

PEARL WEAVER HAVARD
Interview 073b
September 9, 2008
Jonathan Gerland, Interviewer
Courtney Lawrence, Transcriber

ABSTRACT: In this interview with Jonathan Gerland and Richard Donovan, Pearl Weaver Havard reminisces about growing up in Angelina County near Diboll. Mrs. Havard's father worked as a pipeline rider and she recalls the oil company's bridge that was built over the Neches in 1918, killing hogs, preserving food, walking to and from school, recreation and amusements, and life near Diboll throughout the 20th Century.

Jonathan Gerland (hereafter JG): Today's date is September the 9th, 2008. My name is Jonathan Gerland and I'm with Mrs. Pearl Weaver Havard. And also with us is Mr. Richard Donovan. And we're in Mrs. Havard's home today and we're going to ask her a few questions. This is actually the second interview that we've done with her. This follows a 1985 interview that Marie Davis did. And Mrs. Havard was born in 1912 and we're very interested in hearing more of her life's experiences. Mrs. Havard maybe...

Pearl Havard (hereafter PH): A little louder.

JG: We don't have really any order to this but maybe just start, tell us a little bit about electricity and what you remember about when you first got electricity.

PH: Well, I was very uh...enthused and wanted 'em to hurry up and come on cause we, you know, we wasn't used to electricity and nothing like that. And so, I was very proud of...to get the electricity. And I very well remember the first night. My husband, Avy Joe, he was working in Freeport, Texas down for Dow Chemical and he was coming in that night. So, when I was I could see it way down the road, the car lights, and I was gonna surprise him with electricity on the porch. So when he drove in to my front porch, well, I turned the lights on and everybody hollered and my kids was here and some friends was here too. And we all hollered and had a joyful time. That may seem silly, but it wasn't. We were so proud of our electricity. And then that started the wheel rolling. I had uh...we had lights, electric lights. Then, next thing I got was uh...a iron...to iron the clothes.

JG: Electric iron.

PH: Electric iron. And the next thing was a refrigerator.

JG: Now, what did that mean? Having an electric iron and a refrigerator when you didn't have one before?

PH: Well, what it meant that...well, it was more convenient, the ironing work, you know. Had an ironing board, and stood there and just kept ironing. And before that I had

the smoothing irons, you know what that is. Sat 'em on the stove, had a wood burning stove and sat 'em on the stove and let them get hot and then go, I had two. And let and get an iron and when that one got cold, wouldn't smooth it out, well I'd go back and get the other one put that one back and then it get hot. That's the way we iron. But then, with electric iron, well, you just kept ironing, you know, and smoothing and had everything ready before you started the ironing.

JG: About what year was that, that you got electricity?

PH: Nineteen and forty one.

JG: 1941. And you were still living out here on what we now call 1818? Just over here.

PH: Yeah...right, right here. Yeah, this house behind me.

JG: What was this road called at that time? Was it Farm Road 58?

PH: No.

JG: Still...no. That was before the farm roads.

PH: No...see at that time.

JG: Was it a dirt road? Was it...

PH: Yeah, it was dirt road it wasn't...it was several years till we got a hard surface road. A farm road. And then, it wasn't named till a few years after then. And I don't remember, but, I believe that I named it 1818. Uh...course I had to get somebody to, you know, to say that was ok. I was writing or getting portraits of the past for the Free Press. And when I got that oh, well, I had to have where I was gonna write from, you know. So I got, I worked for...well that's something I wanted to do. That was what I wanted to do. I didn't get no money and no pay and nothing like that. I just got pictures and the...where the pictures were, and I got them over there in the book. And...

JG: Now a lot of those were from other people right? You borrowed photos from other people and put them in the paper as well?

PH: Yeah, they told me who they were and what it was.

JG: Yeah...I think it's called portraits from the past or of the past.

PH: Yeah, portraits from the past that's...

JG: And then you also had a column called News from FM 1818 right?

PH: Yeah.

JG: That was a little later.

PH: That was about the beginning of my writing.

JG: Ok...now Avy Joe, your husband, worked for the pipeline is that right? Or some of...I know your father did but...

PH: Well, he did when they needed some help, you know, cause we had two mules. Big mules farming, you know. And then when uh...Papa would need him...well he would tell him to come over and help, fill in ditches and things like that, you know.

JG: Is that how you met Avy Joe?

PH: Huh?

JG: Is that how you met...your husband? When did you meet him? Did you go to school with him?

PH: (laughs) No, I met Avy Joe at a dance.

JG: Where was that?

PH: (laughs) Now you getting into my personal life. Uh...it was well, it's a long story. He had a girl...his girlfriend was my best friend. And then, somewhere or another they agreed to disagree. And then, he wanted to come to me.

JG: Keep going, keep going.

PH: He wanted to come to me to see if I knew what was wrong, you know, and all that kind of stuff. And so, then he left and went to West Texas and stayed out there about six months. And when he come back, well, she had found her another boyfriend, you know. And was going with him. And so that's where...and then he come to me and wanted to talk to me about it, you know. And so, anyhow that's the way it...

JG: So you set him straight huh?

PH: And I...yeah...uh huh. I wasn't but about fifteen years old in them days.

JG: Now, you went to school at Beulah through the eighth grade. And then you went to Diboll School is that right?

PH: Diboll...I didn't go much cause didn't have no way.

JG: Ok...so when you were fifteen you met who would be your husband.

PH: Yeah, something like that, you know.

JG: Ok.

PH: I married in the fifth of October when uh...in...'29.

Richard Donovan (hereafter RD): Pearl, before they black topped this road out here in front of your house would you occasionally get stuck when you went to Diboll during the winter time?

PH: Oh yeah, a lot of times and the water would get over the creek here, you know, down near Stovall Creek.

RD: Yeah.

