

Beatrice Burkhalter
Interview 4a
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ABSTRACT: Mrs. Beatrice Burkhalter reminisces about life in Diboll in the 1920's through the 1940's in this interview with Rebecca Bailey. A longtime educator, Mrs. Burkhalter talks about being a widow and single mother in the 1930's, attending college and working while mothering her son in an effort to earn a teaching certificate. She came to Diboll as a teacher in 1937 and eventually finished her bachelor's degree in 1939. In addition to her teaching memories, Mrs. Burkhalter recalls the Depression, the beginnings of Social Security and the Teacher Retirement System, entertainment as a teenager, and Weeks family genealogy.

Rebecca Bailey (hereafter RB): Okay, Mrs. Burkhalter, where were you born?

Beatrice Burkhalter (hereafter BB): I was born in Shelby County, about three miles northwest of Timpson in a little community called Rose Hill.

RB: What year was that?

BB: I was born on December the 31, 1903.

RB: Almost a New Year's baby.

BB: I almost...they said it was nearly twelve o'clock.

RB: Oh no, you could have been the first one.

BB: And that night it snowed and we were living in a little shack out in the country, a log cabin. And of course, the cracks were not chinked very well. And it snowed all over momma and me. They said it sifted through. And my first experience with snow was the night I was born.

RB: Oh my word. It was a wonder that you made it and didn't catch pneumonia or something. What were your parent's names?

BB: My father was William Alonzo Coan. That is spelled C-O-A-N. And my mother was Cornelia Elizabeth Weeks.

RB: Any relation to the Weeks out at Ryan's Chapel?

BB: We are all related. My mother's father and their grandfather's were brothers.

RB: Well, Mrs. Weeks was telling me about her ancestors coming through on...in a wagon from...was it Arkansas?

BB: Mississippi.

RB: Mississippi.

BB: They started in Georgia. The original Weeks was from Georgia. They called him the "rip roaring Georgia stag."

RB: He must have been something else.

BB: Yes, he started out...that's where they landed when they came out from England. But then they came to Mississippi and then there is a lot of things in Mississippi that are of the Weeks. Oh, I don't know what all to tell you what it is, but there is a lot of things there. And then in Louisiana there is a mansion. And I can't think of the name of it right now. I have it down in the Week's relatives' history. Of course, they have restored it and it is a beautiful mansion that the Weeks live in there. Our family came on then to East Texas. And my mother was born about two miles from right out here. Beyond C. B.'s store. That's where my grandfather and them lived in this part right in here in the time when my mother was born.

RB: Did she meet your dad right around here?

BB: No, in Timpson. They had migrated to Timpson at that time, my grandfather and grandmother had. All their children were married and gone. Some of the children lived in Shelby County. So that is where they...my grandfather was the one that always followed his children. Some of them...one time he took the ones that were home with them, momma and Uncle Bascum, and they were just about in their early teens. I think Uncle Bascum was twelve and momma was fourteen. One of his daughters and sons had married and moved out in West Texas, Southwest Texas. So when they gathered their crop that fall, they got their bed and little stove and loaded it all up in the wagon and tied the cow on behind. And here they went to West Texas. It took them three weeks to make the trip out there and momma said that she and Uncle Bascum walked every step of the way. And Grandma and Grandpa rode in the covered wagon, you know. They would camp along. They would go so far and then they would camp and they had their old cow along with them. And they would milk the old cow at night and have fresh milk.

RB: And they just went for a visit or to live?

BB: They went to live. So they stayed one year and he rented a farm and raised a crop. He didn't like it out there. So when he gathered his crop, he loaded them all in and they came back. Back to Shelby County. They went to Shelby County. That's when he went to

Shelby County. One of his other daughters was living there so he decided that was where he would go. My momma lived there then until she married.

RB: Do you have any brothers or sisters?

BB: I had two sisters and one brother. My brother is dead. He died in 1939. A very young man. And I have two sisters living now. One of them lives in Diboll, Mrs. Ottis Shaw. She lives in the old home where I lived all these years. And my other sister lives in Kennedy, Texas, Mrs. Carrie Hemphill.

