in those? I know I've heard them called play parties, too. What would go on at one of those party games? Okay, they're not dancing, but what are they doing?

BWB: Well, they played ring games. You know (sings), "Go out one window, idey-ho, two windows, idey-ho." It was about like dancing, you just sang, and you—

TS: You made your own music.

BWB: Yes, you did. And even when they had musicals, you didn't dance, that was—you might pat your foot and clap your hand and get pretty excited about the music, but you didn't dance.

TS: Well, the musical, now that's another kind of use of the school for a social affair, right?

BWB: Yeah, well, that'd be maybe like this man played a guitar and that one played a fiddle, or maybe they'd have two guitars and a fiddle. They didn't have drums, and they didn't have electrified—well, we didn't have electricity, so we didn't have no electrified steel guitars or electrified guitars or fiddles, either. But it was good music.

TS: What would they play?

BWB: Well, kind of like a breakdown. You know what a breakdown is, that fast band? Then a waltz or a—

TS: They would play dance music.

BWB: They would play dance music, but nobody could dance! Or nobody was brave enough to dance, maybe I should put it that way. Now, in Tennessee Valley, they would have house dances. Maybe one family would give a house dance on Saturday night, and they'd take down the bed and even move the linoleum out, and have kerosene lights, you know.

TS: That's to save the linoleum, right?

BWB: Yeah, you didn't dare wear it out by dancing. (TS laughs) Put cornmeal on the floor.

TS: Well, you must have gone to some of those. But the Sparta community didn't have dancing, didn't have dancing at the school, and they didn't have house dances.

BWB: Unh-uh, no.

TS: So, if you wanted to go to a house dance—

BWB: Well, see, I went as a group. 'Course I claimed him as my boyfriend, the guy I married, but he even went to the service while I was in school, and we didn't get married until after I graduated. But his folks, now, they were Baptists and they gave dances, and his uncle and cousins would play the fiddle and guitars, and they'd just have their own house dance. Well, you know, everybody in the community could come. But they'd vacate one room, just take the bed down or move all the chairs out just to have that one room for that dance that night. And they would—

TS: Would everybody come inside and dance, or would the men circle around in the yard outside?

BWB: Well, some of them would, 'cause it would be hot in that house in the summertime, and with them kerosene lights it would be even hotter. And, 'course, in the winter, well they mostly stayed in, 'cause they didn't want to sit out in the cold. Most of 'em, if they were young couples or young people, and they brought a girl, they wanted to stay and dance with her 'cause they's afraid she'd find another one. And if he went outside and was fooling around I guess, I don't know.

TS: But you would go—what was your husband's first name?

BWB: His name was R. D. Bounds.

TS: I saw his photo. Later a professional rodeo man?

BWB: Now, he wasn't professional, he rode in what they call open rodeos. See, he held a regular job, but he'd rodeo on weekends. You couldn't travel too far like that, mostly just around in here at—pretty

much, well, you could get pretty far, I guess. But you had to be back at work on Monday.

TS: You might be sore, too.

BWB: Yeah, that's true, too. And I got tickled, when we'd go off to a rodeo I would fry chicken and have—we'd eat one time while we's gone, 'cause, you know, you might stay all day and half the night. But we'd eat one time. We'd eat 'fore we left home, but I'd fry chicken and I'd take fresh tomatoes and I'd make gravy, and 'course I had light bread, and pickles, and onions, and a gallon of tea. So, we had—and they's a lady here awhile back told me, said, "Oh, you've saved many a cowboy's life." Said, "He hadn't had nothing to eat in—the old saying—three days." None of 'em had ever eat within three days. I mean, it's been three days since they eat.

TS: Well, how did, uh—I'm still going back to Sparta School. What other kind of uses did the community make of the school building? You know, we talked about the school entertainments, okay, and there were the musicals. Now, I guess people at the musicals would just come and sit around and tap their foot and listen to the musicians, at least in Sparta. Did anybody use the school building, did the community use the school building in any other way?

BWB: Well, if somebody was running for sheriff or something like that, they would have a speaking. You know, they'd invite them, and everybody would go listen to them speak, and they would hold the election at the schoolhouse. When they voted, it was the voting place. And the local women, would, you know, they's trained to handle the voting and everything.

TS: What about school closing at Sparta? Did something go on at the very end of the year?

BWB: Yeah, we'd have a May party, and sometimes we'd have a picnic and we'd all fix—or, our mothers would fix—and sometimes our mothers would come, and we'd have fried chicken and potato salad, and stuff like that. And, then, maybe we'd run races, just foot races or something like that for entertainment. Jump rope.

TS: So, it was a May party.

BWB: Yeah. Well, it was kind of an end-of-school party, too, I guess. But it was held in May, because school was out. And, then, work started. (laughs) 'Cause by then, you's chopping cotton and corn. Then in August, you'd start pulling corn and after that picking cotton. Hay baling come in there about May, too, about the end of school in June, July, long in there. I never will forget, my daddy bought—he'd had these mules for years, and he finally sold them, and 'course, me and Billie cried 'cause there's one, Old Sue, that was just like the family. Oh, we didn't want Daddy to get rid of her! But he had to sell her to get the tractor. So, I was plowing, I was just plowing, and so—well, I was riding on the tractor with him, and he said, "Do you want to plow?" And I said, "Yes'ir." So, I get down there, and I get to the end, and I had seen him reach over here and pull this lever, and he just turned around. I grabbed it, and I pulled it back, and I did a wheelie, nearly. He kind of scolded me.

TS: In other words, it turned so fast it popped one wheel off the ground.

BWB: Well, I don't know if it did that, but it just—I said nearly a wheelie because it just turned right back. Usually it would turn kind of slow-like, when he was turning it, and I just grabbed that lever and pulled it right hard, and it just turned right back.

TS: Well, let me get you on—let's go to the farm and talk about that. What was—how many acres, how big was y'all's place?

BWB: Ninety acres.

TS: What was it like? What was it like? What kind of land was it? Uh, was there water on it, what did it have?

BWB: Well, part of it was kind of caliche, but down a little farther it was blackland. And, boy, if you stick with it when it's dry, it sticks to you when it gets wet. (laughs) And the bull nettles growed sometimes in the corn. 'Course, we'd chop them out but sometimes they'd grow back. And 'fore I got big enough to pull corn, I drove the corn wagon. 'Course, I was about like that, looking over the end gate. But those mules would step in a bull nettle. Oh, and they'd take off running! And Daddy would tell me, "Hold on to the reins!" And Mama'd say, "Turn loose!" 'Cause, 'cause she's afraid they'd drag me out, you know. But I'd hold on, and he'd jump on the back and work his way up and finally get ahold of them and slow them down.

TS: You mean those old stinging nettles?

BWB: Yeah, yeah. And that Johnson grass, I think, went to China. And he'd say, "Get all the roots, Baby." Get all the roots, and I'd think, Oh, my goodness, I'm gonna end up in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, one of these days, digging so deep.

TS: This is when you were chopping, right? What did you do, just whack off the top and go on?

BWB: Oh, no! Oh, no. There was no such thing as whacking. You chopped, and when you come to Johnson grass, you dug.

TS: That was awful stuff, right? I mean, it was hard to get it out of there.

BWB: Yeah, 'cause it would just keep growing, I guess, deeper if you left it, I don't know. But I know he'd tell us—but really, my daddy wasn't hard on us. Everybody, I guess, was doing that, all the kids our age was working in the field and helping out. Our mother went in the field. How she cooked dinner—but she'd cook beans, I guess she did the night before, beans, and she'd fix cornbread. She might quit just a little earlier than we did for dinner, but she'd have beans and cornbread and fried potatoes and onions and all that good stuff ready when we got there. Then, we had a swing on the porch, and Daddy would lay down and take him about a five-minute nap, and she'd be in there washing dishes. And I thought—'course, us girls helped her, but still. She just—and she canned everything—all kind of fruits, all kind of vegetables, and canned meat. And they put up cured ham, and they fixed sausage. And so we didn't hardly ever have to buy anything but, like, coffee and flour. And, 'course, our cornmeal, we'd shell our corn and put it in a bag, and Daddy would take it to the gristmill. And we had our cows, we had milk and butter, and we had our chickens and eggs, and we had pigs, and we had our beef. So, we was living high on the hog but didn't realize it, I guess.

TS: Well, did he own, did y'all own this? You were renting?

BWB: He was renting from the Cummings family, D. L. Cummings. He was a—well, D. L's daddy was a doctor, and he'd bought a lot of land around there, and there was several different ones that would rent portions of it.

TS: What was the—I know you were just a kid, but what was the deal, the rent deal, with Mr. Cummings?

BWB: Like, a third of the corn, or, I'm not sure but—

TS: A portion of the corn and a portion of the cotton.

BWB: Uh-huh, and a portion of the hay, so many bales. And Daddy would stack them in the barn until he decided to sell, or whatever he was going to do with it. You know, put it in another barn somewhere, or something.

TS: He'd have his, Mr. Cummings's bales, in a special place.

BWB: Yeah. And he'd put his corn in a special corncrib, he didn't mix them. Ever so many loads of corn,

well, that went—and, 'course, he took the bales of cotton. He allowed for that, uh—sometimes he'd bring the seed back to plant for the next year. And sometimes he'd have some of the cottonseed ground so it would be cow feed.

But it was—but we never knew if we's rich or poor. My parents never talked about that. Well, nobody in the family did. You didn't, you's just happy. Or I remember it as being happy, even though we worked hard. But like I say, my mother did that and my daddy, and all the kids in the neighborhood, they'd be out working in the field, too. So—now, kids'd probably say it was child abuse if they had to get out and work in the hot like that. But, you know, you never thought of nothing like that. You just thought, well that's the way of life, and you do it.

TS: Well, this was a family farm, and the family had to work it themselves. They didn't have—and that meant everybody. And if it's all girls, the girls—did you do any plowing before the tractor?

BWB: Yeah.

TS: What do you remember about that?

BWB: You know what a cultivator is?

TS: I do.

BWB: Okay. Well, Daddy would hook the mules to the cultivator. And they were gentle, I mean, they were broke to work that. And they'd just, you know, we'd just plow with them. And my sisters did, too. 'Course, my older sister married young, and so I don't remember her working quite as much as I do us other three. But, yeah, we'd help haul in hay, and 'course Daddy would, when it got high, he'd do the stacking, but we helped drag it, a bale at a time, onto the wagon. And, oh, you'd ride in that wagon, and you get a catch in your side, and you'd lean over like that! Helping that catch get out.

TS: That haying is always in the hottest time.

BWB: Yeah, well, it's not any hotter than corn pulling, though, I don't think, 'cause August was usually corn-pulling time.

TS: How did you go about corn pulling? Somebody drove the wagon and people walked on either side of it?

BWB: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Well, my mother and daddy would—when I was driving the corn wagon, my mother and daddy would pull on each side, about three rows. And then, after me and Billie got big enough, we pulled the down rows, and Mama pulled two on one side and Daddy pulled two on the other. And he'd just tie the reins up over there close to where, you know, he could kind of—and them old mules just walk on down the row, and they'd eat corn while they's going along. They's pretty contented, I reckon. Once in a while they'd pull a sneak and run away.

TS: I know what you mean, but tell the people that don't what the down rows are.

BWB: Well, that was where the wagon went. You would pull two rows, they would be standing up on each side, but where the wagon went, it would knock the corn stalks down, yeah, and 'cause we was little and short, well, they wasn't hard for us to pull the down rows.

TS: The kids start off often following along and pulling the down rows, 'cause they're close to the ground.

BWB: Well, I never did get very tall, as far as that, but, yeah, we pulled the down rows. And in picking cotton, they would have the trailer sitting, or wagon sitting, in a spot, designated spot, and you would pick cotton and go to the scales there by the wagon and weigh. And we had jugs of water, and they

were wrapped with tow sacks, 'cause you didn't have ice that much. And you'd wet those tow sacks, it may be wrapped around there two or three times, but that was our thermos jug, I guess you'd call it.

But I remember, too, we'd make butter, and there was a spring house, and we'd go put that down in that, and it would be cool—keep the butter from melting, you know. And I don't know how old we were when we got an icebox. I don't mean a refrigerator, I mean an icebox. 'Cause, you know they'd have coolerators that had ducking around this metal frame, and you'd put your milk in there.

TS: Evaporative—

BWB: Yeah, yeah.

TS: Well, tell me about the spring house. What was it like?

BWB: Well, it would be a house built over the spring run, and it never quit running, I don't reckon. But it would be cool in that house, kind of built over it.

TS: How high would it be?

BWB: It was high enough that I could walk in it. 'Course, I wasn't too high, then.

TS: Would you set the milk down in the spring?

BWB: Well, sometimes you would. And sometimes—it had a cement, best I remember, built along that foundation, and you would set it on there, even, and it would stay cool, even.

TS: Well, that's what people did before they had evaporative coolers or iceboxes—spring houses.

BWB: Yeah, yeah. You know, I remember riding in a wagon when my mother and daddy'd go places, and we'd go in a wagon. And I've been on a cruise to Hawaii on a ship, and I've flown on an airplane several times, and I never thought I would live to live that wide a span in life.

TS: Yeah, a lot of people—my grandfather felt the same way, he was born in the 1880s. And, you know, it was amazing to him, where he started out and where he ended up.

Okay, the spring house—you had the spring house, then you got an evaporative cooler, then you got—what was the icebox?

BWB: It was a big old wooden box, and it would have a door, kind of a short door, and then it'd have a long door. And the ice man would come around, and you had a card, and it had twenty-five, fifty, seventy-five, or a hundred, and whatever amount a block of ice—you know, if you wanted twenty-five pounds, well, you put that in the window with the twenty-five up so that he'd know how much ice to bring. And he'd come about twice a week, so you saved ice. And then on Saturday night, when we'd have ice cream at our house, well, I remember Daddy would go to town a lot of times—well, we'd be in town—and he would get extra ice for us to have ice cream.

And you could smell them hamburgers. Ooh! By the time you got home, you's really ready to eat it. (laughs)

TS: So, what you just described off the tape was—would be the weekend, it'd be the weekend?

BWB: Well, usually on Saturday, we—

TS: Sparta was ten miles out from Belton, and this was going into town for hamburgers.

BWB: No, we didn't just go for them. We'd usually go buy groceries, and then you did you—this was about a weekly—every Saturday, nearly, you went to town.

TS: This was the big treat of the trip?

BWB: Yeah, six hamburgers for a quarter.

TS: And you might get some extra ice, what you said, to bring back to make ice cream—dessert after the hamburgers?

BWB: Uh-huh. Yeah. And grandkids wouldn't believe you could get that many hamburgers for a dollar. There was a little place, little hole in the wall, called Hamburger King. I mean, it was just big enough for the man and his wife to work in there, but they turned out the best hamburgers.

TS: Well, what would happen besides that? Would you be going in most Saturdays to town, or would this happen like ever' two or three weekends?

BWB: Well, I'll tell you how something we were. Billie and I would get up like in corn season—we'd be pulling corn or picking cotton, either. We'd get up early Saturday morning, wash our hair, roll it, put it in a bandana, go to the field and work one-half day, and then we'd come home and we'd comb that curly hair. Why, I'm sure it was dirty again, because we'd been down there in the field, but we thought we looked as nice as all get-out, I reckon.

TS: Well, you didn't have time to do your hair. This was the best you could do, is to try to do your hair before—you had to go to the field, and you definitely wanted to go to town.

BWB: Yeah, yeah. (laughs) So, we just washed our hair, got up early and washed our hair and rolled it. And sometimes we rolled it on—you know how you used to roll coffee and have that tin? Well, we'd roll those in cheesecloth or some kind of white material Mama had, and we'd roll our hair up in it, and then we'd bend them round. Well, now they have sponge curlers like that, but that's what we used, lot of times.

TS: So, you were recycling this, there were no sponge curlers.

BWB: Oh, no. There sure wasn't, we just on our own made these hair curlers. And then you had spit curls, you know. Now, kids will frown at you if you even spit on the ground and talk about a spit curl.

I'll tell you something else. When I was going to that little country school, I never in my wildest dreams ever thought I'd have a granddaughter going to A&M, but I have. Sara's going. This is her first year down there, but she's doing good. She likes it.

TS: Well, y'all would be going to town to get—what kind of groceries would you be getting in Belton?

BWB: Well, like sugar and coffee, not a lot of groceries, because you grew all your vegetables, you grew your fruit trees. Like, we had pears and peach and apricot. And we'd have grapevines and Mama'd make grape jelly or grape juice. And so you didn't buy a lot of groceries in town.

TS: What about—you know, they're kind of two sides to the farm. There's the sort of doing for yourself side, the gardens and fruit trees and all that, and there's the sort of trying to make some money side of the farm, like the cotton and the hay. How much, how much cotton do you think your daddy grew? How many acres would you guess?

BWB: Well, I really don't remember. I mean, he'd make several bales.

TS: So, that kind of tells the story right there. Would he generally be under ten bales a year, or—

BWB: Probably around ten bales a year. And then he'd, you know, the corn, he kept a lot of it and fed the horses, and then we used some for cornmeal. But he left the rent corn in that barn, that was not his. He was very strict on that, I remember.

TS: Well, the corn was essential. You couldn't have work animals without corn.

BWB: Yeah, and you could grind it up and make cow feed out of it, too, as well, and then you could make hominy. You ever eat hominy? You had to boil that in lye water. I've seen my mother make it, and she would first put it in lye water and soak it, get those hulls loose, and then she'd have to rinse it and rinse it. You ever eat poke salad? My mother would cook that. You'd have to boil it about three or four times and pour it off, put fresh water and boil it and pour it off. Yeah, I used to like that. And scrambled eggs, she'd fix poke salad and scrambled eggs.

TS: Tell me about, tell me about her garden, or y'all's garden. What did you grow in the garden? What did she put up?

BWB: Well, we'd have beans, green beans, and usually we kept some beans and dried them for pinto beans, and we'd put those in a big sack, probably fifty pounds, for the winter. Green beans and new potatoes, and sometimes she canned potatoes, you know. She'd get those little ones and can them with the green beans. And then she'd get like corn and tomatoes and kind of make a—I guess it was kind of a goulash or soup or something. And she'd can that. And she'd can—we had peach trees—she'd can that. And we'd have lettuce and tomatoes and radishes and cabbage, we just grew just about everything that—but I don't remember having broccoli or cauliflower, when I was a kid. Don't remember seeing it. They may have had it in grocery stores, but I don't remember it.

TS: Who's job was it to work in the garden?

BWB: We all worked. Daddy would plow, and we'd plant the potatoes. And then mostly Mama and us would plant like the radishes or set out the onions. But Daddy would plow the garden up, oh, it'd be fine soil, and I think they planted the potatoes the fourteenth of February. Seem to me like you had to have your potatoes in the ground by the fourteenth of February. And she just—well, I don't remember she ever canned radishes, but carrots, she did. I remember canning carrots. Then, she'd—well, she put that in the soup, too, but she'd can carrots. And then, uh, when hog-killing time come in the wintertime, well, we'd make sausage, and she would sew little sacks, cotton sacks, out of cheesecloth or something, and that was my job to stuff them. Oh! And then, you know what cracklings are? I would stir the cracklings and make the—or, I'd stir the, uh, fat and make cracklings, and then she'd get the grease off and make soap with the—

TS: Maybe I ought to ask you, because, maybe I don't know what cracklings are. I've eaten crackling bread. Are cracklings in the hog fat?

BWB: Well, it's, uh, skin of the hog. See, they would take them, put them down in big barrels of hot, hot water, and then they'd raise them up with a singletree—or something else, they called it—and they'd scrape those. There'd be maybe three or four men there that day, and they might kill two or three hogs, even. But they'd scrape them, and then what the cracklings really was, was after they cut the different parts up, well, they would cut off this skin and a little bit of fat, and they'd cook them, and that was the cracklings. And the fat just cooked into grease, and you used that for lard.

TS: So, it's little pieces of skin, cooked, and sometimes I guess it could be put into bread.

BWB: Oh, I've cooked crackling cornbread. Yeah, my husband loved that. And we had, he had, foxhounds, had big old foxhounds, and I would cook crackling cornbread for them. And one of them was getting fatter than the other, well, I let her eat first, and he said, one day he come in and he said, "Old Molly looks like she's gaining weight," and I thought, Yeah, she gets to eat first, with all the others.

And lye soap, you ever use lye soap?

TS: Yeah, once or twice. Did your mother make lye soap?

BWB: Oh, yes.

TS: Do you remember how she did it?

BWB: Not for sure, but I know they'd have a big pot, and seem like they put ashes in it and lye and grease. And it was my job to stir all that. Oh! It's a wonder this arm isn't either longer than this one or shorter than that one, 'cause I was caught on the ice-cream freezer and the sausage grinder and the hominy stirrer and the lye soap stirrer and the making of the cracklings. But I didn't mind, I was lower to the pot. (laughs) Well, the other girls were busy doing other things, too, I'm sure.

TS: You naturally remember what you had to do.

BWB: Yeah. (laughs)

TS: That's the part that makes the big impression.

BWB: Yeah. But, you know, I wouldn't have traded that life for anything else, 'cause I feel like it has really made me a better person. Because the things—endured really isn't the word—but the things we did I think makes you appreciate things now better, more than the kids do now. 'Cause, you realize how hard that was to get something. Mama and Daddy'd take us to town to get new shoes before school started, and my sister, the first pair she tried on, she'd say, "Well, they fit," and she'd take them home. And they might rub blisters on her feet, and Mama would say, "Well, now I told you to try on more." She'd say, "Well, I was afraid they didn't have another pair like this one." I think she ruined her feet by wearing those kind of shoes, too.

But my mother made most of our clothes. I remember that she made us pinafores and little white blouses, shirtwaist blouses. You know what a pinafore is? That's a skirt, and it comes up, has a kind of like a bib, and then it has a ruffle over each shoulder.

TS: No, I needed you to tell me. I know the word, but I didn't really know what—

BWB: Well, she made us—mine was blue and white and I think—no, mine was red and white and Billie's was blue and white. 'Cause she dressed us a lot alike, there was two years difference in our age. In fact, sometimes when Billie would outgrow her dress, then I got it again. I'd have to wear it another year. (laughs) But that was okay.

TS: Well, where would she get the fabric to make your clothes? Would she buy it in Belton?

BWB: Yeah. There was a Cooks that had a department that sold ready-made clothes and shoes and cloth fabric, too. But, now, like our underwear and our slips and gowns and things, she might use feed sack. And flour sacks, lot of times, for the underwear. But all the other girls were wearing them, too, so we didn't feel ashamed. Well, we didn't know, like I say, didn't know any different. That's what they were wearing.

TS: My grandmother made those. Well, the flour sack fabric was good fabric. The whole idea was to give people something they could recycle, and people would pick out the flour by the patterns, sometimes.

BWB: Yeah, yeah. I remember my mother would get something with a check. Well, maybe they'd be flowers and stripes but she wanted something in a check, that particular time. And feed sacks, like I tell you—'course, did didn't buy much feed because he raised his own.

TS: What about your work clothes? What would be your clothes for working in the field?

BWB: Overalls. You had school clothes, but you did not wear them to play in, and you did not wear them to work in. You had overalls for that. And you didn't wear your school shoes, you wore older shoes, just

before they wore out, really, I guess. Or went barefoot, we went barefooted a lot of the time. In the summer, especially.

TS: Watch out for the bull nettles.

BWB: We didn't work in the field barefooted, though. (laughs)

TS: What did you wear on your heads, like in cotton picking and stuff?

BWB: Bonnets. Oh, Mama thought we ought to be covered up. We'd have long—they'd be cotton, they wouldn't be thick—jackets and lots of times gloves and bonnets. And then we got older, and we decided we didn't want the gloves and the jacket. We might wear the bonnet awhile, but—and a lot would wear a split bonnet. You'd have a bonnet and sew seams in them—(unintelligible) and then you would get pasteboard and stick in that to make it stand out so it wouldn't fall over in your eyes—to give it body. But then you had free bonnets to wear with your pretty dresses, sometimes, and they would button up the back and cross. Lots of times they'd have embroidery or lace on them. And lots of times they'd be little checks—gingham.

TS: Would you wear a bonnet like that to school? Or, was it more of a—

BWB: No. To school, you just—you wore a cap in the winter and that's about all.

TS: But there were pretty bonnets to go to town in, and there were work bonnets to go pull the corn in.

BWB: Yeah.

TS: And they weren't the same thing.

BWB: Oh, no, oh, no, you did not mix work clothes with dress clothes. And then going to church. You went to church every Sunday and Sunday night and sometimes on Wednesday night. And then in the summer they'd have maybe a week of revival.

TS: What was that like? This is Church of Christ, right?

BWB: Yeah. They would have preachers sometimes, would come out from Belton and preach. And even the song leaders, 'cause I remember Mr. Lathal Casky from Belton would come out, and he would lead singing at the revival. And then we'd have dinner on the ground, maybe on Sunday at the end of the revival. And the ladies would fix, oh, good meals, and then they'd spread it all out and have a—and then they did singing that afternoon, gospel singing. They'd just gather back the tabernacle and sing gospel music for two or three hours. Good fellowship.

TS: So, people would go back and forth to the revival? Like, the revival would go on for several days, right? So, people would come and go.

BWB: Uh-huh, yeah. Well, maybe three or four days they would have morning services, too. They always had night services, but sometimes, either at the beginning or the ending, they'd have about three days of morning services. And people from different communities would come and attend.

TS: When were they having the revival? Was it at a good time for people to get away from crop work?

BWB: Well, seems like it was always in the summertime, so I guess it was between corn chopping and corn pulling, I guess. I don't remember exactly the days, but I know it—

TS: Did people talk about—do you remember people saying laid by? Are you familiar with that?

BWB: Uh-huh.

TS: And what did that mean? When is laid-by time?

BWB: Well, you put up in case bad times fell on you, I think. Wasn't it? Well, you would can extra in case something happened. And, too, my mother would can a lot of extra stuff to just give to people whenever bad times fell on them. And she would go help nurse them back to health. She was—well, all the ladies were in the community, they just—you know, if somebody had a sickness well they would—and they had to set up with them, well, they would work it around where nearly everybody in the community was involved in that.

TS: That's a kind of difference between then and now that people have told me about before.

BWB: Oh, yeah, oh, yeah.

TS: So, if somebody is sick, has a prolonged illness in a family, the neighbors would sort of work it out? Like they're very ill, they would come over there, kind of in rotation, and sit with that person?

BWB: And bring cooked food in, and if it was a woman that was sick they would do her washing and just kind of help the family along, whatever need to be done.

And that's like when a person died, the men of the community went out and dug the grave, and then you would go to the funeral. Well, I remember going to a house with my parents, and they set up all night long with that dead person. And they'd take a door down. I was little but I remember that, they took a door down, and they laid this person on that. And they bathed her, the women did, bathed her and dressed her, and then they laid her on that board, and they set up all night. And then the next day they put her in the casket and had the funeral.

TS: Where'd the casket come from?

BWB: Usually from Belton. Heartfields, and then there was Phillips and Luckys had funeral homes in Belton.

TS: Well, most people couldn't afford—most people out in the countryside wouldn't use the funeral home, right?

BWB: A lot of times they just had the body in their house. They'd have a—I don't guess they embalmed them. They just cleaned them up and dressed them and got them ready for the—I remember one time I went to a funeral, it was an older woman, they had her in a black dress and a black bonnet, and I remember that, oh, I remembered that for a long time, how that woman looked laying on that door with black bonnet and black dress on.

TS: It made it worse, right? Or something?

BWB: It really impressed.

TS: Well, so, the neighbors would come to help, and they would clean the person up and dress them. And they would be laid out on the board—the door. I understand why they use a door, it's easy to take it down and use. What would the door be setting on?

BWB: Maybe chairs, or tables.

TS: So, they would sit up with the corpse all night.

BWB: All night long.

TS: And then the next day, because you didn't want to wait too long—

BWB: You had the funeral.

TS: A do-it-yourself funeral, right?

BWB: Yeah. Well, the preacher always preached, and then usually the local people sang the hymns. The men and women of the church or community would come and sing. And then the ladies of the community would fix dinner to take to whoever's house that the person had died a member of. And they would just fix—well, for several days, 'cause they'd take lots of food in.

TS: But, there was this kind of community—the family had had a tragedy, somebody had died, and this was just customary, to come in and help. Everybody expected to do it and expected that other people would do it for them if they needed it.

BWB: Yeah, yeah. I don't know, I guess it was expected, but everybody just did it. They just—and that is something that's kind of lost. 'Cause if your neighbor's sick, well, as long as they don't get out in your way, well, why bother with them. I'm not a lot like that. I still—I have a neighbor lady that had surgery 'cause her artery was stopped up, and I went over to see her last night. And she said, "Oh, I'll be all right, you don't have to stay over here." Well, I didn't stay all night, but I did sit there with her awhile. And ask her if she needed anything. And the other lady brought in some soup, and I made rolls for her.

TS: Would people help if people got in trouble with their crops? What do you remember about that?

BWB: Yeah, yeah. Well, I can remember there was a man that got sick, and he was sick for two or three months, I guess. And the men of the community just filled in and gathered his crop in for him and put it up just like they would their own. And if they were building a barn, lots of times they would go help build the barn. Or if they's working on a house, lots of times they'd go help them build their house. Just, you know, well, I'm a carpenter, I'll help do this, I can paint, and they just all—and the women would usually go and help, and then they'd cook a meal for those that were helping. And so it was a community effort, kind of.

TS: They would just go over as a big bunch, like on a weekend. It was kind of a social affair, and they'd try to get a lot of work done quick, right?

BWB: Yeah. Sparta had three grocery stores. They's one that was a little bitty thing, but there was an older couple, Alf and Ollie Roberts, that run it. But I remember going by there, and they'd give me candy once in a while, and I thought that was such a great place. But, then, Henry and Carrie Jordan run a bigger place. And they always had fruit, and they had cold drinks and bread and a lot of stuff.

But I'll tell you how crazy I was. When I went to school, my mother would fix me big biscuits, and she'd put mustard on them and a big sausage patty, which was good, good. But this girl, her mother and daddy run the grocery store, and she got light bread and lettuce and bologna, and she would trade me that bologna sandwich for my sausage. And I would trade with her, and I think, boy, now, how crazy I was. But that was different—I mean, it was something real different. Boy, she was getting the good end of the deal, and, well, I knew I's getting sausage and biscuit at home.

TS: Yeah, well, everybody's getting something different to what they were getting at home. What was the bigger store like? What did it look like? What did it have in it? Just anything like that.

BWB: Well, it would have kind of the basics. And it would have flour and coffee and sugar and tea and oatmeal, and just in general, stuff, you know, you could buy there. And it had two pumps outside for the gas, I think it was flying Mobile, the flying horse. I remember it had a big old metal thing a hanging up, and that thing in the wind it'd swing and it'd make a noise.

TS: Yeah, the sign of the flying horse. Soft drinks?

BWB: Yeah, yeah—Big Red and RC Cola. There's a man, he'd come there and my daddy would say, "Uh, Mr. Bill, would you like to have a cold drink?" "Yeah." They called my daddy Preacher. He wasn't, but—when he was going to school, there was a Methodist preacher that was the teacher, and he got in trouble one day and the teacher whupped him. Well, after that, having eleven brothers and sisters, well, that stuck with him. They used to call him, first started out calling him Preacher, whatever the preacher's name was. You know, Preacher so-and-so. And then they dropped the name and just called him Preacher, and that stuck with him all his life. But anyhow, Mr. Bill would say, "Oh, Mr. Preach, I'll take RC Cola," or R and C Cola, or something like that, he'd say it kind of funny. And the Big Orange and Grapette—

TS: So, your father was offering to buy him—

Where were we? Well, it doesn't matter. Oh, the store. Did the store have anything—could you get your corn ground at the store?

BWB: There was a little building out from there that had the grinder.

TS: How did that work? Did the people that owned the store own the grinder?

BWB: No, I think another man owned that, and I think he owned a blacksmith shop—not adjoining, well, maybe it did adjoin it—but he had a blacksmith shop there, too.

TS: What we're kind of getting at is, what was there at the center of Sparta? What sort of—and we're talking about stores, gristmill, I'm sure there probably wasn't a sawmill. What would you see if you went into downtown Sparta, is what I'm saying?

BWB: Well, in going in you'd see the church, and then you'd see one of the stores 'cross the street from it, and then on the same side of the street there was another store. 'Course, there were houses opposite the stores. All three stores were on the same side within probably a block of each other.

TS: That's a lot of stores.

BWB: Yeah, it was.

TS: They're all in competition, sorta, anyway.

BWB: And we had a switchboard, Mrs. Bealula Wesson run the switchboard.

TS: How did that work? How did the phone system work?

BWB: Well, you had these big wooden phones in each home, and you had three longs and a short, maybe, or two shorts and a long, but anyhow, everybody knew their ring.

TS: So, it rang all the time, right, and you stopped listening when it went off your code?

BWB: Yeah. Oh, years ago, there was a doctor's office, but that all burned in about—oh, the '20s, I guess. But there was a doctor's office and several things there, but it all burned in about, I guess, the early '20s.

TS: So, there had been more of a town center.

BWB: Uh-huh, but that's before I's born. There was the church and then the grocery stores and then on up about a fourth of a mile was the schoolhouse. It kind of set off, there wasn't any houses. Well, there was some. One they got water from, the well, was pretty close, but it wasn't—I mean, there was a big school ground that no houses were on. Then there was Sparta Bluff and there was Sparta Bridge, and

then there was the Boren Bridge, it was down below on the Cowhouse, down below the church, even.

TS: So, these were close by? How close was Sparta to the Cowhouse?

BWB: Well, it kind of run through Sparta. It run over behind the stores and come down. We lived about a half a mile from it, where we lived. But we never learned to swim, because our mother told us not to go swimming until we learned how. So, we never did learn. Well, she didn't know how to swim either, so, I think that's the reason she just didn't want us down there in the water fooling around. 'Cause, she couldn't swim, and if we'd got in trouble, I guess—

TS: What was the bluff? Was it just a high place over the creek?

BWB: Well, it was, yeah, back of the creek. It was a pretty bluff. I's going to show you, now, this is a picture of the church in '52, just before they disbanded for the dam.

TS: It's a church congregation, standing in front of Sparta Church of Christ. You can see electric lights inside. It looks—1952, the Sparta Church of Christ. And this is—so, the church survived the coming of the army, but it didn't survive the coming of the lake.

BWB: Well, they all come in about the same time. Fort Hood and the dam was being built about the same time. 'Cause, see, the road 'cross the dam opened in '53, I think. So, they were working on it, but they allowed the people to live there, 'cause, see, the houses wasn't any danger, I mean the houses weren't in any danger of the water, 'cause they hadn't got the dam finished. But in the latter part of '52, they had to start moving—well, a lot of them had moved their homes out or just moved out and left them.

TS: So, Sparta was—the land around Sparta was taken when the army built—

BWB: Fort Hood.

TS: The extension of Fort Hood.

BWB: Yeah, 'cause Fort Hood was built up there—

TS: They didn't get you in '42?

BWB: Unh-uh, unh-uh, no. Like the Brookhaven kids, their school was taken, and they had to go to either Killeen—some of them came to Belton, I went to school with some of them, but some of them decided to go to Killeen School. In fact, we're going to have a Brookhaven reunion the first Sunday in May, and I'm going to go to that, 'cause I want to see some of the kids I probably haven't seen since we got out of school, probably. And some of them, I'd see them every once in a while. And in June, we have a Tennessee Valley—that's where my husband was raised—which is about seven miles down in the country from us. It's on the Leon River, and 'course the Cowhouse runs into the Leon. Then this [photograph] is a Wilhite reunion, but that was down on the Cowhouse. I don't know if you can see that bridge, but that was an old tree down on the river bank, and we used to have our reunions there, nearly every year, until they moved out. And, so, we quit having them for a while, and then we had about five deaths in the family in one year, and my husband told me, said, "What the Wilhites need is a reunion." So, this June will be my twenty-second year to hold the Wilhite reunion.

TS: So, you're the sponsor? Somebody has to do all the hard work.

BWB: Yes, somebody does. They said, Pass it around! But when you start passing it around, you'll hit somebody that don't want to have it, or they won't invite as many, and it just don't work passing it around. So, I—well, my husband and I did it for fifteen years, and then he passed away. He's been gone six years—seven. And, so I've been—well, I have help. My kids help me, and my nephew

comes and helps me set up. They get me set up. But I always look forward to it, 'cause we see so many, and they bring along the babies. A lot of reunions, it's the older people, and I know two communities, Union Hill and another one, has done quit having reunions 'cause nobody, I think twenty-two showed up, and that's not enough to really plan on, you know.

TS: Yeah, it gets depressing if you don't get enough.

BWB: Yeah. But we usually have about a hundred at the Wilhite. It gives me a boost, and I'm ready. When it comes time, I'll have it out here at the VFW in Belton. 'Cause they, you know, you just go out there, and they've got it cleaned up. If you had it in your house, you'd have to work for days cleaning house. And you can spend all of that getting ready for the reunion and visiting with people and such like.

TS: Well, how did it come about, what happened, how did it come about that Fort Hood and the lake came in? How did that happen? Were there rumors that it might be going to happen? What happened when people lost their land to Fort Hood and the lake, is what I'm asking?

BWB: Well, that Mr. Denman was a big hand—he and Representative Polk, Bob Polk. They and Mr. T. E. Sanderford, they were a big hand in getting the dam built. And 'course, when they's building the dam, well, Fort Hood just come and met the land where, well, you know, that they weren't going to use. And so I guess that's how it was, because I remember even before they come through surveying, years before they'd even talk about Belton Dam coming. But, you know, whoever thought of Belton having a dam or Sparta being in Fort Hood?

And lots of people, oh, lots of the old-timers that had lived maybe two or three generations on the place, it was hard on them to give up their places and move. Some of them sold their houses, and then they were moved, different things. But I know even that Mrs. Denman, she cried for days. But her husband was a big hand in them getting the dam built, so—but he'd tell my daddy—he had a big fine home there in Sparta, and whenever the dam took it, he bought a big office building in Temple, and he had Denman Building, I think, on every window pane on that thing. And he'd say, "Mr. Preach, I wish I knew how I could take my money with me." (TS laughs) And of course my daddy was kind of a cutup, he said, "Well, I guess you're gonna have to sew some big pockets in that shroud." My daddy knew you couldn't take it with you, but he'd say you're gonna sew some big pockets on that shroud.

TS: But Denman had some sort of sense of humor about it, or he wouldn't have been—he knew perfectly well that it didn't matter how big a building he had in Temple, it wasn't gonna carry over into the next life.

BWB: Yeah.

TS: Well, so Sparta—uh, did Sparta have any lodge halls or anything like that? Were there any Masons?

BWB: No, you had to go to Belton. My daddy was a member of the Woodmen of the World, and I remember him going to Belton for the meetings. And then, when he died, he had life insurance with them, and they paid off.

TS: Is it the Woodmen that have those gravestones?

BWB: Uh-huh, we have some out in our cemetery. Now, we didn't have—my daddy had already bought his. Well, my mother passed away in November of '64, and he died in April of '66. But he already had a double marker, so we didn't even apply for a Woodmen of the World marker, which we probably could of gotten.

TS: And in case the tape recorder doesn't know, the Woodmen of the World gravestone is a tree stump

with little limbs on it—a concrete tree stump, it's a special marker for the Woodmen.

BWB: Uh-huh. And there's some of those out at Rest Haven, 'course they were probably in the—she, when they moved the dam, well, they moved the Tennessee Valley Cemetery to Liberty Hill, which was by our house. Oh, that was the Denman Cemetery, Liberty Hill was on up past the church. But then about three or four—and then they's a few family cemeteries in Rest Haven out here south of Belton, they moved it in '52.

TS: How did people feel about them moving the cemeteries?

BWB: They didn't like that, lot of them.

TS: Digging up granddaddy and moving him.

BWB: And some of them had been there so long they just got scoops of dirt and put it in a new casket, was what they did. But there was a lot of people did not go for that. But then when you talked about water coming over them, they didn't want that either.

TS: (laughs) They didn't want grandfather on the bottom of the lake, either.

BWB: Yeah, that's like I's telling somebody, I said, "Oh, where Daddy's cotton field was is eighty-five feet underwater, and I don't think I could pick much cotton there, now." (laughs)

TS: How were you as a cotton picker? Now, there were different ways of doing it, and some people were a lot better at it than others.

BWB: Oh, my oldest sister, she snagged it, but she could get that cotton. She'd go faster down the row than I could. And I'd think, I'm picking as hard as she is, but she'd get more cotton. I's about fair, I guess. Daddy never told us how much we had to pick—just so we's busy, I reckon.

TS: He never gave you—some daddies gave quotas.

BWB: Yeah, yeah, but he'd never would. He'd just tell us get out there and do our best. He'd say, "Now, just do your best." And I'd pick hard, but I couldn't get what my older sister got. But she'd snag hers, she'd leave little—and I'd pick mine clean, I wanted all that cotton out of that boll.

TS: So, she would leave little tufts in the bolls. You'd look behind her on the row and see—

BWB: What row she'd picked, yeah. And you could tell which ones I'd picked, 'cause I'd pick them clean.

TS: How about chopping? That's easier—chopping the cotton or chopping the corn is easier than picking, right?

BWB: Oh, yeah! Oh, yeah. 'Cause in picking, if you bent over and picked, well, then you had a sore back after the first day. And if you crawled on your knees, well then your knees was sore. Oh! That second day, you couldn't hardly get out of bed. But you did. Now, pulling corn wasn't that bad. I mean, it was hot, and that stuff would get on you, but it wasn't hard on your legs or your knees or back like picking cotton was.

TS: What about stuff in the corn? Was there a problem with scorpions like there was some places? Some people have told me about—you would get into stuff like that.

BWB: I remember one time my daddy was wearing overalls, and a scorpion got up his leg and was stinging him, and he run—of course, after he went over there a ways, you couldn't see where he was anyhow, 'cause the corn was so tall, but he was trying to get out of them overalls, I tell you. 'Cause that scorpion—but that's the only time I remember a scorpion being in there.

TS: You mentioned that you would have poke salad. I'm thinking of varmints and wild stuff, and—okay, now, poke salad is a wild green. Would you use any other kinds of wild greens, would you pick anything else?

BWB: Well, you'd have wild onions. They just grew, and you get them started, they's about like Johnson grass, they just kept coming back. And cold weather freezes didn't bother them at all. And we'd use that in a lot of soups. Well, eat them, too, but a lot of times in soups or roast or something like that. Mama would chop them up.

And I remember getting oatmeal, and you'd open it up, and there'd be a little pink bowl or a little green glass bowl in there. And with some kind of tea you got a big goblet. It was little down here on the foot, and then it come up, and it'd be real big.

TS: Yeah, these were gifts in oatmeal.

BWB: Uh-huh, and with the tea.

TS: And you wondered what were in them. They were surprises.

BWB: Uh-huh. And Mama would say, "You can't get another box until you eat all this one," but we'd have—now, my sister Billie liked sugar and butter on her oatmeal, but I liked sugar and sweet cream. I didn't want any milk in it, but I didn't want any cream in my drinking milk, either. I didn't really like milk, and my mother would give me a nickel a glass to drink it. And my sister older than me, she'd drink the glass of milk and get the nickel. 'Course, I didn't care, 'cause I didn't have to drink the milk. But I just never was a milk drinker. Seem like they couldn't get it cold enough that I couldn't smell the cow in the milk when I's drinking it.

TS: Well, how about your—how many cows did y'all have, and who milked them? What would you do with the milk?

BWB: Oh, my mother milked them. Well, sometimes we mixed it in with the pig feed and fed it to the pigs. If we had a bunch of little ones he'd feed the milk to them. And we'd make butter and cottage cheese. You know, you'd put in cheesecloth and let all the liquid drop out, and it would be cheese, I mean, cottage cheese.

TS: You'd let it curdle, or you'd let it sour. And then you'd hang it in the cheesecloth and let it drip, let the whey drip out?

BWB: Yeah, yeah. Uh-huh. You ever eat any clabber milk?

TS: Just buttermilk.

BWB: Oh, I didn't like buttermilk. My sister did, she loved it, still loves buttermilk. I could drink clabber, but I couldn't—cornbread and clabber, but I didn't like buttermilk. I liked butter, and I churned a lot of it. Lot of it! (laughs) Some of it with just a jar and some of it with that crank jar, too.

TS: The crank jar is—you turn the handle, the handle is up, right?

BWB: Yeah, and it kind of had paddles in there.

TS: Did you have a churn?

BWB: Yeah, had one of those, too. About a two-gallon one is what we had, and churned it.

TS: This is the vertical churn, where the plunger goes up and down? That's the only one I ever did.

BWB: Uh-huh, and the little wooden stick with the paddles on the end of it, yeah, cross paddles. I've done that, too. No, Mama said if Daddy milked the cows he'd dry them all up, so she wouldn't let him milk. And she milked all the time. We had about—sometimes he would just turn them in the pasture with the calves and let them—and he'd kill a calf every once in a while, and he'd sell some. And Mama had turkeys.

TS: How did she do the turkeys, how did she manage turkeys? Because I've never understood that. They weren't exactly managed like the chickens.

BWB: No. Well, now, she had a turkey pen, but usually when they got to laying they would go off in the brush and lay, and you'd just have to find their nests. And usually she would sometimes leave them alone, and sometimes she would bring the eggs in and keep them. Not cold, but, you know—and then, when the turkey started setting, she'd take the eggs and put under her setting and hatch out the turkeys. But a lot of times a fox or a wolf or something out in the wild would get the eggs, so she didn't leave them with that hen all the time.

TS: But you almost had to let the turkey hen go out and lay in the woods, and then find the nest, and then bring the eggs in, right? Because, like, she wouldn't lay in the house, right, like a chicken?

BWB: She wouldn't. No, no, they wouldn't. This pen, it was chicken wire for the one we had, and had real tall poles, and they could kind of fly around in there some. That would kind of pen them up to keep anything from catching them or eating them. But she would let them out, and I know sometime we'd go and follow them. We wouldn't get real close, but we'd get close enough that we could tell if she went over here in this bunch of woods or over there. And then, uh—

TS: Well, they were kind of a little bit wild, right?

BWB: Yeah, yeah, yeah. They had a tendency to be a little wild.

TS: Well, what would you do with the turkeys? Would you sell them?

BWB: Yeah, she'd take them to town and sell them a lot of times. And sometimes around Thanksgiving different ones would want a turkey, too. She'd sell 'em to them. Oh, my mother and daddy both were very conservative. Like I say, we never talked about being rich or poor. I don't know, I guess we were much richer than I thought we were because we had all the eats. Nearly anything we wanted to eat we raised, you know, canned, or whatever.

TS: How did you manage the hogs? Did you keep them penned up all the time? Did you let them run out? Were there woods they could go into, did you have a hog pasture? Just anything.

BWB: Well, we had a hog pen, and Daddy would use—they had stalls, like whenever they'd have babies, well, they were put in a stall so that the hogs wouldn't lay down on them. Sometimes, the mother hog would eat—like, this mother hog had little ones, but this one over here had little ones. Well, this one over here, if those got out, she might eat one or so. So, he didn't want that to happen, so he put 'em in different kind of stalls, like. Until they got a little bigger and running around, and then there was a hog pen that they could run around in. And he fed them slop, most times. And he'd raise some pretty big hogs. And I know at hog-killing time, the backstrap, that piece right down the back—

TS: I was going to ask you, what actually happened at hog-killing time. I know hogs are going to get killed, but how would hog-killing time go down? What would happen?

BWB: Well, I guess they'd cut their throats, 'cause they'd hang 'em up. They wouldn't let us watch that. But they'd hang them up by their feet and let them, you know—and then they'd have these big barrels of boiling water, and they'd dip 'em down in that and pull 'em back out, and they laid 'em on a big table

sort of like a door or something. Well, seem like Daddy had a metal thing, though. And he'd wash that off good and clean and put 'em on that and scrape 'em. And they would have the liver probably cooked up that day. Like I say, maybe two or three men would be there, and they'd kill two or three hogs that day, and everybody would take their own meat back with them. And some of them would have salt pork, and they would have sausage and ham, sugar-cured, hanging in the smokehouse.

TS: And y'all had a smokehouse. You had to have a smokehouse.

BWB: Yeah, yeah, we did. And it was good to go by and just take a knife and cut a piece of that ham off and eat it. Then my daddy had a kind of a blacksmith shop that he'd sharpen sweeps or he'd sometimes fix horseshoes, if they had to be—I don't know if he bought 'em ready made, and he'd bend 'em according to the horse's hoof shape, or exactly what, but I know sometimes—I remember him holding, it'd be so hot, he'd have that thing—

TS: Was it one of little things like a table thing, I'm making about the size of my arms, kind of set up on legs? It had a blower, you had to have a blower. It was one of those sort of—like a do it yourself blacksmith shop that a farmer would have to do the stuff that he wouldn't need a professional for?

BWB: Yeah, yeah, it was. And so, see, they were pretty much self sufficient of the things they did.

TS: Well, that's a step beyond a lot of people, right there. Most farmers probably wouldn't have the little blacksmith shop.

BWB: I don't remember anybody else having that, really.

(taping stops)

TS: This is a second interview with Bert Wilhite Bounds. [This interview is part of Prewitt and Associates' Fort Hood Oral History Project sponsored by the U.S. Army Fort Hood and conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University.] It is April 18, 2001 [and we are in Belton.] The interviewer is Thad Sitton.

Might as well start with—what do you remember about canning? Tell me about canning day.

BWB: Oh, that was a full day. My daddy would usually hitch up the mules and put 'em to the wagon, hitch 'em to the wagon, and go to the corn patch, corn field, and he would cut the stalks. It would have the roasting ear on it, you know. And he'd just throw the whole thing in the wagon and brought it up under the shade trees. And he would take and pull the roasting ear off, and 'course he'd throw the stalk to the mules. And he would cut both ends off with a big knife, and we would take and husk it, and then we would silk it. You know what silks are? (laughs) Okay, we would silk it, 'cause Mama did not want any silks in—then she would take it and in a big dishpan she'd take and cut the kernels off. And then she would scald the cans put the corn in the cans. And we had a sealer, we had a cooker and a sealer, both. And she would put the corn in the cans and seal 'em, put lids on 'em and seal 'em, and then she would put 'em in the cooker and cook 'em, I don't remember how long. And she would can maybe fifty or sixty cans all day. It was a just about all-day affair, yeah.

TS: Well, the corn only gets to the roasting ear stage once, so you're basically putting up all the corn, you're canning corn, for the whole year. And you don't get a second—I mean, there's just one little period.

BWB: Uh-huh, yeah, because after a certain stage they get too hard to can. They're too hard to eat, and you don't can 'em, then.

TS: This was just basically the regular field corn, right, at the right stage for roasting ears?

BWB: Uh-huh, yeah. 'Course, we'd have roasting ears every day, while that season was on—fresh roasting

ears. But canning day was quite a thing.

TS: Well, what did you and your sisters do? How did you—

BWB: Well, we had to help shuck it, and then we had to silk it and get all that kind of like hair on the corn, ear corn.

TS: Yeah. You've got to be pretty picky about that to get it off.

BWB: Yes, you have. And our mother expected us to just get it pretty well clean, 'cause she didn't want any of that in her—when she cut it off, she didn't want that mixed in with her corn. And then the horses had a good feast, because they eat the shucks and the stalks of the day. Well, I'm sure they eat some one day and some the next, because it'd be a big, big load that he'd bring in.

TS: Did you cut the corn tops? Can you talk about that a little, because I think the story of the corn is just how completely the corn plant was used in every way possible.

BWB: Oh, we would go and cut the tops out. 'Course, after my daddy got a pickup we'd put 'em in the bed of the pickup, but before that we would put 'em in the wagon and take 'em to the house to feed the cows and the horses and mules. My daddy had some of those.

TS: Did you shock 'em up in the field, or would you just go and get a load?

BWB: Well, most of the time we just got a load as we needed it—to feed 'em. And my daddy raised highgear. You know what that is? Okay, we would take and stack that sometimes, shock that sometimes. And then he'd plant cane, but 'course we would cut that, and you'd windrow it, you'd leave spaces—well, it would be all in a row, and then you would come back and rake it and then bale it and have bales of hay. I've helped do a lot of that, too.

TS: So this was baled. It was a thin cane, kind of like oat hay or something, but it was baled?

BWB: Uh-huh.

TS: That's interesting.

BWB: Yeah. My daddy had a baler and had a baling crew, and I know my mother would cook—that was something else, too—'cause she'd fry up the chicken and—but we wasn't allowed to eat until all the men had eat. Oh, you'd be so hungry!

And fan flies, and the ice man would come around 'bout twice a week in a truck, and you'd have a board, and it would have twenty-five, fifty, seventy-five, or a hundred, and you would put that in the window, however much ice you wanted that day. Well, when she was having to cook for the hay baling crew, well 'course, we got more ice 'cause she'd make iced tea for them. Well, we had iced tea, but I mean having a crew there—and she'd cook for that whole crew. She'd cook fried chicken and gravy, and we'd have tomatoes out of the garden and beans and just good old country dinner. And 'course those men were hungry, I remember, and they'd just keep eating, seem like. And they'd eat all the good pieces, and 'bout all that's left was the back or the neck or—

TS: So, they weren't modest about that. They didn't think, I've got to leave some for these girls.

BWB: No! I guess they figured that we could eat peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, I don't know what they thought. But anyhow they worked hard, and so we respected that.

TS: Well, what was it—explain about his baling crew. Were these people that he had hired, or did he go around with his crew? What was going on?

BWB: Well, sometimes he would bale, and people from other farms around would come help him, and then he'd go bale their hay. And, 'course, their wives would cook the dinner for 'em.

TS: He had the baler, right? He had a full set of stuff?

BWB: Yeah, he had a rake. Well, he had a mower.

TS: What did you have to have?

BWB: You had to have a mower to cut the cane, and this baler—well, rake, you had to have a rake.

TS: It had to be raked into windrows.

BWB: Uh-huh, and we'd hitch the mules to that, you know. Well, after he got a tractor we put it to the tractor, but when my first memory of hay baling, well, he used two mules, and they would pull the rake. And you'd get up there where you'd raked before, and then you'd pull them mules up a little bit and mash that thing so that rake would lift up and deposit that bunch of cane there.

TS: I've heard of something called a bull rake. Would it, did it, leave a little stringy row? Or did it leave a pile?

BWB: No, it left kind of like a row. And then, first thing you know this row—and then you come back with a hay baler, and then he had a guy that loaded the hay in the baler, and then they would have baling wire to tie the bales, and he'd have one there, and then one to move 'em. Well, it would kind of—it would throw 'em out.

TS: You know, people think about this, and they think it's that fully automated baler that just goes down through the field and spits out bales, but this wasn't what we're talking about. What we're talking about is this older system that involves several pieces of equipment and takes several men. They don't make nearly as many bales a day, right?

BWB: Right.

TS: Especially if it's just mules and horses.

BWB: Yeah, yeah. 'Course, he'd unhitch the mules and let 'em rest while they ate. He'd feed 'em and water 'em, and then he'd go back and hook 'em up, and they'd go again that evening. But I don't believe it got as hot then as it does now—(laughs) or I guess we're used to air conditioning, now, that makes it so hot. But we didn't think about it being hot. And then we had just gallon jugs, and my mother would sew tow sacks on 'em—to insulate 'em, I guess that's what they were—and you'd put water on that sack, well, that kept it cool for a while.

TS: Um-hm. That worked a lot better—that evaporative cooling worked better than a lot of people think.

BWB: Yeah.

TS: Nobody knows about it now, right?

BWB: No, they have to have little coolers and that blue ice or something, or just ice itself.

TS: Well, what else did you think of were—I'd like to know what you—

BWB: Well, my mother canned just about everything that she could get her hands on, out of the garden or out of the orchard, either one. And she would can like green beans, green beans and new potatoes, and then sometimes she'd can carrots and potatoes and tomatoes and onions. It would be a form of soup already in the can, which she could add other things with it.

TS: I see. Basic soup and then she prepared, when she heated it up, she could put in some more things—some meat, whatever.

BWB: Or macaroni. But she would can individual, like can the beans and sometimes the carrots in individual cans, you know. Then, we'd plant—we'd let a section of the—not a section but a part of the—beans, we'd let 'em dry, and then we would pick 'em and shell 'em and have the pinto beans, as people know it now, in the dried form.

TS: What did you store those in?

BWB: I think that was in the smokehouse, a part of it, you know. It would be in big old barrels or big containers, because she would store a lot of that. Sometimes, she'd wash feed sacks and store 'em in that. I remember onions they'd hang up to dry in part of the smokehouse. Not where the smoked the meat but another little building there on to it. You'd see onions hanging up and potatoes. Lot of times they'd scatter them out on—they'd have a screen wire with a wood frame around it and would put that on there so they could get air and wouldn't rot as quick.

TS: Would this be in the smokehouse area, too?

BWB: Well, not where they smoked the meat but in the other part.

TS: Yeah, I understand, the other part, the food storage. So, we've got pinto beans, and dried onions hanging up on the wall—

BWB: Well, they were still green, but we hung 'em up 'cause if you piled 'em together they might rot.

TS: And the potatoes on the wire. Irish potatoes, or—

BWB: Irish potatoes, yeah. And my daddy would plow the garden, and then we'd go along and plant the potatoes and same way about beans. He'd plow that, and we'd go along and put maybe two beans in a hill. And a hill was about every so many—because, when they grew up they would kind of grow together, especially if you planted them too close. And cabbage, she raised cabbage.

TS: How did you put up—did you put up the cabbage?

BWB: Well, sometimes she just canned it as cooked cabbage, and sometimes a part of it went in there where the potatoes was on another screen thing, so the air would circulate, and they wouldn't rot. You had to really know what you's doing, I guess, and my mother was a wise person, I reckon.

TS: Her generation really knew how to do this stuff—really. They had learned it from childhood and—

BWB: Yeah, on up. And part of that was the Depression years, so I'm sure they didn't throw anything away, I don't reckon.

TS: You know, you go back past a certain point, and that hot-bath canning method isn't being used. So, everything is being preserved by hanging it up or drying it.

BWB: Uh-huh, and we didn't have deep freezes, either. And then when my daddy would kill a beef, well, she would can a lot of the beef, and lot of it was—and sometimes, you know, he would share with the neighbors. Well, when they killed a beef, they would share with us and the other neighbors.

TS: How would he share with 'em? Would he just take it around?

BWB: Yeah, or sometimes my mother would invite the ladies over to come, you know, that she had some fresh beef to give 'em and liver.

TS: You don't like liver.

BWB: I like beef liver, seem like pork liver is stronger.

TS: Yeah, I've never had pork liver.

BWB: And—you ever eat cow's tongue?

TS: Never.

BWB: You take and you boil it, I don't know how long, and then you take and peel that rough skin off, and it tastes about like some kind of—I's trying to think what kind of sliced meat you could buy now.

TS: But it had some kind of a steak taste, right?

BWB: It wasn't one of my favorites, 'cause I could still see that cow chewing. (laughs)

TS: Well, you said you didn't like, on the other tape, you didn't like milk, because it just seemed—

BWB: Well, you could—see, we just had an icebox—I don't mean refrigerator, an icebox. Well, part of the time we didn't have an icebox, we had a coolerator, where you put water—you'd have this metal span, you know, and you'd put ducking on it, like you made cotton sacks. And you would put water on that, and that would keep the milk cool to a certain extent. But I could still smell the scent of that cow, and I could not drink that milk. My mother would offer me a nickel a glass, she'd lay the nickel on there and put the glass of milk. Oh, my sister would drink it and she'd get the nickel. I didn't care because I wasn't going to drink that milk. I just didn't like—I could smell it and it just—and I'm not a milk drinker, now, even though you process it and all.

TS: It's a long way from the cow when you get it now. Well, anything else she put up that you've thought of?

BWB: Well, like fruits. She would can peaches, she'd make preserves and peach jelly and plums. A lot of times she'd cook the plums down and have the plum juice to make jelly on in whenever she needed it, even. And then we'd go pick wild grapes, and she'd make grape juice and grape jelly, and sometimes she would store that juice in a jar and later use it for making jelly in the wintertime whenever the jelly supply started getting—and pears, we'd go pick pears, and we'd take and wrap 'em in a newspaper, and put 'em in a pasteboard board, and put 'em under the bed, 'cause it was dark and cool under there. And we'd have pears, fresh pears, way on into the winter. Like, when we was going to school, she'd put a pear in our lunch.

TS: That's interesting. Really, pears, you almost have to let 'em age to be—the kind of pears you have around here, if you get 'em right off the tree, they're not very good.

BWB: Uh-huh, they're hard and they don't taste as well. But, you put 'em—we had boxes under our beds, and Mama'd just get it out. Usually, she would fix a big biscuit and fix a sausage and mustard, most time. Now, my sister liked mayonnaise, but I liked mustard on mine. And she'd put a pear in and lots of times a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. So, we thought we's well fed, and I guess we were, we survived it.

TS: Well, this is what you would take to school, right? The standard thing was the big biscuit with the sausage in it, or something like that?

BWB: Uh-huh, right, and our lunch box was usually a syrup bucket, and she'd put that in there and put the lid on it, and we'd carry the syrup bucket to the school. And I remember when we got lunch sacks, too. That was different. And the way she did the sausage, when Daddy killed hogs she'd make little

cheesecloth sacks, and we'd stuff a bunch of those and hang 'em in the smokehouse. But then she would cook some, and she'd put 'em in a big old crock jar. I guess that thing was five gallons, it might have been more, and she'd cook 'em and just lay 'em, you know, one on top of the other, and when she got it about full, she'd pour melted hog lard over that. And when that got cold, well, then, she got ready for breakfast or like fixing our lunch, she'd just go get just however many patties and put 'em on the skillet and finish cooking 'em.

TS: And the hot lard sealed off everything in the crock, so the crock itself didn't have an airtight seal on it, but everything was sealed away beneath the lard.

BWB: Uh-huh. Oh, she would put a cover on it and put a cheesecloth over that so that nothing got in it, but—

TS: That's an old method right there that doesn't require airtight containers or canners.

BWB: Uh-huh, yeah. Oh, my mother was very saving. But they never talked about whether we was poor or rich. I guess we were richer than we thought, because—not money-wise, especially, but we had—our home produced, or our farming produced, 'bout everything we eat except coffee and sugar and stuff like that.

TS: Did, uh—I was going to ask you about chickens, but it just occurred—did your father raise any field crops? Sometimes they're field crops. Now, the corn of course is multi-purpose, but did he have any field peas in his cornfield? Did he do that? Some people did. Did he have any field crops that were really food crops, like watermelons or cantaloupes, anything like that?

BWB: We just raised watermelons for ourselves. Now, we had friends from Tennessee Valley that would have acres and acres of watermelons and cantaloupes. But we just mostly—if we had ten, well that was—

TS: Your sister, I think, mentioned that. I've been looking through that lady's master's thesis, you or your sister mentioned it. Why did they raise melons in Tennessee Valley? That's one question. And secondly, somebody mentioned that they bartered 'em, they traded 'em. What about the melons at Tennessee Valley?

BWB: Well, it was sandy land, it was very sandy land. And berries, they raised a lot of berries in Tennessee Valley, and peanuts. Peanuts wasn't a main crop, but berries and watermelons were. And they would take 'em to Belton by the wagonload and sell 'em or trade 'em to somebody for something that they didn't have, didn't grow, or something.

TS: Your husband knew all about that, right?

BWB: Yes, he did. He was from Tennessee Valley, and he had picked berries and loaded watermelons, too.

TS: Well, you got to raise what will grow on the soil that you have.

BWB: Yeah. Well, now, see, where we lived it was black soil.

TS: And watermelons don't do very well.

BWB: No, it's too rich. But I'll tell you one thing. If you stick with it when it's dry, it sticks to you when it gets wet. Wooh, oh!

TS: Did the people in Tennessee Valley raise sweet potatoes?

BWB: Yes, they did.

TS: So, they were sandy land farmers because that's what they had to work with.

BWB: Yeah, and then they had—Dr. Pittman had a big peach orchard in Tennessee Valley, and he'd have—sometimes he'd let you come pick the basket yourself, and sometimes he'd have baskets setting out by the road, you know. People coming by and buying. But other people could come and pick the ones they wanted, and buy 'em by the basket or sometimes little baskets. He had a big crop.

TS: Did your family dry peaches? Or, did your mother just can 'em?

BWB: Well, she dried some, 'cause I remember that was another thing. They put 'em up on the top of the well house.

TS: Tin, right?

BWB: Yeah. And it had a screen, or best I remember it had a screen, but she'd put these peaches up there.

TS: And the heat's coming down from the sky and it's coming back off the metal roof, too, to help—

BWB: Uh-huh, dry 'em from both sides.

TS: Would she take 'em down at night and then put 'em back up, maybe?

BWB: Sometimes she did, yeah. Sometimes she'd have so many that she'd just cover 'em up with a sheet or something so they couldn't be—a lot of times to keep animals—

TS: Yeah, the birds will bother them.

BWB: Yeah, yeah.

TS: What about—did you have any trouble in keeping stuff out of your garden? They're stuff that wants to get in your garden. I mean, the coons will tear up the corn if they get in and—

BWB: We didn't have, I don't reckon, problems too much like that. I don't remember us having to—now, coons will get in your corn, too, but I don't remember that so much. Maybe we had so much they weren't real bad about it.

TS: Did you have dogs on the place?

BWB: Yeah, we had dogs. We had one that I remember, Old Shep, it was a German shepherd. And where we lived there was a little old—it wasn't a deep branch, but water run part of the summer in front of the house, and I had a nephew, and one day he was out there playing. I was watching him so he wouldn't get in the water, but this dog, if he got too close I guess that dog thought—he'd go and he'd keep walking until he got him back way away from it.

TS: And nobody could have trained the dog to do that, it was just an intelligent dog protecting him.

BWB: Uh-huh, well it had growed up with us, you know. Uh, I'm just kind of rambling.

TS: Rambling is the way this works. It's supposed to be. If you can't ramble, when you think of something you can't talk about it then, and if you don't talk about it then, you'll—

Chickens is the topic.

BWB: I was I guess appointed, I don't remember that I was. But it was my chore to go gather eggs, and I fed the chickens. We had a chicken house, but they would lay in the hay barn. They would lay all around the barn, but I found out where their nests were. And I remember one time I was gathering eggs and I reached up in there and a head pops up. It's a chicken snake. Scared me to death, I thought it was a rattlesnake, and I screamed for dear life. And my mother come running, "What's the matter? What's the matter?" I said, "A rattlesnake!" but she went up and killed it, and it was a chicken snake. But it

was real enough that it scared me, I tell you.

TS: So, it was in a hen's nest, you were feeling for—

BWB: Uh-huh, well, it was up—well, it was kind of the hay rack in the barn. Daddy put hay up in there, and the horses would pull it through and eat it. Well, in one corner up there she had made a nest. And it was—I could crawl up and see it, but a lot of times I'd just reach up and see, 'cause it was a little bit above my eyesight. I'll reach up there and feel, see if—but I didn't do that no more, I climbed up to make sure.

TS: How did your mother get her chickens? Did she replenish the flock every year, or would she keep it going? People did it different ways.

BWB: She more or less would replenish the stock, because she would keep eggs. Now, you didn't put ice on them at all. And then she'd mark 'em and draw little drawings on 'em, so she'd know if another hen come along and laid with 'em, laid an egg with 'em, well, she knew it was a fresh egg. She could get it. But after they started setting, and I think it took fourteen days to hatch chickens, and I think it was twenty-one days to hatch turkeys.

TS: So, she didn't buy baby chicks.

BWB: Sometimes she would, if she didn't have enough of her own to replenish. My daddy and her would go to town, they had an incubator down there at Cleat's Hatchery, I think it was, and they would get fifty or so baby chicks. And then we'd feed them out. 'Cause, we'd have chicken every Sunday, just about.

TS: What about Sunday dinner? You or your sister said something about Sunday dinner as something you remembered. It was different, right? After church, right?

BWB: Yes, oh, yes. And lot of times they would be somebody coming home with us, maybe the preacher or just some friends. And Mama would always have chicken, fried chicken, and fresh tomatoes and gravy and big old homemade biscuits and maybe potato salad. And then she would cook a cake, but she didn't ice it, it was just a plain cake. But then she'd make chocolate pudding, and you cut a piece of cake and put your own pudding on it—kind of like icing, I guess. Oh, she made some cakes with icing, she was a good cook, and around Christmas or Thanksgiving she would bake all kinds of—I remember mincemeat, do you remember mincemeat? Well, my sister just older than me, she loved mincemeat, and Mama would have to nearly hide it up in the cabinet. And I know one day she put it way up in the cupboard, and Billie climbed up there and eat a box of it or part of a box. Anyhow, she had meant to make a mincemeat cake, and when she got ready for it, it wasn't all there.

TS: The varmints had gotten to it.

BWB: No, she admitted that she did it, but it just—Mama had just bought it, probably had to wait until she went to town, then to—'course, we had a little grocery store about a mile away, but I don't know if it kept mincemeat much. It may have but probably not a big supply of it.

TS: What did your mother's kitchen look like? You know, could you kind of describe what she had to work with in the kitchen? A big wood stove, I guess.

BWB: Yeah, and it had an oven on the side, you opened up the oven door, and it had a kind of a water box on it. You could put water in there, and when you built the fire it would warm that water for like washing dishes. Now, we didn't have running water, particularly, but we had a well, and after we got electricity, well, it would pump water up into a big tank up over the—and I know would get warm and we'd take a bath in it at night, 'cause it'd be good and warm. And that was another thing, you took a bath every Saturday night whether you needed it or not. (laughs) And if there were four kids, well,

usually, one took it after the other, if they weren't too dirty. And I was the youngest of four kids, so usually them older girls wanted to take their bath first, 'cause they were very verbal about it.

TS: Well, that was a standard—generally—was it a washtub?

BWB: Uh-huh, big old washtub.

TS: It was seniority rule, with regards to—the oldest kid got in it first.

BWB: Yeah. And then a lot of times Mama would take and mop with it. She'd mop the porch, and it'd be just as white as anything. And 'course we had linoleums, and she kept that spotless.

TS: How come those floors were so white? Was it the lye soap in the dish water you think?

BWB: I think so, yeah. It was. And sometimes she'd lye soap in, though. Like if we'd bathe, and she used that for mopping the porch, she'd put lye soap in, chip it up, you know, and stir it up until it'd make a suds, and then she'd scrub that front porch with it.

TS: What about eating utensils? Like, they'd be stored in the kitchen, right? Like, dishes and—you were saying that a good many things came out of the oatmeal?

BWB: Uh-huh, and with iced tea. I remember we got big old glasses. They had a little round foot, and then they'd have a stem, 'bout like that, and then the glasses would come up, and they'd be bigger at the top. And they were in pink, you'd get 'em in pink or green—oh, they were pretty.

TS: Now, would these come out of the tea?

BWB: Some of 'em come with tea. You'd just buy 'em, and the grocery store would give you a glass that come with the tea. And some of it come, the smaller glasses and bowls and little plates come in oatmeal, though, a lot. And we did eat a lot of oatmeal, because that was more or less a kind of a standard breakfast for us—biscuits and sausage and oatmeal. Now, I wanted cream on my oatmeal, I didn't want no milk. But if I did drink milk, I didn't want no cream in it. I don't know—now, my sister just older than me, now she'd—boy, she'd mix that milk and cream up and put on her oatmeal.

TS: What about eggs for breakfast?

BWB: A lot of time we had bacon and eggs or sausage and eggs, yeah. That was another big favorite. But in wintertime a lot of times we'd eat oatmeal. Well, then, too, we'd eat eggs and bacon, because my daddy was kind of a big meat and eggs person, or meat and potatoes.

TS: Well, I haven't asked you enough about the house, the rest of the house. How many bedrooms? Like if somebody said, what did it look like, what would you say?

BWB: Well, it was a plank house.

TS: Were the planks horizontal or vertical?

BWB: I believe ours were horizontal. Now, my grandmother lived in one that the planks went up and down. But there they go across, too. That picture up there with the little girl was probably made in 1923—of my parents on the left, grandparents on the left. She was a little bitty woman, 'bout like me, four-eleven and he was six-three. And he—that's my oldest sister when she was three years old with 'em. And he had a loud voice, and he lived up on close to Brookhaven, we called it the Carter place. You crossed the Cowhouse, and there was a gravel bar on each side, and then you went up, and then you turned a real sharp corner, and then went on up to their house. And, oh, coming back down that when I was a kid, I would think—I remember riding in the wagon with my mother and daddy. I have lived a span of years, 'cause I remember riding in a wagon with my mother and daddy with mules to it, and

I've ridden an airplane and I went on a Hawaiian cruise one time with six ladies. And so—

TS: But the wagon—I'm just sixty, but I remember some of that, too, and I basically grew up in a courthouse town. But I've ridden on a mule behind somebody, and—it's just amazing.

BWB: And I've ridden in a buggy with mules, or maybe a mule, pulling it. It'd have spans and the mule would be in the middle.

TS: What was the Brookhaven community like, compared to Sparta? Now, some of these communities didn't have the same reputation, they were different kind of places. Like, at Tennessee Valley, they danced. Sparta, they didn't. You know, they were different. What was Brookhaven like?

BWB: Well, I think Brookhaven was Methodist, mostly, and Sparta was Church of Christ, and I think Tennessee Valley was basically Baptist.

TS: So, you're suggesting that that made a big difference?

BWB: Well, yeah. (laughs)

TS: Okay. Well, what did that mean? What did they do in Brookhaven that they didn't do Sparta?

BWB: Well, they had a lot of singing conventions. On Sunday they'd have all-day singing with dinner on the ground and lots of good fellowship. And 'course, my daddy enjoyed that, because he led singing at our church. But now, when we went to Brookhaven—now, the Church of Christ didn't believe in musical instruments, but when we went to Brookhaven I remember there was one little lady—well, she was an older lady, but she was short and fat, and she'd set up there and just bounce and play that piano. Oh, she could play it! She played by ear, but she used such motions with it, bounced up and down on that piano stool. I know I'd think as a kid, one of these days she's gonna bounce plumb off that stool! She never did that I know of.

TS: Well, how did your father—he liked to sing, right?

BWB: Uh-huh.

TS: Did he have a good voice?

BWB: He had a good voice. We had a battery radio, and we could listen to the Stamps Quartet or something like that, or the news, 'specially during the war, and we did listen to the "Grand Ole Opry," some. But you didn't just turn it on and listen to it like you do a TV, now. Had to save the battery.

TS: There was something about him I was going to ask you. Did he—somebody mentioned it—did he buy cattle and sell cattle?

BWB: Yes, he did.

TS: What can you tell me about that? What did he do?

BWB: Well, after I got a little bit older, and he had a pickup and trailer, well, I would go with him, and he would see people with maybe eight or ten cows, and he'd stop and see if they wanted to sell 'em. And lot of times he'd offer a price, and they wouldn't take it, but they'd pay him to haul it, haul the cow to the auction barn. And I remember, oh, he'd want to get up at four o'clock in the morning, and I'd think, Oh, Daddy why can't we just sleep an hour or two longer? (laughs) But he was—he would be out after dark, some, but he was kind of early up and early to bed.

TS: So, he would go around and sort of look, and if he thought somebody had cows they might sell, then he would start this conversation. And he might be able to trade—pay—for a cow and sell it, or he

might drum up some business. Maybe this guy didn't have a pickup. And this guy'd say, "Naw, I won't sell it to you, but I'll pay you to take it to the auction barn."

BWB: Yeah, yeah. I remember one time, this was after I got older, but I remember my daddy went to look at a bunch of cows, a herd, and he was buying 'em by the pairs. You know, a cow and a calf, a cow and a calf. And, so, he thought he had bought ten pair, and when he went to pick 'em up, this man said, "No sir, you just bought nine." Well, my daddy still thought—but because he'd been a good customer and a good friend, he didn't argue with him. He let him—he said, "I know I bought that other cow and calf." 'Cause he would tell 'em, you know, he'd offer so much for this pair or so much for that pair. And sometimes he would just offer a price, on paper or in his head or something, how much he'd just give for the bunch. But sometimes he would kind of itemize it, you know, so much for this cow and calf, so much for this one, 'cause they might be different kinds and different aged calves on the cow. But I remember he said, "No, that man's been my friend too long to argue with him."

TS: But he had thought he was buying ten pairs.

BWB: Uh-huh. I remember that. But this man, no, no. See, my daddy, they called him Preacher. He wasn't a preacher, but when he went to school a Methodist preacher was the teacher, and I don't know what he done, but he got a whipping at school. Well, all the kids in the community and his brothers and sisters called him Preacher whatever the preacher's name was at first, then they dropped the name and just called him—so he went by Preacher all his life, or just about all his life.

TS: His actual name was Joel Ernest Wilhite.

BWB: Uh-huh. But he was a very honest man. If he told you he was going to do something, he just very nearly did it. It would have to be something very drastic that he didn't. 'Cause I remember when I's a kid, and I'd want to go somewhere a week later. He'd say, "Well, I'll take you." But if he had an idea—if he said, "I'll probably take you." Well, I didn't hold him to it, because if something come up—but if he told me he would, he would. He just was a very honest man.

TS: We've already said that he was a school trustee. They passed that around some, but that was still a sign that he was well respected in the Sparta community, to be one of three trustees.

BWB: Yes, he was. Yes, John Light and Charlie Northam were the other two when I remember. And they hired the teacher, and maybe if she had problems, kind of like maintenance, my daddy would have to go to see about it. Or would go see about it. Well, the others if he couldn't take care of. And then he—when they had election, the year of election, they had a voting place at the school, and he helped with that. He was very involved in the community.

TS: Well, let's see, as far as the money coming in—not the subsistence side, you do it for yourselves, but for the money side of the farm, now, there was the sale of the cotton we talked about that, maybe around ten bales, somewhere around that, a year, on average—

BWB: Well, then, he had the one—I think he worked on thirds and fourths, every third load of corn and every fourth bale, I believe, was what he—I'm not sure, something of that effect.

TS: That would be the usual deal, when a man has his own equipment and work animals. Did he sell some corn?

BWB: Sometimes he would, but we used a lot of it, 'cause we'd use it for cornmeal and for cow feed and for stuff like that. And he would break mules, 'cause I remember—

TS: Oh, that's interesting.

BWB: He'd bring 'em home and they'd run away, scare me to death, him in the wagon and that mule

running away, two of 'em running away with him, and I'd just know that he's gonna fall out and they're gonna drag him to death, or whatever. But he would break 'em to work the wagon or to plow, and I remember several sets of 'em were the red, kind of red-looking mules, with white noses. You know, if you had that—to me, that was something special.

TS: Those were flashy mules, good mules.

BWB: Yeah, good working mules.

TS: Well, would he be taking other people's mules to break 'em for them? Is that what was going on?

BWB: No, he would—I guess he started out and bought a couple, or something. He'd break 'em, and people would come there and want to see the mules, and sometimes he'd get the wagon and show 'em how they would work to the wagon, you know.

TS: So, would he buy 'em and then break 'em and them sell 'em? Those mules were rotating through?

BWB: Uh-huh, yeah. They were young mules when he'd buy 'em. Now, there was a mule barn in Temple. Now, I don't know if he got from there, I don't know where he bought them. But I know I remember him having several pair of—not at the same time but having several pair of red mules with white noses. I remember that very well.

TS: But he must have been selling them to other people right along, and then he'd get another pair of unbroken mules. So, that would bring in—that's a money crop, just like the cattle. We've said that this is the money side. Was there anything that you sold off your place for money? Did you have cedar posts on your place?

BWB: No, he would go up in the cedar brakes and cut our firewood, we had a heater and a cook stove. And then he would come down and bring it. When he chopped the posts, he would bring those down to and pile 'em out there, and he would cut 'em up in stovewood size. And the bigger ones, well, sometimes a guy would come by and saw those. They'd be about that long and might be that big around, you know, 'cause it was a pretty good-sized—

TS: Nine inches through, or something like that?

BWB: Yeah.

TS: So, you burned cedar in your wood stoves, you burned the little stuff. Well, it burns real good, it burns real hot. It doesn't last real long.

BWB: Yeah, yeah. And that was another job, was gathering eggs and bringing in stovewood. Even if it rained, you had to pile it behind the stove so it would dry out to use.

TS: There's a lot of work that has to do with wood stoves and heating stoves.

BWB: Oh, yes. And kerosene lamps, you know, you had to clean them globes. Oh, it's a wonder my hands wasn't still black! (laughs)

TS: What was involved with—'cause, people don't know this—with keeping up kerosene lamps? Obviously, you got to put kerosene in 'em when the kerosene runs out, and—

BWB: Yeah, and you had to had to keep that wick trimmed, or it would burn too high and really smoke. And then you would take, well, like when Mama'd get a new catalog, we'd take those pages out of the old one, ones we didn't use for paper dolls or use at the toilet, we would shine the globes with. We'd wash 'em and shine 'em with that.

TS: Well, you had to keep the wicks trimmed and the globes, pretty quickly, like once a week?

BWB: Oh, no, it was pretty often.

TS: They'd get sooted.

BWB: Yeah, yeah, soot in 'em and—one time when my mother was a kid, her and her brothers and sisters was running and playing, and she run under a clothesline, or run into a clothesline, and cut a gash right there in her eyebrow, and my grandmother put soot in it, and she always had a black scar there. But it stopped the bleeding.

TS: Yeah, but the grandmother should have had a thought about doing that. So, that's one of the things they would do to—

BWB: Stop blood. Some things like that, yeah, put soot in there. Well, I cut my finger. I was washing, and I was married, even, and I was washing a glass, and it cut right under there. You can see that scar, now. I probably should of had stitches, but my husband was working on the car, and I called him, and I walked out on the front porch, and I just laid down and passed out. And so he got flour. Well, I had put a cup towel on there so it'd stop bleeding, and I's trying to hold it until it quit, but it just kept bleeding and bleeding and bleeding, seem to me like, and so he put flour on it. It burned a little bit, but I've got a white scar there where he put that flour on there.

TS: Yeah. That's something—now, one of the ways that people tried to do for themselves is that they did as much doctoring, or health care, as they could at home. What did your mother do? What would you use for colds, and did she give you something in the spring?

BWB: Oh, yes, we had to have a tonic ever' spring, and I cannot stand Sprite right now. Well, main thing, if you stuck a nail or cut your foot, soak it in coal oil. And we didn't know what a tetanus shot was. And a poultice, did you ever use a poultice? Okay, you mix up flour and water and put it in an old sock. Like if you had cut your foot? And put another sock over it so that that dough wouldn't seep through the sock. And that kept it open, I guess, and soft, and infection wouldn't set up.

TS: If you run around barefooted, you're gonna get things go wrong with your feet.

BWB: Oh! And we went barefooted all summer. You know, you just got new shoes to go to school. So, most of the time you—well, you got new shoes to wear to church in the summer, but—well, you got 'em in the spring—new Easter outfit—and then they'd have the Brookhaven homecoming, and I remember Daddy would buy us little frilly dresses, Mama and Daddy would, and little gloves and hats and little white shoes and socks. And, heck, by the time we got home that night the hat had been set on, and the gloves was somewhere in the back seat of the car. (laughs)

TS: Well, that's a good thing to have brought up, because the homecomings were not just a modern thing, but they were going on when you were growing up, at least the Brookhaven.

BWB: Yeah. Well, see, everybody in the community, well, people that had moved away, knew when the homecoming was, and they'd all come in. And that's what I say they'd have all-day singing and dinner on the ground.

TS: It'd be around the church.

BWB: Uh-huh, yeah. And sometimes the dinner would be in the church. But it would be on the grounds, anyhow.

TS: Well, did they play baseball at such a thing?

BWB: No. They's visiting and singing, mostly.

TS: Enough is going on and baseball is not—

BWB: Well, they might be off, a bunch of 'em off somewhere, you know, on the school ground, but not there at the church. They would be—

TS: The reunion, which you remember from your childhood, was centered around the Methodist church, dinner on the ground, all-day singing in the church, and then you said something about kids.

BWB: Well, everybody brought their kids 'cause they wanted each other to see how their kids had grown, if they had new ones they wanted to—

TS: They were showing off their kids, that's the point of the dresses and everything, the stuff that didn't look as good at the end of the day.

BWB: Yeah. Oh, no! And we would play outside, the smaller kids, you know, and—

TS: So, all the kids were really dressed up, but then they'd play. And that's why—

BWB: That's why the gloves was in the back seat of the car, and the hats probably were, too. But we got 'em.

TS: There was something about clothes that I believe Ernestine mentioned in the interview, and I want to see if you—there was something—your father might come by the Sparta School, with his cows or something, and he had a dress code for you. There was something you were supposed to wear, or not supposed to wear, for recess at the school. He would take a look and see if his daughters were maintaining—he had some kind of dress standards.

BWB: (laughs) We weren't allowed to wear shorts. And Ernestine, they had a basketball team or volleyball, I don't remember which one, but anyhow they were to wear bloomer shorts. So, he would let her wear 'em, but she had to pull 'em down to her knees. And whenever she thought he wasn't around, she'd push 'em up! Thought she could run faster, or something. Anyhow, one day he was out and around, and he stopped and he made her pull her shorts back down to her knees, bloomers.

TS: At the school. That must have been humiliating.

BWB: I'm sure it was. And another time, this was at the Church of Christ there in Sparta—she was about thirteen years old, Ernestine was, but she was big for her growing. I remember, she's looked grown from the time I hardly remember. She looked like she's probably eighteen, in my mind. Anyhow, she wanted to go somewhere on Saturday night, and Daddy wouldn't let her go. So she thought, well, she would get back at him. So, Sunday morning she gets dressed and well go to church, and she tells me, "Bert, just wait here in the car with me." Said, "I'm not going in right now." So, she put on Maybelline. Do you know what Maybelline is? She had them eyes it looked like coons, nearly. She had painted up there. Well, she didn't set in her seat where she usually set in church. But when Daddy got up to lead the singing, he looked up, and she wasn't setting in her seat, and he saw her, and he made her go over to the neighbor's house and wash her face and come back. Now, that backfired on her, too. But she thought she was doing 'bout the ugliest thing she could to get back at him.

TS: And she didn't think he would dare do that in front of the congregation.

BWB: Unh-uh, she didn't! She didn't think he would, but he did. (laughs)

TS: Go de-Maybelline herself.

BWB: Yeah, go wash that stuff off. Yes, that was embarrassing, but she embarrassed him by wearing it, you know, 'cause she knew she wasn't supposed to have it on. I don't wear shorts or dance on account of

that, mostly, because he never did allow us to wear shorts.

TS: Well, what about when you started to date? What was his attitude about that? Did he—

BWB: Well, see, I had an older sister, and my husband-to-be had two older sisters. Well, they didn't call it dating, but I knew he was my boyfriend. I was about fourteen, which was too young, but we went as a crowd, we'd go to the ball games, and then sometimes we'd go to a rodeo. But we went as a group. So, my mother and daddy really didn't care for me going. He could drive, he had a car, he could drive all of us. I claimed him as my boyfriend, but I didn't voice that to them.

TS: You weren't pairing up, you weren't sitting on the porch swing or anything like that?

BWB: (laughs) Not yet, no. No, no, no. Talk about us sitting on the porch swing, we had a—well, it was a three-bedroom house, and then it had, uh, the living room came out and had a porch, and we had a swing on that. And my sister just older than me, Billie, had a boyfriend, and he come to pick her up, and she was about sixteen, I think. And 'course, I's about fourteen. So, he—she wasn't quite ready, so he set in the swing and I set on the porch and put my feet on the first step, and he'd play—do you know what a jew's-harp is? He was playing a jew's-harp, and he said, "You didn't stand up." And I said, "Why was I supposed to stand up?" He said, "I played 'The Star-Spangled Banner.'" And I started laughing, I said it didn't sound like—he got plumb mad at me, and he told her that I wasn't very respectful. I didn't—and I have an ear for music. I mean, I can pick up real quick on what the name of a tune is if I've heard it before, but I did not recognize—to me, he just set there flopping that—(laughs)

Oh, and talking about how we weren't really allowed to dance, well, we had a piano, and Daddy gave the two oldest girls piano lessons. A lady came out from Belton twice a week and gave 'em piano lessons. And, so, my oldest sister, she had a beautiful alto voice, and she sang in church and was—but she had no idea what that piano was about, even. And Ernestine then come along, he gave her lessons, Kathleen and Ernestine, and Ernestine come along, and she'd get the sound of the tune by note, and then she'd just take off by ear and play it. Well, whenever Billie and I came along, I guess he'd got kind of disgusted with them. Anyhow, he didn't give us music lessons. (TS laughs) And, really, Billie was the best piano player. I could play, but Billie she played "Listen to the Mockingbird," and she could make that old mockingbird sing, oh. She could—but, anyhow, we were not allowed to dance. 'Course, when I started dating, well, my husband's people in Tennessee Valley would have house dances, and I would tell my mother, but I didn't really tell my daddy, where I's going. I never would lie to 'em, I'd just tell Daddy I had a date. But I'd tell Mama. I'd say, "Well, his mother and daddy is having a dance, and we're going to go down there." But, anyhow, back to my story, when I started high school the jitterbug was all the craze, and I learned how to jitterbug. So I had a girl cousin, and she come to visit us one Saturday. So Billie was playing on the piano, and Daddy come through the house, and he asked Mama did she need anything from the store, or not. Think she needed vanilla flavoring or something, and so he went on, and we thought he was gone. So Billie gets up there and she's playing "In the Mood," and 'course me and Aline are jitterbugging, and he walks in. He said, "Oomph, oomph," and boy I mean Billie fell into "Amazing Grace," and when she hit that first note I just started singing like I had been singing all day. (laughs) I'm sure he laughed up his sleeve—a lot of times. Boy, I knew, I knew "Amazing Grace" from the first note, and I started singing. But he never got after us about that, but he cleared that throat, we knew that we should quit.

TS: He wanted it stopped.

BWB: Yeah, and he knew by clearing his throat that we'd stop it, too. But I'm sure he laughed, 'cause she's just playing all the courses and all the stanzas, too, and I was just singing like I been singing all day.

TS: Well, what about your sisters? What was sort of the break down of chores? But were all of you there

at the same time?

BWB: Well, see, my oldest sister was ten years older than me, and she got married at fifteen. She was nearly—I remember her taking—well, back to the piano. She was gonna play "Little Brown Jug," but she's gonna sing with it. "Little! Little!" I said, "Do you want me to play 'Little Brown Jug' for you?" And she said, "Ah, you can't play it." And I got up there and I played "Little Brown Jug," both hands. 'Cause I'd heard it enough, I hadn't played it before, but I did, then.

TS: So, he was musical, and he was—I mean, that is kind of a luxury—to be bringing in somebody to teach his daughters—to have a piano and to be bringing in somebody from Belton to give you lessons. I mean, that's kind of going—he must have really been interested in seeing what musical talents could be developed.

BWB: I think what he thought that as we grew up, we would form a family quartet, I think. But then my oldest sister got married. Well, he heard about it, and he went down here to the courthouse in Belton, and he told 'em not to sell her a marriage license. And she and her boyfriend went down there, and they wouldn't sell one. So, they and another couple went to Gatesville, and before she went up there she wrote eighteen on a paper and put it in her shoe. And so, when they asked her if she's over eighteen, well, she was! (laughs)

TS: That is an absolutely wonderful story. So, anyway, he's blocking her in one courthouse over here, her native county is not going to be the source of a marriage license, so she goes to Coryell.

BWB: Yeah. Well, see, she was an older-looking—to me she looked older than fifteen. 'Course, I'm sure to my daddy she probably didn't look fifteen. But to me—she was tall, she wasn't a very big person, fat, but she was tall and had dark hair and dark eyes. Both the older girls had dark hair and dark eyes, after Mama. Then, Daddy had blue eyes. And then Billie and I were little short—she's about five-two and I'm four-eleven, we were short and blue-eyed and blonde. We were cotton-headed about the time we started school and before.

TS: So, she didn't lie because she had that in her shoe.

BWB: She was over eighteen.

TS: I have never heard that one before. So, she's gone, she checked out early, you're five years old when she's gone. So, you basically grew up with the two sisters.

BWB: Well, she had a son, and they lived part of the time close to us, so he is more like a brother to me even now, than just a nephew. 'Course, after he was about half grown, her and her husband divorced, and my mother and daddy raised him. So he was in the house, you know, most of my life.

TS: What was his name?

BWB: Jackie Rhoades, Jackie Leon Rhoades. And he lives out here on Holland Road now. He's married to Shirley—she was Nelson. They built 'em a home out there, and they live out there.

TS: Well, this must have—your father really must not have liked his daughter getting married at fifteen.

BWB: Oh, he wasn't happy. I remember he cried and cried after that, he just didn't think she was old enough. And she thought she was, I guess. But see, she would go to singing convention, and all she'd have to do is say, "Well, I don't have anything to wear," and he'd go buy her a new dress. And then they wore hats and gloves, and she'd be dressed as good as anybody, and he would take her, and she would sing—well, there was a Mr. and Mrs. Dave Kelly, and I think Florence Kelly played the piano, and—but I think that was Daddy's idea, that we would grow up and become a quartet, you know, and maybe we'd go to homecomings and things and sing.

TS: But his lead singer ran off at fifteen, and blew it.

BWB: At fifteen! (laughs) And then, my other sister got married at seventeen. Well, he didn't like that, either. I was eighteen, almost nineteen, but I had graduated from school. 'Cause, my husband, he said he didn't, and his parents moved enough that he could borrow cornmeal from here to California. And he said he didn't want me—even if I talked about getting married, or asked him how much he loved me enough to marry me, you know, just talking, and he'd say, "Not until you graduate." I graduated one May and we got married the next February.

TS: So, he put the brakes on. Maybe you wouldn't have graduated if he hadn't—

BWB: I don't know. I might have been like them if he had been wanting to get married. But he just, he—he had to quit when he was sixteen, his daddy had about sixteen cows, and they milked 'em every morning and every evening, and yet he worked at American Desk building wooden boxes that they shipped bullets into the soldiers.

TS: American Desk?

BWB: Uh-huh, he wasn't but sixteen. So, when his older sister, which was about fourteen months older than him, when she got old enough or got up in like, uh, junior or senior year, he told her, he said, "I'm working and I can help you, I want you to graduate." And she did. But the next sister she got married at seventeen, she didn't wait, either.

TS: How did you meet Mr. Bounds? He's in Tennessee Valley and you're in Sparta. That's ten miles?

BWB: Seven. Well, I went to school with his youngest sister—well, both sisters awhile, then his older sister graduated, but Ruby Mae was just a year older than me, so we kind of met up on the bus. See, the bus would run from Brookhaven and come through and pick up Brookhaven, Union Hill kids, and Sparta, and go on through Tennessee Valley, and then on into Belton High School. And his daddy drove the bus. Not when I first started riding it. But, anyhow, his sister was always telling me, "Oh, you ought to meet my brother, he's a handsome man." And he was handsome, he had black wavy hair and blue eyes. But what I really fell in love with was his eyes, to me he had the most understanding eyes.

And he was an understanding man. He was slow to anger, but when he said something, you better stop and listen. And the kids learned that, they knew when they could cutup and go on with him, you know, get by with a lot, but when he told 'em, no, they wasn't gonna do something, they knew no was the answer. And they didn't argue about it, because they—he just—well, he wouldn't argue, me and him didn't argue.

TS: So, you basically didn't meet him until you were bussing into high school. Because, when you were attending Sparta School, it would've been hard to meet somebody from over there. I guess you could have met 'em at a baseball game or a—

BWB: I probably did, and I probably saw him at some, but I didn't—him not playing ball, 'cause he was about three years older than I was.

TS: So, with your sisters on the farm—now, you were kind of in charge of the eggs, did your mother sell some eggs?

BWB: Uh-huh, she'd sell 'em at the little store a lot of times up there, and then sometimes we'd make butter. But I don't remember her selling it, I remember her—you know, somebody'd be sick or they'd have problems—I know this family, they had about fifteen kids, and I'm sure they had a hard time, and I know Mama would send butter to her, and eggs, and a lot of times canned goods. Well, Daddy'd be going by there, and he'd say he'd take 'em to 'em.

TS: That is something I ought to ask you about. People gave each other—it falls into the category of neighborliness, if they had excess food of some sort they'd give it to other people, and then other people would give them things back. That went on, right?

BWB: Yes.

TS: This is kind of a special case, where your family knows that they were having—

BWB: Having a hard time, yeah. I did not know this when my daddy was alive, but—and I shouldn't say the name on there.

TS: You don't have to.

BWB: But he'd buy shoes for those kids, they didn't have shoes when it come wintertime. And I did not know this guy, particularly, told me and my sister about it. Said that he would get their shoe sizes, and he'd go buy shoes and bring out to 'em. He said, "I think the world and all of Mr. Preach." Said, "He's the best friend I ever had." And lot of things that Daddy did like that that I did not know until after he had died, and people would come tell us about things he had done. That the daddy had been sick in the family, and he would give 'em money. And 'course I's just a kid, and Daddy visited 'em, but I didn't know all this was going on. And yet, this family that had so many kids, I didn't know if I was any better than them. I wasn't raised to know that I was. Well, I don't know that I was. I guess I was a little bit better because my daddy did buy me shoes, but I didn't know that he—

TS: I don't think kids think about that too much, because I don't remember thinking about that, and, clearly, I was going to school with some—there were some rich people in Lufkin, and we just didn't have much—we evaluated other kids in a different way. I remember that some of the richest kids in town got picked on a lot. It wasn't that they were rich, we just didn't—they were targetable. (laughs)

BWB: Well, the richest people in Sparta, I reckon, was Mr. Byron Denman and his wife. But they inherited it from both sides, so—they didn't have any kids, they had two dogs, and during the war—now, they say don't feed dogs chocolate, but they bought chocolate candy, 'cause I'd know Billie and I'd laugh and we'd say, "Oh, we wish we was Byron Denman's dogs." (laughs) Getting chocolate candy.

TS: What about, uh—what would y'all get for Christmas? What would Christmas be like in your community?

BWB: My first remembrance is we didn't get a lot of gifts. We got like an apple, an orange, and maybe a candy cane in a sack and some pecans and nuts and stuff like that. But I remember as I got a little older I remember getting a doll for Christmas, and then one year I got a silver brush and mirror and comb set. I remember two or three of the girls in the community got one that year, so that was a popular thing.

TS: I guess you'd have a tree, right?

BWB: Yeah.

TS: What would you get for a tree—what kind of tree?

BWB: Cedar, we'd go up above the house on the hill there. And sometimes Daddy would go and he'd get a much bigger tree, but a lot of times Billie and I would go, and we'd cut one about our size. (laughs) But I remember we'd put popcorn on it and red berries, and sometimes we'd make those chains out of construction paper and put on there. And it'd be pretty decorated up, we thought. And we'd take chewing gum wrapper, and we'd make stars out of pasteboard, we'd cut stars and we'd put that on it and make silver stars on the tree.

TS: Yeah, that stuff is real—I know exactly what you mean. And this is just part of that using everything.

BWB: Yeah, because our mother—and the pasteboard, it may have been a shoebox lid. I don't remember, but I remember we drawed it and—we didn't go buy a pasteboard like they do poster board, now, and make things, we did it with something.

TS: What would y'all do—now, you talked about listening to the battery radio, which would be kind of limited. What would you do for recreation in the family? Would you sing, would you sing to the piano? You've got a piano, so that has to figure in there.

BWB: And Mama played hymns. Now, I don't know, she never played a whole lot of anything else, but she'd play hymns and we'd sing. And we'd go to the ball games, sometimes, and on Saturday night, lot of the Saturday nights, different people, they'd come to our house one Saturday night and go to another, and then play dominoes. It's the reason I don't play dominoes, I reckon, 'cause—now, my sisters all did, but I wanted to talk, and they didn't want me around, and I never did learn to play dominoes.

TS: Well, now, that's just a recreation, that's just a visit. The neighbors visit, and you play dominoes or you talk, or you just might play—

BWB: Well, I'm not saying it was—now, like my Uncle T. A. [Wilhite], he played a fiddle. And he would come and bring his fiddle, and he'd play, and I would second on the piano to him. And then my sister older than me, her husband played a fiddle—Burton Thompson. He was from Tennessee Valley. He would play and I would chord to his music. And then, another uncle, June—or, they called him Pud—Wilhite, he played a guitar, and he'd come up and he'd play. And that might be on a Wednesday night or during the week sometimes. That's not late, because they all had to get up early and go to work.

TS: But they lived close enough together to do that, and not a big expedition on Saturday.

BWB: Well, he lived in Sparta and so did T. A. and we did, and just—

TS: So, musical talent in the Wilhites.

BWB: Well, all of 'em played. There was twelve kids and all of 'em played an instrument but Daddy, and he loved singing. He had one sister, Pauline, that died early in life. She had a—well, they thought she mashed a blackhead or a spider bit her or something, and anyhow she had blood poisoning on her face, and she died when she was about thirty-something years old, I think. Now, she played—they went to visit some of the kinfolks, and they had an accordion. And she picked it up and played "Home, Sweet Home," and she'd never seen one. But she could just play any instrument. And some of 'em played banjos. Uncle Spruce, I think, played either a banjo or a mandolin. But yet they didn't have a band in their family. But I remember that they'd come, like T. A. and Pud would come, and we'd be having a get-together at Granny Wilhite's, and sometimes we'd set out in the yard in the shade of the house or a tree or something and play music.

TS: How often would that sort of thing happen? Would that be happening at Christmas or something like that?

BWB: Sometimes it would, yeah.

TS: Where was that place?

BWB: Well, now, I remember when I was real young that they lived on North Nolan, which is now Fort Hood. And they had, oh, I don't know how big a house that was, but the front of it was fourteen steps off the ground. I'd get dizzy just looking down at it, and I wouldn't play out there. But us grandkids would make a playhouse under it. It was built on a hillside, and the back just stepped out on the ground from the back door of the kitchen, just stepped out on the ground there.

TS: So, the ground really sloped to the front.

BWB: Uh-huh. And I remember it had, seem like, two bedrooms on this side and a big hall and two bedrooms on this side and a dining room, and then the kitchen was kind of built on to that. And then it had a porch off the kitchen that stepped out on the ground. And they had big old cisterns that caught rainwater, and that's what you washed your finer clothes in, and washed your hair and such like in that.

TS: This was Tennessee Valley, right?

BWB: No, that was North Nolan.

TS: North Nolan was a community?

BWB: Yeah, kind of over the mountain from Sparta.

TS: I see, yeah. So, if somebody had said, Where do you live?, they'd have said North Nolan.

BWB: Uh-huh, but they had a school there, and they called it Phoenix. Now, my two older sisters went there. I was born on North Nolan, but they moved to Sparta before I was a year old.

TS: So, basically all your memories are coming from that—and he lived in this one place, right, in Sparta. Didn't move. Like, a lot 'em would move around in the community. He must have been satisfied with his deal.

BWB: He was. And they were satisfied with him, I reckon, 'cause they thought lots of Daddy. A Dr. Cummings owned that, and then when he died, well, his son and daughter-in-law owned it. But they never were—they never questioned Daddy about moving, as far as I know, just more or less took for granted that he was just gonna stay there. And he did until the army come in and made 'em move, in '52, I think it was.

TS: It just sounds more like a landowner, you know, really—the whole story. And let alone having enough money to give somebody help. He must have done well with it all.

BWB: He did, and he and Mama both undoubtedly were very saving. Because, most of our clothes, now, she made—our school clothes—'cause I remember different clothes that she would make for us out of feed sacks.

TS: Did she make cotton pick sacks?

BWB: Uh-huh, yeah, they would buy the ducking. They called 'em trailers. And the first time I remember picking cotton I picked in a tow sack, and she sewed a strap on it, 'cause I wasn't very high from the ground, and I picked cotton in that.

TS: How old do you think you were when you started out?

BWB: Well, my sister was still home, so I had to be under five. Probably about four.

TS: You probably wanted to, wanted to try it.

BWB: Yeah, I did. Because Mama picked, she worked in the field just like Daddy did. And she'd go home and she'd have dinner fixed. And he'd lay down in the swing and take him, uh—well, he'd, after he got the tractor of course. He was feeding the mules at dinnertime and didn't hardly have time for a nap, then, 'cause time he'd eaten and got back, it was time to hook 'em up and go again.

TS: Did you help with the planting? And what kind of planter did he have? This could be the planting the cotton or planting the corn, either one.

BWB: Yeah. Well, he used the same planter, but they had different plates in 'em, 'cause the corn seed was different size to the cottonseed. I remember that, that it had the seed and had two planters on the side.

TS: A two-row planter.

BWB: Yeah. And it had sweeps, kinda, that went ahead to open the row, and then the cotton just—he set it however thick he wanted it planted.

TS: So, he would be planting two beds, and the mule would be walking up the water furrow, right?

BWB: Uh-huh.

TS: And so, it's a double—they'd be two of those seed reservoirs. Would it be riding or walking?

BWB: No, he'd be riding. He'd have the seed on there, and these were on each side, 'cause—after I got a little bigger—'course, I wanted to do everything, you know, no boys in the family. Well, after Jack come along and got a little bigger, why, he'd pick cotton.

TS: Did you ever plant, did you ever run the planter?

BWB: Yeah, but Daddy was close by. He never did actually just turn me loose on it. I guess he was afraid the mules might run away, or something.

TS: Well, it was kind of a delicate—it had to be done just so, right?

BWB: Yeah. And then when I rode the tractor he was on the tractor with me. He just never did completely turn me loose with it. And I rode the hay rake, some, to rake hay, whenever—but they was old gentle mules that wouldn't run away at all, I guess. Anyhow, they didn't.

TS: Well, how would he bed up? What kind of machinery did he have making the beds for either the cotton or the corn? What kind of a plow?

BWB: Oh, he had a furrow—you know that that is? Where them plows, oh, they're just—they was two rows wide, I know. Discs, they were disc plows.

TS: So, he would disc. He would disc, I know, he would disc the field, but then he'd put it up in rows before he planted, right?

BWB: Well, he had a deal sort of like that cotton planter. It had sweeps on it that would go, it just didn't have the planter on it, and he'd go through, and he'd furrow up the—

TS: Like that? (holds hands side by side, making a V at the top) That's maybe a middle-buster?

BWB: Uh-huh, yeah. That's what it was.

TS: And it would bust—was it like one of 'em or two of 'em?

BWB: Two.

TS: Double middle-buster.

BWB: Uh-huh.

TS: Pretty good stuff. Two mules?

BWB: Uh-huh. And then after he got the tractor, seem like he got a bigger disc that would go three rows, maybe, but I don't remember about the middle-busters, then.

TS: But you've heard that name?

BWB: Oh, yeah, oh, yeah.

TS: Okay, he's got a double middle-buster, and he's made up the rows. And he's got a double planter, he plants two rows. Let's imagine he's planting cotton, he's planting two rows at the same time. And then the cotton comes up. Then what happens? Tell me what happens next?

BWB: (laughs) Oh, you get out your bonnet and gloves and hoe and start chopping. And you'd chop—lot of times it'd plant just right, but then if it planted too thick—but a lot of times you didn't leave any grass, I mean it was clean, clean. I remember on the end, sometimes, it'd be Johnson grass, and he'd say, "Dig them roots up." And I'd think, Boy! I'm gonna reach China this evening.

TS: What did he think about Johnson grass?

BWB: Oh, he did not like it. But it was there, that was what you had to contend with. 'Cause, it wouldn't—it wasn't so bad in the crop itself, it was mostly on the turn rows. But you had to keep it out of there, 'cause it would get in the crop.

TS: It was just sitting there on the turn rows waiting to get in there and cover the field.

BWB: Yeah, if you didn't keep after it all the time. I mean—

TS: Other kinds of field weeds?

BWB: Bull nettles. I remember driving the corn wagon, and 'course the in-gate come just under my chin, there, and I'd just stand up there and hold those reins, and they'd walk into 'em. They weren't real bad, 'cause kept 'em out, pretty much, but once in a while they'd walk by a bull nettle, and it'd sting 'em, and they'd start running. And my mother would tell me, "Turn the reins a-loose! Turn the reins a-loose!" 'Cause she's afraid they's gonna pull me out, and he'd say, "Hold on! Hold on!" And he'd swing over the back of the wagon and walk his way up and get hold of 'em. I'd hold on, 'cause, I don't know, I just figured if I dropped 'em he wouldn't ever be able to catch 'em by walking up the wagon like that. So, I'd hold on.

TS: When people say they chopped cotton, they're talking about two different things done at the same time. The first chopping of the cotton is thinning, you're thinning the row and you're also getting weeds and grass. The second time you chop the cotton, you're just getting weeds, right?

BWB: Yeah, yeah.

TS: Then, would you cultivate after chopping? How would that work?

BWB: Yeah, he would—before the cotton got too tall, he would kind of go through, and that took a lot of weeds out, but it also built up so that if it rained, well, the water would get in the middles and I guess go to the roots.

TS: Cleaned up the middles and threw dirt back to the roots.

BWB: Yeah.

TS: So, that was a riding cultivator, too.

BWB: Uh-huh, yeah.

TS: Did y'all do that, did the girls do that, or did he just do that?

BWB: He did it, mostly. Now, I remember that before Kathleen got married she rode the rake, but I don't

remember them—

TS: You know, running the cultivator through the cotton after it's up, is kind of a tricky—

BWB: Plow cotton, yeah! You can plow up a lot of cotton if you wasn't watching your business. So, we didn't do much of that, I don't think. He mostly did that. And the corn, too.

TS: Okay, at some point you can't get back—we're just kind of following the crop, here, and at a certain point the crop, either the corn or the cotton, is up so high that you can no longer get back and forth to cultivate. And then all you do is leave it, let it—

BWB: Yeah, and that's usually in June. And in August, late in July or August, you start pulling corn. And you pick cotton then in, say, uh, October or November. 'Cause, lot of times, school didn't start until late on account of letting the kids help pick cotton.

TS: I was going to ask about that. But the old-time cotton didn't open all at once like the modern stuff does. Well, they make the modern stuff open all at once by hitting it with chemicals. But the old stuff would just open right along, right?

BWB: Yeah, 'cause you might pick over a patch, and, gosh, you'd have to go over it again, because it would be bloomed out and cotton on it again.

TS: And you can't leave it all hang on there until it all opened, or a thunderstorm will get it.

BWB: Uh-huh, yeah, yeah. Something will. So, you went over it at least twice, I remember.

TS: Well, how would y'all pick it? Would you, uh—how would you dump your sacks? Would you dump your sacks in the wagon?

BWB: Uh-huh. He put it pretty close to where most picking was going on at that time. And they had a scales there, and you'd go weigh your cotton and then empty it into the wagon.

TS: So, you'd empty your—you'd get about sixty, seventy, eighty, one hundred pounds in your sack—

BWB: Well, when I first started out I did good to get fifty in that little tow sack. But, yeah, I picked, and it was all I can do to drag it, and Mama'd say, "You don't have to pick that much, you don't need to be dragging that much cotton." But you hadn't finished the row out, and you needed to finish the row out, so you just dragged a little harder. And Daddy never told us how much to pick. We didn't have no set amount, he just said, "Do the best you can." And I guess he figured that if we did the best we could, why, we's gonna get whatever we could, you know.

TS: Did you pick one row at a time?

BWB: When I was little I did, but when I got bigger I picked two rows. And Daddy would pick two, and Mama would pick two, and so we'd cover—well, and then, usually, there was other people helping us. Sometimes some of the farmers would have their kids to come help us.

TS: Would your daddy pay 'em?

BWB: Yeah.

TS: He would pay 'em so much per pound?

BWB: Yeah, so much a pound, and Mama would keep weights. She'd have a little book, and everybody had a page, and if they picked on Monday, well, whatever they picked, and on Tuesday and, you know, and then on Saturday they got paid.

TS: Did y'all ever do that for other people?

BWB: I don't remember ever going and picking cotton for anybody. Now, I remember helping a guy gather some corn, or driving the wagon and Daddy somebody helped pull corn, but I don't never remember picking cotton. 'Cause, by the time we got ours, it was time to go to school, just about.

TS: Well, you know, he had a good bit of cotton, and he didn't have a really big labor force.

BWB: Yeah, not with four daughters!

TS: He was in a labor deficit, so, he would have been in need of help. The family with fifteen kids, they probably didn't have to hire any neighbors.

BWB: Well, I don't think he farmed, too much. He wasn't the type of person to farm much. Well, I don't think he raised very many much stock.

TS: Did your father do anything else for money that we haven't talked about? You know, we've talked about—the cotton was the main thing, but the cattle was maybe next, and then maybe—he was kind of a mule breaker, mule trader, there was some money from that. Did he have anything else? Did he do what they call custom work? Did he take his tractor over and break somebody's land for them or anything like that?

BWB: Well, he'd sometimes go break up a garden for a family that didn't have a tractor, but he wouldn't charge for it. That was just being neighborly. He did a lot of stuff neighborly that growing up, I didn't realize how much.

TS: What else would he do besides what we've been talking about? The shoes and the money help-out to the poor family and breaking up gardens. Anything—

BWB: Well, sometimes, at Christmas he'd like buy a sack of flour and stuff they couldn't raise, if they raised it, and give different ones for Christmas.

TS: And we talked about giving the butter, excess butter.

BWB: And eggs, sometimes Mama would take eggs. Even though she sold some and then had plenty for our own use. 'Cause she cooked a lot, I don't know when she had time, but she did.

TS: It's just amazing how hard it was for the women, because they were field hands and housewives at the same time.

BWB: Yeah, and then they had to sew for kids, 'cause Mama made our clothes, you know, lot of times out of the feed sacks. I don't guess she threw anything away.

TS: When the cotton sacks wore out, would she make something out of them? What would she make? I always ask that.

BWB: Well, one thing I remember is on the back porch she would cut off and hem certain amounts for a towel. And you'd have a water bucket, and everybody drank out of that water bucket. When they come along, they'd get a drink. And then there was a big wash pan there, and they'd pour water in that and wash their hands and dry on the same towel for two or three days, seem like.

TS: Cotton-sack towel. Did she ever make work clothes out of old—what would she make?

BWB: Oh, yeah. Well, she'd make overalls for us to wear in the field or to play in.

TS: How about jumper jackets? You've heard of that?

BWB: Yeah, yeah. And after my daddy—I don't remember what, I guess denim, mostly was what he wore when I was younger, but after I got older he'd buy those Carharts, and he wore those all the time. And they're warm.

TS: Yeah, the Carhart's were really—

BWB: And they'd have a corduroy collar and then usually around the cuff or on the sleeve somewhere they had a—

TS: Those were good, and 'course they're still making them. Heavy duty stuff, almost bulletproof. But I was always interested in the way people reused everything.

BWB: Well, sometimes she'd make a cushion for—like chairs we had out on the porch, sometimes, she'd make cushions out of the ducking.

TS: I mean, you wore out part of the sack, but part of the sack was still pretty good. You wore it out by dragging it, basically.

BWB: Yeah, and she would make things out of—like I say, I don't remember her throwing very much away.

TS: Did she do anything with the dish water? Some people—well, she reused the wash water and the bath water, that was used to scrub the floors. And some people did something with the dish water.

BWB: Yeah. Well, sometimes she'd mop with it.

TS: I'm just looking at the—one thing I haven't asked anything about, this is my reminder list to ask about, and I haven't asked anything about hunting or fishing.

BWB: My daddy wasn't too much on hunting and fishing. He'd go squirrel hunting once in a while, but he wasn't, he wasn't—I don't imagine he had time, for one thing.

TS: He was too diligent. And your mother was afraid you would all drown in Cowhouse, right? (laughs)

BWB: She didn't know how to swim, and she'd say, "Don't y'all go down there until you know how to swim," and after I got older I thought, Well, how was I going to learn? So, I never did learn to swim.

TS: So, you didn't fish too much in Cowhouse Creek, where you might drown.

BWB: Uh-huh. Now, my husband was a very avid fisher and hunter and went in the Leon. He learned to swim real early in life, and he'd go swim that thing when it was out of the banks, even, and big logs be coming down. And he and some of the boys would go and swim across to be with each other.

TS: That's interesting. So, he could really swim. He wasn't scared of the water at all.

BWB: Unh-uh.

TS: And the Leon is not a great river, but it's a much bigger deal than Cowhouse.

BWB: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. And not far from where he would swim when he was a kid was a hole of water that was kind of a step-off. And they's two or three people that I knew drowned in that place. Well, now, we had the Sparta Bridge, which was up above Sparta, and then we had the Boren Bridge, which was down below the church—about a mile below, the Boren Bridge was. And then you crossed the board bridge and went on down and went to Tennessee Valley that way. And there was a fork in the road, and one road went to Belton, and the other went to Tennessee Valley and then on to Belton, but it went to Tennessee Valley.

TS: Did he ever talk about fishing in the Leon when he was coming up? How would they fish in Leon?

BWB: Oh, yeah. With just cane poles a lot.

TS: Hand fishing, basically.

BWB: Yeah, and they'd set out lines. Now, their, like, Fourth of July celebration down there would be a big fish fry on the river. And the ladies would fix potato salad and whatever, and the men would go fishing, and sometimes they'd cook the fish, but sometimes the ladies would. But a big deal like that, the men did in a big wash pot. Put lard in there and melt it and get it real hot and fry those fish good and crispy brown.

TS: There's just a few occasions where the men, it's interesting, where they do some cooking. Now, they do the barbecuing. The women are never barbecuing. So, the Tennessee Valley men had the tradition of putting on the big fish fry, for which they had to catch all the fish.

BWB: Uh-huh, yeah.

TS: Did they put trotlines across?

BWB: Yeah. Before that, you know, so they'd be sure and have enough fish. But lot of times, he—well, he set out lines lot of times, and after we married he set out lines on the Cowhouse lot of times. And he'd go fishing with—well, then he had the rod and reel, and he caught so much fish until everybody didn't care if he come to see 'em or not, I think, 'cause he'd carry 'em fresh fish. But a lot of times he'd clean 'em and cut 'em up and take 'em to 'em. Oh, I remember one spring that he just—well, he worked for Griggs here in Belton, he was a welder, and he worked at night. Well, he went to work about five in the evening and got off at like two in the morning, and he'd sleep until about eight or nine, and then he'd sometimes go fishing. And I know that spring they just hated to see him coming, because he had fish.

TS: We've talked about the work stock that you had before you had the tractor. Your father must have preferred mules. There were horse men and mule men, okay?

BWB: Well, he had horses, 'cause we rode horses. He had a black mare named Molly, and he had a filly named Millie that Billie and I would ride. See, sometimes a neighbor would be a mile away. But sometimes we'd go visit those girls in Tennessee Valley, R. D's sisters, and we'd ride horseback down there.

TS: So, you grew up riding, and we know he was—yeah, of course he's not just a mule man, he was a cowboy.

BWB: (laughs) Well, my daddy had a roan horse that he rode a lot named Old George, but mostly mules was in his lot.

TS: Was his work stock.

BWB: Yeah.

TS: But, his riding—nobody wants to ride into some place on a mule, or, most people won't—(unintelligible)

BWB: No. But then the horses would work at the wagon, too. Now, I don't remember them plowing much, but I remember they'd work at the wagon, you know, like hauling up the corn that day of canning corn. They would work at the wagon, and—but oh, they were working people.

TS: Well, you had better be working people or you would be like the—

BWB: Family that didn't buy shoes for their kids! (laughs)

TS: Didn't buy shoes for the kids—I mean, depended on somebody else paying for shoes. But with fifteen

kids, that's a lot of shoes, too.

BWB: Yeah, it is. But he was known not to do a lot, I don't think.

TS: What about your husband's—

When the tape ran out I had just started to ask about Mr. Bounds's fox hunting, and I know that fox hunting is an old thing, an old way of hunting, and I know your father didn't have time, but there were always fox hunters in the community. Was your husband's father a fox hunter, was that where he got it?

BWB: Some, but he had a lot of friends that had beagles that were fox dogs. But Mr. Thompson that lived in Tennessee Valley, he had a dog named Crim. And I don't know who the mother of the dogs were, but we got four of the puppies. And so my husband trained them—well, I guess, they really didn't train 'em, they just went out and put up a little red fox, but he never would let 'em catch it. And we run all over. up here where the spillway is, that's where his hunting ground was, mostly.

TS: How would they go about it? How did the fox hunters do it? I mean, did they just sit and listen to the dogs? Or did they ride after the dogs? What did they do?

BWB: Uh, oh, sometimes they'd sit and listen, and that's my dog and that's my dog and whoever's dog was running. And you was talking about my daddy fox hunting, well, an uncle of mine had come up from Freeport, and he had dogs at Freeport, but he understood that R. D. and Burton Thompson, which was my brother-in-law, had hunting dogs, and so he asked 'em would they take 'em out one night. He'd like to go and listen to the dogs run. And, so, they talked my daddy into going, and they always told this joke on him, I don't know that he did it, but—Uncle Bob said, "Preach, listen to that music!" And Daddy said, "Well, if them dogs would hush, maybe you could hear the music." (laughs) Daddy said, "I don't hear the music," said, "Maybe if them dogs would hush, I could hear the music." I don't know if Daddy said that, but they always liked to tell that joke around.

TS: Yeah. They tell that about non-fox hunters. The music of the dogs, it doesn't sound much like music unless you're—

BWB: Well, we had four. Old Mollie and Shortie and Mike and Mabel. And Mollie had a different little bark, she sound like you was beating her: ouk! ouk! ouk! And so when I fed 'em, she got to eat first, and then I'd let the other three dogs eat. And my husband laughed at me, said, "Old Mollie's getting fat." I said, "Yeah, she is." 'Cause, I cooked 'em crackling cornbread.

TS: Back then, you had to make your own dog food.

BWB: Uh-huh, and so that was part of our making, and I would let her eat first, and she was all sleeked off and getting fat. Well, the others weren't poor, but he made the remark about—I said, "Yeah, I guess she gets first to the trough," or something, but I never did tell him I fed her first. (laughs) And we had dog pens. They was pretty big, big as this room, I guess. They could run around in there, you know. But he took 'em out hunting pretty often.

TS: They were beagles?

BWB: Uh-huh.

TS: Now, you know beagles aren't going to catch a fox, right?

BWB: Well, they can, they would nearly do it, but he'd run up a tree, and 'course they'd sit there and bark, you know, tree it. And he never would let 'em—you know, some guys would knock the fox out and let 'em kill it, but he wouldn't, 'cause he wanted 'em to run again.

TS: It's not the fox-hunter way to want the fox killed. Grey fox or red fox?

BWB: Yeah. It was a red fox that he used, mostly.

TS: Uh, I'm just looking at my reminder list. Somebody was talking about, whether it was your sister or somebody else, gathering pecans. What can you tell me about that? Would you sell 'em, or just gather 'em for home use?

BWB: Well, both, but we'd sell most of 'em.

TS: How would that work?

BWB: Well, Daddy would usually use an old cane pole, and he'd climb up there, and he'd thrash all the pecans out. And then we'd get buckets or things to hold 'em in, baskets or something, and pick 'em up and we put 'em all in a tow sack, and he'd take 'em and sell 'em, sometimes. And sometimes—'course, Mama kept enough to cook with, 'cause she'd cook candies and cakes at Christmas and things like that that she'd need nuts for. It might be a big tree and would be bigger than this room, that we'd be picking up under. It's about like picking cotton.

TS: Where would the trees be, would they be on your land, or were they just—

BWB: Yeah, we had some kind of down on the turn rows. Well, we had an orchard up close to the peach orchard, with a pecan orchard, like. But we didn't have—now, there was some people had larger pecan orchards, but this was several, you know, at, at—I don't know, probably about six or eight trees, and we'd go pick up. And a lot of times, when it was cold or something, we'd crack 'em and pick 'em out for Mama and put 'em in jars or something so she'd have 'em on hand to cook with or bake with.

TS: Who would buy 'em? What kind of store?

BWB: A feed store, you'd take 'em to the feed store. I think B. B. Porter was one of 'em. And they would buy pecans, and they would sometimes sack 'em in little sacks and sell 'em to other people.

TS: It seems like the feed stores would often end up being the ones that were buying the little stuff like that. Sometimes it's the feed stores that are buying the pelts—from kids trapping.

BWB: Yeah, yeah.

TS: One thing—I'm almost through, I swear, I know I've tired you out. How would the syrup—where would your cane, where would you take your cane for processing into syrup? You didn't have a rig on your own land, did you?

BWB: No. Now, Daddy would plant sugar cane, and he'd cut it and put it on the wagon, and my husband's grandfather had a syrup mill. You know, this mule'd walk around and around, and that syrup would make. He'd take it to Tennessee Valley. 'Course, I didn't know my husband, then. I guess I saw him, but I don't remember seeing him, 'cause I was quite small when I remember Daddy taking it down there.

TS: Well, you know, almost every community had one or two people that had the rig that would make the community's—because, you had to have syrup.

BWB: Yeah, oh, yeah! (laughs) Oh, that thick syrup.

TS: Do you remember cutting the cane?

BWB: Uh-huh, we had a cane knife, about a half-circle knife with a wooden handle on it, and we'd take and

cut, and we'd load it on to the wagon.

TS: Did you have to strip it? I mean, it's got the leaves on it and everything. You remember stripping the—

BWB: I don't remember stripping it much, Daddy might have, 'fore he loaded it on. I remember cutting it, but I don't remember stripping it. I know I went with him, rode the wagon to Tennessee Valley with him to take it down there. And they had a big old pot, and this mule went round and round and round to, I guess, crush the stalks.

TS: Yeah, they fed the stalks into the—and then the juice was—what did the cook pan look like, do your remember that?

BWB: It was a big old kind of a pot like, I believe, 'cause I remember it—seem like, it had foam on it or something to start with, and they'd dip that off. But I think it was a big old pot.

TS: Was it a long flat pan, or was it a round pan?

BWB: I believe it was a round pan.

TS: That's the old way.

(interruption in taping)

TS: You had mentioned the toilet, and you were saying that y'all had a two-holer.

BWB: Yeah.

TS: And that's—some people didn't even have toilets.

BWB: I know, and most of 'em had one. But we had a two-holer. And, when Mama would get our new Sears and Roebuck catalog, well, we got the old one to carry to the toilet. But me and my sister would go through and cut out paper dolls—tear the pages out and then we'd keep that in the house and cut out paper dolls. Take Oxadall boxes after Mama started using Oxadall, I think was a powder, and soda boxes for cars, and we'd make our own furniture out of pasteboard things.

TS: I haven't asked you, really, about that sort of play, like the kids playing around the yard. Talked about things you did for fun, but—so, you would make, you would use boxes—

BWB: Well, we had a playhouse, too. And we would use old cracked dishes, broke dishes. We'd take the bigger part, and that was our butter dish. And in back of us was a clay hill, and we'd go and make our clay shaped like butter and put on there. And we'd make bowls. We'd take and roll the clay, and they we'd wind those rolls around and make the bowls.

TS: I halfway remember doing that. But anyway the clay was a resource, because you could make all sorts of things.

BWB: Yeah, yeah. It was red clay, it was just a hill back of our house. It wasn't everywhere, because our field was black dirt. And then, up towards the cemetery—there was a cemetery up on the hill from our house, and it was caliche-like dirt.

TS: What cemetery—was that the old Sparta Cemetery?

BWB: That was the Denman Cemetery. See, it was moved into Rest Haven when they was moving all the cemeteries.

TS: So, it was a family cemetery, and the Denman's were the landowners.

BWB: Yeah.

TS: Did they have several renters on their land besides your father?

BWB: Well, now, Daddy didn't rent from the Denmans, he rented from the Cummings. And the Waltons. Now, when—there was a little log house there by where my daddy rented, my mother and daddy lived, and my husband and I lived in that little log house about a year and a half after we got married.

TS: Did you? Was it an old log house?

BWB: Yeah, it was made in 1894 or eighteen-something. It sits down at Salado now.

TS: Oh, it's there. Well, what was it like living in the log house? Now, you didn't grow up in a log house, you grew up in a pretty nice house.

BWB: Well, it was planks. It was nice, yeah. And painted white, and my mother kept that yard swept clean. Now, she had a—there was a—I don't know where that big ring come from, but it was a big ring that would probably take up this whole room, and it was about that wide, and she had roses in that.

TS: You mean a big metal ring that sat on the ground and sort of kept the weeds out of the roses?

BWB: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

TS: That sort of marked her rose bed.

BWB: Uh-huh, and she had lilac bush, I remember that, out by the windows there by the living room and one bedroom, and you could smell those lilacs. They smelled so good. And then she had a lot of iris and she planted, had a flower bed that had old maids.

TS: But the yard was kept—

BWB: No grass, no grass in the yard at all.

TS: That was the custom, right?

BWB: Uh-huh, everybody kept their yards swept, just about.

TS: What would you sweep it with? Did you make a broom to sweep it with?

BWB: Yeah. A lot of people grew that broom straw. We'd sometimes gather that up and make—'cause if you had a broom, you didn't want to use it out there in the yard.

TS: Yeah, I talked to some people—Wolfs—last name Wolf, and they grew broom straw kind of big time and sold the broom straw. The broom straw—now, are you talking about the wild growing broom straw?

BWB: More or less, yeah.

TS: Yeah, okay, that's different. This is the wild—that reddish looking stuff?

BWB: Yeah. I remember, the toilet on the side, it had a half-moon. I guess that was to let ventilation in, I don't know.

TS: Yeah, it was kind of decorative, too. Let a little light in—

BWB: Yeah, and it was painted red. 'Course, it was kind of faded-out red, kind of barn red, I guess, to start with.

TS: Would you go to the toilet at night or would you have chamber pots? Because, it was dark out there at night.

BWB: Had pots.

TS: Had pots. Anything get in the toilets? My grandmother's toilet had bats.

BWB: No. Now, I remember when Billie and Burton were living up on Taylor's Branch, which was up above Sparta, a bull snake got in there, and we didn't notice it until we'd gone in. It was laying there, and it was kind of dark, and when we opened that door, we thought it was a rattlesnake. Ooh, we hollered! Her husband and mine was working on his tractor, and they thought we was dying, nearly. They come over there, and they laughed, Aw, that's a bull snake. I said, "Well, it just might have well been a rattlesnake," 'cause I thought it was.

TS: You don't want to see it in the toilet, that's for sure. But things would get in the toilet. My grandmother's would get red wasps in there, too. I was scared to go that toilet when I was a little kid.

BWB: Ours wasn't—now, red wasps would get sometimes at the barn, like, but I don't remember red wasps getting in the toilets. Maybe they couldn't stand it! (laughs) No, my mother took ashes up there. It stunk, I guess, but it seem like it didn't like some of 'em, some of the kids I'd go visit and we'd go to the toilet. But my mama kept ashes poured on there to keep the scent down, I don't know.

TS: Yeah, if you don't take some trouble with it, it's pretty smelly.

BWB: Oh, yeah, oh, yeah. But she would, she'd put those—she'd clean out the stove or the heater, and she'd carry—well, she wouldn't take hot ashes up there, but she'd take after they cool off.

(interruption in taping)

BWB: They had a Greyhound Bus station here in Belton, so they had an indoor toilet. Well, at the courthouse they did, well we went—whether we needed to or not, I guess, we went to the bathroom in the courthouse every Saturday while we's in town. But we went to Crow's Cafe one day, 'cause we'd heard they had one up there. But they charged a dime. They had three, I think, but they charged a dime to go in, but the doors was about that far off the floor.

TS: About a foot, or so.

BWB: Yeah, or so. So, my sister and I didn't have a dime, so we crawled under the door—(unintelligible; laughs) probably no telling how dirty them floors—well, they looked clean, they looked good and clean, but—

TS: Well, what I'm getting from that is that the toilet was almost a tourist attraction, and when people would come in from the countryside, they would go out of their way to use the courthouse toilet or the ten-cent—ten-cent is pretty steep—

BWB: Well, the bus company, they would get off the bus and go to the bus station bathroom. Yeah, but they'd have to use a dime to go in it, and we didn't have no dime so we just crawled under the two doors.

TS: People think that pay toilets are an abuse of the late twentieth century, but in this case the first toilets in the town are being charged for.

BWB: Yeah. And I remember at the courthouse they had little metal boxes, and they had little, oh, probably three-by-five sheets in there, the toilet paper, you know, to use. And, oh, that was certainly different from home or school—

TS: Well, the Sears—what was used at school for toilet paper? It wasn't the Sears Roebuck. Maybe it was the Sears Roebuck catalog?

BWB: No, I think they used—I don't know if they got some kind of brown wrapping paper. Seem like it was brown paper they used.

TS: That isn't very comfortable, either.

BWB: No. (laughs) But if you don't know any better, you don't really gripe about it until you get better than you do. But I remember we'd go—well, my mother would go to town and go to Perry's, that was a variety store. There was a Perry's, and there was a drugstore, and then there was Duke and Ayres. But we'd go to Perry's, most of the time, and, 'course, the courthouse was just across the street over there from it, and me and Billie'd go to the courthouse to use the bathroom. And, oh, that was wonderful, just flush it and get those toilet tissues!

TS: Made for that. Well, the Sears Roebuck catalogs were almost universally—that's where they ended their days, last year's catalog was—

BWB: Yeah, this year's toilet tissue.

TS: And it had a lot of pages in it—

(telephone rings; interruption in taping)

BWB: Oh, I was telling about going to Belton, and they'd have bananas on a stalk, you know, you'd cut off. Had a banana knife was sort of like a cane knife only it was smaller, and you'd cut the banana off.

TS: This was not something you were used to. Bananas were—now, we just take bananas for granted.

BWB: Well, they're out laying all over the tables at the grocery stores, now.

TS: But it was like an exotic, it was like mangos or something, right?

BWB: Yeah, yeah. James Grocery and Austin Grocery both had 'em. Well, there was a little guy that come around, had a little truck and had stalks of bananas hanging up in this little truck.

TS: He would come around to your house?

BWB: No, in town you'd see him. I guess he was going to the stores to deliver stalks. And then I remember going to town and getting a snow cone. That old guy had the motor of the ice crusher hooked up to his spark plug, or something, on his car, and he'd crush that ice. And had a little tin spoon, oh, they wasn't very big, that he gave you with that, and the cups were big at the top but they come to a point. And I remember that.

TS: So, this falls, all of this falls into the category of treats when you go into Belton. Bananas, flushing toilets, snow cones.

BWB: Yeah. And, too, there was a place, which they even tore the place down, or tore it off, it was there on the corner across from the courthouse, it was the Hamburger King. And I remember my daddy used to buy six hamburgers for a quarter, and that would be our Saturday night supper, sometime.

TS: Yeah, because you wouldn't have time after you come back for—it would get your mother off the hook of having to—

BWB: Cook supper. Yeah. And I remember milk was in glass jars, and they'd have the little creamers at the restaurants in look like milk bottles, but they was little bitty, and they had cream in 'em. You know,

pour it in your coffee. It's just enough for your coffee.

TS: Well, the cream wasn't all—well, now I don't know what you get. There was one thing I wanted to ask about. Were there midwives in the community in Sparta? Was there anybody that served as a midwife? You were fairly close to town in Sparta. It's not like you were twenty miles out.

BWB: Well, uh, Dr. Pittman was at Belton, Dr. J. W. Pittman. He delivered me. 'Course my family lived on North Nolan, then, at Phoenix. In fact he delivered I think all four of us girls. But I remember my niece. I was about twelve years old, and that oldest sister of mine had a little girl, a baby, and the doctor came, but they was—my mother would go, lot of times, and get her ready, I guess. 'Cause then they told us the doctor was bringing the baby in that black bag, and we'd watch, you know. But Sadie Northam was another lady that would go and help get the—when the baby was coming—and Erbie Light. They was some of them that would go, and I guess if they couldn't have called a doctor there they would have delivered, but they always got her ready.

TS: Erbie Light?

(telephone rings; interruption in taping)

TS: This is the internal mike. Okay, what happened when somebody died?

BWB: Well, the men of the community would dig the grave, and they would line it with cheesecloth, and then they would put a wooden box in there, and then after they had the funeral they would put the coffin in that and put the box on it. And then, 'course, couple of the men of the community that had dug the grave would stay and cover it up.

TS: So, they would line the hole in the ground with cheesecloth. Now, that's kind of—so, that's shutting away the sight of the actual dirt.

BWB: Yeah.

TS: And then—the coffin, would they get the coffin in town?

BWB: Yeah. At a funeral home in town—Heartfield has been there as long as I can remember. And then at one time there was a Phillips and Lucky or something, and it went out of business. Oh, the guy killed himself, I think. And now they have another one. But they don't line the—

TS: No, they'll drape it in green Astroturf, they'll be a little bit draping the side of the hole, but this is a—I've never heard—that was the custom at Sparta funerals?

BWB: Yeah, uh-huh. I don't know if the women did that for the men or exactly, but they would line the wall inside with cheesecloth. And then they would—they'd have some kind of something and they had ropes to let the—well, they'd have bands—or wide strips of cloth or something—and with ropes they'd let the coffin down in there.

TS: But the undertakers weren't doing this, the people of the community, the men, were doing this? This was a community-based funeral, you're not, like, getting the funeral home to come out and do it?

BWB: No, about all they did was bring the body out. And then the preacher would conduct the funeral, and then they'd usually have a dinner or supper for the family. Well, and the community, they'd just all pitch in and fix a meal for after services.

TS: What about weddings? What would happen at Sparta? Would they take place at the house? Would they take place at the church?

BWB: Well, my second sister got married in the back seat of their car, the preacher come out of his house,

Preacher Howell, and married 'em in the—and they're sitting in the back seat of the car. And another couple was telling me about that. Sometimes they'd get married at the preacher's house and sometimes at a—I don't remember very many weddings at the church.

TS: Well, your first two sisters were basically getting married against your father's wishes, so they were not into—

BWB: Sort of like a justice of the peace, I guess.

TS: Yeah, but this was a preacher who would come clear out to the car. (laughs) I've never asked about drinking in the community. Was it dry?

BWB: Oh, yeah.

TS: It was dry, but there's always somebody—

BWB: Made moonshine. Yeah, somebody did. I remember this guy, he drove a truck, and his legs probably wasn't that big around.

TS: Okay, we were talking about moonshine, and this was this little skinny-legged guy who drove a truck.

BWB: Yeah, post truck, mostly. Well, hay in the hay season. But he'd come off that mountain faster than he should have, and we'd say, Oh, there's old so-and-so, he's drunk again. But, actually, I was in high school, probably a junior, before I ever saw a drunk woman that I remember. And I remember being in Belton, and I was telling about being there at Perry's, well, Belton was—every other door was a beer joint, back then. Underground, upstairs, and all, you couldn't go anywhere without passing a beer joint. But I remember the—he was a deputy sheriff or constable or something, and he had a '37 Ford car, and he'd arrested this one down the street at one of the beer joints. And oh, she would walk! He was a tall guy, and he had all kinds of trouble getting her to walk up there to that car. And he tried to put her in that car, and she'd do her legs like that and he couldn't get her in.

TS: Spread her legs so he couldn't push her through the car door.

BWB: Yeah, and he'd get her legs together, and she'd do her arms. Finally, he wound up handcuffing her.

TS: Well, that was the first really scandalously drunk woman you had ever seen.

BWB: Yeah, it was. And I guess that's one reason I never did drink, I just thought about how she acted when he was trying to get her in that car. I never did drink. My husband, he drank, some. And I never did smoke, and he didn't want me to.

TS: Would the people drink at these Saturday night socials? Would some of the men sneak outside to drink? Or was that not done in Sparta?

BWB: I didn't know it if they did.

TS: They were really sneaking around if they did it.

BWB: But I don't think they were. Because, see, they's all church people that came there. But, now, in Tennessee Valley, now, they made the moonshine, but they didn't bring it in at the dances, you had to go outside. And some of 'em would, but I don't remember seeing drunk people at the dances.

TS: Yeah. If they had been drinking at the dances, they were not showing it, is what you're saying.

BWB: Yeah. I guess they kept dancing until it didn't show up on 'em or something. And I'd remember, we'd all be dancing in one room. We had a kerosene light, you know, 'cause they didn't have electricity.

And everybody had to dance in the same direction, had to move this way or that way more or less in rhythm, 'cause it was so crowded.

TS: You had to coordinate, the couples had to coordinate their dancing, because you're not out on a great ballroom floor.

BWB: Yeah, just in a little room, probably not as big as this, or about this size.

TS: So, you really had to go around one way or go around the other, right?

BWB: Yeah, yeah, just about. You didn't hardly back up much. But they would square dance, my daddy-in-law called square dances, and my husband and I would dance to 'em.

TS: Well, you know, the ring dances sort of control what you're doing in a small space in a different way.

BWB: Well, now, the ring games is what they did at Sparta. They didn't dance, but they could ring game.

TS: It would've looked kind of like dancing to someone who didn't know it wasn't dancing, right?

BWB: 'Specially when they turned you, you know, you'd break hands. You'd be with one particular person, and they'd have to turn you around.

TS: It was regarded as technically not dancing. You know, this is ring games.

BWB: Ring games, right. And musicals, they'd have musicals, and they'd play the instruments. They would play dance music all right, but we didn't dance.

TS: Remember any fights between the men at social affairs? Any fist fights or stuff?

BWB: No, I really don't. Like I said, the dances, even, when they had dances. I remember my husband-to-be, he just danced with me all night, he didn't even go out and drink.

TS: It's not the courting couples. Where there's alcohol, it's not the courting couples or the dating couples, it's the married men or the unattached men, or something.

(interruption in taping)

TS: Which was a sort of scenic site where people would carve their names on trees and kind of picnic site, and then, tell me about the baptism hole, baptismal hole, on Cowhouse.

BWB: Uh-huh, on the Cowhouse. It was close to the Denman place—well, I guess it was on the Denman place. That's where people were baptized, and they called it the baptismal hole. And whenever we'd have church, well, that's when they'd go and baptize.

TS: What would happen at the baptisms there? I'm sure you've attended, or—were you baptized there? What happened?

BWB: Yeah, I was baptized there. Well, usually, when I went up, we's having a revival there. Under the tabernacle, it was in the summertime. And we went down there, and everybody parked around where they could shine the lights for the preacher and whoever went in the baptismal hole. And they sang two or three songs, I think, and then he baptized everybody, and then they went on their way, I guess.

TS: So, would these have been people who professed as part of the revival, who got religion during the revival?

BWB: Uh-huh.

TS: And right then and there, at the end of the revival, the preacher would—

BWB: Yeah, that night. Well, some of 'em were on Sunday afternoons.

TS: But these would be fruits of the revival service, these would be saved souls that had been saved that very evening. And then they'd drive the cars down where the lights were shining.

BWB: Well, there was a gravel bar there, and I don't guess it was too deep.

TS: Yeah, it was a sloping bottom.

BWB: Yeah, it was deep enough they could baptize people, but—and I think there was six people that night I was baptized.

TS: So, it was a revival when you decided to come forward. Would you come forward, actually?

BWB: Yeah, you'd be back. They'd be singing the hymn, and you would go forward, and he'd ask you, "Do you truly believe in God and Jesus Christ and that He resurrected from the dead?" And you tell him, "I do." And then he would announce to the congregation that, you know, whoever was gonna be baptized, and they would meet down there at the baptismal hole. And they would go down there, then.

TS: How far away was it?

BWB: Oh, it was probably half a mile, it wasn't too far. You had to go down a little lane, I think Mr. Denman baled hay between there and the river.

TS: But they parked their cars and shined the lights down on the gravel bar.

BWB: Uh-huh, on the preacher and the people that was being—

TS: That would be more impressive than Sunday afternoon to me, I think, to be baptized there.

F. A. Barrington Bowen
John D. Bowen

F. A. Barrington Bowen
Date of birth: 26 December 1917
Communities affiliated with: Pilot Knob, Willow Springs

John D. Bowen
Date of birth: 9 January 1916
Community affiliated with: Clear Creek
Interviewed by Martha Doty Freeman

MDF: This is Martha Doty Freeman. Today is November 27, 2000. I'm interviewing Mr. and Mrs. John D. Bowen for the first time. The interview is taking place in the Bowens' home at 2405 Bird Creek Drive, Temple, Texas, 76502. This interview is part of Prewitt and Associates' Fort Hood Oral History Project sponsored by U.S. Army Fort Hood and conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University.

Let me start with you, Mr. Bowen. Ah, what were your parents' names?

JDB: My dad's name was O. H. Bowen, Owen Harrison Bowen, and my mother's maiden name was Minnie Swope. A lot of Swopes in Killeen back then. In fact, two of her brothers had a hardware store there, tin shop.

MDF: And how many children did your parents have?

JDB: Twelve. Nine boys and three girls.

MDF: Can you tell me their names?

JDB: Yes. Start with the oldest one, was Thomas, and Onieda, and then—

FABB: Morris.

JDB: No. Leo and Lucia, Morris, Swope, John D., Arvis, Laverne, Bill, J. R., Boyce, and Max. Was the youngest one.

MDF: And how many of you are still alive?

JDB: Five.

MDF: And when were you born?

JDB: January 9, 1916.

MDF: And where were you born?

JDB: Born in Bell County. Ah, I'd better change that. Everybody else's birth certificate was in Bell County. Mine was in Coryell.

MDF: Now, why was that?

JDB: The Coryell County line ran right behind our barn. Now, I can't tell you—

MDF: Were you born behind the barn?

JDB: I might have been! Seems to me like they were trying to tell me something. So I went to the courthouse in Belton, and they couldn't find it. So I just got to thinking about it, and we talked about it, and so I went to Gatesville, and there it was.

MDF: Now, who were your grandparents?

JDB: Ah, my dad's was Adam R. Bowen and we did a little, my oldest son did a little work on, they actually I guess it was their parents originated in Wales.

MDF: Your great-grandparents?

JDB: Um-hm.

MDF: And when did your family first come to the Bell County and Coryell County area?

JDB: Ah, they told me that several times, but I can't tell you exactly. But they were there way back, I know. My dad was born in 1884. In fact, my mother and dad both were born in 1884. They, at first, my dad first lived at Sparks, which is right outside of Temple.

MDF: Sparks?

JDB: Uh-huh. And then they came, they moved to Killeen. That's where they were.

MDF: And where was your home place, where you grew up?

JDB: Right there, in that picture.

MDF: Okay, but where was that relative to Killeen?

JDB: Okay. Three and a half miles northwest of Killeen.

MDF: And tell me a little bit about your family, Mrs. Bowen.

FABB: My dad's name was A. C. Barrington, and my mother's maiden name was Lillie Jane Pennington.

MDF: And how many were in your family?

FABB: Oh, there was seven. Four boys and three girls.

MDF: And what were their names from oldest to youngest?

FABB: Raymond was the oldest boy, and Rose, and Ethel, and Braden, and F. A., and then Herbert Cecil, and Estalee.

MDF: Estalee?

FABB: Um-hm.

MDF: And when did your family come to that area where you grew up?

FABB: Let me see, ah, sometime in the nineteen and thirties, but I'm not sure. I know we were living there in nineteen and thirty-five, so it was, I'd say early '30s.

MDF: Do you know where they came from?

FABB: Let's see, let me think just a minute. West Texas. Both of them lived in West Texas before. Was when they settled in that area.

MDF: Do you have any idea why they moved to that area?

FABB: I think because my dad was a farmer, and that was good farming land. He owned about a hundred acres of real fertile farmland.

MDF: And where was it located relative to Killeen?

FABB: Well, it was located, you said that was west of Killeen?

JDB: West, almost due west, just a little bit southwest.

FABB: About five miles?

JDB: Probably no more than four miles. It was a little further—in other words we were in that direction and they were in that direction. They were a little further out than we were.

MDF: And was there a house there when your family moved to this farm, or did your parents build the home?

FABB: It was there, but my dad remodeled it.

MDF: Can you describe it for me? What did it look like?

FABB: It had a long porch on the south, and we had a swing on the porch. And it had two bedrooms, two big bedrooms. You know, lots of the family would sleep in one bedroom back then. And then we had an upstairs, which you went up some steep steps, and over to the right of the top of the stairs was a bedroom. And this is where the boys in the family, that was their room. And then we had a dining room and a kitchen. We had a wood cook stove and a wood heater for heat.

MDF: What community were you part of?

FABB: Willow Springs.

MDF: And who were your neighbors there?

FABB: Well, let's see. The Kielmanns were one of our neighbors. What was Mr. Kielmann's first name?

JDB: Henry.

FABB: Henry Kielmann? And the Dalleys. Was it Arthur Dalley?

JDB: Arthur Daude.

FABB: Arthur Daude.

JDB: Some flying—

FABB: And when I met John, the Bowens were our neighbors. When they had moved from Pilot Knob and were moving there to the farm next to ours.

MDF: Now tell me about your house?

JDB: Well, I'll tell you. I'd love to have that house now. I wouldn't want the upkeep, you know, on the place, but that was a fabulous house. It was a nice house. It was well kept. It had a nice stairway. It had, let's see, one, two, three, four big bedrooms upstairs, and three down, I believe. Let's see, that's seven, and then a small sewing room, a pretty big hallway. And of course the living room, as we called it, I guess had the fireplace in it. And then it had a pretty good-sized kitchen and a pretty good-sized dining room. I can't remember whether there was another little room, a utility room probably. It was a total of twelve rooms in the house.

MDF: Did you have indoor plumbing or water?

JDB: No.

MDF: Did you have indoor water?

JDB: No. No.

MDF: So where did you get your water from?

JDB: Well, we had a big rain tank that we had—we called it rainwater—and then we had two windmills. Of course, one of them was quite away off, but the one was there. Well actually, the barn and all that was quite away from the house, but we had a windmill there. So that's where we got the rest of the water.

FABB: We had a deep well. My dad had some cattle and he used that well to water the cattle, and then we had a shallow well that we used for drinking water, and it was, it tasted lots better than the deep well did.

MDF: Did you have a cistern, too?

FABB: Yes, we had a cistern.

MDF: And did you have water in your house?

FABB: No, not in the kitchen.

JDB: See, this house had—

FABB: And we had an outdoor toilet. Kept the Sears catalog out there.

JDB: See, this house was on—the lower part had a big porch come all the way around two sides, and then upstairs was all the way across the front. And that's where the boys all slept in the summertime.

FABB: We had a peach orchard with a hundred trees. And when we got to bothering Mama, she'd go to the peach orchard for peace and quiet.

MDF: Now, what did your father do, Mr. Bowen? Was he a rancher?

JDB: He was a farmer and a rancher. We had about five hundred head of sheep, three hundred goats, and sixty head of cattle. We farmed 240 acres with single row equipment. But we had eight single hoes, sixteen head of work stock.

MDF: That was a pretty big operation.

JDB: Big operation. Yeah it was. It had the power to do it.

MDF: And then all those boys in your family.

JDB: That's what I'm saying. We had it right there, and they all knew how to work. And my dad knew how to work right along with us.

MDF: Did your parents build that house that you grew up in?

JDB: No, no, no, unh-uh. All of that, the lay of that land, there was thirty-five hundred acres of it, and it was split up into three different parts. And we had that leased for many years until just before Fort Hood came in. We probably would have stayed there a lot longer, but the man that owned that had six sections of land in West Texas, and he also had a little farm where the VA hospital sits now. I don't know how much he could get, but they never paid them enough for that land. The average price for that Fort Hood land was sixty-seven dollars an acre, and that's ridiculous.

MDF: So who actually owned the land that you farmed?

JDB: J. W. Pace.

MDF: So he didn't live out there?

JDB: No, no, he lived in Killeen.

MDF: Who, whom else did he rent places out to?

JDB: Well there was a family by the name of Springer that had part of that, and then the one big pasture next to us. He just leased it to different ones, you know. That was about, that was really, I guess, our closest neighbor.

MDF: Now, did Pace build that house that you lived in?

JDB: I'm sure he did. And, you know, I don't recall, but I'm thinking that he did, yes.

MDF: Were there any outbuildings around the house?

JDB: Lots of buildings.

MDF: Can you describe them for me?

JDB: We had a real big barn. We had a sheep shed that would hold all those sheep, and then we had another one that would hold all the goats. 'Course, then we had another little pasture, a little run around for the good farm—it was _____ (??) gentle horses. And then a barn where we kept the horses. So we had plenty of barns, plenty of space.

MDF: Were there a number of wells on the property?

JDB: Just the two, two windmills. Now, back over on this other one was another windmill, and down on the other side of that other was a windmill. So I'd say that was a total of four. Four windmills. They all worked and had plenty of water.

MDF: What kind of goats did you raise?

JDB: The shearing type.

MDF: Angoras?

JDB: Angoras. Yeah.

MDF: Did you have any Spanish goats?

JDB: No. Not at all. The sheep were registered Rambouillets.

MDF: And what about the cattle?

JDB: The cattle were just mixed. Mixed cattle really. A few white-faced, but mostly mixed.

MDF: And where did you sell the wool and mohair?

JDB: Lampasas was the only market anywhere around. Of course, San Angelo, but that's too far off, you know. But we always carried ours to Lampasas.

MDF: How did you get it there?

JDB: Had a, had a flatbed Ford truck.

MDF: Do you remember the name of the wholesaler you took it to?

JDB: Gosh, I should, but I can't right now. No. Must have been awhile ago.

MDF: Did you have any mechanical shearing devices?

JDB: They had a, there was a fellow that lived at Antelope by the name of C. K. Sadler that had a shearing machine, and I believe that it had six drops. Had six shearers on that. He always came and sheared our stuff.

MDF: You didn't do your own shearing?

JDB: I did a little, but not much.

MDF: Did he have helpers?

JDB: Oh, yeah. He used, most all of his shearers were Mexicans.

MDF: Did they just go around from ranch to ranch?

JDB: Yeah. Um-hm. They sure did. Did a lot of shearing. They were good. Those Spanish boys really, really could turn them out. Of course, my job was to tromp the wool in the sack. I didn't like that job too well.

MDF: Why is that?

JDB: Greasy. See, that wool's greasy.

MDF: So did you wash it before you took it Lampasas?

JDB: No, no. Just put it in a big sack and then—and I can't remember how much those sacks weighed, but I tromped a lot of wool.

MDF: So how old were you when you started working on the ranch?

JDB: Well, about seven.

MDF: And what kinds of things did you do?

JDB: Well mostly, ah, you know, went with my dad and worked stock. Stuff like that. Wasn't long after that, though, until I running, you know, binders and cultivators, and so forth.

MDF: What kind of farming did your dad do?

JDB: We raised cotton, corn, and oats, mostly. Of course, the corn was to feed the mules, and the oats was for the riding stock, mostly. Cotton was a pretty big thing around there then. You wouldn't believe it now. But my granddad was what they called a public weigher. They had a big warehouse, and that's what he did. He did that so, he was older than my dad's uncle, youngest uncle, took the job over and

he did it until they did away with it.

MDF: And what were their names?

JDB: My, that was Adam R. was my granddad, and then his son, they called him Adie, but it was an Adam.

MDF: And where was their office?

JDB: Okay. On Avenue D [in Killeen] right down, I'd say at the end of Avenue D where it turned back north. There was a big area right down in there where that all sat. You know, they had a couple of fellows that handled those bales of cotton with hooks, and they could drag those things around. I don't know how they could do it, but they did it.

MDF: And what about gardens?

JDB: Oh, yes.

MDF: Where were they located?

JDB: Well, they, they were pretty close, usually, not too far from the house. Of course, we had those fenced off so the livestock couldn't get to it. We had to raise stuff. Of course, corn, you know, raised it right out in the field. When it was ready, the whole family canned corn for a whole day. We killed beef and canned beef, we just canned all that stuff. We had to if we was going to live.

