

CLOYCE REINHARDT

Interview 225a

June 24, 2011, at East Texas Auto Parts, Corrigan, Texas

Jonathan Gerland, Interviewer

Patsy Colbert, Transcriber

ABSTRACT: In this interview with Jonathan Gerland, Polk County native Cloyce Reinhardt reminisces about his life and family. He talks about his father and grandfather's work on the Waco, Beaumont, Trinity, and Sabine railroad, growing up and going to school in Stryker and Corrigan, his time in the United States Marine Corps, and his career in the auto parts and wrecker business. Mr. Reinhardt also talks about his friend Mr. Jay Morrison and their adventures visiting abandoned railroad tracks and logging towns as well as riding an old motorcar. He tells stories about his days driving a wrecker and recounts stories that his father told him about railroading in East Texas in the early 20th century.

Jonathan Gerland (hereafter JG): Today's date is Friday June 24, 2011. My name is Jonathan Gerland. I'm with Mr. Cloyce Reinhardt. We are here at East Texas Auto Parts in Corrigan sitting back here in the back of his shop and we are just going to do an oral history interview today. I'll just sit this here maybe Mr. Reinhardt if that will be all right. I think it will pick you up. Don't worry about it, if it's in your way let me know, and if I need to move it I'll take care of it. But, I don't know, maybe let's just start with when and where you were born.

Cloyce Reinhardt (hereafter CR): I was born at Stryker, Texas, February 15, 1933 and I have lived there pretty well all of my life except what time I was in the Marine Corps, and still living there.

JG: So, where you live now is the old home place?

CR: Part of it.

JG: Part of it.

CR: Yes, where we are living at now we had a, we was farming it up there.

JG: What is that?

CR: We was farming it.

JG: Farming, yes.

CR: First I built a home out here on 59 north, the last brick home on the left. I built that in 1966 then I left out there in '79 and I've been...and that house burned in 2002 and rebuilt and been living up there ever since.

JG: So, that is where you were born. Who was your father?

CR: Willie Reinhardt.

JG: Willie Reinhardt and was he born there as well?

CR: No, he was born in Corrigan.

JG: Corrigan, okay. What did he do for a living?

CR: He worked for the railroad for many years and farmed and ran a little old country store that him and his brothers bought. And, well he farmed the whole time till he got so old and he wasn't able.

JG: Now, you said you were telling me the other day he was born in the 1880's.

CR: Six.

JG: 1886?

CR: June 3, 1886.

JG: So, did you have any brothers and sisters?

CR: I had one brother that was born dead.

JG: Was that before or after you were born?

CR: He was born...that was before I was born.

JG: Okay.

CR: Then I have that one sister that, well you've met her. Well, I don't know if you've met her or not.

JG: I don't remember.

CR: She is a little bit older than me. She is 79 or 80. She is a retired school teacher.

JG: Where did she teach?

CR: She has taught in all of South Texas and Corrigan.

JG: What is her first name?

CR: Billie Jean.

JG: Billie Jean. Did she marry?

CR: Yes, she is married and got two children.

JG: What is her married name?

CR: Adams.

JG: Billie Jean Adams. Talk a little bit about your father. He was born in Corrigan and what did his father do?

CR: His father came from Germany over here.

JG: And, what was his name?

CR: Fritz.

JG: Fritz. I think we found him on the census one time.

CR: I think you did.

JG: So, he came from Germany do you know about what year?

CR: Not exactly, but it had to be in the...he said he was born in Corrigan in a house that had a dirt floor in it.

JG: Your father?

CR: Yes.

JG: In Corrigan in a dirt floor house.

CR: Yes.

JG: So, when your father was born what was your grandfather doing for a living?

CR: He was farming.

JG: Farming.

CR: And he worked for the WBT & S [Waco, Beaumont, Trinity, & Sabine Railroad].

JG: Oh, he did, too?

CR: Yes.

JG: Okay. So, that railroad had just come through just a few years earlier. Well, I guess if your grandfather came over in 1870's that railroad didn't come through 'till the early eighties, right?

CR: That is right.

JG: Do you know what he did for the railroad? Did he work on the track or on the train?

CR: I think he was one that kept the pumps up.

JG: That is your grandfather also?

CR: Yes, and whatever else they did back then.