RB: Let's see, you are retired right now, but what did you do for work whenever you were younger and raising your family?

BB: Schoolteacher. I started teaching school in '34. And taught until I retired.

RB: What kind of work did you do when the Depression started in '29? Were you employed then?

BB: No, I was just a housewife. That time I was a housewife. Vernon was born in '28 and I had this little child. And then I was left a widow in 1930 with this little fellow. I had never worked so I did not have any kind of way of making a living. But it was right in the very middle of the Depression in 1930. Just everybody was out of work. I could keep house and cook because that was what I had done. And so a man lost his wife here and he had a four year old. So I went and kept house for him and kept his child for a year.

RB: Did you get paid for it or did you just get room and board?

BB: No, I got room and board and twenty-five dollars a month. That was good money then.

RB: It sure was good money. Did he work at the sawmill?

BB: Yes, he was head of the box factory – superintendent of the box factory. He was a real nice gentleman and the child was a nice child, too. I enjoyed taking care of them. And then when I decided...I guess I stayed there maybe a year and half, then I decided that I wanted to go to college. About that time, about '32, I decided that was when I wanted to go to college. So I went up. I lived with the Dean of Women and kept house for her and did all her work for my room and board. I didn't get any money from her. So I went to college and I worked at the Mize's Dress Factory. Worked a shift at....

RB: They had a....

BB: Mize's Dress Factory. I would get through with my college work and everything by noon and then I would go home and fix Mrs. Maze's lunch and wipe up the dishes and put my working clothes on and here I would hot-foot it downtown. I lived on Starr Avenue, better than a mile.

RB: Yes, it is.

BB: Downtown. I walked downtown and I would be there at three o'clock. I worked from three until eleven when I walked home. I wouldn't do that now. I wouldn't walk across the street! But then I didn't think anything about it. I walked home.

RB: Do you remember what you got paid at Mize?

BB: You got paid by the dress...by the piece. Different pieces were worth different things. Ten or fifteen or twenty cents. You know.

RB: A completed garment was worth like.....

BB: You didn't complete it. Say I sewed the seams down the side, whatever. You did your little part. It was piecework and so we got so much for each piece. I didn't make too much money but according to standards now but it was a lot of money then. Because it kept me...

RB: Kept you in school.

BB: You know I think about it now. Kids going to school and they've got to have a wardrobe that they have to haul with a u-haul trailer. I went to school with two blouses and two skirts.

RB: Oh, my word. So you had to wash every night, too.

BB: Every night, I washed. And I think the most tragic thing that happened to me that year was that I forgot to wash my blouse. I was so tired when I came in that night that I forgot to wash my blouse out. So the next morning I got up to wash my blouse out. I washed my blouse and hung it up over the gas heater and it caught fire and burned up!

RB: Oh, no! Oh, no!

BB: There I was with two skirts and one blouse.

RB: Two skirts and one blouse!

BB: Until I could make me enough money to buy me another blouse.

RB: Oh my word! Did you have Vernon there at SFA, too?

BB: Not that first year. You see he was still a little biddy fellow. I didn't take him that year that I was living with the Dean of Women. So then the next year I...that was in...let's see '33. That was when they began to open up those...it's not...it's government work. I have forgotten what they called it that we did.

RB: The W.P.A. or C.C.C.?

BB: Something the college had and I got a job at the college and I told Mrs. Mize I just wouldn't have time to do all that she required me to do and hold that job too. So she got me a job over at one of the dormitories as housemother. I could be housemother and you didn't have any duties there except at night, you know, see that they all got in. So then I was housemother at one of the dorms and I worked at the college. Until the third year, in '34 I taught school.

RB: So you got your bachelor's degree in two years?

BB: Oh no, you could teach then with two years college. I taught. You could get a certificate, a teaching certificate at the end of the, you know, two years college. And I got my certificate, and you had to work on it, though, all the time to keep it renewed. So I would go to school in the summer, teach all winter and go to school in the summer. And I got my...it took me from the time, I had two years off in '34 and it took me until '39 to get my other two years, to get my degree. Only going so much during the summer.

