

**CAREY SMITH**  
**Interview 22a**  
**September 28, 1982**  
**Becky Bailey, Interviewer**  
**Dorothy Farley, Transcriber**  
**Retyped by Courtney Lawrence**

**ABSTRACT:** In an interview with Becky Bailey, Carey Smith reminisces about his life in Diboll from the 1920's through the 1980's. Mr. Smith was born in Huntington and moved to Diboll as a child. Except for one year spent in the Army during World War I, he lived in Diboll and worked for Southern Pine Lumber Company in the Planer. Mr. Smith recalls the hardships of the Depression, living conditions in Copestown, and life as an African American worker and preacher in the company town.

**Becky Bailey (hereafter BB):** I am interviewing Mr. Carey Smith. His address is 711 Persimmon Street. I am interviewing him in his home, and today's date is September 28, 1982. My name is Becky Bailey. Ok, Mr. Carey, where were you born?

**Carey Smith (hereafter CS):** I was born in Huntington, Texas.

**BB:** What year was that?

**CS:** 1897. February 24.

**BB:** 1897.

**CS:** Yes. I am 85 years old.

**BB:** 85?

**CS:** That's right.

**BB:** Um, that's a long time, isn't it?

**CS:** That's a long time to live, isn't it.

**BB:** You said your wife died just died last year?

**CS:** No, she died this year.

**BB:** She died this year.

**CS:** The 28<sup>th</sup> of this month. I mean the 28<sup>th</sup> of May. We stayed together sixty years.

**BB:** Sixty years.

**CS:** That was quite a while I tell you.

**BB:** Sure is now a days, isn't it?

**CS:** I'm telling you. Sure is.

**BB:** What were your parents' names?

**CS:** Um.

**BB:** Your parents.

**CS:** My parents. My dad was named Henry Smith. Mother named Lucy Smith.

**BB:** Okay. Do you remember your grandparent's names?

**CS:** Jeff Smith.

**BB:** Do you know where they were from?

**CS:** They all from Jasper.

**BB:** All from Jasper.

**CS:** Um-huh. Jeff Smith and Roles, let me see what, Jake Roles, that one of....that was my mother's father.

**BB:** All from Jasper.

**CS:** All from Jasper. I was raised right in Jasper. All my folks lived in Jasper County. But they left Jasper before I was born. You know, they moved here from Huntington. And so I was born out in Huntington. Nine of us in all. Just..I'm the onliest one living. And I'm just is living myself.

**BB:** You said there were nine of you. Where?

**CS:** Nine. There was two girls and some boys passed before I was born. Two girls and seven boys.

**BB:** Seven boys.

**CS:** Um-huh.

**BB:** Where were you? Were you the youngest or the oldest?

**CS:** No, I was the youngest boy.

**BB:** The youngest boy.

**CS:** Yes. My brother. I had two brothers. Three brothers. Four brothers. Four or five. I had about five brothers older than I am. I was the youngest one of the boys. My sister, she was the youngest of the girls. And they all passed but me.

**BB:** Okay. How long did your folks live in Huntington?

**CS:** Oh, they stayed in Huntington oh, I guess seventeen or eighteen years. I can't remember now it's been so long. We left Huntington in 1907. I was quite a kid then. I wasn't no kid, but I was the yearlin' boy. The old folks say. We left there and came to Huntington and we stayed at Huntington. I mean we left Huntington and came up here. Stayed here. We didn't stay in Diboll. We stayed right up here. Above the Copes town, they call it. Stayed there about seventeen, eighteen years. Of course I've been in and out of Diboll all my life. And so my father, he used to furnish this place in wood way back up in there in eighteen, nineteen. Seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, and all like that.

**BB:** Did he ever work for Southern Pine at this time?

**CS:** No, he didn't. He didn't.

**BB:** He just worked for himself.

**CS:** Just worked for hisself. He cut wood. You know, got out in the woods and cut the trees anywhere in those days, 1910, 11, and 12. My mother died. She died in '26. I mean December 1912. She passed.