MDF: Now, how do you can beef?

JDB: With a steam pressure cooker. Put it in a pretty good-sized can, about like that. (demonstrating size with hands)

FABB: My dad belonged to what they called the beef club.

MDF: Tell me about that.

FABB: And each, each week, a different one that belonged to it would have a, a steer slaughtered, and then we'd divide it up amongst other members of this club. And of course, the next week it'd be somebody else's turn, and they'd do the same thing. Some of that beef was absolutely so tender you could cut it with a fork. You didn't have to use a knife.

MDF: Really, for goodness sakes. Did they age it after they cut it, or—

FABB: No, they'd just cut it, and different members of the club would know who was doing it and just kind of come and get some of it.

JDB: You know, that canned beef, I got, I really got tired of it in a way, but it was plenty good.

FABB: We canned a lot, and my mother was a good gardener, and she had a real big garden. And we all had to work in the fields. There was too many of us, and I can remember I'd be so hungry about 11:30, and look and see Mama taking out from the garden to the house with a bunch of vegetables in her hand to get ready for lunch. And I'd think, Oh, my lands, it will be so long before we have lunch!

MDF: What kinds of things did she grow in her garden?

FABB: Oh, she grew all kinds of vegetables. Peas, and of course we had corn, beans—

JDB: Lots of potatoes.

FABB: Potatoes, black-eyed peas, and of course tomatoes, lots of tomato plants. And squash.

JDB: Tomatoes.

MDF: Tomatoes?

JDB: Um-hm.

MDF: Did you have any fruit trees?

FABB: Yes, we had a hundred fruit trees.

MDF: My word!

FABB: Most of them were peaches, and we had some pears, plums.

JDB: Yeah, they really had a nice orchard.

MDF: Did they plant the orchard, or was it there?

FABB: They planted it.

MDF: Now, what kind of peaches did they have?

FABB: Well, we had Albertas. That was—

JDB: That was the main one.

FABB: That was the main one we had.

MDF: Now, you had a tremendous production off of that. What did you do with all that fruit?

FABB: Well, we canned it.

MDF: Did you keep it all for yourselves, or did you sell some?

FABB: Well, we didn't usually sell, and neighbors didn't need because they always had, so we just canned it. We had a pantry my mother would always—we'd can it and then she'd put it—we canned fruit in jars. We liked fruit better canned in jars than in cans. Canned most of it in jars.

MDF: And did you, where did you, did you have any place other than a pantry to store it, or did it all go in a pantry?

FABB: She had a cellar.

MDF: And where was that?

FABB: It was out in the back yard. And of course, we used the cellar, cellar to go in if it was coming up a storm.

MDF: Did you have a cellar, too?

JDB: Yeah. And we also had a pretty big smokehouse 'cause we killed six big hogs every year. Cured it out.

FABB: We also killed hogs in the winter. My dad would cure the meat out in the smokehouse.

MDF: So you had a smokehouse, too.

JDB: I think everybody did.

MDF: Did your family kill your own hogs, or did you have a community killing?

JDB: No. We did our own.

MDF: And did you keep the hogs penned, or did you let them run loose?

JDB: Well, he had a, we had it so they could run out, but we kept 'em where we could feed 'em. But we had, I guess we had a little more space. Most people just kept 'em in a space.

FABB: We kept ours in a pen.

JDB: A small pen.

FABB: And then, neighbors would come in and help you, and you would help them whenever they did one.

JDB: Well, we had enough to where we just got ready, we did it. Didn't take—had a son-in-law and my oldest brother who wasn't at home. They always came and helped. So we had plenty of help.

FABB: And we had a sausage stuffer, and that was my job, to stuff the sausage. And we used what we called casings.

MDF: And where did you do the sausage stuffing?

FABB: We did that in the house. In the house, we'd do that on the dining room table. We had a big long dining table with benches on, a bench on each side, to sit. We had a few chairs. Mama and Papa had a chair. All of the kids sat on the bench. And we fought. I got—

JDB: I tell you, they didn't fight much, I tell you because her dad wouldn't put up with it.

MDF: Now, tell me how you went about the hog slaughtering.

JDB: Okay, we had a couple of big barrels that we would boil the water in. We had two of those big iron pots. We'd boil the water and we'd pour that in there and kill the hogs. Of course there was enough of us to pick 'em up and put 'em in there and turn 'em and scale 'em where you could get the hair off of 'em. You'd just scrape that hair off. Just hung 'em up and—

MDF: What parts of the hog would you use?

JDB: We used most all of it. We had, we had some head cheese. Some people just made a lot of head cheese. Quite a bit of it. There wasn't much throwing away that you did back in those days.

FABB: My dad raised quite a lot of chickens. And of course when Mama got ready to do a chicken fry, she just caught one of those chickens and wrung its, would wring its head off.

MDF: Now, did you ever participate in the hog killing, or watch one?

JDB: No. (answering for FABB)

FABB: Didn't want to.

MDF: Where did you go where all this was going on?

JDB: Oh, she helped inside. She helped with the sausage making, but the outside, no.

FABB: I usually was in the house talking to some of the neighbor, neighbor people who had come in with their folks to help with the hog killing.

MDF: What were your duties around the house?

FABB: Well, I had, when they killed the hog, I had to stuff the sausage. And we had a cream separator, and my dad had quite a few cows. And we separated cream and sold some of it. And then, some of it, my mother had a churn, one of those, you know, old ones, that you did that with. And I had to churn and

run the cream separator.

MDF: Where did you keep the cream separator?

FABB: We kept it in the kitchen on the end of the cabinet. But then, whenever we got through with it, it had all to be washed, and it had the, it had oodle gobs of parts. And then, Mama thought they had to be sunned, so we put 'em out in the side of the house. We had a sort of a stand built where we put things like that out to sun.

MDF: Where did you sell the milk?

FABB: We usually took it to the store downtown.

JDB: Wendland's.

MDF: Wendland?

JDB: Yeah, Wendland. In fact, they still have a grain elevator here. They left Killeen and came to Temple even, I think, before we did.

FABB: And we'd sell butter to them, too, what we didn't use for ourselves. Of course, we used quite a bit of it. It was a big family.

MDF: Now, did you have one of the larger orchards in that area?

FABB: Yes.

MDF: Had your parents done that kind of fruit production before?

FABB: Well, not really. They'd just done farming in general, and—

MDF: Excuse me.

FABB: And we'd go to town on Saturday afternoons and sit and watch the people pass up and down the street in front of the car. That was our pastime.

JDB: Nearly all the farmers back then, when Saturday noon came, they quit work and all went to downtown Killeen. It was full. Sidewalks was full of people. Of course, they'd buy their staple groceries.

FABB: We had community dances. Always someone in the community knew how to play the violin and guitar, and we'd, different ones would give dances and invite whoever they wanted to invite. And we'd go, and we'd, the girls stood around on the side of the wall, around the wall, the boys were out in the middle. And they'd come and ask you to dance. And I guess I'll never forget, there was a fellow in our neighborhood. We called him Sprinkler Parker because he sprinkled on you every time he talked to you. And we'd just stand around the wall and hope he didn't ask us to dance!

MDF: Do you remember who any of the musicians were in your community? Who the people were who played the violin and—

FABB: Well, of course, they weren't notable musicians, or noted for that. They were just fellows in the neighborhood, and I believe Boots—did Boots—

JDB: I think Boots did, and where I went, we had a Whatley boy and a Brookshire. One of them played a fiddle, and the other one played the guitar. They played for all those dances. In fact, Blacky Brookshire and Lloyd Whatley. Everybody knew them.

MDF: Where did the dances take place?

JDB: Just different—

FABB: Different homes.

JDB: Just different homes.

FABB: It wasn't a public place.

MDF: So did you get an invitation, or did you just hear about it?

FABB: You called on the telephone. And of course, we had those telephone lines where everybody listened in, so you almost didn't have to call but one person, and all the rest of 'em heard it.

JDB: You know, that's what's strange there, the way you, in fact she'd have two rings, somebody'd have two longs and one short, or—they fixed it all up.

FABB: And if someone got a date, you know, the whole community knew who you had a date with.

JDB: Yeah.

MDF: Did you do any games at the parties?

FABB: No, we usually just danced.

MDF: And what kinds of dances were they?

FABB: Well, we did the waltz, and one-steps and two-steps. Let's see.

JDB: She used to do a little Charleston for 'em.

FABB: Yeah, I did the Charleston. Well, that's really dating me, isn't it?

JDB: Yeah, yeah. But, you know, it's amazing how you could entertain yourself. Now, people would think that was—well, there are still a lot of people still dance.

FABB: I went to a little neighborhood school—Willow Springs—and we had a stage. And there were sometimes we'd have music there, and someone would perform, different ones in the community. And sometimes I'd do, I'd get up on the stage and do the Charleston, and different fellows, mostly, would throw money up on the stage.

JDB: So, it sounds like she made a business out of that!

MDF: Kind of does. Now, describe that Willow Springs School for me.

FABB: Well, Willow Springs School was about three miles from where we lived, and we walked unless the weather was extremely bad, and if it was, then someone, my dad or one of the other's dads, would take us to school and come after us. And I can remember that I took a, for lunch, we'd take our lunch. And I took biscuit and sausage, and then there was some in the neighborhood that took light bread and sausage. And I remember just envying those that could take light bread, 'cause I always had to take biscuit.

MDF: Where did they get the light bread?

FABB: They made it, homemade, with yeast.

JDB: See, those Yancys were all ranchers. If the weather was bad, they'd saddle up however many horses it took, and that's the way they took the kids to school.

MDF: Did your parents have a car that they would take you to school in sometimes?

FABB: Yes, um-hm.

MDF: Was there ever a school bus?

JDB: No. I don't remember. I don't believe so.

MDF: And where was the water supply for the school?

FABB: There was a well out in the schoolyard.

MDF: Ah, where did you go to church?

FABB: We went to church in Killeen, and in the summertime, we mostly went to revivals in the summer. And, well, this Killeen Church of Christ had an arbor, you know, just benches and then this covering over it. And that's where most of the revivals were held. And then on Sunday mornings we had a church building, and we'd go to church in that building. And there was so many of us we could hardly get in the car.

MDF: Now, were there many people who were members of Church of Christ in that area?

FABB: Most of 'em were—lots of Germans around there, and most of them were Lutheran. No, there wasn't too many Church of Christ.

MDF: Do you all believe in baptism?

FABB: Yes.

MDF: And did you have baptisms somewhere?

FABB: Yes, we had a creek.

JDB: They'd baptize 'em in the creek.

FABB: Where we took, where they were taken to be baptized. Was baptized in the creek.

MDF: Which creek?

JDB: Nolan.

FABB: Nolan Creek.

MDF: And what happened? Was there, was there a group of you who were baptized?

FABB: Well, sometimes, there would be two or there, and then sometimes there would just be, like when I was baptized, I was the only one. And the minister would just, well, you'd put on an old dress, is what you wore to be baptized in, and he'd just walk you down into the water and baptize you, and then you'd come out, and you'd have to kind of dry off with a towel you'd taken with you and go home wet to change your clothes.

MDF: Was there any kind of celebration when you did that?

FABB: Just singing and prayer.

MDF: And where did you go to church?

JDB: The Baptist, First Baptist Church in Killeen, but they had a lot of meetings in the summer out at the Clear Creek School.

MDF: Oh. Why would they do it there in the summer?

JDB: Well, just for that community, you know, because that far to Killeen, just wasn't that many people could go before they could go there.

MDF: How far were you from the Clear Creek School?

JDB: About, a little over a mile.

MDF: And what did it look like? Can you describe it for me?

JDB: Just a little ol' kind of a bungalow with a big potbelly stove right in the center, the lower grades on the south side and the other grades on the other side. That's, they went through, first grade through the ninth. And I had a, for, gosh I don't know how many years I had an old maid schoolteacher named Meryl Smith who taught the higher grades. And a lot of 'em thought she was strict, but I got along with her real good. I did little things for her, like dust the erasers, you know. You got to, you got to do a few of those things.

FABB: We had a lot of school picnics, and usually we had barbecue. Some fellows in the community would do the barbecue right there on the school grounds in a barbecue pit that was, they'd built.

MDF: Was it a dug pit?

FABB: It was just a pit, dug out, and then a, some kind of a metal rail over the top of it.

MDF: Was there a certain time of the year when they did picnics?

FABB: Well, in the spring.

MDF: And what else went on at those?

FABB: At picnics?

MDF: Um-hm.

FABB: Oh, we'd usually have someone that could play music, do the music, and then we'd have games, like ball games. Different kinds of sports things.

MDF: Did you play any baseball or softball, Mr. Bowen?

JDB: Basketball. Played a little baseball, but we had a basketball team. The girls had a better, really had a better team than we had.

FABB: I played all kinds, I played baseball and softball, volleyball, and tennis.

MDF: Now, I've heard from several people that they played tennis. Was there—

JDB: No tennis back in my day, that I know of.

FABB: Well, I played tennis.

JDB: You did? We didn't have it over at our school.

FABB: It may have been after I started Killeen over where the other was. I went to Killeen High School. I just went to elementary and middle school at Willow Springs, and I graduated from Killeen High School.

MDF: Was there ever a high school at Willow Springs?

FABB: No. I think they went up through about, about the ninth grade.

JDB: Most all of 'em out in those areas went through ninth grade. I don't know about Antelope, they might, I believe there's a possibility they might have went a little higher, but I'm not sure.

FABB: But we had such good teachers at Willow Springs. Tinney Harrell and Hope Harrell, they were really good.

MDF: Now what, where did they get their training, I wonder.

FABB: They were both from Oklahoma, Oklahoma City. I'm not sure what school they went to or anything, but they were good teachers.

MDF: Do you remember the names of any of your teachers?

JDB: Ah, Myrtle Smith and Vera May Redding. There are still a few of the Reddings around Killeen. But they were both good teachers. That Vera May Redding was such a sweet person. She was really good, and everybody loved her.

MDF: Did teachers tend to come and stay for a while, or did they rotate in and out?

JDB: No, in our case, gosh, that Myrtle Smith was there for years. I mean, she was there for a long time. She finally retired, you know, after I left there.

FABB: But mostly, I'd say, they rotated in and out.

JDB: They did, I guess. But she finally wound out over here at the Meridian Nursing Home, and she was ninety, let's see, it would be ninety-six. When she was about ninety-five, I went by there one time to see her, and I walked in, and I said, "I'll bet you don't remember who I was." And she said, "I sure do."

MDF: Stayed sharp to the very end.

JDB: Oh, yeah, yeah.

MDF: Now, did either of your families raise turkeys?

JDB: Oh, yeah.

MDF: Did you all?

FABB: We had a few.

JDB: We raised lots of turkeys because we had lots of space.

MDF: Did you let 'em run free?

JDB: Yep.

MDF: And how did you gather 'em up?

JDB: Well, see we checked on 'em at least once or twice a day. You could just go down there and look on horseback, and it was a slow process. But you could round 'em up and get 'em back if you wanted to.

MDF: Did they ever wear bells?

JDB: Once in a—we have had bells on 'em but not usually.

FABB: We sold a lot of eggs. Those white leghorns would lay a lot of eggs, and we sold lots of eggs.

MDF: In Killeen?

FABB: Um-hm. At Wendland.

MDF: And what did you keep, how come you had all these turkeys?

JDB: That was just another way for income. We had space and with all of that, you didn't have to feed 'em near as much.

MDF: Where did you sell 'em?

JDB: Wendland's, mostly. Yeah.

MDF: Was it a seasonal thing for Thanksgiving or Christmas?

JDB: Yeah. Yeah.

MDF: And how did you get 'em to Wendland's?

JDB: In that flatbed truck we had some crates that we hauled.

MDF: I've heard of places where they actually do turkey drives.

JDB: Well, we never did that. I mean, we did gather 'em up in the pasture maybe to bring 'em in if it was going to be bad weather or whatnot, but—

FABB: My dad just had these big crate things with wire around them. He made 'em out of wood and then put wire around them. And he carried his stuff off to sell it.

JDB: We had one part of barn there that had a wire net fence around it where they could go inside when the weather was bad. We'd bring 'em into that. That was a well equipped place.

MDF: Who was responsible for keeping it up?

JDB: We were. If there was any, any expenses for material, then he paid for that. But we did the labor. That was just one of the things we did in order, the trade we made whenever we—

MDF: Did you handle—did Pace take, did he take a certain amount of your cotton and you—

JDB: No.

MDF: How did that work?

JDB: Ah, he took a fourth of the cotton and a third of the other. And of course, that nine-hundred-acre pasture, we didn't have to pay anything for that. So that was thrown in.

FABB: When we had a box supper, we'd just announce it, you know. Everybody would kind of get out, and the women, the girls all fixed up a big box of food. Then we put 'em all on this stage, and the fellows would bid. They'd hold up the different boxes and the fellows would bid on it.

MDF: And what kinds of things would you put in the boxes?

FABB: Well, you'd usually make some kind of sweet, you know, pies, cookies, or cake or something. And sandwiches, and stuff you could eat without much—

MDF: And then would the two of you eat the box lunch together?

FABB: Yes, whoever bought it. And of course you were always hoping someone you really liked would buy your box.

MDF: Did you ever buy hers?

JDB: Probably a time or two, but not much.

MDF: Now, how did you happen to move from the Pace place down to her area? When did that happen?

JDB: That happened in about nineteen and thirty-six, '37.

MDF: How come you moved?

JDB: Well, we already had, already had rumors that they was going to build Fort Hood, see. So we knew that was coming.

MDF: And what place did you buy down there?

JDB: It was right up on top of the hill from where she lived.

FABB: Whose place was it?

JDB: It was, gosh, what's that lady's name? Gee. There was some widow lady that had two places there.

MDF: And describe that one for me.

JDB: It was just a blackland farm about, I guess 125 acres. It was good blackland. Just a farm, it was, well, probably 25 acres of pasture where we could run—

FABB: Your land wasn't as good as Papa's land, though.

JDB: Probably not. I wouldn't know anything about that!

MDF: Now, was that, how many of you kids were left at home at the time your family moved there?

JDB: Oh, about, let's see. About six. Yeah.

MDF: Was that quite an adjustment to go from that great big place to the smaller farm?

JDB: Oh, gosh, was it. Terrible adjustment.

MDF: Tell me about that.

JDB: Well, you just, there's just things you have to do. 'Course most of the kids were gettin', except about two or three, were gettin' old enough, you know, to leave. So, I guess that wasn't that bad after we left.

FABB: He's standing over in his field and wave at me and stuff, and he was, mostly Dad was, he just kind of waved at Papa.

JDB: See, I never, I never knew, I knew of her, but I never really knew her until she was eighteen years old.

MDF: So did her father make it difficult for you?

JDB: A little bit. That was his pet, so—

FABB: He would come down to our house, and we had this big long quilt box. Mom did lots of quilting, and she put her quilts in this quilt box. And he'd sit on the quilt box and sit over there and make eyes at me, but he'd make sure Papa wasn't looking.

JDB: Oh, yeah.

MDF: And you didn't encourage him at all.

JDB: No.

FABB: No.

MDF: Were you allowed to go out on rides with him?

FABB: We, but I was supposed to be home at a certain time. At an early hour.

JDB: We went to a movie.

MDF: Would you go into Killeen for a date?

FABB: Yeah. We went into Killeen to a movie usually. And we'd stop in at a cafe. What was her name, that had that cafe?

JDB: Ah, Gracie.

FABB: Wasn't Watkins was it?

JDB: No. Well, she was a Watkins before she married. It will come around after you leave. Reddick.

MDF: What was it?

JDB: Gracy Reddick.

MDF: Reddick.

JDB: Yeah. No it was Watson. See, her mother—

FABB: It was about the only eating place in town.

JDB: You're talking about Gracie's mother. They had a big place right in downtown Killeen where they served meals, and you could buy lunch, I mean spread out on a table, for thirty-five cents. And boy, was it good food. It was excellent.

FABB: You could take twenty-five cents and go to a movie and buy a hamburger and popcorn.

MDF: I've heard some people talk about the government programs in the 1930s and the cattle shoot. Did your father participate in that at all?

JDB: I don't, don't remember that.

MDF: Did you ever hear about that?

JDB: No I didn't. I don't believe I remember that. That must have been about the time we left that ranch, I guess. I don't know.

MDF: What year did you leave again?

JDB: About '30, I believe it was '37.

MDF: Did you have a cattle dip or a sheep dip on your place?

JDB: Oh, yeah.

MDF: Where was it located?

JDB: It was down in the pasture quite a ways from everything else. Yeah, that was, you just about had to have that.

FABB: Most of the farms had a pond for water, where the cattle went.

JDB: We had, we had what I called, we had the big tanks. But then we had that windmill to back it up when it got dry. Of course, that cattle dip, wasn't everybody had one. The neighbors would come and use it

if they wanted to.

MDF: Who were your neighbors?

JDB: Ah, I guess the closest one on the east was a man whose name was Spencer Meddart, and then to the south was Dolphus. 'Course then on the west was the Yancys. They were away down there. And then below him, between them and the Clear Creek School, was a fellow named George Mitchell. And right up on the hill from, from Clear Creek School was, what was the Dorris Edwards, what was her maiden name? Gosh, you know, those things just get away from you. Oh, Alman.

MDF: Now, did your cattle all mix in together with, say, the Yancys? Or was there fencing?

JDB: No, no, it was all fenced. And then, I guess, the only other neighbor that was anywhere close to us was right down kind of in that direction, was Jones, John Jones. He's been around, his daddy's been around, a long time. These are all old, old-timers, nearly all of 'em.

MDF: Did you do any hunting when you were a boy?

JDB: Um-hm.

MDF: What kind of gun did you have?

JDB: Twelve-gauge, double-barrel. We had a pack of hounds. We run fox and bobcat. That was sport to do that. Her daddy did, too.

FABB: He had greyhounds.

JDB: He had hounds, just like we had.

FABB: I'm talking about when he moved from Fort Hood, that place. After Fort Hood took his farm, he moved to the Belton Lake.

MDF: And he had greyhounds there?

FABB: He had greyhounds.

MDF: Where did you get your hounds? Did you breed 'em yourself, or was there a breeder some place?

JDB: Well, we got most of ours at—they had what they called First Monday. First Monday in the month. That's where we bought most of ours.

MDF: Where was that?

JDB: That was in Belton. First Monday. It's been a long time since they've had First Monday. They used to have it as regular as a clock.

MDF: Were there people in the area who were especially famous for their hounds?

JDB: Yeah. Now, there was one fellow that lived here, and he kept a lot of his greyhounds up on the other side of Killeen, and there was a couple of fellows that kept those for him. He'd pay 'em, you know. But he run those things on a track. That's been years ago. He had to go to, I believe, Oklahoma, but every year they had a meet.

MDF: Well now, did you all buy a certain kind of hound for the hunting?

JDB: Uh, we just called 'em soup hounds.

MDF: Soup hounds?

JDB: Yeah.

MDF: Why did you call 'em that?

JDB: Flop-eared, flop-eared hounds. They were, they were, they had different kinds, but they were kind of mixed. They were good to run a fox.

MDF: Where did you keep 'em?

JDB: We had a pen. A pretty good-sized one. We had plenty of territory to build pens.

MDF: And how many would you have at a given time?

JDB: Probably half a dozen.

MDF: Did you go hunting real regularly?

JDB: Pretty regular. Depending on, you know, certain times of the year you wasn't doing much farming. We did a lot of hunting then. It was a good pastime.

MDF: What about your dad? Did he have special dogs?

FABB: He had those greyhounds. And he didn't, he just kept them in, had a pen out back, a big pen he kept those in. And he did some racing, just kind of local-type racing.

JDB: Now, at one time we did have a few greyhounds that we did lots of jackrabbits with. We'd go out on those oat patches at night with car lights, and they hardly ever caught one. But it was just more of a sport than anything else.

MDF: Did your father have dogs when he was there south of, south of Killeen?

FABB: The place that Fort Hood took?

MDF: Yeah, Willow Springs?

FABB: He, all we had was just a dog, a family dog.

MDF: Now, did your second place get taken also?

JDB: Well, that's the same one.

MDF: The one over near Belton Reservoir.

FABB: Yes, it was taken by the lake.

MDF: And when did that happen?

FABB: That happened in, let's see—

JDB: Well, I can't remember what year exactly. But see, if he started out there with about 315 acres. Of course, the lake took part of it, then he sold off a lot of it up on top of what they call the west lip, sold lots up there. He finally, let's see, he lived after, he died, and I don't know if your mother was still living or not. When those three guys bought that land. She was still living?

FABB: She was still living.

JDB: Yeah. Sold the rest of it off to three people here from Temple.

FABB: It must have been the '40s.

JDB: Developed it.

He left, her father left, 9.96 acres right by the Belton Lake between that and his property for an easement for all these lots he sold. Well, I'm sure her dad didn't know that there were going to be any taxes on that, so he didn't, you know, he just left it. Well, a couple or so years ago, a retired colonel, he made it a business of his to check on stuff like that. So he found that, and he went to the tax office, and started paying taxes on it. Of course, you know, the tax office, they don't care who pays the taxes as long as they get the tax. So, I don't know.

MDF: Now, what community, were you gone already by the time he moved over near Belton Reservoir?

JDB and FABB: Yes.

MDF: Okay. What community did he move to there?

FABB: It was Sparta. Sparta area.

MDF: Did you ever visit him there?

FABB: Oh, yes, lots.

MDF: What was Sparta like?

JDB: It was one store, a gas pump, that's about it.

MDF: Was there anything at Willow Springs?

FABB: No, no businesses.

MDF: No store?

FABB: No stores or anything.

MDF: How did you know that you were part of Willow Springs?

FABB: Well, we were in Willow Springs district, school district.

JDB: They had all those districts lined out.

FABB: So we had to go to school there. We didn't have any choices. The district we were in. 'Course then, when I got to high school, I went to Killeen High School. And finished there.

MDF: Did anybody in your area have a gin or a sorghum mill?

JDB: Yeah, there were a few sorghum mills around. There was, let's see, one, two, three, four cotton gins in Killeen.

FABB: They were all in Killeen.

JDB: And they were all busy in the fall. Real busy.

FABB: Like my dad. We had lots of cotton, and he would, when he got a bale of cotton, he'd take it into the gin at Killeen.

MDF: Did you help pick it?

FABB: Yes. I could pick about 350 pounds of cotton in a day.

JDB: You could?

FABB: I think that's why I wound up with back problems.

MDF: Now where, how many acres of cotton would he grow usually?

FABB: About, we had about a hundred-acre farm, and it was practically all—

JDB: He raised enough corn to feed.

FABB: He did some corn, but not much. But it was chiefly—and then we had a garden space which took a little, it was mostly cotton and corn. More cotton than anything else.

MDF: Now did—go ahead.

FABB: One year I remember we made a half a bale of cotton per acre, which was considered real good.

JDB: Very good for dry land.

MDF: Was all of the farming there dry land?

JDB: I guess.

FABB: Ours was. It just depended on the rain. And somehow it would rain often enough that it didn't require any extra water. And we'd have a—

JDB: Every once in a while—1925 was a *very* dry year. And we always made an average of fifty or sixty bales of cotton. We made nine bales that year. That caused a hardship.

MDF: Was there a time when they stopped growing cotton, or did they grow all the way through while you all were there?

JDB: Oh, yeah. They, they was growing cotton whenever they took all of that.

FABB: Yeah, Papa was growing cotton when I got married in 1940.

MDF: Was that still his main crop?

FABB: Uh-huh.

MDF: What about banking. Did they do much?

FABB: One bank in Killeen. And the entire banked at this one bank. And there, what about two or three people in it, maybe?

JDB: At one time, yeah. Way back, they had another bank that was, what was it, People's something. It went broke, so they wound up with First National Bank. It was the main bank. In fact, the president of that bank's son married her sister. They were the Miners.

FABB: Clarence Clements was a real prominent banker. He worked in the bank.

JDB: This gal here was his niece. He passed away, oh, how many years ago?

FABB: Oh, several. Quite a few.

JDB: This gal and her sister, pretty well-fixed. 'Cause he had no children.

MDF: Now tell me when you first heard about what was going to happen with the army base coming in?

FABB: First I remember, my dad just got a letter from the government.

MDF: He hadn't heard any rumors or anything?

JDB: Oh, I'm sure he had, yeah. We did.

FABB: Well, I think they had heard something. Seems like I remember hearing something about it. Then he got a letter telling him. Purchase it.

MDF: Did he just go ahead and sell at that time, or—

FABB: Best I remember, he didn't have much choice.

JDB: We had a brother-in-law that had a ranch out there. He really had it fixed up. It was about eighteen hundred acres in there. He had it well fenced, all the cedar off, and that's all they paid him for it. He got him a lawyer from Temple. In fact, he was supposed to be the best lawyer in this, around. He never got another penny, but it cost him five thousand dollars for the lawyer.

MDF: Now, who was your brother-in-law?

JDB: Ed Heuss. Married her sister Rose. And they wound up with a lot of property in Temple. He bought a whole block of land up there up by the old ice plant, Kangaroo Football Field up on—are you familiar with that? Right across the street, all that big block of land, he bought it for a song and sung the sound himself. And he sold the last block, the last block that he sold off of that, off of that west end, he got a hundred thousand for it. Paid thirteen thousand dollars for that whole block of land. So he put in two big stores and a laundromat. He got rich.

MDF: Did all right.

JDB: Uh-huh.

FABB: Well, my dad just turned around when they bought his there and got, bought the place down in the Sparta area.

MDF: How did he happen to choose that, do you know?

JDB: Ah, he just, I don't know how he found out about that place, but—

FABB: He just kind of went lookin' around and checkin' around, and he just, he just liked. And he did kind of well with it because he sold a lot of the lots. He had quite a bit of it cut into lots and sold those individually.

JDB: You know, it's unbelievable, actually. He got about six thousand dollars for his little place up there. Well, he found this place, which was three time as much, but it wasn't as good a land, of course. He bought that for sixty-five hundred dollars.

FABB: He didn't do much farming after he went to the Sparta area. The land wasn't that good, and he did mostly, you know, a few cattle and chickens. A few chickens. Not near like he did at the other place.

MDF: And what did your parents do?

JDB: Beg pardon?

MDF: What did your parents do?

JDB: Well, farming and ranching was all they ever knew.

MDF: Yeah. And, but what happened after they lost their land?

JDB: Well, we, they finally, I had an older brother that was a Jap prisoner for forty-four months. He finally got out of there barely alive and wound up, and they bought a place up at Purmela. They bought a,

started out with 450 acres up there, and they bought it from six heirs, fifteen thousand dollars. Now my youngest brother has that place now. He added on to that. He has 3,000 acres now. So—

MDF: Did they continue to farm and ranch after they went up there?

JDB: Yeah. Oh, yeah. Of course, my dad was getting, he was getting old. So he actually just, well that brother of mine stayed with them until they passed away. And he married at age fifty-five. But he married a girl that had two boys, and just worked great. Because, see, he was in terrible shape, though, when he got out of that prison camp. But he come out of it pretty good, and—

MDF: What did you enjoy about living out there when you were a youngster?

JDB: Well, see, I just loved horses and working stock, and that's just something I loved to do. I really enjoyed it, and my dad let me do a lot of it because I liked it. Sometimes when they were in the field, I was out taking care of stock. Somebody had to. But we all worked.

MDF: What about you? What did you enjoy about growing up there?

FABB: Well, I guess I just enjoyed the activities that we had at the different homes. The dances and the freedom of the country. 'Course, I don't want to move back to the country now.

JDB: I still love the country.

H. P. Brookshire Jr.

Date of birth: 1931
Communities affiliated with: Brown's Creek, Maple
Interviewed by Martha Doty Freeman

MDF: This is Martha Doty Freeman. Today is January 24, 2001. I am interviewing for the first time Mr. H. P. Brookshire. This interview is taking place in Mr. Brookshire's home at 2420 F.M. 2412, Gatesville, Texas, 76528. This interview is part of Prewitt and Associates' Fort Hood Oral History Project sponsored by U.S. Army Fort Hood and conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University. [Sandra Brookshire also took part in this interview.]

Well, let me start by asking you questions about your family.

HPB: Okay.

MDF: When did they come to the Fort Hood area?

HPB: Now, I don't know exactly what the dates or years was of nothing, uh, when Grandpa Brookshire and them come. But, my mother and daddy grew up out there. Now, I believe Mother, when they moved what is in the Fort Hood area, was seven or eight years old, when they moved in there.

MDF: What, what was her name?

HPB: Iona Keener.

MDF: Keener?

HPB: Um-hm.

MDF: And do you know what date she was born?

HPB: No, I don't.

MDF: Okay. Do you know the year, generally?

HPB: Not really, no, I don't know. Can't remember.

MDF: When did she die?

HPB: I can't even remember what year she died. She was eighty-nine years old.

MDF: Was it a time after they moved in '54?

HPB: She was living on this place. Of course, she was in the nursing home. I'd say it was about four years ago that she died.

MDF: Oh, really? That recently?

HPB: Uh-huh. 'Cause we had done built this house and moved here, and we've been here seven years.

MDF: And what about your dad? Do you know anything about where he came from, or when he was born?

HPB: Daddy was born in 1899, I believe. And they were living on what's Fort Hood now when he was born. He was born out there.

MDF: And who were his parents?

HPB: Tade and Zula. She was, Grandma was a Trammell.

MDF: Okay. And do you have any idea when they moved to that area?

HPB: The Trammells?

MDF: Yeah, or your grandfather's family.

HPB: No, I really don't.

MDF: Okay. Okay.

HPB: Now, uh, I got a cousin that could give you all that kind of information.

MDF: Okay. Who's that?

HPB: Wanda Carol Smith.

MDF: And where does she live?

HPB: Here in Gatesville. She studies all this history.

MDF: Okay. Where did the Brookshires settle?

HPB: Right north of Jack Mountain in there, Brown's Creek.

MDF: And you were telling me earlier where the family was located for several generations. What was that again?

HPB: Now, that would be the Keeners, my grandparents on my mother's side. And they located right at the north of Brown's Creek. Now, Uncle Bill and Aunt Lucy Keener lived in the first house, and then Grandma and Grandpa, and then Aunt Bud and Uncle Ira, and then my family.

MDF: And how many were in your family?

HPB: One sister and one brother.

MDF: And what were their names?

HPB: Jean Elizabeth, Billy Tade.

MDF: Billy Tay?

HPB: Grandpa Keener's name William, Grandpa Brookshire's name was Tade. So he was named Billy Tade after them.

MDF: Ah, did you visit your relatives much when you were growing up?

HPB: Lived right there, right amongst them, yep.

MDF: Ah, can you describe each of their different places for me?

HPB: Well, ah, Grandma and Grandpa Keener's house, the road come right by it, and it was like a little walkway. You walked up a little hill and their house sit right there. And the old concrete water tank is still there, storage tank, where their house was. Now, Aunt Bud and Uncle Ira lived just across the road in a little house. And our house, like I say, Mother and Daddy bought from Grandpa Keener. I don't know how many acres was in that place. And it was just an old box house. I think it was one big room and then a shed room where the kitchen and all was off of that. But then they bought what they called Catlett place, which was a little further around, and it had a two-story house on it, and that's where we were living when we moved out of Fort Hood, and they had an old concrete storage tank there, which is still standing. Or was not long ago. And my Uncle Jesse Keener, which was Mother's brother, built those storage tanks. Fact of the business, he built all of those that was around over Fort Hood back then, which, I don't know of any other ones that's still standing except those two. There was one on Cook Mountain that tanks run over, and then there was Lawrence Graham place, there was one there. There was one over on Tommy Cochran's place.

MDF: Now, were these big round ones on the ground for the cattle to drink, the livestock to drink out of?

HPB: Oh, no, it's storage for the drinking water.

MDF: Okay, like a cistern.

HPB: No, it was above ground.

MDF: Yeah, above-ground cistern. Were they high? I mean, were they tall?

HPB: Uh-huh, they was about six foot tall.

MDF: Okay.

HPB: Hold thousands of gallons of water. I don't know how much they'd hold, but a right smart.

MDF: Yeah. Where did the water come from?

HPB: Out of a well. It was pumped in there.

MDF: Ah, now, was it your parents that bought the Catlett place, or was it your grandparents who bought it?

HPB: My parents.

MDF: Your parents did. And what was that two-story house like?

HPB: Well, the up story was just one room, but it was a big room, you know, like we'd put several beds up there. Now the bottom part was a living area, then bedrooms over there, and then kitchen and all on the west side.

MDF: Was it sort of L-shaped?

HPB: No, no. It was just square.

MDF: Okay. Did it have any fireplaces?

HPB: No fireplaces.

MDF: Okay. How did you walk into it? Where was the door on the front?

HPB: Facing east.

MDF: And was it in the middle, or to one side?

HPB: In the middle, kinda of. And then it comes back in the living room, kind of a little hall there, and then the stairs, went up stairs there.

MDF: So there was a central hall?

HPB: Uh-huh.

MDF: Okay. And what was your, what about your grandparents' place, the Keeners' place? What did it look like?

HPB: Well, it was a just about a five-room house. It was kind of a regular house. And, you see, they moved that house over here to the Schley community and bought a place there. They moved 'em again in 1943, so they moved on over here on Highway 84. Ah, now Uncle Jesse's house is still there, and Grandma and Grandpa's is, too, but it's been added on and everything. But, you know where the bed and breakfast is over there?

MDF: Yeah, um-hm.

HPB: The Keener house?

MDF: Uh-huh. Oh!

HPB: That's where they lived.

MDF: The bed and breakfast is?

HPB: That's where Uncle Jesse lived.

MDF: Oh, okay. And was that—so that house was moved off of Fort Hood.

HPB: Fort Hood.

MDF: Now, where did your Uncle Jesse live relative to the, your grandparents, your uncle and you all?

HPB: He lived down in what I called the Silver City community, the Maple, where they all went to school down there. 'Course, Gladys had a whole lot to do with that school deal last year. Chastain? Gladys. That's my cousin. And Uncle Jesse was her daddy.

MDF: Can you think of any other homes that got moved off of Fort Hood out to this area?

HPB: Well, there's one out there on the Straw's Mill Road that Ross Carothers moved in there. And, of course, our house that come from Spring Hill was moved off of Fort Hood. But it was originally a hospital barracks that come from out here at North Fort Hood and Mother and Daddy moved it out there and fixed it up and everything. And then when they moved in '54, they moved that out there on the Golf Course Road. It's still there, and me and my brother and sister just sold it about four years, oh, it hasn't been that long ago. I guess a couple of years ago.

MDF: Now, in that little community of you all there were your grandparents, and then your Aunt Bud, Uncle Ira, and you all. Was there anyone—

HPB: No, no, no. Aunt Bud.

MDF: Oh. Okay.

HPB: Aunt Bud. Now, they called her Bud. Naomi was her name, and Uncle Ira Graham. Now, his parents lived down on House Creek.

MDF: Antelope, that area?

HPB: Eliga. And I, Uncle Bill, Aunt Lucy, now her parents, they might have come from Antelope or over there at Eliga down in there somewhere. I'm not sure just, you know, where they came from.

MDF: So there was the three houses. Was there another house in there, too?

HPB: There was four.

MDF: Four. And what was the fourth one?

HPB: That was where we lived.

MDF: Okay, so there was your grandparents' house, and then the Grahams' house, and then your family home.

HPB: Bill Keener.

MDF: Bill Keener. Okay.

HPB: That'd be Mother's brother.

MDF: Okay. And where was he?

HPB: You mean where was he—

MDF: Relative to everybody else.

HPB: Well.

MDF: You want to draw me a map there?

HPB: Like, of course, the old public road was say, you come in this way, right in here you see their house.

MDF: The Bill Keener's house?

HPB: Uh-huh. Grandma and Grandpa.

MDF: Okay.

HPB: Aunt Bud and Uncle Ira.

MDF: Okay.

HPB: The road come on around. And we lived right here.

MDF: Okay.

HPB: Now, this is the Catlett place. I don't know if I'm getting this right or not. Now the public road, Okay, that'd be—the public road come on down here and back this way. Then the Catlett place was right over here.

MDF: Okay.

HPB: And this is the old public road.

MDF: Okay. Now, were you already born by the time they had moved to the Catlett place?

HPB: Oh, yeah. I was born the, I was really born on the Bigham place.

MDF: Oh. And where was that?

HPB: Well, it's going to be a little further east from where we have there.

MDF: Okay. So have I got this right? It's Bill Keener, your Aunt Bud, your grandparents, the first place where you moved, and then the Catlett place?

HPB: Uh-huh.

MDF: And, what direction is this, what direction am I looking here? Is this north?

HPB: No.

MDF: This is north.

HPB: This is east.

MDF: This is east. Okay.

HPB: Now the Bigham place, where the road turned back there, you go in here, and this would be the Bigham place. Okay, but where I was born would be right straight across over here. There's another house on the Bigham place. Right nearly down on the banks of Brown's Creek. Comes down through here.

MDF: So Brown's Creek is, kind of runs through here?

HPB: It starts right up here where Uncle Bill lived.

MDF: Okay.

HPB: Right up in this canyon up here, and comes down through this way.

MDF: Okay.

HPB: Now, the old chimney's still standing at the Bigham place. Or was not long ago.

MDF: And what was that place like?

HPB: The Bigham place?

MDF: Um-hm.

HPB: It was a two—you mean the house?

MDF: Um-hm.

HPB: It was a two-story house, and, I guess, had a real big fireplace in it where he'd put a great big ol' back log in there, you know, and it had this thing that swung out here where it could hold, hang a pot on it, you know, and cook beans. But the house that we lived on down there, lived in, when I was borned, was just like a two-story house. It wasn't very big. You know, they put up them houses, they're box houses, was just everywhere nearly. Wind blowed through them.

MDF: Were all of the houses you've described box houses?

HPB: No, no. The Catlett place was a frame house. And the Bighams' house was a frame house.

MDF: The big one, the big Bigham place?

HPB: Yeah. And Grandma and Grandpa's house was a frame house. Now the rest of 'em were box houses.

MDF: Ah, what year were you born?

HPB: Thirty-one.

MDF: Okay, and so, what is your earliest memory of being out there?

HPB: I remember living on the Bigham place. Now, I wasn't very old when we left there and moved up here where Mother and Daddy bought this house there, that little place. Now, my sister was born in the big Bigham house 'cause I don't know where the Bighams were at that time. But they didn't live there. They lived off somewhere, and they moved back, so we moved down into the, what they called the lower Bigham house, and that's where I was born.

I remember the Bighams had the first radio that come into our part of the world. And we'd go over there every Saturday night and listen to the "Grand Ole Opry." And I couldn't have been very old. I guess that was before I started school. But then I remember when we got our radio. Went up here at W. T. Hicks and bought that ol' Truetone radio. And back then, it's like when TVs first come out, seeing them big antennas and everything. We had this wire outside for our antenna that you, for your radio. And it had a wet-cell battery that it run off of, and those Model A cars, and had two batteries. Put one on that radio, and then when it'd go dead, they'd go out there and switch it off of that ol' Model A. And then cars had generators on 'em, not like now. Your battery could be plumb dead, but you push that alternator and that generator kicks in, and it starts and charges that battery up. And every day at dinnertime, we'd listen to W. Lee O'Daniel and the Light Crust Dough Boys. That's when W. Lee O'Daniel was running for governor.

And nearly every Sunday, we'd go to Brown's Creek to church, and then we'd go on down to Grandpa Brookshire and eat dinner. And it'd be a bunch there. Kids my age, let's say, about seven or eight of us, and—I forgot what I was going to say. It must have been a lie, don't you guess?

SB: Tell her about the long bench you all had to eat on.

HPB: Oh, okay.

SB: And about getting in the barrel and rolling down the hill and everything.

HPB: Yeah. Ah, they had a big table. Of course, I don't know, Uncle Bill and Uncle Tump, Uncle Johnny and Aunt Nancy, and Aunt Minnie'd all be there every Sunday, you know, that many of them. And, had this long bench, you know. That's where all us kids ate. Well I hated to get in the middle, 'cause if I got through, then you had to wait until everybody else got through to get up and get out. And had this old, like a, a rain barrel that they set at the edge of the house, you know. It was pretty big. But (??) had a hill there, and all us kids would get in that thing, and then some more of 'em would roll it down the hill.

MDF: Did you ever go in the creek?

HPB: Never did go in the creek. No. And I always wondered, Grandpa Brookshire never did say nothing, but all of us boys would get out there and ride his milk calves every Sunday. And one of my cousins, we called him, still call him Cowboy. He was the best rider of the bunch.

MDF: Where ah, where did all these other aunts and uncles live, the ones that—you mentioned several of 'em besides your Aunt Bud and your Uncle Bill.

HPB: Well, Uncle, well this is getting on Daddy's side of the family now. The Brookshires. Well, Uncle Jim, we called him Tump, I don't know why, but, lived south of Jack Mountain, over there by the Harman community. And Uncle Bill lived right there by Grandma and Grandpa Brookshire. Well, Aunt Nancy had two boys—Phelps and Buddy. Phelps died when he was about eighteen years old, had tumor of the brain. And Buddy, I guess, is still living in Mississippi, as far as I know. But, Aunt Nancy's husband died when those boys were real small, and she lived with Grandma and Grandpa, and Aunt Minnie never did marry, and Uncle Johnny, I guess was thirty-five when he got married. I

told him that anybody that waited that long should have had better sense. But, Uncle Johnny lived with us and worked for Daddy a whole lot. He was more like a brother to me than, actually, my own brother, I guess. Billy was, I guess, sixteen years younger than I am. I was just about gone from home by the time he got, you know—

MDF: Ah, did everybody bring food to those meals, or did your grandmother fix all the food?

HPB: Grandmother would fix a whole lot of it, but no, other people would bring in dishes of food.

MDF: What kind of food do you remember at those meals?

HPB: Mostly fried chicken, or chicken and dumplings was about it. And I imagine lots of beans.

MDF: Now, did your father farm or ranch, or—

HPB: Farm. And had a few goats and cows.

MDF: What kind of goats did he have?

HPB: They were hair goats, Angora. And mostly started out with Jersey cows.

MDF: So did he tend more towards milk cows than beef cattle?

HPB: Uh-huh.

MDF: Did he sell milk at all?

HPB: Didn't sell no milk. But, they'd always milk two or three, four cows, all the time, you know. And they'd skim that cream off that milk, you know, and put it in what they called a cream bucket. And if you'd carry it to town, you could sell it. And, you know, I often wondered if that cream had to be sour by the time it got to town. And chickens. Mother would get three or four hundred baby chicks every spring, and we'd start eating fried chicken by the time you could tell the rooster from the pullets, you know. You can tell by their comb on their—they'd be a little bit bigger than quail when we'd start eatin' them, you know, and we'd eat fried chicken all summer. And pork all winter.

MDF: Where did she get the chickens, the chicks?

HPB: They had a Winfield's Hatchery up there. And I think back then, a lot of times, if you'd buy your feed from them, they'd give you the chickens. You know, the baby chickens.

MDF: And—

HPB: When we had an old two-seated Model A car, and when we'd start to town, it'd be cases of eggs tied on every fender and everywhere, and when we'd start back home, it'd be chicken feed tied on there.

MDF: Ah, tell me about the hog raising.

HPB: We, well they'd raise 'em from pigs. They'd keep a sow, you know, and they'd raise pigs. Okay. And in the fall of the year, about the first cold spell, they'd start killing hogs. And when they killed hogs, that's what they done. The Bighams, Mr. Bigham shot all them, and there was Daddy and Uncle Ira, and Uncle Bill, Grandpa, they done all the scraping and the cutting up, and all this that and the other. The women would clean the intestines and everything to put the sausage in. And they'd just go from place to place. And in two days, and then I'd say that each family would probably have four hogs, three or four anyway, and it'd be sausage in the washtubs full. Had that ol' sausage had to be turned by hand. And that's what they'd do at night, way up in the night. Grind that sausage. Every time—

And then they cured that meat. But now, I tell people, of course I don't know the process of curing

meat or nothing, but I don't think we have enough cold weather. I think it's fall, 'cause it's got to be, I think, under forty degrees for so many days.

MDF: How would you cure it?

HPB: They had, ah, like you'd bought that, I believe it was Martin's Sugar Cure they called it. And basically it was just salt. Had boxes of salt. And they'd turn that meat every day. It was drawing the moisture out of it, was what it was doin', and my goodness, them ol' hams, they'd just hang them up out there in what they called the smokehouse where they'd smoke 'em, you know, smoke 'em. You'd go out there and they'd look plumb green, you know, and they'd just slice that off and carry it in there and peel that green off of it, in the skillet, fry it up. A lot of times, the sausage, they would cook the sausage. And they had five-gallon crocks about this big, you know, and they'd just put that sausage in there and pour the grease over it. Then they'd just go, scoop out sausage, grease and all, and put it in a skillet, and they'd—and back then, you killed hogs, they didn't ask you how big the hams was, or how much bacon, or nothin' like this. How much lard did it render? 'Cause that's what they done all their cookin' with, with the lard.

MDF: Did each place have a smokehouse?

HPB: Each place had a smokehouse.

MDF: Now, what, at your place, let's see, I guess maybe, ah, either at the Catlett place or the one closer to your grandparents up the hill, what kind of buildings were there besides the house that you lived in?

HPB: Barn, and most of 'em had a garage for your car. Now, on the Catlett place, ah, we'd been to the gin with a bale of cotton, and we come in late this night, and they always kept the cottonseed back then to feed their milk cows because it made the milk real rich. And cottonseed was good feed. But just pulled that trailer, ol' four-wheel trailer up beside the barn until we could unload them cottonseeds in a day or two. Well that night, our barn burned down. Two horses in it. They burned up. And our neighbor, I guess we was tired and everything, Alex Vanwinkle—

MDF: What was the name?

HPB: Alex Vanwinkle—come down there and woke us up and told us the barn was on fire. It was about gone then, burnt up.

MDF: Now where did he live from here? (refers to drawing)

HPB: Well, let's see. This is the Catlett place isn't it?

MDF: I think right there.

HPB: Okay, yeah, here. They lived right on up this canyon right here and right at the foot of Manning Mountain. And this road, they come by our house all the time going up on the Manning Mountain up there. That's the way the road went up there. I don't know if you would know where Manning Mountain—

MDF: Uh-huh.

HPB: Well, they went right by our house, going up there.

MDF: But they were close enough to see the fire.

HPB: Yeah. Uh-huh.

MDF: Did any of you have storm cellars?

HPB: Uh-huh. We called 'em root cellars. And that's where we kept all of our canned vegetables out in that cellar, like peaches, pinto beans. Mother put up at least three hundred quarts every year. I still don't like pinto beans, I've shelled so many of 'em. Daddy would plant a row of corn and a row of pinto beans. But he'd get them, what they called them pinto beans dough beans. You'd get 'em, when you'd shell 'em, you know, when they start turning speckled, the shells, and that's what they'd can. Okay, when she canned all of 'em, then they'd just let the rest of those beans dry out, and then when they dried out, go in there and pull 'em up and just take an old broom handle or something, an ol' wagon sheet, which is a tarp, and just thrash all them beans out, dried beans. And then trade those dried beans at the grocery store for different things.

MDF: How close were you to where you traded?

HPB: Gatesville was where we traded. Ah, by the way we had to go then, I don't know how many miles it was. Fifteen, I guess.

MDF: How often did you get in?

HPB: Once a week, unless there was some kind of emergency, you know. Now Grandpa Keener, when he went to town, he had enough to sell to buy what he wanted to buy and bring some money home in his pocket, or he didn't go.

MDF: Ah, did each place have its own fields?

HPB: Um-hm.

MDF: And where were your father's fields?

HPB: East of the house.

MDF: Okay, was that at the Catlett place?

HPB: Both places. Would be east of the houses. Now, the, that first house we lived in there we had to go down to a shallow well to get water, carried it up there with buckets, you know. And that ol' well is still there. Or was a year or two ago. I was over there. Now, when we moved to the Catlett place, they built that water tank and had a windmill there to pump water, and there was water piped into the house.

MDF: Pretty fancy.

HPB: Pretty fancy. Water piped in the house.

MDF: Did any of the other places have that?

HPB: Unh-uh. Grandpa and Grandma did after they built their water tank, had water piped in the house.

MDF: Did they do their own plumbing, or—

HPB: Uh-huh.

MDF: Did you have an indoor bathroom, or did you have an outhouse?

HPB: Unh-uh. Outhouse. We didn't have an indoor bathroom until sometime in the '40s.

MDF: Did your family have an orchard?

HPB: Uh-huh.

MDF: What was—tell me about that.

HPB: Peaches, plums, pears, big orchard. They'd can a whole lot of it and sell a whole lot of it. Now, my family didn't really have orchards. But Grandpa Keener had a big orchard, and that's where everybody—where we lived over on the Catlett place, had a pear tree which is still there.

MDF: Did, so you all would go over to your Grandpa Keener's place and gather fruit and take it back to your house to can? Or did you can it there at your grandparents'?

HPB: A lot of times they'd just all can together, you know, and then carry it home after it was canned.

MDF: Did you can in cans, or in glass jars?

HPB: Glass jars. Now, they did put some stuff in cans, like corn, maybe, but it had to be pretty careful then with those cans, 'cause you could get them contaminated, you know. And, yeah, they had that ol' cellar, you know. They'd do, they'd put that can over there. They'd use 'em several years. And cut that ring off, you know, and then they'd buy new lids, and then that thing would seal it up.

MDF: What kind of crops did your dad grow?

HPB: Well, they always growed corn, you know, for feed. And for a money crop, Daddy'd grow a little bit of cotton, but he wasn't too much on cotton. He didn't like cotton too much. Broomcorn was basically the money crop that they had.

MDF: Now, why didn't he like cotton?

HPB: I really don't know. But he didn't go in for cotton too much, and when he really got to raising broomcorn, he never did plant no more cotton. I guess he didn't like to pick cotton. But, I tell you, I'd rather pick cotton than pull broomcorn, though.

MDF: Why is that?

HPB: The broomcorn is stingy and itchy.

MDF: How old were you when you started to work around the house or in the fields?

HPB: Well, when I could really, I imagine that I was working in the fields by the time I was seven or eight years old. Uh, 'cause I was cutting corn stalks in the field, and Mother and Daddy was over there picking cotton. And one of the horses got the bridle off, and they run off, and I baled off of that stock cutter, and like to scared Mother and Daddy to death. Them horses running, boy, they cut a swath through there. But when I could really make a hand, I guess, you know, to draw wages, was when we lived at Harman, and I guess I was thirteen or fourteen years old then. When, I mean, I could hold my own. I could do as much as nearly anybody then.

MDF: What do you remember about working at home? Chores and—

HPB: I tell you, chores? Like every morning, Mother and Daddy didn't, it was just me and my sister then, you know. We didn't have no chores much in the morning. Now, in the evening, yeah. Had to feed the cows. But in the morning, didn't have to get up and go milk, or nothing like that, no.

MDF: Tell me about going to school. You said something about starting and then skipping some grades.

HPB: Well, I started to school, ah, in Pidcoke, in the first grade. And Miss Brown was my first-grade teacher. And I learnt a good bit in the first grade. And then, the next year they didn't have enough kids in the Brown's Creek School, so they sent us, me and my sister, to the Brown's Creek School, which we had to walk, I think, about two miles to school. And they didn't have nobody else in the second grade, which I'd be in the second grade. So the teacher said I was smart enough, and just moved me up in the third grade where she had three or four more in the third grade. So I went to school there in

the third and fourth grades. Didn't learn a whole lot. But then, when we started back to school in Pidcoke, I'd be in the fifth grade. But that's the year they added twelve grades and they moved everybody up a grade. So I was in the sixth grade, and I'd been in school three years. Well, I think we went a half a year there, and then that's when we moved out, off of Fort Hood to Pearl and finished up that year in school there. And we just stayed there. They just made one crop at Pearl, and then we moved to Harman. And went back to school at Pidcoke. Well, they'd done away with the school at Pidcoke 'cause they didn't have enough kids there on account of Fort Hood, you know, and they sent all of them to Gatesville to school then. So they started the school back at Harman up to the eighth grade. So I went through the eighth grade, and then I started to school at Gatesville in the ninth grade. And I just barely could read and write and add and subtract. And it took me five years to get through four years of school at Gatesville. But I finally did.

MDF: So you came out about even in the end anyway.

HPB: Uh-huh. Yeah. If I hadn't of took that five years, see, I'd have finished school when I was sixteen years old.

MDF: Yeah. Do you remember the Brown's Creek School?

HPB: Uh-huh.

MDF: What was it? Can you describe it for me?

HPB: It was just a one-room schoolhouse. Back then, you know, every community had a school. And just a one-room schoolhouse.

MDF: Do you remember any of the classes that you took there, what subjects you studied?

HPB: Just, back then, it just kinda basically reading, writing, and arithmetic. Of course, spelling, you know. And that's about all you took.

MDF: How many kids were there? Do you remember?

HPB: Let's see, might have been twenty.

MDF: And it what grades?

HPB: One through eight.

MDF: That's pretty small, isn't it?

HPB: Uh-huh.

MDF: And who were the other families that were represented in the school?

HPB: Well, the Vanwinkles. There was a girl that would walk down to our house and then walk on to school with us. Then the Riches, which Miss Pearl was the schoolteacher, would go to their house, and then they'd walk on to school with us. And golly, I, plumb forget my own name one of these days. Anyway, I can't even think of them others. All of their names.

MDF: Uh-huh. And where did you all go to church?

HPB: Brown's Creek.

MDF: And where was that relative to the school?

HPB: Brown's Creek Church was southeast of where the school was.

MDF: Was it very far?

HPB: Mile and a half or two miles.

MDF: And what denomination was it?

HPB: Methodist.

MDF: Ah, were there lots of different religions there in that area where you lived, or was it mostly Methodist?

HPB: In the area where I lived, it was mostly Methodist, but of course there was Baptists around, and Church of Christ.

MDF: Did you all ever have much dealings with one another? Did you visit each others' churches, or just go pretty much to your own?

HPB: Just went pretty much to our own church. My, you see, Grandma and Grandpa Keener both preached.

MDF: Oh.

HPB: Uh-huh. And George Siler was a preacher that come there a whole lot. And you see, the Brown's Creek Cemetery they moved. They didn't move no more after that, but it was moved.

MDF: Now, tell me about your grandmother's preaching. Did she preach in church?

HPB: Uh-huh.

MDF: Was that unusual at the time?

HPB: Well, I don't know. Probably. It probably was, yeah.

MDF: What did you all do for entertainment?

HPB: Now, that's a good question.

MDF: Did you have toys you played with?

HPB: Some. You know. And I guess back then it was kind of like it is now. You just made do with whatever you had. Played different games and all, you know. Like now, you give a youngster a toy that's in a box. What do they do? Take the toy out and throw it away, and play with the box. So, of course, I was always riding horses. I was riding them horses nearly the time I could walk. And the time I was big enough to know them old trace chains that hang down, well I'd grab a-holt that and climb up on them old work horses, you know, and I'd ride them. And I guess we just talked and visited. We didn't have nothing—

MDF: Did you go fishing?

HPB: Not much, no.

MDF: What about hunting?

HPB: No hunting much. Now, when my cousin Phelps would come up there, he trapped back then. Had a trap line and he'd stay with us in the winter. And I'd go with him hunting, you know, and all, and I got my first .22 rifle when I was eight years old. And I still got it.

MDF: How wonderful. What kind of things did your, was it your uncle, did you say? Or your cousin, who trapped?

HPB: Cousin.

MDF: Cousin. Was he a Brookshire or a Keener?

HPB: He was Lindaur. That's the one that died when he was eighteen, of a tumor.

MDF: And what kind of animals did he trap?

HPB: Coons, fox, skunk, possum, ringtail. And, you know, ringtail, back then, them furs, they'd bring six, seven dollars. And that was a lot of money back then. A dime back then was big as a wagon wheel now.

MDF: And where would he take the furs?

HPB: He had, he would mail them off. I think most of them went to Paris, Texas. Is where he'd bundle 'em all up. He'd mail 'em up there, and then they'd grade 'em. He'd get a check back.

MDF: You said something about the ice cream that you used to eat. Tell me about that again. I can't remember the name of it.

HPB: Junket Ice-Cream Mix. And it was just a little ol' package. I don't imagine they still make it now, but Mother'd mix that up in them ice trays. I can't remember, I guess you had to mix so much milk with it, or whatever, and boy, we thought that was good back then.

MDF: Did it come in different flavors?

HPB: Different flavors. That's when we first got our refrigerator, you know, when electricity come in '46, '47, somewheres. Just after World War II. When they started running power lines all over the, REA, over the country.

MDF: Now tell me again that story about your mother and the electricity coming in.

HPB: Oh, yeah, when the electricity was coming in, Mother already had an electric cook stove and refrigerator settin' there, plugged in, where when they turned the electricity on, she could cook on that electric stove and keep stuff in that refrigerator from spoiling. We never had nothing. We had one of them ol' water coolers, you know, where you'd put your milk in in the summertime, and it wouldn't stay very long.

MDF: Where was the water cooler?

HPB: It was on the back porch. And what it was, do you know what I'm talking about, water cooler?

MDF: Well, I've heard about a couple of different kinds. What are you talking about?

HPB: Well, this is just the kind that had a, like a trough down here. And of course it had shelves in it, you know. And on the top up here another trough. You just take an old bed sheet and wrap plumb around that, clothespin it around and all, you know. And then you poured this top part full of water, and the sheet would absorb that water, and it'd go down, and it'd drip out in that bottom trough down there. And see the breeze, where you'd get a breeze if you could, would kind of cool in there. And of course, them rich folks had them iceboxes, you know, that you just put a block of ice in, but we never did have one of those iceboxes.

MDF: Were there any people who came around trading, bringing, like peddlers?

HPB: Yeah.

MDF: Tell me about them, what you remember.

HPB: Ah, Mr. Zook come around, maybe once a month, and handled Rawleigh products, like salve, and I don't know, and I guess herbs or spices. And, you know, them old farmers always had chickens. And it didn't matter to him, chicken, he'd trade, you know. He had a chicken coop or two on the back of his old car, and he might leave with it full of chickens, you know. It wasn't, nobody had no money much as far as money. And, of course, ice. Even back in the '30s then, we had a guy that delivered ice all around over the country, and you'd just get a block of ice and wrap it up in a quilt, and it'd stay for two or three days or so. Depend on how big a block you got.

MDF: How did he carry those blocks around?

HPB: He had a pickup with a, like a tarp over it, and it'd just be plumb full of ice in there.

MDF: Do you know where he came out of?

HPB: Killeen. Is where he got his ice.

MDF: Now, would he trade for chickens, too, or did he want cash?

HPB: He wanted cash, I think. But probably he would trade, too. He had a regular route that he'd make every week, or maybe twice a week, and he generally knew the people, how much ice they would want, and if you wasn't at home, he'd just bring it in and leave it.

MDF: Now what did, if you didn't have electricity, what did you do for lighting in the house?

HPB: Kerosene lamps. Wasn't too good, but it beat nothing. A little better than a candle.

MDF: Did anybody in your area have a Delco system, or anything like that?

HPB: No, they didn't. Now the Marshes over there I think had something like batteries, you know. And then in the later years, they come out with wind chargers. And now in later years, Aunt Bud and Uncle Ira had a wind charger, and all it was a generator with a propeller on it, you know, and it'd charge that wet-cell battery in there, and that would just run the radio, was all that was good for.

MDF: What do you remember listening to on the radio besides the Light Crust Dough Boys and the Opry?

HPB: Oh, the Lone Ranger, Gildersleeve, Captain Midnight, and they'd have several programs on in the evening, you know, like the Lone Ranger, Captain Midnight. Gildersleeve come on on Sunday. Jack Benny, and let's see, what was that. Roscoe, I think.

MDF: Did y'all have much in the way of reading material around the house?

HPB: Not much. Maybe a few books, but not a whole lot.

MDF: Did anybody play music?

HPB: Nothing much. Now Daddy's, Aunt Bess and them played the piano. Uncle Ira Graham was a good pianist, and they would. They'd play and sing.

MDF: Were you old enough to remember anything at all about the Depression?

HPB: Not a, not a whole lot about it, other than it just wasn't no money. But something, we always had plenty to eat. Now, it might not be the fancy stuff, but we always had plenty to eat. We never did—

MDF: They raised everything that you, that you ate?

HPB: Uh-huh. Canned, like I say. We never did have beef, hardly ever. Now every once in a while, somebody come around peddling beef, and they might buy some, you know. They'd butcher a beef,

and they'd just come around selling it.

MDF: There were, so there was no beef club or anything like that?

HPB: Not that we ever belonged to. Now they did have a beef club that started over at Harman after we left over there.

MDF: Did your mother keep a garden?

HPB: Uh-huh.

MDF: And what kinds of things did she have in it?

HPB: Everything. Peas, beans, corn, cucumbers, tomatoes, radishes, lettuce. It was all in there. Onions, potatoes. They'd plant a hundred pounds of seed potatoes every year, and if you got a rain, they'd make. My job, when we lived over at Spring Hill, they had a potato patch down below the barn there. I'd have to clean out the chicken house and scatter it over the potato patch, and they generally always made lots of potatoes. Maybe, that hundred pounds it might make a pickup load. And they'd store those potatoes under the house and in the barn and everywhere. Every once in a while, they would plant some sweet potatoes, but they didn't grow them too much. Generally Irish potatoes.

MDF: So was your diet pretty much chicken and vegetables?

HPB: Uh-huh.

MDF: And fruit, I guess.

HPB: And fruit, yep.

MDF: What kind of food did you take to school?

HPB: Generally, ah, it'd be a sandwich, and an orange or a apple. You know. And that sandwich, most of the time, would be sausage. Or maybe, I don't think I remember carrying much bacon, you know. And, maybe some cheese and crackers.

MDF: Ah, when did you move? When did the government come in and take this place?

HPB: We moved out in the spring of '42.

MDF: And where did you move to?

HPB: To Pearl.

MDF: Okay. And then, when did you live in Spring Hill?

HPB: We, we moved to Pearl and then made one crop there in the spring. That fall, we moved to Harman, and they made two crops over there. And it was on the second crop, and that's when they got their money out of their place from Fort Hood. And then they bought that place over at Spring Hill. And I can't remember the year or nothing. We moved there and lived there until 1954. Mother and Daddy did. Me and Sandra got married in 1951.

MDF: When did you move away from home?

HPB: In '51.

MDF: Ah, were you aware of what was going on when the government, you know, approached your family about selling?

HPB: Oh, I guess I was aware, but I really didn't, you know, I was a—all about it, no, you know. The first time. Now the second time, I did, you know.

MDF: Ah, do you know why your folks moved to Pearl first?

HPB: Well, they was going to buy that place at Pearl. But the heirs couldn't get together, you know, get the deeds fixed up. And, I guess the reason we moved to Harman, and Aunt Bud and Uncle Ira lived at Harman then, they'd rented a place over there. And this place come up for rent over there, so that's where we, when we moved to Harman.

MDF: So what happened to all these family members who kind of lived in here together? Where did each of them go after that taking?

HPB: Well, in '42 Grandpa and Uncle Bill and Aunt Lucy moved over to Schley. Schley out here. Well, they got to stay there one year. And then Grandpa and Grandma moved on over to Highway 84 up there, and then Uncle Bill and Aunt Lucy moved on to the Larry place on the Leon River over there, and I can't remember how many years they farmed there. But several. And then, Uncle Bill got a job working in town, and they bought a house out there on Highway 84, and they moved on to town then.

MDF: Did people still visit, or did it become more difficult?

HPB: Oh, no, we still visited. You see, there on, I think, where Keener Chapel was there, Shirt Works had it for a while, didn't they, Sandra? Yeah, anyway, Grandpa and Grandma, you see, built that church there on [Highway] 84, and that was Keener Chapel, they called it. And that's where we all went to church. And most every Sunday, after church, we'd all go down to Grandma and Grandpa's and eat dinner. And it was my family, Aunt Bud and Uncle Ira, and Uncle Bill and Aunt Lucy was the ones that generally, you know, were there for Sunday dinner.

MDF: What did you, what do you remember about growing up out there that you liked? That you liked the most?

HPB: Gosh, I don't know. I guess the freedom of it. I don't know. I'd get on my horse and go anywhere I wanted to.

MDF: Tell me about your move from your home place out to Pearl.

HPB: Well, me and Uncle Johnny, before daylight, saddled our horses. We had the cows in the lot there. And we put them out in the public road and started driving them to Pearl. I don't remember how many cows it was. I imagine twelve or fifteen, something like that. And my mother and sister was following us with a wagon and team loaded down with stuff. And we drove them old cows all day. And it seemed like every place we'd go by, their gate would be open, and them cows would run up towards the house, and we'd have to go up there and bring 'em back. But before we got to Pearl, there was a guy Daddy knew—I can't remember what his name was—said we could pen those cows in his lot that night and come back and get 'em the next morning. I shore was proud, 'cause I was played out. But Daddy had hired a truck, why he wasn't with us. And they had hauled the sheep to Pearl in that truck, and then he'd come back to meet us after they got the sheep unloaded and all.

MDF: And your mother and sister just went on ahead with the household things?

HPB: They left the wagon there that night, too. 'Cause they was following along behind us with that wagon. I don't know how many miles we traveled that day around them roads. Probably twenty.

James W. Calhoun
Billie Jo Calhoun Cartwright
Joyce Calhoun Ritchie

James W. Calhoun
Date of birth: 1926
Communities affiliated with: Brown's Creek, Maple

Billie Jo Calhoun Cartwright
Date of birth: March 1923
Communities affiliated with: Brown's Creek, Maple

Joyce Calhoun Ritchie
Date of birth: 1932
Communities affiliated with: Brown's Creek, Maple

Interviewed by Amy E. Dase

AED: This Amy Dase. Today is June 22, 2001. I am interviewing for the first time, James Calhoun. This interview is taking place in the home of Donna Eakin in Killeen, Texas. This interview is part of Prewitt and Associates' Fort Hood Oral History Project sponsored by the U.S. Army Fort Hood and conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University. [Donna Cartwright Eakin also took part in this interview.]

Maybe you could go over again briefly what you mentioned about your—is it your great-grandfather?

JWC: Yeah.

AED: Conrad Witte.

JWC: He was born in Prussia. They lived there. Left Prussia for the United States because of civil strife, civil war, inside—between the Prussians and the Germans. And then after they got to New Orleans they were quarantined for a long time because of the—some kind of a plague or something. They got to New Orleans, and they were quarantined because of scarlet fever or something for some time, and then they went to, I think New Minden, Illinois. And they got up there, and they didn't like it. It was him—Conrad, his mother, and his sister, I believe. And they didn't like it up there because it was too cold. So they came back to Ladonia, Texas, where he bought 340 acres for like a dollar, a dollar and a half an acre, or something. And they were farmers.

And then the Civil War broke out in the United States, and he didn't want any part of civil strife. So

he joined—went to Greenville, Texas, in Hunt County, and joined a group of people that was known as the Red River Riders, or something like that, that was to keep the Indians back across the Red River in what was then Indian territory, now Oklahoma. And, I don't know, stayed in there like four years or something like that and actually had two skirmishes with the Indians, was all they had.

And then they moved to McLennan County, up around Waco. And I think he eventually died there as far as I know. And then they came to Gatesville, my granddaddy, Bill Witte, W. L. Witte. And they had lived neighbors to the Mounces in McLennan County and my grandmother was a Mounce. So—

AED: What was her first name? Was it Dollie?

JWC: Dorthy Cornelia, called Dollie Witte. And I don't know what their relationship was there, but he decided that he wanted to be married to Dollie so he went back to Waco and got her and they lived together until Granddaddy died. He died fairly—he died about '52. And Grandmother lived on until she was well in her eighties, I think, before she passed away. And they were the ones that had the Fort Hood property. It was out on Henson Creek in Fort Hood and Grandmother sold out, had to sell out, to the government, and then she moved to Gatesville where she finally passed away.

All—it disrupted everybody's lives, you know. There're people who lived on property out there for a hundred years. And it was more or less a take-it-or-leave-it deal. The government offered them so much an acre, and I think it was something like fifty dollars an acre. They could dismantle their barns and houses and all that and take them with them if they wanted to. Take up all the fences or whatever they wanted to do with it, but they got fifty bucks an acre for their land.

AED: Was the home site part of Spring Hill community?

JWC: Uh-huh. It was in the Spring Hill community.

AED: And then did you grow up—

JWC: I grew up in the general area. But then what seemed like a terrible long distance back in them days was just a few miles away. Probably, oh, farther—farthest we ever lived away from Grandma was about ten miles, something like that. But in a wagon that was a long way.

AED: Bumpy. Did you live in one home as you were growing up?

JWC: No. We—when we—when I was born, we lived out here on the old Calhoun Ranch that was right here between Pidcoke and Gatesville. And when Granddaddy Calhoun died, and it was all split up. Dad wound up, I think, selling his part to one of the other kids, and then we moved over to Turnersville.

And then, from there, we moved to Maple, which put us back in Fort Hood deal, and lived there a couple of different places. Dad was just a renter. And, oh, lived there, I guess, in that—around the Maple area there until, I guess, '39. Isn't that right? About '39?

BJCC: About.

JWC: And then we moved to Leon Junction, which would be out of the Fort Hood area.

AED: When you lived in the Maple area you continued moving? He would look for better land—

JWC: Yeah.

AED: Or better opportunity.

JWC: Yeah, better opportunity, yeah. He—we lived two different places around Maple.

AED: Can you tell me what the houses were like that you lived in?

JWC: (laughs) Well, some of them, you could look through cracks in the floor and see chickens under the house. (laughs) They were generally, oh, livable. But by today's standards, they'd a been pretty bad off. (laughs)

That's—it was a hard life, but it wasn't—our life wasn't any different than most other people's lives. It was just something that everybody was used to, you know. Wasn't much money. You worked yourself to death and raised a pretty good cotton crop, by the time you got it ginned cotton prices had gone down. And not too much different than what today is.

AED: Is that mostly what your dad tried to raise—cotton?

JWC: Yeah. Cotton.

AED: Did he do any livestock?

JWC: Yeah. We had—we had horses, 'course they—everybody farmed with horse power back in those days, not gasoline power. But anyway, we had horses, we had cattle, few cows for milking purposes and so forth. And lots of chickens. So, we pretty well lived on what we could raise, you know. And Mama—Mama and Daddy always raised pretty big gardens. And we—we were no better off or any worse off than anybody else was back during Depression days. It was raise what you could eat because you sure didn't have any money to buy it, you know.

And—I remember one time after Daddy paid the rent on a bale of cotton. He bought whatever Mama told him to get at the grocery store, ginned out right here at Killeen, and very discouraged—I think he had five dollars left when he—when he got through with buying the groceries. 'Course back in those days they didn't buy five pounds of flour, they bought two forty-eight-pound sacks (laughs) and hundred pounds of sugar, all that kind of stuff. So it was a hard life, but like I said, everybody was used to it in those days.

AED: They brought the cotton to Killeen to gin? There weren't any closer gins?

JWC: I don't s'pose it would have been any closer to go to Gatesville than it was to Killeen, but the bad part was we had a real steep mountain we had go out to get up on flat ground again to go to Gatesville, so coming to Killeen was the simpler route, too, so far as the mountains was concerned.

AED: Was he using a wagon or a truck?

JWC: A wagon. A wagon. Yeah. Wasn't any trucks back in those days. There's—you might find somebody with an old flatbed hauling cedar posts.

And that was another thing Dad used to do to supplement the family's income. In wintertime he'd cut cedar posts. And, oh, down there four miles from Maple, and there was a post yard at Maple. And they'd cut posts, load them on wagons, haul them to the post yard at Maple, and get eight cents apiece for them. So you didn't get rich. (laughs) Probably a hundred good posts was a heck of a big wagonload, you know. And—

AED: Were you involved in the cotton production process?

JWC: (laughs) Oh, yeah. From the time we was big enough to pick up a hoe, really. Chopped cotton. We always had a cutoff point. If we couldn't get all the cotton cleaned up by the Fourth of July we just left it. And then about the first week in the middle of August we'd start picking. Oh, I picked from the time—I picked in a tow sack I think until the time I could drag a hundred-pound bag of cotton. So—it was—everybody worked though.

AED: What other kinds of chores did you have?

JWC: Oh. Back in those days, when we lived around Maple, we didn't do much milking. Me and my brother, maybe my older sister, and—but—oh, feeding the cows, feeding the horses, feeding the chickens, shelling corn by hand, and just general farm chores, carrying in wood and all that stuff.

AED: And water? Where was your water source?

JWC: We carried water half mile, I'm sure.

BJCC: That was the most difficult thing, I think, that we had on the farm was having to get the water to the house.

AED: And you carried it in large buckets?

JWC: Aw, we usually, when we were little we'd carry it in gallon syrup buckets, you know. One in each hand. And it was—it was pretty tough.

We used to—me and my brother used to go hunting quite a bit. Had a pretty good old dog.

AED: You did.

JWC: Yeah. We'd catch rabbits and kill squirrels. Nothing was thrown away. (laughs) Everything was eaten.

AED: What did you do for fun when you weren't doing your chores?

JWC: Oh, we played baseball.

JCR: Kick the Can and Hide and Seek. (laughs)

JWC: Oh, yeah, Kick the Can. (laughs) Just anything that we could find to do. Wasn't any organized sports back in those days. Might've been for the older ones in school, but—but just kinda did whatever was fun. We might get out and run races. If it ever snowed we'd chunk snowballs.

AED: Did you have any toys?

JWC: Huh?

AED: Toys that you remember?

JWC: Most of them were made I think.

BJCC: I think James made it.

JWC: We had a—

BJCC: We had a four-wheel something that you put a flatbed on (laughs) and we rode up and down the hill.

JWC: Oh, that was a—it was an old buggy frame.

BJCC: Yeah.

JWC: And we used to pull and tug and get that thing up the side of the mountain. Pulled for two hours to get it up there and get it turned around and then take us about five minutes to get to the bottom. (laughs)

AED: And I was told that the school, the Maple School had tennis courts. Do you remember that? And a basketball court.

JWC: I remember a basketball court, but it was just on the ground, you know. It had two cedar posts with

backboards and a hoop and nets on it. Our oldest sister Dorotha, she played—she was quite a good basketball player. And—but they played a whole lot different, women did then, than what they do now. They played half-court basketball then and now then they play full-court. So—

AED: Did you go to the Maple School?

JWC: Oh, yeah, yeah. I started the school at Turnover, which was another school that was on Fort Hood. And failed my first year because I wound up having tonsillitis all the time, infected throat more than likely, and didn't go to the school long enough. Found my old report card the other day. (all laugh) It was in some of Mama's stuff and said didn't attend often enough or enough days to pass. So I went through the first grade the second time and did that at Maple. And was, I guess, in Maple School until I was in the sixth or seven grade, best I remember. Sixth grade maybe.

BJCC: I can't remember you failing.

JWC: Huh? Yeah.

BJCC: I can't remember you failing.

JWC: At Turnover.

BJCC: Well, I'm—I failed the third grade because I had diphtheria.

JWC: Yeah.

BJCC: And almost died.

JWC: That was another thing that was bad. We was thirteen miles from Gatesville, which would be the nearest doctors. No means of transportation, no automobile. And rattlesnakes was plentiful. I don't ever remember walking out of the house unless Mama said, "You kids watch for snakes."

BJCC: That's right.

JWC: And that's what their big fear was, was us getting snake bit, you know. 'Cause that's something had to be doctored pretty quick. (laughs) And—but people that got hurt back in those days they just did the best they could, you know.

AED: So when you had your tonsil infection there was no—there was home remedy?

JWC: Yeah. Usually a Vicks sally (??) rag. Stuff like that, you know. But old throat would swell up so until I couldn't even drink water.

AED: I know you have a sister, two sisters that are here, and then you have other siblings also?

JWC: I have a brother that lives in Mesquite. And our older sister passed away several years ago.

But it—I look back on it now, and I guess those were some of the best days we ever had, you know. Had a lot of fun. Yeah. In a simple way, you know, compared to what kids are now.

AED: Your school year, was it as long as the school year is now, or was it—

JWC: Well, we—we started school about, about the first of September but usually would miss a good bit of school during the month of September helping get the crops in, you know. And then, I really believe our school ran longer. I think it ran until about the last of May or the first week in June. When I graduated from Bartlett High School, our commencement exercises was held on June the fifth, which—that was in 1944—so it—school years ran longer then than what they do now.

JCR: In fact we didn't have spring break, a long Easter vacation, or that much Christmas time off either, did we?

JWC: No.

BJCC: Unh-uh.

JWC: No, no. We'd get a week out at Christmas, and that was usually it. No spring break. No teacher days.

AED: What was Christmas like?

JWC: Oh, Christmas, if there was any money available, we usually always got a present. There was no money available, well Santy Claus just didn't come this year, you know. So it—just one of them things. Either we did, or we didn't. (laughs)

AED: Would you see other family, like your grandparents, on a holiday like that?

JWC: Aw, sometimes, not very—not very often because, at that time of the year, if you traveled very far and you traveled in a wagon or something like that. But we always tried to make it to Grandma's on her birthday, which was the twenty-fifth day of June. And we still celebrate the—her birthday on the last Sunday in June because it's when it is.

Anyway, they was some of the old pioneers in Coryell County. And it was not only Granddaddy, it was Uncle Jim Witte, Uncle John Witte. I think they split a section of land as well as I can remember. And I don't know just how they came by it, whether it was some kind of a grant or what. But there was a section and Granddaddy Witte and his two brothers split a section, I think.

AED: Do you remember much about your grandparents' home?

JWC: Oh, yeah.

AED: What was it like?

JWC: It was a big old dogtrot house. Had the parlor (laughs) on one side and the fireplace room and the bedroom and a big old kitchen on the other. And it was a parlor and a little shed room that was a bedroom, Uncle Brack's bedroom, on one side of the dogtrot, and on the other side was—had a big porch across the front. His name was Raby but was known as Brack all his life. And the bedrock that they had the house sitting on, big rocks that they buried in the ground to put the posts on that the house set on, still there. Even after Fort Hood's had it for all these years. We were out there three or four years ago, still see exactly where the house was, the granary, everything else.

AED: You said your dad had livestock for use in farming, like horses for pulling wagons—

JWC: Horses and mules.

AED: And cattle, and mules also? And you had some cattle, but not a lot?

JWC: Not a lot. Not like people are this day and time. They—they primarily used their cattle back in them days for—to have a supply of fresh milk.

AED: And hogs?

JWC: Oh, yeah. We had hogs. And turkeys. We raised lots of turkeys.

BJCC: Yeah.

JWC: And that was a big game, was finding them turkey nests. (all laugh) You had to be just smarter than

the turkey to find them. I'll tell you.

BJCC: We had everything named.

JWC: Huh?

BJCC: We had a name for every animal we had.

JWC: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

BJCC: And that was like a death in the family—(laughs) to lose one of those.

JWC: Oh, yeah.

BJCC: Cried a lot tears.

JWC: We—'course busses weren't—didn't exist back in those days, and we—we walked to school. And public roads wasn't any more than gravel trails. So we'd just cut across the field. We'd walk in that mud, and first thing you know, you'd walk to your heels and got about that high. Kick them off. But we cut cross-country to get to school and then it was about four miles. Wasn't it?

BJCC: Uh-huh.

JWC: To Maple School.

AED: Did you go to any of the other little communities for other things that went on, like Tama?

JWC: Was what?

AED: Tama.

JWC: Camera?

AED: I think—T-a-m-a.

JWC: Oh. Tama. No, no we didn't.

AED: You just stuck pretty much within Maple.

JWC: Yeah. Within Maple.

AED: Was there a church there that you attended?

JWC: No. There was no churches around Maple. The closest church that I knew anything about was—I can't even remember the name of the place now—but—

BJCC: When we lived at Maple, the little church down the street, down the road—New Hope. That was s'posed to have been mostly Baptist, but I guess it was all denominations because we went to a Methodist church one time, and we were lucky just to have it. Because we've been a lot of places—lived a lot of places that back then didn't have church.

JWC: Well, that—I don't know whether it was because the lack of money or not enough participation or what, but there used to be lots of rural churches, and back during Depression days in the '30s, they just all died out, and then, later on, people was able to afford transportation, they'd go farther away to a larger church and, where there was enough support to have a pretty good pastor. You know, it's not like it is now where there's hundreds of people to the block. (laughs)

AED: Did you spend a lot of time with your neighbors?

JWC: Oh, yeah. We had neighbor kids that we played with. And worked with because if we wasn't busy with our crops, we was working for somebody else, you know. Back in those days you did what you could to make ends meet. Chopped lots of cotton for seventy-five cents a day. Picked for fifty cents a hundred.

BJCC: That's how we bought our school clothes.

JWC: Pretty good pair of shoes would cost you a dollar. Good pair of overalls cost about ninety-nine cents. And so we'd get out and work for other people and buy our school clothes. Always hated them new overalls. But it was hot in the summertime. I'd rather wear a pair with holes in the knees than I had a pair—a new pair.

BJCC: He was tearing them up—

JWC: Kids tore a lot of overall knees in those days, but patching them was an art that Mama had down pat. Wearing patched clothes was okay as long as they were clean.

AED: Do you remember, were there any mills near where you lived?

JWC: No. There was, like I said, the closest gin—used to be somebody come around from farm to farm and grind corn for cornmeal. And had the grinder on the back of an old Model T truck with a—and they'd everybody have their corn shelled and ready to grind and he'd come around and grind it, or else Daddy would take it to either to Gatesville or Killeen to a feed mill. A flour mill or corn milling place, you know. And—

BJCC: They held out part of it for cost, for grinding it.

JWC: You had to take corn, shelled corn, and the mill would take part of it for the grinding, you know. If you carried a hundred pounds you might wind up with seventy pounds or something like that, they'd take like a third of it for milling it, grinding it.

AED: Did you have other people that would come to your house selling services like that?

JWC: Not too many. If we had a sick horse or something and you didn't know how to doctor it, you called on your neighbor or whatever.

AED: Did you ever have ice delivered?

JWC: What? Had what?

AED: Ice.

JWC: We did at one place. It wasn't delivered. We had—we'd take the little red wagon with an old quilt and go about a mile to the public road and flag the truck down—we knew what days he came by—and get like fifty pounds of ice that—and we protected it (laughs) pretty well. We'd keep it rolled up good and tight so it wouldn't melt. You'd be surprised, a fifty-pound block of ice would last two or three days, you know.

AED: What other kinds of methods did you use to refrigerate?

JWC: Had what they called a milk cooler. And it was—had two shelves in it, put a sheet around it, and then the top, it had like a water tank, and that water would seep down through that sheet into a pan in the bottom of it and the air blowing up, we always kept it out on the porch, and the air blowing on it—it'd keep the milk good inside there. And butter.

BJCC: Not cold. Cool.

JWC: Not cold. Cool. But it was, it was better than nothing.

AED: Because there was no electricity.

JWC: No electricity.

AED: So what did you do for light?

JWC: Kerosene lamps. Got one.

JWC: Yeah. (laughs) Yeah.

BJCC: We hauled it in the back end of the wagon, from some place.

JWC: Yeah. Yeah.

BJCC: And it was a big barrel.

JWC: Yeah. A big wooden barrel.

BJCC: And it would spill. (laughs)

JWC: Then there'd go spill too much, and you would have to go for another barrel.

AED: You had outbuildings like barns and smokehouses and things like that?

JWC: Yeah. No, we had barns and smokehouses and outhouses (laughs) and all that kind of stuff.

AED: Had to have that.

JWC: Yeah. But no light. No electricity.

AED: Did you ever have a telephone?

BJCC: At the old home place.

JWC: Yeah.

BJCC: The old home place.

JWC: At Pidcoke.

AED: The very first—

JWC: Between Pidcoke and Gatesville.

AED: Where you were born?

JWC: When I was born.

AED: There was a telephone there?

JWC: There was a old crank type. Yeah.

AED: But not in Maple.

JWC: No. No. There was no telephone service out there.

AED: And when your parents were conducting business they would go to Killeen or Gatesville, but more often to Killeen?

JWC: More often to Gatesville. Yeah. Because we lived in Coryell County and a lot of places you had to go to the county seat to conduct business. And Gatesville was their choice anyway since they'd more or less grown up around Gatesville, and they would often see members of their families while in town.

AED: That's true, having grown up in Spring Hill they would be used to going to—

JWC: To Gatesville. Yeah.

AED: That's where they'd know more people probably?

JWC: Right.

AED: Did they do banking there? That you know of?

JWC: Didn't too many people do banking in those days. (all laugh) They kept it in their overall pockets, you know. And wasn't too much money to put in banks or in pockets.

AED: But they went to the store when they needed goods—

JWC: Yeah.

AED: They'd go—

JWC: Either to Gatesville or Killeen. And primarily to Gatesville. Huh?

BJCC: There was some stores that if they knew you personally, they'd give you credit until you'd gathered your crops.

JWC: Yeah, yeah.

BJCC: And you paid your bills at the grocery store. But that was a lot of times that probably we made it from one crop to the next.

AED: Was with the credit?

JWC: Yeah. And it wasn't credit as we think of it now where you buy something and pay for it next week or next month or pay it out on an installment plan. It was just, people knew that your word was good and that they'd extend you credit until you got your crops in. And then you'd go pay your bills. But you must pay the bills, or you were in bad shape the next year. Honest, hard-working people survived being a man of your word.

AED: You said you had a garden.

JWC: Oh, yeah. We always had a garden, you know. Raised potatoes and beans and peas and turnip greens. And Mama'd—back in those days canning was limited to glass fruit jars, you know. About the only thing they could handle is hot-bath canning, they called it. And then, later on, they got into the tin cans, but that was quite a bit later on. And they put up everything they could. I remember some of the best pickled peaches I have ever eaten in my life, and that was one thing they could can that was fruits, you know, it would keep because it had enough acid content to make it keep. And we used to can a lot of corn. We grew corn, you know, really fresh corn, sweet corn. And green beans kept good. We used to can a lot of green beans.

BJCC: Let part of them dry up.

JWC: Yeah. And those that you didn't can green well they'd dry up on the vine and you'd pick them and thrash them and have pinto beans. Another thing that kept good was pickled beets.

BJCC: Pickled beets and cucumber pickles.

JWC: Cucumber pickles and all that kind of stuff.

BJCC: We had sweet ones and sour ones.

DCE: Did you tell the story about the meat that you cured on top of the tin roofs?

JWC: Oh, that—that was in 1932, I believe.

BJCC: The Depression.

JWC: When the government had the cattle reduction program on that killed a lot of cows and everything, and they'd—they'd give basically all of it that you wanted or that you could use. And we sliced beef and put it on a sheet, covered it with a sheet, on a tin roof, and it made, actually made jerky, was what it was. And they—we'd—Mama'd chop it up in the wintertime. Soak it overnight in water and then make gravy on it and it was as good as anything you ever ate. Hot biscuits. That was another thing you didn't have back in those days, and that was light bread. You didn't—they cooked their own bread.

BJCC: It didn't slice thin. (laughs)

JWC: No. It didn't slice thin. Pop a biscuit open and slap a sausage in it and you had lunch.

AED: Was that what you took to lunch at school?

JWC: A lot of times. Yeah. Either that or sliced middling meat, fried, put in a biscuit. Wasn't anything wrong with eating a biscuit with a piece of sausage in it. Something like that in it for lunch, 'cause that's what everybody did.

AED: What did you carry your lunch in?

JWC: Oh. Gallon bucket. Or we had some little lunch boxes that, I don't know, Mama bought, I guess. But they was pretty bad about the handles breaking off of them. 'Specially if you used them to beat on somebody with. (all laugh)

I remember one time me and my brother loaded our lunch boxes up with rocks and clods of dirt. There'd been some boys trying to run over us. We beat knots all over them. (laughs)

AED: When the community got together—or did the community have gatherings?

JWC: Our best community get-together was at the end of school. They'd kill beef, goat, and we'd have a big barbecue. And everybody'd bring lunch. And the end of school used to be quite an affair at Maple. There was people would come from far and near to the end of school, and then the older kids would put on a, like a three-act play, or something like that, you know. And it—we used to have get-togethers at Christmastime, too, you know, when we had the school Christmas tree and have school programs. And the parents'd get to see what their kids had been doing in school and all that stuff. And whether they was being good or bad.

AED: And would have sporting events?

JWC: Oh, yeah. We used to have lots of good softball games between us and Cold Springs and, oh, I don't remember what other—some of the other schools was, do you?

BJCC: Well, no. Brown's Creek and Maple were fairly close together. And we got a get-together.

JWC: I remember going to Cold Springs, and we got about halfway there and the old cedar post truck we

was riding, we was going to play softball, got about halfway there and the old truck broke down. And somebody else come along that'd been hauling posts, and we all loaded on it and went over there. And the guy just stayed there with us until the game was over, and then he carried us back to Maple. Kicked us all off back at school, and then we had to walk four miles home.

Aw, it was—it was a life if you put a kid in it now, they'd probably rebel.

AED: What makes you say that? Why do you say that?

JWC: I doubt that you could get a kid to walk to the end of the block now to catch a school bus. I know my own great-grandkids, grandkids and great-grandkids, when I tell them about where we lived. To the school system in the county that I live in, it's about the same distance we used to walk to Maple. And you talk to them about walking from here to school and then walking back and they'll tell you right quick, Well I wouldn't go. Yet, they'll get out and run two miles after they get to school, you know, in their track program and everything. One great-granddaughter now, just getting over a broken arm. (laughs) So—

AED: Can you think of other things you'd like to talk about?

JWC: Oh, I think of the fun that we used to have as boys going hunting. And we'd go to the mountain, and there were some caves in the mountain behind where we used to live, and we used to explore them caves.

AED: What mountain are you speaking of?

JWC: I don't even know what it was called now. But it—

AED: Not Manning Mountain?

JWC: No, it wasn't the Manning Mountain. What was that old mountain called that used to be behind us down there at Maple? We lived on the Mayberry place.

BJCC: When we lived where?

JWC: Oh.

BJCC: At Maple?

JWC: Not the first place, the second place we lived down there at Maple community.

BJCC: I don't know.

JWC: I don't know that it even had a name. But it used to have pretty good, couple of pretty good caves in it and we used to go down into that thing and you'd have to put me to sleep to put me down in there now.

AED: I've heard about those caves.

JWC: Yeah.

AED: I've talked to some of the Wolf family.

BJCC: Oh.

JCR: Oh.

AED: They told me about them.

BJCC: They're from Maple.

JWC: Andy and William Doyle and all of them. I'll tell you a funny story about that. One time, just before Christmas, we was all going out to gather pretty red leaves, red berries, cedar boughs, and all that stuff to decorate the schoolrooms for Christmas. Well, we—the whole—I guess the whole school went. And every kid, we was traipsing in the mountain and everything. Well, we decided, me and my brother, and Andy and William Doyle Wolf, and one of Tuck Wolf's boys. We decided that's too tame for us, so we just took off from the bunch and went to going to explore some caves that was back up in there and probably the same ones they were telling you about. Well, we showed up just before school was out. Well, Miss Molly Montgomery and I don't know who the other teachers was now, but they, they already had their peeled cedar switches. And they got our attention pretty good. But that wasn't near as bad as it was when we got home. We didn't get a whipping, but it was dark and the old barn had rats in it, and Daddy made us, me and my brother, go to the corncrib and shell a number three washtub full of corn as punishment for running off. (laughs) That was—the dark was bad enough, but them rats crawling around was something else.

BJCC: I had a girlfriend that would walk that length of that mountain to come visit.

JWC: Oh, yeah.

BJCC: Yeah, Winnie.

JWC: Well, we had lots of kids that liked to come to our house. Would come and stay for days. If we were working, they would pitch in and work right alongside. Maybe we would get to quit early in the evening.

BJCC: And I still have her.

JWC: That was Winnie.

BJCC: She lives in Skokie, Illinois, and she comes to visit her sister in Temple—

JWC: We used to love that girl to death. Always the life of the party. Such a great person.

BJCC: And we still see each other.

JWC: We used to in the summertime, when we'd catch up on our work, we used to go visit cousins, and we'd stay like a week at a time. If they had a swimming hole, we were in hog heaven.

BJCC: Yes.

JWC: Or they'd come and stay with us, just as a diversion, you know. Go swimming if we could find a puddle hole big enough to get in. And—

AED: There weren't very many swimming holes, were there?

JWC: They's just in creeks or dirt tanks. And—so—anybody that had a pretty good creek near them that had deep enough place in it to go swimming in, they had lots of company.

BJCC: Well, about the only place you could go was on the Cowhouse.

JWC: Yeah.

BJCC: And they had fish and running water.

JWC: I crossed it awhile ago. It was running good.

DCE: Lot of rain.

AED: Did you do a lot of cooking? Or your mother did?

JWC: My mother did and my older sisters. My older sisters. They—they used to do a lot of cooking, and it was all done on a wood stove.

AED: Who chopped the wood?

JWC: Oh, Dad did mostly. But later on, after I got a little bigger, I used to have to fill the wood box pretty often.

AED: What kind of things did they cook? What would be a typical dinner?

BJCC: Whatever we canned, unless it was fresh.

JWC: Yeah. A big staple was cornbread and biscuits, of 'course, and, like she said, all the canned goods that we canned and always ate good gravy and just probably ate as well as we do now.

BJCC: Yeah.

JWC: You know. Always had pork.

AED: Did your family belong to a beef club?

JWC: We did in later years.

AED: It's sort of a Depression era—

JWC: Well, beef clubs kind of came on and were organized and set up after Franklin Roosevelt became president and they started the reconstruction deal among the farmers. Farmers were really bad off, and when Franklin D. Roosevelt got in there he started all the programs that—I remember right there at Maple they used to make cotton mattresses. Franklin Roosevelt had the idea that a farmer couldn't do a good days work unless he got a good night's sleep, so they had all this government surplus cotton, and they would give them the cotton, they'd go to Gatesville, haul it out there, and then all the women would sew the ticks and make the mattresses. Big fifty-pound cotton mattresses, you know. Everybody started sleeping a lot better after that. 'Course some of the programs that was put into effect under Franklin Roosevelt's still going on. Soil Conservation Commission and all that stuff. I do quite a bit of work where I live with them.

AED: And you were saying about the beef clubs—that your family did participate?

JWC: Oh, yeah. Whatever you got under a beef program—beef club program—one week you'd get steak, next week you'd get—they used up the whole calf among the people that was in the club. The next week you might get, you'd just take a roast one week, next week you might get stew meat. Lots of liver. (laughs) Anyway, it worked good, but for the lack of refrigeration you had to—you would only get what you'd use up in, might say, one big meal 'cause they'd kill the beef and butcher—cut it up and everything and deliver it right away. Had to because it wouldn't keep very long.

AED: Were you involved when there was a hog killing?

JWC: Oh, yeah, yeah. We used to scrape them hogs. They used to use, instead of skinning them, they'd use tow sacks. Put them on boards, then pour the scalding hot water on them and that would make the hair slip. and then you'd take a knife and scrape it down. And, oh, yeah, we used to help out. We got in the way a lot, trying to help. But everybody enjoyed fresh pork. People'd come to help kill the hog and process it and everything. They'd always go home with a bunch of fresh meat, you know.

BJCC: That's what they paid them.

JWC: Yeah. Yeah.

BJCC: Since they'd come and helped free. Wash it up. Always a lot of cleaning up after a hog killing. Lots of utensils to be cleaned.

JWC: Yeah. Washing was a problem.

AED: Washing was a problem?

JWC: Yeah. Yeah. We used to—talk about having to carry water from the well, it had a pitcher pump on it. Instead of carrying water to wash, we'd carry the clothes and the tubs and the wash pot and everything down to where the well was and do the washing down there. And, 'course there was nothing lost after the killing of a hog or a beef or anything. You used all of the bone and the undesirable parts, and you'd make soap out of it. So we had our lye soap, you know. Chip that lye soap up in that tub, I mean wash pot, and then punch them clothes in there, and—

AED: So you had, down by the well, you had a place to build a fire for the kettle?

JWC: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. It's just right out in the pasture under some trees, so it was no problem. Build fire around the wash pot and do the wash in there and then you take it to the house and hang it on the clothesline.

AED: When you think about how your dad spent his time, how would you describe—was he out in the field most of the time?

JWC: Staying busy and when the weather, in the wintertime, the weather was too bad for him to get out, it'd be rainy or cold or something, and he'd get his work done, and then I've seen him sit by the fire and doze for hours at a time.

BJCC: He'd rest.

JWC: Yeah, he'd rest.

AED: He worked hard when he wasn't resting.

JWC: Oh, yeah, yeah. Bless his heart. I've seen him when he's beat following plow or teams or something, he'd come in and his feet'd just almost be scalded, you know, from walking in the hot dirt and all that stuff. It was a hard, hard life. I sit up there now in a John Deere tractor with cold air blowing on me. Sometimes I have to turn the air conditioner off, it gets cold, and I—I get to thinking about them days. (laughs)

BJCC: What would he have done one morning to get up to go out and have that?

JWC: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

AED: And he was always a farmer?

JWC: Yeah. Always a farmer. He—one time—one day Works Projects Administration, was the WPA was on, he decided that he'd work on with them, you know. And so he went and signed up and everything during the winter months. And they was building the Mound schoolhouse. And they was sawing that limestone. They was getting it out of a quarry right there close to the Mound schoolhouse. And Daddy said them people were so lazy, and they kept getting on him about working too hard. He was still having to walk four miles to catch the truck to ride to Mound. He'd get up early in the morning and walk to Maple to catch that truck to go to Mound. So, it just got the best of him, and he said that it wasn't for him. If he was gonna work, he was gonna work, but they wanted to goof off, make the job last. (laughs) So he didn't stay at it very long.

DCE: He had a brother that was a medical doctor.

JWC: Yeah.

DCE: That was who provided some of your medical help.

JWC: Our oldest sister had an abscess on her hip bone. And, that was about 1932, '33, somewhere along in there. And, oh, it—it was giving her a bad time. So Dad's brother was a medical doctor in Dallas. Did all of his years in the Medical Arts Building there in Dallas. So Dad went to Gatesville and called him. And him and one of his doctor associates that was a surgeon came down, and they did surgery on Dorotha on the dining table. And it was—was it a chipped bone that had abscessed?

BJCC: Uh-huh.

JWC: Chipped, on her hip bone, that was causing that abscess. Oh, it was swelled up yea big, you know. She'd a probably have died from infection if they hadn't a done something about it, but hospitals were nonexistent. I remember when Gatesville got its first hospital. Up until then it was just in the doctor's office, you know.

We—we live in a lot different world now days then what we did when we was kids. A whole lot more of us here, too.

AED: Do you recall if there were any black families that lived in the Maple area?

JWC: No. There was none.

AED: Any Hispanic families?

JWC: No. I think maybe the Mannings—didn't they at one time have a Mexican that worked for them? I can't remember. Huh?

BJCC: I can't hear you.

JWC: The Mannings. Didn't they at one time have a Mexican that worked for them. That everybody was afraid of?

BJCC: I think so.

JWC: Yeah. He worked—they raised a lot of sheep and everything, and he was kind of a herdsman. The Mannings. They were—they was pretty well-off and had a lot of land back in there.

AED: Did they have kids that you went to school with?

JWC: Yeah. They had a daughter, had one girl, and she used to ride her horse—if she was running late, well she'd ride her horse all the way to school. But if she got there by the time we left, she'd put her horse in Daddy's horse lot and walk with us. And then when she'd get back, she would saddle up her horse and go on home. But she lived a good two miles or farther from where we did.

AED: What was her name?

JWC: Her last name was Manning. I can't—

BJCC: Mary Manning.

JWC: Mary Manning.

AED: And did you know Richard Hill?

JWC: Richard Hill?

AED: He's a cousin of the Wolf brothers.

BJCC: I don't remember.

JWC: I can't remember.

AED: And lived over near Manning Mountain.

JWC: No.

AED: He's probably younger than you.

JWC: Well, he might not a-went to school at Maple, too.

AED: He might not, you're right. I don't remember if he went there or not.

JWC: Yeah. But I remember the Wolfs well. Andy and William Doyle they were my best friends. And me and William Doyle used to wrestle all the time at school. Kids do that now they'd get expelled from school. But we used to tie up at lunchtime and warble until the bell rang again, you know.

AED: You said your dad rented land.

JWC: Yeah.

AED: So he did tenant farming?

JWC: Yeah. Well, not—not tenant farming. He was a renter. A tenant farmer is somebody that works for somebody. And they furnish the teams and the seed and all that.

AED: So he was a renter.

JWC: He was a renter, yeah.

AED: And how much land would he rent?

JWC: Oh, I'd say in the neighborhood of a hundred acres, wouldn't you?

BJCC: I imagine. I imagine.

JWC: Pretty close to it. Had about that much in row crops. And then, of course, pasture and everything was extra.

AED: Do you recall who you rented from?

JWC: Well. That old place, first place we lived at, what was that? Was that Hubbard's?

BJCC: Which one?

JWC: First place we lived at at Maple. Was that Hubbard's land?

BJCC: No.

JWC: No, it wasn't.

BJCC: We joined them.

JWC: Yeah, joined them.

BJCC: On the south side.

JWC: I don't know. I don't remember who it was.

BJCC: I don't know who that was.

JWC: I can't remember.

BJCC: Then we moved to the other side of town and—and that was—but that was Troy Lee Hunt.

JWC: No, Troy Lee Hunt had it rented—

BJCC: Leased.

JWC: Leased—

BJCC: Yeah.

JWC: From somebody, and Dad farmed the land, and it was a big old place. And the deal was that Daddy could farm the land and not pay any rent and help take care of Troy Lee Hunt's cattle. Just died here a few years ago but helped take care of his cattle. On later years, Troy Lee Hunt owned the sale barn in Gatesville.

AED: So it was a trade?

JWC: Yeah. Yeah.

BJCC: During the wintertime, there were cows that were calving, or we kept their rows and—

JWC: Yeah.

BJCC: Foals fell. Maybe look after the cows. We got paid. Yeah.

JWC: So it—it was just a tradeoff deal. But anyway, it—I'm surprised that we survived and got through it, but we was a lot tougher then than we are now. (laughs)

BJCC: I think my mother and daddy said a lot of prayers to have made it.

JWC: Well, I was just thinking, come down here awhile ago, about times when things really looked bleak, you know. And I can remember how down they'd get when there wasn't enough money to meet the needs of the family.

BJCC: Oh, yeah.

JWC: Yeah, just—I've seen Mama cry silently lots of times when things would get so rough, you know. Daddy, if he—if he ever let his feelings be known he got away from the house (laughs), you know, because—but people don't think anything about crying anymore. If their feelings are hurt, or something they don't mind crying. Back in them days, crying was a sign of weakness. That went back to the—being—what do you call it? Pioneers.

BJCC: Yeah, I remember seeing Mama and Daddy, and the only way we could go anywhere was in the wagon. And I've seen Mama and Daddy in the spring seat (laughs) and those springs on the end of it, and it was close riding.

JWC: Yeah.

BJCC: But that was not very wise.

JWC: No.

BJCC: And, we'd go to church and Grandma's.

JWC: Yeah. In those days in the summer, they would have revivals under brush arbors, and everyone went. Preach hell fire and brimstone. Scare the life out of us kids.

BJCC: And they'd go to Gatesville.

JWC: To programs at school at night. Yeah.

AED: When did they get their first car?

JWC: In—oh, early on, before the Depression really hit, they had a car. Had a Model T. When they lived out here at Pidcoke, they had a Model T. And then things went sour.

BJCC: The Depression years come on.

JWC: Yeah, the Depression years come on to where I've seen the times you could buy a perfectly good old Model A for forty bucks. Forty, fifty dollars.

BJCC: Get the forty bucks.

JWC: Get the forty or fifty dollars. Then, the first car they got after that, was in 1941. But, at that time, if you even found a car to buy you were lucky 'cause the war had done broke out, you know. And, I went to a guy's funeral the other day that I worked with when I worked for Studebaker Corporation.

BJCC: You did?

JWC: Yeah, Archie Gaddis. And his wife, Dorothy, said, "James, do you remember that first car they let y'all have when the war was over at Studebaker?" And I said, "Yeah, Archie got it, but he lied to get it!" (laughs) She just died laughing.

AED: So you were not living on Fort Hood when the army came in and took it over?

JWC: No.

AED: At that point you were already gone, but your grandmother was still there.

JWC: Grandmother was.

AED: She was still there. How did she take it?

JWC: Not well.

BJCC: Terribly.

JWC: Terribly.

BJCC: And she cried. That was—their roots were right there.

JWC: Well, she'd been there from the time she was married to Granddad. I think she was sixteen when her and Granddaddy married. And lived there until the government took the land.

BJCC: Married, and she lived there—

JWC: Raised twelve children.

BJCC: She had twelve children.

JWC: Twelve children. And took care of a lot of them there when things really got bad. And some of her boys didn't marry until they were quite old. Uncle Walt, Uncle Brack. Well, Uncle Brack didn't marry until after Grandma passed away. And, I don't know, there was always some of them in and out. Grandma always made room for them, you know.

BJCC: Yeah, Mama and Daddy moved in the house with them with five children.

JWC: Yeah, we was waiting for somebody to move out of another spot that Dad rented from the Boyds.

AED: So you were there temporarily.

JWC: Yeah. Yeah, 'bout—what?—two months?

BJCC: I imagine.

AED: I know you mentioned something earlier about when the name was changed. Could you repeat that?

JWC: It was changed from W-i-t-t-e, to W-i-t-t-i-e, when Granddaddy signed up to—or Great-granddaddy, Conrad Witte, signed up in Hunt County, to be a part of that Red River Riders or Raiders or whatever it was, to keep the Indians back across the Red River into Indian territory, which is now Oklahoma.

AED: And did he make the change? Or did—

JWC: No, no. Somebody mistakenly did. Spelled it W-i-t-t-i-e, instead of W-i-t-t-e. And when he got out, well all of his papers and everything had W-i-t-t-i-e, so they just left it. 'Cause they—his—Conrad Witte's mother never learned to speak English. She spoke German until the day she died. And their name in Germany was pronounced, V-i-t-t-e, was pronounced Vitte or Vittie. So, all W's in German are pronounced as a V.

AED: And Conrad married a woman named Sophia?

JWC: Sophia.

AED: And they had six children.

BJCC: I don't really know.

AED: They had several children, I know that.

JWC: Several kids, yeah.

BJCC: Now which one was this?

JWC: Huh?

BJCC: Which one was this? My grandmother?

DCE: Great-grandmother.

AED: Great.

BJCC: Great-grandmother.

JWC: Yeah.

BJCC: You know, I don't even know how many children they had.

AED: I read in one book that there were, I think, it was six, it might have been five. Anyhow, William, your grandfather, was one of them.

JWC: Well, there was Granddaddy, Uncle John, Uncle Jim.

BJCC: Well, I can't even remember who those Mags come in at. Name was Margaret, we called them Mag. There was black Mag and red Mag.

JWC: That's some of Uncle John Witte's girls.

BJCC: Really?

JWC: See John was a whole lot older than Granddaddy Witte. And Jim Witte, daughter, also wound up being our aunt.

BJCC: Who married who?

JWC: Uncle Bud married Lula May.

BJCC: Oh, oh, oh, yeah, okay.

JWC: That's in the Mounce book.

DCE: It's like, John married Dollie's sister, Mary Alma.

JWC: Yeah.

AED: That's right, I saw that, too, not in that—in another book.

JWC: Yeah.

DCE: So they married sisters.

JWC: They married sisters.

JWC: So they were double first cousins.

BJCC: And we knew those were our double first cousins.

JWC: Is that the Mounce book?

DCE: Um-hm.

BJCC: And after their mother and daddy died, they always come to our reunion.

JWC: Yeah, yeah.

BJCC: Every year come to our reunion. They're all gone now.

AED: I don't have any other specific questions. So if there are things you can think of you'd like to speak about, feel free.

JWC: Well, I don't know of anything that I could add that would be—oh, I could tell you some funny tales about—talk about doctoring. Daddy used to buy a new can of Red Top axle grease and first thing done when got home, Mama'd take the lid off and have some empty Vicks bottles and she'd start scraping that stuff off and putting it in the Vicks bottles. That's what we doctored sore toes with. (laughs) Red Top axle grease. And kerosene oil was big—used it for medical purposes. Coal oil, coal oil, not kerosene. Coal oil is a derivative of coal. Kerosene is a derivative of petroleum, and it's poisonous.

AED: So it was—

JWC: Coal oil. Was—it was good. It—

AED: What did you use it on?

JWC: Eh?

AED: What did you use it on?

JWC: Oh, somebody'd get a cut—

BJCC: Yeah.

JWC: Or something. First thing they'd do is slap it in a pan of coal oil, and it killed infection. But with kerosene, it would give you an infection.

BJCC: You know, I still have the scar.

JWC: Yeah.

BJCC: I was letting my feet cross, lying on the bed flat on my back, with my feet up on the wall by the window, studying for a test, and my feet slipped off and they went through the window pane. And I still have a scar right there. And that was what Mama and Daddy did. And poured that kerosene—not—coal oil—in there. And it was burning.

JWC: I think that is when they found out there was a difference in coal oil and kerosene.

JWC: Yeah.

BJCC: And it sealed that. I was bleeding to death. And they put that on there. And it stung. It didn't knit back too well. (laughs)

JWC: Yeah, you get a little something wrong with you now, and you go to a doctor, and they're probably going to start doing this. Talking about putting you to sleep and all that stuff, you know.

DCE: Do you remember the stories that Aunt Bessie and them would tell you about how Granddaddy come over the mountain to court Grandma?

JWC: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

BJCC: Oh, Mother and Daddy.

JWC: They lived out here. Daddy and his family. (others laugh) I'm turned around. They lived out there between Gatesville and Pidcoke. And our dad would—he could ride horseback across the mountain, or I think they could even go in their buggy, go across the mountain to Grandma's to court our mother. And didn't—they didn't marry until Daddy was twenty-nine and—

BJCC: Twenty-eight.

JWC: Twenty-eight.

BJCC: And our mother was twenty-four.

JWC: Mama was twenty-four. But her daddy—

DCE: William.

JWC: William, yeah, he had cancer, yeah, like melanoma, you know, or something. And he'd just stayed away from anything. No treatment for it back in those days. And Mama was his nurse. So she stuck

with Granddaddy until—after he passed away, then they got married.

BJCC: About four years, I think.

JWC: They did everything out in the sun. And back in those days, 'course we didn't have chemotherapy, we didn't have radiation therapy or anything to kill all that out. They even went to Marlin and took those hot baths and all that stuff trying to cure that. Didn't work. Used to go by buggy to Gatesville, get on the Katy train.

DCE: This is a picture of our—his great-grandmother—or my great-great-grandmother. (brings a photograph album to table)

JWC: She was Norwegian. She was Norwegian. Didn't have a whole lot to say, but when she did, everybody listened.

BJCC: And we had a—Grandma had a table, that was about three times this length.

JWC: Yeah.

BJCC: But with twelve children. And it had a—I've always wanted a table that had a bench. Because Grandma's bench, I remember.

JWC: Well, Grandma's kitchen must've been twenty-five foot long. And that table reached a good two-thirds of the length.

BJCC: Nearly as far.

JWC: And I've seen it setting full of people just as close as they could sit, and others waiting. Yeah, the men used to eat, and the women waited. Men was first to the table.

BJCC: Yes.

DCE: You still did that when we were kids.

BJCC: Well, some did that way.

JWC: Yeah.

BJCC: But that was the longest table.

JWC: Now days the kids are the first to the table and get rid of them. (laughs)

BJCC: That's the way—was talking—my grandmother'd had a stroke, just laying there with her eyes closed. A little lady. We were discussing, Grandma, how did you raise all of your children? And she said, "I get them up in the morning," she lay there talking with her eyes closed. She says, "I get them up in the morning, and feed them their breakfast, and I'd shoo them off in the weeds, just like chickens." (laughs)

JWC: She what?

BJCC: She'd shoo them off in the weeds—

JWC: In the weeds.

BJCC: Like the chickens.

JWC: Yeah.

BJCC: And then she said, "And I'd call them, and they'd all come out of the weeds, back for lunch." (laughs) But she could—they didn't stay around.

JWC: She was comical.

BJCC: Yeah.

AED: She was comical. Is that what you said?

JWC: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. She was comical.

BJCC: Yeah. Until the day she died she was still cracking jokes.

DCE: She used to have a funny one she told about moving to town and having indoor plumbing. This was a main challenge.

JWC: Yeah.

BJCC: That she lived like that.

JWC: All the time that they lived on the reservation out there at the old home place, they had outdoor plumbing. Did have water. Did have water. They had a windmill and water tower and the cold water came in—there was no hot water, if you wanted it hot, you had to put it on the stove. But, anyway, having indoor plumbing was a great change for Grandma. I tell you. 'Cause she was way on up in years when added on. She—she didn't pass away until '56, '57, '56 I guess. I know Jo saw her one time, we went down and visited and—us and Mama went over there and Jo got to meet her one time before she passed away.

BJCC: She was a wonderful lady. And to be around her was looking like being around someone real young.

JWC: Yeah.

BJCC: She kept up with current events and—

JWC: And you never saw her there what you didn't feel like you was better off when you left. You ever see people like that?

AED: Um-hm. I know what you mean.

BJCC: When I needed encouragement, it was wonderful to go to her.

JWC: Yeah.

BJCC: Donna thought our mother was like Grandma.

JWC: Huh?

DCE: Strong, strong people. Strong survivors.

JWC: Well, Grandmother Witte and the Mounces—she was a Mounce. But they left North Carolina, I believe, and when they went over a mountain they was looking out the back of a covered wagon, Grandma said she could remember seeing some town, Salem or somewhere, burning. See the smoke from the town.

BJCC: Was that the Civil War?

JWC: Yeah. During the Civil War, yeah. Yeah. But they were fleeing. They were plantation owners.

BJCC: Yes.

JWC: Raised tobacco and cotton. Had lots of slaves. So (laughs) they were getting out of there while they could, I guess.

DCE: How come we didn't learn the German?

JWC: Huh?

DCE: How come we didn't learn the German language.

BJCC: Because they wouldn't teach it.

JWC: Roy Witte has the old German Bible that they brought with them when they came.

JCR: But it was very frowned upon—

JWC: Yeah.

JCR: To teach children whatever language they should—

JWC: Yeah.

JCR: Your heritage—because you were now an American, and so you spoke English.

BJCC: Yeah.

DCE: Was it a German Bible? I mean a—

JWC: It's German.

DCE: Was it Catholic or Protestant?

JWC: It's a Catholic Bible. They were Catholic.

BJCC: Who got that?

JWC: Roy Witte.

BJCC: You're kidding.

JWC: And it's printed in German. And he brought it to the family reunion one time, and the only that could read anything out of it was Aunt Bessie's Luanna. She could read German and she could read part of it.

BJCC: Oh. Oh. Yeah, they were in service, weren't they?

JWC: Yeah, in the service in Germany for a long time.

BJCC: What did Mother have her—I don't happen to remember it—that she would say and those—that was just a few words, and she would say it in German, but I can't remember what it was. (laughs) Oh, me.

JWC: Our mother was a whole lot like her mother. She got a lot of strengths from Grandmother.

BJCC: Much like her.

JWC: She got hilarity out of things most people would frown at, you know. Everything was funny to her, until she got real serious. Then she could be deathly serious. But Grandma was the same way. She'd joke to a point. Then get quiet, everyone would quit talking, then they would hear the serious side of Grandma.

BJCC: I used to stay with her a lot. It was fun though, just about. And she wouldn't let me work in the field. And Mama said I was—she felt like, felt like that I'd got out of work.

JWC: Yeah. (laughs)

BJCC: When we were growing up—

JWC: Yeah.

BJCC: We was at the house, and I didn't have to work. We worked in the garden.

JWC: Y'all worked in the garden but didn't go to the field.

BJCC: No, no, I didn't go to the field.

JWC: I'll tell you a funny story one time. Oh, Grandma was sunning her quilts and Uncle Walt or somebody had strung her up a line outside of the yard, and they had lots of sheep. So she had clotheslines inside the yard full of quilts, sunning them to put them up after winter. And she had some quilts out on this line outside. Well, right outside the gate was a wash pot. And Uncle Walt had told her, said, "You watch that old buck, 'cause he's mean. And you be careful when you get out of the yard." And she said, "Okay." So she got her quilts hung, and she went out to gather her quilts in, and she heard this noise. Here come this buck sheep. He was gaining on her fast. She just stepped over this wash pot and dropped the quilt down in front and it, and she said, "That buck sheep hit that wash pot," and said, "he thought he'd had a bad day." (all laugh) She said, "He just backed off and shook his head and took off." (all laugh) But that's how she was—got a big kick out of telling that.

BJCC: We all have our tummies, but Grandma had a larger one, more than usual.

JWC: Yeah.

BJCC: And she'd cross her arms up on top of her stomach, and she'd sit. I'd like to—is that the book?

DCE: Yeah. Um-hm.

BJCC: I think she has her arms crossed upon her tummy in some of those.

DCE: This one. (points to a photograph)

BJCC: Yeah. But that was her usual pose.

JWC: I used to go down there, and they had this orchard. Oh, out there by the garden they had some red bud trees.

BJCC: Yeah.

JWC: And Grandma always dipped snuff. And she'd take them old red bud roots. You know, you dig down and find them little roots—and then she'd scrape. She'd chew on them and then she'd take and put it down in that snuff box, stick it back in her jaw. I remember her [saying], "Jimmy, would you go out and dig me some red bud root?" (laughs) I went out there when I was just a little old kid and dig around under them red bud trees, cut them roots off. She never did call me James, always Jimmy.

BJCC: Huh?

JWC: She always called me Jimmy.

BJCC: Yeah. She tried to shorten us all.

JWC: Last time, I guess the last time I saw Grandma was when I don't know who passed away, but I know

Uncle Bud and all his boys and all of them was there. I guess it was—was it Uncle Jeff? Maybe.

BJCC: Maybe.

JWC: I can't remember.

BJCC: That was the last time you saw her?

JWC: Huh?

BJCC: Was that the last time you saw her?

JWC: I think maybe it was.

BJCC: Well, we grew up, and we got into things—

JWC: No, no, it wasn't Uncle Jeff. Uncle Jeff was before then. I—one of those pictures that's in here of all of them. (looks at the photograph album)

DCE: It's that next one over, I think. (refers to the photograph album)

JWC: That's at somebody's funeral.

DCE: Uh-huh.

BJCC: That was a Mounce.

JWC: Was it?

BJCC: That is when all of the Mounce kids had their pictures made.

JWC: Well that's a Mounce picture.

DCE: Yeah, I think that's it.

JWC: Yeah, there's no picture in here of when I—I don't find it.

DCE: Unh-uh.

BJCC: That was the one that Uncle Joe wrote in.

JWC: This one.

DCE: Uh-huh.

BJCC: Uh-huh. I've got—the writing thing.

DCE: Right there.

JWC: Yeah, yeah.

BJCC: And he could write with both hands.

DCE: They transcribed my great-uncle's thoughts about her.

AED: How great.

JWC: Now that might give you—

DCE: Some—

JWC: Some insight.

BJCC: Now Donna's left-handed. And her child is left-handed, but that Uncle Joe—

JWC: Uncle Joe could write with either one.

BJCC: Was the last one that I remember of the kids that—maybe he was the only one, or was Uncle Brack?

JWC: No, no.

BJCC: Uncle Brack wasn't.

JWC: Uncle Brack wasn't.

DCE: I told Marie, I've got a recording of him. And, well, they tell stories and then they were the last two kids to survive.

BJCC: Do you have an extra tape?

DCE: No, we'll have to find it.

J. M. Carroll
Margaret Hunt Carroll

J. M. Carroll
Date of birth: 9 December 1918
Communities affiliated with: Killeen, Maple, Sugar Loaf

Margaret Hunt Carroll
Date of birth: 20 April 1918
Communities affiliated with: Brookhaven, Sparta, Union Hill

Interviewed by William S. Pugsley

WSP: This is Bill Pugsley, it is about two o'clock on April 24, 2001. I am in the home of J. M. Carroll and his wife Margaret Hunt Carroll. [This interview is part of Prewitt and Associates' Fort Hood Oral History Project sponsored by the U.S. Army Fort Hood and conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University.] We are sitting at his dining room table discussing his life and growing up on Fort Hood lands before the army arrived in 1942.

Could you please, sir, give me the name of your parents and your brothers and sisters, in order of the oldest?

JMC: Oscar Carroll was my dad, and Hettie Bell—H-e-t-t-i-e—

WSP: Hettie Bell Carroll?

JMC: Yeah, well she was an Elms before. Hettie Bell Carroll Elms. If, if you want that.

WSP: Or, Elms Carroll?

JMC: Yeah, uh-huh.

WSP: And your brothers and sisters?

JMC: None.

WSP: No brothers and sisters?

JMC: No. I'm it.

WSP: Now, how are you related to Darel Bay?

JMC: My Grandmother Carroll was a Bay. My grandmother and Darel's daddy was brothers and sisters. And Darel and I are second cousins.

WSP: Did you live near Darel growing up?

JMC: Well, I was born close to Sugar Loaf Mountain, that's just on the reservation just, uh, north of Killeen.

WSP: Did your parents own the property at the time?

JMC: No, I, it was the old Carroll place, and I don't really know who owned it, but we lived there. And, uh, we lived there, oh, for a short time, and we lived pretty well all over the reservation. We didn't actually—my dad didn't own anything.

WSP: Was he sharecropping then?

JMC: Well, he sharecropped, he worked here and there, sometimes he would go off and work in the oil fields, and—oh, this, that, and the other. We moved around a whole lot. I guess before I was ten years old I'd been in four states. Yeah. And we left here when I was about five and wound up in Roswell, New Mexico—in a covered wagon.

WSP: And what did you do in Roswell?

JMC: Well, he worked at the Pine Lodge up in the Capitan Mountains for a while. That was a tourist resort.

WSP: About what year would that be?

JMC: Oh, I'd say '23 or '24.

WSP: And then where?

JMC: Then we went on down to Jenkins and Crossroads, New Mexico—and got a quarter of a section of land down there. And I suppose we lived there about a year, and then we came back to Texas to Coryell County.

WSP: You're about seven at that time?

JMC: No, six or seven, something like that. Too far, too far gone, I can't remember. (laughs)

WSP: Where did you live when you came back the second time?

JMC: Well—we moved in with my grandpa, just across the line from, or you might say on the line of Coryell and Bell County.

WSP: Just north of Killeen, one way or the other?

JMC: Yeah, north of Killeen, yeah. It was on the old road between Killeen and, uh, Gatesville over there.

WSP: Well, we have a map here, maybe this will help us out. (looks at the map)

(interruption in taping)

WSP: On the county map, you've located your home site when you returned to Coryell County. It's on the road running east-west that intersected the old highway to Gatesville from Killeen, just down the road from the Maple School. And it's a little to the east of that north-south road.

JMC: Oh, we lived there during the school year, I don't know, probably six or eight months, something like that—I don't know just how long.

WSP: During the school year?

JMC: During the school year. I went to Maple one year.

WSP: Then did you move again?

JMC: Oh, yeah. And, that, we moved back to Killeen then. We moved from there to Killeen and lived there three years. Or, uh, I went to school there the fifth, sixth, and seventh grades. And that's where my mother died whenever I was fourteen. I had just got out of the seventh grade, and then I come back down to—let's see, where is Killeen on here—

WSP: Killeen would be off the map in Bell County, down here a ways. This is just Coryell County.

JMC: Okay. Yes. Well, now here is the Sugar Loaf Mountain, right there. Where it's right. This is Sugar Loaf Mountain. All right, right back over here, that's where, well, that's where we lived whenever I was born. But then, see, my grandfather just lived up there, just over in Bell County. And, uh, my mother went up there, went, you know, went to her mother's whenever I was born. But we actually lived there whenever I was born.

I don't know, of course, you may not understand what I'm talking about. But back then, whenever a woman was going to have a baby, she usually always went home to her mother's if she lived close by, you know. So that's what my mother did. We didn't live far—what I mean, it might have been a mile and a half or two miles over there, but that's where she went. I was born over in Bell County, but our home was actually in Coryell County.

I've got a picture of her aholding me, out on the front porch of the, or out in the—well, we didn't have no porch but just out in the doorway there, holding me whenever I was just a month old, or weeks old or something. And, uh—

WSP: So there's not many memories that you have of the place near Sugar Loaf Mountain?

JMC: Well, yeah! There's a lot of my folks lived there in that same old place. See, I'm kin to nearly everybody in the country. I had eleven living grandparents whenever I was born!

WSP: Wow!

JMC: And, uh, now let me see, where's, where's Sugar Loaf Mountain—right here now. All right, my great-grandparents and my grandfather was born back over in here, close to Palo Alto, Palo Alto School. And he was born in a log cabin over there. They've been there since the beginning of time. And, uh, yeah, I knew all that country, I knew all that reservation pretty well because whenever I was a kid, well, I'd be gone, and I'd come back here—I didn't have no place to stay, but I, uh, I had kinfolks all over the place. We'd go to parties and dances everywhere. I'd come back over into—

WSP: Is there any particular place that you would consider your home after the seventh grade? Where did you move?

JMC: Well, I moved down in between Sparta and Brookhaven. You had to go around the Sugar Loaf Mountain, and it was right—it was in Bell County—it's not in there but it's right off, just right on the edge.

WSP: I thought Sparta was on the Leon River, down over here.

JMC: Maybe so, she [Mrs. Carroll] can tell you probably more about that than I can.

WSP: I'm going to turn the recorder off, and we'll look at the map.

(interruption in taping)

JMC: It's over in between Sparta and Brookhaven. And me and an old fellow would get in a wagon whenever they'd have a rodeo over at The Grove [Highway 56] and come back over here to The

Grove to watch a rodeo. And that's been a long time ago.

WSP: (looks at the map) Do you remember Seattle or Cold Springs?

JMC: Well, I remember them, but I can't ever remember being there.

WSP: The Grove is the one town you remember most?

JMC: Yeah. Yeah, I remember The Grove.

WSP: Basically after the seventh grade you lived with relatives from one place to another?

JMC: Well, I, I, I'd got up here whenever I was fifteen and I left. My daddy, when my mother passed away, well, he got up and left. There was a lot of hard feelings in the family, and I didn't know where he went.

So whenever I left, I wound up in Waco. But I's just setting out on the corner and here came some people by that I had known a good while ago. I waved them down, and they happened to know where my dad was. He was up in Arkansas. His daddy had come all the way from New Mexico, come back to Cove, Arkansas, in a wagon. My dad was up there.

So, we got in touch, and I went up there where he was. Well, he had just remarried. And, uh, I stayed there awhile, and I got on a freight train and wound up in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I stayed down there awhile and come up through Missouri and Mississippi, and back down to Cove, Arkansas. I stayed down there awhile. And, uh, I got up and left there. My dad and his wife went over to an Oklahoma to see about getting a place over there. And, uh, so I had a dime in my pocket, and I got out on the road, and I wound up back over here in Killeen.

Well, I worked between—well, I'll show you where I worked. All right, where is Silver City at now—(looks at the map)

WSP: Let's see—I'm going to turn the recorder off again.

(interruption in taping)

WSP: Okay, there's Silver City.

JMC: All right. On this road between, uh, Silver City and Killeen, oh, right up here, a couple of miles right up here, there was an old fellow that chopped his foot with a chopping axe by the name of Lee Brookshire. I went to work for him, and I worked for him a couple of months for ten dollars a month and my board. Well, whenever he got where he could hobble around. Well, naturally, well, I didn't have a job anymore.

WSP: He'd injured himself and needed some help? Were you doing cedar chopping for him?

JMC: No, I was just doing farming, or whatever there was to do. He had a farm, and he had a whole bunch of kids. All of his kids—he had a whole bunch of them that was older than I was, and, uh, but they was all scattered out—and, uh, maybe his three daughters lived there with him at that time, and his wife. But I worked for him just doing whatever there was to be done on the farm, you know. If I chopped wood, or if I plowed, or whatever I done, whatever he wanted done—

WSP: I see, he'd tell you what he needed, and then he'd just kind of watch you? But he got better after a while?

JMC: Yeah. Yeah, and then I didn't have a job. So I—I headed out toward Rock Springs to see about getting a job on a ranch. Rock Springs is west of San Antonio, well, you know where San Antonio is? All

right, Uvalde is about seventy miles west. All right, Rock Springs is about sixty or seventy miles north of Uvalde.

WSP: Beautiful area out there, up in the hills—

JMC: Yeah. Yeah. But anyway, I headed out thataway. Well, I run into an old boy that was old enough to be my daddy, and he was more or less a professional traveling man, too, a bum. (laughs) So we wound up in Bakersfield, California. See, I still had a little money, and he knew it. So he used me until we got to Bakersfield, California. He knew people out there and well, then he unshucked from me. So I found—some people told me where—

WSP: Now how did you get out there, did you take the train?

JMC: I rode a freight train out there, we rode a freight train. And then, uh, we got out there to a little old place they call Arvin. And people told me that the Kearn County Land Company needed some people to break horses and mules to the hay wagons. They had alfalfa fields out there, irrigated.

So we went out there, and I hitchhiked out thataway. I got as far as I could hitchhike and started walking up a road towards the place. I don't know how far it was. Well, anyway, it just so happened the superintendent of that outfit come along and picked me up. And, uh, he asked me a lot of questions—and I didn't know who he was—and I told him what I was looking for. He asked me how old I was. Well, of course, I had to tell him I'm eighteen because then you couldn't even work in California unless you was eighteen, you know? So I lied to him a couple of years, and I went out there, we started breaking mules to the hay wagons.

And, uh, oh, they had, oh, big hayfields—what I mean, not just little old places—the Kearn County Land Company just owned land *everywhere*. And uh, I worked there until all the hay was put up, and then we started building up the irrigation ditches with the four-horse fresno scraper. And, uh, it's about as long as this table is. And, so—

WSP: That's the scraper they used before they had the caterpillar tractor do the road scraping. It had the same kind of blade but it would trail after horses, right?

JMC: Yeah. But it had, they had four horses hooked to it.

WSP: And you were driving this team?

JMC: Yeah, yeah, I was driving this team. You'd catch ahold of them and put your elbow in there where you could kinda move the reins around, you know, and then you had this long handle that you'd scoop up a bunch of dirt with. And you had to keep it down. And if you wasn't very careful that thing could catch and fly over and hit you, and it'd maybe break your neck or something.

WSP: The lever that you held down with your right hand determined how deep the cut was going to be?

JMC: Yes, that's right. And we'd build up the irrigation ditches. And then we started putting—

WSP: Is this the drainage ditches along the side of the road? Or is this in the fields themselves?

JMC: Just out through the fields. What I mean, they might be along the side of the road, or they might be coming down—see, they had a lot of irrigation wells out there. I didn't have nothing to do with that, but they, that's where they flooded the fields—you know, every year.

And, uh, after we done all that, well, we started, uh, putting fences around the alfalfa fields. They brought in cattle from New Mexico and Arizona, and they were just about as wide as your hand whenever they got there, and just every day they just looked like it, it's been puffed up—they was on

them alfalfa fields, and boy, they was doing good!

And, uh, so whenever the hay season was over, well, they laid everybody off but me and two or three men. And I could have stayed there, I guess, until now. But I kinda got the wanderlust. They had some cowboys out there, and I always wanted to be a cowboy, but—I knew how, but they didn't give me the chance. So I quit.

I come down to Deming, New Mexico, and I went to work helping a man move a bunch of cattle. Back then they just had a lot of open country and those cattle would drift. So we went over—oh, maybe fifty, sixty, anywhere from sixty to a hundred miles—over there and got a bunch of cattle that had drifted that far and started moving them back.

WSP: They'd drift a hundred miles or so?

JMC: Well, that's just—what I mean, more or less—I don't know how long they'd been drifting. But anyway, that's what we done. And, uh, we moved them over there, and we got through with that, well, uh, of course I was out of job. And then the man come to town—they wanted me to, uh—now you might have heard about drift fences and things like that?

WSP: For snow?

JMC: No, for cattle, to keep them from drifting. See, it's just like—the gap of this mountain, from over here where the mountain is to over there—well, they might put a fence across there to keep the cattle from going across there. They wouldn't want to go over the mountain—they would, they could—but that's what they put them fences up for.

WSP: Cattle tend not to go up the hills, so if you put a fence in the valley that would keep them from drifting out of that area.

JMC: Yeah. Yeah, but anyway, this drift fence—I don't know how long it had been down. They knew where it was, but you go over there, and you couldn't even see it because you didn't know where it was. They'd show you were the drift fence was. I guess it was a four-wire fence, the best I remember, maybe a three-wire. But they'd hired me, and I know a couple of more guys, and, uh, we rolled that barbed wire up.

Well, when I got through with that, well, the man, 'course he'd found out about me. And, uh. He was sick in bed. He, he was—I don't know what he had, but—he wasn't all that old, but anyway he was trying to die, looked like.

WSP: Who was this again?

JMC: A fellow by the name of Williams, I don't remember, it's been so long ago.

WSP: He was a supervisor?

JMC: No, he *owned* the ranch where we was running the drift fence. And, uh, he told me, said, "Son," said, "I haven't got any more work for you, but you can stay here, and, uh, we'll more or less board you, you know, you just live here." He had a boy that was about eighteen, and he had a daughter, oh, maybe twenty, twenty-one, I don't know. He had two kids, but he kind of taken pity on me. Well there wasn't nobody going to pity me—(laughs) I was on my own!

But anyway, I fiddled around and went over to Lordsburg, [New Mexico]. My headquarters was at Deming, but then I went over to Lordsburg, about forty or fifty miles over there. An old boy talked me into going over there. He was a pool shark, he called it. So he found out I had some money. So he went over there and started shooting pool and lost a good bit of my money, and then I went down to

the carnival, and they taken the rest of it.

WSP: Where?

JMC: I went to a carnival!

WSP: A carnival! And they took the rest of it.

JMC: Yes, they taken the rest of my money. (laughs) But anyway, I come back to Deming, and I didn't have no money. So I caught me another freight train and wound up in Killeen again, just as broke as I was when I left. I gotta, I, I was real smart. (laughs)

WSP: How old were you when you came back to Killeen that time?

JMC: Well, I was, uh, I was still—I wasn't seventeen until December, and this was, oh, about October, November. It was cold. But I had to, coming back on the freight train, I had to get off over there, oh, somewhere back up the line on the Santa Fe. I had to get off. I was in a coal car, and it was so cold I couldn't stay in there. So whenever they stopped at some little old town over there, I got off. And, uh, I was walking down the road and trying to get me a ride. I wasn't getting no ride so about a quarter of a mile back in there, a couple of hundred yards or whatever, there was a house down there.

So I walked down there, and I knocked on the door, uh, and, uh, old elderly lady—of course, I don't say she's old 'cause she probably wasn't as old as I am now—but anyway, she come to the door and I said, "Could I come in, or do some work or something for something to eat and, uh, and to get warm, you know?" She said, "Well, I, come on in." And she fixed me something to eat. Well, by that time I was getting a little drowsy. She had a wood stove a-setting a little big further back from the wall than this one. And she said, "You can lay down over there behind that stove and go to sleep if you want to." So I did. And she fed me, you know, and whenever I woke up, well, I, of course I didn't want to bother her anymore, and, uh, so I thanked her, and I went out to the road, and I—

I can't remember whether I caught a ride or went back up there and caught another freight train. But I, I, whenever I wound up in Killeen, on the west side of Killeen over there, well, I got off the train and walked on into town. I guess I was awful lucky to be so dumb. (laughs)

WSP: You had quite an adventure in a year and a half.

JMC: Oh, yeah. Well, I rode freight trains all over country!

WSP: So I take it that wasn't the last time you left Killeen?

JMC: Oh, no. Oh, I stayed around there at Killeen. I had an aunt that lived there in town. And I worked at the bakery there a little bit and stayed with her. And, uh, then, that was whenever they had the CCC camps.

WSP: Did you work at a CCC camp?

JMC: Yeah, in there seven months.

WSP: We have almost no information about CCC camps. Why don't you tell me a little about that. Do you know where was the camp located?

JMC: Yeah.

WSP: Was it in Coryell County?

JMC: No, it was in Bartlett. You know where Bartlett is.

WSP: Bartlett County?

JMC: Texas. All right, It's uh, south of Temple. It's, uh, in Williamson County. You know where Georgetown is? Well, that's the county seat of Williamson County. It wasn't far from Georgetown, I don't know just how far, but, uh, not all that far. It wasn't that far from Killeen 'cause I could come over, back to Killeen nearly every weekend.

And, uh, 'course, when I was in the CCC camp, well, we built up these irrigations, but not irrigations—but these, uh, well, these little old farms was washing away—where they'd have a ditch, we'd build up a concrete spillway there to kind of stop, slow the water down. And, uh, that's what we done. And, uh, like I say, I stayed over there seven months.

WSP: How did you like that?

JMC: Well, it was all right, but they didn't have no horses for me to ride over there. (laughs) Well, I'd already rodeoed, you know, whenever I was a kid, whenever I was sixteen. When I started rodeoing. I'd ride, well, first rodeo I ever made was in Belton, Texas, when I was sixteen. And I rode a bull over there. And back then, whenever they—they just kept all the bulls in the arena. Every time they'd buck one out—they wouldn't pen them, corner them like they do now, or back there the other way.

So I rode this bull, and I got out there, and he was right in the middle of all them bulls. Well, I wasn't about to get off right then. Finally I got the chance to get off. So I come back and run into a girl that we went to school with, my wife and I, and she said, "How much money did you win?" I said, "Well, I don't know whether I won anything or not." She said, "Well, you rode him longer than anybody!" (laughs) He probably wasn't all that tough, but anyway—(laughs) I rode him because I didn't find a good place to get off. (laughter) And, uh—

WSP: When you were at the CCC camp, did they have certain routines you were supposed to follow?

JMC: Oh, yeah, just like, just like the army or something or another like that. You know, you had barracks—there was twenty, thirty, forty men stayed in a barrack there. They had three or four barracks there, I don't know just how many. You could go to school at night. I taken typing, I taken shorthand and stuff like that you know. And, uh, then I joined the national guard over in Temple. And they paid you, oh, I don't know, very little, maybe two dollars a month or something or another, just to go over there. Back then money, you know, there just wasn't none.

WSP: But what would you do with the national guard?

JMC: Well, there was a machine gun company over there. So, uh, I stayed over there and then whenever I quit the CCC camp, well then I started rodeoing again. Well, you can quit the national guard any time you wanted to. You didn't have to show up if you didn't want to, you know.

WSP: I didn't know that. I thought they had an enlistment, or you had to sign up for a certain length of time?

JMC: Well, things have changed a whole lot—what I mean, uh, over the years—and, uh, they might have had rules and regulations, but at that time that didn't mean nothing to me. Whenever I got ready to go somewhere, I went.

But anyway, I got out of the CCC camp in seven months. And, uh, well, we had all kinds of routines to do—like if a sewer line would break, you'd have to get out there and fix it. Or—the, the winter was bad, and we didn't get to do all the work that we should have, you know, because whenever it was raining or muddy, or too, just too bad to be out, you know, So we had—

WSP: You'd stay indoors at that point.

JMC: Well, you stayed in the area, that, you didn't have to stay indoors. You could go over to this barracks

or that barracks, or, or wherever you wanted to go, you know. But then at night you could go wherever you wanted to go around Bartlett there. And Bartlett you could throw a rock across. It's not much bigger now, I don't think—it might be, but—

Well, I was heading out of—that's whenever I knew so much about Coryell County. I'd come, come back on the weekends to Killeen. It was like Darel and them, they lived—he had a brother, oh, he's about two, two and a half years older than I was. He wasn't hardly as tall as Darel, but he and I was—they, we were running buddies. Darel was a good bit younger, you know, he was two or three years younger.

But anyway, we used to gang up and go over to Killeen, get drunk, fight and all kinds of stuff like that. Uh, his brother and I used to fight all the time—what I mean, we wasn't mad, but we'd fight. And of course I was always the little guy, and he was a big guy, and I had to really hang in there. (laughs)

WSP: He was as big as Darel? Darel's a pretty tall fellow.

JMC: Well, yeah, he's not hardly as tall as Darel, but he was a little heavier. He's still living. I don't know just where he lives out, he lives—oh, a couple of hundred miles from here somewhere back over towards East Texas. He's got a boy over there, that live with him—

But see, I missed all them people. From the time I actually left here—we got married in, uh, February in '38, I guess. Well, I'd, I'd been gone—whenever I was still—in '37, uh, we decided to get married, but I didn't have no money. So I went to Rock Springs, and I went to work again out there. And I worked there eight months, and I saved up eighty dollars, well, I come back. And we got married, and we moved to Rock Springs. And I was away from the country for a long time—you might say from—outside of just coming in once in a while, you know? From '38 until '74, I was away from here. Whenever I moved back up in here, I didn't know where Darel or anybody—I'd lived here two years before I, not two years, but a year before I knew his sister lived right, right between here and the store over there—(laughs)

I'd say I'm kin to half the people in Coryell County, now—I didn't know it till I come back here. See her brother had bought this place, and he lived in Casa Grande, Arizona. And he was a mechanic, he'd saved him up a little money, and he wanted to buy this place. And, uh—

WSP: Your wife's brother?

JMC: My wife's brother, Don Hunt. And, uh—(pause)

I got hurt down on the waterfront, and he wanted 'em to move up here. And, uh, so I'd been down there eighteen years on the waterfront—

WSP: Which waterfront?

JMC: On Houston. (pause)

And, uh, so I moved up here. Well, just like we're sitting here talking and nothing is put down on paper—and he told me—I asked him, I said "What are you going with this old house?" And he said, "The old house is yours, you can do whatever to with it." He says, of course, it looks bad now. But it didn't have no ceiling, no walls, or no nothing on it. And, uh, I fixed the old house up the best I could. And, uh—

Then, uh—he had, he had been married three times, had two sets of kids—well, he taken lung cancer, and he died in about a year. Well, that just left—he was a young fellow, about your size, maybe a little heavier and about forty years old—you'd just think that he was going to live from

now on, you know? So whenever he died, well, I sat here a couple of years before I found out who was going to handle it, you know, and I went ahead and bought it then. That's how come I came to be here. And I thought it was the sorriest place I'd ever saw! (laughs) But anyway, I wouldn't, I wouldn't live nowhere else, now.

WSP: It sure looks pretty in the springtime.

JMC: Oh, yeah. It's. Well, this whole country—it's always been, had, had some good years, but it's has lots of bad years, too.

WSP: Do you remember bad years back in the 1930s?

JMC: Yeah, and in '25 and all along in there.

WSP: Nineteen twenty-five? What was that like?

JMC: Well, see, I was about six, seven years old. And, uh, my grandpa used to be a—Grandpa Charlie Elms was a cattle buyer. And he had bought a bunch of cattle—oh—(pause) Charlie Elms, he bought, say—I don't know exactly, but maybe like he'd bought a hundred steers at a hundred dollars a head. Well, you know, that's ten thousand dollars. And that was a lot of money then. All right, zoom—right on down. He kept them, oh, I don't know, a year or two or whatever, and, uh, I guess finally had to just about give them away. Well, that's whenever he lost his place over there—see, they has, had owned a whole lot of country back over there. But he was real honest, and he just let the bank go ahead and take his place. And that's whenever he moved down between Sparta and Brookhaven, and that's when I moved down there with him. Yeah.

And, uh, but he was, he was a broke man—what I mean, it didn't just break him money-wise, it broke him—

WSP: Spirit?

JMC: Spirits.

WSP: Now this was a result of the drought in 1925?

JMC: And the Depression.

WSP: The Depression of 1929 and 1930.

JMC: Yeah, it came all along in there. What I mean, it, it was a pretty bad Depression on nearly everywhere. That's how come we moved around a whole lot. And 'course, they had oil fields and my dad worked in the oil fields, and we went to the cotton patch in the fall of the year—'cause just my dad and my mother and I, could make more money picking cotton than he could if he had a regular job somewhere. So we picked cotton in South Texas, we picked cotton in West Texas. We chopped cotton over around Killeen, and all kind of stuff like that. And it got to where you couldn't hardly make a living doing anything. You just couldn't hardly *buy* a job then.

And, oh, people stayed here, 'course, some people, wherever you're at, have got a little money. You know, they're, they're lucky enough—you see that yourself—and uh, we just didn't happen to be one of them that had any money. And I suppose that my dad wasn't too good a manager. He just kind of done what he wanted to, and when he done it, if it worked out, fine and if it didn't work out, fine.

And that's the way *I* was brought up. I didn't ever get depressed about anything. I've slept right out—when I was hoboing around, I've slept right out in the ditches. Whenever I'd be hitchhiking and didn't nobody come along at night, I'd lay down in the ditch and go to sleep. That didn't bother me. I

might get a little hungry, but I've been hungry several times. (laughs)

WSP: Can you describe the way the community was during your youth?

JMC: Well, they had, they had a lot of good people, they was nearly all just poor people. Just, you take forty or fifty or a hundred acres of land, and they had six or eight kids, well, they made a living on it. They had their chickens, they had their eggs, and they had their milk, and—'course, about the only time you could kill meat would be back in the wintertime because you didn't have no refrigeration or nothing you know.

WSP: Did you help out with that?

JMC: Well, yeah. Uh, wherever I was at, well, I helped out with that kind of, kinda living, you know. 'Course, like I say, I was always with somebody else. My, my home—when we lived in Killeen three years, we lived kind of out on the edge of town, and we had our chickens, we had our cows. And, uh, we had to carry eggs into town and sell them. And we had two or three customers that would churn butter, churn their cream, make butter and carry it in and sell it for about a quarter of a—twenty-five cents a pound, or something like that. That's the way lots of people done.

'Course, the biggest part of people were better off than we was. But it's like I say, it didn't, didn't bother me a bit in the world. I was just like I am right now—I eat just as good as anybody, I sleep just as good as anybody. I haven't got much money, I haven't got a very good place, but anyway, it don't bother me.

WSP: How did your mother cope with all this? Your father had left town, but your mother is still in town.

JMC: No, my mother died when I was fourteen.

WSP: That's right, that's right, I'm sorry.

JMC: And, uh, but she'd been raised up to work, too. She'd, work didn't bother her. (laughs) She, she was, I guess, as good a woman as ever was. But she was the slowest cotton picker there ever was, and my dad had a brother that was the same way. They could work together and never stop, just keep a-going, keep a-going. And at the end of the day they was lucky if they could get two hundred pounds of cotton, whereas somebody else was getting three or four, or five hundred. You know? They just naturally slow people. But they didn't ever get real excited about anything.

WSP: What was community life in Killeen? How big was Killeen?

JMC: Oh, I'd say about five or six hundred people there, and everybody went up to that old brick school, from the first grade, well I believe they had eleven grades then. Uh, well, they've got twelve grades now, I think, they had eleven grades then, and, uh—they, from the first grade right on up, through high school, you went to that old brick school right over there. One school.

WSP: How long were you there?

JMC: Three years—

WSP: How was that?

JMC: Well, it was a pretty nice school. I, I enjoyed it. Well, I played football, and I played baseball. 'Course, we weren't big time or nothing like that, being that young, you know, but we all tried. I lived about two miles from school, I guess, something like that. And I always wanted to be a runner, and I'd run to school the biggest part of the time. Then, and then whenever we played football or played baseball, or whatever we played, well then I'd go on home, you know—'course, I had my chores

there at home. But, uh—

WSP: What was the distance between your house and the school?

JMC: About two, about two miles. I used to run it, you know, 'cause I always wanted to be a long-distance runner. And I never did learn to smoke—I tried—and I never did learn to drink—I tried. But, uh, that didn't fit in with what I wanted to do, you know? So, uh—but anyway, everybody tells me I'm in awful good shape to be as old as I am. And I, that's the only thing I can figure, just, uh, it wasn't because I was smart, it was just something I wanted to do.

And a lot of people smoke, but that's their business if they want to do it. A lot of people drink, if they want to, well fine. I might wind up with lung cancer, but I haven't so far. I had a heart attack about six years ago. (laughs) Yeah. I went to a rodeo at Corsicana.

Her [Mrs. Carroll's] mother was having a birthday over in Belton and this boy—a friend of ours had gotten killed up there around Granbury, some boys had wanted to take him out, or borrow his car, or—I believe they offered him some money to take them somewhere. Got out there, well, they wanted to go, they'd been stealing stuff, and they wanted him to take them to Florida. He said, "No, no way." So anyway, they shot him a couple of times, killed him, stomped him, put him out in the bar ditch. Well, this boy was going up there for his funeral. I was set to go to Corsicana for that rodeo and come back to the funeral over there.

Well, anyway, when I got over there, well—I was hurting before I got to Waco, and I drove up over there—well, I knew nearly everybody and an old boy said, "How you getting along?" I said, "Well, I'm hurting pretty bad." So I went out and roped a little old calf and didn't handle him too good. And, uh—then, uh, every time we'd pass one another he'd say, "How you feeling?" Well, I'd tell him, I wasn't feeling too good. So I heeled a couple of steers, and, uh, when I heeled that last one he said, "How you feel?" I said, "Man, I've got to go see a doctor." So he just unsaddled my old horse whipped me around there to a hospital, about half a mile or a mile from the rodeo pen. And man, I was—I thought I'd done had it. But anyway, I got over that.

WSP: You're look like you're doing real well!

JMC: (laughs) Well, I uh, stayed two days over there, and stayed two days here at Gatesville. And they was going to send me to Scott and White. I said, "Well, just send me to the VA." So I went over there to the VA, and I stayed over there for about a week or ten days. And they couldn't do nothing for me over there, so they sent me to Audrey Murphy in San Anton'. So I stayed down there another week or ten days or whatever. And they got ready to make, give me a bypass, and they went up my leg with that thing to look around, and I had made my own bypass. So they pulled that thing out. My wife and boy come up there that day, but they had a little car trouble, and they got there a little bit after the deal was over with. So they had to come on home. (laughs) Well, I don't guess they had got home till the doctor come in there and said, "You can go home tomorrow." So they had to make a trip all the way back to San Anton' to pick me up. (laughs)

But, I, talking about that, I've got to take a pill, too.

WSP: All right, we'll turn the recorder off for a moment.

(interruption in taping)

WSP: Did you go hunting or fishing when you were a kid on the Fort Hood lands?

JMC: Oh, yeah, uh, the Cowhouse Creek went right down between the—well, when we lived between Sparta and Brookhaven, well, it wasn't a, well it wasn't a mile down there—at the back of our field

down there then—where you could go down and take, go swimming or fish, or do whatever you wanted to. I used to fish under rocks down there. The water might not be that deep, but there'd be a lot of rocks in the creek, and they'd go down there and fish under there, and they're liable to catch a fish weighing thirty-five or forty pounds. They'd have a big fish fry and everybody in the country would come around and—have get-togethers like that.

WSP: You'd catch a thirty-pound fish out of water that wasn't more than three feet deep?

JMC: Oh, yeah! Well, I'll tell you what! I'll tell you what, we've caught fish in water that wasn't that deep!

WSP: A foot and a half?