JG: You were telling me some specifics about your dad and what he did. He was the pump man for the line and I guess that would be the Trinity and Sabine or the Waco, Beaumont, Trinity and Sabine.

CR: That is right.

JG: Tell for people who don't know about that. What did the pump man do?

CR: They had four pump stations on 66 miles of track and his job was to take a motor car and pump that tank up, down at Chester. And he would ride up here to Stryker and pump that one up and drive on up to Woodlake and pump that one up and drive on up to White Rock and pump that one up. His sister was living in Trinity. He would spend the night with her and get his motor car the next morning and go back and do the same thing.

JG: The other direction, keep those water towers or tanks full of water for the locomotives.

CR: Full of water.

JG: So a tank then would pretty much last the railroad for one day.

CR: Yes, depends on how much...

JG: How many trains they were running I guess.

CR: Yes, and they were running two passenger trains, one each way from Trinity to Colmesneil and then from Colmesneil back to Trinity every day except Sunday. I don't

think they ran on Sunday. It was a lot of work around here then,. There was a sawmill every few miles. [pause] I know one of the old...[pause] old man A. B. Armstrong, he lived to be nearly 100 and he said he switched out 97 cars here one day.

JG: Ninety-seven cars.

CR: Of lumber, they put it all in a box car then.

JG: Probably 40 foot boxcars or...?

CR: Yes.

JG: Every board touched by no telling how many hands, hand to hand to hand.

CR: Yes.

JG: One at a time maybe, multiple times, on and off and here to there. A lot of labor back then huh?

CR: Yes, well you can see them pictures you got in some of those magazines of them niggers loading them box cars.

JG: Tell me about some of the things you remember your dad telling you? I know you've told me before about that I guess it was about 1913 or so when John Henry Kirby dedicated that church to his dad. Tell me about that.

CR: John Henry Kirby built that church.

JG: That is at Peachtree Village.

CR: Peachtree Village and the opening day they had...well you remember reading that article, they had eight or ten thousand people down at Chester.

JG: That was a big day!

CR: A big day!

JG: Kirby was pretty well off by that time.

CR: Kirby was...he was a shot then.

JG: Had a lot of friends and people who wanted to be friends.

CR: Had the governor and everybody else here. Had a passenger train come out of Dallas and Fort Worth, they had a passenger train out of Trinity, had a passenger train out of Beaumont and I think one out of Houston. They all gathered at Chester.

JG: Special trains just for that trip.

CR: Special just for that.

JG: Probably carrying six or seven cars a piece.

CR: Probably and my daddy was pumper on that pump station down there and he said he stayed up two night's just pumping water for those locomotives. They had so many locomotives in Chester till if the local come by all the other trains would have to get on the mainline and go down and let the other one by then back up.

JG: Quite a congestion there.

CR: Yes, they didn't have enough side tracks.

JG: Of course Peachtree Village was where John Henry Kirby was raised and I guess his father still lived there.

CR: Yes.

JG: And the church is still there.

CR: Still there.

JG: They have kept it up pretty well.

CR: 1913.

JG: So these water tanks, do you know where they would be pumping the water? You mentioned White Rock or White Oak, well not White Oak creek, the rock creek I guess that came from the creek ,but do you know some of the other sources of water?

CR: They picked the spring along the track.

JG: Okay, so springs.

CR: Like this one right here that thing produces oh no telling how much water. But each one of them had springs that supplied the water.

JG: And, it had to be a certain kind of water too or some kinds of water did better than others in those boilers.

CR: Yes, yes.

JG: Or the chemical make-up of the water.

CR: They had a passenger train that run through here every morning going to Colmesneil. It would go down there and turn and go back to Trinity. It came through here about ten o'clock in the morning or eleven and that afternoon about three or four o'clock going back.

JG: Now, where you live and where you were born is pretty close to where the tracks came through right?

CR: Yes.

JG: So, you more or less grew up around the railroad.

CR: I did.

JG: What is some of your earliest memories of the railroad as a child? Did you go with your dad much?

CR: No, they had already started shutting down...that was during the Depression.

JG: Yes, your childhood would have been late thirties I guess huh?

CR: Yes, and they pulled that track up in 1938.

JG: You were just a young thing then.

CR: I was just a kid.

JG: Do you still have memories though of seeing the engines go by before that time?

CR: Yes, yes.