**BB:** And you were still living at home.

**CS:** Ma'am?

**BB:** You were still living at home at this time.

**CS:** Yes ma'am. I stayed at home. Oh I guess until about 1917. I started work at Southern Pine. I worked up until 62. That was right around 65 years.

**BB:** My Word! You worked all this time for them without...

**CS:** For Southern Pine. Well, I spent about a year in World War I.

**BB:** Oh, you did?

**CS:** Right at a year. About nine or ten months something like that. Not quite a year. And so I give all my time to Southern Pine, the balance of that time. I been off about a year. About one year. Out of that 65 years. About 64 years I worked for Southern Pine right here in Diboll.

**BB:** Um. Now this time. Someone told me you were a preacher, too.

**CS:** Yes. Um-huh. I been preaching quite a while. I uh preached all over this country. I preached at Woodville. I got some folks at Woodville and I preached at...preach everyway, all over. I preached at all those around here. Done a lot of preaching, they want me to preach now but I done got bad and done got old and I can't around like I used to. So I've just about called that off.

**BB:** Just about quit that. When did you start preaching?

**CS:** Oh, I've been preaching, oh, I think about twenty-eight, twenty-nine years. In fact I've been preaching all my life. I was a preacher when I was a little kid. Of course, I wasn't ordained or nothing like that. But I started preaching when I was eight or nine years old. Imitate other, preachers you know. I get out in the cotton fields and preach to the breeze. So after I got grown, after I married, I married in late August, I went to preaching then, and have been preaching ever since.

**BB:** When were you ordained?

**CS:** About 1928. '27 or '28, somewhere along in there. In that time. I can't remember now what the year was. I think in '27 if I'm not mistaken. '27 or '28.

**BB:** What church are you affiliated with?

**CS:** Baptist.

**BB:** The Baptist.

**CS:** Oh yes. Deep water Baptist.

**BB:** Deep water Baptist? How is that different?

**CS:** Well, I just say that, you know.

**BB:** You just said that.

**CS:** They use that word, you know, deep water. You know, they immerse them. They put them under the water?

**BB:** I've never heard that expression. I was raised a Baptist. But I hadn't heard that expression.

**CS:** Yes, that's what they call them, the deep water Baptist. And uh, I likes the Baptist Church. That's the only church I??? I don't say that other churches aren't good now. They're good people in all churches. You're saved by your belief. If you believe, He said with your heart a man believe unto righteousness and with your tongue, confession is made unto salvation. And so if you just believe. That is the only way you can be saved. By your belief. That's the reason I'm a Baptist, I believe in the Baptist and that's the only way you can be saved. Now if you believe in the Methodist you're just a Methodist, that's all. Church of God, or whatever the case may be. But I...all my folks were Baptist. My dad was a Baptist deacon. He stayed a deacon a long time back in the old days. And he taught me a right smart about the Bible when I was coming up. And I was a kid, I've never been arrested, never have been in jail. At my age you know, lots of people can't say that. I've always been trying to tend to my business and let the other fellow alone. And try to be honest and pay my bills and all like that. I did all of that. And, uh, I never had no trouble with nobody. Been here these 85 years and had no trouble with nobody.

**BB:** That's saying a lot.

**CS:** That's a pretty good record let me tell you that. And I have quite a few friends, white and black. More white then there is black because the black people, you know, some of them cuss a little, more than they really is...so I got a lot of black friends but not nearly as is white. I got a lot of white friends. Anything I want I can to Lufkin, anywhere right here, and tell them I want this and this. Anything I want, I don't have to have no money. Put that in the truck or the car and go on, Carey. I know you'll pay me. I try to be honest. I try to be honest with...

**BB:** That's saying a lot. What kind of education did you have?

**CS:** Well.

**BB:** When you were younger?

**CS:** I went to the ninth grade. I didn't get no high school education. Back in my time that was the highest they went.