RB: Right. Well, what...let's see if you went to work in '34 then, what did...do you remember what teacher's got paid and that sort of thing?

BB: Yes, we...I got paid eighty dollars a month. But now before my sister was teaching at Diboll and she... I think it was fifty dollars a month was what they were making back during the Depression. I think that was what she was making. But I started with eighty dollars a month, but we only had seven months. You can imagine what I made a year?

RB: Oh my word!

BB: And then had to go to school in the summer.

RB: So you only went seven months and were off five. Oh I didn't realize that. I thought it was the same as now. Well, did they prorate it like they do now, as far as... you know, now a teacher can either get all hers....

BB: No, we got ours by the month.

RB: Seven months, I see. Did you have anything like fringe benefits, as far as, paid holidays or sick days?

BB: No. None of those things. Not back in those days.

RB: What about your hours? How long did the kids go to school during the day?

BB: We went from eight 'til four. Back in my early teaching days. We went from eight 'til four.

RB: Did your dad work for Temple during the Depression years?

BB: Yes.

RB: What kind of work did he do?

BB: He was working at the planing mill at that time. Before that time he had worked on the T.S.E. [Texas Southeastern] Railroad. When we first came to Diboll in 1906 he worked for Temple, which was Southern Pine Lumber Company...and then he got the job on the railroad. He worked there several years and then he went back to Temple.

RB: Well, how did Temple fare during the Depression? Did they stop work pretty much or...?

BB: They didn't completely stop. They let the men work about two or three days a week. That's about what they did. And it was very, very tight. You know, because you could not make a living for a family on two or three days work. But....

RB: Did they pay them by the day or did they...?

BB: Yes. Now by that time they might have been paying them by the week. I don't remember. But in early times, they paid them by the day. But at that time I can't remember if it was by the week or day....

RB: What did people do to make ends meet then?

BB: Well, here everybody in Diboll had a garden and a cow. And so that way you had...and we had community gardens. The ones who didn't have a place, they had a community garden they could go out and work there and make you some groceries there, in the community garden. So that was the way they made a living there.

RB: How did the community gardens work? Would everybody chip in as far as seed and all?

BB: Yes.

RB: Did you have to put in so many hours work on it or did you...?

BB: Well, you had your own little plot. We had a community garden. Well, you give me this right here, and this is mine and I can plant anything I want to on it. And you worked. And yours is right over there by mine. If you wanted to plant something and I wanted to plant this and then....

RB: Swap.

BB: Swap out, you know. That way each person did their own work. But we never did work that because we were fortunate enough to have a garden at the house. Our house during that Depression was where the Temple-White office is now.

RB: Oh really?

BB: Yes.

RB: That is that two story house?

BB: No, the Temple-White office.

RB: Oh, Temple-White. I know where that is.

BB: Right down around First Street. That's where I...

RB: And so you had plenty of room to the side of it to...

BB: Had a cow. Had a cow lot and cow. Had chickens and a big garden.

RB: So everybody ate well if nothing else.

BB: Yes. We had plenty of vegetables. We always had a cow. I guess as far back as I can remember we always had a cow and our own milk.

RB: What did you have a hard time paying for during the Depression? Was it things like clothes?

BB: Yes. We had a hard time paying for clothes because we just didn't have very many clothes. We used to laugh about our sack dresses. Poppa always bought his cow feed in a sack. It would have a pretty print on it. We always – and they were good material. Everybody would pick out, and would say, "Now poppa, when you buy feed next time, get a sack with a certain kind of a pattern on it so we could have two sacks and make a dress."

RB: Oh me.

BB: One day my sister...we've always done that but she always laughed about...she missed Sunday school there a week or two, just a little bitty old fellow. She said, "We've been missing you at Sunday School. Oh, you've got on a new dress." She said, "Yes, I've had this dress several weeks but we've had to wait 'til we've had enough feed sacks to have me a slip to wear under it."

RB: Oh, no!

BB: So that was the way we lived. Can you imagine kids now doing that?