PH: If you get over the road...yeah. I drove that school bus. But, you know, only one time did I ever stick. And that was over yonder close to Rayburn McDuffy's over there, and then some of the kids got out went back and got Rayburn. And he had a tractor, and he come and pull me backwards. And when he pulled me way backwards, in the school bus you know, well...I...well old saying is "I give it all it had and I busted that (laughs) mud hole open." And I went on across it that time. But the other times I never did. I had one wreck but I didn't cause it. It was at White Oak Creek just before you get to Diboll. Now then, that day this man...I won't call names....or do you want me too?

JG: Whatever you want to do.

PH: Well ok...Mr. Christopher from Bald Hill was a working at Diboll. And his son had left that morning to go to the service. And, well, he uh...I went to turn to go down the Oaks road. Around behind the new office building...you know where that is.

JG: Yes ma'am...yes.

PH: That Oaks Road that way...alright went to turn. But, you see, I have, had lights to show I was turning and then I had this flag and I pulled this lever and it throw this flag out you see. Well, I had done that before I got to the road but he didn't notice it. And just as I turned well he hit my front bumper. Like that. And I jumped on the brakes before I got to the and I didn't like but from here to the wall, to get in the creek. But he went to tumbling over and over and over and he turned over on the bridge. Now, two of the oldest boys on the bus they jumped out of the bus and run there and they said "He's alright, he's alright, he's alright." So, it didn't do nothing but jerk my bumper off.

JG: And that...and you were driving for the Diboll schools at that time?

PH: Uh huh. Out of Prairie Grove.

JG: Prairie Grove. Ok. Going back a little ways, I'm again referring to your earlier interview. When you were going back to the times when you were a girl living with your parents you'd mentioned that you would often go with your mother, she liked to take, maybe I think what you described as nature walks and walk along the creek. Would that have been Bear Creek? Would, ok. Can you tell us a little bit more about that? What you remember of your childhood and maybe specifically with your mother and her love of nature and...

PH: My mother, she liked to get out. See, they kept boarders, she kept pipeline boarders from Gulf Pipeline Company, you know. And then in the afternoon, you know, and this was every other day that she would have these boarders, at this time. Well, in the evenings, well, sometimes the neighbors kids would come over to play, you know, it'd be two or three girls, the Jones's and the Scarborough's. And, so she'd say let's go walk down the creek and see if what we can find. Behind the creek, once was an Indian camp. And so we had found some, oh.

RD: Arrowheads.

PH: What them things that...

JG: Arrowheads.

PH: Arrows...yeah, ok. We had found a few of them down there. And we'd...we would want to go down there. We'd walk to the creek and go down where the under the old uh...magnolia tree. It was as big around as that table. It was an old tree. And way up in the top there was crosses cut, you know and then moons. And I always remember that.

JG: Hmmm.

PH: And so we would see that. And then we would find other things up and down the creek.

JG: It was it like...would it have been a bearing tree? With the cross on it or you think just...

PH: Huh?

JG: Like a bearing tree...a survey marking tree, you think. Is that why the markings were on it?

PH: Well it was just...it was where...now my mother said that her mother told her that there was a camp there. And then the young boys, when the tree was young, now this has got to be a way back in the early 1700's. The boys when the tree was young, would maybe cut these. You know they done things like that in them days. Put their initials. See they didn't know what initial was a name hardly either in them days. And they cut and as that oak as that magnolia grew well it made these things go on up, you see.

JG: Right.

PH: And it was way up there. And that old tree lived, I don't know how long...it lived a long time after I married.

RD: What kind of designs were in it Pearl?

PH: Huh?

RD: What kind of designs were in it?

PH: The best I can remember they was crosses. Not like a cross yonder, it was just a cross.

JG: An x, like an x. Not a...

PH: Yeah, an x yeah...yeah. And then there was a half moon circle. You know, like that. That's the best I can remember...all that I can remember. But there's other marks on it that the tree grew over or something other like that. Now, if they were living, but they dead now, I have some friends would tell you the same story. Cause they seen it and they knew about that we always called it the Old Indian Camp where the magnolia when we wanna talk about these different places. And that was on Bear Creek.

JG: And what else would you do besides going down there? Did you look for animal tracks or what else did you do?

PH: Yeah...well yeah, we'd look for that and snakes and things of that sort you see.

JG: But your mom just liked to get outside.

PH: Oh yeah, she liked to get out. She was short and like me you know, she just liked to get out of the house when she wasn't cooking, in fact. And...but Momma was uh...you know, in other words she liked to show the children around the community. They all liked Momma because she liked to get out with us you see.

JG: Uh huh.

PH: In that day and time Momma was about...I say...maybe 40, 35 or 40 or something other like that, you see.

JG: And so this would have been in the 1910's. You were born in '12 so this would have been late 10's early 20's.

PH: Well, I born in 1912. And say I was about uh...say 12 years old well that make it...

JG: '24.

PH: '22. No before then. It was before my baby brother was born. Because Everett wasn't born then. And Everett is eight years younger than me.

JG: So it would be you and your brothers and sisters? Or friends as well that would go down?

PH: Yeah...uh yeah you see I had one brother that's just two years younger than me. And me and these kids that would come was my age, was my age. The Scarborough girls sometimes would come. And then the Jones' girls would come and sometimes there'd be a boy with us. A Preston Jones was the boy that would go with us. He liked to do things like that too. So, cause they just lived on the other side of the creek.

JG: So you just run up and down the creek and explore and have a big time.

PH: Oh yeah, we done that all the time.

JG: Did you play any particular games? Any games that you played along there?