JMC: The big fish, there'd be a hole under there, and they'd go in there to lay their eggs and things like that, you know. And, uh, they'd go under there, and the grown men—'course, I was just a kid then and about all I'd do—maybe that rock would have two or three different holes and you'd have to stop up the hole. Then one of them grown men would go in there and grab that fish in the gills and pull him out. And, uh—

Oh, back over here—I don't know whether if Eliga is on here or not—(turns to the map)

WSP: Let's see.

JMC: Have you ever got ahold of Cleo Bay or any of them people?

WSP: Not yet.

JMC: Well, Cleo Bay, 'course you know who he is? He's the guy that owns own all the car lots back over around Killeen. You see it on TV. All right, he's a cousin of ours.

WSP: He's related to Darel, I take it?

JMC: Well, yeah, he's, he's Darel's second cousin and he's my third cousin. Now he went to school over here at the, at Maple, too. He lived, uh—let's see—(looks at the map) All right, he lived right back down this road, back off down here on the other side of the road from where—right along in here. His Grandpa, Bony (??) Bay, lived back over in here, too. That's where I always stayed—an old road that come back up in there—some people by the name of Hoover lived up there.

WSP: (points at the map) That road there?

JMC: It could, could be. It's just been so long ago. That. uh—

WSP: This is a pretty accurate map from 1939.

JMC: I'm not questioning the map, I'm questioning about what's up here! What I can really remember.

Now Uncle Bony Bay, you know, he lived off down this road here. And, uh, Cleo's daddy's name was Arthur Bay, and they lived right back on the other side of the road over there. But, uh, Uncle Bony had a—his youngest kid was named Ted. And he went to school out there at the same time that I did. And we'd come across here, wherever they lived there, and we'd stop in there and, uh, get us a big chunk of cornbread and a piece of fat bacon. And we'd eat it, you know, after school, you know. We was hungry. And, uh, oh, Cleo Bay would know a whole lot about it, that, too. 'Cause, well, he went in the army, I think, and—oh, I don't know much about him. I used to know him when I was a kid.

He was about Darel's age, he was younger than I was. But they moved to Killeen, then, and his daddy and his uncle had the store. They started the store over there, see, I don't know, in '25 or somewhere like that. Well, they had all kinds of kinfolks, and they'd come in there. That's where we sold our

eggs and where we bought our groceries, and all this, that, and the other when we lived in Killeen.

WSP: Cleo Bay's parents' store?

JMC: At his, his parents, or—well, his, his daddy and his uncle owned the store. (pause)

WSP: You said you went fishing and caught some very good fish. What about hunting?

JMC: Well, we used to hunt—there wasn't, uh, oh, we used to catch ringtails and a few coons, but *everybody* hunted then and, uh, it was pretty hard to come by.

WSP: Not much good hunting?

JMC: No, there wasn't—what I mean, they just kinda hunted out, you know? Everybody would, uh—oh, they'd, you'd catch polecats, and that's the worse thing in the world to catch, you know. But you still, you'd, uh, you'd catch 'em and skin 'em out, and—oh, I don't know, remember now, whether they'd people come by and bought them or if you had to take them to a little old store and sell them. Or I can't really remember how we got rid of them. I had an uncle that was, uh, about six years older than I was. And 'course I, he was my hero, and whatever he, he said or done, or we tracked this or that or whatever, we done it like he wanted to do it, you know—'cause he was all that much smarter than I was. (laughs)

WSP: And what did he say to do with skunks?

JMC: Well, he, uh, he'd catch them and skin them out. You know, we'd put them out on a board and let them dry, and then sell them to whoever—wherever he had to sell them, I can't even remember. Seemed to me like they had to take them to some stores, but I can't, just can't remember.

WSP: How did you keep the skunk from, you know, letting go?

JMC: You didn't. Well, you'd, lots of times—well, I won't say lots of times, but time or two I've had to go home from school on account of that, and other kids did, too, from catching 'em skunks, you know? Well, naturally they was, you'd smell bad, you know. You just couldn't hardly wash it off.

WSP: You'd smell bad for days?

JMC: Oh, yeah! That's, uh—(laughs) 'course, that's a good thing you, you didn't have no air conditioning, and you didn't have no screens on your windows, you didn't have no screens on your doors. You probably didn't have no ceiling. If you had a ceiling in your house, then, it was just kind of old cheesecloth stuff—you could look right straight up through there at night lots of times and see the stars through the old wood shingles. That's what people lived in. (pause)

Oh, I could, I could show you a many a picture, uh. I just happen to have a lot of old pictures that people haven't got. I've got a picture of Darel's daddy. He was a big tall man. And, uh, my daddy was about my height, and uh, oh, weighed about 235. And, uh, we'd been off down around Raymondville, close to Brownsville, down there picking cotton. And my daddy's got one of these big Mexican hats that had the high top.

Well, he come back and Uncle Ike—that's Darel's daddy—do you remember people that had yo-yos? Okay, that's whenever they first come out. Well, uh, Uncle Ike was up in a chair—'course he was like six-three or four—and then, he was up in a chair with this yo-yo, and my daddy was acting like it's, he was wanting the, the yo-yo, you know, like a couple of little ol' kids. They was great friends whenever they was kids. They used to wrestle around like Darel's brother and I used to do. And one time that—Uncle Ike was married then—and my dad and Uncle Ike was wrestling, and they fell up over on the bed and, uh (laughs) broke it down. And, uh, Darel's mother ran them both plumb out of

the house! I can remember—(laughs)

WSP: Broke his nose?

JMC: No, broke the bed down! And Aunt, Aunt Maude run 'em out of the house, see and, that's Darel's mother. I can remember 'em telling that and laughing, you know, after they got older, you know. But they was quite the rambunctious kind of guys.

WSP: Did people know where Indians used to camp, old pottery, things like that? Was that something that was known back then?

JMC: Well, yeah, uh. Right over there where, uh, well, where, all right—let's get back to the map over here. Yeah. All right, there's Silver City, and here's the crossroads. Right back over here, just about where this first dot is, well, Cleo's uncle, Bill Bay lived over there. And we was over there helping them do something or another and, uh, right off down in here, just a little ways from that road—I, I was just a little old kid, I can't even remember how old, but I've got arrowheads right now that I picked up whenever I was four or five years old there—

WSP: What about pottery, or the caves where they used to live?

JMC: I don't remember the caves. Now, way back there—I know you have heard of Robert Gray, that's the Gray Air Force Base?

WSP: Yes'ir.

JMC: It was named after him. He was some months younger than I was. Well, I went to school with him. Well, Robert had made—that big bombing raid they made on Japan, way over—

WSP: Doolittle's raid—

JMC: Yeah. Well, he was in that. Well, anyway, his daddy was a Mason, my daddy was a Mason, and, uh, one of my cousin's husband was a Mason. So they had got a map, a Spanish map that sent them to a cave over there on the reservation or somewhere, I can't remember where.

But uh, there was supposed to be a big box of money over there, where some of the people that was trail drivers or whatever they was had stashed that money—

I guess on Indian raids or something, and, uh—they went over there, and they found the directions and everything, they found the cave, and they found the box, but somebody had already got the money out of it.

WSP: No kidding—

JMC: Yeah. And, uh, but as far as pottery and stuff like that, I don't know anything about that. But there was Indians in here, uh—oh, these stories go back about Indian Dave Elms. I think he was—I don't know how much kin he was to us, bound to been. But, uh, I think the Indians had captured him, at one time, and as far as I can understand, they might have castrated him. But I remember—I've got a cousin, a first cousin that is named David Elms that they named, you know, used the same name.

WSP: What was the relationship with him and Charlie Elms?

JMC: I don't know. Indian Dave? I don't know—there's just some of the kinfolks—back then, if, uh, a family went under and they had some kids, well, they just brought them on in, you know, and, uh, raised them or whatever. I don't, don't really know.

WSP: Well, you've had a very colorful life, but a lot of it was spent off the Fort Hood reservation.

JMC: Oh, yeah, you bet, you bet. Uh-huh, that's why I told you that Darel could tell you a lot more about it, about it than I could. I've been all over the reservation, uh, just like going to parties and dances, and riding horseback through the country, and all kinds of stuff like that. Now, back over here at Maple, they used to—at the end of school every year, they'd have a goat roping. And a lot of these little old schools around here, they'd have a goat roping, and what not—

WSP: Is this in conjunction with the end-of-school ceremonies, with the picnic and school plays—

JMC: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

WSP: Or is this a separate function?

JMC: No, these, that's what, at the end of school they'd have a big picnic and, uh, and a goat roping, and stuff like that. Everybody would get together and bring a bunch of stuff together, you know. And, that's, of course, that's, uh, I missed a lot of them, but I, I went over there to Silver City nearly all the time. We lived—at one time I was working for another uncle over there on the other side of Killeen—you know where Florence is? Well, he lives over there in that area, and, uh—I've rode from—well, he lived in between Killeen and Florence, at Reese's Creek, and I rode from his place to over there, a horseback, plumb over the Silver City to a goat roping, and, uh, that's a whole lot—well, one of the reason why I knew the reservation, I was probably had been over more of it than nearly anybody else. But at staying at one place very long, I didn't.

WSP: What do you think about the roads in the area?

JMC: Well, they just wasn't hardly—I'll tell you a good one, how good the roads was. There's one of my cousins, a little older than I was—and like I say, we used to go into Killeen, and would, there was a bootlegging place south of Killeen. You could go over there, and you could buy whiskey over there. So I'd been over there and, uh, I bought half a pint. And we hadn't ever, we'd already been drinking, but anyway I still had this half a pint that never had been opened. And one, another one of my cousins had a little old bobtailed Ford—it was just chopped off, they'd use it out in the pasture, you know? But that's what he drove to town, what we went to parties in and stuff like that. But anyway, he come in, and he got with us. He said, "Let me have that half, half pint of whiskey," he said, "I've got a lot of catching up to do!" So I just handed it to him, and, man, he just downed the whole cotton-picker!

Well, we started home and, uh, he lived over in Coryell County. And, uh, so he told us, "You better drive, I'm pretty drunk." Well, coming back—it'd been raining and the old ruts was deep, you know, and, uh, anyway, I was driving along there, and I got the front wheels in one set of ruts and the hind wheels in another set of ruts, and he leaned over like this, to see what was happening, and he like to have fell out. Man! It sobered him up, just like that! He said, "I believe I can drive from now on." And that's the way the roads, roads was everywhere. You might get stuck right in the middle of the cotton-picking road in bad weather. But of course them old Model Ts were pretty high off the ground anyway, you know. They had made twenty-one-inch wheels, or something like that, you know.

WSP: We understand there was some road improvement during the early 1930s. The county had grading crews that came out and scraped the roads flat.

JMC: Well, now, they, they did, they had some pretty good roads, all right. Uh, that uncle that I, where I was at and rode the horse from over there, he was, uh, uh, maintainer driver. He worked for the commissioner over there, well, he worked for nearly all of them over there at that time in, in Bell County. He come around Sparta and Brookhaven, and back over thataway. He'd come up to the county line and all that stuff. His name was Harlin Sutton (??). Harlin Sutton (??). He was raised right there in Killeen. He had a lot of brothers and sisters—well, he had a lot of brothers, I know, but just one sister that I can really remember, and, uh—

WSP: But were the roads better in Bell County than Coryell?

JMC: Well, I would, I would say that they was, uh—now, maybe all the roads wasn't just like I said they was, but that one was. That's the way I can remember the roads. It wouldn't mean, uh—they was passable all right, but you can take this one and go on down there right now, and there's people stuck right down there. Yeah. I can take you right down there and show it to you right now, and uh—now from here to the pavement is a good road. Well, that's the way nearly all of them was back then.

JMC: You might find one place maybe for two or three miles that it was good road, then all of a sudden maybe there'd be a bad place there, a sink place, or a creek come across it, or something or another like that. Now, they had bridges, they had, uh, across Cowhouse, and, uh, iron bridges. I've got pictures of them, and, uh—they was, they was passable, but, uh, they was a hell of a long ways from being good! (laughs) Yeah. As what you'd call good now, you know?

WSP: Did you ever see the roads in good condition? When did they start to get good?

JMC: Well, now, I imagine they really started getting good after I left here. I wouldn't doubt, as far as road conditions, I could be just as wrong as I could be right and think that I'm telling you exactly how it was. But see, I never even owned a car until I was twenty-seven years old, so I wouldn't, wouldn't really know. Now whenever I was riding horseback, I'd ride up and down the road and especially in the fall of the year when they was gathering corn, they'd haul their corn in, a lot of it would fall out, fall off, fall off on the road. I'd stop there and gather that corn up, and I'd have corn to feed my horse.

WSP: Mr. Carroll has just returned with a box, a Super-X plastic shotgun shell box, and it's full of Indian arrowheads—

JMC: Artifacts.

WSP: Yes, arrowheads, some of them quite nice-looking.

JMC: Now this old watch, the first time it was, was worked on was nineteen and one. I had it fixed up. That belonged to either my great-grandpa, or my Grandpa Elms.

WSP: It's still working!

JMC: Oh, yeah, I had it fixed up, it just needed to be cleaned.

WSP: This is a Waltham watch, looks like a silver case, with a glass lens, no cover, twist knob with a string tied to the loop. It's working. It looks beautiful. And it belonged to your Grandfather Elms.

JMC: I imagine it belonged to my great-grandfather—that would be the best I could—

WSP: These Indian arrowheads that you found were just picked up over time?

JMC: No, these have been picked up since I've been on this place right here.

WSP: Really?

JMC: Yeah.

WSP: There are some really nice looking pieces.

JMC: Now the ones I had found when I was a kid, I've got them, but I don't know just exactly, I couldn't put my hands on them.

(searches for arrowhead collection)

JMC: I got one that I just found yesterday.

(interruption in taping)

JMC: Okay. This was awful hard country. Now when I left here, I was like I say, I was getting ten dollar a month and my board. And that was about all you could get, sixty cents a day and your dinner, and stuff like that. I left here, and when I went to California, I got—that man paid me a dollar and a quarter a day, and I just had to work eight hours. And I thought I was a half a day because here you got up early in the morning, and you worked late at night. And I had never run into anything like California. At that time that was the best place in the world for a working man.

WSP: And that's in the 1930s?

JMC: Yeah. That's, uh—whenever I got a rodeo program from Bakersfield, California, I believe in '34 or '35—I forget now which, but anyway, I was sixteen, whatever. And they wasn't in, in that '34 or '35, they wasn't hardly anybody that you run into from California. They was from Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana—somewhere like that. They wasn't—nobody was from California. Everybody went out there to their fruit harvest, you know, and stuff like that. I never did work in fruit harvest, but I worked out there.

WSP: Some guys went out there and ended up in the movie business.

JMC: Well. Yeah.

WSP: Someone good with horses could get some work.

JMC: Well, uh, I, uh—well, after I went to Houston, and I went back down—do you know where Brackettville is? All right, that's where John Wayne put that *Alamo* picture on. Well, my oldest boy and I went down there and worked as horse wranglers down there, for, uh—see, they'd had a, a ship blow up in the ship channel down there in Houston, and we couldn't work. So I knew—I went, I went out there, and, uh—we worked there—I don't know, week or whatever, and, uh, it come a bad spell, and they had to close down, so we went back to Houston. And that boy, he was single, and he wanted to go ahead and work down there. I would have stayed with that outfit out there—we was making, uh—if you was in the movies, I think, just as an extra, they paid twelve dollars a day. A horse wrangler they paid forty dollars a day. So, so I'd said, "Say, I'm, I'm a horse wrangler." Well, uh, people down there knew me because I'd lived in Uvalde, you know? So, uh, that's what, what I done. But I knew several of several of them, and, uh—then this youngest boy, he went over to Bartlett, you know, I was telling you about, and they put that movie on—I believe that *Stars Fell on Henrietta*, or something or another like that. Well, that's where they made that movie. This boy here went down and worked on that movie. (calls to his wife) What was that movie star's name?

MHC: Oh, gee, I can't recall—

JMC: Oh, it's that old guy that played on that—

MHC: He played Gus in *Lonesome Dove*.

JMC: Yeah. He made uh—he, uh—you remember that *Lonesome Dove* picture?

WSP: Hold on a second—

(interruption in taping)

JMC: But anyway, he was making that picture down there, or he was the main star. And this boy here went down there and worked on it two or three days. He was in the navy reserve and he had to go to

California, the reason why he didn't stay with them down there.

WSP: Well, I thank you for your time. I appreciate you setting aside your afternoon to talk to me.

JMC: Well—

WSP: I might want to talk with your wife, if that's all right with you?

JMC: That's all right.

WSP: Well, I'll just stop right here.

This is Bill Pugsley. I am at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Carroll, and I am now talking to Mrs. Margaret Hunt Carroll about her life and upbringing in the Union Hill community, which was part of the 1950s taking by the army. Union Hill was near what is now Lake Belton.

Mrs. Carroll, what were your parents names?

MHC: John Milburn Hunt, and Dora Gladys Breedlove.

WSP: Could you repeat that first name?

MHC: Dora. Gladys. Breedlove. B-r-double-e-d-l-o-v-e.

WSP: And the names of your brothers and sisters, starting with the oldest, please.

MHC: I'm the oldest, Margaret. Lois—do you want full names?

WSP: Yes, if you want.

MHC: Well, I could—Virginia Lois, Lillian Doris—do you want their names, their married names now?

WSP: Hunt? And their married name is now?

MHC: Wilhite, W-i-l-h-i-t-e, and Boyd.

WSP: Virginia Lois Hunt Boyd.

MHC: Boyd.

WSP: Okay.

MHC: Gladys Myrlene Hunt Smith, M-y-r-l-e-n-e.

WSP: Smith.

MHC: Smith. James Kenneth Hunt, We called him Buster. Willie Lynn L-y-n-n.

WSP: Is it Willie, l-l-i-e.

MHC: Yes. Willie Lynn Hunt Shirley—i-r-l-e-y. Gee, let me think about this. Buster and then, uh, Donald Ray Hunt. D-o-n-a-l-d—R-a-y—

WSP: One more? That's seven?

MHC: And Oleta Sue, O-l-e-t-a, Sheppard. Okay.

WSP: All right. That's eight. (laughs)

MHC: That's all.

WSP: You did good.

MHC: Really!

WSP: Can you give us a tour of your family home, where it was located? How big was it, how many rooms?

MHC: Well, the community where I lived was on Union Hill, and I guess, from where you went up on the mountain on the west side to where you went off on the east side, it might have been about ten miles. A lot of people lived in there. Since we didn't own a place, at the time I was born, but our grandpa and our uncle had different places, and we would move—there was always houses on the place where you could live. And whatever place you rented for the year, sharecropper—you understand? Thirds and fourths. Every year that you changed fields, you moved to a different location.

WSP: Yes, this is fine. Just a moment.

(interruption in taping)

WSP: Okay, so when you were born, what was his housing arrangement?

MHC: We had a house—there was a house, there were lots of little houses on the place. We had the well, in fact we had a *good* well! That the people down the road [who owned the place] came up and got water sometime because their well was shallower, and it may have been a dug well. You know, stuff like that—see, those wells were important. That's not on is it?

WSP: Yes, you're doing fine, keep going. The wells were important!

MHC: The wells were important! Yes, we had a good well—I remember that—where I was born. And this was connected to my grandfather's and grandmother's place, you know, that year.

WSP: And their names are?

MHC: H. R. Hunt and Linnie McDade—

WSP: Hunt.

MHC: Uh-huh.

WSP: They would be your paternal—

MHC: My daddy's, my daddy, paternal—

WSP: Paternal grandparents.

MHC: So about the next year we moved over onto his sister's place that was at the other side of the mountain.

WSP: The east or west side?

MHC: East side. The east side. And we lived and Grandpa and Grandma moved over there, too, 'cause it was all family thing. And there was a little house that we lived in, and that's where my next two sisters were born. (laughs) This is crazy.

This country was free country, and people come and homesteaded it. You know, what I mean? See, that's the way it was divided up. Well, this particular place, this Clements place where the, I told you all of the beautiful rock work was? Yeah, the Clements place. His *other* side, the Elms family, that's where that come from. See, everybody is convoluted. So we moved there. And Mrs. McGuarity, a Egyptian woman, owned a lot of this territory in here and people would buy from her. So Daddy

bought this place from—or he rented it from Mrs. McGuarity. But anyhow, thing of it is, that's where his parents lived when him and Mama got married.

WSP: It's full circle.

MHC: Well, it was—yes, see—

WSP: They came back around and rented the same house—

MHC: Well, here, here, and here. We lived in all places. So we lived there for a while. And this tract of land had a bunch of houses on it, and the road run through it, you see? And so, some people came out from town and wanted to buy this. Well, Daddy—they made some kind of a trade—so then he took some acreage for, swapped this for some acreage up by the schoolhouse—the schoolhouse was in here—I don't remember how many acres it was there—from this same Mrs. McGuarity. And, uh, so we built this house there by the schoolhouse, which was, uh, just a little way from us.

WSP: And the name of the school?

MHC: Union Hill School.

WSP: Now was that one of the houses you stayed at the longest?

MHC: Awhile, until, uh—Willie Lynn was born there. Wendland's from Temple owned it another strip of land over here. So somehow or another, transferred—and we was going to buy this place—we lived there a long time, or rented it. Uh, you paid rent on it somehow or another—it was real easy, you never got them paid for. But anyhow, we lived there, awhile, well, I guess that's where we were living when I got married. So that's all the places I've lived.

WSP: And you got married in 1938?

MHC: Yes, '38.

WSP: The house you wanted to talk about the most, with all the wonderful stonework—was it one that had been bought from Mrs. McGuarity?

MHC: See, I'm not clear about all of that. But Mrs. McGuarity owned a lot of this land in here. And people would swap things around. And I know that Daddy was going to buy that place. We lived there—we didn't live there long because these other people came out—and we switched it for this land up by the schoolhouse. But you want to talk about the house with the—

Well—(sighs) have horrible nightmares and wake up crying about this. It was a *tremendous* old log house, square logs. And it was built—they'd have a cross like this, see, and then they'd thisaway, and thisaway. That's the way they'd join them. And there's two rooms here and a room and a back porch here. Then this was a big room, and a porch here.

WSP: Well, let's just draw that out.

MHC: Oh, gee! (laughs)

WSP: We'll take a moment now.

(interruption in taping)

WSP: Okay, that looks good. Now, please give me a description of the house based on your drawing. Then I can refer to your floor plan later on. You're pointing to a big room. What side of the house would that be on?

MHC: This was the west side, and this was the east side, of course. Well, uh, this was one long room, and this was one long room, and this is one long room. But see, the way it was built, these logs were laid, see, 'cause this is the shorter way because the house was tremendous. The logs—see, they wouldn't reach twenty or thirty feet like this was, you see. They built this little—up to the roof—built the logs, and then, they put this in somehow or another. This was left open, and the other wall came in here. See? It had windows here and windows here and windows here.

WSP: I see, so basically they built two square houses, one on the east and one on the west, and then connected the two houses with a very long room, which as you describe it was the bedroom and the living room. Have I got that right?

MHC: Yeah. And then the roof came over all of this. So, see, we had a solid roof that came over. And this was *really* protected, you know, it was just, and, nice big place to—it was nearly as big as any other room, see.

WSP: This covered porch that was on the front of the house.

MHC: And the same way with this, you see, the way the logs come out. See this? Then upstairs, uh, this was all filled in with logs, shorter logs, and had the door here. And it may have had—but we were not allowed because they was afraid we'd fall out. We were little kids when we lived here. So, that's, but see, this long roof—no, it came thisaway because it had the pitch here. So the roof was like so. I believe, it had a tin roof on it when I came along. I don't know what it started out with. But that's the—

WSP: So over the center section was enough height in the attic area, from the pitch of the roof, that your dad had his own bedroom up there but he'd keep you kids away from it, because he was afraid you'd fall?

MHC: Well, no, when he lived there—when *we* lived there, uh, we weren't allowed to go up there. It wasn't a room then. Because it was quite some time afterwards, ten or twenty years, no telling how many people had lived there.

WSP: I see. In front of this beautiful open porch were stone steps.

MHC: Steps. Yeah, there was two, they were thick slabs, about like that. There was two steps, because it wasn't very far—high off the ground at that part.

WSP: Okay, so you're showing me slabs that are about six or seven inches high and about how wide?

MHC: About so wide, the bottom step, and then the next step, and they were about six foot long, polished.

WSP: You indicated about a foot and a half with your hands.

MHC: Well, it was—

WSP: That's a nice big wide step.

MHC: Well, see, I imagine it was beautiful when it was built because this guy was a stonemason, and he did it to last, see.

WSP: Was this house sitting on stone foundations?

MHC: Well, now that's the funny thing about it. After all was said and done, before my daddy died, he moved back to this house. This is where he started, and he moved back to this house—which was just down the road a little ways. It didn't matter. I can't remember what happened to this other place. But anyhow, they moved back there, and somehow or another he contracted for it again, and that's where he died. Now what was I going to say?

WSP: The foundations—

MHC: Yeah, so he moved back to this place. So, when Fort Hood took it over—by the way he took the guy that come in and showed him all the cornerstones back in the, back in here, away from the civilized, away from the community—all this back in here where Fort Hood was taking, where nobody ever lived. See, there was a lot of land in there that was never taken up. That's why they decided to do this. See, this? Right over here where Fort Hood is, kind of back in there.

WSP: Yes, north of Pidcoke?

MHC: Yes! Where I showed you.

WSP: Yes. I see. On Union Hill.

MHC: See, there's no neighborhoods in there right now, it's all been taken in. But he showed the guy all the cornerstones because he helped the surveyors when he was a young guy.

WSP: Who helped the surveyors?

MHC: Milburn, Milburn Hunt. Well, see, he was seven years old when they settled the land, when they come out from Jarrell, yeah. Well, see, his grandfather was sheriff of Williamson County at one time. Yeah. So they lived down in that area. Then they came up off of Bull Branch there, up off the mountain from Bull Branch, and, uh—then, Union Hill on that east side was settled. That was a community—all these people, lots of people, I don't know remember how many families but a pretty good community.

And then, back of that, west and north of that, where Bland—do you know where Bland is now? All right, between Bland and Union Hill was land that was never taken up. It was called Badgers, Badgers probably had a lot of land back there that they never settled.

WSP: That's the Badger family?

MHC: I don't know who Badger was—it's just like Wendland's and Mrs. McGuarity—they probably farmed something or other to buy the land to parcel it out, you know what I mean? That's just what I think. Now nobody ever told me that, but that could have been.

WSP: I see. This was undeveloped land on this mountain.

MHC: West—well, there were lots of mountains, lots of mountains, it was mountainous country. But that's why Fort Hood could take it because it was un—

WSP: Unoccupied.

MHC: Yes, and it had never been taken in, see? It was more or less—it was still state land. See? It was still state land, and so they felt free to come in and do what they wanted to do, but to—get in charge of the river and first one thing and then another. And it started out it wasn't very big. In fact, we were gone forty years, see, so that's why I don't know too much about it—we were gone forty years. When we married we moved off to Uvalde, first then, and to Houston, and first one thing and then another. And, uh—

WSP: So what happened in the 1950s you're not real clear on because you were gone then?

MHC: Yeah.

WSP: But it was in the 1950s when the army acquired Union Hill.

MHC: Well, they were already—see, my daddy, before he died—that was before, the year before I married—a guy came down, somebody that was surveying out this land. They had already appropriated it, or whatever you call, before Fort Hood ever went in, actually. And my daddy took him back in all these places and showed him the markers—

WSP: Survey markers for the property—

MHC: Yeah. Back in the free land—see, they had boundaries, too. But he had helped survey this land when he was a young guy—the county surveyors. You know? And he took this guy back and showed him all the old markers that he knew about, see. He gave him a map of the territory back there, before he died. Yeah.

And we left along about that time. When we come back it was still wasn't too big an enterprise, but you know it has expanded. But they had the territorial boundary for a long time.

And then, what I was going to say, when they finally—what year?—I don't know what year they took this community—but they bought all the houses, and uh—some people didn't want to leave, but they had to leave. So they come and packed one old lady's things and moved her themselves. She said, "I am not going." They had to come and pack her clothes and pack her stuff and *move* her to were she went.

But Mother sold this place, this old house, to another person and they moved it down close to Belton.

WSP: Really!

MHC: Yes. It's—

WSP: This beautiful log house is near Belton now?

MHC: Well, it doesn't even look the same because they filled it over, but the original center part of it—yeah.

WSP: And what was your concern about what they had done with the well and the stone steps?

MHC: Well, it was just, uh—the way it was laid out, you know? Somebody that knew what they were doing, the architecture of it.

WSP: They'd done a fine job?

MHC: They had done a good job a long time ago. Now I don't know what people would think about it now. I guess it would still be good.

WSP: Did you say your husband cleaned out the well?

MHC: Yeah. See, uh—I don't remember why they wanted to clean it out, but it hadn't been cleaned out in a long time, and, uh—he was a grownup and could do it and Daddy got him to—they drawed all the water out, you know, and he went down, and wiped it out with a towel or something or other, wiped it down.

WSP: Then the water naturally filled it back up?

MHC: It just. Well, I guess between the, the rocks, and it was, so—you know, there's a good strain of water, there's veins of water—you know, don't you know how veins of water run in the ground?

WSP: Help me out.

MHC: Well, people used to—don't you know, did you ever hear about the witching rods? Okay, well, people used to go—that could do that—would go around where a place was and this rod would point to the

nearest water. So, I don't know why they put it there, but it had a good source of water, and it was good water. Surface water usually isn't worth anything. When it rains, it tastes yucky, you know? It has to be at a certain level to be good. But this—I guess it filtered somehow or another—whoever built the well knew what he was doing! See?

WSP: After he pulled out all the water, and dried it all out—

MHC: And dried it out with a towel.

WSP: Then he just left it.

MHC: Yeah, they just drawed him back up. See, the well had posts at each side. (draws) And a crossbar across the top. See? And then they had a pulley on here to let down a bucket to the well. Well, they just—I don't know what they just tied a rope around his waist or he stood in the bucket, and let him down. And they just pulled him back up. But see, there was plenty of them to pull him back up—my mother and my daddy and my little brothers and sisters. And it wasn't all that big, big a deal, 'cause—

WSP: He didn't weigh all that much?

MHC: Gee, no! He must have weighed 140! (laughs)

WSP: Once he left it alone, the water just seeped back in—

MHC: By morning, by morning. Yeah, and it had a certain level. You know, it would just seek, whatever level the water was, that's how it would be. By morning I imagine it was back to level.

WSP: And good water.

MHC: And good water!

WSP: What did the army do with that well?

MHC: I don't know! I guess they just—

WSP: I thought you said they filled it in?

MHC: On the other wells, they just said they filled them in, I don't know—well, they just dropped a charge down and blowed them out, I guess. You know? Yeah.

WSP: As opposed to just having a backhoe put some dirt inside?

MHC: Oh, yes, they'd just drop something in there, and you know—because the old wells, uh—we had one out here—that just curved down, uh, just had a casing down so far. And it was just sheer, like a stovepipe. You know, after years, and it just went down so far, see, and they would cave in and stuff. But anyhow, all they had to do was drop a charge down in there, and just blow them up I reckon.

But I don't know what they did to this, cave it in or what, or filled it in with rocks.

WSP: Oh, not this stone well. You were referring to other wells you had heard were filled in—

MHC: That's what they said. See, we wasn't here, but the people that moved away—yeah, they had to go off and leave their homes. I'm not saying a very good story, am I?

WSP: You're doing just fine. You're not quit clear on exactly what happened to the property itself after they moved the house into Belton to make room for the army.

MHC: Yeah, but they moved every house, every house in the neighborhood.

WSP: Got physically moved?

MHC: Absolutely! Moved off or burned, or whatever they wanted to do with them. But Mama sold her house because she could get money out of it. Somebody may have thought it was a treasure, you can't tell. But I don't know what they did with the schoolhouse. See, there was a lot of houses in there, and I don't know what they did with them. They—but if you moved and had property, you could move your house with you when you left, if you wanted to, I presume. See, she could, she was eligible to move the house if she wanted to. But every house was moved, and all the wells were ruined, yeah. So that's what I heard.

See, right here—and this is just hearsay—(laughs) because I was not there at the time. Okay?

WSP: Okay. Well, tell me about the stuff that you were involved in before the army came? Did you help out with gardening or any of the chores in the fields? Did your family raise crops on that hill?

MHC: Yes, that was—that was farming country. Well—

WSP: What kind of farming did you do?

MHC: Well, we had cotton, corn, and cane.

WSP: Did you help your parents do work in the fields?

MHC: Well, I was the oldest boy. I had too! (laughs)

WSP: (laughs) The oldest boy?

MHC: Yeah. I was the oldest. I started driving a team whenever I was, well, eleven—whenever I was risked with a team and wagon, I guess—from then on till I got married. But whenever I started helping my daddy—he'd do the plowing, and I'd come along, he'd open the furrow, and I'd come along with the planter and a mule. See, it was a one-horse vehicle. And, I was so little that when I pulled around at the end, I had to put the plow handles up on my shoulders, to get the plow out of the ground enough to where I could follow the horse around, and put him back where he belonged, then dropped the plow back down, and we'd go again.

WSP: This is the seed planter?

MHC: Yes, because that's all I was big enough to do for a while. And then when I got bigger, well, I did the other, an—

WSP: More plowing?

MHC: Yes. That was *my* job. Plowing, yeah. Or whatever—driving a team, that's—and, I didn't help to wash dishes. See, everybody had a job. You had to raise your food, milk the cows, gather the eggs, plow the garden, gather the vegetables, help prepare them for canning—peel peaches until you dropped! (laughs) Make preserves.

WSP: But because you're the oldest and your father needed help in the fields, you ended up going to the fields fairly early?

MHC: Yeah, because that was the first job of the planting season. See, you had to do all this planting before, and when it come up, then everybody, *everybody* grabbed a hoe and went to the field to hoe. See, these rows was planted, and you chopped between all this stuff. Have you ever hoed a garden?

WSP: No.

MHC: Well, I shall take you out and hoe you a garden! It needs to be hoed! (WSP laughs)

You'd, you'd chop this cotton—you planted the cotton heavy, and then you'd have a hoe about like this, and you—

WSP: You're showing me about six inches wide—

MHC: Well, about so—

WSP: Seven inches—

MHC: The blade, the blade, yeah. Well, there is chopping hoe. But you'd go down the row, and you'd swing, swing, and you'd leave about three or four stalks—whack, whack, whack, whack—when it was real little. Then they'd come along with the plow between each row and put the dirt back to it, and then as the time went on, well, you had to keep the weeds and stuff—as it rains, you know, everything grows, weeds most especially. Then you'd go hoe all this kind of stuff. And when you'd hoe it all out, well, you would take a team and a plow and go back and dirt it up again, see, with a plow, with a double-shovel or something or another. Little stuff you did with a double-shovel.

WSP: What's a double-shovel?

MHC: (laughs) Well, it had two little sweeps, little buzzard-wing sweeps on it. See, you had a big sweep, a solid sweep to open the furrows. Then you come along with this plow and plow in the furrow. Then, whenever it got up, you used this little double-wing, I mean, double-shovel to plow while it was little, because it had little sweeps on it and it didn't cover it up. And as it got bigger, then you swapped to a big buzzard-wing for the middles.

Yeah. Well, that was my job, 'cause I was—I started. But then, whenever I got through plowing, well I helped hoe, too. And the best time about it is when you pick the cotton because that—all this work, you could take the cotton and sell it and then you got *paid*! See, you worked all year long before you got paid.

WSP: That's true!

MHC: Yeah.

WSP: And you liked the cotton picking season?

MHC: I loved the cotton picking season because I got money!

WSP: Did you like doing the work?

MHC: Well, I didn't know any better. Yeah, I liked doing that. I would rather do anything than wash dishes! (laughs) And my sisters had to wash dishes. 'Course, whenever I wasn't in the fields, I helped wash the dishes, too. But they would fuss. My mother, she said, "She's *already* worked all day long! She had a job!" You know? And when I come in, well, I shouldn't have to wash the dishes that night. And I didn't have time to do them for breakfast or lunch, because—

WSP: Your sisters complained because you wouldn't do the dishes, and your mother would say?

MHC: Yeah, well, they didn't really complain, they just said, "When is her time?" You know, because they had turns. Well, they'd say, "Well, it's her turn!" You know. No, you had turns about stuff. You had to, 'cause, gee, every had, everybody had to be treated fair, you know? You got that many kids and that much work, you're going to have a little trouble. But Mama was a good general. She could keep forty things juggled at once. I can't. I can't do but one thing, and if somebody says something to me, forget it, I've got to start over! (laughs) But, you know, she was a good organizer.

WSP: Did your sisters ever work in the field?

MHC: You bet! Everybody did, that's what I said—I did the plowing, as they got older, well, I guess, whenever I left home—but one day, I do not know why I wasn't at home—I went to do something. I got back, and here come my little brother, he was—well, he was twelve, golly, and I had started driving a team long before I was twelve—and he was driving the team, and he'd plowed or whatever he done, and unhitched from the plows, and brought your team to the house with the harness still on them—you just drove them down, like but—but with nothing behind them—to come home to feed them for lunch. And then you took them back and hitched onto your plow, and went about your business.

Well, here he come in, proud as he could be! Driving this team! And I looked at him—and his, the lines were dragging, 'course, that was fine—and there he was coming, bringing the team in. I was never so furious in my life at Daddy for letting that kid off with that team! All by himself! Take that team off! Well, you know, if you got tangled in it—you never tied your lines except whenever you were hitched to the plow, because if a horse run away with you—so many people got drug to death—accidents happen. So you had to be really, really careful about everything. Well, there I was. And there he come in. And he was stepping so proud and looking at me, you know—there, he'd got my job. See, I was about eighteen. I was grown up. But I was absolutely so mad at Daddy for letting that kid go off with that team!

WSP: Because he was still tied to the team?

MHC: No. Well, no, he wasn't tied to nothing. Because his lines were dragging. That's the first thing I looked—the lines were dragging, untied, so he couldn't get tangled up.

WSP: So that was good? He was safe.

MHC: Yes. But he had been off with that team!

WSP: Plowing, which was for older people who knew better!

MHC: Well, yes! (laughs) And it, boy, they straightened me out right quick. But I'll tell you, when I first saw it I was so shocked at my daddy! I was mad at Daddy for being so careless to send that kid off with that team!

WSP: What are the tricks to driving a team? You're talking about mules?

MHC: Mules. Well, we had mules and horses. We just had stuff to drive. We wasn't—

WSP: Is there a particular trick to driving them. Do you harness them in a particular way to gain the best—

MHC: Yes! Well, however they were broken, whoever broke them to begin with, from an unridden or unused horse. You had to break them and teach them how to pull a wagon, pull a plow, whatever. And however you hitched them up when you were training them, see—if you broke them for the right hand or the left hand—some of them after they got older, you could do anything. But they could do *better* if they were hitched up as they originally learned. Just like you, if you learned to do something left-handed, or right-handed, there you'd be.

So, Old Kit went on the left side, Kate, Kate went on the right side, that's the way it was. Then there was some of them that would work to a double-shovel. We got a horse one time that had been broke to a double, something or other, no—and it, then you train 'em to walk on the right side of the row whenever they're plowing. *They* know where to walk, they'll—you know.

And we got a horse, that—to work him to a double shovel you had to plow backwards! (laughs; claps)

Instead of going around thisaway, you went thisaway! It was the same difference but the horse, he would be so miserable. He'd step on the stuff, you know, and you'd get him straightened up, and he'd go for a minute, and then directly he'd be trying to cross over and walk on the other side. And before you could realize it, you'd plowed up some stuff—not much, 'cause you'd know what had happened right away. And so Daddy just turned and went the other way. Instead of going around the row, like you're supposed to, he just went thisaway, in the middle. See, it would be the same difference except just—because, and the horse would be so miserable. You know, they'd be trying—he knew he was stepping on it, but he didn't know how to—

WSP: Undo it, because he was trained—?

MHC: No, because he'd been trained. He was a right-hand horse or a left-hand horse. Oh, it whatever it was. And that's—(laughs)

WSP: What are some of the other tricks to keep them in line?

MHC: Well they had lines on them.

WSP: I mean, to keep them from being rambunctious?

MHC: That's why you broke them to the first place, see? Who—whenever you got one trained to do something—well, you didn't have any trouble with them later. 'Course, we didn't have that rambunctious a horse—because Daddy had a young team of horses when he got married, uh, mules. Well, they lived—one of them, Old Kit died on Christmas Day when he was thirty-one. He was standing by the gate—

(lawn mowing outside)

WSP: Let me stop the tape for a moment—

(interruption in taping)

MHC: The way I'm talking?

WSP: No, it's fine. When it types up all the little spaces disappear, and it's one long beautiful sentence.

MHC: I don't have a very good speaking voice, though.

WSP: Well, this is just part of oral history. I sound really goofy, and I ask goofy questions all the time—I'm embarrassed.

MHC: (whispers) Is that on?

WSP: It's on, but it's okay, keep talking.

MHC: Well, I was going to tell you, our son's tape over there, he didn't know how to speak either.

WSP: Okay, we'll turn this off for a second.

(interruption in taping)

MHC: Like I said, time I came along with these mules, I don't know how old they were, they were ten years old—they was already broken.

But Daddy was a horse trader, too. Yeah. See, First Monday on the square in Belton—I think the square now is a parking lot for Cochran, Blair, and Potts. You know, that's in there. That was the trade square. And everybody would take their stuff to town on Saturday, or on First Monday, was when—

they'd go to town and they'd trade horses, and—whatever you had to take to town. And they'd always be horse trading, and Daddy would always go down and trade horses.

WSP: And he would train them and break them?

MHC: Well, no, they was usually—but that's when, when we found out that this one wouldn't work—you know, was the right hand—

WSP: The mule that wasn't turning right?

MHC: Well, he was turning right, we just didn't know which way he was, he didn't know which right for him. But it don't take long if you know what you're doing, see.

WSP: So besides doing the plowing work, what other kinds of jobs did you have around the house or out in the fields? You chopped cotton.

MHC: You had to hoe it, and then you plowed it again, and then you pick it.

WSP: Did you like picking?

MHC: Yes, that's what you got paid for! So, uh, then you did the garden, you had to hoe the garden and plow the garden, pick the vegetables, and—

WSP: What kinds of vegetables did your mother grow?

MHC: Oh, well, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, pinto beans, black-eyed peas, tomatoes, onions—everything that you grow in a garden—squash, radishes, lettuce, whatever.

WSP: And she would plant all these, even if she moved, she'd plant another vegetable garden?

MHC: Well, yeah, because, see, yeah. You would do a season. Yeah. And, uh, my grandma always saved her seed. She'd have a good plant, and she'd mark that out and let everything mature on that plant, like her beans and peas. And she had her seed from year to year to year, because—if you have something good—you couldn't go and buy the seed—well, you wasn't able to pay for it anyhow. See? Yeah.

WSP: So she would plant a garden at one place, and if you moved she would have the seeds from that garden to start another one.

MHC: She would already have them. Yeah. Well, her beans and peas, and stuff like that, that you save seed from, yeah.

WSP: Well, when she got to another place, didn't the previous owners or occupants have a garden there as well?

MHC: They had, yeah, probably so.

WSP: By then it was time to replant—

MHC: Yeah! Oh, no, you didn't have anything left over. You couldn't harvest everything, it was all gone. And you had, let it lay out during the winter, or you bedded it up and let it lay there in the winter. Then open the beds the next year and start you a new crop.

WSP: Did you help plant the vegetable garden, or was that strictly your mother's?

MHC: Well, I helped, yeah. You had to have a team to do it, to open the garden and plow the garden.

WSP: Just like the rest of the fields.

MHC: Yeah, it was just, except—

WSP: Would you plow your mother's vegetable garden for her?

MHC: No, Father usually done that. That was their community thing. That was what they enjoyed doing together. Yeah, he usually done that. I may have, I probably did the hoeing.

WSP: How big a garden are we talking about? Acres or square feet?

MHC: Oh, well, my rows out there now are a hundred foot by about twenty rows is what I've got out there. I don't know. Daddy, what would they—

JMC: Oh, every—everybody had a different-sized garden. We had one there in Killeen that—oh, I imagine it was 200 foot long, by—well, 150 foot long by about a 100, I imagine.

MHC: It just depends on how ambitious you was, or what you wanted to do. Every—everybody didn't have a garden but most people did. You know? That was just, that was just a way of living.

JMC: We had okra and tomatoes, and—

MHC: Oh, yes, I'd forgot about the okra—(laughs)

JMC: And, uh, black-eyed peas—

MHC: Cucumbers—

JMC: Pinto beans—

MHC: Cucumbers—

JMC: Cucumbers—

MHC: (whispers) I'll show you my garden.

JMC: And some cantaloupes in places, and sometimes some watermelons. This isn't very good watermelon country around here. Back around, oh, Hempstead—Tennessee Valley, back over north, north of Belton, I guess—oh, that was a lot of sandy land over there, and they made good watermelons.

MHC: Now that is under the lake. That's under the lake, yeah. Now *that* was watermelon country! And everybody there had truck gardens because they'd take their produce to town and sell it. You know, they, that was their business. And berry farms, they had some berry farms down there.

WSP: How many acres of cotton did you plant?

MHC: Well, we were just a very small operation, probably twenty, fifty acres.

JMC: Her daddy was a horse trader, and a horse shoer, and a cedar chopper. That's the way he made his living, wood chopping.

MHC: And I short-hauled.

WSP: Short-hauled, meaning what?

MHC: Uh—taking the wagon and team in and getting it out of the brush, and bringing it out to the road where the buyers can get it.

WSP: The wood that had been chopped?

JMC: The cedar posts, whatever.

MHC: The cedar posts. Posts. Yeah, posts. He'd chop them and I'd haul them.

JMC: And they didn't have no chain saws then, wherever—

MHC: No.

JMC: You went to the cedar brake you had your axe, and you didn't have to worry about it not working. (laughs)

MHC: And *nobody* touched his axe. He could shave his arm.

JMC: No sir!

WSP: Shave the hairs on his arm?

MHC: Yeah, that's how sharp it was. Uh, somebody said, "You know how to chop cedar posts?" No sir! I did not touch an axe. None of our kids touched an axe! We didn't bother that axe. That was as valuable as his razor. You didn't—

JMC: You could take that axe, and you could, most of them, a real cedar chopper, you could shave the hair off your arm with it.

MHC: 'Cause they knew how to sharpen them.

WSP: That's what made their business go well, I guess.

MHC: Yeah.

WSP: Was your dad afraid that you kids would get hurt if you were handling his axe? Or afraid you would do something that damaged it?

MHC: Well, yeah, if they'd drop it on a foot it would cut it off because as sharp as it was. It was dangerous, and it would also—if you chip that axe, because it was so sheer, just exactly right, and if you knocked a hunk out of it, it might take you *hours* to get it back down again.

JMC: At least a half a day to get that thing worked back down. And you had grindstones then that you turned by hand—big grindstones were about that wide—

MHC: And I done that, too.

WSP: Did you ever sharpened the axe?

MHC: I didn't sharpen the axe, I turned stone. No sir, I didn't know how to sharpen that axe.

WSP: So you turned the grindstone while your dad was sharpening?

MHC: Yeah, while he held it at the right angle to get it down. And it took hours. No, you bet I didn't bother that axe!

WSP: How long does it take to chop down a given area of cedar?

MHC: Well—

JMC: Oh, I didn't know we was on that. Let her tell you about that. (WSP laughs)

MHC: He's been doing that. (laughs) Oh, I don't know. uh, It depends on what kind of posts you wanted. See there's—

JMC: Depended on the cedar brake.

MHC: Yeah, and, and how well the cedar—now we have a beautiful cedar brake back here. Oh, it just makes me made mad because I can't do anything, I'm too old to do it, I can't handle a saw.

WSP: What makes it good cedar brake?

MHC: Well, see there's, uh, two's. Six-and-a-half-foot straight post, trimmed, and at the top you can put your hand around it and do this—see, two, two and a half. That's the way you'd measure.

WSP: I see. You take your thumb and your middle finger and make a C. Then your measurement was determined by—

MHC: Put it around the top of the post, and put your fingers in—that's the way you would measure.

WSP: Slot the fingers on your other hand, the width of your fingers, between the gap in the C. So if you could only put two fingers in the slot, then it would be a two, and three fingers a three, and so on from there.

MHC: Yeah, in his hands, not mine. Everybody had probably a different measure, but that was his. But that's the way he'd do, he'd slap his hand up there, he'd seeing what it is. But when you—each one was a different price, see. Twos, threes, fours, they were a different price. Then you went into blocking.

WSP: What's blocking?

MHC: Well, it was big stuff.

WSP: Bigger cedar.

MHC: Yeah. Yeah. Not just—corner posts, like you have on corner posts and brace posts. They were *lots* more money, but there weren't so many of them, and they, most of it was heart cedar, see. Mill stuff. And then—

WSP: They get to be six foot long as well? That would take a big cedar tree to get a old corner post.

MHC: You want to see some cedar corner posts after while?

WSP: Okay. When we get done, we'll go take a look.

MHC: Well, see, some trees—this big middle tree, this big post, you'd get that out of it, and the limbs that had grown out would make other sizes. And so out of one tree you might get a lot of posts. And then some trees would just one post. It just depends on what you're finding.

WSP: You could get a corner post and several running posts—

MHC: Yeah, fence posts.

WSP: Fence posts out of one tree. Eight or ten posts, typically?

MHC: Well, no, not where we—'cause it had been chopped over for years and years and years, see. But, it grows all the time.

WSP: That's the difference between a good cedar brake and a not-so-good one?

MHC: Now, you've already heard about cedar brakes haven't you?

WSP: You've been talking about them. I'm from Austin. Austin has cedar in the hills, but I'm a downtown city guy.

MHC: Oh, yeah, well. Yeah.

WSP: You're saying the cedar brake on the top of your hill had been cut over several times—

MHC: Yeah.

WSP: From the 1800s, and 1900s?

MHC: Yeah, cleared.

WSP: Does cedar just grow back up?

MHC: Yeah, and got old. Yeah.

WSP: Then you come back and cull them again.

MHC: Sure.

WSP: Was this part of the territory we were talking about earlier, that was not claimed? Where the cedar was growing and was open land.

MHC: You'd already heard about that, huh?

WSP: Yes, you explained earlier. Now your dad would take his wagon, and you would gather up the posts that he had chopped down, and put them on the wagon and carry them back to the road?

MHC: Yeah, or carry them back to our house. We lived right on the road, yes.

WSP: How many trees could he chop in a given period of time?

MHC: Well, now, when he was a young guy, he would chop the cedar and the wood—he'd hire out, you know, clear places. He'd chop the cedar—I don't know how many, I don't know how many—but he would rip, he'd chop the wood, too. You know there was other things besides cedar when you're clearing land. Okay, he could clear the land and chop a cord of wood in a day. My little grandpa, that was just a little fellow—he was my mother's stepdaddy—he could chop a cord of wood when he was an old man. He didn't know how old he was, he didn't know when his birthday was. But he could clear a cord of wood a day.

I mean, that just—everybody could do it, didn't think anything about it. All them people are gone. All of my neighbors are gone. But one of the girls that's just older than me passed away the other day. There's nobody left anymore.

WSP: No one to tell these stories.

MHC: No.

WSP: And what else did he do beside cedar chopping?

MHC: Oh, well, that was just whenever you wasn't working in the field. That was his, that was your days off.

WSP: Chopping cedar was on your days off?

MHC: Yeah. (laughs) Oh, no, I don't know. But you know, uh, when you had to plant—you had to get your crop in the ground in the season, yeah, and then you went off, and—this was a cash crop, cedar posts was—'cause you'd take them right to the grocery store and swap 'em for whatever you needed, and if you had some left over, you got a little money to come home or you just bought candy for the kids. Yeah. So you had to do that every day or two to keep groceries going that you had to buy, like sugar and flour, that you couldn't raise in the garden. See, see, that's what you had to do.

And then you didn't have to worry about cornmeal, 'cause you'd already had corn put away from the summer. You'd just went out and shell a turn of corn, take it down to the mill and have it ground, too. Cornmeal, yes. But salt and flour and sugar, stuff like that you couldn't grow in the garden is about what you had to buy because you had everything else.

WSP: And coffee?

MHC: Oh, coffee, and cigarettes. (laughs)

WSP: What about clothes? Did your mother make your clothes?

MHC: Oh, my mother was a seamstress! That's what she did in her later years, is make dresses and trousseaus for the gals, and their wedding dresses. She did everything. She was really good. And she could take a pattern and—

WSP: Was she sewing by hand or on a machine?

MHC: Oh, she had a machine, of course!

WSP: Peddle driven?

MHC: Yeah—well, after, and as the—everybody got civilized and got electricity. (laughs) See, electricity come in '47, rural REA, rural electricity. You know, and then people started having appliances and sewing machine. Yeah, the first one was a treadle machine. My first one was a treadle machine.

WSP: Did you make your own clothes?

MHC: Oh, yeah.

WSP: Would you go to the store and shop for patterns?

MHC: Yeah, you could get patterns. Well, they had nice patterns, McCall's and, and Advance were the cheaper patterns, but Butterick was the top of the line.

WSP: Why would they be the top?

MHC: Well, they was—just had designers like Edith Head and stuff like that, you know. *Real* designers, you know? Oh, it was a big business, I guess.

WSP: Then these patterns would appear in the late 1940s and 1950s, right? Was Edith Head designing clothes in the 1930s?

MHC: Edith Head? Oh, but, that's what I said—it was that type of stuff. Butterick was top of the line patterns, designer patterns. That has nothing to do with the history of the country. (laughs)

WSP: Well, it's all part of it, people don't know what the brands are, what the view of the people are.

MHC: Well, those were the best patterns. Yeah.

WSP: What did you do for social activities on Union Hill?

MHC: Oh, well, when we come home and unhitched the team, and fed them and milked the cows, and we took a bath and got dressed up and walked seven or eight miles to a party! (laughs)

WSP: You wouldn't take a horse or a buggy?

MHC: You better believe! They had worked hard all day, they didn't get—yeah, we've carried stuff from the store on Saturday, my daddy would, because his team had worked hard all week and he turned them

out Saturday, and they got Sunday off like everybody else. (laughs)

WSP: (laughs)

MHC: No sir! You didn't work that horse all day long and besides—

WSP: Work them in the evening, too.

MHC: No! Besides, we didn't have saddle stock. Yeah. Saddle stock was for the cowboys.

WSP: You had mules and teams for plowing, and that's a different kind of training for the animal?

MHC: Well, we had some horses that you could ride, but we didn't ride them. Like I said, 'cause they had worked, and we didn't—you know.

WSP: You didn't keep horses around just exclusively for riding.

MHC: Just for riding, no.

WSP: Is that what you called saddle stock?

MHC: Yeah, pleasure horses, rodeo stock.

WSP: I see, Mr. Carroll had rodeo stock?

MHC: Yeah.

WSP: When you got to the party, what were they like?

MHC: Well, this is, uh, somebody that had a good voice would sing these old songs and we'd play ring—what they called ring games, uh, "Swing your partner left and right, do-si-do," and all that kind of good stuff.

WSP: That sounds like a square dance.

MHC: Yeah.

WSP: Why did they call them ring dances?

MHC: Well, because uh, square dance had uh, musicians. Kids didn't have time to hunt up or pay a musician. They just went down there and had somebody that would sing their heart out until one or two o'clock and go around and around.

WSP: There was no instruments.

MHC: Well, there was a few, yeah, there was a few. But, uh, that was usually the dances.

WSP: Regular dances?

MHC: Just regular dances. Once in a while somebody'd bring their fiddle to—or a guitar to a—but we just stood around and listened to them, usually. (laughs) That was, that was entertainment! See, we didn't have a radio then.

WSP: Some people had radios in the late 1930s, but I heard they didn't bring them to the parties. I didn't understand that. Can you explain why?

MHC: Well, no, they wasn't noise boxes like there are now, for goodness sakes! Besides, they had to be hooked up to a wind charger. You didn't charge around the country with them. If they had one.

WSP: Some of them had car batteries?

MHC: Yeah, uh, we had an old car battery, kinda like an old car battery, yeah, but then you had to be real careful or it would run down, you know. You had to conserve. You turned it on when your program was ready and turned it off real quick whenever it was over with.

WSP: What were your parents favorite programs? I'm assuming you listened then?

MHC: We didn't have a radio then. See, that's long ago—see, I'm eighty years old. That's been a long time ago, kid! I've been married sixty-three years, so that's been a *long* time ago! See what I mean? You had phonographs, yeah, but no radios. That was before radio because there wasn't any electricity until '47. See?

WSP: Well, some people described battery-powered radios, and I asked why they didn't bring them to the dances, and they weren't quite sure. But I think it had to do with a worry that they would run down the battery, basically.

MHC: Well, yeah, they would run down the battery. And besides, you couldn't carry the radio it was—cabinet! It wasn't the kind of thing you could go carrying around. You had it set on a table, or if it was a cabinet big enough to sit on the floor, like a—the old first old TV s—

WSP: Were they pretty heavy?

MHC: Yeah. Well, some of them were, and some of them weren't, but anyhow, you didn't, uh, unhook them. You'd had to unhooked them to carry them down the road, and somebody had to carry the battery—who was going to do that! You was walking, you might walk five or six miles. Yeah.

WSP: Did you ever hold any parties at your house?

MHC: Oh, yeah! Our turn came regular. That's what we'd do, you know, my house this week and your house—

WSP: What kinds of refreshments would you offer your guests?

MHC: (laughs) Well, I don't think we offered any refreshments. We didn't have any ice, no refrigeration, see—no ice. A cold drink of water out of the well is about as good as you could do for a person—unless you had ice-cream party or a watermelon party, and then you would invite anybody, and you'd have a big load of watermelons and a watermelon cutting. I don't remember a watermelon cutting, but, but a few ice-cream parties.

WSP: And cookies or cakes, anything of that nature?

MHC: No, no, you didn't do that.

WSP: So it was pretty much the dancing?

MHC: Yes. Yes, just the kids get together. You might be out in the yard if you had grass on your lawn or for a smooth—now that old place here—

WSP: The stone house?

MHC: Oh, yes, whenever. We lived there when we was little. Mama and Daddy was young kids, you know? And all the neighborhood kids would come there because there was always plenty of room in that big old grassy yard. That's where, I first learned all my songs—

WSP: You learned songs out in that yard?

MHC: Well, I just heard them, hear them sing, sing the party songs. That's what I said, I learned them

whenever I was a little bitty kid. (laughs)

WSP: (laughs) Did you go to church? Did you have a church on the hill?

MHC: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

WSP: What was the name?

MHC: Well, it was Union Hill. It was, it was a Baptist—well, it was just whoever, and, uh. People would come in there and hold, uh, revivals or whatever that wanted to, uh, bringing the message to us backwoods people. And whatever church wanted to come—and everybody came—it was a social function. Oh, everybody attended everything! And whoever would come and preach for what the people could give him in offerings was welcome to come. And, and if he stayed long enough, well, they'd have dinner on the grounds, and, uh—then there was a guy that lived in Tennessee Valley, was, uh, Charlie Parker, he was pastor there for years and years and years. And I don't know how much they paid, but he came every Sunday or two. And, uh, everybody came, because that was a social function.

WSP: So even if the Baptists would come, and the Methodists would come, and the Church of Christ would come—

MHC: Church of Christ—

WSP: They'd all come to the same revival?

MHC: Oh, yeah, everybody was coming because they had all the best singers there and they had a piano players and they'd have singings. It was a big deal. Then on Sunday, well, you'd have dinner on the ground. Everybody would come and bring their best cakes and pies, and all the ladies all their favorite things that they cooked best. Tub fulls of food! And set them out on the tables and have a big gathering, and everybody'd eat.

That was the way they did at the last of school. I heard you telling about the last of school. That was the closing of the school, everybody came, and they'd have, uh, basketball games from neighboring schools, that have teams, and they would come, see? It would be a big deal.

WSP: But the church itself, which you were about to say was Baptist and then you stopped yourself and said everybody—

MHC: Well, well it was Baptist, actually, mostly a Baptist community. But anybody was welcome, and different people did come and preach. But it was Baptist.

WSP: During Sundays, would other denominations use the same building?

MHC: No, not in our—

WSP: It was only during revivals?

MHC: Yeah. Uh. This was a Baptist church, but it was in the schoolhouse. See, the schoolhouse was the community center, and, uh—the people, the deacons and, you know, the heads of the church were all Baptist there. But no, anybody that wanted to could come and preach. Everybody would come listen to him. They didn't turn him down.

WSP: You had your church services in the school building?

MHC: Uh-huh, in the schoolhouse.

WSP: You didn't have a separate church?

MHC: No. Not in—not in—

WSP: Not while you were there?

MHC: Not on, not on Union Hill. No, 'cause, see, right after I left there, well, they took it in and moved everything.

(interruption in taping)

WSP: Can you think of anything else that you'd like to talk about before we end this interview?

MHC: Do you have any more questions. Do you have a questionnaire?

WSP: No, I'm thinking of the stuff off the top of my head. I have basic areas we wanted to cover: the house, and how life was around the house and what kind of farming activities you might be involved in. The crops or animals that you raised, and the community life which you've talked about—

MHC: We raised cows—

WSP: Social life, like the ring parties and then the church activities. Is there anything particular to your own experience others may not have had. For instance, the fact that you had driven a team of mules was novel, I hadn't run across that before.

MHC: Well, the girl next door plowed—because, uh, she was the only boy left at home. She plowed just like I did and helped put in the crop. But. I don't, well, I don't know of anybody else that did plowing, uh—a girl had a little cotton crop one year, and she had her own stuff. But, uh, I was the only—

JMC: (returns with a photograph)

WSP: Hey, look at this picture.

JMC: Yes, his was taken in Gatesville way back yonder. These people all come here whenever they're young—

MHC: (whispers) Turn it off.

WSP: Do you want me to turn it off? Okay.

(interruption in taping)

WSP: Well, I think this about does it. Thank you for taking the time to talk to me, and I hope I can come back and ask you some more questions, if I can think of anything. We'll send you a copy of the transcript so you can look it over. The two of you can correct it if you need to.

MHC: Can we just mark it out? (laughs)

JMC: How does our opinion go with everybody else's?

WSP: Pretty much what you are saying. I've heard variations, but everybody is different. People think of different things. Somebody will think of it, and then I'll come to the next person, and they'll think of a new detail that hasn't been mentioned before, and I'd never heard of before.

MHC: And you didn't think of it.

WSP: And I didn't think of it. I just ask questions. I kind of know what my basic areas are, so once I've covered all the basic questions, then I move on to the next area. Something new always comes up.

JMC: A bunch of these people—

Lois Pearl Shults Cathey
Tommie L. Shults Haferkamp

Lois Pearl Shults Cathey
Date of birth: 22 November 1933
Communities affiliated with: Ewing, Friendship, Owl Creek

Tommie L. Shults Haferkamp
Date of birth: 23 November 1927
Communities affiliated with: Ewing, Friendship, Owl Creek

Interviewed by William S. Pugsley III

WSP: This is Bill Pugsley. I'm in the home of Mrs. Haferkamp just north of Gatesville on F.M. Road 182. It is Monday morning about ten o'clock on April 23, 2001. We will be discussing her memories of life on the Fort Hood lands before 1942. [This interview is part of Prewitt and Associates' Fort Hood Oral History Project sponsored by the U.S. Army Fort Hood and conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University.]

Now, if you would, please, walk me through your house. Describe what your parents' house was like.

TSH: Okay. We lived in an unpainted house. There were three bedrooms. Well, actually our living room had a bed in it. There was a kitchen, but we ate and cooked in the same room. It was a long shed room on the south end of the house. And there was a front porch and a back porch. The front porch had a shelf, and there's where the drinking water, the water bucket and the dipper were kept.

And one room we called the fireplace room, obviously, (laughs) because that's where the fireplace was. That's where we lived, mostly, during the wintertime. And then there was—I suppose it was the hall but it had a bed in it, and we called that the little dark room because it had no window in it—it was like a big hall, but it had a bed in it. Then one bedroom had two beds in it, and then another—actually the living room—had a bed in it during the summer months. Now it didn't during the winter months. But I guess Mother—I can't remember, but I guess she moved the beds around because that living room had more windows and was cooler during the summer.

There was no electricity. We didn't have electricity at all until after we moved out of there. There was no electricity. I don't know of anyone, do you, who had electricity?

LSC: We had a generator at the church.

TSH: Yes. And we had an uncle who had a carbide system for electric power, had electric lights, but they used that very sparingly.

WSP: We've added a second person to our conversation, so that she can be closer to the mike if she's going to add her insights. What is your name again, for the record.

LSC: Lois Cathey.

WSP: What is your relationship to Mrs. Haferkamp?

LSC: Sister, I'm the third child.

TSH: She's six years younger than me. I am seventy-three, I will be seventy-four in November. And she's six years younger than me.

WSP: All right. We have described the house and—

TSH: Can you think of anything else?

LSC: Did you tell about the bedroom where we kept the featherbed?

TSH: Now that's the little dark room?

LSC: No. No, the new room.

TSH: Oh, okay, the living room, the front room.

LSC: Well, I guess—

TSH: It was supposed to have been the living room.

LSC: Yes, I guess so, because that's where the bed that Grandpa Shults made, and Mother kept a featherbed on it. That's where it was. Isn't it? (laughter)

TSH: Oh, that's not what I remember. (laughter)

WSP: Well, how do you remember that?

LSC: Well, I remember going in there, and unless we had company, Mother did not like us to get on the featherbed.

WSP: In the living room?

TSH: Yes. That was what was supposed to have been the living room because Mother had a library table, isn't that what it was called—a square table—and the Victrola, and—at one time we kept an organ of Mother's sister. That's where all of that was. Then there was a little shed room on the west end of the porch. I'd go in there and read magazines.

WSP: This was in the living room area?

TSH: No, it was in a little shed room at the west end of the front porch.

LSC: It was—I don't know, was it as big as your kitchen area?

TSH: Something like that.

WSP: Ten by ten, fifteen by fifteen?

LSC: No, not that big.

TSH: In earlier years, when I was real little there was a bed in there that my grandpa built—he built a lot of furniture himself.

LSC: He was a carpenter.

TSH: And I have—we called it a book desk—it's what I guess people now would call a secretary because it

had doors where the books were, and then a lid where the inkwells and everything were stored.

Anyway, my grandpa was a great reader, and he had a lot of *Watson* magazines, which were political magazines. But in the summertime I'd go in there when I was too little, actually, to read, but I would look at those political cartoons. And that was probably before she was old enough to remember all of that.

LSC: No, I don't remember that.

TSH: And there had been an upstairs. This house had been my grandparents', Ake Shults and Susan Shults—Ake, or E. A., his initials were E. A.—

LSC: Shults.

TSH: And his wife's name was Susan. And when my mom and dad married they lived with them. Then Grandpa Shults died, and then Grandma Shults was incapacitated and Mother and Papa took care of her. Anyway, before we were born, there had been a stairway up to an attic area—and Papa was afraid that we would fall down so, he had those stairs removed before I remember. I just remember them talking about it.

Okay, that about describes the house, I guess. We had a wood cook stove that was the only way of heating and cooking was with wood.

WSP: And for light?

TSH: We had kerosene lamps.

LSC: And lanterns. Like if we had to go outside, they'd light the lantern, and it had a bail that you carried it with.

TSH: It was a great day when my mom was able to buy—

LSC: An Aladdin lamp.

TSH: (laughs) I couldn't think—see I told you I can't—an Aladdin lamp. Do you know what an Aladdin lamp is? It has a little kind of mantle—I don't know what it's made of, very delicate.

LSC: Very fragile, it's like, almost like paper.

TSH: But it produces, a light—a bright light, like an electric light.

LSC: (points to a lamp on a nearby table) There's the kind of lamp we had, and the Aladdin lamp had a taller globe, and then, instead of having the little wick like that it had the little mantle—it was a little bitty thing.

TSH: Very fragile. I'm not sure what it was made of but you had to be very careful, or it would collapse. And part of my job was to keep the lamps clean, the lamp globes clean.

LSC: And the wicks trimmed. You trimmed the little copper—or whatever it's made of—the little round thing that's inside the globe that has a wick. And if you turned it up higher than that it would just burn, smoke the globe.

WSP: Would you wash the globes like dishes?

LSC: Yes. Mother used to buy boxes of apples, and they had a little tissue wrappings. She saved all those tissue papers, and that's what we cleaned the lamp globes with, just wiped them.

WSP: Wiped them, instead of putting them in water?

TSH: Right. Sometimes we did that, if they *really* were dirty. If they just had the soot on them, then we just rubbed them with that tissue paper.

WSP: You had a wood stove in the kitchen, but you said you also had a fireplace in the living room?

LSC: And then in the living room we had a heater, didn't we, that they took down in the summertime?

TSH: Yes. But that was not the living room, Lois, that was just a bedroom. The living room was that one that was off the porch.

LSC: I think we called it the new room? (laughs) I'm not sure what we called it, but I don't think we called it the living room. But we didn't go in it a whole lot—but I was thinking we had—

TSH: But when we had company, though, when Uncle Jim and Aunt Florence, and Uncle Sam and Aunt Bessie came, that's where they sat to talk.

LSC: If it was in the summertime—

TSH: In the summertime—

LSC: But if it was in the wintertime we all sat around the fireplace.

WSP: Was the bed in the living room in the summertime? When guests would come, would they sit on the bed, like a couch?

TSH: No. There were chairs.

WSP: So the bed was moved so there was enough room?

TSH: Yes, it was a big room.

LSC: It was a pretty big room.

WSP: What size?

TSH: Oh, I don't know, I never thought about it. There *have* been times in the summertime when it had two beds, and then we had Aunt Anne's divan at one time—it was in there—

LSC: Now I don't remember that.

TSH: And her old organ, so it was a big room.

LSC: Yes, it was.

TSH: The walls were papered, but with builder's paper. Do you know what builder's paper is? Okay, it's very heavy paper. It isn't like our wallpaper today and you didn't have to have canvas under it but it kept a lot of the wind from the cracks. It was—I don't know how heavy, it was heavier than that, it was pretty heavy, but not that heavy.

WSP: Not as heavy as cardboard?

LSC: But it was more like a cover of a—

WSP: Of a soft, paperback book?

LSC: Yes.

TSH: It had designs on it and it was colorful. And wasn't it tacked instead of glued?

LSC: Yes.

TSH: You didn't paste it like you did other wallpaper to canvas and like you do now. They used tacks, carpet tacks, I think they were called.

LSC: And we had a little tack hammer that had a magnet on it, and we'd tack it up.

TSH: Yes, that's what all of our rooms were papered with.

WSP: And this paper was applied to plaster or wood walls?

TSH: Bare-wood walls. Single walls, and the outside was unpainted.

LSC: Yes, and was the same board as the inside.

TSH: It was not underpinned because we played underneath the house. I didn't have any cars, later my brother did—but we made roads, and we used bottles for cars and played under the house.

LSC: We had the smokehouse, too, out on the south side. It was out the back door to the kitchen, from the kitchen, and that's where we stored the meat and the onions and—

TSH: And the water situation—we had a deep well with a windmill over it. And then we did have stock tanks. We didn't have any creeks running through our place. So in the hot summertime it was bad. If the wind didn't blow we were very careful with the water. And for our milk we had a water cooler, a milk cooler. Okay, a milk cooler is—

LSC: Galvanized—

TSH: Uh-huh, I think it had three shelves—

LSC: With a pan on the bottom.

TSH: And one on the top. And you pinned a cloth, a white cloth that you had to keep *real* clean or it smelled fishy, yucky. To have fresh milk in the summertime, we'd catch the fresh water from the windmill, pour it in the top tray, and keep that cloth wet. And then it would drain down into the bottom tray, and that kept the milk and butter fresh, at least for one day.

WSP: Was the canvas on just one side, or on all four sides?

TSH: It was on all four sides. You kept it closed.

LSC: It was like an old sheet—

TSH: Uh-huh, usually made from an old sheet or from—

LSC: Or unbleached domestic, or something—

TSH: Mother had some white feed sacks. I remember one sewed together from white feed sacks because it had all the seams in it.

LSC: And the opening would be in the front—I think we kept it closed with a clothespin.

TSH: And that's where the milk and butter were kept. And that kept flies out.

WSP: And butter wouldn't melt?

TSH: Well, it wouldn't be firm like refrigerated butter, but it was firm enough to use. Every day that was

somebody's job to catch cool fresh water from the windmill and change that water in the cooler.

LSC: And we ate a lot of butter when we had it. We drank a lot of milk. I did.

TSH: We ate cereal with cream on it, you know, skim the cream off. (laughs) And whipped cream over fresh peaches or home-canned peaches. And I remember that that was one of the things—if we had unexpected company and Mother didn't have sweets. She would open a jar of peaches, home-canned peaches and whipped cream. That was so good.

WSP: How long would the milk last in that arrangement?

TSH: Probably one day without getting blinky or sour. (laughs) Blinky. We called it blinky blue-John.

WSP: Blinky blue-John?

LSC: Yes, it was soured milk, and—

WSP: Where does blue-John come from?

TSH: (laughs) Well, okay, this is *another* story. Do you want me to go on with that?

LSC: (laughs)

TSH: Okay. My Grandpa Powell, who was my maternal grandpa, had a cream separator. They had *lots* of cows. We usually just had one or two milk cows, but they had a lot of cows, and they sold cream and fed the skimmed milk to the hogs.

But the cream separator—and I've helped them do that, too—it had a lot of pieces, it was pretty complicated. And you had to turn it at a certain speed, you couldn't go too fast, for the cream to separate properly. There were a lot of—

LSC: Disks—

TSH: Stainless steel and different pans. Anyway, the milk that came out of that was actually pretty blue-looking because it had all the butterfat taken from it. And everybody just called it blue-John. And then if it was blinky we called it blinky blue-John.

LSC: Yes.

TSH: So that may just be a thing with our family, but I think I've heard others say that, too.

WSP: Interesting. Your grandfather made furniture. What types of furniture?

TSH: Okay, he made beds, and they were made from square—they were like poster beds.

LSC: Like four-by-fours.

TSH: They were poster beds—

LSC: Yes—

TSH: Not *tall* poster beds, but they were real sturdy. He made the dining table and the bench to go with it, and the bench was from—I guess a hand-hewn board. It was like fifteen inches wide.

LSC: Uh-huh, because it wasn't. (rubs top of table) It wasn't level like this, it was like—

TSH: It wasn't smooth.

LSC: Yeah, and—

TSH: It had the grains of the wood in it.

LSC: And the knots.

TSH: They had several children so they had a lot of people sitting on that bench. And then the legs were from—I think cedar, weren't they?

LSC: Probably. Yeah. Oh, yeah! They were just *limbs*, cedar limbs. There were holes, they'd made holes in the bench on each end and then cut the legs off where they would be level. Seems like Mother had to replace one of the legs.

TSH: She might have. I don't remember. And then he made, uh—

LSC: The book desk.

TSH: Uh-huh, book desk, and—seems like there were some other things. But he had a blacksmith shop, he did his own blacksmith work.

WSP: In what town?

TSH: At the home, for himself. I don't think he did any for the public.

LSC: Now our *other* grandpa, our mother's daddy—

TSH: Grandpa Powell that I talked about a while ago, our maternal grandpa.

LSC: He did—he was actually a carpenter, too.

WSP: Okay, then I am confused. Who is the carpenter that built the furniture?

TSH: Shults—

LSC: E. A. Ake.

TSH: He's the one where we lived on the home place.

LSC: His initials were E. A. and they called him Ake.

WSP: Oh! Okay.

TSH: It's *that* place where we lived, the Shults home place is where we lived.

LSC: And he's the one that made all the furniture. And our brother has the bed he made, and she has the book desk, and I got the table. My son has it and he refinished it. And Oneta got the bench, our other sister got the bench.

TSH: Oneta got the bench, and Uncle Lawrence got one of the beds. There were two homemade beds, exactly alike and he got one of them.

LSC: Now I don't remember—

TSH: J. W. mentioned that the other day.

LSC: So Grandfather Shults was making furniture, basically, furniture and other things for home use?

TSH: Yes. Not for sale.

LSC: No, not commercial.

WSP: But Grandfather Powell *would* make it for sale?

LSC: He did—

TSH: Well, he had a mill, and—

LSC: A gristmill, and he bartered a lot, I guess. And he had a blacksmith shop. He made a quilt box. My mother bought the lumber or paid for the lumber, and he made a quilt box, if you know what a quilt box is. It's a big trunk that they kept the quilts in.

WSP: Like a hope chest?

LSC: Only bigger. It was big.

TSH: Much. It always reminded me of a casket, except even larger than a casket. That's what I always—oh, I could crawl in it and hide.

LSC: Oh, yeah! Probably three or four kids could get in it.

WSP: Two or three feet wide?

TSH: Yes, probably that wide—

WSP: And eight or nine feet long?

TSH: Six—I would say—

WSP: Six feet long.

TSH: Because most of the doors you couldn't have gotten it in.

WSP: Oh, I see, yes.

LSC: And then it was probably this tall. (motions with hand)

WSP: As tall as the table, thirty inches or so high?

LSC: Yes.

WSP: So in the summertime all your quilts would be stored in there?

LSC: Quilts, blankets, and I guess, sheets and—

WSP: That's where you stored the linens.

LSC: Yes, because most houses didn't have closets.

TSH: We had one small closet.

LSC: In the dark room, wasn't it?

TSH: No, it was in that bedroom next to it, off the little porch. It was a very small closet.

WSP: What was kept in there?

TSH: Our Sunday clothes. We had Sunday clothes, and we had everyday clothes. (laughs)

WSP: And you would keep Sunday clothes in a closet? What was considered Sunday clothes?

TSH: What we wore to church.

WSP: Suits and nice dresses?

TSH: Yes, uh-huh, nice dresses. And yes, the men *did* wear suits. Papa—

I don't know that he wore one to church every Sunday, but in wintertime he did.

LSC: No, but I can remember him wearing his khaki pants.

WSP: Cooking in the kitchen, what was that like back then?

LSC: Hot in the summertime. (laughs)

TSH: It was. And our stove, I think it was larger than some. It had four lids—

LSC: Burners—

TSH: That you could remove, and that's where you put the wood in, and then it had an oven. And our oven had a gauge on it, but some people didn't have a gauge. I read a story recently about where the woman stuck her hand in the stove, and she said, it's—you know, just in the oven, and she said, "Okay, it's ready." Now ours had a gauge, and it had to reach a certain temperature before, I think, 450 [degrees] before we could put the cornbread in. And then the top had—it was called a warming oven, it was like a little storage area. And that's where Mother kept the—if we had leftover ham or bacon or—

LSC: Biscuits or cornbread.

TSH: Biscuits or cornbread, that's where they were stored.

WSP: And this storage area was warmed by the heat from inside?

TSH: Yes.

LSC: Now ours didn't have a water well.

TSH: It *did*, it had that—but Mother didn't use it because water made it rusty. I think she called it a water reservoir.

WSP: This was for producing hot water?

TSH: Yes, but Mother didn't use it because it was just cast iron and it got rusty. And she didn't like that so we just used the teakettle for heating water for baths and washing dishes. And we took our baths in the little tubs, washtubs.

WSP: In the kitchen?

TSH: In the kitchen, I believe. Some—in the wintertime I believe we got by the fireplace.

LSC: I know we did up here if we didn't have the heater in the bedroom up.

TSH: It was cold! (laughs)

LSC: We used to take baths there. Because none of the houses were insulated like—I think the houses were like clapboard, they were like twelve inches wide, and then the seams had a little board over them—

TSH: Like a two or three-inch board, you know, to cover the seam.

WSP: And it would run vertically?

TSH: Uh-huh.

WSP: And there was a post that the outside boards were nailed to, right? Like the studs now?

LSC: No.

TSH: I'm not sure, I don't know what it was like. I really don't. I never thought about it.

LSC: I don't know either. Probably it was just at the corners. I don't remember—

TSH: I'm thinking probably corners because I don't remember—but I didn't think about anything like that then. I didn't care, I could have cared less.

(gets photographs)

WSP: (looks at photograph) Oh, I see. That's right, because that ran vertically that could act like the studs, too. And you would just put the cardboard, or that paper on the inside.

TSH: Builder's paper. It came in a roll like regular wallpaper.

LSC: Big roll.

WSP: And I'm assuming from your descriptions that you either had to change it or paint it?

LSC: No.

TSH: No, it had designs on it, I remember one—

LSC: And it lasted, I guess a long time.

TSH: Yes, it did.

LSC: But it was pretty soft, it would tear easy. It was very fibrous, I guess that would be the word for it.

TSH: Yes, that's a good description.

LSC: So you would have to occasionally have to reattach it?

TSH: Maybe, some of them, if it came loose. But it kept the wind out.

LSC: And we had linoleum on the kitchen floor, I think.

WSP: And the rest of the house?

TSH: I think it was bare floors, wasn't it?

LSC: I think so, too.

TSH: I think in the fireplace room there was a linoleum.

LSC: And I think they were like nine-by-twelves, and they would have a border—

TSH: Okay, let me go back to the water situation, because that was the first time I ever saw Papa cry.

It was in the hot summer—I have a story written about it. I think it was in 1934—and the windmill was broken, I believe the pipes, the sucker rods were broken. And it was in, I think in August, July or August. It was hot! The stock had water to drink, but we didn't have. Oh, it was awful—we had to haul water. Anyway, some people came to help Papa pull the pipe and fix it—because neighbors did that, they just helped each other when somebody needed a well fixed or something, they just helped each other. And most of them had the equipment to do it with. You know, it took a lot of equipment.

But anyway, somehow the pipe fell in the well. I don't even remember those details. What I remember is Papa came over and sat down beside the shelf for the water bucket on the front

porch—because the windmill was in front—just outside the fence—of the front porch, and he came over there and just sat down and cried. And that's the first time I ever saw Papa cry. So I knew that it was serious—

LSC: It was something bad.

WSP: Do you remember how he solved it?

TSH: Well, yes, they had to hire men with a well rig, someone who dug wells. He had to bring that well rig in and pull the pipes, and that was a big ordeal. But we finally got water. So I don't really remember the rest of it, but until we got water we had to haul water from a neighbor's house in barrels, I believe.

LSC: Back then we had the wooden barrels, I guess?

TSH: I think we had some. What I remember is a metal barrel.

WSP: Any other buildings besides the main house?

TSH: Oh, yes, we had barns, a car shed—

LSC: And the barn fence was a—

TSH: A rail fence—and we had what we called a corncrib, and then the other one had an area for hay, storing hay, a loft.

WSP: Which one was that?

TSH: There were two barns. Okay, with a lot, fenced like a square. One barn was here, and one barn was here, and this was the corncrib I believe.

WSP: They were facing each other across the lot?

TSH: Yes, facing across the lot, yes. Then the house was here, and the garage was here, where the—

LSC: Car shed.

TSH: Car shed—we called it a car shed.

WSP: So the house was on the adjacent side of that square. So everything was within easy walking distance out the back door?

TSH: Uh-huh. Oh, just a few steps away.

LSC: The barn was probably nearly as far as her barn is. (indicates the barn just outside the window) The car shed—

WSP: Looks like 100, 150 feet, something like that?

TSH: Uh-huh. And then the car shed, 'course the car was kept there.

LSC: It was at the corner of the yard fence.

TSH: Yes, and that's where Papa kept the harness for the mules and the horses, and, whatever equipment was needed for them.

LSC: And saddles.

WSP: What was kept in the main barn?

TSH: Well, just the feed, hay and corn.

LSC: Feed for the cows and the horses and pigs.

TSH: Oh, and the—the cow barn was—

LSC: The cow pen.

TSH: The cow pen and a barn with it—

WSP: Now this is a different barn? This is a third barn?

LSC: Yeah, the cow pen is smaller. Yes.

WSP: It was not a part of this? It was off somewhere else?

TSH: Yes, it's in a different area. That's where the milk cows were kept overnight and the cottonseed to feed them was kept down there, or whatever. And it adjoined the garden, Mother's garden, and we had, I think, a couple of fruit trees in the garden. And then, later we had a little orchard with berry vines.

LSC: Peach trees and pears, and it seems like maybe we had apricots.

TSH: There was an apricot tree in the garden. And then, I think I'll describe the smokehouse that was to the south of the house.

LSC: And the smokehouse was inside the yard.

TSH: That's where we did the weekly washing, Monday, when washing for the family.

WSP: The smokehouse? Why the smokehouse?

TSH: Well, it had a shed over it with a bench, and it was close to—well, the wash pot was in that area. On Monday morning you got up and heated the water and, uh—

LSC: In the big black wash pot. I'm sure you've seen them. We built a fire under it to heat the water.

TSH: And with lye soap—

LSC: And a rub board—

TSH: We scrubbed the clothes.

WSP: How long would that process take?

LSC: All day. (laughs)

TSH: At least until after lunch. And we usually didn't have enough clothesline and clothespins to hang all the clothes, so some of the jeans and other clothes got hung on the fence. Oh, I can just see that! It was awful!

WSP: Why was it awful?

TSH: It just looked awful. (laughs)

LSC: But we had in one corner of the yard—and it may have been outside—there was a huge oak tree that we played under. I can remember picking up acorns.

TSH: It was outside the yard in the front.

LSC: Yeah—

WSP: So the *front* yard would have the garden?

TSH: No, the back yard was nearer the garden.

LSC: Well, the garden was to the east of the house, and the front yard was north. Yeah. (laughs) We may have to draw it out for him.

TSH: Let me see that other piece of paper you have.

(interruption in taping)

WSP: Mrs. Haferkamp has drawn an outline of the house and the outbuildings on a tablet. She's labeling the drawing now. It has the chicken house outside the fence. Why was the chicken house outside the fence? I would think you'd want it close to the house.

LSC: We didn't want it inside the yard. They make a mess!

TSH: And they're smelly.

LSC: No, the chickens would jump, fly up on the fence and get inside the yard. We didn't like them in there, but they would scratch Mother's flowers up. You know, they just make a mess. So we didn't want them in the yard.

TSH: Yeah, and they were smelly.

LSC: They weren't supposed to be in the yard, but they would fly up on the fence.

WSP: You'd keep chickens for eggs.

LSC: Eggs, and we would eat the chickens. If the preacher came on Sunday, we'd have fried chicken.

WSP: Were you glad to see the preacher?

LSC: Yes.

WSP: Let's talk about the animals, and how many of each type, and if that quantity changed, up or down, because of particular events. Let's start with the chickens.

LSC: Well, back then we hatched our own.

TSH: I guess then Mother had twenty-five or thirty hens, do you think? Yes. And I can't remember whether she ordered chickens then. Later she did from a hatchery. But I think she hatched her own chickens. And she raised turkeys.

LSC: At one time we had an incubator, but I don't remember whether she bought it or whether someone gave it to her.

TSH: No, no, it was Grandpa Shults's, or Grandma Shults's. But I don't—

LSC: The incubator is where you put the eggs, keep them warm.

TSH: But I don't remember that Mother ever—I remember that incubator, but I don't think she ever used it to hatch chickens. And I remember the turkey eggs because you had to be very careful with them. She'd wear cotton gloves to pick 'em up, and she'd keep them in the dark under that bed—like in a—

LSC: In a blanket.

TSH: A shoebox or something. And, I think she turned those eggs every day.

LSC: And, she kept them in there long enough to get a setting of eggs.

TSH: Uh-huh. I'm not sure how many a setting was. Was it fifteen?

LSC: I don't think—

WSP: What's a setting?

TSH: It's how many a turkey could cover, how many she could incubate.

LSC: Could cover. She sets on them all the time until they hatch.

WSP: So she would pluck these—

TSH: She watched for the turkey eggs. As the turkeys made their nests, Mother followed them, and she'd steal the eggs from the nest until she had a setting. And then when one of the old turkeys wanted to set, then she'd put her in a safe place and put all the eggs under her.

LSC: And if she didn't get the turkey eggs, the varmints would get them.

TSH: Possums and raccoons, and—they couldn't just leave the eggs in the nest.

LSC: Snakes.

WSP: So the strategy behind collecting all the turkey eggs is to create the largest number of eggs that would survive? But if your mother had not added eggs to the nest, the setting turkey might leave, and a varmint would come. But if the hens had enough eggs, they would feel instinctively obligated—

TSH: Well, when the turkey hen started setting, then Mother would move her to a safe place. I don't remember whether it was in the barn or the chicken house. Do you remember? But she'd move her to a place where the varmints couldn't get to her.

LSC: And the turkeys, when they got ready to set on their eggs they make a different sound.

WSP: Would they make that sound when they're laying two and three eggs?

LSC: No.

WSP: But when they have a whole clutch, as it were, then they would be ready to sit there until they hatch.

TSH: I just know that they would start setting on the nest all the time—instead of, you know, they'd lay an egg and go about their business, forage for food or whatever, and—

LSC: And the chickens were the same way.

WSP: But they wouldn't lay but one or two eggs?

LSC: Well, *all* of them just lay one egg a day, turkeys and chickens both just lay one egg a day.

WSP: Would you retrieve the eggs from the chickens regularly?

TSH: Oh, we gathered them everyday. If you didn't they got bad in the hot summer. I think they stayed in a milk cooler tray, too. You know, they get rotten if you leave them out in the hot sun. That was the job you did every day, gather the eggs and milk the cows. That was an every day deal.

LSC: And we milked the cows in the evening and in the mornings.

WSP: How early?

LSC: *Early*.

WSP: Did you do that, or did your brothers and older sisters do that?

TSH: Uh, Papa usually did the milking. Now, I learned to milk.

LSC: When we moved up here, I milked a lot.

TSH: Well, I milked some down there, but Papa did most of the milking. But I knew how.

WSP: This is something that you were taught to do? Who taught you?

LSC: Mother taught me.

TSH: I'm not sure whether it was Mother or Papa. It's just something you do. It's not something you think about.

WSP: You watched by example and then would try it?

TSH: Yes, and then if they see you aren't doing it right, then they show you.

LSC: (laughs) Yes, you have to squeeze a certain way.

WSP: How many cows did you have?

TSH: Usually not more than two, did we, or three?

LSC: Oh, I was thinking we had more, but maybe not.

TSH: I don't think so, because we—

LSC: And we had one mule, and another horse that were the work horses.

TSH: I thought we had two mules?

LSC: Oh, yeah, we did. Yes.

TSH: Mike and Toby.

LSC: Oh, yes, we did. Yes. One of them was red, one of them was black.

TSH: Mike and Toby. Mike was the black one, he was the bigger one. Toby was the gentler of the two, he actually could be ridden. Mike couldn't be ridden.

LSC: Toby was the one that threw me off and injured my back. (laughs)

TSH: Yeah. And then Mother had a mare when Mother got married. I guess you would call it a dowry. Her parents gave her a buggy, a mare, and a trunk. And, Old Sorrel was the mare's name, and she had several colts over the years. But anyway, she must have lived to be, what, thirty years old?

LSC: Thirty-something.

TSH: She was old.

LSC: And then as many kids as could get on her, could ride her. She was that gentle. We crawled all over her. You could crawl up her back legs. (laughs) We could line up almost all the way up on her neck.

TSH: But the mules are what Papa farmed with—there were no tractors then.

WSP: How many acres did he have?

TSH: It was a hundred and something, wasn't it? And it had lots of flint rocks. You know, I'm not sure. There's a lot of things that I don't remember.

WSP: That's interesting. You said it was flint rock, tell me about that?

TSH: Oh, it was bad.

LSC: Yeah, hard to plow.

TSH: When we chopped cotton you had to keep continually sharpening your hoes because the flint rocks dulled them and you could see the sparks when the hoe hit the flint rock.

WSP: So what kind of dirt was it, exclusive of the rocks?

TSH: It was black dirt, it was fertile soil. We had some that was good, but one of the fields was really rocky.

LSC: The one right to the north of the house and the barn was rocky and had lots of ragweeds. I can remember the ragweeds and the smell of the ragweeds. And then we had two stock tanks. One of them was big, and it was up at the north end.

TSH: Dirt tanks, if you know what that is.

LSC: A pond. (laughs)

WSP: Okay, a dirt pond.

TSH: We called them dirt tanks.

LSC: And then *this* is one of the first memories I have. Papa is digging that little tank there, kinda in front of the house. Well, it was just south of the barn—

LSC: Yes, yes.

TSH: And beside the garden.

LSC: And he used the mules, I guess, and a scoop—that wasn't what they called it, but it was a wide shovel.

TSH: It's kind of like a backhoe, it looked like a backhoe, but it flipped the dirt. He'd get it full, and then it would flip.

LSC: It had a lever. He built the little tank dam with it.

WSP: Why did he put in a second tank?

TSH: To hold the water for the animals.

WSP: He just felt like he needed that additional water? Was it filled by rainwater?

LSC: Yes.

WSP: Did he find it difficult to dig in the rocky soil?

TSH: Well, that was not rocky. That was white dirt, that was not rocky there.

WSP: What kind of dirt?

TSH: It was white dirt. I don't know, maybe a clay, a caliche or clay.

WSP: And how was white soil for planting or growing?

LSC: Oh, it didn't do very good.

TSH: I don't think we had any of that in our fields.

LSC: It was kinda in a lane. It wasn't a field, it was just in the pasture.

TSH: Uh-huh. It was not cultivated. He just picked out a spot, maybe because he knew that white dirt was there and would hold water.

WSP: Have we covered all the farm animals at this point?

LSC: Well, we raised sheep and goats and hogs.

TSH: We had goats. Sheep later. We didn't have sheep—my first memories are not of sheep, but we had goats.

WSP: How many?

TSH: Not many. I don't know.

LSC: Fifty maybe?

TSH: Yeah, probably fifty. And not that many sheep, I don't think. I think probably like twenty-five sheep.

LSC: I don't remember. *My* memory is that we always had sheep.

TSH: We didn't when I was little.

LSC: We had a little field back over, I guess it was off—

TSH: South of the garden where that rock bluff was.

LSC: I guess kind of—

TSH: You know there were a lot of rocks.

LSC: Kind of even with the cemetery, our fence line over there.

TSH: Papa, planted it in Sudan.

LSC: The Sudan [feed crop] or something that he raised. I can remember having sheep and goats over there, and I guess wild dogs—or neighbors' dogs or something—killing one of the sheep over there.

WSP: What happened?

LSC:: I don't know.

WSP: It just happened and that was just something that happened?

LSC: Yes.

TSH: You asked about the crops. We raised some cotton, corn, sugar cane to, uh—

LSC: To make syrup.

TSH: Our maternal grandfather had a syrup mill, so we raised just a few rows of sugar cane. And then maize. That scar (points to her forearm) is from heading maize—

WSP: My! You have a two-and-a-half-inch scar on your left forearm. What's that from again?

TSH: It's from cutting maize heads. Mother and Papa were cutting maize heads—we called it heading maize, they cut the heads off and threw 'em into a wagon. And I did the driving.

WSP: The top of the stalk of the plant as opposed to the ears?

TSH: Yes, the head.

LSC: This is not corn, this is *maize*. It has the little bitty round seeds.

TSH: Let's see, milo is what some people call it. Do you know what milo is?

WSP: I'm a city boy, I hate to say.

TSH: Well, most people think of corn as ears of corn. I wrote a story about this. The Indians called corn maize, but this is like, well, like cane, the heads on cane, you know, it's sprinkled with little tiny seeds, and it—

LSC: It makes a head.

TSH: Anyway, we had a big field of maize, and Mother and Papa started heading it—it has to reach a certain stage. And they used it for feed. Anyway, I drove the wagon and team.

LSC: You had to have a really sharp knife, and they would just cut them off, hold several in their hands—

TSH: Uh-huh, and toss them in the wagon. I drove for them. I think Mother had a row or two rows on one side of the wagon, and Papa, two on the other. They took two rows at a time, walked between them, and then they could toss the heads into the wagon.

Okay, one day Mother went to fix lunch and I begged Papa—because the mules knew where to stop, he could just holler at 'em. I guess that was my job so I'd keep out of trouble. But anyway, I begged Papa to let me use Mother's knife and help him. I had not gone probably ten feet until I cut my arm. (laughs) Well, that ended my maize heading for that day. I was little, six or eight, maybe.

WSP: Six or eight, and you're handling a sharp knife? How tall is the plant for you to be able to reach?

TSH: Oh, it's probably that tall. (indicates with her hand)

WSP: Two and a half feet off the ground.

LSC: Three, maybe.

WSP: Is that as tall as it would get?

TSH: Yes. There was some called dwarf maize, and I think Papa usually raised the dwarf maize because it had bigger heads. But anyway, I remember helping him cut sugar cane. First you stripped it—

WSP: Sugar cane?

TSH: Sugar cane, now—and it was tall, it would be taller than my head.

LSC: And taller than Papa's head.

WSP: Six or eight feet tall? Tall as the ceiling?

TSH: Probably six or six and a half. And first we had to strip it. We had a wooden paddle that you'd just go down the rows stripping sugar cane.

LSC: The leaves. Stripping the leaves off.

TSH: And then, Papa, I think he made a homemade knife, handmade knife, to cut it with. It would be probably a strip from an old saw, I think, that he put into a handle. Then you held it, and held onto the stalk of the cane, and cut it off at the bottom of the stalks. And then, I think you—I guess we headed it before we cut it. I think we stripped it first, then headed it, cut it, and then we piled it in the wagon and took it to the syrup mill, where they made syrup.

LSC: To our Grandpa Powell's.

TSH: To the syrup mill.

WSP: And the mill would grind or squash the—

TSH: Juice out, and then they would cook it—

LSC: In a pan.

WSP: They'd give you back the pan full of juice?

TSH: No. They cooked it right there.

WSP: What would you get back?

TSH: Gallons of syrup, after the juice had been cooked.

LSC: Molasses. And any of the neighbors that grew sugar cane would come to Grandpa's. And they'd do it all in a day or two. I guess he would—

TSH: Supervise it.

LSC: And let everybody know when they were going to do it so they could all bring it at the same time.

WSP: So all of this heading and stripping and cutting and putting in the truck would happen in the same day, or same week?

TSH: The same day.

WSP: There wasn't any chance for a plant to dry out.

TSH: No, it was still filled with the juices.

LSC: And it wouldn't dry out in that length of time. And we, we used to—I used to love the sugar cane. We'd peel the peeling off and chew it, get the sweet out of it.

TSH: It would be in lengths, and it was like eating a stick of sugar candy.

WSP: So you're indicating with your fingers on the table, oh, about six or seven inches long.

TSH: Yes, uh-huh.

WSP: And you would take one strip of that, and then strip off—

LSC: You'd just break it off. It would break at the joints.

WSP: Like bamboo?

LSC: Yes. You can go to the grocery store now, uh, the markets—

TSH: Oh, really?

LSC: Have sugar cane, but it doesn't taste like what we grew. Billie Joe bought some one day, and it didn't

taste the same.

You just chew it up and get the juice and then spit it out.

WSP: I see, you'd spit the fibers out.

LSC: But the sugar mill, if I can remember, it was against a tree, or under a tree, maybe—

WSP: You mean the pans, the copper pans?

TSH: Yeah. Somebody would feed the sugar cane through the mill. They had a mule or a horse that would go around and around, turning these cogs that would press the juice out of the sugar cane.

WSP: Then you would get your batch, and then he'd clean the machine and start a new batch, so that everyone would know what amount—

TSH: I guess so. I don't know, that part I wasn't worried about. (laughs)

LSC: But the pans were copper, and if they weren't cleaned right before they did this, the batch of syrup was ruined. I remember that.

WSP: How do you remember that?

TSH: Because ours was the first batch to be cooked off one time, and apparently—you know how copper turns green—apparently they hadn't scrubbed those pans good, and the syrup was ruined.

WSP: From the green in the copper that had not been cleaned?

TSH: You had to be very careful about cleaning those copper pans.

WSP: So the whole batch was ruined?

TSH: Yes, that whole batch was ruined. They gave it to the hogs.

LSC: And we used—we, my mother used molasses to sweeten nearly everything.

TSH: Yeah, that was—that was a big part of our, I can't think of the word—

WSP: Cooking.

TSH: Our staples, our staple food. Yeah, because she made syrup cakes and gingerbread—

WSP: Oh, what is syrup cake?

TSH: Okay, it's just like a cake except it's sweetened with syrup, and it's *very* tasty, and—

LSC: Molasses cookies.

TSH: Uh-huh.

WSP: So this is a replacement for sugar, so whatever you needed sugar for—

LSC: Uh-huh, if we couldn't afford, or didn't have sugar, she used molasses for sweetening.

WSP: Cotton. How did raising cotton go?

LSC: (laughs) Oh, dear.

TSH: The pick—the chopping was not too much fun.

WSP: This is hoeing between the plants? Was this is a chore the young ones were expected to do?

TSH: Uh-huh, right. And then the picking was awful, but going to the gin was pretty fun. (laughs) When we got—how much did we have to have, fifteen hundred pounds?

LSC: Uh-huh.

TSH: You had to have fifteen hundred pounds on the wagon to make a bale of cotton. Usually the last bale—and we didn't raise a lot of cotton like some people did, maybe four or five bales at the most, do you think?

LSC: Uh-huh, if it was a good crop.

WSP: And how many acres would that require?

TSH: Probably thirty.

LSC: I don't even know.

TSH: Because we didn't—like after my husband and I were farming, we made sometimes a half bale, or a bale to the acre—Papa didn't do that.

LSC: (laughs) But my memory, my first memory of picking cotton, is having a flour sack—that barely reached the ground—that Mother put a strap on for me to pick. Our younger sister was three years younger than me. And I can remember going to the field and Mother carrying a quilt. It was my responsibility to watch my little sister under the shade tree there on the corner of that field. (laughs)

WSP: You'd pick cotton in the area and watch—

LSC: Well, I just watched her. This was before I ever started picking.

TSH: Was it up by the cottonwood trees by the tank?

LSC: Well, between—you remember where the plum trees were?

TSH: Uh-huh.

LSC: Between there and the big tank.

TSH: Okay. But what I remember when we were chopping cotton—and this *was* pleasurable—we would sometimes take our lunch. There were several big cottonwood trees—okay, this field away from the house, north, north of the house, had the tank and the cottonwood trees there. And we would sit under those cottonwood trees and eat our lunch. And, oh, that was so nice!

LSC: I was just thinking, coming on down here—you can just close your eyes and hear the rustle of the cottonwood leaves.

TSH: And then if we were picking cotton up there, we'd leave our sacks filled with cotton and lay down and take a nap before we went back to pick.

WSP: Lay on the cotton sacks?

TSH: Uh-huh, on the sacks filled with cotton, we'd lay under those cottonwood trees and listen to the rustle of those cottonwoods. And that water, you know, you could hear it splashing a little.

WSP: What time of year was this?

LSC: September, October, August especially.

TSH: Well, August, July and August. Uh-huh, hot, yeah, very hot. But it was cool, always cool under the cottonwood trees there by the tank.

Okay. What distresses me more—can I talk about this?

WSP: You can talk about anything.

TSH: More about the changes—are the morals between then and today and going to church. I said this in Sunday school yesterday. When I was a kid, when I woke up on Sunday morning, I knew it was Sunday. Everything—you know, no outside activity, everything was shut down. You knew it was the Lord's day. You knew it was Sabbath. And everybody went to church. There was—'course we didn't pass too many houses going to church, but there was no working in the fields. It was Sunday.

Now you can't tell the difference, whether it's a weekday. When I drive to church, you don't know whether it's Sunday or a weekday.

LSC: And the only thing that was done at our house on Sunday was milking the cows and gathering the eggs.

TSH: Yes, milking the cows and gathering the eggs, that was it.

WSP: The bare minimum.

TSH: Uh-huh.

LSC: I mean it was just unheard of to do—if the crops ruined on Sunday, they just ruined.

TSH: Oh, yeah. They did.

WSP: If you knew it was going to rain on Monday, and the rain might ruin the crop, and you could pick it on Sunday, you didn't—because that's just the way it was.

LSC: Yes, right, at least it was for my daddy, for Papa.

WSP: Now, you had a cemetery that was just down the road.

TSH: Probably a quarter of a mile.

WSP: Describe what that was like, and anything you remember about that cemetery. Which one was it again?

TSH: This is the Friendship Cemetery. Okay, what I remember about that, mostly, is the cemetery working. They had a cemetery working where everyone in the community who had family or friends buried there—anyone who wanted to—because then they didn't have caretakers came to clean the cemetery. Later, before we moved, we did, but early on there was no caretaker, everybody was just responsible for their own graves. And, everyone took a picnic lunch, a basket lunch, and spread the lunch. But everybody worked the cemetery until it was clean. And that usually took place in the spring.

WSP: And you're not using a lawn mower, I assume.

LSC: We didn't have lawn mowers. (laughs)

TSH: We had hoes, we used hoes, and I think the men probably used axes.

WSP: What for?

TSH: Well, to trim out the brush. There was brush around the cemetery.

LSC: Around the fence—and I'm thinking shovels to fill in like if a grave had sunk, you know, they'd get dirt and fill it back in.

TSH: And hoes and rakes. And then, I know, Mother always took fresh flowers to put on the graves. Everything looked *really* pretty when they left, after the cemetery working. And I guess some of the other ladies took flowers, too. I think they took them for their own relatives.

WSP: Cut flowers as opposed to planted flowers?

TSH: Right. Cut flowers.

WSP: Were there any planted flowers?

TSH: I don't recall any there.

LSC: I don't remember any.

WSP: Wild flowers?

TSH: Some of the flowers that they took to put on the graves were wildflowers, or what was growing in their garden or yard.

WSP: But they wouldn't sprout. These flowers were not—

TSH: No, not, permanent.

WSP: The cemetery was just grassy, natural terrain.

TSH: Uh-huh.

WSP: How often would this cleaning take place?

TSH: Once a year, in the spring.

LSC: When the grass and the weeds started growing.

WSP: One cleaning would last the whole summer?

TSH: Well, it usually got pretty ragged looking before the next spring, but I guess that was probably the only time that people met to work the cemetery.

LSC: People had the time to—

TSH: See, I was only fourteen then, and by the time we moved I was fifteen, so I really didn't pay much attention.

WSP: Did you help on these occasions?

TSH: Not much.

WSP: Did you have relatives in the Friendship Cemetery?

TSH: Oh, yes!

LSC: Yes, our, our Grandpa Shults and his three wives are buried there.

TSH: Three of his wives. Oh, yes, we have lots of relatives there.

WSP: Three wives?

TSH: Uh-huh, Grandpa Shults was married, actually four times.

WSP: I don't know about that story. Can you help me out?

TSH: Okay. Well, first he was married to a young girl, or young lady, before he went to the Civil War. Then when he came back home, he never could find her. So it's assumed that she and the child died while he was gone to the Civil War.

WSP: He was living out here, out on Fort Hood land?

TSH: Well, it was in Fort Worth, he married her in Fort Worth. I think at the time he may have owned land in Fort Worth.

LSC: He built the first lumber house in Fort Worth, on the Trinity River, I think.

TSH: And then when he came back from the Civil War—now I'm not sure of this story—is it okay if it's not exactly accurate?

WSP: Just tell the stories as you remember them.

TSH: Okay. Well, J. W. knows this story from beginning to end, so I may not know it that well. Well, what I remember them saying is that when he got back to Fort Worth after the Civil War, his brother was in Coryell County or had bought land in Coryell County. So he could buy land here cheaper than in Fort Worth.

LSC: It was like fifty cents an acre in Fort Worth and a nickel an acre down here, or something like that.

TSH: So he elected to come to Coryell County and he bought some property here. He married—

LSC: This is before Fort Hood—

TSH: And he married, now I'm not sure, I have it all written down—but anyway, he married a lady and had—would you like for me to get the book and get this accurate?

WSP: No, just give me the general gist, and we can look at the book later.

TSH: All right. I think he had four children, and then that wife died, and he married her cousin. And she was the mother of all of Papa's brothers, except the one who died. Okay. Then *she* died, and he married my grandmother. And they had my daddy and a younger brother who died. In all there were twelve, I believe.

LSC: Twelve—

TSH: Twelve children.

WSP: And his wives died because of—

TSH: One had cancer. I'm not sure why the second one died.

WSP: Childbirth, or influenza?

TSH: No, I don't think so. It could have been influenza, I know Grandpa Shults died from the flu. And then, I guess, Grandma, well, Grandma Shults died from cancer.

LSC: Yes, she had—because I can remember Papa saying that was what he was going to die of, and he did. But our Grandfather Shults ran a schooner from Fort Worth to Louisiana, and he sold it and that's when he came down here, if I remember.

TSH: Okay, I think that's probably true. But all of the three wives who are buried in Friendship were from this area.

WSP: I see. Now do we have any other crops to discuss?

LSC: Sudan. Sudan was just a feed crop.

TSH: And that's what was made into hay, because I remember raking hay for the hay baler.

LSC: We had a sickle mower that cut the feed and then we had a *big* rake that was horse-drawn that raked it in—

TSH: And when it was full—okay, it was shaped like this, with prongs.

LSC: And it had a seat on it.

TSH: Oh, yes, I've raked hay, and you would have to get as close as you could to the hay baler and dump it in exactly the right spot. One time I hit the hay baler, and that wasn't too good. (laughs) But anyway that was fun. I liked doing anything like that, I liked doing something different.

WSP: Such as driving trucks or farm equipment?

TSH: There were no trucks. Yeah, that was before the day of any—

LSC: But we raised all of our food.

WSP: In your mother's garden?

LSC: Yes, and we canned everything.

WSP: Give me a list of the vegetables that you would have in this garden.

LSC: Pinto beans, black-eyed peas—

TSH: Beets, tomatoes, potatoes, onions, squash—

LSC: Yeah, squash, and bean that we called Haitian beans. They were a little bitty white bean, and, uh—

TSH: Similar to a northern bean, but they had a different taste.

LSC: Smaller—

TSH: Yes, they were smaller and had, oh, a wonderful taste.

LSC: And she would let some of them dry on the vines to save for seed for the next year. And we'd put them in a tow sack, and she'd let us kids stomp 'em, (laughs) to get the hulls off, and then hold them up an' wind and let the hulls—

TSH: She'd put a wagon sheet or something, a tarp of some kind to catch the beans.

WSP: And then the chaff would blow away?

TSH: Yes, it would blow away.

LSC: We raised turnip greens—

TSH: Lettuce, radishes—

LSC: Mustard greens—

TSH: Oh, and one year—Mother was always trying something new—do you remember when she grew eggplant?

LSC: Yes, I do.

TSH: But none of us liked the eggplant.

WSP: She was seeing what variety she could add to the menu.

Could she grow pretty much everything she thought she could? Or was there something you recall that didn't work out well? Did she grow corn?

LSC: Well, we grew corn, and we didn't grow it in the garden.

TSH: It was field corn, a yellow corn.

LSC: Field corn. Back then they didn't have the hybrid sweet corn.

TSH: Oh, and canning corn was a *big* day, because, usually—again, neighbors got together to do that.

LSC: To help each other.

WSP: Can corn?

TSH: Okay, we may have to get together on the process, but first, usually the men went to the field with tow sacks, they'd bring back three or four tow sacks full of corn.

LSC: I just remember them bringing 'em in the wagon. (laughs)

TSH: Oh, really? I don't remember that. Anyway, when they got back, they'd cut the ends off.

WSP: Of the stalks or the ears?

TSH: The ears.

LSC: They would gather the corn from the field, the ears, pull them off the stalks.

TSH: Then they'd have a *really* sharp knife and cut the butt end and then the end with the silks—do you know what silks are? Okay, they'd cut the butt end and the silk ends, and then peel the shucks back. And, then comes the tedious job of taking a little tiny paring knife and getting *all* of those silks out between the rows of the kernels.

WSP: Who would do that job?

TSH: Okay, usually the little kids, the ones—(laughs)

LSC: Who were too little to cut corn off the cob.

WSP: What that process called?

TSH: Silking.

WSP: Silkin' is pulling the silk threads out from between the kernels.

TSH: Yes. Right. And you'd have to have a fine paring knife.

LSC: A real sharp blade and point.

TSH: Sometimes there'd be worm-eaten places, and you had to make sure all of those were cut off. And then after they were silked, there would be a big tub of water, fresh water usually, cool water that you'd put every ear in that water. And then the people who were allowed to cut the corn off of the cob, then they started.

LSC: They'd have a dishpan—

Big pan, and they'd—with a really, really sharp knife, cut just the tips of the corn off and then scrape the rest. That made the juice.

TSH: And that made cream-style corn.

LSC: Yeah. We didn't till later on, years later, do whole kernel corn.

TSH: No.

LSC: And then—

WSP: I've held the ear of corn and run the knife blade close to the cob and cut the entire kernel off the cob.

LSC: That's whole kernel corn.

WSP: Okay. You're describing something else, then.

TSH: Just cut the tip off—

WSP: The very top round part of the kernel. And then you get the milky stuff on the inside? What would you do with that stuff?

LSC: You scrape it off in with the corn, and that's what makes cream-style corn. If you ever look at cream-style corn, it doesn't have the whole kernel in it.

TSH: Okay. And then in a *big* dishpan, when there was enough to start cooking, somebody started cooking it. And you'd have to add half—probably half as much water as there was, or equal amounts, maybe, of water and cutoff corn. And you had to stand and stir it, because it would stick easily.

LSC: Burn.

TSH: Uh-huh. And you didn't want scorched corn.

LSC: And we canned the corn in cans.

TSH: Yes. Most things we canned in jars, but we had a can sealer—

WSP: You had a can sealer in your house?

TSH: Uh-huh, a can sealer, yes.

WSP: How would that work? It involves lead, doesn't it?

TSH: Well, maybe, but it's not in the lids. Some things Mother would can in used cans. But for corn and, uh—

LSC: Tomatoes.

TSH: Uh-huh, you had to have *new* cans. They came in *big* boxes, I guess of a hundred, do you think?

LSC: Probably.

TSH: A hundred cans.

TSH: I don't know what they cost, I have no idea.

LSC: And new lids.

TSH: Yeah. Well, when you bought a big box of cans, the new lids came with it. If you were using some that had already been used, then you had to buy the lids separately. But for corn you always had new cans.

LSC: And they were already flanged, if I remember—

TSH: Yes. Yes, they were.

LSC: Which is the edge, the top edge turned down.

WSP: Okay, so you would fill the can, push the lid down on top. And then put it in this sealing machine?

TSH: Take it to the sealer. And this would be hard to describe—okay, somehow you had a lever that raised the can up to this part that fitted over the lid.

LSC: Didn't that, didn't that have a magnet that held the lid, or am I not remembering?

TSH: Not that I remember. But I remember—because I've done this a lot of times—pushing that little lever that pushed the can up and then you had another lever that had the little, uh—oh, I don't know how to describe it, I'm not mechanically minded—but anyway, you pushed that into that lid and you had to go very slow to turn it down just a little bit at a time.

WSP: Some kind of crank device?

TSH: Yes. With one hand you held this lever and then with the other hand turned the crank, except very slow, and it gradually would turn that—

LSC: Flange—

TSH: Flange down. And then you reversed that lever, and for the last step, it really sealed it. (laughs) I wish I knew how to express it to you, but I don't. I just knew what to do.

WSP: It doesn't sound like there's a lead seal involved, like there is now.

TSH: Oh, no. Unh-uh.

WSP: It was all sealed by bending and crimping the lid to the can, and that was sufficient because it would have this very tight seal.

TSH: Okay, it looked exactly like this when you got through. (brings a modern-day can from her kitchen) And with a can like this we could use that sealer to cut those lids off, cut all this off—

LSC: Cut it off right around there.

TSH: And then there was a separate little instrument that you turned the raw edge, and it would make a flange. Like I said, for some things you could use secondhand or used cans—

LSC: Like beans and peas.

TSH: But corn was hard to keep. You had to be very careful. It had to be heated exactly and processed exactly because it spoils easily.

LSC: And so do tomatoes.

WSP: Using new cans was an extra precaution to make sure that you wouldn't spoil your batch of corn. Now tomatoes I can understand the extra precaution because they're acidic. But I don't understand corn—

TSH: Well, there's something about, maybe the milk in the corn, but it sours. Because Mother was—now I don't know if everyone was as careful as she was or not, but you didn't leave—like if we couldn't finish up the corn that we pulled that day, she didn't use that the next day. It had to be very fresh. And then you didn't leave it setting for a long time.

WSP: Even cut ears, even if you haven't topped them?

TSH: Yes. It had to be *very* fresh. Now I don't know whether Mother was especially picky, but I know corn sometimes—if a can of corn spoiled, the ends would—

LSC: Would bulge.

TSH: Bulge, and some of them actually popped. I mean, it was easy to spoil. So you had to be very careful.

LSC: Now Mother would let me flange the cans, but I don't know that she ever let me seal them.

TSH: I know. (laughs) I bugged them so. I wanted to do everything that they did.

LSC: Well, I did, too. And these don't have—the ones we did—that had a little [ridge] where the seam of the can was—and you had to be very careful going over that seam to make sure it's sealed in there. And if they had one that didn't, they had to cut it off and start over again.

TSH: Yes, redo it. And then Mother put them in the pressure cooker, put the cans after they were sealed—

WSP: In the cooker.

TSH: Uh, huh. They tried to keep those warm after the hot corn was in there. If she had to, I think she put them in, uh—

LSC: A pan of water.

TSH: A pan on the stove, uh-huh, a pan of water on the stove, to keep them until she could get them in the cooker to process.

WSP: Once you get them sealed the next thing to do is to raise the temperature and keep the temperature up somehow or another.

TSH: Uh-huh, in the pressure cooker.

WSP: If the pressure cooker was full and you still had a whole table of sealed cans, then you would put them in some device to keep them warm—

LSC: In water.

WSP: Was it boiling?

TSH: No, just warm.

WSP: And then she'd put them in this pressure cooker? How big a device was that? You're indicating, now, what—

TSH: I don't remember how many gallons.

WSP: About two feet, a foot and a half deep?

TSH: It was, what, a five-gallon—

LSC: Probably a five-gallon—

TSH: I think a five-gallon pressure cooker.

LSC: I can't remember how many cans it would hold.

WSP: The pressure cooker I remember from my childhood looked like a heavy pot with a little valve in the

center of the lid.

TSH: Okay, I think you're talking about a Presto cooker.

WSP: With a little valve on the top.

LSC: That's the little one. *This* was big, it was probably this big around—

TSH: It would be about the size of a five-gallon can.

WSP: About a foot and a half in diameter.

TSH: And about that tall (indicates with her hand)

LSC: (returns from the kitchen) It would be about the size of a five-gallon can. With a—it had a lid, that had, on the lid it had little things—

TSH: Clamps.

LSC: Clamps, and from the pot, raised up into those, and you tightened them down.

WSP: Now I remember.

LSC: And then it had the gauge on top. And, she'd put it on the cook stove and wait for the gauge to show a certain temperature and cook it so long. And she had to keep the wood in the stove exactly right so it wouldn't get too hot.

LSC: So it wouldn't fluctuate, yeah.

WSP: Well, this raises an interesting question. I'm a city boy, and I don't know how this was ever accomplished. How did one manage to control the temperature when you're baking things that are sensitive, like cakes or cookies? How did you manage a fire when you're working with wood? Since the temperature of wood starts very hot and then cools off. Are you feeding it wood, or—

TSH: I'm not sure that I can answer that question because, see that's been many, many years since I did that. But this is what I remember: Mother would fill the stove and get it really hot, or to the correct temperature. I'm saying really hot, like for cornbread, okay, and then usually it would stay that hot until it was finished, until cornbread at least was finished. But I guess like on one of those days, I think she just added a little stick of wood at a time when she saw the temperature was going down—then you'd add another stick. You didn't want it to go up and down, but I think she just added enough to keep it regulated.

WSP: She would put enough wood to raise it to the proper cooking temperature, and then the temperature would kind of plateau out, and she would feed just enough wood to keep the heat at that plateau.

TSH: Yes, now that's what I think. I don't really remember that much about it.

LSC: That's what I think, too.

WSP: So she was working with basically one or two temperatures that she could easily manipulate with the wood? It isn't like today, where we set the oven at twenty-five- and fifty-degree intervals?

LSC: Yes, and I'm sure that over the time of her doing this, she knew what she needed to do to keep it at that temperature. And if it got up too high, she would move it over to cool, so it wouldn't pop off—because it had a pop-off valve.

WSP: Okay, we're back to pressure cooking the cans of corn.

TSH: See, our cook stove, as I recall, it was nearly as big as this table with a top—

WSP: The table is about thirty inches by about four and a half foot.

LSC: Let's see, it had two—two things here, and then the little extra—

TSH: The water reservoir, I guess it wasn't that big—

LSC: I think it may have been a little longer.

TSH: And it was wider than that, and then probably about here—

WSP: Okay, about half the size of this table.

LSC: And then it had a little door that you pulled down that you put the wood in.

TSH: Or you could take the—

LSC: Yeah, the lids. To put wood in underneath. And then the oven, it was just a one door—

WSP: And the wood would go beneath.

TSH: No. It would go on the side. Actually the firebox heated the oven from the side.

WSP: Heated the oven from the side, not the back?

TSH: Well, now, the heat—it seems like there was a bin or something that went around the back. See, again, that's one of those things I didn't pay much attention to. You just took it for granted and didn't look into the reasons of why, and—

LSC: And then the beans and the peas we shelled and snapped and did the same thing on the cooking, except most of them, like she said, we did in jars. And peaches, we canned peaches in jars.

WSP: Now did it require—

Now you said she would put the jars in the pressure cooker as well?

LSC: And every once in a while one of them would break.

WSP: The glass would break? Ugh, that's a mess.

TSH: Well, it's back to, I guess, thinking about the food, back to the Sunday dinners. I guess the thing that I remember that I really enjoyed from my earliest memory, was when we had church services. I guess once a month on Saturday night, we had church services and most of the time the old preacher—his name was Brother G. H. Lee—would spend the night with us. And on Saturday afternoon he came, and he and Papa would sit out on that front porch. Brother Lee dipped snuff—I think it was Garret's snuff—and he told some of the neatest stories. He was a big fisherman, and he liked to tell funny stories. And I would sit there on the porch—of course I just listened—but, anyway, then he'd spend the night with us, and Mother would cook a good breakfast. And then we'd have church again on Sunday and Sunday night. And sometimes we had what they called dinner on the ground at church.

WSP: What was that?

TSH: It was when everyone took a box lunch or a basket lunch and spread together. They just called it dinner on the ground. And then revival meetings most of the time were held under a tabernacle, sometimes under a brush arbor.

WSP: Was this something the men of the church would make?

TSH: Uh-huh.

WSP: How big would this tabernacle be?

TSH: Gosh. I'm not good with—how big would you say? I don't know.

LSC: Twenty-five by twenty-five? Or thirty by thirty? I don't know.

WSP: Would the roof be kind of flat-like or pitched?

TSH: No, it would be flat. It would have chicken wire over the top and each time, each year when it was time for the revival, the men would cut fresh brush to put over that.

WSP: So the frame of the tabernacle was already in place?

LSC: Yes. Yes. The poles were.

TSH: Yes, the posts and the chicken wire on top stayed there all the time.

LSC: But it was wide enough, it was big enough that it was two or three rows of benches.

TSH: Three, I believe.

LSC: And the benches were about six feet long.

TSH: And there were two aisles.

WSP: How was this place lit at night?

TSH: Coleman lanterns part of the time, most of the time, wasn't it?

LSC: Old lanterns. I think, if I remember, they hung them from the sides of the—

TSH: Now did the church—you said we had a generator—was it a carbide generator? Was that what it was?

LSC: Oh, Tommie, I don't remember, I just remember hearing it. (laughs) But I don't remember about the—I don't remember if the lamps were on the side.

TSH: I *do* remember some of those lamps that had a reflector on the back, and they hung on the posts. There was a slot in the back that they put them on a nail, I guess.

LSC: She and I have both have talked about not paying more attention to what things were like—(laughs)

WSP: Well, it would be hard to remember everything in your house, today. Everyday life is just a something people take for granted.

TSH: But the church and school were the hub of the social life. That was our social life.

WSP: What was the name of the church?

TSH: Friendship Baptist Church.

WSP: And this was down the road from the cemetery?

TSH: Well, the school was down the road from the cemetery, and then the church across Coryell Creek and, I don't know probably a fourth of a mile—

LSC: Not Coryell Creek.

TSH: I mean Owl Creek. I'm sorry.

LSC: They were like a half a mile apart, and the school was like a mile from our house.

WSP: And you would walk?

TSH: Uh-huh. Oh, not to *church*, but to school we did.

WSP: Your path went through that gate by the cemetery, down the road to the junction, where that little road would meet the main road? And then which way would you turn, left or right?

TSH: We went straight to the church from the schoolhouse. The schoolhouse was—

LSC: Kinda on a corner.

WSP: At that junction?

TSH: Uh-huh.

LSC: From our road and the main road.

TSH: Then the Friendship Church was down the road.

WSP: So it was easier for you to walk to school. The formal way would be to ride in a, what? a wagon? What did you take to church?

TSH: We had a 1929 Model A car.

LSC: A touring car.

TSH: A touring car. Uh-huh. Had those curtains.

LSC: Curtains that snapped on in the winter.

TSH: I think it was called isinglass, wasn't it? It was cold.

LSC: It was celluloid made onto—it wasn't leather, I guess it would be—I think it had, uh, a cloth back, so I think it would be kind of like an imitation—

TSH: I'm not sure, but it was fancy when it was new. It was 1929. But oh, it was cold in winter.

LSC: It was. Even with the curtains. We always carried quilts to cover with.

TSH: Mother had what she called a lap robe. I think it was left over from the buggy days. It was wool, heavy wool. Do you remember it? Anyway, that's what we put in the back seat of the car to cover with.

LSC: And it had hand windshield wipers. (laughs)

WSP: Hand wipers meaning you would have to operate them by hand when it rained?

TSH: Yes.

LSC: And they had to crank it.

WSP: Was a solid roof, as opposed to a canvas roof?

TSH: No, it was a canvas roof.

LSC: Same kind of material that the outsides of the curtains were made out of. They were black.

WSP: Would this make into a convertible if the roof was taken off?

TSH: That *was* the roof. (laughs) It kinda looked like a convertible, when the curtains were taken down.

WSP: Now let's talk about church life. We've talked somewhat about that. Can you give me some ideas about the church?

TSH: Okay. It was one room. It was a painted building and the school was painted. I don't know how large to say it was, but it had curtains strung on wires to divide the Sunday school departments—you know, so you couldn't hear the others.

LSC: Like, I think the men met, and the women, and then the primary children, the beginners and the primaries, and the juniors, I guess.

TSH: Yes, I think so.

WSP: Three groups of children. Babies, then young children, and then young adults. And you would all be in the same room?

TSH: Yes. In the same room, but it had like—you strung wires and then ran curtains kind of like in a hospital.

LSC: Material.

WSP: Yes, I understand. But I've heard this description before, and I still did not understand how you worked around the pews?

TSH: Well, the pews, as I recall, were in three sections.

WSP: Okay—Mrs. Haferkamp will draw the floor plan.

TSH: Okay, let's see if I can do a little bit better job on this.

WSP: We're going to stop the tape for a moment—

(interruption in taping)

WSP: Now what has been drawn is a rectangle, and at the top of the rectangle is the platform where the preachers and altar—

LSC: The pulpit—

WSP: Where the pulpit would be. On the left is a set of pews, two or three.

TSH: I think probably a choir sat there. I think, I'm not sure.

WSP: These pews are alongside and facing the side where the pulpit was. On the other side of the pulpit, is the piano. There were two aisles that run up the middle of this church with pews on the left, center, and right—three columns of pews running all the way to the—I take it that's the front door?

TSH: The front door is there and I believe there was a back door, I think right here.

LSC: Seems like there was.

WSP: You're showing a back door near the piano at the front of the church.

LSC: And if I remember right there was a little house over here, and that's where the generator was. (laughs) And now I may be just dreaming that.

TSH: I don't remember a building out there, but there may have been.

WSP: For curtains to divide a church of this nature, they would basically be strung, on a wire, down the

middle of the aisles that separated the pews. Then, according to what you said, the Sunday school teacher would stand between two sets of pews and face the class, who would be sitting in the pews with everyone facing the Sunday school teacher as if they were in school. Then the teacher would give the lesson. Do I understand it correctly?

TSH: Yes.

WSP: In this arrangement, everybody was very close together. You must have heard the other teachers.

TSH: Well, I don't remember.

WSP: Did everyone just talk quietly?

TSH: I guess, probably—because I don't remember them being loud.

LSC: And I mean, it wasn't like a hundred people in that little—if we had three or four in our class, I think, maybe five or six.

WSP: And which was your class?

LSC: Mine was the primary, I guess.

TSH: Okay, I didn't write anything in here about the church, I don't think, except the pastors that I remember.

WSP: Mrs. Haferkamp is looking over an article she wrote about the Friendship community, and she will, I hope, graciously loan us a copy?

TSH: I will.

WSP: Good! Okay, this was the place where you'd meet, so then, what were some of the church events?

TSH: Okay. Once a month, I believe, or it might have been on fifth Sunday—some people had special services every fifth Sunday. But I'm thinking once a month we had services on Saturday night—and this was regular church worship services—anyway, Saturday night and Sunday morning, and then Sunday night.

WSP: The other times it would just be Sunday morning and Sunday night?

TSH: Right. I'm trying to remember—we had special services at Christmas. What I remember is a Christmas tree and gifts were exchanged, I guess, or the teachers maybe gave gifts to the kids. But our parents didn't teach us there was a Santa Claus because we were so poor they didn't want us to think that Santa slighted us if we didn't get as nice gifts as other kids did.

So they never taught us there was a Santa, *but* one time Mother tells me that she had a hard time making me believe there wasn't a Santa. Because I went to a Christmas program at Friendship, and she gave me—

WSP: At the school?

TSH: No, this was at the church. And she put on the tree for me a little doll wardrobe. It had doll clothes in little drawers. I guess I must have been probably three or four, four maybe. And she said then—because there was a Santa dressed in a Santa suit—that she really had trouble convincing me that there wasn't a real Santa, that she and Papa were Santa, and that there was a spirit of Santa Claus but no real Santa who actually brought the gifts, that it was gifts from someone.

LSC: And I don't remember ever hearing anything about Santa Claus except at school.

WSP: So everybody else had a Santa? How did you work that around in your head?

TSH: Well, I don't remember. (laughs) And as a result, my husband and I didn't teach our kids there was a Santa. One time, quite a few years after our kids were older, somebody asked my daughter, "Didn't you feel left out?" And she said, "No, I thought it was funny because I knew there wasn't a Santa when everybody else thought there was." And she said, "I *knew* what they didn't know!" And, anyway, Mother and Papa, just felt like if we were disappointed about something—because we didn't have as much money as a lot of people did—

LSC: Mother made most of our Christmas things.

TSH: Yes, she did.

WSP: She identified herself as the source of the Christmas gifts so you wouldn't blame Santa if Santa didn't—

TSH: Didn't bring us as much as our cousins.

WSP: Then you were less likely to be angry at your mother because you would understand she was doing the best she could. Is that right?

TSH: Yes. And it never was a problem.

LSC: I can't remember it ever being a problem.

TSH: I've written it in this story, but just to give you an idea of how isolated we were—

WSP: Physically?

TSH: Physically. And I think this was probably true of the whole community, but we had neighbors who lived—I'm not sure, it was on Rob and Mallie Hunt's place—I don't know if it was a mile. But anyway one Monday morning Papa was outside doing something. And seldom did anyone come by our house. If a car came down the road or someone came walking, they were coming to see *us* because there just wasn't any traffic.

WSP: Because you lived at the end of a dead-end road.

TSH: Right. But anyway, on this Monday morning, a man named Ross Roberts, and his wife Thelma, came driving by. I think they had a little brown Model T, if I remember. But anyway, they stopped to talk to Papa, and Ross said, "Well, I guess we'd better get going on to church." And Papa said, "Ross, today is Monday. What are—are y'all having a revival?" Because they didn't go to our church, they were members of the Church of Christ, in another community. When Papa said, "Are you having a revival or something?" He said, "No." And Papa said, "Ross, this is Monday morning." And Ross just thought Papa was teasing—I don't know exactly what he said. Papa said, "No, this is Monday morning." Well, then Ross noticed that Papa had on work clothes. He said, "Oh, we picked cotton all day yesterday." (laughs)

LSC: Thinking it was Saturday. (laughs)

TSH: They picked cotton all day Sunday.

LSC: I don't know that we had calendars, I guess we did.

TSH: Oh, we had calendars, big, hanging on the wall.

LSC: Maybe from the feed store or something?

TSH: Black Draught calendars.

WSP: What was that?

TSH: Black Draught was a medicine.

WSP: What was that good for? Did you have any in your house?

LSC: It was a laxative.

TSH: I think it was. I think we had Black Draught.

LSC: Oh, we did, I remember Mother giving it to me. Yes.

TSH: Really? Well, I guess I did, too.

LSC: It wasn't as strong as castor oil.

WSP: Castor oil? Would it clean you out?

LSC: Uh-huh, yes. (laughs) Nobody likes castor oil.

TSH: (laughs) But we had Black Draught calendars hanging on the wall—as I recall, in the fireplace room.

LSC: I don't know how often they would come, but before we moved, there was a peddler that came to the house in—

TSH: A panel truck.

LSC: A panel—yeah. And he had, I guess, like spices and vanilla, and the first candy Easter egg I can ever remember—he gave me one.

TSH: Really? And he had ice. He carried blocks of ice.

WSP: Did you have an icebox?

TSH: We didn't.

WSP: So the only way of cooling food was that cloth milk cooler unit?

TSH: Yes, that's all.

LSC: If we ever got ice we just wrapped it in a quilt, layers of quilt.

TSH: And put it on the front porch.

WSP: And used it for what?

TSH: Iced tea. The best meal I can remember—oh, and I didn't finish about going to the gin—

WSP: Okay. Let's do the meal, and then we'll go to the gin.

TSH: Okay. But when Papa went to the gin, he usually brought back a loaf of bought bread, and that was a treat. We seldom had bought bread. And he would bring back a block of ice, and a box of tea—because Mother didn't keep tea all the time. But we'd put the butter, take it out of the cooler and put it on the ice itself. But anyway, then we would have bought bread and butter and iced tea. Oh, that was good! Nothing ever tasted that good!

WSP: That meant he might arrive in the afternoon?

TSH: Yes, and sometimes it would be late when he got back from the gin. But usually Papa would take us, or at least one of us to the gin with him on the last bale of the year. And we'd maybe get to go through

the gin, he'd take us upstairs and let us watch the cotton being sucked up—and then watch all the workings of the gin, and then walk out on the platform where those bales are waiting to be loaded. Anyway, then we usually got peppermint sticks. Do you remember him buying those?

LSC: Yeah.

TSH: Because there was a grocery store, a little grocery store near the gin.

WSP: And this gin was located where? In the community of Friendship?

LSC: No.

TSH: It was at Ruth, I believe, wasn't it? And then later he went to Gatesville to the gin.

LSC: Yes, when that one closed down.

TSH: But it was at Ruth, which is another little community nearby—I'm not sure how many miles, maybe four or five?

LSC: Probably, and going across through Webster's it wasn't that far. (laughs)

WSP: This is the cutoff road you were showing me that was not on the map?

TSH: No, it was in the other direction.

LSC: It went up by our big tank—

(unfolds and reviews map)

WSP: We have a photocopy of a Coryell County road map from 1936 with a square in red where her house is, just behind the Friendship Cemetery, and the little road that led along Owl Creek—that's what it joined up to—and you are showing me now the route your father went to the gin.

TSH: Now, I'm not sure I see Ruth here. What does that say?

WSP: That says Dalton Mountain. Henson Mountain, yes, and Ruth is right here.

TSH: Okay, we went across, actually across kind of a mountain there.

WSP: Well, that's just a shortcut altogether, isn't it, as opposed to going down the road, across and up.

LSC: And it was just a little wagon road.

TSH: Yeah.

WSP: Was the road rutted?

TSH: Oh, you could travel it in a car, but it was very narrow and brushy.

WSP: Weren't you going across somebody's property? Weren't there fences blocking the way?

TSH: We'd have to open some gates, I don't remember how many.

LSC: We'd have a gate there, that went there by the tank, it went from there into the Webster's.

TSH: And then I think we had to open a gate before we got on the public road.

WSP: So basically what the highway map shows are the main, public roads as opposed to the ones you informally used to get around, which made life *way* more convenient. Correct?

TSH: Yes. Right.

WSP: So these tracks across your own acreage would join to tracks running through somebody else's acreage?

LSC: Or they had cleared out trees and made a road.

WSP: For them to get around, either to manage their own property, and you would have this common gate that you would use?

TSH: Right.

WSP: Now would people cut across your property?

LSC: The only time I remember them doing that is—we called them woodcutters—people would come through there going up into the Webster's place to cut posts.

WSP: Cedar posts?

LSC: Uh-huh. And I, I can remember being scared of them. (laughs) I think I'd go hide when they would come.

WSP: And they'd come right by your house, continue on off to the Webster's place?

TSH: Yes.

WSP: I see. But was there an east-west road that would cut across the northern most part of your property, so you could go from, say, the main road through your property and over to Ruth?

TSH: Uh-huh.

LSC: And the same way going up to Rob and Mallie's—there was a road and didn't it go on out?

TSH: Yes, it went into the Turnover Road.

WSP: (reviews map) Here is an informal road—I'm going to put little dots on the map—

TSH: Okay. This would have been the one that came out on the Turnover Road.

WSP: Turnover Road?

TSH: Well, I'm not sure what it's called on here, but that's what we called it anyway. (laughs)

WSP: You called it the Turnover Road? Why did you do that?

TSH: Well, Turnover School was here somewhere—and I don't see it.

LSC: Wasn't there a creek?

TSH: Yes, there's Henson Creek.

LSC: And Turnover School was near it, wasn't it?

TSH: Yes.

WSP: Now, do these creeks—well, let's start with Ruth—this is very interesting. We need to talk about this. I'm assuming, in terms of groceries, supplies, Ruth was the town you would shop, or not?

TSH: Gatesville.

WSP: Really? What did Ruth have? Besides the gin, what would you go there for?

TSH: I think they had a church, and I think there was a little grocery store, a very small grocery store. No, we went to Gatesville, sometimes every Saturday, but most of the time like twice a month.

LSC: To get sugar and flour and—

TSH: That was about what, twelve miles, ten or twelve miles?

WSP: Wasn't that considered far? Oh, but you would take the car. So that would not be considered a major trip, right, it was just—

TSH: Oh, it *was* a major trip.

LSC: It was a major trip, yeah.

TSH: (laughs) It was a big deal!

LSC: My first memory, the first time I can remember going to town, we called it going to town, I was so scared that—and I mean, it was just the courthouse square—

TSH: See, that's what Gatesville looked like. It still looks about the same.

LSC: But back then it was just—and I hung on to my mother's dress, I was afraid I was going to get lost.

WSP: In the big city?

LSC: Yeah! That's my first—

WSP: And how old were you?

LSC: Oh, seven, maybe, six or seven. I don't remember how old I was.

TSH: Well, you probably were younger than that.

LSC: (laughs) But I can remember grabbing hold of her dress and being so scared that I was going to get lost. But they would buy flour and sugar. Now I don't remember if back then if they sold eggs?

TSH: They did sell eggs and cream to Blackburn's Produce.

LSC: To get money.

TSH: Yes.

WSP: But you are the south end of the county—no, you're actually up there.

TSH: Halfway maybe.

WSP: But it would be closer for you to go to Gatesville than for you to go south along Owl Creek to Killeen.

LSC: Oh, Killeen would have been the closest from that way.

TSH: Oh, yes, Gatesville was closer—see, Killeen was not our county seat. And sometimes Papa got called for jury duty, and you know, different things that we had to do in, in the county seat.

WSP: But which town was actually physically closer?

LSC: Gatesville. And that was the *only* close town.

TSH: Yeah, it was.

WSP: So how much further away was Killeen?

TSH: It was like a foreign country. I didn't go to Killeen until I was grown.

LSC: I didn't go until after Uncle Ingram and Aunt Ava moved there. After the army camp came one of our aunts and uncles moved to Killeen.

WSP: Did you feel everybody in your area considered Gatesville as the central point for services?

LSC: Yes, and on the election nights, everybody went to town to get the results, and stayed—that's the first time I remember going to a picture show.

TSH: Well, actually, I wrote a story about our first movie.

WSP: In Gatesville? Well, I can read it and we'll include it in the archive, but why don't you give me a verbal description of what you remember, besides what you have written.

TSH: It isn't very long, so maybe I'll just read it. Okay. "In 1939 at the age of twelve I had never seen a movie. I felt like a freak. Every Monday at school all my friends talked about the picture show they'd seen the previous Saturday. But Papa thought movies were immoral. He thought Hollywood was awful. However, I finally convinced him my life would be ruined if I was not allowed to see a movie soon. He agree to let me see a Shirley Temple movie, *Susannah of the Mounties*—"

WSP: (laughter) Now you are definitely in this! You two are the stars.

TSH: (continues reading her written story about seeing her first movie in 1939) "Our ticket money was tied in the corner of my handkerchief so I wouldn't lose it. There was no money for popcorn, but I didn't care. I was finally going to the picture show. When Susannah was captured by the Indians we all began crying. Since I was the only one with a handkerchief the three of us passed it from one to the other. When my sister was passing the wet, tear-stained hanky to the next person, she dropped it under the seat. In the dark theater we couldn't find it. Fortunately, Susannah soon escaped from the Indians, and we didn't need it any longer. To this day my sister and I still laugh about losing our handkerchief in the movie."

LSC: (laughs) And back then no kids had purses, so everybody tied their lunch money and stuff in the corner of their handkerchief.

TSH: Everybody—see, that was before the days of Kleenex, no one knew what Kleenex—didn't have Kleenex.

LSC: Didn't have toilet paper.

TSH: So everybody had handkerchiefs. Everybody carried a handkerchief.

WSP: I assume that you reported that the movie was good.

TSH: Oh, yes. It was fun!

WSP: Were you twelve or fifteen?

TSH: I was twelve.

WSP: Did you go to another movie later on?

TSH: Later I did. That kind of broke the ice. I think Papa even went with me one time to a movie. I don't remember, maybe—it was during, after the war started and I think it was a war movie, and he went with me. Do you remember that?

LSC: I don't remember that, but the one I'm thinking of—Uncle Sam gave J. W. and I money on—this is on election night, on a Saturday evening—

TSH: So you all wouldn't get bored standing around?

LSC: Yeah, because they all stayed until they got the results of the election, presidential election. And we went to see a Western.

WSP: The 1940 election?

LSC: Probably. Yeah, that would have been—

TSH: That would have been.

WSP: The men were standing around the courthouse.

LSC: Yes, around the courthouse. Our uncle gave us a dime, I think, to go to the picture show.

WSP: How did you learn about events in your community? Did you have a telephone?

TSH: No. We didn't get magazines—well, we got a few magazines. I think we got *Farm and Ranch*. Early on we got a magazine called *Holland*—you probably don't remember that, but that was a great magazine. *Farm and Ranch*, *Progressive Farmer*. But on Sundays—

WSP: *Holland*? What kind of magazine would that be?

TSH: It had children's stories, and recipes—that's all I can remember.

WSP: And you mentioned earlier the *Watson* magazines. What were they like?

TSH: Now that was a political magazine. I looked it up. My daddy was named for Thomas Watson—I think he was a controversial political figure—but I don't remember, I'd have to look again. But anyway, Grandpa Shults had, oh—and they were old, they were not *new* magazines, they were not still getting them when I was a kid. But they had saved all of those magazines.

WSP: I see, and you would look through them at the pictures and the cartoons.

TSH: Yes, there were a lot of political cartoons.

LSC: We didn't have a telephone. Grandpa Powell had a phone, I think.

TSH: For a while, but even before we moved it wasn't working.

LSC: But they would only reach the neighbors. They would have like different rings to ring. And everybody could hear—if somebody—everybody's phone rang, like if, two longs and a short, it would be a long ring and then two shorts. And—

WSP: You would know that call for was you, or for somebody else.

LSC: Yes. But everybody could pick up the receiver and listen in.

TSH: Yes, they'd listen anyway. (laughs)

WSP: But a outgoing call could not go beyond your immediate area? You could not place a call beyond your local service area, which would include Ruth or Friendship? How far would it go, all the way to Gatesville?

TSH: No, I don't think so. No, it was just a community telephone line. I don't think that any company had

it, it was just kept up by the people who had telephones, that's why it eventually wasn't working.

LSC: And if I remember right, it wasn't even insulated wire, it was just bare wire.

TSH: Bare wire, yes.

WSP: Bare copper wire?

LSC: It wasn't copper, it was galvanized or something.

WSP: I see. Like fence wire?

LSC: Yeah.

WSP: Strung up on poles using the glass insulators?

TSH: Yes, the insulators.

WSP: The first telephone system was a completely ad hoc creation.

TSH: Yes, with the old wooden telephones.

WSP: Who came up with this scheme?

TSH: That's before my day, I have no idea. Now Mother and Papa had one at one time—

LSC: But it never was hooked up after I was—

TSH: Not after we were that old. I guess the lines got bad, or in the Depression probably they didn't have the money or the time to keep it up. That's, that's what I'm guessing, but I don't know that for sure. But I think when I was born they had one because I think they called Grandma or somebody.

LSC: And all of us kids were born at home.

WSP: In the house? And what was that like? You were obviously old enough to remember some of your younger siblings.

TSH: They didn't let us stay at home. I remember when our youngest—the other two I don't remember, but my younger sister—she's what, nine years younger than me? I do remember that, I remember them calling for the doctor, and then Papa got Lois Pearl and J. W. and me, and took us all to Grandpa's Powell's.

LSC: Which was like six miles. (laughs)

TSH: No, it wasn't that far. Was it? Four I thought.

LSC: I don't remember. (laughs)

TSH: I think it was four miles.

WSP: By car? He dropped you off there?

TSH: Uh-huh, and then came back and got us the next day, after Oneta was born. And that's all I remember about that.

WSP: Were you involved in any of the preparations?

LSC: No. Unh-uh.

WSP: It was like, okay, time to move the kids out, have the birth, and then bring the kids back, right?

TSH: Yes, right. I don't remember—of course, I was three when J. W. was born, but I don't remember when Lois Pearl was born. I don't remember anything about that.

WSP: The community of Ruth was just a stopping place? What did that little store in Ruth offer you, if anything?

TSH: You know, the only time I was ever there was when we went with Papa to the gin. And I think it was just very small, probably a few staples, and candy—

LSC: Candy maybe for the kids. Maybe, maybe some feed, I don't know.

TSH: I don't know either. We did not go there very often.

LSC: Now the guy that owned it was a hunter and had hounds. I can remember him having coon hounds. (laughs) It seems like several would be tied around.

WSP: Questions come up from time to time about what type of community base supported a town like Ruth. Because little towns like Ruth would appear throughout the county, and then disappear and then another one would pop up two or three miles down the road?

TSH: Yes. That I don't know. Because—see, we were in a separate community, and Papa only went there when he sold, ginned the cotton.

LSC: Just to gin the cotton.

WSP: You said you were in a separate community. You thought of yourself as Friendship, as opposed to Ruth?

TSH: We were definitely Friendship community.

LSC: And two of our uncles lived south, which is South Fort Hood now, and they were in a separate community. I mean the little communities—Ruth had a church and a cemetery. And was it a Church of Christ?

TSH: No, it was a Baptist church. And then their kids in that community went to Ewing School, where I later went. After I graduated from seventh grade I attended Ewing School, which was a nine-grade school. I attended school two years there, and then on to Gatesville. Rode the school bus to Gatesville.

WSP: For high school?

TSH: Yes. Ewing was the nine grade school, so I guess it was junior high—eighth and ninth there.

LSC: Now I never did go to school at Owl Creek. When I started I went to Ewing. I went there, and I was in fourth grade when we had to move.

WSP: Now why did you not go to Owl Creek?

LSC: It was closed.

TSH: Yes. Okay, in this little picture here—I think that it was only open one more year after I graduated.

WSP: This was due to reforms? Problems? Lack of attendance?

LSC: Not enough—

TSH: I'm guessing not enough students, I believe. See this picture (points to photograph)

WSP: Yes, you only have six or so students there. (points to photograph)

There is this wonderful picture you have provided, and it shows the teacher standing behind seven or eight kids, and you're smack in the middle, right in front of the teacher, with a deep scowl on your face, like you could have fried that photographer. (laughter) You look so angry. Was there a reason for being so upset?

TSH: (laughter) I know, I have no idea!

LSC: Well, my brother looks—all of them almost do—he's frowning, too. (laughter)

TSH: I think we were looking into the sun. See, we were on the side of the school building, and I think the sun was very bright. I really, I don't really remember anything about that.

LSC: I can remember visiting the school, and I think when you went in the front door there was a cloak room on each side.

TSH: See, I think everybody has kind of a sun grin, and see, that boy, too.

WSP: I see, it's called a sun grin, not a scowl.

TSH: Now this is a picture of Ewing School, a nine-grade school.

WSP: And I assume Ewing drew its students from other little communities when the other little schools had closed?

TSH: Some yes. The seven-grade schools.

WSP: So, did you feel you were left out in any way, or included—

TSH: No, I thought I'd died and gone to heaven when I went to this school.

LSC: And we rode the bus to go there.

WSP: (laughs) Why did you feel like you had died and gone to heaven? What does that mean?

TSH: Well, obviously, with this number of students there wasn't much you could do—no organized sports, what can you do? Annie Over, Red Rover, and—what were some other games we played? Something with sticks. But anyway, *here* I could play basketball, was on the basketball team. We had hot lunches, we had a lunchroom. And friends—

WSP: More people?

TSH: Oh, yes, yes.

WSP: You knew all these kids already—

TSH: Well, no, I really didn't.

WSP: I mean the Owl Creek School—

TSH: Oh, yes. Yes, most of them were kin to us. All but one, I think, was kin to me. And I loved Ewing. And then Gatesville was even better. When I started to Gatesville *that* was just great.

WSP: Because it offered more opportunities? Would you say there was some part of you that enjoyed getting out and—

TSH: Oh, yes!

WSP: Was that a sense of getting older, that brought you to this perspective—

TSH: I don't know, I liked school, I liked books. I *loved* books—I don't think I would have made it through all those years—because, we didn't have any social life, actually, no close neighbors. Had a few friends, but we didn't get to visit—and I loved school, I loved reading. I don't know, I just liked it.

WSP: The book cabinet that your grandfather built, and left books in it—obviously, these were among the first books that you read, correct?

TSH: Uh-huh. Mother tells me that I learned—just my ABCs on a Mother's Oat box. My Aunt Ara Dorsey—I think you may have had her on your list—but she died a couple of weeks ago, she was almost a hundred—

WSP: Yes, yes.

TSH: Anyway, her son told someone, "She learned to read before she went to school. I don't know how because we didn't have books back then!" And I said, "Well, Mother tells me I learned to read from a Mother's Oat box." She always had a box of Mother's Oats up on the cabinet. That's what she tells me, that I would ask her what those words were, and that's how I learned to read and spell, or how I started. Of course she read to us a lot. We didn't have much money but she always bought books. I don't know how we managed to buy books but—

LSC: And she may have ordered them.

TSH: Well, I remember her buying *Little Men* and reading to us. Were you old enough to remember that?

LSC: I don't remember that.

TSH: And she bought it at Perry's or Davis's, I think it was at Perry's.

WSP: This was a store?

TSH: Yes, a five-and-dime store in Gatesville. Perry's and H. B. Davis's were the—

LSC: Perry Brothers—

TSH: That's where, oh, we just loved—

LSC: Oh, we'd go through and just look and look and look—

TSH: Perry Brothers and H. B. Davis. Now Perry's was a chain, and H. B. Davis was an individual owned store.

LSC: A home-owned store.

WSP: Let's talk about the furthest distance you went, or drove. What would be a big trip?

TSH: Temple.

WSP: Temple, Texas? And what would you go to Temple for?

TSH: We had an aunt and uncle who lived in Temple. We usually went there—oh, once a year.

WSP: How often would you go?

LSC: I cannot remember going.

TSH: We would go at Christmastime sometimes. She was my first teacher, and then she married my uncle who lived in that community. I can remember we helped move them to Temple.

LSC: She lived with us, didn't she?

TSH: Uh-huh, she roomed with—they called it boarding with us. Actually two teachers boarded with us Owl Creek teachers. But anyway, Temple had a *big* hotel—Raleigh's? No, not Raleigh's—anyway, that was the biggest building I had ever—

LSC: The Kyle Hotel or something like that?

TSH: The Kyle Hotel, yes! (laughter) I told somebody, "When I get grown, I'm going to work in the Kyle Hotel," because that looked so big and glamorous. But yes, that's the biggest trip, until—when I was at Ewing School they took us on the bus to the Fort Worth stock show.

WSP: My goodness! Up I-35 all the way to Fort Worth?

TSH: (laughter) Well, we didn't have I-35 then! Whatever it was, I don't know.

LSC: Highway 81?

WSP: Well, how long did that trip take?

TSH: I don't remember. We went and came in one day. It's just eighty-something miles. Oh, well, from down there it was—

WSP: It's a couple of hours drive now, probably three hours then.

TSH: Maybe—we had a new school bus. I don't know how fast it would travel, (laughs) but we had a new school bus at Ewing. And then they took us to Austin to the state capital. And Ewing had, what would you say, progressive teachers?

LSC: And that's the first time I can ever remember having a soda pop was—well, we always had an end-of-school picnic and a program.

TSH: Yes, that was a *big* deal, the end of school.

LSC: Programs—

WSP: I've heard that everyone would give performances of plays or things that they had done. Tell me about that.

TSH: Yes. The little kids did their thing, and then the high school, the eighth and ninth grade did a three-act play. That was a big production. I happened to be in one of those.

WSP: That they had written themselves?

TSH: No. No, they ordered these play books—I can't even remember the name of that company—I should know, I don't think I have one of the books.

WSP: Yellow covers?

TSH: No, I think they were grey. But anyway, the older kids did a three-act play, and that all took place on Friday night. And then on Saturday there was the picnic.

LSC: And they did barbecue at Ewing, and if I remember, they dug pits.

TSH: Uh-huh, did the pit barbecue, and then the ladies took salads and desserts.

LSC: And the vegetables.

TSH: Yes, and the school actually furnished the barbecue and bread—well, maybe they asked for contributions, I don't remember.

LSC: But that was the first time I can ever remember having a soda pop. I think it was a strawberry.

TSH: From the concession stand, except we just called it the stand, didn't we, we didn't call it a concession stand. But then on Saturday night, during the afternoon, there would be musical groups, who—

WSP: Students?

TSH: No, mostly outsiders—and they were good—some of them have gone on to be professionals, I think. But, they did great country music and bluegrass, and all that stuff.

WSP: They would bring them just as entertainment?

TSH: Yes, just entertainment. You'd have lunch and then they'd all be on the stage. Then on Saturday night the adults, the outsiders—we called it the outsider play—they did a *great* production of a three-act play.

WSP: Were your parents involved in these three-act plays?

TSH: I don't remember that our parents were, but we had some cousins, relatives, and friends who were.

WSP: Were you in a play?

TSH: I was in the school three-act play but never in the outsider because I was still in school.

WSP: Was this entertainment?

TSH: Oh, yes, it was great! Everybody looked forward to that! That was next to Christmas, I think!

LSC: I'm thinking nearly all of our costumes were made out of crepe paper, and Mother would make our costumes—and I can't remember—and at Christmas we had a Christmas play, program.

TSH: Yes, we did a pageant.