JG: I guess it was something you were fascinated with?

CR: Yes, and then they had those two passenger trains everyday and then they had a local that switched all the mills going and coming and sometimes they would run an extra just to run an extra train to pick up more. They had a heck of a business, of course, they had a sawmill, a big sawmill at Groveton and Carmona, Benford; they had a hell of a mill at Benford. Bennet and Satanford was the name of it. Then they had a mill at Stryker, a mill down at Barnum and then one out from Colmesneil. John Henry Kirby had a big mill down between Chester and Colmesneil.

JG: Is that Mobile?

CR: Mobile, yes.

JG: Mobile yes. I think we went out to the Mobile area, you, me and Mr. Jay...

CR: That is right.

JG: ...a few years back and we found that piece of coal didn't we, along the right of way? It probably fell off seventy, eighty years ago or more.

CR: Yes.

JG: It's all grown up. So, where did you go to school as a boy?

CR: Well I started at Stryker.

JG: I guess that was a county school huh?

CR: Yes, I went four years out there and they consolidated with Corrigan and then the rest of the time I went to Corrigan until I graduated and then I went to work for the railroad.

JG: Now what year did you graduate high school?

CR: 1950.

JG: '50 and, then you worked for the railroad. What railroad was that the Southern Pacific?

CR: Southern Pacific. I went to work for them and worked in South Texas in the summertime.

JG: Now you mentioned earlier your sister taught school down there. Was she down there when you were down there?

CR: Yes.

JG: Okay, what part in South Texas?

CR: Well some of those smaller towns down there.

JG: So, you lived down there then when you were working on the railroad?

CR: Yes.

JG: What did you do for the railroad?

CR: We run a bolt tightening.

JG: Bolt tightening, yes.

CR: Replace the bolts in the track where they bolted together.

JG: That was before they had this ribbon rail. That was when everything was bolted.

CR: Oh yes, there wasn't no such thing as ribbon rails back then.

JG: How did y'all...this is a question that comes up a lot, how did you deal with heat expansion and sun kinks?

CR: Usually they would take a rail and dig down and put it in there and tie it to the track and they would break a rail. I have got one at home that is broken. A fifty-five to sixty pound rail...

JG: And, for those that don't know who might be reading this interview that is when the rails, the metal expands and binds up at the joints and it can actually break rail, split it, certainly come off the ties and cause derailments. Did y'all try to lay track a certain time of the year? Was certain times of the year better than other times?

CR: No, not that I remember.

JG: Okay, I know today they try to do it within a certain temperature kind of an optimum to where it won't shrink or expand depending on, of course, it's kind of more of a problem since they have such long pieces now that's all welded. They have to have expansion joints ever so often. How many was on a work crew? How many did you work side by side with?

CR: Well when I was working on the railroad it was six of us.

JG: Six of you. Did y'all go up and down the track in a motor car?

CR: Yes.

JG: Y'all didn't have any hand pump cars did you?

CR: No, we had those regular motor cars, you know, with those old cranes on them.

JG: Anything else you remember about working on the railroad down there?

CR: Well my daddy has told me a lot of stories about...

JG: The early days of railroading.

CR: The early days yes. He said the Trinity County Lumber Company was one of the biggest sawmills in East Texas.

JG: That is at Groveton right?

CR: Groveton yes. And they brought a train load of logs down there and parked it down at the depot and the engineer when he got off he didn't completely cut the steam off and they was eating dinner and that train started pulling out.

JG: With nobody on it.

CR: Nobody on it and then they got to chasing it...

JG: Chasing by horseback or...?

CR: I don't know. But they had that passenger train coming in from Colmesneil and it was headed this way and that one was headed that-a-way and...[pause] but he said that passenger train eased up to the front of that other one and it was a bigger engine and wasn't running that fast and to stall that engine and they pushed the whole mess back to Groveton, train and all. They gave the engineer a gold watch.

JG: A gold watch?

CR: Yes.

JG: For saving the train I guess huh?

CR: Yes. He said that was on that straight track over there between Woodlake and back in that a way.

JG: So, the passenger train engineer had to actually go backwards a little bit, put it in reverse and ease the impact and then slowly stop it.

CR: Yes, and then coupled up and then stalled that other engine.

JG: I wonder if you were a passenger on that train if you knew what was going on. He got a gold watch huh?