PH: On the creek? No, no, no...not on the creek. But we played games at the uh...school and...at my house while when the little girls would come. We'd play in the playhouse, you see, like that. And swing and things. Course as you grow older you know...its different kind of games that you play, you see. And then as when I was about say 13, 12 or 13, we went to parties. Course that's in your book there. We went to parties; we called 'em. Which was now they would call it square dancing. But it wasn't, we didn't have music, we sung, we'd done our own singing. And so I could sing real well. And it was... I'm gonna call these names because they was real good singing, Preston Havard and Doyle Havard, were boys. And they was about 3, 4 years older than me. But then they could sing real well. And they both had two sisters apiece. And they could sing real well. And so we would sing these songs, which would have a melody...I mean a real melody, tune and uh...play with these. You had a motion. You had to have a desire or want to dance. You know, a motion. You know what I mean.

JG: Really? (laughs)

PH: Did you ever dance?

JG: No, not...not in public. (laughs) Well tell me a little bit about you'd mentioned about the Womack brothers. Bob and Othel said that...Bob I guess played the fiddle really good...Othel played the guitar. Does anybody else do you remember...good instrumentalists? I think you'd at one time played guitar a little bit?

PH: Yeah, yeah. Well, yeah, you see, they were the ones that played for the real dancing. See we...

JG: The real dancing.

PH: Yeah...in the country you know. They would come out. They had a uncle that lived over here not very far. And they would come out and play on certain times, you know. On Friday...mostly Friday nights. And...

JG: And where would these typically be held? The dances...at people's houses?

PH: Uh huh...yeah, at the houses. And people would take their...

JG: In the house or in the barn or in the house, inside the house?

PH: Bed...no in the house. Take their beds out of their room and then invite...there wasn't too many that would go. I say maybe 8 or 10 couples would be all there would be there you see. And it would be people that like to dance. And...

JG: So if you didn't like to dance there's no use in going.

PH: No, there wasn't no needin' to goin' you'd be gettin' away you know.

RD: Pearl was there any drinking that went on at those dances?

PH: Uh...no not in them dances. Not here. But they did in other places. 'Cause I know I'd been told about it. But the dances that we went to...there wasn't any drinking. No. The ones at...as far as I know...cause I didn't know. But oh, one...one dance I was real young. I remember they said, I wasn't there. That there was a bunch of boys, grewed up in them days, got some whiskey. And they come to this dance and they all got pretty full and they had a fight outside. And so, didn't hurt nobody, you know, they just fought. And that was pretty close to where we lived. And my sister...boyfriend was there. I'm gonna have to get out of there [referring to squeaky rocker]. My sister's boyfriend he, they...

JG: She's referring to the squeaky rocker. Go ahead...I'm sorry...go ahead.

PH: Huh? Well he got drunk and so she broke up with him. See I knew all of that.

JG: Ok. Any specific memories of going to school in Diboll? You'd mentioned I think Bear Miller was the Superintendent at the time. Do you remember anything in particular about him or...

PH: Yeah...no, not when I was going. The only thing that I can think about was I had a hard time a gettin' out there. And I walked home several times. I walked the Buttermilk Road. Way it goes now, that was the road then. It was a road then, too. It wasn't no car – a car didn't travel...it was just a wagon road. But that made it closer, I didn't come around this a way you see. See I lived over in yonder. Now then...

JG: How far away from where we are now did you live when you were a girl?

PH: Well, it's about five miles.

JG: From here.

PH: The way you have to go, yeah. Where the crow flies wouldn't be about three. Right straight across, you see. But you gotta go...

JG: That's in Beulah, right?

PH: Yeah, uh huh...uh huh.

JG: Now how would you...you said you had trouble gettin' there?

PH: How did I go?

JG: Yeah...would you ride with some other people or...

PH: Well, I...best I can remember Mr. Gerland...I went...

JG: I think you mentioned.

PH: A time or two. You see, the teachers at Diboll then knew that we was having a hard time gettin' out there. And there was a man that had a boy that he wanted to go and he let him have his truck. And he come by and got me one time. And then another time...I went one week with some Scarborough girls, but that's a long story. I won't...and uh...and then that's when I had to walk home. And I said, "I just quit." So I didn't go back. My daddy didn't make no effort to send me or anything like that or carry me. He had a car but he worked with Gulf and he had to be on his job all the time. But anyway, I quit and...

JG: How long after that did you marry?

PH: Oh, it was two, three years. Because, after I quit, you see, I wasn't courting then when I was going to school. I wasn't courting. But Bob, that played the fiddle...

JG: Bob Womack.

PH: Yeah, he was my first boyfriend. Oh boy. (laughs) And so...

JG: Is that when you started learning to play the guitar? Was while you dated him or was that later?

PH: No, uh no...I started before then, I started when I was ten.

JG: Oh, before...ok.

PH: My daddy played the fiddle. Alright, and so we was boarding the school teachers, Momma was. And so she could pick a guitar, you see, real good.

JG: So you mean the school teachers were staying with you? Living in the boarding house.

PH: Yeah, uh huh. And then she turned she taught me how to play. Papa wanted to and he bought me this guitar right up here. And so I learned to play with him. And so he...

JG: So did you and Bob play together? Did y'all...

PH: No, me and Bob never played. When I went with Bob...

JG: Y'all are too busy dating. (laughs)

PH: We was always a walking we didn't have no cars in them days we walked. Now, we would walk from Beulah, I went to Beulah to Sunday School. And we would walk to a certain friends house and eat dinner and then we'd walk back home. And then...then sometimes Avy Joe had an old car and he would carry Othel, that was Bob's sister, and then we'd get to ride with them sometimes but not often. And I was with Bob when I got in a car wreck. And so...

JG: What can you tell us some of your memories about the Depression years in the 1930's?

PH: Ok...that was what I thought you was going to ask me.

JG: You were waiting huh?

PH: Uh yeah...what I, that's what I told Jean you was...she asked me awhile ago what was you going to ask me and I told her about the Great Depression.