**BB:** Was the ninth grade?

**CS:** Um-huh.

**BB:** Did you mainly go to school in Huntington then?

**CS:** Ma'am?

**BB:** Did you mainly go to school in Huntington? Or in Diboll?

**CS:** Did I what?

**BB:** Go to school.

**CS:** I went to school in Diboll, mostly.

**BB:** In Diboll.

**CS:** I went to school in Huntington when I was a small kid. I spent several years down there in Huntington. In a little old log cabin. Out from Huntington, there. The old lady, she used to run this place down below me here. Miller, she used to be my teacher.

**BB:** Was that in Huntington?

**CS:** Ma'am?

**BB:** She was your teacher in Huntington or here?

**CS:** Yes, Huntington.

**BB:** In Huntington.

**CS:** I used to...fellow at Crockett. He's dead now. He called Professor Hogg, he's a great big old fellow. Professor Hogg, another teacher, Jack Baret. I just named several of them to you down in Huntington. But after I got here, I had several teachers: Professor Smith, Professor Higen, Professor Grant, Professor Hubbard, uh I can't think how many I had. That's about the biggest of them in Diboll.

**BB:** Where was the school here? Where was it located?

**CS:** It was located before they moved those houses. The school was located over there by the hill right off in the mill.

**BB:** Oh, okay.

**CS:** Yes. Right up there by the mill. Around the...just a little above the graveyard. East of the graveyard. That's where the school used to be. They moved it. Put it down there at...in '63.

**BB:** In '63.

**CS:** Um-huh.

**BB:** What? How many rooms was the school? How many kids did you have go? Do you remember how big?

**CS:** From my family.

**BB:** No, just all the kids.

**CS:** Oh, I couldn't number how many. There's quite a few of them. I guess there's only twenty-five or thirty more. But...in my school.

**BB:** In your grade.

**CS:** Em-huh. My class. There's more in other classes. You know.

**BB:** So you went through the ninth grade?

**CS:** Yes.

**BB:** Okay.

**CS:** Of course, folks knew more back in the ninth grade then they knew then they know in the twelfth grade now. Cause they. They do. They really do. You had everything in those blue back spellers. You know. They used to have those blue back spellers and they had science and they had physiology. We called it physiology, but health book. They had geography and they had arithmetic and all in that book. The science and everything in that book. But now they've got it separated. Get all that in one in my day. But now they've got it separated. Figured differently than they figured in my day. Yes, it's a lot different.

**BB:** All that new math.

**CS:** That's right. Lots of difference. I can't understand it myself.

**BB:** Well, it's hard when you are not brought up that way.

**CS:** I guess so.

**BB:** The kids don't seem to have any problem with it.

**CS:** No. But I could not. I can't handle it now, like back in my days.

**BB:** How did? How long did the school day last? Do you remember how?

**CS:** No, I think it was nine months. Are you talking about the months, around nine months. Like it is now.

**BB:** Nine months. Did the kids take off time to go cotton picking or anything like that?

**CS:** No, they didn't.

**BB:** They pretty well went all year.

**CS:** They went most all year. Didn't have much leisure time at all.

**BB:** Okay. How old were you when you started work then. When you went to work?

**CS:** Well, lets see. I was only...about seventeen. I was guess about sixteen or seventeen. I was pretty old anyhow. It amounted up to eighty-five years. I think about seventeen or eighteen. That's right, I was seventeen years old, because my dad had to sign up for me. He signed up for me to work.

**BB:** Okay. You started for Southern Pine. What did you do for them?

**CS:** Huh.

**BB:** What kind of work did you start off with?

**CS:** Well, I started off with....I started off with loading cars and trucking lumber from machines to a machine off a yard. You know the yard used to be different then than it is now. Lumber all stacked in a stack. Way up in the yard now. And I used to feed...supply the machine. But that's way back yonder. After I got up, after World War II, they cut out all that and got those lifters and things. And they could pick up the lumber that back in my day, back yonder, we had to take three men to pick up. Go out there and pick up a twelve by twelve by twenty-four and put it on a buggy. Just three men. You know that was killing. After all that was over with, we had those lifters, and that would take a lot of work off of us. So I went to loading cars then and I loaded cars for a long time. Trucked lumber for a long time. And that's about the things I be at the planer.