WSP: So the community held two large programs each year. Let's get the map out see where Ewing is in relation to—now there's Ruth.

TSH: Okay, it's just a little further on beyond Ruth.

WSP: I'm going to turn the tape recorder off for a moment.

(interruption in taping)

WSP: Okay, so there's Ewing near the Leon River on a little road that runs along the southern bank of the Leon River. Now would you go the long way around and up on the bus?

TSH: We came this way.

WSP: You came all the way in the other direction?

LSC: We picked up kids all along the way.

WSP: All the way along, and then came up the road there? How long would that take?

LSC: An hour?

TSH: More than an hour I think, because I got on the school bus, I think, at six o'clock. I was the first

person on the bus.

LSC: I was trying to think who, besides Jim Powell drove the bus.

TSH: Maybe it was Millard Powell.

LSC: Millard. That was the flat-topped bus.

WSP: Was that bus stored nearby?

TSH: The man who drove the bus lived at Ruth, near Ruth.

LSC: Between Grandpa's and Ruth.

WSP: And he would go down through Owl Creek and across to the Friendship community?

TSH: I walked to where this Owl Creek schoolhouse was and then rode on around.

WSP: Were there others who took the bus, or were you the oldest in that school at that time, so that you were the only one picked up?

TSH: I was the only one picked up there, until—

LSC: Until we—well, J. W. would have been—no, maybe he was at Owl Creek.

TSH: No, he was still going to Owl Creek. I was by myself the first year that I went. Maybe it wasn't six o'clock, maybe it was seven o'clock. It was dark. A few mornings Mother walked with me because it was so dark.

WSP: Did it make you feel like you were going off to college?

TSH: No, I don't remember. Some things you just do and don't think about it. Let me tell you what I did hate about it. If it happened to be raining, I either had to wear overshoes or mud shoes. And I couldn't stand my shoes to be ugly, muddy and ugly, so I put my overshoes—let's see, the bus was a little box-type bus—flat top—it really looked just like a box, and the seats—it didn't have individual seats, it was bench-type seats.

LSC: Around the edges.

TSH: Uh-huh. And boys had to sit on one side and girls on the other. Okay, this is the bus—(draws) there was a divider of some kind of a pipe, as I recall. Okay, there was a bench seat like here, and then one on each side, and if you happened to get on and it was full, it was hard to walk. And the boys sat on the right side, and the girls sat on this side. Right here—see, like this is the door, and here the bus driver, Mr. Millard, stored some of his supplies, but I could put my overshoes or my mud shoes under there and take my clean ones with me and put them on if it were muddy.

WSP: I see. This was some kind of a rack behind his seat.

TSH: It was underneath the seat. He was right here.

WSP: The driver sat smack in the middle of the bus, not like nowadays where he sits off to one side?

TSH: No, he was in the center. I sat there usually, and sometimes others would come in and want the front seat and I didn't really care. Sometimes I'd go all the way to the back.

WSP: So you would sit up front and talk to the driver, and as they'd come along you'd go—so was it a rough ride?

TSH: Yes, it was rough—

WSP: And you would be bouncing along—

TSH: Oh, yes—

WSP: And knocking into each other.

TSH: Right. And the bus was rough itself, and the roads were rough, and it was, yeah, it was pretty rough.

WSP: Were you able to do any homework, or read, or was it just trying to keep yourself from falling off the bench.

TSH: No, not too often, but some of them did, I think.

WSP: So the bus would stop and somebody else would come out from their house or some road, and the driver would make the whole sweep and then head to the school. When you'd leave school—what time was school out?

TSH: I think four.

WSP: That's a long day.

TSH: (laughs) It was a long time.

WSP: And when you were doing something like the school play, when were the rehearsals held?

TSH: The practice? We did that during class time. We didn't have to go back at night for that—not like they do now. We just did all that during school. They would let us out probably for English class—it probably took place in English class.

WSP: The school was more than one room, right?

TSH: Oh, yeah. Ewing had—

LSC: If I remember right, grades one, two, and three were together, but I may be mistaken.

TSH: Well, I think that's right. Then fourth and fifth, and sixth and seventh, and eighth and ninth.

WSP: How many kids were in each of those classes, roughly?

TSH: Oh, gosh, I don't know, it was.

WSP: Twenty? Twenty-five.

TSH: Maybe fifteen or twenty, ten or fifteen. It varied. And then we had an auditorium and a tabernacle behind the school. And that's where the stage was.

WSP: And the school's tabernacle would be used in the same way as the church tabernacle?

TSH: Well, this was for school activities.

LSC: And that's where we had the picnic, under the tabernacle.

WSP: So you put branches on top?

TSH: No, this was a permanent structure. I think it had a metal, corrugated roof.

LSC: It had benches under it.

TSH: Yeah, it had benches.

WSP: This was much like the picnic pavilion you might find in a city park now?

TSH: Uh-huh.

WSP: What about organized sports? Did the Ewing School have a gym or was it outdoors?

TSH: Yes. It was outdoors, but we did play basketball and volleyball and I think the boys may have played football, touch football.

WSP: And baseball? All the regular sports were played?

TSH: Yes. Yes.

WSP: Was this coached in any way, or was it kind of a free-for-all?

TSH: No, we had coaches.

LSC: The teachers were coaches. Was this taken under the tabernacle? (looks at photograph)

TSH: Yes, it was.

WSP: Oh, yes, there you are.

TSH: It was up on the stage.

WSP: Okay, and I see rough-hewn posts and some benches.

TSH: Yes, it had posts every so often.

WSP: All right. Well, what would you consider the strongest memory you have of that time, in terms of something really unique.

For example, I've read stories about children who were standing in the pasture when the first airplane they ever saw zooms overhead and lands in a nearby field. Can you remember anything unusual like that happening?

TSH: Okay, the day that Pearl Harbor was bombed I remember that day like it was yesterday. It was on a Sunday, Uncle Sam and Aunt Bessie had visited us, and you know how after you've had company you're kinda keyed up, and everybody was kind of winding down. And Papa went to the cow pen and milked and came in, and turned on the radio. We *did* have a radio at that time.

TSH: This was 1941, December 7, 1941.

LSC: Yeah, but I don't think we had the radio until like 1939 or 1940.

TSH: Right, we'd probably had it a couple of years. But anyway—

WSP: And without electrical power, it ran on what?

TSH: It was a battery. So we could only use it for special occasions.

WSP: What would that be?

TSH: The "Grand Ole Opry" and the news. (laughs)

LSC: Gabriel Heater.

TSH: Anyway, Papa turned on the news, and they were talking about the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

WSP: That must have been a shock.

TSH: Oh, yeah. Well, I think when we went to school the next day they said that war had been declared, or would be declared. By then I was in Gatesville High School—and everybody was talking about it.

And then the next year there was talk of taking our place—

WSP: That would have been 1942.

TSH: Right.

LSC: They had already taken South Fort Hood, Uncle Sam's and Uncle Jim's place.

TSH: Anyway, that was probably the biggest change that was ever made in our lives, us moving out of that area, out of our home—

WSP: The September 1942 taking as opposed to the earlier taking in April and May 1942?

TSH: Yeah, it was September, it was the September one. Because we moved out in December of 1942, they actually moved us. We had a little bit longer—

LSC: It was cold, I remember that.

TSH: With December 1942. But one of my friends said, "You know, Tommie, I *really* often wonder what our lives would have been like had we not been moved out of that area and into a different environment."

LSC: A more progressive one.

TSH: Uh-huh.

WSP: And your answer was what?

TSH: Well, I didn't have an answer. I wonder, too, what it would have been like.

WSP: Where did you move directly here, or did you have an intermediate stop?

TSH: No. No, my husband and I bought this place. My mother and daddy bought a little farm—what was it, 250 acres, 225 or something? About three or four miles from here? How far is it?

LSC: Yes, about three or four miles.

TSH: In that direction, east.

WSP: East of here.

TSH: Uh-huh, and that's where we lived, and then I worked in Gatesville all the years.

WSP: As a secretary, I believe you told me.

TSH: As a secretary.

WSP: And so you felt like that change was, although—

TSH: It was traumatic. I think it made a big difference.

LSC: Uh-huh.

TSH: In our lifestyle.

WSP: How so?

TSH: Because—well, after we moved here we had electricity.

LSC: And that was by accident (laughs) more or less. Because they had actually come to put electricity into Toby and Callie's house, and they came to our house!

TSH: I was already living in town so I didn't know.

LSC: They came to our house and Papa *really* didn't want to do it—

TSH: But after they did it, he went ahead.

LSC: Yeah. Yeah.

TSH: See, I wasn't there I didn't remember.

LSC: We had an electric refrigerator, but we *really* had to be careful with the lights. (laughs) Papa still wanted us to go to bed at dark, so we didn't use any electricity. (laughs)

WSP: So you gain something in that way, electricity, and lost the land that you had grown up on?

TSH: Right.

WSP: Do you remember it being harder on your parents?

TSH: Oh, it definitely was. I didn't care, I could have cared less—fifteen years old!

LSC: I think for Papa it was probably harder than—

TSH: Yes, that was the second time I saw him cry. They went to a meeting at Ewing, and what was the general's name?

WSP: General Bruce?

TSH: Bruce, okay, he talked to them and told them that they would be getting their letters just in the next few days. And Mother and Papa—when I got home from school they'd been there and they said, Well, it was definite. And like I said, that was the second time I saw Papa cry.

WSP: When in your house did this take place?

TSH: I guess we were sitting in the fireplace room.

LSC: I don't remember. I just remember us having to move, and I remember how.

TSH: And I didn't care, I didn't like it down there, I knew—in fact, I *knew* there was a better life somewhere else! And I'm sorry it had to be like that, for them, because I don't think Papa ever got over it.

WSP: When you say you don't think he ever got over it, how did he show that to you? Did he talk about it?

LSC: No, Papa didn't talk.

TSH: Not a lot, except sometimes in the wintertime if we were sitting around the fireplace he would tell old stories, you know, about how things used to be. No, he kept a lot of it inside himself, but, in 1952 he died from stomach cancer. And, I don't know, even though he got a tractor, sold the horses and got a tractor, and it was a lot easier farming here than in the flint rocks—but, I don't know. Maybe when you're that old—

LSC: The water situation was better too.

TSH: Yes, better water.

WSP: Better water here, where you are now?

TSH: Uh-huh.

WSP: So he gained better soil, more equipment, electricity, better water, and at the same time felt an enormous loss from the loss of his—

TSH: Yes. But they *never* complained because—that's another thing that has changed so much—that I'm sorry has changed. They were so patriotic. They never questioned. None of them every questioned but what it was their duty to do that, even though it was painful. My daddy grew up on that place, it had been in the family all those years. Now that I know how much I love this place that we worked for, I understand what it was like for him. At that time I didn't. I didn't care, I really didn't.

WSP: The change just offered more adventure for you.

TSH: Uh-huh. But now I understand it and am sorry about it.

WSP: Do you feel like the time that was allowed to move, and the offer that was made for the land was fair, or appropriate?

TSH: I understand it wasn't. I graduated when I was fifteen, and my first job was with an attorney, Robert W. Brown, who had property in South Fort Hood and who handled some of the law cases for the people who did file suit against the government. He felt that it was *very* unfair. And I didn't, as far as myself, have any feeling about it. But after I worked for him and saw what he went through with that. I think it was unfair.

WSP: Did you became familiar with some of his cases?

TSH: Yes, I did. He actually took some to federal court in Waco.

WSP: I understand those cases didn't always go well for everybody.

TSH: No. No, it didn't. But I don't remember that much about it. I didn't go with him. Later I went with him on some out-of-town cases, but I hadn't been working for him very long, and he didn't even ask me to go with him. I guess he thought I wouldn't be much help. (laughs) At that time, I didn't know very much about trials.

LSC: But I think, from what I have heard, they gave so many different prices to different people, for maybe the same amount of land—it wasn't always fair.

TSH: Well, the first group did not get paid as well as the second group. I remember Papa—

WSP: And you were among the second group?

TSH: Yes. Papa felt that he got better pay than, his two brothers who lived at Tama, in South Camp Hood.

WSP: For the value of the land?

TSH: Yes, and they actually had better land than we did, and they got a lot less per acre.

WSP: The cases that were filed through Mr. Brown's office were cases associated with the first taking as opposed to second taking?

TSH: Yes, yes, I believe so. I can't even remember the names of all of them. There was his own case, and

there was a Williamson. I believe a Beverly—I'm not sure.

WSP: One of the Beverly families.

LSC: In the yellow book I think it told the ones that filed suit.

TSH: I wish—see, again, I wish I had been more attentive to what was happening.

WSP: Are his papers available, does his widow have them? Are they around?

TSH: She is dead. I'm not sure what happened to his papers. I have no idea. I think—they would be available in the courthouse. You could go to the court records and find them.

WSP: Yes, that's true, but I was thinking more of the evidence and the working papers, where he's taking interviews.

TSH: I worked for him five years, and then after that I never knew—I mean, we kept in close touch, but again, I wasn't paying attention to the physical things that were happening. One of my friends asked him for one of his law books. I'd give anything if I had. He gave it to her—and I know he would have probably given me anything I asked for. But I didn't—

LSC: Then it didn't mean anything to you.

TSH: You know, dumb young kids. laughs)

WSP: Now do you have any memories of the move, besides it being cold?

LSC: They gave us the opportunity to ride in the trucks that were bringing our things.

TSH: The army trucks.

LSC: Yes, the army trucks. And I was *so* timid and bashful and backward that I almost didn't want—and I can't remember if Oneta and I rode in the same one or not. But I think I can remember thinking that they were going to take us off somewhere, you know, the soldiers weren't going to bring us up here.

TSH: The soldiers were going to take you—

LSC: Yeah, the soldiers were gonna take us—*weren't* gonna bring us up here.

WSP: You were what age at that time?

LSC: I was nine.

WSP: But who would know? They were all in uniform?

LSC: Yeah. I mean, we had never been around people other than our relatives—

TSH: Friends.

LSC: And the people that went to church.

TSH: Yes, yes.

LSC: That little isolated community.

WSP: Do you feel that by moving closer to Gatesville, that you were also moving into a larger world?

TSH: Yes.

LSC: A little bit—

TSH: A little bit, but not much.

LSC: Three miles closer. But it was thick, more thickly populated. I mean it was a totally different environment, even though it was just on the opposite side of Gatesville.

WSP: What would you attribute that to?

LSC: I don't know. I have no idea.

WSP: You see what I mean?

LSC: I do—

WSP: You are only talking about the north side of Leon River as opposed to the south side of the Leon.

TSH: I know. I've thought about it myself and I don't know—unless that little group down there was so clannish and cliquish—I don't know. I've wondered about it.

WSP: Pulling back now for a moment. Did you feel like your family existed in little rural islands. That people in Friendship community would know, I mean—there are degrees of knowledge and degrees of interaction, and some social circles might include larger areas, but they were basically restricted to a couple of towns, Ewing and Ruth, and then possibly Gatesville—that would be the sum of it. I think you told me you didn't go to Killeen until you were—

TSH: Yes, I was grown, after the army camp came.

WSP: So there certain travel patterns that were common, and certain communities that you were familiar with, and the rest of the county was just like—well, on the other side of the world, essentially?

TSH: Foreign counties, uh-huh.

LSC: And when we moved up here we had fairly close neighbors, on public roads that were totally different from the public roads where we lived.

WSP: What would that mean for you?

LSC: I don't know. (laughs) Well, I mean, it was easier to drive on them. It was not like—

TSH: And one thing, when the army came, it *did* bring good jobs. Even Mother had boarders, which meant more money to spend. In the little house over there, two boarders? I wasn't there.

LSC: Well, the first ones we had was a family with two kids. They boarded in one of the bedrooms.

WSP: Was this another displaced family, or a family moving to Gatesville?

LSC: No, a soldier and his wife and kids.

TSH: The others were construction workers at Fort Hood, the two men, weren't they? See, housing was really scarce in Gatesville.

LSC: They didn't have apartment buildings, they didn't, you know—the people that had the houses lived in them. And lots of people boarded soldiers and their wives or workers.

TSH: Oh, yeah. Every little chicken house had somebody in it. (laughs) The economy was changing with the war.

WSP: Yes. You felt like the Depression was moving out, and there was more things happening—

TSH: Yes, the Depression was moving out, and there were more things available.

WSP: So by moving to the north of the river, you just jump started—

TSH: A whole new life.

WSP: But even if the army had not come, electricity, radios and other things would have eventually got to you.

TSH: Yes, it probably would have eventually gotten there, I guess.

LSC: But I think it would have been a lot slower. (laughs) I mean, the people down there were—I think they weren't looking for progress. I don't know.

WSP: But, relatively speaking, Gatesville was big, but, at the beginning, Killeen was nothing. Then after the army came, it reversed. Killeen got huge and Gatesville was like—

TSH: Well, you see Gatesville got the back end—

WSP: The back end of the fort—

TSH: Yes, that's what everybody always said.

WSP: Really?

TSH: Yes, the back end of the fort.

WSP: But Gatesville had North Fort Hood.

LSC: That was where we moved out of.

WSP: But I mean, the army actually built a part of the camp up there. But that didn't seem as large a facility as the south camp, which were pretty big. And then there was a prison camp, a POW camp that was there.

LSC: That was in South Fort Hood, wasn't it?

TSH: I don't know—

WSP: No, I believe there was one right across the river—

TSH: Uh-huh, you're right. I think they were German soldiers because one of my cousins, L. D. worked for a poultry company. And they had those guys come in, and—the POWs, the German POWs—came into Gatesville and dressed turkeys. It was around Christmastime.

LSC: See, I don't think I even knew about that. I think I—

TSH: That's all I know about that. But he talked about how the German soldiers spoke German language while they were working. That's all I know about that.

WSP: Okay, you're showing me a photograph now—

TSH: That's Mary Powell, the one who is going to be a hundred in June. And well, I can't find Mother now.

LSC: Isn't that Aunt Jimmy and Aunt Abbie?

TSH: Yes. That's Mother's twin sisters. And this is Papa.

WSP: Now these are wonderful photographs. Have you had them copied yet?

TSH: No, not that I know of.

WSP: Well, maybe we need to do something about that.

TSH: And this is Mother and Mary. This is Mary Powell.

LSC: Isn't this Mother?

TSH: No, that's Aunt Anne's. See Mother would be the age—I guess that's Mother beside Mary.

LSC: I don't—that doesn't look like her.

TSH: Well, she and Mary were inseparable.

LSC: Yeah—

WSP: Where was this taken?

TSH: This was Owl Creek School, about 1906.

WSP: This is in front of, or along the side of the school?

TSH: Right.

WSP: Wow, she would know it all the way back into the 1910s.

TSH: Yes, her daughter-in-law told me she can name every person in this picture. I think they were in the second grade—well that couldn't be right. Because they were—Mother could be, I guess.

LSC: There's Uncle Andrew, Mother's brother.

TSH: I think that's Mother beside Mary.

LSC: Well, that sure doesn't look like any picture that I've ever seen.

TSH: No, not much.

WSP: We're very interested in collecting photographs, not only for the people that are in them, but also for anything they might show about the houses or work activities, or even things taking place in the background.

TSH: Okay. If you want to come back sometime, I'll gather up all my old pictures from the house in the army camp—

LSC: Oh, it's pitiful looking—

TSH: Yeah, it is.

WSP: You mean, the original house you moved out of? You have photographs of that? Excellent!

TSH: And the old Model A car.

WSP: And the outbuildings, and the car that you rode to school in?

LSC: The only outbuilding that I can think would be the car shed. There is a picture of you and—

TSH: Papa at the car shed.

LSC: I think he had you on Sorrel Tip.

TSH: I don't know how many years it was before Owl Creek School closed, but a family moved in from—I think they were near Waco, the Hickmans, and they had some type of washing machine. 'Course there

was no electricity, but it was some kind of a gas washing machine.

LSC: Like the one Aunt Bessie had.

TSH: We had never heard of anything like that!

WSP: The kind that would turn and agitate?

LSC: And it made a loud popping. The motor, it had, uh, I can remember Aunt Bessie's that would have this coil—

WSP: Some type of a muffler? Was it run by a belt?

LSC: Gasoline. Yes, a belt.

TSH: I know everybody says, the good old days, and there *was* a lot of good about them. Like I've said, the things that I don't like that have changed, are the morality, the loss of the morals and the Christianity.

LSC: And kind of the loss of the family.

TSH: Yes, the family unit. But, you know, a lot of things for the good have changed—but I would like to see those things not disappear.

LSC: And one of our uncles that moved out of South Fort Hood, he and his wife moved to the Owl Creek schoolhouse before they bought their place.

TSH: Yes, while they were in the transition period they lived in the schoolhouse.

WSP: Interesting. And then, of course, the army took that as well. Were they hoping they could live in that area?

TSH: No, no, it was just a stopover till they could find a place that was acceptable.

LSC: And they bought one at Topsey.

TSH: Which was the same with everybody, looking for places, they were scarce, hard to find.

WSP: Not only for the people who used to live there, but also for all the newcomers who suddenly show up as well, putting a real stress on the housing market. Any interesting stories in terms of your relationship with the army in Gatesville? Either of you?

TSH: I can't think of any right now.

WSP: Was it generally pleasant? Some communities in other states the taking did not go down well with the local citizens.

TSH: No, not that I can think of.

LSC: I don't remember any of that part.

Gladys Merle Keener Chastain

Date of birth: 3 June 1925
Communities affiliated with: Brown's Creek, Maple
Interviewed by Thad Sitton

TS: This is Thad Sitton. Today is November 28, 2000. I'm interviewing for the first time Gladys Keener Chastain at her home in Gatesville. This interview is part of Prewitt and Associates' Fort Hood Oral History Project sponsored by U.S. Army Fort Hood and conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University.

Tell me about where you grew up. You were a Keener. How many brothers and sisters did you have? Just about your family.

GKC: I am Gladys Merle Keener Chastain, oldest daughter of Jesse and Nora Keener. Mom and Dad had six girls. Myself, the oldest, and Faye Nell Bledsoe born two years apart. We were both born at Brown's Creek. Ten years after moving to the Mountain community, their third daughter was born, and two years later their fourth daughter was born at Silver City community. Again they waited twelve years for their third set of daughters, Sharon LaRue Evetts and two years later Alma Delores Billman, born here at Gatesville. So you see, Jesse and Nora had three sets of girls. My father, Jesse Keener, married Alma Nora Hopson on June 21, 1924. Daddy lived in the Brown's Creek community. He had ten brothers and sisters. His dad, our Grandfather Keener was a Methodist minister. He moved to this area in 1915 and was a farmer. Mama's parents, Alfred Lee Hopson came from Illinois and took up homesteading by digging a well in 1880. They ran the post office out of their home. Mom had twelve brothers and sisters. When Mom and Dad married they moved to Brown's Creek and farmed on Granddad Keener's place. They remained in this area for approximately two years. Then Dad bought a place and moved to Gatesville in the Mountain community. That's where I attended school for my first year. This was the Depression years, and Dad lost his place, and we moved back to Silver City and sharecropped on Mother's brother's farm, my Uncle Lee Hopson's place, and I went to Maple School. We moved back to Silver City in 1934 because my father—it was during the Depression and he had to let the home go back, the one on the Mountain, to the mortgage holder. There was just no work. Mother's brother had a farm at Silver City and he had moved from the house because his son was killed, and they didn't want to live there, so they moved to Killeen. We moved to Uncle Lee's home at Silver City. Uncle Lee's son and another fellow had a fight at a dance, and he was knifed and killed. That was the reason Uncle Lee and his family didn't want to live in their home, and we moved in and Dad farmed the place, and he would give Uncle Lee so much—you know, sharecropped. I don't remember the percentage or how much, how they determined it. But anyway, Dad worked the farm, and then when he sold the hay, the cotton, and everything, and he'd give Uncle Lee his quota. And then Dad worked for the man across the road, which was a Mr. Jim Schultz, that seemed to be financially better off than we were. And so he had Dad build a rock fence and paid Dad a dollar a day. And I can remember seeing my father come home with his hands bleeding from handling these big rocks and making this rock fence out of it. I guess it was cheaper—rock fences—back then, than with wire and posts and everything.

TS: Yeah. You just had to pay—if you had rock, then it was just how much you paid to the people for the labor.

GKC: Yes. So, Dad farmed and Mother gardened, because if she didn't garden we didn't eat that year, you know. She canned everything she could get her hands on. And they raised turkeys and chickens. Mother was a great cook, so she always had a lot of neighbors and company would come to eat. People'd come out of Gatesville to eat Sunday dinner with her. And I can remember seeing her pen up that old hen or a chicken. And she'd catch it and wring its neck a couple of times, and then throw it on the ground and step on it and pull its head off, and the chicken would still flop around. Being a kid like, I didn't like to look at that. But anyway, Mama was a great cook. And we always had food to eat, but we wore hand-me-down clothes from my cousin Neta out of Killeen. I always liked to see my uncle come, because she'd sent her leftover clothing for me to wear. To me, it's like Christmas, 'cause Uncle Lee was gonna bring me Neta's clothes. And Mother preserved all the fruit. We had fruit trees, and the fruit preserved, and pickles, dill pickles. And Mother made hominy from corn that Dad had grew. We'd put in a great big wash pot, and put water in it and then lye to make it turn or something—preserve it—I don't remember about that other than—we looked forward to killing a hog in the wintertime, first cold spell. All the neighbors would get together and share killing hogs. We made our sausage, and we didn't have refrigeration then. Am I talking too fast?

TS: No, you're not.

GKC: We had a water cooler. You know what a water cooler is?

TS: Yeah. An evaporator, like?

GKC: It was a metal thing, and you hung cloths over it. It'd pick up the water from the bottom and that would keep your milk and things cool. But then in the really hot summertime, we did have an icebox, a wooden icebox. See, there was no electricity. We didn't even have running water. And we didn't have a bathroom, we didn't even have an outhouse. It was like the song goes, "out behind the barn." And glad you didn't have neighbors living too close. We were always glad about hog-killing time, because that's when we made our soap from lye in Mama's big old wash pot. And then, let's see, we didn't have a radio until—I think Dad bought the radio in 1937, seems like. We had this battery-operated radio. And we loved the radio, we'd sit right in front of it. I don't know why we thought we had to sit right in front it, but we'd sit right in front of it and listen to the radio. And then in '39, Dad got enough money, and he bought Mom a washing machine. And we'd get out in the back yard, and we had to haul water from down on the branch. And you talk about environmental and pollution, probably the cows were upstream, the horses were upstream, probably the turkeys were drinking from the stream. But anyway, we did haul water and never did die from any kind of disease, or even was really pretty healthy.

TS: You hauled water—all your water was hauled from the branch, not just for your washing machine?

GKC: Yes.

TS: And maybe that was gas, gasoline, powered?

GKC: Yes, gasoline powered.

TS: But all the household water—how did you—did you use—how did you bring it back from the spring?

GKC: In huge barrels, huge barrels. And we did have what you call a rain barrel at the end of the house and caught rainwater. But it would get tadpoles in it. You know what tadpoles are? We would strain that, and that's what we would bathe in and wash our hair in, the water, the rainwater that the tadpoles had been strained out of. But we were sanitary. (laughs) But that was just a way of life.

TS: Well, you will have to conserve water if you have to haul it from the creek. I mean, it's not the same thing as—

GKC: Going to the faucet, it sure isn't. And poor Dad, he, let's see—Mother would fill a big washtub full of water and heat the water on the stove. We had a wood cook stove, wood heat, and no electricity, and Mother would heat the water on the wood cook stove. And us girls would get the bath first, and then Dad got his bath, and poor Mom got the last bath. In the same water, mind you. Lot of people wouldn't tell this story, but it's the truth, it's history.

TS: Yeah, same with my family. So, six girls—

GKC: Six—well, there were only four girls at that time.

TS: At the time we're talking about. You hadn't gone off Fort Hood yet?

GKC: No sir. Four girls down there. And one of my sisters, Florence Sue, she was born at Silver City. I remember the night that Dad rounded up me and Faye, and my sister Linda I guess was about two. She'd be asleep, my mother was having childbirth. So, Dad took us over to Mr. Shultz, which was the neighbor across the road. And I would have been twelve, then, and I can remember being so scared about my mother going to give birth at home. But they did, and I don't know how they got word to the doctor. The doctor did come and finally deliver my sister Sue. But my Grandmother Hopson, which was Mother's mother, now she was a midwife. This Mr. Bay that I talked to yesterday, he was telling me that everyone always came for my grandmother to doctor them if they had any kind of sickness. Because, they didn't have money to go to a doctor, and they didn't have transportation, because it was eighteen miles, and see, this is back in the horse-and-buggy day.

TS: Eighteen miles to Gatesville?

GKC: Yes, and ten to Killeen.

TS: That's a long day's trip.

GKC: Yes.

TS: And by wagon it's overnight, certainly.

GKC: Yes, because most of the people did not have transportation down there for years. It was years before my dad did. Because we moved there in '34, and I don't remember just how long after that he had transportation.

TS: Well, let me get straight, where were you before he moved there in '34?

GKC: We had lived in Brown's Creek. That's where I was born, and that's where my sister Faye was born, in Brown's Creek, and that was about eight miles from Silver City. And then we came to Gatesville, the Mountain community out here, it's just a little piece out of Gatesville. And that's where I had started to school first.

TS: So, he had moved—he had moved to town, but then he moved back to the country to—

GKC: To survive, to survive! Because he had bought this place up here, and seemed to me like I remember seeing the payments. It was just ridiculous how much the payments were on it, but he couldn't even make them. There wasn't any work, you know, just wasn't any jobs. 'Cause my dad was a worker, you never in your life seen—everybody said he was the workingest man they ever seen. He enjoyed work, and he really tried hard to make a living. And like I said, he worked everywhere for a dollar a day. But anyway, us kids, we picked cotton and headed maize, hoed corn, pulled corn, ran the hay

baler. I remember walking an old horse, follering a horse around doing the hay baling. And we raised our own sugar cane, and this Mr. Fletcher Colvin had a vat, and everybody would use it. They'd build a fire and I guess heat up the sugar cane, best I remember, and the syrup would run down this trough of a thing, and you'd catch it in buckets. And then you'd give him his share for using his vat. I don't remember the shares, how much it was or anything. And then Mom made lye soap after we had killed hogs. And then the cracklings, and you'd put those in the cornbread. And let's see—anyway, when we went to school in the summertime, all students didn't get to go to school, because they had to stay out and help the families with the crops. It's just a known fact, you didn't call them absent or turn them in for not attending school. It was a known fact that you had to help the family with the farms. I know I have a diary in there, and it would say so-and-so didn't come to school today, they had to pick cotton, or they had to do this or that.

TS: Who's diary is it?

GKC: It's mine.

TS: Oh, it's your diary.

GKC: Yes, it's my diary.

TS: It's your diary from the school years?

GKC: Yes, it's my diary from the school years. I was eleven years old when I started this diary, and it would tell about things like that. And anyway, the teachers lived in the neighborhood with the farm families, because it was too far to drive back and forth from Killeen or Gatesville. And they sure didn't have apartments or condos in those days. So, you lived with a farm family, and you usually drove a buggy to school. So, I never will forget, me and my sister had to walk about a mile up this road to school, and in the cold wintertimes—I don't know if it's 'cause you were young, but it seemed much colder than we have nowadays. But anyway, Mother'd bundle us up, and we'd walk facing the wind until we'd be so cold—our faces, our hands—and we'd turn around and back a while. (laughs) Then, when we'd get to school—we had a huge, big potbellied stove in the school corner, and the teacher wouldn't let us get too close, 'cause he knew our hands warming up and our faces would hurt too fast if we got up close. So, he kept us back until we thawed out or warmed up. And the school building had two rooms, and with different classes in it, and then it had an activity room, kind of at the back. And on Fridays we'd usually have plays or some kind of activity. So when we'd get home from school, Mother would normally have us change our school clothes into work clothes. They don't get to be like kids nowadays, keep their good clothes on. And we'd change from our school clothes to our everyday clothes, she'd call them, and get in the wood, you know, and grind corn and feed the chickens, and do the outside chores. And then on Friday, she'd have us save our best dress, because that was when we were gonna have a play or some kind of activity. So, you saved your best dress, which might have been made out of feed sacks.

And so anyway, it was just a lovely community. The neighbors were all good folks. You knew everybody, and you knew how many kiddos they had, and you knew how poor they were, and you knew who'd work and who wouldn't work, and you knew all their secrets about the families, if there was any. You're getting sleepy after you've ate lunch.

TS: No, no! You didn't know a lot of people, but you knew them really well, right? You knew—

GKC: Well, you pretty well knew them all, because you had—well, the only things to do back then was go to church, and you'd meet the other communities and the different people in those. And then at the revivals, they used to have a lot of revivals. 'Course, they need to have more nowadays. But they'd have the revivals, and everybody'd go to the revivals, I don't know whether to hear the Lord or just to

see friends. And they always had lots of good food there. Everybody'd bring their different dishes of food, whatever they wanted to cook.

TS: Yeah, J. D. [Wolf] was talking about the revivals as being big—they were revivals, but they were also the biggest social things of the year, really.

GKC: Yes, social events.

TS: And it wasn't just that people from surrounding communities would come into—I think he talked about Eliga. And it didn't matter that—

GKC: Eliga, yes. And that's where you'd get to meet people, the different ones coming in from other communities. Let me turn up the air some—(unintelligible; interruption in taping)

TS: The communities. Do you have a sense that communities had different reputations, are they different from each other? I'm really asking—my question is, were all of them kind of—the ones that you knew about—kind of different versions of the same thing? Or, did some have reputations for being rough? Did they have different reputations?

GKC: (unintelligible; speaking at the same time) I think so. There were some that—I don't know if they were raised different, or what. Some of them, I guess, had larger families, so that threw, you know, really a hardship on the parents. And they were raised different, but—

TS: Well, you were telling me before we started, that your notion—if you asked people, Well, where do you live? What would they say? Would they say, Silver City, I live in Silver City and I attend Maple School? Or would they say, I live in Maple community?

GKC: They'd probably say Silver City, Maple School. I bet so. But anyway, my parents—well, my grandpa—Grandmother Hopson ran the post office at Maple.

TS: Oh, yeah? How did that work? Nobody's given a good description of—I know it's in their house, right?

GKC: Right. Yeah.

TS: How did they do it? What did they do?

GKC: Well, I've wondered about that, too, and I called a cousin. She said she could not remember. She said only thing I can remember is seeing the post office desk. The letter sortment thing? It's made out of wood and kind of like a desk and everything. So I guess somebody brought the mail by horse, but as far as remembering, I just don't.

TS: It was like a piece of furniture, right? That was the official mail station, with the pigeonholes?

GKC: Yes. It was this room, she had a wood-burning fireplace. And I remember when I was a kid, and I used to go spend the night with her, I loved sitting there and watching that fire crackle, you know, in the old fireplace. And your legs would get red-splochity, you know, you'd be setting up so close to get warm. That was all the heat in the house. Yet, you'd be cold, you know, on the back and everything. But I remember that post office thing, being kid-like—there was a post card there, and I remember there was a devil with a pitchfork on that post card. Where it came from I don't know, but I can remember it to this day, and I'm seventy-five and a half years old. And I thought, Boy, I don't ever want to do anything mean like that and let that devil with that pitchfork get me. (laughs) So, that might of kind of kept me in line all my life.

TS: Well, you wouldn't have seen many drawings or depictions of the evil one.

GKC: No! That's where it came from, but I remember it being on that post office desk—(unintelligible;

speaking at the same time) But it was bad, and I thought, Well, I don't want that sucker to get after me. My Grandmother Hopson, she always wore a long black checkered apron over her dress. And we'd go out there in the back and pick up wood chips and put in it. And she had a big long homemade table. And that—Mother's dad and mother had twelve children, and so I thought their house was really rich, but now I can know that it wasn't. I've seen some pictures of it. But they did have a cistern at the end of their porch, and all of us grandkids would take turns pumping that cistern. And so they did have a cistern, which we didn't have. But anyway, all the kids and grandkids would come to Grandmother Hopson's on a Sunday and visit. We had a wonderful time. And my grandfather, back in that day and time, and that's been a lots of years ago, belonged to the Masonic lodge. And he had came from Oklahoma and staked a claim down there at Silver City. And back then, staking a claim, all you had to do is dig a well. And so he had gone back and got my grandmother and come up there in a wagon. And had—he had already staked his claim. And another man, can't remember the other fellow's name.

But anyway, the latter years, my grandfather's mind got bad. And so he'd gone off hunting something in the pasture and got turned around, got lost. And so to this day I can still hear them hunting him in the corn field. Hitting the corn stalks, calling his name. And the neighbors and the family, people came from everywhere hunting my grandfather, because he, I guess, was up in the eighties. His mind had gotten bad, and he'd got lost.

They put all us kids on a pallet to sleep. Her house was built exactly the same. It's this huge, long porch, and on the end of it was this cistern. And then was a big room that you went into with the fireplace, and that's where Grandmother had the post office, just as you enter the door to the right—that's to the fireplace. And then, there was kind of what you call a shed room. The house sloped back, and the roof wasn't as tall, and that's the way her kitchen was on the other end. But the two bedrooms were exactly alike, they had a fireplace on each end. And then they had the walk through between the two bedrooms. I remember all of us kids laying on the floor, on pallets, because all the other family members were out hunting my grandfather. And they finally found him. But I can still hear them hitting the corn stalks, trying to find him, thought maybe he's laying down in the corn stalks.

TS: So, they were thrashing their way around—

GKC: Trying to find him.

TS: I see. Yeah. Well, somebody in a corn field—

GKC: Would be hard to find.

TS: You'd have to be right on them to find them. I see.

GKC: I remember that incident about my Grandpa Hopson. And, oh, back to the Masonic emblem. My grandmother had a cellar at the end of the house, and as you go into the cellar, up above it was the Masonic emblem. You know what it looks like, don't you? So, we went back to Silver City last year, I'd never been back in the sixty years since we moved. And Fort Hood gave us a tour. So, I had looked for the cellar, because I found that area that my grandparents' house was in. There was a huge mountain that us kids used to go up out the back, and up on this hill was this huge rock, and you could look out everywhere. And so—but there was nothing left of the cellar. But being a kid back then, I kept thinking, I wonder what that thing is up there? You know, I didn't know what the insignia was.

TS: Had the big eye in the middle, right?

GKC: Masonic lodge. No, well—I don't know just what it looked like. But anyway my husband belongs to

Masonic lodge. So anyway, he had belonged—and back in those years, that was a long time ago, so I don't know where he'd got the money, or where they had their lodge at, or anything in that area.

TS: Well, they had to hide from the sight of passers by, and so a lot times, maybe a cellar, maybe they had meetings?

GKC: No, no, the cellar was for Grandmother's fruit and potatoes and everything. We had the cellar for—but I guess he was just proud enough that he belonged to a Masonic lodge, that he put it there. They do so much good for crippled children. No, Grandmother canned and canned, and also her fruit trees, she would cut the peaches half in two and put up on the roof and dry them out, make fried pies out of them. Umm, good. I don't know why the flies wouldn't have carried them off. I don't remember flies back in those days so bad.

TS: People, people, often dried them on the roof, you know. If you had a—

GKC: They must have had netting, maybe, I don't know, put over it.

TS: Or, they just didn't worry about them. You know, flies were everywhere.

GKC: And you might just knock them off, but I don't remember that. But anyway, all the family would gather on the weekend and just have a great time. The kids going up the mountain. Granddad Hopson, he loved flowers, even back then, as poor as we were and everything. I don't know where he got the seeds for flowers. But he had a beautiful flower garden at one end of the house that he was proud of, all kind of flowers. And then he was for making bird houses. On tall long poles, you know?

TS: Martin houses?

GKC: Martin houses, he had lots of them.

TS: The flower bed's a little unusual—for men.

GKC: Yeah. He had these bugles, these vines that had these red bugles on them. That's the best I can ever think to call it, a bugle vine.

TS: I can't—I know what you mean.

GKC: And he had just a pretty nice farm. We raised the hogs and the chickens and the turkeys. I remember at our home—we didn't live awfully far from Grandmother and Grandpa Hopson, when we moved back down there.

TS: So, they were in the same community?

GKC: They were in Silver City community. And that's where she had a post office. And it wasn't far to the school, and it wasn't all that far to our house.

TS: What did he do for a living? Did he farm, did he raise cotton?

GKC: He farmed, he raised cotton and corn and maize and sugar cane, and then a huge garden, you know. And then you cut your own wood for your fireplaces and your cook stove. And we—I'll show you the lamp when you leave, that I studied by. Coal oil lamp. And I never will forget when Dad come home with this Aladdin lamp. You know what an Aladdin lamp is? Just got the wick, and it gives a little more light. And Dad loved to read. My father was one that really liked to read, and everybody—

Under the window. And then my two youngest sisters, Linda and Sue, slept on that other bed. And then there was the potbellied stove, and then you went into the other room where me and my sister Faye slept. But the wind came through the windows so, and through the cracks in the wall, that you

could even see the snow. If it was snowing, it would seep through. So, Mother would have so much cover on us, that once you went to bed you didn't turn over, because you was so weighted down with cover. And also, she would put the irons, the flat irons that we ironed with, on the cook stove and heat them up and then wrap them in, oh, old leggings or something, and put them in the bed with us to heat our feet. But when you talked, you could see your steam blowing, it was so cold in that room. (laughs) So—and we didn't have clothes closets back then, you had a wire stretched across the corner, and that's where you hung your clothes, what few clothes you had. And we didn't have a clothesline outside. When we washed we hung our clothes on a barbed-wire fence. And when they dried, the wind would blow them off, so you'd just go along on the ground picking up your clean clothes.

TS: When they were heavy and wet, they would hang on there, and when they got dry—no clothespins.

GKC: Right, no clothespins. And so there wasn't any refrigeration. When they cured the meat, they salted it down. There was a little old shed in the back, and Mother'd hang the meat and salt it—what kind of salt, that I don't remember—and would hang it up.

I was sixteen when we moved out of down that area. And the army come, moved what possessions we had to Killeen. Because Dad went there and started working building the barracks, when Fort Hood came in, and got work. And the army came and moved us, and they wouldn't let Dad put his gas can in the truck. Why, I don't know, why you couldn't afford the gas there. But I do remember that they wouldn't let Dad put the gas can in.

TS: They wouldn't let him load the—I guess it was—

GKC: They might have been—I don't know, they might have thought it'd slosh around, burn up, or something. Maybe that was just their orders or instructions, you know?

TS: You know, we can talk about that. It doesn't matter when we talk about anything. Were there rumors, were there rumors flying around that the army's gonna take the land? J. D. [Wolf] was saying people thought, people just—a lot of people just didn't believe it.

GKC: Didn't think it. Well, no, I suppose we thought it, because there were lot of the people, you know, were really depressed. And some of them took their own lives. And then it just moved families away from families. You know, they went different ways.

TS: Just broke everything up.

GKC: And all their school chums had to start to different schools.

TS: Well, they were tight little communities, and it's not the same thing as if the army comes in northwestern suburb of Austin, where everybody's moved in the last couple of years. Those people just barely drifted together and hardly know each other anyway. But this was different.

GKC: Yes, because everybody knew everyone. If anybody got sick, they knew about it. If anybody almost stumped their toe, they knew about it. Or, when your family members were married, or everybody had their showers for them—but it was kind of really all families. Just everybody knew everybody else and respected them, and if anybody got sick, well, you always went to help the sick.

I remember picking cotton, you'd get so hot, you know. And you wore an old bonnet. You'd be tired and you'd look around to see if a whirlwind was coming, where you'd take your bonnet off and get a breath of air. That's a very strong memory with me, how hot it was.

TS: That's interesting, I've never heard that.

GKC: Yes, you kept looking for those whirlwinds. And my sister said, "Oh, wish a whirlwind'd come

along!" And she was always into something. Oh, we played lightning bugs, we didn't have a great lot to play with. In fact on Christmases, the only thing we got would be one gift. I remember one year I got a locket. But we'd get fruit and candies, 'cause we didn't get fruit and candies all through the year. We just got it at Christmastime. And then you just got one gift. You couldn't look at Sears Roebuck catalog and pick out what you wanted like the kids do nowadays. You were thankful to get what you got. But anyway, we played—get jars and fill them with lightning bugs and see who would fill up the most lightning bugs. And then you'd play Annie Over the Roof. You ever play Annie Over?

TS: How do you play that?

GKC: Well, if you had a ball you'd throw the ball over, and then you'd run around to see who caught it. And my sister was a daredevil. We had a ladder, and she'd always put it up on the roof, and she could climb anything. But she'd get me to climb up, I could climb, but the coming down. I'd stand up there and say, "I'm scared, I can't come down!" And she'd stand there and laugh at me. But she was more tomboyish. In fact, she got mad when Sue, the fourth child was born, the one that was born down at Silver City, because Mother and Daddy hadn't had a boy. She said it's just too many damn girls. But she was always pulling something on me. After we were grown, and she was practically on her deathbed—she passed away with cancer in '89—anyway, I'd tell her, "Sister, you outsmarted me many a dadgum time, because I'd be always the one to wash the dishes, when we were kids." And she was supposed to dry, but she'd say she had to go out behind the barn. Then—

TS: That was the turn of phrase you used—

GKC: For going to the bathroom. Out behind the barn. I wanted her to hurry up and get through where we could go play. So I'd go ahead and dry, and she'd fool around, and I'd have it done and dry when she'd get back. I told her when she was sick, "You outsmarted me, many a time." And Faye, when we'd go to make up the bed, she's supposed to make up her side and I'd make up my side. And she'd make hers up awful, just awful! And she'd die laughing about it then, you know. And she said, "Well, I knew you'd make the bed for me right." 'Cause, if it's not done right I don't want it done. I'm one that I want it done right! So, anyway, I said, "You outsmarted me a many a time," and she'd just laugh about it. She was a fun person, she was more like Dad.

Our dad, he had all the neighborhood, everybody—anybody, he seen anybody walking down the road, "Come eat dinner with me. Come eat supper with me." Poor Mom's cooked for more strangers than most people even know. Back then, you know. And Dad, if he had men working—well, he had a bunch of cousins that their mother had passed away and the dad was trying to raise them, and he always had my two cousins there—(unintelligible)

And Mother was a caregiver. She took care of my Grandmother Hopson, passed away when we lived up here in Gatesville with sugar diabetes. And then, when we moved to Maple, well my Grandfather Hopson lived with us. And me and my sister Faye slept on the porch, and Mom and Dad slept out in the yard under a tree. And every night she'd have to take the sheet and shake the leaves off it before her and Dad could go to bed. My sister Faye and I were sleeping on the front porch, and I heard my grandfather. When he give his death gurgle, you know? And so I hollered at Mama and Dad. He passed away living with us. And then—

TS: So, they were giving him the bed inside, 'cause he needed to be inside?

GKC: Yes, the bed inside. Mother and Dad sleeping out under the tree, and me and my sister was on the front porch.

TS: That would be something you'd never forget.

GKC: I can remember it to this day, and I wasn't but about ten or eleven years old, then, I guess. But anyway—

TS: But that was the way people—people, people lived with their family until they passed away.

GKC: Yes. You didn't think about putting them in a nursing home. I don't know if they had them, back then.

TS: I don't think they did. It was good of people, but that was the only thing that could be done, too.

GKC: And then Mother had a sister, that was Una, and she had polio. They said at the time they thought she ate too many green peaches. But anyway, it made her crippled, and she had a crippled arm. And back then they didn't have any walkers or anything, and she—even up until she died in years, she pushed a cane-bottomed chair around. But when we were living there at Silver City, well, Aunt Una and Uncle John were always coming to stay with Mama. Like I said, Mother and Dad took everybody in. And my aunt fell and hit that arm, her crippled arm, on the sewing machine and broke it, and so they had to amputate. And so, for years she went around, her arm would jerk. But, anyway, Mother looked after Aunt Una forever. And then she had a brother named Richard that lived with them towards the end. So, Mother just was a caregiver.

TS: You didn't have a huge lot of resources to take care of all these people, too, right?

GKC: No, we didn't.

TS: I know they weren't all there at the same time.

GKC: No. But we shared and gave them the bedroom. But there was always people coming to stay, and when I was reading my diary, I thought, Where did all those people sleep?

But anyway, we did make ice cream. We'd get out on the porch and make ice cream. That was a fun time for people to come and make homemade ice cream. We had milk, plenty of milk, and then you had rich cream from milk. You'd skim the cream off the milk. And churning, me and Faye would fuss to see who's gonna churn, 'cause she didn't like to churn. We had the old-timey churn, you'd churn and you'd churn and you'd churn. And just like with the crank ice-cream thing, well, one would have to sit on it and the other would crank.

TS: Where'd you get the ice?

GKC: Okay, I'm sorry. My Aunt Una's husband, Uncle John, that's what he did, he was the ice man. So, you'd put a sign that you wanted twenty-five pounds up in your window, 'cause we kind of lived off the road. And, driving by, he'd see if you wanted twenty-five pounds or fifty-five pounds, and he'd get it and bring it in the house. And we had this wood icebox. Just the other night, we went to a Christmas party at these friend's house, and they had a wood icebox just like we had, only they'd gave top dollar for it and called it an antique. (TS laughs) But we used it out of necessity. And we would just use it in the really hot summertime, and if we run out of ice we couldn't wait for Uncle John to come to bring us the ice. But I was laughing, telling Jerry, I said, "I can't believe that." Because she'd bought it for her husband, and I don't know how much she'd paid for it, but quite a bit.

TS: Well, Silver City, it doesn't have electricity, of course, and it hadn't got the telephone, but the ice man is delivering ice. You had ice, and a lot of places didn't have ice. Coming out of Gatesville, I guess, right?

GKC: Yes, we had ice. I guess that's where he brought it from.

TS: What did his rig look like?

GKC: He had a little old van of a looking thing. I imagine it was homemade, probably some kind of a pickup thing that he'd put up. Some kind of thing over it, you know. I don't remember how much the ice was, but it couldn't have been very much. But that's what we used for icebox. And then, the—what'd I tell you awhile ago, the—

TS: Evaporator? Cooler?

GKC: Yeah, the cooler, cooler, milk cooler. We called them milk coolers, that's what we called them.

TS: That would draw the water up the canvas, the sides, and it would cool. That works a lot better than people realize, that haven't tried it.

GKC: Keeps it cool. Yes. Oh, anyway, back to Mother and Dad. Mother was sixteen and Dad was nineteen when they married. And he came from the Brown's Creek community to court Mother. Well, there wasn't any place to take her unless she went to church or revival. But she stayed at my Grandparents Hopsons' house on the front porch in summertime. But anyway, Mother said she never kissed Dad, all the time, until they were married. But she said at one time he came from Brown's Creek, which was eight miles, riding a horse, and it was raining and really cold. And said when she went to tell him bye one evening—I'm sure he went home before dark, you know, probably—she said she wanted to kiss him, but she said, "I didn't." So, Mother never kissed Dad until they married.

TS: He was probably supposed to start the let's kiss bit, and he clearly wasn't—

GKC: But anyway, they got married in a horse and buggy, they were in a horse and buggy when the man married them. But Daddy's brother married Mother's sister. Brothers married sisters, you know? So that makes me have double cousins—their children. And I have double cousins, because we're both Hopsons and Keeners, too. But anyway, Uncle Willie knew Aunt Lucy, and that's the way he introduced Daddy to Mom. I don't know if Dad ever had a girlfriend before her or not, or Mom either. I don't think so. They probably had friends that they claimed in school. Just like when we were in school, you claimed a boy. (TS interrupts; unintelligible) You gave each another valentines, probably, and wrote notes in school.

But school, we were always glad for recess because you got to go out to play baseball and volleyball. And everybody loved baseball, and you could hardly wait for recess. And we didn't have bathrooms in the school. The boys was to the right and the girls was to the left. You went outside out to the toilet outside.

TS: And this is, once again, Maple—

GKC: Maple, Maple School.

TS: Maple School. So, it was just a direct, boys to the left girls to the right, sort of deal?

GKC: No. Opposite.

TS: Opposite.

GKC: Boys to the right and girls to the left.

TS: You know, a lot people did not like those pit toilets. They stunk, they got things in them, they would even get bats. There was a school of thought that the brush is better than the pit toilets, right?

GKC: Yeah. My sister, I don't know whether to tell this or not, you might want to cut it off. (laughs) But anyway, like I said, she was a fun person, and she went to work out here in the prison, the later years of life. So, all of those prisoners out there, she was always I guess telling jokes and everything, but

anyway she was telling them when we were kids that we didn't have a toilet. And they said, How did you clean yourself? And she said, "Well, we had different colored corncobs." Said, "On the red corncobs, you used it to clean yourself, and then on the white corncobs, you used it to see if you were clean." (laughs)

TS: A test.

GKC: So, I know she had them all laughing. They said, Oh, Mrs. Bledsoe! It wasn't really that way, but that's what she told.

TS: When people talk about it, the people who didn't grow up out there, they, they can't tell truth from fiction. And the truth is almost—

GKC: It's almost—in later years I told Daddy—one day we were sitting there I guess talking about old-times, or something, and anyway I said, "Dad, I'm mad at you." "Well, why are you made at me for?" he said. And I said, "Well, looks like you could have put two rocks down with a board over it." I don't know why we never did have an outside toilet, but we didn't have. I don't know why. There's some people did, but we didn't. But like you said about that, the ones at school, you know, you couldn't sit down. I guess they were smelly, I'm sure.

TS: Well, the picture of the school that we were just looking at, is a fine brick school. I mean, if you compare it to—it's head and shoulders above most rural school buildings, and yet it didn't have—

GKC: It didn't have inside toilets, or inside running water, either.

TS: Well, it had, it had outside pit toilets, didn't it?

GKC: Yes, that's what it was. They had them by the trees, outside pit toilets. But we were poor, I mean, poor. But everyone else was, so I guess you couldn't feel ashamed, you know. Because I don't remember being embarrassed or anything.

TS: What did your father—we're talking about after coming back to Maple, and he's on, he's on shares—with who?

GKC: My uncle, Mother's brother, Lee Hopson.

TS: What is he doing to make money on the place? I bet he raises some cotton, right?

GKC: He raised the cotton and corn and millet to feed the cattle with. And so, whenever he sold the cotton, well, he gave my uncle his share. And whenever he sold the corn, he gave my uncle his share. But I guess on the sugar cane we just probably kept it for our own self, 'cause it was food for us. And then Dad also raised popcorn, too. You could raise your own popcorn, it was a different corn from the regular corn. And, oh, the corn, we ground it, we brought it to Gatesville and ground it to make our cornbread out of. Mother always made cornbread or biscuits.

TS: So, the cotton is just for money, but the corn is for a lot of different things, right?

GKC: Feed for the horses. But now, Dad worked extra for this man across the road, this Jim Schultz, a dollar a day making the rock fences and I suppose putting his crops in, too. But I know that Dad liked to read, and he'd send us over there to get Mr. Schultz's paper every day, 'cause we couldn't afford to buy a paper, you know. And they'd read the paper, and they'd save it for Dad. And he'd read the news. Dad was a good man, and Mother was a good woman. I mean, you just couldn't ask for finer family. And everyone, you knew, loved them, too. The boys would come to see Dad, and—

TS: Well, there was no way to—all you were trying to do in the '30s is to get by. I mean, there was no real

way to better yourself, there was nobody's money to better yourself with.

GKC: No, there was no one that could go out and get good jobs. You couldn't say J. D. [Wolf] went here and got such a good job, or Gladys went there and got such a good job, 'cause they were all paying the same. And it wasn't much. And they're wasn't baby-sitting ways to make money—you couldn't baby-sit in those days. You couldn't afford a baby sitter, you kept care of your own children, you know. And the wives didn't work. They were homemakers, they sewed and quilted and made their own clothes. Did the cooking and the canning and the preserving and the making of pickles, all the food to eat. None of them worked. And the schoolteachers, they weren't just schoolteachers. They cared for you, they cared for your welfare and knew about your family, was interested in your family. And I'm sure they all knew the ones that was more needy. I'm sure some of us were dressed a little better than other ones with such large families. But nobody, just no one, had any money that I knew of.

TS: Well, that sort of makes it easier. I mean, there's no sense of looking over there—it you're inclined to feel envious, there was nobody to look around and get very envious about.

GKC: No, you don't have to compete with the Joneses, because the Joneses have what you have. So, you didn't have to feel self conscious or worry about so-and-so has on a prettier dress than I've got on today, or, Mama, why can't I have this? Because, you know, they were all just that way.

TS: Did you produce anything on the place that you could sell to the store? Did you sell eggs, did you sell cedar posts?

GKC: We sold eggs, Mother did. And I think that's about all, maybe chickens from time to time. Oh, the turkeys! She raised the turkeys and sold the turkeys.

TS: Talk about how she did the turkeys, because that's kind of a—how did she—now, the turkeys were not raised in quite the same way as the chickens, right?

GKC: No.

TS: How were they raised?

GKC: She set the turkeys, too, and raised them. And I'd remember they'd wander off, and me and my sister Faye would have to go bring the turkeys in. Mother'd say, "Go get the turkeys and bring them in." And we'd grumble, 'cause the doggone old squawking turkeys—but anyway, she would sell the turkeys and make money off of selling the turkeys and make money off of selling the eggs at the store.

TS: So, the turkeys would be sold at the Silver City store? Or in Gatesville?

GKC: Probably the Gatesville store. I'm betting the Gatesville store.

TS: What were the dealings back and forth with Gatesville? What would you go to Gatesville for? When would you go to Gatesville?

GKC: To sell your cotton you'd come to Gatesville in a wagon. And me and my sister would usually take turns coming with Dad, he'd take turns bringing us. And then you would bring your corn and have it ground for cornmeal to use. And then, I don't—let's see, what else? Oh, and then Dad was always working with the hay baler. He worked with people. You'd go to different farmers and bale their hay.

TS: I think you ought to talk about that, because—that was a time when the hay baling was mechanized, but there was several pieces of equipment involved, and not everybody generally speaking could afford to own all of them. So, just how was the hay baling going on, at the time you remember?

GKC: Well, I don't know if Dad had the hay baler, or if he was doing it with his folks—if Granddad had it. But anyway, you'd go to different farms and baled hay. And you'd pull the hay baler with a horse and go round and round, you'd have to go round and round with that horse to bale this hay. And I remember sitting down and trying to poke the wires through the hay, which was pretty hard because they'd always get caught. You really had to work at it. But Daddy was, they always said, was the best hay baler there was in the country. In fact, Daddy could pick more cotton than anybody. Everyone in the neighborhood knew Daddy was the best cotton picker. And then also, after you'd pick cotton, then you'd go back and pull the bolls, too. And that's what hurt, you know, the bolls would hurt into the ends of your fingers. And Dad was a very good cotton picker and boll picker. In fact, Dad was a good worker.

TS: What do you mean about pulling the bolls? Do you mean scrapping?

GKC: Yes.

TS: The last picking of the bolls, that's what you mean?

GKC: Yes. And if any more had opened since the first picking. And that's what you mean by going back and pulling bolls.

TS: So, that's not letting anything waste.

GKC: No. Nothing waste, nothing waste. And all the wives would take their babies and lay them on pallets and help the husbands pull cotton and pick cotton. They didn't stay at home and listen to the radio, I'll tell you. (laughs) They sure didn't have TV back in those days.

TS: You remember when you got started picking?

GKC: Oh, pretty young, just as soon as, probably, eight or nine years old.

TS: Gave you a little sack or something?

GKC: Little tow sack. I remember—Mother made her own tow sacks, you know. You bought the ducking, and then she made her tow sacks. And if you got too much in that, it could get sure heavy on your neck. But—

TS: How were you at picking?

GKC: (laughs) I was reading in my diary, one time I picked seventy pounds. I tried to read through my diary the other night to get some pointers, but some of it was in pencil, and my eyesight's not all that good. I need my glasses to read, and I couldn't make out a lot of it. But anyway, I was a good worker. And when you headed maize you had to be real careful or you'd cut your arms and hands. So, we always wore long sleeves and gloves. And then when you pulled corn, they had a wagon pulled by a horse. We'd go slow, usually my sister Faye would stand up there with the horse thing. But you'd pull corn and you'd have to pull it fast enough to get in the wagon, 'cause they'd just keep going. So, you had to pull corn really fast to hit the wagon, throwing in the corn.

TS: So, the wagon set the—

GKC: Set the pace.

TS: Is the wagon knocking down a row, or is it—

GKC: It's running between the rows. One's on one row and one person's on the other row.

TS: And it's setting the pace for the people pulling the rows on either side.

GKC: Yes.

TS: It could make them work pretty hard.

GKC: Make you really get to going, get to hopping. Or get teased about it.

TS: How about corn tops? Did you fool with corn tops for fodder?

GKC: The cattle ate the fodder. Sure did.

TS: (unintelligible)

It's natural to just move around. But I was, uh—there's something you said a moment ago about—who was the midwife, the community midwife?

GKC: My Grandmother Keener.

TS: Keener, Grandmother Keener.

GKC: She's the one that lived at Brown's Creek. Her and my grandfather, both, were Methodist ministers. And they lived in the Brown's Creek community, and they had ten children. And she's the one everybody came to when a member of the family was going to deliver a baby. And she went and delivered the babies. In fact, she even delivered a nephew of mine, my sister Faye's son, Douglas. And—but they had moved—it's after the army moved in, see, the army moved them out twice. They moved them out from Brown's Creek, and they went to the—what was that area called?—Slido—(unintelligible) up here. Closer into Gatesville, they moved them closer into Gatesville. And she delivered my nephew, Douglas, and she even delivered one of her grandsons, her daughter's. But they were the people that went everywhere and had revivals, preaching. And when we were kids I lived with them. Because Mama and Dad, when we lost the place up here in Gatesville, they moved to what you call Manning Mountain, which is down in the Hood area that the army land took over. But all it had was rocks and goats, and we were living up on this mountain, I think. And it was really poor land, and we didn't live there very long. But I had to go down to my grandparents and live, because there wasn't any way to get to school from up there. So, I remember my grandmother and then my double-cousin Geneva and her mother and daddy lived around the hollow from my Grandparents Keeners, on their side, you know, those brothers that married sisters. And so, the teacher lived with my Aunt Lucy and Uncle Willie, and the teacher would come by every morning and pick me up in the buggy. We went to school in a buggy. And went to Brown's Creek School, it was a little school down there. And we went to school down there. And I lived with my grandmother—I must have been about either seven or eight years old. I know she'd get me up on her lap, she's a little bitty short fat lady, and she'd get me up on her lap and help me with my lessons. And it felt so good sitting on Grandma's lap, 'cause she was so squishy and loving. But, ever' night before you'd go to bed they'd do their praying. And you'd kneel by a cane-bottomed chair, you'd be a little kid and you were tired. And Grandpa would pray first, he'd pray for everybody, everything. And so he'd pray—

TS: He'd pray out loud, right? (unintelligible)

GKC: Oh, yes, oh, yes. You were listening and you were on your knees by the cane-bottom chair, sitting there. And he'd pray and he'd pray and he'd pray. And about the time you'd think he was gonna stop and you could get up and go to bed, being a kid and tired, well, then Grandmother'd take over, and you'd be there for a spell after Grandmother took over. So we had our nightly prayer, really young, burned in my soul, I'll tell you. Because Grandma—they believed in prayer. And they raised about the same things as the Hopsons did. And they might have been a little better financially off, I don't know. But they—everybody always seemed to furnish houses for their kids, because my Aunt Lucy and Uncle Willie lived in a house that Mother and Dad had lived in when I was born. In that house I

showed you the picture of at Brown's Creek. My aunt and uncle lived there, and that's where they lived when my cousin Geneva, when the teacher lived with them, too. And she would come pick me up and take me to school. And during the week I'd live with my grandmother, and then on the weekend Daddy would drive down the mountain on the horse and get me and take me back up the mountain to stay with Mom and Dad on Saturday and Sunday. And so I remember one weekend when Dad come and took me up there, it was snowing. And we're riding a horse. And Mother made divinity candy. 'Course, where she ever got the sugar and the makings of candy, back then, I don't know. But she made divinity candy. And so, when Dad was to take me back down to Grandmother Keener's the next day, well, it was snowing, so she wrapped us up in so many clothes I don't know how we ever mounted a horse together. The horse was so stiff with clothes on us. But anyway, I remember standing and holding to the porch—round porch post—'cause I was just a little kid, and I wasn't wanting to leave my mama. And so I remember standing there holding on to that porch post, crying, not wanting to go back, you know.

TS: You had to be sort of peeled off the post—

GKC: Yes, the post, to get on the horse with Daddy to go back down the mountain. So, I lived there with my grandmother, and we did the nightly prayers, and we did the nightly setting on her lap getting my lessons. Which was fun, she was a little bitty short fat lady, too. Mother's mother, on the Hopsons, she was a tall, stern looking person. She was very stern.

TS: Well, what do you remember about that school? That's a different school.

GKC: Brown's [Creek] School?

TS: Yeah. It's clearly not as grand as the, uh—

GKC: No. It was an old school, and I don't really remember all that much about it, it was just a very small school. And really old. And my remembrance is they maybe only had the one teacher.

TS: But the teacher was rooming with—

GKC: My aunt and uncle—on the Keener side.

TS: So, she was taking the buggy to school, and you just rode with her.

GKC: Yes, she'd come by and get me. And my grandmother would make what she called tea cakes, back in those days. Oh, they were good! We've lost the recipe and everybody keeps saying, Do you know Grandmother Keener's tea cake recipe? But anyway, she'd make me tea cakes, and so she'd give me, I guess, one, and one for my cousin Geneva. And she'd say, "Give this to Geneva," you know. Well, I'd eat them, both of them. So, to this day, Geneva's seventy-seven, and she still throws it up to me, "You ate my cookie when you were a kid!" So, I told her, "Well, before the end of our time I'm gonna bring you a bunch of cookies and you can't keep throwing that up to me," and we'd laugh about it. But she still talks about it. And also, I had an uncle on the Keener side that lived in Dallas, and he had two boys. And they were really young, and they liked coming to the country. So, every summer, my Aunt Frances and Uncle Arthur would bring them down to spend the summer with Grandma and Grandpa Keener. So, all—when it come cotton picking time, all the families gathered in. You know, all the brothers and sisters, sisters-in-law, brother-in-laws, to help get the crops in. So, anyway, all of us kids was out in the cotton patch playing. We wasn't big enough, we were all under seven years old, and I think there were about maybe five or six of us. And we got in a fight, and we tore each other's clothes. And so, Grandma Keener, she come got us and took us back to the house and made blue and white checkity dresses for us, and even made the boys shirts out of blue and white checkity. And so, anyway, we all grabbed hands and went back to the cotton field, showing our parents, just as happy as

we can be, holding hands. And there we'd been fighting earlier. (laughs)

TS: She made these things right there?

GKC: Right then. We've wondered why she had—she might've got them to make curtains out of, I don't know.

TS: But she had—she just—

GKC: She had the material and cut them out.

TS: You must have had a serious fight to—

GKC: Tear our clothes, yes. Knowing we were all, I'm sure, under seven years old—just little bitty kids. (laughs) Anyway, that's what we had done, we'd got in a fight. But, you always had lots of family. They gathered at the—I think maybe Mother's people, maybe on Sunday, went more to her house, as long as the parents were able. And then, before we started all going—because, see, on the Keener's side, there was a lot of Hopsons involved, too. You know, the brothers had married sisters, and then when they had children well, they were both Grandma Keener and Grandpa Keener and Grandma Hopson and Grandpa Hopson. So, you always went to the Keeners, then, and they were always a bunch of people. You know, the daughters would help Grandma get the food ready and everything prepared. And the kids would play up on the mountains, 'cause you didn't have toys, you didn't have bicycles, you didn't have TV to watch. You just made the fun among yourselves, playing.

TS: Well, if you have enough other kids around, then that, generally—something can be arranged. I mean, a lot of toys are based on not having anybody to play with, and you had somebody to play with.

GKC: That's right. I guess you didn't have books to read then, either. You know, kids' books. Nowadays they got books and tapes and VCR and everything. But then, you just played with rocks and broke dishes. I remember Faye and I at the house, after we'd get through doing the dishes, Faye'd already been out behind the barn, well, we'd go up to a group of trees up there and scratch out all the leaves, and with the tin cans and the broke dishes and rocks, well, we'd make out like that was a playhouse. And we'd play up there. And I don't even remember having a swing when we were kids, I know we didn't have a bicycle. I remember a neighbor boy had a bicycle, and he came over to see us, and my sister Faye, she learned to ride on it. I never did, I think I was bigger than her and probably thought I was too big. But then, I've never learned to ride a bicycle. Because then we were too poor to have one, and you were embarrassed to say you were too poor, you didn't have a bicycle. And then when you got bigger, you didn't know how. So, I never did learn how to ride a bicycle.

TS: You missed your bicycle learning stage?

GKC: I guess so, I missed that stage, because I never learned to ride a bicycle. But, boy, Faye did, and she liked riding horses. She really liked that. We had this cousin, that was Jimmy Hopson, he's the one that I said there was two brothers that their mother had died really young, and the dad was raising them, and they would come to our house. And I remember—I was young, but I used to idolize Jimmy—he was a bigger boy, and he was always just so good and so kind to us. He'd get out and throw the ball. But anyway, he took pneumonia. He hopped a freight train, he and his older brother, Pen Hopson, hopped a freight train to go to look for work somewhere. And it was really cold, and Jimmy took pneumonia, and he died when he was really young, I'm thinking maybe sixteen or seventeen. He was just really young. And his brother never did get over it. He felt like he should have been older and took care of Jimmy better—knew that it was cold.

TS: Well, you know, the story of the person who dies young of something that you cure like this (snaps fingers) today, is one of the stories that always—it might be appendicitis or something, so easy, or just an infected arm or something.

GKC: Yes. But, they just didn't have medicine. Well, Mother, if we stepped on a nail, we didn't go to the doctor. We had kerosene, we soaked our foot in kerosene for a nail. And if we got cut, she doctored it. And I know I had earaches a lot when I was a child.

TS: What would she do for that?

GKC: She'd get cornmeal and put it in a cloth, a very thin cloth so that it wouldn't come through, and she'd put it in the skillet on the wood stove and heat that and put it on my ear. And the heat from the cornmeal—would hold heat quite a bit, and that would help my ear. And also, back in those days, I don't know why, but I had nosebleeds really bad, and Mom would try everything trying to stop the nosebleed. But I know I was the one that learned to cook first and would stay in and cook the meal—very very young—because I'd have nosebleed when I'd get out, get in the really heat, picking cotton or something. And Faye would always say, "Yeah, you just got nosebleed where you wouldn't have to pick cotton." But I would cook the meal, and the men would come in and eat—Dad, and if there's any of the other workers around, and Mom. My sister Faye, she liked outside work better than—I liked inside work better. You know, doing ironing. And my sister Faye also laughed many a time about the tricks she tried to play on Mom. 'Cause, back then, you ironed your pillowcases, and you ironed clothes, then. And you heated the iron on the stove, and—so, she'd fold the pillowcases and just iron one side of them, thinking she's pulling a funny, a fast trick on Mom. But actually, when Mama unfolded them, she found out there's only one corner ironed on each pillowcase.

TS: What about washing? How would that, how would that go down? What would happen?

GKC: Washing day. Well, we were in the back yard. In the wintertime, I can't remember, I guess your clothes stacked up. Because you sure didn't get out in icy weather to wash clothes. Maybe you had to wait for a sunshiny day. But you got out there, and Mother heated the water in a wash pot. She had a big wash pot, I think one of my sisters has got that wash pot. So, she heated the water and put it in—well, used to, we washed on a rub board. She had a rub board before we got the washing machine. And she—we'd rub them—rub and rub and rub them. We always had clean clothes, that's one thing, and clean linens. Oh, I got something else to tell you! But anyway, you washed them and rinsed them, and us girls would be the ones that rinsed and wring them out, you know, and then hang them on the barb wire. And then the wind would blow them, and it'd blow them off. And you'd go along on the ground and pick them up.

But Mother—we had wood floors, we didn't have linoleum, with big cracks in them, and she would scrub them with lye. And they would be the cleanest floors and felt so good in the summertime. Just, oh, smelt so good and cool and clean. We always had a clean house. It didn't look like much, but it was clean. It sure was.

And then every year, every spring, Mother would give us Black Draught. If you've never had Black Draught, brother! Oh, it'd cramp you so, and I'd think, How can my mother love me and make my stomach hurt like this! (laughs) But I guess all of them did, probably.

TS: It was the spring purge, you know—the purging. The Black Draught was sort of cleaning you out.

GKC: Yes, it did, it—(unintelligible) but anyway, it didn't feel all that great. And for breakfast in the morning, my sister and I didn't like eggs, we'd have peanut butter and syrup. (TS laughs) And they'd put it the plate, and we'd mix and mix and mix and get that mixed up. And eat that. And that's what we'd take to school, is peanut butter and syrup.

TS: In sandwiches? Or do you mean in a jar?

GKC: No, we'd take it in sandwiches. Probably between biscuits, we'd put it between biscuits. We didn't

have a cafeteria back in those days. I've been trying to think, what did we drink through the day? I don't know, I know we didn't take anything to drink with us. I was a big girl, I mean a really big girl, before we had soda pop, or I can remember drinking a soda pop. And we didn't buy bread, we all had all of our canned stuff. I guess the only staples we bought would be sugar and flour.

TS: What was sold in the Silver City store? What kind of staples would they have? The little store.

GKC: Oh, they'd have peanut butter and let's see—they'd have bread, but we didn't buy bread that much. And probably they'd have cornmeal, if people didn't do their own. Just the very staples, 'cause they didn't have all that much canned stuff, 'cause everybody canned their beets, they canned their beet pickles, the canned their pickles, they canned their relishes, they canned their fruit and their peas, corn. We canned corn. I can remember doing corn, and it would splatter, you know, when you'd be cutting the ears off, I mean the kernels off. And then you'd scrape it, and you'd have corn splattered all over you.

TS: Making the creamed corn for canning?

GKC: Yes. And then we made our sausage and the bacon and the beef. We didn't have steak very much, 'cause we didn't have beef. We mostly had pork. We didn't have much beef.

TS: Did people—sometimes you hear about people would kill a beef and distribute—take what they could use before it spoiled—and distribute the rest among the neighbors. And then the neighbors would do the same.

GKC: When they did it, yes.

TS: And there's even such a thing, sometimes, as beef clubs, where they had that all organized, but I think almost everybody—you just cannot preserve a beef carcass, and it's just too much. So, you gotta have something, you've got to give it to the neighbors and then let them give it back to you when they kill one.

GKC: Well, I don't remember beef all that much, because we had these friends that used to come out of Gatesville, and I went home with her one time, and I seen this lady fixing a steak, and I thought, Oh, I don't like the looks of that. I can remember the first piece of steak I'd seen, and I was a pretty big girl.

TS: Looks like a great piece of meat.

GKC: Yes, it looked yucky, you know, 'cause I hadn't seen beef that much, because we didn't have beef. We had chicken and pigs—hogs or something.

TS: I can see that. If you hadn't seen a steak in a pan, a big steak in a pan, before, it doesn't look all that—

GKC: I seen it laying there on the counter, and I can just remember it just as well. (TS laughs) Uh, her name was Mrs. Way.

TS: Big old red piece of meat.

GKC: Yes.

TS: Let me see, what else?

GKC: Oh, up at the Keener Hollow—it was named Keener Hollow up there, where my grandparents lived. And she had guineas, have you ever heard of guineas?

TS: Yeah, I've heard of them, but I've never understood why people kept guineas.

GKC: I don't understand it either, because those things—Geneva lived around the bend from the Keeners, my Grandparents Keeners, and these guineas, and every time you'd see her coming down the lane she'd have the guineas excited, and they'd go rat-tat, rat-tat, rat-tat! But I can still hear those guineas.

TS: Well, they would give the alarm, but they would give the alarm every time a possum came by in the middle of the night.

GKC: Yes, when anybody came by they would. But see, no one had locks on their doors back then, Thad. You just left your doors open. I guess there wasn't new people to the neighborhood, come to think about it. I don't remember seeing strangers come. I think you knew everybody.

TS: What about—one thing I haven't asked you about—now, I may forget some of what you've told me, but have you said anything about peddlers?

GKC: Peddlers.

TS: People that would come, people that would come to your door? Perhaps, we've already—you told me about Watkins.

GKC: Well, they sold Cloverine Salve. And then kids would sell vegetable seeds, they'd come around selling vegetable seeds. I don't know if it would've been a school project, maybe, or what.

TS: Probably.

GKC: But I know they'd buy vegetable seed. And then they sold this Cloverine Salve, that was good for risens. People back in those days had risens, my sister Faye really was always having risens. But you'd put that Cloverine Salve on it, and—

TS: I had those as a child, I wonder why people don't have risens? They don't seem to.

GKC: They don't have them. You reckon they take vitamins, it's better food, or what?

TS: I don't know.

GKC: But she sure did, she had risens. More so than I did. She always had stumped toes, 'cause that kid would not wear shoes. Oh, the first day of school out was a big deal, going home barefooted, I don't know why. But when school's out, you'd go home barefooted. She loved going barefooted, she couldn't wait, she'd say, "Mama, can I go barefooted today?" "No, it's still too cold," you know. But she loved going barefooted.

TS: How would the kids come and go from the Maple School? I mean, how would they get to school, would they walk or ride?

GKC: Walk or ride the horse, yes, walk or ride horses. Usually, most of them walked, I think. Until—I never will forget when we got a school bus, it was that homemade deal. Andy Wolf told me today his name was Mel Smith, I hadn't remembered that. I had kept trying to remember. But it was this funny—I don't know what it looked like, maybe homemade, but anyway it had wooden benches in it, and if it turned a corner it'd throw you cross to the other person cross it sitting there from you.

TS: So, they were crosswise in the—they were crosswise?

GKC: Yes, running across—up against, running this way. You walked in this way, but—

TS: Well, that first generation of school busses were, I believe, homemade. I think somebody had rigged them up.

GKC: Yes. And a panel job, or something, I don't remember. But I remember being glad to get to ride the school bus. But you would go spend the night with your school friends. My sister Faye, she enjoyed going to spend the night with school chums more than I did. I kinda was always a homebody, I liked to be at home. But she was always, even in my diary in there, Faye went and spent the night with so-and-so, so-and-so. Oh, I can remember one time—at Silver City, they used to have, the homes would have, parties they called them, or dances, when we got a little older. And you'd play ring games, Spin the Bottle and different things like that. But anyway, I went to spend the night with my friend Ruth Graham, and that was a family that lived next to my grandparents. And when my Grandmother Hopson—people would call her out to care for the sick—well, this Mrs. Bay would send her son over there to my granddad's with food, because she knew my Grandmother Hopson was at so-and-so's house looking after so-and-so. But—(unintelligible) I've lost my train of thought.

TS: I'm not sure.

GKC: Oh, back to the Grahams, about me spending the night with Ruth Graham. I had gone to spend the night with Ruth Graham, and we had gone to a party at this Miss Murphy's house. She was a schoolteacher, and she'd gave a party for us young, young, people. And so anyway, Ruth, I think she was a couple of years older than I was, and she was dating, so her boyfriend was at the party and he wanted to take her home. So, he took Ruth home, so that threw me have to walk home with her mother and her brother, which was Vernon Graham. He was younger than I was, it wasn't a boy-girl friend thing. Ruth and I were friends. But it threw me have to walk home with her mother Mrs. Graham. And I remember Mrs. Graham holding my hand, 'cause it was dark, we didn't have a flashlight or nothing, I don't know how we seen. But anyway, she was holding my hand, and we were walking back home, and this Vernon stepped on a possum. And I remember that just as well. He was a kid, he was younger than I was, and I probably was fourteen. But I remember him stepping on that possum and it scaring us all to death.

TS: Well, that tells you how dark it was. Your eyes are as used to the dark as they can get, and you still can't see well enough to keep from stepping on a possum.

GKC: Yes, stepping on a possum. That's true. But I remember Mrs. Graham was holding my hand when Vernon stepped on that possum. 'Bout scared us all to death! (laughs) Oh, Lord. They were fun days, everybody just looked after each other. You never heard of any great accidents or any, you know, great problems. The only thing I ever heard of is like my cousin getting knifed and died. They both were claiming the same girl, I think it was, and they went to this dance, and my cousin, which was a Hopson, got killed.

Families were intermingled, you know. I've got cousins that were Hopsons that married into the Keener family. So, it was just families. That was their life, that's all they knew. And that was their social life and they just didn't know anything else. Nobody took vacations, everybody worked. And thought nothing of it—they just knew they had to work to survive. And it was hard work, it wasn't fun. It was just hard work. And I'm sure—

I know my dad, one time I've seen him cry because my sister Linda, the third sister down, she took—well, we call it diarrhea, now. But Mother did everything in the world to cure her, she was just a little bitty thing, and she wouldn't let us eat around her. And Daddy walked to Killeen, which was ten miles, to get medicine for my sister Linda, and I remember Daddy crying and Mother crying, both, trying to cure her of this. A lot of people, back in those days, died with—I think they called it the bloody flux or something, back in those days. And today, it's diarrhea to us and not that big a deal, you can correct it. But back then she was just—I'd say she might have been between one and two years old, and it was really bad. In fact, we thought we were going to lose her. And Mother cried, and we'd go outside to eat. She couldn't, didn't, eat, and she just—well, she was the one of the family that

we just liked to have lost. Because of, uh, no medication, and Dad—I remember—he walked all the way to Killeen to go get medicine for Linda. And I remember Dad crying about it.

TS: Well, things weren't, things weren't—you know, something like that, a common thing, could carry you off.

GKC: It did—my cousin little Buddy Keener.

TS: An infected elbow could go—

GKC: Well, this—I've talked about my Aunt Lucy and Uncle Willie and Geneva. Now, she had a son that she lost with the bloody flux when he was about four or five years old, I think. And I know she kept all of his clothes, and when you'd go to her house you'd see this little cedar chest with all of little Buddy's clothes in it, you know. And that's sure what he died with, was that.

TS: Well, the family grave plots, you know, out in the country, or in the city, too, past a certain point back in time, are—you know, all the infants, the dead infants.

GKC: Just—it was just too rough for them, then. Not medicine or not knowing what to do, which is like you said, be a simple thing, now, you know that you could cure with penicillin. I don't—did we have aspirin back in those days?

TS: You know, I don't know when aspirin was—it's kind of a wonder drug, I don't know when it came in.

GKC: I suppose we did. I don't remember having headaches, I don't know if we had aspirin. Maybe we did. Us kids probably didn't. We were a very fortunate healthy family, you know, we never did have broke bones, and we didn't have pneumonia or anything. But the only thing is, Linda had that when she was a baby. But all the rest of us—Mom, I guess—well, I had the earache, she knew how to doctor that, you know, but I guess we were just—maybe the Lord looked after us.

(interruption in taping)

TS: Your grandparents, and up on Manning Mountain.

GKC: Manning Mountain.

TS: Why did he move up there?

GKC: I guess that's the only place he could find to live.

TS: And it wasn't a place to put in row crops, right?

GKC: No, nothing. It was just goats and, and sheep. I remember they sheared sheep. I can remember them shearing sheep. But mostly I remember there's just a horrible old house, and I don't think we lived there all that long. Maybe a school term.

TS: And that's when you were staying with—

GKC: Uh-huh. I stayed with my Grandmother Keener.

TS: But the sheep and the goats were the only thing you could do, that was sheep and goat country, or nothing, right?

GKC: Yes, it was just rocks and trees. I mean, it was just really rough terrain, it was just the roughest you could get. Like I said, you couldn't get up there with anything except a horse. And Dad came down the mountain on a horse, and I can remember, we just was walking over rocks and stepping over rocks and everything. There wasn't a path there, much, just get down the best way you can. But we didn't

live there that long. In fact, I was really young, I don't remember that much about it.

TS: Did he have sheep and/or goats later on, after you came back in '34?

GKC: No.

TS: So, you were, you were never—you don't have a whole lot of personal experience with sheep or goats, and probably glad you don't?

GKC: With sheep or goats. No. Only thing, I know at the end of school at Maple, the farmers there that did have sheep and goats, they would roast a goat, and they would have it at end-of-school picnics.

TS: Have you talked about that and I don't—because, J. D. [Wolf] talked about that. Have you talked about the school closing stuff?

GKC: Well, at the end of school they just roasted goat, and you'd always have a play, and I got to always be in the play. And I always knew how to spell, back then, I always was the last one to be put out. I was proud of that. I could spell. I can't say that much, now, but anyway I always liked spelling and I sure liked reading. And I was always the one that remembered the poems, and the one that remembered the poems would get up in front of the class and say their poem. So, I always got to, say, do that.

TS: So, the school closing was a big barbecue?

GKC: Yes.

TS: Would they play baseball?

GKC: Yes, baseball.

TS: And then they'd put on a school play.

GKC: A play.

TS: A three-act play.

GKC: Yes, they'd have a play. And I guess the men would sit or stand around and chew and spit the best I remember, I don't know. (laughs) But anyway, it was always fun. You always looked forward to the end of school.

TS: Get to walk home barefoot.

GKC: Yeah, you'd walk home barefoot.

Ernest Allen Cole Jr.

Date of birth: 5 August 1913
Community affiliated with: Okay
Interviewed by Martha Doty Freeman

MDF: This is Martha Doty Freeman. Today is March 2, 2001. I am interviewing for the first time Allen Cole and LeRoy Cole, his wife. This interview is taking place in Mr. and Mrs. Cole's home at 5119 Yarwell, Houston, Texas. This interview is part of Prewitt and Associate's Fort Hood Oral History project sponsored by U.S. Army Fort Hood and conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University. [LeRoy Mason Cole also took part in this interview.]

EAC: You ready?

MDF: Yes, sir.

EAC: What we were talking about, the part that I'm familiar with is the community they called Okay. Now, it's the community of Okay. It's spelled O-k-a-y. That's in Central Texas, and the geography of that area is, you're right on the southwest corner of Bell County, and you're on the southwest edge of what they called the Killeen Prairie.

Now, most of the homes in there were about half farm, half ranch. And they grazed cows, mules, horses, goats, an awful lot of Angora goats where the hills start. And the homes, about half of them were painted and about half of them weren't. A lot of them are made out of rawhide lumber, which is lumber that is a little rough. And the homes are usually on the rocky hills, caliche hills. If you took all the rocks off, there wouldn't hardly be any hill there.

And a lot of them, for their water system, a lot of them had hand-dug cisterns. Some of them had hand-dug wells, and a lot of the hand-dug wells were down close to the barn, horse lot, and as such, they had quite a bit of typhoid fever from the flies and such, back in the late 1800s. And some of them had bored wells, but not too many, and the water in that area, you'd see a lot of people there, you'd see the iron stains on their teeth, which was iron fluoride in the water causing that. Now, like my mother, when she died in '96, I believe she had lost one of her teeth, and my Aunt Byrd, I think she, I'm not sure if she'd ever lost a tooth. She died at about 102. And my Uncle Jarvis, who died at about ninety-eight or so, he lost a tooth one time, and the dentist wanted four hundred dollars to make one to fit in it, so he made his own. He made him a mold and poured himself a pewter tooth he kept in his pocket and used when he ate. But this is the kind of people we're talking about, that lived there.

And most of these houses were either on a hill, or they were down close to a spring. And the only reason I can see to put them on a hill was so you could see further, so it stayed drier and cooler. And also the top of the hill wouldn't raise anything, so they weren't using up any of the grazing land or their farmlands.

A few of them had bathrooms. A very few. In fact, most of them had an outhouse, which is always on the downwind side. And had the half-moon cut in the door. And I never did know why that was there,

unless it was to look outside.

Now, the name Okay, as my mother told it to me, the community decided that they wanted to build a school, make a community, and they wanted to have a post office. So to do that you had to submit a name to the post office authorities and have them assign a name to you. Well, they submitted several names, and they'd already been taken. A lot of them had been taken. So they had to reassemble. So they were getting some other names, and they had a list up there, and someone in the group says, "Well, that sounds like it's okay to me." So somebody wrote down Okay. And that's where I heard the name came from.

Now, then, so now we're at school. Now, this community, you've got to remember, my mother's father, Finis Henderson, well he had the first batch of kids, fourteen kids, and ten of them lived. And the next batch was four kids, and they all lived. He was a rancher and a farmer, and he had, oh, I'd say, five, or six, seven farms, I don't remember how many it was, and he owned those finger mountains that are up there. You've seen 'em. He had about two, two and a half of them on his ranch. And he principally raised sheep and cattle on 'em. But he gave the community the land where the school, the church, the little store, and the blacksmith shop was. These hills, or mountains, most of them were covered with cedar or juniper, mountain juniper.

Now let's see now. Oh, the school, I was going to tell you about the school. When I was a kid, it was two rooms, facing east, probably faced east, as I remember, and it had a dug well where we got our well water down by the creek, and the outhouses were, oh, a hundred yards or so on the side of the road. But there were two schoolrooms, and the first room had the class for about the first to the fourth grade. Then the second was the fifth to the eighth grade. And I went from the first through the eighth there. When I started to school, I guess my mother wanted to get rid of me because she sent me, I don't know whether I was five or six, I wasn't very old. But anyway, I'd already memorized the primer, and I knew my ABCs. Well, I could read the primer upside down. That's how well I knew it. I could count and add a little bit. So the second year I was there, there wasn't anybody in the second grade, so they just put me in the third grade. And here I was a runt in the third grade. But it was all right, too. It wasn't any trouble. I'll tell you the reason for that was you was setting in this schoolroom. You was listening to them teach the second grade, the third grade, and the fourth grade. So by the time you got old, you knew pretty well what was going on there. Now, it was kind of a shock when you moved to the next room. You were the dumb runt.

MDF: Starting all over.

EAC: Starting all over again. In fact, I think it was about that time I read my first story. I read the book *Kidnapped*. We had a library, you know, about this long, about this high (measures with his hands) there in that school, and that was one of the books that the county gave us. The school system, you know, had a county superintendent. And then they had the teachers, I think sometimes, got as much as fifty dollars a month for teaching, and they usually boarded at my grandpa's house, my mother's daddy's house. Some I can't remember, but one of my teachers real well. There was a lady named Miss Rambo. She was a nice, big lady. Could go bear hunting with a switch, you know, that kind. When I was in the third grade, it was right after Christmas, and we got a few firecrackers and things, you know, Christmastime. So I took a box of sparklers to school with me for some reason. And I was settin' there bored to death one time at my desk, and I had some kitchen matches. All of the kids carried them then. So I got under my desk and lit it. Well, those things, you can't put 'em out, and I waved it in the air, and when it finally went out, she came and got her foot ruler and blistered the palm of my hand. It really hurt.

Oh, and the one thing we had, well this is particularly in this one fourth grade, these kids had gotten smart, and our desks had an ink well in them. And this ink well had a cork stopper in it. And,

of course, we had chalk at the blackboard, and you could take a little piece of chalk, and as you got in line to go into school, you went by somebody's desk, you real quick took the cork out, dropped the chalk in it, and it was down there. Now, this ink was an acid ink. The old ink, you know, drew up in the pen, the old pen, eat 'em up before very long. And pretty soon, it'd create enough pressure and gas, the cork would pop out, and the ink would go plumb to the ceiling. Nobody knew who did it, you know.

MDF: Did you ever do that?

EAC: Me? Oh, no. Of course not. Never did dip pretty little girls' hair in the ink well, either. Never did do that. The little girls learned to cut their hair short so that didn't happen to them.

Now, in school, we had a recess, fifteen-minute recess every morning and then one every afternoon, and an hour for lunch. And we, during these recesses, we usually ran around the schoolhouse or fought, to get rid of your energy. And then at lunch, we had a cloak room. Each room had a cloak room where you hung these clothes, put your lunch. You wrapped your lunch up in a newspaper, and some people carried it in half-gallon buckets, but I liked mine wrapped in a newspaper because that left my hands free, and I carried it in my book satchel. And could use my slingshot to shoot birds and rabbits on the way to school. These kids, I'd say that, oh, ten to twenty in each room, something like that. And most of them came to school barefooted, particularly the boys. Some of them walked three or four miles, but it was fun, because you knew you could gather kids as you went along, and you'd have a kind of a social gathering going to school. It was more fun than staying home.

A lot of times we'd cut through a pasture. I remember where we cut through. There was an old boy's, well I guess the ranch had a lot of goats out there. But I had an old pet billy goat, had horns about a foot long. This man had a goat fence around the part of the ranch where he had the goats, and my old billy goat would jump that fence. And my dog, Nero, they'd both follow me to school. And I remember one time the goat followed me all the way to school, and the goat followed me right in, and this teacher, I don't remember who it was, said, "Get that beast out of here! Get that beast out of here!" And one time, I hooked my goat and my dog to my little red wagon, and they started fighting and near tore it up.

Now our house was on a hill, I say a hill. It was ten or fifteen feet high. And as I said, if you took all the rocks off of it, there wouldn't be any hill left. And the barn came up the side of the hill and was cut into it. The horse stalls were lower than the level of the top of the barn, and so we had a corncrib, and you'd just drive up and pitch the corn in. And then we had a chute to each horse stall where you'd drop the corn in and feed 'em. And down below the hill there we had a stock tank that probably would cover half a block. Well, there was two tanks. One of them was, the water ran into it, and the dirt settled out and then ran into the other one.

MDF: So it was kind of a settling tank?

EAC: Yeah, kind of. In fact, about four or five years ago, this is after they allowed people to go into the fort security area, we drove up there. I had a Suburban then with an aluminum boat on top. Well, the dadgum army had set up an embankment with a bulldozer so you couldn't get in this road where you were supposed to. With the Suburban, I just went around it, went up on top of the hill, and where the house had been, the only thing that was left was one cornerstone of the house, and the cistern had been filled in, so it was only about two feet deep. But this old tank, stock tank, down below the hill there, was, still had about three feet of water in it. When we were kids, when it was full, it had seven or eight feet of water in it. Pretty good-size. It had a lot of perch, catfish in it too.

Now, I was going to see about the people who lived in Okay. Most of them were descendants, or maybe the actual people that came to that part of the country from Kentucky, Tennessee, Carolinas,

Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi. It was after the Civil War, they migrated into that area. And a lot of 'em, in the Kentucky hills and things, the old people there had Elizabethan language, kind of. And the songs that they sang, you know, like "The Great White Bird" and a lot of 'em, like "Charlie's here, Charlie's there, and Charlie's over the ocean. Charlie says he'll never come back, till Charlie takes a notion." And that sort of thing. These old hillbilly songs. And you've got to remember, it's right on the edge of the hillbilly's country here, too.

MDF: Did they have special words they used that were—

EAC: Well, yes, some of them said yeas and nay, and you know, the old Elizabethan language. You've got to remember in the Virginias that they came over from England in the time, say, of Elizabeth, and they weren't infiltered with other people. They kind of kept that same thing. Now, my granddad's, my mother's dad, their family came, I think, from Alabama. I'm not sure. Georgia, I'm not sure which. And Grandpa was born, I guess, about—let's see, he died in 1939. I guess he was born about 1850, or something like that, in Brushy Creek.

MDF: Now, this is Finis Henderson, you're talking about?

EAC: Yes. Now his dad is buried there on Fort Hood, and there's a graveyard there on Clear Creek, close to Clear Creek there. That's where the old great-grandpa settled, and he was a preacher and a schoolteacher. And my granddad's mother died, and there were five kids, and he said he never went past the third grade, but he was quite a mathematician. And apparently he read the H. G. Wells *History of the World* because to me he knew everything in it. Of course, that's a kid, you know. And, in fact, after we moved away from the farm and went to Temple, I spent an awful lot of my time out at Grandpa's house because his last four boys, two of 'em were younger than I was. The boys got tired of doing it, but he'd take me up on the mountains, up on the hills out there, to look over the property, to see how the goats and the cattle were doing. He was one of these guys, he'd say, "Boy." He called me boy all the time. He had about fifty grandkids, you know, so he couldn't remember the names. And so he'd take me up there, and he'd say, well, what would usually happen, he, every morning, he got up at four o'clock. My stepgrandmother would make an extra pan of cornbread every night, and he'd get up at four o'clock and make coffee, and he drank a glass of buttermilk with cornbread in it. And that was his breakfast, and though Mother would never admit it, he had a little room right off the back porch there with a lock on it where he usually kept some wine made from Mustang grapes. And the reason I know this because those boys and I sometimes would have to take a wagon and go out there, and there was a fence in back of the house, about a quarter of a mile, bois d'arc fence, and covered with Mustang grapes. And we'd stand in the wagon and pick grapes, and he'd make his wine out of that. But my mother was a WCTUer, so she'd never admit it. In fact, she'd never admit she had some cousins who lived down on the Lampasas River that—and I can't substantiate all this, but my uncle who was a lawyer told me that they bootlegged, two brothers, and they took turn about going to Huntsville when they got caught. My uncle would get 'em out every once in a while.

MDF: Makes a good family story anyway.

EAC: Yeah, nobody'd admit that.

Now, this school, as I was telling you, it only went about six months or less, from October to April. And the reason was we had to pick cotton in the fall, we had to chop cotton in the spring, we had to make the gardens, and they decided they didn't have enough money to pay a teacher any longer than that. Particularly two teachers in a country school, you know. So it was kind of fun.

Then, in the summertime, we kids, I don't know what kind of a communication system we had, but we had someway of knowing what was going to happen. So my mother washed every Saturday morning. I hated that. Boy, I had to get up and, we had a cistern. I had to pump water, put it in a wash

pot, build a fire under it, shave soap in it, pump two tubs of water, get this water boiling, and she brought out the clothes. I think she soaked them in one tub and then put them in a pot. And I had to sit there with a broomstick poking it, and after we did that, we had to pull them out and wring them out, rinse them twice, and then blue them.

MDF: Did you wring them by hand, or did you have a machine?

EAC: Well, we had a hand-operated wringer, but usually, a lot of 'em, it was easier to just squeeze 'em out. We would hang some of 'em on the clotheslines, but we had a lot of shinnery oak there on the hill, and we'd spread 'em out on that. They dried better that way. Just put the sheets on the clotheslines, you know. Of course, you changed the sheets every week, and every kid took a bath every week too. You had a big ol' round number two tub, you know, that you took your bath in. Started out with the little one and wound up with me 'cause I was the oldest. But in the summertime I'd never take one. I'd just go down to the tank and go swimming. Mother didn't make me take one. I got to where I could leave the house. I wore kind of a coverall like I've got on now, and I could take them off a-runnin' and hold 'em in my hand and jump in the tank without ever slowing down. And usually I had two or three chums that were with me.

MDF: Was your bathtub outside, or was it in the house?

EAC: It usually was in the yard or in the house. Now, I believe sometimes Mother put it outside and let the sun warm it up. I'm not sure. You know, you took a bath either Friday or Saturday morning after washing. A lot of times the kids washed in the tub where the bluing water was. You know, that wasn't real dirty. It was kind of fun. But then, after I'd eaten my lunch, then somehow or another, the kids would all gather on the creek and go swimming, fishing. And then in the wintertime, now why my mother let me do this, I always wondered, we would gather, and each one of us had a dog, and we'd go up in the coves of these mountains, and there were pecans up in there, and there were plums in the fall or summer grapes still on there, and we'd hunt that night. Go all over hunting. The main thing we caught was possums and coons. For a possum I think we got a dollar a hide, and for coon, a raccoon, I think it would be two dollars or two and a half. And that was our winter money.

MDF: That's pretty good.

EAC: One time, this uncle who was much younger than I was, he and I caught a skunk. And if you got a skunk, with a narrow white stripe in it, it was worth about five dollars, so we skinned it, and my mother smelled me at about a hundred yards before I got to the house, and she says, "Stop, stop. Take off all those clothes and go get a shovel and bury them." And I never did skin another skunk!

MDF: What kind of gun did you use?

EAC: Well, my dad, he was an expert with a pistol, and when I was five, during World War I, we moved to Houston. When I was five years old, my Christmas present was a BB gun. Nickel-plated Daisy air rifle. Well, on my seventh birthday, he ordered me a .410 shotgun from Montgomery Ward and two boxes of shells, I think it was, and when it got there, he put it together, and I had to show him how to load it, and he says, "Now, go huntin'." The first day I got it, and I went out in the woods, and I killed five rabbits. And I remember, Mother said, "Look at that boy coming, he's draggin' a whole bunch of rabbits!" And then I've had two or three .22s. Now, I've got, one of the .22s that I have is a Stephen's Favorite. It's a single shotgun, drop-bolt lever action, and it's a classic. I can show it to you, and the .410 shotgun. I've still got them. The shotgun's pretty well worn out, and the .22 is, too, but you know, kids had to have guns then.

MDF: Sure. And each of your friends had a gun.

EAC: Most of 'em, most of 'em, if they had enough money. You got to remember, there's a lot of these people, sharecroppers. And that's one thing I was going to mention. In this part of the country, you never made any money. You just lived on what you made, if you know what I mean. We had to garden. You went to the store. You bought flour, sugar, and coffee, and maybe some spices. The Rawleigh man and the Watson [Watkins] man came by in his truck and or covered wagon, was what it was. I remember when I was a little ol' kid, this old boy come up here in this covered wagon. Had chicken coops on both, hanging on both sides of it, and he'd swap Mother some vanilla flavoring for two chicken hens, or something like that. And Mother, to get her spare money, you know with six of us kids, to get her spare money, she raised turkeys, chickens, and I know she sold butter. And my daddy had made her a mold and carved EAC in it so that when she molded her butter, it would be identified with her initials in it.

MDF: How nice.

EAC: And then, chickens, at one time she had five hundred registered white leghorns laying infertile eggs, and you put 'em in boxes about this long and that wide, and about that high, that held twelve dozen, I believe it was twelve dozen. Maybe more than that. I think it was 144 eggs. Well, you had one, you went out and gathered those eggs, and sometimes they were dirty, so I had to wash them. Then you had to, what you call it?

MDF: Candle them?

EAC: Candle! You had to candle them to be sure there was no little speck in there because if they were fertile you'd see that little spot, the little white, they'd throw a dark shadow in there, so you had to guarantee they were infertile. So that's what she usually made her money out of, selling eggs, selling butter. And, of course, we had cotton, we had corn, we had cane. Cane we planted. A lot of time, we planted the cane and made sorghum syrup. And one of my uncles, Uncle Charlie, who lived on the farm, the place next to us, it was the closest farm, he had a cane mill with three rollers where he put the cane through it, and the juice ran out. And then they had a cooking vat. Now this was pretty good syrup on a cold winter morning with hot biscuits and butter. But it was so strong that it nearly take the skin off the inside of your mouth.

MDF: Strong in what way?

EAC: Well, sorghum cane is not mild like sugar cane syrup is. Ribbon cane, ribbon cane syrup, you know, is pretty mild. No, it was strong. I don't know what material in it was giving it that strength.

MDF: Was it sulfury?

EAC: Yes, it was sulfury. It was strong, and you could smell it. It was dark and thick.

MDF: And can you describe his, the set up of his—

EAC: Where he cooked it?

MDF: Yeah.

EAC: Well, it was just like the people that raised ribbon cane. That is, you had a little fire pit, and you had a U-shaped trough like this, and you built a fire under this, and you poured the cane juice in there, and it progressed on around like this and then dripped off down here. And you could put it in jars or cans, or whatever you were going to put it in. And you started it cooking it here, and by the time it progressed around—and these experts knew how to do this. And, of course, this mill, where we pressed the cane, had a horse or mule, I think it was a mule, that went round and round and round and round like that. And, of course, one of my jobs was to feed the cane into the rollers. And

we'd take a, well, they had a tin can, catch some of the juice. It was a real good purgative, if you drank very much of it.

MDF: And did somebody skim as it went around?

EAC: Yeah, they'd skim it. It's just like you make any syrup, the old-fashioned way of making syrup.

LMC: Now, are you from Austin?

EAC: I believe there was a shed around this thing like this, but they burned wood under it, and it was mud bricks, so that the fire, you'd put the fire under it, and the fire was all the way around it, and steam coming off of the vat. And by the time it got around here, and I guess this traveled, I'm saying, I haven't seen one, let's see how long is it, seventy-five years, but I'm not, I've only been thirty-nine for how many times? Forty-nine times, or something like that. But this, I'd say it made a circle of maybe twelve feet. By the time it had moved twelve feet, it was about that deep in syrup.

MDF: A couple of inches.

EAC: Beg pardon?

MDF: A couple of inches deep?

EAC: Something like that, as I remember. And it flowed. You poured it in, you poured it in there, and it just pushed itself around and came out of here, and they had kind of a spout there where you put a bucket, half-gallon bucket, gallon bucket, or a quart jar, or whatever you had.

MDF: Now, was all of this area underneath the U-shaped thing? Was the firebox brick?

EAC: The firebox. Yeah. Well, no, it wasn't brick. I tell you what, it was clay. Now, my Uncle Charlie, Mother's brother, he had a shop, and he had this thing, and he had this in here, and they used what they called rammed clay. You take clay and wet it, and then you take, put it in a form and ram it, and that's what he used, instead of bricks. We didn't have bricks, didn't have money to buy bricks. In fact, his shop was made out of rammed clay.

MDF: Really!

EAC: Yeah. Uncle Charlie. And he had three daughters. And one them of is still living. Molly. She moved to Florida, where her daughter lives. You've seen, that Fort Hood book that they put out, she's mentioned quite a bit, what things she said in there.

MDF: Now, do you know anybody else who did structures out of rammed clay?

EAC: That's the only one I ever knew. The county, I think somewhere, my Uncle Charlie got the instructions how to do this. You've got to remember, he was up on a clay hill. His didn't have as many rocks on it as ours did, and it wasn't quite as high. But it had a lot of yellow clay. And they had a clay pit where they got this. And they mixed it up with a hoe, some water. He's the one that wanted to have a bored well. It had a water tank on it. So we had plenty of water there. Windmill out there.

MDF: Now, where was his shop?

EAC: It was, I'd say about a hundred feet northeast of his house. Something like that. You've got to remember that everyone of these farms had a house, some kind of a shop, a barn, and a cowshed. Now, our place had a house, a barn, a cowshed. That's where you milked the cows, kept the calves. And my dad had his own blacksmith shop. He was a pretty good blacksmith. He could always sharpen his plows, fix his—you know, these old wagons, the old wheels would get dry in the summertime, and the rims would come off. Every time you passed the creek, you drove through it and

it'd swell it up, and the rims wouldn't fall off. But he could straighten a rim and put it back on the wheel, and he could weld, not with a welding torch, but heating it up and using a welding flux and bang on it and weld it.

MDF: Now what did your Uncle Charlie do in his shop?

EAC: He kept an old truck there, he kept his car in it, and he had tools hanging around. Saws, axes, a drill press, an anvil. You know, so he could do minor repairs on cultivators and cars and that sort of thing. And a vise. He did not have a forge, though. My dad had a forge. They pumped the air with a bellows like you've seen, you know, with these bellows, like on a fireplace bellows, except that it was as large as this table, maybe that wide. Had a pole you pulled up and down to keep it going. And his furnace was an old reaper bull wheel, which is about that high and about four feet in diameter, and he'd filled it with clay, and the air came up from the bottom, and he put in anthracite coal. He'd go to town and get a sack of coal for the fuel. Anthracite is a hard coal. It doesn't smoke, and it's much hotter. He didn't know it was anthracite. They just called it hard coal.

See, we left. In 1925, they had a terrible drought there, and places where you'd been making a bale of cotton to the acre made two or three hundred pounds, you know. Got about six or eight inches high and nothing happened, so you were either willing to starve, or move, go somewhere else. So we moved. First we moved to Houston. Well, then we moved to Killeen. He worked in Houston on something. I forget what it was.

And, you have to remember, when he and Mother got married, they lived in Temple. My mother was a schoolteacher, taught school. And they got married, and his family, his granddaddy and grandmother raised him about two or three miles west of Temple. So when they got married, he got in the plumbing business, and then when my Grandfather Henderson decided to get married again, he divided his property in half, and this place we lived was a farm, one of the farms. Mother bought out two or three of the heirs, you know, that didn't want it, and my Uncle Charlie did the same thing, and my Uncle Jarvis did the same thing. So I had two uncles, a grandmother and grandpa that was family there in the community. But after that drought in 1925, we moved to Houston and only stayed a couple, three months. I got down here to the Heights High School, and they told me I'd been going to a country school, and I couldn't go in the eighth grade.

Then we moved to Killeen, and Killeen was a big town then. It had nearly nine hundred people in it, and I believe there was two blocks of sidewalks, as I remember. No paved streets. The town business was a block long, you know, the town on both sides. And then he went in business with Marvin Gray, who had a hardware store. He had a hardware store, he had a tin shop, he made saddles, he made harness, and he owned the only undertakers deal there. So Daddy went in business with him, and Daddy ran the plumbing shop and the tin shop because Killeen had just put in a sewer system, and they thought there was going to be a bonanza. Everybody'd hook up with the sewer system. But it cost money, so they didn't. Then, after I'd gone to school in Killeen, from about February or January to the first of June, they had me back in eighth grade but didn't have a half grade, so I had to start in with the kids that I was six months behind, nearly. But I passed everything except English and Latin. Of course, I could say, "Amo te." You know what that is, don't you?

MDF: Yes.

EAC: "I love you." That's the only words I can remember in Latin. But anyway, when we moved, then we moved to Temple. Well, they asked me what grade I was in, and I told them the ninth. They said, Where's your grades? I said, "I don't know." So I went in the ninth grade. I never did pass eighth-grade English, you can tell that. But I did get to go to Rice. I had good enough grades to go to Rice. I graduated from high school in 1930. Well, I went to junior college two years and graduated there, and

then I went to Rice University and graduated there in 1936.

MDF: So, tell me, what year were you born?

EAC: Nineteen thirteen. August the fifth. Oh, and I was going to tell you, we had a birthday party. Mother was going to have a birthday party for me, and it was very rare, and we had watermelon, angel food cake, and peach ice cream. And add about six boys, and they were ragged, tagged, barefooted, dirtiest-looking kids you can imagine. You know, we looked a mess on Saturday, but we went swimming down there, so we was pretty clean underneath these dirty clothes.

MDF: Now, why was it rare to have a birthday party?

EAC: Well, with six kids usually all they said was just happy birthday, you know. You didn't get presents. I don't remember getting any presents. I remember one time, I had a cotton patch. When I was about nine years old. And I made, I think, seventeen dollars off my cotton. You know, just a little ol' patch about as big as this area in here. And so I bought a bicycle. My dad ran into a guy down at the gin whose son wanted to sell his, and I paid him seventeen. And I remember, one of the best Christmas presents I ever got, I got a bicycle tire. And I had that bicycle until the year before I graduated from Rice, and somebody stole it out of the garage. My sister Coleta rode it all the time. That was a good bicycle, boy.

MDF: Tell me about your Christmases. What did you do then?

EAC: Well, on Christmas, see we, I don't ever remember seeing any fireworks Fourth of July, unless we went to Belton on the Fourth of July. They had fireworks at night, Fourth of July, I believe it was. But, out in the country you got all your fireworks Christmastime. So on Christmas night we hung up our stockings. We got an apple, an orange, English walnuts, a stick or two of candy. What else did we get, LeRoy? Oh, and about two packages of firecrackers. Little ol' firecrackers and a box of sparklers, and maybe a Roman candle. You know, big deal Roman candle, about this long, shot about ten times. So, that was Christmas. And then, for Christmas dinner we usually, might have been two or three families get together, or, I don't know these kids. I can remember kids coming over. I'd go over and see what they got for Christmas, and they'd see what I got for Christmas. And the girls usually got a doll. Usually one present was all you got. You know, as I told you, you didn't make a living on this country, in this country, you lived on what you made.

MDF: Did you have a tree?

EAC: A stream?

MDF: A tree.

EAC: Tree.

LMC: Christmas tree.

MDF: Christmas tree.

EAC: Oh yeah. We had a cedar tree. One of the junipers, mountain junipers. We owned half of a mountain, just south of us. You went off the hill down a little valley, dry weather creek, and then up, and then the road come alongside this, what I called it a mountain then. We owned about half of that, so we had lots of cedar trees. In fact, my mother always had this bunch of turkeys. That was one of her cash crops. And somehow or another, she got ahold of an old turkey hen, half-wild turkey. I don't know, she was a little different colored than these great big old bronze-breasted turkeys she raised. In the spring there, Mother says, "That ol' hen's got a nest." And she'd like to set the eggs in an incubator. She had a big incubator she'd set 'em in, then let the turkeys go and set. So she says, when the

turkeys came into roost, "You catch her and put her in a pen." So I caught her, put her in a pen up on top of the hill there. And about ten o'clock A.M., Mother said, "Let's turn her loose and watch her." So I opened the door, and she took off the edge of the hill and flew plumb across this and landed over there where the road went around the mountain. I saw her go up into a grove of oak trees. I think they called them a motte?

MDF: A motte.

EAC: Yeah. And so I took my old dog Nero with my .410 shotgun. Why I took it I don't know, but I took it nearly everywhere I went anyway. So we took off down there. It was probably half a mile across there where this was we saw her land. And got up there, and even before I even got into this bunch of trees—it was probably, oh, 150, 200 feet in diameter, this clump of trees—I could hear this old hen raising Cain. And I got up there, and there was a chicken snake about as long as across here in the nest, and that chicken snake had swallered about six or seven eggs, and you could see lumps, lumps, lumps, like that. So I shot the snake, shot his head off, took my knife, cut the snake open, got these eggs out, took 'em home, Mother set 'em, and they hatched.

You know, when a snake swallered eggs, they had to wrap themselves around a tree to crush 'em before they could digest them. So he hadn't had a chance to crush the eggs yet. Now a lot of people won't believe that, but that's the truth.

MDF: What did the mother hen do while you were doing that?

EAC: Just over there fussing, just fussing. I don't know, the nest had eight or ten eggs in it. It was a pretty good-size nest, and this old snake would just swaller them. It was funny, you'd see these knots just, and the old snake. You know, the turkey eggs were pretty good-size.

LMC: Will y'all take a break for coffee?

(interruption in taping)

EAC: And this corncrib above the horse lot. One time it was late. I don't know where we'd been or anything, but my daddy sent me down there to feed the horses. It was dark. Of course, we didn't have any lights. Well, when I went in the corncrib, boy, this rattling (imitates rattling sound) like a rattlesnake. Boy, my hair stood up on the back of my head. Well, what it was, it was a, not a chicken snake, a coachwhip, I believe it was, or a bull snake, I'm not sure, that my dad let live in the barn 'cause he caught rats and mice. And his tail was flipping against a corn shuck.

MDF: Did you ever get snake bit, or did you know anybody who did?

EAC: Yes. Uh-huh. Ah, what was the name of the family? One boy in the community got snake bit by a rattlesnake, that I can remember. The thing got infected. He almost lost his leg. See, that was the main trouble with a snakebite. After you survived the poison, if you didn't—they didn't have the antibiotics that they have now. His leg got infected. Wright. The name was Wright. They lived just west of my grandpa's about a half a mile, a mile.

MDF: Was there a doctor who visited y'all ever, or did you go to town?

EAC: Well, the doctors then, you called them on the phone. You rang the phone, had two batteries hanging off of it, then you had a ring. The doctor might be a long and a short. Or you had to have the doctor called by central. And central answered, and you told 'em to connect you with the doctor. And of course every time the phone rang, everybody up and down the line picked it up. So then he would come out for a birthing or an emergency. Charged some of 'em two or three dollars, I think. And in Killeen there was a Dr. Woods. He also owned the drugstore there.

MDF: Did you ever get sick enough that you needed the doctor?

EAC: No, I don't ever remember having the doctor come out to me. When I was a kid, I had granulated eyelids, they called them. And I'm sure now it was an allergy, is what it was. And I had to wear shades nearly all summer. My eyes would get red.

LMC: Allergic to that cedar.

EAC: They'd put Argyrol. I bet they put a gallon and a half [of] Argyrol on my eyes.

MDF: What was it called?

EAC: Argyrol. It's kind of a yellow-brownish material and you drop it in your eyes. And it helped.

MDF: Did you parents ever use any kind of a home remedy, or medicine?

EAC: Oh yes.

MDF: What kinds of things did they use?

EAC: Well, one of the things that you did, every spring, to keep from getting boils and to purify your blood, you took sulfur and cream of tartar pills. And another thing that they did, they made tea out of horehound. You've heard of horehound candy. Well down close to where our hog pen was, there was a patch of horehound. So they'd make horehound tea. Tasted pretty horrible to me, but I guess it was all right.

MDF: And what was it supposed to do?

EAC: Um, cured fever, sour stomach, or something like that. I'm not sure. But one of the main things you did when you had these boils, and I guess this is because of sanitation, I don't know, risings, we called 'em. They were boils. If you had an infection, you would take a prickly pear leaf, you know, like that, hold it over the fire and burn the stickers off, take it and slice the skin off, and then put it on that place and cover it up, and that would pull it to a head or kill the infection.

MDF: Poultice?

EAC: Poultice. Yeah. Prickly pear poultice. Worked real good. And then, now there was a bush that grew right by the side of our outhouse, and it had thorns on it, and the leaves were kind of a light green, and we called it a tickle tongue bush. Chew the leaves and tickle your tongue. Now the Indians used that for tea. Mother always told me it was poisonous. Now I don't know whether it was or not.

MDF: So you never tried it.

EAC: Not tea. I chewed the leaves because it tickled your tongue. It'd numb it, you know. Yeah, there was a lot of things. Now, for gum, the kids, well particularly on my granddad's place right before you got to the mountain, down there close to the schoolhouse, there was a caliche hill. And on that hill grew a weed about like this, about this high, called weed wax bush. Kind of a grey bush, looked like a thistle. And where the bottom leaves came out, I guess a bore worm went in there, and sap would run out. Made a pile of resin-like stuff about this big. So you got that and you chewed it. You spit out the pulp. I'm not sure where this came from.

And then you'd go to one of these coves in the mountain, and there was a vine in there called a stretchberry vine. We'd gather stretchberries, and they were about the size of a buckshot, about a quarter of an inch in diameter, and had a purple hull on them. You took you hand and pulled that hull off, and in between the hull and the seed, the seed was a round seed about the size of a BB. It had a rubbery sheet around it. You take that and put it in there with the gum, put about six or seven

stretchberries in there and chew that gum, and you could blow bubbles better than bubble gum kids do now. But, you didn't want to destroy this because it was pretty valuable. You know, you'd be in school, and you could blow your bubble gum, and, if the teacher wasn't looking, hear it pop. And it didn't stick to your face like this ol' gum we got now. You could wad it back up. So we didn't throw it away. It was hard to get. So we'd stick it behind the door facings or under the table, you know, so it would cover it. Under the kitchen table there was always a wad of gum stuck all around. Every place you went. You'd need some gum, you could find some under there.

But we called that weed wax. Now, LeRoy was raised in East Texas, and she made her gum out of sweet gum tree sap.

LMC: Stretchberries.

EAC: Huh?

LMC: Out of sweet gum.

EAC: Sweet gum stretchberries.

MDF: How many children were there in your family?

EAC: Six.

MDF: Tell me their names from oldest to youngest.

EAC: I'm the oldest. The next one was my sister, Sylvera, who's still living. Lives in Temple. The next one was my sister Coleta, who passed away several years ago. And then the next one, I had a brother who had Down's syndrome. He died when he was about eighteen. And then Mildred was born and then my brother John. Mildred still lives there in Temple. My brother Johnny, who lives out at Inks Lake. So there was six of us. And Mother had ten, there were ten in her family, the first crop. There were fourteen to start with, and four of 'em died. One of 'em got kicked by a horse, and killed him. The other three, I think, had typhoid fever. I'm not sure. I know my Aunt Byrd used to tell me about, when something didn't go right, she'd say, "Well, you know, I had typhoid fever when I was seven, and so it did that." She was a graduate nurse. That was the one that lived to nearly 102.

MDF: Did you know your grandfather's first wife?

EAC: No, no. Uh, uh. No, she died when Mother was—

LMC: Fourteen, wasn't she?

EAC: Fourteen or fifteen, something like that. And my grandfather then did marry again. He married when he was about sixty, I guess.

MDF: And what was his second wife's name?

EAC: Miss Sallie. We always called her Miss Sallie, even though she was my stepgrandmother. And she was a wonderful woman. I loved her.

MDF: And how many children—

EAC: She had four boys. There was, the oldest one was named Reed, the next one was named Thomas, the next named Jesse, the next one named Robert. And there's none of 'em living now. There's none of that bunch living. My, I guess my Aunt Byrd was the last child living. She lived to 102. Or lacked a month or so. And my granddad died when he was about eighty-nine, 1939.

MDF: And he lived on that farm, ranch, then all his life.

EAC: Yeah. And actually, his home, the original home burnt down, and he built this house, which was always the big house in the community. Had lightning rods and painted white, you know. Was really something. And he had a windmill, and he had a gristmill, and, you know, real thing. And it was up on kind of a hill. That hill was shell. It was a little marine shell. I don't know whether you've ever see any of 'em. This whole hill was covered with it. It wasn't really very much of a hill, but, I mean, it was still a hill. And he had a windmill, and there were oak trees on it. Now, when they built the runway on Gray Air Base, and by the way, Gray Air Base is named after the son of Robert Gray, who was the son of the guy that my dad was in business with, the guy that ran the hardware store there in Killeen, and Robert was about my age. And Robert was killed, or died—I don't remember the details—Flying the Hump. And they named that air base the Gray Air Base after him. I think he was a lieutenant, or a captain, or a major in the air force. And the runway, up there on Fort Hood, it was in the security area. It's a long runway. It's a couple, three miles, I don't know how, and very wide. They said that three bombers could take off abreast with it. I don't know. And when they took over the, the army took over the land in '40 or '41, whenever it was, took over my granddad's, in those finger mountains, they're like this, this is the one towards Copperas Cove, and this is where the church is and the school right here. And they went in the side of these hills, and went into 'em, dug into 'em, and the limestone they took out they put down here on this runway. And the hill where my grandpa's house was, they moved the house and bulldozed it, where it was flat, and the runway starts where the schoolhouse was. And where the control tower is, is where the church was, and I believe there's a beacon light up 'bout where my grandpa's house was off the side of the runway. And the runway ended down on the furtherest north farm he had, where Clear Creek starts. The Clear Creek which runs into the Cowhouse Creek started on my granddad's place there on this farm, and it had a dug well there and, I guess, dug in the spring because in dry weather the only water that went into the creek was that spring coming out of this well, and it kept the creek running. It never did run dry that I know of. And on our place, we had what we called the wetlands. We had a well down there, and the spring ran out of that well also. Formed a little ol' creek.

MDF: Where was your place relative to your grandfather's?

EAC: Well, our place was, well, let's see, we'll draw—

MDF: Let me give you this, so I can take it with me.

EAC: Well, let's see, I'll have to, this is north, and west, east, south. And we'll say our place was here, and my Uncle Charlie's place was here, and my Uncle Jarvis's place was down here, and Grandpa's house was over here. He had a farmhouse here, and he had a farmhouse here. Except for the main house, he had two farms after he divided this half up, and our place, Uncle Charlie's place, and my Uncle Jarvis's place were all on this divided-up part, and Grandpa still had, I guess he had two or three thousand acres, including this ranch left there. I don't have any idea. He told me one time he paid a dollar an acre for it.

MDF: And did he have tenant farmers living on his part?

EAC: Ah, yes. These two were sharecroppers. And Uncle Charlie had usually a Mexican family living on his place. Now we only had, we usually had a Mexican family in the fall, picking cotton. Oh, and there was one funny thing. We had a family, and every fall, when cotton-picking time came, they drove up in a wagon, covered wagon. There was a boy, about, I'd say fifteen. The girl's about thirteen, as I remember. Covered wagon that was pulled by two mules, and, to pick cotton. And they could pick more cotton than anybody I ever saw. And so I'd talk to 'em, and he told me one time, I asked him, well, when the cotton was gone, they left, of course. And I asked him where he

spent the winter. And he says, "Well, I spend it up on the Trinity River between Fort Worth and Dallas." He says, "I sleep on a *Fort Worth Star Telegram* and cover it with a *Dallas Morning News*." Well, I was a little ol' kid, and I was curious. I asked him what he did to make a living. And he said, "Well, we picked pecans and sell 'em, and eat 'em too. We fish, and we catch possums and coons and sell hides and shoot squirrels." But every fall, for, I guess, three or four years, they came every spring. I don't know why this happened. There was always some guy came up, usually had a guitar, and to help plant and chop cotton, and that's where a lot of these ol' Elizabethan songs came from. They all had a repertoire. They sang and played the guitar. Some of the songs I can't repeat. Very few of them, in fact.

MDF: I thought maybe I'd have you sing something into the recorder!

LMC: He's going just like that.

EAC: No, they'd sing a lot of square dancing songs, like "Charlie's here, and Charlie's there, and Charlie's over the ocean. Charlie says he'll never come back till he takes a notion. I don't want any of your weevily wheat, I don't want any of your barley. I want some of your very best flour to bake a cake for Charlie. Charlie is here and Charlie is there, and Charlie is over the ocean. Charlie says he won't come back until he takes a notion."

MDF: So did you have community dances?

EAC: Yeah. I was going to say, now, the social life there was, you might say, the church. And remember this church, one day it'd be Baptist, one day it'd be Methodist, and the next time it'd be something else. But they'd have a revival. We had a arbor, brush arbor covered with cedar trees to keep the sun off. And they'd have a revival. And then they'd have dinner on the ground. Have you heard of dinner on the ground?

MDF: Uh-huh.

EAC: Well, we had dinner on the ground. Well, the other part of the social life, we'd have, they'd have dances. Now, they were all square dances, no round dances like we have now. But, just, you know, where you swing your partner to the left, you know, and all that kind of stuff. And then they'd have card games at people's houses. And my dad, my dad could play a guitar, he could play any musical instrument, for that matter. A lot of times, I remember when I was a little kid, he'd play a guitar. And they'd dance to that. And they always had somebody that could call and sing, you know, these square dance songs.

MDF: What were the card games you played?

EAC: Gosh, I can't remember. I know we played dominoes, Forty-two. Oh I can't think of that card game. There was one that was real popular.

LMC: Pitch?

EAC: No. Well, some of 'em did, but, no there was another game where you'd have five or six people play it. And I can't remember the name of it. I think they played Hearts. Of course, some of 'em played solitaire, but that's only one person. Aunt Byrd, that was her favorite game. That's what I play on my computer all the time. I'm computer illiterate, by the way. All I do is get the stock market and solitaire, that's all, period. No e-mail, none of that. I'm not like my sister, Mildred. She likes to communicate with the world with hers.

MDF: Now tell me what the, was there kind of a little concentration where you could say Okay was, where you had the post office? And where was that relative to your family's homes?

EAC: Well, it would be, wait a minute now, that'd be over here.

MDF: Over to the west of where your grandfather lived?

EAC: The community would be almost directly south of my granddaddy's house. About half a mile, I guess, from the house. There was some farmland in between and then this hill where the weed gum bush grew. And of course he didn't give 'em good land. He gave us the chalky hill. The church was up on, kind of the edge of this mountain, and then the blacksmith's shop, and then this little country store where they sold staples, and, well, he finally sold gasoline there too. That's where you filled up gasoline. Had an old pump with a glass bowl about this big around and about that tall. It held five gallons, I think, and he pumped it by hand and then ran it in the car.

MDF: So did you visit that country store every once in a while?

EAC: When I was little?

MDF: Um-hm.

EAC: Oh, yeah. If I ever got a nickel. Now, I could take that to Morgan Bell's store. He and his wife had a kid, a boy was younger than I was. And he ran the store. Kind of a slow-talkin' ol' boy, and we kids, we could steal two or three eggs and get a nickel for 'em. You didn't steal 'em. You borrowed 'em from your mother. Take 'em in, and he'd buy 'em. Sometimes on Saturday, or late Saturday night, we was going up hunting with our dogs, we'd each one come with two or three eggs, and we'd buy a can of pork and beans. I don't know, they cost about three eggs, and one of these little square boxes of crackers, cost a nickel or so, and a slice of cheese. About a nickel's worth of cheese. And then one of us would buy a box of .22 shells, shorts, and of course that cost a dime. So it took about six eggs for that. But that's where we usually got our money. And he'd take 'em and sell 'em, take 'em to town and sell 'em.

Well, I was going to tell you about one time in the fall. I don't remember what grade I was in, I guess the fifth or sixth grade. There was a bunch of us boys played hooky. It was when the pecans were in. Mr. Bell owned the farm south of him, and down on the creek below the schoolhouse, the creek got bigger and bigger and had pecans on it. So we kids went down there and thrashed the pecan trees and got through thrashing, and we came up and sold him his pecans.

LMC: Your mother didn't know that, did she?

EAC: No, but my sisters told that I'd played hooky, and I got a whipping when I got home. My dad always said, "For every whipping you get in school, you get one at home."

My mother, if she was real angry, she'd slap me. And she could slap you on both sides of your head before you could turn your head sideways. But, her favorite thing was a razor strap. You know, it had two leather straps. And when it hit, it popped. And so it sounded like it was killin' you. But my dad take me and put me between his legs and whopped me, my bottom end. That was his way of punishing. That was my whipping with him. But Mother used a razor strap. And I needed it more than I got it, I guess. I never felt like I was, but my sister, Mildred, thinks Mother was mean to her. But Mildred was spoiled. Boy, my dad spoiled her. She was the youngest girl, and. And I always laughed. Sometime we had cake on Sunday. And we were settin' at the dinner table. This was after we moved to Temple. Mildred was probably five or six years old. Brother Johnny was about two or three. So she would take her cake, a slice of cake, and she'd eat the cake part out and leave the icing. And Johnny, of course, gulp, gulp, gulp. He'd eat his. Well, she always sat next to my dad, and Johnny was crying 'cause he was out of cake, and so my dad reached over and said, "Well, Mildred, if you don't want the icing, I'll give it to Johnny." And he started to give it to Johnny. I'll never forget that. Mildred ate that icing.

MDF: What kind of food did your mother fix for meals when y'all lived out on the farm?

EAC: Well, see we had a big garden. Some reason the sharecroppers didn't do this. I don't know. Yeah, some of 'em did, some of 'em didn't. That's the reason they're sharecroppers, I guess. How they got enough to live, I don't know. They ate corn and stuff like that. But we planted a big garden. Mother had a little garden right there by the house. I remember Daddy hauled black soil from down at the cow pen and up, and it had about that much black dirt on top of that chalky stuff. The first thing we got out was leaf lettuce. Mother liked to put it in the skillet with grease. And radishes. Now, radishes were my crop. And that's what we raised in that little—and sometimes turnip greens. But in our big garden, we had tomatoes, beans, and peas. Now this is the garden down from the house, down below the hill where the soil was pretty good. We had beans, black-eyed peas, well, not so many black-eyed peas there, but mostly beans, potatoes, and we'd say more or less the fresh crops. And then down on the wet lands where it didn't dry up so much, that's where she would have her big crops. Tomatoes, corn, sweet corn. I remember one time she planted some eggplant. And I kept asking her what it was going to taste like. She says like fried oysters. Well, that was one of my favorite foods. That was the worst thing I ever tried to eat. But, anyway, we raised sweet potatoes and a lot of Irish potatoes down there. And a lot of black-eyed peas.

Now, in the fall, or when these vegetables got ripe, and we also raised watermelon and cantaloupes down there. These black-eyed peas, I can remember them. I'd have to go down there when they dried and bring 'em up and hull 'em. And we put them in a gallon bucket, and we put about two drops of carbon disulfide, which is highlife, in there with it. Now, the reason for that was, that would kill weevils. There wasn't any weevils. Put 'em in a gallon bucket with the lid on it, and that way the weevils could die. And so that was one of the things they had.

She would can. We had a storm cellar. And it had shelves in it. And I'd say we'd have two or three hundred jars of canned food in that cellar. There'd be canned tomatoes, there'd be canned beans, there'd be canned peas, black-eyed peas. When they was green, can those. There'd be jars of jelly. And we had a peach orchard down in one field. We had Alberta peaches. We had Indian peaches, and one of 'em—Alberta were freestone, I believe. Indian peaches, Indian peaches was a kind of a white-pink peach. And so we gathered the peaches and cut 'em, cut 'em up and put 'em up on the roof of the house in the sun and let 'em dry. And you'd have to take 'em down at night, put 'em back, get the dew off of 'em. And we had dried peaches, and we had a lot of Irish potatoes. Seemed like we always raised red ones. Why, I don't know. But we always had a haystack where we thrashed the oats or wheat, and Daddy would put the potatoes in the haystack. He'd have it where the cows couldn't get to it. He'd put the sweet potatoes in the haystack, and that'd keep 'em. You'd go down and dig up some when you wanted 'em.

MDF: Now, you mentioned that somebody had a, had a gristmill.

EAC: That was my grandpa. Grandpa Henderson. He had a windmill, or a gristmill run by a big windmill. I'll show you. Well, Mildred painted this. This is not an actual photograph. Well, it's a photograph of her painting. I'll show you a picture of his house.

LMC: I didn't like his granddaddy. He used a cane all the time, and when our older son was a baby, Grandpa hit me on my shins because I wasn't listening.

EAC: My sister Mildred is an artist. Well, I mean really, she painted that. And that's a photograph of a painting.

MDF: Oh, isn't that beautiful!

EAC: Now, here's the gristmill there with the windmill. And here's the other windmill where they got their

water. And this big oak tree.

LMC: Is this a gristmill?

EAC: That's the gristmill. That windmill was setting on top of that building and had two stone wheels about this big. The windmill turned, and it had, it should be two story. You carried the corn up and put it in there, and then it ground it. And Grandpa ground corn on the halves. So he always had lots of meal there. Now it had the husk in it. It didn't have the husk taken out. But everybody would bring their corn over there. Well, that's what most of the sharecroppers ate was cornbread. Cornbread and sowbelly.

MDF: Now, the sharecroppers stick around for more than one year at a time?

EAC: Some of 'em were pretty permanent. Some of 'em weren't. I know there was one family that lived on this lower farm of my granddad's for several years, and I had some real buddies down there. Now, right north of us was a farm. It was on the Killeen Prairie. We were right on the edge of the Prairie. This farm was on the Killeen Prairie, and they had a—sharecroppers were usually Mexican people, and sometimes they'd stay three or four years, and sometimes they wouldn't.

On this farm right north of us, where these, one time there was a preacher lived there. He was a sharecropper-preacher. Preached on Sunday and hoped to get a donation or something. But, anyway, he had two boys about my age. Mother, every once in a while you invited the preacher into eat fried chicken on Sunday. Well, she insisted I, and I didn't much care for these boys, but, even though they didn't live but about three quarters of a mile from us, or a mile, but she insisted I invite 'em to Sunday lunch. So I did, and so when they got there, Mother asked 'em if they didn't want to wash their hands, so they finally did. And she said, "Don't you boys want to comb—?" "Oh, no ma'am, we better not." Says, "Things fall out of our hair sometimes when we comb it!" That's the last time I had to invite them.

MDF: That solved your problem for you right there didn't it?

EAC: Right east of us was a family called the Rileys. And they had a sharecropper house up there. And I remember one of these kids that lived there one time stuck a cottonseed up her nose, I believe it was. And it started swelling up, you know, and sprouting. So they had to carry her to the doctor and get the thing pulled out. I remember that.

MDF: Now what was—were the sharecropper houses all pretty much the same, or—

EAC: No. Now this, this one that was down where Clear Creek started north of—there was one farm and this farm. It was about a mile from Grandpa's house, maybe a little more. It was a pretty nice house. In fact, it was a house that I think Grandpa and Grandma had lived in before they moved up on the hill. So it had about, I'd say, three bedrooms and pretty nice house. It was up on stilts, of course. But now the reason they built that house down there was the spring, you know. Water was down there. Now the farmland on that farm was good farmland. But, most of this farmland, well, ours was right at the edge of the Hill Country, so it was a lot of rocks and caliche. But my dad was one of the first people in that part of the country who terraced his farm. You know what a terrace is.

MDF: Uh-huh.

EAC: The surveyor came out, and according to the rise and fall of the land, you built this terrace, which is kind of a snakey thing, so that the terrace, when it rained, would hold the water and soak into the ground. We didn't have fertilizers then, but that improved your production quite a bit. Now, down in the wetland, we didn't have that because sometimes it was so wet you couldn't even plant it.

MDF: So, was it a real seepy place down there?

EAC: Wetland was seepy, yes.

MDF: Did it stay that way most of the time?

EAC: No, in the summertime it dried up. But that well was down there and always had water in it. It was bricked up about this high and about that big around at the top. But it was about twenty feet deep, I guess. Something like that. And I know when our cistern, I remember this 1925, when I told you we were having the drought, we had about nearly a two-year drought, so our cistern played out. And my dad would go down to the well and haul water up to the house in a barrel. I don't ever remember that well going dry. But that was where one of the little creeks started that went down in Clear Creek. And in the springtime I'd go down there, little ol' perch about this long, and minners. I carried my worms in a Prince Albert can and take the stopper out of a medicine bottle and get some string off something they wrapped up at the grocery store and cut me a willow pole.

MDF: You mentioned that your family moved out of there during that drought. Did many people move out then?

EAC: Yes, quite a few of them moved out. Well, you just didn't make anything. Now my Uncle Charlie had quite a few cows. Well, he was a manipulator. He took a nap in the afternoon and figured out deals to where he could make a little money, or something. Like, he built this molasses system, so he took part of it as his cut, so he had that. He rented part of Grandpa's mountain up there and had cattle up there and goats. Oh, and he finally rented the whole thing. Grandpa was gettin' old, so he didn't have any stock. So he leased it to Uncle Charlie. And these doggoned old buzzards, when the goat kids was born, buzzards would come down and peck their eyes out, and the kids would die. So my Uncle Charlie, he made a deal down at Morgan Bell's store that I could buy .22 shells, and he'd charge it to his account. So I'd go get a box of shells, and then I'd go up in the cove of this mountain, where there was that home up there, the house and the big spring came off of it right down, and I'd set up there at the spring, and these buzzards would come over real slow, like that and go down to get a drink of water, and I was supposed to shoot 'em. And I pretty much wiped the buzzards out. It stopped 'em from eating the kids, but it was fun. I got to where I could hit a buzzard flying just every shot. What I finally found out that, if I got hollow-point bullets, long rifle hollow-point bullets, even if I did hit 'em on the wing, it'd break their wing, and they'd go sailing off, maybe a quarter of a mile before they'd fall. But it stopped 'em.

MDF: Were there people who came around every year and sheared for you?

EAC: And did what?

MDF: Sheared the sheep and the goats.

EAC: Yeah, yeah. They were usually Spanish, Mexicans. And they had an old truck. And they could shear. There was usually, be four to six of 'em, and they would, had a shaft and run by an old gasoline engine, and they'd shear six goats at a time. Uncle Charlie had about, I guess he had five or six hundred goats. It took a little while. But it's quite an occasion because you carried food up there, you know. And you had, when one of these Mexicans got through, you gave him a token. And at the end of the day they got so much for each token. I don't remember what it was. Seemed like it was a dime, if I'm not mistaken. And then they, the sack they put this mohair, this is mohair, they had a frame with a tow sack that was right this big around, and you'd put, they'd roll up these, the mohair, in a ball, and you stuffed it in there, and keep on, and this sack would be that tall and that big around. Didn't weigh too much.

MDF: Was there a special shearing shed where they worked?

EAC: No, just out in the open, 'cause it didn't rain much, you know. It was pretty dry country.

MDF: And where did, where did your family take the mohair?

EAC: Took it to Lampasas, sold it. In fact, this good friend that we have up in Carrollton, Texas, her brother finally owned the store. Perkins, the name is Perkins. He owned the bulk mohair and pecans business in Lampasas. He's in control there. Glenn Perkins. He's still living. He's a year older than I am. But I can remember when I was a kid, Uncle Charlie had an old truck with a flatbed on it and put stakes on it and everything. And we'd load all this mohair up there and take it to Lampasas. I never did like Lampasas much because they had a sulfur springs there, and it stunk like heck, and they had what you call a horse lot, you know. People came in on their horses and their buggies and their wagons, was where you kept it. And you parked your truck there, and you took it to this place that bought the wool, or the mohair. And pecans, if we had any pecans. Now, we didn't have any pecan trees on our place. But on Grandpa's, up in the cove of these mountains, just one cove, there was quite a few pecans up there. Sometimes we'd have some pecans to sell. Kids pick 'em.

MDF: You mentioned that your grandparents' first house burned.

EAC: What?

MDF: Did you say that your grandparents' first house burned?

EAC: Yes.

MDF: The old house.

EAC: One of the houses they lived in when Mother was about fourteen. My two aunts were playing in the living room with matches and set it on fire. Aunt Byrd and Aunt Mattiebell.

MDF: Now, where was the old original Henderson place?

EAC: Well, the original was out on the Killeen Prairie where my grandfather's father settled. He raised horses. One of the things they did during the Civil War, he and his sons, caught wild horses and sold 'em to the—he was anti-slavery. And Grandpa told me that they caught wild horses and sold them, and they wound up in the Confederate Army, I think. Now, they started out living on Brushy Creek, which is down below Georgetown, there. But they caught these horses. This is all wild country in there. And at Three Rivers, where the Leon, the Lampasas, and Salado run together, they apparently had a house there with a horse lot. And Grandpa said one time they had some horses. He was just a young boy then. The Indians, Comanche Indians came in during the night and killed every horse with bow and arrow. So, I don't know. I asked him one time if he ever killed any Indians, and he never did tell me. He said if an Indian could slip up on you, and he was up wind, you couldn't smell because you could smell 'em. They put grease on themselves to keep the red bugs and ticks off.

MDF: Now, how early did he move into the Fort Hood area?

EAC: Did he move in there? Well, I would say, in the Fort Hood area, when he was about five, or six, seven years old, I think.

MDF: Your grandfather?

EAC: No, great-grandfather. His grave is there alongside the grave of two horse thieves. It's got a cyclone fence around it, and we put a monument up for my great-grandfather. We have a family reunion of maybe three or four hundred people up there every two or three years. Now, Grandpa told me about

these horse thieves. He said it got to where you couldn't keep a good horse on the Killeen Prairie. Somebody'd steal it. Well, they caught these two guys stealing horses, so they hung 'em down on the creek. And he said after that, you could leave a horse anywhere, and nobody'd bother them. But there's two horse thieves and my granddad. Only people buried that I know are buried in this cemetery. When I was a kid I used to go with my granddad down there, and he'd, you know, pull the grass up and put the headstone back. It'd always, somebody'd moved it or something. And these two horse thieves, they just had, I think, a rock there, or stick in the ground, or something.

MDF: Ah, how often did you get in—when you were living on the farm, how often did you get into town?

EAC: Oh, once or twice a week on Saturday usually. Well, in cotton-picking time, when you were picking cotton, you might have to go, take your wagon into get it ginned every day if you had cotton pickers. And then, when we were selling a lot of eggs and stuff, I believe we went in about twice. I think usually we had two or three of these crates of eggs, you know. So you had to take 'em in. I can't really tell some of the stories about that.

Well, I'll tell you about it. My mother had about five hundred white leghorn hens that laid infertile eggs, and they were in a pen. They didn't get out with any roosters. So they got to where they just didn't lay much. So Mother decided she was going to sell fertile eggs, registered white leghorn fertile eggs to people, you know, to raise chickens. So she needed some roosters. So she sent my daddy off. I don't know where he went. But he had chicken coops tied on both sides of old Model T Ford, and he came back with it full of roosters. About twelve of 'em. Turned 'em loose in this pen, and they were into the—(imitates chicken sounds)

LMC: Gosh.

EAC: Those roosters just had a big time, but in about thirty minutes they went off pecking somewhere. They'd just lost interest. But that was the funniest thing. I was a little ol' kid. I was about seven or eight, ten years old. I don't really know. And she sold little chickens then. She had an incubator, and I don't remember, seemed like this incubator either held a hundred eggs or five hundred eggs. I'm not sure which. Powered by a kerosene burner, kept it even temperature, had a thermostat. And you'd get these little ol' chickens, put them with little ol' hens, and they didn't have sense enough to get out of the rain. But she'd boil eggs, and chop it up and put red pepper with it and grind it up and feed 'em, and then I'd have to go down there and shell corn, and we had an ol' hand grinder. Grind it up to make chops, and we fed those little chickens that boiled egg and that chopped, corn chops.

MDF: Now why did she put pepper in it?

EAC: That kept the red bugs off. And did her turkeys the same way. I'm pretty sure all they had was a hundred eggs, turkey eggs. And a turkey just doesn't have sense enough to get out of the rain. Really and truly, they'll hold their mouth up and drown. Well, they followed a mother hen. After they'd hatched and got up about that high, well, Mother'd turn 'em loose, and they'd follow the other turkeys. And these hens would, you know, mother 'em a little bit then. And you had to be real careful when it rained, go ahead and bring those turkeys in. Really, these stupid things would bunch up and smother each other. In fact, my sister, when they had a ranch out there from Belton, she was raising turkeys, and they'd had to take them into the barn one night, and they backed up into a corner and smothered about half of them.

LMC: I remember that.

EAC: You remember that? But these turkeys, now, that were out there on the range, they really got grasshoppers, I mean red bugs. And we dusted, we fed 'em eggs with, or something with red pepper on it. And we also dusted sulfur. They'd get under the wings. Dust. I'd have to catch 'em and dust

'em with sulfur. But they didn't have sense enough to get out of the rain.

MDF: Now, did they just range out free?

EAC: They ranged. They ranged within half a mile, and they lived on grasshoppers and grain. I've seen grasshoppers take off, these turkeys take off after 'em. They go a hundred yards, and that turkey'd grab 'em.

MDF: Now how did you bring 'em back in?

EAC: They came in every night. Mother usually gave 'em enough so that each one get a grain or two of corn, you know, so they'd come in. We had big oak trees around our place, you know, something like that. One in the front yard about that big. And I had a tree house in it. They had, down by the barn, there were two big oak trees, and then down by the cow pen there was a great big oak tree, and there was about three down by the blacksmith shop, and the turkeys and chickens would roost in those.

MDF: Did any of 'em ever wear bells? Did you have belled turkeys?

EAC: Oh, yeah. Yeah, uh-huh. Yeah, one of the old turkeys had a bell. We called that old bell hen, so that you could keep up with them. Had a little turkey bell. And I used to use 'em on my fishing rods when I was fishing at night, fishing on the river.

MDF: You said something about oysters and how much you loved oysters. You surely didn't have them when you were down there.

EAC: Well, now, here's what it was. Usually, when on a cotton farm, you had what they called a top crop. In other words, if it rained in the fall, the cotton would bloom again and have a little top crop. That's the reason why they call kids that was born after the mother was forty-five years old, they called 'em a top crop kid, you know. We'd pick it, and we'd usually get one or two bales of cotton off a top crop. And Daddy would usually make it a point to be there on Saturday, or usually Saturday. This would be after school started, so I'd go with him. Sat on the top of this wagon with those two mules pulling it, with my slingshot, with a bucket of rocks, so I could shoot birds and rabbits on the way. This ol' gravel road all the way to Killeen was about seven and half, seven miles there. And that was always the thing he did, when he got to the cotton gin, he'd take me to a restaurant there in Killeen, and he'd order a dozen fried oysters, and I'd get a half a dozen. They shipped 'em into the Santa Fe Railroad in a barrel with ice on 'em, and this restaurant would get these oysters. And I don't know. I think a half a dozen cost twenty-five cents and a dozen cost thirty-five, probably. I don't know. Now that was a highlight of my day. That's the only, that's the first restaurant I've ever ate in, and the only time I ever remember eating in a restaurant was those fried oysters. That was the best thing, and I still like them. In fact, now, until I got to where my wife wouldn't let me, I'd go down to Bastrop Bay in my boat. Well, this time of the year. March is the best time. Get a good norther and get down there, and the oyster beds would be exposed, and I'd gather enough so I'd have a few half a dozen oysters.

LMC: And that _____ (??).

EAC: Huh?

LMC: You don't want to get hepatitis.

EAC: Well, I quit eating 'em raw. The last bunch I ate raw, this friend and I went down to a bay. We were down below Palacios. I've got lots down there. And we got about two or three bushels of oysters. So when we got home, I started opening 'em, the small ones, and he and I both ate seventy-two raw oysters from about three o'clock in the afternoon until dark.

LMC: Uck. I don't like raw.

EAC: Might even have had a bottle of beer a time or two, you know. My mother didn't know that. See, I just take my medicinal drinks, you know. Don't drink.

MDF: It's a good thing. It substitutes for that stuff you used to take when you were young.

EAC: Well, yeah. That sulfur and molasses.

MDF: Can you describe—describe your house for me. The one where you grew up.

EAC: Our house faced west. It had a bedroom and a big living room-bedroom, and then it had a side room and, oh, the front porch was about two-thirds, and then there was a room off of there. And that was where my daddy had built a box and lined it with tin, and in the fall, when they had sales, he'd buy either six or seven sacks of flour, and we'd keep it in there. And we kept, I believe it was sugar, in there. The bulk stuff in there. And so there was, and the kitchen. Then had a kitchen off. The roof was just straight this way and straight that. Like, like this. (draws roof line) This one little room here, and then this porch, and then the kitchen was down here, and then the room here, and a room there, and a room there.

MDF: So it was a one-story house.

EAC: One-story, yes. We had a fireplace in the north room. Had a fireplace in there. That's where we'd stay in the wintertime, the cold wintertime, we had a popcorn popper made out of screened wire. We'd pop our popcorn, and Mother would, that's one thing you didn't do. You didn't spit in the fireplace in our house. That was taboo, because Mother liked to put sweet potatoes in there and bake 'em in the ashes. And these sweet potatoes were Jamaica yams, and sweet juice would come out of 'em in the ashes. You'd brush the ashes off the skin and eat 'em.

MDF: And what kind of light did you have in your house?

EAC: Kerosene lamps.

MDF: Were those, were there fixtures mounted on the wall, or were they just—

EAC: No, they were movable.

MDF: Movable lights.

EAC: Yeah. We had one light that gave a better light. And it was still kerosene. It wasn't like a kerosene lantern, but I think it had a mantle. I'm not sure. That was what we read by at night. Didn't do much reading at night. But Mother was an ex-schoolteacher. She was darned sure I read and knew my ABCs. Stuff like that. I guess it's a good thing.

MDF: And did you have a radio, or—?

EAC: No, we had a phonograph.

MDF: You did?

EAC: Yeah. And I can remember, we had a lot of comedy songs on it. One of 'em was:

A preacher went out hunting,
Was on one Sunday morning.
It was against his religion,
But he took his gun along.
He shot himself some very fine quail
And one great long-eared hare.

And on his way returning home,
He met a great big grizzly bear.
And the bear marched out in the middle of the road,
And the preacher said to him,
"Oh, Lordy. You helped Jonah from in the belly of the whale
And the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace,
The good book do declare,
Oh, Lord, if you can't help me,
For goodness sakes, don't help that bear.

Now that was one of 'em. There's two or three more verses. But I remember one of 'em was, the two black crows, you know they were singing. And one of them said, "Lord." These are blacks, two black crows—and one of 'em said, "Man, when I gets wealthy, I's going to build me a house and this bathroom. I'm going to put it, it's going to be out of this world." And this other crow said, "Man, that's a long way to go a bathroom." And that was one of the jokes. And I remember that. I was a little ol' kid.

And I remember another one that we had was:

One morning when old Af went out to plow
With an ol' grey horse and an ol' red cow,
Up jumped the devil and said, "How do you do.
I'll have to take your wife, or I'll have to take you.
Doodile, I'll have to take you."
So Af says, "Take my wife and don't bring her back.
Doodile, and don't bring her back."
Next morning, ol' Af looked out of a crack
And he saw the devil was bringing her back.
He says, "Now wife, you'd better be good.
The devil can't stand you.
Oh, tell me who could.
Doodile, oh, tell me who could.

There was a whole bunch of records like this. And, boy, people would come over from miles around to listen to these. You'd crank that thing.

MDF: Were they—

EAC: Flat disk.

MDF: Okay.

EAC: Now my grandpa had an Edison. It was cylinders. He had, oh, maybe a hundred records. An Edison. It was cylinder, cylinders about this big around and about that long.

So I guess ours was a Victrola. I don't know what it was.

MDF: And they were ten-inch records?

EAC: I think, ten-inch, yeah. We had a whole bunch of 'em. And there was a bunch of square dances on 'em. And a bunch of religious songs. I don't know, we probably had fifty records, I guess, something like that.

MDF: So would you sit around together and just listen to the music?

EAC: Oh, they visited, yeah, yeah. Usually we'd have, in the summertime usually had a treat of ice cream. When we went to town on Saturday, my dad would usually buy a hundred pounds of ice. When we'd get home, we'd wrap it in burlap, carry it, put it, we took it down to the cow lot, and that's where we kept the cottonseed that we fed the cows. And you'd bury this ice in the cottonseed, and it insulated it. And it would last for several days. But then Sunday, we'd go down and break off some of it and chip it up and make ice cream.

MDF: And how did you do that?

EAC: How did you make ice cream? In a gallon freezer. And you took rock salt and ice and put it around it. And Mother would make either custard ice cream, vanilla ice cream, or if the peaches were ripe, peach ice cream. Or, a lot of times, if the blackberries were ripe, I'd gather half a gallon of blackberries, and she'd mash 'em up and we'd have blackberry ice cream. Chocolate, might have chocolate ice cream. And of course, you have ice cream, and then you have your freezer, turning it, and when you couldn't turn it, you'd pack it. And then you'd eat Sunday lunch, and then neighbors might come over, and we'd have ice cream, listen to that Victrola, or tell yarns.

And this old billy goat I had? That ol' billy goat, it'd eat all the labels off the cans. And his favorite food was thistles. You know, a goat eats leaves and bushes and thistles, but one of the funniest things was, these old guys sit over chewing tobacco, these farm hands Daddy'd have. Chew tobacco. And they'd throw the cud out, and boy, this goat couldn't wait. Boy, he'd pounce. And cigarette butts. He just loved cigarette butts. But I finally had to get rid of him. My sister, Coleta, was in the wagon one day, and the goat jumped up there and butted her out and hurt her. So my dad said he was getting dangerous. A big ol' goat like that.

MDF: Did you get him when he was just a little—

EAC: Little bitty goat. I don't know how it happened. I think maybe my Uncle Charlie gave him to me. His mother died and, you know, I had to feed him. I guess, I don't really remember how I got him. Now my old dog Nero, my dad had a friend that had a farm up somewhere, and his dog had some puppies. And my dad said, when he was a kid, he had a dog named Nero, so I named my dog Nero. Nero was half collie and half bulldog. Colored collie, but shorthaired. And, oh, he hated snakes. He'd catch 'em, he'd catch and sling 'em, you know, like this. But he came in one morning with his face all swollen up, and you could see right on his nose a rattlesnake bite. Some snake had bit him. Looked like he was going to die, so I got on the phone, and my Uncle Charlie was a, you know, a half veterinarian. Been around stock all his life. So I got him on the phone and told him my favorite dog Nero was dying. And he says, "Well, get a bucket of lard and just drench him with about half a bucket of lard that you fried bacon in." So I did. Hell, ol' Nero, he was too far gone to resist, and damn he gulped down maybe a quart of lard, grease, liquid grease, and you know, by noon that dog was up walking around, and that cured him of it. A rattlesnake didn't hurt a hog. Apparently, the fat in a hog neutralized the effect of a rattlesnake bite.