JG: That's your daughter Jean, right?

PH: Uh huh...yeah. She lives in Nederland. Uh...we, well let me see now. The Great Depression was beginning but we didn't feel like it, 'bout the time we married. In '29. In '30. The beginning of '30 in January. Well, we didn't have no money. We got married and then lived with his brother and wife six months. And then, Avy Joe always had lots of hogs and woods, you know. Lot a hogs...I don't...

JG: Was he...where was he working at the time? Did he have a steady job or...ok.

PH: No, no...he lived with his brother and sister, you know. And...brother and his wife. And he worked for him, he had a farm and he was a cow man...raised cattle.

JG: Ok.

PH: And he helped herd the cattle and Everett would give him a dollar or two now and then, you see. That was his brother's name.

JG: So he did get some cash, working for his brother? Ok.

PH: Uh huh...yeah, uh huh. Yeah, but you see Avy Joe had hogs hisself. Since he was a little boy his daddy gave him a mark and give him an old sow and a mark to put in their ear, you know.

JG: Uh huh.

PH: And from then on he growed and he kept his hogs, you know, and got a big bunch. And he had hogs everywheres in the woods. It was a easy mark...I don't know marks but I don't...I know a brand but I don't know a mark. But anyway, uh...it wasn't much to do by. And it wasn't...you didn't pay taxes on it, just property taxes, you know. And poll tax. You had to pay a poll tax in a dollar. To get a poll tax, you see. And...

JG: Did y'all always pay your poll tax?

PH: Huh?

JG: Did y'all always pay your poll...did you vote?

PH: Uh huh.

JG: You voted every year?

PH: Yeah...I never, I never fail. My first poll tax papa said "Pearl," says "You gonna go vote this year." I was twenty-one. That's when I voted, that's when you had to...that's as early as you could vote then. Twenty-one. And, so, he said, "I'm gonna pay your poll tax now, and so you go and vote." So I did and voted at Beulah, it's a school you know. So from then on well, I paid my tax.

JG: You remember who you voted for?

PH: Huh?

JG: Do you remember who you voted for?

PH: No. (laughs)

JG: That was a long time ago.

PH: Well, let me...

JG: Was it local elections only or...?

PH: Butler Rostan was the County Judge. And uh...Will Evans was the Sheriff. And Billy Bynum was the Road Commissioner. And that's about all, you know, we voted for. And we would have box suppers and everything...candidate speaking, you know.

JG: Uh huh.

PH: And the whole community at Beulah would meet...Beulah School was the meeting place. That was the community center. And we'd meet outside, you know. And they'd speak, and then we'd have pie suppers and sell that and everything went to the school. For the benefit of ball, and nets, and library, and books, and things like that.

JG: Yeah...athletic basketball nets and things.

PH: Yeah, uh huh.

RD: Pearl, how many hogs would y'all kill every year for your own consumption?

PH: For me and Avy Joe?

RD: Yeah.

PH: We killed about four. But they was big hogs. He'd go in the woods in a river bottom, you know, they was wild. They eat acorns, you see and everywhere. It wasn't no hog law then, no stock law. And he'd go in the woods and drive up a bunch and pick him out one or two from that bunch. And then he'd go back and next day probably or next day and get another bunch, you see, go over to another place, and get 'em like that. But they'd be big hogs. They'd weigh over two hundred pounds, you see. And we would...

RD: Would y'all dip them in a barrel or a tub of scalding water or would you pour the water on them and scrape it off?

PH: Dip 'em in a barrel. The way he did it...I got pictures of how he done it but...anyhow, you heat your water and put it in a barrel. And then, you kill your hog and then you cut his throat to let him bleed so the meat wouldn't be dark, you see. You let him bleed. And then they'd bring him...they had this barrel half buried with it open out towards you in the dirt. And then they'd put the hog in that boiling water and then cover him over and turn him over and turn him over and turn him over. And out on the front we always had a big ol' board or something or another, a door, an old door that he put him on and then you started scraping, then, with a big knife. And the hair will come right off, you know, if you start while it's hot. And then always two or three men there to help, you see. One get on one end, one on the other, and one in the middle and it wouldn't take long to scrape one, you see. And you scrape 'em. And scrape the feet and get the toenails off. And pig feet was good, you know, people I guess you can still get pig feet, can't you?

JG: I don't know.

RD: I think so.

PH: Well, anyhow you could about thirty years ago, I know.

RD: You still can.

PH: But it, anyhow, the feet was cleaned, then the head was cleaned, then the head was taken the meat off of the head. And some off of the, above the feet up in them bones. It was gristle stuff. You made hog head cheese, I think what they call it now. They call sous, something like that, in them days sous. And oh it's good, I'd like to have a piece of it right now. Did you ever eat any?

RD: Yes ma'am.

PH: And that...you didn't though did you, no, he growed up in the city. But anyway, that was there wasn't nothing wasted. But even the hair...it was put in the garden. For fertilizer, you know. (laughs)

JG: The hair?

PH: Uh huh. Uh huh. And, but anyhow, we, after you kill it you see, and put it uh...put the hams where they want 'em and then you salt it in the smokehouse on a big bench. Salt it real good. All of this here and let it lay for about four or five days. You had to cover it up though and tuck it under. Now, the way me and Avy Joe done it...I had an old blanket of a thing...I put it on this big long bench and laid the meat on it. And I taken it and covered it up so the flies and bugs wouldn't get on it while it was a...in the salt, you know. Then, after four or five days, well, you have you a pot of water, or tub of water. And you get you some bare grass and you have you, in the smoke house poles up here. And you put that bare grass in this meat and dip it down in that water to get all the salt off. And then you hang it on these poles. Now then, after you do that, you make a smoke out of either oak or uh...