CR: He got a gold watch.

JG: I've read that in some old newspaper accounts. Even there in Lufkin occasionally a train would get away from them and I think there was one that ran up the Cotton Belt. They actually had to intentionally derail it. It was going too fast and I think they derailed it at Forest or something like that if I remember right. I imagine that happened more than the railroads wanted people to know about.

CR: Well he derailed one, a motor car.

JG: I've heard stories about motor cars getting away too.

CR: Yes, he...they was over at Glendale and that motor car got away from them and drug one man down the track and wasn't nobody on it. They telegraphed Glendale and they throwed cross ties across the track and all that to derail it.

JG: I think TSE has had one get away before too. They had to send it down a side track there in Diboll to derail it to keep it from going where they would rather it not go. So, how long did you work on the railroad?

CR: About a year.

JG: About a year. Then you went in the Army?

CR: Went in the Marine Corps.

JG: The Marine Corps, sorry about that. (laughter)

CR: Yes, I went...

JG: Now was Korea still going on then?

CR: Yes.

JG: Okay.

CR: I went to San Diego for basic training and then from there we went to Korea. I got over there just before the...well just before the...[pause] and was over there oh what, a year and a half and...[pause] that has been a long time ago.

JG: That was sixty years ago.

CR: Yes.

JG: Did you see any combat?

CR: A little. They signed up troops. They were teaching us to...they were going to drop us behind the line and we got in that plane and was flying from Tokyo but that whole outfit was they were going to drop us behind the lines and we was to fight them the other way and we was in the plane flying to Korea when they called the truce. So, we just naturally flew back to Japan.

JG: That was a close call wasn't it?

CR: That was a close call so we didn't.

JG: But, you were prepared to parachute in and fight?

CR: Oh yes, yes.

JG: They must have known y'all were coming. (laughter)

CR: Yes, we were already up there and all at once that plane turned and went back and so that is what it was. I left there and I come home and got married.

JG: How did you meet Bennie?

CR: I met her in high school.

JG: High school.

CR: I went with her for two years. I guess while I was gone all that time either working on the railroad, in the Marine Corps or something and then we got married and been married ever since.

JG: What year did ya'll get married?

CR: 1955.

JG: In '55. And, what were you doing for a living then?

CR: I was working for Western Auto.

JG: Western Auto.

CR: They was drafting then and my name came up and two or three more names came up so, they was going to draft them to the Army and we said shit we will just join the Marine Corps, and we did.

JG: So, when you came back home, home was here in Corrigan right, or Stryker?

CR: Yes, yes.

JG: How long did you work for Western Auto?

CR: Oh two or three years off and on, a couple of years I guess.

JG: How did you get into the East Texas Auto Parts store here and the wrecker service and all that? Was it about that time or little later?

CR: Yes, a little bit later. I went to work at the paper mill.

JG: Which one?

CR: In Lufkin.

JG: Lufkin, okay. Did you drive back and forth each day?

CR: Yes.

JG: Okay.

CR: It was some more people, another man or two around here that we rode together and swapped out and they had me on that graveyard shift and I had never worked graveyard. I got up there one night a Sunday night at midnight to go to work and I said shit and I called Bennie and told her to come get me. She come up there and got me and I never went back.

JG: You didn't like that night work huh?

CR: Oh, that was tough. We done everything manually you know. They would bring one of them old soda ash cars in there and have to unload that thing with a shovel.

JG: Soda ash?

CR: Soda ash, and a wheel barrow and a damn shovel.

JG: Shovel and a wheel barrow, a short handled shovel.

CR: Yes, and I didn't last out there too damn long. I quit and that is when I come down here and opened this damn junk yard.

JG: So, that was in what about the sixties, early sixties or still the fifties?

CR: The late fifties and early sixties.

JG: Right here in this location here?

CR: Yes, and I didn't open this parts store until '75 when I opened this new part store. I helped and it's a lot of work and I just last week or week before last we just finished up hauling scrap off this yard here. Well he hauled \$15,000 worth of scrap off this yard. And I hadn't hardly got anything left back there but two or three pick-ups.

JG: What is some of the most interesting things you've had junk wise or salvage wise, cars and trucks and equipment and stuff? What are some of the more interesting things you might have had?

CR: Well you name it and I've had it.