MDF: My word.

EAC: I know we had one, we had a hog pen on the north side of our house, because the wind blew from the southeast. And you had ten or fifteen hogs in there. A bunch of hogs, I don't know, always had some hogs in there. And that's what happened to my goat. My daddy took my old billy goat and traded him off for an old sow. And she had ten pigs one time. I had more hogs than I knew what to do with at the hog pens.

MDF: Did you, were you ever around when they did a hog killing?

EAC: Oh gosh, yes, I was usually the one that got to shoot the hog with my .410. That was always my job.

We had a fifty-five-gallon drum. Hollow drum. Open at the top. And I believe maybe it was bigger than that. I don't know. It was a big ol'—I was a kid. I don't remember how big. It was about that tall. But, when it was hog-killing time, the first big norther came in, Daddy says, "Well, we're going to have to kill a hog. Get up at daylight." And they'd go down and we'd fill that thing about half full of water and build a big fire around it until it was boiling, and then you'd lead the hog down there. Usually put a rope around his foot and just lead him down there. And I'd shoot him. It's down by the blacksmith shop. And we had a block and tackle there. And we'd take a singletree, and, on his back feet, take him, and that water's boiling, and dump him down there, up and down. And they had the table out there. And they had big ol' butcher knives. My dad was a blacksmith, and he'd make butcher knives. A lot of butcher knives. And we'd take and scrape the hog. And you'd gut him, and I don't know how they knew it, but these sharecroppers, there was always one of them or two of them showed up the minute you killed a hog. And their take was they'd get the heart, the liver, the kidneys, you know, that sort of thing. That was usually their deal. And then, after they'd killed a hog, some of them would get a head. Well, they were usually somebody we knew, would get the head. But if I shot him, well it didn't leave much brains to make brains and eggs out of. But they would, they'd pickle this head with salt, you know, and you'd get some meat off of it.

But we had a smokehouse. And in there Daddy had a box, about, oh, about three foot square and about six feet long, and he kept a whole bunch of rock salt in it. And you'd take all of your meat and put in there till it drew the water out of it. Some of it you'd leave, but you'd take the hams and smoke 'em or rub 'em, rub 'em with a bunch of stuff and cure the ham up in the ceiling. And bacon the same way. And usually put a canvas cover, canvas bags, and put around them, and then they'd put some kind of spice, a repellant. But usually by the time, oh June, July, they'd get woolly worms in them, you know, so, they'd get on it.

MDF: Yeah. So did you actually smoke the meat?

EAC: Oh, some of it, sometimes.

MDF: And did you make sausage with it?

EAC: Oh, yeah. Made a lot of sausage, and, for a long time, we'd make sausage and hang it up and smoke it. But it didn't keep good then, so Mother found out, or maybe this was a county agent, or somebody told her, we got crocks about this big around, about ten-gallon crocks. And when we rendered the lard, we put about an inch of lard in there, and then she'd make sausage patties and cook 'em, not completely done, but pretty done, and we'd put a layer of sausage in there, might fill it up that much with sausage patties and then pour grease over the top. Then we'd put a lid on it where nothing could get it in and put it down in the cellar, the storm house. And we might have two or three of those before it was over. And then, that always gave me something for my lunch. I usually had a cold biscuit with a sausage patty in it, a biscuit.

MDF: Did you take fruit with you for lunch, too? Or what did you take besides the biscuit?

EAC: Well, no. In the wintertime you didn't have any fruit. I might take a pocketful of pecans if I had 'em. But I'd have those eaten by the time I got to school, usually. But Mother, when she cooked breakfast, she'd have some extra dough, and she'd roll it out in a pie pan, put it in a pie pan. And she'd put sugar and cream and butter on it and then put cinnamon, I believe it was, cinnamon on it and put that in the oven, and it got kind of sticky and gooey. Now, that was the best thing you ever saw with that crust, and it'd be about three-eighth's inch thick. I usually had a biscuit with sausage and one of those in my lunch. That would be my lunch. We'd go down to the well and draw us a bucket of water, and we'd have water to drink. Eat our lunch down there unless it was raining or something. But the school had a porch on it, too. I forgot to tell you, with cloak rooms on each side and then a porch, I guess, about

thirty feet long and about eight feet deep, something like that.

MDF: Did you play any sports at school?

EAC: Oh, yeah. We played basketball. That's where I broke my nose the first time, playing basketball. And the goal posts were right at the edge of the court. They're not like they are way over here, bending over like. They're right there, and the thing with the hoop was up there. And, boy, I was down there dribbling and some kid hit me, and I threw the ball up and ran slam-dab into that post. Boy, I broke my nose. That's where I broke my nose the first time. But we played baseball. We had a ball that was usually a bunch of string wound up. And the bats were a board that we whittled. We played that at lunch. We usually fought on the recesses. That was more fun. I had two or three kids that we always fought.

MDF: Now what did you do? Just go out and start fighting each other?

EAC: Yeah. Just for fun. Clawing each other. Fightin' with our shoes. Although I was usually barefooted, so I had to scratch 'em with my toenails.

MDF: Let me ask you about how you kept things cool. Did you, did you have—?

EAC: Like the milk?

MDF: Yeah.

EAC: We had a pyramid cooler.

MDF: And what was that?

EAC: It was a pyramid like this. Four-sided. And you put a sheet around it, and it had a water trough in the bottom. Put water on it, and that water would come up that cloth, and it'd keep it cool in there when the wind blew through it. And that kept your milk—now, you've got to remember, we milked twice a day, so the minute we got the milk we strained it and we drank it. And then, what was left, you put it in the cooler, and then you skimmed the cream off. And that's where you got your butter, and the other turned to clabber. And you didn't want to make curds and whey, cottage cheese, then you fed that to the hogs and the chickens, or—oh, that was another thing we fed to those chickens. We'd make cottage cheese and mash it up and put that red pepper on it. And, boy, those chickens thought that was wonderful. Those turkeys, too.

MDF: Now, what made the structure of the pyramid?

EAC: Metal, usually. Some of them were made out of wood. Some of them made out of—ours were made out of metal. Was about—(measures with hands)

MDF: About four feet high?

EAC: I'd say, and about thirty inches square. And it had the two shelves in it. Had a shelve right above the water and then a shelve above that. Put crocks in there. You put the milk in crocks.

MDF: So, you put the milk in the crocks on these shelves, and then the pyramid fit over that?

EAC: The cloth was all around that.

MDF: I see.

EAC: And the cloth was held together with clothespins. Where you opened it.

MDF: And where would you put the pyramid cooler?

LMC: Where was the water? Around the—

EAC: It was in the trough down in the bottom. The cloth went down in water, and you changed it. You usually spilled some milk, so you'd change it, or it'd sour-like. And wash the cloth. Mother took care of that. I didn't have to do that. All I had to do was pump water and build the fires.

MDF: What other things did you do?

EAC: Huh?

MDF: What other chores did you do?

EAC: Well, I had to feed the horses, usually. I had to feed the chickens. I had to feed, slop the hogs. That was the thing about it. I don't know how those hogs could stand it, but she took the dishwater and fed it to the hogs. They had a hog trough, a V-shaped trough. You put it in there, and those hogs would, boy, they'd just go wild over it. And it had soap and everything else in it. I don't know how they stood it. And then, what they really liked was that clabber when we give 'em that.

MDF: And how old were you when you started doing that?

EAC: I guess ever since I can remember. In the farm you had chores, and I know one of my chores was cuttin' wood for the kitchen stove. My dad was one of these that hauled the wood out the woods. On the place there we had about, oh, I don't know, about forty or fifty acres of woods. And we'd go cut trees, and they had what they called a Spanish oak that made good kitchen stovewood. They got that big around. And so I had to chop that and haul it in for Mother.

MDF: Did you ever use cedar for that?

EAC: No. Never did use cedar. Cedar burned too quick, and resin came off of it. You didn't dare put it in your fireplace because it was kind of like pine. You don't burn pine if you can help it because the resin will get up there and collect and then catch on fire and catch the chimney on fire. No, oak is the only wood I remember us burning. We didn't have a power saw then. You cut it with an axe. And that wasn't very much fun.

MDF: Were there any crews that went around and cut cedar in that area for posts or charcoal?

EAC: Oh, yeah. On Grandpa's mountain there were cedar choppers. And that was where everybody got their fence posts is on Grandpa's mountain. Now, he liked for people to cut the cedar up there. The reason is because it would shade and keep the grass from growing. So, you cut the cedar, and then the grass would grow over there. It was shady. There was no grass growing. So this was free. The whole neighborhood cut their posts. In fact, when they built the telephone lines, they cut cedar poles off his place for that.

Now, for the roads up there, we went to the Lampasas River that was about, I guess about five miles from the schoolhouse, south. About six or seven miles from our house. We'd take a wagon with a bed on it about this deep, and they'd go down to a gravel bar on the river and load the wagon up, and then they'd bring it up, and then they'd spread it out on the road so that it wouldn't be muddy. And wasn't too much of it would get muddy 'cause, remember, these is old caliche hills. It's rocky. About all you could do was grade it. But there were a few flat places where they had to gravel.

MDF: Were there ever any charcoal burners in that area?

EAC: I never knew of any. Never knew of any. Where there's a lot of oak is where they—I don't think the cedar trees would have made too good for charcoal. They burn too fast. That's what Grandpa and I'd usually do when we'd go up on the mountain. I'd take my .22 and kill a rabbit. He'd take a rabbit and

split it like that and skin it. No hairs on it. Gut it. He'd take and run a stick through it, and he'd take two forked sticks and build a fire here and put the rabbit up here and cook it. And no salt or anything. And I don't like wild game, and I think that's the reason. But he thought that was good.

MDF: So you didn't eat much wild game at home?

EAC: Well, we ate. Now my dad loved half-grown jackrabbits. And in the springtime, where this woods was, there was a fence there and then a cotton patch. These doggoned jackrabbits would come up out of the woods and go in there, and they'd just clip off the cotton. Well, my dad would send me out there with my .410, usually late in the afternoon or early in the morning, about daylight, and these rabbit would come out. I'd lay there and shot 'em. Well, the half-grown, he loved half-grown jackrabbits, so we'd take 'em and skin 'em. He'd skin 'em and cut 'em up like chicken. And Mother would fry 'em, and that was good. We ate that, and down on the river we killed squirrels. We'd eat squirrels. Now, the deer, there were very few deer. There was some deer up on my grandpa's mountain, but our area there was no deer. Had been killed out. During the Depression a lot of these people, they ate what they called a Hoover hog. That's armadillos. But I never ate armadillo, and I never ate a possum, and I didn't eat a coon either. But a lot of 'em ate coons and possums, rabbits and squirrels.

MDF: It seems to me, when I was, now the time you're talking about when you were killing a lot of jackrabbits and squirrels and things like that would have been in the '20s.

EAC: In the '20s.

MDF: 'Cause I was talking to some people who said that—

EAC: We had rabbit drives.

MDF: Oh, really?

EAC: Yeah.

MDF: Did you ever?

EAC: Yeah. I can remember they would have a rabbit drive, and they'd take chicken wire and make a V-shaped thing like this, and all of the people in the community, where there's lots of rabbits, would get in there and drive 'em out of the woods and out of the pastures and drive 'em into this thing and kill the rabbits. They had what you call rabbit drives.

LMC: Never heard of that.

MDF: And what did they do with the dead rabbits?

EAC: Feed 'em to the hogs. Some of 'em would eat 'em. I don't know. Up there when the cottontails and the rabbits got old, they usually had tapeworms. You could gut 'em and the guts would run all over. But I baited my hooks for catfish with 'em. They were good bait.

MDF: I wondered if maybe by the '30s a lot of that wildlife had been killed off.

EAC: Well, there was still lots of rabbits and possums and armadillos. A lot of armadillos. You know an armadillo came out of Mexico. And we didn't. Practically the first time I remember about an armadillo, they called 'em grave robbers. I remember when an old man died there in Okay. We took him down to the Okay graveyard. Some of the graves had holes in 'em, and they said the grave robbers had been in there. The armadillos, digging in those graves. I don't know. You know the armadillos, they were after worms and stuff like that. Root around. But the armadillos migrated out of

Mexico, and they were just getting up in our part of the country. Now they're all the way to Oklahoma. Their common name in that part was grave robber because they always seem to dig holes in the graves. People would kill 'em for that reason.

My old dog Nero hated armadillos. Oh, he hated. I'd be out there, and we'd be hunting possums and coons, and an armadillo would come along. He wouldn't go hunt anything else till I'd caught that armadillo. And an armadillo would go in a hole, and they could dig as fast as you could. And he'd get 'em by the tail, and they'd swell, up and you couldn't pull 'em out. You'd have to pry 'em out with a stick or kill 'em with poking. They were a mess.

And, oh, a lot of times we were hunting at night for these coons and possums. We'd go up on the mountain, Grandpa's mountain, and they had a persimmon, a mountain persimmon up there. It was a persimmon about the size of my thumb. Blue or black. And the persimmon would be like this, about that high. And the coons and the possums loved those things, so that's where we'd usually catch them. And in the cove of the mountains, too, where they'd, these would be black haws. Well, black haws in there. There's black haws, and there's mountain persimmons. The black haws were, were a haw. They called them black haws. The coons and possums loved them.

MDF: When you got through skinning 'em, where did you sell the skins?

EAC: In Killeen. Somebody bought 'em. We, we'd skin 'em and turn 'em wrong side out. We'd get a forked stick and put 'em on that and stretch 'em and then rub the salt on the outside of 'em and then dry 'em. And then when they got good and dry and hard, then you could take them in and sell 'em. But they wouldn't buy 'em when they were green. They wouldn't buy a green hide. You took 'em on these forked sticks, maybe sticks about the size of that and maybe this long and about that wide. Then you'd press 'em together and slip the hide over it. Take and rub salt on it and hang up where it would dry.

MDF: Did anybody in your area raise hunting dogs?

EAC: Oh, yeah, the Browns did. The guy that ran the blacksmith shop, he had foxhounds. He raised foxhounds. And I remember my Uncle Charlie's old bulldog, Fritz. This guy, when his hounds would get wantin' lovers, he'd put 'em up in his barn. And ol' Fritz climbed the ladder and got up there with 'em, and I thought old man Brown was going to kill Uncle Charlie. But Fritz got up there and ruined his dogs. Fritz got in lots of trouble. He was a bulldog. I don't know, he might have been my dog's daddy, I don't know. I wouldn't be a bit surprised 'cause my dog was half bulldog and half collie. But he was—

Oh, once down at this tank, there was an oak tree about this big. It was kind of a little peninsula around the place where the tree was, so I could get up in the tree with my .410, and the doves and ducks would come down there and get on there. And the doves, there was a little kind of narrow stretch of water, and it was muddy. The doves liked to get in there and eat gravel and drink water. Well, I would climb up this tree and make Nero stay down there, and the doves would come in, and I'd shoot 'em. Well, one time, it was freezing, and there was ice on the tank about that thick. The cattle would keep it broken out where the water was open there. And there was a bunch of doves down there, and so I got up and they come together, and I shot 'em. One of 'em flew over there and fell on the ice. And Nero was a good retriever, so I said, "Get him, Nero." He took off, and he got to the dove, and he went to stop, and on this ice he skidded plumb to the bank. I bet he skidded a hundred feet across there. He was the funniest looking dog you ever saw. To see the look on his face!

One time there was an ol' cow died down below the tank dam. That dam was fifteen feet high, I guess. Something like that. One of our cows, I guess, got old and died. I don't know why, but there was a dead cow. And the buzzards were all down there. So I decided I'd go down. I wasn't going to

kill any of them but go down there and look. So, Nero and I slipped down and got on the inside of this tank dam. Then I slipped up there, and I looked down at a whole bunch. I said, "Get 'em Nero!" Boy, he went down, and he caught one of 'em. And that old buzzard upchucked on him. And I'm telling you, Nero got out, and he rolled in the grass, he skidded in the grass, he rolled in the grass, and he came up to the tank and went out in the water, just his nose sticking out, and he stayed there for thirty minutes. He never chased another buzzard.

Every afternoon I was to get the milk cows up. We usually milked two or four or five, I don't know. And so, they'd be way up down in the pasture somewhere or down in the field in the wintertime, if we were feeding, and stuff. So up on that hill I could say, "Go get 'em Nero. Go get 'em." And he'd go all the way down there and bring those cows in. All I did was set up on the hill and watch him. And he wouldn't run 'em because I taught him not to do that. The ol' cows wouldn't give their milk down if you ran 'em.

MDF: And how long did you have him?

EAC: Well, I got him when, I guess I was about four or five years old. And we left there in 1925 when I was thirteen. So Nero was probably eight or nine years old. And I gave him to my uncle who was a month younger than I was. He kept him after that. And Nero lived to be about sixteen or seventeen years old. He was a smart dog. He was scared of thunder. Scared to death of thunder. And I remember one time a thunderstorm came up and the lightning hit one of the trees there close to us, and Nero came through the screen door and ran under a bed, and Mother liked to beat him to death with a broom getting him up out of there.

MDF: Did you ever have any storms that were so bad that you'd go into the storm cellar?

EAC: Oh, I was going to tell you about that. Uncle Charlie had a storm cellar up there on his place. And my Aunt Vergie, his wife, was scared to death of cyclones and storms. So every time a storm came up they'd run and get in the storm house. Well, one night, there was a sure-enough cyclone, and a storm came up, and they went off with the three girls, and my aunt and Uncle Charlie ran off and got in the storm house. And sure enough, it had a little cyclone, and it blew—I don't know whether it was a shed or part of the barn—and landed on top of the door. The door was like this, you know. The storm house was dirt piled up and had a door. Landed on top, and they couldn't get out. Well, he had a little sharecropper house down about two hundred yards north of his place, and there was an old bachelor lived there, I guess it was. I guess you'd call him that. And he came up to see what had happened the next morning, and he had to chop this thing off and open the door so they could get out. And after that, Uncle Charlie kept an axe, a hammer, and a saw in the storm house. But, oh, I tell you, that was something up there.

And for a while there we had this tick fever, so there was a, I don't know whether it was a law or something passed. I believe you had to dip your cows twice. Well, the dipping vat was on my Uncle Charlie's. This was so he could get people to drive his cattle up, too. You know, I tell you, he was a manipulator. The dipping vat was on there, and it was right below one of his tanks, his stock tanks, so you could siphon the water out and fill the dipping vat up. Well, every spring, you had a cattle drive. Each guy would drive his cows up, and that's when you dipped 'em. And you branded 'em, and you neutered the little boy calves. Well, a lot of times there'd be a lot of ticks, and you used some kind of creosote, or something to put in the water to kill the ticks. So you'd have to skim it off. They had a skimmer that they'd skim the ticks off. But anyway, my job, they all had a fire out there where they heated the branding irons, and they neutered these young calves, the boys, and they took the mountain oysters. And my job was to split 'em open, clean 'em, and I had to keep an onion sliced, and I had to keep bread there, a loaf of bread that somebody'd bring a loaf of bread. Keep the onions and pickles there. And I would have to keep the mountain oysters fried up for the boys that were branding and

doing the neutering job.

MDF: How did you cook 'em? Did you just cook 'em over the fire, or did you fry 'em?

EAC: No, fired 'em in a skillet. A big ol' iron skillet with grease in it. And they were good, too. But that went on, oh, twice a year, I think, that dipping. Everybody gathered too. This guy here was going to drive his stock in. And Uncle Charlie always had more than anybody else's. We'd do that and wouldn't have over about fifteen or twenty, but he might have a hundred or something. I don't know. Two hundred.

MDF: Did an inspector, a county agent, or somebody, come around to check during those times?

EAC: I don't know. The only time I really remember a county agent was when Daddy terraced the farm. The county furnished the grader that we graded with, and I believe we had eight mules tied to it. I'm not sure. But it was a kind of grader, and the county agent and a surveyor laid the stakes. And that's the only time I really remember the county agent.

MDF: Do you remember what year that would have been?

EAC: When we terraced the farm? I would say, probably, about 1920. I don't know, '19 or '20. I can remember I got to ride on the grader. I don't remember. I was fairly young. My daddy ran the grader, and he had a guy that helped him that drove the mules. It was a thing to drive eight mules. There was two or three lines, and that sort of thing.

MDF: Did you ever run, I mean, did you ever help with the plowing and using the animals?

EAC: Oh, yeah. I can remember when I was about eight years old, I ran a cultivator. I had two old horses. Daddy usually used mules, but he had two horses that pulled the cultivator. They were very tame. And I'd plow. We had a cultivator, and I'd plow. And we'd take the horses lose at noon, and I would ride one of 'em into the stock tank and jump off and go swimming. I don't know why Mother let me do it. My clothes were kind of wet when I got up to the house. But I didn't have anything on but these coveralls. That's all I had, and they'd drain off pretty fast. But it was sure fun to jump in that tank and swim and climb back on that horse and drive him up to the barn and feed him.

MDF: Did your dad ever have any mechanized equipment?

EAC: He never had a tractor. Now, my grandfather bought a tractor after we left. He had a Ford, Fordson, and the boys used it to farm the farm around the homestead. But we never had a mechanical tractor. We used mules. You raised your own mules. There was an old boy came around about once a year with what they called a Missouri mule, donkey. Great big ol' black donkey. He was big as a mule. And bred the horse mares. There was a guy that came by, and he had what was really a donkey, a jackass. Was black. He was a great big animal. He was a pretty big animal for a donkey. We had a pit that was about two feet deep with, you might say, a fence on both sides so the mare couldn't get out, and they'd breed the mares. Then you'd usually have, every year, you'd have one or two mule colts. So you raised your own mules. And nearly everybody plowed with a mule.

The mule had one advantage. They never foundered. A horse, you put a horse where there's lots of food, and they'll eat until they bloat. But you put a mule out there, and he gets full, he quits. And the mule had more stamina. They could stand more hard work than a horse could. I can remember you had to be careful when you were hooking 'em up or they'd kick you halfway across the farm. But they were a better work animal than a horse was. The mules that produced with this old stud, this ol' donkey stud, were big mules, big heavy mules.

MDF: Do you remember the name of the man who came around?

EAC: I have absolutely no idea. I just remember him coming up with that mule. Seemed like he rode a horse and led the mule. And he went from farm to farm, I guess. I don't know. I just remember that, as a kid, I watched the operation. It was commonplace. It's like our cows, our cows were Jersey cows, milk cows. And the guy lived about two miles from us, had a registered Jersey bull. So that's where Daddy would breed the milk cows. We'd drive 'em down the highway. That was always a good thing because the lady, the wife of this man that had this bull, always fed us lunch.

MDF: Did you belong to a beef club?

EAC: Yeah, we sure did. We belonged to a beef club, and each farm, they killed one of their yearlings every Saturday, and sometimes you'd get the round steak part, sometimes you'd get ribs. You took time about what you got. And Uncle Charlie always said, they always said he used one of his poor yearlings. He didn't use one of his fat yearlings. But he was one of my favorite uncles.

MDF: And how many people were in that club? Do you remember?

EAC: Well, in the families, there'd be, probably the Givens, Uncle Charlie, Uncle Jarv, Grandpa, us, the Proctors, the Rileys. I'd say maybe ten families. Something like that.

MDF: And where would you keep the meat during the week?

EAC: Well, Mother would cook quite a bit of it. But we'd take it and put it in a bucket or tub and drop it down in the cistern and let it hang there where it was cool in the cistern. And it would stay, it would stay a day or so without spoiling. Or if we had ice, we'd keep it on the ice in the summertime. Lot's of times we'd do that. But that was about the only beef I ever ate was that beef club. Now, we had chickens, chickens and turkeys.

MDF: How would she fix the beef?

EAC: Roast. Usually roasts. And if we happened to get a round steak part, you know, then we might have steak. Now, the round steak she would take and cut it about that thick, pieces about that size, and roll it in flour, and fry it, and then make thick cream gravy with hot biscuits. You know, you were eating pretty high on the hog when you did that. And we killed hogs. We had spareribs and backbone. She boiled the backbone, I believe, and fried the spareribs, I believe. Baked 'em, barbecued 'em. I don't remember. Boy, I remember if you ate too much of that fresh meat, it'd make you sick.

MDF: Really!

EAC: Boy, I can remember these old people eating that backbone, and they'd break it apart and get the marrow out. "Boy, that's the best part of the whole hog's that marrow!"

I liked to fish, and down on this tank, we had a lot of big perch in it, and my dad kept a fishing pole or two down there. So I decided one day I was going fishing. Well, we had a haystack north of the house down there at the edge of the field. And it was damp under it, and you'd pull the straw off and you could dig your worms out. Well, I went down there, and I dug me some worms, and put 'em in my Prince Albert can, but I started back. I cut across and there was a field of grass burrs right in here. I got in there, and I got in the dangedest bunch of grass burrs in my bare feet, and I was a couple, three hundred yards from the house. And so I started screaming. Mother had to come down there and pick me up, take me out of the grass burrs, pull the grass burrs out of my feet, and then I went down to the tank and caught a mess of perch. I'll never forget that. That was the last time I went through that patch of grass burrs.

Zell Kinsey Copeland

Date of birth: 11 February 1917
Communities affiliated with: Brown's Creek, Ewing, Friendship, Maple, Owl Creek
Interviewed by Thad Sitton

TS: This is Thad Sitton. Today is April 5, 2001. I'm interviewing for the first time Zell Kinsey Copeland at her home in Belton. This interview is part of Prewitt and Associates' Fort Hood Oral History Project sponsored by U.S. Army Fort Hood and conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University.

ZKC: It was twelve miles west of Gatesville. It's closer, now, we have the road and all. So, we moved to the Friendship community when I was ten. And I had one sister and five brothers. And our back-yard fence was the schoolyard fence, also, and I was halfway through the sixth grade, and a brother with me, and my oldest brother and sister were halfway through the seventh. And we'd gone to Levita all that time, right out our back door. And we moved to Friendship, and, now, I don't remember how far it was. My sister said it was three miles down through the woods. And the first day we went to school, oh, we just had more fun, you know, going through the woods. Bunches of water and the trees and the leaves, and we got to school at recess. (laughs) We didn't do that anymore.

TS: So, you had so much fun you got there at—

(telephone rings)

ZKC: That's my daughter's. And that was the one-room school, with seven grades in it. And, 'course, six of us were going to school at that same time. We had one teacher of 'course, and we were all in that one room. And we had to carry our water and our lunch, 'cause we had no well. And if you got a drink of water during books, that's what we called it then, was during books, you got in trouble.

TS: So, there was water discipline.

ZKC: Right, there really was, my brother could tell you about that. And then from there we moved to Ewing. Well, before we moved to Ewing, 'course my sister and brother had to go somewhere else to school, because that was just to seventh grade, so they went to Turnover. And my brother walked, and my sister rode with a friend. And then the next year, then, my brother and I that were in the same grade—'course we finished the seventh, and we had to go—well, we moved to Ewing, then, so we could go to school there, because they went through the tenth. And out in the country the tenth was far as any of them went. And we lived there—well, I went through the eighth, ninth, and tenth—half of the tenth—and then we moved back to Friendship, where I couldn't go to school, my brother couldn't. We started riding a horse to Ewing, but that horse was so pokey we got there about recess. So, anyway, that's when I went to Maple and stayed with my uncle and aunt, Uncle Demp McBride and Aunt Sally. I stayed with them and finished school at Maple. And Seth, my brother, stayed with our daddy's cousin, Sam Schultz, in the Maple community. So, we went to Maple that year.

TS: What I'm doing, when you say a name that I think I may not be able to spell, I'll jot it down and then

at the end of everything I'll ask you about the spelling, okay? Don't pay any attention to that, that's all I'm saying.

ZKC: Okay. (laughs)

TS: So, he stayed with the—

ZKC: The Shultzes, yes. Sam Schultz. And, 'course, down there was Sam and Jim Schultz. And, you know, I think there was another one, I know there was, I can't think of his name. And most of the people I knew down there of course was—'cause I wasn't there a lot, just the rest of that year, for the tenth grade. And the Beasleys, Uncle Jack and Aunt Nannie, lived there. Let me see, some of the names I knew down there are written down. At Maple there was the McBrides, Beasleys, Schultzes, the Bays, Brookshires, Wolf, and some others that I don't remember.

TS: I've interviewed a couple of Wolfs. So, you were going to Maple just as a student. I mean, you were staying there just so you could go through the good school.

ZKC: That's right, that's right, the good school. Now, at Ewing of course there was—well, Friendship, I remember the Dorseys, the Yorks, the Wiegands, Powells, Sewards, Mohlers, Warrens, and Autreys. And of course there were more there, too, that came and went. These were the main ones that stayed there at Ewing. There was the Bateses, Jones, Howard, Ayres—am I going too fast? At Ewing there were the Berrys, Browns, Hords, Rauschenbergs—and I think that's R-a-u-s-c-h-e-n-b-e-r-g, and Autrey.

TS: Well, which—did your father rent places?

ZKC: My father died when I was five years old. And my mother never did marry again, so she had seven kids. And, yes we did. Part of the time we rented a place. My oldest brother was fifteen years old when we moved to Friendship and rented on halves—for the time what you calls thirds and fourths, I'm not sure exactly. I know sort of what all that means. And then part of the time they just worked for whose ever land we lived on. They worked for it. But most people, if they didn't own their own land, they just rented and worked on the halves. Or, if they had their own horses and equipment and all, it was thirds and fourths—(unintelligible) and cotton of course was the main thing, which as I say I don't like. (laughs)

TS: A lot of people ended up not liking it.

ZKC: My husband asked me once, said, "Well, what did you like?" I didn't like to work in that garden and I said, "When it came to the farm, not anything." And 'course, he loved the farm. He grew up in the Seattle area, that's on Fort Hood also. They had to move out of that area when Fort Hood came. 'Course, time the Fort Hood came in, he and I both were already gone, but his parents still lived there. Well, and they had moved out, also. And, now—

TS: Well, why don't we talk for a while about the schools. Now, you attended several schools, and the first school you just crossed your fence, right? Now, which one was that?

ZKC: That was Levita, that's not in Fort Hood, that was before we moved to the Fort Hood area.

TS: I see. How long did you go to Levita?

ZKC: Well, I was halfway through the sixth. Now, I didn't start in the first grade there, because my mother started me early. I started to school in the third grade because my mother had taught me at home. She was a schoolteacher, and she started me early. So, but anyway I was halfway through the sixth and my older brother and sister were halfway through the seventh. And as my sister said, we could hear the first bell ringing and get to school by the second. But when we moved to Friendship, it was a different story.

TS: How did the kids get—you said you walked to Friendship, right?

ZKC: We walked everywhere. We walked to church. But the school, now, at Friendship was Owl Creek School. But the community and the church were Friendship. And we walked—except for church we had friends, and that was the Yorks, and they had two daughters about my sister's and my ages, and they would come out and get us in their surrey. Do you know what a surrey is?

TS: Sort of. Explain to me what's the difference between a surrey and a buggy.

ZKC: Well, a surrey has two seats, have a big seat up here and a big seat back here. And this one just had a top on it, and the way I remember it, it had a little fringe on the side, you know, all the way around. And you know, I don't remember in the wintertime, but I think they probably were closed in, sort of like a car and a buggy was back there. If it was raining or whatever, they had these curtains they'd put up.

TS: And a buggy was a rougher thing. It was normally just one spring seat, right? And normally didn't have a cover?

ZKC: Right. Well, a lot of them had covers.

TS: Okay. But a surrey was a two-seater, and a buggy was a one-seater?

ZKC: Right. And, usually, two horses pulled a surrey and one pulled a buggy.

TS: So, you would ride in it to church?

ZKC: To church. Now, they usually came by to get my sister and me. We rode with them to church. 'Cause it was a little further to church than it was to the school up there. And when we went to parties, we all walked down through the woods, across the branches. And that was rattlesnake country, and I don't know why we never did get bit, but we didn't. And my brothers hunted, and they stretched the skins—put them on these boards—stretched them, and they'd send them into some company, Sears and Roebuck most of the time, and they got paid for them. 'Course, you know, about ten or twenty cents, you know, but that was money back then. My girlfriend and I, when she'd spend the night with me, we would go with them to their traps early the next morning. It seems like it was before daylight, I think it was. We'd go with them to their traps. And it was a few times that my brothers caught skunks, and they had to be sent home from school. (laughs) I mean, you can't get that smell out!

TS: And you can't get a skunk out of a trap without getting it on you.

ZKC: That's true. And I think they were one of the best paying skins that there was. But that was fun, and, 'course, we fished in the little creeks all the time.

TS: How did you fish?

ZKC: All I ever remember is just a cane pole with a string and a hook on the end of it. And I think it had a cork, maybe. If they had anything else back then, I didn't know it.

TS: Well, that's the best way to fish in a creek. You can't exactly cast across it. So, you were living—where were you living, where was the family living, when you were attending Friendship? Would you say you were living in Friendship?

ZKC: Yes, we were.

TS: What was, what was the place like at Friendship? What was the house like and the outbuildings, or just anything you remember about that?

ZKC: Well, our house, it was a nice looking house. I mean, it was nothing big, but it was a nice looking house. And we lived on the Dorseys' place, then. And, 'course, we had an outhouse, you know, like everybody had. And our yard, you had to sweep your yard every Saturday with a broomweed broom. And, 'course, you didn't have grass on it. We had rattlesnakes, there, and one time one woke us up early of a morning, was under the house and it was rattling. And when my mother and brothers and my neighbor finally found it, it was under the house, and there was also a possum and something else under there that was disturbing it, and that was the reason it was rattling.

TS: Well, who all was living—give me a rundown of everybody that's living in the house there at Friendship, your brothers and—what's your mother's name?

ZKC: Tinie, Tinie Bell Kinsey—used to be Tinie Bell Taylor, she's the one that had the store, and all. She had all this and taught school before we, before she married. There was Mother and my oldest brother, who was—well, when my daddy died, my oldest brother was nine, my youngest brother was a few weeks old. There were seven of us, so we were one right after the other.

TS: I mean, that's a hard row to hoe, right there. All those young children who can barely do fieldwork.

ZKC: That's true. That's what I said, see, when we went to the farm, my oldest brother was only fifteen. And, 'course, then my sister was probably fourteen, and then my next brother was just older than me. I was ten, he was eleven or twelve. But they did that farm work, they rented land, worked that land. And, 'course, cotton was the main thing. 'Course people had corn, a lot of corn, but now as far as I know they just had corn for themselves. I don't think they ever sold it or anything, I think it's just for themselves. And, like, when we were working for them, that's what you got for pay, because they was as good a pay as you wanted for your food.

TS: That was the money crop, there really wasn't another one to replace it.

ZKC: That's right, no, no. And everybody ground their own meal, they ground that corn. That's the way I remember it.

TS: Did you take it some place to be ground, or—

ZKC: You know, that's what I'm trying to think. I think they ground their own, but now maybe—and I don't remember grinding it or seeing it ground, so maybe they took it somewhere. I'm not sure. 'Course we all had chickens, so we had eggs—and we had cows, we had milk and butter and everything like that. And everybody had that. And a garden, and you canned. I didn't like canning. I always had to wash the jars every year, my younger brother and me, because our hands were little. I hated washing those jars. Really, that's all I had to do—it's always in hot weather, too.

TS: How much, how much cotton do you think y'all raised at that place? Do you remember how many bales?

ZKC: You know, I would say—I think I know at a place or two we depended on one bale. That's what we got was one bale. And I don't know how many a person that had their own land, they got a whole lot more. Like, we lived on the Dorseys' place, you know, I'm sure they had a lot of bales, but I don't know how many.

TS: What was the deal with the Dorseys? Were you working for the Dorseys? Were you on halves, do you think, with the Dorseys? You know, normally, if you're on halves, you didn't supply the work stock or the machinery or anything, you're just using the land. And generally that means that you get half the cotton that you produce.

ZKC: Right. And you know, I'm really not sure. The first year we lived there, we lived on the Mohlers'

place, and the second year we lived on the Dorseys' place. I think the Mohlers moved, then. And I think one of them we worked on the halves, and the other one my brothers worked by the day for them. I think.

TS: Just hired—

ZKC: Right. And then at Ewing, I think, was where we always depended on one bale. And we lived on Mr. Jones's place. Well, we lived on Mr. Hord's place, and then we lived on Mr. Jones's place—they were brother-in-laws. And on Mr. Jones's last place, he had already moved out, he and his wife moved to town, and we lived in the house they had lived in. Which was a beautiful house, in my view it was gorgeous. It was right almost on the bank of Henson Creek.

TS: Henson Creek?

ZKC: Yes. And that creek would rise and get clear out of banks, and my brothers would sit on that bridge down there and hang their feet down in that water and would just scare me to death, I thought they were goners. 'Course we were just kids. (TS laughs) Now, there, I think we might have—you know, I'm not sure about this, I think we might have worked on thirds and fourths because his horses and everything were still there, and I think my brothers just used those and fed them like they were theirs, because the people was already gone.

TS: He couldn't take them to town, so why not let you use them.

ZKC: There you go. But, I can't tell you anything sure about that.

TS: Well, the deal, the deal, probably changed. Every deal on a new place is a little bit different.

ZKC: That's true, that's true. And 'course our situation was different to what a lot of the others were because I just had brothers, young brothers, and there was no man.

TS: You can't get as good a deal if there isn't an adult male.

ZKC: That's true, that's true. But my mother always said that she's afraid to get married again, she's afraid our stepfather would be mean to us, and she couldn't take that. So, she didn't even consider ever getting married again.

TS: What caused your father's early death?

ZKC: Pneumonia. And, see, back then, of course there was just nothing to do for pneumonia. If you had pneumonia you most always died, and that was back in 1922.

TS: How did he come to get it?

ZKC: I have no idea, I don't know. He was working in the coal mine in East Texas, Rusk. And he was changing jobs. He had gone to Mexia to the oil fields, and so he was working in the oil fields, really, when he died. But he had just moved there, that's how come we were—we were at Levita when he died.

TS: What county was Levita in?

ZKC: Coryell.

TS: Coryell? It's in Coryell. I just didn't know.

ZKC: That's all right. Well, that's okay, there's two people I've come across that knew where Levita was. (laughs) And it used to be a pretty good-sized little town. When we lived there, there was doctors and

there was drugstores and two or three pretty good-sized stores, had everything in 'em. And my grandfather had a little store that had everything in it. And that's where my grandmother and grandfather lived, and my aunt—my mother's sister—lived there. When my daddy died—and, you know, I've never known for sure why my daddy was changing jobs except I read, when I lived in Dallas, uh, where, it's been about that same time—I thought about this later, you don't think about this when you're younger, and it just didn't—I still thought about it, then, wish I'd kept that article, but when the people who worked in the coal mine, they went on strike, and by the time their strike was over the oil had come in, so the coal mines never did open up. So, I figure that's when my daddy moved to Mexia, because it would have been about the same time. And he had already rented a house and had bought groceries, and then he got sick.

TS: So, he was planning to move the family to Mexia?

ZKC: Yes, yes. And see, my mother was expecting this baby, and she didn't even get to go when he was sick.

TS: Where was she staying?

ZKC: At Levita, at my grandma's and grandpa's house. So, he didn't see any of us. So, after all of this—

TS: Let's talk about the Friendship community for a while. How many years were you at Friendship? Were you moving around on different places in the Friendship community?

ZKC: Two different places, there. And then, see, we moved away from there, then we moved back there. So, all in all, I'm just guessing, I'd say three or four years. Maybe four years, I'm not sure. And they were wonderful people, they were real—

TS: What was in Friendship, what was the Friendship community like? Was there a store or gristmill or cotton gin or anything in Friendship? What did Friendship amount to?

ZKC: Friendship was a school—well, no, the school was called Owl Creek, but it was in the community. And the church, and that was it. And a bunch of very nice people, wonderful people. We had one church, and that was the Baptist. The Dorseys and the Yorks and the Wiegands were the main part of the church, really. I mean, they were what kept it going. And, 'course, the Dorseys had children that was already married, the Powells, and they lived there. One of them lived here in Temple, she just was buried a few days ago, she was ninety-eight. She had a sister living in Gatesville, Mary Powell, who is ninety-nine, and a brother is in the nursing home, here. Mary Powell's son William Ake lived in Friendship until he was drafted. Mary Powell is still living by herself at ninety-nine. The brother's in a nursing home, and he's got to be—he's probably about ninety-five or ninety-six.

TS: What is the sister's name?

ZKC: Mary Powell.

TS: And she still lives—

ZKC: In Gatesville.

TS: I just will check and see if we know about her. There's a big list somewhere.

ZKC: Yeah. Now, she has a son that lives there. He's just built a house and lives close to her in Gatesville. He did live out in—seems like it was Pearl community or something, but he lives there close to her, and they could tell you a lot, because he lived in Friendship, I guess.

TS: What is his name?

ZKC: William Ake. They call him Bill, I call him William Ake 'cause I knew him when he was a kid. We

call him William Ake. And he, they, could tell you worlds and worlds. Because, they lived there—I won't say—well, I'm sure his people was still living there when Fort Hood took it.

TS: We're equally interested, I'd say, in any of the communities, but sometimes there's a lot of people to talk to, like about Maple. Sometimes there aren't so many. So, what did people do, what was the countryside like around Friendship? Was it more wooded?

ZKC: Definitely wooded, definitely.

TS: You talked about the chickens. Tell me about turkeys. If you're living in the woods, you're in good turkey habitat.

ZKC: Right. Well, we always had turkeys, and they just went all over the woods, and when they were little, you had to go and get 'em up at night because—well, it was dangerous to leave them out. And—

TS: How would you do that?

ZKC: Just walk until you found 'em and then drive 'em home. (laughs) But first, when the hen was finding a nest, getting her nest, you had to watch her, you had to follow her. And it might be all day long, because she's smart. They say turkeys are dumb, but they're not, they're pretty smart. She would lead you all over everywhere before she would go to her nest. You really had to sneak to find her nest, because you had to get those eggs every day and bring them in and take care of them. I don't remember just how you took care of them, but anyway you couldn't leave them out there. I followed a lot of those old hens. Now, I didn't mind that. I didn't like to pick the cotton, I didn't like to do the garden, but I didn't mind following that turkey.

TS: I'd rather do that, too.

ZKC: And then, after—you would then get that turkey to set at the house—I mean, in the barn, wherever. Because you didn't leave her out there in the woods, I guess animals would have eaten the eggs and everything. And then, when she had her little turkeys, she would go all over the woods. And sometimes, I guess after they got up a little bigger, Mother would just let them go in the woods. And, then, when it was time to sell them, you had to go hunt them. I don't know how they stayed on your place instead of going to somebody else's, but anyway we'd go and bring them up, and then she would sell—you sold, you kept some of the hens, but you sold all the others. And you always hoped they were not crooked breasts. (laughs) You ever hear of that? And I remember seeing that, the breasts would just be crooked, and it didn't bring near as much money.

TS: Where would you sell them? How would you sell them?

ZKC: Uh, I don't remember if we took them into town. I know we took our eggs to town to sell. I don't remember if we took the turkeys or somebody came around buying them. I know somebody always came around to buy the calves. We always sold a—we kept a female but we sold the male calves. And somebody would come around to buy those. And, I just really don't remember if we—I think somebody came around to buy those turkeys.

TS: What some people would say, that wouldn't understand this would say, Why did you have to let the turkeys lay their eggs in the woods?

ZKC: That's just the way they did it! That was their way. I don't know—well, people do have them penned up, now, all the time, but they have a great big pen to be in, I guess. But I really don't know.

TS: I don't think they're quite the same kind of creatures as they were, the kind of turkeys you're talking about. What would they eat in the woods?

ZKC: I have no idea.

TS: Did you feed them corn?

ZKC: I don't remember feeding the turkeys corn. But we fed the chickens corn, of course, all the time. That's another one of my jobs—feed the chickens.

TS: What do you remember about that?

ZKC: Well, I really don't remember shelling corn, I don't know if I had to do that or not. All I remember is carrying the corn out there and just throwing it out, a handful at a time, to the chickens, and I remember them running to get it.

TS: Did they have a fenced yard, or did they just run around the place?

ZKC: They just ran around the place.

TS: Yard chickens.

ZKC: Well, ours—you know, our barn was always quite a bit farther from the house, and they usually stayed around the barn area. That's the way I remember it.

TS: That's was their center, sort of?

ZKC: Uh-huh.

TS: Roosted in the barn, maybe?

ZKC: Yes.

TS: Did you mark your turkeys?

ZKC: No, we did not mark the turkeys. That's the reason I wonder, how did we—

TS: Well, if you're far enough away from other people's turkeys, you don't have to mark your turkeys.

ZKC: Right. Well, 'course we always had the land that we had rented or was using or whatever. So—but we didn't mark them.

TS: What did the turkeys look like?

ZKC: They looked just exactly like turkeys do today. They're not white, though. You know, I have them come every once and a while out here on this vacant lot. The first one I saw, I just couldn't believe it. They're wild turkeys, and they look just exactly like what we used to grow. Just far as I remember, they tasted just exactly like what you get today.

TS: I've heard that about turkeys from most farms. They were just part of the things you had, and they brought in a little money. They were a money crop.

ZKC: Uh-huh, they were good. They were a good money deal. I know Mother always looked forward to that and depended on it, definitely depended on it. And she depended on that calf that she sold every year.

TS: How did you manage your cattle? How many would you—I'm sure you had milk cows, right?

ZKC: Yes. Now, we never did have very many, but we had some, and sometimes we would—the family where we lived, they would have a cow or two that they didn't—I guess they were not keeping them for milk cows, so we somehow kept one of theirs also. They were just out in the pasture, and when it

was time for—let me think about this. I'm thinking about Levita, we had them in a pasture, there, but of course we didn't have any land around the house, and had to go get that cow every evening and bring her to the barn to milk her and then let her back in the pasture every day. But, out in the country of course, it seems to me like they were in the pen all the time, but I'm just really not sure about that.

TS: Whose job was it to milk the cow, or cows?

ZKC: My mother or my brother, and I think my sister did, part of the time. They wouldn't let me, because I's so scared of the cow. (laughs) I would milk her through the fence. And you got to, you have to, be good to them, and they've got to have confidence in you, I guess, or they won't let their milk down. I remember that part of it. So, I never did give very much help.

TS: My one attempt by my grandmother to teach me to milk was not successful. I never could do it. It was just sort of an idle—she didn't need me to milk the cow. But, I found it pretty hard to do, I wasn't getting much milk out of that cow.

ZKC: (laughs) Well, I guess they need to sort of know you, or—that's what they always said, she won't give her milk down.

TS: It's a hands-on operation, and strange hands—well, how important were the chickens? Did you just use them for your own use, or did you sell them or sell the eggs, or anything about that?

ZKC: Uh, we did both—used them for our own use and sold them, too. And, you know, back then a lot of—what did they call it? They didn't call them salesmen, but they'd come around—peddlers.

TS: But they'd come out to you, right?

ZKC: Right, peddlers. And selling like magazine, and we had magazines, and that was the reason that they gave, the magazines. And I remember a few years that we had—the ice man would bring ice, and we'd pay him in eggs.

TS: Well, eggs were just—they became money.

ZKC: That's right. And now this ice man was a friend of all us kids, so I'm not sure if he did everybody that way. I'm really not sure about that.

TS: Well, tell about how the ice man operated. What would the ice man do? How would he bring the ice? How would you let him know how much ice you wanted, or whatever? Anything about the ice man.

ZKC: The only thing I remember is this hook that they'd hook onto the ice, that's really all I remember. But I know it was nice to have that ice, I remember that. I don't think we ever got enough to make ice cream. We made ice cream in the wintertime, when we had ice. We used to have more ice back then than we do now. We had more snow, too, 'cause we used to play in the snow. We had a lot of snow where we lived. Back in that time, we had a lot of snow. I know we'd skate, one of the places we lived we'd skate. The porch was real long, and we'd skate from one end to the other in that snow.

TS: So, the porch had snow on it, and you'd slide back and forth.

ZKC: Yes. Right.

TS: What was the place at Ewing like, that you moved to?

ZKC: Oh, one place we lived in Ewing, the first place we lived, that's the only time we lived in a little bitty house. It was a little bitty house. I don't know how we all lived there, but I don't remember thinking a thing in the world about it. It had, the way I remember it, just had this long room, and then it had the big room, which would have been the living room and whatever, a wood fireplace in it, and then the

kitchen, which seem like it was kind of a long room, the kitchen and dining room together. It had a little porch, a front porch, and I know Mother always kept this table on the front porch and had flowers on it. And when we'd be coming home from school we'd see those blooms. She had a lot of bachelor buttons, they'd make real bright colors. And that was right on a little creek branch, it wasn't big enough to swim in or anything, I guess that was a branch. And our well there was just what Mother called a surface well. Don't ask me what that is.

TS: Just a shallow well. How about the water at the other places?

ZKC: Oh, at Friendship, the first place we lived, now, if I remember right, we had water like to wash with, but drinking water we had to go to the neighbors, which seemed to me was about a mile, and I really think it was, to get our water—to carry our water to drink. And I remember, some people lived there, once, where we went to get water, and those boys—they were Kinseys also, I don't know for sure if they were kin to us or not, I don't remember that, but they were real nice people, a little girl about my age, and these two boys, one of them especially, would take our water and get it over the fence, 'cause we had to crawl through the fence. He was so tall, he could put one leg over and the other leg over, and he was there.

TS: Just step the fence.

ZKC: He did! And so we had to carry water there to drink, and then on Mr. Dorsey's place, we had to haul, my brothers hauled it in a wagon in barrels, and that was all of our water, washing and everything. And washing, that's another thing. (laughs)

TS: Nobody looks back and wishes they could have the weekly washing like in the old days, even the people that think well about the gardens. What would washing be like? You've got a big family, you've got a lot of dirty clothes, how would you do the weekly washing in your family?

ZKC: We did it all at one time, and seem like we did it on a Saturday. But, anyway, we did it all at one time, and it was a lot. The overalls I had to wash seemed as big as the side of a house. And 'course I was just a kid, and 'course Mother had to do everything, you know. She didn't have a husband, we didn't have a daddy, so she was busy doing everything else. So, my sister and I did the washing, this is the way I remember it. I know we did most of it, anyway. And my sister would—this is the way I tell it, if you talk to her it might be different. She would get out there and get stuff done, get the washing going, and what she left was all the overalls. That's what I had to do. But, like I said, I always thought she was so good that she did exactly what Mother wanted her to do and needed her to do. You know, when I think of it now, that's what she needed. And my three little brothers was always playing something that was so much fun, and I wanted to be with them, so I would—I didn't do my job when it should be done, they had to make me do it—tell me several times. Like, doing the washing dishes and cleaning the house, that was Josie's and my job. Well, Josie cleaned the house, I always had to wash the dishes. But I wouldn't go ahead and do it, I'd go play with my little brothers, 'cause they were always shooting marbles or playing Mumble-peg, or dominoes, or something. So, time I jumped into helping her get all that done, and I just thought she was doing it because she was just such a good person, and now she tells me she did it because she knew that if she hurried up and did that, then I would have to wash the dishes. (both laugh)

TS: Well, some of these things are revealed in time.

ZKC: That's right. That's what she tells me now, but I didn't know it, then.

TS: Well, how did you actually wash the clothes?

ZKC: In that tub was a rub board, and we always had this big iron pot full of water, now, people have

flowers in 'em and everything, and build a fire around the pot, and the water had to boil, it had to be boiling. And 'course we scrubbed the clothes on a rub board.

TS: Did you dip the clothes in the boiling pot and then scrub them on the rub board?

ZKC: No, no, we washed them first. We had warm water out of that pot to wash the clothes in. And then, seem like we might have had warm water for the first rinse water, I'm not sure about that, but I know we had warm water to wash in. And, then, we had to boil them, and 'course you boiled the whites by themselves, you know, and then the coloreds, and then we rinsed them twice or three times. I think it maybe was just twice you had to rinse them.

TS: And then where would you hang them?

ZKC: On the clothesline, we had a clothesline strung from the house to a tree, I think. No, it was probably poles out there, it's different at different places, but we always had to hang them out. So, I got a dishwasher, the first one that came out, I think, 'cause I'd washed too many dishes, and then I never had a clothesline! Yes, I did, I did have a clothesline, at first, after I was married, but I got that washing machine and dryer pretty soon.

TS: You know, it's harder—okay, you're raising cotton on all these places as your money crop, but when you start out the boys are not really—who's doing the heavy work, who's doing the plowing?

ZKC: My oldest brother and my younger brother, they both did. They did that, and they did—I don't ever remember having to pull corn, you know, pull the ears off. Well, you cut the tops off, too, cut the tops off and feed that to your cows. And they say that's a terrible job, and I'm sure it is, 'cause those blades, they stick, and 'course it's always hot as everything when you're doing that. Well, my sister and I don't think ever had to do that, but we had all these brothers that did it, but now we chopped cotton and we picked cotton, and then we did the house stuff.

TS: So, there were plenty of boys, they were just—when your father died your oldest brother was how old?

ZKC: He was nine years old. We lived there with my grandma and grandpa for five years. He was fourteen, then, when we moved away. And Mother, 'course, she'd been a teacher, and Brown's Creek wanted her to teach down there, but there was no nurseries, then, to keep children, and if they had of been, no way she could pay for seven, and she said that she just didn't feel like town was the place to raise boys, and that's the reason she wanted to go to the country. And she did. Now, I thought a lot of times when I was growing up, She sure did a stupid thing, but I think I understood after I got older. I knew why she did it.

TS: Well, I can understand why she could move away when the oldest brother was fourteen, that's old enough to plow. Somebody has to do the heavy—that's old enough to get a place from somebody. So, he would have been the plowman.

ZKC: We did, that's right.

TS: Sometimes the landowners are hard to convince that women could plow land.

ZKC: My mother never did do that, either, she never did do the plowing, but she picked cotton right along with us and chopped cotton and all that right along with us.

TS: Let's talk about the cotton a little. What do you remember about—what of the things you did with the cotton was the most memorable, or maybe that you don't like the most?

ZKC: The most memorable is that I didn't like to pick cotton! (both laugh) We also, these people like in Friendship, you know, I don't really know if it was Friendship or it was Ewing, where we were on

Mr. Hord's and Mr. Jones's places, that they, after all the cotton was picked, then they would let us go through and pick the—what do they call that? Anyway, it was what was left in the boll, there's always some left, and that's what we made our quilts and our mattresses out of. We made mattresses. And we would take that cotton to the gin, and they would gin it, and I guess they made the mattress. You know, I don't really remember. I know my sister and I were talking about that, and I think we disagreed on that. We both knew we took it to the gin and had it ginned, because that cleaned it, you know—

TS: Would you get to pick not just your cotton but all the cotton? You would live on part of the place, and they would give you the right to—I've heard it called scrapping.

ZKC: Yeah, that's right, that's what I was trying to think of, scrapping. Yeah, they'd let us do that, and I'm sure that they got that out of the Bible, because that's what it says, let the widow glean. Anyway, that's what it's talking about, and they were good Christian people.

TS: Do you think people were nice to your mother because of the situation, the widow with all the children? Would you say that?

ZKC: Most people were wonderful, the biggest part of them. Ones like Mr. Hord and Mr. Jones and Mr. Dorsey, that we lived on their places, they were great. And I definitely think they were nicer to us on account of Mother being a widow.

TS: 'Cause that's a hard, hard situation. All those children and the early death of the father, the oldest child nine years old, that's just very, very difficult.

ZKC: Oh, it is. And Levita, when we went there, this was my mother's sister's house that we lived in. She was a schoolteacher, and she was gone a lot of the time, you know. She had one child, and my grandmother and grandfather—really, my stepgrandfather, because my mother's father had died when she was five, but she had a stepfather. And they lived there, and we lived with them for a while, and then they moved out to themselves. Probably couldn't stand it any longer!

TS: That must have been where she got her bad opinion of stepfathers.

ZKC: No, that's what I asked her, and she said, no, she never had—he—to her, he was not like her father, he was not ambitious. He didn't make near as good a living as her own father did. But that was her opinion, and probably a lot of that came from her mother, I imagine, because a lot of mine—you know, I was five years old when my father died, and I remember very little about him. Very little. They tell me he had a great sense of humor, and so I feel like in my subconscious mind I do remember him. But my grandfather was good to us and brought us chewing gum from his store. He led family prayer every night, and sometimes we'd get giggling, like little kids do. You know, it's so funny when you're not supposed to laugh, it's whole lot funnier than when it's okay to laugh. We didn't laugh out loud, I don't think, but I know he heard us and he never said a word.

TS: Now, who is that you're talking about?

ZKC: My stepgrandfather.

TS: Your stepgrandfather. Oh, I understand, okay. What would he do at a family prayer meeting?

ZKC: Uh, he just read the Bible and prayed was the way I remember it, read the Bible and maybe he would pray. Then, we had a storm cellar, a real nice storm cellar. This was at Levita. And my grandmother kept everything spotless, even that storm cellar, and it was concreted all inside, had benches made into the wall up and down each side. And when there was storm, we would go to the storm cellar, but my grandfather wold stay in the house. He'd say if it was his time to die, he'd die no matter where he

was. He would never go down into that storm cellar. (laughs)

TS: But he had built the storm cellar, right?

ZKC: No, I don't think so. I think the house was already built when my aunt bought it. I think so. But he was good to us kids, and, you know, he could have—he had to have a lot of patience for us, with seven of us and oldest one nine, I don't ever remember him raising his voice.

TS: Why do you think your mother decided to move out and start renting?

ZKC: Because she wanted to rent a farm for the boys to grow up. That's what she always said. I think myself it'd been just as well in town, but that was her opinion then, so, that's what she had to do.

TS: If it was good for the boys to go to the country, the girls had to go, too, right?

ZKC: That's right! (laughs) It didn't think that, then, it was just whatever came up. But, now, I will admit, I certainly did like living in Levita more with that out-your-back-door school, and it was a big four-room school, and it went through the tenth grade. Now—(telephone rings) that's my daughter's phone again. At Levita—'course our grandfather had that little store up in Levita, our great-uncle was the postmaster, and another—well, really it was my mother's cousin, but their mother and my mother's mother were twin sisters and my mother and all of them were just like sisters. They lived there—

TS: This is a book written by Mary S. [Scotty] Grandbury, *Tales from Texas and a Rhyme or Two*, published in the last year or so—1999. You were going to tell me about her.

ZKC: We were real good friends, and so we lived up there at the same time for a while—at Friendship—and if I went to see her, went through the woods, all the way, then she'd walk halfway home with me. She'd tell her mother, "May I walk halfway home with her?" And we'd stop there and sit there, find a limb we could sit on, you know, a low one, and talk, and we told each other everything. Everything! And then when she came to my house, well I'd walk halfway home with her. And our notes that we got from our little boyfriends at school, we took them up there and buried them. So, they're on Fort Hood. (laughs) But, then, I loved this book, and everybody that's read it are people that knew her, and knew about the area and all, and they all just love it. It's good.

TS: Before I leave today, I'd like to get her telephone number, just to make sure. We might interview her over the telephone if she was willing.

ZKC: I think she definitely would be. Would you like a book like this? I think it's $3.25, if I remember. Remind me and I'll go find—you know, I put everything so I can find it, and then I can't find it. I like to never found this book this morning. I'm sure you've seen this, *Coryell County Families*.

TS: Uh-huh. Well, what do you remember about picking cotton? How did you—now, there was a lot of difference, a lot of variation, in how much cotton people could pick. Some people picked a lot, some people didn't picked so much.

ZKC: I didn't pick a lot. I think the most I ever picked—well, I got up to two hundred in my later years, not when I was so young. And I remember weighing out forty pounds, I think forty pounds, that I drug in the sack. And the worst thing I remember about, really, that was harder for me than anything else, part of the time we had to empty our own sack, and that's not easy. You're standing in the middle of this cotton, trying to empty your sack.

TS: You're up in the bed of a wagon, right?

ZKC: In the wagon or they might have it piled on a tarp, they might have it piled on that. But you had to get it up in the wagon, too, I can remember that. I didn't like that, that was hard. But your back would

hurt 'cause you stoop over so long, and you crawl a lot. We all had kneepads, I think, and when I get up the next morning, my back was still hurting. That's the way I remember it. My sister and I and this friend of ours, we'd pass a cotton patch in these later years, and Lela Fay would say, "Oh, that just makes me want to get out and pick cotton!" Josie and I'd say, "It makes my back hurt." (laughs) So, people do look at it different ways.

TS: There's not a lot of people that remember picking cotton with fondness, I would say. They may remember other things—

ZKC: But that girl did. That's what she would say, "Oh, that makes me want to get out and pick cotton." Her husband, probably been about four years ago, now, won the lottery, eighteen million dollars—(unintelligible) I met him, but I never did really know him. I worked at the telephone office in Gatesville, and she did, too. In fact, we were working there when Fort Hood first came in, and most of those guys were from New York. We could not understand them, and they couldn't understand us, we talked so different, then. And through the years, we've all moved around so much, people have, it's not that bad anymore. But she would come in, she worked split hours and she'd come in at night at eight o'clock to work until twelve, and during the war there was a song, "They Drew My Number," because that's the way the boys went to war, they drew numbers, and she'd come in singing that song every night, "They Drew My Number." 'Course, we'd all get tickled. I was telling that to somebody and they said, Yeah, they finally drew her number. She got the—

TS: The eighteen million. Well, I always ask about the coming of Fort Hood, and it doesn't really matter when we talk about it. So, you were off the farm and working in the telephone place in Gatesville, running a switchboard. What do you remember about the coming of—were there rumors the army was coming before the army actually showed up? How did that all come about? Anything you remember about that.

ZKC: You know, I don't know why, but I just really don't remember that.

TS: Well, you had already left, so, they weren't going to take your farm.

ZKC: No. But of course I had a lot of relatives, the McBrides and the Beasleys and all the Schultzes, and you know, I don't remember. People would say to us, Well, I know that just killed you for the army to take your land, but I don't ever remember hearing a one of them complain. I think they felt that was just a little thing for them to do, because most of them had sons that was in the war. My husband went, four of my brothers went, and my sister's husband. So, I don't think they felt that way at all. And my mother-in-law, 'course, they had to move out, too, and she said, "That's the only way in the world I'd of ever got away from down there." (laughs) She was glad to get away from down there.

TS: You know, there's a difference, there's got to be a difference, in the reaction of landowners and renters. If you move around all the time, you're not all that attached to a particular house or place, and there's no sense of, this is all mine. If you were renting, the army wasn't taking your land.

ZKC: No. But, see, now, Uncle Demp and Aunt Sally and Aunt Nanny and Uncle Jack, they'd lived down there always, they grew up down there, and you'd think it'd just kill them, but I don't ever remember hearing them complain just one bit.

TS: What about, let's talk about, we haven't talked about—what kind of gardens did your mother try to have at the several places that you were on? What would she try to raise?

ZKC: Well, we always had a big garden, and we had beans, peas, cucumbers, lettuce, tomatoes—nearly anything—cabbage. Nearly anything you could think of, we grew it—potatoes.

TS: How big do you think it would be, just guessing? It might vary, but what was a big garden to your mother?

ZKC: Well, when I was a kid, I know it had to be an acre. I'm just kidding. (laughs) You know, I don't know, it was pretty big. Seems to me like it would've been about the size of say our lot coming down to the street, maybe to the back of the house, here. I think it would have been about like that.

TS: Seventy-five or eighty feet square.

ZKC: Now, that's my guess.

TS: Yeah, yeah. Nobody said, Well, measure out the garden. But people did have big gardens.

ZKC: They did.

TS: Did you try to raise anything in the field for food? Sometimes people would have watermelons or something like that.

ZKC: Uh, we never did have very many. We had some watermelons and cantaloupes, but we never did raise a lot of them.

TS: What about sugar cane or sorghum?

ZKC: We didn't raise that. Our neighbors did, the Dorseys, and they had their own syrup mill, and my brothers and sister helped at that syrup mill.

TS: And got syrup.

ZKC: Yes. And my sister and her friend, one of the Dorsey girls, they had this syrup fight, fun fight of course. Can you imagine?

TS: What would a syrup fight look like?

ZKC: They had syrup all over them, I don't really remember a lot of about it, but my sister told me about it. They were real good friends.

TS: Well, they needed to be to have syrup fights. What do you remember about the syrup mill?

ZKC: I just remember, I hope I'm not telling it wrong, was the big thing that held the syrup—I know they stuck those canes in there somehow or another, and this horse went around.

TS: Went around, yeah. Everybody remembers the horse going around.

ZKC: Yeah. That was the main thing I remember about it. But it was big time of year, you know, when you'd go make that syrup. Yeah, and we got our syrup.

TS: Did you like to eat syrup?

ZKC: I didn't care for the sorghum. My husband thought that was the only syrup there was in the world, was sorghum syrup, and I guess that all that you made out there was called sorghum syrup. I don't know for sure, but I think so. Then, when we didn't live there by him, Mother bought, she'd buy several of those gallon buckets.

TS: Well, most people thought they had to have syrup. If they didn't raise it, they had to buy it or work for it or get it somehow.

ZKC: That's right.

TS: Well, what sort of things would you—you've already talked about canning. What sort of things would your mother try to put up, and how would she do it?

ZKC: Well, she canned beans, I know that. And 'course you had to snap 'em and all that. And then you would have to, I think you always—no, I don't think you had to cook 'em back then before you put 'em in the jar, because, you know—you had to have those jars, Mother had like a baking pan, about like that, full of jars, and that'd be hot, hot water, and have wet clothes in this hot water around all those jars. Exactly why I don't know, but that's the way they were. This was before you canned in a can.

TS: So, it wasn't a pressure cooker, it was a boiler, a hot bath?

ZKC: That sounds like it, I think they called it that.

TS: It's just canning, though they still used jars.

ZKC: And she canned beans and corn, a lot of corn. I hated to do that corn, too, 'cause like I said it's always hot out there. When you'd cut a row off all the way around, then you would scrape it, and that would just fly everywhere. I hated that. That's the reason my husband would say, "Is there anything you liked?" And he liked it all. Although I don't think he would have cared, after we got married, to have lived on the farm and, like, plowed cotton and all that kind of stuff, he just wanted a farm and cattle and stuff like that. And sit around at the neighborhood store and talk. (laughs)

TS: The people that go back to the country don't usually put in a cotton patch so they have the job of picking or anything like that.

ZKC: (laughs) No, they don't.

TS: You know, the people who really work in town and are weekend farmers, they don't do that. I've just got to have my two or three acres of cotton to pick every year. I've noticed that myself.

ZKC: I told my kids I wanted them to pick just a few bolls of cotton just to see what it was like, but I don't think they want to. (both laugh)

TS: Well, how about—was there variation, were some of your sisters or brothers good at picking? Were there some stars? Two hundred pounds in a day, for a young woman or girl, is pretty good.

ZKC: Well, it is, and that wasn't real often, but I did get to that, which thrilled me to death, to get that much. No, you know, in our family, if there was anybody that was really an exceptional one, it would have been my oldest brother. And he got asthma a lot of times, and after it rained and they'd be dirt on the cotton, it really would start him having a—I think he might have been real good at it. Now, my husband was real good, at least that's what he told me all the time. Well, I know he was. He picked a lot, but I don't know how much he picked. I don't think any of us were really like that.

TS: No stars. Well, what do you remember about chopping? Because, that's something—even little kids can chop.

ZKC: Well, the way I remember it, I think your hoe sort of measured between the—you'd just leave about one or two or maybe three—the row would be solid in this cotton coming up about like that, but you had to go along and chop so much of it out. And I think it's about a hoe's length that you'd chop out, and then that was chopping cotton. And then I think you did have to go back through there sometimes and hoe the grass and stuff from around it. I think maybe you did, I don't know a lot about that. I didn't mind that like the picking. I didn't care about it, but I didn't mind it like the picking.

TS: Well, the picking always takes place, or at least it starts, the main picking, when it's so hot.

ZKC: Right. And we never did get to start—now, my sister and I tell this different, but the way I remember it, we did not start to school when everybody else started. Most of 'em, some of the rest of 'em had to do what we had to do. But we had to stay out about two weeks, because that was cotton-picking time,

and we had to finish picking that cotton. And it might not be our cotton, but we had to pick as long as there was cotton to pick, because that was our money. And it was our food. And now my sister says that school started, we went two weeks, and then stayed out a week or two to pick cotton. And I'm not sure she didn't say the school closed, but I don't remember that well. What I remember is that we didn't go the first two weeks. I do remember being in the cotton patch and seeing the kids pass going to school. I didn't like that.

TS: School was definitely preferable, right, is what you're saying? There wasn't any question about which you'd rather have been doing?

ZKC: Yes! That is true. And Mother sent an order every year before school started, a big order to Sears and Roebuck and National Bellas Hess, which was in Chicago.

TS: National—

ZKC: National Bellas Hess. H-e-s-s is the way I remember it.

TS: All one word. It's not all one word?

ZKC: I think it might be, I'm really not sure, that may be spelled together.

TS: Okay, and what would she order from them?

ZKC: Our school clothes, our shoes. And I'd put that new pair of shoes under the bed, and I couldn't wait to get up the next morning and see 'em. (laughs) They were so pretty. And maybe she didn't buy much of anything else then from them during—everything else we got off the farm. She'd send this order in and bought all our school clothes—sweaters, coats if we had to have them, shoes. She always made my sister and I dresses all the time.

TS: I was going to ask what clothes she made.

ZKC: She made all of our dresses, she made of our pajamas. I think that was boys' and girls' both. And I can tell you she made all of our underwear, I think she did, well, I know she did, back when we were kids.

TS: Did she make cotton sacks, pick sacks?

ZKC: Yes, definitely. Scotty tells in here exactly how long that sack was, how wide it was, and so on.

TS: Well, the people who made the sacks sort of made them to fit the people they made them for. You wouldn't all have the same length of strap as if you were six foot tall.

ZKC: That's true.

TS: They always seemed—some were real long and big because people could drag a lot of weight.

ZKC: I guess she's telling the size of hers, and that'd be the same size mine would've been.

TS: Would you try to dump yours so you would not accumulate a whole lot before you dumped it? You could tire yourself out dragging eighty or ninety pounds, right?

ZKC: I never could have done that, no way. Well, I think we all weighed and emptied at the same time, but it's just that I wouldn't have as much as the older ones.

TS: Well, how did your family try to make money do? Now, I understand the cotton, which is on the halves or the fourths, it might be the halves or the fourths, depending. Did you pick for other people?

ZKC: Yes, we did. In fact, I'm afraid to say what year it was, it's about 1925 that we didn't make much cotton in this area, and we went to West Texas, Stephenville—we thought it was the other side of the world, in the Stephenville area, and picked cotton. Two different years we left and picked cotton. Now, one of those years, both of 'em, was before we ever moved to Friendship. It was when we lived at Levita that we did that.

TS: And it was like the local cotton had failed, you didn't have the necessary cash money you needed for the next year, so you go pick somebody else's.

ZKC: Right, where they made some cotton. And a lot of people did that, then. That's what we called it, was West Texas, and we thought it was way off. Stephenville is not very far, but—

TS: But you had to go some place where the drought hadn't struck, to where people had been able to make cotton.

ZKC: That's right.

TS: Okay, your mother sold eggs or traded eggs, it's the same thing. Did you ever sell milk?

ZKC: We didn't. Now, this friend of mine, they had a milk separator and everything and they sold milk all the time. I think they sold cream, because, when you separate it, that milk you leave—it's just milk with nothing in it. And I think they sold the cream, was what they sold.

TS: Was her family—did they own their land? That's what it sounds like.

ZKC: They did.

TS: If you own your place, you generally you have more resources and you're less close to the edge. You don't have to go to West Texas, maybe.

ZKC: That's true. I don't know how my mother ever did it, but she did, she lived to be eighty-three.

TS: It was hard, I understand, it was hard for your mother. It was hard for all of you.

ZKC: It was. Oh, we really didn't know the difference, then, when we were kids, we didn't know the difference. 'Cause nobody had much of anything, so we didn't really think about that.

TS: What would your work clothes have been like, the girls?

ZKC: We wore—in the cotton patch we wore overalls or coveralls, I think we wore overalls most of the time. Bonnets, yes, what do you call them? Something slats. Anyway, it was amazing, they came way out here and had this pasteboard—they were sewed like in strips—and you cut pasteboard the size of that and put pasteboard in every one of those, so that made it stand out here so you wouldn't get—

TS: Stand out in front of your head, it'd be a big eye shade, and it would protect your face from the sun. So, it would stick way out.

ZKC: Yes. And then we wore gloves over our hands and all up our arms, so we wouldn't brown. You didn't want to be brown. (laughs)

TS: You didn't want a nice cotton tan. (both laugh)

ZKC: And at school, at Ewing and at Friendship, well, at the country schools, we didn't have ball teams there, 'cause we didn't have enough people, just went to the seventh grade. But line at Ewing and Maple, we had ball teams. I think basketball, softball, at Ewing we played basketball and softball, and at Maple we played basketball, I don't remember them having softball. And we played every Friday,

usually, the way I remember it, school turned out at noon for all the ball games, and we played communities. This community would come over to our school, or we'd go to their school. And that was every weekend, I mean every Friday. And that was school to me, was playing ball. I wish it had been a little bit of the other, but I liked ball playing best.

TS: Would community people show up to watch those?

ZKC: Yes, they did. Now, my mother, I would have loved for her to see me play ball, but I don't guess she ever did. I really don't think she ever did see me play ball. Of course we lived too far for her to walk to the school, and she didn't have a way to go, so I don't remember her ever seeing us playing. She may have, I'll have to ask Josie about that sometime, but I don't think she ever did.

TS: Well, baseball was a big deal.

ZKC: I loved that. I always played first base or right shortstop, and that's what I like. This good friend of mine was hind catcher, and I wouldn't of been that for love or money. I'd just know that bat was going to hit me in the face. And she's the one that when she would bat she slung her bat. Every time she hit that ball, the bat went, too. But she's a good hind catcher.

TS: That's another reason you don't want to be hind catcher was the batter slung the bat. It's a little bit dangerous to be hind catcher.

ZKC: That's right! Maybe I had seen her do that too much. And then, this other friend was the pitcher, and she was a real good pitcher, she could sling them balls so fast. But I liked that first base and shortstop.

TS: Now, this is baseball were talking about, right? It's not softball, right?

ZKC: Well, you know, I just—

TS: How did people pitch, did they pitch overhanded?

ZKC: It was underhanded.

TS: Although sometimes you might use a baseball and throw it underhanded.

ZKC: You know, I think we did. I don't remember using that softball, 'cause it's bigger. But I can't say that for sure, either. But I loved that, I loved to play ball.

TS: Let's talk about—what do you remember—

The Levita School was a four room, goes through grade ten, it was kind of a grand school, had four classrooms. And the next school was Owl Creek School at Friendship, what did it look like? What was there?

ZKC: Just a little bitty old building, and it had some steps there in the front—(unintelligible)

TS: It's a picture of a one-room school, seventeen children and the teacher, and the teacher is holding a trophy, and you were about to say?

ZKC: We got the trophy for the display background and all. It's my opinion that the background was the big factor in that. My brother Taylor had painted a creek across the canvas, a schoolhouse, and an owl—hence, Owl Creek School. That was the background for our display.

(interruption in taping)

TS: This is another photo of the students at Owl Creek, and once again it looks like the same trophy is being displayed. This photo is also really good, and they're standing at the same place in front of the

main door, and I don't see the teacher in this one. Maybe the teacher is taking the photo?

ZKC: It could be, I don't know. Now, that's me, and that's Josie, and we asked Taylor, my brother who drew the picture, why he wasn't there holding that, since he had won it for the background, which was so beautiful. And he said, "Because I was right up there in front of that school in the field plowing," and he probably was.

TS: That looks like a pretty bare bones old school, kind of on its last legs.

ZKC: It was just four walls and that was it. I don't remember it had a closet or a library. I don't remember if had anything like that. I just don't remember any. I know at Ewing we had this stove, a great big round thing. I don't remember anything like that, so it must have just a small heater.

TS: How would one teacher deal with seven grades? That's about as hard as it gets, you've got more to go through, with more people. Do you know how she did it at Owl Creek?

ZKC: No, the only thing I remember is she'd do like the seventh grade with their lesson in one subject, and then the sixth grade for theirs, and then on down. I don't know how she ever got all that done, all the different studies, with the crowding and everything.

TS: What did you like the best besides what we already know about—the book work?

ZKC: I liked English, I liked the literature part, and I loved math. I liked spelling, I liked to spell. I didn't like history—(unintelligible)

TS: Now, that's how [the recorder] is supposed to do. I was noticing—I hope everything's okay. But, no, we were talking about rabies, and you were thinking about—

ZKC: This was when, this was really at Levita when I was younger. Well, I was ten when we moved away from there. But I remember dreaming about dogs and rabies, so it must have been going on then pretty bad. And all through the time, yeah, I do, I remember about rabies, because this dog of ours, he started having what they call fits, and that would scare me to death, because I thought about rabies. So, she was real concerned, I know, or I wouldn't have thought all that much about it.

TS: You wouldn't have been having bad dreams about it. You're remembering bad dreams in childhood.

ZKC: That's right.

TS: Oh, it was a horror.

ZKC: It was. I still worry about it, in fact. A few days ago I was out here on the patio, and this possum was out there in my back yard, and he started coming towards me. And I thought, You know, things don't do that. So, I thought about rabies, then. But finally, he walked back in the grass.

TS: They don't see very good.

ZKC: Oh, don't they?

TS: They don't see well, they're about as bad as armadillos.

ZKC: I thought it was an armadillo, at first. But it wasn't, it was a possum, because it had that grey hair on it.

TS: What about school programs? You talked about baseball games. School programs you remember at any of these schools? What would happen?

ZKC: Oh, we had wonderful school programs, and every time it was a holiday of any kind, any kind of a

holiday, we would have a program. And everybody was in the program unless some just flat refused, really refused to be. And I think that was wonderful, because like my children grew up in Dallas, and it was just a few, according to how many was in the school, was just a few that would get to be in the plays and things. And a few, according to the size of the school, that got to play ball. And out in the country everybody did all this, and I think you miss something when you don't get that. I really think they missed something. So, we had some kind of a program every time, and at the end of school we had plays. The first night, I think, there was about four nights of this, three or four nights, but first night was the grade school, or primary, I think they called it, now, that would be from the seventh grade on down, would have their program that first night, and the whole community came. And everybody was in it, they had a part in it. Then, the next night would be the eighth and ninth-grade play, and we were all in that, and, now, I loved this. I could have done that every day. And then the next night was the tenth-grade play, and then the next night was the ex-students' play, every year. That was at Ewing. I'm not sure about Maple. Then that Saturday, Saturday of that weekend, we had a big picnic, and everybody carried their lunch. And a bunch of the men made barbecue, I think they cooked it all night long. My husband still talks about that barbecue. And had an all-day thing, then, and usually had some kind of entertainment. They had, like, well, they sold ice cream and stuff like that, I don't know what else they did, but I know you looked forward to that from one year to the next.

TS: Well, that's about as big an end-of-school event as I've heard about. This was at Ewing, and you went about four days.

ZKC: Four nights, that's what it was. And, you know, we'd go at night. Well, now, when we were in school I don't guess we went at night, but after I got out of that school I was in the ex-students' play, and we'd go at night and practice that.

TS: Would these be one-act plays or three-act plays?

ZKC: Three-act plays.

TS: And the ex-students—now, that's a little unusual, the ex-students' play.

ZKC: They did, the ex-students' was on the Saturday night after the picnic, I think.

TS: So, they'd take all day and then that was the big event of the night.

ZKC: That's right.

TS: And, really, Saturday was the biggest of the days, right? More went on Saturday.

ZKC: And my husband lived at Flat, if you know where that is, between here and Gatesville. I didn't know him, then, but he told me he always went to the picnic end-of-school at Ewing. Everybody did, it wasn't just Ewing, they'd come from other places, and he always looked forward to that.

TS: Well, they—all of them, most of them, had end of school, but that doesn't mean that some schools really had grander—Ewing would bring in people from all around, is what you're saying?

ZKC: They did, they did, they talked about those plays, they wanted to come see those plays. I've had people tell me in later years how they loved to go see those plays.

TS: I don't think I've asked enough, what other kind of social things would go on that weren't attached to the school? Would there be house parties? What sort of things would go on?

ZKC: Yes, uh, sometimes there would just be parties around kids' houses, and then they're a few, some of 'em would have dances, just at different, our friends' houses, and we'd all go. And there was some of

'em that wouldn't let you dance, so—Mother wouldn't let us until my oldest brother got up, he just started going anyway. So, then we all did. She didn't tell us we couldn't, but she really didn't like for us to. I did love to dance! (laughs)

TS: Well, it depended on the person giving the house party. Some of the people would give a house party and people wouldn't dance, and sometimes they would. Is that right? Or, would they almost always dance?

ZKC: Uh, they always did. If it was a certain person giving the party, you knew they were going to dance. So, you just went to the dance. But if it was somebody else just giving a party—like at our house, they didn't dance.

TS: What would happen at a party where they didn't dance?

ZKC: We'd play those ring games. You know what that is? But, really, it's the very same things as the dancing except you don't have music. But somebody sings a little—what do they call it today? They have these big groups.

TS: Square dance, square dance callers?

ZKC: Square dance! That's what I's trying to think. It's sort of the same thing, except we didn't have music, but we had the caller. 'Cause my brother-in-law was one of the main callers.

TS: So, that was—some people that would not tolerate full dancing with music would—the line was some place, it was okay to call, well, ring—

ZKC: Ring games is what Mother called them. What they called 'em back then was ring games. But it's just about the same thing as square dancing, except no music.

TS: Yeah.

ZKC: And they would play different kind of games, like Spin the Bottle, and, oh, goodness, Snap. Has anybody ever told you about Snap?

TS: I've heard about Snap, but how did Snap work? I just know the name, is all.

ZKC: (laughs) Okay, everybody would be in a room, in the room, and somebody—you know, I don't remember how it started. But, anyway, they'd be two people outside, like a boy would come in, and he would choose a girl to go, and they'd go outside. I don't remember how—

(taping stops)

TS: This is a second interview with Zell Kinsey Copeland at Belton, Texas, on April 23, 2001. [This interview is part of Prewitt and Associates' Fort Hood Oral History Project sponsored by U.S. Army Fort Hood and conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University.] The interviewer is Thad Sitton.

ZKC: Well, now, I saw this in the paper just the other day, and it reminded me, and probably people have told you this already. The heading of this is "Roosevelt Creates Jobs." And said (reads), "In 1933, President Roosevelt created the Civil Works Administration." They called that the CWA, I remember that. "Designed to create jobs for more than four million unemployed." And, anyway, that reminded me of the WPA, which was Works Progress Administration, and the NYA, which was National Youths Administration, and the CCC camp. I've sure you've heard of all that.

TS: Was there a CCC camp around here?

ZKC: Yes, there was one down at Pecan Grove, and that's just out here not very far. And, now, two of my brothers were in the CCC camp. There was one in Gatesville, because one of my brothers was stationed there for quite a while. And my other brother was stationed down in here somewhere, he was not at that one at Pecan Grove, but I don't know exactly where he was. And, anyway, the WPA was for the men, the NYA was National Youth Administration, that was young kids. And I know that my husband—I didn't know him at the time, but he quit high school to go to the NYA camp, and they helped at—oh boy—okay, I can't even think what it was down at Buchanan—that cave, what was the name of that cave? Longhorn Cavern!

TS: Longhorn Cavern State Park. There's a tower there built of stone, which is an overlook, and there's other stone construction.

ZKC: Uh-huh, that's what they helped build. Right. And he was in his senior year, and he quit, so he didn't quite graduate from high school. He's invited every year to everything just like he did graduate, but—but, anyway, that's what that was for, and then the older ones had the CCC camp, and my two brothers went to that. And it was really wonderful for times like we had then.

TS: Yeah, the CCC—most people, most people enjoyed it, or at least remember that they enjoyed it.

ZKC: That's right, that's right. And, you know, they had a little money when they's there they didn't have before. (laughs) I haven't—

TS: Now, I have go-fishing questions prepared. You know, I may not catch a fish with them in your memory, but—and they sort of jump around, so—uh, what do you remember about, when family, after your mother was out operating on her own on various rent places, about marketing the cotton? Did she market it, or did the landowner whose place you were on market it? I mean hauling it into sell it, you know what I'm talking about?

ZKC: Yeah. Well, you know, I really don't know. I just really don't know. My brothers I'm sure did that, but now whether the people that we rented the land from had anything to do with it or not, I don't think so, but I don't know.

TS: It's just that a widow—it's not that they're not widows that would have gone into town and sold their cotton, but that would have been a little unusual.

ZKC: Now, she did not do that, I know that my mother didn't.

TS: Uh, I told you that I was going to jump around.

ZKC: That's okay.

TS: In terms of the cash, the operating cash that your family needed during the year, now, am I right that most of it would be from the bale, or two bales, of cotton?

ZKC: It would be. And then there was from the turkeys and from the eggs and her selling a calf once a year.

TS: Yeah, yeah, you mentioned—and how did she sell the eggs? I don't recall if we talked about that or not.

ZKC: Oh, we took them into town at times. Now, I, my sister and I, both, wondered how we got places that we remember that we went. We don't know how we went, we don't know how we got to Gatesville as many times as we went, but we went quite often. But, you know, we didn't have a car, we didn't have a wagon. We've been to town in the wagon, but that was friends. (laughs)

TS: You must have walked to Gatesville.

ZKC: It was a little too far to walk to Gatesville. It was at least, I think—you know, I'm not sure how far it

was from Ewing, I think from Friendship it was twelve miles. It was too far to go from Ewing also, but I don't remember how far it was.

TS: Nobody would—twelve miles is a pretty long buggy ride in and out in a day, you almost wouldn't have time to do business.

ZKC: That's true. But that's the way they all went, all those people in there—at Friendship.

TS: What about—some of the people that lived out here cut and sold cedar posts?

ZKC: Yeah, now, I've heard my husband talk about that. He did that when he was young. But we never did do that. 'Course, we didn't own the land, you know.

TS: Yeah, that's a good point, that's a landowner's—some of the landowners would cut cedar and take it into the nearest little store and would swap out for so much a post. The man I interviewed after I interviewed you said that if they got hungry they'd just cut some cedar posts.

Ever pick up any pecans? Sometimes people picked up pecans for sale.

ZKC: Well, we didn't. I don't guess there were that many in that area. I just don't remember, but I know we ate pecans all the time. Somebody had a big handful of pecans at school all the time. In fact, if you ate pecans during books—so we called it, during books—you got in trouble, like you did if you'd drink water. In fact, I know some people who did that and got in trouble, and I was one of 'em. (laughs) One of my friends, she and I did, and this real young girl, well, we got by with it, but she caught the young girl, she probably wasn't any more than maybe second or third grade, we were in the seventh, and so she caught her, so she told on us. Which I don't blame her, I'm glad she did, because that would have been awful for that little girl—

TS: She cut a deal. In other words, I'm caught, but I'll make you a deal. I'll reveal some greater criminals.

ZKC: There you go. I think we were the leaders.

TS: How did the teachers—that's something I didn't ask before. How did the teachers handle discipline? I know that discipline probably wasn't a big problem in those schools, but how did the teachers handle discipline?

ZKC: With a little switch. That's what she had, was a switch. And then my mother had those problems even way back when she taught. In fact, at one time one guy's parents—and some of those boys were as old or older than she was—she got her first certificate when she was seventeen years old, and so she gave two boys a whipping one day. I think they were fighting, but I'm not sure what. Well, one of them, when she got through with 'em, he sassed her, so she gave him some more licks. Now, I don't know what she used, I really don't know. I think it was a switch, though, 'cause I think I've heard her say that I think she'd send the boy down to get the switch. And so she gave him some more. Well, his daddy came down the next morning, and he was going to sue her. And people don't know this happened away back then, and they think that just happens today. But, anyway, after it was explained to him what happened, the daddy, well, he didn't do anything. But things like that happened away back then, just the same.

TS: I was going to ask you about your mother's teaching career. You said she started at seventeen, that's early as you can get a certificate—you know, a temporary, I believe. Where did she first teach?

ZKC: I'm not sure what that first school was. Uh, it may have been Brown's Creek, because I know she lived in that area when she went to school, because she went to Mary Hardin Baylor. Back then, she went to what was called the Normal. It was at the same university it is now, but it wasn't a university then.

TS: So, she trained to be a teacher.

ZKC: Yes, she did. She was seventeen when she got her first one, and she got a school, but by the time school started they consolidated with another one, so she went back to school, then, that year, and she really didn't start teaching until she was eighteen. And I'm sure her first schools must have been Brown's Creek and Maple.

TS: But, you know, there's always some big old boys, quote, the big old boys, and they're seventeen and eighteen, right?

ZKC: That's right, they were.

TS: They may have been in the seventh grade, but they were—

ZKC: That's right, they really were. And I couldn't tell you who they were, I have no idea.

TS: Well, did she like to teach?

ZKC: She loved teaching. Brown's Creek offered her the school after my father passed away, but she just couldn't see how she could do it. With seven children, you just couldn't do it. And it wasn't back then like it is now, that there were nurseries and things, you know, where you could leave the children. There was no such thing.

TS: You didn't get paid enough to support seven children.

ZKC: That's true, that's true. Today, that would be awful, I don't know what it would cost you.

TS: It's not at the one-bale-of-cotton level.

ZKC: Now, it isn't.

TS: Well, did she continue to teach after she got married and started to have kids?

ZKC: No, see, she didn't get married until she was twenty-nine, and she had taught. She taught for nine years, and the rest of the time in there, from the time she was seventeen until the time she was twenty-nine, she went to school. What years she didn't teach, she went to school. No, she didn't teach after she got married.

TS: Well, you know, it would have been hard. The typical rural schoolteacher was an unmarried young woman, because when you started to have children, that was kind of the end of your career, unless you lived right on the doorstep of a school, or something like that.

ZKC: That's right. And I don't know if it would have worked then, or not. But, and my father, I think he was thirty-two when they got married. Neither one had been married before. They had been boyfriend and girlfriend, or whatever you call it back then, since she was fourteen, and didn't get married until she was twenty-nine. (laughs)

TS: Isn't that strange how often do you hear about that? They go with each other until—where was he from, your father?

ZKC: He was from down there also—Boaz, Maple, or that area.

TS: Same general area.

ZKC: Yes. They went to school together, and then she taught his little brothers. (interruption in taping; looks for a photograph)

TS: What do you think your mother liked best about teaching? Did she ever say? Ever recall her saying anything about it? That she missed it, or—she might never have said anything.

ZKC: I don't remember her saying, but I know she loved learning, she loved teaching. But after we were all grown and gone, during the war, really, they wanted teachers, and we lived in Grand Prairie, right out of Dallas, and she lived with us, my husband and I. She could have taught, they wanted 'em in Arlington so bad. But I think she had been out of that so long, she just felt she couldn't do it. And I think she'd just have loved it, if she'd've once got back in it, but she didn't. And then, she never did get back in it.

TS: It would've been quite a plunge to get back in it. She knew that Arlington was not where she was used to.

ZKC: That's true.

TS: Do you remember what the kids—when you were going, other than the pecans, what would the kids take for lunch? Had a lunch period every day, right?

ZKC: Right. Well, mostly just a sandwich of some kind. I think a few of 'em took fruit, maybe, I really don't remember if they did or not. I know we didn't. I don't remember except, except the sandwiches. That's all I remember. And I didn't think to ask anybody, I should've asked but I didn't think of that question.

TS: Now, I apologize for jumping around. At Friendship and Ewing, other than the social affairs that were focused on the schools, did you have—what would happen on the weekends, did you have family visits? Would you have dances at people's homes?

ZKC: They had dances at some of the people's homes, our friends' homes. Or a party, some of them just gave parties. A few of them gave the dances. And we didn't get to go to dances until our oldest brother got old enough that he just went anyway. So, then, we just went right along with him, anyway.

TS: So, he broke the ice.

ZKC: Yes.

TS: So, your mother—I remember this now—she was anti-dance.

ZKC: Right, she was. She didn't tell us we couldn't go, or we wouldn't have gone, but when he started going we started going, too. That was just to our friends in the community, we didn't go anywhere else to them. And on Sundays there was always, like at Friendship, a whole group of kids would be at our house, lots of times including the preacher, too, who would be real—our preacher was always a student out of Baylor, and my sister was telling me that we didn't have church every Sunday. We had Sunday school every Sunday, but we had church I think about once a month. And it would be a student from Baylor University in Waco. So, he would be at our house lots of times, and he wasn't much older than the rest of us. But, anyway, they'd be a whole group there. If we weren't there, and we were there most of the time, but if we weren't there, we'd all be at somebody else's house, the whole group of us.

TS: This is kind of a Sunday social after church or after Sunday school.

ZKC: Right.

TS: Who would do the Sunday School? If the preacher comes out once a month, maybe, who would run the Sunday schools?

ZKC: Well, I guess just our teachers did. I don't even remember that, but that's what my sister says—that we just had church, the preacher came, about once a month. And there were several men in the community that were leaders, really were leaders, in the church. I know one of them, Mr. York, led the singing all the time. And then Mr. Dorsey was a big leader in the church at Friendship. And Mr. Wiegand, he moved away, he lived there part of the time, and he was a big leader in the church. And my Sunday school teacher that I remember more than any other was Mary, used to be Dorsey, and was Powell, Mary Powell. And she's the one I was telling you that lives in Gatesville, now, and her next birthday she's going to be one hundred.

TS: I looked her name up, and—they're four of us interviewing people—and somebody had already met her, and I hope he gets around to—he put his dibs on to interview her, and I hope he hurries up and does it. Because I checked, they did know about her. The, uh, what about revivals? Did you attend any of those?

ZKC: Always.

TS: What happened at those?

ZKC: Well, all I remember is just, you know, we had it at night, every night and every morning, and it was always a week. In fact, I think it was two weeks. Josie and I were talking about that the other day, and I really think it was two weeks, but I'm not going to say that for sure. But it was at least a week. And even after we were going to school at Ewing, some of our friends would come and spend that whole time with us and go to that revival.

TS: They were a big deal.

ZKC: They were, and now they have about three days of it, once a year.

TS: Well, would they do something every night, have a program every night? Would people go and come back to it, like?

ZKC: Yes. Every night, every morning and every night during the revival. And, 'course, all we young people sang in the choir. We just didn't think anything about it, except we went to sing in the choir, you know. And 'course that was just a certain area in this church, because at Friendship it was what you call a covered arbor. It wasn't a tent, it had straw up there, I think, over the top.

TS: It was an old-fashioned brush arbor, then. Later, they used tin roofs on some of them, but you don't remember a tin roof.

ZKC: No, I remember the straw. And seem like there was straw on the ground, too, where you walked. I think there was.

TS: At which church was this, again, what was the name of it?

ZKC: That was, uh—well, it was Friendship Church, that was the only church that was in the neighborhood. The next neighborhood, which wouldn't have been very far, there was other churches, but it'd been far if you had to walk. I don't know, we were always in the choir at every service—not just morning but every service. And then, kids would go home with us and we'd go home with them. It was just something you looked forward to all the time as a kid.

TS: And you said that some people would come in, that lived too far away, and would stay with relatives during the period of the revival to attend the revival.

ZKC: Well, now, all I remember doing that would just be kids. I had friends, two friends, that came from Ewing and spent—I think they spent the whole week with me.

TS: And the occasion was a revival. And the parents would have said, Well, I guess we'll let 'em do it. It'll be good for 'em.

ZKC: Right, probably that'd have a lot to do with it.

TS: But it was also social.

ZKC: Yes, definitely. We didn't realize that then, we just knew it was the revival, and everybody was going. The men, I remember, 'course, they'd be working in the field, and some of them would take out of a morning long enough to come to a revival, and some of them didn't, but they all came at night. And that was almost everyone in the community.

TS: So, a pretty high percentage of attendance.

ZKC: Right.

TS: How about baptisms, you remember baptisms?

ZKC: You know, Josie probably would remember that, but I can't remember it. I just barely remember when I was baptized. I know it was a creek. I don't even know what creek, probably Owl Creek somewhere. But I don't know where.

TS: Well, that has a good sound to it, baptized in Owl Creek.

ZKC: Well, Owl Creek was right there, so—see, our school was Owl Creek School.

TS: Could you hear owls at Owl Creek?

ZKC: Um, I heard those all my life. In fact, we had an owl for a pet, once. My brothers, I think, found it injured, and they brought it home, and Mother doctored it and it got well, and it lived in our house for a long time. Finally, someway or another, it accidentally flew out and was gone.

TS: So, it went back to the wild. It was rehabilitated and—what did it look like? There's a challenging—

ZKC: I don't anymore remember that than anything.

TS: I always think when I'm doing interviews, if someone asked me what something looked like, I would—the barred owl was the common owl of the larger owls. (imitates eight-note call of barred owl)

ZKC: Well, I didn't know that.

TS: Sorry about that. I'm transcribing it, so I may cut out the owl. You brought up the subject of pets, what other pets did you have?

ZKC: We had a dog, and we had cats. They were all outside, 'cause we lived in the country and they could run everywhere. So, we didn't have them in the house. Now, I think the cats could come in the house, but they were usually outside.

TS: What did you feed them? You weren't opening little cans of—

ZKC: No, we didn't do that. You know, I don't know, 'cause we didn't have a lot of scraps. (laughs) With seven kids, you don't have a lot of scraps. I don't really know, I remember after we moved to town, a long time after that, and we still had that dog. I remember my grandmother, I think she would give that dog half of what she had to eat, if it was necessary.

TS: Well, the cats might of got some spare milk. But cats would hang around for little bits and would catch rats. That was part of the idea, right, that they would catch rodents?

ZKC: Probably, but I don't remember that. But the dog, you know, he set outside and I'm sure he got his own food a lot.

TS: Dogs are less good at feeding themselves.

ZKC: That's what I've been told. I didn't realize that, but I've been told that by friends.

TS: Uh, let's see. Jumping around, these two, the homes that you lived in, I know we're talking about several places. What was the—you didn't have electricity, so what kind of lighting did you have?

ZKC: The lamps. We had to fill the lamps up and trim the wicks, I think that was everyday's business, and wash the globe. I think that was everyday. And you had to be real careful that it wasn't too close to your curtain, or I think I remember a time or two that ours caught on fire.

TS: That's—they burned down an awful lot of houses. I recall reading in the county newspapers, so-and-so's home burned down, it was thought to be caused by—the kerosene lamps set a lot of places on fire, so did the wood stoves. What kind of wood stoves did you have, or did you have fireplaces?

ZKC: Oh, we had fireplaces most of the time. In fact, I don't remember ever having the wood stove to heat by, we always had the fireplace. That's what I remember. I know my husband said he always had the heater, and he always wished he had a fireplace. And I always thought the heater would be better. That fireplace, you just got warm in one spot, and you had to turn around if you warmed in another spot. And I just thought the heater would be better, but he didn't feel that way, 'cause he always had the heater.

TS: Well, the heaters, I mean the wood stoves for heating, were kind of the more modern, up-to-date, replacement for fireplaces.

ZKC: Could've been.

Last winter our power was off for about two days. We used the fireplace. It's real good when you don't have anything else!

TS: Did your mother—she would have had cook stoves, right?

ZKC: Yes, but now, I remember, I don't know if this was always—where I remember it more it was at Ewing, and it was probably at every place we lived, that she cooked on the fireplace a lot, too. She always cooked the cornbread and the biscuits in this big iron pot, iron deal, and it had legs. It was about that deep, as I remember it, and it had legs about like that, and you put the coals all under there, and then you put coals on top of the lid. The lid had a little whatever you call it up here, where it would hold the coals. And I think that's the best biscuits and cornbread I ever ate.

TS: So, you'd have coals under it and then pile coals on top of it, so you'd get heat from both sides?

ZKC: That's right, and they would be just as brown on top, you know, as like you cook 'em today. It was good.

TS: Did she cook anything else in the fireplace? Or mainly the cornbread?

ZKC: That's really what I remember. I know way back they cooked pots of beans, but I don't remember seeing her doing that.

TS: Cooking in the fireplace is the old way—those Dutch ovens or whatever you call that.

ZKC: That might have been what it was called. I don't know.

TS: There were three-legged skillets and various things that were designed to use in the fireplace. You still see that. Let's see, now, did you have a telephone at any of these places?

ZKC: You know, we did at some of them, 'cause the telephone was already there in the house. I guess she didn't have to pay every month like you do now, or I'm sure we would not have had one. But you didn't call your friends all the time like people do all time, all these years for a long time. But I don't remember ever just calling a friend on one of those telephones, and most of them probably did not have a telephone. And like I said, the only reason we did—well, at Ewing, this family had moved out, they'd already moved and gone to Gatesville, and their telephone was there. And so we had that.

TS: They tended to be in the landowners' houses, and in this case you had inherited a landowner's house. He had left the countryside for the town.

ZKC: That's true.

TS: And that was a nicer house, right?

ZKC: Yes, that was much nicer, but we had a telephone in the house at Friendship, and I don't know how that one happened to be there. But it was there when we moved in. The first house we lived in, now, the second house we lived in at Friendship did not have a telephone.

TS: Did, uh—how about radios? Did you have a radio at any place? You know, you can have those battery radios or crystal radios that don't require plug ins.

ZKC: Uh, my cousin, who lived with us part of the time—my mother had only one sister, and she had one son, and she was a widow, just her and her son—

(telephone rings; interruption in taping)

TS: You were just starting to talk about from some notes about his family, your husband's family, who ended up—at least he grew up in Seattle. What were you saying? Say that again.

ZKC: Uh, his grandfather, I just got this information last night, his grandfather was George Washington Copeland. My daddy was George Washington Kinsey. (laughs) And they had seven boys and five girls, and they moved down in there from Georgia. I don't know what year. I was talking to my husband's brother last night, he only had one brother and no sisters, and he lives in Arkansas, and he didn't know either, but he was going to send me a bunch of information that somebody had sent him from the internet, and I said, "Well, it'll be too late for the interview." But, anyway, they came from Georgia, and my people came from Alabama and settled down there. And I don't know why, and Virgil said he didn't know why, and I've been asked this, interviewed for another book, why they came here. And I don't know. I really don't know. But it wouldn't be just one family, it would be like my grandmother and grandfather and her twin sister and her husband and family. They all came here at the same time, but I don't know why they left Alabama to come here.

TS: Well, to get cheaper land or better land. A lot of people left the old South after the Civil War because it was in such bad shape. They were moving—I mean, this whole state is full of people from Alabama and Georgia and Mississippi, just like where my family came from. Uh, well okay, that was something I was going to ask. Uh, do you know anything about—your mother didn't have a lot of cash to support the whole family. I'm just still trying to figure out how she did it. Clearly, she's an educated woman, who can plan, but do you have any sense of how she did it? Did she calculate every penny?

ZKC: I'm sure she calculated every penny, but we wonder today how in the world she did it. We just can't imagine how she raised us seven kids, sent us to school all that time.

TS: You always got clothes for school. You know, there's not a great difference between rich people and poor people, but people still look—you know, they are the kids from the families that are so badly off that even when the snow's on the ground, they're still coming to school barefooted, right? But you remember she always managed to get you school clothes, and you don't remember running out of food or anything, right?

ZKC: Right. No, I don't ever remember, and I think this is amazing, I never remember really being hungry. There's time when we were eating I could have eaten more, but I wasn't really hungry. I just don't remember it at all, and none of the rest of 'em, my brothers and sisters, do either.

TS: Well, did everybody behave discreetly at the table, or did they try—some of my relatives, I would eat with them, but I never could get very much because they got everything so fast.

ZKC: My mother always said—I don't remember anything like that, really, I just remember each one getting our part. But Mother always said, and I'm not going to call names, because I want to still live around here, one of my brothers, she said he would sit back and this other brother would grab everything he could—she had to control him in other words, but I'm not giving their names. (laughs) So, there was a little bit there, but I don't remember that. I just remember that we all—I don't know how we knew how much was our part and how much wasn't, because I know Mother didn't just hand it out. I just don't know. At the table my mother always gave thanks. We always had to say, Please pass the food, and then after it was passed we said, Thank you. There was no question, there!

TS: If she had to referee that, she would referee.

ZKC: Yes, she would. Because she said she kind of control this one that wanted to grab everything. (laughs)

TS: How about your mother's home remedies? When you got sick, did she believe in spring tonics? Anything about—

ZKC: You know, she was not—I'm going to call it old-fashioned—in that way, like so many people then were. We didn't do the spring tonic thing, and she had the Vicks salve, I remember the Vicks salve, always. If we had an upset stomach she fixed this. It was a little vinegar and sugar and water and a little soda. Just a little bit of soda. And put it all in there together, and it'd just foam up, and that's what you'd drink for your upset stomach. And I've sneaked it, sometimes, because I thought it was good.

TS: Tastes sort of like soda water.

ZKC: I guess it did. It was just good!

TS: You didn't get a lot of sweets. Well, you got syrup, right? You always had syrup.

ZKC: We had sweets on Sunday, and that was it. We had cake sometimes on Sunday. I know we always had chocolate pies, and we had a coconut cake.

TS: Was Sunday dinner a big dinner, or the big dinner, of the week?

ZKC: Well, I don't remember it really being a big dinner except, if we were home, we weren't the only ones there, there was other kids, too. And I know one man told me not real long ago, he was my oldest brother's friend—'course, my oldest brother's only five years older than me—he said that somehow, every Sunday, he ended up at our house. And he said, "I don't know how in the world your mother did that," and I don't either. We all wonder, How in the world. These kids, they was kids when we were, when I meet some of them, that's what they nearly always say, How in the world did she do that? I don't remember her ever getting upset at us, you know, being a bunch of us. Like, my daughter has her little grandson with her, now, and he's wild. And just think about a whole house full of us!

TS: She fed all those people.

ZKC: Yeah, she did.

TS: But there really is something a little mysterious here, about—

ZKC: There is. My friend, the sister to the one that wrote this book, she lived at our house for a while in Gatesville. This was a lot of years later, 'cause I guess it was about World War II time. And she said that Mother—my brothers would have their friends in there, William A. Powell was one of the main ones, and she said Mother would send her to the store. I guess I was at work. I don't think I'd already gone, then, I hadn't married, then. Guess I was at work. She said Mother would give her, she told how much money, and send her to the store to get this, this, and this for them to cook for all that much boys. But there is nothing mysterious about it, now, to me. She did it by reading her Bible, praying, and having a lot of faith in God. That was it.

TS: Well, it's all these kids, and this is in a family situation that in some other families saw the children might have had to be living with sisters. I've heard about that, you know. And instead, we've got company coming to dinner!

ZKC: That's right. Well, a lot of people wanted—when my daddy died, a lot of people wanted Mother to put us in an orphans' home, which I can understand, and probably thought, How in the world is she going to do this? But she was determined not to, and she didn't.

TS: Even moved the boys back out to the countryside, it'd be better for them, right?

ZKC: Right, right.

TS: Well, how did you, how did you, come to move into town? And how old were you, and when did you—you were going to high school, right? You went to high school?

ZKC: Yes. Now, I didn't get to go finish the eleventh grade. See, out in the country was just the tenth grade. And there was no busses, then, and I didn't get to finish the eleventh until my sister moved. She married and moved to Gatesville, and I stayed with her and finished high school. Finished that last grade.

TS: 'Cause you couldn't have afforded to have just board with somebody.

ZKC: No. That's what some people did, you know, but we couldn't, of course.

TS: So, the sister married and established a home in Gatesville. And what had you been—had you been out of school for a year or so?

ZKC: Yes, about three years, in fact. I'd been out of school.

TS: Is this when you were working at—what were you doing in those years?

ZKC: Well, I stayed at home on the farm with Mother and them some. Because, I wanted to leave, but I always felt like Mother—she just looked like that her whole life was leaving if I left. 'Course, I was the only girl left, then, you know, because Josie was already gone. And I would have left sooner if it hadn't been for that, and I guess that was my feelings maybe more than hers, I don't know. But that's just the way it looked to me. And 'course, by then she was—how old was she? She was getting way up there. I think when I got married she was sixty. 'Course, that's young, now. (laughs) But then it wasn't, and with her having done all she had done.

TS: Well, who was on the farm in those couple of years? Your mother, yourself, the girls were gone—a brother?

ZKC: My brothers were still there. Uh, my oldest brother had gotten married. In fact, he left when he was about sixteen at one time, and he went on this long trip to Montana, we had relatives in Montana. He went up there and stayed awhile, worked on their ranch, and then my next brother had to be the lead on the farm. And his son lives right around the corner up there, my second brother's son.

TS: And he was essentially running the farm. And this was Ewing?

ZKC: Yes. This was still at Friendship, I think, when my oldest brother left for a while, and then he came back and lived at home for several years after that. Probably wasn't as many years as I think it was, you know. Because, back then, it seemed like a lot longer. Now, time just passes like that. It didn't do that, then.

TS: How did you meet your husband?

ZKC: When I was working in Gatesville at the restaurant, and I'd already started working part-time at the telephone office—training, really, and going to night school. I was taking typing and shorthand and all that stuff. And he was in the CCC camp, stationed in Gatesville, and he was going to night school. He was from the Flat—I mean, Seattle and went to high school in the Flat—but I never did meet him until then.

TS: Well, that's a good ways away, isn't it? It's not far from Gatesville, but it's a good ways from—

ZKC: Friendship. Well, for back then it was a long way.

TS: The whole other side of the country. So, that's when you met him. That would have been the early '30s? The '30s?

ZKC: No. He's younger than I am, he's younger than me. I finished the tenth at Maple in 1933 and the eleventh at Gatesville in 1937. And I was working, and I met him at night school.

TS: Going back—we're jumping all over, but—

ZKC: That's okay.

TS: What were the roads like around Friendship? You couldn't go anywhere at all times, right?

ZKC: Mud! Oh, walking and in the car, there was mud. Well, not the car, there wasn't the car, much. When my cousin came and lived with us at Friendship, he had a car. But now, he and my older brother went in that car, I don't remember going in that car very much.

TS: Would the creeks get up and cut the roads?

ZKC: No, I don't think they ever did where we lived at Ewing or Friendship, either one. I don't remember that they did. Now, the river would get out between the country and Gatesville, but we didn't go there anyway. But I've always heard 'em talk about the river getting out, and people couldn't get through.

TS: I mean, Gatesville was not—where you lived, Belton, if you went into town you went into Belton, right?

ZKC: No, if we ever went to town, we went to Gatesville. But now my husband, if they came to town they came to Temple most of the time. They went to Gatesville some, but their main place was come to Temple.

TS: Do you recall any major weather events, growing up, like tornadoes or floods, or anything?

ZKC: I don't remember tornadoes or floods, I remember all the snow. There was lots of snow.

TS: I think it was colder.

ZKC: Oh, it had to be, 'cause we'd walk through the snow to school, you know, which was fun, 'cause we could skate on it. I know at Levita, that was before we had moved to the camp area, I remember storms then, and we had a storm house. And we'd go to that storm house. I guess if you had one everywhere you went, you'd go there, but if you don't have one you don't think anything about it. You don't think anything about the need to go to the storm house. I get in my hall closet. (laughs)

TS: Well, a class five tornado just cut through the country just south of us here, the great Jarrell tornado.

ZKC: Oh, well, it came through right up here, but I was in California. That was luck. But it didn't do any damage here at my house. It did damage all down in there, but—like Morgan's Point, I think it came right through there.

TS: I remember that, now, that they said it started up close to Belton, and then it got bigger and bigger as it moved southeast. Uh, talking about the roads, do you remember what sort of visitors would come around, peddlers and stuff. Any memories of those?

ZKC: Uh, yes, because they would sell like magazines, and Mother would sell 'em a chicken for a subscription to a magazine. And we loved those magazines, my sister and I had a race every time we were going to get one which one got to read it first. We just had a race for us to get that paper first so we'd get to read it. I remember the *Farm and Ranch*, and there was one named *Copperas Farmer*, and others. I don't know, we must have had three or four magazines, and 'course that's the way she got along, then. Now, when we were just really young and lived at Levita, I told you about that, my brother had a magazine route that was those real good magazines away back then.

TS: You told me about that, but I think that that's on the messed-up bit of tape. Tell me again about that, because that's interesting.

ZKC: Well, when my father passed away, my oldest brother was only nine. And of course there was six younger than that, my youngest brother was about a month old. So, one of the ways that we made money was my brother had this magazine route, those real good magazines. Right now I can't think of what they were to save me, them that are so noted for the covers today. I can't think what that is.

TS: *Life*? *Time*?

ZKC: No, no. They were all major magazines that he sold. I think today, I can think of things that I knew back then, and, we've talked about this, how in the world did we know it? We didn't have any radio or anything like that, but we must have read a lot of it in those magazines. Because, what he didn't sell, he could tear the back off and send it in, and he got paid for it anyway, and so we had the magazines, then. And that must have been the way we learned a lot. But he had a regular route for those magazines, and I'm sure that was pretty good money because they—you know, it wouldn't sound like good money today, but back then I'm sure it helped a lot. And 'course that was our food money. And Mother did washing for the doctor, there, one of the doctors, washing and ironing. And then we'd pick cotton at cotton-picking time.

TS: Picked for other people?

ZKC: Yes, yes, 'cause we didn't have any land, there. See, we lived with my grandmother and grandfather, and they just had their—it was just a house and a lot. Now, we lived next door there to a house that Mother had had built before she was ever married. When she was teaching school she had this house built, but she had sold it when she got married. Grandma and Grandpa owned this house next door to her. And then my brother worked with my uncle. Really, he wasn't my uncle, but—his wife was my mother's first cousin, but we called them uncle and aunt, and they seemed like it. And he worked with him, probably from the time he was nine years old, did everything on the farm, he had a big farm.

And I know they had worlds and worlds of watermelons, and he helped him rob the bees, and he could do any of that. He says today, says, That's where I learned everything. No way he could have worked—you know, when we moved out—we moved out, then, when he was nine. Wait a minute, he was nine when we moved there, we moved out when he was fourteen. We stayed there five years. And he said that's how he learned to do everything.

TS: This is happening at the Levita community, Coryell County. Levita was bigger place than Friendship, Ewing—

ZKC: Much bigger. It's not much today, but it was pretty big back then. I mean, we thought it was big. In fact, right behind our house, right beside of our house, was three churches, the Baptist, the Methodist, and I think Church of Christ. And then, I told you before but it may be out, our back-yard fence was the schoolyard fence, there. And that's why it was such a change to move out here to the country where we had to walk. My sister said it was three or four miles, I'm not sure. And that first day, you know, we got there at recess. 'Cause we walked through the woods and played in the water.

TS: Well, your house was right at the center of Levita. I mean, the school fence and the churches. So, it was a three-church town, that's pretty—

ZKC: Yes. Oh, there was another one in the town, then—the Apostolic it was called, then.

TS: Was there a gin at Levita?

ZKC: Yes, there was.

TS: A post office, I'm sure?

ZKC: Yes. In fact, my uncle was postmaster, there.

TS: So, it was a considerable—how far was the move from Levita to the Friendship area?

ZKC: It was twelve miles from Levita to Gatesville, so that was twelve miles, and I think it was twelve miles, and I think that maybe was what it was, then, to Friendship. That was twenty-four miles, but that was forever, back then. You just didn't go that far.

TS: How come—maybe you told this before, but how did your mother come to move—now, that's a long way, she wants to move back out in the country, so how come she moves so far?

ZKC: This family that had lived there at Levita, in fact we went to church, they picked us up at times in their wagon, they had, I think they had five or six kids, all about the same age as we were. We knew them at Levita, went to school with 'em. And then he moved, he bought land. I guess he owned land at Levita, I don't remember that part of it, but he probably did. Now, why they moved to Friendship, I don't know, but they had—

TS: You knew the people that owned the land on the first place you lived on. You had met them at Levita and knew them at Levita, and then they moved down there, and he had a rent place on the land, he bought land down there, and that's when your oldest brother got fourteen, he could be expected to plow, to do the heavy plowing. And so, this was really the first—he had been working since he was nine, he knew how to do it, he knew how to farm at that point. And so this is really almost the first time that your mother can move the family out in the country. Because at fourteen, most people would assume that a good-sized boy could plow, could do plowing at fourteen, so there you go out in the—Levita is north of Gatesville.

ZKC: Levita is west of Gatesville.

TS: So, you're moving kind of southeast? Or south?

ZKC: Now to me it would be south.

TS: My mental map of Coryell County, and where all the communities are, is not very good at this point.

ZKC: Well, my mental map is not always correct. (laughs)

TS: Well, what do you remember about moving? Anything about your first impressions of the new place? Did you wish you were back in Levita? What did you think about it?

ZKC: Oh, think I wished that a lot of times, but that might have been a few years later. Because, it was such a change, and at Levita we had so many relatives there. Uncle Epps was postmaster, his last name was Griffin. And this is a bunch of his daughters that were in the school (refers to a photograph), 'cause they moved to Levita.

TS: It was moving from a settled, kind of crossroads, community, with a whole bunch of different relatives—it wasn't like living in the courthouse town, but it was a community, there was a bunch of people gathered in there, there were several churches. And you were just moving back out to where you had to walk miles to school.

ZKC: Uh-huh, and we had a four-room, big school at Levita, and it went through—you know, I guess it went through the tenth grade, as far as I remember it went through the tenth grade. And then we moved to Friendship where it was a one-room and we had to carry our water and walk all that far. And at Levita, 'course we went home for lunch, 'cause it's just across the fence. And it was just such a big change. 'Course, our grandfather had a little store there at Levita, and then we had another uncle and aunt—well, she was a sister to the rest of them, the Griffins—that lived there. So, it was a bunch of family.

TS: I think I asked this before, but what was at Friendship? There was just the church and the school?

ZKC: The church was Friendship, the school was Owl Creek, but that was the same community. You asked me what I remembered about moving. I remembered moving, I'm quite sure we were in a wagon. That's the way I remember it, riding in the back of that wagon. Seems to me my sister said our uncle from Levita—yeah, I know he had a truck, and she might of said he moved us. But, anyway, I was in the back of that, whatever it was.

TS: You had to get the wagon down there. Even if he had a truck to move part of your stuff, there had to be a wagon trip involved. Anyway, go on, I'm sorry.

ZKC: I don't know! (laughs) Anyway, she remembers definitely that it was on Halloween when we moved. I told her I remembered the dress I had on. Then I got to thinking about it and I thought, It's too cold a weather for that dress, that must not have been the one. But that's they way I've always remembered it, so I don't know. I guess at first it was kind of exciting to be in a new place and walk that far to school, and it was fun that first day, anyway. And it was just so different. But I think it was maybe a few years later that I thought, You know, I wish we had stayed at Levita. I don't know if any of the rest of 'em thought that or not.

TS: Well, it was about—when was that happening?

ZKC: That had to be about 1927, 'cause I was born in 1917, and I was ten years old. So it had to be about 1927.

TS: Maybe on Halloween, right?

ZKC: That's what she says. She says, "I know, I remember that well," and Halloween was a big thing with us at Levita. We would all—I don't know what we put on, we didn't have a costume, but we probably put a towel or a sheet or something around us, and we had stick horses, and all the kids would run up and down the street on their stick horses on Halloween.

TS: That leads me into something I was going to ask—games that you remembered you played with your brothers and sisters or other kids, say mainly at Friendship, Ewing? What did you do when you had recreational time, is what I'm asking.

ZKC: With my brothers and sisters at home, and my mother, she always played with us, we played baseball, we jumped rope, anything we needed she did it with us. And then, with our friends, when they'd come to our house, I don't know what we did, we walked around over the countryside a lot. I know we did that a lot. At Ewing especially, we'd walk—I always called 'em mountains, they looked like mountains to me. My son-in-law says they're not mountains, but—we walked all over those, my friends and I did, with my younger brothers, and hunted the arrowheads. And we went with them to their traps. They'd set traps and we'd go with them early of a morning. I don't know why a rattlesnake didn't bite us, but it never did, any of us. My sister got bit by a copperhead, but that was years and years before, that's before my father passed away, and that was in East Texas.

TS: But that country down there did have a lot of snakes in it.

ZKC: Oh, yes, my family killed a lot of rattlesnakes! One time, my oldest brother, we were picking cotton there. 'Course, we all wore the kneepads, and he had on leather kneepads, and a rattlesnake struck him on the kneepad. 'Course, that didn't bite him. That was the closest, I guess, that we knew of that anybody ever came.

TS: Well, you know, the snakes would get up in the cool under the cotton plants. It's always hot when you're picking cotton, and the copperheads and the rattlesnakes in the cotton patches—I've heard that before, and that's not good. And you're generally tired, and you're generally trying to go as fast as you can, and still watch out for—

ZKC: Snakes, yes.

TS: Was it hot picking cotton? Do you remember the heat?

ZKC: Yes! (laughs) It was hot.

TS: How did you try to keep from overheating?

ZKC: Well, you know, I guess there was just no way. Because we didn't get a drink of water until we got back to the wagon where the water was. You didn't just leave and go get you a drink of water when you got thirsty, you waited until you got back toward where the water was, at the wagon. I remember that I was barefooted, I don't remember how many of us were, but I know I would be, and I guess the ones younger than me, maybe all of 'em, I don't know. And that ground would be so hot, you'd try to step in the shade of the cotton stalk, 'cause the ground would be so hot.

TS: I've heard that, too. I mean, it was. Was this blackland?

ZKC: Not really, because I know my mother always talked about she would like to have a blackland farm, I think that was in East Texas.

TS: But the blackland got ever hotter. I'm just saying as far as this barefoot thing, the black soil will absorb more heat. It's just like black asphalt is hotter than white sand.

ZKC: I guess, I didn't know it could get any hotter.

TS: You were wearing a bonnet?

ZKC: Yes, a bonnet with—I think they called it a slat bonnet. I can't remember exactly. But anyway, if you didn't have it on, when you washed it, it was just laid out flat. Then it had this extra piece to hang down on your neck, but this, all sewn with little strips like that, and you cut up pasteboard and put in each one of those, and that made your bonnet stand out like this.

TS: Stood out from your head so it would shade your face better, a big brim. So, it's really a heat—this not your Sunday-go-to-meeting bonnet, it's your survive-in-the-cotton-field bonnet.

ZKC: Yes, that's it.

TS: And so it had the slats, the pieces of cardboard, in it, so it hung over your face and protected your face, and it also covered the back of your neck.

ZKC: Yes, 'cause it had this extra piece back there. It come down over your head, and then it gathered up here.

TS: At the nape of the neck, yeah.

ZKC: And it tied or had elastic. But I think it tied, because when you washed it it'd be flat out. And that would hang down on our necks. And then you had, I think I told you the other time, gloves. I think it was old stockings we used for gloves, the way I remember it. And you'd have a place cut out for your thumb, and then it would come right across here, 'cause you had to have your fingers out.

TS: Your fingers are sticking out. You've got your arms in these stocking gloves, which are homemade, but your fingers and your thumb have to stick out to be able to feel the cotton.

ZKC: That's true.

TS: That's interesting about the bonnet. What you're saying—you've been showing me, for the tape recorder, you would pull all the cardboard out of the little bonnet, and then the bonnet could become just a flat piece of cloth for washing and maybe ironing. And then you'd reinsert these pieces of cardboard again. So, it was a woman's hat for hard, hot fieldwork to try to protect 'em. You tried to protect yourself from the sun, right, so you wouldn't get tanned.

ZKC: Yes, all brown, that wasn't popular back then like it is today. Aw, it's not as quite as popular today, I think, as it was for a long time.

TS: It should be becoming more unpopular, considering the consequences. Did the girls wear overalls?

ZKC: Yes, we did. That's the only time Mother would let us wear overalls. Girls were not supposed to wear overalls! So, we wore 'em to pick cotton, and that was it. But she never did, she wore her dress in the cotton patch all the time.

TS: How did she dress you for school? What was your standard school get-up?

ZKC: Just a print dress, of course she made them all. Just a print dress, and—well, she made all of our clothes—underwear and the dress, too. And we wore—there were times during our life that we wore hose, then we started wearing those knee socks. I don't think anklets had started when we were in school, then, I don't much think they had.

TS: Did she have a sewing machine?

ZKC: Yes, she did, one of those peddle ones. Yeah.

TS: But she really must have been a seamstress of some skill to make all this.

ZKC: She really was. She made all of her own dresses, and they were gorgeous, up until she died. She was eighty-three when she died, but she was still making her dresses. She didn't make all of them, because Josie was working at Leairds Department Store as a buyer, and when she'd go to market she would get her some. But she made the biggest part of them, even then. And she definitely was a good seamstress.

TS: She sounds like she was a determined lady.

ZKC: She was.

TS: Everybody said, well, you're going to have to let all these kids—I mean, it just shows through in everything you've said, that she had high standards, right?

TS: She did, she definitely did.

TS: What were her rules—it would happen like this with some of the boys, when they started to court girls, would they be able to go out on dates, or was it just meeting at a social at somebody's house, like with a group of other people?

ZKC: I guess as soon as they wanted to go out on a date, I guess they did, as far as I know. Now, Josie says she never did get to go to a show, like in Gatesville—well, that'd been the closest place there was—because Mother wouldn't let her go with a boy to Gatesville. See, she got married when she was nineteen, and I didn't get married until I was twenty-five. So, I was home a whole lot longer, and I went to Gatesville to the movies. But she says she didn't, and I don't remember. But the boys—

TS: She sounds like she would have been a little strict.

ZKC: Evidentially she was. I know she was, really. But then when the boys got up older, they did as they pleased. (laughs; interruption in taping)

TS: Mary S. Grandbury, her maiden name was—

ZKC: Seward. Mary Scott Seward. She was always called Scotty.

TS: And you were about to describe—they had a cistern, not a surface well but a cistern.

ZKC: And that's one I remember, I think I do, it's concreted all the way around, and catches rainwater, and this was on their porch. Like that was the corner of the porch, the well stood up about like that, rocked, or concreted, around. And then they had a top over it, where you had to raise it up to get water out of it. That's the only one of those I ever saw, I know there's quite a few of them, but that's the only one I ever saw, and I always thought that was so interesting.

TS: So, it was on the porch. How far across was it? How big?

ZKC: How far across? I would say it was almost as big as this table.

TS: Yeah, like five feet, maybe.

ZKC: Yeah.

TS: So, the water would come down off the roof and refill the cistern.

ZKC: You know, it was under the roof, so I don't know, they must have had a pipe. I don't remember that part of it.

TS: But it was under the roof of the porch. And it was a cistern, because you could look and see there's the bottom of it right there, right?

ZKC: No, it's deeper, I don't know how deep.

TS: But it wasn't a well?

ZKC: Well, it was a well, but it was a one that the rainwater went in. They called it a well. Well, they called it a cistern, I don't know if you'd call it a well, or not. C-i-s-t-e-r-n, I think.

TS: Well, generally the cisterns caught water from the roof, and wells are tapping into ground water. Although some people would runs pipes and drains down into their wells, so as to supplement their wells with water.

ZKC: Oh, I didn't know that.

TS: At Friendship and Ewing, would neighbors help each other out? What if somebody got sick, things like that? Would they come help?

ZKC: Yeah, I know they did, but I don't remember a lot about that. I know when my father was living I've heard Mother talk so much, he always went to sit up with—you know, if somebody was sick, the neighbors went to sit up. Or, if they died, and they'd have the casket there in the house until they buried them, they didn't leave that casket in the house by itself, people sat up there all night. And she said he was always—he always did that. But of course I don't remember that.

TS: You don't remember attending—I think I asked that before—you don't remember attending one of those, where somebody's laid out?

ZKC: No, not really. I don't. I went to a lot of funerals, and probably I didn't even know the people, I don't know. But where we lived at Ewing in one house, the cemetery was right in front of our house across the road. And this Frank Black, that I met with Friday, and he's been interviewed, he lived right next door to the cemetery. It was the Ruth Cemetery, it's one that every—I think it's Memorial Day—that you can go, the only day out of the year that you can go, to those cemeteries. The Ruth Cemetery—oh, there's a bunch of 'em, the Friendship Cemetery. I've been one time, and the only reason I haven't been more, my family gets together Memorial Day, around Memorial Day, at Lake Buchanan, and I've just always thought I needed to go to that. But I'd love to go to Friendship.

TS: So, the cemetery was right there, and you went to a lot of funerals.

ZKC: That's right, and then at Levita the cemetery was right—see, there was our house and the school, and the cemetery was right there.

TS: Well, why would you go to services where you didn't know who it was?

ZKC: I really don't even know for sure that I did that, because I was just a kid, and I don't know, maybe my mother went, or my older brother or sister. I don't know.

TS: It's something going on. I think if I was a kid and lived next to the cemetery—what's the old saying? If you live on the road to the cemetery you can't weep for everybody? That's a Russian saying, I think. (laughs) One final loose end and then I really will leave, I think I've got the rest of your family trapped in the back of the house.

ZKC: Oh, they're okay, he's probably taking a nap. And if he gets too restless, they'll go outside.

TS: Anything about hunting? You told me about going when you were at Friendship when you were a kid—I'm sure your brothers hunted, and you told me they had a trap line, and you went along to run

the trap line. Did they also hunt? I mean, sometimes people hunt seriously, sometimes people hunted for food.

ZKC: Well, at this point I think they mostly used their money just for themselves, as far as I know, as far as I remember. But they were serious hunters.

TS: I'm thinking of hunters for food.

ZKC: Oh, now let me think, we ate squirrels. I know they killed squirrels. And I think we may have eaten rabbits for a while, but I remember that we didn't for a long, long time, because there was some kind of disease came around that Mother heard of—with rabbits—and so she never would cook 'em anymore.

TS: Uh-huh, that was for sure. It was a little dangerous to eat rabbits.

ZKC: But we ate the squirrels while we lived out there. That's the only thing that I remember of wild things that we ate.

TS: Possums?

ZKC: You know, I don't know if people did. I don't remember that, but we may have. My oldest brother could have told me if I'd just thought to ask him when I was talking to him.

TS: A lot of people wouldn't eat possums, a lot of people would. Any deer around? Turkeys, like what come in your yard, now?

ZKC: No, not where we lived. The only turkeys that came around were the ones we raised.

Clements W. "Speedy" Duncan

Date of birth: 14 November 1923
Communities affiliated with: Okay, Copperas Cove
Interviewed by William S. Pugsley III

WSP: Good afternoon. This is Bill Pugsley. I am interviewing Clements Duncan on his porch at his home south of Copperas Cove and just a bit north of Highway 183. It is Saturday afternoon, August 25, the year 2001. [This interview is part of Prewitt and Associates' Fort Hood Oral History Project sponsored by the U.S. Army Fort Hood and conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University. Wayne Duncan and Juanita Griffin Duncan also took part in this interview.]

To begin, could you please give me your full name and then your parents' name?

CWD: Clements W. Duncan. Nickname is Speedy. My parents' name was Tom Duncan and Rosa Duncan. And I had eight brothers and sisters, Mattie Duncan, Vascoe Duncan, Thomas Elijah Duncan, Rosa Mae, and Jessie Leona—huh—Jessie Alice, Hattie Olene, Claude Earl, and two brothers that died at birth, and myself, last. Eleven children.

WSP: You're the youngest of eleven?

CWD: Yes sir.

WSP: Am I to understand that you are the last surviving member of your family? Is that correct?

CWD: That's correct.

WSP: Where were you born?

CWD: Okay, Texas.

WSP: What year?

CWD: November 14, 1923. I went to school, started to school at Okay, Texas, but we left the eleventh of November, 1929, and we moved down close to Corpus Christi between three little old towns, Aransas Pass, Gregory, and Ingleside. I went to three schools in the first grade, and I got to the second grade in just three years! (laughs) That's true.

WSP: How long were you at Aransas Pass?

CWD: About six years. We came home in 1935, we moved back to Okay.

WSP: Your parents bought a place?

CWD: They kept their place. We just moved off, rented land in South Texas, but we still, Pa still owned his little place in Okay. We moved back to it.

WSP: Why did they move down to Aransas Pass?

CWD: Well, my daddy took his four daughters and went down there to pick cotton in 1929. And he'd been raised in this area, and he'd never seen rows that you couldn't see the other end of, and no rocks—and he couldn't wait until he could get down there and plow it. So that's why we moved, the whole family moved. It was two married boys and—I guess he had—I guess he had three, three daughters and Claude, my brother Claude and myself. I was six years old on the road when we moved. We left Killeen the eleventh day of November in Model Ts, several Model Ts helped move us. We got all the way to Round Rock that same day. (laughs)

WSP: It took you *that* long just to drive to Round Rock?

CWD: Yes. Yeah, you don't understand—there's a lot of one-way bridges, and you'd have to wait at every bridge if there was a car coming, or a wagon or buggy.

And I'll never forget. I'd never seen an electric light up close and Pa rented a cabin in Round Rock, and it had one pull-chain electric light on it. And I was trying to figure out what made it burn. And after a short while Pa told me, "That'll do." And that did it. But he always got up early in the morning to get on the road, and I pulled that light till we left. On and off, yeah. (laughs)

That's hard to believe—I never had—they had electric lights in Killeen, I know they did, but I can't remember going to Killeen.

WSP: Not before you were six years old?

CWD: No, not before I was six. I went—I know we—I went with Pa. We raised cotton then and hauled it to town on a wagon. And we had one old mule that was real scared of cars. He'd nearly tear up the wagon when a car came by, which wasn't often. But Pa would take me with him and lean up against his back to watch behind us, tell him when there was a car coming. If Pa heard a car coming, "Whoa!" He'd have to get off and get ahold of this old mule to hold him until this car went by—which probably wouldn't happen over once or twice until we got to Killeen.

CWD: There weren't many cars. I don't remember that old mule's name, but he was scared of cars. (laughs)

WSP: What did your dad do with the family farm while you were in Aransas Pass?

CWD: Yeah, yes, rented it out.

WSP: Did the renters take good care of it?

CWD: Oh, yeah. There wasn't much to take care of no-way. That was before electricity or bathrooms, or anything. So it was just an old house that you couldn't hurt, you know?

WSP: How much acreage was that farm?

CWD: I believe 160 acres.

WSP: Did he make enough rent money to kept up with the mortgage?

CWD: Well, there wasn't no mortgage on it. Pa owned it then, when we moved, he'd already paid for it. He'd bought part of it—I don't know how in the world he paid for it—and then he traded a good span of mules and a wagon for another large part of it. And that's all there was to it.

WSP: The trade was an old family story?

CWD: Yeah.

WSP: Do you know how much acreage he got in that trade?

CWD: No sir, I sure, sure don't. I could go walk it out for you. The man he traded with had some kind of problems and had to leave the country, pronto, and he sold him that land for a wagon and team. And that was about all there was to it.

WSP: Sounds like that guy was glad to have the wagon and team.

CWD: Well, a wagon and team was kind of like a new pickup, now. The value was different, but the value of them was the same, you know? A good team and wagon would cost a bunch. Well, a bunch in the sense that people didn't have a bunch of money.

WSP: I understand completely.

CWD: You do?

WSP: Yes sir, I do. Most families didn't have much cash on hand, so their team and the wagon would have been one of their major assets.

CWD: The team—yes sir.

WSP: Your father traded a substantial amount of property for—

CWD: A good wagon and team.

WSP: How did he manage to replace his own team and wagon?

CWD: Lord, I don't know. That was before my time. I don't know how he—

WSP: Do you remember the house and its condition before you left as a child?

CWD: Oh, yeah.

WSP: Tell me about it.

CWD: Well, it was built on a little old sloping hill. I assume when they had so many children, they'd build another room on, but they didn't build them the same height. So you had to go up and down—split level they called it now! (laughs)

WSP: Was that because of the incline of the property?

CWD: Yeah. It didn't look like much of a hill, but when you'd build a level room on there, you had to drop it down another foot to keep from being too high off the ground out here. Yeah.

WSP: When you walk in the front door, what kind of rooms would you encounter? What was the layout of the house?

CWD: Oh, it was scattered out over that hill. You walk in on a front porch and go in—one room was the fireplace room, more or less call it a living room now. But then the front room, I guess where all these kids was born including me, was more of a delivery room, I think—(laughs) because all of the children were born at home, none of them in the hospital.

WSP: Then you pass through this front room into—

CWD: Into the kitchen. There's an old porch on the front of it. My sister-in-law's got a picture of the old house somewhere.

WSP: Where's the bedrooms in relationship to the kitchen and the front room?

CWD: Well, the living room was a bedroom, and then there was another bedroom, and another shed room.

I guess they kept a bed back there, too. And then they put beds in the fireplace room, especially in the wintertime. And then my pa slept out on the porch, oh, all summer, on a bed on the back porch out there.

WSP: If I gave you a piece of paper, could you draw the way the house was built?

CWD: Yeah, I could make a stab at it for sure.

WSP: Okay, hold on one second—

(interruption in taping)

WSP: You've just completed this drawing which shows a front porch and both the delivery room, as you've described it, and the living room, open to adjacent walls of this porch area, and then there is a bedroom that connects the living room and the delivery room. And from the living room you go into the kitchen. But I don't see any hallways in this house?

CWD: Not any.

WSP: No hallways, no breezeways?

CWD: No hallways, no.

WSP: How did the air circulate?

CWD: Real good if it was a cold night. (laughs) Otherwise there wasn't no air.

WSP: Would that hill block out the breeze?

CWD: No, no, no, there wasn't no hill, but it just—it wasn't *that much* of a hill. In summertime, it didn't seem like there was any breeze.

WSP: Which bedroom did they add on?

CWD: Well, I don't know, I guess it started out with that room and this one, I assume. And they built this room on it, and then they built that one on it—before my time. And, oh, hell, it was just cobbled up—

WSP: Pretty much the entire front of the house was added onto the original structure?

CWD: Yeah, yes sir. Yeah, they built a new room on there.

WSP: So, as your coming from the kitchen forward to the front of the house, are you going down levels, or up levels?

CWD: Up levels. Yeah. Well, mainly, this little old room here—you had to go up to get in the kitchen and you had to go up to get in this room. I believe all the other floors were basically pretty level.

WSP: Just that little back corner bedroom was raised?

CWD: Yeah, there wasn't level on it. They had to drop it so it would cover the roof without going in up at the top, you know? Economical ways, is the way most things were built in the '30s.

WSP: Did your dad build this house, and the add on, or did he get somebody else to do that work?

CWD: Somebody else, I assume. I don't know.

WSP: What did he grow on his 160 acres while he was there?

CWD: Anything you could eat. (laughs)

WSP: Did he grow any cotton?

CWD: That was the money crop. Cotton and turkeys was all the money crop we had.

WSP: How much of the 160 acres went into cotton?

CWD: I think he had 40 acres of farming land in several different patches on that 160 acres. But I believe, all told, there was 40 acres. The reason I remember is that I broke it one winter, with a walking turning plow. And Pa was real nice, he'd give me a fresh team every day at dinner. (laughs) He wanted to take care of them mules. (laughs)

WSP: (laughs) Then sent you back out to plow some more?

CWD: (laughs) Oh, yeah, yes.

WSP: How many acres were you able to plow between breakfast and dinner?

CWD: Well, not much, 'cause it seems like I plowed all winter on the forty acres. Yeah, yeah, it's a slow job, them walking turning plows cover about eight inches, I guess. You'd go around and around and around the patch—around and around.

WSP: Oh, You didn't go down long rows?

CWD: No, no.

WSP: You'd corkscrew around the perimeter—

CWD: All the way around—until the middle. I broke the whole cotton-picking thing. It took a long time.

WSP: Didn't do that again?

CWD: Oh, I would enjoy it again, but I ain't pulled a line on a mule in a many, many years now. They're—I enjoyed driving mules.

I'll tell you a little yarn. I guess I was—oh, man, I was a grown man, I was ten years old, I guess. I was driving mules, had an old leather line, and I was playing a little tune on them mules. And my daddy reached over and liked to have tore my little old hands off, jerked them lines out of my hand, "No, no! When you get grown and get a team of your own, you can make deadheads out of them, but you ain't going to ruin my mules!" (laughs)

I often wonder a kid learning to drive a car, if his daddy ever treated him the way mine did me. He wasn't going to let me make deadheads out of his mules.

WSP: Why did he call the mules deadheads?

CWD: Yeah, if you take a mule and just keep pecking on him, you'll make a deadhead out of him. He won't respond to you tapping on him.

WSP: Oh, I see. He was concerned that if you're tapping with the reins while you're walking, they'll learn to ignore you?

CWD: Yeah—no, no, yeah, deadheads. Going to buy. "No, you don't want to buy them old mules, them's old deadheads." And that's where the deadhead comes in. And grown men did it! Grown men.

My daddy and I were taking a bale of cotton to Killeen one time and, "Whoa!" And I didn't know what was happening. Hell, I was just five years old. He said, "Son, look a yonder." There was a wonderful span of mules, and the old guy was whipping them all the time with the lines. He said,

"Them mules won't ever be worth nothing," says, "they're just making deadheads out of them." He taught me that when I was awful young.

WSP: What was the preferred technique to get mules to advance? Just tap them once or twice and then—?

CWD: Ah, yeah, well, if I didn't want Pa on my hind end, I had to hold those mules and whip their hind ends—not often—once a week or something. That's all you need to whip a mule.

WSP: Would you whip them with the reins or with a whip?

CWD: Either way. If you had leather lines, you could whip them with those lines. Hold them and whip them, like a kid.

WSP: Would you call out to them?

CWD: Yeah, well—

WSP: What command are you trying to get them to respond to?

CWD: Go! Giddy up! That means go.

WSP: You're connecting one or two taps with the reins and the words whoa or go, so they'll know when you want to move forward. But if you keep on tapping them while they're walking—

CWD: They'll just get immune to it. A good example, and you might observe this sometime, especially at this time the way things are—I've had people come here and never quit hollering at their children. Don't fall off of that! Don't do this! Don't do that! Just continuously hollering at them, and it wearies me. It really does. It's—it finally bugs me.

Of course, Nita (??) or I, neither one, were raised thataway. When they say, Pssst! That's all. You didn't think about doing something the next time. It didn't even cross your mind, or nothing. That was it. So you didn't think about the second time. And that's—in reality, kids are a whole lot like mules. An old mule will get by with, with what he can, if you don't watch him. You know? That's their nature. A lot of people never think about it, but mules made the United States.

WSP: How so?

CWD: Hell! They built all the railroads, and they did all the farming, and they pulled them wagon trains across the country. And they don't get their just credit, the mule don't. He's the most unappreciated thing that ever happened to this country—the cotton-picking old mule.

WSP: Mules are bred between horses and donkeys, correct?

CWD: Yeah.

WSP: Did your dad breed his own mules?

CWD: No. No, no, a neighbor had a jack, and we raised some mules, but we didn't have no way of raising them. Well, we had the old mares, the old horse mares to raise mules, and we raised a couple. That was all I recall, when I was a boy we raised horses—a few, yeah.

WSP: Was your dad considered a first-rate appraiser of mules and horses?

CWD: Yes. Yeah.

WSP: Tell me about that.

CWD: Well, he married in 1900, just over that hill right around there. And he moved down just a little ways

in a covered wagon, and him and my mother lived in a covered wagon. And he made his living breaking horses and mules, work or ride, it didn't matter, whether it was a mule or a horse, or either animal. He broke them to work, with a collar on and a harness, or break them to ride. It didn't matter to him, just whatever they wanted. And that's the way he made a living, breaking them. So I'd say he knew them pretty good.

WSP: Could he look at the confirmation and tell whether they were a good animal or not?

CWD: Oh, yeah. Yeah, he knew a mule.

WSP: Did he teach this to you?

CWD: No, no. No, no.

WSP: Why would he keep a secret like that?

CWD: (laughs)

WSP: Did he teach it to your older brother?

CWD: It's a possibility. They learned a lot more than I did, but they're not around, so—by the time I came around—we moved from here when I was six—and they farmed with a tractor, or my brothers did, but my pappy still worked mules in South Texas. But it finally faded away. The mules went away. And just—

We used mules to pull cotton wagons to the gin, and down there is a large farming country, and there'd be people heading for the gin in their wagon behind a tractor, pulling maybe a five-bale wagon behind a tractor. And we just had one-bale wagons, homemade jobs. But them mules would outrun them tractors so bad, we like to got in trouble! (laughs)

Her husband was driving—'course, he was grown, he was, he was fourteen years old by then, thirteen—he was a grown man.

WSP: A thirteen-year-old was a grown man?

CWD: By then. But we used to have a lot of fun outrunning people. Them mules—them Spanish mules—they'd pull a bale of cotton running. And maybe be a hundred bales, a hundred wagons coming in, and in flat country you can see forever! (laughs) And some of them old guys on the wagons would get there and just about have a fight on account of because we cut ahead of them. (laughs)

WSP: To get in line at the cotton gin?

CWD: (laughs) Yeah! Yeah.

WSP: You'd get there before they did, even though they had the tractor?

CWD: Oh, yeah! The tractor wouldn't keep up with the mules, for sure. What they'd do was—always leave the wagon back in the field, you know, to put more cotton on. It would be one wagon full, and by the time you got back you needed another one—if you had a lot of acres. You picked it all by hand.

I know—there's a story I never forgot was—I was picking cotton, but picked up one great big old rattlesnake and I wanted to make a scene out of it, and my pappy grabbed me and said, "Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!" And he pulled up—he was an extra strong man, and he jerked up that cotton stalk and killed that snake. He says, "Son, be quiet!" Said, "Half of these pickers will leave the field, and we need to pick this cotton!" (laughs) Of course, they all knew that there was snakes in the area, for sure, it wasn't no secret. But he didn't want me telling nobody about killing no snake. Yeah—

WSP: Did you ever get bit?

CWD: No sir, never did. My daddy got bit by a copperhead. And I was going to lance it with a knife, and he was afraid I'd poison him. (laughs) That was the funniest story.

When I was a little boy, and a curious little kid, my mother had an old trunk, and down in the bottom, the very bottom of that old trunk—I only got to see it a time or two—is a pint of whiskey, sealed up, a full pint.

And when my daddy got snake bit—hear my mother walked on a walking stick on the wooden floor, and I could hear her going. I knew where Mama was going, she was going to that trunk. She come back with a pint of whiskey, and we got it open and Pa drank half of it. And he hadn't—he wasn't a drinker, you know? And—had to call a neighbor to come get him in a car. We didn't have one. The neighbor got him and took him to Killeen, and then they couldn't get him to go to the doctor. He'd drank the rest of that whiskey and he—(laughs) he didn't want to see no doctor! (laughs)

They had one old doctor that delivered all the kids within many miles of Killeen. His name was Woods. That's where that W comes from in my name. And they finally talked him into go to see Dr. Woods, and he looked him, "Yeah, just go on home and die." (laughs) And he almost did, too. He almost died.

WSP: What good was the alcohol? Calm him down?

CWD: No, that's the worst thing in the world.

WSP: I would think it would be.

CWD: It is! That's an old—

WSP: Old wives' tale?

CWD: Yeah. Always Mother kept that whiskey in there—and I had an older brother that had kids my age, and he says that whiskey was in that trunk when he was a little boy, he could remember. That's how long that whiskey had been in that trunk for snakebites. And that's the worst thing in the world to do is drink whiskey. It's a wonder my pa didn't die, he did almost.

WSP: Didn't the doctor have any medicine for him?

CWD: No, no, no. No, that was in the '30s. He didn't do a thing in the world to him. He said, "Just go on home and die."

WSP: He wasn't joking, was he?

CWD: No! He said—he was a gross-talking old doctor, I loved him—but, he just, "You damn idiot, go on home and die!" (laughs) That's what he told him. He sat out in front of his drugstore—he run a drugstore, and his office was in the back, in the '20s and '30s. I don't know when Dr. Woods came to Killeen. I'm sure it was during the '20s, because he delivered me in 1923. He went in a buggy then. He later got him a car. But there wasn't—didn't every family have a car in the '20s.

WSP: I wouldn't think so.

CWD: No.

WSP: When did your family get a car?

CWD: Well, we got one in the '20s. Pa rented land over about that Metroplex Hospital, and south of it—

there was a lot of good farming land in there. He rented all the land. He had to rent all the land he could to feed all these kids. And I guess well—we probably got one in 1928. You know, every time—when you bought Model Ts they'd go off from the house a ways and build a shed to put them in, a house, with walls on the side. Very seldom see one left.

But my daddy didn't drive, so my older sister learned how to drive, but she wasn't available, and it was coming up a rain, and the old car was setting out of the garage. And my dad told my mama, said "I'm going to put this car in that car shed." And he went out there, and he cranked her and headed for that car shed, and when he got to it, he said, "Whoa! Whoa! Whoa!" And out the back of it he went! He didn't know how to stop it. (laughs)

And as far as I know, Daddy never got under another steering wheel. That was the only time he got in the car under the steering wheel. (laughs) My mother laughed at that. And Pa was really hollering whoa to that car when he went through the back of that car shed. It didn't hurt nothing. It's not hard to repair an old shed. (laughs) And that's odd that my daddy—I never knew him to get—he never got under the steering wheel again, never did. No.

WSP: Who did the driving in your family?

CWD: My sisters. They all drove. Well, that was kind of a long story. Well, one sister drove all the way to Corpus Christi in an old Model T, and we went through San Anton', Lord knows why.

WSP: Well, that was the only way you can get to Corpus Christi.

CWD: Well, might have been, then. There's new roads now, but then—anyway, this old Model T ain't got no tail lights, you know? So we lighted an old kerosene lantern—I don't know if you've ever seen one or not. There used to be a lantern, had a globe on it, you raised it up and light a wick and let it back down, and the wind wouldn't blow it out. And it gets dark, and that's when the rhubarb would start. Brother Claude—'course he was—I guess he was twelve, he was twelve or thirteen years old, but—and my sister was older than him a year or two. And it gets tiresome, holding an old kerosene lantern out the back end of a—no curtain, you know, there's a hole back there. You'd have to hold that lantern—

WSP: It wasn't hanging from the car, someone was holding it?

CWD: Hold it out there. Keep somebody from running over your hind end, you know? And the rhubarb would start. "He held it last night." "I held it last." And directly Pa would pick out one and tell them, "Hold that lantern." And that was all of it, whoever it was, they got to hold the lantern outside. (laughs) I don't know how many days it took us to get down there, but it was quite a few.

WSP: What was the purpose of going to Corpus?

CWD: That's where we was going to farm down there, out east of Corpus a ways.

WSP: Yes, Port Aransas is a little east of Corpus Christi.

CWD: Yes, we was next to the last farm going to Port Aransas—

WSP: You spent several years farming cotton in Aransas Pass.

CWD: Yeah—

WSP: Did you enjoy it?

CWD: Well, it was a long, sad story. We made ninety-seven bales of cotton the first year we was there. That's a lot of cotton. And—(pause) we had problems paying the pickers.

WSP: Why?

CWD: We didn't have no money! But I still recall—and I was just—

WSP: You didn't get enough money when you sold your cotton?

CWD: Well, the story was—see, cotton went to pot. It was bringing nine cents a pound! And my two older married brothers and Pa was in cahoots on this farm someway—I was too young to know the particulars—but they got together and decided they couldn't take nine cents a pound for it. They had some program they could put it in, so they put it in there and waited six months, and then they had to pay rent and everything else, and live. So they took seven cents a pound for it, and that didn't amount to much.

WSP: They held it off the market, but—

CWD: Yeah. Yeah, it went down two more cents. Yeah, they got seven cents a pound for it. Yeah, ninety-seven bales of cotton.

WSP: But the pickers wanted to be paid immediately?

CWD: Oh, they had to have their money because they were picking for a trifle. I don't recall what it was.

WSP: Did he take a loan on the cotton, or did he pay them out of his pocket?

CWD: No, oh, they had a loan—I believe the government, probably—anything I believe our government ever messed with is messed up—but I think the government put out some kind of a deal where you put it in storage and, and hold it—but you had to pay storage. And the storage was over in Corpus Christi, I know that. But they wound up, they had to take what they could get, and it was seven cents a pound.

WSP: Down from nine cents.

CWD: Yeah. See, when my pa bought that new Model T—that was before I can remember—cotton was bringing forty cents a pound.

WSP: Yeah, in 1919.

CWD: Yeah. When it bring forty cents a pound?

WSP: Right at the height of World War I, and it crashed in 1920. Everybody was expecting a lot of money, and then they got nothing. It really hurt a lot of people.

CWD: Yeah. Yeah! It sure did.

WSP: Did your old man get caught in the pinch?

CWD: Oh, yeah, yeah. That's why they went down there to pick cotton, to get some flour money.

WSP: He thought things would turn out better if he went where the cotton was better?

CWD: You bet. Well, you couldn't blame him. He'd plowed these old rocky hills all his life, and then he got down there to where you can't see the end of the damn row and not a rock in the field—

WSP: Cotton heaven?

CWD: Oh, man! He just couldn't wait to get down there an' stick his plow in that ground where you couldn't see the other end of the row. (laughs) There's some pretty farming country, if you've ever been to Taft—

WSP: I'm not familiar with that area.

CWD: Well, it's beautiful farming country, it sure is. You go along the highway and look down the row, and you can't see the far end of it. Well, it's beautiful farming country. Mm-mm-mm, it sure is.

WSP: What caused him to come back up this way?

CWD: Well, hard times. One brother quit and went to farming on his own, and one lost his son, and I don't think he wanted to stay there any longer.

And, basically, my mother never was happy. She never wanted to go in the first place. When we lived up here, when we lived on what we could make, you know, to eat, and my mother would can all summer. And we moved to South Texas it took, uh, about three Model Ts to haul the quart fruit jars of everything they growed.

And we got down there to this old house, a big old—it had five rooms in it, and it was studded walls, but they never did Sheetrock it, it was just old two-by-fours went up and then a brace, you know, across the middle? There was nowhere to store these canned goods. So, I can remember it well because I handled most of them. It would hold a quart fruit jar on a flat two-by-four. We lined the whole five rooms with fruit jars full of everything. And in a few nights it came a cold spell—it wasn't supposed to be thataway down there—and it busted them jars at night, sounded like rifles going off. I don't remember which was the loudest noise, the fruit jars busting or my mother crying. (laughs)

WSP: This was food she'd put up all summer long?

CWD: Yeah, up here, all up here, all summer. Her and—yeah, her and her girls.

WSP: Okay, we're going to take a pause here for a second.

(interruption in taping)

WSP: Your mother went down to Aransas Pass in a Model T Ford full of canned goods, I mean bottled goods—

CWD: Yes, fruit jars—

WSP: Oh, dear, hold on—

(interruption in taping)

WSP: This was food she's stocked so that you'd have something to eat that first year—

CWD: To eat, yeah—

WSP: But in the middle of winter, the jars burst and pour out on the floor.

CWD: Yeah. Yeah, we lost the fruit jars and everything that was in them, you know? Of course, them jars was valuable. You used them over again. Well, it was sad they broke. We went to get a washtub and corn scoop, and scooped it in the washtub and carried it off, out and dumped it. (laughs) Quite a project mopping up the floors. And my mama crying all the time. She had everything you could can: peaches and beans and corn and on and on.

WSP: Did the house have an unusual, fruity smell thereafter?

CWD: I don't remember. It was a sad house, I know that. Well, my daddy got up and started a fire in the old fireplace in that house and got it going enough to save everything that was stacked in that particular room, and some that was in the one adjoining it. We saved a little of it, but most of it busted. And it—I still hear my mother crying and fruit jars, whop! It sounded like rifles going off.

WSP: Besides that event, you said earlier she had another incident. What was that?

CWD: A car wreck.

WSP: What year was that?