**BB:** This was all at the sawmill?

**CS:** Um-huh?

**BB:** At the sawmill.

**CS:** At the planer. I never worked at the sawmill. I worked at the planer my whole, about 64 years, I worked at the planer, something in that neighborhood.

**BB:** What kind of pay did you get when you first started off?

**CS:** Well, listen, I'll tell you the truth, I hate to tell it, now I hate. For the public to know it. But I worked for a \$1.25 a day.

**BB:** That's when you were...?

**CS:** That's way back yonder.

**BB:** Way back yonder.

**CS:** Along 1917 and 1918.

**BB:** Okay.

**CS:** After then they raised me to .35 an hour, something like that. Then during World War II, they raised me to .50 an hour. Then later on when I had to quit I was getting a \$1.15 an hour.

**BB:** This was in 1960?

**CS:** '62.

**BB:** '62. What kind of days did you work? I mean did you work from 8:00 to 5:00 or...

**CS:** Well, we did work sometimes ten hours. We start at eight and work till five. A little later in the deal, you know. First we start at six or seven and work till five-thirty I think, right along in there, 5:30 or 6 o'clock. I can't remember now, it's been so long ago. That's a way back yonder. But along in that neighborhood.

**BB:** Okay, lets move on to about 1929 and '30. Uh, you were still working for the company.

**CS:** Oh yes.

**BB:** And uh, can you remember what happened after the stock market crashed?

**CS:** Do what?

**BB:** After the stock market crashed. Did things start slowing down for the company?

**CS:** Oh yes, we uh, sometimes we would, we would work two days a week. Sometimes we work three. According to how the orders come in. See you had to get orders from Mr. Farley. He was my foreman and he was shipping clerk. He get...sometimes he get a order at twelve o'clock in the day and we worked that evening. Be off in the morning. And we done pretty well, but after World War II, we worked pretty regular then. Up until I got ready to get off.

**BB:** So you only worked like two days a week. Did you get?

**CS:** Some.

**BB:** How did they do your pay now? Whenever you were only working two days a week?

**CS:** Well.

**BB:** Cut way back on your...

**CS:** We worked on a whole week. Sometimes we just worked two days, sometimes we worked three days. On like that. Just off and on. And we'd have from twelve, fourteen dollars a payday. I know you had twenty-nine dollars payday, you were doing pretty good in those days. That was tough, I'm tellin' you.

**BB:** Was that pay per week or every two weeks?

**CS:** It paid every two weeks. I think sometimes like that.

**BB:** Right.

**CS:** But then they went to paying every week, on a different deal.

**BB:** In 1917 when you first went to work for them, did they pay you in scrip or checks?

**CS:** I can't remember.

**BB:** Or money.

**CS:** We had checks I think first. Them old red and yellow checks first, if I'm not mistaken. Then later on they were paying in slips. You know, writing those slips and after then they cut out all that. They used to have those slips you write on. You write out a slip for so much and so much and you could go down and cash it. They would cash it for you and you go buy your groceries and first one thing and another with that slip. And uh after then, they went to paying off in money.

**BB:** When did they start that?

**CS:** Well, I can't think now just when they started paying. I think along 19...maybe 1940. '30 or '40, something like that. Maybe in the '30s, it might have been in the '20s. I just can't think now when they started paying in cash, but they did pay cash a good while before I got off.

**BB:** So they were doing it when you first started to work for them?

**CS:** No, they weren't paying cash.

**BB:** No. I mean they were paying checks when you first started?

**CS:** Checks. Yes.

**BB:** Okay. Did you trade at the commissary then?

**CS:** Hum?

**BB:** Did you buy your things at the commissary?

**CS:** That's where I lived, by the commissary.

**BB:** You lived by the commissary?

**CS:** Yes. By the commissary. I bought all my stuff there. Stuff was reasonable then. We could get stuff much cheaper than you can now. I get all my....after I married in '20, last of August. Maybe about the first of '22, I'd get all my groceries out of there. My groceries didn't cost me too much. I could take ten dollars and get me enough groceries to last me and my wife, oh I guess, twelve or fourteen days. In those days. But now you can't. You can't get it now.