RD: Hickory.

PH: Sassafras. But sometime you couldn't find...we never could find no sassafras. Avy Joe always went with oak or hickory. That's something we could find hickory. And let that smoke till it...certain time, sometimes it taken longer for others, you know.

RD: What is bare grass?

PH: Well (laughs)...

RD: And why did you use it?

PH: Well, it's a long...it comes out of the ground, the blades do. It'll come a way up, like this...and sharp on each side. Like a day lilies or onion blades but there bigger. And it's end is real sharp. But you cut one of them off and you take...you cut one blade and you stick it in the side of the meat and bring it up and tie it. It...that was, you couldn't brake it. After you tied it well it was there. And when you went to take your meat down to put it away for after you got smoke. Well, you had to cut that with a knife, you see.

JG: So the bare grass...

RD: After you got your smoke...after you got your smoke where did you put it?

PH: Well, now me and Avy Joe had a box that we put ours in. We...

JG: What do you mean a box?

PH: Yeah, a big wooden box. And a lot of it we let hang...because there wasn't anything that after...a fly, it's the blood that a fly wants, you see. After it dries a fly won't come to it, you know. You know, no more than anything else. And after the meat dries, smokes, and get it like that, well there's no blood in it and no water either. It's all run dripped out, you see. And it's just something a hanging up there. But say like bacon, midlands, and hams...well they hung there. We take, I take the midlands down alright but the hams, they hung there until we eat them. And that was about the last of March, something or other like that. And you started killing hogs about first norther in October. But we didn't kill our meat and nobody else did to keep for the summer until right after Christmas.

JG: Any critters try to get in.

PH: Huh?

JG: Did any critters try to get into the meat after it was hanging?

PH: Uh...no because these smokehouses was made tight, you know. And they, nothing could get in there. Ours was, ours was, I don't know about other people. But ours was, a made out of logs, you know. And then when nothing.

JG: Ok.

RD: What did you do to your sweet potatoes, Pearl?

PH: We banked them, and, me and Avy Joe did over here. He dug a hole out about...six by six hole. And then he put straw in the bottom of that and then put, pine straw, and then he put as he put the potatoes up there they would kind of go up in a cone style, you know. And then, he would put corn...corn, dry corn stalks and things like that. Because you didn't dig potatoes until late. Well, you tried to dig them by the first frost. I remember that. And if...and then at the top you put them corn stalks there...they come together like a teepee, you know, like the Indians made a camp. And you tied that with a rope or string.

Then you put an old tub, always his tub in the way, over that. And then when it rained it just rained off of it, you see. Some people had potato houses, but we never did have a potato house. And so, and I think it kept the potatoes well preserved to have them in the opening. You know, they was, they didn't dry out like they's in a house. See the rain it fell, kind of needed moisture in there and the potatoes wasn't dry like some of 'em was. And uh, but you take, now when you kill hogs in December after Christmas, that's about when everybody started killing hogs, uh...some kill before then some have a ham for Christmas. You take a oven of those sweet potatoes and then a black pot that was on the stove full of back bone, a hawk, that was a meal. You didn't cook nothing else. You put that big, my mother's, and other women too, the farmers...there's a lot of farmers over yonder...went over there and they would stay...oh I don't know...they would stay people would stay with one another all night, you know. Spend the night with them them days. And when they did, well, that's what you had to eat in the wintertime. And on Christmas time, course you had a chocolate cake. (laughs)

RD: Pearl, were there many deer killed during that time? Deer were about gone weren't they?

PH: No, there wasn't. That was in-between cycles of deer. Uh...the first deer that I ever seen was down here on the old Conn pasture. Uh...old man E. J. Conn made a big fence and he brought some deer. Made a high fence where they couldn't jump out. And he brought some deer from the west, I don't know where he got 'em, and put in there. Five or six doe's and some bucks. And so, and then he hired a...built a house and this man seen after them. And then for about four or five years...well, they was in that pen. It was a big pen. It was say two acres or more...something like that. And down here in the Dollarhide pasture.

JG: Uh huh. They may be that part of that game preserve we read about.

PH: Yeah...uh huh. And then he let them out. Well, in them days the people didn't hunt like they...they wasn't used to hunting, you know. All they went hunting was squirrels. And then they multiplied fast.

JG: Was there much quail hunting or duck hunting?

PH: Not much quail, that I know anything about. Now, there's a lot of ducks. Man my daddy liked to...oooh he loved to duck hunt. He rode the pipeline from our house to the river and back every day. And then in duck season, when ducks would come in, you know, the ducks wasn't there all the time. And old slough's, close to the river, well he killed a duck or two. And then we'd have duck dressing. He'd bring it home and momma'd have duck dressing, you know. And then this man Mr. Simmons that rode after...as they built a bridge across the Neches River on the Gulf Pipe Line, well, Mr. Simmons rode from Chester Station before they built a bridge to the river and back. And then papa rode from our house to the river and back home. Now then, and they built the bridge when Mr. Simmons come on then to our house. And I can just remember the bridge just a little bit. And, but when Mr. Simmons...

JG: Now this was a bridge that like a wagon...

PH: Huh?

JG: Wagon...a highway bridge that could be crossed with an automobile?

PH: Uh...yeah, yeah...it was an old highway it was on the Gulf Pipeline.

JG: Ok.

PH: It's down, well from here it's about nine miles to where the old bridge was.

JG: Was it just for a, for a...was it just for a horse or...? Or for a wheeled vehicle?

PH: No, it was a wagon...for a wagon, yeah. Wasn't no cars then.

JG: Ok. And it's not there today is it?

PH: Nooooo, no, no. But there's sign there. The sign that it was there, you know. And that was all called the Old Bridge Crossing, what they called. Where Gulf Pipeline crossed uh...Neches River is where it crossed.