RB: No, I can't imagine that at all. Did your dad ever do any hunting, too?

BB: No, he didn't. No, my dad did not hunt.

RB: So it was just the garden and then the animals that you had around?

BB: Chickens. We've always had plenty of chickens. That was our Sunday dinner was always a chicken of some kind. Either a hen or a fryer, something.

RB: You had to kill it on the spot, I imagine.

BB: Kill it and dress it.

RB: I assume that ya'll went to the commissary then, since he worked for Temple.

BB: He worked for Temple. We traded at the commissary. Sometimes we would go to those other little stores. But not very often because it just seemed like it was better to go to the company store.

RB: Were the prices better?

BB: Just about the same.

RB: And did Temple use script here or checks?

BB: Checks. I have a bunch of checks. Where did I put them? I wanted to show you.

RB: Really?

BB: This is what we had. A dollar and fifty-cent piece.

RB: Oh, neat.

BB: Of course, they were not that color. You know, they've been bronzed and put in there for me.

RB: Oh, I see. It's got Southern Pine Lumber Company on it, and Diboll, Texas, and on the front it says "Good For Merchandise."

BB: And trade.

RB: And different denominations.

BB: And trade at the company store.

RB: Did you ever need cash money? Would they give....could you get cash from the company if you needed it?

BB: Well now, I don't know whether they got cash that way or not. I don't know. I never did have to trade there because I never worked for the company and I don't remember how my father used to do. But there were people in Diboll who would take your checks for ten....charge you ten cents on the dollar and give you money for them.

RB: Kind of like a money charger. I see.

BB: I don't know whether the company gave any....I don't remember that. See I wasn't....I didn't work for them. That just doesn't come to my mind. But I know that's the way they would do. Get ten cents on the dollar.

RB: Did any banks fail in this area? Do you know of any banks?

BB: Not that I know of. No, I don't now of any. See, we didn't have a bank in Diboll. And the Lufkin bank, I don't think they failed because they keep saying they've been there since 1901.

RB: Right.

BB: So I don't think we had any bank failures in this area. Of course, our lives...if we had to go as far as Lufkin, well we had gone a long way.

RB: How did you go when you would go to Lufkin?

BB: Well, early in our early lives when my father was working on that T.S.E. Railroad, we always rode up with him. He was conductor on the passenger train. We would go up with him and we would go out and do our shopping. If we wasn't through with our shopping when he came back, well then we would catch this H.E. & W. [Houston East & West], we called it then. Catch it and come back.

RB: I didn't realize there were two trains going between here and Lufkin. Did they use the same track?

BB: Oh no. You know that T.S.E. that's over there, it goes out that way and around to Lufkin and this one goes straight. Southern Pacific goes straight. No, they didn't use the same track.

RB: Is this the one that goes through like around Hudson, the T.S.E., does it go...?

BB: Well, yes.

RB: Because I go over it going on....1924. Oh, I didn't realize that was what that one was.

BB: That's the way we did our shopping, you know. Some extra shopping, like sometimes we bought shoes in Lufkin. But mostly we bought everything here in Diboll. Sometimes we bought our shoes.

RB: Just for a special treat.

BB: And for a special treat we'd go. That's right.

RB: Do you ever think a Depression like happened in '29 can happen again?

BB: Yes, I don't....I hope it doesn't. But it looks to me like we are headed right that way right now. Hearing the Congressman talk this morning, the way they're talking now and everything....the budget, trying to get the budget balanced and all that stuff.

RB: Balanced and all.

BB: Well, something's got to happen. And I'm afraid we are going to have a bad recession. A depression before they really get things turned around.

RB: Do you think people will be as accepting about it as they were?

BB: No, I don't think so. I don't think the young people can accept it because they have had too many things. You know, they haven't had to do without like we did back there. We were raised to do without. And it didn't.... we always laughed in our family and said the Depression didn't hurt us because we never had anything anyway. We still had the same that we had had, you know. Of course, my father wasn't working and all that stuff but it just didn't bother us. Because we had enough to eat. Momma always canned everything she could get her hands on: berries, peaches, you know, and everything like that. We just had a pantry full of food besides the garden. Canned everything out of the garden that you could can.