CWD: Ah, 1933 to '34, maybe 1935. I'm not—I ain't sure what year it was.

WSP: What happened?

CWD: My brother was taking her to visit her daughter that was married and lived down a ways. He had an old 1929 Chevy, I believe. Anyway, it would jump out of high gear. And he started across this highway that's not much traffic on, but that particular time he pulled out there, and the old car jumped out of gear. And a family from up north was going, and down there to where the sea breeze blows—the little live oak trees get up a little ways, and then they go over in a circle, the sea breeze causes them to grow over at an angle. And he told me, he says, "I was looking at them trees and didn't see them." Anyway, it was a terrible wreck.

WSP: They broadsided your family's car?

CWD: Yeah.

WSP: Who was driving, again?

CWD: My brother.

WSP: He tried to get the car back into gear?

CWD: Probably. It's a possibility that ain't what happened, that's my imagination. Because he would have stopped at that road and started up, and that's when it usually jumped out of gear. He had a homemade stick he'd put—when he got it in highgear, he could put a little forked wooden board there to hold it in highgear, or it'd jump out. But I assume he started off, and if he got it in, it jumped out before he got across that road.

It demolished that old car completely. And my mother stayed in the hospital a long time, and he thought it had killed his wife, too, but it didn't. But they carried them to Aransas Pass, the town, and my friend that knew me, knew my folks—and I was a little shaver—he come got me.

We went to Aransas Pass, and my brother was out. He was on his feet, but he didn't know who he was. But he kept looking at me and said, "Do I know you?" And I said, "Yeah, you know me." And he said, "I want to show you something." And he carried me and showed me his wife. She was a heavy-set lady—said, "Ain't that the biggest, fattest woman you have ever seen?" (laughs) And it was his wife.

WSP: Who was in the hospital.

CWD: No, they was in the doctor's office there in Aransas Pass. They sent them to Corpus Christi. But they—it took several men to carry—had to carry them down the stairs. They carried his wife down and put her in an ambulance. And they was going to put him in there, but my old brother was tougher than a stump, really, and he wasn't—he was completely out of it, he don't know who he is, he was out crazier than a bat.

I seen them—there was a dozen of them that was going to try get ahold of him and put him in that. There ain't no way, with him crazy—you can't handle a crazy person—maybe you ain't never been around one, but—

WSP: This is the result of an accident?

CWD: Yeah. Oh, yeah! So I run up there and told them, I said, "Hold it! Hold it! Let me talk to him!" I told him, I said, "Do you remember me?" He looked at me, "Yeah." "You remember you showing me that big fat woman?" "Yeah! I remember that!" I said, "Well, they need somebody to hold her down in that ambulance and they can't find—." "I'll hold her!" (laughs) And in he went, and they shut the door on him! (laughs) One of them turned around and looked at me, he said, "You saved a lot of problems!" Yeah, talking him into getting in there and holding her down—that was his wife.

WSP: Did he come out all right after that?

CWD: Not really. He lived many years, but he never did—I don't think he ever come out of it. He lived *many* years, later, but he—he played ball until he was fifty-five years old.

WSP: Baseball?

CWD: Softball. Hind catcher. He was fifty-five years old, and he—it wasn't because they needed him to make up the team, it was because he was the best they had in that community down there at Maxdale. Fifty-five years old.

WSP: You think his mind kind of took a shock from all of that?

CWD: Yeah. I don't think—and he lost a boy that was, I guess, eight years old, maybe—I ain't sure—he was a great big boy. He once jumped on the back of his daddy's old car and his daddy didn't know it. Anyway, he bumped his knee on the thing someway, and it swelled up. And they carried him to the hospital—a long time, too late, and the boy died.

WSP: His knee injury got infected?

CWD: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, the boy died. Yes. He never did get over that, either.

WSP: How long was this after the car accident? I think you said it was in 1935?

CWD: She says 1937. She'd probably know.

WSP: I see. Juanita Duncan said 1937 because you came back the same year she got married.

CWD: Yeah.

WSP: In 1937 you come back up to Killeen area from Aransas Pass?

CWD: Yeah, back over here to Okay. That's where we stayed until the army took Pa's rock pile over there one day and took me the next. He was real lucky, he got shut—(laughs) his side one day, and me the next.

The army sent me a letter. That's another little long story. I mentioned an old guy name Hanes, Allan Hanes.

WSP: Allan Hanes?

CWD: He owned many acres of land between here and Florence. And I was walking. And he had a car. He picked me up. And they was drafting people for the army in World War II, and he wanted me to come work on his ranch because it was getting hard to get help. And he was going to pay me a dollar a day, or—and I was already making a dollar an hour. (laughs) But he was going to give me a dollar a day and feed me and keep me out of the army.

I said, "Well, Mr. Hanes, I ain't going to volunteer, but when they call me, I'm ready to go." And I got

out. And about two days later, I got an invitation to go to the army. I went to the army and came back and had been out several years, and I found out that Allan Hanes was on the draft board down at Belton! (laughs) So—I know—I know what happened! He drove straight on to Belton, and (points) "Get him!" (laughs) I didn't know!

WSP: You refused to work on his farm, so he had you called up.

CWD: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, I know that's a fact. Yeah, I know that's the truth. He was an old scamp, and I didn't know it until I'd been out of the army a good long while, before I found out Allan Hanes was on the draft board. He was—he's quite a fella.

WSP: Were you working for your dad, or did you have your own property?

CWD: No, the army took it.

WSP: The army took the farm, but are we talking about your family's original 160-acre farm?

CWD: Yeah, the army took it.

WSP: Were you out of the army at that point?

CWD: Yeah, one day!

WSP: One day. The day after the army sent notice to your dad, you were drafted.

CWD: Yeah, my friends and neighbors sent me an invite down to Belton. Yeah. Then they gave us—

WSP: Were you home when they actually moved out?

CWD: Yeah! I got back in time to help them move. I was in the army, but they give you—they used to give you thirty days or something. I believe they gave you seven days at that time. They changed it—a shortage, and they changed it around, they didn't give us as much time. But I came home and—the army gave you everything you could tear down, and they'd haul it for you, a reasonable distance I assume.

And we tore down the old house and the old barns, and every—everything you could get loose, you know? You could take down your fences—anything you could get loose, they'd haul it free of charge. It was quite an ordeal. I worked day and night—three days and three nights—

WSP: That was your vacation?

CWD: Yeah! That was my seven-day leave. Three days and three nights. That was quite a story. I was working—I can show you on a map—this old guy that owned—Waddell, with the two fingers at Cedar Park—

He'd put up a fine barbed-wire fence, brand new, and it joined my daddy's. And they had a 'dozer, I guess. It was real clean property. And it was a full moon that night, and I could go a long stretch, like from here to my mailbox up yonder, and take down two wires at a time, pull the staples and pile them over to the side, and tie them to a tree. When I got enough slack and I got to the other end, I could pull on them and get the two together and make a large hoop, like, you know, five or six foot high, and pull back on it and roll it. I rolled up a thousand pounds of new barbed wire in three days and three nights. But it was warm, I'd took my shirt off and this was in—this was in February of 1943.

WSP: The first taking was in spring 1942. But, you're saying they took your farm in the 1943?

CWD: Yeah. Yeah, they took us later, 1943. Anyway, it was getting along toward daylight, and the wind

come out of the north. And I said, "I better get my shirt on." I got my shirt on, and I, that was—I remember that I was unusually cold. So I headed to the house—Lord knows why, there ain't no house, you know—but I guess that's where I headed for, the house. When we moved we had a storm cellar that had big old logs across the top, and Pa took the turning plow and plowed down to them, tied a chain on them and pulled them out with mules. That let the top fall down in the cellar.

And when they tore the old house down—I don't guess you've ever heard of Wall-Rite Wallpaper. If it hadn't been for Wall-Rite Wallpaper most of us would've froze to death—but they'd tore that off of the old walls, and it was blowing around out there and hanging up on whatever. I went and gathered me up a whole big arm load of that Wall-Rite Wallpaper and threw it down in this old cellar hole, and, and jumped down there on it, crawled in under that paper, and I went to sleep.

My daddy came from over east of Killeen, where they moved to, in a wagon and team and he went over there and loaded all that wire up by his self, bless his heart. And he didn't know what had happened to me. So he come back by the old house place, and he told me, "Son, I hollered as loud as I could holler, and I couldn't get you up." He said, "I don't know why I walked up to that old cellar, but I did." He said, "I looked down in there and said, 'He ain't in there, and I started to walk off, and then I said, 'That's his boot heel!'" He'd seen my boot heel sticking out from under that dang old paper. (laughs)

We walked from there to _____ (??) Street, over on the east side of Killeen, now. It was out of town at that time. I'll tell you, a wagon won't knock off much wind. It sure don't. And them old mules was pulling a pretty big load of wire, and I can remember them shaking and quivering they was so cold, pulling that wagon.

WSP: The mules?

CWD: Yeah, they was cold!

WSP: The weather had gone from being unseasonably warm in February, that you could take your shirt off at midnight, pulling these wires down by moonlight, to a sudden cold front that shook the mules.

CWD: Yeah—that's right—

WSP: You could have frozen to death if you hadn't hunkered down in that cellar!

CWD: I guess I could have! (laughs) It was unbelievable. We got to our old place, and the well wasn't working, and there was a dug well off down maybe two hundred yards down in the field that you could dip water out of. I grabbed two buckets and went down there to get water. And I came back, had to put them on the stove to thaw them out. That must have been the second day of March 1943.

WSP: Mercy!

CWD: It must have been the second because I went to bed—and I had to be in Killeen at the bus station at five o'clock the next morning—so I couldn't go to sleep. (sighs) I said, "Oh, well, I'll just as well to get up." I got up and put on my clothes and went in there and kissed my mama good-bye. And I said, "I'm just going to town."

I went to the bus station, and cold, my God, it was cold! So, we told the old boy that was running the bus station that we're going down to the railroad depot. The railroad depot had a coal stove, put coal in it. So we went down there and burned up a ton of coal!

And, needless to say, that was the first eating out I got was when the sergeant came by to pick us up. (laughs) And they never did quit, they liked me! (laughs)

WSP: The bus station guy didn't tell you when the army bus arrived, he just sent the sergeant down there to get you—

CWD: No. Yeah, the sergeant! Yeah.

WSP: The sergeant followed you all the way back up to the bus chewing on you?

CWD: Yeah, until I got plumb out of the service—thirty-four months and seventeen days later!

WSP: Where were you stationed?

CWD: Fort Belvoir, Virginia, for basic training, and you could write a book on me. Old Gomer Pyle had it great all the way through his career, according to me. We got on day coaches in San Anton'—day coaches, not sleepers. And we went through Arkansas. That train never stopped—but just for amusement you could go back to the caboose, step off, and walk up to the engine—that's how slow it was going.

We were going along there and there was an old farmer, farming mules near the railroad and—I ought to have been shot—but them was gentle old mules. I was hollering, "Whoa!" Boy, them old mules would just stop! (laughs) That old farmer was a-whipping and cussing, get them started again, and I'd holler, "Whoa!" It took this train several minutes to pass by where we could get back up on the caboose. (laughs) I ought to have been shot for that.

WSP: I really can't understand why your sergeant yelled at you.

CWD: At the railroad depot?

WSP: Well, and where you're rousting the natives along the way into Arkansas.

CWD: Yeah. Well, there wasn't—I don't think there was even a sergeant on that danged train, just a bunch of privates. I don't remember one. If there was, he'd have been on my case.

But I made it to Fort Belvoir with flying colors, finally. I couldn't sleep sitting up on a train shaking and rattling. And we got—we always got somewhere at night, and we got to Fort Belvoir at night. (sighs)

CWD: And they let us off there—and we've got two old heavy bags—and went up a steep bluff, afoot! And we all got up there and got in a bunch and walking, and finally got down to the barracks area. And they'd stop and pull out a list, turn on the flashlight, and call out some names. And then they'd fall out, and somebody would get them there. And they finally got down to me. They called my name and fell out. I guess it was three o'clock, 3:30 in the morning, or some damn time—way in the night.

So they took me down there, and took me upstairs and put me in a bed. It didn't take me long to go to sleep. And I woke up the next morning and they were hollering—my name—and I knew my name. And I went to an old two-story upstairs window and hollered down there and told him I was up there. He hollered my name again, and I had some choice words I shouldn't have used. (laughs) But I told him again I was up there. (laughs) And they reported me AWOL!

WSP: They reported you AWOL because you did not come downstairs when the sergeant yelled out your name?

CWD: I wasn't in formation. I wasn't in formation, I was AWOL. So they got me one of those old GI spoons, and many nights I was under the barracks digging a damn hole, just forever, two foot deep, with a damn spoon! (laughs) I'll tell you! You can write a big book on my army experiences. I volunteered for overseas duty, and they wouldn't let me go.

WSP: Why was that?

CWD: I didn't have no training, get somebody killed, you know? They wouldn't let me go overseas. They would send you overseas later, but it was a whole bunch of replacements. They sent us from Fort Belvoir to Fort—Camp Stoneman in California. Yeah, and we stayed there awhile, a week or two, maybe, I don't know. It wasn't a long time we stayed there. I remember there—they'd fall you out, and you'd have to go on a hike. Have you ever been to Camp Stoneman or that part of California?

WSP: I really haven't, no.

CWD: It's steep damn hills, you know? And you'd fall out, and they walk you five miles, and you make an L-shape and come back. And you can look yonder at your barracks, about as far as that gate, down there, and you've got to go another three or four miles up through there.

It's a real steep bar-ditch and real grassy, and a big old culvert—you could walk through it—so I'd be on the back end, back there, and when they weren't looking—I'd take a little jump and—whist! Slide down on that grass and walk under that bridge and go back and get in my bed. (laughs) They never did catch me! They never did catch me. (laughs)

We left there, and they put you on a little old boat, too many on one little old—I don't know what you call them, a little old river boat of some kind, and take you to—what was it—'Frisco? San Francisco? Yes. Where you go by—what's that prison out on that island there?

WSP: Golden Gate.

CWD: No, that's the bridge. There's a prison out there.

WSP: Alcatraz.

CWD: Alcatraz! We went right by Alcatraz, and they didn't let me off there. But they took me on down—and I'd been listening, you know, "Seasick?" "Seasick." And one old boy said, "Well," said, "Well, if you don't want to get seasick, don't drink any water." I said, "Okay, I won't drink no water." So you had to carry these two bags up a long gangplank on that riverboat, and get up there in a big old shed, and it was plenty warm. I stayed in there a couple of hours or three or something. And then you picked up your bags and, oh, walked from here to the mailbox, up some gangplanks and got up on this ship.

Man, I'm, I'm dying for a drink of water by then. I said, "Well, I'm going to ask this sailor." "No sir, we'll probably lay here for three days before we move out." "I thank you. Where could you get a drink of water?" "Oh," he said, "Hell, you ain't supposed to come in here, but," says, "come on." That navy boy took me in there, and the coldest, best water I ever tasted. I drank a bellyful and took a canteen full and went back up to the top side, and we're pulling out! (laughs)

Oh, my, my! I get sick just thinking about this. There was eighteen hundred of us on an old cargo ship. And I said, "Well, I'm going to stay up on deck and not get sick." But people further up the ship was getting sick, and the wind was blowing—and I said, "I best go back downstairs, or I'm going to get sick up here." So I go back downstairs.

And they had them bunks like egg crates, you just had a little bitty room, and they're stacked up to the next deck, you know? I don't know how high they was, but they was in there, and you didn't have much room. It wasn't but about that wide an aisle, and then you crawl up and get in your bunk. And I got in my bunk, and I said, "I'm going to be all right." You could hear sick people, very sick, all over. I said, "I'll just lay here still, I'm going to be all right." There was a large fellow up on the very top bunk, and he began, "Ooh, ohh," and the water was rough, and the old ship was rocking. (laughs) He tumbled off of there. How in the hell he got in my bunk on top of me, I don't know. (laughs) And he got sick right there.

Needless to say, we both fell out of that damn bunk, both of us in bad shape. I stayed—

They shipped us to Australia for a few days—and replacement outfit—and we stayed in a racetrack in Brisbane, Australia. A pretty, pretty place. And you couldn't go to town—well, you could just walk out the gate, they didn't bother you, but their bathrooms was five-gallon buckets in an old tent. And if they caught you, for any reason, well, you would be out there to dump them buckets out, into a wagon, and that was kind of an unpleasant job.

So, me and my old buddy, we went to town and eat—you could eat a bellyful for a little bit of change. And we come back, and we knew if we'd go through that gate to the race track that we'd be on that honey buckets, as we called it. (wind noise) We crawled under a bridge near the railroad track, and we crawled under that bugger, and thought we had it made—and the fence was low in that area. So we got over the low fence and started to cross that yard. Them people had two large dogs—I don't know the breeds but they wasn't—they wasn't polite dogs. But I could outrun my buddy. They tore the britches off of his hind end, but I got over the fence and out into the street. And we didn't get caught. (laughs) Yeah.

They shipped us from there to New Guinea. We didn't stay there very long. They put me on a DCL unloading ammunition off of ships. And an Australian was keeping records, and he come up to an old truck and two of us was up there packing the old ammunition up. He says, "Idey?" And I looked at that old boy—I didn't know him, didn't nobody know nobody, hardly—and he says, "No, I don't know him." "No sir, neither one of us is Idey, maybe he's over yonder." (laughs) That old man was screaming and hollering, and jump up and jump up, and screamed and waved his hands. He'd wanted to know if there were eighty boxes of ammunition in that truck! (laughs)

But they say, "Idey." "Eighty."

WSP: In Australian.

CWD: (laughs) That was my first experience with a civilian over there, and he was hunting Idey. They didn't find him. (laughs)

WSP: We're getting off the beaten track here. Can you summarize your military career shortly? How long did you stay in Australia?

CWD: Nineteen months.

WSP: Then you came home?

CWD: No. Philippine islands. Hit the Philippine Islands Christmas Day in 1944. I know it was Christmas Day. I used dynamite. I was supposed to be a carpenter but I did a little of everything else. But I sat—they wanted—Lord knows why—there was a cliff that must have been three hundred foot straight down, and straight up, I mean to tell you, and at the top it was a good forty-five [degrees] or more over for a ways. And that's where the army wanted to put a road. So they had me up there—it was Christmas Eve—and brush and—terrible place to work. If you shook a loose rock—loose and you could hear it roll off, you'd have to wait like you threw it in a real deep well to hear it hit the water way down at the bottom. So that brush was a bothering us, and I said—well, I kicked the lid off of a whole case of dynamite, stuck a fuse to it. And this was a small little old island—(laughs) and I set off a case. And in a short while here come a lieutenant up there to see what happened. I says, "Oh, I just set off a breech charge to get some of that brush out of the way." (laughs) And they called me Breech Charge for a long time. (laughs)

Yeah, that was funny. I was in Fort Belvoir, Virginia, at a training mission, and they was blowing up a bridge, and we had witnessed setting the powder and all the junk on top of it. And then there was big

old pine trees a shortly distance from it. The old sergeant runs us all back up there, and everybody went under them trees. Not me. I stood out in the road. And he was hollering and screaming at me, and the damn thing went off, and rocks fell—it's a wonder it hadn't killed somebody because rocks came right down through them damn trees—plenty large to kill a man—but luckily nobody got hit. I was out in that open road, and could sidestep them, not let one hit on top of me. And—(sighs) of course we all hit the ground fairly soon.

And here he come out there. And I said, "Well, hell, take me to the stockade, or eat me, I don't give a damn!" I said, "Ain't no damn stupid sergeant going to get me killed with a rock falling on me from a dynamite blast." And here come a lieutenant up in a jeep and jumped out and asked what the hell's wrong. The sergeant told him I'd disobeyed an order. And he said, "Is that right, soldier?" "Yes sir, it sure is." "Why?" I said, "Well, hell, that ain't—that's just concealment in there, that ain't cover, and when a damn rock comes down, it's going to hit you and kill you. If you stay out here in the open you can sidestep them." He looked at me, he said, "You know, soldier, I believe that makes a lot of sense." He says, "I'm going to change—change the training deal for Fort Belvoir." If he did or not, I never did know because I left there.

I never made it to the stockade. I got put in brig on a ship for knocking an officer down, but I didn't know who he was. But I stayed in a three-man brig right on the tail end of a big old ship. It was a circle. It had, uh, three bunks, kind of leaning, kind of, and a commode, and about that much room between them bunks and the wall over here. And eleven of us was in there. (laughs)

WSP: That's on your way out or on your way back?

CWD: (laughs) Oh, no, that was the way we was going to New Guinea, then, from Australia.

WSP: When did you get back from the Philippines?

CWD: I got out Christmas Day 1945.

WSP: You spent one year in the Philippines. You got there on Christmas, and you left on Christmas.

CWD: Yeah. Yeah, I got at home on Christmas. We was there—I know we was there Christmas Day in 1944, but then we stayed there, and then we left and went to Lingayen Gulf in the northern part of the Philippines. That was the most ships, I guess, ever assembled.

WSP: Leyte Gulf?

CWD: Yeah, that's where we went, yes.

WSP: After your military career, did you go back to farming?

CWD: No, no, I was working at—oh, yeah, but I was working at Fort Hood civil service before the army got me. Yeah. By the time I was back home rolling up wire, I was already on military leave from the civil service, and then after I got out, I stayed out a few months and went back to civil service. I worked thirty-two years out there in supply. I went to work when I was seventeen, so I couldn't put down ten years' experience as very much, you know? And I never did get no experience! (laughs) I just stayed in supply for thirty-two years. Yeah.

WSP: Now Juanita Duncan's husband was also in supply, too?

CWD: Yeah, we worked in the same group of old buildings for years. Yeah, sure did.

WSP: Did you ever go back to ranching, or did you do that on the side?

CWD: Just on the side. I bought this place—I was one of the first ten in the state of Texas to get a place on

the GI Bill. It come out in all the newspapers.

WSP: Really!

CWD: Yes, one of the first ten. But I wasn't one of the first ten to get one. There was a distant heir that didn't sign some papers a hundred years ago, and they had to—they've got a hell of a system, the lawyer in Austin at that land board. "Hell, how in the hell are you ever going to find that man, how are you ever going to do it!" He says, "I'll tell you how we're going to do it. We're going to run it in the classified ads in three small papers in Arkansas. And if he don't show up, the title is clear." I thought that was kind of crooked. That's what he said they was going to do—

WSP: That would fulfill the legal obligation.

CWD: Yeah! They weren't going to put it on the front page, they was going to put it in the classifieds.

WSP: They normally put land notices in the classifieds.

CWD: Yeah. But they were going to run it in three papers in Arkansas.

WSP: Is that where the heirs were living?

CWD: Oh, hell, I have no earthly idea, but that's what the land board did, and if they didn't show up in thirty days then the title would be clear. I had an old uncle that lived up the road here that was a member of the Federal Land Bank—which don't have—the government has nothing in the world to do with the Federal Land Bank. That's just a name. It ain't a federal bank, it's just the name of a bank. Federal Land Bank. I didn't know it at the time, I thought that was—

But he was a trustee in that land bank down in Temple. And he talked to me, "Oh," he says, "they'd loan money on this land." He says that title is clear as a crystal, I know that. But it sure wasn't. So, I wasn't one of the first ten in the state to get a place—that was a long time later. And then an old Bascom Giles—I don't guess you ever heard of him?

WSP: Bascom Giles, yes.

CWD: Yeah, you've heard of him?

WSP: Oh, yes.

CWD: Him and Allan Shivers?

WSP: Oh, yes, Governor Shivers.

CWD: Somewhere or another the land board lost all of our money. I ain't selling you nothing because I ain't got no proof! But maybe you've heard of the two of them. I don't know whether Allan Shivers—last time I heard of him he was over, uh, the _____ (??) in the United States. Huh! I'll be darned—I don't remember—

WSP: Excuse me, but could you tell me about the days that you worked for Mr. Waddell. Tell me about his property?

CWD: Yeah, he was just a civilian, just a common fellow. Yeah, he just had mainly goats. And he had a lot of cattle, too, yeah.

WSP: Were you helping him with his goats?

CWD: Yeah, whatever he wanted. A ranch hand, you don't know what you're going to do. I went down there, and he put me to pushing a push lawn mower. (laughs) That didn't last long. I retired off of

that—I pushed that lawn mower on rocks, and it—do you know what a push lawn mower is?

WSP: Oh, yes.

CWD: It'll really hang on a little twig, it'll just lock it up. And then you've got to back up. Sometimes it'll fall out, and sometimes you've got to pull it out. Mowing a little rocky spot, and I told him, "No, I'll go back to the house. I'm not going to push this dang lawn mower." (laughs)

And then he put me to mowing in Mayberry Park—where Mayberry Park is there's lots of trees—and two little old Spanish mules and a riding mower—a two-wheel team pulling it—and you couldn't go for a tree, everywhere you started there's a tree. Then you've got to back these mules up and try to mow around them damn tree. I said, "No." So I says, "No—I'll unhook that team and take them back to the lot. You'll have to hire you somebody else, I can't mow in between those trees with these mules." And he said, "Well, here," and he laid a saddle horse out, says, "ride the rest of the day, see if you find any wormy sheep or goats or cows or whatever. Just ride the pasture the rest of the day." Which I didn't mind doing that. In them days—you're too young remember screwworms, aren't you?

WSP: I've read about them.

CWD: Uh-huh, yeah, whatever, they was in every thing. What happened—heel flies—you don't know a heel fly either—'cause that's the big problem. Heel flies get after old horse and mule, cows, and it hurts them terrible because they'll just go—normally they'll run in a straight line and as fast as they can run. And they'll eventually run into trees or brush, you know, getting away from them heel flies, and they'll knock a little spot of hide off of them. And an hour later they've got screwworms in them. So heel flies created—

WSP: Heel flies would drive the animals crazy. They'd wound themselves trying to get away from the heel flies. Then the blowflies would come in, lay their eggs in the open wound—

CWD: Yeah. In just a few minutes, yes.

WSP: The flies would lay their eggs in that hole, and they'd hatch in there—

CWD: Yeah. They'd recycle again, after so many days they'd come out, you know?

WSP: Wasn't there medicine you could put in the fly holes?

CWD: Oh, man, them old boys were talking recently—I guess there's twenty-five different brands of worm medicine. I ain't seen a bottle of it in years and years. They dropped those sterile flies, the deer hunters financed the operation, in, ah, oh, maybe in the '50s.

WSP: Yes, I remember.

CWD: Do you remember, Wayne? You said you found some parachutes?

WD: Fifties.

CWD: Nineteen fifty? A long time ago, and then the screwworms are extinct now. I ain't seen a case of screwworm in years. But that used to be a *full-time* job, doctoring screwworms. It was a full-time job.

WSP: Tell me how you'd do it?

CWD: Oh, they had patent medicines. I was trying to think of some of the names. We always—there was—one of them I believe was called Sixty-two, a black, paste-like stuff. It appeared to be the best. But they had Peerless—

Huh! There must have been fifty brands, kind of like, uh, fire ant bait in the stores. None of them work—well, some of them don't work—I'll re-word that—some of them just feeds them.

But that old Sixty-two, and then they had a clear one that was a paste—maybe it was Sixty-two. One of them was named Sixty-two. It was a good worm medicine. But you have to doctor them today, and doctor them again tomorrow, and it was continuously—

WSP: How did you apply the paste? On your finger?

CWD: No, no, on a swab. Sixty-two was clear, and it had little like shoe brush thing, something—yeah, it was attached to the lid. You unscrewed the lid, and you had the swab. Then you could swab it. And then you have the grubs. Them heel flies that I was telling you about—they create a grub. They get them in the heels but the grub comes out from the middle of their backs, And when the grub pops out, the screwworms—the screwworms, the blowflies would get it and then you'd have screwworms. They'd get in every little thing in the world.

And then in the hair goats—my old uncle that lived up the road had a large ranch, and hundreds and hundreds of them Angora goats. And they shear them—of course, they had to be careful. If it come a cold spell they could freeze to death. You'd have to put them in the shed and build a fire and keep them from piling up and smothering themselves to death. Because after you turn them out and let them go back up on that mountain up there—where Radar Hill is—all the way around that mountain there were just—not caves but crevices in under, under—them goats will go in a dark place, and you can ride up there on a horse on top and walk down there and catch them in under there and doctor them. But they little old—they nick them shearing them, you know, with electric—nick their hide, just a little nick, and then they'll all get full of worms.

I didn't mind doctoring goats, because a goat wants to live. But a damn sheep, they're born trying to die, and they don't ever quit! (laughs)

WSP: That's what my grandparents used to say! (laughs)

CWD: That's the difference in the two animals. A sheep is born wanting to die, and he don't ever quit. It may be some of them get old, but they're still wanting to die.

WSP: I understand sheep were a very fragile animal. Even in a rain storm, they wouldn't come into the barn, and fool things like that.

CWD: Well, like that little old slope right out there (points) don't look very steep—

WSP: Right.

CWD: That old sheep will lay down out there and get his feet uphill, even a young one, a healthy one, and they'll die. They get their feet uphill, they don't have sense to roll over or get up. It don't take much of a hill, a little slope, and a sheep will lay down there, and he'll die.

WSP: His feet uphill?

CWD: Uphill, and he can't get up. I guarantee you, you throw a sheep down there out past that pickup on that little slope, with his feet uphill, that's where he'll be, he won't get up.

WSP: On his back with his feet are pointing up hill, up in the air?

CWD: No, no, no! Laying flat on his side.

WSP: Oh, I see what you're saying.

CWD: Just laying down there—if he gets his feet up hill, not much and he won't get up, he'll die. You can roll him over, or—

WSP: If you roll his feet all the way over, so that his feet are pointing downhill—

CWD: Oh! He'll jump up and run off—and it'll take a fast horse to catch him—(laughs) if it's right away. If he's laid there for two days or something, he'll be slow to move anymore, according to the heat and the climate. Yeah, they'll die with their feet uphill.

WSP: What were some other things sheep did?

CWD: Well, sheep had wool worms in their back. You know, their bowels would move, and they'd get wool worms in their kidneys, the old ewes. A wool worm is a nasty doctoring. It's a different worm to a maggot. Instead of a screwworm, it's a wool worm. Whew! Yeah!

WSP: You had to doctor that too?

CWD: Oh, yeah, yeah.

WSP: I understand that, after you shear goats, they're vulnerable to a cold spell. They shear them in early spring, right?

CWD: Yeah. Twice a year, yeah. Yeah, they'll freeze to death right quick.

WSP: Did you ever hear of a goat coat, a little jacket you put on the goats after they were sheared?

CWD: No sir, never did. (laughs) When you're talking about a couple of thousand head—(laughs) I don't guess they ever thought about putting a jacket on them.

WSP: Some did, apparently. I didn't know whether this guy Waddell was well-off enough to be able to afford them or not.

CWD: I never knew his financial status. He spent a fortune putting a fence around that large ranch. I know he spent that.

WSP: Is that the nine-strand fence?

CWD: Yeah, yeah. It'd take nine barbed wires to turn a goat. Yep.

Nine to keep them from crawling through, or going over.

WSP: Did you have to use something to keep them from pushing the wire strands apart?

CWD: Oh, a stay, a wooden stay—yeah, that fence had a stay every three foot.

WSP: Sounds like a lot of work maintaining a goat fence.

CWD: Well—it didn't cost him a fortune, I don't guess—four bits a day or six bits for a man—daylight until dark, tying stays all day—not an hour, a day—six bits a day, maybe, tying stays. Everybody in the country was glad to get a job at six bits a day. You couldn't get a job every day. Agriculture didn't need you every, every day.

WSP: I understand.

CWD: Yeah. They needed you when they's picking cotton, hauling hay, or shearing sheep or goats, or maybe working cattle or something. But you're talking just a day or two at a spell. I worked for my old uncle for several years when he needed me. And you came by his old house up there—there's an old tin building, a big old barn where we put them goats when sheared them and it turned cold.

We'd put the wool rack—one side touched the roof, and the other side was tight to get in. Three people shearing. I'd tie the wool and throw it up on over this rack and run up on those steps and get up there and tromp it down in that sack. The sun shining on that sheet on that wool sack—(laughs) that was some hot job! (laughs)

I had one small cousin. I'd have to catch the sheep. We were shearing the sheep that day. I'd have to catch them big old sheep, when we got down to the big ones, and tie them for him. And then I'd tie the wool for the other two shearers, and throw them up there and get up there and tromp it.

WSP: How did you tie up the wool?

CWD: Twine string. Yeah. And, uh, your whole fleece is thrown up here on the table, and you wad it where the inside, where they sheared it off is exposed. And then you tie the string.

WSP: I see. The outside of the wool is rolled inside the bundle?

CWD: Yeah. Yeah. You go around thataway and twist it, and go back around over this way and tie it. And then throw it up in the wool sack. And then you have to run up there and tromp it every half-dozen fleeces you'd throw in this big old sack—it's a large sack. You could put about five hundred pounds of wool in a sack. But you'd have to tromp it pretty hard. My sweet old uncle, bless him, he'd come down there and poke on it with his thumb, said "Clements, you've got to stomp them a little tighter." And those old sacks cost eighteen cents or something—

WSP: Was he trying to save wool sacks?

CWD: Trying to save wool sacks. And he had a whole stack of them that would sit there at the edge of that shed, and nobody never put them up. They lay there and rotted. (laughs) A whole stack of them. (laughs) I would have put them up. Those wool sacks lay there and rotted.

WSP: He was saving money by having you stomp five hundred pounds into one sack?

CWD: Yes. (laughs) Yeah. "Stomp them a little tighter, son."

WSP: Did you ever shear any sheep on your own?

CWD: I sheared one sheep on my own. I had a few sheep when I was a boy, and one was a special sheep. I didn't want it nicked. My cousin was running a rig and I asked him if he minded if I sheared that sheep. I said that I'd rather not have it cut. "Yeah," he said, "you can shear it. Here." And handed me the clippers. And I was real—and I thought those clippers had hung on a little burr or something and I pushed a little harder, and it went up about that far, in that sheep's belly! (laughs)

WSP: Oh, no!

CWD: He reached over and jerked my hand back. He says, "I'll finish shearing her for you," said, "you've killed that sheep." I killed the best sheep I ever owned.

I sheared goats a few times, but I never did shear another sheep. I stayed clear of those.

WSP: Your shear just cut a hole right in the sheep?

CWD: Yeah, just went right inside her stomach and killed her.

WSP: Oh, my goodness gracious.

CWD: Yeah, best sheep I had. Goddamn, I never have forgotten it. That was the only sheep I ever attempted to shear. But I didn't want—

WSP: I don't think the sheep was too happy about it either.

CWD: No, I don't imagine she was. She was a fine ewe. She sure was. I'd raised her. (sighs) You can't keep from nicking the sheep with them shear rigs. They make little bitty marks on them all. Especially some sheep are real wrinkled. Another brand, Rambouillet, are real smooth-skinned sheep compared to the hides on—ah, I don't even remember all the names of sheep, now, but I know an old Rambouillet, he was a smooth-skinned sheep.

But some of the others were just real wrinkled. They were good sheep, their wool was always heavy. But they couldn't keep from cutting them. They just—some shearers were worse than others, but I never did know a shearer that didn't nick them, you couldn't help it. Well, that old thing—that thing is almost like a razor or something, you know, and if you hit the hide, it just cuts it the same as it does wool. It just cuts anything you stick it up against.

WSP: Was this is a rig powered by electricity or what?

CWD: No, no, no, gasoline motor. This is before electricity, son. Gasoline motor.

WSP: How did the motor turn the cutting mechanism?

CWD: Belts, belts run it—it ran off of belts and gears. Yeah.

WSP: How many shearing stalls did your uncle have?

CWD: Well, various ones rigged—some of them had eight drops, they called them. Eight-drop rigs, where you had eight shearers. A lot of boys made livings. This Molly Duncan we've been telling you about—her husband—and I didn't know it until later years—he was a great sheep shearer.

But they had an eight-drop machine and they'd get done shearing the local area, everybody's sheep, and they'd load up their clothes and head west. There's more sheep west in them days. They'd go out here to San Saba on west, large sheep ranches. And they pulled in one place and sheared sheep for two weeks, same damn lot. Then they'd just shear and shear, eight drops running.

WSP: How many sheep in a day or an hour?

CWD: Well, an excellent sheep shearer, very few of them could knock out a hundred head—

WSP: In a day?

CWD: In a day. Oddly enough, you know what they were getting back then?

WSP: I have no idea.

CWD: Seven cents.

WSP: A sheep?

CWD: Seven cents. That's the truth. Seven cents a sheep.

WSP: Seven dollars a day?

CWD: Golly! Well, four bits was normal wages, son.

WSP: Oh, I see.

CWD: So, yeah, that was the only big money there was, being a sheep shearer.

Well, what happened, they sheared hundreds and hundreds of heads of sheep for an old fellow. They

got done, and he said, "Boys, I hate to ask you of it, but if y'all will help me, I'll herd these sheep back over that hill, out of sight of here." Said, "My brother is going to drive his sheep over here and let you shear them here." And says, "They all scattered out and herded them old sheep back over the hill." And when they were coming back, they could look coming over the hill from the other direction, twice as many sheep as they'd sheared! (laughs)

And they stayed there for nearly a month in one shed, shearing sheep with an eight-drop machine. There was an old boy across the river that was sacking—

I never knew Cousin Barney had done a day's work in his life. He was a schoolteacher—but I was mistaken. He was the best sheep shearer in the country. Yeah.

WSP: This is Barney Duncan?

CWD: Barney Duncan. He was a sheep shearer when he was a boy, I guess before he went to college, probably. Yep. He was raised on a ranch up there. Anyway, I guess he learned early.

All them boys—nah, the youngest boy, I don't know if he ever sheared any—ever done a damn thing in his life. He went to A&M and then went to the army, and then he came out and was working for, ah, some big company down in Houston when they was having them big strikes. He was the main negotiator for the company he worked for. It was a long drawn out deal. I don't know, he—he made a lot of money but he died young. His wife is still living.

That's odd, that old uncle had—ah, one, two, had four daughter-in-laws, and his boys have all been dead now for quite a while, but his daughter-in-laws are all still living. Yeah, it's kind of odd. My daddy has got one daughter-in-law living, and the rest of them is all gone, been gone awhile.

WSP: Now, your parents' ranch was very near Radar Hill? Am I right?

CWD: Well, a mile, maybe, from it.

WSP: Did you ever climb it?

CWD: Aw, hell! I know, I still know every snake den on that hill, son! In the 1930s they paid two bits for rattlesnake rattles and a quarter inch of meat, a little meat on it. And you'd get four bits a day—if you could find a job—from daylight to dark, and it was usually hauling hay or sacking wool—or strenuous work, needless to say, or they wouldn't hire you.

But anyway, I'd start in the fall hunting snakes on that hill up there. And I know every snake den from—around from, from Radar Hill, around thataway, and then from Radar Hill *way* back around to that control tower. Radar Hill zigzags around this way and that—I know every cotton-picking snake den up there!

WSP: You'd get how much a snake?

CWD: Two bits, two bits.

WSP: You could make some good wages just catching snakes?

CWD: Well—maybe, maybe. Maybe. You wouldn't catch them every time you went. Maybe you'd could go and get six, or eight, or maybe you'd find a diggable den, one that you could work out, with crowbars and jacks or something, and get, you might get a bunch out of that. Make good day one day and the next day you might not make a quarter. (laughs) They might not be out.

Them snakes, in the fall they bed up, but they lay out, then they den in them holes all winter, and then come a warm day in February is the best ones. They'll crawl out of them dens and get in the sun.

They don't leave them, they just crawl out for that day, lay in the sun. And if you know where the den is, well, you can walk quietly you can get up there. But the problem is that once you shoot one, they're gone. They go in the hole before you can bat your eyeball. Yeah.

WSP: What kind of gun would you use?

CWD: A .22 rifle.

WSP: Stand a good piece away and shoot them?

CWD: Well, whatever is—whatever the situation was. He might be right under your feet when you see him. (laughs) Yeah.

WSP: Why did you use a rifle instead of a pistol?

CWD: Well, real simple, I didn't have a pistol. Yeah, I didn't have a pistol, and I probably couldn't have hit one with a pistol anyway. But I could shoot a rifle some, I sure could. My folks let me start hunting with a .22 rifle when I was six years old, by myself.

WSP: My goodness! What did they send you out to shoot?

CWD: Rabbits. Anything I wanted to shoot. We lived in South Texas, and I kept us in doves and quails and rabbits with a .22, a little old .22.

I had a good dog. Little old mesquite trees ain't, you know, ten foot is the tallest one, and this little dog would tree these quails in the mesquite trees. And you aren't shooting four foot, you know, just—and I'd shoot them quails in the head. If you aim to shoot—I'm not talking about a big marksman deal, I'm just talking about shooting from here to that post, and her head is as big as a dime, you know? I'd just shoot them in the head, because I wouldn't waste the meat. And I wouldn't ever kill but five. The dog would keep them in that tree, but I'd just kill five. That's what my dad—there wasn't no refrigeration, so five quails is what my daddy and I could eat at one meal.

WSP: The two of you could eat five quails between you?

CWD: Yeah, yep. Five quails.

WSP: What about the rest of your family?

CWD: Well, I guess Mama didn't eat quail. I guess. I don't remember. But that was all there was, at that time, just my mother and dad and I. Yes, they'd all flew the coop.

WSP: Oh, okay, sometime in the late '30s?

CWD: Yeah. No, the early '30s.

WSP: What did they call Radar Hill before they called it Radar Hill? Do you remember?

CWD: No sir, I sure don't. I don't know. There was a lot of different people that owned property up to the top of Radar Hill, to the top of that hill.

Yeah, it run up on it. My uncle owned a whole bunch of it and rented it, leased or rented, or borrowed or whatever a bunch more of it. He went around there towards that control tower, you know. That's a good ways across there.

I had a brother-in-law come see us one Christmas and brought his hounds. My brother'd come with him, too. They lived in Aransas Pass. We went up on that hill. Way in the night we'd been chasing these old hounds all—them old hills, you drop off of it, and then you come back up over there. We

chased them old hounds until way in the morning, and fog rolled in, and it was thick. You couldn't see twenty feet. You couldn't see nothing.

My older brother was with me, and we sat down on a rock at the edge, wondering where in the hell we was. And he said we was in McCowan (??) Cove, which is that one right around from Radar Hill, kind of. I said, "Well, brother, I'm turned around." I said, "Damn, I think we're way up towards Copperas Cove." "Oh, no, no, I know where we're at, I've hunted this hill all my life. We're in McCowan (??) Cove." I said, "Well—(sighs) I'm glad, because I'm tired of walking these hills." "Yeah," he said, "me too. I ought to have went home hours ago." He said, "Let's go." I said, "Well, let me rest a little bit." I had heard a train in the way distance, and sure enough, that train come along right down there. And I said, "Brother, you know, since we've been up here they've built a railroad track below McCowan Cove." (laughs) He said, "Damn you, you know where we was!" We was a long ways from home. (laughs)

Yeah, a railroad, a freight train come by and proved him wrong. We were right above the railroad tracks. We were right up at Copperas Cove, right up from where we eat dinner, little ways over. It come out over here on Radar Hill. That's a deceiving hill. You get up there at night, and you go down one of them gullies and come up on the other side, and it might be several hundred yards flat as can be and good grassland, but then you come to the edge over there, and you go off in another one, and you can get turned around in the dark, especially in fog you don't know where in the world you are.

WSP: So the only way you can keep your orientation is to stay on the upper part of that hill?

CWD: Well, it kind of—it may be wide or you may walk several miles on flat, and then you might not walk thirty yards, and you're going off in another gully. The top of it ain't—it's flat up there, but it's—what I'm trying to say is there ain't a long streak of flat country until you go up the gully, and there's another one. You can stay on flat all the way to Copperas Cove, but you'd have to zigzag a whole bunch.

WSP: If you walked a straight line you'd go up and down the gullies.

CWD: Up and down, oh, yeah.

WSP: You followed those hounds up and down the gullies almost to Copperas Cove before you figured out how far you'd gone.

CWD: Yeah. Yeah, and if that train hadn't come by, I don't know where we would've wound up. (laughs) Yeah, it was so foggy you couldn't see your hand.

About Christmastime one brother-in-law brought a quart of alcohol, I guess it was—of course I was too young to drink any of it. But the rest of them knocked the chill off so long, I don't think they knew where they were. (laughs)

It's a wonder we—even up in them, them times, uh, poison was—for dogs—was kind of a common thing. You may not follow me, but people put out strychnine, mainly—that's one type of poison—to kill dogs killing their goats and sheep or calves or whatever.

WSP: Oh, wild dogs?

CWD: Hell, no, just community dogs.

WSP: Domestic dogs?

CWD: Domestic dogs.

WSP: They put out strychnine to kill domestic dogs that they thought were trying to kill their sheep?

CWD: Ah, yes, hell, they wasn't trying to, they was. They were getting into them. The damnedest old story I can tell you—my old uncle up here had a big old red dog. Hell, I don't know what breed he was, longhaired and a big old tall dog. And he'd work for me just like me and him was buddies. I could use him to put goats in the lot. I could use that dog or take him in the pasture roundup and wave at him, and he'd just work his old hiney off for me.

WSP: An instinctive sheep dog?

CWD: Yeah, any kind of animal. He was just a smart old dog. You could work him all day—maybe you're rounding up worming sheep, or going to shear them or mark the lambs, or whatever. And that old dog, I could take him and an old horse and head out, and old dog would take off around there. He knew what he was supposed to do, get all them sheep. I'd work him all day—and I'd worked for my uncle a good long while at times—and a man drove up in a car and said, "Mr. Duncan, your dogs." And you know where we came from her house?

WSP: Yes sir.

CWD: It was between her house and what was Killeen—which is in town now, but this man lived out of town—but it was between her house and town. He said, "Your dog was over there killing sheep, my sheep." "Nah," he said, "you surely must be mistaken." Says, "This old dog is probably ten years old." Says, "He lays right here on the front porch." And he says, "We use him every few days working sheep or goats, cows or something. He's a good old dog, we use him all the time." Says, "He won't bother the sheep. I've got *hundreds* of them down here!" "Well, sir, it was your dog."

He said, "No sir." "It was your dog." "Well," he said, "I sure think you're mistaken." Says, "The old dog is always here, he wouldn't come that far to kill sheep." "Yep," says, "that's him." "Nah," he says "sir, I believe you're—I just flat believe you're mistaken." I told the old guy, I said, "Hey, I just used that old dog yesterday to round up sheep out of this south pasture down here, and he worked like charm. I don't believe it's him." "Well," he says, "tell you what," he says, "the next time I catch him I'm going to kill him, mister." My old uncle says, "Sure, sure, sure, kill him."

WSP: If you catch him way out on your place—

CWD: Yeah, yeah. Then about three days later, early one morning, the sun was just coming up, and I'd done milked their cows for them. I seen that guy coming—because there wasn't much traffic in them days—here he come, and Old Red was laying up on the hood of his car. And he said, "You want to call your dog?"

And Uncle Dave walked out and looked at him, and he said, "Sir, I sure believe that was my dog." (laughs) He said, "Well, I tried to tell you." He said, "Well, I just can't believe it, that he would come that far, across that many sheep pastures, to go to that one place over there and get with half a dozen more domestic dogs." It wasn't wild dogs, it was just somebody's dogs—gather up and going *way* over there and killing them sheep and—

WSP: Then come back and being a good boy?

CWD: Yeah! Come back and working for you all the next day. My old uncle reached in his pocket, "How many did they kill?" He said, "Oh," the feller says, "they killed so many," I don't recall, but says, "but there's a half a dozen dogs in the bunch." He said, "That don't matter! One of them was my dog! How many sheep was it?" He told him. He said, "I'll pay you." And he went to counting out some money and the fellow backed up and said, "No, no, no." And my old uncle, "Yeah!"

He had that money out, "You're going to take it, or I'll whip the hell out of you!" Right in front of his old house up there. I guess he was mad because he lost his dog. He said, "Yeah, you're going to take this money, to pay you for all of them damn sheep!" And he did. He made the man take the money. Yeah! He was going to whip him, he was going to fight him. He was going to make him take the money. He said, "I don't give a damn how many dogs was in the bunch, mine was in there, and I'm going to pay you for all!" Well, see he had lost sheep for years and knew how it was.

WSP: Oh, I see.

CWD: Of course, he never got paid for any of *his* sheep that I ever knew of.

WSP: I got you. He'd had been denying his dog had done it—and it turned out his dog was some psychotic killer?

CWD: Well, I would have died thinking that dog that there ain't no way he was going to go ten miles from home to kill a damn sheep when he could kill them right there, right there at the house, or he had that many sheep, he could just kill them anywhere.

WSP: Do you think it was the pack mentality?

CWD: Yeah. Yeah, that's the big problem, big problem. I ran goat here for years, Spanish goats, and they put me out of business. People would say, "Wolves! Wolves! Wolves!" Wolves don't bother you at all. I'll admit, the wolf is going to kill a few. The wolf will kill to eat. A dog will kill for pleasure and never quit. They catch them off over here in the back of my pasture, and the dog will finally give out, but they'll lay down and rest fifteen minutes, and then they'll get up and start killing them again. They don't ever quit.

WSP: And it's not for food?

CWD: No, they're just killing them for killing them. That's the difference.

WSP: How do they do it?

CWD: They bite the hind leg, the flank first, and then they just chew them up all over—

WSP: Multiple dog bites.

CWD: In the back of the leg. They kill them, they cut their throats, they kill them dead. Yeah.

WSP: And once they kill one sheep, they're ready for another.

CWD: Go get another one! Yeah! And it's usually never one dog, it's nearly always as many as six. And they'll just kill until—if you don't live near the goats or happen around, they'll just kill them, I guess, until there ain't none left because they won't quit. They'll just keep on killing them.

WSP: Did you have dog problems yourself?

CWD: Oh, Lord! I could tell you dog stories from now until daylight.

WSP: Tell me another one.

CWD: Oh, I killed so many. I hate to—I love dogs, and I hated to kill them, but when you see a little old kid goat running around, and their mama is dead, it don't bother you much then to kill dogs. When I started out, I'd see dogs and go find the owners and tell them. And, later on, I'd kill a dog and go tell the owners. And then I got a little smarter—I just killed the dogs.

WSP: Did you ever have an owner confront you?

CWD: No! No, I never had one get on me. But I didn't go tell them, I just killed the dog, and that was it.

WSP: That guy that came and talked to your uncle was something special?

CWD: Yeah. Yeah. He'd followed that old dog halfway over there, evidently, or he wouldn't have knew where he was. That was ten miles, I guess.

WSP: Upset as he probably was, he could just as easily have shot him, like you did.

CWD: I'm sure he finally woke up to the fact, "Hey, I'll just shoot these dogs, and they'll wonder what went with them." I killed more dogs—I'm not ashamed of it.

WSP: You said something interesting back there about goats. When it got cold, you would put them in the barn, but you'd have to make some special effort to keep them from piling up and killing themselves, or suffocating?

CWD: Yeah. From piling up, yeah. Yes, suffocating. They—

WSP: They didn't have the sense to keep warm?

CWD: No, no, no. They ain't got that much sense. If you have a big old stove with a pen around it where they can't get to it—a wood stove. Build a big fire and put what heat you can in that big old barn, but you'd have to be at least three men stay in there all night and keep them stirred, you know. Just walking around through them—because they'll normally get in a corner, and you can't believe it, they'll just keep jumping on each other, jumping up and piling up in the corner. If you ain't got three men there to jerk them back off, they'll kill a bunch of them.

WSP: What are they jumping on each other?

CWD: For cold. I don't know why they do it. That's the way they do.

WSP: But they're not heading toward the warmth, which is in the middle of the barn with the furnace—

CWD: No, no—they'll just pile up anywhere. They will pile up not in a corner, just anywhere, just start piling up.

WSP: Some weird goat instinct?

CWD: I guess so, sir. I've seen it happen so I know what they do. But it takes three men to run grab them by the horns and jerk them off and—you grab an old goat by the horn and jerk him back out there and the damn scamp will jump right back on there if you don't watch him. You have, you have to work fast and hard. And you get them unpiled, and then they may not pile up again for hours, or not right away, anyway. You get them unpiled you can rest a little bit—you'll need to. Then—

WSP: Then they go to piling again, and you've got to get up?

CWD: Yeah, got to get up.

WSP: Are you just circulating all the time to keep them kind of loose—

CWD: Yes—

WSP: Or do you wait in some part of the barn and wait until they start to pile up?

CWD: No, you have to circulate all the time to keep them from piling, but then they'll, then they'll do it again.

WSP: Sounds like terribly exhausting work!

CWD: Well, it ain't too bad, you just have to keep walking.

WSP: But it's all night long!

CWD: Yeah, it's—yes, you've got to do it around the clock or—

WSP: But in the wintertime, wouldn't that be just like every other day?

CWD: No, it's around the clock for a few days, unless the weather turns off warm.

WSP: Then you let them out?

CWD: Let them out in a bigger trap where they won't pile up outside. On a warm day they won't pile up, just when they get cold.

WSP: But there's some awfully cold days back to back in Texas. You could go for several weeks!

CWD: Yeah, I know, I know—I've been there. (laughs) Yeah, I know.

WSP: The goat-herding business is a lot more complicated than most people appreciate.

CWD: Yeah, yeah. Well, that old uncle up there, I guess he got pretty well wealthy for just a common feller. Only he was the first individual that ever brought an Angora goat in a wide area around here. People come from hundreds of miles to see them damn Angora goats. They was pretty, and ringlets, their hair white, dragged the ground.

WSP: Very long hair would drag under the belly.

CWD: Yeah. And they'd go by an old greenbriar, which is plentiful in this area, hang that wool in there, and it'll try to get loose. And it'll go around and around and around, and if you don't go around there on horseback and looking—you've got to get down and cut that briar loose.

WSP: That's another chore you've had to do.

CWD: (laughs) Yes, another thing to watch for, greenbriars, they killed many a goat.

WSP: Running down the list of things that kill sheep and goats. You've got flies—

CWD: Yeah—

WSP: They could die from cold weather, from shearing. They could died from cold weather by bunching up. They could die from—

CWD: Screwworms.

WSP: Or any number of other worms.

CWD: Yeah.

WSP: They could die from tangling up their long hair on a bush.

CWD: Yeah.

WSP: Tell me again, why raising sheep and goats is better than farming?

CWD: Well, see, you can't farm that hill up there.

WSP: So you're stuck with all that work!

CWD: Well, you've got—at that time that hill was brush, where Radar Hill is, it was just brush. So you

couldn't farm nothing on that hill. So all they could have get off of it was brush. And they was lots of trouble, but there was lots of money in the mohair of goats, way back yonder. I forget what mohair was bringing, but it was—he had a herd of goats—it seems like he was getting three dollars a head, or averaged about three dollars a head off of them, which then, son, was a lot of money. Yeah, a lot of money.

WSP: Sheep and goats was about the only thing you *could* raise on land of that nature?

CWD: Yeah, just goats—

WSP: And what about cattle?

CWD: In the wintertime, he often run his cattle up on the top of that hill because it was a good thirty degrees warmer up there on a still, cold night than down here on this creek bottom. It's warmer up there on that hill.

WSP: I'll be darned. Thirty degrees?

CWD: Yeah. I would hunt in this country and be up on that hill, and wouldn't be finding nothing. "Well, let's go to the river," which wasn't nothing when I was young—could walk all night. But by the time you got halfway down the river, you'd untie your coat and put it back on. It would get colder every step—every step of the way to the river you'd get colder. On a still night it gets cold. I have frost down here that's unbelievable on a still night.

My nephew lives right up the hill up here, and we was going to do something the next morning, and I said, "Well, wait." It was a roof job or something, I said, "Let's wait awhile until the frost gets off." And here he pulled in down here one morning and the sun was coming up.

CWD: He got out of his pickup, and I said, "Son, I told you that you'd have to wait until the frost gets off." He said, "I wish you'd come get in my pickup and go up to my house. There ain't a bit of frost up there!" (laughs) And it looked like snow down here. Said, "I can't believe it, there ain't a bit of frost at my house!" And you can see it, it's just right up the hill up there.

Every step walking, here from the creek was—it would get colder every step on some nights. You know, still nights? Whoo-ee, along before daylight, it gets cold down in the low places!

WSP: Did you ever remember any flooding on Reese's Creek?

CWD: No.

WSP: That run through your property wouldn't it?

CWD: Nah—

WSP: No flooding?

CWD: No, it probably headed on Pa's place, but he didn't have a water gap on his place, 160 acres and no water gap. Not a water gap on Pa's place.

WSP: Did he use pumps to get his water?

CWD: Yeah—no—

WSP: A well?

CWD: A bucket and rope.

WSP: A draw well?

CWD: Yeah. That's why my hands are growed crooked. We got a dry spell, ah, the last of the '30s, I guess. We had a drilled well—Mama paid for it with turkey money, she told me—years before I was born. And it had a bucket and a rope, a long bucket—maybe you've seen them. You drop it down there, and the valve at the bottom lets the water come in, and then when it gets full, that bottom valve shuts, and your bucket is full of water, and you can draw it back out. But you have to let that rope down, and I let the rope slide as fast as possible—have to kind of hang onto it, lightly. You get the bucket full and I had a number three washtub and a number two washtub, tubs like—see that thing out yonder upside down? (points)

WSP: Yes sir, I do.

CWD: That's a number two washtub. A number three washtub is quite a bit bigger. Anyway, I'd draw a number three washtub full of that cold well water—it was in the yard.

CWD: I'd have the gate shut to the yard so the cattle couldn't get in there because you couldn't draw it for them running into you. I'd draw a number three tub full and a number two tub full, and I'd open the gate—and this is the truth—and one old cow would drink a number three washtub full of water.

WSP: Completely empty?

CWD: Suck it. Oh, I guess you could wet a handkerchief in what was left in there. That one old cow—and she looked like she was going to bust. I'd get them full, and then you have to drive them back out, go back and draw it again—you know, fill up them tubs—and then let some more come in. That was a full-time job.

So we drew the well dry, finally drew the well dry, and then we had—an old milk cow was all we had. I'd teach them to lead—and I haven't forgot how—I can teach a—I'm not real smart but I'm smarter than most cows. If you put a rope on an old cow's horn and pull on her and if she won't come, you double it up and go back and whip her a little bit, and pull on her and she won't come, maybe you'll have to whip her a little bit more. It won't take but a few minutes, maybe ten or fifteen minutes—when I get done messing with them. They won't get that rope tight, you can get it and take off and she'll keep slack of that rope, she'll get right with you. (laughs) Yeah, you can break them to a lead. Yeah, you sure can. It don't take too long to break a cow to a lead.

WSP: You were describing a drought in the late '30s—and it required you to draw enough water to keep the cows' thirst slacked.

CWD: Yeah. Yeah.

WSP: How many head of cattle are you talking about?

CWD: I don't think we had but seven or eight milk cows. We didn't have no big herd, just milk cows. Well, when the well went dry, then I was leading them to my grandfather's place. He had a little old creek that didn't go dry. It quit running, but it had holes in it. And he had one particularly deep hole that still had plenty of water, and quite a few of the neighbors was bringing their cattle over to Grandpa's place to water them. Yeah, they—they seen some droughts. I—

WSP: You were about to say something about a drought in the 1950s?

CWD: Drought is a whole lot easier to remember than floods. You can sit here on this porch—and you know a little old glass marble?

WSP: Yes sir.

CWD: You could throw one—well, I guess you ought to say a slingshot—we used to call them nigger shooters—you could shoot one way off up there somewhere, and you'd still see it. There wasn't no vegetation, wasn't any. It was just like out here behind this truck—

WSP: Just bald dirt?

CWD: There just wasn't no vegetation. It was just—I planted seventeen acres of Johnson grass, and any farmer hardly could raise Johnson grass. I bought the seed and got the land in shape and sowed it with a grain drill. It got up about six inches high, and the wind blew—and I want to tell you it was pretty—and directly it turned brown. And the wind blowed, and it just withered away, there wasn't none there. Johnson grass died—the seedling grass, now, don't misinterpret—old Johnson grass with a root system definitely didn't dry in the drought. They live forever. Yeah.

Now you're going to have to excuse me because I'm going to the bathroom.

WSP: All right.

(interruption in taping)

CWD: He had a boy—

WSP: Your grandfather had a boy?

CWD: Yeah, a crippled boy that never did marry, named Jess, a bad cripple. Doctors operated on him before 1900 over here at Oakalla, just two sheep-herding doctors, I think. One of them had been a herder, herding sheep. But they operated on his leg, and it was way short.

Anyway, he had a hog pen off down from the house. When they killed a hog, of course my daddy and I had to go do it. And they put a rope on the hind leg of that hog. And my old uncle walked on a walking stick anyway, and he'd drive that hog—and it couldn't get away from him, he had a rope on his leg—and he'd drive him up to where we killed them.

And, 'course, by that time I'd killed hogs for years. Fortunately, I'd never made one squeal—you hit a hog just right, he won't squeal—it's a dead X between his ears and his eyes. It don't work on a beef, their brain is off to the side. Anyway—my gun, and I was going to shoot the hog. And my grandpa raised a grandson from childhood up, and he was the one that had to do the killing of the hog. So he grabbed my gun and shot the old hog, and didn't hit him right. A big old hog.

And a shot hog will go kind of crazy. But my dad was holding him with that rope. And I'm perturbed because my cousin throwed my gun down, and I was perturbed about my gun. And we, that cousin and I had a few words, and he took off to the house, and my daddy yelled at me, "Get over on this rope, son!" And I knew to get on that rope! I didn't know whether I could hold that old hog or not, but I knew I had to get on that rope! And my daddy grabs up an old single-bit axe and settled that old hog, knocked him in the head and everything quieted down when the hog quit squealing. (laughs)

And my old grandpa—law, there's more to that story. My grandpa had a little black and white dog that rode on the saddle on a horse or a mule, whatever he rode, that little dog would set up on the horse. And this old uncle saw the dog was barking and biting at the hog. And my old crippled uncle throwed his walking stick at him and knocked the dog unconscious, and my grandpa was about to kill my uncle for killing his dog. (laughs) It was quite a—quite a rhubarb there for a minute until Pa stopped the hog from squealing, and the dog come back to, and everything got back to normal. (laughs) Oh, it was the only hog killing I ever got into! (laughs)

There was some people that moved into the area from Houston, and that old lawyer's got a girl her divorce, or I don't—

WSP: Judge Henderson?

CWD: Yeah. And he moved them up here for some reason. I guess the single girl, divorced—the girl was a baby—and her brother and her mama and daddy. And as soon as they got here, they wanted to buy some pigs. And another brother raised hogs, and he sold them five pigs, six-week-old pigs. I guess they didn't know that pigs eat or something. They fed them, fed them about a month and—you know, they're pigs—and they decided they didn't want to feed them pigs anymore, just butcher them. Little old bitty pigs! So my daddy—he caught everything in the community. He was a butcher, and a veterinarian, and a trustee, and everything else in the community. Well, they called my daddy, "Come slaughter these hogs for us."

CWD: So we—my pa said, "Come on son," let's go over there and kill that old guy's pigs. I said, "These pigs are—." And he said, "I know it son, but if he wants them killed, we'll kill them." So he told the old man to have two pots of water boiling when we was on the road. And them little old pigs were over there in the pen. And Pa told me before we got there, said, "Son, we'll just dip them in them wash pots. Kill two of them at a time." So I walked up to the pen, and pow, pow! I killed two of them and stepped over there and stuck them with a pocketknife, a little old bitty—stick them and make them bleed. And that old man that moved in there from Houston, he told my daddy, he said, "Maybe he ought to let my boy shoot them, seems like he ain't having much luck." And I thought Pa was going to whip him. He got pretty rough with him, grabbed him and shook him, he said, "Hell, he didn't miss!" (laughs) Says, "He didn't miss!" And Pa got hold of that old guy—

WSP: Why did that guy think that your dad had missed?

CWD: He was telling my dad that *I* had missed.

WSP: How did he get that idea?

CWD: Well, he didn't hear the hogs squeal.

WSP: Ah! You were so good they didn't squeal, and he's expecting squealing, and he didn't hear any, so he figured you're not a good shot.

CWD: Yeah, I shot twice, and he didn't hear no squealing, so he thought maybe his boy ought to do the shooting. And that didn't set well with my pa at all. So he reached over and got him by the arm, rattled his cage pretty good over that hog killing.

WSP: I should think when you carried out two dead piglets that kind of—

CWD: I hadn't had time to get them out. I'd crawled over in the lot to stick them. (laughs) They was rough-dressed hogs because we dipped them in the wash pot and scraped them, and Pa gutted them laying there on the table, said, "Here's your hogs." And we turned around and left. It didn't take us long to dress five hogs. (laughs) We didn't cut them up—(laughs) we just got the hair and the guts out of them. (laughs)

An old fellow, come an ice storm—ice was, I don't know, about as thick as I ever seen it. You don't see ice too often here.

WSP: You're indicating about an inch thick.

CWD: Yeah. And they heated with a fireplace, and they run out of wood.

WSP: Now, who is this guy you're talking about?

CWD: Lord, I don't know, some old guy from Houston.

WSP: It's not that same lawyer? This is?

CWD: Nah, they lived in his house.

WSP: Oh, I see. Somebody else altogether. Okay.

CWD: I can't think—I can't remember what the heck them people's names were.

WSP: He's obviously not a real ranching sort of guy.

CWD: Nah, he come out of Houston. He didn't know nothing. I don't know what he was thinking about, killing seven-weeks-old, two-months-old pig, they ain't big enough for nothing. I don't know what they taste like, I never did eat a pig—but I know, I remember Pa having that old fellow by the arm because he didn't want to kill them pigs no-how, we had something else to do—(laughs)

WSP: You were about to tell another story on this *same* guy, something about when the ice was pretty thick.

CWD: Oh! They wanted wood, they wanted a load of wood. And Pa was asking him about three warm days before, "No, we don't need no more wood." Then this ice got on the ground, and—he needed wood. They were plumb out of wood. Pa said, "No, to bring you wood now would cripple a mule on this ice. I won't bring it." And the old man pleaded for wood, and Pa says, "Well, all right." And so I hooked up a team to the wagon and throwed on a jag of wood. We made it over there just fine, threw the wood off and turned around and started home. There was a little old hill, just—and that ice—of course, I stopped at the top—what they call a stay chain on a wagon, to keep one mule from getting ahead of the other one. It's called a stay chain. They're about three foot long, I guess, a hook on, and a clevis on one end and—and you take that off and put it around the spokes of the wagon and tie it to the bed—then the wheels just slide.

And I took off the stay chains and locked the back wheels. And I got back up on the wagon and pulled over in the bar ditch where there was some good-sized rocks to hit, and I was trying to get down that hill. And sure enough, one of them old mules slid down on that ice. And they're sure-footed animals, but they will fall. And there come the wagon and the other mule trying to hold it back. It slid that old mule from here to that old shack there. And he got up, and he was all right.

WSP: Slid about thirty feet, thirty-five feet?

CWD: Yeah, he was, he was skinned all over but he got up, and he was still able to pull. And Pa was sure sick, "Oh," he said, "he may die, it may have hurt him." I said, "Pa, it sure might have, we slid a good ways." He said, "You locked them wheels?" "Yeah, Pa, I had the hind wheels locked." "Well," he says, "it didn't matter. They'd slide on this ice." Old mule got all right. It didn't hurt him.

WSP: Did you get money out of that job?

CWD: Aw, no, oh, well, five dollars, or three dollars or something.

WSP: You risked a perfectly good mule to give some guy from Houston, who had three warm days to get the wood when it was timely—

CWD: Yeah, didn't want no wood!

WSP: But when the ice storm came, he wanted the wood, and he wanted the wood, right now!

CWD: (laughs) Yeah, yeah. That's the way it was. I went in the wood business on this place many years ago. I didn't intend to, but I cut out a lot of trees out here where I could see and sawed them up, and a nephew come by that lived in Killeen and loaded up a load of wood, and there were a lot of loads left. And he called me back, said, "If you'll haul another load of wood over here, we'll give

you—twenty-five dollars," I believe, thirty dollars—I ain't sure on the price. So I was hauling, and I had several loads sold up there of no-count wood, mostly hackberry, and that's sorry—and then I went to cutting wood. And I made a lot of spending money out of cutting wood. I sold one man, I guess, at least ten loads of wood, and I ain't ever saw him. I never did see that man.

WSP: Where did you drop the wood off?

CWD: In Killeen, scattered around in different places.

WSP: Did he send you a check for the wood?

CWD: In two or three days it would be in the mailbox. And I never have seen that man.

WSP: Was there a lot of wood on Radar Hill?

CWD: Oh, yes.

WSP: That whole line of hills?

CWD: Well, around the edges of it. The trees up on top wasn't six or eight foot high.

WSP: What was down on the side?

CWD: Spanish oak, mostly. It was good wood.

WSP: Is that wood for building or wood for firewood?

CWD: Firewood.

WSP: Did you get involved chopping any of that wood?

CWD: Oh, for years. Yeah!

WSP: Tell me about that.

CWD: Me and my pa chopped wood all—several winters—we chopped wood one winter, Spanish oak wood and hauled it in poles, long poles on a wagon to the house and piled it off. And in a pretty day we'd stay out, you know, in the open, not too much wind. Pa was a hell of an axe man. He'd chop that off in stovewood lengths—you know, that's shorter than fireplace.

WSP: I understand.

CWD: And he'd chop it off with a big old axe and pitch it over there to me, and I'd take my axe—and that stuff splits like glass. When it's cold—you can just lightly hit and split it. You'd split it and split twice more and make little sticks, and throw it in a pile. I wish that somebody had made a picture of that woodpile. It was as big as my whole house. And it was tall. That was the awfullest pile of wood I've ever saw! We worked on it all one winter.

WSP: Would you do this regularly, or just a one-time shot?

CWD: Nah, it's every winter. We cut wood all winter for three or four winters, five—but what we did then, my daddy seldom went to town, but he went over to town, and a lot of farmers over on the prairie heated with wood, but they didn't have no timber. So he talked to them, said, "Y'all need some stovewood, I've got a pile. Bring your trailer." And that German nationality people come with a two-wheeler, or a four-wheel trailer and back up to this pile and they'd stack that wood in that trailer. And one left with a load, and Pa said, "Son, that'll never happen again." He said, "One thing about it," he said, "there won't be a mouse getting in that damn trailer when they get home with it!" (laughs) And

he said, "No, we made a hell of a mistake. We won't ever do that again."

WSP: You sold it by the load, and they managed to pile it in so tight—how much more wood did they get in that wagon than you were expecting?

CWD: About three times as much.

WSP: They got three times more wood by carefully stacking it?

CWD: Yeah. Yeah, they'd rake that in there, you couldn't put a chicken feather in there. But the next years, two or three more years, we'd go to the woods on his place—he had a lot of Spanish oak—and we'd cut pole wood, just chop it down and the tops off and the limbs out. And go in a wagon on a pretty day and—

A cord of wood is awful heavy—but that was green wood. But we had an old open hill up there, and we'd put a load here, and the next load put it back there, and we'd get thirty or forty loads around over that hill. And then we had a neighbor that would come saw it with, in two with a power saw or a wood saw on a Model T, and old Model T motor.

WSP: How did that work?

CWD: You jack up the hind wheel and put a belt on it, and run on a pulley, and it would pull the saw.

WSP: Like a saw you'd find in a wood mill?

CWD: Similar, yeah, it runs on belts. Yeah.

WSP: Would it rip the length, or just cut it off?

CWD: No, just cut it square off. Yeah. Yeah, through a jack—the jack was stationary, just flip up and flip it down, jack it up. You jack up one wheel on a Model T, the other one won't turn, you know, a loose wheel will turn. And that old motor would sit there, a Model T motor, and it'd just run forever. You'd get a glowy red color, a real glow red, then it was ready to job the wood to it. You couldn't pull it down. But they'd saw all that wood for fifty cents a pile. We just called it a pile of wood. It was a cord, but we—and we had piles all over the hill.

And my mother was crippled, but she walked on a walking stick. And Dad and I could be plowing or whatever, we was cutting more wood or whatever, somebody would come after wood, well Mother would hobble out to the gate, "It's five dollars a pile. Take any pile you want." And they'd give her the five dollars. (laughs) And we made money that year. They'd back up to a pile and load it up and leave. And we made money that year.

But we had the hill full of pole wood—and Mr. Brown was the old gentleman's name that owned the wood saw. I don't know what his ailment was now, but he brought his saw over, parked it there by a pile of wood, and said, "Here's your saw, Mr. Duncan. You can use it." I think his daddy was sick, I don't remember why he couldn't saw.

So my daddy went and got hold of my older brother—not his daddy but another one. Of course he could run a Model T—which didn't take a genius—and one of us had to get that wood, and it's got a table on it, and you push it with your knee, and push, and it goes through the wood, and throw it off and pull your limb up and saw it again. Anyhow my brother had been sawing all day and—you saw up a pile and then you take your jack down and get the tongue—two men could move that old Model T down to the next pile, you know?

You get down there, and you may have to throw a stick of wood in front of the wheel, one wheel, and

jack it back up and you're ready to go—just leave it running—and the motor would still be running—you'd have to take the belt off.

That brother got tired. I guess I was—I was an old man by then, I imagine I was—I must have been twelve years old by then. But anyway, my old brother told me, said, "You want to saw awhile?" I said, "Yeah! Let me have it!" So I was, Rumph! Rumph! Rumph! I mean! (laughs) My brother was feeding me the wood! And I was poking it through, the old Model T motor was red, and it was ready, and I was sawing that wood! Rumph! Rumph! Rumph! (laughs) All at once I went flying—way back out through there! Hit out there in the road. My daddy had slipped up behind me and got me by both arms at the same time and ripped me away from that saw! (laughs)

WSP: What had happened?

CWD: He didn't want me sawing off an arm, or a hand or something.

WSP: He thought you were sawing too fast?

CWD: Yeah! Sawing too fast. Oh, he said, "Hell," he throwed me a winding! He throwed me *way* out there! And I turned around and—

WSP: You're twelve years old!

CWD: Yeah, I guess I was twelve. And so he turned around to my older brother, "Kill that damn thing! Get in your car and go home!" (laughs) He went back to the house, and my brother killed it, got in the car and went home. I never got to saw no more wood. I'd already sawed two or three piles, though. I was feeding that saw! I was young and active. And I don't think I was going to saw my arm off, or my hand off, but I got throwed a long ways! (laughs) And my brother got a little bit of tongue chewing for letting me use that saw.

WSP: He was your older brother, and your dad figured he should have known better.

CWD: Yeah, he had kids old as I was. Oh, Pa was unhappy. My brother was leaving, and he made a circle and come back up. I said, "I guess Pa wants to keep me around to cut wood," and—(laughs) he said, "I guess so, brother," and away he went. (laughs) He didn't—he never said a word back to my dad. (laughs) But—but he got in serious trouble.

WSP: Did your dad take special care of his axe?

CWD: Oh, my! Unh-uh, no, I didn't use Pa's axe, unh-uh, no. I'll tell you the truth, my daddy was a little of everything. But we traded a yearling, an old milk-can calf, to an old boy that had an old boar hog. I asked Pa, "What in the world are we going to do with that old boar hog?" He said, "Ah, well, we'll figure out something, son." We loaded this yearling in a wagon, backed it up at the tank dam—we'd had a pond built and backed the wagon up there—and got that calf in that wagon and tied him. We went off over there two or three miles, about where the control tower is west of Fort Hood is where that old boy lived.

CWD: We had a little problem finally getting that old boar hog loaded. God almighty! He was a monster! I guess he was seven or eight hundred pounds! He was old, old tusks, God almighty!

WSP: Oh, my! You're indicating about a foot-long tusk.

CWD: I said, "Pa, what in the world?" He said, "Well, we'll see." When we got home, we had an old house that we usually put feed in it, or one thing and another. It had a pretty good old floor. He backed that wagon up so—he could back a wagon better than I can back a trailer, but he backed that wagon up to the door and said, "Open that window," it had windows in it. "Open that window, and take these tail

gates out, see if we can't get that old boar to jump in there," which wasn't much. We drove that old boar—we got the old boar out of the wagon and put him in that barn.

Of course, I had to start toting water and corn to him, and called the same brother that was helping me saw wood. I called him and he came over in a few days. I said, "You'll have to help me. We've got to work on that old hog." So he had a fifty-five-gallon barrel. "Well, what the hell are you going to do with that barrel? "Maybe I'm going to hide behind it, I don't know what!" But he went out there and throwed that old barrel in that old building, got a little old limber rope and roped the hind feet on that hog. And he said, "Now be ready when I jerk him up, you roll that barrel under him." I was ready. I would help that brother do anything in the world. He kind of half raised me anyway. But we worked that old hog over, castrated him, and he took a pole axe and knocked those big old tusks out of him. I think we kept him out there for six months or something because I had to tote corn about a hundred yards to get out there, fed him twenty ears of corn. Not twenty-one or nineteen, twenty! And got shorts, fed him shorts and water—

WSP: What's shorts?

CWD: It's a hog feed. It's kind of like cornmeal, only it's coarser. I don't know if they still make it or no, son. It's like a cornmeal. I don't even know what shorts is made out of. But anyway, there was a certain amount of shorts, about a number two can full of shorts. You put five gallons of water and soak it from night until morning, and then you make another batch. You're feeding him shorts twice a day with five gallons of water and twenty ears of corn. We fed up a whole barn full of corn to that damned old hog. I guess, Lord knows what he weighed.

But we were finally going to butcher him. I said, "How in the world will we ever butcher him, Pa?" "I don't know, son, I don't guess we'll ever get to butcher him." So he went off and cut two forked posts, I guess they was probably twelve, fourteen foot long, big heavy ones. He dug two holes and they was eight feet apart. And he put a *big* old log up there in them forks, crossways. I thought, Well, that'll hold him up, but how are we ever going to get him up there?

So we killed this old hog and finally tussled him into a wagon. I think we pulled him in there with a mule, yeah—we had an old mule, ran a rope and tied it on and pulled him into that wagon. We drove him down there, and Pa backed that wagon up where he wanted it. We had a big old heavy rope, and he tied it on each leg of that hog's hind legs, and threw it up over a crossbar up there, and it just barely reached. He knew just how long he wanted it. I said, "Well, I don't know what we're going to do now?" So the wagon wheel was close—the back, he had kind of missed them posts—he knew how far to set them because the wagon wheel missed them. He got up on that wagon wheel and took a crowbar—that's just a straight bar—and run it up through that rope. He'd get up there, and he could twist it. He twisted that big old hog up with that crowbar and that rope. And that log would turn, it would turn in them forks, and he twisted that bugger up there. (laughs) That was the most amazing sight you ever see.

And getting back to the axe, that's what he gutted that hog with.

I wondered why Pa kept on messing with it, rubbed it a little more and worked on it. "I wonder why in the world Pa is putting such a feather edge on his axe?" (unintelligible) He gutted that big old hog with the axe.

WSP: That's the only thing that could have handled it?

CWD: Well, I don't know, but that's what he used was the axe. He gutted that hog with an axe. You know, a hog comes down, and his ribs come together. You can hit them with a knife just right. If you're lucky and hit it perfectly, you can just rip it through there with a knife. Well, he ripped them

through, he hit, took that great big old axe and—riiir! (imitates noise) Just ripped him all the way down. One lick. (laughs)

WSP: It sounds like your old man had a plan for everything.

CWD: Yeah, he, I guess, had to have. I never thought he took advantage of a damn thing. He was so stout, he'd just do it, just do it with brute strength. He, he could—he taught me a little.

We was a chopping wood, and of course, living in South Texas, I never had used an axe to speak of. And we was chopping wood, and lots of timber and groves or thickets. And Pa would walk up there and look one over. And "Well, I don't guess Pa is going to cut these." He was going to cut them all right, but he wanted to see which one he wanted to cut down first. He would eyeball them there a little bit and usually smoke him a cigarette, walk around and look at them. Next thing he'd rare back with that axe, and an old tree that big around—normally three licks. He'd hit one lick at an angle, and he'd hit one under, and the chips would fly off out there, whistle like a bullet. And he'd whop it over on the other side, and that tree usually fell.

WSP: You're indicating a tree about seven inches in diameter.

CWD: Yeah, pretty good-size, yeah, three licks with that axe. He'd cut—the first lick he made would be at an angle going down, and then he'd come back out, and he'd come under, and that chip would—whist!—fly out off out through yonder. And then he'd come overhanded on the other side and come down. And that tree would fall.

He'd cut that tree down in three licks, a pretty good-sized tree. And he'd cut down twenty or thirty trees, whatever was in a little old clump of trees, cut them all down. And then stop and prune one up. He cut every cotton-picking one down, and there'd just be a circle of trees there, the tops still on them, you know? He'd usually stop and roll him another cigarette by hand, smoke his cigarette and look over it, walk around, and directly he'd walk in there with his axe, and I've seen him—he'd cut off maybe two pretty good-sized limbs, and then cut the tree in two at the lower end with one stroke. (laughs) He'd could slay that thing! He could cut it. (laughs)

I learned a little because one time he told me, "Whoa!" And I stopped, and he said, "Son, there ain't no use in killing yourself." Says, "Take your time." Says, "Look at that—where you want to get. Look at it! Think about it!" Says, "Look at it." Says, "When you draw the axe back, hit there!" Says, "Don't just hit it all up and down the tree. Hit where you want to! Look where you want to hit, and hit there!" He got a little perturbed with me for chopping around too much. He didn't want me wasting them strokes, you see?

He said, "Hit where you—look what you're doing! Hit where you want to!" And I didn't pick it all up, but I guess, probably today I'm better with an axe than anybody I know—because don't nobody knows anything about an axe anymore. Yeah, I can still hit. I guess I can. I ain't had one in years, but I can hit with an axe, I know how. He taught me, "Waste no effort."

In 1900—this goes back awhile—in the beginning of 1900, at Oakalla, which was a very striving community in 1900. They had two grocery stores and a cotton gin, and a blacksmith shop, post office and doctor—and anyway, there's—

WSP: What town was this?

CWD: Oakalla.

WSP: Oak Alley?

CWD: A dead little community right around the road here.

WSP: Like Okay, but O'Kally?

CWD: Well, it's pronounced O'Kally and Oak Alley, and—

WSP: Oak Alley?

CWD: And it's pronounced several different ways. People raised—everyone called it one way and one another.

So, anyway, this gentleman rode in there on a fine horse and some shiny slippers, and nice dress clothes, and stepped off his horse and inquired for anybody wanting wood cut. And everybody kind of snickered and laughed because he had on them damn shiny slippers and dress clothes and just horseback and had a roll behind the saddle, going through the country. (laughs) "Yeah, what does he want a job cutting wood for. He can't cut wood!" You know?

But somebody hired him, between there and Briggs—somewhere out on one of them hills. He cut him ten cords of wood, or a large amount of wood for one individual. He found out the way to his house, saddled his house, and rode out there. The next day Pa got word about that man chopping wood. So he got on his horse and rode several miles over there and stopped and walked up, asked the fellow if he minded him watching him for a little while. He said, "No, it don't bother me, watch me as long as you want to." He still had on them shiny shoes, slippers, and dress clothes. And my daddy was telling me about it, said, "I sat, I watched him for hours, just watched that man." Says, "He was so careful not to skin them damn shoes, said he spent more time keeping from scarring his shiny slippers." Said, "He'd step here and step there, and move a twig he didn't want—but," says, "when he got set, then, he could chop in two, and it was amazing to watch him. He was a great hand with an axe." Pa says he was the best he ever seen. So he must have been damn good because everybody used axes back in 1900, you know?

So, Pa always told me about that old boy. He says, "I learned a little from him, watching him." Said, "He didn't make no miss-licks, he never—." You know, me, I might hit and be six inches off, or I used to, and he said that fellow could chop it—and I forget how many cords, three cords or something, he was—an ungodly amount of wood that he could chop and cord just by his self.

WSP: In a day?

CWD: In a day! Yeah.

WSP: Three cords of wood in a day?

CWD: I believe that's right. And he got his money and saddled his horse and rode on off, nobody never knew where he came from or where he went to. He made his living cutting wood.

WSP: And wearing slippers.

CWD: And wearing shiny slippers and dress clothes.

WSP: You know, it sounds to me like a gambler on hard times.

CWD: Must have been. Dad told me about that old boy several—I guess a couple of times. And nobody knew where he came from, and nobody knew where he went. But he was talked about for years.

We used to pitch dollars, real dollars, silver dollars. All those little old communities would dig a hole in the ground and pitch dollars at that hole for pastime. It wasn't all pastime, they'd bet some on it.

WSP: How far away would you be to pitch it into the hole?

CWD: Ah—twenty feet, I believe, I'm not sure about that. There was a set—there was a regulation on it to

learn, you know?

WSP: I see, somebody would pace it out and make sure—

CWD: Oh, yeah, it would be to the inch, just so far and then—

WSP: How big, again, was the diameter of the hole?

CWD: Very small.

WSP: You're indicating a couple of inches in diameter.

CWD: Yeah, yes, a very small hole.

WSP: How would they dig out that hole?

CWD: With a pocketknife. And then they'd wore them holes out—which they'd wear out fairly soon and they'd have to move over and dig a new hole. There'd be sometimes five games going on in that little old town, Oakalla over there, of dollar pitching.

WSP: I presume the goal was to toss your dollar in the hole.

CWD: Yeah, it counted three points, I believe, if your dollar went into the hole, but the opponent over here, he had three dollars in his hand. If he pitched one in the hole, well, yours didn't count, it killed yours. And the closest dollar to the hole would count one, and Twenty-one was the game.

WSP: If you're the first one to pitch, and by good chance you tossed your dollar in the hole, but the next guy got his dollar in the hole on top of yours, then he won your money?

CWD: Nobody got nothing. He killed yours and killed his, too. His didn't count, either, he just killed yours. Oh, man! They was—we pitched washers—times got hard. (both laugh)

We had washers—you know, washers? You know what a washer is?

WSP: Yes sir.

CWD: Anyway, we pitched washers. My dad and I pitched every day for—all year, I guess. So often, we didn't have nothing to do but pitch washers. And you know, you take a kid, and you let him do something long enough, he'll get fair at it. My daddy, he could pitch a washer in a hole, just—he could pitch it in there. And we're there one day, and me and him pitching washers, just pass time.

Two fellows worked at an oil refinery, and they had money in their pocket. And they come by, and my dad and them talked awhile and got up a washer game. And Pa said, "Well, ain't nobody around, I guess that kid will do—I can use him until somebody shows up." And we was pitching, and I wasn't putting them in the hole.

And directly my pa walked around there and got up close and said, "Son, pitch them washers in that hole." I didn't know he was betting the egg money on it! (laughs) You know? He said, "I'm telling you, pitch them washers in that hole." We soon relieved them people of all the money they had on them. (laughs) I guess—I guess that was the first gambling I ever did in my life.

WSP: Why weren't you putting them in the hole?

CWD: Well, I just wasn't bearing down enough, wasn't putting in enough effort. I was just playing. And Pa talked to me in a tone of voice, said I'd better pitch them dollars in that hole! (laughs)

WSP: I thought you were scheming with your old man to raise the betting stakes.

CWD: No, no, I didn't know nothing about it. He'd made that with them fellows. I didn't know we was pitching for money. And they left. Pa kind of grinned, and he said, "Well, I guess they won't be back." (laughs)

WSP: Do you remember how much money he won from them?

CWD: No, I didn't know how much. He got whatever they had. Whatever they had in their pocket, yeah. Yes, I guess that's the only gambling, first one I ever got into. Yeah.

WSP: Well, I've enjoyed this a lot. Have you got any other stories you want to tell?

CWD: Well, come back and see me sometimes when I'm in a talkative mood. I'll tell you a whole bunch if you want. Yeah.

WSP: (laughs) Yeah, it's been kind of hard to pry a story out of you.

CWD: Yeah.

WSP: Now do you remember anything special about the Okay area where you lived? Any special story?

CWD: Well, I can tell you one yarn—it's a true yarn. A man had a—what's them old red-looking dogs? The first one I'd ever seen—huh, I didn't think I'd ever forget them, ain't seen one in years.

WSP: Cocker spaniel?

CWD: No. Huh. It was just a mean dog.

JGD: Ask him how he got his name, Speedy.

CWD: Oh, that's a long story, but—

WSP: Well, we'll have to catch that before we end up.

CWD: That old guy lived beside the road, and we walked. We didn't have no car. And this—damn, that old dog—I don't remember the breed of him, he was the first one I ever saw. He wouldn't bite you, he'd get your britches and tear them. And the old man wouldn't do much with him, that owned him. (sighs) Everybody walked by there. My grandpa, very seldom he walked, he usually rode something. But he'd pulled his britches.

So I had a friend that had an old Model A pickup—that's a long time back—and I had an old hoopy, and we met up at this little old country store and drinking a pop. And that old dog had tore our britches for three or four years, I guess. He said, "Let me go up this hill," which was a hill there, up towards Copperas Cove. He said, "I'll go up there on that hill and turn around. I'll turn around over on the other side of you."

He said, "You be out here ready, and I'll top that hill and blow my horn." Says, "Take off with all that old Chevy's got in it. When you get down there, pull over on the left side of the road, and that old dog will run out and bite at your tires," he said. "I'll get him." And it worked.

So I went on home, and you didn't go to the store every day. A few days, and I went back to the store, and my friend, acquaintance said, "Where's your gun?" I said, "Hell, I ain't going hunting, I come after some kerosene oil." "Well, everybody in the community is carrying their gun." I said, "What in the hell is going on?" "Oh," he said, "old man Bell." He was the old man that owned the dog—said, "He got Sonny Whitehead down and just beat the hell out of him for killing his dog." And I said, "Well, hell!" And I didn't—and he says, "All the Bell kinfolks has got guns and all," and this old Sonny Whitehead that run over the dog—and his daddy come back up there and beat

hell out of old man Bell, liked to have killed him. He beat the hell out of him. And that started it. And all the Bells—the community divided, and all of them had guns. It liked to got serious, it sure did. I said, "Well, hell—."

WSP: You were involved in killing this dog, but no one else knew you were involved.

CWD: Yeah, I didn't know nothing about it. I said, "I better go back and tell Pa what's going on."

WSP: How old were you when this happened?

CWD: I guess I was seventeen. I said, "Well, I'll go tell Pa," and Pa went—I told him, I said, "Pa, I guess I started trouble." He said, "Well, son, that damned old dog needed killing." Said, "He's tore my britches before, so don't blame the boys for that." He said, "I imagine the best thing I can do is go talk to Mr. Bell right now." And he left afoot. I never did hear no more about it. I guess he went over there and—he wasn't a fellow to plead much—(laughs) so I guess he went and neighbored (??) with Mr. Bell, and they put up their guns, I don't know. (laughs) But it all blowed over. I never heared no more about it.

And now, you was asking me about Speedy.

WSP: How *did* you get your name?

CWD: I had this old 1928 Chevrolet car that didn't have no top on it. And it had a right front-wheel brake. That was the only brake wheel, the only wheel that had any brake. And this store was in a dirt area, and it was a big area open out there. And I'd come up to that old store, and I'd reach—put my left foot on the brake and get the right foot on the foot-feed, and I'd turn this wheel. It had no bed on it and nothing on the tail end, it was a light end, and it would start to slide, you know? And I'd give it a lot, give it all the gas I could and hold that brake, and it would just—and it was just making loops out there, just—and needless to say, I was stirring up a lot dirt, and if the wind was right, it was all blowing in this old man's store. And he'd hustle over to the phone and call my mother, say, "Rosie," and needless to say, you've heard of party lines? We had four rings, but it didn't make a damn if your just rang Central, everybody took down. You've heard of that?

WSP: Yes sir.

CWD: Well, four rings, then they'd all take it down. (laughs) Everybody—

WSP: Because everyone was curious?

CWD: Well, four rings would get everybody's attention—and five rings was the party line ring, that was emergency for everybody. But four rings was our ring, four long rings. We had one long and a short, and a short and a long. Everybody had a different amount of rings. Whenever it rings, you listen to it, and, "That's so-and-so." We knew everybody's ring. In the phone book, there wasn't that many of us.

But he'd say, "Rosie." That was my mother. He called her Rosie. "Rosie, that boy's over here speeding again." (laughs) So that's where I got my Speedy. (laughs)

WSP: How old were you when you were doing this?

CWD: About seventeen, I guess.

WSP: That was an active year for you!

CWD: Yeah, I guess I was about seventeen years old.

WSP: Well, I've enjoyed talking to you immensely, and I thank you for taking the time.

CWD: Well, I've enjoyed you.

WSP: Well, thank you.

CWD: And I hope you write a poem. That's what you're doing, poetry? (JGD and WD laugh)

WSP: That's it.

CWD: Good.

WSP: It's going to be a *long*, epic poem the way it's going. (CWD laughs)

You know we were thinking about doing videos here.

CWD: Oh, well, I don't know—

WSP: Do the same kind of interview on video, and go out to your home place.

CWD: Well, that would be nice.

WSP: Well, okay, we'll see about doing something like that.

CWD: I'd like to do that. I can find it again because he took me out there with another with some others with interest from the post—

WSP: Well, good. Yes, that would be ideal.

CWD: Around on the old home place.

WSP: You want to come with us?

JGD: Yes.

WSP: All right! We'll take care of it.

CWD: Yeah, I can find the old spot, right where I was born, but the cedars has literally took it, you know? I'd been gone fifty years and laying in there and ain't thought of the government, the reservation, or—and I dreamed a soldier fell in a well my daddy dug, a hand-dug well. And it bugged me ever since. And I went out there with him and them people, but it had been raining, and it was awful foggy and wet. I can find it, but I'm going to have to walk in for a quarter of a mile or so, to be sure I know where I'm at, because the cedar trees has changed it unbelievably!

WSP: It's hard for you to orient yourself because of the cedar trees.

CWD: Yeah! See, I hadn't been there since, what, 1943. So, see—where we used to raise what we eat, or eat what we raised, it's growed up in cedars and some of them is tall and thick—and it's changed the—the only way I ever found the old house place—my daddy dug a small pond like that one right up there, and I found it. When I found it, I definitely knew where the house was.

But when they had—Mother had an old tree—we called them pepper trees or sage trees, like this one right here at the edge of the yard. We put them in sausage, when we made sausage with a hand grinder. When we killed a hog, we ground sausage, and we'd go to that little old tree and pulled off a handful of them, whatever they are. We put them in sausage.

WSP: The leaves or the bark?

CWD: No, it's a little ball on there.

WSP: The berry that grows on the pepper tree?

CWD: Yeah, throw it in there and grind it with the sausage. And we had an old tree there behind the kitchen. And I believe it was thirty foot tall, wasn't it, Wayne? I know it's the same tree. I didn't think they grew that tall, but it's a monstrous bush for that type of tree. So I can find it. But then we had to drill a well out there, and I don't know. I couldn't find the well.

WSP: Well, might have some drawings and stuff from the archaeological survey that we could help you.

CWD: Well, that wasn't the well I was worried about, it was one off down in the field. It was hand dug, and it was fairly deep and awful wide. And there's a possibility the army went in and filled it up, but it was a weird dream. I dreamed a soldier fell off in there, and they couldn't found him, and when they found him he was dead. And I woke up and I thought, I've got to go out there and call somebody and go check on that old well.

WSP: When did you have this dream?

CWD: About a year back. Why was I dreaming that? I hadn't thought of that well in fifty years or better, and then I dreamed about a soldier falling in it. And the way it's growed up with cedars, if it ain't filled up, a man could walk into it very easily.

WSP: Just walking along and not realize it?

CWD: It's just a hole in the ground, and I'm sure—the top with wood, and it's all been rotted and gone for years, now. I know—I know I can find it but it'll take—it's going to take—I'm going to have to stop and walk from the area I know well.

WSP: Walking in from the pond and find the pepper tree?

CWD: Yeah, and go down—I can walk and find it, eventually.

WSP: All right.

CWD: It won't take me too long.

WSP: Well, let's set an appointment and do that here in the next month or so.

CWD: All right. Anytime. Anytime—

WSP: Thank you very much, sir.

CWD: Anytime you can come up.

WSP: I appreciate the lunch and visiting with your friends, and hearing all your stories.

CWD: Well, you're sure welcome to the lunch.

WSP: Well, I enjoyed it very much. Thank you so much.

CWD: I could tell you a book full of army stuff, but it ain't interesting. (laughs)

WSP: Oh, it's interesting! I'm afraid it's just not related to this particular history project. But I love your army stories! Believe me! But thank you very, much, sir.

CWD: Oh, old Gomer Pyle, he had it so easy to what I had. (laughs) That old boy ain't never had a damn gun in his hands, you know? I'd seen soldiers at Fort Hood, because I started working out there before any troops got there. I helped build it. Anyway, you get in this old barracks at three o'clock in the morning—of course, I was there but I wasn't in formation, I was AWOL. The rest of them ate and

came back, and the old sergeant gave me a gun, and everybody was falling out, so I like in Rome, I don't know what, follow the bunch. I thought, I won't get in this front line. I'll get in the next line. And I got back there, and everybody had them guns, and I'd hold mine like they do.

I got it held up there and here came a little second louie looked about sixteen years old. He went plumb down that cotton-picking front row, popping his heels. _____ (??) (wind noise) and come down and started—he'd done come to several people, and he popped his heels in front of me. He hadn't touched nobody's gun—

So I ain't never had a formation in my life, I'd never seen one—and he come around to get my gun. I thought, Well, hell, I don't guess you're supposed to let nobody take your gun away from you. So he wasn't too big, and I'd been working hard at building, working at Fort Hood as a laborer, anyway—he was up there, and I gave him a tap, and he come loose, he hit the man in the front, and the two of them fell over against the barracks and the shrubs, and—

WSP: He reached for your gun?

CWD: Yeah, it was an inspection-like—

WSP: Yes, and then what did you do with the gun that pushed him back?

CWD: I just shook him loose.

WSP: Oh, I see, you just gave him a good jolt with the gun, pushed him back?

CWD: Shook him loose.

WSP: And never let go of the gun?

CWD: Oh, no, no, no.

WSP: And he lost his grip?

CWD: He lost it—and fell into the man in the first row, and both of them fell in the shrubs against the barracks. He was a mad little lieutenant. And the old boy got up and got back in position. And here he come back again. And he reared back, and I thought, Well, hell, let him have it!

CWD: And that was the only time I ever turned one loose. (laughs) And I almost ran it. I turned it loose and didn't even feel his pull on it, and it knocked the old boy down again! (laughs)

WSP: He jerked it away hard, and you let go easy?

CWD: (laughs) Fell down again. (laughs) Oh, damn. Oh, I couldn't keep from laughing, it tickled the hell out of me. (laughs) I had trouble, needless to tell you. I was already under the barracks digging a ditch for not being—for being AWOL, and then I couldn't—

WSP: Yeah, digging a ditch with a spoon, I remember that story.

CWD: Yep. And I hadn't ever never seen nobody—I hadn't ever seen nobody, you know, no way the military handles rifles. I ain't never seen that. And damn, my theory was, "Goddamn, they give you a gun, don't let nobody take it away from you!" (laughs)

WSP: You thought that was the army way. (laughs)

CWD: Oh, I shook him loose. I was tough, then, eighteen years old, prouder than a jackass. I shoved that little lieutenant and throwed him that old row in the front, and both of them hit in the shrub. And that created a commotion.

That old boy got back up and got in formation and here he come again. That little scamp reared back and hit at that rifle—I guess over years in the army I released them a thousand times, later, but I never did release one as perfect as that one was! I didn't feel no pressure at all! (laughs) And he got that damn gun, and down he went again! (laughs) I believe they—I forgot what all they done, they done everything they could, but they didn't put me in the stockade.

And that was a six weeks' course, and they had him two weeks when I got there. And I ain't never had a minute's close order drill. I ain't had nothing! I'm just off out of the boondocks. I come in there, and, oh, man! What in the—so go down there and volunteer for overseas duty. I said, "Hell, I can shoot a rifle, I don't need no training in that!" "No, hell, you'll get a bunch killed! You've got to go through training."

I went through that school, another four weeks of it—I'd done got in two weeks. In two weeks you learn close order drill, a whole bunch in an hour, you know? But I ain't had a minute of it! And I tell you, I had a hard time.

They gave you old M-1s, and they've got a peephole in the back sight, and I thought I'd take that damn thing out and see all about it. Of course, they said, Don't do it, but I did. And then I couldn't get the damn thing back together. And I went over to an old sergeant up about two o'clock in the night. I said, "I got problems." He looked around, "Anybody know you come in here?" "No." "Come on in." He said, "I've been aiming to tear one of these damn sights down ever since I've been in the army. Maybe the two of us can get it back together." And he helped me, and we got her put back together. And I never did tear it down again. He was a good old boy. His name was Johnson—I remembered his name. He was a good old boy.

WSP: Well, it's time that I move on home.

CWD: Well, if you go up there to my mailbox, you know, where the pavement—and turn right, you go around there, and you'll hit another road over a little hump. Turn left. You can't get off of it, it's a lot of crooks, but you come out at Briggs. Then you get on [Highway] 183 and then after you get down at Cedar Park or something, you won't hit no traffic at all.

WSP: Yeah, that's what I've been hearing. Thank you so much for your time!

CWD: Well, there may be a few more—(laughs)

Juanita Griffin Duncan

Date of birth: 23 February 1923
Community affiliated with: Brookhaven
Interviewed by William S. Pugsley III

WSP: This is Bill Pugsley. I am interviewing Juanita Griffin Duncan at her home located just below Douglas Mountain, off of Highway 195, south of Killeen, Texas. The date today is August 25, 2001. It's Saturday morning about ten o'clock. We're sitting in her living room. [This interview is part of Prewitt and Associates' Fort Hood Oral History Project sponsored by the U.S. Army Fort Hood and conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University.] We will be talking today about her life in Brookhaven, where she was born and raised.

To begin with, can you give me your full name, your date of birth, and then your parents' names and your brothers' and sisters' names?

JGD: My name is Juanita Griffin, born February 23, 1923, in Brookhaven. And my daddy's name is Jesse Levi Griffin. He was born in Madisonville, Texas. My mother, Lou Rena Simms, was born in Brookhaven. And my daddy was born October 11, 1895. My mother was born March 7, 1900.

WSP: And your brothers and sisters in order of birth.

JGD: My oldest sister, Jesse Pearl Griffin. Geneva Jane Griffin.

WSP: What?

JGD: Geneva Jane Griffin, baby girl deceased, Juanita Griffin, Weldon Levi Griffin, Lewis William Griffin, Odessa Griffin, Ariel Dale Griffin, L. R. Griffin—

WSP: What does the L. R. stand for?

JGD: It, uh, it's just initials.

WSP: Even on the birth certificate?

JGD: It's my mother's—it was my mother's initials, and so they didn't put a name to it.

WSP: How about that? Okay.

JGD: We were all born at Brookhaven except Weldon. He was born in the Palo Alto community.

WSP: Would you describe the house you were born in, as you remember it as a child?

JGD: Well, I was born in an, an old house that had two rooms, a porch across the front, and a room completely across the back of the house. Now this was the house I was born in. I was not raised there. The house I was raised in was, of course, a great big old house. It had, oh, three bedrooms. It was a great big old T-shaped house, the roof was T-shaped. It had two big rooms at the front of the house with a hall between it, a porch all the way across the front. You went down the hall, went into the

kitchen area, went through the kitchen to the living room—and it was the fireplace room, was where we had the fireplace to heat the house. And then there was a bedroom off of that, and then the dining room was off of the kitchen, and a back porch. And that was the house that we lived in.

WSP: You were born in one house and later moved to another one. When did this move occur?

JGD: We moved to Palo Alto for a year in 1925. My oldest brother was born in the Palo Alto community. We moved back to the home where we—where we were raised.

WSP: In 1926?

JGD: In 1926. And we lived there. My, my mother was born just south of us in the old Simms home in 1900. She was born in a house, and then my grandfather built a great big house, and that's where she was raised. She was not born in this house, but she was raised there, and it was a great big old house. Fact of it is, it still sets over here on [Highway] 195 across from the feed store.

It was moved in there.

WSP: The house was moved off of Fort Hood?

JGD: Uh-huh, right.

WSP: It was one of the few houses that was.

JGD: Yes, it was moved—well, evidently the lake took that part of the property.

WSP: Oh, I see. Let's go to the house that you're most familiar with, the one that you were raised in.

JGD: Okay.

WSP: As you enter the house off this long front porch, can you take me room by room through the house?

JGD: Right.

WSP: You had a bedroom to the left and a bedroom to the right—

JGD: Right.

WSP: What was in each of those bedrooms?

JGD: Well, one bedroom had two beds, a dresser. We had no closets in that house. We hung our clothes on the wall with a—you know, with a nail on the wall. And we had no closets in that house. Most of the old houses over in that area did not have clothes closets. In the other room there was the dresser and a piano, and a bed.

In the kitchen we had a big wood cook stove and had a wood box set as you went out the back door. There was a closet—there was a closet to put canned stuff in at the—in the corner there. And there was the cabinet, a dining—a big table that we called a cook table. And then in, of course, in the dining room was a big long table with a bench that we older kids sat on, and as we grew older there was a certain place by my daddy that as you grew older you got to sit by my daddy. And the rest of us sat around the table, but there was four, about four of us would sit on the bench at one time.

And then the other room was a bedroom. My Grandmother Griffin lived with us at one time, and she lived in that room. And she had her belongings. She had a bed and dresser, trunk, and all that stuff.

And then in the fireplace room there was a bed, and we had what was called a washstand. And that's where we had our radio. And then in the corner we had our—a square table and a great big kerosene

lamp—which I still have—that we studied by, and—because we had no electricity out there for a long time—it came there years later, but not at the time I lived there.

And we had a refrigerator in the dining room that you put ice in. You didn't—you didn't have electricity. And in the hall we had what was called a milk cooler that had a water basin on the top and it had a pan on the bottom that the water overflowed through. Usually it was an old ragged sheet that you tore up and pinned around that to keep it cool, and the wind came through and kept the water cool. And that's how we kept our milk.

And, oh, then on the back porch we had water that came from the windmill out the back, and we had a wash basin that we washed in, and the towel hung on the back porch. And we had a wood box out there that we put our wood in. And then there was a table at the other end of that where we had extra buckets.

On the front porch there was a little table that held two wooden water buckets that we put our drinking water in. And we carried our drinking water from a spring up, up the branch from where we lived.

WSP: Did you use the well for your drinking water?

JGD: No, no, we didn't like it.

WSP: Why was that?

JGD: We just didn't like the taste of it.

WSP: What was peculiar about the taste of that water?

JGD: It just didn't taste good, and my mom didn't like it, so we had a spring about—oh, I don't know, it was a good ways from the house—that we carried our drinking water from. And then when that one dried up there was a place further up the branch that we went and got our water to drink. We just had water to drink. But we used the water out of the windmill for household use. And when it come time to take a bath, we took a bath in a washtub.

WSP: Using the well water?

JGD: Using the well water. And we had the water in a teakettle on the wood cook stove.

WSP: From the well?

JGD: From the well.

WSP: After it was boiled—

JGD: Oh, yeah.

WSP: It was not too bad.

JGD: Oh, no. But we didn't drink it. We just didn't like it.

And in the wintertime, on the fireplace, we had this great big old iron skillet that had a lid on it that you could cook in. We cooked sweet potatoes, and we cooked cornbread, and we cooked biscuits. It was just more or less a fun thing. And then we had a popcorn popper that you could shake and—in over the fire—and pop the popcorn. So this was, you know, some of the things that we did.

JGD: And my mom could always find lots of weeds for us to cut. But I guess there was so many of us, she was glad to get us out of the house. (laughs) But I can remember that we never got through cutting weeds.

WSP: Cutting weeds around the house?

JGD: Right, right. Right.

WSP: Where was your bedroom?

JGD: In the east, where there was two beds.

WSP: Near the front of the house?

JGD: In the front of the house, uh-huh. I slept with my sister.

WSP: Jesse or Geneva?

JGD: Geneva is the one I slept with.

WSP: Where did Jesse sleep?

JGD: She slept in the—in the other room—oh, no, she slept in the same room with us. The boys slept in the other room.

WSP: So the kid's rooms were in the front of the house?

JGD: Right. Now we weren't all home at one time. My youngest brother was born after I married.

WSP: Lewis William?

JGD: No, L. R.

WSP: Oh, L. R., okay.

JGD: He—

WSP: At the most, would you say there were five kids in the house at any one time? You have seven total.

JGD: Uh-huh. Well, my two older sisters married in 1935. Ah, the kids in that community had a thing about—they all usually married young.

WSP: What age would that be?

JGD: Twelve to fourteen up.

WSP: Oh, really?

JGD: Fourteen to seventeen. Fact of it being I was not fifteen when I married, and we lived together for fifty-three years. We were married fifty-three years. There was at least four different girls in that neighborhood that married at that age, and they all went past the fifty-year mark. So we were raised right. (laughs)

WSP: The girls slept in one of the front rooms, your brothers slept in the other front room. And you described one of those rooms as having a piano in it. That's very interesting.

JGD: My mother played the piano, and she played the piano at church.

WSP: Was one of the bedrooms her practice room?

JGD: Right. And we learned a little—we didn't learn much. I never did learn to do anything but do a little chording. I didn't, never learned to play. I think I learned to play "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," and that was the only song I ever learned to play.

WSP: Did any of your other brothers and sisters pick up the piano?

JGD: No, no, we never did learn much. We just learned a little bit, and that's all.

WSP: How did she learn piano?

JGD: Her older sister trained her when she grew up. She was a teacher. She taught organ music and piano lessons.

WSP: You have shown me a photograph of the house. As I recall there's an attic window, am I right?

JGD: At the time—I don't know what was up there, there wasn't any room up in that old house. But I think it does have now. They've remodeled it since they moved it over here on [Highway] 195. That house had a porch all the way across the front. It had a hall in the middle as you went down, and a great big room on each side. And you went down to the end of the hall—there was the living room off to the left was a great big dining room. And then there was the kitchen. And then there was an L-porch at the back of the house and a little room off—at the, at the end of that L-porch.

WSP: This the house you grew up in?

JGD: No, that's the house my mother grew up in. That was this old Simms, B. F. Simms home.

WSP: It sounds very similar to the one you grew up in, actually.

JGD: Uh-huh, it was similar, but not exactly.

WSP: Cooling breeze would come down this—

JGD: Hall.

WSP: Hallway, right into the kitchen—

JGD: Right.

WSP: And then blow right through the kitchen out the back?

JGD: Right.

WSP: It would help keep the kitchen cool.

JGD: Right.

WSP: Did you have any screens?

JGD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, we had screens. We had, oh, a telephone. And the fact of it is we had the only telephone in that community, that little community there.

WSP: You had the *only* telephone?

JGD: Right. We had the only washing machine, which was a Maytag gasoline—Maytag—whenever we—I don't remember what year we got the machine, but we had the first and only one for a long time.

We were a large family, but we never went to bed hungry, we had clothes to wear—of course, my mom sewed and made most of the girls' clothes, but we always had plenty to eat—

WSP: I want to shift for a moment to your dad, and then we'll come back to the house. What did your dad do? Was it ranching or farming?

JGD: It was farming. We had a few animals, but mostly it was just farming.

WSP: How big was your place?

JGD: A hundred and sixty acres.

WSP: What was the main cash crop?

JGD: We had cotton. And, of course, we raised maize for feed, and we raised highgear—of course, you don't see highgear anymore.

WSP: Highgear?

JGD: Uh-huh. That was a white-headed—looked like maize, but it was white, instead of—instead of, you know, yellow or gold, or whatever you want to call it. And then we raised syrup cane, and of course it was always the hottest time of the year when that was ready to use. And we used a long wooden, slender piece of wood, and stripped the leaves off, and then it was cut down and hauled by wagon to a syrup mill that my uncle had down about a mile from us, and made syrup out of it. And, uh, we—of course, there was a mule that, that worked the machine to make the cane go through this machine—

WSP: To crush the cane?

JGD: And then it—it run down a hill to this cooking place. And then it was cooked. And not everybody could do it right, but he was pretty good at it.

WSP: This was on your uncle's place?

JGD: It was my uncle. Right.

WSP: Would other people come to your uncle's place for this?

JGD: Oh, yes, they brought the cane in and at certain—I don't remember what time of year, but it was always hot.

WSP: End of summer or something in that range?

JGD: Right. Right.

WSP: I don't know anything about highgear. Why would you raise that and not the normal type of maize?

JGD: Well—well, we fed it to the chickens, and, oh, usually we'd cut it in bundles and tied it up just like we did the maize. But we usually headed—what we called headed the maize, and we would take that and feed it to the chickens and the turkeys.

WSP: Highgear was just a choice of your dad's—

JGD: Right.

WSP: A preference of your dad to use this particular type of maize, essentially?

JGD: Right, right. We had corn and cotton and maize and highgear, and then we had hay that we baled for, for stock, for the wintertime.

WSP: How much of your 160 acres was committed to cotton?

JGD: Oh, I'm not sure about that.

WSP: About half or a fourth?

JGD: Probably about half.

WSP: All right. Let's go back to the house, if we can. You were quite young when you moved to this house?

JGD: Right.

WSP: Was this house already on the land at the time?

JGD: Right.

WSP: So your dad purchased it from someone. Do you know who?

JGD: Well, my grandfather had bought it and they—after he and my grandmother passed away—they passed away within four months of each other—three, four of the girls decided that they wanted to buy the property. And that's how, that's—and I understand that they drew numbers to see who got what, and then of course, they paid for it. The other kids got, you know, their money out of it. It was just the Simms property, the B. F. Simms property, and four of the sisters bought it. And so we got the north part, and one sister got the east part, and then another one got the home place, and then another one got the west part. It was divided up in about 160 acres each one—I'm not positive, but there was about that much in each place.

WSP: Your mother's relatives were all around as you were growing up.

JGD: Right, right. It was four sisters—

WSP: Your property was on the road leading from Brookhaven north across the Cowhouse, and—

JGD: Right.

WSP: Along the Cowhouse between the mountains and the Cowhouse.

JGD: Right. And when you got to our place, that's as far as you went. There was nowhere else to go. We was up next to the mountain, and our place, when you got there you stopped. There was no road to go anywhere else.

WSP: The 1939 Texas highway map that you have in your collection, shows a little jog that comes out—it's not a complete road, it's just a little right-hand turn, heading east off that north-south road that crosses the Cowhouse from Brookhaven. And I think, you told me that your house was near that little road, right in that area.

JGD: Yep. At the end of that road. Whenever you saw a car coming, it was coming to our house. That was the last place they could go.

WSP: Your dad owned this 160-acre farm. But the first three children in your family were girls—

JGD: Right.

WSP: Which put your dad kind of at a loss for some help, didn't it?

JGD: No. We worked in the fields just like the boys did.

WSP: Oh, really?

JGD: Right. My oldest sister always got the plow, and I had to use the hoe.

WSP: They were taught to plow early on?

JGD: Right, right.

WSP: What were they plowing with?

JGD: With mules. With mules. We didn't have horses, we had mules.

WSP: Did you ever get to plow?

JGD: I did, but I wasn't very good at it. I plowed up the cotton, so I didn't get to plow much. My brother was old enough that he took over.

WSP: Lucky for you, huh?

JGD: Uh-huh. (laughs)

WSP: What was your main chore?

JGD: I had to use the hoe.

WSP: On the cotton?

JGD: Right. Right, and the corn.

WSP: What was your main chores around the house?

JGD: Well, I'd get the eggs and feed the chickens, and we had to feed the mules. And later I had to milk the cows. And if we had, oh, five cows to milk—(laughs) I milked three and my brother milked two because he could always piddle around enough to have to milk—you know, I'd have to get the third one because we had to get it done so we could go to school. We had to do that.

And we walked to school most of the time, which was about three to three and a half miles. It was according to whose field you cut across. (laughs)

WSP: You started pretty early in the morning doing chores.

JGD: Oh, yeah, yes.

WSP: What was a typical day at your house when you were ten or eleven?

JGD: Well, we got up around six, 6:30, something like this. And, Mama always cooked a big breakfast. And we always—that was—we had to be all at the table at one time.

WSP: About what time?

JGD: Uh, about 6:30, seven, something like that. And we always had oatmeal. My daddy always was a great believer we had to have oatmeal. My mother always made biscuits, and 'course we always—in the wintertime we had sausage and bacon. And we always had jelly, fruit. My mom always dried peaches, and we always dried peaches to make fried pies to take to school in our lunch.

WSP: Eggs?

JGD: Yeah, we had eggs. And we didn't use a whole lot of eggs. We sold them to buy the things that we needed at the store, which was baking powder, salt, flour, and coffee. That was usually about—and sugar—that was about what we bought because we raised two gardens, we canned everything, we had peaches and plums, and we made our jelly and canned our peaches. So we didn't have to buy a lot of fruits because we had it.

WSP: One garden was basically your family garden, and then you had another garden? Where was that?

JGD: We had—we had one at the house, which was an early garden.

WSP: What does that mean?

JGD: Well, it was right, not very from the house. There was a garden there, and we had—we planted things early there because if we planted them too early, you know, they got killed down—we had a garden that was down under a little hill, and it was low enough that, that frost would get it if you planted it too early. So we had to wait a couple of weeks, maybe, before we planted it. So—and we had pecans and—

WSP: Would you plant different things in the early and late gardens?

JGD: Right. Right, we had beans, peas, oh, cucumbers, squash. My daddy always had a melon patch, we had cantaloupes, watermelons, and that sort of thing.

WSP: You had all your basic food needs and then some extra?

JGD: Right, uh-huh.

WSP: Besides eggs, what other of the garden crops did you sell for money?

JGD: We didn't. We didn't, we just shared it with the ones that didn't have it.

WSP: Would there be any trade involved in that exchange?

JGD: Some, sometimes. We had one—oh, one of my aunts and uncles had pears, and we didn't have pears, but we had peaches. So we always shared. The same way, whenever it got summertime, and we didn't always have a milk cow to give milk in the summertime. We would share the milk in order to have enough to make our bread. And we took our corn over to the little mill in—in Brookhaven there was a little blacksmith's shop and they had a corn-grinding mill there in the same place. And they would grind our meal for a certain portion of it. So they had their meal from what they had ground for other people.

So we ground our own cornbread meal, but we had, of course, buy flour. Once in a while we had to buy shortening. Nobody liked to buy shortening because it—you know, it was just too greasy, and of course we used pork lard, but that wasn't as greasy, you know, as the other thing. (laughs) But they didn't like the bought grease.

WSP: Pork lard is not as greasy?

JGD: (laughs) That's what they felt like. But we always had hogs to kill in the wintertime. We didn't kill any beef, but we did kill hogs. And we had meat and a lot of times we had meat through the, through the summer because, uh, they would just cut it in great big chunks and cook it done, and then pour the grease over the top of it. And it would keep indefinitely like that.

WSP: What would they store the meat in?

JGD: Great big stone jars, and I have one. (laughs)

WSP: Would they take like a leg of pig and stick it in the stone jar?

JGD: No, no, no. They cut it in great big chunks and cooked it. They cooked it. It was cooked done, and then the shortening was poured over the top of it, enough to cover it, to keep air away from it. And it would keep indefinitely.

WSP: I have heard of sausage being stored that way.

JGD: Right. Well, we did the meat that way, too. And of course, whenever it was wintertime, we stuffed the sausage in cloth bags that had been made and hung them in a smokehouse, and then they built a fire out there under them to smoke them, to cure them out. The same with curing the meat. They'd hang

the meat up after so many days and smoke it and cure it out.

WSP: Along with the house and the well, you had a smokehouse, too?

JGD: Right, and that's where we usually kept our canned stuff was out in the smokehouse. And some people had a cellar. We had one, but it had caved in and so we never did re-fix it. But we kept our, our canned stuff out in the smokehouse.

WSP: Did this cellar have stone walls and some kind of—

JGD: Roof on it.

WSP: A wood roof?

JGD: Yes. Well, ours fell in and then we never did fix it. But my aunt and uncle had one that—it was cemented up, and then it had—it had a shingle roof, like a house roof on top of it. So they kept their food down in that one. That was at the old home place—the Simms home place.

WSP: They put a shingle roof that wouldn't collapse.

JGD: Right. Right, didn't collapse.

WSP: What other outbuildings did you have on the place where you were raised?

JGD: We had a barn that had, oh, one, two, three, four cribs in it, and it had a hallway in it. And then there was an open place on the north side where Daddy hung his harness off of his mules.

And we had chicken nests out there, and we had a chicken house out there that we had—fact of it is we had two chicken houses. We had one at, close to the house, and we had little baby chickens out there in that.

We had an incubator that we set our own eggs in, which would be, oh, maybe 150 eggs in it. And it was heated with a little kerosene lamp, and you had to get up and check it out during the night to keep a certain temperature. And every day you turn the eggs, you mark the X on one side and the O on the other side, and you turn those eggs, to make sure—like the hen does.

WSP: All Xs one day, then you turn them so all the Os show the next day.

JGD: Right. Right, and then of course when they hatch, then you've got to keep them warm. So we dug a hole out there in the little chicken house and put a lantern under it with a—we had a piece of tin across it, and had sand on top of that, and then had a little house on top of that. That kept them warm—that we shut them up in at night until they got big enough to go in there on their own. So, that's the way we raised our little chickens.

WSP: Was this lantern for light or heat?

JGD: It was a light, but it was heat, it was used for heat, too. It was just a kerosene lantern, just an old kerosene lantern. And then 'course, it was dug—about a foot-and-a-half-, two-foot-deep hole that the lantern was set in, and it was covered with a piece of tin—

And that's—that's how we raised our chickens.

WSP: If the hole was completely covered, how did lantern get any air, for the flame? Was there some opening somewhere?

JGD: I'm sure there was, I'm sure there was. But it was fixed where the little chickens wouldn't fall in the hole. But, every night we'd go out and make them go in this little—well, it was a small little house

over—over this that you put them into keep them warm until morning. And then in the daytime they could go and come as they pleased, and—

WSP: What time of year would you would hatch new chickens? Is this year-round?

JGD: No, it probably was springtime.

WSP: Where it still could get cool in the evenings—

JGD: Right, right. It was usually early spring because it was still cold enough that they needed heat. And then, of course, when they got electricity out there, well, they had these great big old sunlamps that hung down in the little chicken house for them. And then we had a bigger chicken house that the hens stayed in—I mean, they roosted in, they didn't stay in it—they roosted out there.

And I get tickled at my youngest sister—as we grew older it came out time to clean out the chicken house every Saturday. And not too long ago I was visiting with her, and she was laughing about when it was her time to clean the chicken house, how she despised doing that job. And I said, "Well, you weren't the only one. Every one of us didn't like that job." And she said well, she guessed it was one of the best lessons she ever learned in her life—was that she went out to clean the chicken house and set down and was crying because she had to do it, and fleas was getting on her. And she said, "Well, I just might as well get up and do this. I've got it to do." And she said, "I found out later in life, if you've got a bad job to do, go ahead and do it." And she said, "I guess that was one of the most valuable lessons I learned, was that if you've got a bad job to do, do it!"

WSP: And get it over with.

JGD: And get it over with as quick as possible. I said, "Well, you weren't the only one that didn't like to clean the chicken house, didn't any of us like to do that."

WSP: What other jobs didn't you like?

JGD: Cleaning the yard. Every Saturday we had to clean the back yard, we, you know, where we'd swept everything out of the house there would be things, you know, and we had to clean the back yard. Every Saturday. I didn't like that job.

WSP: Were you picking up little trash in the yard?

JGD: Well we took, we used—we fixed us a broom out of broomweeds, and we swept up the trash, and we had to take that—and of course, we always—everybody in that neighborhood had their own trash dump, they carried their own trash, and they had a certain place they put it.

WSP: On their property?

JGD: On their property. They didn't have paper and stuff like we do now to burn, to get rid of—it was just one of those things that, you know. And we had very few cans to throw away because we canned everything in jars. And it seems strange to me today to see the trash cans out by the side of the road and people carrying their trash off to a public place because as we grew up we didn't have that. And even after we moved out here, some forty, fifty years ago, we had a trash thing up there and one down this way.

WSP: Did you have a compost heap?

JGD: No. We didn't do that. I guess we didn't know, we just didn't do that because we, you know, just—we carried stuff out and—

WSP: If you wouldn't have paper containers—

JGD: No! Unh-uh.

WSP: Was it basically just food material?

JGD: Right, and usually we fed the food stuff to the dogs because we always had dogs and cats because—you know, my mom never would let us bring them in the house like I do here, but we always had cats and dogs.

WSP: You know, you're one of the first people I've interviewed who had pets where they were growing up.

JGD: Oh, we always had cats and dogs.

WSP: What would you feed them? Table scraps and things like that?

JGD: Right. We never bought dog food or cat food, we fed them off the table. There was always enough scraps left to feed them.

WSP: Would you say your family was unique because you had pets?

JGD: Oh, everybody in our neighborhood had them.

WSP: Like a watchdog?

JGD: Dogs and cats. And we had a collie-like dog that—we had lots of rattlesnakes in the area where I was raised—and that dog was real good about finding the rattlesnakes before we did. And I'm sure he kept us kids from getting bit more times than one. And he got bit, quite a few times, and my mom always felt sorry for him because she had been bit by a rattlesnake, when she was pregnant with my oldest brother. And my three uncles—she had three brothers—all three of them was snake bit, and my grandfather died from a rattlesnake bite. So we kind of knew what it was to live among the rattlesnakes.

WSP: Well, yes. Let's talk about this for a second. You say your mother was bit while she was pregnant?

JGD: Right.

WSP: What did they do?

JGD: Well, they—it was on the place where we raised, but we weren't living there at the time. But there was her and my older sister was up there picking peaches. And she reached under a cedar bush where one had fell, and the snake bit her. And it evidently was a great big one because my mama had big hands like I do, and the fangs reached completely across her hand. They wrapped her hand with a rope—they were in a buggy—they wrapped her hand in a rope and went back to my grandmother's house, which was, I'm going to say, a half a mile—may have been more or less. And they went back over to where we lived, over where I was born, and they got some medicine they called permanganated potassium—it's a purple substance that they soaked her hand in, and then they called the doctor. And that's all I know, but she got really sick.

WSP: For some length of time?

JGD: Right. I don't know how long.

WSP: You were not around at that point.

JGD: No. Well, I wasn't big enough to remember.

WSP: I see. Was her hand damaged?

JGD: Yeah, and she had scars, of course, on her hand. And of course, we were taught to be careful and watch for snakes, which we did. And that dog was a very important part of our life.

WSP: Did it affect your brother?

JGD: No, no.

WSP: Wouldn't the rattlesnakes rattle?

JGD: Sometimes they did, sometimes they didn't. But it's just—that one didn't, because she reached under the little tree and picked up the peach, and when she did, it got her.

WSP: She must have surprised the snake before it could rattle.

JGD: Right, but there were lots of them over there.

WSP: Was this because you lived near mountains where the snakes would—

JGD: Well, anyway, there were lots of them over there. And all three of my mother's brothers were bit. I don't know the details on that. But I do know that my grandfather went out to the barn to feed his mules. He reached in the barn to get some—either some corn or some hay—and one bit him. And he lived, I believe, about two days.

WSP: Was this because he didn't soak his hand in that potash?

JGD: I don't know. I don't know any other details other than that's what happened to him.

WSP: How old was he at the time?

JGD: I am not sure.

WSP: His thirties, forties?

JGD: Oh, no, he was in his fifties, I'm sure. See, my grandmother had just died about—one of them died in July—anyhow there's about two to three months difference in their deaths. And my grandmother, I think, was fifty-four.

And I was the last grandchild to kiss her good-bye. She was real sick, a lot of the family was at the house where she—at the Simms home, and she called all the grandkids into kiss them good-bye. And I was small enough that I had to tiptoe to reach—to reach her for her to kiss me. She kissed me, and I walked around to the foot of the bed, climbed up on the foot of the bed—a big old iron bedstead—and they put the sheet up over my grandmother's face and I said, "What in the world are you covering up my grandma for?" Nobody told me.

I walked out on the little back porch and my mother was carrying my brother, and my brother was crying and my mom was crying. And I remember pulling on my mother's dress and said, "Mom, why are you crying?" And she said, "I'll explain it later." And it was just little bits and pieces that I remember about my grandmother and my grandfather because I wasn't very old.

WSP: In the short time between your kiss and walking around the bed she passed away.

JGD: Right. Right, I was the last grandchild—and there were several of us there, 'cause there was a big family of them, and there was quite a few of the family there.

WSP: She knew she was *that* close to dying?

JGD: Yes, uh-huh. Right, uh-huh.

WSP: How amazing!

JGD: And that—that's my memory of my grandmother, you know, the last memory I have of her, as she—

WSP: What is your best memory of her?

JGD: Ah, my best memory of her—I don't remember a whole lot—but there was some of the family there at the house, and one of the grandsons had picked up her glasses and tried them on and bent them. And she tried to get us to tell who did it. Well, I *knew* who did it, his brother knew who did it, but he was older than us, so he had told us we'd better not tell. So I remember sitting in the hallway where she had her sewing machine. Called each one of us in, one at a time, sat in this straight chair and she put her arm around us, and drawed us up to her, and said, "Now, I want you to tell me the truth, which one of you did this?" And I said, "Grandmother, I didn't do it!" And she said, "Do you know who did it?" And I said, "Yes, I do, but I can't tell." Well, she didn't press me. And then—but the boy that did it finally admitted that he had tried her glasses on and had bent them. So that got us out of that.

WSP: She was a very effective interrogator.

JGD: Right, uh-huh. But she had a—my grandmother was a large woman, wore her dresses completely down to the ground, and she always had beautiful flowers, always had a yard full of beautiful flowers.

WSP: Flowers were one of her passions.

JGD: Yes, uh-huh. And that went down through the family. My mother and her sisters, *all* were good flower people. And this was down at my grandmother's house, though, down below us, the Simms home was where—

WSP: True, but you said your mother also liked flowers?

JGD: Right, right.

WSP: I'm assuming she grew flowers on her place?

JGD: Right, right.

WSP: Where was her flower beds?

JGD: Out in the front yard.

WSP: As you walked into the house there would be—

JGD: Flowers.

WSP: What were your favorite kind of flowers?

JGD: Roses. Roses was one of the things, and my daddy had a little bush that was called a hawthorn bush, and it had red, kind of red flowers. And we had lilac bushes.

That was where we got our switches when we had to get a switching. We had to get our own switch—that was bad!

And I was trying to think of another flower. But anyhow, we had, you know, a variety of flowers in the yard.

WSP: Were these native Texas flowers?

JGD: Right.

WSP: So you didn't need to pour a lot of water on them.

JGD: No, no. No, you didn't. And I had—it just recently died—I had a lilac bush that came from over there. My family went over there—my husband and my brothers and, and sister went over there, oh, not too many years ago, and they brought back some lilac bushes. And mine was the only one that lived, and it just recently died. It was out here in the corner of the yard.

WSP: Let's go back to the house and your brothers and sisters. What did you do for entertainment around the house? Anything?

JGD: Uh, yes. We played jacks and we played checkers. We weren't allowed to play dominos or cards.

WSP: Why not dominos?

JGD: Because my mother said when she was growing up that her brothers and her daddy would get in a domino game and you, they wouldn't quit and, and come eat or do anything else, so she wasn't going to allow it. So we were not—now the boys, after I was married, they did play dominos, but I didn't.

WSP: And cards?

JGD: No, cards was out! That was—that was a sin.

WSP: One was a time waster, and the other was a sin.

JGD: Right. Right. Oh, and cards—cards was regarded as gambling. And that was not allowed.

And 'course, we went to church every Sunday. We didn't go during the week, but we went every Sunday morning, and we don't always go at night. But we did go to church and Sunday school on Sunday morning.

WSP: Was this in Brookhaven?

JGD: In Brookhaven. My mom was—played the piano, and my daddy was the Sunday school superintendent. Then later, after I left over there, after I married and left, my dad became a deacon. Now the little church house belonged to the Methodist congregation, but Methodists and Baptists went to the same church. We had Methodist preachers, Baptist preachers, and we didn't know who was who until they had a business meeting. And then you knew who was Methodist and who was Baptist. But I had as many Methodist Sunday school teachers as I did Baptist. And—

WSP: They used the same building on the *same* day?

JGD: No. Alternate days.

WSP: Alternate Sundays?

JGD: Right. And the tabernacle, my Grandfather Simms furnished the great big cedar logs that was in the tabernacle, and he and the three boys and then the men of the community built the tabernacle. The tabernacle was a community building, but the church belonged to the Methodist people—but they shared it.

The Church of Christ people didn't go to church with us, they went down to Sparta. That was the closest Church of Christ. There wasn't too many in the community that were Church of Christ, but they went down to Sparta.

WSP: I'm just needing to clarify because this is an unusual arrangement. You would go to church every Sunday?

JGD: Right.

WSP: But every *other* Sunday there would be a different preacher?

JGD: Right.

WSP: One preacher was a Methodist, the other one was a Baptist—but neither announced, "Today will be the Methodist service."

JGD: No.

WSP: He would start in and preach the usual service?

JGD: Right.

WSP: Not until you held a business meeting, where people said, What are we going to do with the building? and, uh, How are we going to pay for this? Did you find out who was a member of what group?

JGD: Right.

WSP: Did you have a preference?

JGD: Well, of course, I was raised Baptist. My parents were Baptist, and I think most kids were what their parents were.

WSP: But you couldn't even tell the difference between the sermons?

JGD: No. No, as far as—as the preaching was concerned, no—in my mind, there was no difference.

WSP: Did you like one preacher more than another?

JGD: No, not necessarily.

WSP: Did you have visiting preachers from time to time?

JGD: Sometimes we had what they called revivals, and there would be a visiting preacher come in, and they would stay two weeks. You know, it was usually in the summertime, July or August, somewhere along in there that they would have, uh—and I remember one, one preacher and his wife. And she built the ark for the kids. And she took—well, it wasn't clay, but it was a substance that she mixed with salt and flour and made all of the animals and painted them. And that was so impressive, I never will forget it. And at the end of the revival, she gave all the animals to the kids. And I remember I got the, the hippopotamus, and I got the—not the kangaroos, but the giraffes, and—but she made all of them, she made all the animals, two—you know, a pair.

WSP: Was this on display somewhere?

JGD: Right, at the church, uh-huh, at the church, at the tabernacle. It was out under the tabernacle.

WSP: Where the revivals were being held.

JGD: Where the revival was, right. And that was her part, teaching the children. And I know—she came, they came home with us—of course they are usually going home with the people to eat, you know, meals. Well, I remember one time they were at our house, and there was a biscuit left over. And she took this biscuit and squeezed it up, and I don't remember what animal she made, but she made an animal out of that biscuit. And I, I remember that, but I don't remember what animal she made.

WSP: She took a biscuit, and right in front of you, she made an animal.

JGD: Right!

WSP: Impressive.

JGD: Right. It was real impressive! Those things kids don't forget.

WSP: Exactly!

JGD: And another thing we had for the community was, we would have ice cream and cake. We'd get together and have ice cream and cake, homemade ice cream and cake.

WSP: What were the occasions for that?

JGD: Oh, we'd just—just get together, have family get-together. We had some neighbors that moved in over there close to us, after we moved to the home place. And we would get together, and she would make chocolate ice cream, my mom would make vanilla ice cream. And we'd get together at least once a month and have ice cream. And sometimes we had cake, sometimes we didn't.

WSP: In one of your houses?

JGD: In one of the houses, right. Right.

WSP: Was there similar social activities for the community?

JGD: Oh, yes. We would get together, and especially at the end of school. At the end of school there was always a picnic, and 'course there was a lot of good cooks in that—and there was one lady I never will forget. She was my sister's mother-in-law, Mrs. Bundrant, and she made the *best* coconut-pineapple cake—I can still remember! And she didn't have a recipe, she just made it—used fresh pineapple—and it was delicious!

JGD: I asked her daughter not long ago if she could do it, and she said, "No," said, "Mom didn't have a recipe, she just made it up." She made three layers, and of course there was none of it left.

And then a lot of times the church would have a, oh—a singing, they would sing, have a singing. Different people would come in from different communities and they would have their lunch, which—you know, they spread, everybody spread out their lunch and everybody picked up what they wanted.

WSP: Would they just gather around and just sing hymns?

JGD: Uh-huh.

WSP: Through the entire day?

JGD: Right. Right.

WSP: Just pick their favorite hymns and sing them?

JGD: Right, right, and they—

WSP: An impromptu choir—

JGD: Right, and then there would be people that were quartets, you know, and duets, and that—and they would just sing hymnals.

WSP: Was this normally on a Sunday?

JGD: Usually. Usually it was on a Sunday. It was on a Sunday.

And then at the end of school we always had school plays. And then, once in a while the older—well, I guess it would be the older school, kids in school, they would have a play. And sometimes the teachers would be in it, and sometimes they wouldn't.

And I never will forget one year I was Mrs. Santa Claus. And this boy and I had started to school together and we skipped the—we had primary, first grade, second grade—we skipped first grade. We were in primary, and we skipped first grade. So, he was Mr. Santa Claus. He wasn't mean, but he was mischievous. And, I don't know, we must have been in about the third or fourth grade, and I remember I wore my sister's stripped dress, and he was supposed to be sick. He was Mr. Santa Claus. And he told me, the last day we practiced our program before we were going to put it on in front of our families that night, that when I handed him the—I had to give him a dose of medicine with a spoon—that he was going to grab me and hug and kiss me. Well, that really did fix things up—because I—I mean, I stood way away from him when I gave him the dose of medicine. The teacher got after me and wanted to know why, and I said, "Well, he told me he was going to kiss me, and I was not about to let him kiss me in front of my family, or all the people that was there!" But that was, you know—he wasn't mean, he was just mischievous.

So later, my granddaughter was at a craft show in Belton, at the—oh, what do you call that place down there—that big building down there—and anyway, the lady that was over it was his daughter-in-law. So, of course, they didn't know her, didn't know it—so his, her mother came along, and they were talking about, you know, where they were from and everything. And she said, "Well, my husband was from Brookhaven." And she said, "Well, what was his name?" So she told them. And she came home telling me, and I laughed and told her, I said, "Yeah," I said. "We started to school together." And I told her the story. And I said, uh, "He probably remembers it, too." So he came the next day, and he went around and talked to my granddaughter. He said, "Yeah, we was the only two smart kids in the class," said, "we missed a whole grade of school!" And I said, "Well, did he tell you what he did to me?" She said, "No, he didn't tell that story." And I said, "Well, I remember that very plainly." (laughs)

WSP: (laughs) Conveniently forgot it, didn't he?

JGD: (laughs) Right! But like I say, he wasn't mean, he was just mischievous. And we went together from primary through the fifth grade, I guess, and then he moved to Killeen. (laughs)

WSP: Who were your favorite teachers at this school?

JGD: Oh, my first teacher was Miss Gladys Murphy. And she was a person that could write with either hand. This fascinated me! So, I learned to write my name with my left hand and can still write my name with my left hand—because either side of the desk you walked up to and you needed some handwriting, she did it, with either hand. And this fascinated me.

WSP: Did she explain how she acquired that skill?

JGD: No. No, she didn't. And then another favorite teacher of mine—I visited her two or three years ago—was, uh, Miss Melba Swope. And then Mr. Clyde Joe King (??) came out there and was principal. We had two rooms in the school, and he was the principal. Well, of course, us kids wanted them two to get together to get married, and she had told her family that she was not about to go with him, she wasn't going to—and she ended up marrying him, and they stayed married for sixty-something years before he passed away.

They lived up at the lake and several years ago I went up there and found them. And they came to our Brookhaven reunion, and we were so glad to see both of them. But since then he's passed away, and I don't know about her.

WSP: Did the principal teach classes, too?

JGD: Oh, yeah, yes. And we had the—what we called the little room had from primary through fourth grade, and what we called the big room had fifth grade through the ninth grade. And then they had to go somewhere else if they could, to go to school.

WSP: Where was that?

JGD: It would either be Belton or Killeen—but later the bus came out there, and my sister went to Belton school and my brothers went to Killeen school. The bus came out there, but they still had to go a long ways to catch the bus, and it was before daylight and after dark before they—you know, they had to catch the bus, and it was after dark when they got home. So—

WSP: Did you ride the bus?

JGD: I didn't do that, I quit—

WSP: You went to Brookhaven—

JGD: Yes, I got smart and quit! (laughs)

WSP: But you looked to Brookhaven for the church—

JGD: Right.

WSP: And the school—

JGD: Right.

WSP: What other services were in town? What could you get when you went into Brookhaven?

JGD: There was—there was a little store that you could buy, uh, just about any kind of groceries that you needed.

WSP: Who owned that?

JGD: Oh, different people owned it, uh—when I first remember—was Sam Alton owned it, and there was just the one store, and it had gasoline in the front, one of those kinds of pumps that you pump with your hand, to pump the gas. That was Sam Alton. Then Charlie Hallmark owned the store. And then there was another store that was built and the ones I remember running it was Mr. Jordan—let's see, they called him Mr. Jordan—and he came in here from Mississippi. And he had a son named Ralph, and he was still young enough that he went to school out there. But then there was Wilbur Smith, Owen Ming, and then a longer—further back than that, there was a man by the name of Alonzo Jordan that run the store.

WSP: Who came before Jordan, sounded like Ming?

JGD: Owen Ming.

WSP: Owen Ming?

JGD: Uh-huh.

WSP: Was he Chinese?

JGD: No. He just had that name. And of course, the school—the school set back here and then the little stores—it come out here and there was a big store here. And then over here was the new store that was built. And then the church set out in front of it, and then the tabernacle by the side of it.

WSP: The main road ran—

JGD: Through. It came by the store and then went north.

WSP: The church and school were on that northbound road?

JGD: Right.

WSP: Two stores in Brookhaven. You also mentioned a blacksmith.

JGD: Uh-huh, there was. Different people, oh, the ones I remember running it—there was a Joe Keel, and my uncle, A. D. Reed run it for a while, and then the last one I remember was Francis Beck.

WSP: Blacksmithing.

JGD: And—and they ground the corn, they had the little mill on the side of it—they ground the corn.

WSP: Would the blacksmith also work on farm implements?

JGD: Plows. They'd sharpen plows.

WSP: What other activities can you recall?

JGD: No, they just sharpened the plows, as far as I know, and ground the corn, and then that kind of stuff.

WSP: Was there a cotton gin in Brookhaven?

JGD: Ah, before my time there was, but after—from what I remember, I do not remember one.

WSP: Was there a cotton gin in the '20s?

JGD: Back. Back further than that, than what I know.

And the same way with the schoolhouse. There was a two-story schoolhouse in 1900, and my mother went to that school. But the school that I went to only had—it had a big room, a little room—and what they called a big room—they were the same size, but that was where the kids sat in school.

Then there was a little room off of the porch, and that was, oh, where you put your clothes, put your coats, caps, and the same way in the big room. You went through that room [possibly a cloak room] to hang your coats, and then there was what they called a book room, and that was the school.

WSP: What happened to the original schoolhouse?

JGD: It burned. It burned down—

WSP: During the school year?

JGD: I don't know about when it burned or anything, but it did, it did burn down. But I do have a picture of it.

WSP: Oh, good! You have several pictures, of your original home, and the school—

JGD: And the school—

WSP: On the first tape you said the original school in Brookhaven burned, but you don't know a lot of the details. Do you know anything about the construction of the other one?

JGD: No, I have no idea.

WSP: No idea?

JGD: No idea. Now I have some literature around here where Mrs. Ruby Richardson had made that as very important, I mean, it'll tell you more than I know about the school—and who started it, and who was the first teacher. It even talks about the post office. And there was a doctor there at one time, which I knew nothing about. It was before my time.

WSP: Was the post office in Brookhaven when you were—

JGD: Not whenever—not as long as I can remember, but there was one there.

WSP: At one point?

JGD: At one point. And in this information I have that Mrs. Richardson put together—and Mrs. Richardson was a Robinson—and she's put together—and there is a lot in the library that she's put together and—

WSP: About the way the old Brookhaven was—

JGD: About—right, right.

WSP: And what services were in Brookhaven and who owned them—

JGD: Right, right.

WSP: Is this information at the Killeen library?

JGD: Killeen library, right.

WSP: Okay. How far was it from your house, which is north of the Cowhouse, to the town to Brookhaven? Do you know?

JGD: It was about three to three and a half miles. I said, it was according to how many corners you cut. Now we could cut across the fields and it wouldn't be but about three miles, but if we got caught—(laughs) we had to go around the road.

WSP: Caught by whom? You had relatives everywhere!

JGD: Yeah, but who owned the property we cut across! (laughs)

WSP: In most cases weren't you cutting across your family's property?

JGD: Well, yes, but this was other people that—that lived below them—and they didn't really like for you to make a trail across their property. Now you could go down the road, but don't cut across the cornfield.

WSP: And you still had to cross the Cowhouse at some point.

JGD: Right.

WSP: Was there just the one bridge?

JGD: That's—as far as I know that was the only bridge. It was a big old swinging bridge, and of course if a car—if a car passed before you went across it the old bridge would swing. And then, of course, us kids as we got older, we was mischievous enough that a bunch of us would get in the middle of it and we'd jump up and down and get to move. (laughs)

It's a wonder my sister hadn't really give me a spanking because my cousin and I, we would—at one time we crawled through the bars and stood outside—and, it's, it was a very foolish thing to do. If we would have fell, there would have been nothing left of us because the water wasn't very deep under that bridge. It was rock, and just, oh, not more than a foot deep.

WSP: How far was the drop?

JGD: It was a long ways down. I don't know how far it was down but it was a long ways down.

WSP: You crawled through the hand railing and stood outside the road path—

JGD: Yes. Yes, there was boards sticking out where they had repaired the bridge, and we dared each other to do it, like kids will. We wouldn't do it now, but we did then! (laughs)

WSP: What was the name of this bridge?

JGD: We called it the Carter Bridge because the Carter's owned the property that adjoined it on the, uh, the north side.

WSP: On the north side?

JGD: Uh-huh.

WSP: Were the Carter's one of the families that wouldn't allow you to cut across their cornfields?

JGD: Right. Right. And the Carters and his family, and then Clyde Watson, the son-in-law, lived with them. And Clyde Watson was the one that—that, that did the farming. Mr. Carter was too old to do the farming at that time.

WSP: Can you describe this Carter Bridge?

JGD: It was a great long bridge and it had great long cables on each end of the bridge that held it up, and—

WSP: Like the San Francisco bridge?

JGD: It's—I guess—but anyway—

WSP: But it had a lot of bounce in the middle, and it would go up and down?

JGD: Right.

WSP: That's the reason you said swinging.

JGD: Right.

WSP: But would it swing left to right?

JGD: No! No, no.

WSP: Just bouncing up and down.

JGD: Bouncing up and down. Right.

WSP: Wherever a car crossed, would the road way bounce?

JGD: Right.

WSP: This is a great deal of fun for you all?

JGD: Oh, yeah.

WSP: Was it built before your time?

JGD: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

WSP: Was it ever replaced by anything later?

JGD: Well, not to my knowledge. The boards would wear out, and they had to replace a lot of them. And that's when a lot of times they left them sticking out farther than they should have. And then, 'course, when Fort Hood came, they moved up and made what they called a low-water dip on the East Range Road.

WSP: Not a high bridge?

JGD: No, not a high bridge, a low-water—they called it a low-water crossing. I'm not sure what its name is, but that's what everybody in the neighborhood called it.

WSP: Hold on one second.

(interruption in taping)

WSP: We took a short break to let the dog out. Now we return.

JGD: (laughs)

WSP: We were talking about the facilities in the town of Brookhaven. You said the cotton gin wasn't there any longer. Where did you gin your cotton?

JGD: Well, it had to be taken into Killeen.

WSP: That was the nearest big town for you all?

JGD: Right.

WSP: How long was that trip?

JGD: About fifteen miles.

WSP: One way?

JGD: Right. And you—of course, we had—it had to be taken in from our place, and most places out there, in a wagon with mules. And it was an all-day trip.

WSP: Did you join your dad in that?

JGD: No, I never did get to go—the boys did, and after you crossed the Carter Bridge, there was what we called the Carter Hill, which was pretty much of a hill to go up. And one of our old mules would balk—you know what balk means?

WSP: Yes.

JGD: She would balk just before she got to the top of that hill, nearly *every* time. And Daddy had been known to kind of build a little fire—(laughs) under her to make her go—that's what they had to do a lot of times to get them warmed up to where they'll go on. (laughs)

WSP: Literally build a fire?

JGD: Yes! Literally. Literally build a little fire under them, and they'll take off up the hill. (laughs) More people than one did that.

WSP: I have never heard that! The mule would be stalled out, wouldn't move for love or money—

JGD: Right.

WSP: And your dad would get out of his truck—

JGD: Wagon.

WSP: Wagon, and come around, and just fix himself a little campfire right underneath the belly of this mule?

JGD: Yes. Yeah. Didn't always have to do it, but most of the time you did, to get them to go. But that—that's what the men did in the neighborhood. And going up that Carter Hill they would do it because it was hard pulling.

WSP: Couldn't you just wait for the mule to kind of catch its breath or something?

JGD: No. No, they would just—she was just stubborn. Their names was Kate and Curly, and Kate was the one that would balk.

WSP: What would Curly do?

JGD: She'd try her best to get her to go, and she wouldn't do it.

WSP: How big would this fire get?

JGD: Not very big, just a little one—

WSP: Enough for the mule to feel the heat under its belly?

JGD: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. (laughs)

WSP: (laughs) Where was this hill again?

JGD: On the south side of—of the river—

WSP: Before you get into Brookhaven?

JGD: Right. It was just after you cross the Carter Bridge. We called it the Carter Hill because it was, you know, after you crossed the bridge, and you made a little circle, and then up the hill. But it was a pretty good little hill.

WSP: More so, if they're pulling a load.

JGD: Right, it was—right.

WSP: Was this hill difficult for automobiles?

JGD: Uh, well, most of them would get up it all right but it was—it was a hard pull for most of them.

WSP: As you come out of Brookhaven, headed north, was it flat in that area?

JGD: Yeah.

WSP: Then you'd go down off of Carter Hill to the bridge?

JGD: Yes. It would be—it would be several miles out before you went down Carter Hill.

WSP: You would carry your cotton through Brookhaven and then turn south into Killeen? Am I right?

JGD: No, you would go—if you was going from where we lived, you would go south, and then you would go west to go into Killeen.

WSP: Were there any other hills that you had to worry about on your way into Killeen?

JGD: No, that was—that was the only one that we had to travel.

WSP: Did you ever travel north for anything?

JGD: Not very much. We started one time to a singing over around Flat. We got up past the Robinson's house, and the old car wouldn't go up the hill, turned around and tried to back it up, and it wouldn't go, so we had to turn around and go home. (laughs) We just had an old Model T and it just wouldn't go.

WSP: Most of the commerce went south from Brookhaven?

JGD: From where—from where we lived and a little bit west of us it went to Brookhaven. It was kind of a dividing line, and then there was a dividing line, kind of, between Brookhaven and Palo Alto. Now there was one family of children, uh, named Whitely. They had an option of going either to Brookhaven or to Palo Alto. Part of the time they went to Palo Alto and part of the time they went to Brookhaven. I went to school with part of them, and then part of them went to Palo Alto.

WSP: What do you remember about Killeen from those early days?

JGD: Well, we didn't go to town very often. Well, Mom and Dad never did go off and leave us kids—but just—well, I remember once they went off and left us, and I climbed the windmill and my sister had to come up and get me because I couldn't come down. I was afraid to come down. So—(laughs)

WSP: The windmill at Killeen?

JGD: No, at home, at the old home place. Mom and Dad went to town for—to get things, groceries or whatever they went for—and—but, they very seldom ever left us, we always went with them. But this one time I climbed the windmill and—and I couldn't come down, I was afraid to come down. My sister had to come up and get me down. (laughs)

WSP: What prompted you to climb the windmill?

JGD: Just because I wasn't supposed to. (laughs)

WSP: How old were you?

JGD: Oh, I must have been six or seven years old.

WSP: Oh, my! That's very brave of you!

JGD: I don't think—(laughs) oh, I don't think so! (laughs)

WSP: What kind of mischief would your brothers get into?

JGD: Well, Lewis was always into something, and Mama would send him after—you had to go get your own switch off the lilac bush. And she'd spank him with that—she never did hurt us—but she spanked him with that, and he'd cry as long as she was spanking him, then he'd laugh and say, "It didn't hurt!" And he'd get another whipping. (laughs)

WSP: (laughs)

JGD: And the worst thing she could make him do was stand in the chimney corner. He'd go outside and stand in the chimney corner. That was worse than giving a spanking because if you got a spanking then you could go on. But that was the worse that he could—

We didn't really do anything really bad. We was just mischievous kids—there were so many of us!

WSP: I'm not asking about criminal behavior.

JGD: (laughs)

WSP: I'm just curious about the mischief that farm kids could get into around the farm, mischief that would be a problem for their parents.

JGD: Well, do things they tell us not to do. That was—that was like climbing the windmill, that was one of the thing I wasn't supposed to do. But, uh—there wasn't—and my sister that's older than I am, she got my spankings, and I got hers.

WSP: How's that come about?

JGD: Well, I don't know how it came about, but usually things, that's the way it happened. One of us would get the spanking, or both of us would get spankings. And we never really did do anything really bad, we were just mischievous kids.

WSP: Did you have a swimming hole you would sneak off to?

JGD: No. Oh! Well, there was one down on the branch that once in a while we slipped off to, but it wasn't deep enough to swim in, it was just deep enough to wade in. It was right down from the house.

WSP: A branch of the Cowhouse?

JGD: No, no. No, that little branch that come by our house where we went and got our drinking water. Up the branch was where we got our drinking water, but this was down below where we got our drinking water.

WSP: I see.

JGD: It didn't even have a name, it was just a little old branch that went down through there.

WSP: Wouldn't that stream eventually empty into the Cowhouse?

JGD: (sneezes) Right. Right.

WSP: I see. Okay.

JGD: I guess it did. It was probably a-going thataway.

WSP: Did you ever skip school?

JGD: The only time I ever skipped school was one April Fools' Day. A bunch of us kids left school at, at, uh, noontime and didn't go back. And then we had to—we was punished by having to stay in at recess for a week because we missed that evening's school. So we didn't do that anymore. We didn't do that anymore.

We played baseball, we played Annie Over, we played Hide and Seek, and we had seesaws that we played on. We had swings that we played on. And we played Ring Around the Rosie, Drop the Handkerchief, and basketball, baseball. Didn't play football.

WSP: For the basketball, did you have a special court or was it dirt?

JGD: Yeah. Yeah, we had—we had a court that we played basketball. And of course, at that time you had six girls that played basketball—two guards, two goal-throwers, and two played center. I usually played side-center. And took a tall girl to play the jump, and when it, you know, started the ball game.

WSP: Were you one of the tall girls?

JGD: No, I'd be the short one. I played the side-center.

WSP: Oh, okay, there'd be a tall-center and a side-center. The tall-center would hit the ball to get the game going.

JGD: Right, well, and you know, that would jump. And the last match game I played was where Nolanville School sets now.