JG: You've had it, okay. What was the most common junk car when you first started the junk business? What was the most common item?

CR: The Chevrolet and the Ford.

JG: How would you get a junk car?

CR: Well I was in the wrecker business.

JG: Okay.

CR: And you would pick up one with the wrecker and bring it in and tow it and store it and then buy it from the insurance company. You bought a lot of them damn things that was just junk anyway. And now you would get some good ones too. I didn't buy a new car from...[pause] I would buy one that was wrecked and fix it up and drive it until I sold it and then buy another wrecked one and fix it up. It ain't no telling how many I had. Of course my kids was getting on up age to drive and so, I fixed them one up.

JG: You still have the wrecker business right?

CR: No, I still have a wrecker sitting right back there. Everything got so complicated and so expensive and you couldn't get no help 'till...

JG: Just insurance laws and things like that?

CR: Insurance and they passed a bunch of laws that just like I told them, I said, "I've been running a wrecker around here for forty years and y'all going to teach me how to run a wrecker." I just dropped it. I had three, at one time I had four wreckers.

JG: How far would you go if you got a call?

CR: Lufkin, Livingston, other side of Groveton and back to Woodville.

JG: Now did you yourself run a wrecker? I know you probably had people working for you as well.

CR: Yes, yes, I had another man helping me. He ran one and I ran one.

JG: Did you ever work any railroad automobile wrecks or anything?

CR: Down at Moscow.

JG: Is that the big one there where Mr. Jay's land is?

CR: Yes.

JG: Before they put the overpass.

CR: Yes, and one up here at 287. They were switching up there one day. There used to be a side track in there and a damn jeep got in between those cars and they tore that son-of-a-bitch all to pieces.

JG: You mean the jeep got stuck between the railcars?

CR: Between the two box cars.

JG: Okay.

CR: I don't know if they didn't know it was in there but, they tore that jeep all to pieces.

JG: Did you have to get it out?

CR: Yes.

JG: Did you just hook onto it and pull?

CR: They had to move the damn train to get it out of there.

JG: Was the person injured?

CR: No, he jumped out and run.

JG: Jumped out and ran.

CR: And we have had several drive off down the railroad track and running from the law and all sorts of shit as that. We would have to drive down the railroad to get to the car or truck.

JG: So, they would just get on the railroad track trying to outrun the law and get stuck eventually.

CR: Yes, yes.

JG: You would have to go get them.

CR: Yes, drive down the railroad track and pick them up.

JG: You just couldn't get away from those railroads huh?

CR: Yes. (laughter) I wish I'd have kept a scrapbook of all that with pictures. I guess the worst one I had with the damn railroad was up here at...up at Goat Hill where that farm road crosses the railroad tracks there. It was a woman in a car, she must have been about half drunk coming from Goat Hill and there was a train going by, well she didn't

stop she run into the side of that train. And, of course when she hit that train her car door flew open and she fell out, fell out under that damn train. Boy, it cut her all to pieces. We picked up stuff for a half a mile down that track, she drove right into that train and it passing.

JG: So, your grandfather worked for the railroad, your dad worked for the railroad and you worked for the railroad a little bit. Beside that what is your interest in railroads and trains and the history of that? Was that it? You've certainly had a lifelong interest in railroad history.

CR: Yes, it's kind of...I love to read the history like around here it's a lot of history here in East Texas, a lot of it. I enjoy reading about it.

JG: You enjoy visiting the places too don't you?

CR: Yes. Have you seen any of them from the Forestry Museum?

JG: Have I seen what at the Forestry Museum?

CR: Have you seen anybody from the Forestry Museum?

JG: I saw Rick the other day.

CR: Did they get the motor car cleaned up?

JG: I wasn't at the museum. I don't know. I didn't talk to him about that. We were at another meeting. I know you were very good friends with Mr. Jay Morrison; you want to talk about him a little bit?

CR: Mr. Jay was one of my best friends. I guess we got tight back in 1965. He was still working and a lot of times I would go with him.

JG: The Angelina & Neches River Railroad?

CR: Yes, yes and then he went to work for the Texas State and me and him made many trips up there. Yes, he was one of my good friends.

JG: He loved those steam locomotives didn't he?

CR: Oh my!