JG: The Gulf Pipeline built the bridge for their pipeline riders.

PH: Uh huh...yeah. Yeah, the men rode it. And I very well remember that. The night, the day rather, that the bridge was completed we was going to have a celebration between the men that worked at Chester Station and their families and the one at Lufkin Station and their families. Well alright. We all, they all come down and on this side of the river, well, the Lufkin bunch camped and on the other side the Chester camped. Well, they had a big dance that night on the bridge.

JG: There's those dances again.

PH: Oh yeah, dancing tonight, the shrimp boats are coming. (laughing) Well anyhow, I was very young but my sister, you see, she was eight years older than me...but she could dance. And then a lot of the other women and boys, young boys and girls, they come from up here around Luf...it was the Allens, the Brazils, Finleys, Kirklands, and Tabs. And so everybody carried something. But we didn't have, on this side, we didn't have no uh...flour. We had meal...but we didn't have flour. But in Polk County them women had some flour. And they divided with the women over here, I remember that.

JG: Hmm...so it was a pretty big deal, getting that bridge.

PH: Oh yeah, that was a big, that was a big deal. You see, it was a smooth and Avy Joe's uncle and some of his people played the fiddle and the guitars there. And so, I asked, I

asked somebody or another one time, I said “Well where did they sit,” cause the bridge was long it had reached way over on each side, you see. And then they danced. And said well the fiddlers got in the middle of the bridge and they played and they danced on each end, you see. (laughing) And...

RD: Pearl how hard was flour to come by at that time?

PH: I...I don't know. I just know I remember momma saying, now I was very little... very little about that time, that I can remember. I remember she said they divided flour with us...over this side. And they made pancakes...they mixed half flour and half meal, to make pancakes the next morning for breakfast, you see. And then, I remember her saying that and I remember there was a big oak tree on our side. It had a grape vine swing. And one of the boys...I'll always remember what his name was, his name was uh...Buffalo Allen. He was my sister's age. And there was a lot of boys in them days...more boys then there was girls. But then, one of these girls from Chester, she wanted to swing on that swing. So, you got up on the banister...see the bridge had banisters...got up on the banister and then somebody would push you and then you go way on across the river.

JG: On a grape vine.

PH: Yeah, and then you come back. You see, you come back to where you started.

JG: Uh huh.

PH: Well alright, this girl got on there so Buffalo boy, he was gonna shove her. He shoved her, and she got way out in the river and the vine broke. (laughing) That's what I remember.

JG: Now, was this in the daytime or at night?

PH: Yeah, in the daytime.

JG: In the daytime, ok.

PH: Yeah, they danced at night. But then (laughing)...

JG: Swung in the day.

PH: But then Buffalo he jumped off of that and I remember we was watching me and some more of the kids. We were standing, I remember where we was standing...when the vine broke. So Mrs. uh...her mother she come just a hollering, she was over on the other side of the river, you know. Hollering, hollering, “My baby, my baby.” So, but Buffalo got her.

JG: He dove in huh?

PH: Yeah, and he got her. But he never did marry her. (laughing) In fact that girl never married. She never married, she made a schoolteacher and she never married.

JG: She had all the bad luck huh? The vine broke on her and...

RD: Pearl, did you have biscuits all the time you were growing up as a child? Do you remember having biscuits a lot?

PH: Uh, yeah. My mother made biscuits.

RD: Reason I was asking, a lot of people have trouble getting flour back in those days.

PH: Yeah, well that day and time. Then, you see, Richard that must have been about 1918. I was probably six years old. I just can remember when we...about this here bridge deal. But, after then, Momma made biscuits. I got the old bread tray in yonder. And I'll show y'all all these things after a while. And Momma would, in her kitchen, she had a flour barrel. And it shoved up under the table, of the...the cook table. And, this old thing that she made her biscuits in went down into that flour barrel. And she pulled that out and she'd get her sifter and get her flour out and sift that flour in there, and make her biscuits in that, you see. And then when she got through with that, well, it would...now, my mother, I can't remember when she cooked on a wood stove. But, she got when oil stoves, kerosene stoves first come out, well, Momma got one. It had five burners. And two of them was under the oven and three to cook on. And so this oven oh as big as...oh it was this big and there was a pan that slid right in there. And I remember Momma, I can see them biscuits today. She'd make that pan full of biscuits for boarders, you know, had boarders. Had, oh I tell you. And so we, we eat biscuit. Now, my Daddy liked cornbread. When he growed up he never had a biscuit. My Daddy was an Indian. And they didn't have nothing but corn. So, anyway, he didn't growed up eatin' biscuit. But after Momma went to making biscuits, well, he wanted biscuits if he had to go out on the pipeline work. Which he did a whole lot. And Momma would cook something or another and she'd get somebody to carry them their dinner on the pipeline. And she'd make a pan of biscuits and send that big pan of biscuits. That was the bread they had. Oh, there just so many, many memories that I can think of, you know, that went on in them days.

JG: Well I like that, that bridge story, I hadn't heard that one before.

PH: (laughs) That bridge deal.

JG: And you said that was about 1918. Did I understand you right?

PH: Yeah.

JG: Ok. Well that, yeah, you were young then.

PH: Let me see...it had to be about 1918.

JG: Just after World War I? Ok.

PH: Because, uh...I can just remember that. And that would make me six years old.

JG: Well that was probably something pretty big. Seeing that girl out there in that river.

PH: I don't...I can remember just sketches. Yeah, that that was fascinating, you know, seeing that. And then, I remember Momma telling later on a whole lot about the meal and flour.

JG: Yeah.