RB: So you had to eat.

BB: And we didn't have very many clothes to wear, but that was all right, too, you know.

RB: Nobody else did either.

BB: That's right.

RB: Did you ever see very many hobos come through? Were there a lot?

BB: Not a lot of them. They would ride the train through, you know, and drop off and they'd come around for something for you to hand them out. Something, you know,...

RB: To eat.

BB: To eat. Yes, there used to be a lot of hobos.

RB: When did they stop coming through that you noticed?

BB: Well, you know, I guess we moved up out of the middle of town in '37, up in Copes Town. You know where my old place is. And I don't.... of course, they didn't come that far out away from the railroad. So I don't know for sure, but that's when they quit coming to our place.

RB: So even that late, they were still coming around.

BB: To the people who lived near the railroad track. They would fall off those...of course, those trains would stay over a while, you know, and would give them time to run to everybody's house and beg them something to eat and then run back and get on the train and leave. One would go on the side and to wait for another one, they would know that they would be there at least for thirty minutes. And that would give them time to get something to eat.

RB: Did you know of anybody who hopped a freight and took off looking for better times somewhere else?

BB: Well, not during the Depression, I didn't. But back in my early years, when I was a teenager, that was the thing to do for our boys in Diboll...

RB: Oh really!

BB: Was to hop a freight. They hopped a freight and left here and went, you know, looking for work in getting out, away from the sawmill they thought. But most of them came back.

RB: Oh really?

BB: That was just something for the boys to do. And, so I knew a lot of them that hopped a freight and left. But most of them came back.

RB: They decided that work in the sawmill wasn't that bad.

BB: Wasn't that bad.

RB: Oh me. Let's see, Mrs. Burkhalter, one thing I wanted to ask you was.... you told me something about some of the policies in Diboll as far as the school board went. Like the teachers had to have a year of experience, and the other one was that they couldn't teach unless they were married. A woman couldn't teach unless she was married. You were telling me a story.

BB: No, she couldn't teach if she was married.

RB: If she was married.

BB: They only had single...they only had single people teaching. And of course, now the Superintendent, the man could be married. You know, they've always made the difference between men and women. He could be married. But none of the teachers, women teachers were supposed to be married. And they had to sign a...on their contract, sign the paper to go along with their contract, that they would not have dates during the week. They would not have a date during the week. Their dates would be on the weekend. And they could not marry during school. If they did, they automatically lost their job.

RB: Oh my word. You said you knew somebody who was married.

BB: Yes, married. Married in 1936 and didn't tell it until '39. And taught all that time, secretly married. And that was you know, brought on by the policies. So after I came here. I came here in '41. And they began to lighten up a little bit on that because.

RB: Oh, you mean that was still the policy in '41.

BB: That was still the policy. They didn't want a married woman. But....

RB: Oh, my word.

BB: They began to lighten up on it because they found out...they thought that maybe these married ones would make....well, all the girls were getting married and leaving them without teachers.

RB: When you came here in '41, how many grades were there here in Diboll?

BB: All twelve of them.

RB: Well, I meant how many classes were....I mean was there, like just one room of each grade, or were there two or three of ...just how big was the school.

BB: Well, in elementary, I can't tell you about that high school.

RB: Okay.

BB: In the elementary when I came here, there was a teacher, one teacher per grade up through the fourth grade. When they got into fifth grade there were two teachers. Because their thinking was that a person couldn't handle bigger kids as much as they could little ones. And so they...and the first year I taught here I had sixty-five in the fourth grade.

RB: I still don't see how you taught them anything with that many.

BB: I don't think I taught them very much.

RB: Oh, my word. Didn't you tell me that you didn't have desks either to start the year with?