And I acted ugly over there. This girl—I don't know what her last name was, but her first name was Ruby Lee. She was playing next to me and the teacher that they had was the umpire, and ours was, too. And 'course our teacher had told us, before we went, to be good. We promised we would be good. Well, we was good for the longest time, but then this girl, she pushed me and then she took—she had long fingernails and she came down my arm—all three fingernails—and my arm, it was bleeding. Well, to say the least, I didn't like it. The next time I got the opportunity, I pushed her. The teacher didn't even foul her, she just—you know, her teacher was doing the umpiring, and she didn't even foul the girl. And I guess that's the reason why it upset me. But anyway, they didn't, they didn't foul me when I pushed her, either, but I pushed her. Didn't, didn't hurt her but I pushed her. And should have been a foul, but it wasn't.

WSP: Did she stop harassing you at that point?

JGD: Yeah, she—she was a little nicer from then on. (laughs) But the bad part of it is—(laughs) our Methodist preacher was hiding behind—watching the game!

(laughs) And saw me pushing, and saw the other girl, what she did to me. (laughs) So he saw it all! (laughs)

WSP: Did he say anything?

JGD: No, never did. (laughs)

WSP: Caught in the act! Was your team ranked well?

JGD: Yeah, we did pretty good. And when we got in the seventh grade, we would go to Belton to take a test to see how we rated. And there was a girl from Maxdale. She's in a nursing home right now—she was—she made the highest in the whole class. Her name was Inez Heinz. And Inez Boydston she's a Heinz now. But we all went down there to take a test to—I reckon to pass out of the seventh grade. But other than that we took our tests at—you know, at school.

WSP: Did you have a big graduation program?

JGD: No. No.

WSP: Graduate, and that was it.

JGD: That was it.

WSP: And thank you very much, and you don't have to come back.

JGD: Right. Right. Sometimes we got our—our cards the last day of school, and sometimes we had to go back another day to get them. But usually they had our grades added up and handed us our card on the last day we went to school.

WSP: What else do you recall about the school, a funny story about school or the kids?

JGD: Well, one of—one of the funny things was one of the boys would, uh, erase the chalkboard and got

behind the teacher and rubbed the brushes, the erasers together and got, you know, got chalk dust all over their head, and they didn't know it. And that was, you know, one of the mean things that the boys did. But that's about the funniest thing that I remember happening.

WSP: Gave the teacher grey hair?

JGD: Yeah, yeah. They didn't get in trouble over it but it—I can't even recall who did it, but I remember it being done.

WSP: Were there any academic contests, such as spelling bees?

JGD: Spelling! Spelling, we had to stand in front of the room and teacher would give out spelling words. And we had to, oh, add numbers in our head. And this boy I was telling you about—I could beat him spelling but he could beat me counting—when we were in the second and third grade.

WSP: According to him, you were ranked very highly—

JGD: I made good grades in school. I made good grades in school, Never made below a B.

WSP: What was your favorite subject?

JGD: I liked math, and I liked history. And of course, if you listened close enough, by the time you moved from one grade to the other, you already knew what was going on—because, uh, the teacher had to teach every class in the same room. She taught the first grade, or primary—the first grade, second grade, third grade and—and all the way. So if you listened, you could be ready for the next grade, and know it before you got there. And the same way in the other room.

WSP: I'm very unfamiliar with the day-to-day operation of a schoolroom that had more than one class at the same. How did this work?

JGD: They usually just had a few minutes for each class.

WSP: Was each class in a separate corner of the room?

JGD: No, they were in, in, in rows. The desks was one right behind the other one, and usually the desk in front of you was your work desk, and the chair you sat in, there was—the back of the chair was a work desk for the other person. And then there was a place underneath to put your books.

WSP: Would your teacher stand in front of the row for that particular class—

JGD: That's right, that's right.

WSP: And she would talk to all the students down the row?

JGD: Right, and then move to the next one for the next class.

WSP: Would she give them some kind of homework?

JGD: Right, right, you had to—

WSP: Homework would occupy them while she taught—

JGD: You had work to do while she was doing, or he—we just had the one man teacher that I remember, but most of them was ladies—and then they taught the next class. But if you was smart enough and had your work done and listened, then you had no problem with the next class, the next grade.

WSP: What happened when they had more students in a class than they had chairs in a row?

JGD: We didn't, we didn't have that, we didn't ever have that.

WSP: How many students in a class, or a row?

JGD: Oh, uh—probably, oh, six, or seven, In the fifth grade there was—there was about eight of us in the fifth grade. So that was about as big a class as we they had.

WSP: When you went out to play, would you stick with your own class or would you mix it up?

JGD: No, mixing, mixing it up. Usually the girls played together and the boys played together.

WSP: You had brothers and sisters in the same room, right?

JGD: Right, right. Right. My two older sisters and I were in the same room, and then my two younger brothers and I were in the same room. The youngest sister didn't start until—of course, I married and was gone when she started school. And then the other two came along, and they—

WSP: Would the teacher ever call you to the ?

JGD: Yes, you had to go to the blackboard a lot of times and write your spelling and give words out, and you'd write your spelling, or you'd work your arithmetic problems up there, and—

WSP: While the others are—

JGD: Watching—

WSP: Keeping busy?

JGD: Right.

WSP: Did he have trouble keeping you occupied? I would think it would be kind of hard. I mean, the short attention span of kids.

JGD: Well—well, we usually—usually we had to study for the next class. Because see, we had, we had math, we had spelling, we had history, and we had what they called health, and then after you got into the sixth or seventh grade, you had algebra.

WSP: You had what?

JGD: Algebra. And, uh, I don't believe they had any other math where I went to school. Now later when you got into high school, you know, higher school, you did have geometry and that kind of stuff. But by the time you taught each class, all those subjects, you know, it was a full day. And they got around to doing it every day. It was every day. But I'm sure they was allowed so many minutes for each class, and then 'course we had a—about a ten minute break in the morning, and then we had about a thirty or forty minute at noon, and then we had another break at, in the evening. And then we got out at four o'clock. We usually started at eight, and we were out by four.

WSP: Nowadays teachers have only one class, and yet they spend an enormous amount of their energy just controlling class behavior and keeping their attention.

JGD: Right.

WSP: And it sounds like, from what you're describing, that the kids were basically quiet and kept busy while the teacher was going down each of the rows teaching these different classes their coursework.

JGD: If they got caught talking, they got their name wrote down on the board, on the blackboard, and if they got three, then they were punished.

WSP: Which would be what?

JGD: Sometimes they had to stay in school for the recess, and sometimes, if they was real bad, they got a spanking.

WSP: Would the teacher give you in-class assignments?

JGD: Right, right. Right.

WSP: Would you have homework as well?

JGD: Right. Right. You took your books home, or some of your books home every night—not all of them but some of them, whatever you had to study.

WSP: What happened if the students did not understand a particularly difficult subject, but his time has run out?

JGD: Well, they usually take time at recess to help you with it. If you needed help, or maybe someone else in the older class could help you.

WSP: Did he ever pair older students with the younger students to help them learn?

JGD: Sometimes. Uh-huh.

WSP: Did you have any special projects to do?

JGD: Yeah, we had—later, when we got in what was the big room, we had, oh, a kind of a—well, they called it a home demonstration—that they taught you how to, uh, improve your home, you know, to make things for your home. And at one time we had a county health agent to come out. Every so often they distributed toothbrush, toothpaste, and soap and taught the kids to make sure that they kept their hands clean. And when we got to school every morning, we had to put our hands on the desk and the teacher came by to check and see if we had clean hands and if we had, oh, cleaned our fingernails. And this was more or less just teaching kids how to take care of themselves. And I don't know how long that went on, but I can remember it happening.

WSP: But did the teacher assign a special project to do for the class, like draw maps or build dioramas—or something of that nature?

JGD: Yeah, yeah, we had to—we had to draw a lot of maps. And I never will forget, I never was very good at drawing maps. And once in a while she would let us trace them. But most of the time they required us to, you know, draw the best that we could. But once in a great while we could trace them.

WSP: That was about the typical size of a project?

JGD: Right.

WSP: Did you ever have to do any handcrafted, paper cutting—

JGD: No. No. No.

WSP: What was the worst thing a kid ever did in school?

JGD: Have a fight. Boys would have a fight.

WSP: Did they ever fight in the classroom itself?

JGD: Uh—most of the time it was outside the school.

WSP: And what would be the main issue of this argument?

JGD: Uh—I don't know. Just boys being boys. And sometimes the girls did the same thing. And on the way home from school a lot of times there was problems. The kids got into it on the way home from school.

My second brother, Lewis, was always into trouble on the way home from school. There was some other kids that—they could go two different ways from school—they could go toward, uh, Killeen or they could go back north—and get to their same home. And they could cut across and get to the same home. Well, there was a boy about Lewis's age, and the girl was older. Well, Lewis and James Lee was always fighting! Well, one day on the way home, Lyla Faye (??) got into it, the sister got into it, and she got onto my brother. Well, I told her to leave him alone. And, uh—so, when she got to school the next day she reported that I got after her for getting onto Lewis. And the teacher asked me and I said, "Yeah, I did, I told her to leave him alone! Let the boys fight it out between them." And, uh, she said, "Well, I thought you was old enough to—to try to keep it, the fight down?" I said, "That was exactly what I was doing." And that's exactly what I told her, that if she would leave them alone they would fight it out and get it over with. (laughs) But he was, he was always getting me in trouble.

WSP: Lewis was?

JGD: Yes, Lewis was, yeah. We'd start—

WSP: He sounds like a real pistol.

JGD: We'd—he still is. We'd start to school, and we had to go down by the garden in front of the house, and I'd say, "Lewis, are your hands clean?" "Yeah." I'd look at him, and he hadn't washed his hands before we left the house. I'd turn around and go back, wash his hands, soap and water—(coughs) but half the time, by the time we got to school, he'd picked up rocks and throwed them, first one thing, and then another and then his hands—

WSP: We talked before about snakebites. What were some of the other home remedies you had?

JGD: Vicks salve. (laughs)

WSP: What was that used for?

JGD: (laughs) If you had a bad cold, you greased your chest, and put it on your nose, or Mentholatum salve. And usually we bought laxative from the Rawleigh man. Rawleigh man would come by. He, you know, had a variety of stuff that he sold, vanilla flavoring and all that kind of stuff. And, uh, usually there was a little old pink tablet that we bought from him that was the laxative we took. And of course, my daddy was a great believer in taking Black Draught, Black Draught tea, which was *terrible*! And every springtime you needed a dose of that. (laughs)

WSP: Why was that?

JGD: I don't know!

WSP: He just felt like you needed it?

JGD: Yeah, in the springtime you're supposed to take a dose of it. Right. (laughs) Make that tea, and it'd taste terrible.

WSP: Like spring cleaning.

JGD: Right, right. Right. It tasted terrible. (laughs)

WSP: Did your mother have any home remedies of her own design?

JGD: Well, they made—they used a piece of felt, and used a combination of stuff and greased that. And if you had a congested chest and put that on you. And 'course, some people used what they called asafetida.

WSP: What's that?

JGD: (laughs) It's supposed to wear in a little bag, and it stinks like everything! To keep off—to keep you from catching diseases. And a lot of people wore a little bag around their neck, and of course, you didn't have nobody sitting close to you when you wore it! Because it smelled terrible! I know—(laughs) I don't remember ever wearing one, but I knew some people that did!

WSP: They would go to public places with this?

JGD: Oh, yes! They wore it continually!

WSP: Did it have a garlicky smell?

JGD: Oh, it's worse than garlic! It was worse than garlic. It was a little old, kind of waxy ball of stuff, and, and it, it was, it was terrible.

WSP: You knew people that swore by this stuff?

JGD: Oh, yeah! Oh, yeah!

WSP: Besides the cloth on the chest, what else—

JGD: You usually got a dose of castor oil once in a while.

WSP: Just for good measure?

JGD: Uh-huh.

WSP: Castor oil, Vicks for colds—

JGD: And Mentholatum salve, and Rawleigh pills for laxative.

WSP: What about headaches? Or cuts and bruises?

JGD: Oh—(pause) just use that salve on them, I reckon is all.

WSP: It solved all problems.

JGD: Yeah.

WSP: Who is this Rawleigh man?

JGD: His name was—his name was Ed Thornton. He's, he used to live in Killeen, and he, he would come, and he had a van-like thing, and it had—like I said, it had vanilla flavoring, and it had flavorings and salves and all kinds of remedies in it.

WSP: His name was not Rawleigh?

JGD: No, no, his name was Ed Thornton.

WSP: Where does Rawleigh come from?

JGD: I don't know, it was just—it was a company. It was a company. It was—and then there was a Watkins

man. There was, there was two different people, and put out for two different companies. What one had the other one didn't. Or most of the time one person liked one brand better than they did the other. And there was lineament they used, and, uh—fact of it is, I think I've got a bottle of lineament in there that I got to, not too long ago.

WSP: Two different companies had traveling salesmen that would go around with drugstore-type goods.

JGD: Right. Right.

WSP: Were there other things in their vans besides drugstore stuff?

JGD: You know, I don't, I don't remember. That's all, I don't remember anything else. That was what we used.

WSP: How often would a Rawleigh man show up?

JGD: Oh, whenever, maybe every four or five months. It wasn't real often.

WSP: A salesman from one company would come around and then a few months, some time period, the other one make his rounds?

JGD: Yeah.

WSP: They just kind of alternated?

JGD: Yes.

WSP: Were there any other traveling salesmen that made it out to your house?

JGD: No. No, just—

WSP: What about ice delivery guys?

JGD: Well, at one time we did have somebody that would deliver ice, about, uh, twice a week. But that was—you know, I don't remember what year it was, but it was—well, usually thing that the people had to get their own ice.

WSP: Travel into town for ice?

JGD: Yeah. It wasn't—

WSP: Was there an ice company in town?

JGD: Yeah. Arnold's had it for a long time. And, uh, fact that I was just reading that the other day. Uh—(pause) but always, when Daddy went to the gin, he brought back ice. And he'd put it in the cottonseed, you know, to keep it—wrapped it in a cotton sack and put it in the cottonseed so it wouldn't melt before he got home with it.

WSP: How many blocks of this would he get?

JGD: Yes—oh, he'd get about fifty pounds to a hundred pounds.

WSP: How much—

JGD: It would be in fifty-pound blocks.

WSP: He would get one or two blocks at a time.

JGD: Uh-huh. Right. We'd usually have ice cream.

WSP: Immediately, with the biggest chunk?

JGD: Right, right.

WSP: Would your icebox take all hundred pounds?

JGD: Well, you take—yes, you put it in there, and then of course it had a pan underneath where the water dripped out. And if you didn't watch it, it'd run over.

WSP: How long would a fifty-pound block of ice last in the refrigerator?

JGD: Oh, a couple of days, by the time you'd picked off of it and had iced tea and ice water, it'd—

WSP: Would you have to go into town every other day or so for ice?

JGD: We didn't. We didn't, we didn't keep ice all the time.

WSP: What was the system, then? How did you decide—

JGD: I don't know, just every once in a while. If you were going to town you brought some home. If you weren't, you didn't.

WSP: Okay. And your milk products were being cooled in the cooler.

JGD: It was in the cooler, in the water cooler.

WSP: If not milk, what items did you keep in the icebox?

JGD: I don't know. Nothing in particular that I know of—because usually you cooked enough food for the day, and you didn't cook—you know, you cooked every day, but you just cooked enough food for the day. And sometimes, if it was really hot, you had to cook supper, too, because it didn't—it would spoil between dinner and supper—because you had no refrigeration.

WSP: I see. You couldn't even cook a large lunch and keep it over to supper?

JGD: No, not if—

WSP: You'd have to cook a separate supper?

JGD: Right.

WSP: Your breakfast was large?

JGD: Right.

WSP: You've given me the breakfast menu, what would be the typical lunch menu?

JGD: Ah, well, we usually had potatoes of one kind or another, either sweet potatoes or Irish potatoes, and we'd eat lots of beans. We all loved beans. And cabbage, and uh, all kinds of vegetables, black-eyed peas—

WSP: Meat?

JGD: Not always, not always. Uh, we—we'd eat lots of chicken—and—but we didn't have a lot of beef. Now, a lot of times there would be someone in the neighborhood that would kill a beef, and they would bring it by and they would—in other words, they usually would trade.

You know, you'd kill a beef one time, and you'd go over in the neighborhood and they'd—someone would take part of it. And then the next time, they'd do the same for you. But that didn't happen very

often. So we mostly had pork and chicken.

WSP: It would be like a special occasion when you had beef.

JGD: Right, right. Yeah.

WSP: Was beef be a seasonal item, primarily?

JGD: Yes.

WSP: What would be the season?

JGD: Probably, oh, uh, late spring.

WSP: Before the heat of the summer?

JGD: Um-hm, right, so it didn't spoil whenever they was taking it from one place to another.

WSP: And what would you trade the beef for? Eggs? Or peaches?

JGD: Well, we'd just trade the meat from—like we killed a calf, then someone else would take some meat. Then the next time they killed meat, we'd take it back.

WSP: Oh, okay. You didn't trade meat for some other food product.

JGD: No, no. Meat for meat—

WSP: Trade meat for meat but at different times in the year.

JGD: Right.

WSP: I understand—maybe your family was different—that supper, the nighttime meal, was rather light?

JGD: Right.

WSP: What was the supper menu?

JGD: A lot of times it was cornbread and milk. We liked cornbread and milk.

WSP: What were you concerned would not store from lunch?

JGD: If you had beans left over, a lot of times it would spoil between—sometimes it didn't, but sometimes it did. It was according to how hot it was.

WSP: She only cooked enough beans or vegetables for lunch, uh, dinner.

JGD: Right, right.

WSP: But the bread would stay all right.

JGD: Right. But then we usually had—a lot of times we'd have to cook extra bread for supper. And a lot of times—a lot of times my daddy liked pancakes for supper. Instead of breakfast, he liked them for supper.

WSP: What was *your* preferred meal. If you were to design all your favorites at a birthday meal or some special meal, what would they be?

JGD: It would probably be beans, potatoes, cornbread, and something sweet, a pie or a cake.

WSP: And your meat product—any?

JGD: Uh, beef.

WSP: You preferred beef?

JGD: Yeah. Yeah.

WSP: And drinks?

JGD: Uh, tea.

WSP: Now is that what you drank most of the time when you ate?

JGD: Uh, no, we drank milk. We drank milk.

WSP: What about water?

JGD: Yeah, we drank a lot of water, too, but at mealtime we'd usually drink tea—oh, not always, but—milk, we usually drank milk. And we drank, well, we liked buttermilk, and clabber milk. You know what clabbered milk is?

WSP: Give me a description.

JGD: The milk is solid, and it's a little bit sour. And 'course, buttermilk wasn't good unless it was churned with clabber milk—sweet, sweet milk, churned with was not good.

WSP: Why not?

JGD: It just didn't taste right. So we didn't, we always waited until it soured before we made the clabber milk, before we churned and made buttermilk. And we had a great big old three-gallon splatter churn, and that's what we churned our butter in. And we usually, we usually had—of course, in the summertime, sometimes we didn't have any milk, except enough to do the—make the bread with, because the cows had, you know, gone dry, so—

WSP: Milk cows would go dry in the summertime?

JGD: Yeah, yes, if you didn't, if you didn't handle it just right.

WSP: Now what does that mean? What would you have to do to keep them from going dry?

JGD: If they had a baby calf. See—say—it's just whenever they came fresh is whenever they have a baby calf, and then until that calf gets big enough to wean, well, she'll give milk. But when that calf gets big enough to wean, well, she quits giving milk. And then you have to wait for her to have another baby.

WSP: Even with a milch cow?

JGD: I don't know, we always, we just had regular cows. We usually—we usually had a Jersey cow for the milk, but sometimes they were just regular mixed-up cows.

WSP: You had five cows—

JGD: Sometimes we had five to milk.

WSP: And each cow was in some stage of weaning a calf.

JGD: Right. But they didn't always give a terrible lot of milk because we let the calf have half of it.

WSP: It took five cows to get enough milk for you to live on?

JGD: Right, enough. Right, right.

WSP: How much milk a day, total quantity, would you say?

JGD: Oh, I don't know.

WSP: A pail's worth?

JGD: Yeah, we usually—we usually would have pretty good milk buckets, about, oh, I'm going to say they would probably be two-gallon pail buckets, and there'd may be three gallons in both of them.

WSP: Total. You had two buckets, and the total between them was what? About three gallons?

JGD: Uh-huh. Yeah, yeah.

WSP: How long would that last you?

JGD: It—well, we usually fed, you know, fed it to the dogs, and if we had turkeys we let the milk sour, and, and we'd put it on the stove and, and cook it and make what they call curds to feed the turkeys.

WSP: Oh, really!

JGD: Yeah! You mean you're not a farm boy and don't know that?

WSP: I didn't know about feeding turkeys with cooked sour milk and curds. How interesting.

JGD: Uh-huh, yes. It'll separate, it'll just—the curds will rise and then there'll be water on the bottom. You pour the water off, and you take the curds out and feed them to the—

WSP: That's the first step of making cheese.

JGD: Right.

WSP: Did you actually make cheese?

JGD: No. No, we didn't.

WSP: You'd just get it to that first stage and then give it to the turkeys?

JGD: Give it to the turkeys.

WSP: Turkeys was another one of the food products you had.

JGD: Right, right, but we'd never eat the turkeys. We sold them. I usually tried to have them ready to sell by Thanksgiving or Christmas. That was our, you know, Christmas money, usually.

WSP: Because cotton was sold by then?

JGD: Uh-huh, right. Right.

WSP: How many turkeys are we talking about?

JGD: We would have somewhere in the neighborhood of fifty.

WSP: Would you do the harvesting on the farm, or would you take them into town?

JGD: They took them to town.

WSP: By what means?

JGD: Put them in the back of the car! Tie them up!

WSP: Well, you know, there's a town in Texas where they round them up like cattle and drive them through the middle of downtown!

JGD: (laughs) Where is that?

WSP: I think it's Cuero.

JGD: Oh, I'm not surprised.

WSP: The Turkey Trot?

JGD: Yeah.

WSP: Yeah. They had a big turkey processing plant downtown, and they would have these parades of turkeys through the main streets.

All right. Let me think here for a second.

(interruption in taping)

WSP: We've taken a little break and enjoyed some homemade brownies, and cold water on this rather hot August afternoon.

Now I would like to discuss the period after high school. Shortly afterward you finished seventh grade you married Claude Duncan. Tell me how the two of you met, and what courting was like back then.

JGD: I met Claude Christmas 1936. He came to visit some relatives at Brookhaven, the Bowlands. And we went to a, some parties while he was here, and then we wrote to each other for a year. He came back and visited, and we went to a movie. And then we decided we wanted to get married. So we married on his mother's and dad's wedding anniversary, the twenty-eighth of November, 1937.

We moved to Aransas Pass and stayed a few months and helped his parents move back to the Okay community. And then we went back and lived down there for a short time, and then came back to Killeen. We have lived in different communities around Killeen. We lived in the Okay community, we lived in the Maxdale community, we lived in the Brookhaven community, and we lived where he could find work. He did farm labor until in the 1940s and went to work in Temple at the American Desk Company.

WSP: What was he doing there?

JGD: He was making ammunition boxes.

WSP: The American Desk Company used to make desks but converted during the war to making ammunition boxes, right?

JGD: Right. And then he came back and went to work at Fort Hood as a laborer in the warehouse, dry storage warehouses, and ended up being the supervisor out there—had to retire because of health reasons.

And we had three children, three boys. Our first one was born in 1938, the second one was born in 1943 and the third one was born in October of 1951.

WSP: What are their names?

JGD: The oldest one is, is Peyton Earl, the second one was—(pause) Jesse Durwood, and the third one's

Kenneth Wayne. The oldest one married Zoanne Husung and they have two daughters, Terri Lynn and Rebecca Ann, and Rebecca and Terri are both married, Terri Lynn has three daughters, Annie, Gracie, and Mattie. Rebecca doesn't have any children. Terri married Chris Hawkins. Rebecca married Robert Maindale.

WSP: What about Jesse?

JGD: He passed—he died when he was five weeks old.

WSP: Any particular illness?

JGD: He had a heart problem. He was born with an enlarged heart.

And he only lived five weeks.

WSP: Oh, my! Kenneth was the third child?

JGD: Right. He was born October 30, 1951. So it's kind of like having two families. The boys were about thirteen years apart.

WSP: Kenneth's married, I take it?

JGD: Well, the oldest one is, but—Peyton is, but Kenneth is not. No.

WSP: All right. Now during our cookie break you told me a story about the army, explaining how your husband got a civilian job making boxes during the war. Did he get drafted?

JGD: He did later. He did later. He had gone to work at Fort Hood as a laborer, and he was drafted in '43, I believe, '43 or '44. And he went into the army and went to Camp Joseph Robinson in Arkansas, got hurt in training, and was discharged after a little over six months.

WSP: Describe how he got hurt. That's an interesting story.

JGD: He was the tallest man on the end of a log being lifted in infantry training, and as he raised up his back gave way, and he pulled a hernia. And he had to have back surgery, and he never was able to go back to his company. So he was discharged, honorably discharged.

WSP: Did the army perform the operation?

JGD: Yes. And he was honorably discharged and came back home and went back to work at the same place where he had left and later became supervisor. And then he retired, had to retire because of health reasons.

WSP: Was this related to his back injury again?

JGD: Yes, he had to have some more back surgery. He had three back surgeries altogether, and he was never able to go back to work. He had a cot out in the office where he worked, that when his back got to hurting so bad, he was allowed to lay down.

WSP: Well, that's very generous.

JGD: It sure was. It sure was. I can't remember the officer that ordered it, but it was some officer that was over him at the time ordered it.

WSP: What was he doing in Aransas Pass?

JGD: He was day-working, working out on farms.

WSP: Did he do any boat work?

JGD: No. No.

WSP: Any fishing?

JGD: No. No.

WSP: Was this the same at Maxdale?

JGD: Right. He worked with the WPA when we lived in Maxdale. Well, worked farm first for a man, a Mr. Rennick and then he got on WPA and we lived—we lived down at Maxdale.

WSP: This was straight WPA and not CCC?

JGD: No, it was WPA. It was Work Progress, something—

WSP: Administration.

JGD: Yeah.

WSP: What was he doing for WPA?

JGD: Roadwork. He did roadwork.

WSP: Then from Maxdale you moved back up to Brookhaven. Did I get that sequence right?

JGD: We lived at Brookhaven, and then we moved down to Maxdale. We lived in Maxdale in '38 when Peyton Earl was born. And then we moved to Okay, then back to Maxdale when Peyton was, oh, a little older, when he was working on the WPA. He was working on the farm when Peyton was born, but then he went to work for the WPA. And we lived in Killeen at the time, and then we found this place out close to the job, and he, they did—

WSP: Was he working at the military storage area?

JGD: That—we lived in Killeen at that time. We had moved from Temple to—

WSP: Temple to Killeen?

JGD: Uh-huh.

WSP: You moved quite a lot in that time period.

JGD: Right, right. Well, you just moved where you could find a job. That's why you—why we moved as much as we did, was where he could find a better job.

WSP: Would you rent a house for a time period?

JGD: Well, a lot of times you didn't have to pay rent, just so you would live in the house.

WSP: I see. They'd give you the house as part of the work arrangement.

JGD: Right, right.

WSP: This was *not* sharecropping, right?

JGD: No, it was just working for the man.

WSP: Whatever chores he'd give for him to do?

JGD: Right. That's right.

WSP: It's rather unfortunate his back went out on him because when you're a laborer, that's pretty much the end of it, isn't it?

JGD: Right, right.

WSP: Did he enjoy the work he was doing?

JGD: Oh, yeah. Yes, he was a farmer at heart all the time.

WSP: Working in the warehouse or the box company was just something he had to do.

JGD: Yeah. Right. And then we lived in Killeen, and then we moved out here in 1949, and we've been out here ever since.

WSP: When did he retire from the army? Was that in 1949, or was that later?

JGD: It was later, it was in the 1950s when—

WSP: So he spend a number of years working in the warehouse.

JGD: Right. Twenty-six-plus years.

WSP: Eventually becoming the supervisor there.

JGD: Right. Right.

WSP: As the camp continued to grow.

JGD: Right. It was from camp and then it went to Fort Hood. He started out at Camp Hood, and then it ended up being Fort Hood. He had taken a class, and he was allowed to go out to Gray Base to load the troops out there. Then he was trained to, in emergencies to go, and he was on call. He had to go anytime he was called. And he did, he did go.

WSP: In the capacity of a supervisor, when they had an emergency, and they had to move the troops quickly, they called him, and he would help organize the troop movement?

JGD: Right. He'd handle all the groceries.

WSP: The food end of it?

JGD: Right, right. That's what those warehouses were, the dry—what they called dry storage.

WSP: K-rations and other stored food?

JGD: All kinds of canned stuff.

WSP: He made sure it would all get on the plane correctly—

JGD: Right. Right.

WSP: Well, that sounds fascinating. Did he tell you any particular stories related to his work, or life on the camp?

JGD: Well, he didn't talk about it a lot because sometimes it was stuff he wasn't supposed to talk about. So he didn't. And if there was something going on out there, I never knew what it was because it was not proper for him to tell me, and he didn't.

WSP: Because he was doing day labor, and you were moving around, were you ever involved in the land issue in 1942?

JGD: No, we didn't—we didn't own any property out there. My in-laws did, over at Okay. And my mother and daddy had sold their place and had moved to Salado, but the Fort Hood did not take their property. The lake did. But Fort Hood did not take their property. But my in-laws that lived over at Okay, it did take their property.

WSP: The old homestead north of Brookhaven went in the 1950s when the Belton Lake filled up?

JGD: Right, right.

WSP: Were they still living on the property at that time?

JGD: My parents weren't, but I had a couple of uncles and aunts that were—the Kellys and the Reeds were still living there—the fact of it is the Reeds were the last ones to leave, the ones that lived in the home, the home place.

WSP: Was that because it took awhile for lake levels to get up to that part?

JGD: Yeah. Well, they were allowed to stay there, for some reason—and I don't know all the details, but they were among the last ones—I think they were exactly the last ones to leave. And then the Kellys, Howard Kelly's family.

WSP: How did they feel about it? Did they ever express any concern about this situation?

JGD: Well sure! They weren't happy leaving, but they knew it was necessary.

WSP: Had they made arrangements at that point to have an alternate place to go?

JGD: No, it was just, when they got notice that they had to leave, they found another place. It wasn't like whenever Fort Hood come along. Those people out there, a lot of them didn't have time to find a place. Fact of it is, I have a friend that her parents and they moved into a schoolhouse over here at Reese's Creek because they didn't have enough time to find a place to go.

WSP: Did the people in Brookhaven feel like they'd dodged a bullet when the army outlined the area for Camp Hood back in 1942.

JGD: I don't know, I didn't live there. I didn't live there then. I don't know.

WSP: All through January and February and March 1942, while the army's building the camp, where were you living?

JGD: Uh, we lived what's in the reservation now, on Harv Rennick's place. As you go down to my brother-in-law's house, it's just off the road down there on Harv Rennick's place. It's not too far from him. We were living there, and Claude was working on the road at the time—

WSP: Your husband was working on a WPA road project the day that the announcement came through about the taking?

JGD: Right, right—no, no, of Pearl Harbor.

WSP: What was he doing at the time of the land-taking?

JGD: I think we had done already moved, because—I'm not sure where we were living when—but I believe we were living in Killeen at the time.

WSP: Can you describe the transformation Killeen went through in the months you were there?

JGD: It was terrible! There wasn't no place to live, people just had to live in just anything they could live in, and it was absolutely terrible for the people that were coming in here to find a place to live.

WSP: You were among the lucky ones to have a place.

JGD: Yes. Right.

WSP: Weren't you telling me a story about how many family members lived in the same house? What was that again?

JGD: Well, we all lived there because we didn't have no place else to go.

WSP: What house was this?

JGD: It was up on Second and Dean, in Killeen.

WSP: Who owned the house?

JGD: Jim Bundrant.

WSP: One of your sisters' husbands?

JGD: No, it was his daddy.

WSP: How many families were living there?

JGD: Three.

WSP: Your sisters, primarily?

JGD: I think I've got the date wrong on that because that was the year my baby was born that died, and that was 1943, so I do have the date wrong when we were living there. We moved in there in 1942.

WSP: Oh, okay.

JGD: Then we moved from Temple—and where we lived when they took the land, I do not remember.

WSP: But you considered yourself fairly lucky that one of your family members had a house in town located when everybody else was scrambling for a place.

JGD: Right, right. Right, right.

WSP: Did you make more room in that house to accommodate boarders, or were you pretty much filled to the rafters at that point?

JGD: Yes. My two brothers stayed with my older sister. She had two rooms, so of course, everything was all packed up, no room to move in. And my two brothers was working at construction work, so they moved in and stayed with her, but—and my brother-in-law stayed with us for a few months.

WSP: Construction work on the Camp Hood, right?

JGD: Yeah, right. And my brother-in-law stayed with us—I believe he left in February of that year, so it was before then that he stayed with us for a while and worked—I don't know where he was working now, I don't remember. But he did stay with us for a few, few months or weeks. And that was—I mean, it was a house running over.

WSP: Then all the military people arrived in town, too.

JGD: Right. Right.

WSP: How was it around town?

JGD: It was—it was bad! Because there was no place for them.

WSP: Do you remember any stories from that time period?

JGD: It's been too long ago.

WSP: Then you moved to another place sometime thereafter?

JGD: Yeah, we built—in 1943 we built us a little—a little house on Dean Avenue, about a block from where we were living, renting, and we lived there until we traded for this place out here. We traded that place for this.

WSP: When you're living in Killeen, he's working in the army base?

JGD: Uh-huh.

WSP: Is he doing construction, or the warehouse?

JGD: No, he—he went from Temple, making those boxes, to the warehouse in Fort Hood. And he was working at the warehouse when we built that little house on Dean Avenue. And then we moved out here. We traded this—what—we traded our property in town for this, and picked up the note on this.

And it was—it was late—it must have been 1944. Well, the baby was—my baby that was born in 1943, was, he was born that year, and we lived in the Bundrant's place. And then we built the little house up there, and we lived there until after he went in the army and came back home. And then we—the boys didn't like it—Peyton—Kenneth wasn't born then—I just had Peyton Earl, and they, he didn't like to live in town. So, Claude went looking for a place, and he found this place out here, so we traded it with the Douglasses, and then we moved out here in 1949.

WSP: And you've been here ever since.

JGD: Been here ever since.

WSP: How big is this place?

JGD: Ah, a hundred acres.

WSP: Almost as big as the home place in Brookhaven?

JGD: Yeah. Well, really, I think it's 104 acres, by the survey it's 104 acres.

WSP: Did he do any farming or raise cattle out here?

JGD: Yes, uh-huh, we had goats, we had sheep, and we had cattle, and then we raised some corn, and we raised some cotton twice, I believe, out here. And of course, you couldn't get nobody to pick it, and I had to pick what had to be picked, and I decided I wasn't picking anymore. (laughs) So we didn't plant any more cotton.

WSP: Had all the cotton picking you could stand as a kid.

JGD: (laughs) It was before Kenneth Wayne was born that we had the last cotton. No, the last cotton we planted was about 1955 or '56. Kenneth went with me to the field, and he found a nest of cottontail rabbits, and he put them in his straw hat. But I didn't work in the field anymore after that.

WSP: Probably a good idea.

JGD: Yeah.

WSP: Do you recall hearing the news about the 1950s taking, and the development of the dam and the Lake Belton? What were your memories of that time period?

JGD: Well, I knew it was just something they were going to do. You had to accept it.

WSP: Did you talk to any friends that still had property out there?

JGD: No. Of course, that—that was down, down from us, that was down more or less in Tennessee Valley, where that was. That was down below Sparta.

WSP: Near the dam.

JGD: Right.

WSP: But Brookhaven was toward the north end of the lake.

JGD: Yeah, yes, and it just—you know, the water doesn't quit back up there too—you know, too much. The fact is, I don't know if it backs up all the way or not. I don't really think it does. I think—

WSP: Is Brookhaven still around?

JGD: Yeah.

WSP: Isn't it now part of eastern Fort Hood area?

JGD: Right. Right.

WSP: Did living near Cowhouse pose any flooding problems that you can recall?

JGD: Oh, one year I remember that the—it rained every Sunday for seven Sundays, and that old Cowhouse River, Creek, whatever you want to call it, came out of banks, came down by the Carter house in what they call a slough down through there. And it came down through there just like the river ordinarily was for seven different Sundays. And that's the most that I—of course, it did it occasionally, but that was one year that it did it every Sunday for seven Sundays. And I know we was always concerned about it—you know, every weekend, here it come.

WSP: Did it threaten the bridge?

JGD: No, it didn't. It couldn't reach the bridge. It couldn't reach the bridge, except the foundations. It could reach them, but not—not as far as the bridge was concerned because it was up high enough that it didn't reach it. But it could reach, you know, the foundations on each side of the bridge.

WSP: Did anybody receive any damage from the flood?

JGD: Just, just the damage it did to the crops, whenever there was crops down through there.

WSP: Any other unusual weather you can recall as a kid? For example, any droughts?

JGD: Oh, yes, we had a sandstorm one year. We had just finished setting out a lot of tomatoes, and I remember the sand came in. And I had never seen a sandstorm before, and it just—sand was so much in the air it just clipped the tomatoes off at the top of the ground. Now what year that was I don't know. But that was—as far as I can remember, that was the only sandstorm that I can remember.

WSP: How far along were the tomato plants?

JGD: Well, they were big enough that you transplanted them from, you know, the bed that you raised them in, to, to the garden.

WSP: Six to nine inches tall?

JGD: Uh-huh, yes, something like that.

WSP: The wind and the dust just—

JGD: Cut them off, cut them off.

WSP: How about bug infestations?

JGD: Oh, yeah, we always had those, tomato worms, great big old tomato worms. We had to get them off the plants, but we used the—if we used anything, we used ashes, we didn't use any kind of insecticide, we just used ashes.

WSP: How would that work?

JGD: Just sprinkled it on. Well, it did pretty good.

WSP: How does one use ashes as an insecticide?

JGD: Well, we just—we just used a kind of an old piece of screen wire and just sifted it on, on the plants. And that was about the only bug spray we used.

WSP: Was it effective?

JGD: Yeah. When we had sweet potatoes, I'll tell you how we kept them. We got cornstalks and we put them together like a tipi, and then you put dirt on the outsides of that, and you had it facing south. You put your potatoes in there, and then you hung a ducking cotton sack down in the front of it, to keep the cold air out, and you kept those potatoes for several months in the wintertime like that.

WSP: Potatoes you have already pulled out of the ground?

JGD: Right. Right.

WSP: The tipi is not for bugs, it's for storage?

JGD: Right.

WSP: Why must it face south?

JGD: So the north wind wouldn't get in.

And we would put our onions, tie them together, and hang them out in the smokehouse, you know, on a rafter. And our Irish potatoes, we would—our house was like this one, up off the ground, and we'd store them under there. And my mom always had what you called cushaws.

WSP: What the heck is that?

JGD: Well, it's a—kind of in the pumpkin family, except it's got a great long neck and it's got a big bulb on the end, and it's striped, green striped. It's called a cushaw. And she always raised some of those, and you cut them up and cook them like you did a pumpkin. And we put those under the house, and they'd keep indefinitely because the house was up off of the ground—and that's where we put those.

WSP: We're sitting in the middle of your house, we've got a fan going above us, but it's still a little warm. What did you do in the 1930s and 1940s to stay cool?

JGD: We had fans that you got out—usually funeral homes gave out fans, and you used a newspaper to fan with, and that's all we had.

WSP: No electrical fan?

JGD: No! No, we didn't have electricity.

WSP: When did electricity come to your place?

JGD: I don't remember, but it was after I married. So it was after 1938.

WSP: You just sat there and fanned?

JGD: Yeah, right.

WSP: Oh, you must have done something else!

JGD: No, we didn't! No, we didn't!

WSP: Was it as hot back then as it's been these days?

JGD: I think so! You're just used to it! And you worked in the field, and you went barefooted and your feet got hot, and you walked in the shade of the cotton to keep your feet from burning.

WSP: Kept the windows open—

JGD: Right. (laughs)

WSP: I'm a child of the '60s! If I get too hot, I just collapse.

JGD: (laughs) We can bring that fan to the door if you want it?

WSP: No, I'm going to tough it out with you.

I wonder if there's any topic I might have missed, some significant aspect of your life back then?

JGD: Well, all I know is that we always had plenty of food and had a roof over our house, plenty of clothes. We might not have had the best of everything, but we did have plenty. And we may have wore patches, but—but that didn't matter.

My daddy was the shoe cobbler of our neighborhood. He always half soled the shoes. My mother and my uncle did the hair cutting, and another uncle did the, uh, carpenter and the mechanic work. So we just kind of a neighborhood that we kind of took care of each other. And if someone was sick in the neighborhood, and then other neighbors moved in and helped do what had to be done in the fields, or whatever. And if there was someone sick in the community, they always went and helped them.

WSP: A community drawing together to support each other—

JGD: Right, right.

WSP: Was this primarily between those who lived close to each other?

JGD: Right.

WSP: But not necessarily connected to the same church—

JGD: All of them in the little community where you lived, in about, you know, uh—oh, a few houses, you know?

WSP: What happened when community relations were not going well, like teenagers acting up, or alcohol problems, or issues that required law enforcement?

JGD: Well, you know, we didn't have that. About the worst thing I can remember like that happening was, uh—the community over at Brookhaven, they would give what they called parties, you know? You couldn't dance, couldn't dance, but you could go and play party games and—

WSP: What community was this again?

JGD: Brookhaven. And one or two of the older boys would smoke. Well, that was really bad—was for somebody to smoke.

WSP: Cigarettes?

JGD: Right! And sometimes they would have a bottle of beer. Well, that was really—nobody had anything to do with them if they did that. They were just outcasts! So we were pretty—I don't know what kind of community you would call us, but we weren't—we didn't do the wild parties like they do now. We didn't know—we didn't know what to do with something like that.

WSP: What was the worst crime that occurred in that area? Anything like, shoplifting or cattle rustling—I'm just pulling things out of my head, now.

JGD: I don't remember any of that happening.

WSP: You felt safe.

JGD: Yeah, we sure did. The only thing that—the worst thing that I can remember happening was the man that run the grocery store was really a high-tempered fellow.

And he went to Belton to First Monday—and they had First Monday where they sold, they brought their stuff to sell pigs and all that kind of stuff. And him and a man from Sparta got into a fight, and they used knives on each other. And this man almost died because of the cutting that he had on his stomach.

WSP: The grocery store owner, or the man from Sparta?

JGD: The store owner. And 'course, when they had a ball game, well, he was one of the ones—if there was anything going on, well, he would try to pick a fight. There were two or three men like that, that when they went to ball games they would try to—and that's usually about the extent of what went on.

WSP: What did the community do about these guys?

JGD: They tried to ignore them and tried not to invite them.

WSP: Left them out of social activities—

JGD: Yeah, leave them out. Uh-huh.

WSP: Were any of them members of your church?

JGD: No. They didn't go to church.

WSP: Might have been the problem right there!

JGD: Could have been. (laughs)

WSP: You said you liked to cook, and I can attest to the high quality of your baked goods. How did you come by that knowledge?

JGD: Well, as we grew up, we learned to cook at home. It was just one of those things that Mama taught us was that. It come our time to learn to cook, well, we had to cook, whether we wanted to or whether we didn't.

WSP: What age was that usually?

JGD: Oh, that was about ten or eleven. And, uh, by the time I married at fourteen, there wasn't *nothing* I couldn't make. It might not have been the best in the world, but—and then my cousin that married at fourteen, she didn't know how to make biscuits or anything else because her mom wouldn't let her mess around in the kitchen—she didn't like to clean up after her. But she lived in the same house with me, so I taught her a few things. (laughs)

WSP: Now would your mother stand beside you while you were cooking, and give you instructions on what to do?

JGD: Yes, right.

WSP: Did she have recipes?

JGD: Sometimes and sometimes she didn't. I never will forget the first hot rolls I made. My mom always made hot rolls, and she, uh—it was what they called everlasting yeast, so she always saved a great big piece of dough and buried it in the flour bin. We had the flour bin in the cabinet, and she buried it down in there to keep it. And then you got it out and soaked it and started your next batch of rolls.

WSP: That's how you get the name everlasting yeast?

JGD: Right! Usually, the thing, you went to the bakery, and you bought one to start with. And then you saved a piece of the dough, and if somebody else wanted a piece of the dough, then you saved them a piece before you, you know, made your rolls out.

Well, it was before Peyton Earl was born, so it would had to be in 1938, when we were living down on the Lampasas River at Maxdale—where Claude was working for, oh, Mr. Rennick (??). And I had made these rolls up—and I didn't have a recipe, I just kind of remembered what my mom had done. And as I was putting them in the oven—they were so pretty—and I thought, Oh, I wish my mom could see these! She'd be so proud of me! Well, by the time they got done, they had drove up! And they lived at Brookhaven, and 'course we lived over there, and that's a long ways to go. And I was so proud of myself, because I had made those rolls, and Mom and Dad come along and found them. (laughs) So I was really proud.

WSP: What did they say?

JGD: Oh, they was proud, too.

WSP: They liked them?

JGD: Yeah, oh, yeah. And had a little wood cook stove that they would cook them in.

WSP: Can you tell me about your eleventh birthday?

JGD: Yeah. I made my first cake. My mom—uh, my brother, younger, second, third brother had just been born, and she was still in bed, so she told me how to, what to do. And I made that cake, and I was so proud of myself because that was the first cake I'd ever done by myself.

WSP: Yeah, but it's your *own* birthday cake!

JGD: Right! My own birthday cake! (laughs)

WSP: Of the things that your mother taught you, what else do you still enjoy making—

JGD: Oh, I love—I love to make rolls.

WSP: What is your secret?

JGD: Uh, patience. (laughs)

WSP: Why patience?

JGD: Well, you've got to give it time to do it because if you rush it, it's, that's no good. I taught my granddaughters, both of them how to make rolls, and they was like me, they could tell by feeling of the dough if it was going to be good or not.

And my sister was so amazed at them because we were making pizza at her house one day and one of the little girls said, "Well, this is going to be good, feel of the dough." And she didn't make rolls, so she didn't understand what they meant! (laughs)

WSP: Patience is not about the baking, it's about—

JGD: It's getting ready.

WSP: Getting the dough ready to bake?

JGD: Right, right. Yes, right. And my oldest granddaughter had an allergy problem, and I had to give her allergy shots when she was, oh, about two years old, I guess, so—she came every Saturday for me to give her her shot. And I always had rolls—either making them or ready to roll out, or something with rolls every Saturday because she liked to play in the dough.

One day she started out the door, and they hadn't waited long enough for the biscuits to be ready to cook, and I handed her a little pan of rolls to take home with her because she had made them out herself. And her daddy said, "What are you doing taking Nanny's rolls home?" Said, "Well, Daddy, didn't your Nanny ever give you anything?" (laughs) So she took her rolls home with her. (laughs)

WSP: What consistency are you feeling for?

JGD: Well, you make it—you make it up and let it rise first, until it's doubled in size. Then you make your rolls out, or loaves out, and let it rise a second time until it's doubled. And then bake it at 350, no higher than 350.

WSP: It should be a pretty small lump of dough to start.

JGD: Right.

WSP: You're saying people get hasty and plop in a lump of the size of the finished roll and—

JGD: And then they've got too-big ones. (laughs)

WSP: What's the difference between one that's been rushed and—

JGD: Well, in different weather—different weather makes a difference in how much flour you use. Sometimes you have to add some flour. And on a—oh, certain kind of weather, uh, it rises better than it does others.

WSP: What is the ideal weather?

JGD: Nice and warm like today.

WSP: What circumstances would you add more flour?

JGD: Uh, I think if it's rainy weather. I'm not sure—usually you can tell. But I've got recipes that I go by, and I can usually tell if it's got enough flour or not. But, if you get too much flour they're not as light and fluffy.

WSP: It's a matter of feel at this point, isn't it?

JGD: Right. Right.

WSP: Is there any other dish besides bread products that you enjoy making?

JGD: I like to make pies.

WSP: Pies. What is the trick there?

JGD: Well, the trick I have is, in making chocolate pies, is to use canned milk.

WSP: I've heard of a chocolate cake but I've never heard of a chocolate pie. How do you make a chocolate pie?

JGD: Well, you—and I like to bake my crust first before I put the pie filling in it. Bake the crust until it's nice and brown. And then make your pudding using canned milk, and pour that in there. And save the egg whites and beat them, and put a little a bit of sugar in them and put them on top, put it back in the oven and brown that. And—

WSP: Doesn't the second time in the oven make the pie crust that's been browned too, uh—

JGD: No. No. No, you don't brown it that much to start with.

WSP: Oh, okay.

JGD: But cooking the crust first makes a better pie.

WSP: Why?

JGD: Well, it's nice and crusty.

WSP: Your mother trained you in the arts of cooking. What was her procedure? I mean, did she give you tips as you worked, or did she kind of leave you to your own devices?

JGD: No, she was—she was real good about showing me you how to do things.

WSP: What item did she teach you first?

JGD: Make cornbread.

WSP: What was the sequence of items in your training?

JGD: Well, one of the worst things for me to make was biscuits. I didn't like to make biscuits.

WSP: Why was that?

JGD: I didn't like to make them.

WSP: Why? Too simple, or what?

JGD: No, it's just too messy.

WSP: I don't understand.

JGD: Well, Mama had a wooden bowl about this big. You put your flour—

WSP: You're indicating about ten or twelve inches in diameter.

JGD: And you put your flour in that, and you take your hand and you dig a hole in the middle of that flour, put your ingredients in that and take your fingers and work that up, make a dough. And then—most people then pinched them out like you would light bread buns, but a lot of people rolled them out and cut them out with either a glass or a cookie cutter. But my mom always just pinched them out.

WSP: What's the messy part?

JGD: It's whenever you're mixing it with your fingers.

WSP: Don't you use your fingers to mix the dough for rolls?

JGD: No, I use a spoon.

WSP: So there is a whole separate technique for biscuits?

JGD: Right, if you made them like they made them back then. Of course, the easiest way now is to open a can. (laughs)

WSP: Well, that's so true.

JGD: Right.

WSP: Well, this has been most enjoyable. You've been an excellent interview subject. In closing, what is your most enjoyable memory of the years spent on the Fort Hood lands?

JGD: Just a kid growing up over there. Just, it was home, knew everybody, went to school, went to church, went to parties. Good friends, good neighbors. That's about it.

WSP: Well, thank you very much. I've enjoyed this.

JGD: (laughs)

John Easley

Date of birth: 16 August 1932
Communities affiliated with: Ewing, Ruth
Interviewed by Marie E. Blake

MEB: This is Marie E. Blake. Today is Thursday, September 13, 2001. I'm interviewing for the first time, Mr. John Easley. This interview is taking place in Mr. Easley's home in Gatesville, Texas. This interview is part of Prewitt and Associates' Fort Hood Oral History project sponsored by U.S. Army Fort Hood and conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University.

Okay. So, if we want to start out with some material about your family, that would be great.

JE: Okay, my—do I need to be closer?

MEB: Oh, no, you're fine. It picks up just fine.

JE: Uh, my great-great-grandparents were the first Browns that came to this—in fact they came—they got to the area, which is part of Fort Hood now, around January of 1855. And that was Nimrod and Gracie Brown. Nimrod Brown and Gracie Reece Brown, was her maiden name. And they came from—in fact, Nimrod was born in Virginia, and I suppose Gracie was, too. I don't really know that to be a fact, but they came—they had moved from Virginia, then to Tennessee, and from Tennessee they came on to Texas.

And my Great-grandfather Brown, John Brown, he was born in Tennessee. And then, of course, he came as a boy, kind of a young boy, with the rest of the family to this area. And then he married—his, let's see, his first wife—I kind of get this mixed up, too—Sarah, and, no, let's see. He married Amanda, which was my great-grandmother. John and Amanda were my great-grandparents on my mother's side. And they lived in the area that, you know, is a part of Fort Hood now. In fact, it's just—going out toward Temple where the MATES, the Texas national guard equipment site is, that at one time was a part of their farm, you know, the Brown farm.

But Nimrod and Gracie are buried there. Their graves are there, just the two graves and the army maintains—well, they established a chainlink fence around them. And they're right there. Of course the others are buried either there in a cemetery there in Fort Hood or my great-grandfather, Nimrod—I mean John, is buried in Gatesville, at the city cemetery.

But his—Amanda died, who was my great-grandmother, and then he remarried Sarah, which is the other part of the Brown family that I was talking to you the other day about. You know, there are two sets of children, he had two sets of children. And that first group was my grandmother and three other sisters, and they had a brother. And then my mother, I mean my grandmother, was Clementine Brown Holt. And she married John Able Holt, who came from Fuquay, North Carolina. At some—he was a young man, I don't know what age, when he came. But anyway, they married and they made their home at Flat. In fact, my aunt and uncle still live at the home place there at Flat where these—where my grandmother and grandfather, on the Brown side and the Holt side, where they lived.

And my other grandparents, Samuel, they came from Arkansas. Let's see, we're going to get this right. James married Mary Jane, and I don't know her last name, what her last name was, but I'm going to try to find that. But of that marriage was Samuel Rufus, and he married Josie Tutor, and that was my grandparents. But James and Mary were my great-grandparents on the Easley side. And uh, my grandfather, like I said, Samuel came from Arkansas. And my Grandmother Easley was a Tutor prior to their marriage, and some of the Tutor relatives still live in Temple now. But anyway, she was born in Mississippi, and then to this marriage was born my dad, and he had two brothers and a sister. And then Daddy married Mamie Lee Holt, who was a daughter of John and Clementine Holt. And then of that marriage, I had an older brother, Bill, and then a baby, an infant baby daughter that was—she died in infancy, then myself, then a younger brother, Troy. And that gets that part of it.

The Tutors, they—let's see, they—my Great-grandfather, H. L. Tutor, he came at some point from Indiana, and I'm not exactly sure when. And his wife's name was Julia, and I don't know her last name. Got a lot of research to do. But I don't know her last name. But of that marriage then was my grandmother, Josie Tutor, who married my grandfather, Samuel Easley. It's an interesting thing that I found out, at the beginning of this research, that this H. L. Tutor, he was a corporal in Indiana in a—Twenty-fifty Company, Company H, Twenty-fifty Infantry of Indiana, in the Civil War. And my other great-grandfather, John Brown, was a captain in the Confederacy. So I had two great-grandfathers that were on different sides in that struggle.

Uh, let's see. Did that cover all of the genealogy, I wonder? I got the Holts, John and Clementine were my grandparents. And my great-grandparents on the Holt side, his name was John Sidney Holt, and her name was Mary Margaret Arnold Holt. That was my great-grandparents on the Holt side. Then on the Tutors, I've got those, and the Easleys, and the Browns. I guess that covers that genealogy part of it, you know. In a haphazard way. (laughs)

MEB: Well, could you tell me, if you don't mind me asking, when and where you were born?

JE: I was born—on my birth certificate it says, Tama, T-a-m-a, Tama star route, which is in that vicinity of the Ruth area, the Ruth and Ewing area. August 16, 1932. My parents were Willie and Mamie Lee. And this picture (shows a photograph) was made—that's my grandmother Easley. My grandfather had already died at that time. That's my dad and my mother, my—Bill, and me, my younger brother Troy.

MEB: So was this photograph taken at your home place?

JE: No, this was taken at Flat, where my grandparents, where the Holts lived, and an aunt and uncle still live at that place now. But that was taken about—probably about the time that we moved, somewhere around the time that we moved. It's interesting to note—my daddy died of cancer, but you see the Prince Albert smoking tobacco can in his pocket and that caused his death. You know, tobacco use.

MEB: Too bad. Um, so your family lived in the Ruth and Ewing community. And were they farmers? Ranchers?

JE: They were sharecroppers.

MEB: What do you remember about that?

JE: I just remember, we lived—our family lived in the small rural community of Ruth, Coryell County, Texas. And our family home at that time was—my daddy, my mother, my brother, and me, and my other brother, and my grandmother lived with us, the lady there, the Grandmother Easley. She lived with us. And that brought—since she lived there, that brought aunts, and uncles, and cousins from Killeen and from Temple, occasionally, to visit. But we lived in a home that was owned by Judson and Ivy Jones. In fact, Mr. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Jones, they owned two farms, at least two that I

remember, because my daddy's cousin lived on the other one. And it was kind of a—have you been to Temple? The old log house on the left as you're going toward Flat?

MEB: I'm not that familiar with that. I just drive through Temple usually.

JE: Are you familiar with what's termed the old typical dogtrot house, or dog-run house?

MEB: Yeah, uh-huh.

JE: Well ours was that, except that one at the Flat is log, and ours was plank, you know, frame, frame home. And it had the—we called it the fireplace room where the—of course there was no electricity, and no—we heated with wood in the wintertime. Had a fireplace, and Mother had a wood cook stove for, you know, food preparation. And in the summertime, that space in between, that hallway in between had that long front porch across the front, and then a space in between, you know, we slept out there because it was cooler. Of course, no electricity, no air conditioning, and all that.

MEB: Do you know when that house was built?

JE: I don't, I really don't, Marie, I just don't know. But we moved there in—sometime in about the early, about the midthirties, about 1935 or '36, somewhere, because my brother was born, my younger brother, he's born in 1935, and we lived there when he was born. So, but I don't know when it was built.

MEB: So how big was the farm there?

JE: It was just a—I don't know, I don't recall the acreage. I know that Mr. Jones, in the late 1930s, John Deere made, they called it a Popping John. It was a—you know, an early tractor. And he bought one. And my daddy's cousin used it, you know, to work that farm. And then my daddy'd get it and work the farm that we lived on, so they shared that one tractor. But primarily, we just grew corn and cotton on the farm that we had. 'Course we—like everybody then, you know, we had a milk cow and chickens, and a garden, and I still do here, too, have a garden. But it was just a typical, you know, small sharecropper place.

MEB: So how did that sharecropper arrangement work with the owner? Were you guys third or quarter—how much did you—

JE: I don't remember that, Marie, I just don't. I'm sorry, I don't remember that part.

MEB: That's okay.

JE: I just know that, you know, sometime in the—after the crops were in, the owner and the sharecropper would make their settlement. You know, they'd settle up the profits, if there were any.

MEB: So it sounded like the owner, in this case, supplied at least some of the equipment.

JE: Oh, he supplied it all. Well, we did have a horse, but I don't ever recall Daddy using that horse to plow with. From the time that I can remember, he used that tractor on the farm.

MEB: So were these two farms next door to each other or were they separate?

JE: No, they were about, probably—ours was right near the Ruth Cemetery. And this one, the other farm, was over near Henson Creek, was probably about, oh, maybe two miles, two and a half miles away. They weren't that far apart in distance. In fact, you went from our house—we lived, the house that we lived in, it set back off of the road, probably three or four hundred yards, in kind of a little high space. And the area sloped down to the road, which at that time was known as the Killeen Public Road, Gatesville-to-Killeen Public Road. And it was the way you got from Gatesville to Killeen, just a

gravel, just a dirt road, and it passed through some of these small—like Ruth. It went through the little community of Ruth. And so on that same road was the other place that my cousin, I mean my daddy's cousin, Lee Love, lived on. And it was down near the Henson Creek area.

MEB: So let's see. What other kinds of buildings were on the farm? There was the house, and what else—did you have outbuildings, a barn—

JE: We had a barn. It was a two-story, with a hayloft up above, and the horse and cow stayed below. We had a house for the chickens. Some of them didn't roost there, some of them roosted in the trees. (laughs) And then we had a—what we called a smokehouse, you know, for meat storage in the wintertime because Daddy and Mother raised their own pork. So we—that was about, other than the outdoor bathroom. We had a windmill and a water storage tank, drinking water.

MEB: Was that a drilled well, or a dug well?

JE: It was a drilled well. In fact, every year when I go back down to that Ruth Cemetery there, I walk up there and you can drop a rock down in—the well casing is still there above the ground, and you can drop a rock down and hear it splash. Hear the water splash in the well. But on the north side of the house there was a gigantic oak tree, big, big oak tree. And that's where, you know, us boys spent a lot of time when we weren't working or going to school or something like that.

MEB: Did you play up there or—

JE: Yeah.

MEB: What kind of games would you play?

JE: Uh, ball, softball mostly. There was a real grassy area that was kind of south or southeast of the house and we had us a little ball field there. And when there's enough there to play ball, you know, we had teams. But when there wasn't, just us three boys played ball on that, in that area.

MEB: Did you—in terms of entertainment and things that you and your family did, what kind of community events did you take part in or what was there?

JE: Well, there was a little frame building, the Ruth Church of Christ that we attended. And we could walk to it. And we did walk to it from our house. And, 'course, that was a Sunday event, you know, a Sunday morning event. And then the other, most everything else revolved around school. You know, there were play days. The different schools—at that time, there was just many, many—all the little communities almost had a school, you know. And there were many of those little schools around, and they—you know, they'd play each other in different sports. They were so close together, too. And even when I was growing up there, and like I said the other day, we moved when I was ten years old. We moved on December 1, 1942.

And I was talking down at Fort Hood when the book signing was there—I didn't stick around to get the book signed, but it was thunder and lightning outside so left. But I was talking with Robert Powell and then, of course, County Judge Hull, you know, John Hull. He was raised in the Antelope community, which was farther south toward Killeen from Ruth. And Robert Powell was raised in area around what was called Bethel. There was a Bethel Baptist Church there, and a cemetery, you know, and just a—some houses. And we were talking about how we got the word that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. And of course, Daddy and Mother had a radio, but it—the best I recall it somehow or other it, they had to use the car battery to power it. I don't recall that much about it. But anyway, at school on Monday morning, we got on the school bus and when we got to school there at Ewing, Mr. Eubanks, Carl Eubanks was the principal. Yeah, he was a principal. He and his wife were the teachers. There was two more teachers there, also. But he had an assembly in the Ewing School, and

told us that the country was—the country going to be at war. That it had been bombed, you know, Pearl Harbor had been bombed. Of course, we had no idea where Pearl Harbor was. (laughs) And, but anyway, I recall—and Robert and Judge Hull was talking about that, too. Robert said, "You remember Mr. Eubanks told us that Pearl Harbor was bombed, and that we needed to go home and be with our parents." We did, everybody went home. That was a Monday after the Sunday. Kinda some similarity with what's going on in New York.

The school bus came right, like I said while ago, somewhere between three and four hundred yards, our house was off of this little Killeen Public Road, they called it. And we caught the school bus there, and also we had mail delivery there. There was a man that ran a ice truck out of Gatesville. Of course, we had one of those little ol', little wooden deals with the ice in the top, and it would melt, and drain the water under—

MEB: An evaporator or an icebox?

JE: No, it was just a—you wrapped up the ice real good. There was a deal on top that had a lid on it. It was metal, it was metal pan-like deal, and you put it in there, and the water drained. You know, you had to have a drain. And our water drained through a hole in the floor, and then that kept anything that was in there reasonable cool. You had some ice, you know, occasionally, for iced tea or something like that. You know, not very often, but seldom. Seldom—and on occasions we made ice cream, homemade ice cream, but not very often. But this fella, he delivered ice from—at one time there was an ice plant in Gatesville that manufactured ice and you'd pick up—pick up a load of ice and bring out to every home that wanted it, that could afford it.

MEB: So would—in terms of businesses and stuff, would you guys do a lot of your business and shopping and things like that in Gatesville?

JE: It was all in Gatesville. Well there was a store at Ruth, a little grocery store, but—and it sold gas. You know, there was gasoline there. It had a—I was thinking about this, I was telling my niece Cindy about this. I said, "You didn't drive up and have four pumps or diesel." A diesel pump and two or three others. You drove up and you pumped it by hand. You did, you know. It had a big ol' long handle on it, and it pumped and pumped, and it went up in here in a container, a glass container that measured the gallons, and by gravity it went into the tank of the car. But there was one of those there, you know, where people could get gasoline, and a few grocery-type items. But most people did come to Gatesville.

MEB: And how far was that from Gatesville?

JE: Ruth was six miles. In fact, it was just across the Leon River, probably three miles across the Leon River from Gatesville. But we didn't come to town that often, you know. But occasionally. I'm sure I don't recall coming over, maybe twice a month or something like that. I guess we have very few needs, really, Marie. Because you know, like, we had our chickens and had our milk cow and, you know, Mother cooked bread and all that stuff. So we had very few needs. And canned, she canned, you know, vegetables in the summer, spring and summer. We really a lot of subsistence living at that time.

MEB: So you were really self-sufficient then.

JE: To a degree.

MEB: You'd said that your father grew corn and cotton, was that all for sale to the market or was that—did you guys use the corn yourselves?

JE: He used part of the corn, you know, for feed. And then, of course, sold the cotton, and then some of

the corn got ground into cornmeal. Some of the corn got ground into cornmeal for our own use.

MEB: And where was, like, where was the mill, and the cotton gin?

JE: In Gatesville. Well at one time a long, long time ago—well, the mill was still in operation then. There was one at Straw's Mill, which is in—it's not in Fort Hood, it's on Leon River, the banks of the Leon River. But it's, of course the mill's long gone, but they still did grind cornmeal there.

(dog in room; various noises) Will she bother the—

MEB: Oh, she's fine. Uh, so tell me about—you've got the communities of Ruth and Ewing, what was in each of those communities in terms of services?

JE: Well in Ruth, at one time, this was before we lived there, I mean before I was born, Frank Black said there was a post office there. But I don't recall it. There was a grocery store and a cotton gin, and that's all that was there, other than homes.

MEB: And what was in Ewing?

JE: The school was there, and another grocery store, and again a few homes. In fact, Daddy and Mother ran the little grocery store one time at Ewing.

MEB: Really?

JE: Uh-huh, yeah.

MEB: What do you remember about that?

JE: I just remember that, remember the little grocery store. But my daddy died thinking, and believing, really, truly believing in his heart, that Bonnie and Clyde came by and got gas one day. (MEB laughs; dog noises) He didn't, you know—of course he didn't know that, but he firmly believed it.

Let me get her out of here, she'll bother you.

(interruption in taping)

JE: Thought that Bonnie and Clyde stopped and got gasoline. (MEB laughs; dog barks)

MEB: So how far apart were Ruth and Ewing?

JE: Probably, oh (dog barks), I don't imagine over about, maybe about three miles. (dog barks)

Let me get her back in the other—

(interruption in taping)

MEB: So, Ruth and Ewing, then. Only a couple, three miles apart you said?

JE: Uh-huh, just—

MEB: And um, you said the church was in Ewing?

JE: No, there was a church in Ruth, the Ruth Church of Christ.

MEB: Okay. And school was in Ewing?

JE: In Ewing.

MEB: So there wasn't a church and a school in the same town.

JE: No, no.

MEB: So were all these little communities, were they closely connected, or did people sort of not have much to do with folks in the next town, or how did that work?

JE: Uh, they, well they, the ones that had schools, they had play days and things of that nature. Schools, you know, would go play sports, whatever the sports might be. But—and I guess there was quite a bit of visiting going on, but I don't recall us going to other communities. I know we went to my grandparent's home there at the Flat, and of course, we went into Gatesville and to school at Ewing. But I don't recall really going to, too much to other communities other than for school activities.

MEB: So when you guys did go places, like into Gatesville and stuff like that, did you have a car then?

JE: Um-hm, we had a car, yeah. Daddy had a 1933 Plymouth. And when it—almost invariably, if there was a little bit of moisture, little bit of rain or little bit of anything fell, it wouldn't start. And he'd have to get out there and roll up paper, you know, and set that paper on fire, and then hold it, dry off those spark plugs. It'd start then. It was amazing that was a very hard car to start.

MEB: So most of the time you folks lived out on the farm there was during the Depression. Do you—you were a child then, do you remember being aware that there was something going on, that people were having problems, or how was that for you?

JE: Uh, for us kids, us boys, we weren't aware, really, because we never were hungry. But I know for Daddy and Mother and all the others, too, that it was real, real hard times. You know, because—

The picture (shows a photograph), that was taken there at Ruth, that, uh—that's my mother there on the end.

MEB: Okay, this is when she was in school?

JE: Uh-huh, she was. And, let's see—

MEB: Do you know what year this is?

JE: No, I really don't. That's the—that's Sidney and Mary Holt, my great-great-grandparents. And then that's my—that's John and Clemmie, my grandparents. And that's my mother. Of course, this was before she married, so—but that's, that was taken at her uncle's house, Millard Powell, in the Ruth community.

MEB: Okay, so is this a cotton crop there?

JE: Uh-huh, it's cotton, you know, just right up to the house. (laughs) You know, every available space that was—that could be used.

MEB: That's great. Um, let's see, so living—growing up on the farm, what kind of chores did you have to do, you and your brothers?

JE: Well, we—'course Daddy cut the wood, you know. Sometimes they'd—people that had a saw, you know, a wood saw, they could run it off of that tractor, and they'd bring the saw into, you know, saw up wood for the cook stove, and for the fireplace. But if we were short of wood or something, he'd cut it by hand with an axe, by hand. But we, and we brought in the wood, and 'course did—I don't recall, I'm sure we—I don't think they would allow us to milk the cow. But we, I know we did things at the barn, you know, like putting out hay or putting out feed for the horse, and for the cow.

MEB: Did you ever help your mom in the house or do any that kind of chores?

JE: No (laughs), not very much, I don't recall. I don't recall that.

MEB: So, how long were you guys in school, like how many months out of the year, and—

JE: Well, we started in—usually then we'd start in September and we'd go maybe—well, it all depended on when the cotton got ready to pick, you know. And then school would cease or turn out until everybody got their cotton picked and then we'd all go back to school. They'd, you know, they'd postpone, they'd stop school in order to let the kids help gather the cotton crop.

MEB: Did you help pick cotton on the farm?

JE: Yeah, yeah, I remember that.

MEB: Yeah, I imagine! (both laugh)

JE: Yeah, I remember that!

MEB: Was there other parts of growing cotton that you helped out with, or was it just the picking?

JE: No, that was all. Just the picking.

MEB: Did your father have other help in doing his farming?

JE: He and his cousin, you know, would trade, what they call trade work. You know, they'd help each other out. Well, in fact, one time I remember Daddy was sick. In fact, somewhere about the time we were living at this place, the county road commissioner, Mr. Roy Evetts, took Daddy and Mother to Dallas because this cancer on Daddy's tongue—you know, at that time Dallas was the nearest place you could get radium treatment. And he took—Mr. Evetts took Daddy and Mother up there. And he, you know, his health was bad there for a while, and then he kind of recovered from that. But during that time, neighbors came and planted the crops for him because he couldn't do it himself. Some of the neighbors came and did it for him.

You know, I think people were—I don't know, I guess more aware of circumstances that needed were—they were needed to be, you know, people needed to be helped out, like that was. I don't know that—and I know now there are so many people now that are, that do care and do help out. But—you know, things like that kind of stand out in your memory.

MEB: So as sharecroppers, did you guys move around a lot from farm to farm, or did you stay on one farm for several years?

JE: Uh, we stayed there—I don't know, like—I think we, like I said earlier, I think we—somewhere around 1935 we moved there, because my brother was born when we lived there. And we were still there when, you know, when we moved, when Fort Hood was established.

MEB: Was it common for people to stay in one place like that as tenants?

JE: It, I guess it all depended on how productive the land was. If you could find a better farm, well naturally, you'd want to go to it. And the best I recall, that was a fairly productive, you know, a fairly productive farm that we lived on. But like I said earlier awhile ago, I—there was never—I know our parents, you know, it was all, it was terrible on them, hard. But I never recall a time, you know, that—there was not enough food available. I just don't ever recall it.

MEB: Did your parents work outside the farm, did they have jobs?

JE: My mother—no, Daddy just—well, when the cotton season was in full swing, he worked at the gin. But Mother worked, she worked in the school cafeteria at Ewing. And then later, after we moved, she

worked at school cafeteria in Gatesville. And, you know, I've always thought about it, Marie, that—you know, some kids carried their lunch, but we never did. So I don't know, I guess, and I never did ask Mother about it. Things like that you wished you had've asked, but you didn't. But I suppose part of the—and she was not the only one that worked in the cafeteria, but maybe part of her salary or wages went for us, our meals. I don't know that, but I just suspect it probably did.

MEB: So can you tell me about the school? Sounds like it was pretty big one.

JE: It was a—let's see, I had a picture of it somewhere. It was a consolidated school. There were several schools that consolidated and formed the Ewing school district. (looks through papers)

MEB: Can you describe it to me, like how—(interruption in taping)

JE: That picture's before I started. (refers to a photograph) There were quite—there's a Model T there, and somewhere over in the shadows, you can see a horse.

MEB: So was this a four-room school?

JE: Uh-huh.

MEB: And how many grades were taught there?

JE: I guess it went through the ninth or the tenth, maybe the tenth.

MEB: So if kids wanted to go to school past the tenth grade, where would they go?

JE: They went to Gatesville. In fact, the Gatesville Independent School District, the bus picked us up in front of the house and stopped and let the younger kids off at Ewing, and the older kids rode the bus right on into Gatesville.

MEB: And how many years did you go to school at Ewing?

JE: Until 1942, so I guess about four years.

MEB: And you had four teachers?

JE: Uh-huh.

MEB: So how would—how many grades would be in any one room with a teacher? How would—was it multiple grades per room?

JE: Yeah, I don't know, I don't recall what the breakdown was. But there were more than one grade in each room.

MEB: So what was the typical day at school like?

JE: It, uh—looking forward to recess time. (both laugh) And the time you could go to the bathroom outside, to get out of the building. I guess it was just, you know, they tried to teach us the basics of math and reading and things of that nature. There was—they had a—and I'm not sure, there was a Mr. Colvin that was a singer. He was—his kids went to the school, but you know, he wasn't associated with—I mean he didn't teach or anything at the school, but his kids went to the school. And he would teach singing, you know, even for the adults in the evenings sometimes. The school had a lot—you know, had lights because of, it had a generator, a dynamo, I think that they called it. But it generated the power for lights in the school building.

MEB: So was that a gas generator or?

JE: I suppose it's probably gasoline, uh-huh.

MEB: And so the school didn't have electricity or indoor plumbing, though.

JE: Unh-uh, no. It had a space out behind the school, well it was attached to the back of the school building. Had seats under there, it was like a—it was just a covered area, you know. And it was dirt, the floor was dirt, but it what was the—where people sat to watch school plays. You could set the stage—the stage was in the front of this—it really wasn't enclosed. It was open all the way around. And I remembered, that's where we first learned, you know, that Fort Hood was taking our land. Because, you know, of course our parents got notified, or everybody got notified, but the meeting that we attended was at, under the tabernacle, they called it, at the Ewing School. I don't remember too much about, you know, I just remember that everybody went.

MEB: Do you remember much about the acquisition at all, and having to move?

JE: I remember the moving. I know we, that morning that—and Daddy, in the wintertime when there wasn't stuff to do on the farm, he cut cedar posts and sold them. So even had some cedar posts that he had not sold. And the army, they came in trucks early one morning and just put everything, load everything up that was ours. And we moved away, just took everything at one time. They did—we did get to go back. Some of the chickens we couldn't catch, 'cause they roosted in the trees. And I'll never forget this, we went back one night—some, I don't—it wasn't that day, it's some days later to get those chickens. And it's a strange feeling, that here this house sat vacant that you'd lived in all these years, and you couldn't go in there and stay the night. It's just kind of a traumatic feeling.

But when we moved up here, 'course Daddy had torn down an old house there in Fort Hood—had bought it and torn it down, and they'd moved the lumber here. And he just built these front two rooms. That's all we had. And even that wasn't finished then. I know the morning we got up here and the soldiers unloaded everything, and us, too. 'Course we came in the car. But they were still working, Daddy and a neighbor were still working on the house. And they—Mother built a fire out back out here for us to stay warm, 'cause, you know, first day of December and it's cold. But you know, it was the day that we were supposed to move and we did.

MEB: Do you remember, did you guys have a lot of notice of how long it was that you were going to have to move, or did it happen real fast?

JE: I just don't recall that, I really don't.

MEB: Well, were your parents upset or did they just take it in due course?

JE: Well, I guess we probably—they probably took it due course, you know, but not being landowners. And too, the prospect of employment, steady employment, you know, for Daddy, made the move for us a whole lot different from those that owned the land. Because then he did go to work at helping build Fort Hood and was employed there until just shortly before his death in 1946. So from our perspective, it wasn't that a big a deal, I guess you would say because we didn't own the land, or didn't have stewardship of the land, I suppose. None of us own the land, we just have it for a short while. But that made it—you know, those that did have the land, and it'd been in the family for generations, that was a real struggle for them, I know.

MEB: Do you know, in terms of like the family who owned the farm where you were sharecropper, or maybe other families who owned land, do you know anything about how it went for them, and the Ruth and Ewing community landowners?

JE: I know the Browns, which is on one side of the family, they moved and secured land up at Jonesboro, north of Gatesville. And most everybody that could, moved to an area not very far away from where

they had moved from. Just a matter of finding a place to live or build a home or build a house or whatever to live in. I know when—I remember that Mother and Daddy, at one point they just didn't know where we were going to go. Because Frank Black, Colonel, his parents, or his dad and his stepmother, they ran a little store and I know, I remember this, that Mrs. Black, his stepmom, said—we were down at that little store one day and he said—she said, wanted to know where we were going. And Mother said, you know, they hadn't found a place. And she said they had found some land up here that was for sale and that's how the family came to locate here.

MEB: So this place, where we are right now?

JE: Yeah, yeah, we moved here. December 1, 1942.

MEB: Okay. So after getting relocated by the army, was your family able to buy a place after that, or did they continue to be sharecroppers?

JE: No, we moved here, and then Daddy worked in Fort Hood until just shortly before his death, and Mother worked in the cafeteria of the school in Gatesville.

MEB: So your parents were able to buy this place.

JE: Yeah, they bought it.

MEB: So was that the first time that they'd—

JE: Uh-huh, first home that—well, at one time they had owned, they had bought a farm and because of Daddy's health, he—they couldn't make the payments and did have to let it go back. It was located there in the Ruth community, but he just—because of his illness he couldn't pay for it.

MEB: I see. So let's talk a little bit more about life on the farm there. You were telling me about different deliveries that you had come to the house like the ice man and mail and all that kind of stuff. Did anybody else come around? Did you guys ever get salesmen or peddlers?

JE: There was a—what was, the Watkins, you know, they brought the, all kinds of the spices and the flavorings and all that stuff. They always called him the Watkins man, Watkins. He was just a delivery service that they just made all of the little ol' small communities and everything.

MEB: So was that the kind of thing where you make an order in advance and then they'd bring you your order?

JE: You just went out to their pickup, their little delivery thing, and picked out what you wanted and what you could afford in the way of spices or flavorings, stuff like that. Or liniment.

MEB: Okay, traveling salesmen.

JE: Traveling salesmen, it really was.

MEB: Did they sell medicines or things like that as well?

JE: Um, they was some kinds of medicines, they called them patent medicines. I don't know what, I don't recall. You know, I—growing up, I just don't recall us taking any medicine, really. Nor going to see the doctor very much, even though our mother's uncle was a doctor. He was a doctor, Dr. Brown, in Gatesville. But I just don't recall us—

MEB: Did the doctor ever make house calls?

JE: They made—all of them made house calls then.

MEB: But you guys were just really healthy. (laughs)

JE: I guess we were healthy, all except Daddy.

This is where Frank Black's—you can just see a corner of their house. (shows a photograph)That's my brother and his cousin there at Ruth.

MEB: So that's—okay, so that's the chimney—

JE: That's Troy and Doyle, his cousin.

MEB: So, now the Blacks and your family lived next to the Ruth Cemetery, on opposite sides?

JE: On opposite sides.

MEB: What do you remember about the cemetery, what was that like?

JE: I just remember that occasionally we would attend funerals there. You know, even, I go back every year now because my sister is buried there, and, but—the Sunday before Memorial Day is the only Sunday because it's in the impact area that you can go without obtaining a pass. But it's just a little, small cemetery that, you know, is there for the burial of people that lived in the community.

MEB: So when you lived there, was it fenced? Is that right?

JE: It had a little—probably, if it was anything, it was a barbed-wire fence or something of that sort then. But since, Fort Hood, you know, they put the chainlink-type fence around them.

MEB: So who maintained that cemetery when you were there?

JE: The people, the people that had folks buried there. They would call—what they'd call a cemetery working, you know, for some Saturday or some other day in the week. Mostly on a Saturday because of school and things like that, and everybody would just go. You'd clean up the cemetery. But you know, even now, occasionally, they have cemetery workings, in smaller places, too.

MEB: So what would one of those days be like? What would people do?

JE: They just—well, everybody just take, you know, take something to eat and they'd—usually they'd work real hard and get it cleaned up and then eat. Shortly after then, everybody'd go back home.

MEB: So like pulling weeds and—

JE: Uh-huh, and hoeing and cutting weeds and stuff like that—just, more—as much as anything else it's kind of a social event. I don't remember as a boy, I don't remember ever doing anything, other than playing. I know that the older ones did.

MEB: That's a great picture. (refers to a photograph)

JE: I wish it had all the house there, but—

MEB: Yeah, um, let's see.

JE: But the cemetery's just north of that house, you know, and we were on the other side of the cemetery.

MEB: So were most of the people in that area, they went to church in Ruth. Is that correct?

JE: Uh, it was just a little frame building, and there were quite a few people there. I'm sure others maybe—there wasn't any other churches around, other than Gatesville. And I doubt it seriously if anybody went that far, you know, the six miles or so to Gatesville. I doubt it, but they might have.

MEB: So maybe, um—why don't you tell me what you know about what religious life was for people. Was everybody of the same belief? Or was the church a particular denomination or did—how did that work?

JE: Well, it was a—that was one particular, you know, it was, and still is referred as Church of Christ. It's particular, you know, didn't believe in instrumental music, and Sunday school. Some Churches of Christ, you know, did. Uh, and uh, we just—we had a visiting preacher, a Noah Cowan, I remember him. And there was another fella by the name of Sprott that came from Killeen occasionally. And of course, you know, just being with no electricity, just a morning service. But it just was a country church. Just singing and praying and someone talking, reading scripture, talking.

MEB: Did any other denominations use that building, or was it full-time?

JE: Uh, I don't ever recall others using it. I think it was just the little frame building for—I suppose a lot of the people in the community that were other than Church of Christ, they, you know, I don't know where they went. I never really thought about that.

MEB: Did they have a tabernacle, or—

JE: Had a tent.

MEB: Okay, for like, revivals?

JE: Uh-huh, because it's too hot in the building. Yeah, had a tent. And I know my aunt one time told me something. They even lived, at the Flat, near the Flat, which was about, it was probably about five miles away from Ruth or so. And Grandpa and Grandma Holt, even before my mother married, they would—they'd come in a buggy, you know, pulled by a horse, over to church at Ruth. And my grandpa one time, there in front of the church building, he ran into a hole or something and turned the buggy over with them. (laughs) Nobody got hurt, but it did turn the buggy over with them. But, you know, people came from that, you know, four or five miles to attend that church. Now there was a—at that Bethel, I was telling you earlier, there was a Baptist church there. So I suppose that others, you know, of the Baptist faith probably, maybe went there.

MEB: And how far away was that?

JE: It was, it probably about four or five miles from Ruth. It wasn't very far. It was closer, really, to the Ewing community than Ruth was.

MEB: And those were all active communities at the same time?

JE: Yeah, yeah, they were all active at the same time.

MEB: There seems to be more of a connection between Ruth and Ewing, and not necessarily Bethel?

JE: Uh, well to me it was. I'm sure to those that lived in Bethel, there was a great connection between those two. But not living there—I mean, living in Ruth, it seemed like the connection was greater between those two.

MEB: And what was at Bethel besides the church?

JE: It was just some houses. Far as I—I don't ever recall even a store or anything being there, just homes and the cemetery and the church. And no, of course, not a school.

MEB: So did you guys have revivals in the summertime?

JE: Yeah.

MEB: Do you remember those?

JE: I just remember that they—'course we were so close, we could go back and forth. But some people came, you know, like at a distance, like my grandparents. When they didn't stay with us, they would just come and stay for two or three days rather than—you know, too far to go back and forth in a buggy and a horse. So they'd come and just stay, you know, for—they wouldn't stay the full week or two weeks or whatever it was, but they would stay for a few nights if they didn't stay with us at home. I know my Grandpa Holt, he'd always let his—he had mules, and he'd always let his mules rest on Saturday so that they could go to church on Sunday. He farmed with mules all of his life even after the tractors came out. He never did give up the true horse power, the hoof power, the mules.

MEB: So did—what kind of events for a revival that was a couple weeks long, what kind of events would take place in those two weeks?

JE: The best I recall, just—it would be just the church service at night, and there'd be some activity in the daytime, not very much. Families just really visited more than anything else for those two weeks. Just about, that was about the extent of it.

MEB: Let's see, maybe we can back up a little bit and talk a little bit more about the farm. You said that your family was pretty self-sufficient, and grew a lot of food and stuff on the farm. Do you remember, besides cotton and corn, if anything else was grown, or maybe the kinds of things that your mom grew in her garden, that sort of thing?

JE: I think cotton and corn was our principal farm crops. But she grew in the garden, you know, she grew just about everything that could be grown, and she canned it. You know, like the beans and all kinds of things. We grew potatoes and beans and squash and—I don't recall what—we did grow cucumbers 'cause she canned 'em, you know, for pickles. I don't recall anything really other than okra. But primarily she canned corn from the field. Canned the corn and beans, primarily those two. And fruit, we had fruit trees, so she canned fruit also.

MEB: Did you have an orchard, or just—

JE: Just had trees, just a—not really an *orchard* orchard, just fruit trees, peach trees and plums. 'Course, like everything else, they didn't make every year. (laughs)

MEB: Okay, so I was going to ask you, with like, garden produce and I know you said you had chickens, and cows and stuff, presumably for milk and butter, and eggs. Was there any surplus from that, or did your family consume all that sort of thing?

JE: We—you know, I just don't remember that, Marie. I remember, there was a place in Gatesville that bought eggs and bought cream, you know, the—when you skim the milk and save the cream. But I just don't recall if we sold any or—I suppose we probably did. I guess we did. But I doubt if we—well, I know we didn't sell any milk because, you know, the three boys and—you know, we all drank all the milk that was available. (both laugh)

MEB: So what kind of things would you have bought in town?

JE: The sugar and coffee, and the dry beans and flour, things of that nature.

MEB: Did you buy clothes and things like that, or did your mother sew your clothes?

JE: Uh, we bought clothes occasionally, and my grandmother, she was a good seamstress, so she made a lot of our clothes. Now you see that picture there (points to a photograph), I think we all wore overalls. (laughs)

MEB: Yeah, good for working in.

JE: And my brother Bill wasn't even wearing shoes. (laughs)

MEB: Did you guys wear shoes all the time or just in winter?

JE: No, just in winter mostly. Mostly wintertime.

MEB: So did you guys have any turkeys or anything like that on your farm?

JE: No, no turkeys. My Grandmother Holt did, but she lived at the Flat, but we didn't have turkeys. Now she sold cream and occasionally she sold eggs. But we didn't have turkeys.

MEB: So, and I'm assuming you guys—no electricity, and no plumbing. No phone? Or did you have—

JE: No phone, no phone.

MEB: Did anybody in the community have a phone?

JE: Not that I recall. Maybe, maybe the Powells. He was the school bus driver. Maybe he did. I kind of doubt even that he did, though. 'Cause I don't think there was any—I don't think there's any phone lines in that part of the community.

MEB: So how did the school bus work? What was it like? Was it a private vehicle, or—

JE: No, it was a regular, yellow school bus. You know, an old yellow school bus, but it was a school bus. 'Cause we—it picked us up, and picked other kids up there at Ruth, and we went further south and picked up the Schults, J. W., those folks. Just picked up all the kids around that they could find.

MEB: Um, another—I wanted to ask you if you had either sheep or goats?

JE: No, didn't have any sheep or goats. Did have a pig, you know, had pigs for our own meat, our own pork, but no sheep or goats.

MEB: Did anybody else around do sheep or goats, or was there much ranching in general?

JE: No, generally it was just small farms. I'm sure there were some that had cows, but—for ranching—but I just don't ever recall sheep or goats in that community at all. Mr. Black had hound dogs. (both laugh) I don't know if Frank told you about that or not, but his dad had, he had a bunch of hound dogs.

MEB: Let's see, what else—

JE: And even this time, as hard as times were, we had a dog, you know. I think every kid growing up almost, had a dog at one time or other.

MEB: So one of the things we always like to ask people we interview is what some of their favorite memories are of living out on that area before it was acquired.

JE: Well, I guess the fact that—you could, when you came home from school, you know, there was always—'course Mother rode the school bus with us. She worked in, you know—and she rode the school bus with us, but we never came home to an empty house. There was always someone at home. And growing up, I think that's real important that you don't walk into a house that's empty. And, too, we just—not having all those things, seems like we—I know Daddy, in the wintertime especially, you know with the fire in the fireplace we just, we'd set around the fire, and he'd smoke his Prince Albert tobacco. But we were altogether, probably would be the main thing.

MEB: So was there a lot of family visiting?

JE: Quite a few because of my Grandma Easley living with us. She had a son in Killeen and a son in Temple, and a daughter at the Flat. Of course they all had children, too.

MEB: Did you guys ever go to Killeen or Temple?

JE: Yeah, we went Temple more than Killeen.

MEB: And how often did you do something like that?

JE: Maybe once or twice a year, not very often.

MEB: Just to visit?

JE: Just to visit.

MEB: Or would you do business in any of those places?

JE: No, not that I recall. Just mostly to visit.

MEB: Did you have any other stories that you wanted to share? I see you've got a couple of pictures out.

JE: Yeah, I was talking about the gin. I don't—there's up in the corner, you see a little bit of a—maybe part of a building. That's the water hole, you know, they're out there eating watermelon. Somebody's in the—they called that the Gin Hole. They go down in there and go swimming as kids, you know. Bunch of kids—of course, that's adults there. That's where they had the—when there was a conversion at church, go to the creek and have the baptism there in the Gin Hole. And I guess the reason they call it the Gin Hole, it was where the water was, you know, the creek was dammed up so they'd have—the gin was steam operated. And my Grandpa Holt, who lived at the Flat, he would—he put the wood, made the steam for the gin to run. Then, of course, the water—had to have the water and the heat for the, to make the steam to make the gin run. But he fired the boiler. He called it firing the boiler.

MEB: So where was this at?

JE: This was at Ruth. It's on Henson Creek.

MEB: Okay, that's what I was going to ask. Okay.

JE: At Henson Creek. In fact the gin, where East Range Road crosses the Henson Creek at North Fort Hood down here, the gin was in that vicinity. And it was owned by my Grandmother's—Holt's—half brother. Well, there were two of them, Bill and Juber Brown. And I think I've got a picture of them. They owned the gin, and they owned a thrashing machine for—to thrash oats, you know, for those who grew oats. They thrashed their oats. And, in fact Cathy, my cousin, who lives in Hewitt, she has a—the bill of sale where they bought the old, where they bought the threshing machine.

MEB: Huh! Do you remember when that was when they bought that?

JE: No, but this is the two that owned the gin, Bill and Juber. And that's their half brother. That's the thrasher there.

MEB: Okay. Wow, that's quite the contraption!

JE: It's a steam—it's operated by steam.

MEB: Okay, and this is 1919. So do you know how this machine works, how a thresher works?

JE: You had to get it with steam, you know, build a fire and put water in that boiler. And then the boiler

gets hot and it force the steam to make—turn a wheel, and then the wheel had a belt on it, and that would turn the threshing machine.

MEB: Okay, and it's like, on a tractor looks like.

JE: Um-hm. It had iron wheels to move it about, the threshing machine, to make it move. In fact, you remember, Marie, about two months, maybe six weeks ago, up in Ohio at the state fair in Ohio, one of these things—you know, someone had restored it, and the thing blew up.

MEB: Oh, I didn't hear about that.

JE: You didn't? It was on TV. They don't know what went wrong, but it was an old, steam-operated threshing machine, and the thing blew up at the state fair in Ohio.

MEB: Well that's too bad. So would they go around from farm to farm?

JE: Uh-huh, from farm to farm. The ones that had oats, you know, I don't ever recall anybody growing wheat. You know, some people grew oats, for their own use and, I suppose, to sell, too.

MEB: So would that just get processed for people to eat or would that get fed to livestock, the oats?

JE: I guess probably for livestock mostly, I imagine. Maybe to sell, probably just for livestock, though. But my grandmother, she was a half sister to these, Bill and Juber Brown here, she worked—she cooked for men that worked at the thrasher, you know, during the season that the thrasher operated. 'Course they—everybody stayed around, you might be several miles from home so you just stayed there, and they had a cook shack, she called it, where they prepared the meals, prepared food for everybody that worked at the thrasher.

MEB: So would they take that with them then?

JE: Uh-huh, yeah, it went with them.

MEB: Huh, like on a wagon?

JE: It was on a wagon. Yeah, and the side would kind of, it would let down and it would be like a little shelf there, and they could get their food to go off over and set down on the ground and eat, you know.

MEB: Kind of like a chuck wagon or something.

JE: Chuck wagon, yeah, it was a version of the chuck wagon. But it went with the thrasher to feed those that worked at the thrasher.

MEB: Okay, so do you know if these people paid them in money or them to thrash their oats or would they take part of the crop?

JE: I really don't know that. I kind of imagine they probably took part of the crop, and maybe some did pay them, but that I just really don't know.

MEB: So were they still doing this when you were a boy?

JE: Uh-huh, yeah. Those two brothers—another cousin that lives in Midland, he's done more extensive research on the Brown family and those two brothers, though, they built identical houses near the Henson Creek, down there close to where the gin was. Their houses were identical. They had a joint bank account, you know—and he said as far as he could ever determine, there was never a word between them about the handling of the money or anything. Just—they pooled their money, just the

two of those boys, men, you know, pooled their money. But their houses were identical.

MEB: That's very interesting. I've never heard anything like that.

JE: And this was the doctor (shows a photograph), Reb, Reb Brown.

MEB: And you said he was your—

JE: He's my grandmother's half brother. John and Gracie, I mean John and Sarah, these would be their children. And then, I don't know, that's probably not all of them. And then John and Amanda was my grandmother's parents.

MEB: So Reb Brown was a doctor in Gatesville?

JE: Yeah, and he made house calls. In fact, I don't know this but my grandmother told me he owned the first—he bought the first car that was ever in this vicinity. Of course not in Coryell County even, but in this particular vicinity. Other than that he went on horse, or in a buggy, probably a buggy. But he bought a car, but—and made his house calls. And then his son, both of them, were—I mean his son also became a doctor, John Brown, John T. Brown. And both of them went to medical school at Tulane.

MEB: Okay, I was kind of wondering where somebody would go to medical school then, okay.

JE: Yeah, went at Tulane.

MEB: In New Orleans, right?

JE: In New Orleans, yeah.

MEB: Okay, yeah, that's great. So do—they're standing in front of this house here, do you know where that is?

JE: Um, I really don't because I got this picture from a cousin and I don't know where that was. This is a—something happened to the bottom of the picture—but this was the Ruth Church of Christ. (shows a photograph) That was Noah Cowan, N. C. Cowan, was his name. He was the preacher.

MEB: Okay, so did he live in the community or did he go—

JE: Uh-huh, he lived in the community, but he went to different churches, he traveled. And then there was another fella by the name of Sprott, Mr. Sprott, came from Killeen, you know, over there to preach.

MEB: This is probably a silly question, but there's a ladder on the roof here, what was that for?

JE: To put out the fire if it caught the roof. See it was wood, it had a heater, and in case the roof got on fire where the chimney, the pipe went up through the roof, the wooden roof. I don't ever recall it being on fire, but—

MEB: That's good. (both laugh) So what was this little building like?

JE: It was just a little, small frame building with pews or with seats in it, you know, benches in it.

MEB: Did they ever use it for anything else besides church services?

JE: Unh-uh, no. There's a story behind that. This Juber, this one on the end here (points to a photograph), he gave the church—or sold the church an acre, the deed says more or less an acre of land. And he—he was a real conservative individual, and he put—and it's in the deed, the stipulation's in the deed. In fact, it's reprinted in one of those books that were furnished that day at Fort Hood. He put the

stipulation in the deed and filed it in the courthouse at the county clerk's office, that there would be no musical instruments, there'd be no fairs, there'd be no anything that's not authorized in the New Testament. If it is, if it ever happens, then that—the building and the land is to be taken away from those that are in charge at that point, that allowed this to happen. He just lined it out pretty straight.

MEB: So that was in accordance with his beliefs?

JE: His beliefs, yeah. That there would be no musical instruments, they'd be no dancing, they'd be no fairs or no festivals. He spelled out a whole bunch of stuff that he didn't want to take place there. That's what he—I guess that's the way it went, I don't know.

MEB: That's great. So was there anything else that you'd—any other stories or things that you remember that you'd like to tell me about?

JE: Well, let's see what I've got written down here for us to talk about. I remember one. I always—my daddy, we had the car like I said while ago, but we also had an old truck that, you know, that he hauled cedar posts on when he cut 'em. And we went up—he would go to this Charlie Brown's place, who's in one of those pictures there, that was my mother's uncle and my grandmother's brother. And he cut cedar posts there. I know I never could get—I never did get to go because I's too young. They thought I's too little to go. And something happened to Bill, my older brother. He always got to go with Daddy, and something happened. He cut his foot. He wasn't cutting cedar posts. I don't know what happened. He got hurt anyway, so he couldn't go the next day, and I got to go, and almost got rattlesnake bit. And I didn't get to go no more. (both laugh) That ended my going.

MEB: Were there lots of snakes around? Did you have to deal with that all the time?

JE: Uh, I don't remember that many around where we lived. Where we lived it was pretty well—well it was a flat, of course the farmland was pretty flat. But up behind was a hill and it had a lot of trees on it. There was snakes in that area.

MEB: Did you guys keep your yard cleaned out and everything? Was it swept?

JE: Yeah, we either pull the weeds or, you know, or chopped them with a hoe. But we got real, real modern. Daddy—one time we were in town and—I don't know how long one of these things had been out, but those, you know, the weed slingers? The idiot sticks, they call them? He bought us one, bought us boys an idiot stick. (both laugh) But we kept the yard clean.

MEB: Did you guys have—

JE: And then—oh, go ahead.

MEB: Oh, I was just going to ask if you had a root cellar or a storm cellar on the farm?

JE: No. But in the yard, I remember, I remember this, too. There was a big, big lilac tree. And in the—or bush—and in the springtime, you know, that—those lilac blooms smell so good anyway, and that would just permeate the whole house, you know, around the house, the smell of that lilac. I remember that.

Let's see if I've missed any. (looks through papers) Like I said, I've got a lot of work to do. I just really hadn't thought too much about that. Really kind of got—after I got those books over at Fort Hood that day, I got to thinking. I got to reading in there about—especially about Nimrod and Gracie, and of course I'd had some information on them. Here's the—this is what a cousin had done about John, you know. You may have seen it.

MEB: Yeah, you sent us a copy. I've read this.

JE: Good, that was Nimrod and Gracie. (looks through papers)

MEB: Somebody's been busy.

JE: Yeah, he just has done an awful lot of work on that. He's right now, let's see—Dettner is his name. He lives in Austin. Anyway, he's another cousin, and he knows Martha. And they—in fact, Martha was telling me over there what—I think at the cemetery that time, that they ran into each other, or were talking, something about Brown.

MEB: He works in Austin? I know who you're talking about.

JE: Yeah, I can't think of his first name. But he—well, in fact there's another—

MEB: David.

JE: David. There's another cousin, Bill Brown. He's named after his granddaddy. He lives in San Antonio and he always comes every year to the Brown family reunion. He had it this year in Salado, and are going to have it next year in April in Salado also. And he took his daddy up to Culpepper County, Virginia, where Nimrod and—where Nimrod was born and I think Gracie was born there, too. And he—anyway, David said that he wanted to go up there and go to the cemetery and trace the family back, if they could, from there. And Cathy, another cousin, was telling me that he had done it. And they had actually located, in England, where the Browns came from, a cemetery that the Browns came from in England. But he—in fact, he was appointed the historian of the Brown family at the last meeting. He was the historian.

But had so much good information, and Cathy was telling Martha this over at the Friendship Cemetery this Memorial Day. That Margaret Ann Brown, she's Bill Brown's daughter, and she lives in Burnet, and she has some letters that her mother had kept that were Bill Brown's father, you know, John, had written and got and received. And she had those at the reunion, and anyway, Cathy was telling Martha about them. And Martha was telling that there was a way you could restore—what happened—Aunt Viola, well I call her Aunt Viola, anyway, she rolled them up and put tape around them and through the aging process, they're cracking. And Martha had told Cathy that they probably might be able to restore that.

But anyway, Margaret Ann had them at the reunion, and it's some of the most interesting, Marie, some of the most interesting stuff you'd ever written—read. Nimrod's brother-in-law was a Mr. Ritchie that lived in Waco. And I don't know how they—how Mr. Ritchie stopped in Waco and Nimrod came here, I don't know how all that happened. But anyway, he—in one of the letters, Mr. Ritchie cautions Nimrod, his brother-in-law—Nimrod had a business of hides, you know, beef hides. Anyway, Mr. Ritchie told him to be very careful, that the word that they had gotten out of Coryell County that the Indians were very restless. You know, cautioned him—the next time he come to Waco be careful because the word we've gotten that the Indians are restless. And in another letter, he had so many of those things, but anyway, he was reading them. But he had another one—she had another one there that Mr. Ritchie said in that letter he'd written to Nimrod, he said, "Sam Houston came to Waco today." Said, "Didn't say much about the awful question." You know, of course, the impending Civil War. And you know, like Cathy said, those things, that needs to be saved, you know, not to be lost or anything. But just so matter of factly, like your neighbor came over. Sam Houston came to Waco. (laughs) It's kind of funny.

MEB: That's great stuff.

JE: It is. It is great stories that Margaret Ann, you know, she's saved all these things, and it's real, real important stuff. In fact, Cathy, who lives in Hewitt, she has Captain John Brown's fife that he carried

during the Civil War. She had it at the reunion. She's put it, like in a shadow box-type thing to save it. But it's just, you know—and I know—in fact, I really didn't know too much about Nimrod and Gracie. I knew the Browns lived in that area.

But when I was in the army in 1953, I was in training at North Fort Hood. And at a—we had a compass course at night. You had to read a compass and go so—walk so far and then somebody'd be there to initial your piece of paper that you'd made that point. You knew how to read the compass well enough to get to that point. And one of the compass point was those two graves. At that time, it had an ornamental, a very, very old ornamental fence around it and I read the stones and then, of course, I knew who they were. My grandmother, she said, well, that was her grandparents. Of course I knew it then. But it's just, you know, how things like that can affect you to maybe want to want to do more research into it.

I know there was a picture, and you might have seen this, I don't know, of John. We had a—they rededicated his—well Turk, who's Cathy's dad, he made arrangements through—to get a Confederate marker for John's grave. And he—we had a rededication a few years back and of course that's John there. (shows a photograph) And that's Amanda. (shows another photograph) Don't have one of them together. And these are the—there's one, two, three—there's five on the front row, there's five there are John Brown's, John and Amanda's grandchildren. (shows a series of photographs)

MEB: Wow, okay. And is this at the rededication?

JE: Uh-huh. It was about two or three years ago, 1998 it was.

MEB: And this is in Gatesville?

JE: Uh-huh, yeah. A group came out of Austin. Cathy's dad, Turk Brown, he was really the knowledgeable one about the Brown family, and he made arrangements to get the marker and everything. And then Cathy made the arrangements to get the group to come from Austin, the re-enactment group.

MEB: That's great. Do you think we've about covered it, or do you have other things that you want to—

JE: I can't think of any other, really.

John Gail Edwards
Mary Edwards Groves
Hope Edwards Turner

John Gail Edwards
Date of birth: 12 December 1922
Community affiliated with: Antelope

Mary Edwards Groves
Date of birth: 7 November 1926
Community affiliated with: Antelope

Hope Edwards Turner
Date of birth: 27 August 1920
Community affiliated with: Antelope

Interviewed by Martha Doty Freeman

MDF: [Today is May 3, 1998, and we are in Lampasas at the Antelope-Eliga Reunion. This interview is part of Prewitt and Associates' Fort Hood Oral History Project sponsored by the U.S. Army Fort Hood and conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University.]

JGE: Our daddy was John Walker Edwards, and our mother was Virginia Elvina Jackson.

MEG: She was commonly known as Jenny.

JGE: Granddaddy Edwards was Joshua James [Edwards], and Grandmother Edwards was Mary Anne Walker [Edwards]. And Grandmother Jackson was Edie (??) Alvinia Swofford, and Granddaddy Jackson was Ben Franklin Jackson. L. W. Walker, our great-grandfather, came to Coryell County in about 1860 from Bastrop County. That was our Grandmother Edwards's father. That's as much as we know about where he came from.

The Jacksons came through Coryell Country when there was no Gatesville on the way to Erath County to visit with the Hollands, which was our Grandmother Jackson's—our Great-grandmother Jackson was Nancy Anne Holland. She died and was buried there at Fort Gates in about 1849 or '50. The Hollands were already in Erath County in Dublin. And that's another connection with the Hollands.

HET: There's quite a book on the Jackson side.

JGE: I'll tell you a little story about Granddaddy Edwards. He was born and raised in Fayetteville, North

Carolina. His daddy was John Gilmore Edwards and his mother was Elizabeth West. He came horseback from North Carolina and had a change of clothes. He worked his way through. He told me, when I was a little boy, that he rode the ferry across the Mississippi River on his horse (??), and he wished a thousand times that he was back on the other side. But he was bound to come to Texas. So he came here to Coryell County.

Our daddy was born in 1875, and he was their second child. So it was around the 1870s when he came here. And he went to work for L. W. Walker as a hired hand. And he married his daughter. That's our first Edwards connection in Coryell County in the Fort Hood area.

Our great-grandfather's first place was on Cowhouse right below Jackson Crossing. The Walker place? Our daddy was born on part of that place in 1875. There was one place between Jackson place and the Walker place. The Sadlers had a ranch in there. I could take you right there to it. I think it might be known today as the Clinton Turner place, or the Eda Fisher place. That was the people that owned it when Fort Hood came.

MEG: His home [the Coffield place] was one main room with a fireplace. And there was a regular room on the east. And a shed room on the back. That was the kitchen. And it had a little porch on the front. It was several feet off the ground, and that way the chickens and dogs and whatnot had access to underneath the front porch. There was a native stone fireplace. Maybe had some plaster on it.

JGE: The house was a box house with batts. There was a lot of [houses like that]. It had a wood shingle roof.

MEG: That was about all the roof you had in those days. The families who lived there were various sizes. When the Coffields lived there it was the mother and four children and that was all.

JGE: When Granddaddy Walker came there and built that house, he was a widower with three daughters and a son. And shortly after that time he married and he had five other children. So you can figure seven to nine people were living in that house.

MEG: But you had a bed or two in the living room in those days, and you didn't mind sleeping three to the bed either. If you were lucky you didn't have to sleep at the foot.

JGE: Our father was born on the Walker place in a little one-room log cabin with a dirt floor down in a field, right on the banks of Cowhouse Creek. It was high enough that it wouldn't ever flood up there. I think J. J. Edwards built it, his (referring to John Walker Edwards's) daddy, our grandfather. But it was on his father-in-law's place.

The Jacksons came as a family, several generations. Granddaddy brought his married children and grandchildren with him when he came down here from Johnson County—Cleburne—in the late 1800s, about the 1890s. The Hollands came to Texas in five different migrations. The Hollands were our great-grandmother's family, the Jacksons. The Walkers came as a group, three to four brothers. But they split up when they got here. Our group came to Coryell County. There was two groups that came to Lampasas County, and the other group went on the San Angelo, Tom Green County.

They came to Coryell County because they were hunting a better life. They were moving west. Our family were prosperous people. I don't mean to be boastful, but they were. And they wanted a better life.

HET: Part of it had to do with how the Indians were moving. Our Grandpa Walker used to tell us that when he came here there were still Indians—(unintelligible)

MEG: Great-grandmother Jackson's death had to do with an Indian raid and coming in and taking some

horses. They had stopped over at the fort (referring to Fort Gates). And so our great-grandfather went out with men to try to get their horses back. While he was out in this patrol, Great-grandmother died. And they buried her there.

JGE: They moved on to the Johnson [County] area, near Cleburne. She left nine children. She was forty-three years old.

MEG: But he found a new, young wife. That's the way they did, you know.

JGE: He found a new wife in Johnson County. Her name was Mary Presley. And they had eight more children. So there was a big family of Jacksons.

MEG: We grew up on Cowhouse on Jackson family land. It was property that passed down from Grandfather Jackson to our mother.

HET: I was born up on the hill, about two and a half miles from there, and then I moved down.

JGE: She was the only one of us children that wasn't born down on the Cowhouse. Daddy had a place that was called the Quarry (??) place towards Harmony, and that was where she come to Texas. The rest of us were born down on the creek. Daddy called [his land] 320 acres.

HET: His was a bungalow-type house, right down on the creek, not quite as big. It was a square house built out of one-by-twelves, with strips. It wasn't sealed inside. You could see the roof. It had a porch on the front, and it had some big hackberry trees. The roof came to a point. I believe it was two rooms and a back room, a shed room. [It was where Eunice lived.]

JGE: No, it was a little four-room house. Just nearly like ours.

HET: When we were just kids, we went there. My daddy had two sisters. Maybe we went up there and chopped cotton for them. He was going to make ice cream, so we gave him a nickel apiece to support making the ice cream.

MEG: This was the place where she (referring to HET) was born. We all grew up on our mother's place on the creek. It was the same kind of house, a bungalow. It was painted white. It had three main rooms and a back porch and a space there for a bathroom, which we never had as a bathroom, and on the front there would have been a room the same size as the other rooms, but it was a screened porch, screened on the east and on the south. Some of us slept out there year-round.

JGE: We put curtains up made out of ducking. You'd wake up in the morning and there'd be snow on the bed.

MEG: We just put on another quilt and snuggled down in the featherbed a little deeper.

JGE: There was a big 75-acre farm right on the Cowhouse Creek in the forks of Cowhouse and Stampede. And then there was 720 acres according to my figures. That was land that belonged to our mother. They didn't add to it.

They were late. Our mother was thirty-two and daddy was forty-four when they married. They did well to get us raised.

MEG: My daddy lived until I was eighteen.

JGE: I was twenty-one.

He raised cotton, corn, and maize. We raised popcorn.

HET: Brood mares, and raised horses, cattle.

JGE: Hogs, chickens, turkeys.

MEG: Yeah, we did the turkeys. If the turkeys strayed, got into the neighbor's field, we would have to bring them home. They had bells on, so we could kind of tell where they were. We'd have to bring them back and make them roost close to home so the varmints didn't get them. We did lots of going after the turkeys. Find out they were in someone else's field, and they didn't appreciate it one bit.

JGE: The three of us had an older brother, a half brother, but we didn't know any different. He grew up with us. He was raised with us. Our daddy lost his first wife when this little boy was four years old. And if Daddy was plowing, we had to hoe. And sometimes they'd get through plowing before us, and so they'd get to hoeing cotton and corn. And we'd slip off down there to the creek and go in, clothes and all, go swimming. And one of us would stand guard while the other two went. And we'd hear our mother calling, and we'd make a signal. Our clothes would be dry by the time she got down there.

MEG: But one time we didn't stay out to give the signal and we got in big trouble. She came after us with bloodweed. You'll have to go to Coryell County to find bloodweed.

HET: It's a thing you're allergic to.

MEG: It grows along the roadways and on the creek banks. It can grow six to eight feet tall. And it's flexible, but it sure will get you to the house.

JGE: You mash 'em a little bit and they'll turn red. Look like blood.

MEG: That's the common name. That's the only time I ever remember her really getting after us. She switched us all the way home with that bloodweed.

HET: We didn't have swimsuits. We had an old pair of overalls. We'd go down there and put on those old clothes to swim, and then when we got out we'd put ours on and throw those up in a tree.

MEG: We stayed prepared, didn't we?

MDF: You were all three in cahoots.

MEG: Well, you had to be.

MDF: Did your father ever keep sheep?

HET: A farmer that had cattle didn't like sheep because sheep eat grass closer to the ground. Used to have a saying, starve a cow (??).

MEG: Sheep was a no-no in that ranching for a long time.

HET: Every once in a while we'd get a pet goat. You didn't have many goats.

JGE: Some of the neighbors had Angoras. It was getting fairly common about the time we left there. But you had to have such a good fence.

HET: We had mules. And those mules would kill the goats. They'd just paw them, they weren't used to them.

Dad used the mules to plow the fields. He never had any mechanized machinery. He never drove a car, and he didn't like to ride in one.

MEG: He'd ride with his foot on the running board.

JGE: We did have a corn sheller, but the motor on it was me or one of these girls.

HET: He'd leave at five o'clock in the morning, he'd be going to the mill. He'd take the corn sack up there to Eliga, to have it ground, and they'd toll it, take part of it for grinding it. He'd get us up and we had to shell that corn, go to the barn and shell the corn for him to take.

JGE: Our day was before daylight until after dark. "Don't you burn that coal oil, it's too expensive. Put that light out." (imitates their father)

MEG: And I would sneak up and read all night.

HET: In the wintertime, school days, we [HET and JGE] got up. We had traps on the mountain. Varmint traps. And that's where we got our school, Christmas money. We'd get up, and Gail and I would run those traps and see what we had in them. Sometimes we'd come back and have to change clothes if we'd caught a polecat. We got dressed and Daddy had the horses saddled. And we were on horses to go to school at 7:30. Mama would pack our lunch.

JGE: She packed biscuits and sausage, mostly.

HET: And fried pies.

MEG: Don't forget the pies. Sometimes they'd be sugar pies made in the oven, which were great.

HET: She'd take a piece of biscuit dough and fold it this way, like a pie. But she'd put butter and sugar in there and then she'd put it in the oven, and that sugar would melt, and the butter together.

JGE: We could trade them off at school if we wanted to, real easy, couldn't we?

MEG: By all means. And of course, we were far out and didn't have a lot of access to a lot of fresh fruit. And the kids showed up at school with an apple or an orange, we'd trade them our pies for the apple or orange because we had pies all the time, and some mothers didn't know about making pies. But our mother did.

JGE: I went on into Gatesville for high school. Mary did, too. Hope didn't go on. She got married. Anyway, I carried this sack lunch. And it was biscuits, about that big. And it was homemade pork sausage, pepper sausage (??). And I've have two biscuits with that. And I'd have a sugar pie and a boiled egg. And I'd kind of hide to eat it because the rest of them had light bread and lunch meat. And I was there living high off the hog and having a good life and wasn't smart enough to know it. But I'd kind of get off here and set by myself. Embarrassed.

MEG: We'd have baked sweet potatoes, too. I remember when the guys would be working in the fields, and our mother would take a huge baking pan that fit in the oven in the wood stove, and bake sweet potatoes. It would be mid-afternoon snack for guys that were working in our fields. Carry that pan of baked potatoes down there in the middle of the afternoon. Can you imagine now, there would be anyone that would be working for you, and you would go out and take them baked sweet potatoes in the middle of the afternoon?

HET: I have grandkids that won't eat them.

We used to gather roast ears when we went to the creek to wash. Wasn't enough water at the house. So we'd load up the wagon. Daddy would take us down there and got the wagon unhooked. And send us kids back to the corn patch to pull ears of corn, twelve, sometimes twenty. Put 'em in this big pot, boiling water. We loved it.

MEG: It was field corn.

HET: She'd [Mother] wash the clothes, and if she didn't have something to hang them on like a tree or a

fence, she'd lay 'em on the rocks of the gravel bars. And we'd go swimming in Cowhouse.

JGE: We'd take roasting ears, maybe twenty or twenty-five, cut them off, and we always had plenty of butter.

MEG: We didn't know what margarine was then.

JGE: We'd milk the cows and churn the butter. And she'd put all that corn in with salt—she wasn't much on pepper—and that cow butter. You talk about good. You used to eat your fill of the stuff.

MEG: What amazed me about some of the food we had in those days, we had clawed (??) onions along the banks of the Cowhouse, and when they would get really good, we had one little area that Daddy would always close off because he didn't want the milk cow to get in there. If the cow ate those onions, you couldn't use the milk. It was terrible. You couldn't drink the milk. The onions would get nice size, and I've seen him come in with a tow sack just as full as he could get it with those onions. And how in the world we ever got enough peeled and ready. (JGE shows how small they were) But Mother would take those onions in a huge skillet, and she would make cooked onions for a family of six, and boy, I can just taste those onions right now.

JGE: They were good.

MEG: Of course, they were sautéed—we'll use the modern term—in bacon drippings. We always had cornbread.

HET: She'd make a mixture of cornmeal and hot water and sometimes a few of those onions and bacon drippings, and make a mush.

MEG: That was a glorified mush.

JGE: She kept a garden in the field.

HET: She raised tomatoes.

MEG: And evergreen onions. They're onions that stay green the year-round. They reseed and make buttons and they'll spread even from the roots.

JGE: They go dormant in the early fall and then come back in the early spring.

MEG: Depending on the weather. If it's a mild winter and we get the right kind of rain, you can use them almost the year-round.

HET: We all have a row at our houses.

JGE: People kept fruit trees, but we didn't have many.

HET: We used to gather tree plums, made jellies.

MEG: We had the Mustang grapes, of course, which was wonderful. We drank the grape juice year-round. We always had the grape juice.

JGE: A lot better than iced tea.

MEG: Especially when the ice man would come by every once in a while and bring us some ice.

JGE: There was an ice man from Killeen.

HET: We were fourteen miles from Killeen.

MEG: Seemed more like fifty then.

JGE: He had some kind of old stripped-down pickup, maybe a Chevrolet or a Model T, was what he brought ice in. He had it wrapped up in old quilts and stuff like that. He probably brought us fifty pounds twice a week.

MEG: We had an icebox.

JGE: There were no dairies. Everybody had some milk cows and we did our own milking. A dairy would have gone out of business because everybody milked their own cows.

HET: Not everybody had Jersey cows either. They had mixed cattle. Sometimes we milked four or five to get enough milk.

JGE: Daddy would keep a bunch of cows, and if one of the neighbors got destitute for a milk cow, he'd loan them a cow. They'd come get the cow with a young calf, and the only thing he asked them to do was not to hit his calf in the head with a churn dasher. Don't starve my calf.

Daddy raised Red Polls. He finally went in with a registered Hereford bull later. At first he went in with a grown shorthorn. He got the Hereford bull from _____ (??) Walker. The first one he got from Mary's husband, Billy Groves, but he was a Walker bull, some of his relatives got out north of town, registered Hereford. We just used each other's bulls.

We had a meat club where they'd butcher a beef and you took a part. Next week you furnished a beef and you took part. It'd go around like that.

MEG: That makes me think of when we had all the government kill off of the cattle. I was looking through some papers the other day that I didn't even realize was at the house. Some of Mama's papers. The papers were in there about that, how many cattle they killed, how little they paid for them. There was some that went for four dollars a head. That was to try to boost the economy because there wasn't any market and there was a drought and all that good stuff. Slaughtered those and we could save what we could save, if you had access to a pressure cooker where you could can some of that meat, or dry it.

JGE: We sat on the fence and watched it.

MEG: My job was after they butchered the things and brought the meat into the house and the ladies of the community were trying to preserve what they could, my job was to stand out there with a limb and fan the flies off so that the flies wouldn't ruin the meat before we could get some.

JGE: I stood right there and watched that government agent come in with a .22 and shoot those cows down as fast as he could reload. And we pushed them in the ditch and buried them.

HET: I remember that great big old red cow we had that we played with. We got on her back, and she was old—big muley—Daddy got twelve dollars for her. They didn't shoot her in the pen. They took her down to the side of that ditch where they shot 'em, and they fell in. They piled brush on them.

JGE: That's where they all went eventually.

HET: The milk calves they shot out there in the pen.

JGE: It was pretty brutal, pretty heartbreaking.

HET: I never will forget it because part of those cows were our pets. We milked them, we fooled with them, raised them.

MEG: We rode the calves when we could get by with it.

JGE: We rode horseback to school. We had to go right by the cow pen when we went to school, the three of

us. We took two horses, most of the time. The calves were in this lot. Our mother had two umbrellas, black ones. We'd slip them out and play with them. We broke the calves out the lot one day, scared them with the umbrellas. Daddy said, "How come the calves are out?" Of course, we didn't know. Another time we came by there coming from school. I believe it was Mary and me. We were on the horse. That old horse went riding and shied, and that saddle turned right under. Old Paint. It just turned on that horse.

HET: Those cows and horses, too, were scared to death of those big black umbrellas, and we found it out, and it was a game.

JGE: That old paint horse was the one that dumped me.

HET: We were close to that bluff on Stampede Creek, and we had those umbrellas, and I can just see his tail yet, he was running. He was scared to death.

MEG: It might have been what ran the milk cow off the bluff instead of the horse, you reckon? Do you remember that?

JGE: You called us some ring-tailed tooters. We were. And we still are.

HET: Now when school would be out we might not see any of the other children until school started, but we had a lot of fun.

MEG: We entertained ourselves.

JGE: I don't know how come our mother and daddy didn't kill us all.

Sometimes we delayed going to school until the cotton was in. We didn't have school all the time like we do now. There were a lot of six-months- schools. They'd start school in October or in the middle of September and let us go to school for two weeks, and turn out for two weeks until we got the cotton picked. There were several schools at Stampede that we went to that were just six months. October, November, December, January, February, and March. That's all the school we had.

MEG: By March it was time to start chopping corn.

HET: Planting cotton.

JGE: A lot of time when we went to Antelope School, they'd start a little earlier. They had a bigger school. We'd have seven to eight months school there. They would start school and then knock out for two to three weeks and get the cotton picked and then start back to school. We'd have to make that up the next spring.

HET: I started when I was seven.

MEG: I started when I was five.

JGE: I was not quite seven.

HET: I was born in 1920.

JGE: I was born in 1922.

MEG: And I was born in 1926. There was a sister in between born in 1924.

JGE: We started at Stampede.

MEG: I just went there one year.

JGE: It was a little frame building, two rooms, and it had an inset porch on it facing the west. And it had a little cloak room over here on each side for us to hang our coats in. Then it opened into the two doors, one on each side, a foyer, the principal's room, and then the little primary room over here on the right. Each one of them had a potbellied stove back in the back with a big curtain around it burning wood. It was a two-teacher school.

HET: Gertrude Vile (??) was the only teacher one year when I started.

JGE and MEG: There was two when I started.

JGE: Antelope had four teachers. Four other schools consolidated and made Antelope. House Creek and Table Rock, Salem and Ross. That was in 1920. It was there all the time during our lifetimes.

HET: We lived on the north side of Cowhouse Creek, so we went to Stampede until we got into the sixth, seventh grade, and then we went to Antelope.

MEG: The first year I went to Stampede, that was the last year that Stampede was a school. I really didn't like it too well. My teacher didn't allow gum chewing, and I was a gum chewer. And I stayed in each recess the whole first year of my schooling. I didn't like my teacher, I never did like her, I don't like her now. Miss Carpenter. In those days, we had an inspector that came out from the county seat to inspect. Well, I was so small, and my feet wouldn't touch the floor, so I had a block to put my feet on, and he didn't like the way I held my feet. He'd some in and he'd slap them down on the block, and I could have killed him. I thought, If I were just a little bit bigger, I could just have pinched his head off. And I didn't like to wear shoes. And my daddy made me wear shoes to school. Some days I would stop on the way and hide them and pick them up on the way home. So that was my experience my first year in school.

I say, don't ever start one ahead of time. As it turned out, I graduated from high school when I was fifteen. No one needs to be out of high school when they're fifteen, especially when it's wartime. It makes a difference when you can't afford to go to school. What is there left to do? You get married, which I don't have any regrets about. Stayed married to the same man for fifty-five years until the day he died. But it still kind of leaves you at loose ends.

HET: You probably wouldn't have gone to school if it hadn't been for me and Gail taking you.

MEG: No telling.

HET: She'd (referring to MEG) rather go to school than stay at home by herself.

MEG: Besides that, I liked going to school, always liked going to school. In fact, I went back to school after I had three children.

JGE: Well, she's (referring to MEG) a little bit modest about her ability to learn. She started to school that young at five years old. And then by the time she hit third grade, she was so far advanced she skipped another year. She was way ahead of the others.

MEG: Made me graduate two years ahead. Now when I see people and they say, What year did you graduate? That makes them think I'm two years older than I am. I don't need that. I don't need two years tacked on. I'm old enough.

JGE: It's strange, some get all the brains and others get left out.

MEG: Others get the looks.

JGE: Yeah, but you got the looks and the brains both! (referring to MEG)

MDF: What do you remember about—when did you hear that something was going to change and the government was going to come in?

JGE: I can tell you exactly when I heard about it [the taking]. It was sometime in the spring of 194[2]. Our neighbor, Elder Cox and his wife, had lost a baby, stillborn. And I had a car then, drove our parents to Copperas Cove for the funeral of this child, this baby. And we heard that rumor that day—that the government was going to buy our home and build an army base. And my daddy hooted at the idea and said, "No, they won't ever do that." And we had an uncle, our mother's oldest brother, who had taught school all over the country, and he was a Baptist preacher. He was out in the public a lot. And he told Daddy, he said, "No, John, it's going to happen." And that was the first time I heard about it. And then it developed real fast.

MEG: Well, and you heard they were going to buy it. They didn't buy it, they stole it.

HET: Last time I came home before they moved away, the tanks were already in and around the house. The chickens were running from bush to bush, trying to get out of the tanks' way.

JGE: I am going to write a piece on the takeover, but I don't want to hurt your feelings. I'm pretty hard about the taking. I'll go on to say this, we never know what might have been. We did well, financially.

MEG: But it broke lots of hearts.

JGE: It killed our parents young.

MEG: Daddy was ill when we moved from there. He had to be moved out in an ambulance. I think the final part of it was [from the strain.] He did have a malignancy, but I don't think it would have—

HET: Well, nowadays, they say the stress adds to things.

MEG: There was suicides.

HET: One of the men that lived out Clear Creek community shot himself—Urbanky.

JGE: It robbed us of our heritage and our inheritance.

MEG: You can't go back home.

JGE: There's no place to go.

MEG: That's the sad part about it. In fact, the last time I was down there, I said I wouldn't go back again, but I would have liked for my kids to see it.

HET: I told somebody awhile ago, the first time I ever came to this, this building was full, and it had been thirty years since I'd been back. Of course, I had four little kids, I lived in Houston, and we didn't come back too often. And I saw people that day that I'd gone to school with thirty years before.

MEG: Yeah, and you're like I am. When you drove up you said, "Look at all those old people."

HET: I remember seeing my next door neighbor, Liz Goodwin, and I was glad to see her.

JGE: It was the spring of '42 that we left there. It was fifty-six years yesterday since we moved out. May 2, 1942. We went right up [Highway] 281 here north of Lampasas about twelve miles. It was just the two of us and our parents. They moved a second time before Dad died. A third time really.

HET: There weren't any places available. Everybody just went that way and took up.

JGE: You didn't have any money. They didn't pay us.

MEG: Had enough to make a down payment on one up here. Even less acreage.

HET: All the things they might have bought, somebody else had.

JGE: We left there May 2, 1942, and sometime in August that year they paid, what little they paid. If we hadn't had a little cash, what kind of shape would we have been in? And I was the only family member who was eligible to work. This girl (referring to HET) was still in high school.

MEG: In fact, I was living with friends when they were moving to finish my senior in school.

JGE: I moved us out. Our daddy was bedridden. He had had a nervous breakdown. And we moved him in an ambulance. We pulled up to this old house out here, just an old shack of a house we moved into. It was summertime. It was warm and dry. I don't know how many snakes there were. We run them out pretty quick. Moved in with them. But we pulled up there in front of the house. The army moved us out. We had five army trucks that came to move us, and the first trip we took most of the household trucks that came to move us, and the first trip we made we took most of the household furniture, except Daddy's bed. And when we drove up there in front of the house, they brought Daddy and my mother to come in an ambulance, so I went on with these soldiers. Pulled up there in front of the house. Oh, there was just a line of people here, cars all around, and I said, "What in the world is going on here? Who knew that we were going to move in here today?" And I don't know to this good day how the word got around. But the neighbors all around there were there, and my aunt and uncle and cousin. I never was so proud to see anybody in my life as Aunt Josie and Uncle Earl, and _____ (??). And Boyd (??) Walker was there, and one of the old neighbors that we had lived by out there at Fort Hood had already moved out there neighbors to us. So how happy I was. They had that furniture set up, that wood stove set up, and everything, and a bed made for Daddy to be put in in nothing flat.

MDF: How many people from your immediate area there moved over to this area?

JGE: I wouldn't even want to guess. Probably seventy-five families in the two counties, Burnet and Lampasas County, and San Saba. A bunch of them.

MEG: The Yancys were the first ones that came to mind. They lived south of town. There was all kinds of other people, too.

JGE: All around here. The Haedges, several of them moved into Lampasas. Some of these are here today.

MDF: What do you remember most about being out there [at Fort Hood]?

HET: Well, I remember that it had to be the best place in he world. Because when you're a child, isn't that what you think? Until you get up so big that you think this is a terrible place. To me, when I look back, I think, we have maybe more material things now, but as far as having a better life, we don't. Because even though we worked hard, there. You worked hard. All the years I worked, I used my head, and that's more tiring than physical.

MEG: When we went out to visit, we got as many of our grown children as we could to go with us. I guess that's been fifteen years ago. We went back down through the place where we grew up where Stampede runs into Cowhouse Creek, right in there, and we carried a lunch with us. We took two pickups. And the kids played in the water, our grown kids. And they said, Oh, boy, what a way to live be, live down here in the flat rocks, clean.

HET: Like your own private swimming pool.

JGE: I'll tell you what I think about that. That was some of the best part of my life. Growing up. Grew up with lots of love, lots of freedom.

HET: We didn't have money, but then we didn't know anybody else that had money. But we had a home, and we had food, and we had parents that loved us.

JGE: We had good food, lots of it. Some of the best part of my life.

HET: Good neighbors. You didn't have to worry about locking your doors. And if you went to your neighbor's home and they weren't there and you wanted to go in and get you a cold biscuit or whatever they had in their kitchen, you didn't think anything about it.

Wilma Earl Colvin Edwards

Date of birth: 14 January 1928
Communities affiliated with: Boaz, Brown's Creek, Maple
Interviewed by Martha Doty Freeman

MDF: This is Martha Doty Freeman. Today is November 28, 2000. I am interviewing Wilma Earl Edwards for the first time. This interview is taking place at Mrs. Edwards's home at 2214 Bridge Street, Gatesville, Texas, 76528. This interview is part of Prewitt and Associates' Fort Hood Oral History Project sponsored by U.S. Army Fort Hood and is conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University.

Well, tell me about your family.

WCE: Well, turn that off just a minute.

MDF: Tell me about your grandparents.

WCE: Well, my earliest relatives in the county were, of course, the Graham family. You've heard much about that. But they did come in 1854 right after Coryell County was a county, you know. And they settled. Jesse and Martha Jane Fannin Graham bought land, just settled on land. They got a grant for it later. But anyhow, in the Fort Hood area next to the Cowhouse and between the Cowhouse and Brown's Creek communities, I guess they were there early enough to name some of the communities. And then, they had a large family that all came with them. Eventually, one family, one married girl came with them and then some others came later. They all ended up in Coryell County and began to marry into different families around, the Kinsey family. There were a lot of sons—seven sons and three daughters. And then they eventually moved, usually west to different counties in Texas, and then, all through the United States. And if you study anything about genealogy, you'll know that Grahams have populated the earth! And my family in particular.

Is this specifically about the Fort Hood area? You don't care about the rest of the county much?

MDF: Yes. Well, if it somehow ties back in, sure.

WCE: Well, it does. Jesse and Martha Jane had a younger son named Jesse II, and we think it was Jesse Abner, but our different families are trying to prove different. But I'll call him Jesse Abner the second. And he married Cornelia Griffin whose family came at the same time and settled on Coryell Creek in the northern part of Coryell County. And they didn't know each other at first, but they were all Primitive Baptists. And Elder Jesse Graham helped establish the first Primitive Baptist church in Coryell County, which is called Sugar Loaf Baptist Church. Then, the next church was the Rainey Creek Primitive Baptist Church in the northern end, and so the Griffins were that congregation. So he met their daughter, and then, after the Civil War, they married. And she was four years older than him. But, anyhow, he came back and they married. And then, let's see, they had five children, Cornelia and Jesse did. And then they raised four grandchildren. Their oldest daughter died young and left these four children. And they kept them, you know, and all these children had small farms, and sometimes

their parents would give them a small bit of land, or they'd buy some, and then they all began to move away except my grandmother, who was the youngest daughter. Her name was Rosa Ellen Graham. And she married John Fletcher Colvin. Everybody called him J. F. And then, of course, my dad was their oldest son, Barney McClinton Colvin.

MDF: What was his name again?

WCE: Barney McClinton—they called him Barney. And he became senior, because I had a brother. My only brother was named for him. And my mother, Lola, I need to tie in Mother's family.

MDF: Sure.

WCE: Okay. The Brashears moved into the Cowhouse River Valley close to where New Hope Baptist Church is. If you remember that on the map, and they settled in where, later, the Bay family lived, if you're more familiar with that family. They bought the home place of Guy and Nancy Jane Gentry Brashear. And then their son was my grandfather, John Taylor Brashear. And then he married Carrie Belle Maddux who had, well, they lived in Goliad County before they married, and then they married down there, and then they came on up here with his parents, and they migrated from Goliad, Goliad County. And they were married nine years, I believe, before they had a child. That was unusual in those days. But, anyhow, they both came from large families, and what makes it interesting, three of my grandfather's sisters married three of my grandmother's brothers, so they had, they all had a bunch of double cousins, but their family was small. They only had that one son, and then twelve years later, they had Mother. Which made 'em wide apart there, you know, and she was the little spoiled girl.

MDF: Now, what was her name?

WCE: Her name was Lola Norine Brashear. B-r-a-s-h-e-a-r. Brashear—accent on the second syllable. Some of 'em, you know, they emphasized that. The Brashears came from France in 1634. They were Huguenots. I've always wanted to join that society, but I haven't yet.

But, anyhow, then, of course, Mother was real young when they married. And they had three children. My sister was eight years older than me. She was born in 1920, and I was born in 1928, and my brother was born in 1931. And I got here just in time for the Depression. And, although everybody, you know, likes to say how hard it was, and just how everybody suffered, well, because we lived on the farm, we didn't suffer that much. My mother and daddy suffered because they had to work so hard. But the children had a home and food, and we were not homeless and all that. And our families were progressive for the times, and they had money and enough to have spending money, for goods and things. And they never complained about being just dirt poor like so many were. However, compared to what we know now, they were pretty poor.

But they had farms. And my mother's father was so crippled. He had osteomyelitis when he was four years old. And we always thought it was polio or infantile paralysis. And I find out later on that it was osteomyelitis, but it had damaged his bones and everything. And of course, he lived in the horse and buggy days, and he had lots of accidents, and teams would run away with him. There's one *terrible* accident that's described in that book. I don't know if you want me to go into detail about that or not.

MDF: Sure.

WCE: The whole mess, you do?

MDF: Yeah.

WCE: Okay. They had built that house at Tama that you see there, in that picture, and he was going to Killeen

for the last load of lumber to finish something he needed. He also had a store by that time, I believe. He had to quit farming because he was already crippled so, and his fieldwork was too hard. And so he bought the Tama store and he had a, as I understand it, he owned the gin for a while. I don't think very long. And then he had a blacksmith shop, but it later sold to other people, too. But he kept the store. And the post office was there, and so he was a responsible businessman of his community. He was postmaster of Tama from 1906 to 1918. And he, oh, golly, I lost my train of thought—

MDF: The accident.

WCE: Yeah. Well he had a dray service. You know what that means.

MDF: Uh-huh. Hauling, and that sort of thing.

WCE: Hauling stuff from Killeen to his store for people to purchase and whatever. They'd turn in orders and he'd do this service, and so he was coming back from Killeen with this load of lumber. And there's a place out of Killeen on the Killeen-to-Gatesville Road that crosses the Cowhouse called a gap, you know, gap of the mountain. And down that hill, before you get to the Cowhouse Creek was a family they knew. But anyhow, something frightened the horses, and they ran away with him. And because he was just on this dray wagon, which had no sideboard system to speak of, he fell off and caught his leg in the spokes. I just found out recently that I thought he was just dragged, but they caught his leg in the spokes. It ran away two miles with him like that. And that even broke spokes out of that wagon wheel.

MDF: Amazing.

WCE: It was just terrible. And so when everybody found the horses, they ran down to this person they knew. His name was Webb. And when they got to their place, they, of course, were able to stop the horses. And they thought he was dead. He was just a bloody wreck, you know, he was so, so terrible. But they recognized who he was. I believe at that time that there was not doctors, evidently, in Killeen, because in Mother's book, she said they sent the Webb's son to Belton to get a doctor to come, and then another son, I guess, or another person, went about eight or nine more miles up to where my grandmother lived to get her and bring her there. And I believe that happened, I can't remember the date it happened, but anyhow, it was pretty early in their marriage, before they had children.

And so the doctors came. Two doctors came, and they decided that they would have to amputate his legs. Well, he was a very firm person, and there was no amputating his legs, you know. And he called, 'cause Grandmother was crying and everything, and so they had a lady to fix her table with sheets for surgery. And he caught on to what was going on, and so he told Grandmother to bring his pants to him. And she said, "Well, what for?" And he said, "I want my pocketknife." And he got his pocketknife. And he said, "I'll kill them before they cut my legs off." He wouldn't let them put him to sleep because he thought they would amputate anyway. They put a stick in his mouth to keep him from chewing his tongue. My grandmother was a very clean person, always was, and he said, "You can take care of me. The doctors will show you what to do, and you're going to take care of me."

And the Webbs kept him there, I believe six weeks or two months, because it took that long for him to heal. And they couldn't set his legs well, you know. They didn't have casts then. And of course, being such compound fractures it—both legs were broken. One of them two times, and one of them three times between the knee and the feet. And then, compound, and drug in that dirt and everything. So I don't know how they ever saved his legs. But he did not get gangrene. Of course they were a real close community down in there, and everybody heard about it, and they all came to see what they could do to help. They finished his crop out. He had some more farmland still, and they helped him that way. And they had their garden and all that kind of thing. So he finally survived enough to get home. But it was really hard on my grandmother because she had to do all the work, and to keep—

they had cows and chickens and horses, and all that, and then she had the garden coming on, and Mother said he would, when he got to where he could walk at all, he would put one of his knees somehow on a chair, and just drag around like that to walk a little bit. She would take things to him. He would peel and snap the beans. He helped her in any way he could.

MDF: What happened to his store and the post office, and—

WCE: Well, I may have that wrong. I'm not quite sure he had the store at that point. They might have just been building the house. I think Mother made clearer than that in the book. I know they bought the store in about 1896, seven or eight, or something like that. So he might not have had it at that time. I've got the date mixed up in my mind. I want to say 1915, but I think, I know the store was robbed in 1915. But he finally recovered. But he was very crippled from then on, and he never walked without a cane, and the last ten years of his life, he didn't walk, period. They had moved to Gatesville in 1934 so he could be close to my parents, who had moved to Gatesville and just lived two blocks away. But he was just so helpless. But he was our baby. Everybody loved him, and he never complained. You wouldn't know he was crippled if you didn't see it. And he was always just cheerful with people. And he was our sounding board. If we had trouble—my dad was real harsh on us, just very harsh, and so we'd go to Grandpa to be consoled, and it was fun, and of course, I was fortunate. I had four grandparents until I was sixteen years old. Then he died. And the next year Mother's mother died. Then I was thirty before my other two grandparents died. So that's unusual, you know, in those days.

Okay, now that gets Mother and Daddy together.

I'll go back a little to Rosa Graham's husband, Fletcher Colvin. He came from, well, I have long genealogies, just generations, and you don't want all that on there do you?

MDF: No.

WCE: I didn't think you did. But anyway, he came to Coryell County by way, from Houston County, Texas, and they first went to Tow Valley over in Llano County because they wanted water. One day I asked Granddaddy why, why did they migrate? He said, "Water." He was always in search of good water. And they went to Tow Valley. Well, there was so much water over there on the Colorado River. That's before the dam was ever built, you know, and then dry, also, big floods but dry earth, and so they knew about Coryell County. They had other relatives that had come here. And they came two years later in 1884 or six, about that time. About the same time that the Brashear family had come. They all came to the county at the same time.

And then my Grandfather Colvin, I call him grandfather, but Granddaddy Colvin was ten years old when his mother died. His father was Laroy Sunderlin Colvin, and his mother was Julia Ann Brooks, and she had a sister who had married a Henson who came to Coryell County also. That's another story. Long story. And then she died when my granddaddy was ten years old, and she had six living children and a set of twins that had died during that time. Can you believe that? Of course, they had, when I tell you *all* their children, you'll be amazed. But anyway, she had a little son that was six weeks old, and she had gone to help her husband clean out a well, a dug well, you know, that they had to get the debris out of because they had to use that water, and this was in March. And March in Texas, it's cold, you know, and all that. So he was in the well. There's a term they call for cleaning out a well, but I can't remember what that is. Anyhow, he was in the well, filling this bucket, and she was pulling it up and dumping it out on the ground. She dropped dead and fell in his arms. And he held her out of that water for several hours before anybody heard him screaming for help. When they left home that morning, she said to Fletcher, "Take care of Bill." The little baby boy was six weeks old. And so that afternoon, when school was out, well some girls, Kinsey girls, went by that way to go home. They heard this screaming, and so they went and told their daddy, and he knew what it was. So

he went to him, and then they got her out. Of course, she was just dead, you know, had been all those, all that time. I think that's so sad that he had to hold her there like that.

But anyhow, he married again in less than two years, and he had two more children, and that lady died. She was Mary Josephine Tipton, and that's another old family in Coryell County. And she died. I never knew why, but she died. And later, there was a lady that lived about a few blocks from here, and across the street from Mother's sister-in-law, who was that woman's sister, and I didn't even realize that until after she had died, or I would have asked her lots of questions. But there's a lot of history about the Tiptons in this county, too. And, so she died. Well, here he is, all these children, still in their pre-teens. They're all at home, still, you know. And then he married another lady named, well, let's see, what is her name? I don't have them all here. Anyhow, her name was, I imagine it was Mary, but they called her Molly Raines. Molly Raines Keele, I believe it was. And then, they, in turn, had nine children. He was the father of nineteen children, seventeen who lived! Well, some of them died. There was one child that died young because it had a bad heart. Then an older son died young. But most of them lived to be grown. And I have a fabulous picture. I want to show you that. When he married Molly Raines Keele, she had three children by her marriage to Keele. Her daughter is with them. Her husband had left her. She had two little boys and one of them died, and her husband had left her and took one of her sons with him. I would kill a man that would just take a son away from me! Wouldn't you?

MDF: Yes.

WCE: But anyhow, that shouldn't be there, but my husband didn't do things like that either. But anyhow, I have this picture with all this separate family, you know, and I thought, You talk about learning how to get along and live. There's three sets of children. Of course, it wasn't all wonderful either. There was trouble. My grandfather told of how she was not famous for being good to his two sisters. But she was all right. How would you take all those stepchildren? But, that's how my granddaddy got to Coryell County. Granddad Colvin. And then he and Rosa met at, just in the community. After his father married the third time, they moved to Boaz, and Boaz is where the Grahams lived. And that's where Granny went to school. Granddad did, too. He was a couple of years older than her. He [Laroy S. Colvin] was the postmaster at Tama. Not Tama, excuse me, at Boaz from 1902 to 1907. And then they lived there several years. I can't remember how many, but they lived there several years and then they moved to East Texas.

MDF: Now, what year would they have come to Coryell County?

WCE: I think about nineteen—I mean 1890—1886, I believe. Yeah. Because Granddaddy—I nearly know it was 1884 to Tow Valley and then 1886 to Coryell County. And then, Granddaddy and Granny Colvin were married July 8, 1897, see. My mother's parents were married October 23, 1884, before they came to Coryell County. They married and then left on this wagon train trip with several other family members to Coryell County in 1884. Mother's grandparents and, actually, her parents also, and Daddy's Colvin side of his family came into the county about the same time, like the Griffins and the Grahams came in at the same time, only something earlier. And then, am I supposed to—

MDF: Well, I wanted to ask you one thing. You had mentioned the Kinseys a couple of times. They were a very early family.

WCE: Yeah, I know. I recently learned that the Kinsey family lived in Bell County, then moved to Boaz before moving to Gatesville. Elisha Kinsey was the father of twenty-one or twenty-two children. They lived adjoining farms to my Granddaddy Colvin, and one of them married a Rambo and one of them married a McBride. You've heard of Rambo Mountain. And then Daddy told a tale how my uncle, his baby brother Earl, fell into a well, they thought, 'cause they missed him. And they searched

and searched. And so one of these sons of the Kinseys, Britt Kinsey, came riding up on his horse, and he wanted to know what was going on, you know. Daddy said he ran all over. Went to the wells first—there was two dug wells close by—and got down and looked in, and he said, "No, the water hadn't, dirt hadn't been stirred up and the water was still." So he wasn't in that, you know. Later on, he had crawled in under the house and had gone to sleep. Took a nap! Then he came out. Well, there was a spanking then! But they were too glad he was alive.

MDF: Did, was there an old Kinsey house?

WCE: Yes. We called it the Kinsey Way Station because it was just off the road from Killeen to Gatesville that also forked and went on to Eliga and Antelope and Copperas Cove on the stagecoach route. The Kinsey house was right at Boaz, right down where it made that little branch. And then on the north side of the branch was the Kinsey house. And that house was there when I was a child. Well, renters had lived in it when I was real small, and then it was vacant at the time, and they scared the kids to death. They told us it was haunted and everything else, but that was to keep us out and not prowling around, because the top story, they had this huge area where they had big rooms, and the floor was weak and had begun to give way if anybody walked on it. So I never went in it, but I remember seeing it.

MDF: Can you describe it for me?

WCE: It was very similar to the Kinsey house that was up here. Do you know about that house?

MDF: I don't.

WCE: Well, would you like to drive out there after a while? I'll show it to you.

MDF: Is that the stone house?

WCE: The stone house, uh-huh.

MDF: Okay, I've seen a picture of that.

WCE: It was made on that design, but I believe that the Kinsey Way Station house was just, I don't think it was masonry. I think it was a mostly frame house. Of course, it had two or three big chimneys in it, at each end of the house, but I believe it was a little bigger than that house up here.

MDF: Did it have a porch on the front?

WCE: Yeah. It had a porch on the bottom and a balcony porch.

MDF: Oh, it was a two-story house.

WCE: All the way across. Yes, two stories. And it set sideways, what I'd call it, because there was a little street, a cul-de-sac thing that went up around that, and that's where some of the businesses and the post office were, and they had a drugstore. And that was where that was. And then, later on, I think the post office was moved. The school was on the west side of the road up on the hill, south and west of the Kinsey Way Station. I know, I was there, and there were so many people now to try to tell me it wasn't that way, but I know it was. And those who—

MDF: I think I'd trust your memory.

WCE: I have a good memory, believe it or not. I can't remember about yesterday, but thirty or forty years ago, I can remember, and further back than that.

MDF: Did it have a central hall? Was there a central doorway?

WCE: I don't remember. No, that was usually the smaller houses that had that, I think. I don't think so. It might have had a central hall, but it wasn't open like one of those runs, you know. Of course it had a big front door and steps and everything. And I'm sure it went into a hallway and then into rooms on the sides. And it probably was designed much like this house out here. And would you believe, I've never been in this house? And they've had open houses, and the lady, Lalla Rookh Ward, owns it now, and her daughter lives in it. And she's really gracious, but there's always been something else going on whenever she's had that open house-type thing.

MDF: Have you ever heard anything about the old Kinseys owning slaves?

WCE: No, but I rather imagine they did before they came to Coryell County and even after they came here. My Great-great-grandfather Graham, it was never talked about that he had slaves, but in the census record of 1860 or along in there, there were three slaves that lived with them. Because he was a minister, he was gone from home a lot because he just went anywhere. Well, there she was with all that gang of kids, you know, and they were growing up and everything, but she needed help.

There were actually three Graham cemeteries down there. The old Graham Cemetery had been moved. The first few were buried right down close to Brown's Creek, just before you crossed Brown's Creek going north. But it would flood and just be so muddy they couldn't get into it. So they decided to move those further up on the hill, and Jesse and Martha Jane gave land for the cemetery and the church, and it was pretty close to each other, I think. At least, the cemetery was close to their house. And then the Graham, what's called the Graham Family Cemetery, was my Great-grandfather Jesse and his wife Cornelia, and daughter and one of her children. There were just about, oh, I don't know, about five or six people buried in that one. Lots of people think they're the same ones, but they are not. And that's another thing, the moving of those graves. So many of our families, see, had been buried there for generations, and they had to be moved out. The saddest one—is that on? The saddest one I know of—they were all sad. Do you want me to back up and do something else before I get into this?

MDF: Sure. Sure.

WCE: What?

MDF: Well, just—

WCE: Just go ahead and tell all this now?

MDF: Well, you could.

WCE: Well, anyhow, the move was a great happening. You know that from everybody's experience in talking about it. And my Granddad Colvin fell and hurt himself and then he, he just got sick. He was emotionally sick, I guess, from having to move, and so he stayed at our house here in Gatesville through most of the move, the packing and the getting ready. And Granny stayed, Daddy's mother stayed down there at their house. Because, see, I don't blame, I mean I don't accuse anybody. But there were vandals, even then. And you know that. And there were people who would steal their stuff if they could. And so, she stayed with the place and came up here one day to sign the deeds. And some of her furniture was vandalized. Well of course, they never knew who. Their sideboard, somebody had knocked the end of it in with a hammer. And some things were stolen. But, nobody ever knew who.

But anyhow, she stayed there. And this big old house was full of things. Granny was a spender and a collector. And she collected lots of these objects, objects d'art, however you pronounce that. She had a house full of that. She was just a collector. And, then, they had all this farm stuff of forty years, you

know, and they didn't ever throw away anything. Their farm tools, of course, they used. They just had the areas where they just stored old vehicles and parked them there, you know.

And then they had a pasture that was the neatest place for kids to play in. Because all the buggies, surreys, the first cars, the tractor, the Fordson tractor, when they got through using it, they didn't trade any, they just put it in this pasture and left it there. And we could play to our heart's content on that stuff. And then they had these big grape vines growing on the trees out in that area, and we could swing on grape vines and play like we were Tarzan and Jane. You know, we had fun. But then, right before World War II started, Granny sold that stuff. 'Cause, you know, Japan went all over the country buying scrap metal to kill us with later, and she sold all that good stuff for junk iron and I never forgave her for that. We loved that stuff. I knew it had to go. But anyhow, they were in the process of, they were going to put native stone rocks around the house. It was rock veneering.

MDF: You mean, rock facing on the house?

WCE: Facing of the house. It was just a frame house, you know. They loved petrified wood. And they had gone all over the world looking for it and bought lots of it. She liked to walk and roam around in the pastures, and wherever she saw a pretty rock, well, she sent Fletcher to fetch it! She didn't carry rocks, but he did. He was a real strong man. And, so, she had just these big piles of rocks out in the pastures and everywhere else where she could take—and so when the army moved her, they had to move those rocks! They didn't get to put the stone around the house 'cause that's what they were going to do. And they were waiting for electricity. They had surveyed all over the place. But they didn't realize it was for Fort Hood, not the promise of electricity, you know. And, anyhow—

MDF: So did she move the rocks, too?

WCE: You bet they moved the rocks, and their house's got rock on it! They bought a small farm west of Gatesville about a mile or so west, and it's right across U.S. Highway 84 from the current Coryell Memorial Hospital. They had a house built. It wasn't very good material they had to get, you know, during the war. But, anyhow, that rock's around that house. And the funniest thing, she brought a stone that was out of, I believe, of her parents' house. And it had the date nineteen—I think it's 1907 on that stone. Now what that date had reference to I don't know, because her parents had built that house long before 1907. But, anyhow, it was put in the chimney in this house over here, and Patsy Cofer's daddy thought until day he died that that house over here was built in 1907! And he told Patsy that he knew that was the house—they had moved it—he knew that was the house that was down in Fort Hood because he had remembered going there. It didn't even resemble that house in that picture, you know. It is a plain-looking house.

But then, they moved. They had to just move. They moved the cattle, and they had cattle, they had registered shorthorned cattle. They had sheep. I guess they just sold their chickens. I don't think they brought all the chickens. And they had to sell most of the sheep. But, you know, they had to get out. And, they did let them roll the wire and pull fence posts from their place, but they could not pull, well, I believe they could, on one well on each place they could pull the pipe. But they had to leave if there was any more. So Daddy hired, Granny and Granddaddy hired two or three young men from Gatesville to go down and help him. Because he just could not do that all by himself.

MDF: How old was he by that time?

WCE: My father?

MDF: Your grandfather?

WCE: Sixty-four. Okay. He was capable. And he got well, and then, man he worked. He worked at Fort

Hood at the warehouse. And they, of course, they had a small farm here. My dad leased that and grew corn and some cotton. And this house they bought was real old, and they tore it down and tried to build at the same time, just right at the same site. And the kitchen at the old house had to be torn down before the kitchen of the new house could be finished. So they did that all and moved. She bought her an electric stove. See, she'd always had a wood stove down there and she wanted electric. She'd already bought an iron and a bunch of electric small appliances down there before—

MDF: Anticipating.

WCE: Yeah. But they were able to get an electric stove here. It was a fair-sized house. It had a huge living room and a dining room and three bedrooms, and all good-sized rooms. And so she did this, you've heard of these, they call them cot houses. They just lined up cots as close as you could get them 'em with just a little walkway between them. And people who built Fort Hood came in. They rented those cots. They didn't have any place to stay. We didn't have apartments all over Gatesville. And she had, I don't know how many, but anyhow she rented those cots by the night for these workers. And that went on for about two years, I guess, and then she was, she was sort of her own person.

MDF: Enterprising.

WCE: She was enterprising, and she, this will be on that, and I'll be sorry for it, but it's the truth. She read just plain playing cards.

MDF: Oh, how wonderful!

WCE: As a young girl, she became interested in that. Because she went to Killeen one time and got her fortune told. And that impressed her. So she began to do that. And really, she was sort of harmless with it. But she put a sign up by the road on Highway 84, and it nearly killed my dad and his brothers. And it embarrassed the heck out of the grandkids. But you would be surprised who came. In fact, the mayor's wife brought the Sunday school class over to be entertained by that!

MDF: That's wonderful.

WCE: So we just swallowed. Nothing could embarrass me anymore, you know. She was a determined woman. She didn't dress up in a garb or anything. Her house was kind of cold. She always used to put on a robe to stay warm. But I'm getting too involved with this thing, I think.

But the move is what impressed me because I was fourteen years old, kind of vulnerable. They had such a short notice. My granddad had gotten notified on January 14, 1942—my birthday—and he had, I believe, six weeks to get out.

MDF: Did they have any warning at all?

WCE: Suspicions, but not warnings. Have you ever read my daughter's thesis? She tells it like it is, like it was, because she interviewed lots of people around here. And so it wasn't a made-up story, and we were sad. But we were sadder about the war. You know, the war—

MDF: What do you mean, exactly?