**BB:** No, you sure can't. So you married in 1922, did you?

**CS:** Yes. I married in 1922. I been married 60 years this month.

**BB:** What was your wife's name?

**CS:** Erma Lee Smith. Erma Lee Brooks first. That was her first name-Brooks. She worked for Miss Dixie Cook about 34 years.

**BB:** Oh, she did.

**CS:** Um-huh.

**BB:** That's what I was going to ask you if she worked outside?

**CS:** She worked for Dixie Cook about 34 years.

**BB:** Did ya'll have children? I know you did.

**CS:** No, we didn't have no children.

**BB:** You didn't have any children?

**CS:** No, not by her. The Book said, "part from ?????? and water, but increasements come from above." I didn't do nothing. Yes, sir.

**BB:** Let's see, where am I. Oh, I know what I wanted to ask, did you live in a company house.

**CS:** I lived in a company house up until '22. After I married I didn't. My dad brought this place here. We bought twelve acres. Twelve acres, more or less, that's what the deeds called it. And we bought that...he bought it for twelve hundred and forty dollars.

**BB:** Oh my word. Twelve acres, huh?

**CS:** Twelve hundred and forty dollars more less. That's what the deed said. Twelve acres. I mean twelve hundred and forty dollars. That' what he paid for it.

**BB:** Was the house already here or did you?

**CS:** We had the one house. That house down there that my brother used to live in. We all lived in that house. A long time. After we moved my family from above Copetown. We moved in that house and stayed there. My dad and another white man built this old shack. For me and mine. Built this along 1930 or '31. Something like that. We moved, me and my wife, moved in here '30 or '31 or '32. I remember now. Along in that category. We lived in this house 52 years.

**BB:** Uh-huh. Let me think. Do you know who he bought this land from?

**CS:** Miss old Laura Hogue. Miss Laura Hogue. She's dead past now. Have you ever met Mr. Paul Hogue who worked for the boss up here?

**BB:** I've heard his name.

**CS:** Well, that's his.

**BB:** That was his mother.

**CS:** That's his mother. Ceasar Hogue. He passed some time ago. That's one of her boys. Had a girl, I think, named. I forgot her name. She's living up there in Lufkin now. One of her daughters.

**BB:** Then you never worked for the C.C.C. or the W.P.A., did you?

**CS:** No ma'am.

**BB:** You stayed with the company then.

**CS:** Stayed with the company all my days. I mean years.

**BB:** Were there very many of your friends, any black workers that worked for you?

**CS:** Oh yes. Quite a few of them. There lots of black people that worked there with me. I had one named Eddie Harris and another...oh, I can't think. One called Waxie and another called Amos Simmons. You know Amos Simmons, don't you. You ought to

know Amos Simmons. They live in Nigton now. I can't name how many boys that come and worked with me. But there were several.

**BB:** How about on the W.P.A. projects? Were there a lot that worked there?

**CS:** No, ma'am. I don't think anybody fooled with that. I don't think anybody done anything like that. I'm not sure, yes.

**BB:** Okay. Let me think. This part. I was gonna ask you if there were very many hobos around this part of town?

**CS:** Any hobos?

**BB:** Any hobos come through. I know there were a lot that came through...

**CS:** There was a lot when I lived up above the store here. My mother fed a lots of hobos come by. They would be walking down there and some of them had good money, too. And they would come by and ask my mother for a lunch and she would fix them a lunch and they would go down to the tracks and eat it. That's when I lived up here on the track. But now that never bothered nobody down in this. After I moved down here, there weren't....

**BB:** Nobody came down here much.

**CS:** No. No, nobody.

**BB:** Okay, in this part of town were there very many people that were actually hungry during the Depression?

**CS:** Hungry?

**BB:** Um-huh.

**CS:** Well.

**BB:** Just didn't have food.

**CS:** Some few. Some few, didn't have anything. I can't remember how many. Some few here were in a destitute condition.

**BB:** Did, uh...let me make sure my tape doesn't run out. Did the churches have any relief projects or...?

**CS:** Do what?

**BB:** Did the churches have any projects where they tried to help these people that just didn't have..?

**CS:** Well, they didn't do it in those days. No ma'am. They did give people...they had a poor folks treasury there. A penny treasury they called it. They would give them three dollars, four dollars or along like that every Sunday. That's about the biggest they were able to give. Because I know that when I first came there, they wasn't paying but twenty-five cents a month for church dues. And uh...

**BB:** So there just wasn't..?

**CS:** And they didn't have no money in the treasury to amount to nothing. They give them what little they had. Those pennies. They would have a penny plate and they would go around and give pennies and when one gets sick they would give them three or four or five dollars or something like that. And sometimes you would call a collection and raise twenty-five or thirty dollars for different people. That was after I got up to preaching.

**BB:** Did very many young people, I'm mainly talking about the black people, did very many black people leave Diboll to go somewhere else?

**CS:** Oh, yes, quite a few of them. Some went to California. Some went to Houston. I had a bunch, I had some kinfolk that left and went to Houston. They all might near, all of them passed down there. And I had some go to Michigan and just all around. They are scattered all over. Lots of people left here, young people. I got a boy out there in California. I mean adopted, not an adopted boy, but a foster son. I raised him and he is out there in California. He has done well out there. He has two homes out there. He worked for the city and his wife worked for the internal revenue. She was a teacher. She finished at Bishop College. Her home is up here in Dallas. She and my boy married after he came out of the Army. He came out of the Army and married and bought them two homes. They are doing fine.

**BB:** Well, that's good.

**CS:** Yes.

**BB:** During the Depression, did a lot of people around this area raise gardens and this sort of thing?

**CS:** Yes, yes. Most of the people...in the last fifty years people have stopped raising gardens. I say forty years. Before then people had gardens all around their houses. After they moved out in these quarters here they had gardens all around their houses. Greens and beans. First one thing and then another. For the help. And they lived fairly good, fairly good. Of course, the houses weren't too good. The first houses they wasn't much good. But they didn't cost so much. Oh, five dollars or something a month.

**BB:** Were they company houses?

**CS:** Yes, that's what they all were. I paid five something. Five seventy-five, something like that. Six or seven dollars according to the make of the house. If the house was good then they charge you a little more. But them old houses, they charge you about five, six or seven dollars something there, in that category.

**BB:** Did the company keep 'um up?

**CS:** Yes, sir. They had a man to keep them up. They had a man to go around to see to them. They had a man over all that. He had all this work done. He would hire....sometimes he would hire his hands. Now he had a lot of colored boys, men working. Keeping...help keeping these houses. One was Will Canada. He had a bunch of men to keep up the houses. Had another man over that. White fellow was over it. He'd get 'um to fix up those houses and patch 'em up. So they did pretty well.

**BB:** Okay.

**CS:** These is all facts. They are true. They are true.

**BB:** I believe you. I've heard them from more than one person.

**CS:** I wouldn't tell nothing on nobody. That was wrong. I know I went through all this. Yes, I've been through all of it.

**BB:** Did you ever....during that. What would you call the worst part of the Depression around here? Which year was really the worst?

**CS:** I believe along around 1929. About the worst we had. I think it was '29. It was before World War I or II....let's see.....

**BB:** There's been more than one bad time?

**CS:** Yes, we had some all the time. But we had one Depression here...but that's after I married. Now I believe in 1928 or 1929. Somewhere in that neighborhood. We just....they rationed your flour and rationed your ice. That's in World War II. They rationed your ice. If you didn't have no old people in your house, you couldn't get ice. And I know lots of times we'd get in that old car, old truck and go to Lufkin and catch those ice trucks and get ice. They wouldn't let you have it until they built us an icehouse out here. Well they built the icehouse and people began to get those Frigidaire's and all like that and they cut out all this ice business. That hard ice.

**BB:** That was during World War II because I talked to Mr. Turner...

**CS:** Yes,...pardon me. I used to have a box. Fellow used to make a box to put my ice in. And pack it all around with sawdust. And put a tin bottom in it. And hole down through the floor and through there where the water would drip on down through the floor. I used

to have that when I first married. I used to have a little old wooden icebox. Until I moved down here. Along about 1928, '29 I got me a Frigidaire. A refrigerator, whatever you call it.

**BB:** When did you get your first car?

**CS:** Car?

**BB:** Uh-huh.

**CS:** I...we bought a truck. Let's see.

### **SKIP ON THE TAPE**

**CS:** Take a bale of cotton to the gin you know, and get about a bit a pound for it. And that would put us up the hill right smart, you know. You would get sometimes six or seven hundred dollars per bale and that helped us a quite. My dad didn't do nothing. He didn't do much but run flower gardens. He plowed quite a few gardens. After he got old and he didn't do very much of nothing.

**BB:** So you raised cotton up here on the side?

**CS:** Yes, we raised cotton right out there. Out there. I can't think what year it was. Long about 1920 or '21. 1926 or '27. Along in that year. We raised cotton out there. Raised corn, peanuts, potatoes and everything. And that helped us so much.

**BB:** Well, in 1930 whenever the price dropped on the cotton so much, did ya'll...

**CS:** Well, we didn't...I don't think we fooled with no cotton. My dad was...my dad was. He had to quit fooling with the cotton. My dad passed in '34. And he had to quit fooling with cotton I think then. Because you had to pay so much to have it ginned. Pay....

**BB:** Did they have a gin here in town?

**CS:** No. They had a gin up here at Burke. You saw the gin at Burke.

**BB:** Yes.

**CS:** Gin, grist mill and everything. And that played out way back yonder. And so we just stopped fooling with cotton. You had to take it to Groveton. And that was too much expense. And he wouldn't do that, and he just quit fooling with it.

**BB:** I see. When did business seem to kind of pick up? Around at the...

**CS:** Now, more business....

**BB:** When did business start picking up?

**CS:** Business began to pick up directly after World War II. That's when the business began to pick up a little bit. It wasn't too much in the World War, before World War II.

**BB:** It was just....

**CS:** It was just gettin' by.

**BB:** Just gettin' by until then.

**CS:** Just gettin' by. And so we...after World War II things began to pick up, and on up till now. Now they are gettin' worsen, now than they was back in them days.

**BB:** It's getting pretty tough, I admit.

**CS:** It is tough.

**BB:** What did you think of the social security system whenever they....?

**CS:** I likes it.

**BB:** You like it.

**CS:** I like it.

**BB:** You didn't mind them when they first started taking the money out of your paycheck, or did it...?

**CS:** They cut me so much. If I...if I had made more than, you know, they allowed me, then I would have to pay it, social security, I mean I paid internal revenue. I never did hardly go because I didn't make that much money.

**BB:** Do you think a depression like happened in '29 can happen again?

**CS:** You think it's going to come back again?

**BB:** Do you think it could?

**CS:** You say it should?

**BB:** No, I don't say "should," I say "could." Could it happen again?

**CS:** We're right on the edge of a depression now. It...it's...I wouldn't call it a depression, but call it a recession now. I think we..we..we're right on that now, because I

tell you the people cutting off the job, if you don't put their money into the government, your government can't pay off these other bills, on these social bills. They can't do it, and so if you don't put no money in anything then you can't expect none out of it. And so all of those folks that's off now, that's loosing. The government is loosing on that. They are talking about so many of them off internal revenue.

**BB:** Yes, I heard that not too long ago.

**CS:** Yes. And that's what makes it bad on the poor folks. And the President wants to cut social security, and the folks just can live off what they are getting.

**BB:** That's true.

**CS:** That's not fair at all. You done worked yourself to death for forty or fifty or sixty years. Then they going to take it away from you, after you done killed yourself and worked all that time. I don't think it's fair. But I've got nothing to do with that. That's their business but I don't think its fair.

**BB:** Did you....I forgot to ask you this awhile ago. Did...what did you think of President Hoover?

**CS:** Hoover? He was tight.

**BB:** He was tight.

**CS:** He was tight, I tell you. But I tell you, I can't put it all on the President, because times, you know, we've got a changing world. But unchangeable God. And so anything change here, you can't put all on the President because you...he just can't do it unlesen the Congress and the Senate give him that privilege, you can't do it. He is...just going to do the best that he can. He's got to use his own thinking.

**BB:** Right.

**CS:** And if he thinks anything is better, he puts it before the Congress and the Senate and if they don't pass it, well, that hurts him. See?

**BB:** What can he do?

**CS:** Why he just can't do it. He can't do it. So I don't put all the blame on the President.

**BB:** But do you think Roosevelt?

**CS:** Roosevelt...Roosevelt and Mr. Kennedy was two of the best we had. That's all there is to it. I mean, in helping on the poor people. Looking after the poor folks. They were more liberal than anybody else.

**BB:** That's true, that's true.

**CS:** Another President that I know of, Mr. Johnson's all right. He was all right.

**BB:** Now, I like him.

**CS:** He done all. He was just working on Mr. Kennedy's platform.

**BB:** Right.

**CS:** And so he done a good job.

**BB:** Do you think that people would be as accepting now if times got as bad as they were in 1930? Do you think people would accept it like...like you had to?

**CS:** Well, Miss....what's your name?

**BB:** Bailey.

**CS:** Mrs. Bailey...I...think now, that people wouldn't take what they taken back in my day. No, I don't think they take it. I don't believe they would, of course. Back in my day it was tough. It was real tough. You just couldn't get nothing to eat hardly. I know when I came out of the Army you could get this old...some kind of flour, you know, they had it all mixed up. And that was cake. You took them as a cake, some kind of cake or another. I know me and my wife had some of that in 1962. Better watch that. In 1962. And so we just had a tough time back there. Course, stuff wasn't as costly as are now, but it was pretty tough. I think now it would hurt worser now than it did back there.

**BB:** We are used to what we've got.

**CS:** That's right. We...we...the people have accumulated quite a bit now in this modern day. They...they got....they pile up a lot of stuff. They...haven't got it paid for. And they cut them off the job; they can't pay for it. Quite naturally they are going to loose it. And when they loose it, see that makes it hard. I know on television that say two fellows, I mean a man and his wife committed suicide because they lost all their stuff. And you know, that's tough.

**BB:** That's terrible.

**CS:** Tough. Real tough. I saw it on television. I didn't see it myself.

**BB:** Okay. In '29 or '30 did people...were people buying things on credit like they do now?

**CS:** No, yes...we had those traveling peddlers. They would bring in stuff, L.B. Price and several more folk out of Lufkin, would bring stuff. And my wife bought several little

articles from them, and we would pay along until we paid it out. That was along in '23, '24, and '25.

**BB:** Did, uh...did you know anybody that had like large things repossessed, or their houses taken away from them during that time?

**CS:** I don't know nobody in Diboll that lost their homes. I know some people...some people, some folks that might of lost them here but they could have paid for them. But it was on their part, and you couldn't say that the government taken it, nobody else. They just wouldn't pay for it, and quite naturally people are going to take their property back. And..we..uh, bought this place. My dad, he worked on the first highway that's been put through this old highway. He was straw boss from Livingston, I think, from Livingston to Logansport, Louisiana. My dad was straw boss. A bunch of men worked. And he helped us pay until it run out. It run out and he didn't have nothing to do, so me and my brother, we paid for it.

**BB:** That's good. How much of this do you still own? Or did you sell...

**CS:** I don't own very much now. We sold some of it. Some of it, me and my sister and my boy...but it's divided between two families...this twelve acres is divided between two families. So we...my boy...my brother's boy, he had an adopted son, and he sold all of his, my dad's and my brothers stuff. He sold all of it, every bit of it. And I sold a little bit of mine, me and my sister. Sold a little bit of mine back there. But I got about two acres now. Yes.

END OF INTERVIEW