PH: Didn't have that. And then I ask Avy Joe's brother Elbert one time uh...Elbert was a young boy at that time and he may have been over there too. Where did they play...who played for that, you know? I was always interested in music. And he said it was an old man Havard and some of his boys. They could pick a guitar and they could blow a French harp, you know, and all that kind of stuff. And he said they played, he said that he thought they played right in the middle of the bridge and they danced on each side. And the bridge though, for a wagon, let's see, about ten feet would be as wide as they could make it, wouldn't it? Did they make them ten feet, or eight?

RD: I think at least ten.

PH: Eight.

RD: Ok.

PH: Well anyway. They had to make it wide enough that this here wagon could go across if they needed. Now at our house there was a tool house there and they kept pipes and if they needed an extra pipe well they would come there and get one. If they needed it, well, on the other side of the river, well, they had to go across the bridge, you see because the wagon stayed at our house. And then, there was a man that had some mules. That was, not the Spanish mule type...that's the kind we had. But, a big old mule. Now what would be them called, do you know Richard what them big mules was called?

RD: Just a big American mule I guess, Pearl.

PH: Oh, they was big mules. And high. Well, this man Mr. McLinton had mules like that. And Pop would always get him to come hook up to the wagon. And they'd roll the pipes on that and that's what they needed and what was wrong with the pipeline. But then they carry 'em to it. And that bridge had to be wide enough that they could go across it if they needed to. And then....

RD: Pearl, listening to you talk, and I believe it was because your dad worked for the pipeline and your mother kept boarders, I believe you had a little bit better standard of living than most people did during your time.

PH: I did...I don't brag about it. But we had shoes to wear, to school. I had a good coat. And other kids didn't have, Richard. But I remember, cause I'm not mentioning that. No. No, Papa went to work for Gulf in nineteen and four was when they surveyed the line through my grandmother's property. They come through there and they asked Momma, asked Grandma, could they lease a pipeline right through there? And she told them "Well, if you let my son-in-law," see Papa and Momma hadn't been married very long then, two years. And they said "Yeah, we gonna be looking for men to work." So in nineteen, that was in nineteen and four. Well, wasn't very long I don't know, I never did know when they got...just as soon as they got it bought from Lufkin to Chester. See this man was buying property that when they started clearing the trees, sawing the trees out of the way and then getting this out of the way and that out of the way so they could dig a pipe. You know, dig a hole.

RD: Wasn't Spindletop in '01?

PH: Yeah, Papa started in the beginning.

JG: Yes.

RD: That was pretty quick I didn't realize it was that soon.

PH: Uh huh...and dug it with shovels. You see, holes. And you got so much...a pipe was...a pipe was I think 12 feet and you got paid by the feet you know as you dug. But first they went to clearing, cutting trees and cutting things like that. And he went to work then, and then in nineteen and seven, well, the whole line was completed from Oklahoma City to Sierra Lake. And, then that's when they started the oil down. See they had this big oil field in Oklahoma City...that was where the oil was going. I don't know why they didn't make a refinery there but there was a refinery in Sierra Lake then. Nineteen and seven. And it, they, it went down this line and then that's when Papa started riding the pipeline, before there was a bridge. And so then he rode it, well...

JG: And his job is riding the pipeline, what was his job? What was he to do?

PH: Riding it on a horse. Looking to see that there wasn't any limbs on the wires. You see, it was a wire too. Had two wires. You know, it was a cross arm and a wire over here and a wire over there and two wires. Watched to see wasn't no limbs on that. And then...

JG: So it...what, telegram wires?

PH: Huh?

JG: Was it telegraph wires, phone wires?

PH: A telephone wires, yeah. It was wires about like my little finger, you know.

JG: Uh huh.

PH: And, but then wasn't no bogs in it, you see. It was straight wire. Then, this pipe that they had...see they was five pipes down the Gulf Pipeline during all the time of pipeline days.

JG: Five...five different lines?

PH: Five lines. It's the first one was ever started was a six inch. Just six inches, you see. And you had to see that everything...that it wasn't leaking. And see, at Lufkin...they put a telephone in our house. And at Lufkin station if the pressure...if...alright, at Chester station if the pressure was low they knew something was wrong between Chester and Lufkin. So they call the Lufkin station and say the pressures low. Well then Papa Weaver, everybody in them days went by their last name, "Weaver, cover the line, there's a leak." Or something, they called it leak you know. Well he would cover the line, go to the line. And then, go slow. And then if this oil was oozing out, you see, you could smell it or either see it.

JG: How often did it leak?

PH: In the beginning it was pretty often. I don't know how often it was.

JG: Now, how deep was that line...do you know how deep it was, how deep they buried the pipe?

PH: Well, the first line that I remember 'em saying that. The first line wasn't too deep about two feet deep.

JG: So if it leaked you could tell pretty soon.

PH: Yeah, uh huh. Then, the last line they laid was a thirty-four inch pipe. But it went deep. But they had diggers then, to dig them with.

JG: Mechanical diggers.

PH: The last pipeline was in...I won't say for sure, but I think it was in nineteen and thirty. The last pipe that was put there. And, but...

JG: So he would, he would find the leak and then report it over the telephone line...

PH: Yeah, he would find it and he had uh...you see he had a...they call it a test set. See that, see that little phone right back there?

JG: Yes.

PH: Ok, well alright, that went in a little bag that hung on his saddle. And it had a wire. Alright, papa was young and he had climbing spurs. And he'd go to the pole, the close pole was about every forty feet. And climb that pole and hooked his little hook over the wire, and then he could talk over the phone, you see. That little phone right there.

JG: The portable phone...like we have cell phones today. That was his cell phone.

PH: Uh huh...I wondered if they could fix that...I would like to have that phone. But I don't imagine they could. I don't know how it works, but anyway.

JG: Now did he actually do some of the repair work also or was his job mainly just to report it?

PH: Oh yeah, see, they'd say, "Well get some men and do the work...get some men." And so...