WCE: Well, when you see your whole community marching off to go to the army—I mean, even though I was young, we knew how serious it was. And my granny always said she didn't want to hear anybody in our family griping about moving out of there. She said, "I had three sons, and any three of them could have gone." But because they were in vital places—my dad was a carpenter, and helped build installations around here. Bluebonnet Plant. He worked some at North Fort Hood building that. And then my granddad, of course, was too old. My other uncle, Dad's brother Gilbert Colvin, lived down there, and he had to move his family out. And he had children young enough to be in school. He was

a farmer and helped build Bluebonnet Plant. My uncle, the baby brother who I'm named for, Earl Colvin, had left the farm and moved to Fort Worth and stayed there several years and then moved to Kansas City, Missouri, with Montgomery Ward. And he was a buyer for them, and he had to do these trips to Chicago and everywhere, and they called his job, what do you call it? Vital, or whatever, to the war effort, you know. And so he was not called. So she said, "None of my sons had to go." And she said, "Think of all those who did have to go, and so many never came back, you know." So she never regretted it, other than it was her home for forty years. And before that, because, see, she grew up, she was born there. She was the grandparent that was born there. The others were born somewhere else. And—

MDF: What is your sense of how people dispersed after that and whether they were able to keep a sense of community?

WCE: Well, we thought they went to the four winds, but actually a lot of them stayed right around Gatesville. And all these little ol' houses out on west, west of town and down [Highway] 116, just right around, not all, but many of them, were sold. The lots were sold to them by my Grandfather Colvin, 'cause he bought that land, and then he sold lots around. They needed places to stay, you know, to live, to build, and many of them couldn't afford to get a farm anymore. And then, as the years went on, people began to, you know, find each other. And they kept track of each other, whose family went where, and they had reunions. And they got together. They had old church reunions. Ewing community had an early reunion that started right after the war was over, just in a year, two years. And then Antelope had one, and I think Maple, see, just started actively this past year. For many years, Maple and Brown's Creek former residents met on the first Saturday in May at Restland Cemetery for a cemetery working and then had lunch in a park.

MDF: Really?

WCE: A lot of the people would get together at other places, and they'd go. Our church, New Hope Baptist Church, didn't move its congregation anywhere. It just disbanded because it was a very small church anyhow. And then the Church of Christ was strong down in there, and a lot of them came to two different churches, Churches of Christ here in Gatesville. They started two of them, I know, from the congregations down there. And the Methodist church just went in with the Methodist church here, if they lived in Gatesville, or—

MDF: Absorbed the people.

WCE: Yeah. And my grandmother, Granny Colvin, was a Methodist, and she went to this Methodist church. And Granddad Colvin was Free Will Baptist church, and so he just went with her to the Methodist church. There were no Free Will churches here. They had one in Eliga. Mother told me the difference of beliefs of all these different churches. Some of them are quite different and some of them are real different. But her family were Baptists, Missionary Baptist. Her uncle, Chris Brashear, who was Christy Gentry Brashear, was a Baptist preacher, and he was, I guess about the only pastor that New Hope ever had. And I loved him. He was the calmest, sweetest old man, and he moved into Killeen before the war and retired there and later moved to Temple. And he was the father of Arthur, A. P. Brashear who started American Desk Company in Temple. And that family became quite wealthy. Wilson Art and all that was from that family.

MDF: Oh.

WCE: And of course, Arthur who started it married a Ward, and they've been dead a number of years. And then their son, A. P. Jr., inherited it, and then he died, and his son, I believe he's died, too. So A. P. Jr.'s mother and son lived in Salado.

MDF: Ah, if I wanted to get in touch with a descendant of that original Kinsey, is there somebody here you could suggest?

WCE: Yes. Sarah Mullinnix, and I have her name, address, and phone number. They do a big reunion here in Gatesville the first weekend in August.

MDF: How is her last name spelled?

WCE: M-u-l-l-i-n-n-i-x. She just does oodles of genealogy, and she's got that family really. They had had reunions for years, but we'd just come and say hi and have a meal and go home. But anyhow, now she has a whole day of genealogy on the Saturday before. And they're really quite active. They're doing a book, too. And you talk about, they had I don't know how many kids. I think about twenty-one children, and one woman, one mother. Now that's unusual. They had several sets of twins. My granny Colvin's mother, you know, had two sisters. One of them had two sets of twins, and one of them had three sets of twins. They had great big families. My grandparents on both sides had three and two children, but before that, there were eight, nine to fifteen children in everybody's family. But—

MDF: Had to be able to work the farm.

WCE: Yeah. Grandpa Brashear said he didn't marry his wife to be an incubator! Can you believe that?

MDF: Interesting.

WCE: That shouldn't be there, I guess.

MDF: Now, how is she related to the old Kinsey, Sarah Mullinnix?

WCE: Sarah? She just descends from the Kinsey line. Her great-grandfather, Isaac Jackson Graham, married a Kinsey woman, Sarah, I think. I can't remember her first name right now. And they're buried at King, Texas. King Cemetery.

MDF: Where is that?

WCE: It's off [Highway] 116, and you go out to the old Plainview community, and then it turns, veers off south to the King community about, oh, I don't know, about seven or eight miles at least, I imagine.

MDF: Why was it your family decided to move into Gatesville?

WCE: Well—

MDF: Was that your grandfather who decided to, or your father?

WCE: My own father came here. You see, I didn't live there very long, but I was back there all the time, because Daddy loved to go back to see his—well, in fact, he farmed the land after he moved to Gatesville. He farmed for about five years, I think, also, on some of his dad's land. Now he didn't own a farm there. See, they were fairly prosperous, my parents were, and they had been married ten years when I was born, and a lot of tragedies happened. I was born, and Daddy was thirty and quit farm work. They had a grocery store in Killeen at that time because he couldn't farm. He had what's called dust fever from all this corn and all that stuff, and so he had bought the grocery store. And then he had, like I, he had blood pressure that just nearly killed him. High blood pressure. But he finally got straightened out and got pretty healthy later on. But they had wanted to go to Fort Worth to—he liked to do carpentry work, so they were planning to go there. Mother's only brother died when I was one month old. Well, that set the family into sadness, you know, and when I was five months old, I took whooping cough. Well, I was a, you know, a castoff. Nobody wanted me around. And so they couldn't move to Fort Worth during that time for several weeks. And so they were just staying with

my grandparents out in the country there at Tama, and Daddy was building a house for our neighbors. And while he was building that house, they called and said our house was on fire in Killeen. And they had let their insurance lapse because they were going to move. They had no insurance. They just rented the house. But in this book Mother wrote, I was reading last night, that it was an arson fire. The man that owned it burned it. And then he got caught later on and had to pay a lot to stay out of prison, was what he did. But, anyhow, the house burned.

Well, then that was late. That was August, July 1928. And then by the winter, the fall, they went on to Fort Worth and stayed a few months, weeks, months, and then came back just really broken up because they had no home, you know. Everything was gone, and they had not made much money because it rained, Mother said, and then the Depression hit the next year. But they had come back and rented my grandfather's rent house, which was over on Brown's Creek, right close to the creek, and—

MDF: Where?

WCE: Well, do you know where the C. C. Hubbard home site was? That was Jesse and Cornelia Graham's home place. It was about a quarter of a mile down to where the house was where we lived for three or four years, and then you just went on down another level and across Brown's Creek going on across to Eliga. So that's where my first days were spent. It was remote and rocky, and cedars were thick behind the house, and rattlesnakes were the biggest in the world. All around the place, but none of us got bit. And I just have so many memories, you wouldn't believe it.

MDF: Oh. Well, so you lived there at that place that was a rent house that had been built by your grandfather.

WCE: Granddaddy Colvin owned that land by then.

MDF: Okay. And that was from 1928 until how long?

WCE: Nineteen thirty-two. October of '32. And then we moved up here. Daddy farmed still and did carpentry work also. So every chance, and that was his home. Everybody's home was there, you know. And we went real often, and I learned to, that was just—this place over here that Granddaddy and Granny had to move to was never home. It was home down there. And Mother's parents still lived there until I was six years old. And they moved up here then, because he was so crippled by then he couldn't run his store or anything else. Mother's parents were nearly a generation older than Daddy's parents. They were born in 1856 and 1858. And Granny and Granddaddy Colvin were born in 1877 and '79, so see there was—

MDF: A generation apart.

WCE: And, but I loved to go back and—

MDF: Well, do you remember the place where you were when you were little?

WCE: Yes.

MDF: What was it like?

WCE: Well, the house, you mean the house?

MDF: The house, the area around it.

WCE: Well, it was a small house. See, Granddaddy had just, as Mother describes it in her book, built it for a rent house over on one of his farms. It was just about three or four miles from their house site. Their house was right at Boaz community and then on Brown—that was just called Brown's Creek, but not for Brown's Creek School. Down on the creek was where we lived. And it was just a small, as they

called it, box house. It wasn't a bungalow, but it was kind of square-ish, you know, and it didn't have a bungalow roof. I don't even remember the roof. But anyhow, it had a living room, and one of the rooms was big. It had a living room and a bedroom and a kitchen and a big square-like screened porch that we slept on in the summertime, because it was hot, you know.

Mother made a home out of everything. Mother could be put on a rock and make it look like a mansion. She was just that kind, and everybody always commented about it. They went in and they papered the thing. The people that had lived in it were just renting, so they didn't paper it or anything. Just a house. And they did leave their wood cook stove for Mother because, see, she had nothing. They still hadn't bought much, and she papered it, they got curtains and made it homey. They brought a rug. Where they lived in the apartment, the man was throwing this nice rug away because he was getting married again and his wife didn't want the rug. So Daddy asked him what he was going to do with that and he said, "Throwing it away." He said, asked him could he have it. So we had a nice rug. And then in our bedroom, too, but it was hot, hot and cold, cold, cold. I remember that. We had no indoor toilet on that place at all. And the mud was so deep that a child might get lost in it. Daddy built a wooden step and walk out towards the well so we wouldn't have to walk in the mud to get in the house.

MDF: Sort of like a plank walkway?

WCE: Yeah. About, I don't know, a few feet out from the house so you could scrape off your feet before you got into the house.

And then Mother canned. Oh, my Lord, how Mother canned food! They had no garden plot there because that was pastureland and cedar, and Granddaddy used it—his brother was a single man, and he cut cedar posts for Granddaddy all the time to fence his own place and to sell. But in the field towards Granddad's house, they had these big field gardens, you know, just an acre of this and a half acre of that. Like peas and corn and all sorts of vegetables. All sides of our family grew a lot of vegetable gardens and lettuce, and, when we moved to Gatesville, the neighbors thought we were going to die because we ate green lettuce. But we're pretty healthy. Weren't any cancers in our family, but that house was just—and we had lots of company. There was no traffic, but we had company. They—

MDF: Where would they come from?

WCE: Oh, just everywhere. You know, there were people all over the place. These farms were small. They just lived everywhere, and your church life and your community life was visiting. And my Granddaddy Colvin and his three sons, and Granny, too, were singers, and they had a quartet, and they just were well-known far and wide. They went all over the country singing at singing conventions, and then Granddaddy was a music teacher, voice teacher, and they had musical instruments. They had an organ in their home. Daddy played a trumpet, Uncle Earl played a French horn, and Uncle Gilbert played baritone. So we had music. And they loved life and they loved to sing. During the '30s, they had a radio program at KTEM in Temple, and they went every Sunday afternoon and sang a thirty-minute concert. Now I, however, couldn't sing—you know, the piano, I sing in the crack in between the keys. And my brother could sing pretty well. My sister loved to sing, but she wasn't a very good singer. My children were all musically inclined and my uncle's children were. They loved to play musical instruments, and Uncle Gilbert's children are really, one of his daughters, they can all sing real well. The Colvin family, back through the generations, have had some famous singers, opera singers. In three generations, nine of our family members have been in the Gatesville High School band.

MDF: Who were your neighbors in that area?

WCE: Hon, we had more. Hallie and Lum Hubbard, we call—

MDF: Your neighbors—Columbus?

WCE: Well, they called him Lum Hubbard. He was, that's who he was. And Hallie, who was my daddy's first cousin, Hallie was. And they were close neighbors, and then, all the way around the road, you know, there would be the Fains lived in the area, Horace and Ruth Carroll Fain. In fact, my daddy and Horace Fain started a bee business together. Actually, they—

MDF: Down there?

WCE: Yeah, down there. And Horace continued it, and if you've ever seen Fain Honey?

MDF: Uh-huh.

WCE: Okay, that's from him.

MDF: For goodness sakes.

WCE: He went on down into the lower Rio Grande Valley until they started poisoning cotton, and then he had to move back into this area. But they became quite a business and they still are. After Horace Fain moved to the Valley, there wasn't any connection with him and my dad in business. They merely worked together in the very beginning. The Fains have their business out of Llano now, and Daddy made the, I have the rollers where he made the wax, what do you call it, the frames—

MDF: The combs?

WCE: The combs to start the honey with. He made the frames. I have the pattern of the frame. And he built the hives, and Horace and they all worked together. Daddy and Mother did everything. They were real, what I call, industrious people. They didn't mind work. There was an old religious song, "Work for the Night is Coming," and when Mother was doing all this work, trying to get our life back together after all the fire and everything, the Depression and all, she sang, she hummed and sang that all the time. "Work for the Night is Coming." I found out what she meant later.

MDF: Well—

WCE: And then the neighbors, the Mannings on down the road were neighbors. Some of the Mannings were older than Mother and Daddy, and they had kids in upper grades of school. And one of the Thomas girls graduated, or got through with Maple School, and they rode horseback from over towards Eliga clear on to Maple, and they passed our house. And my sister was pretty young, and I hadn't started to school, but she had, so she rode horseback behind these girls. And then Juanita Manning Fleming, who was married to Granny's nephew. She is still living at eighty-nine years! Her mother died when she was just a teenager, and that was hard on her. She had two or three brothers or more, and so Mother got her to take Nella Mae to school on her horse. And that was my sister's name, and then Mother would bake something for her or cook beans or something and send home with her on her way home from school. And then she even sewed a little bit for Juanita. Mother could sew real well, and her mother, too, and they just helped each other out all over the place. And Mother's friends visited over towards Tama and New Hope. In that part of the country was where most of their friends were. The Bays and the, oh, Lord, I don't know who all they were. Just a lot of people. The Brookshires. They had many friends who were Church of Christ and Methodists, but our family was Baptist.

MDF: So, was there—okay. I know that some communities were formed because families were there together.

WCE: Yeah, well there were a lot of families.

MDF: But you're kind of implying that the church had maybe something to do with where, with how people identified with the community?

WCE: Well, yes, and of course, the church was family, an extended family. You know, the different children of the Brashears would marry into the Hopson family. Well, the Hopsons were their family and friends, and I don't know who-all. I'm trying to think. I had recorded, if I could bring up the names, there were, there was tragedies, too, down in there, you know.

MDF: Yeah, yeah.

WCE: Bad things that happened. Deaths, killings, and things like that. My granny's own sister's husband killed a man over her. And then later he got killed himself.

MDF: Oh, my. Were there feuds? I mean, was it that sort of thing, or was it just interpersonal?

WCE: One of the Grahams, Jesse and Martha Jane Graham's oldest daughter, married a Blackwell. And you've heard of the Blackwell and Darnell situation. Well, see, she was real old compared to my granny, 'cause she was just, well she was an aunt, but she was like a great-grandmother age almost to her. And I never knew many of the Blackwells until the Grahams renewed their reunion. We did in 1989, and then we began to gather up all these—boy, you can imagine what we're into, trying to get all the Grahams. But we have located descendants, and many of them are coming to that reunion we have in Killeen now from about nine of those children. One of the sisters only had daughters. We can't locate any of her descendants, if there are any. But we just keep finding somebody every year.

MDF: I wanted to go back and ask you about the Fains. Would he have children who are still alive?

WCE: Yes, he's got, I believe his youngest son. Well, he may have several. They live in the Llano area. They're really nice people. They like to talk about things, too.

MDF: Would any of those kids have grown up out on Fort Hood?

WCE: Well, their oldest daughter—they left there before the war started, so they were down in the Valley in the, I would say about the midthirties they left to go down there. And they had a daughter named Marjorie, and then they had several sons, and I can't remember if they had any more. I have that recorded, though, in case you want me to look it up. We visited the Horace Fain family in Santa Rosa, Texas, in August 1936.

MDF: I would like to know—

WCE: I have a book of everybody.

MDF: Okay. I would like to know if there are any—

WCE: After Daddy died, then Mother and I really got intense on, I got the information, I had always collected genealogical things, but she told me how all the connections were. Who their friends and neighbors, and all the—so I can go into my archive and give you some names. But then I know Sarah can tell you about the—

MDF: The Kinseys?

WCE: The Kinseys, and then the, there are a lot of Carroll connections in the area. And they're all, there are just different families, but I know that they go back and connect somewhere. My sister married a Carroll, her first marriage, and then they divorced, and I see him pretty often now. He's always lived here in Gatesville. I'm getting off here.

MDF: Well, that's all right. Let me, I'm getting you off by asking these sort of extraneous questions. But,

what about going back to the little house that you lived in. Did you all have a radio?

WCE: There was no electricity. Unless you had a crystal set you didn't have a radio. We didn't. Granddaddy had an old crystal set, but it was squawky and poppy. I don't remember—he could get Germany and Russia better than he could get anything in the United States! And, you know, just weird things like that. And we didn't have a radio. Now there might have been some people that had some of that, because we were too poor to have a radio at that particular time.

MDF: Were there any telephone lines that extended as far as your—

WCE: Oh, yeah, we had telephones. Now, in our little house we didn't. But Hallie had a telephone, and Granddaddy had. They all had phones way back. And they talked, too, on the phone. And they could call doctors and things, you know.

There were a lot of doctors around. Dr. Sutherland, Dr. Woods. And Woods was in Killeen. Sutherland was at Flat, I think. They married sisters. And Dr. Swall. That's a funny name, but I believe that's how they pronounced it. Dr. Walker, he was out of Killeen. And I don't remember. Dr. Brown, Reb Brown lived up towards Gatesville, but he pulled my first tooth, and I never forgave him for it.

MDF: So, did they come down in your area very often? Or just when they were called?

WCE: When they were called. Now Dr. Brown was family. See, the Browns had lived up on that, near Robinette Point, were his relatives. He visited. They would be called to a patient and then they, on the way back, you know, they would leisurely go home and visit with people along the way.

And our folks knew a lot of people. I guess everybody did, but we did. And they always, everybody in the country looked in on my grandpa, my mother's father, because he was helpless almost all the time. He couldn't travel much, at all. Mother learned to drive when she was eleven years old, and they always went to church to meetings and everything. And one night after one of those meetings, well, she went to sleep and drove off a little bridge, the edge of it, and if it hadn't been—he was a big man, heavy man, and if it hadn't been for his weight, they think that car would have gone on over. But they were able to struggle out. And, see, it was nearly a mile from the house where they had this wreck in the night. Grandmother went somewhere and got a lantern, I think, to put on the car. And then, she wanted to get somebody to drive Grandpa home, and it was miles for her to have to walk to get anybody, and he said, No, he'd walk. But it nearly killed him. When he got to the store, which was down the hill, oh, a hundred yards or more from the house, well, he just stopped and he could sleep on the counter. And Grandmother went back to the house and got blankets, I mean a quilt and pillows and things, to try to make him comfortable. He suffered a lot like he always did.

MDF: What kinds of outbuildings were there around your old house?

WCE: Not much. We had a small barn out of sheet iron, and we had a log pig pen. And you know why I remember that?

MDF: Why?

WCE: Well, I was always curious about everything. And I always did what Daddy told me not to do. And so he told me never to get on that pig pen, that fence. Well, heavenly days, you tell me never, and I do it that day. Well, anyway, he went to town one day, and I was sitting up on top of that pig pen watching the little piglets, you know, and he came down the road, and when I heard him, I tried to jump off the fence. And of course if I had fallen into that pig pen, you know that hogs eat people that, children that get into their little brood of pigs. Well, anyhow, I hung my clothes on that top pole and just tore the bottom out of my pants. And me too. But I got to the house, and Daddy was so strict. I mean, I do not complain to Daddy, but I told Mother. She helped doctor my bottom, and then it took a long time for

me to sit right. But I would not tell Daddy! He would have spanked me, I know. And I know why, because, my gosh, I could have been eaten alive right there.

MDF: Did you all butcher hogs there?

WCE: Oh, yes, everywhere, everybody did. Man, we did everything. I mentioned the canning awhile ago and these big gardens. Well, my sister was getting on up in school, and they wanted her to get in Gatesville school instead of Maple because it had gotten smaller and it just went to, I think, the tenth grade. You couldn't graduate down there, I know that. So Mother wanted to move to Gatesville, and it had better schools for the kids. And Daddy just could hardly leave the farm after all he had been through. He loved that farm and always had hopes of buying his own place, and almost did. But that's another story. So anyhow, she told him that she would can everything she possibly could, and they wouldn't have to buy groceries. He would not borrow money for anything. Especially after the Depression, you know. And so they saved every little penny they got, and they were able to come to Gatesville and buy two fifty-foot lots adjoining. I think he did borrow the money on one of those lots, just, like fifty dollars or something, but he wouldn't build his house on that lot because he knew he could lose that house. And so that house is the second house over. The white house. Past this red house was the house my parents built. And where this red house is was the garden spot we had. We moved in 1932 and he built that house. Mother had canned, see, and my brother was born in September of 1931. Well, in the year of 1931 and '32 was when she did this tremendous amount of canning, and then the cows were killed. You know about the government killing of the cows?

MDF: Yes.

WCE: And so she canned, oh, just hundreds of cans of beef and everything, all kinds of vegetables. And preserved all kinds of fruits and everything. And she had a thousand cans of stuff to bring up here. They bought a canner and a sealer and a pressure cooker, you know, and a sealer, and Daddy, he did help her that way. Mother was a, not frail, but a small woman, a thin-type person. She never weighed but ninety-eight pounds most of her life until she got older, and she couldn't lift these. She'd stand over that hot stove all day long. And pregnant with my brother part of that time, you know! And then after he was born, and the next year, too, they had this canning going on. When the canning happened, some of the crops would already be laid by, as they call it. And then he could help her lift these big cookers. One was a big one that held, I forgot how many quarts. And he'd lift it off, if you know the process of canning. They canned all that. And then she got to canning for everybody that came along.

MDF: Did she every sell any of the things she canned?

WCE: No, she didn't sell it.

MDF: It was strictly for home use.

WCE: The only thing I remember them selling, besides—well, my own parents didn't have a lot of animals. They had a span of mules, as you call it. And then, of course they had their own chickens, and the cow, and the pigs that they sold. A few, I guess, and then butchered some, and they didn't butcher too much of their own beef. When the government killed cows, then they, everybody had to then. And they had these beef clubs, you know. You've heard of that. They would buy fresh beef off a truck, if they knew who it was that came by.

MDF: Did your parents belong to one of those beef clubs?

WCE: I don't know as they belonged. I guess they did, because I know Granny and Granddaddy bought the beef off that, and I guess they—

MDF: Now, tell me how it worked in your neighborhood, the beef club?

WCE: Well, I'm not quite sure, see. I just know, I would be at Granny's house when these pickups, I guess is what they were, would come by. And I think they'd have ice around it and these big tarpaulins, and the meat was in tubs or containers or something, and they'd say they had fresh beef, you know. Well, I don't know they were in a club, but they would buy off this truck that would come by. And I don't know how long that went on.

MDF: Do you have any idea who the men were who drove these trucks and had the beef?

WCE: Really, I can't tell you that. I'm not sure. It seems to me, I don't know why because he didn't have cattle of his own, but it seems like a man named Arthur Kelley, who was my Aunt Ethel Colvin's brother-in-law, seems like he drove one of those trucks at one time. Also maybe a man named Charlie Catlett. But I couldn't prove that. And they had ice men that came out from Killeen and brought ice. And then, of course, Granny and Granddaddy had cars early on, and they went to town pretty often and bought things. Granny was a rural mail carrier for five years when her children were real small on the star route from Gatesville to Boaz, and that was, I think, about thirty-five miles roundtrip a day. She did it in a horse and buggy, and she did anything she could to help buy and pay for the land, you know. And she inherited some land from her parents, but Granddaddy didn't. He had to buy it, what he got. There were open saloons in Gatesville at the time she did the star route, and I have her ledger where she entered small sums for traffic, so I know she delivered liquor right along with the mail.

MDF: Did she take the children with her, or did she leave them at home with him?

WCE: No, no, she left them. And Daddy was the oldest. See, he was about, I don't know, say like five to seven, along in there, and these little bitty brothers, see. So he had to watch out after them, and they got into all kinds of scrapes. She'd leave, she'd soak the beans overnight, leave them cooking on the fireplace, and he knew how to make cornbread. He said sometimes they had mush beans and sometimes they had hard beans, just according to how you kept the fire going under them. And they played all kinds of pranks on those chickens and the animals. You know, you didn't bother a hen that laid because you could damage her system, and they got some of these old hens in tow sacks and ran all over the yard, and one of the hens died from that, you know, dragging her around like that. And of course they got a good spanking for that one. And they just did everything. They were really lively people. And then, he had these cousins who came because their parents had moved to Fort Worth mainly, and they would come and spend the summer with their grandparents. Well, he stayed several years with his grandparents more than with his parents, Daddy did. And so they had a house full. He said, wherever they were at night, if they were at his own parents' house or his grandparents', that's where they roosted for the night. I thought that was a cute expression.

MDF: That's good. Were you old enough to remember your mother's doing all this canning?

WCE: Oh, heavens yes.

MDF: You weren't doing—

WCE: Yes, but I'd snap beans. Oh, they had to watch me though, because they were not the stringless kind of beans, and those pinto beans that had strings on them. And I'd do what I could do, but, I remember that Daddy, I think he had some help. I don't know who, but it seems to me like just neighbors would help each other if they had theirs, you know, if there was a lull. The Hubbards helped quite a bit. Hallie knew the plight we were in, and she was real helpful to Mother. And the men folks would go pick all that stuff and gather the corn. You know, corn was quite a process to can. You had to cut it off the cob and all that. But they would bring it in by. I remember washtubs full of beans sitting on our porch, and both grandmothers would come and help her to can, prepare the vegetables to can, especially her mother. Granny had a lot of back problems, and she wasn't always able to help, but she did a lot. She had her own household to run, too, but we'd just snap from early to noon or later and

get stuff ready. And then Mother, as soon as they'd get it ready, Mother would start processing it, and Daddy would be there to lift. It went on, and she says—I was reading that last night—that they canned sometimes until eleven o'clock at night. They were just trying to get the whole, not lose anything, you know, in the whole process.

MDF: Yes. Yes. That must have taken a lot of water. Where did she get the water from?

WCE: Well, she'd get the well water.

MDF: Where was the well?

WCE: Right out that little walk from our back door there was a well. There was a pump on the well, and then Daddy got a motor and, oh, I forgot how that ran, but anyhow, it had a long belt on a pulley and all that, and he was able to draw water out of the well at the time. Some of the times he pumped the water by hand.

MDF: Would it have been a gasoline engine?

WCE: It must have been. I don't know what it was. It wasn't electricity, I know. But I remember dropping one of these pulleys on my toe, and it mashed the toenail off. That hurts, girl.

MDF: Yes, yes.

WCE: And I was an invalid there for a while.

MDF: How old were you when you started helping out?

WCE: Well, I just was always in the way, but I helped what I could until I had to, and then I didn't want to. You know. I remember one year, the year of 1936, I believe it was, or seven, '37, maybe, we lived here, of course, but we didn't do much calling. We didn't even have a phone here in Gatesville here at our house until after the war years. But Granny had one. But you didn't waste any, well, I don't know if you had long-distance. I think it was long-distance down there, but I'm not sure. But anyhow, a penny post card would get there. If you handed it to the mail carrier today, it would get there today, sometimes. But at least the next day. So the cards flew back and forth, you know. They were coming. Everybody knew everybody was coming on Saturday, maybe, and we'd go, The corn's going to be ready this weekend. Man, we'd go down there and we'd eat. Granny would cook all this fresh corn for us, you know.

Well, I had _____ (??). Daddy said, "Don't climb on the garage door. Don't swing on it." So I swung on it. Well, okay. I slid down and drove a nail, a bradded nail, rusty nail, into my knee and had to have that thing lanced, and so I was crippled there for a while. So I got in on the corn shucking, not shucking, but the silking. I couldn't shuck. I was too young to do that. But silking, and then the gnats ate you up, and I couldn't move 'cause my knee was sick. So that was an experience.

MDF: You were captive labor.

WCE: Yes, I was, and they even brought tubs of it home to can up here. So I got it both ways. But it was sure good eating.

I don't think I'm answering your questions very thoroughly.

MDF: Yes, you are. Now, how did you know about the cattle kill?

WCE: Well, I saw it.

MDF: Oh, you did.

WCE: I heard it. Mother and Daddy wouldn't let the kids watch it. They had a kill right up in the corner of my granddad's place, which would be, oh, I don't know, two or three hundred yards from their house, at least. It was at the corner of the public road and a cross fence between their house and the Lindauers, and they killed several there. And they burned those. We could smell that smoke terribly for several days. They buried some. They burned some. And of course, they couldn't—those were probably, I don't know, skinny cows or something, that they didn't want to try to preserve as food.

MDF: Did your grandfather participate in that at all? Did he sell any of his?

WCE: You couldn't sell it. What do you mean, sell any of it?

MDF: Well.

WCE: The cattle? You couldn't sell the cattle. You had to kill 'em, destroy them.

MDF: Okay. I thought they got sold to the government and then the government agent came around and—

WCE: I don't know. Maybe they did, but not like an auction or anything. I don't know. He had a farm. He was not a rancher, but he had several head. I would say probably about twelve to fifteen, just like that. But they were a good stock of cattle. He had a registered bull that was, that was a, Gold Dust was his name, and he—

MDF: What breed was he?

WCE: It was shorthorn. They're called just shorthorn. And he had bought this bull from a Dr. Raby here in Gatesville, and it was a real fine bull that had come from England, I think, was where he got it. And his bull was from that sire.

MDF: Did your parents or your grandparents ever express an opinion about that cattle shoot?

WCE: Ah, they thought it was, I don't know how to say this. They just thought it was terrible. But they agreed with the government that if anything could be done to help get through the Depression, we'd have to do it. They didn't, they were not protesters. They might have should have been somewhere along the way. But they weren't. And, of course, my granddad was affected, and my uncle, they had more land. My dad didn't have the land, you know. He was just working Granddaddy's land at that time. And he never got, my dad, my own father never got to own a farm. My granddad helped my uncle buy the farm that Daddy wanted. An underhanded type of thing, you know. It was sad, but it was better. Mother didn't want to stay on the farm because there was too much hard work on a farm in those days. It is still, but it's more mechanized, and it was, the back is bent.

MDF: What did you like about living down there?

WCE: Well, I didn't mind, because I was so young, you know. But then later, after we had to leave it all, you know, we moved to town, but we went back so often. That was fun to get to do. I had one set of grandparents that lived here in town. I could just go two blocks and see them, and then I could go—we did a lot of holiday-spending, and my granny and granddaddy's house had all these bedrooms in it. They had three bedrooms upstairs and three downstairs, and a big fireplace room, we called it, and they had two rooms that had fireplaces in them.

MDF: Now this is the house that is in the picture over there?

WCE: Yeah, that one. They had a big hallway, but not an open hall, just entrance to it. And they had a bathroom. And they had a big kitchen, big dining room.

MDF: Did you work when you went down there, or did you kind of play and enjoy yourself?

WCE: Well, just played mostly. I would go, after I was about ten years old, I guess, maybe nine, I started spending a week after school was out, and each summer, you know, I'd go do that. Granny didn't believe anybody ought to be idle. You helped, what you could do. And they had this, they called it a runaround. It was an area around the home site that you had, well you could have buildings in there, but your animals didn't run in that runaround. They had a yard fence, and then they had this runaround thing that was probably about a couple of acres, which enclosed the holding place for the tools over to the—I could pull weeds in this two-acre plot. It still makes my back hurt to pull weeds.

(text missing from tape)

WCE: Cut the cane for us, and suck that juice out until the corners of your mouth got sore.

MDF: Did you ever see them making the syrup?

WCE: Sure. I could go down to the syrup mill. I wasn't allowed to stay close to it because it's dangerous. You have to keep the fire going, you have to keep this mule going around the thing to squeeze the juice out of the—of course, that mule poked around slow, it wouldn't bother anybody. I rode that mule. Then, they had this big long trough-like thing that they built up on something—rocks, I guess—and cooked the syrup. Daddy was a good syrup cooker.

MDF: So, he didn't have to hire anybody to do that. He knew how to do it himself.

WCE: Well, he hired some, but just to help him, because it was a big, all-day process, or longer, when you got started, when you sent the guys to the field to cut the cane and they came in with it. It had to be worked with, you know. But Daddy knew how to cook it and skim it, and you had these little, have you ever seen one of those pans? You know, how you flow it from one end to the other until it's done, and skim it, and like that. And of course, that skimming stuff was hot. They had a pit back there. And that's what they didn't want the kids to get around because you'd just burn up in one of those, you'd get a terrible burn.

MDF: Did he process his neighbors' cane also?

WCE: I doubt that there was many that didn't have their own syrup mill. I guess he did some. Uncle Gilbert did more of that, I believe, than Daddy did, but I don't know of too many people. There was not close neighbors around Granddaddy. The Brookshires—Aunt Ethel, Uncle Gilbert's wife was a Brookshire—they lived on Killeen Road right behind my grandparents' place, but I don't think they raised sugar cane. And then Mr. Lindauer who lived on south towards Killeen, he didn't, as far as I know, he didn't have the sugar cane. And the Hubbards didn't. They bought the syrup, but they raised a lot of everything else. They had a huge chicken farm. And they owned lots of land, and they had several farms, and they worked hard, too.

MDF: Did your grandfather have sharecroppers or tenants?

WCE: No, except that house over where we lived was just called his rent house. And people just rented that little house, and they may have done some of the cedar chopping for him and some of the farm work. But I don't know that for sure.

MDF: So was there cedar chopping that went on in that area?

WCE: Well, over, where I said we lived, that was cedar brakes. See, Brown's Creek and towards Jack Mountain, you know, that's off now, but at that time, it was just solid cedar. And Uncle Gilbert, Mr. Brookshire owned land over there, and they had goats. They kept goats on that part of it. I believe Uncle Gilbert put goats on Granddad's place. I don't think Granddaddy ever had goats of his own. You utilized every inch of everything, and you didn't waste any food. You ate it or you fed it to the pigs, or something.

Christine Fleming Esparza
Juanita Manning Fleming
Wayne E. Fleming

Christine Fleming Esparza
Date of birth: 19 July 1934
Communities affiliated with: Eliga, Turnersville

Juanita Manning Fleming
Date of birth: 21 September 1912
Communities affiliated with: Antelope, Brown's Creek, Eliga, Manning Mountain, Maple, Palo Alto

Wayne E. Fleming
Date of birth: 24 May 1924
Communities affiliated with: Antelope, Eliga

Interviewed by William S. Pugsley III

WSP: This is Bill Pugsley. I'm at the home of Juanita Fleming [in Gatesville]. It's about two o'clock on Monday afternoon, April 23, 2001. We are interviewing Mrs. Fleming and her daughter Christine Esparza. We will be discussing her life and memories from her time on the lands, the Fort Hood lands, before the army came in 1942. [This interview is part of Prewitt and Associates' Fort Hood Oral History Project sponsored by the U.S. Army Fort Hood and conducted in conjunction with the Texas Collection at Baylor University.]

JMF: Well, Wayne is coming in.

CFE: Oh, there comes Uncle Wayne. (laughs)

WSP: Wayne is coming? Oh, we'll have to stop the tape and get Wayne in here.

(interruption in the tape)

WSP: Now we have added a third party to our tape, Wayne Fleming, the brother-in-law of Mrs. Fleming, who is the youngest brother of her husband.

WEF: Yes.

WSP: You were about to tell a story about people digging gold on Manning Mountain?

WEF: Manning Mountain, yes. For years, whenever I was a young boy growing up, there were old-timers that come in there, and then they would, they were digging, digging all over that Manning Mountain

over there looking for sixteen jack-loads of gold that's suppose, gold that was supposed to have been buried somewhere over there on that mountain. (laughter)

JMF: (laughs)

WEF: As far as I know they never did find it. (laughter)

WSP: Would this digging take place over a long period of time?

JMF: Oh, yes!

WEF: Oh, yes, that was over a twenty-year period there, nearly, yeah, uh-huh.

WSP: Different people?

WEF: Different ones, and some of the same ones would come back every year digging again.

WSP: Convinced they would find it?

WEF: That's right. (laughter) They were very convinced it was there.

JMF: (laughs) Yes.

WSP: About what years were they digging?

JMF: Oh, gosh!

WEF: That was in, from around in 1932 or 1933, along there, up until 1941 or 1942—that I knew about it—and I know that they'd been there before, even before I, I remembered. They'd talked about it, that would have been the story about it.

WSP: Did they dig shafts, or did they just dig along the surface?

WEF: No, they were just digging, they would just dig holes, some of them eight or ten foot deep—if they didn't find nothing, they'd move over and try again. (laughter)

JMF: (laughter) No.

WEF: They were doing kind of like witching for water for that gold.

WSP: Filling the mountain full of little holes?

JMF: (laughs)

WEF: Yes.

WSP: All right, Mrs. Fleming, can tell me about your parents, when they moved onto the land, what stories you heard, and then continue to when you were born.

JMF: Well, I don't know where to start.

CFE: Well, start where, about Granddad and Pauline, Mama. When did they marry?

JMF: Oh, I've done forgot.

WSP: Well, let's try another tack. Can you describe the house that you lived in?

JMF: On the Manning Mountain? It was a six-rooms house—bedrooms house, with a big hall in the middle of it and a double fireplace.

And, uh. And we had to carry water from the spring. Our well, our windmill that was furnishing the water that was there on the place was, uh, was hard and we couldn't use it to, uh, for drinking water or washing clothes or things like that. So we had to go to the springs in the holler—about a quarter of a mile, I guess, from the house—to do our washing and our laundry and stuff like that. And we had to pack our drinking water from down there. (laughs)

WEF: All the water was used for was stock water and things like that.

WSP: The well water at your house?

JMF: Uh-huh, yes, uh-huh.

WSP: You carried in all the water?

JMF: Yes, from down there.

CFE: From the spring to drink.

JMF: We had kind of climb, oh, a hillside. It was down in a gully, the spring was, in the side of a hill. It flowed off into a gully and we caught it fresh as it come out of that, out of the springs, and carried it up that hill—fall down and spill our buckets and have to go back and refill them. (laughter)

CFE: (laughs)

WSP: How old were you then?

JMF: Oh, I guess, uh, well, I was nine years old when I started to school.

WSP: You were hauling water then?

JMF: I was hauling water, packing water before then.

CFE: Well, you started as a little girl, then, packing?

JMF: Oh, yeah, uh-huh, yeah.

CFE: Well, now, Mama, did Granddaddy Bud and Pauline live in that house?

JMF: Oh, yeah.

CFE: For how many years? Was all of you children born in that house?

JMF: Aunt Mary was the last one born there.

CFE: All right, all four of the kids was born there?

JMF: I wasn't born there.

CFE: Oh, I thought you were.

JMF: No, I was born down on the old home place on the—close to Jack Mountain, yeah, above where Granny and Granddad Manning's home place was.

CFE: Oh, down there. Uh-huh. Down there close to the river?

JMF: Where we, where we moved to when we left the Manning Mountain.

WEF: That was down there where you all lived when the others, the kids was growing up, more or less?

JMF: Yes.

WEF: It was just about a mile and a half or maybe two miles from the home place.

JMF: Well, from the Jack Mountain where they was a-digging for that gold. (laughs)

WSP: Continuing with the house. You said it had six rooms. Can you describe each of the rooms.

JMF: Well, I'll start at the kitchen. We had a little back porch that we come in from, and it led into the kitchen. And it was just a small kitchen, a small room, and then there was a dinning area room, and then it moved on up to a big hall that went from the west side to the east side to a bedroom, and then there was a little hall between them. Well, now, in this hallway, one of the fireplaces was there. And then in the north, on the north side of the house well, there was two bedrooms and, uh, one of them had the other fireplace in it, on the northeast corner of it. And then across the hall was another bedroom. And then we had a big, big porch across the front.

WSP: Did you have a living room area, a sitting room?

JMF: Well, we, we didn't call it no living room then, we had, uh, what we called for our family room, when company come, was the, uh, one across the hall.

WSP: What type of furniture was in that room?

JMF: In that one that we had for the family, the guests? Was the, uh, Granny Edwards's organ. Mother got her organ. An old—an it was real beautiful. And a bedroom, a bedstead and I believe a dresser, and maybe a chest of drawers. I can't remember, but I think there was a chest of drawers in there. But now in the, the one we used for the living room, was our bedroom, too. We had two beds in it. And, uh, and then, of course, we had to sit around the fireplace, you see, when we—to keep warm! (laughs)

And, and, uh, but now in this hallway, this big hall—hallway that come in down there, well there wasn't no furniture at all in it. It was just an open territory. And then, right at the end of it on the west, east end was another bedroom, from the, the front bedroom. Then the dinning room, and then the kitchen and then the little back porch.

CFE: Nowadays they call it a breezeway.

WSP: Breezeways.

JMF: (laughs)

CFE: Right, Uncle Wayne?

WEF: Right.

WSP: Would anything be stored in this hallway?

JMF: No, except our wood. We, uh, stacked our wood for the fireplace in there, in the wintertime, in front of the cook stove. But I believe, I believe, uh, we put the wood for the cook stove in the, in the kitchen.

WSP: What type of furniture and appliances were in the kitchen?

JMF: Just a, a cabinet, and, uh, I believe she had a table of some kind to do her work on.

WSP: A stove?

JMF: Yeah, and a stove. We had to boil our water to wash our dishes, and things like that. And we, uh, we washed the dishes and things in the, in the kitchen, on the table in the kitchen.

WSP: In some kind of bucket, I presume?

JMF: Yes, we called it a dishpan. (laughs)

CFE: It was granite [graniteware], wasn't it, Mother, a granite pan?

JMF: Yes, granite.

WSP: A granite pan? Made out of rock?

JMF: I've got one out here on the back porch. (laughs)

WSP: Made out of rock?

JMF: No, granite—what do you call it, Wayne? Huh?

WEF: It's out of—uh—

JMF: It's tin, and it's—

WSP: Galvanized?

JMF: Yeah, uh-huh, it's—

WEF: No, it's—it's—it's gotta, it's porcelain, okay, it's got a porcelain, uh—

CFE: Finish on it—

WEF: Its porcelain finish on it—

CFE: Yeah, but we called it graniteware. And you go to an antique store and try to buy one, and you'll put it down *real* quick.

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: Expensive?

CFE: Very expensive.

JMF: (laughs) I've got flowers a-growing in mine now.

CFE: Forty and fifty dollars for one.

WSP: Really? So you washed dishes in a metal pan with porcelain finish inside.

JMF: And we used, uh, uh, tubs to do our washing, and rub board.

WSP: Did you do the laundry in the kitchen area?

JMF: No, no. But anyway that, we did uh, we had uh, did our laundry in these washtubs. They was how big, Wayne?

WEF: Number three.

JMF: Number three tubs, and they was round, they wasn't square like they are now. (laughs)

WEF: Around about thirty, around thirty to thirty-two inches across.

CFE: And that would be left down at the spring, wouldn't it Mother?

JMF: Yes, uh-huh, and we had a wash pot that we boiled, heat our water in down there.

CFE: Am I butting in too much?

WSP: No, you're doing very good. I'm very appreciative of your help. So as I understand it, you had an entire arrangement down at the creek to wash clothes in the fresh water. Was there someplace like a fireplace to boil water?

JMF: Yes. Well, it was just a big, uh, old cast iron wash pot—

CFE: A cast iron pot. They called them wash pots.

JMF: And we filled it full of water and, uh, we then built our fire around it to heat it.

CFE: And it had legs about this high, didn't it Uncle Wayne?

WSP: You're indicating about six to eight inches high.

WEF: It only had legs about two inches—

JMF: I know, but—

WEF: But then we used them hubs out of a buggy, a buggy hub to go under, to go under it to raise it up high.

JMF: Yes, under it to make it high, to where the heat could get up under it.

CFE: Well, I knew Daddy, I knew Daddy would have had something and he'd say, "Now don't you gals lose them!" (laughs)

WSP: These hubs would raise the pot up higher than the legs could.

WEF: Yeah, yeah, the hubs that went in a buggy, in a buggy, uh—

JMF: Yes, uh-huh.

WSP: Yes, I understand, hubs from a buggy wheel would prop up the wash pot.

CFE: Yes, and it had three legs under it.

JMF: Three legs. And the, and the rub board, it was just a scrub board with uh—

CFE: Tin.

JMF: Tin, uh—

WSP: Corrugated?

JMF: Uh, yeah, down the middle of it. And we done thisaway. (makes scrubbing motions with her hands) And of course we used lye soap. We made our own soap.

WSP: You made your own soap?

JMF: Yes, we made their own soap, didn't we Wayne? (laughs)

WEF: Oh, yeah, we sure did.

JMF: I've still got Ma Fleming's—I've still got Ma Fleming's recipe for lye soap, but I couldn't do it. (laughs)

WSP: Do you remember the recipe?

CFE: Mama, where's the Fleming reunion book?

JMF: Oh, I don't know, Christine!

WEF: It was ten, ten pounds of, oh uh, grease—

CFE: Grease.

WEF: Ten, ten pounds of grease with I believe it was—

JMF: We used, uh, cracklings.

WEF: Four, four cans of lye.

JMF: Yeah, yeah, to how much water?

WEF: Uh, seems to me, uh, seems to me like it was about ten or twelve, twelve quarts of water.

JMF: Yeah, something or another like that. (laughs) We put it all in this, uh, uh, wash pot now, and that's where we boiled it, made that lye soap.

WEF: We cooked that, boiled it in the wash pot.

WSP: Then took out the soap and put in the clothes?

JMF: Yeah, we, we let it cool, when it, and, it, and it separated. The drippings went to the bottom and the soap come to the top. Then we took a knife of some kind and cut it out in blocks. (laughs)

WEF: And the, uh, the lye soap, that in the bottom had a lot of lye in it. And you could then, you could take greasy, uh, work clothes and you could use that, rub that on them to, uh—

JMF: Get the grease out of them.

WEF: Get the grease out of them.

CFE: Like Shout does now. (laughter)

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: Was there anything left over from this process when you finished?

JMF: The, uh, soft soap.

WEF: What we called the soft soap. It was about half-and-half, about half regular soap and the other half was the, what you might call the drippings out of it.

JMF: Yeah. It would be—

WSP: Drippings would be at the bottom?

WEF: The bottom, dark, yes, it's dark.

JMF: Dark. And the top would be light.

WSP: Was that the soft soap?

CFE: No, that would be the hard soap.

WSP: That's the hard soap. And the soft soap is the stuff you put on for the grease on your clothes?

JMF: Yes.

CFE: I'm old enough that I can remember all of that.

WSP: Well I'm very grateful for you being here.

JMF: (laughs)

CFE: And it was just as white. Now, if it didn't turn white they were very upset because they wanted white lye soap.

WSP: What would keep the soap from turning white?

WEF: It was the way, it, it was the way that it was—

JMF: It was cooked.

WEF: Cooked.

JMF: I believe, wasn't it Wayne?

WEF: Yeah, and the, the, uh, amount, and the type of, uh, grease that you used in it.

CFE: I can remember—I don't remember as much about my Manning kinfolks as I do my Fleming, because I, I lived with my Grandma Fleming.

JMF: Uh, she's her Grandma Fleming made over. (laughs)

CFE: They say I look just like Grandma. I can remember her. I've seen her cook this lye soap, and just whistle, didn't she Uncle Wayne?

WEF: I've, uh, I've witnessed that a many a day.

JMF: (laughs)

CFE: She'd just stir this lye soap. She was short and built like I am, but she was a little heavier than me. And, uh, she'd just stand there and stir and just whistle. I don't remember all the tunes she whistled.

WEF: But you don't, but she didn't, you didn't stir it too long—

CFE: No.

WEF: Because if you stirred it too long you'd get some of that bottom lye soap.

CFE: Bottom lye soap.

WEF: And that's one, that's really what made it dark. She's, uh, she's—

CFE: She was very particular with her soap.

JMF: (laughs) Yes, and everything else she cooked, too.

CFE: And she was very particular with her flower beds, too.

WSP: Would you get about four or five bars of soap for each time?

CFE: Oh!

JMF: Oh, Lord! You'd get—

WEF: Oh, no.

JMF: You'd get about a gallon bucket full.

WEF: No, you'd get more than that. You'd get about, you'd get about, uh, a two or three, uh—

JMF: Is, uh, is, uh—

WEF: Gallon bucket.

JMF: It was owing to how many, how much cracklings you put in it.

WSP: So then you would cut this soap into bars?

JMF: Oh, yes.

WSP: How many bars would you end up with?

WEF: Cut it up you'd have, you'd have, you'd have over a dozen bars.

WSP: How long would they last?

JMF: Oh, it'd last a long time.

CFE: Until the next hog-killing time, all summer.

WSP: Then making soap wasn't something you did before every wash?

JMF: No. (laughter)

WEF: No, no. No, that was about every—I'd say every, uh, four to six months you'd have to make a batch of soap.

JMF: And of course we'd have to take a knife and cut that black off the bottom of it to keep it separated, you see, from the white.

WSP: Yes, to make nice clean bars of soap, you'd trim them with a knife.

JMF: Yes, yes, uh-huh, so we'd have the white—

CFE: We used them for everything from clothes, bathing to head-washing, and everything else with that lye soap.

JMF: And taking a bath, too.

CFE: That's what I said, clothes, on—

WSP: Did you add any perfume in the mixture?

JMF: No, no.

WSP: What would it smell like?

JMF: Lye soap. (laughter) Wasn't any way—

CFE: It was kind of a sweet smell I can remember—didn't it Uncle Wayne?

WEF: Yeah, it had kind of a sweet smell like, yeah.

WSP: Okay, we're in the kitchen, and we've made the soap—

JMF: And the laundry. (laughs)

WSP: Tell me about cooking on the stove. What kind of stove was it?

JMF: It was just a big iron, iron, stove with four caps up on—six caps. And, uh, now wasn't it Ma had the one with the little hood?

WEF: I've gotta, I've gotta, my mama had, uh, she had a, uh, what you might say a Cadillac, uh, stove.

JMF: It had a hood over the top of it.

WEF: Warming up the top and—

JMF: It had doors across the top, and when you got ready to put something up there, well, it, just, it—well, the stove pipe went through it, didn't it Wayne?

WEF: Yeah.

JMF: Or at the back of it?

JMF: To keep things warm.

WEF: On one end of that stove was, was, uh, was—now this is where I come in—on one end of that stove they had a water, a water closet, a water tank.

JMF: Yeah—

WEF: On the firebox end, and that kept water—you'd keep hot water in that all the time. I had to carry water to put in that, to fill that, uh, reservoir on the end of that stove.

CFE: And it's a wood stove.

WEF: Yes, wood.

JMF: Yes, and it had four caps on it, isn't that what?

WEF: Yes, it had four caps, no she had six, it had six.

CFE: Your mother's had four, didn't it Mama?

JMF: Yeah. Yeah, mine, my mother didn't have one with a hood on it like his—just a flat-topped one, and with the oven was on the bottom.

WSP: Just a regular wood stove with an oven on the bottom. All right. Did you do any cooking on it?

JMF: Yes.

WSP: For a guy that's used to just turning a gas range to 325 degrees, what was it like to cook on a wood stove? What would you have to consider?

CFE: (laughs)

JMF: (laughter) Well, you had to keep your wood in there to keep your heat a-going, and, uh, didn't you Wayne?

WEF: Yeah, and don't get it—you could get it too hot.

JMF: Yes, you could get it too hot, and it'd burn everything up.

WSP: How would you know when you got it too hot?

JMF: Well, you could just tell by looking. (laughs)

CFE: You just learned, you learned how to do it.

WEF: Mama's, Mama's stove had a heat register on the front of the door. Lots of them didn't have that.

WSP: Heat register? It would tell you—

WEF: How hot the oven was.

WSP: But your stove didn't have one?

JMF: No, unh-uh.

WSP: How did you tell?

JMF: (laughs) You can't. (laughs) You can't—now I think the one we had was about the size of this card table, wasn't it Wayne?

WEF: Yeah, uh—

JMF: Yes, and it had four caps on it, one here—well, it had, uh, burnt, where you put the wood up here, and that wood, that heat circulated back this way and then come out up that stove pipe at the back.

WSP: I see. The firewood was toward the front of the stove.

JMF: Yes, the fire was in the front, and four tops, caps.

WSP: Would you take the caps off? Or just put the pot on top?

JMF: No, no, just set our pots on each cap, whatever you was using. Like if you was boiling beans, well, you'd have your beans here, and your potatoes or something or another over here. And if you was to a fixing breakfast you'd have this, uh, a frying skillet with your bacon and your eggs and stuff like that, and your coffee pot a-setting over there.

CFE: And then hot biscuits in the oven—

JMF: Yeah.

CFE: Homemade hot biscuits.

WEF: Now in that other one, when you get to that oven, now, it depended on hot it was where they put the, uh, the, you had shelves in that oven—

JMF: Yeah.

WEF: And you put your—if you was, if it felt like the oven was a little too hot, you'd put your, your, uh, biscuits down a little lower in the, in the oven.

WSP: The heat was coming from above? So to move it away from the heat you removed the shelf down lower in the oven, whereas nowadays you raised the shelf up to get it away from the heat.

JMF: Yes, uh-huh. Yes.

WSP: Would you determine this because of how much wood you were putting in, or was there some other way?

WEF: I mean, you'd know by how much, how much wood you had in it for heat.

JMF: And they'd be little sticks about this long.

WEF: My mama used, my mama used Spanish oak wood—

JMF: And I think that's what, I think that's what we used.

WEF: Nearly every woman used what today we call today, what was called Spanish oak wood. That made the best, that was the best wood for that.

JMF: Yeah, the smell in it really give it a flavor. (laughs)

WSP: Was this like mesquite wood? Would it have a nice smell?

CFE: No, it's Spanish oak.

WEF: It had oak—

JMF: It was just an oak smell.

WSP: You would cook using the same kind of wood?

JMF: Oh, yes, uh-huh, we did that after we married.

WSP: Would this wood grow on your own property, or would you have to—

JMF: Well, we got it on our own property, on the Manning Mountain, out where we was living.

WSP: The only major appliance you had in the kitchen was the stove, or was anything to keep things cool?

JMF: No. Unh-uh.

CFE: Not for long years, until the gold coolers come out.

WSP: So how did you cool things that needed to stay cool?

JMF: We used the fan, or, or the—

CFE: Food.

WEF: He's talking about food that you put—they had, uh—

WSP: Food that would spoil.

JMF: Oh, we had what we called, uh, uh—

CFE: Pie safe?

JMF: No.

WEF: No, it was, uh—

JMF: No, well, I'll be dogged, Wayne—(laughs) I can see it—

WEF: It was a cooler, that's really what it was.

JMF: We called it a cooler, and it, and it was made out of tin, wasn't it?

WEF: Sheet metal.

JMF: And it had four shelves in it, and it was square. And, and then the top of it was, uh, uh—

CFE: Reservoir.

JMF: Yeah—

WEF: Yeah, you put water in there.

JMF: Water in it and then you put, put around the side of it a sheet or something.

CFE: A white cloth.

WEF: A white cloth, and it drawed the water out.

JMF: And it drawed the water out of that—

WEF: And into the bottom.

JMF: And drop down into the bottom, and, and as the wind blew through, well, it kept it cool. (laughs) I never will forget the first icebox we got, there, uh, these kids was tickled to death over that first icebox. (laughs)

CFE: Well, I can remember the cooler. We one—

WSP: What would you do to keep it operating?

WEF: (laughs) You had to keep that water, you had to keep the top of it full of water.

CFE: Top of it full of water.

JMF: You had to keep it full, and keep it clean. If you didn't, it would sour. (laughs)

WEF: And that's where she's talking about carrying that water from the branch, the spring. You had, you carried that fresh water from the spring to put in the top of it.

CFE: Because you wouldn't use that hard water for it. You wanted the best water there was.

WSP: The water would flow down the sides of the cloth, and you would have wind, or a light breeze?

JMF: Yes, on that material. Oh, yes, yes.

WEF: You had it—or on the back porch.

JMF: Yes. We didn't have it on—yeah, I don't remember where Mama kept—I believe she kept hers in the dinning room.

WEF: Did she?

JMF: I think so. I'm not sure but I think she did.

WSP: What would be kept in the cooler?

JMF: What we kept in it? Oh, our milk, and our butter, and—

CFE: And leftovers from lunch.

JMF: And things like that.

WSP: Butter?

JMF: Yes—

CFE: Homemade butter.

WSP: Wouldn't butter melt?

JMF: No. (laughter)

WEF: No. Oh, no.

CFE: It had to stay real good and cool. I've come in from school on many a time and pull that old curtain back and got me some sausage and biscuits.

JMF: Or some cookies. (laughter)

CFE: (laughs)

WSP: You had a cooler in the dinning room where you ate. And in the kitchen you had the stove and—

JMF: And the cabinet.

CFE: And a work table.

WSP: Any sinks?

JMF: Oh, no, no. We had the dishpan.

WEF: No. Oh, no.

WSP: Washing was always done in buckets and pans?

JMF: Yeah, yeah.

WSP: Where would you store the raw ingredients?

JMF: Up in, up in our cabinet. We had the cabinet with the shelves in it, or, or a shelf of some kind or something like that.

WEF: And most of them had a little storage, a little storage cabinet in the corner—maybe in the corner in the kitchen, with, uh, either the doors on it or a curtain on it.

CFE: They covered everything.

JMF: Had to, to keep the flies out. We didn't have no screens.

WSP: No screens?

CFE: No, no screens, not even—uh-huh.

JMF: No screens, no.

WSP: You opened the window, and whatever came in, it came in?

WEF: That's right.

JMF: (laughs)

CFE: And at night you could lay there and see the stars a lot of times.

WSP: Through the window?

CFE: No, through the ceiling.

JMF: Oh, I forgot, on, on this house—

WSP: Through the ceiling?

JMF: (laughs) On this house on the Manning Mountain, we had a screened-in back porch. No, it wasn't screened-in, it was just a back porch. It was, uh, built up so high around, and then from here up, like this window on up, was all open. And we called it sleeping porch, and we had two beds out there.

WSP: This was for the summertime?

JMF: Yes.

WEF: Oh, no, I slept, I slept the year-round on one of those.

JMF: Oh, you slept on the front porch!

WEF: No, on the back porch.

JMF: On the back porch?

WEF: On that ell in the back porch, I had, we had that screened in all the way around—

JMF: We had duck around it, well, I know—

WEF: And then, and then, in the wintertime we'd drop a ducking: the ducking would hold up.

CFE: That's his home place.

WEF: Most all of them had screened-in, I mean porches like that, with ducking—

JMF: Like screens—

WEF: Flaps that they'd let down in the wintertime, that part—

WSP: Okay, and cover it to block out the cold wind. But that still must have been just *awful* cold.

WEF: I didn't have a bad cold all my life, nearly.

JMF: (laughs)

CFE: But his brother just older than him, they couldn't keep shoes on him, so his ma would put shoes on him, would tell him, "Now Bill, don't pull these shoes off." She said away he'd go, and directly she'd see bare feet walking through the snow where Uncle Bill had taken his shoes off and walked. Right Uncle Wayne? (laughter)

WEF: Right.

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: In the snow?

WEF: Heck, yes.

JMF: Well, y'all was sleeping on the front porch that time, that winter and, uh, and it snowed, and so—they had to cover him up to keep the snow off of him. (laughs)

WSP: Snow was coming on the porch?

JMF: It was, uh, well it was open, open—

WEF: It was drifting in. Uh-huh.

JMF: (laughter) Yes.

WSP: My goodness! I don't think I could have taken that.

JMF: But now when we moved—

WEF: But if you didn't know no better, it was just—

JMF: It was just as happy as we could be.

WEF: It was just the way it had to be.

JMF: And when we left the Manning Mountain, we moved down on the Cowhouse, and we, after moving out of that big house up there on the Manning Mountain we moved into a little old four-bedroom house, no four-roomed house up here, a kitchen and dining room was on the back, was altogether. And then we had a living room and a fireplace room, and we had one bed in there. And then we had another bed, bedroom, we had a bed in it and, uh, Mama's organ, and, uh, my cedar chest, and, uh, a chair or two I think. And we had what we called a chifforobe, a great big closet, you know, to hang our clothes in.

WSP: Your family squeezed everything you had in six rooms down into four rooms.

JMF: Yes, yes. Yes. (laughs) Yes, and as Wayne said, we had a screened-in front porch and had a little side room on the end of it, all boxed in, at where my two brothers slept. At what time, in the wintertime they slept there, but in the summertime they slept on the other end of the screened-in porch. And the one fireplace there.

WSP: Instead of the two fireplaces you had at the Manning house?

JMF: Yes.

WSP: Who built the house on Manning Mountain?

JMF: Uh—my granddad's brother-in-law—what was his name, Wayne? He lived up there close to the Jack Mountain. Well, I can't think what his name was.

WSP: That's okay. So give me roughly about when that house was built?

CFE: Gosh—

JMF: I don't have no idea.

WSP: Turn of the century?

WEF: It was built, it was built before the turn, turn of the century. Yes, I'd say, I'd say somewhere in the '80s.

JMF: Yes, sometime in the '80s.

WSP: Was he one of the first people to live in that area?

JMF: Yes, uh—well, no. I think he bought, I think Granddad bought the, uh, the Manning Mountain, from the, from the Reyes (??). I believe that's who he bought it from.

WSP: What was your granddaddy's name?

JMF: W. F. Manning, William Franklin Manning.

WSP: Is that how the mountain got the name, from him?

JMF: Yes'ir.

WSP: Was the mountain called anything else before that? Or did he just designate the mountain himself?

JMF: Well, the army camp put the name on it when they bought it.

WSP: Oh!

WEF: I think—wasn't that, wasn't that, didn't they call that Jack Mountain?

JMF: No, the Jack Mountain—

WSP: Basically, what you are saying is that the house on Manning Mountain is quite old. Was this the same house Christine said she could see through the roof?

CFE: No, no.

WSP: She was referring to another house. Okay. So what type of roof did the Manning Mountain house have?

JMF: Just a shingle roof.

WSP: And inside, anything hanging on the walls?

JMF: No, nothing but pictures.

WSP: Pictures of the family?

JMF: Yes, I think so, as well I remember.

WSP: Was there anything else that struck you about the construction, techniques that they don't do now? How about things that had to be repaired about the house? Do you recall repairing the house?

JMF: No.

WSP: Any damage from, for example, a hailstorm or fire?

JMF: No, don't think so.

WSP: Any flood damage or anything like that?

JMF: No, it was too high on that mountain to have a flood!

WSP: Was it on top of the mountain?

JMF: Oh, yes, it was on the top of the mountain.

WSP: And you'd have to come down from that mountain for—

JMF: I had to, when I started to school I had to go down the mountain. We was in about four miles of school.

WSP: And also for hauling water, too?

JMF: Yes! (laughs)

WSP: And you carried water by hand?

JMF: Uh-huh, yes.

WSP: In buckets?

JMF: Oh, yes'ir, from the springs I would, we would.

WSP: How many trips would you have to make in a day?

JMF: Well, I'd carry double buckets on each side, a bucket on each hand.

WSP: Were you the only one hauling water?

JMF: Oh, no!

WSP: Everybody hauled water?

JMF: Yes. My brothers and my sister.

WSP: How far to the spring?

WEF: Well, I'd say it was about, it was close to two hundred yards.

JMF: Yeah, yeah, further than that, something like that.

WEF: It was about two hundred yards are better.

WSP: About half a mile?

WEF: Almost a half a mile.

WSP: (whistles) And part of this trip is up hill.

JMF: Yes, going up hill. (laughs) But after you got up on the level part, if you didn't watch, you'd stump your toe on a flint rock and here would go all your water. (laughs) You'd have to turn around and go back! (laughs)

WSP: This was one of the chores you had to do when you were quite young. I think you said, nine.

JMF: (laughs) Yes. Yes, I was, I was nine when I started to school.

CFE: But you hauled water before then, though, before then, Mother.

JMF: Oh, yeah, yeah.

WSP: What other chores, as a child, did you do around the house?

JMF: I milked cows. We milked the cows and fed the hogs and fed the goats. My granddad had goats by the herds. And we, we fed goats, and we worked in the field, chopped cotton, chopped and thinned out the corn.

WEF: You had sheep, too.

JMF: No, not up there, no.

WEF: Not up there?

JMF: No, we, he didn't have no sheep till he moved down to the Cowhouse.

WEF: Cowhouse.

JMF: Yeah.

WSP: He had goats on Manning Mountain. About how many would you say?

JMF: I'd say about two hundred, or maybe two or three hundred?

WEF: Oh, I'd say 250 head.

JMF: Yeah, something like that.

CFE: And he had cows, too.

WSP: He had cows.

CFE: Oh, yes, he was a big rancher.

JMF: Yeah, yeah, he had cows, too.

WSP: How many acres are we talking about?

JMF: Now, I'll have to ask Wayne on that.

WEF: I'd, well, I'd say there was somewhere in the neighborhood of fifteen hundred acres.

WSP: Relatively speaking, he had a fairly big operation.

JMF: Oh, yes. And there was a rent house on the mountain, too.

WSP: Come again?

JMF: There was a rent house on the mountain. And there was another family lived in it, and they helped do part of the cultivating land. They got half of it, and we used the other half.

WSP: How much of the fifteen hundred acres could you farm?

JMF: Oh!

WEF: Oh, not very, I'd say not over a hundred acres.

WSP: The property basically covered the top part of Manning Mountain. But would any of it go down the sides?

WEF: Down the sides.

WSP: Down into the valley below. Was there any farming down below?

JMF: No, no, it was all on top.

WEF: It was all on top?

JMF: Uh-huh.

WEF: I thought, I thought it came down under the mountain there?

JMF: No, uh, oh, uh. Well, I can't think who lived under the mountain. Well, you see, the Sadler Ranch was just down below us.

WEF: Yes, it was just west of you.

JMF: Yeah. But, uh, anyway, on the east side, we'd come in from the east side, you know, at the mouth of Brown's Creek. And, uh, and, uh, Hills lived down there—

WEF: Yeah.

JMF: Yeah, R. Q., R. Q.—R. Q. and Fannie Hill lived down there. And, uh, she was a schoolteacher, Mrs. Hill was, and she taught school at Brown's Creek, what they called the little Brown's Creek School. And, uh—

WSP: Going back, we were trying to learn where you farmed and where you did the goat raising.

JMF: It was all on top. And what was the people's name that lived at the, on the east? The rent house, Jim Barnes lived on the rent house awhile—and, uh, and uh—(laughs)

WSP: That's okay. We'll just move it on, this interview is more about what you did than the names you can remember.

JMF: Yes, well, anyway, we, uh, Daddy farmed the, uh, south end of the cultivating land, and, uh, and, uh, Jim Barnes farmed the east end or the north end. And, uh, and they raised cotton and corn and maize. Did they have maize, Wayne?

WEF: They had maize, yes.

JMF: I think so? That's what they called it.

WSP: This farming was also done on the mountaintop?

JMF: This is on top, oh, yes.

WSP: Did I misunderstand something. I thought the best farmland was below. How would you rate the land on top?

JMF: Well they had to have that for their goats and their cattle, for grazing. Yeah. Yes, but anyway, this farming land, it was all fenced off in fields, what we called a fields, you see, to keep the, uh, the cattle and the goats from getting into the field.

WSP: Okay, so part of this acreage was set aside for farming, the best part, I take it—

JMF: Yes.

WSP: And the rest is for—

JMF: Is for grazing.

WSP: They were grazing along the sides, as well as on top?

JMF: Yes, yes. Well, we didn't, we didn't, we didn't go off of the mountain, we just, we would just on the, on top of the mountain.

WSP: You wouldn't ranch down the sides?

JMF: No. No, It, uh, it, our, that farm was all on top, and the ranch.

WSP: All fifteen hundred acres are just the top of this Manning Mountain?

JMF: Yes. Yep.

WSP: Can you tell me something about raising goats? What should somebody who is from the city need to know about raising goats?

JMF: (laughs) Well, they did their own raising, didn't they Wayne?

WEF: Yes, they did—

JMF: They'd graze the grass, and they'd eat the weeds.

WEF: They lived on, they lived mostly off of the brush—

JMF: Brush, yeah.

WEF: And the leaves that's on the brush on the mountain. That's what they'd prefer.

JMF: They'd climb, they'd raise up their feet and climb those limbs and pull 'em down and eat, eat those tender leaves.

CFE: They kept the underbrush out.

JMF: Yeah.

WSP: There were some real advantage to having goats then.

CFE: Yes.

WEF: Yes, that's generally why they had them.

JMF: Oh, yes! And of course, I believe he fed them—did he feed them cake or what, Wayne?

WEF: He fed them cottonseed cakes.

JMF: Yeah.

WSP: Cottonseed.

WEF: Cottonseed cakes—

WSP: What is that?

WEF: That's, that's, uh, cottonseed that's been processed and the oils taken out of it. And it's the residue from the cottonseed.

JMF: It had little seeds.

WSP: Little seeds. And cotton shell, too?

WEF: No, it didn't, it was ground up until it—black parts of the seed was in it, but it was reddish, it had a reddish look.

CFE: About this long, wasn't it, Uncle Wayne? About—

WSP: About two, two and a half inches long?

WEF: You could get different sizes of cake. For them I figured they used a small, that small cake which wasn't much bigger than the end of your, than your thumb.

WSP: So we're talking about lumps—

JMF: Yes, taken out of the cotton.

WEF: See, see, the, when they ground it, there'd be some of it where they ground it that'd come into meal and that was the cottonseed meal that they, that they used sometimes. They mixed it with salt at, you know, for them to eat, for them to lick on, to keep them from eating so much—that salt would keep them from eating so much of it.

JMF: Then we had salt blocks out, too, for the goats and the cows.

CFE: And they all grazed together.

WSP: Where did I hear that it was not good to put them together? Or maybe I'm thinking of sheep?

WEF: You're thinking of sheep.

JMF: Sheep, I guess.

WEF: Sheep, sheep, don't live off of the, off of the leaves and stuff like the goats, and they, and they graze it, the grass so close until a cow can't hardly, uh, can't eat it because they have to pull it with their tongue into their mouth, and they can't graze it.

WSP: Whereas sheep are pulling it with their teeth, gnawing it right down?

WEF: Yes, they can eat it right down even to the ground.

WSP: But the goats don't eat the ground cover?

WEF: No, they don't eat—they eat some, but they don't eat as much as the sheep does.

CFE: No, they just eat the underbrush.

WSP: What was the goat-raising season like?

JMF: Well, they—do what now?

WSP: Would you raise them to butcher, or raise them to sell, or what?

JMF: Yeah, butcher them, and their hair. They, we sheared them. We, uh, they had a big sheep shed, we called it.

WSP: On your property?

JMF: Uh-huh, and, and, uh, they would pin those goats up and, uh, then there was guys that would come in, and they'd sheared then with the, clip, clip—

WEF: Hand clippers—

JMF: Hand clippers, till the, those electric clippers come in.

WEF: They had a clipper with a long blade on it, and, uh, uh, just like scissors, and they, uh, had a spring. They had a spring. They'd shear those sheep, and they had a sharp point on 'em.

CFE: And goats.

WEF: Goats.

JMF: Goats, yeah.—

WEF: And they'd shear them with that, you, uh—

WSP: I'd think that would really make your hand ache, if you did it for a couple of hours.

WEF: Well, I'll tell you what, it, uh, you had to have good muscles.

JMF: It did. It'd make blisters. (laughs) And then, and then after they get them sheared, well they had what we called a wool sack that they'd put, uh, put this hair all in, and, uh, then they'd take it to market. Isn't that right, Wayne?

WSP: All of that could be done on your property?

JMF: Oh, yes.

WSP: You wouldn't have to go any place else to have it done?

JMF: No, they, they'd come there and did it.

WSP: You would hire men?

WEF: Yes, they'd do it, they done it for so much a head. They'd, uh, they'd, they'd shear goats for, at one time for a nickel a head, a nickel to ten cents a head.

JMF: (laughs)

CFE: (laughs)

WSP: What time of year would this occur?

JMF: In March, early spring.

WEF: Usually in the early, early spring.

CFE: They'd have to wait until winter was over so they wouldn't freeze.

JMF: Wouldn't freeze.

WEF: Yes, their short haircuts. If you got a real bad cold spell—

JMF: You'd have to pen them up.

WEF: You'd lose a bunch if you didn't.

JMF: Yes, you sure would if a cold spell come on 'em, or a rainy spell after they got sheared.

WSP: Three or four days of rain as opposed to one night of rain?

WEF: They'd chill, they'd chill to death.

WSP: Do you remember something like this ever happening?

JMF: Oh, yeah.

WSP: What was the result? Do you recall your parents' concerns about losing goats?

JMF: Oh, yeah, they would worry about it. If there was a cloud come up or something like that, he'd say, "Well, let's go round the goats up and put them in the shed," and where it would keep them from getting wet and cold.

WSP: This was something he could plan for. I'm assuming since, as you said, your folks lost some goats, sometimes the weather would change abruptly, and sneak up on him.

JMF: Yes, uh-huh, yes.

CFE: Well, I'll tell you one thing, them old-timers could tell you more about the weather than these new weather men could.

JMF: (laughs)

WEF: (laughs)

WSP: We need one of those old guys up there doing the weather!

CFE: (laughs)

JMF: (laughter) I've outrun a storm a many a time a-coming in from school.

WSP: You would see the clouds coming and it was either raining or cold? What was it?

JMF: Yes, yes, raining or cold. I'd come on up that mountain and get, streak on across to that house after I got on top. (laughs)

WSP: You've got 250 head of goats. You said sheep came later. Did you have any cattle? And how many head did you have?

JMF: Yes. Oh, Lord! We had a bunch.

WEF: We had a bunch.

CFE: A bunch—and he would drive them from there, Granddad Manning would drive them from there—now Mother's oldest brother has told me this story—he'd drive them from down there on the Manning Mountain up to Copperas Cove, 'cause that was the railhead. Copperas Cove was the railhead. And they got a bunch loose one time, and they went right down the middle of Copperas Cove on the sidewalks and everything before they all got them in the pen. And they had a bunch of posts knocked down off the sidewalks. (laughter) See, Uncle Floy (??) told me that story. You may not want it, but that's it.

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: (laughter) Oh, that's a good story. Did someone have to pay for the damage?

JMF: I don't know. Daddy had an old saddle horse—see that picture up there with those mules—he, uh, that was his old saddle horse. And, uh, he'd load that, uh—saddle him up every morning and, uh, get him two sacks of cake, one in front and one behind, and go feed the cows in the wintertime. And, uh—

WSP: How many head are we talking about?

WEF: I'd say, I'd say about, uh, close to somewhere around 250 head.

CFE: Cows or goats?

WEF: Cows. I've got to put in a little bit now, Christine. He had some of the craziest ones I've ever seen in my life. (laughter)

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: Crazy cows?

WEF: Yes. My dad bought some heifers from him one time, about six or eight of them.

JMF: (laughter) They were as wild as—

CFE: (laughs)

WEF: Oh, they was wild!

WSP: What does a crazy cow do?

WEF: They just run off every time you try to feed them. And they, and they, uh, they won't come with the rest of them, to the pen—

CFE: They'll just stand their own, you can't pen them for nothing.

WEF: Yes.

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: The rest of the cattle would move toward the food or whatever, and these crazy cows are off by themselves?

JMF: With their heads in the air!

WEF: My dad sold them. I think he had about six or eight heifers, and he, he, he loaded them up and sold them. They had one calf, and he sold it with them. He said they was going to ruin the rest of the cows, make them be wild.

JMF: (laughter) See that picture of that car right here? That's my Granddad Manning's Oldsmobile. And he herded cows in it. (laughs)

WSP: Now how do you do that?

JMF: Well, you'd go to round them up, you see, to take them to the First Monday. Well, my daddy would saddle up the horses, and him and the boys would all take out to the place where they were going to get the cows. And Granddad Manning would take off in the Oldsmobile ahead of 'em, and what they couldn't round up on them cows, well, he'd take in after them in that Oldsmobile. (laughs)

WSP: Chase them around the field?

JMF: (laughs) Around the pasture!

CFE: There wasn't any roads, really.

WSP: Well, you can't do that in a car these days.

JMF: No, you sure can't. (laughter)

WSP: Would he just whoop and holler and honk the horn at them?

JMF: Yes, and call them. He'd call them.

WEF: You could train them, you can train cattle to call them. You'll always have one or two that, that is a leader for the rest of the herd. We lived about, oh, we farmed a place about three miles below where our place we owned. And we'd take him and—we had one old cow that—whenever the fall come we'd let them graze the field out of—

WSP: Right, come off the mountain and go down to the field.

WEF: Come into the field. And we'd open the gate to the public road, open the gate and turn, and that old cow would come out. She'd hit a little jog and she wouldn't stop until she got down to the place where we lived. She'd be standing at that gate waiting for you to let her in.

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: And all the other cows behind?

WEF: All the rest of them followed her. She was—you didn't have a bit of trouble of drive, of herding.

JMF: (laughs)

CFE: Every herd had a lead cow, right Uncle Wayne?

WEF: We had to go through another Manning's place, and the Gault place before we got to the public road. Then there was about two and a half or three miles down that road.

JMF: Down that road.

WSP: How many people would it take to move a herd that way?

WEF: Oh, it'd be about two.

WSP: Only two?

WEF: Oh, yes, with a lead cow all you had to do was just one go through ahead and open the gates and, uh—

CFE: And just call.

WEF: One kind of following along behind them.

JMF: Well, they generally had sales on First Monday, of every year, of every month at Gatesville, or Copperas Cove, wherever.

WEF: Yeah, my dad didn't sell any hardly at First Monday.

WSP: The first Monday of every month. Was this where you would take the cattle?

JMF: Cattle. Cattle to sell them. And, uh, and they'd—

CFE: And Granddad took them to Copperas Cove a lot, didn't he, Mama, to put them on and send them to Fort Worth?

JMF: Yeah.

WEF: Yes.

WSP: Why couldn't you send them to Fort Worth from Gatesville?

JMF: That was too far, you see?

WEF: There was no railroad.

JMF: There was no railroad in Gatesville. You had to go the railhead, and the railhead was at Copperas Cove. See?

WEF: At Copperas Cove or Killeen, but Copperas Cove was better, than, they had better facilities there.

JMF: They had better lots.

WEF: Yes.

WSP: Better lots? Copperas Cove was further west, so it was a longer trip. What would make a difference in a lot? Why would you worry about the lots?

WEF: All you had was just pens to pen them in.

CFE: Well, I call them lots but they're pens. You just put the cows in.

WEF: They had about, I guess they had at least fifteen or twenty pens that you could put your cattle in.

JMF: Every family—

WEF: Then you, then you had a chute that you could load them right into the rail, right into the train cars.

JMF: I'm going to tell you something else, too. We had a dipping vat. When they got ticks on them, well, they would herd those cows up and bring them down to that dipping vat and fill it full of water—and

what kind was it that they put into kill the ticks, Wayne?

WEF: I think it was kind of like Lysol. Lysol, I believe.

JMF: Well, I don't recall what it was, but we called it the dipping vat. They had a pen around it, and it was—

WEF: Lysol, I believe.

JMF: And, uh, and it looked like a little chute made out of concrete.

CFE: Down in the ground.

JMF: They filled that full of water, and they put whatever this chemical in it that they wanted to, to kill those ticks. They'd open that gate out of the lot into that vat, and them old cows would jump into that (claps) and go on and swim on through, and they'd climb out the other end. (laughs)

WSP: This was part of the lot facilities in the Copperas Cove.

JMF: No, that was on the farm.

WEF: No, that was on her father's farm.

CFE: No, that was at the farm.

JMF: Yeah, that was on the farm. The dipping was—

WEF: Every farm, every rancher of any size had one—and, too, they had public dipping vats that you could take your cattle to.

WSP: I'd think the stockyard at the railhead would have to make sure you're not sending cattle—

WEF: No, unh-uh, they don't have that there.

JMF: No, no.

WSP: Okay, they don't care about that, something altogether different?

CFE: They're sending them to Fort Worth, didn't they go to Fort Worth, Mother?

WEF: Most times.

JMF: I think so, too.

WSP: What other buildings did you have on the Manning Mountain?

JMF: On the Manning Mountain? Well, we had the barn and the sheep sheds—

WSP: How many of those?

JMF: One, it was a great big one. And we had another little old shed we kept our—well, we kept our car in it for a while—but we kept the buggy in it that we used. We had a buggy before they—

CFE: Well, did you have a smokehouse, Mama?

JMF: No, nope, no, smokehouse.

CFE: And you had the toilet?

JMF: No.

WSP: No outhouse?

JMF: No, no outhouse, we had to go to the barn. (laughs)

WSP: You had to go to the barn? The outhouse was in the barn, as it were?

JMF: Wherever we could get out of sight. (laughs)

WSP: Oh, my goodness! (laughs)

CFE: Is this your first interview?

WSP: No, but this is the first time I've heard this.

JMF: (laughter) Well, it's the truth, ain't it, Wayne?

WEF: Most of them had, a lot of them had outhouses, but there was such a thing as not having an outhouse.

JMF: We didn't even have an outhouse down there at Eliga when we left the Manning Mountain. We had to go under the hill to use the outhouse down there. (laughs) Or use the hen house. (laughs)

WSP: Okay, wait, I'm going to try not to be indelicate when I ask this question—you had one- and two-seaters, you had to sit down for some part of this?

JMF: No, we had to squat. (laughs) Now that's true.

WSP: And you didn't think of having anything to sit—

JMF: No, nope, unless we went to the hen house. I believe Daddy put a little two-by-four across the corner and we used that, in a corner. (laughs)

CFE: That was down off of the mountain, at Eliga.

JMF: Yes, that's when we lived at Eliga. But we didn't—we had to go to the barn when we lived on Manning Mountain, and had to squat, or get behind the barn.

WSP: Was this because of the difficulty digging a hole for it?

JMF: I don't have no idea. They just didn't have one.

CFE: They just didn't think about it.

WEF: No, they just didn't feel it was necessary.

JMF: Wayne and them had one up on the home place.

WEF: Yes, we had a two-holer up there.

CFE: Now the home place is where I was born.

WSP: Which was down the hill?

CFE: Well, it's a different story.

JMF: It was in the Antelope community where she was born.

WSP: Okay, we'll get around to that shortly.

WEF: It's across the river.

WSP: This ranch is a large operation. Did your father put together this ranch himself?

CFE: My grandfather.

JMF: Grandfather, yes.

WSP: He was the one who assembled the acreage?

JMF: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Yes.

WSP: Do you remember where he was from originally?

JMF: Tennessee? Do you know, remember where Granddaddy was from?

WEF: I don't know, I don't know where he came from.

CFE: All I know is the main ones came over into Virginia—seems like Granny Manning said—and that's where they started from.

WSP: He came directly from Tennessee and started up the farm? Do you know about what year that was, roughly?

JMF: No, I don't have no idea. It was before the war.

WSP: Before the war or after the war?

JMF: It was before the war.

WSP: The Civil War?

JMF: Well, was it? No, not before the Civil War. After the Civil War, I imagine.

WEF: No, I think it was after the Civil War.

CFE: It was before World War I, though.

WSP: Yes, the house was probably built in the 1880s, right?

JMF: Yes.

WSP: How would you rate his place as opposed to your neighbors? Was it about the same, or was it considered a larger ranch?

JMF: No, it was the largest one there.

WEF: No, it was larger.

CFE: He was one of the richest men down in that area. Wasn't that right, Uncle Wayne?

WEF: Yes, my dad borrowed money from him to buy the house, the place that he bought, that he had.

WSP: But your folks had a stove, and Wayne's had the six, with the heater on top, and Wayne's folks had a two-seater outhouse, and you had nothing. This is one way to get rich, just to not spend money on things. But where did all the money go?

JMF: (laughs) No. We just didn't have it.

CFE: Now Granddad, my Granddad Manning told me, he said, "Christie, if we had all the notes that Granddad went on at the bank—."

JMF: That's my daddy she's talking about.

CFE: My great-granddad went on the notes at the Guaranty Bank—he said, "You great-grandkids wouldn't have to worry about money, because Papa lost a *lot* of money at the bank."

JMF: Anybody wanted any help, they'd come to Granddad Manning for it, regardless.

WEF: Yes, he was.

WSP: He loaned out money to friends, helping other farmers?

JMF: And his kids.

CFE: And he never got repaid for all of it.

JMF: And the neighbors.

WSP: So if all the loans he made ever came in, you'd be well-off.

CFE: Well, us great-grandkids wouldn't have had to worry. And there's been a lot of us, too—(laughs) well, not too many of us great-grandkids, though—well, yes, and great-great-grandkids. I'm a great.

WSP: So let's talk about the barn. Describe the barn? How big was it? What would you keep in there?

JMF: The mules and the milk cows. We'd pen the cows and the mules up in there at night when Daddy would get through working them—you know, plowing or something like that. He'd feed them in the barn. And we'd milk—we had a certain pen to milk the cows in, and we'd milk them in there. We'd turned the little calves out at night and, uh, and, uh, then keep the mamas in the pen so we could milk them in the morning.

WSP: Would the mothers leave and go with the little ones and then come back in the evening, or would you round them up?

JMF: Yeah, in the evening.

CFE: You kept the little calves at night away from the mothers, and then in the daytime, you kept them away because you wanted that milk. The calves just sucked twice a day, at morning and night.

WSP: Before you milked or after you milked?

WEF: While you're milking.

CFE: While you was milking. And they knew, they had two tits and you got two tits.

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: I didn't realize that.

WEF: You didn't tell about those barns where she, you talking about, where you kept your horses and your mules, they had—

JMF: They had stalls, what they call—

WEF: They had a bin, they had rooms in that barn that they kept the feed in, kept the corn. That's where they kept the corn and the oats. Most of them used oats at that time.

JMF: Yes, the corn and the maize, or whatever it was. Yes, oats and corn. And we'd have to shuck that corn at night for, or in the morning.

CFE: No, it was just loose, wasn't it, Uncle Wayne? Wasn't the oats loose in the bin?

WEF: Oh, yes, the oats were.

CFE: The oats were loose, and you just shoveled them out.

WEF: Yes, you just carried in a bucket. We had an old thresher, and we'd thresh them with an old thresher that would come through whenever.

JMF: And they'd have to shuck that corn, you see, for them mules.

WSP: You'd feed them just the ear of corn, and they would gnaw on it?

JMF: Yes, and they'd gnaw it off the cob.

WSP: Was it in the goat shed—where you would stick the goats when you thought there was going to be bad weather?

JMF: Yes, in the goat shed.

WSP: What percentage of the land was devoted to cotton?

WEF: Well, about, at least half of it went for cotton because that was the money crop, that's where you got your money, where your money came from for the—

WSP: Now what were we talking about before we ran out of tape?

JMF: Feeding cows.

CFE: The goat shed.

WSP: And what percentage of the land was for cotton. You were suggesting that it was about 50 percent.

WEF: Close to 50 percent, depending on how much land that you farmed.

WSP: If we're talking about 1,500 acres, about 750 acres in all.

WEF: Oh, no, no, no, no. There wasn't but—

JMF: About three hundred.

WEF: There wasn't that much, there wasn't over—

JMF: Two hundred, a hundred and something.

WEF: Over a 150 or 200 acres that was, uh—

JMF: In cultivation?

WEF: In cultivating land. The rest of it was pastureland.

WSP: You were only able to grow crops on *10* percent of that land.

JMF: Yes. Uh-huh.

WEF: Not over 10 percent that you, that you farmed, to grow stuff on. And usually it was just enough for the feed that you needed for your stock that you had, your livestock.

WSP: Half of that 150 acres you farmed, or about 75 acres went to cotton?

WEF: Maybe fifty to cotton.

CFE: And then the other to corn.

WSP: Some part of the other hundred acres would go to corn and other feed.

JMF: And grassland.

WSP: You could earn enough money with fifty acres of cotton?

JMF: We'd make how many bales?

WEF: Oh, you wouldn't make over half a bale of cotton to the acre.

WSP: Is that considered good?

WEF: At that time that was a little above average.

JMF: Yes, that was, yes.

WEF: So if you got half a bale, that was a good average.

WSP: What was the process like with cotton?

JMF: How we harvested it?

WSP: Yes, everything.

JMF: Well, he planted the seed, the cottonseed.

WSP: What part of the year?

JMF: Oh, in the spring.

WSP: Before or after you sheared the goats? Or was it about the same time?

JMF: Yes, about the same time, yes. And then along in about September or October we would pick the cotton, wouldn't we? Well, we'd have to, after it come up—

WEF: Yes, September, because school started in September, and we'd usually have to stay out of school two or three, four weeks to help gather some of the cotton.

JMF: Yes, to help pick, gather the cotton.

CFE: Nine out of ten of the schools would close, though, to where they could pick the cotton.

WSP: They opened school and then close it and then opened it again, all so kids could help pick cotton?

WEF: Well, that was more at her age. They didn't whenever I first started.

WSP: You just wouldn't go to school until you got done with the cotton?

WEF: You just didn't go. Oh, well, yes, but you stayed out for about a month.

WSP: So most of September you're out doing the work of harvesting the cotton.

JMF: If you went to school you'd have to get that cotton sack when you got home and hit that cotton patch, after you got home from school. Wasn't that right, Wayne?

WSP: Even after you returned to school, you'd still be picking cotton afterward school let out.

WEF: Well, after the school started you wouldn't be through picking cotton, you'd still—

WSP: You wouldn't be?

WEF: Oh, no, oh, no.

WSP: Well how long would it take to pick a field?

JMF: Oh, Lord!

WEF: It'd takes a pretty good while when you're picking it all by hand.

WSP: Suppose you got an average acre of cotton, that yields about a half a bale. About how many days would it take to harvest?

JMF: Nearly a week.

WEF: It depends on how many you've got picking. If you had, say, five picking, then you'd get about two bales a week.

WSP: We're talking about four acres a week. You had fifty acres of cotton, so that's over ten weeks of work. Have I got that right?

WEF: Pretty close, pretty close.

JMF: (laughs) Yes, pretty close.

WEF: We'd still be picking some cotton right up to Christmas.

WSP: You would start in September and just keep working and working, but the bulk of the picking was done in September?

JMF: In September, uh-huh, yes, until it's all gone.

WEF: Well, it started the latter part of September, well, about the middle of September.

WSP: Isn't there some point when the cotton is just not worth picking anymore?

WEF: Well, no. If you get rain on it it'll damage it, but you can still pick it.

JMF: You'd have to wait until it dried before you'd go back and pick it. And we had to pick it out of the burr. Then, later on, they got the gins would gin it with it in the burrs, so we called that pulling cotton.

WEF: You could do that faster.

CFE: But that was farther down the line, way down the line.

WSP: You're saying there were two methods of harvesting—picking cotton and pulling cotton?

JMF: Yes. Then combines come in.

WSP: But that was up in the 1950s.

CFE: Well, I laugh and say I married in September, and my sister married in June. And that fall Daddy bought a cotton stripper and corn stripper. (laughter)

WEF: (laughs)

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: By then the work force is gone! Picking cotton is a large investment in time? Was it more so than any other crop?

WEF: Well, you pull the corn by hand, but it goes a little faster. It didn't take as long for that.

JMF: No, it didn't take long to pull that corn.

WSP: And you didn't have quite as many acres?

JMF: No, no, I don't think so.

WEF: It depended on how much oats. Now for the, for the, uh, goats and stuff the oats was the best feed. And you sowed them in the early fall to where you'd have green grazing through the winter.

JMF: For the sheep and goats.

WEF: You'd turn them into that. See, the leaves would all be gone off the trees and all. They'd eat corn until—

WSP: Until they got the oats. You would just throw the oats out on the ground?

WEF: No, we grew that.

JMF: Sowed the oats.

CFE: No! After the sowed it. They sowed the oats, sir, in the ground, and they come up.

JMF: With a drill.

WSP: Oh! They'd eat the little green stalks that come up.

WEF: Yes, they'd eat the leaves off of it, and then in about six weeks before the time come for it to head. You take the stock off of it, and the oats would go ahead and head out and make the grain.

CFE: And by then the underbrush was coming out again.

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: This way you got both food for grazing, and a crop of oats. That is very clever!

WEF: And then they'd let the cattle in, put the cattle in on it, too.

CFE: But if it rained, you got them cows off that oat patch because they'd make holes—

WEF: They'd stomp it in the ground.

JMF: They'd stomp it into the ground.

WEF: When they'd bog down.

CFE: When I was a kid, my daddy has yelled many a time, "Girls, we've got to get them cows off them oats!" Because it would make them—

WSP: When you saw the weather coming, was that another chore you'd have to do?

CFE: But like Uncle Wayne said, though, you called the old lead cow, and out they'd come. (laughter)

JMF: (laughter) Yes.

WSP: You'd just yell or bang something, or what?

CFE: Oh, we'd yell. And most, a lot of times the old lead cow had a name, right Uncle Wayne?

WEF: Yes, it was old Number Seven.

WSP: You called Number Seven, you'd yell, Number Seven, and they would come?

CFE: And they know! (laughs) I don't remember what Daddy always called one, though. He'd say, "All right gals, if we can get that old lead cow in, we've got it made." And he'd holler at her, and up that head come, and here she'd come. I know I'm—

WEF: My dad, my dad, really the way he got them started is that he trained them. He'd have, he'd carry a piece of a sack of feed and give them, put a little feed down—

JMF: Little bit down here and little bit down yonder. (laughs)

WEF: And he'd feed them a little bit along, and he got them to where they'd be following you all the time.

WSP: So there *is* a training involved, it's not instinctual?

JMF: Oh, yes, yes, no doubt about it.

WEF: Yes, sure.

WSP: Would you select a cow that you wanted as the leader, or would you know by looking—

JMF: No. No, no.

WEF: No, just the one that took over the lead whenever—

WSP: You put the food on the ground. The one that says, "Food on the ground, make way, you bums I'm going."

JMF: (laughs) And all the rest of them followed.

CFE: I know I'm a century down ahead of you but it's still part of the life of then.

WSP: Yes, you have to know so many little tricks. Is there any little tricks particular about corn?

WEF: You couldn't—well, in the summertime when you was working, whenever you were working your mules in the field—of course we used mules—

JMF: And in the corn.

WEF: Or horses, either one, if you're going to be a riding your horse a whole lot you wouldn't feed them corn because they couldn't stand the heat. They'd get too hot.

WSP: From eating corn?

WEF: From eating corn, yes. Yes, you had to be careful about how much corn you fed your mules or your horses when you was using them in the hot, real hot weather, because they couldn't stand it.

WSP: So what did you end up using?

JMF: Oats.

WEF: Oats, you'd feed them oats.

WSP: Am I wrong in assuming oats were more expensive?

WEF: No, no, not necessarily. It was just the use of it, I mean the balancing out of the—

WSP: A little of this and a little of that, but when you're working them hard in the fields you cut back on the corn and stepped up the oats?

WEF: Yes, because your oats—you harvested your oats in different, in a whole lot different time than you do the corn. The oats is harvested a way earlier, in late spring or early summer.

JMF: At the time school was always out.

WEF: It was around the first of June. Corn wouldn't come in until September, August or September.

WSP: Wait a minute. You were busy with cotton. Who had time for harvesting corn?

WEF: Well that works in with it.

CFE: Well, just you work them.

WEF: You get one, and then you get the other.

CFE: You get the corn out, and then you hit the cotton patch. You get the oats out, and then you get the corn out, and then you hit the cotton patch. Isn't that right, Uncle Wayne?

WSP: Some days you'd come back from school and you'd be doing the corn?

WEF: As long as you had to finish up the corn.

WSP: Less corn was planted, and it's easier to harvest.

WEF: It was planted only for feed, and so then, usually it didn't take just a whole lot of feed of that type.

WSP: You wouldn't hold any of that corn back for the dinner table?

WEF: Oh, yes. Yes.

JMF: Meal, we made cornmeal out of it.

WSP: Was it the same grade of corn that you would eat.

WEF: Oh, yes, yes.

CFE: And when you was a picking and pulling it, you danged sure watched if you got a stinging lizard.

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: A stinging lizard? On the corn?

JMF: In the shuck.

CFE: Lord, yes. I've seen my daddy shuck my sister's dress several times because she got a stinging lizard in her clothes from the corn. You know Marge always got them—

WEF: In the fall, in the fall of the year the stinging scorpions would be up in the corn shucks.

JMF: They'd get in the corn shucks.

WSP: Was stinging lizard the nickname for a scorpion?

CFE: Yes. (laughter)

JMF: Lizard. (laughter)

WSP: Oh! That is creepy! Scorpions would be in the shuck, and you wouldn't even know it.

WEF: (laughs) If you'd run your hand in there, in that shuck pulling that corn, you get your finger in on one of them. Oh, they'd sting you!

CFE: They'd sting you terrible.

JMF: And I'll tell you something else that would sting you and that was bull nettles. (laughs)

WEF: Well, that's a different thing.

JMF: (laughs) That's a different thing. Bull nettle, that's a weed. It would grow in your corn and cotton, or anywhere.

WEF: It was a bushy-like weed that would grow—

JMF: And it would have little white-looking leaves on it.

CFE: And little flowers.

WEF: And if you touch it, if you bump one of them leaves—

JMF: It was kind of like a cocklebur, it would just sting just like an ant, wouldn't it, Wayne?

WEF: Yes, it'd just welt you up, yeah, you'd get that poison in you.

CFE: And the saying is don't scratch it, because the more you scratch it the more it hurts.

JMF: Yep.

WSP: Is there fluid or something on the end of these?

CFE: Yes. Yes, uh-huh.

WSP: That's what makes the welt. You're not just getting poked with a sharp leaf, you're getting a poison in your skin.

WEF: Yes, it's got a poison on it, the little stinging, the little prickly things that's on it has got a poison on it.

WSP: This sounds like it might be useful for some other purpose besides hurting yourself. Did you ever make some kind of potion out it?

CFE: Oh, no!

WEF: All I ever did, whenever they bloomed, and whenever they made a little bean, they made like a bean on 'em, I've eat them beans.

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: The beans were okay?

WEF: Yes, you could eat them.

WSP: But you would still have to cut the nettles out?

JMF: Oh, yes, we'd have to keep them chopped down, or they'd outgrow your other stuff that was growing in the, in the field or the garden either—mostly in the corn patch and in the cotton patch.

WEF: You couldn't, you couldn't eliminate them by cutting them off.

JMF: No! They just—

WEF: They had roots that went all the way to water, it would be fifteen or twenty foot deep. My dad would cut them—we had a field with a lot of them in it—he'd take them and cut them off and put salt on them, and that salt would—

JMF: We did that when we lived down on the Cowhouse, he put salt on 'em.

WSP: It seems like very intensive handwork.

WEF: Yes, that's a slow process.

WSP: You really have to want to get rid of them. Does salting keep them from seeding and growing somewhere else nearby?

WEF: No, no, not necessarily, no.

WSP: These nettles would grow in the your corn *and* your cotton.

JMF: Corn and cotton. Yes. We had to get those cockleburs, the nettles out, so you could take care of your corn or your cotton.

WSP: I assume the nettles wouldn't produce poison until it got pretty tall? But when it was small and green—

CFE: If they're small, they'll still sting you!

WEF: But not like when it matures. It gets bad.

CFE: When it matures, it's bad, and they can get waist high.

WSP: As you walk along with your cotton bag, these nettles are trying to poke you?

CFE: Yes. The corn though was done with a wagon, with mules a pulling it and a wagon. It went down, and you was behind and on the sides, and somebody had the down row, as they called, and you pulled off what the wagon knocked down, you'd pull these ears off the down row and throw in the wagon.

WSP: One on each side, and one behind for the down row—

CFE: Or was it two rows?

JMF: Two rows.

WEF: Two rows.

WSP: The last one walked between these two down rows, throwing the corn forward, while the other two were tossing them into the side of the wagon. And through all of this were the nettles.

JMF: Yes, if you didn't have them chopped down. (laughs)

WEF: You're not going to have some. You're going to have some of them that you've got to walk around because you don't get them all.

WSP: When they got so big it was better to walk around them?

WEF: You'd walk around them.

CFE: My daddy, his oldest brother—well, my daddy always had the down row. My sister and I, my sister Charlotte and I would walk the sides of the wagon.

WSP: Why was that?

WEF: She don't know the earlier stages.

CFE: No, Daddy was faster than us two girls. See, he could do two rows while we done one.

WSP: When you're walking along the side, you're only doing one row?

CFE: Yes, the one row.

WSP: You mentioned the earlier stages. What were they?

WEF: (laughs) Whenever I was a boy, he'd take two rows on one side and a couple of us would be on the other side—well, three of us would take the other four rows. And he'd be up there by the mules, and he'd just be pulling it and keeping them a-going, and we'd get way behind. He'd just run off and leave us, and we'd get so mad at him! (laughter)

JMF: And he'd get an ear of corn up by the side of his head every once in a while. (laughter)

WEF: (laughter) We'd have to chunk him with an ear of corn to get him, slow him down, but he don't pay no attention, he'd just keep it a-going.

WSP: The mules are keeping up with him, and leaving the two side guys—

WEF: Yes, he was telling the mules every time when to go, and then when he'd get up to the end of the lane and he'd tell them to go again, then he'd stop them again—

JMF: Go! Get up!

CFE: I don't know, are we going a different way?

WSP: No, this is all perfect because ultimately we're going to take your cotton stories and your corn stories and edit them with other people's cotton and corn stories until we have another book, which is basically bits and pieces of stories about farm life. This is all great information. Stuff I hadn't heard before.

JMF: (laughs)

CFE: (laughs)

WSP: Your dad was a very fast fellow—

JMF: No, *my* daddy.

WEF: Her daddy. My dad was pretty fast, but he wasn't as fast as her daddy was.

JMF: He always got up at four o'clock every morning, and he went to bed at eight. When we lived on the Manning Mountain, he'd saddle that old grey horse—

CFE: This is her daddy.

JMF: Yes, my daddy. He'd saddle that old grey horse and get them two sacks of cake on, and take off through the Sadler Ranch calling cows. And they could hear him all over Coryell County. (laughter)

I know because after I married, we lived on the home place, Wayne's dad's and mom's home place, and the Sadler Ranch was, uh, north of us, across the Cowhouse, and there was four or five farms in between the Sadler Ranch and the home place, and you could hear Bud Manning calling cows when he'd come off the Manning Mountain.

WEF: Yes. (laughter)

CFE: (laughter) And he was a quiet man. I went into visit Granddad a many a time and he'd say howdy, and when I'd leave and he'd say bye, and that was the end of the conversation.

JMF: When we was growing up, if you looked at—you had to be a looking at him to ask him a question—he'd either shake his head yes or no. (laughs)

WSP: And that would be it?

JMF: That would be it. That would be it. (laughs)

WSP: Well, tell me about your mother. What was she good at cooking?

JMF: Everything!

WSP: What does everything mean?

JMF: Well, beans and cornbread, and fried 'taters, and, and uh, deviled eggs—

CFE: Cakes and pies—

JMF: And cakes and pies, and things like that.

CFE: And bread. See, they made all their own bread.

WSP: You made your own bread?

JMF: Uh-huh. Yeah.

CFE: Now his mother was expert. Her mother died before I was even born.

WEF: Yes, her mother died when I was just a small boy.

JMF: I was seventeen years old when Mother passed away.

CFE: You see I was, when Mother was twenty-two I was born, twenty or twenty-two. You're eighty-eight—

WEF: I just barely remember her mother passing away.

CFE: I'm sixty-six and you're eighty-eight, so you was twenty—

JMF: Yeah.

CFE: When I was born. And so see her mother had been dead for three years when I was born.

WSP: She was good at cooking.

JMF: Oh, yes, and sewing. She could make some of the prettiest clothes you ever saw.

CFE: And she had no pattern. She could look at something and go home—if a girl come to church with a fancy dress on, my Aunt Mary, Mother's baby sister, said well you could count on me and Juanita having that dress next week, because Mother could go home, and in her mind she remembered that. She could cut her a pattern and that dress would look just like the ones that, that the people had on at church that day.

JMF: But Marcy, Wayne's mama was good at piecing quilts, and cooking, too. And she could really have, piece some of the prettiest quilts you ever saw.

CFE: I have one of them.

WSP: You are referring to the design of the different squares—choosing interesting and pretty patterns?

JMF: Yes, uh-huh, yes. Yes.

CFE: Yes. The quilt I have of Ma Fleming's is a big tulip quilt. It's got big tulips on it and each piece, each flower, has got a little bitty block in it to make the flower several blocks.

JMF: And she could quilt the prettiest you ever saw, little bitty stitches. (laughs)

CFE: And she'd always set me on—remember the cabinet there in the room, Uncle Wayne, that had the, where she worked, in the, at the Gray place? And it had, that cabinet she had her flour, her bread can under the table. And she'd let me set on the table, but if you put your foot on that flour, that cake, that bread box, down you'd go! (laughter) Right, Uncle Wayne?

JMF: (laughs)

WEF: All right, all right.

WSP: So did you help her with this cooking?

JMF: Oh, not much.

WSP: She liked to have the kitchen to herself?

JMF: Uh-huh, yes.

WEF: Well, she was not big enough to—you know, when she passed away—

JMF: I wasn't big enough. See, I was just seventeen years old when she passed away, so I didn't, I didn't do much.

WSP: Well, isn't seventeen big enough in the kitchen?

CFE: Oh, well Mother was in the field, Mother had to help in the field. Right, Mother?

JMF: Yeah, that's right.

WSP: Your mom is back taking care of the kitchen, while you're working all day in the fields like one of the boys.

JMF: She had to manage the kitchen, yeah. After she passed away I didn't know how to do no housekeeping! Now isn't that pathetic! I didn't! And, uh, and when I married, I still didn't know how. (laughs)

WSP: Well how did you learn?

JMF: Wayne's mother.

WSP: Wayne's mother like taught you things you'd seen your mother do but that she never had the time to—

JMF: No, unh-uh. Yeah.

CFE: Because Ma Fleming's was—uh, and she'd make that yeast bread, and she'd work it, just like she did the soap, and whistle the whole time she was a working. And she'd make four and five and six loaves at a time, wouldn't she, Uncle Wayne?

WEF: Yes, four or five.

CFE: And she'd put them in this old wood cook stove, and they were the most beautiful brown. You cannot

get a loaf of bread, homemade bread, now, to look like the homemade bread did that come out of that stove, the old cook stove—

WEF: My, my, my mama couldn't—when we moved out of the camp area, she had to go to a, she went to a different stove to cook on and, uh, she couldn't, she said she couldn't cook on it like—

CFE: Well, she had the wood stove for a while.

WEF: She had the wood stove for a while—

CFE: There at the, at Pearl, and then she got rid of it.

WEF: But she went to—

WSP: She went to a gas or electric stove?

CFE: Yes, electric.

WEF: No, it was gas.

CFE: Gas.

WEF: Gas. The place that we moved into up there had a butane—all it had butane in it and so, and had a butane stove there. And so she carried her wood stove, but then she, she didn't—it was, well, we were there for several years there—

JMF: Just before Mama passed away she, uh, she, uh, bought, uh, a coal oil cook stove—

CFE: Coal oil cook stove.

WSP: This is after you moved down off the mountain.

JMF: Yes, that was when we lived down on the Cowhouse, close to Eliga.

WSP: What would you do for entertainment or social activities?

JMF: Not much. We'd go to church and school, and that was about it. And we'd go to town. I believe we went to—we'd go to get our groceries once a month.

WSP: That's the First Monday trip you were telling me about earlier?

JMF: Well, no, it—

WSP: You're referring to something else. Which town would you go in?

JMF: On the weekend.

WSP: Which town would you shop in?

JMF: Gatesville. We'd go to Killeen part of the time, but the biggest part of the time, we went back to Gatesville. That's where, uh, Daddy's parents moved to, they moved back to Gatesville when we moved on the Manning Mountain.

WSP: How far was it from Manning Mountain to Gatesville?

JMF: About nineteen or twenty miles, what?

WEF: About twenty miles, twenty-two miles.

JMF: I think something like that—

WSP: How long would that trip take you? Is this by wagon or by car?

JMF: Yeah, well, we didn't get a car till—I forgot what year it was that Daddy bought his first car. But we'd go in the buggy, what we called the buggy, with a horse to it, pulling it, or we'd go in the wagon with two mules pulling it.

WSP: How long would it take you?

JMF: Oh, it would take us all day! (laughs)

WSP: One way?

CFE: No. No.

WEF: No, you'd, you'd, you'd leave early that morning, it'd take you about, it would take you a good three hours, three hours and a half to make the trip up there.

WSP: Then do your shopping.

JMF: Yeah, and then—

WEF: Yes, and three hours and a half to come back.

CFE: And didn't you all come the old Straw's Mill Road?

JMF: Yeah. Uh-huh.

CFE: Have you heard of it? The little Straw's Mill Road is, uh—I, I can take you there—(laughs) and they had to cross the Leon River to get to Gatesville off the Straw's Mill Road. And it's—

JMF: Comes in down here, the Straw's Mill Road does, right down here off the golf course (??).

WSP: You'd go up into Gatesville. Do your shopping. Would this be more than food, or was it just confined to shopping for food?

JMF: We'd generally come up and spend the night with Granny and Granddad, do our shopping that, say on Saturday, spend the night, and then go back Sunday.

WSP: Isn't there Sunday church? Or would you attend church in Gatesville with the grandparents?

JMF: We didn't go to church here, we always went back home early enough, I think, to go to church at Eliga.

CFE: So they got up early to leave to go to church.

WSP: Arrive home in time for the eleven o'clock service. Was that when the service was held?

JMF: Yes. Uh-huh.

CFE: And they were Church of Christ.

WSP: What does that tell me?

CFE: That's the religion.

WSP: Yes, I understand, but does that mean anything particular about church service, the rules. I'm not that familiar with the Church of Christ denomination. Is that about the same as the Baptist or Methodist?

CFE: No, well—

WEF: Because, it's, it's, it's, it follows, the, what the Bible, just, what is laid out in the Bible to follow.

CFE: They have communion every Sunday. And no, no music, just the voice music—

WEF: Music.

CFE: Just the voice music.

WSP: No piano or organ?

JMF: No piano or organ.

CFE: *Very* beautiful singing.

WSP: A cappella?

JMF: Yes'ir, I was trying to think of that word.

WSP: Going to church would be about all there was for social activities?

WEF: Well, occasionally, now—I think after I—I think after she got into it, we used to have what we called house parties, and we'd go to the, we'd go to somebody's house, and they'd, they'd have little square dance parties—

JMF: Well—yes, but very seldom—

WEF: Well, about once every couple of months.

JMF: But in the summertime, we had what we called a camp meeting. When we lived on Manning Mountain, we would come to Eliga, and they would put up a big tent, and, uh—

WSP: Like a revival? The camp meetings are revivals?

JMF: Uh-huh, yes, and we would, uh, move our stove and our bed and our tent and—(laughs)

WSP: Whoa! You moved your kitchen stove?

JMF: Yes. (laughs)

WSP: To this place? And this is on Manning Mountain?

JMF: Yes. (laughs) Yes—this is down at Eliga—

WEF: Eliga.

CFE: Eliga.

JMF: On the Cowhouse, and we lived on the Manning Mountain. We'd do that from the Manning Mountain, we'd move, we'd take our—we'd stay down there a week for this, uh, revival.

WSP: Would everybody else bring their stove?

JMF: Oh, yeah. There'd be, there'd be, oh, six or eight, or maybe ten or twenty campers down there for this revival.

WEF: We just lived a little ways from it. We went back and forth in the wagon.

JMF: Yeah.

WSP: But apparently it was a long enough trip that you brought almost everything that you could bring?

JMF: Yes, our clothes and our cooking utensils, and, uh, things like that, and the cook stove and our bed

and our tent and our—we used the lantern, of course, for light at night.

WSP: All this equipment was down there by the river, and you would listen to the sermons.

JMF: And, uh, and go to bed that night and get up the next morning and have breakfast. And then, uh, on Sunday, then, we'd have, a what-do-you-call-it? The big congregation would all come in and bring food, and we'd all have lunch together.

WEF: Dinner on the ground.

CFE: Dinner on the ground—

WSP: Now what other church activities did you do besides the revival?

JMF: (laughs)

WEF: (laughs) We had, we had, uh, a little—down below the church ground there was a bend in the river. That was, they called it the baptizing hole.

JMF: That's where they baptized them.

WEF: That's where they, that's where they baptize, they would baptize—

JMF: The new members.

WEF: We'd slip off, we'd slip off and not, and from the church service and go down there and go in swimming. And, uh, we'd either, we'd either go there—

JMF: Or, up to the—up—

WEF: Or up to the, to the swimming hole.

JMF: (laughs) They called it the Elijah swimming hole.

WEF: We had a high swing that swung out over the water.

CFE: There wasn't no bathing suits, either!

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: Now that's an interesting detail he failed to mention.

WEF: (laughs)

CFE: The girls knew better!

JMF: (laughter) The girls didn't, wasn't allowed! No gals allowed!

WEF: And wherever you, and this swing—it was, the river was wide there, and the water was, oh, fifteen to twenty foot deep, twenty-five feet deep, at least—

WSP: Was it cool, or cold?

JMF: Oh, yes.

WEF: Oh, yes, it was cool. Usually, when, but you swung out over that you went off of about a ten or fifteen, between ten- and fifteen-foot bank. The swing was up in an old high cottonwood tree.

JMF: At rose was—

WEF: And, and, when you swung out, you had to leave it, you couldn't come back because you went in a circle, and you'd come back into the tree and the bank. You had to leave it. You had to leave. I mean, when you leapt, when you leapt on the swing you knew you wasn't going to come back. You had to come off of it.

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: You knew you had to jump? How far a drop was this?

WEF: It was about, I'd say twenty, at least twenty foot.

WSP: That's a nice-sized drop!

JMF: One guy, one guy told them, yes, he could swim, he could swim. (laughs) And when he jumped in, well, he began to bubble, you know? And, uh, Wayne's brother Bill, he says, "I thought you could swim!" And, and, uh, he was a-hollering, "Help." And he jumped in and pulled him out by the hair of the head! (laughs)

WEF: Your daddy was the one—your husband was the one that did that.

JMF: Well, that's what I said—

WEF: No, Bill, you said Bill—

JMF: I said Bill—

WEF: Oh, her husband was an expert swimmer—

CFE: You bet he was—

WEF: And he could tread water, he could tread water and show this much of his body out, you know, treading, treading water.

WSP: He was the one who rescued this guy?

JMF: Yeah, he was—

WEF: Yes. Yeah, he'd done, he'd done come up the third time before—he'd went under the third time before he got to him. And he got him, he got him by the hair of the head—and he was a good enough swimmer he was holding him out from him and swimming, until he got him out to the, to the where he could wade. He didn't, he went down, way down to a shoal, walked back up and got his clothes and put them on—that's that, he didn't ever say no more about swimming.

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: (laughs)

WEF: Well, he thought he was going to swing far enough over—he got—

JMF: Out of that deep water—

WEF: Back up on the bank so high until he thought he could swim, swing over to where he would land in, in, uh, wading water on the other side. As it was, it throwed him out in the middle more.

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: In over his head.

WEF: Oh, much over his head!

JMF: (laughter) Fifteen-foot water!

WEF: I'll tell you this little story, the first time I went off of it, that swing. I was about, I guess eight, nine years old. And, uh, I got, they told me, whenever, they said, Now when your feet goes out forward, just as they start back, you turn loose, and you'll hit on your head, dive on your head. So I did. And whenever I did, I hit too straight, and of course that water was so deep until I thought I really, I thought I, I, had swum water for five minutes trying to get back to the top! I'm in so deep till I, I couldn't—

WSP: You dove so well you went very deep.

JMF: (laughs)

WEF: I went way deeper than I was supposed to, or should have.

CFE: Taught you a lesson, though, didn't it Uncle Wayne? (laughter)

WEF: Yeah, it did. I learned, I learned to hit at a little more of an angle. (laughter)

JMF: Oh, me! (laughter)

WEF: But her brother, her brother, uh, Kenneth, uh, he was, he was an expert when it come to swimming and diving. He'd climb up this old, uh, tree—it was at least thirty, between thirty and forty feet to the limb, the first limb in that tree—they had, uh, boards nailed on it like a ladder. And he climb up there—and this tree set up, oh, fifteen foot on above the water—and he'd climb up in there at that tree, and it leaned out a little, and leaned a little bit over the, uh, creek, and he'd dive out of that, he'd dive out of tree into the, into the, head first.

WEF: He was good!

CFE: Well, Mama, was you all living there when you and Daddy married, on the, down there by the creek?

JMF: Yeah. Uh-huh. Yeah, uh, we was living on the Cowhouse, then—

WEF: They'd moved off the mountain.

CFE: They married in 1932, Mother and Daddy married in 1932, and then I was born in 1934.

JMF: But, uh, talking about that swimming, uh, when me and Maurice, or maybe Maurice was just down there, or something, him and Kenneth decided to go to the Cowhouse and go swimming. Well, we had a neighbor lady across, that lived across the creek from us, who always fished. And so when they went to the swimming hole, well, uh, they seen her fishing poles, and Kenneth told Maurice, he says, "I bet that's old lady so-and-so's fishing poles." Of course they didn't have on no clothes. They got ready to go in, well, they hadn't anymore got in than here she came off the bank. And that, what they done, they, they started out of that swimming hole and picked their clothes up as they passing by her—(laughter)

WSP: (laughs)

JMF: (laughter) I've heard him tell that, and laugh about he would get us, about how Kenneth could run off and leave him.

CFE: (laughter) Well, he's so long legged.

WSP: Well, we're back to the entertainment. We have the church revivals that happen in the summer and regular church. What would happen during Christmas and Easter?

JMF: Well, it's just—Christmas we would always, some of us would always get together at each other's homes on Christmas.

CFE: There wasn't anything at church for Christmas.

WSP: No church services?

JMF: No, no, unh-uh, church.

CFE: It was a regular church.

WEF: Sunday morning.

WSP: Regular church, but no Christmas tree?

CFE: No!

WSP: This was part of the church rules, beliefs—?

JMF: The religion. Yes.

CFE: You know, Uncle Wayne, I don't think I ever remember Ma Fleming ever having a Christmas tree.

WEF: Oh, yeah, oh, yeah.

CFE: I'm sure she did, but—

JMF: Who?

CFE: Ma Fleming.

WEF: Yeah, she used to put, she used to put up a Christmas tree some.

CFE: Well, you know, some things a kid can remember and some things she can't, you know and all. I couldn't remember having a Christmas tree.

WSP: Would you get Christmas gifts?

WEF: Oh, yeah, we'd get one gift.

JMF: Uh-huh.

CFE: One gift.

WSP: One gift?

CFE: Even in my time, yes.

WSP: What would that gift be like? A doll? A toy? Something like that?

CFE: Uh-huh, yes.

WEF: I got a little red wagon one time.

CFE: Is that the one that Pa fell over? (laughter)

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: What's that story?

WEF: Oh, it was dark and I'd left it out in front, out in front of the yard, out in front of the steps. And when

he went out, he, he—well, of course he didn't have no outside lights—whenever he went out into the yard. Well, he fell over that wagon. And I mean—

JMF: Pa that _____ (??) didn't he? (laughs)

WEF: (laughter) Well, I didn't, I didn't leave the wagon in front of the steps anymore.

CFE: Pa was a *big* man. He was. What would he weigh, Uncle Wayne?

WEF: Oh, he weighed about 210, 215.

CFE: And he was real tall. Now looking at me you can't tell.

WEF: Two hundred fifteen.

WSP: Muscular, I take it?

CFE: Oh, yes, *very* big, and my grandmother was about my size. Mother has got a picture somewhere—

JMF: I've got it, I'm fixing to go get it.

CFE: Of Ma and Pa, and she's standing on two steps to be as tall as he is.

WEF: He was six, he was about six foot one, is all.

WSP: You were a young girl when you moved off the land.

CFE: Oh, yeah, I was two. I was eight when we moved out of the army camp—

WSP: When the army moved you out? Do you remember any of that?

CFE: Oh, yes.

WSP: What were your memories?

CFE: Well. (sighs) I remember—we were one—now this is my grandparents—(shows a photograph)

JMF: This is my daddy and mama.

WSP: Oh, there you are.

JMF: This is my daddy and mama. See, she's standing on that two steps, and see how high this porch is? Him and his brother Bill when they come in from the service—well, Ernest Tubb had the song, "Walking the Floor Over You." Uncle Wayne and Uncle Bill was always going to put me under that high porch and walk the floor over me! (laughter)

WSP: That's what they threatened? (laughter)

WEF: (laughter) Yes.

JMF: (laughter) I bet that's Joe.

(telephone rings)

CFE: Hello.

(interruption in taping; Wayne Fleming departs)

WSP: Tell me again what you remember about going to school?

CFE: I remember going to school and catching the bus, and I had to walk through what they called Opossum Holler. I caught the bus at Eliga's store. It was the F. F. Curry Store. And it was two or three of us caught the bus and went to Maple—

JMF: No.

CFE: I didn't go to Maple there, I went to—when we lived on the Opossum Holler, Mama?

JMF: Oh, You went to Antelope.

CFE: Antelope.

JMF: Antelope.

CFE: Uh-huh, I went to Antelope School, but when I lived, uh, lived, Daddy lived on, uh, Killeen Prairie I went to school at, uh—

JMF: Palo Alto.

CFE: Palo Alto. And then—

JMF: We moved to the Beasley place—on the Cowhouse at Maple.

CFE: Beasley place on the Cowhouse at Maple. And I went to school in Maple.

JMF: Yeah.

CFE: And then back to, uh—

JMF: Antelope—

CFE: Antelope.

JMF: Yeah. And then on to Gatesville. Did you ever go to Gatesville?

CFE: No, I didn't until we moved to Arnett and all.

JMF: Yeah. Yeah.

CFE: My daddy was what they called a sharecropper, what they called a sharecropper. And where he could get the land. One year he moved three times, my first year of school. Oh, my, and I was a scared little country girl that squalled every day. And I failed that year, and then I'd come in from squalling at school, he told me one day, "Young lady, if you come in one more time a-bawling, I'm going to whip you." Well, I'd bawl until I'd nearly get to the house, and then I'd quit. (laughter) Because I *knew* my daddy!

JMF: (laughs)

CFE: And I, and I remember when we, I brought—when we was living on the Kelly place when we had to move out of, uh, when they moved us out.

JMF: The army camp.

WSP: Oh, I see. Your family was not as attached to a particular piece of property as some of the other farmers?

CFE: No, unh-uh, not like the Manning Mountain was. I was, Daddy was, when him and Mother married, they moved into the home plot, the home place, Uncle Wayne's place, and that's where I was born. And then we moved from there, where, Mama?

JMF: Over to the Sutton—

CFE: Sutton place—

JMF: Sutton place close to Killeen.

CFE: Killeen. And then we moved—

JMF: To the Slawson (??) place—

CFE: Well, we lived on the Bay place—

JMF: Well, but went from the Slawson place to the Bay place, close to Palo Alto, and that's where you started school.

CFE: Started school. Then we moved to the Kelly place, and it was down in there, it was there at Eliga, it was just right over the, river, creek from Eliga.

JMF: Yes.

WSP: And all of these places are somebody else's property—

JMF: Property, yeah, yeah. He had, uh—

WSP: Were you farming all or part of the land?

CFE: Daddy farmed it all. My daddy was a hard—

JMF: What he, what he called renting it.

CFE: Renting it. Two-thirds, he got a two-thirds, and the owner got a third of the crop. Daddy wasn't a big rancher. But, he got into the sheep after us kids all got grown, more of us got grown.

JMF: That was after we moved to Turnersville.

CFE: Uh, uh, Turnersville. Mother inherited some sheep somehow when—

JMF: When, uh, uh, Daddy settled up the home place.

CFE: Home place—

JMF: Yeah.

CFE: Uh, well, that was after your mama died, wasn't it?

JMF: Yeah, yeah, it was after him and Jewell married.

CFE: They all got some sheep then, and—

JMF: But he sold them all.

CFE: He sold them—

JMF: Didn't keep them long.

CFE: Said he'd never have another sheep. Then, lo and behold, that's how he ended up making so much, making money, was off of the sheep—after nearly all of us kids, there was five of us—I'm the oldest.

WSP: Four boys and you?

JMF: *No!* Four girls and a boy.

CFE: Four girls and one boy. Now Uncle Wayne's family was six boys and one girl, and would you believe at one time there was twelve grandkids in the Fleming family, ten girls and two boys! (laughter)

JMF: (laughs)

CFE: (laughter) Now I don't know much about the Mannings because we, we moved away from the Mannings—and my granddad was so quiet, too—we moved away from them. I loved Granny Manning, and Aunt Carry, Aunt Mattie. We knew them real well. Now they were my great-aunt and my great-great-grandmother, and, uh.

And so, uh, when we moved out of the army camp, we moved to the Arn, Ames community, no—

JMF: Yeah, yeah.

CFE: Yeah, Ames—and it's real funny, I went to school with my husband out there, but I don't ever remember him. 'Cause I, and I had to walk about two miles, two or three miles to school there, because there wasn't no busses.

And, and, uh, we moved, we moved in there in March, and Mother was pregnant with May. And we lived there from March to April, August, and then we moved to the Joe Hannah (??) place, down in the army, and down in the—

JMF: Down here in Pidcoke.

CFE: Pidcoke. And we lived there until she was about three.

JMF: Yeah, She was in second grade when we moved.

CFE: No, she started to school at Arnett. Me and Charlotte is the only two that had to walk. We had to walk a swinging footbridge over the Cowhouse Creek to get to the bus, the school bus. I walked it the first year by myself, and then Charlotte come along, and when she got old enough, me and her, and then—

WSP: Is that near Pidcoke?

CFE: Oh, yes.

JMF: Yes, uh-huh, we lived down on the Cowhouse—

CFE: Cowhouse, down in—

JMF: In that little old house right up there. You see that old house?

CFE: That's where my sister was born.

JMF: No, no, *that* one. (points to photographs on the wall)

CFE: That one right there.

JMF: *That* one right there. That's what we lived in. (laughs)

CFE: One year the river got so high it washed the footbridge away. My daddy put the bill that footbridge back. There was big old cables at the top and the bottom, and then netting wire in between it, and then the boards were about that wide and they was about that far apart, weren't they, Mother?

JMF: Yeah.

CFE: And Daddy, my daddy walked them cables, with *nothing* under him, and put that bridge back together to where we could—

JMF: So they could get on across the creek without having to wade it.

CFE: So we wouldn't have to wade the river to get to school. And we lived there—Mable was about two or three when we left there.

JMF: She was, she was in the second grade when we moved to Turnersville.

CFE: I'm, Mother, she started to school at Turnersville.

JMF: No, she didn't. Because, uh, uh, 'cause when I took her in down there I had her in the first grade—

CFE: Oh, okay, yeah—

JMF: She started at Arnett.

CFE: And we moved to Arnett and lived there about five years, five or six years. And then, bless Daddy's heart, he finally got to buy the place at Turnersville in 1950, wasn't it, Mother? Or something—

JMF: Yeah, in the fall of 1950.

CFE: The fall of 1950. And all five of us kids graduated from Turnersville High School.

WSP: So you finally came to rest in Turnersville, and you all were able to graduate from one school?

JMF: Yeah.

CFE: I went my last four years at one school, and that's the longest I ever went at any school. And I failed, uh—Daddy moved four, three times my first year, and he moved three times my, uh, third year. And I failed that grade, but I *did* go on and get my diploma. I was the oldest one in my class. I was, I graduated in May, and I turned twenty in July. But you know, that didn't bother me. I wanted that diploma. And I—

WSP: Your high school diploma—

CFE: Yeah, yeah. And the first year May was at school at Turnersville, my baby sister—(laughs) they had a program. And we hadn't been in the school but just a little while. Well, when after, this is the second grade had their program—afterward they come up to me—(whispers) Christine! Christine! I said, "Yeah?" They said, May's got her shoes on the wrong feet! (laughter) You don't think that wouldn't be embarrassing to an older sister that was a stranger in the school!

JMF: (laughs)

CFE: But it wasn't about maybe, maybe two hundred of us in school, if that big, many in the school system.

JMF: One of our neighbors up there—she told, told me after several days, or a good bit after we, after they started school—well, she said that, that, that, when we moved in, well, they announced at school that they was going to have new pupils, pupils, you know, that the Flemings had moved in and they'd have new pupils, pupils. And this girl, she says, oh, she was just waiting to see them come in because she thought they would be dressed up fancy, and she says, "And then they had on flour sack and feed sack dresses just like we had!" (laughter)

CFE: But I can remember the army—we were one of the last families moving out of the army camp because of my sister Marge. I brought the measles and chickenpox home from school, and Marge took the measles, and Marge got double pneumonia. I can remember, I can remember the doctor—and

it was *raining* Daddy had to go to Killeen and get the doctor to come and see May, Marge. And they told us that she could not be moved for so many days. Well, see, the army was trying to get us out and all. So the doctor wrote a thing saying that she could not be moved. And so when the army come in and moved us, I can remember this great big old army truck backing up. And I was scared to death!

WSP: Did you think you were going to be hauled away?

CFE: But I was just eight and all. I'd never seen anything like that. And so when, uh, they moved, they finally got us moved out—and see, they had already tore the telephone lines down—and Daddy couldn't call Killeen to get the doctor—what was his name?

JMF: Woods.

CFE: Dr. Woods, out there to see Marge. And to—

(telephone rings)

CFE: That's Joe, I'll tell him—excuse me. I'm sorry.

(interruption in taping)

WSP: Let me start again. Okay.

CFE: And Judge (??) was born when we lived at Arnett, the fifth child and the only boy. Mother wanted to name after Daddy, but oh, no, that wasn't gonna to do. She named him Morris [Maurice] then—my daddy's name was Maurice, Charles Maurice was my daddy. My Grandmother Fleming could, she just make her mad 'cause everybody called him Morris. She'd say, "It's Mau-*reese*!" (laughter)

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: (laughs)

CFE: And then he come along, and the year I graduated from high school he started school. So Mother and Daddy had kids in school at one time, I think, for nearly four, thirty-four years from the time I started until the time Judge graduated. But all five of us did graduate. My sister Charlotte and I did not go to college, but Marge went to beauty school, and she works at Temple—

JMF: J. C. Penney's.

CFE: J. C. Penney's in Temple as a beautician. My baby sister, Mable, went to CCC office school in Waco. She went to Houston and worked in a bank down there, and now she's the big proof operator at the Moody Bank in Moody, Texas.

WSP: How nice. She's back in the area again.

CFE: Yeah. When her son—she adopted a son, when he was, a boy when he was little. Well, she lived in Houston and down then there were the drugs and all getting pretty bad. So they moved back up here when Carrie was in first grade, and they have lived here ever since. And, uh—

JMF: Well, it's funny—but when they enlarged that Turnersville Cemetery, well, uh, they, uh, the people that come around and wanted us to pick out our lots—you know, up there—and, uh, Mable told her daddy, she says, "Well, now Daddy, get it big enough to where, where there will be room for me and Irving and Carrie, and, uh, because I don't want to be, have to be buried down here in Houston and be floated out!" (laughter)

WSP: Floated out? (laughter)

CFE: Well, they may not be interested in this, I don't know.

WSP: This is all interesting stuff. This means that you started out as the daughter on this big estate, as it were, on the top of Manning Mountain.

JMF: Yes, Manning Mountain.

WSP: And then you married a guy who was a sharecropper that moved around.

JMF: Yes.

WSP: What is the contrast between having a regular home and—

CFE: Well, that was just part of life then, they didn't think anything about it, did you Mama?

JMF: No.

CFE: That was just the woman done what the man said. And that was just part of it, sir.

JMF: Uh-huh.

CFE: And where, and Mama told all of us girls, "Wherever your husband goes, that is your main thing to go. If he takes you to the four corners of the world, you are to go and not gripe." And Mother *never* griped about any of the moves. We used to laugh and say when we brought the—uh, what we washed clothes in—the number three tub into the kitchen, the dishes automatically wrapped (claps) and went to the tub! Because then you was moving again! (laughter)

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: (laughs)

JMF: And that's what we used for a bathtub, too, was that number three washtub.

CFE: Number three tub.

WSP: You had to be very flexible about things.

JMF: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

CFE: Uh-huh.

WSP: In terms of the amount of work required, are some farms better than others?

JMF: No, I don't think so.

WSP: Why would someone move from one place to other? Is it the demand of the farmer who owns the place?

CFE: Yeah, and to better get more land. Daddy was wanting more land.

JMF: To where he could have, raise his, have goats, and, uh, sheep and cows.

CFE: Sheep and cows. He was wanting more land to where he could better his self with five kids.

WSP: Moving around was part of a grand scheme to slowly move his way up.

CFE: Yes, up the scale, yes.

WSP: So did he advertise, or did he just tell them, "I've managed five hundred acres, or I've managed seven hundred acres?"

CFE: No. No, everybody knew Morris [Maurice] Fleming, my daddy was well-known, and he was an excellent farmer. Ask Mama, he was. He was excellent farmer.

JMF: Yeah.

CFE: Everybody knew if Morris [Maurice] Fleming's farmed it, it would be done right. Well, when we moved to Turnersville—

JMF: It had growed up, cockleburs and sunflowers, the cultivating land had—

CFE: Sunflowers and cockleburs, it was terrible.

WSP: On the land that your daddy bought?

JMF: Yes!

CFE: Yes. It was higher than Daddy's head on the tractor, they could, it was so bad. Well, a neighbor come by while Daddy was plowing that and asked him, said "Morris [Maurice], how are you going to get this done? You'll be moving in no time." Daddy said, "No, this fall, this will be clean." And them rows was a mile long.

JMF: And they was so bad it took 'em—

CFE: We took a day to hoe one—

JMF: One row!

CFE: One row of cotton!

JMF: To clean it out.

CFE: To clean it out. Well, no, we may have got one down of a morning and one down in the evening. We may have got two rows, I can't remember. 'Cause it—

So he come back by, this man. And Daddy said he was standing at the tractor, tractor and he was talking, and he asked this man, said, "What do you see out there?" He said, "Nothing, why?" He said, "I thought you said I wouldn't stay." He said. Daddy had the cleanest farm in the country out there—because—he had four—

JMF: (laughs)

CFE: Well, Charlotte and I worked in the field more than Marge and May did. Marge worked some, but Charlotte and I worked the most in the fields.

JMF: And their bus driver, their school bus driver—he was an elderly man—and, uh, well just before he passed away here awhile back, he was talking about when he had met those—there, there was a half a mile now to where he picked the kids up. They had to walk out a half a mile—

CFE: The first winter—

JMF: First, first year to catch the school bus. And he told, uh, he told the girls that one day, he says, "Have your daddy to measure that length to the house down there, and if it's a half a mile, I can come down there and pick you up." And sure enough it was.

So, he would always pick those kids up and when he—he said, well, he had to go on down towards Whitehall and off on down thataway, and then when he'd come back, well he'd say them little gals was in that field a-hoeing or picking cotton or something.

CFE: Or hauling rocks.

JMF: Yep. They hauled twenty-seven.

CFE: I don't remember.

JMF: Uh, twenty-seven loads of rocks—and they wasn't little rocks either—

CFE: Daddy would have to take the sledge hammer and break some of them.

JMF: Out of that field. (laughs)

CFE: The pile of rocks is still out there in the field.

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: Having farmed properties all around the Fort Hood lands, what was the best of the bunch that you remember?

JMF: I believe it was over at Arnett.

CFE: No. Out of the Fort Hood area, Mother.

JMF: Oh, out of the Fort Hood area? Uh.

CFE: The Kelly place had good farmland.

JMF: Yeah, it was creek bottom. But we didn't stay there long enough to farm it.

CFE: Long enough to farm it.

WSP: Where was that located?

CFE: That was at, uh, Eliga.

JMF: At Eliga community down below Eliga on the Cowhouse.

CFE: Which other one, Mother, would be a good one that Daddy liked?

JMF: Well, uh., uh, the Beasley place, it was on Cowhouse.

CFE: Was in the army camp.

JMF: It was in the army camp, too.

WSP: Along the Cowhouse?

JMF: It was on the Cowhouse, too.

WSP: I'm taking it, from your experience, the Cowhouse Creek was very good land, right along the river on either side.

JMF: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Well, see, Maurice's family's home place was on the, up towards Antelope, but it was on the Cowhouse, too.

CFE: The day when my daddy got where he didn't remember anything, his dream was to have a pretty Cowhouse bottomland where he could farm. He loved to farm the Cowhouse land.

WSP: Was that the most fertile of that area?

JMF: Yeah. Uh-huh.

WSP: More so, would you say, than the Leon River area?

CFE: Well, I guess, but we just had the Cowhouse.

JMF: Yeah.

CFE: When they moved us out of the army camp, we moved to Ames, well, there wasn't much farming land. But Daddy had to find work, so they were building South Fort Hood then. Well, Daddy would go all week and stay with Mama's sister in Killeen and do carpenter work, to where they could have some money, to where he could feed us kids. And he left Mother and me, and Charlotte and May out there on this, out in the country, *way* out in the country. And you know, we didn't think anything about it. You know, and Mama didn't even have a car, didn't have a phone or nothing. But, we had a happy life.

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: In all those rent farms along the Cowhouse, were you living in the owner's house?

JMF: Yes. Well, except the one that's uh, uh, that, uh, I moved into from the Manning Mountain. That was my daddy's farm. It was on the Cowhouse, it was down below Eliga, across the creek from, uh, the Kelly place that we moved onto.

WSP: This was all in the same general area.

JMF: Yes, we lived in the same area. Uh-huh.

CFE: They didn't, they didn't move much until *I* come along, and then they had to, Daddy had to, he said he had to do more. And he was working for Granddaddy, for Papaw Fleming, and then he said he had—then they left there and, where did you all go then, Mama?

JMF: Where we moved from the home place?

CFE: Uh-huh.

JMF: We moved to the Sutton place, over close to Killeen. But it, uh, it, it sold out from under us, and we had to move again.

CFE: Out from under us, and Daddy had to—that's where Marge was born.

JMF: Yeah. And, uh, we moved down the Slawson (??) place, I think, from the Sutton place.

CFE: Sutton place—

JMF: And then, then back to Palo Alto on the Bay place.

WSP: Did any of these places have electricity or water?

JMF: No, no. No.

CFE: Well now—

JMF: Well, the Bankston's, Slawson place—

CFE: The Slawson place had water.

JMF: And the, and the—

CFE: The Bay place had water.

JMF: Yeah. And the, uh, well, the one at the, there on the edge of town, the Sutton place.

CFE: Sutton place.

JMF: It had water. It was a great *big* house.

CFE: Yeah, I had—but you lived in one side and somebody else lived on the other.

JMF: And, uh—

WSP: But when you say it had water, you're not talking about running water. You're talking about good water you had to carry.

JMF: No! No, it had water, running water.

CFE: Oh, no! No, no, running water.

WSP: The place that would have water?

JMF: It was, it was on the edge of Killeen.

CFE: Killeen.

JMF: And, uh, Killeen, the city limits of Killeen. We lived there.

WSP: Out on the outskirts of town, but close enough to get water from the city water system?

JMF: Yeah, and, and we had electricity there, too.

WSP: But most of these other places on Cowhouse you did without running water?

CFE: No. Even when we lived on the Kelly place, when we moved out—

JMF: There was a well under the hill, and we, and we had to draw water and pack it up. (laughter)

CFE: Pack it up. I packed water. (laughter) I packed my share of water. But you know, sir, I don't regret it. It was very peaceful life. And we didn't have to worry about the stuff that the kids nowadays have to worry about. And I had to walk out, I don't really know how far—

JMF: I bet, I bet it was two miles—

CFE: No, no.

JMF: A mile and a half, I guess—

CFE: To the—

JMF: Bus.

CFE: To Eliga. and I was a little bitty thing. I, I, I didn't—when I was, uh, seventh or eighth grade I didn't weigh but like forty-eight pounds. I, I was little, but I've spread. (laughter)

JMF: (laughs)

CFE: But Mama Fleming has always told me, she said, "You're built just like me." But I—

JMF: She weighed four pounds when she was born. (laughs)

CFE: I weighed four pounds. And they—Mama said then I was short and fat. And I said, I've been short and fat all my life! I was the least one of them, and I'm still—well, right there is all five of us, and see how short I am. I'm the one on the far end. (points at a photograph)

JMF: (points) This one here at the bottom, in the middle, the year that Judge graduated. That's when he graduated.

CFE: But that right—uh, somewhere when we put Daddy in the rest home, well, we had Marge come in, my sister—she lived in Michigan for about thirty, twenty or thirty years and then she moved back to Texas, come home, for a visit to see Daddy. We knew Daddy's mind was going, he had Parkinson's disease—too many hard working—when we was all lined up taking the pictures, it was me and Charlotte, Marge, May, and Judge. And Judge looked down the line, and he said, "Hey! What in the hell happened down there!" Here I am, and he can stretch his arm out, and I can walk under it. Excuse the language. (laughter)

JMF: (laughs)

CFE: But it was few—and my kids thoroughly enjoyed going to Granny and Granddad Fleming's out at Turnersville.

JMF: When I moved in down here my little great-grandson, uh, Justin, caught my grandson's oldest boy, boy, well, he said—when I move, no, we moved the dining table, I believe we give it some—

CFE: Judge.

JMF: But anyway, uh, Justin come in just before we moved out, and he said, "Granny, there's been lots of goodies cooked on this little old table hasn't there?" (laughs) He'd always, he'd always make a run for that table, table because he knew there'd be cookies or something or another on it. (laughs)

CFE: And my granddaughter, she would always stay at Mother's when she got sick when she went to school. So one day she got sick—and I worked in Gatesville public school cafeteria twenty-eight years before I retired—and so one day they come in, and they said, Christine is actually sick. And I, I said, "Well, okay." Her mother works for Dr. Maynard, she's a nurse practitioner. And, uh, so I said, "Okay, I'll go take her to Nell's." Well, Nell was Joe's mother's sister. Well, they were gone. I said, "Ashley, I don't know what I'm going to do. You always stayed."

She said, "I ain't going to Granny's." I said, "Well, baby, you always stayed at Granny's out at the farm." (shouts) She said, "She didn't have a cemetery in the back and one in the front out there!" I said, I told Mama, I said, "Mama, please close." I said "I'll get Granny to close the kitchen door and you can't see that cemetery." I said, "Quick as I get off work, I'll come get you." So that's what Mother did, she had to shut the kitchen doors so great-granddaughter could stay here.

WSP: In Turnersville?

JMF: No, right here!

CFE: No, right here, sir. I was talking about when Mother lived at Turnersville. I told Ashley, I said, "You always stayed at Granny's *then*, why not now?" "There's a cemetery in the back yard."

JMF: (laughs) And there's one across the, uh, street down here.

CFE: The Negro cemetery.

JMF: Colored, colored cemetery. down—

WSP: I see. (laughs)

CFE: Well, that may not be any importance to it, I don't know.

WSP: We'll just take all the stories as they come.

JMF: But it was funny when we moved in down, when they moved girls moved me in. Well, Charlotte was a-washing and cleaning up the sink, and she looked out the back, out that window, "Oh, my gosh! Mama," she says, "just look what you've got in your back yard!" (laughter) But it don't bother me, though.

CFE: She went from a beautiful wooded place—there was woods across the road from her—to a cemetery in her back yard. But she never complained.

JMF: (points to a photograph) This is our farm at Turnersville. It took—it took from the air.

WSP: It's very nice. Really gorgeous. I was going to ask you about that. That's a nice big house.

CFE: Wait a minute! He moved her out of an eight-room house with five kids into a four-room house, two bedrooms.

JMF: One bedroom.

CFE: Two.

JMF: No, it didn't. We, uh, the living room and the bedroom was altogether.

CFE: No, it had a wall.

JMF: Yeah.

CFE: Yeah. It. Just one bedroom.

JMF: And, uh—

WSP: This is in Turnersville?

JMF: Yes.

WSP: Was the Turnersville house pretty small?

CFE: *Real* small! So they had what we called the, uh, little house out at the back.

JMF: Out at the back, where Daddy kept the canned goods and—

CFE: Stuff like that—

JMF: And, uh, and our deep freeze.

CFE: But we didn't have a deep freeze then. So what Daddy done, he moved us four girls out in the little house, and Judge slept with Mama and Daddy in the house. We climbed a barbed-wire fence every night and every morning to get to the house.

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: Until he built a bigger house?

CFE: Yeah. He got where. We were in there about two years, weren't we, Mother?

JMF: Yeah. Uh.

CFE: But he made a house for us.

JMF: The top one there is the one that he—I said, well, he kept adding on to it until it looked like a dirt dauber's house. (laughs)

WSP: (laughter) I've got your daughter's impressions of your move off the land. Do you have any impressions about the move in 1942. One of your daughters was sick at the time, am I right?

CFE: Yes. Marge. Marge had pneumonia then. Yes.

WSP: How were you informed that the time had come for you to be moving? How did the army let you know?

JMF: Oh, they just come in and told us we had to get out.

WSP: Did they send any letters are anything?

JMF: No. No, no!

WSP: Did they just show up at the house?

JMF: Oh, yeah.

CFE: Well, they give, they give us days—

JMF: They give us—

CFE: Uh, so many weeks.

JMF: And, uh, and you see that, uh, what cattle Morris [Maurice] had, he had to move them by, by foot to the, over to Ames, across the Cowhouse and up, up at Ames.

CFE: Well, Uncle, Uncle Red brought the sheep in a, in a pickup, because I rode with him in the pickup.

JMF: Well, anyway—

CFE: Daddy drove his cows then.

JMF: And, we moved up on the Leon River and, uh, and uh, every time it got out, well, them sheep would have, would happen to be on the opposite side, and they'd have to swim that river to come across.

CFE: Come to the house.

WSP: You're were living up on the Leon River?

JMF: That's where we moved to when, er—

CFE: Do you know where Ames is? It's between here and Jonesboro. Do you know where Jonesboro is? Okay, that's where.

Daddy fussed more than Mother did, because my granddad, the day he died, he wanted to come, my Granddaddy Fleming, he wanted to go back.

WSP: To the land?

CFE: To the land. Uh, and Daddy would always say that he would never buy a savings bond because the government made him move. And he felt like that, he wasn't giving the government any money. He would not buy a savings bond because he was so hurt about the move. Daddy hurt worse than the rest of us because he was the breadwinner of the family.

WSP: Even as a sharecropper, he felt a sense of loss?

CFE: Oh, yes, very much so.

WSP: Even though he wasn't financially invested in the land like the owners were.

CFE: Like the owners were. Yes, somebody coming in and telling him he had to move.

JMF: What he had to do.

CFE: They didn't ask him, they *told* him.

WSP: But he did it anyway?

JMF: Oh, yeah. We had to.

CFE: There were several men committed suicide over the move.

WSP: That's what I understand. It's very sad.

CFE: Yes. And, uh—

JMF: Two of our neighbors, more especially.

CFE: Who was that?

JMF: Uh, mister whatcha-call-him, at Maple.

CFE: Oh, I wouldn't know.

JMF: And he was an elderly man. And then, that, uh, uh, well, I can't think what his name is—

CFE: Well, I just remember the one that Daddy—

JMF: The one at Antelope—

CFE: And saying—

JMF: At Antelope—

CFE: The government killed him. That's just the way Daddy would put it. He was very heartbroken about having to move. Because he was—Daddy was born way out in West Texas, my grandparents moved out there for a while, my Grandmother Fleming. And, uh, they didn't stay but about two or three years, something like that. Well, Uncle Wayne can tell you more about that. And, uh.

Well, Daddy was born there, and Daddy was the third son but the second son—the first son was born with a heart defect, and then the second son was—then they called it water on the brain, they've got a big name for it now—but Ma Fleming, the table that they had built they said had nails a sticking through it and Ma always said—what was his name, Mama?

JMF: Uh, uh, I can't think.

CFE: Well, anyway he got under the table and stuck that nail in his head.

JMF: The nail in his head.

CFE: And he died. And Ma always said—

JMF: He was, I think, fourteen months old.

CFE: He was real little when he died. And then my daddy was borned out there. But they come back here and settled back down at the Gray place, at that, no, at the home place when my daddy was a little

boy—and in the house that I was born in.

WSP: How interesting, a full circle.

CFE: (laughs) Yes'ir.

WSP: Do you have anything else that you would like to tell me?

JMF: (laughs) Well, I think that's about it. I'm glad Wayne come along. I had forgot about that gold digging on the Jack Mountain. (laughs) And of course I was born just below the Jack Mountain on the Manning farm.

WSP: Do you remember any really bad weather? Storms? Flooding?

JMF: No. No.

CFE: Her mother was scared to death of a cloud, she said, and she'd scare all the kids and take them to the storm cellar. If Mother was ever scared when us kids was growing up I never knew it, 'cause she was so scared as a kid she would never let us know that there was a bad cloud. And my daddy, he could look at the sunrise a lot of times and them clouds—I don't know how he did it—he'd say with us four girls, he'd say, "All right gals, we've got to get the work done in three days. If not it's going to rain." And sure enough, sir, in three days, however that cloud was, you could guarantee there'd be a rain.

WSP: He could read clouds that well!

CFE: Yes, he could.

JMF: Like I was telling, uh, Charlotte and them yesterday, or Charlotte as we was coming home—the sun was a shining through the clouds, you know, and the streaks was going down and the sunlight. And, and I said, well, uh, Granddaddy Bud always said, it's, uh, clouds was a gathering rain. (laughs)

CFE: Well I've heard Daddy say that, too, that they were gathering the water.

WSP: Sunlight was gathering up the rain?

JMF: Yes, gathering rain. (laughs)

WSP: Well thank you very much for spending your afternoon with me. I've enjoyed it thoroughly, and I've got a lot of good information.

JMF: Well I hope we've helped you. (laughs)

WSP: Oh, you have!

CFE: Well, now, in Mother's family there is Mother and Uncle Floy (??) and Uncle Kenneth and Aunt Mary. And Aunt Mary, Mother will be eighty-eight in September. The two boys are dead. And then her sister will be eighty next Saturday, next Friday.

JMF: That Friday—

CFE: Our Granny Manning, my Great-grandmother Manning lived to be ninety-six. When she was ninety she pieced me a Dutch doll quilt.

WSP: My goodness!

CFE: And if, when her mother's mother died, well, Granny helped raise her. And Aunt Mattie was an excellent seamstress—my daddy, Granddaddy Bud's sister—and she'd make Aunt Mary something. Well, Granny would think it was too short. Well, she'd take it apart. If it was checks Granny would

put stripes in the middle to make it long enough. (laughter)

JMF: Well, Aunt Mattie learned her sewing from Mama. Yeah.

CFE: Yeah, from my mama's mama. And—

JMF: And just like Christine said, ever, Mama could see a dress and take it and make it.

WSP: Yes, I think that's phenomenal.

JMF: Yeah.

CFE: And they said she was one of the sweetest people. I have—well, my daughter that's named after her has got a poem that's a real good friend wrote about my grandmother that is just precious. It's, it's, just telling about it and all.

WSP: All the things that she could do?

CFE: Everybody knew her. Everybody knew Pauline.

JMF: Everybody called her Pie, her name was Pauline.

CFE: Everyone called her Pie.

JMF: And they called her Pie. (laughs)

WSP: And why is that?

CFE: It was short for Pauline.

JMF: Short, short for Pauline.

CFE: And I guess because she was such a good cook, I don't know.

JMF: But they all loved her, *everybody* loved her.

CFE: And then—I love to cook and my first cooking was on a wood cook stove, and on the Hannah (??) place on the Cowhouse, and I boiled okra and I burned it so bad Mama had to throw the pan away. (laughter) I mean—

JMF: (laughs)

WSP: Not just the okra? Throw the pan away, too?

CFE: The pan away!

WSP: It is a trick to learn, isn't it?

CFE: So, I have learned, loved to cook all, as long as I can remember. You know, I cooked twenty-eight years in the cafeteria. And now I do commercial cooking out of my kitchen.

WSP: Do you think you gained the joy of cooking because you learned from your mother?

JMF: And her grandmother, her grandmother mostly.

CFE: Yes, my Grandmother Fleming mostly.

JMF: Wayne's mother.

CFE: Mother never has really liked to cook, and she'll admit it.

JMF: And I still don't! (laughs)

WSP: And you said the reason why you didn't learn, was because you were working in the field so much of the time, you had to re-learn it?

JMF: Yes. Uh-huh.

CFE: But I, now I worked in the field, too, but I still learned to cook and all. So, it's just the different interest. Mother could sew and all. She made all of our clothes.

JMF: Out of feed sacks and flour sacks. (laughs)

CFE: She would go to the store with Daddy and take her clean flour, feed sack—they had chickens—and get another feed sack to match that. And us little girls all had beautiful dresses made out of feed sacks.

WSP: What about the label, or the printing on the sack?

CFE: Yes, it had beautiful flowers, and that's why she'd take this sack to go to match it to the ones at the store.

WSP: Would she make it to a pattern—?

CFE: Well, they'd have collars and they'd have puffed sleeves, and big bows and gathered skirts, and—

JMF: And pleated skirts. (laughs)

CFE: Whatever was in style Mama could do it for us.

WSP: That's quite skillful. And it has to fit, too!

CFE: Yes, and I was real slim until I got about fifteen or sixteen. The first dress Mama made for me—

JMF: It was too little! (laughs)

CFE: Oh, she got mad! She tore that dress down about three times before she ever got it to fit me.

JMF: I don't remember I did that! (laughter)

CFE: We were living then at Arnett, on the Bell place.

JMF: Yeah. (laughs)

CFE: I mean, I got fat, and I've been fat ever since.

JMF: She said, She said here, last week or here awhile back she met Wayne in the grocery store—

CFE: No, in Flentge's.

JMF: In Flentge's (laughs) Well, wherever, and she said he said, "Well, hello Ms. Jessie!" (laughs) That was his mama's name.

CFE: We were at a family reunion one year and there was about six or seven of us great-granddaughters, of us granddaughters standing around talking. And I knew Uncle Wayne was talking about me—'cause you always can tell, they look at you—so after we all scattered I went over and said, "All right, Uncle Wayne, what did you say about me?"

He said, and big old tears come in his eyes, he said, "Christer, you're the only one of Mama's grandkids that looks so much like her."

JMF: Well, you know, uh, Linda favors her a whole lot—

CFE: I don't think so.

JMF: That's Wayne's—

CFE: I don't think so.

JMF: I think she does, some, but—she favors the Smiths more than she does—but she's shaped up like Ma Fleming.

CFE: Some.

JMF: Some, but—she favors the Smiths more than she does—but she's shaped up like Ma Fleming.

CFE: Linda, she looks like the Flemings, the Smiths, but she's short and fat like the Flemings.

JMF: Yes.

CFE: Well, we're taking up your time.

WSP: Well, thank you very much for everything. I'll finish this and send you a copy to look over.

JMF: Well, good deal!