BB: Well, the first year, .the first year that I was here, they had added on to the old school because they were bringing Fastrill in. And bringing all those children from Fastrill School. And the furniture, all the furniture didn't get here. So my room was the one that didn't get any furniture yet. So we didn't have a teacher's desk, we didn't have a child's desk or anything. We just had a vacant room. But the kids all scrambled around and found them something to sit on, like a box or something. Some of them sat on the floor. Sat on boxes. It was about two weeks there before our furniture came in. So you can imagine what a scramble we had, sixty-five of us. We had pretty good discipline though, you know. I guess I was younger and I just knew how to handle them. We just didn't have much of a discipline problem. The only really discipline problem that I remember having, that it really worried me and it, looking back it really, it really wasn't bad. But there was about six big boys that came in from Fastrill that had dropped out of school when they were in the fourth grade. They were in the fourth grade. 'Cause they rounded them all up and made them come to school. Well, those six boys landed in my room and they were going to just dare me to teach them anything. And they would just sit there and stare at me, you know. But before they would bring their pocketknives and their whittling and they would sit and whittle. Well, it wasn't long 'til I got it over to them that we didn't whittle but we did come to study. And it wasn't long 'til they kind of settled down. They began to try to learn. But...I was really....I was really frightened when I looked down there and saw those big old boys with those big knives. I was afraid that they would try to attack me.

RB: Oh no.

BB: We did have one. A teacher got cut over there. The boys were fighting with knives and she just....

RB: Oh my word!

BB: She just run in to separate them and they just whacked her down here...cut.

RB: Oh no.

BB: That was one of the first things that I did when I became Principal. No knives in school.

RB: Oh, I should say not.

BB: If they accidentally got there with their pocketknives, if they would bring it by the office and leave it, put their name on it, they could have it back at the end of sc...end of the day. But if they brought it and I found it in their pocket, it was mine.

RB: But you didn't start teaching in Diboll. Where did you start teaching?

BB: Oh, I started teaching in Bald Hill, which is out from Lufkin.

RB: Did you have as many pupils in that school as you had at....

BB: Oh no. There wasn't as many people in that whole school as was in that first fourth grade I had. I only had sixteen pupils the first year I taught. And that was the biggest I had in the small....

RB: Did you only teach one grade there?

BB: That year I had fourth. I just had one grade. The next year I had the second grade there. And then the next year I moved down to first grade. So I taught the first grade before I left.

RB: Mrs. Burkhalter, I understand that you are on teacher retirement. Do you know about when that started?

BB: No, I can't remember exactly the years that it started, but it was after I came to Diboll.

RB: So it was in the late forties?

BB: Late forties, yes. Because so many of our teachers didn't take out teacher retirement when it started because their husbands were on social security. They thought that they could live well on social security with their husbands. But after they had taught several years, ten or twelve years, they decided maybe they had better buy into...buy into the teacher retirement. So they had to go back and pay up all that back teacher retirement. But I joined it when it first came out because I was not on social security.

RB: Oh, teachers weren't covered by social security?

BB: No, Diboll teachers were not. It had to be.... The entire group had to sign up for it. And that's another thing we had; the married teachers then. Of course, by the time I was here, we were getting some married teachers in here. The married teachers wouldn't sign up for social security because their husbands were on social security.

RB: And they felt that was adequate.

BB: It was adequate for them. And so they would not sign up. Mr. Pate tried and tried and tried because he wanted to be on social security and he wanted the teachers to but

they just wouldn't. You had to have so many of them sign up before we could all go on social security.

RB: What did the people...like at Temple, at the lumber mills and all, think about social security when it started?

BB: Well, I guess they all thought it was good because we had lived through a time where when we saw when we got old, too old to work, well, if they hadn't been able to save enough money, and no one could at the rate they were working then, there was nothing for old people to do unless they could live with some of their children. Or we had what they called the "Pea Farm" where poor people went when they got old.

RB: The "Pea Farm?"

BB: That's what they called it, the "Pea Farm."

RB: Where was it?

BB: It was somewhere out of Lufkin out there. The farm where they took care of the old people and they had to work in the pea patch, you know, and things like that. And they called it the "Pea Farm."

RB: I never heard of that.