JG: He used to tell me that he used to dream about them, even dream about running them on the streets. I asked him one time I thought that was kind of strange to dream about running them down the roads down the streets of town. I asked him how would you steer and he said by working that reverse lever. He loved those trains. I remember when Joseph was real young and how fascinated Joseph was with the trains; I used to talk to

Mr. Jay about that. He would tell me when he was a boy how he would play. I was telling him one time about Joseph lining up pieces of broken bricks and Joseph would line them up in a line just out in the yard or on some boards and every little piece of brick was a certain car. This one was the steam engine, this was the locomotive, this was the tender, this was the box car, this was the gondola. He would even say that word, the gondola car, and the tank car, all of them had pieces. Jill would go out there sometimes and line them up to play with him and she would say this or that and you know, he knew each brick and he would say no that is not the caboose that is the tank car or the box car or something. Mr. Jay would laugh about that and he said what he would do is in the dirt when he was a little boy he would just get a stick and make a grove in the dirt and take medicine bottles, those little glass medicine bottles and line them up. Those were his train cars. Mr. Jay had a lot of good stories. Tell about some of y'all's trips if you want to. I know y'all took a lot of excursions visiting the old sawmill towns. I was fortunate to get to go with y'all on some of those and your motor car rides. Ya'll did a lot didn't you?

CR: Yes, we did. Jack Everett was living and me and Jack and Mr. Jay made lots of trips around.

JG: Went to old sawmill towns and railroad spots and depot locations and roundtables.

CR: Yes, yes, and Jack he worked for Mustang Tractor.

JG: There in Lufkin.

CR: In Lufkin, and he knew every damn road it was and everything. He would call and say let's go to so and so. Okay, we would load up. We went to Bragg, you know.

JG: Bragg, B-r-a-g-g?

CR: Yes. You know, that railroad there was the longest stretch of railroad there was without a bridge in Texas.

JG: That was a Santa Fe branch wasn't it?

CR: Santa Fe.

JG: Now did Kirby have a mill there or a camp there? I can't remember.

CR: I don't remember Kirby having one there.

JG: Well what did y'all find there?

CR: Well it's just a dirt road through there now unless they have paved it.

JG: Is that the ghost road?

CR: Yes.

JG: Yes, the one where supposedly if you go there at night you could see the old railroad worker with the lantern looking for his head?

CR: Yes.

JG: He lost it in a derailment or something, the ghost road.

CR: The ghost road.

JG: I remember I went with y'all and we saw the St. Louis San Francisco 1522 down at Silsbee and North Beaumont. We went down there and saw that. That was pretty neat, that was a good locomotive. It was shut down later because of insurance. We went to Longleaf quite a few times in Louisiana. I remember one time when I was at the Forestry Museum we went to Carmona. Was it Carmona?

CR: Yes.

JG: We went over there.

CR: Went to Carmona and Groveton and Trevat and...

JG: We tried to find the end of the line there outside of Trinity. What was the name of that little station the end of the line of that railroad?

CR: They had a couple little old towns up there. One of them was...

JG: Weldon, Weldon is the one I'm remembering.

CR: Kittrale [or Kittrell].

JG: Kittrale, yes there were a lot of little sawmill towns on that railroad line.

CR: They had lot of business back in them days. They had that branch that ran from Trinity to Livingston, the B&GN, Beaumont and Great Northern.

JG: Is that the one that Onalaska was on?

CR: Yes.

JG: Yes, that was a big mill.

CR: Big mill.

JG: Carlisle, William Carlisle & Company had that one.

CR: I know my daddy was working on a railroad and he said it come a flood and washed the damn track out between here and Livingston or the bridge out, and that passenger train come in headed to Houston and of course they were stranded so, they got trackage rights on the old Katy and run that passenger train from Corrigan to Trinity and down the B&GN to Livingston and got back on the main line.

JG: Just bypassed it huh?

CR: Bypassed it. He was working as a guide or a whatever on that engine and he said when they went through that river bottom the damn water was plum up to below the engine.

JG: Almost put the fire out huh?

CR: Yes.

JG: When you were down in south Texas were they still running steam then?

CR: Yes.

JG: Okay. That was probably some of the last days wasn't it?

CR: Probably was, I tell you. They was running two passengers, a passenger train each way back then and a local.

JG: Any particular Mr. Jay stories?

CR: Oh you know as much about Mr. Jay as I do. But I got to knowing him back in '65 and we was big buddies from them on. He had put Willy in a logging business and Willy messed around there and went bankrupt. Mr. Jay had an old loader and one old truck out here at [indiscernible – Lobo?], so he came up here on Saturdays and I drug everything up here and Mr. Jay cleaned them all up and sold them. I think that is one thing that him and Willy...it cost the shit out of Mr. Jay, but him and Willy wasn't up to snuff on things.

JG: So by the time you met Mr. Jay they had already quit running steam I guess at A&NR or about that time I guess.

CR: Yes.

JG: In '65.

CR: Yes.

JG: TSE kind of shut down about '62, '63. Now was the MC&SA at that time still doing their little passenger runs weren't they?

CR: Yes, yes.

JG: Talk about that a little bit. You knew Carl Vinson I guess didn't you?

CR: Oh yes, yes.

JG: Talk about him. He was there a good while. A lot of people remember him.

CR: Yes, everybody...he worked on that railroad for years.

JG: He was the conductor long time I think. People remember riding that train with him.

CR: We rode it several times.

JG: It ran into the early seventies right?

CR: Yes.

JG: It had an old wooden combination car, baggage express and passenger.

CR: It's up in Arkansas now. I think it is.

JG: Was he from around here, Mr. Vinson, from Polk County?

CR: Yes.

JG: Okay.

CR: Out from Camden.

JG: Did his family work for the railroad too or how did he get into railroading?

CR: His wife worked for W. T. Carter.

JG: Now he fell from a car didn't he and was run over?

CR: He fell between two cars and it killed him, mashed him. That was in the sixties. Yes, Mr. Jay could tell you a lot of stories about that crossing down there at Moscow before they built that overpass.

JG: Of course he owned the land right there. His wife's family lived there right where the overpass is now all that land.

CR: He could tell you some tales about that, people running into the train and all that got killed.

JG: Yes, he lost some land when they put that overpass in huh?

CR: Yes.

JG: And that is where y'all would do your motor car rides from under that overpass to Camden and back.

CR: Yes, yes I got to go down there and get that motor car cleaned up and put a new battery on it and we can take us a run.

JG: I took some videos of some of those first trips we took with Joseph. I'll have to find those someday. It's got to where you don't hardly have anything that can play them anymore, those little cassette tape things. I remember all four of us got in that car, two of those mustang automobile seats you have in there and I think me and Mr. Jay and Joseph on one side and you on the other. (laughter)

CR: It was a car come by here one day and he seen that motor car sitting out there. Well not that motor car, the one I gave the Forestry Museum. And he said, "Where did you get that thing at?" I said, "Well, I accumulated it." He said, "I know where there is another one of them things at over at Kennard." So I asked him about it and he told us where it was at and all that stuff. He said, "Now, it hasn't been run in years." So Mr. Jay came by and I told him about it. "Well let's go over there." (laughter) So, we got in the pick-up and took off over there and bought the damn thing. (laughter) I brought it back and they had done stole the seats out of it and a bunch of shit missing off of it and I took them old seats out of an old Ford Mustang and put in there and some more stuff. All the clutch rigging was gone off of it and I had to make all that.

JG: That has been your main one huh?

CR: Yes, and we've drove that thing well, shit we rode it...

JG: Y'all went to Galveston and rode it didn't you, down to Seawall?

CR: Yes. The best trip we made on that thing though was from the papermill down to...

JG: To the Neches River.

CR: ...to the Neches River.

JG: Rockland.

CR: Rockland.

JG: Yes, I was in Beaumont then. I missed out on that one. Y'all were one of the last ones to run down that track before they pulled it up.

CR: We were the last.

JG: Y'all were the last! The only thing left there now is the bridge. I enjoyed that trip we did on the state railroad when they let us.

CR: With you and me and Mr. Jay?

JG: Yes.

CR: Yes, that was a good trip.

JG: I wish they would let us do that more often and just left us on our own.

CR: I don't know how them people are up there now if they would let you run on that thing or not. I haven't been up there.

JG: I haven't either. We get the Rusk newspaper and they have an article most every week on it and according to their reports and stuff they supposedly have good ridership, but I don't think they are making any money. I don't think people that are in the know ever expected any money to be made, but they sure are charging a lot more than what the state did.

CR: Oh, shit, yes.

JG: They were talking about buying another train, a whole set of cars. That was well over a million dollars and something fell through the other day and they didn't get it. They need to get those steam engines to working. Not many people want to ride behind the diesel.

CR: Well have they done anything else to that old 400?

JG: To what?

CR: Have they done anything else to that old 400?

JG: I haven't been up there. Is that the one or was it the 500 that Mr. Jay said they would never get it together again.

CR: The 500.

JG: The 500. How are you doing?

[Unknown visitor greets Mr. Reinhardt and Mr. Gerland]

Unknown: All right, how are you?

JG: Just fine. We are doing an oral history interview so, you are being recorded.

Unknown: Go ahead.

JG: How are you?

Unknown: All right. How are you?

JG: Just fine, good to see you. You don't need to run off.

Unknown: Ya'll go ahead. I talked to him yesterday.

JG: Okay, well we are probably about finished up. Anything else you care to share or talk about.

CR: Oh, it probably is but I don't know what.

JG: Okay, well we can do some more later. I have over an hour is what we've recorded. I was wanting to ask you about your dad and some of that early history.

CR: Oh I was going to bring that picture in.

JG: Oh that is all right, we can do that another time. Just for the recording he's talking about a picture of his father at the water tower there standing on the railroads tracks. Was that at Chester?

CR: No at Stryker.

JG: At Stryker, okay so that is near where y'all lived.

CR: I've still got that tank.

JG: You've still got the tank?

CR: Yes.

JG: You've probably never thrown much away have you?

CR: No.

JG: (laughter) You know what they call that now a day's is they call that hoarding. That is what my wife, I don't have near what you have got of course, but my wife says that is what I do, I hoard. I have to possess it or have it, won't let it go. (laughter) Well while we are thinking about it talk a little bit about that caboose you have and your Stryker City Hall building. I was on the internet the other day looking for stuff on Fort Teran. I told you I went down there on the river and the canoe and everything, but I was searching for

stuff on Fort Teran and somebody wrote that they took a field trip to try to find it and it was a motorcycle rider. I can't remember his name but he wrote about it and he mentioned you and called you his good friend, Cloyce Reinhardt, and he had a picture of your city hall building that he put on the internet. (laughter) But he was a motorcycle rider trying to find Fort Teran. I don't think he ever found it, he took wrong turns and stuff.

CR: You know, you would be surprised the people, well the motorcycles that will stop down there at the house, the nigger house.

JG: And that came from Camden that one of the black families lived in.

CR: Yes, when Camden started shutting down in 1969 they had all those houses for sale and I bought two of them. My sister has got one of them up there at her house and that one we moved it out there and just made a, you know, barn really.

JG: You've got a telephone and some post office stuff that came out of...

CR: The post office out of the Barnum Store.

JG: Out of the Barnum Store.

CR: It's all out there.

JG: Where did that telephone come from, the old crank telephone?

CR: I don't know where I got that thing at. I've got three of those things or four of them. I had them hooked up between my house and the nigger house and we had that storm and it blew all the lines down and I just never have got back around to hooking them back up. But we had a lot of fun with them phones. People come in there and see that phone hanging on the wall and I would ring it up, and well Bennie would answer it up there at the house. They would look! (laughter)

JG: Surprised it was working. Didn't charge them long distance huh?

CR: Yes.

JG: Well a lot of people have stopped. I've seen that picture, pictures of that house on the internet on other peoples website too so, it's quite an attraction.

CR: Oh there has been pictures took of that thing and that caboose.

JG: Now, the caboose hasn't been out there but just a few years huh?

CR: It's been out there a year and a half.

JG: Okay and you had it painted up like MC&SA's colors. You did store it out at Camden but you had to move it.

CR: Yes, when Champion sold out to Georgia Pacific they wanted that thing moved. It was a liability. So, I got my buddy from Huntsville to come over here and move that thing and we moved it in a little over half a day. Pete Johnson, he had the damn wrecker to pick it up. We were out there messing with that and somebody, oh it was a bunch of people come out there just to see what was going on and old Pete was out there and the guy walked up to him and said, "Is this the first caboos that you've ever moved?" And he said, "No this one and one more will be two." (laughter)

JG: Well, I guess I'll go ahead and stop this thing. We got about an hour and fifteen minutes so, I'll go ahead and stop it.

END OF INTERVIEW