JG: So, he would actually sort of spearhead the repair project?

PH: Uh huh...and then he'd get the men that would work. And they'd get four and a half if they worked all day or if they just worked three hours. He'd get four and a half, yeah.

JG: What do you mean four and a half? Four and a half what?

PH: A day.

JG: Four and a half dollars? A day?

PH: Yeah. Uh huh. And that's good money in 'em days. Let me tell you, that was good money. Cause, and too, there's so many people that wouldn't work.

JG: Even during the Depression?

PH: You'd be surprised.

JG: Even during the Depression? In the '30's?

PH: Well, the Depression hadn't come then.

JG: Ok. You're still talking the early days. Ok.

PH: Yeah.

JG: Well, that's interesting. Thanks for sharing that part.

RD: Pearl, did Avy Joe have any dogs?

PH: Dogs.

RD: Yeah.

PH: Yes...(laughs) we, I raised dogs all my life. Yeah, the...his dogs was that Black Mouth Curr. You know, they was kind of a khaki color, a brownish yellowish color. And had a black mouth. Yeah, that was old Smut we called her. Had one like that and oh...I don't know how many dogs. Yeah, always had two or three dogs.

RD: Did you ever cook for those dogs?

PH: Have what?

RD: Did you ever cook for them?

PH: Uh...yeah, not really. I just give scraps to 'em. But they, every now and then, Avy Joe kill a coon or something or other and cook it on a pot. He would, for the dogs, you know.

RD: You never cooked them any cornbread?

PH: No, I never did cook 'em no bread, not that. There's always scraps from the table that we used to...but Avy Joe didn't like his dogs too fat. They wasn't poor, but they wasn't fat...like you see dogs now a days. Because, they wouldn't work.

RD: Work, what do you mean work?

PH: Well, hunt the cows and hunt the hogs. You see, Avy Joe was a cowboy. He, we had a lot of cows. And we had the cows running up and down the river...that's when we moved up here. And then, as we married he went in the cow business.

JG: But how many head of cattle would he have had? Typical year?

PH: Well, the most I can remember...was sixty mother cows. When he pulled out of the river bottom, when the stock law come in, I don't remember the year that come in, well...

RD: '52.

PH: Huh?

RD: '52.

PH: Well, well he had to pull in, pull our cattle out of the woods. On our own place here, you see. And he had sixty mother cows...and I think three bulls at that time.

RD: How many hogs, you think, he would have had?

PH: ...oh I don't know. He gathered hogs for about a year before, then he just give up on it and...went to Freeport. Went to work down there at Dow Chemical.

JG: Now was he able to keep those sixty cows...I mean as number wise after get...

PH: Huh?

JG: He moved them out of the, say the open range so to speak and they moved them onto your property. Was that sufficient to provide for all sixty of them?

PH: Yeah we had...see we had a hundred acres. And then, he leased behind this...he leased two hundred and fifty from uh...it belonged to Carter-Kelley then.

JG: Ok.

PH: The lumber company at Manning. And he leased that.

JG: Was it open pasture or...did it have some woods?

PH: No, he had fences.

JG: Well, I meant was it pasture or woods or...was it cleared or solid woods?

PH: Woods. Yeah, yeah it was woods everywhere. But there was grass and there was vines and there was bushes and all that kind of stuff in there that you could...that they eat, you see.

JG: Now what...did he bale hay then? On y'all's land.

PH: Yeah, uh huh. We bought hay, we bought hay at first.

JG: You bought hay...ok.

PH: After he pulled them in here, right after we bought hay from a fellow...and you know what, other day it made me think of it. This old man that we bought hay from, his son was a young boy in them days. He lived at, well, close to Oklahoma...I can't think of the name now. And he'd bring us alfalfa hay down here. Now this son, now, I don't know how old he'd be, but at that time he was about sixteen years old, when his daddy would come down here. And him and some more boys would come to unload the hay...had a big hay barn down there. He called me about a month ago...and said he was coming oh...it's right away. And he wanted to talk. He said, "Mrs. Havard, do you remember me?" His last name was Stone. Robert Stone. I said, "Yes, Robert." He said, "You remember you went out to Diboll and got us all a hamburger to eat that day?" I said,

“Yes, I remember all that.” So, that made me think of it. We bought alfalfa for a dollar and a quarter a bale. Well, then for about two years...no, three years, yeah...then Mr. Stone called...

JG: Are these square or round bales?

PH: Little, little bales. Little square bales.

JG: Little square...rectangle, yeah...ok.

PH: You know, about this long and, you know, had a...and he said “Mr. Havard, the alfalfa has gone up,” and said, “It will be a dollar and seventy five cents this year.” Avy Joe says, “No,” he says “I’ll buy prairie hay.” Which that’s...prairie hay is what we bale here, you know. So we went to Crockett and bought a baler and a tractor and a...

JG: Rake.

PH: Rake and a thing to cut it. What do you call it? A sica...a sickle blade.

JG: Yeah.

PH: That reached out yonder and cut it, you know. And baled our own hay then for about...let’s see...we baled it until the big round bales come in. But then, Avy Joe sold this, all of this...and then we bought round bales till he died. And this, them round bales was right here where this house is now. That’s why my grass is so...he turned them in here, you know, and that’s why my grass is so thick. This is rich dirt, rich dirt.

JG: Well, I’ve certainly enjoyed visiting with you...you think of anything else Mr. Donovan?

PH: (laughs) Well, I don’t know.

JG: I know we could go on and on. You lived a long life and lots of experiences.

PH: Yeah...I wanted to...

JG: I tell you what, I know you’ve got some things to show us but for now I’m just going to go ahead and stop this. Or did you have one other thing you wanted to say now or...?

PH: No.

JG: Ok. Alright....well, thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW