

JESSIE MALANDERS

Interview 118a

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John Hernandez, Interviewer

Retyped by Courtney Lawrence

ABSTRACT: In this interview with John Hernandez, Jessie Malanders recalls growing up in Diboll, going to school, and living through the Great Depression. He also gives his opinions on World War II, Vietnam, and the state of the world in 1987.

John Hernandez (hereafter JH): I am John Hernandez and I am interviewing Jessie Malanders in his home in Diboll, Texas. Today is November 18, 1987. What is the first memory of your childhood?

Jessie Malanders (hereafter JM): Oh, that was when I was about six years old. I was starting to school.

JH: What was your family's occupation, what did they do for a living?

JM: Farming.

JH: Describe your brothers and sisters.

JM: There were six of us – four boys and two girls.

JH: How were they, how did each one act? Name your brothers and sisters and describe how they would act.

JM: How they acted?

JH: If they were close to you and such.

JM: Yes, we were a close family, helped one another, we were raised that way, to help one another.

JH: What were your chores about the house?

JM: Chores around the house? Oh, clean up yards, feed the stock, and all such as that.

JH: What kind of games or sports did you play?

JM: Rag ball and marbles.

JH: Where did you play the games, where did you meet to play marbles and stuff?

JM: In the yard, around the house.

JH: Describe one of the teachers that you had in school.

JM: Now that's a hard question. Mrs. Nelly Burton, I remember her good. She was a real nice teacher, she was strict but she helped all of us.

JH: Did you ever play hooky?

JM: No, we didn't lie, we were too afraid.

JH: Did you ever play any tricks on anybody, like at Halloween, you and your friends?

JM: No, we were too afraid to get out then.

JH: What were your dreams as a child? What did you want to do when you grew up?

JM: Well, I didn't have no dreams, took life as it came.

JH: What did your mom do for headaches?

JM: Oh, she used something and built a tea and stuff like that.

JH: For stomachaches?

JM: Same thing, she used herbs for everything.

JH: What about fever?

JM: Yes, she made a tonic out of all those herbs; she would go out in the yard, pick up a bunch of stuff.

JH: When you had a toothache?

JM: When we had a toothache she pulled it out.

JH: As an adult what was your main occupation?

JM: Labor, working.

JH: Where?

JM: Anywhere I could get a job.

JH: Describe your first work?

JM: I was stacking lumber in a sawmill, shipping.

JH: What was your favorite job that you had?

JM: My favorite job? Driving a grocery wagon, delivery wagon, delivering groceries.

JH: How was your pay, was it good?

JM: How was I paid? \$0.10 an hour.

JH: Where did you live when you were married?

JM: Lived here in Diboll, it's where I married and it's where I lived.

JH: Who were your children and what were your hopes for them?

JM: I ain't got no children.

JH: Who was the President when you married?

JM: I don't remember.

JH: Do you remember any President?

JM: Let's see, Eisenhower.

JH: What did you think about Eisenhower?

JM: I didn't like him.

JH: What things did he do that you didn't like?

JM: Didn't like the way he carried on business.

JH: Did he get into war problems?

JM: Yes.

JH: How about President Hoover?

JM: Hoover, I was kind of small then, I don't remember him. He was the one that caused the Depression. We called armadillos "Hoover." People would go out and catch them and eat them.

JH: And President Roosevelt?

JM: Well, he did pretty good; Roosevelt was all right, raised us up and got us out of the Depression.

JH: How was work before the Depression?

JM: Well, there wasn't too much work, had what they called the WPA, boys could go in if they wanted to.

JH: How was work during the Depression?

JM: That's what I said during the Depression. Didn't have nothing to eat, didn't have a job, nothing like that. People just lived on whatever they could.

JH: How was your life during the Depression?

JM: It was hard.

JH: Describe one of your days during the Depression.

JM: One day me and my brother-in-law, we would go out and cut cordwood and they would pay us with vegetables, smoked meat, something like that.

JH: What is your opinion of social security?

JM: I think it is all right.

JH: Do you think a depression could happen again?

JM: It could, if they don't straighten it up.

JH: Was the Temple Industries good or bad for Diboll?

JM: Very good.

JH: Why?

JM: Because it created whole lots of jobs, helped people, they are good to the people who work for them.

JH: Describe what you did during World War I.

JM: I was still a baby during World War I.

JH: In World War II?

JM: I was in the Air Force, refueling.

JH: How was the war?

JM: It was tough.

JH: Are you proud of your service for our country?

JM: Yes.

JH: Describe your feelings about your duty in service.

JM: I was drafted, I didn't want to go, but they drafted me and I had to go and after I went and came back I realized that I did a good job.

JH: Were you proud?

JM: Yes. Had a whole lot of them that didn't want to go they called "4 F'S".

JH: Did you dislike them?

JM: Yes, how come they couldn't go?

JH: How about the Vietnam War?

JM: I didn't have nothing to do with that. That was a different war and I don't think it was justified, sending the boys over there.

JH: Did you do anything, you know, strike?

JM: No, no strike or nothing. I was working here in Diboll during the Vietnam War.

JH: Describe some of the news that was on TV during the Vietnam War.

JM: Oh, there was every day news about the Vietnam War, the killing, why they do this and why they do that and they claimed they weren't going to send any more boys and that was the first thing they did. Just send them over there, some of them got killed – you couldn't tell whether they were going or coming, they still got some of them over there.

JH: Going back to your childhood, what do you remember that you and your friends did?

JH: We would go swimming in the river.

JH: Did you ever get caught?

JM: As long as it was free.

JH: You didn't have to ask permission?

JM: No, the parents would give us permission and we would take off.

JH: Did you ever do any tricks and disobey your parents and get in big trouble?

JM: No, we weren't allowed to do that, we didn't want to hurt nobody.

JH: You don't remember if your brothers and sisters did anything that they really got in trouble for?

JM: No, my parents were strict on us.

JH: What was your favorite book when you were a child?

JM: Favorite book? It was – weren't too many books, the only books we would read were schoolbooks and the Bible.

JH: In your neighborhood did you have a house there that you thought was spooky? They lady, or man, who was living there was a witch?

JM: No.

JH: You had nobody in your neighborhood like that?

JM: Used to live in company houses, company furnished them.

JH: If you were to go back, what would you change?

JM: I don't know what I would change.

JH: Are you proud of what you did, how you did in life?

JM: Yes, I'm proud to get up as old as I am and how I lived back then.

JH: What are your hobbies now?

JM: Sitting around and reading books.

JH: Can you name any of your girlfriends that you had when you were little?

JM: Didn't have no girl friends.

JH: When did you get your first car?

JM: 1939.

JH: How did you feel with the car, did you take it around town?

JM: No, my brothers and I would just ride around.

JH: How did you treat your car, did you like to wash it every day, keep it clean?

JM: No, I would let them keep it clean; make them keep it clean for riding with me.

JH: Speaking of children nowadays, what do you think of children now?

JM: I think they are just loose – parents ain't taking care of them like they should. Parents should be home with them, make them stay home instead of running around and acting bad, the biggest majority of them.

JH: What do you think of President Reagan?

JM: He has done a good job; he ain't the whole show, though. Congress has to help him. If they didn't cooperate with him he can't do nothing. He is all right, helping all the old people, helping all he can but, of course, he is helping those foreign countries, too.

JH: Well, thank you for your time.

END OF INTERVIEW