

Mrs. Gussie Stovall Wright
Interview 43a
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ABSTRACT: Life-long Angelina County resident Mrs. Gussie Stovall Wright remembers her life in Prairie Grove (also called Stovall Prairie) and Diboll. She describes her Stovall grandparents, who came to the area in 1845, and the hardships they endured and the slaves they owned. Mrs. Wright also recalls going to the Prairie Grove School and teachers Jimmie Ellis and Laura Davis, purchasing cloth from Fannie Farrington at the Diboll commissary, riding her horse and walking to school, church, and Diboll, farming, and serving as a midwife to local families.

Marie Davis (hereafter MD): I am interviewing Mrs. Gussie Wright. She lives at Route 1, Box 478, Diboll, today's date is August 28, 1984. My name is Marie Davis. With me is Frankie Glass. How old are you?

Gussie Wright (hereafter GW): 86.

MD: And when were you born?

GW: December 31, 1897.

MD: 1897. Where were you born?

GW: Well, over there--not far from Stovall Creek. I guess the place where I was born, Bruce George is living, up on where the old place was.

MD: And that is, would you say, about 3 1/2 miles from Diboll, out Farm Road 1818.

GW: About 3 1/2--something like that.

MD: Out Farm Road 1818. And what were your parents' names. Your mother's name was...?

GW: Lula Jordan before she married my father and his name was William Franklin Stovall.

MD: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

GW: I had 2,3,4,6 sisters in all, half sisters, you know, by one marriage. And let's see, six sisters, and 5, 4....

MD: Why don't we do it like this...by his first marriage you had...you want to name them?

GW: Levy and Sam were the 2 brothers, and Molly and Virgie were the 2 sisters and then me. And then by the third marriage there were 3 brothers--George, Jodie and Johnnie and 2 sisters, Ollie and Nobie. He married the fourth time and they had two daughters and one son--that was Dale Stovall and the two sisters were Nannie and Caroline.

MD: That was how many?

GW: Thirteen in all.

MD: Thirteen in all--thirteen children. Some of those were born after you left home weren't they?

GW: Yes, I was married and had three children older than some of these last children.

MD: We were reading in that book, *The Lufkin That Was*. That picture in there of John M. and Caroline Stovall were your grandparents. It says they lived on 640 acres on Stovall Creek and he came here in 1845. I was looking up on an old map and that land was given by the Mexican government in 1835. So he was there when Angelina County wasn't even a county, but part of Nacogdoches County.

GW: That is the reason I call---it was a Mexican name on our deeds.

MD: Yes. It was given the first time by the Mexican government to Morin, I believe, wasn't it?

GW: Yes.

MD: It just wasn't hardly anything here when he came, was it?

GW: No. I know they built a little shack on Stovall Creek. I guess that is the reason why the creek was called that. They settled there. And grandma, she lived 83 or 84 years and had a good mind. She would tell us lots of things, us kids. She said that grandpa had to go back to---now, was it Mississippi or Tennessee. I think it was Tennessee, after the rest of the things in a wagon with oxen pulling it. Wasn't that a slow go? She had to stay there 3 weeks while he was gone in this little shack they built on the creek, made out of logs. Aunt Cindy was a baby, the only child they had. She had to get water from the creek and she would tie Aunt Cindy to the bed, to the foot of the bed, you know, so she wouldn't get out. She knew she wouldn't get out unless something caught her. But she wanted her to stay put, so she wouldn't be pulling something down while she went down to the creek after water. So she left Aunt Cindy and the dog shut up in the house. She said if she let the dog out, animals would kill it. A dog wasn't much help them days, too many varmints--just eat a dog up in a hurry.

MD: I wonder what kind of animals--did you ever hear her talk about the bears or panthers?

GW: Yes, panthers and bears. Hungry things.

MD: It is hard for us to imagine being left in a little place like that for 3 weeks, and...

GW: Three weeks!

MD: And you wonder, well, what did she eat?

GW: What did she eat? Looks like she would have just starved completely.

MD: No stores...

GW: No way to take care of nothing.

MD: I guess Nacogdoches was the closest town.

GW: I guess it was.

MD: It probably was.

GW: Yes, Nacogdoches.

MD: I don't know if Homer...

GW: Can't imagine that brave to get out with such a bunch of varmints.

MD: I know it. Just her and that baby and that dog there; and there probably wasn't any neighbors close by.

GW: No, and his land, they tell me taken in Prairie Grove Church. And it went by the name of Stovall Prairie then. But I have been told when the Courtney's came from Polk County, I think that is where they came from, they changed it to Prairie Grove.

MD: Have you ever heard this area called Stovall Prairie?

GW: Yes. Stovall Prairie.

MD: I bet in some of the old deeds, it is mentioned as Stovall Prairie. And your grandfather gave the land for the cemetery down there.

GW: Yes.

MD: And how many children did they have?

GW: Six--three girls and three boys. Uncle George Stovall was the oldest, then Uncle Tommy, and then Frank, my father. Aunt Cindy was the oldest girl; then Aunt Nannie married Perry Welch; and Aunt Lizzie married Alvin Russell. That is Wood Russell's mother.

MD: Oh, uh-huh.

GW: That is how we kina got kin folks to the Russells.

MD: Yes, Wood Russell. Now he had a store in Diboll at one time, didn't he? Mr. Russell did?

GW: Yes.

MD: Now what did they do, divide up their land and give each child a certain amount?

GW: Each child got a certain amount. The three girls--their part was out towards Prairie Grove in the Piney Woods. And the boys got their part up and down the creek. Naturally, they were going to farm and make a lot on creek bottom dirt.

MD: Now, your father stayed there until he died, didn't he?

GW: Yes, the same place there.

MD: The others probably sold theirs.

GW: Yes, Uncle Tommy moved to town. Well, Uncle George lived there until he died. And the year he died, he died in September, his widow, Aunt Martha, wanted us, my husband and me, to come and live in the house with her and she would just turn everything in the field over to him and we could make a crop. We had the two children then and she would cook dinner, and I would go hoe and we had two or three hoe hands and she would tend to the two kids. Sometimes she would nearly have to tie the oldest one down...he was a boy. He would watch her and not let her scrub with my new broom. He would say, "That's my mother's new broom." Maybe a chicken would come on the porch and she would get a dipper of water. And she would say, "Now, shut up Rayford, I know it's your mother's new broom. But I've got to get shed of this." And she would tell me some of the cutest things when we would come in for dinner that Rayford would get after her about... "My mother doesn't use her new broom to scrub with."

MD: Kinda like the ad on tv--the little girl says, "My mother uses this soap."

GW: Yes, speaking of soap, my granddaughter--I can't remember her name, but I don't like any other soap. I looked all over Brookshire's there at Diboll and they don't handle it. She bought me 12 bars--where I first learned to love it--you could smell good a good bit after.

MD: Yes.

GW: She got 4 bars of it, came down there, and left it on the bed. I was out there in the garden, as usual. When I came in the house, she left a little note (but she hadn't left though) and it said, "This is for Grannie. I love you, Grannie." I picked up that little note and it nearly made me cry to think that she loved me and I didn't have any way to show it.

MD: Oh, you don't have to show it. We were looking at a cemetery book and it was talking about the slaves that your grandparents had...

GW: Three each. Now I didn't know this till a few years back. Old Dave and Black Ma...I can remember her. I don't remember her name but we called her Black Ma. Grandma said she had three males and three females, slaves you know. And she bought those. She said when grandpa came in one morning and found out--he had a barbershop, saloon, and grocery store in Homer--I guess he had a lot of other men working for him--she bought Old Dave, the last one she bought. She said she paid thirteen hundred dollars for him. That sounds like a lot back in them days for a slave. But he asked her what she paid for him and where she got the money. And she said, "I got it out of your pockets every night hanging on the bed." He never said any more. She said he went on and changed the subject. And she said one of the slaves took care of the children, did the cooking and everything. One took care of the washing, the children. They all had certain things every day for them to do. Course they were busy. And the men folks were all in the field working, three slaves.

MD: Working...

GW: I have heard my daddy say, Aunt Cindy, the oldest sister, (they had fast horses during them days and high steppers and saddles) and Aunt Cindy his oldest sister, could get on her horse and holler like a wild Indian and those cattle would go bunching up in a bunch and she could do more with them than the men could ever do.

MD: Is that right? She probably rode side-saddle, didn't she?

GW: Yes, I imagine she did, because you never heard of a woman riding a man's saddle when I was growing up. And usually a lot easier to sit up on a man's saddle than it was a side saddle. You had to gird them so tight a horse couldn't breathe good, to stay on.

MD: Then you can remember your grandmother, can't you?

GW: Yes.

MD: But your grandfather died...

GW: Earlier in life. I think he died...I never heard my daddy talk much about him. Don't know if he remembered much about his father or not.

MD: You were telling me about the old road that came by your place.

GW: Yes. Yes, that used to be--I can remember when there wasn't any road the way we go home now.

MD: Farm Road 1818? There was no Farm Road 1818?

GW: You see there was just a little space between where my daddy lived and Uncle Tommy's. It went right--they called it the "Old Beef Road" from Homer to Moscow. And they must have had a lot of hauling to call it the "Old Beef Road." I don't know. But anyway there was a lot of traffic that went that way. But they never did build a bridge on that creek. On the far side, on the west side of Stovall Creek where they forded it, it was dug down deep, and hundred yards or maybe one hundred and fifty yards on the west, just slanting it way out--you know where the team could pull the wagon--they dug it down. It looked like clay.

MD: Oh, and they could go down into it.

GW: And I don't remember that creek getting where a person, when they had to go to town for something, they couldn't get across it. I wonder how that was. It gets up now to the banks sometimes.

MD: Yes, and that is the way you went to Emporia?

GW: Yes, I went to Emporia that way. We crossed Stovall Creek and I guess it must have been close to a mile or three-quarters from where the crossing was.

MD: Was there anybody living, say from where you crossed the creek until you got to Emporia?

GW: No. Well, now we could go around, Mr. and Mrs. Hardin, they lived up on kinda a high hill. But the road didn't go around. It went straight, but you could make a loop and go around.

MD: They were about the only people between your house and Emporia?

GW: The only people after you left this neighborhood down here.

MD: Well, you were telling me about that a lot of times when you all went to Emporia that they would be having a Negro funeral over there.

GW: They tell me that they Negro cemetery right after you pass the creek is still there in the same place. They could have left and went somewhere else, but I am told they still bury there.

MD: What did you do when you got to White Oak Creek?

GW: Yes, that is White Oak close to Diboll.

MD: Did it have a bridge across it?

GW: No...I just forgot.

MD: Or was it as big as it is now, I wonder?

GW: It must have had a bridge on it of some kind because the Emporia people hauled a lot of lumber or timber to Emporia. Did I tell you about, we were passing a house there at Emporia and one of the Negro women that had gotten in debt (she had gotten a lot of sugar cane from daddy and he let her have it to see, you know) and she would pay him when she got the money. He stopped there and was going to see if she had the money as he noticed the cane was gone. And her and her husband had had a big ruckus and that made her mad at him, and I guess she told him she wasn't going to pay him for that debt and they got in a big fight and he broke a chair over her head.

MD: Oh, me.

GW: And my daddy, he laid the quirk to those horses and he said, "Not any place to be around here," and the blood was running down her neck and we thought he had killed her. When they fight they mean to kill.

MD: Well, what can you remember about Emporia? Do you remember much about it?

GW: I don't remember much about it.

MD: Were there a good many people living down there?

GW: I remember there was a white quarters and a negro quarters. Must have been a pretty big little saw mill. I remember the Anthony's for one family. They had a guy that played the fiddle. Tom and Martha Ann and she played the guitar and we'd go by and my daddy he would say, "Well, let's go by, as I have something to ask Mr. Anthony or see him about something." And they would get the fiddle and guitar and go to playing.

MD: Your daddy played the fiddle, too, didn't he?

GW: Yes, and he had to play a tune now and then. And Martha Ann could might near play anything. Well, I hear her say after she got to be a married woman, we were talking about our children, and the way she said it would tickle you. Some of them said how many children they had and how many times they had been married and she married a white the first time she married. She says, "I've got 2 white children." She could say things to make you laugh--"I've got 2 white children."

MD: Where did you go to school?

GW: This little Prairie Grove school right out there was the only school I ever went to.

MD: And was it a one-room school?

GW: Yes.

MD: What were your desks like? Did you have a desk or did you have....

GW: Yes. We had some little ole desks, the back of the seat made the desk for the one that sat behind them, you know. I think everyone had a desk. It might be that the ones in the primer didn't have a desk. There was room enough on each top to put your books.

MD: Well, mother said that when she went to school at Hoshall they just had sawed off logs, wasn't it?

Frankie Glass (hereafter FG): They had blocks and they had 2x12's laid across the blocks and a certain amount was marked off.

GW: So yours was marked off and somebody next...

MD: So you were more up town than she was.

GW: Yes, well, maybe so that school was graded up a little higher.

MD: Yes, uh-huh.

GW: Miss Jimmie Ellis was the best teacher I thought I ever went to. Did I ever tell you about we had a snow...

MD: Tell us about that.

GW: Well, the girls decided, or the boys, I don't know which decided they were going to win out. They were going to whip the girls with snowballs. We all got out there and got started. We would put them down their backs, you know, run up and put a ball down his back and he would put one down her back. And we all decided we had enough of it and were about to freeze, the girls. Miss Jimmie Ellis was teaching school, she was listening there, I know from what she said later. And we decided that we were going to play something else. Dewey Davis, that was old Uncle Sam Davis' nephew--they kept him and sent him to school, him and Spurgeon Davis. We decided we would warm up a while by the fire, had a heater. Spurgeon ran up and put one down my back just for meanness. Uncle Dennis Courtney owned the land on the east side of the schoolhouse, and he had just tore down an old rail fence and had built a wire fence, you know—first barbwire fence I had seen in all that time. And the rails were laying around there—good rails. And when he put that down my back, I grabbed a rail and broke it over his head, and I thought

I had killed him. Blood was running when it broke, it splintered his face, and I thought I had killed him at first. I was scared. Blood was just running down where it broke and splintered his face. And I went over and kinda drooped along and he ran in the house. I knew she was going to bring me in there and peel me from one end to the other. And I hear her say, "Now, get out of here, I heard the girls tell you boys to quit that, and I'm not sorry for you for getting hurt." And it made me love that woman to this day.

MD: She took up for you, didn't she?

GW: Yes, she did! "I heard the girls tell you boys to leave them alone that they were through. And then run up there and put big ball down their backs."

MD: I guess you had to take in the wood to build the fire?

GW: Yes.

MD: We did that, too, in Diboll for a long time.

GW: It fell on certain ones to carry in wood on a certain day and another one on another day.

MD: That way you got to go outside some didn't you. That is the way we always felt about it.

GW: Yes, anything to get in and out.

MD: Do you remember any other teachers' names?

GW: Yes, Laura Davis was a good teacher, too. And Miss Jimmie Ellis. Oh, I never did have no trouble with a teacher. They might have trouble out of me. I knew when one told me how to act to go on and take that advice if I didn't want to have trouble. One time way after I had my family me and Rachel went up there. Rachel knew where Hortense lived, Miss Jimmie's daughter. And she said, "Yonder, the next house." (We were passing right in front of her house) "Is where Hortense, Miss Jimmie Ellis' daughter lives and her mother is living with her." It wasn't long before she died. And she said, "Would you like to go by and say 'howdy' with her." And I said, "I would just love to see her one more time." And we went by and that dear old soul knew me by the time I got out of the car--laughing.

MD: Did she?

GW: And she told a little joke. She said there were two of the kids she taught--at the last school she taught, I think. One of them was Ralston McDuffie's boy and my granddaughter, Wanda, Rayford's child. Just the two were the ones in the class together there at Prairie Grove together in that grade. Ralston had got sick and has missed the whole week, and Wanda had gone on and was way ahead. She didn't miss any, and when

Ralston came back she wanted Miss Jimmie to skip over, you know, to where she had got to and start from there and let Ralston catch up later. Miss Jimmie made her believe it wouldn't be right to go ahead and skip over some. Wanda said, "I already know that." She said the first spelling, Wanda missed a word and he spelled it. And he always put an "f" for a "t"--whatever it started with. And he said, "I fought you knowed it." She could tell things that happened so funny. She came up there and ate dinner with us; had a hot lunch. And she always had a funny story to tell when she walked in. "I fought you knowed it." And she told me who told it and I know it was Ralston.

MD: Then she was still teaching when you got married.

GW: Yeah, uh-huh.

MD: Then she taught there a long time.

FG: I remember hearing Mrs. Powell talk about her.

GW: Yeah. Mrs. Powell went to her, didn't she?

FG: I don't remember.

GW: I wouldn't doubt it.

FG: They talked about Miss Jimmie Ellis.

GW: Well, Levy was as old as Mrs. Powell, I'm sure.

MD: When you all went to Lufkin, did you ever ride the train to Lufkin.

GW: Yes, I liked to have got in trouble.

MD: Now where did you catch the train?

GW: In Diboll...

MD: Or Emporia?

GW: Yes, we caught it at Emporia. I will tell you--we got on the train--that was right after my daddy and my step-mother married. They didn't have any children. I was the only wart they had to carry along. I had just got 7 a few days before that. And the conductor came through taking up tickets, and he looked at me and looked at my daddy, you know, and he knew what he was looking at us for and my daddy said, "Well, I think she is just 6." And I said, "No, I'm not, I'm seven."

MD: You had just turned 7?

GW: I thought that I was 7 and I was nearly grown.

MD: But he still didn't have to pay for you?

GW: He didn't have to pay after I got him messed up. The conductor knew. He just kinda laughed and went on. He knew that it was in kids to be smart and tell how old they were. I had just got 7.

MD: After you got a little older, did you ever go to Diboll by yourself?

GW: Oh, I went a lot of times. We had an old mare just as gentle as she could be and she was a good little saddle horse--Old Minnie. And I had a side-saddle, too. I didn't ride a man's saddle. If they didn't need something more than a dollar's worth, they would send me out there.

MD: How long would it take you?

GW: Oh, I would get back before they could hardly get the dishes washed.

MD: It was closer through the woods, probably.

GW: Yes, than around here. I was out there one day, just got up on the porch, up the door steps going into the store, and Floyd, I saw him coming, the one I married. I was just a kid, silly like, and I didn't think more of one man or boy than I did another, and not much if it had been an old man, I would have stopped and talked to him anyway. I saw him put his hand in his pocket before he got to me, and when he got even with me, he held out his hand and said, "Take this and get you a Christmas present." I grabbed it, you know, and went in there and bought me something. I've still got that little dish. Did I ever show it to you?

MD: Yes, ma'am, you showed it to me. It is really pretty. It is a treasure.

GW: Yes, it is and to think that I have had it all these years. It has set out there in the open all these years.

FG: It is a wonder it wasn't broken.

GW: I know it. I had more—you know Talmadge and Kate wanted to trade me out of that. For two or three different years, they would mention it. Talmadge and Kate—was that his wife.

MD: Yes.

GW: I was thinking it was. I said, "No, my old sweetheart gave me that." I married and lived with him for 40 years--no, longer than 40 years.

MD: Tell me, what do you remember about going into the commissary? Mrs. Farrington worked there.

GW: Yes, mama could send me after...you know that was the sweetest person, I thought. I think everybody loved her...and Mama could just tell me or write me a note to give Mrs. Farrington to send her material to make a dress, so many yards of what she wanted to make it out of, you know. And Mrs. Farrington would know more about it than she would. And I would give it to Mrs. Farrington and she would always...wasn't she a sweet person. You remember her?

MD: Yes.

GW: She would smile, "Honey this, that and the other." She would cut off material and ways to trim of any kind. Mama would want something to trim it and thread to match it. We would wrap it up and put it in a sack, and I would hang it on that old saddle and here I would go. It wouldn't take me over two hours to go out there and back on that horse. There wasn't anybody else hanging around watching but the clerks. Ed Day worked in there.

MD: I started to say, do you remember anybody else?

GW: Ed Day. Yes, there are some other men I would know if I could hear their names. You know you used to buy sugar in barrels and stuff like that and they would measure it up in sacks, paper sacks, so much. And it would be ready when you wanted fifty cents' worth or a dollar's worth. They had it right there ready. They didn't buy it in sacks when they ordered it. It came in barrels. Time changes, don't it?

MD: Oh, yes, they had to stay busy; besides waiting on the customers, they had something to do.

GW: Ed Day must have been a good clerk. He stayed there longer than any other.

MD: Yes, I remember, I remember, I used to go in there and he gave me cookies.

GW: Everybody acted like they liked him. He was nice to people.

MD: He was good-hearted.

GW: What ever became of Rosie, his sister?

FG: She is in a nursing home in Lufkin.

GW: Is she? Well, I would like to see her. Didn't she marry Arthur Sturrocks?

MD: Do you remember anything about how Diboll looked when you used to ride that horse over there, Old Minnie.

GW: Well, about all I saw was right in front of the store. I would usually tie the bridle; hitch it over a post or something. There were several who had fences around there. I don't know, they might have cared or they might not have cared.

MD: But you did it anyway.

GW: I would leave her tied long enough to...she wasn't going to worry anybody. I didn't have many minutes to be gone off no how.

MD: But the houses...do you remember much about the houses?

GW: No, not too much.

MD: You just went in...your father never did work for the company, did he?

GW: No.

MD: Did Mr. Wright ever work for the company?

GW: Well, he was working when I met him that day and he gave me that money to go buy me a present, a Christmas present. He was working over there. Later he told me he had come over there to get some...the boiler had to have some new parts in it and he worked about the boiler. I don't know for sure what he said, but that was the job he was working at.

MD: And after you married and moved out to the farm...?

GW: Yes, we moved out. We stayed in the house with his sister--Mrs. Pence, Charlie and Edna Pence, about six months. They had a great big house over there on the old Joe Ferguson place. Charlie Pence bought that place. It joined the Joe Young place. They had a big bed room in part of the end that they slept in and any other kind of furniture that they had. And they let us have the other end of it. And I will never forget the little stove. Floyd bought the stove and the mattress, springs, bedstead and dresser. He got everything we started out housekeeping with from Mr. Rutland, Bud Rutland at Diboll.

MD: At the store?

GW: And had it hauled out there and put in one end of Charlie Pence's and Edna, his sister, house. When we got married, that is where we went. Edna, his sister, was one of the sweetest persons I ever knew. She had a good garden. She would gather the things, bring them in there and divide with me and tell me how to cook it. I didn't know how to boil water. Don't know too much about it now.

MD: Oh, I know you do. When you were a child what did you all do for fun--recreation?

GW: Anything. There was one or two people there in the community that had parties, you know. And we thought that was the grandest amusement that we could do. And they would all come and play “shoot the buffalo” and all the promenade games. One would call the set. Uncle Amos Courtney was about the best. He would let us move a bed out of the way and have room to play in.

MD: And where would you go to church?

GW: Well, Uncle Rube Courtney was about the only preacher. Well, I’ll tell you about Brother George. He pastored Pine Grove for years, Bruce George’s grandfather. We didn’t think anything about, over there in our part of the community walking. A bunch of us girls would get ready, you know, and by the time we would get two miles over there, there would be a pretty big crowd of us. The Clarks lived up there on the Obed Morris place--no house there now--they had three girls. One was named Molly, one Becky. They would always come down there. There was a certain place they would wait, you know. They would get there a little early and they would join in with us. We walked to Pine Grove nearly every Sunday.

MD: Is it about three or four miles.

GW: Yes. It is a good piece. Three miles at least. Her sister married Georgia Gann. Her sister married a preacher--that was Adam Laird.

MD: Where did the Ganns live?

GW: They lived in the old Lufkin land--part of Lufkin.

MD: Did they come down here to church?

GW: No. Adam Laird lived down there about where, south of Pine Grove Church, where Elmer Havard had two or three hundred acres down there and a bunch of cattle in that settlement below Pine Grove. He was pastoring Pine Grove Church. And Georgia was living with Adam and his wife, that was her sister. And she wanted me to go home with her one day from church. Of course, I was wanting to go as bad as she was wanting me to go, I guess. I had never been down there. Her sister was sick and after dinner and we had done the dishes, Georgia said, “Let’s walk around a little.” And we went up to the old house. Ben Morris had built it, but he vacated it--wasn’t no one living there. We sat down on the porch or lay down and she backed me out of taking a dip of snuff. That was the first and the last I ever took.

MD: You didn’t like it?

GW: Oh, it made me so sick, I thought I was going to die—way down there on that little porch. She would spit and didn’t let on like it hurt. I reckon it didn’t. She didn’t holler like I did. Finally, I got able to go back to the house. I never did take another dip of snuff.

MD: It cured you, huh? You took the cure that day, huh?

GW: I took the cure, remedy, and everything in one dose.

MD: When you were living at home with your parents, if any one got sick, would they more or less use home remedies?

GW: Yes. The first thing they would give you was a big dose of castor oil, and if that didn't work, they would give you milk of magnesia--and that would finish it up. I remember not two or three days ago, it seemed like I needed a laxative. I didn't measure, I just went to the bottle, shook it up, and took two big swallows. Didn't need anymore medicine for two or three days. But you know I believe it did me good. I had a pain, and it seemed like I needed something like that.

MD: The doctors from Diboll, would they make trips outside of Diboll?

GW: Yes. They would make trips out there. I know we had the doctor out there several times with my husband--Dr. Dale. He was with me when Rutland was born. I had Dr. Cook when the others were born. I thought Dr. Cook was as good as any of them. They began to call me around, and then on they couldn't have a baby without I was there--me and Mrs. Joshua Havard. I had to help them, do more than the doctor when he left. I had to heat water and tend to everything....me and Mrs. Joshua Havard. We were there with Leon Courtney's wife one night. Leon paid the doctor at Lufkin for the bill and he was on another trip somewhere when this happened that night, and he had to come back home and get money from his daddy. You know they wouldn't take a case like that unless they knew the fellow. He told him he couldn't come without the money. We thought he never would get the doctor out there. And Leon's wife, she was uneasy. She said, "What if it happens. Do you all know what to do?" "Yes," I said, "I have seen a many born. I can do it just as good as the doctor." I was just doing that to quieten her down, you know. I was just praying every minute that it wouldn't happen. And it didn't. The doctor walked in in a few minutes. That is where my prayer was answered. I never will forget that.

MD: Do you remember some of the doctors' names from over here...Dr. Dale, Dr. Cook?

GW: Yes. Dr. Dale, Dr. Cook, Dr. Talley and I don't.....I knew them all because I was with a half dozen women or more during the time that I was young enough to go out and do what I could.

MD: How old were you when you married? **(OMITTED FROM TAPE)**

GW: Somebody at the gate said, "Don't you run." And it was my husband (to be) and he had come on down to the field. Pa was working in the shop. He had talked to him up there and he had got his orders. Pa gave him a slip to get his license. Seems like I wouldn't want to do that...let a fifteen year old girl marry.

MD: Well, I guess your father thought you were mature. You had to do a lot in those fifteen years. You had learned a lot probably.

GW: I could take that team down there and harrow off half that bottom field--get it ready to plant just as good as a man would. He knew what kind of harrow to make. It was a homemade thing, but you had to stay out of the way of that thing. You couldn't walk beside it.

MD: You had to walk behind it?

GW: Behind the harrow--driving was just like driving to a wagon. They both pulled it. It had teeth about a foot long that went into the ground.

MD: Do you remember the first time you ever went to Lufkin--after...

GW: After I went on the train? Yes. Levy and his wife were living at Lufkin and I wanted to go up there and stay a week with them. And finally...I don't remember who took me to the train, but I went on the train. Levy was supposed to meet me at the train there at the depot. And he was working for Collmorgen at that time--a wholesale house. He carried me over there until it was time to go home for lunch. I stayed up there a week with Guster, his first child. I got acquainted with Katie Berry and Mae Berry--they were sisters. And two or three more. They showed me around over town. Showed me a good time while I was there. I enjoyed being up there with them, too.

MD: Did you ever go to a show in Diboll when you were real young?

GW: Yes.

MD: Where was it?

GW: I went to the "Titanic." It was the picture of it when it went down.

MD: Where was the show?

GW: The theatre was a big building. Seemed to be about up there in front of the post office, on the west side of the highway. But it's not there anymore.

MD: I mean when you were a young girl.

GW: Yes. That is when they showed that. They printed it in the paper and oh, there was a crowd there that night.

MD: Was it a silent picture, or do you remember?

GW: Yes. You could tell by the movements of their mouths and all almost what they were saying. The old captain, it sure worked hard on him, looked like. I studied about

that. And there was a song. Did you ever hear that? “It was sad when the old ship went down.”

MD: Seems like I have.

GW: “Husbands and wives, little children lost their lives. It was sad when the old ship went down.”

They were having a revival one night at Beulah Church and Mr. Powell was there, Taylor Powell. He was good to help in the collections. I think he was a pretty big hearted old fellow. I never had any trouble with him. He was there that night and they sang that, a quartet. And he pulled out his billfold and walked up to the roster and said, “Here’s five dollars, brothers, (I think they were all men) sing that again. It touches me.”

MD: The “Titanic?”

GW: Yes.

FG: That was 1900.

GW: Yes, I think it was.

MD: We’ll have to look that up.

GW: It’s in that book, I imagine, that you have.

MD: And you farmed, Mr. Wright farmed, didn’t he?

GW: Yes, I thought I was getting a sawmill guy, and he didn’t do another day of sawmill after we married.

MD: But you were always happy, weren’t you?

GW: Yes.

MD: And that is the thing that counts. And today after Mr. Wright’s death, tell us about your gardening projects. What is our philosophy? Do you think you ought to go in the house and sit down or do you think you ought to stay as active as you can?

GW: Yes. I believe that is what had kept me going. I have always just done all I could. And when I got to where I couldn’t go any further, I could rest. If you just sit around and don’t use your “get up” and your vitality or whatever you call it, seems like you just go down to where you don’t have any energy. And as long as I can get out and work and feel tired, sitting down and resting and getting in bed when I take a bath, sleeping and know that I am clean and ready to sleep, I think helps me. I know that I have it all in my hands--the big end of it, to take care of, and if I don’t do what I can, I am leaving out something.

MD: You don't feel as well, do you?

GW: No. It hurts you to get out and do things, I know, but don't over-do yourself. But up until I had this back trouble--I picked up the end of a porch swing in the junk pile and one end of it was metal. It was heavy but I didn't think it felt heavy...that's what caused this back trouble. I had to see the doctor about it, and he x-rayed me two or three times, or had me x-rayed. Couldn't find any broke bone. He just had to leave it up to me to take care of myself from then on...sorta take care of myself.

MD: When you used to go from your house to Diboll, and then after you started coming around this road, has there been a lot of changes?

GW: I haven't come around this road like I did going to Emporia. Just now and then, I would go this road, not very often.

MD: But now that you are older, you look back and think about all the changes that have taken place...from the time you were a little girl riding Old Minnie to town and the way you go now...

GW: I know I couldn't do it now.

MD: But you drove your car until just a few years ago, didn't you.

GW: Yes. I sold it to Rutland about a couple of years ago, I guess. I paid a thousand dollars for it, and drove it about five or six years. And I said one day, "Well, if you want it for five hundred, I will let you have it." It hadn't had a bit of work done on it since I had it. I think it was the best car I ever owned. It stood up the best. It was a '73. When it was new, it was a good car. It's still sitting there on about half a flat--still runs.

MD: Still runs? Do you like to can?

GW: Uh-huh.

MD: Put things in the freezer? Have you always done that?

GW: Ever since I have had a freezer. I couldn't put 2 apples or oranges in my freezer right now.

MD: You have it full?

GW: Full to the brim.

MD: You are going to have to eat some of that before your fall garden.

GW: I got started on my peas. I call them cream peas or lady peas. I cooked some of them for dinner yesterday, and somebody...oh, yes, Rutland's first wife, she came and

spent the day with me. And it just happened that that was her favorite peas. And she enjoyed those peas. She brought me two packages of pizzas. I have two helpings in the freezer. I can warm it up.

MD: Yes, warm it up.

GW: That was the first one I had ever eaten.

MD: Oh, yes, we eat that pretty often around here. It is kinda quick to fix.

GW: Seems like more meat--different kinds--you will like one or the other.

MD: And a lot of times I put a little more cheese on top of it, and it makes it a little better. What do you remember about the depression? Was it pretty hard on you?

GW: Yes! That depression! I think it hit everybody, especially farmers. We have borrowed \$1250 to build our house. We planted everything we had in cotton that year. It was fall, and you know we paid that back. I don't know how many bales, but somehow it just went up a little.

MD: That was just before the depression hit, wasn't it?

GW: Yes.

MD: And probably the next two or three years, you didn't get much for it.

GW: Bound to been--just a year or two before it dropped off.

MD: Did you ever belong to the Home Demonstration Club?

GW: No. I never did. I joined the Eastern Star. But I didn't go regular. I finally just let it drop.

MD: It was hard for you to get to and from?

GW: My husband was a mason. I had a lot of pride for the masons, and I thought I would join the Eastern Star. But it didn't work out like I thought it would with my children. The nights he had to go, I didn't go. And Wyatt Athey and his wife lived up there in the next house. She was an Eastern Star, and she kept after me or I guess I wouldn't ever have joined. But I couldn't carry my children—I had two then. I liked it. It is a nice lodge, I think.

END OF INTERVIEW