BB: Well, that's what the, that's what the old people who didn't have children to take care of them, you know, well they just...I didn't know where it was, but it was...you would hear about it was out. But that was way back in the teens and the twenties, early, you know back in the...but most of the older people lived with their children.

RB: Their children.

BB: I know we had two grandfathers to live with us when I was a small child. Both of my grandmothers had died and the grandfathers came to live with us. And one of them...had fought on...they were both Civil War veterans. And one of them had fought on the North; my Grandfather Coan. He was from Vermont and he fought for the North. And my Grandfather Weeks was a southerner. And they fought those battles nearly every day.

RB: Sitting in the rocking chair, and fight them all over again! Oh goodness. Was there any government welfare? I mean, not like we see today, but in the Depression if there was a mother with children with no one to support her, how did...how did they manage?

BB: I don't know how they managed. The church took care of people back then. When I was a small child, I know our church took care, you know. And the neighbors took care. There was a lady that was ill that lived behind us. And I know the neighbors just took care of her, you know. And the church would send down the ladies to take care of her. Back in those days the church took care of their own. As somebody in our church said the

other day, if we would start taking care of our own, the government wouldn't have so much to take care of and that probably would be right.

RB: That's true.

BB: But the church did, and the neighborhood, you know. If you had, if you had food, well you divided it with the neighbors.

RB: Who didn't have. What was people's opinion of Hoover around here?

BB: Well, they didn't seem to like him at all because they thought he was the one that caused the Depression. But we all know that he didn't, he just inherited it, but they thought he was the one that caused the Depression that came on. And I know armadillos began to disappearing out of this country. They called them the "Hoover Hogs." They was eating armadillos for "Hoover Hogs."

RB: Oh, no! Did they look on Roosevelt as a...kind of a savior in a way then?

BB: In a way, yes. Because he put all our young people and our teenage boys to work, you know. They looked on him as a...really a savior in our political life, I guess you'd say. But anyway, he was the one that was instrument in getting us back onto our feet, I guess you'd say.

RB: Let's go back to when you were a little girl. What kind of things did ya'll do for fun? Or did you have to work just a whole lot?

BB: Well, we had to work quite a bit, but then we always, we always had time for fun. And we were always get...a bunch of us getting together playing, going places, you know. I remember our early teen, my early teenage...what you'd call, what the kids all the courting days, I guess. We always went...we went to church and after church we met down at the depot to watch the train go by. And then we would get on that track and walk to the river Sunday afternoon, all the young people.

RB: All the way to the Angelina?

BB: Neches.

RB: Neches.

BB: Yes, walk to the Neches River and then come back. By the time we got back it was time for our M.Y.F and church. And then when we got tired of that trip, we walked around the millpond. We could go all...our Sunday afternoons was taken up walking the lumber stacks, walking around the millpond and that was our entertainment. We had a lot. There was a lady in Diboll, a Mrs. Farrington, that had a good book collection of young people's books. And she would let you read them. I read all the books that she had. "The Bobsey Twins" and all the stuff that kids read. And one of the favorite things that I

liked was the “Girl of Limber Lost” she had and the “Elsie Denman Moore Classics.” She always loaned them to us and we read those. And then we got that library building that is now Love Wood Products office. We had a library where you could check out books and things like that. We did so much that I can’t remember other things we did.

RB: What would you do when you’d date?

BB: Hold hands and walk down the railroad track.

RB: And that was the date, huh? No movies, no...

BB: There were no movies in Diboll back then. We did, later on, they had what they called the Old Airdome Theater in a tent. We’d have one, it was shows, silent movies, you know. We would go to that. But I never did have a date to go to the movies. We always went in a big bunch of kids together. I never did date and go to movies.

RB: But...dating was more in a group rather than single...

BB: Yes, more as a group. Rather than single boy and single girl. A group of kids would get together. We didn’t have any cars. And not very many of us had a buggies, you know, to ride in.

RB: When did you get your first car? Or your folks?

BB: My folks, they got it in nineteen and twenty-three. The first one.

RB: But the kids weren’t allowed to use it very much?

BB: Well, not really. It was strictly my Daddy’s work car. He carried the kids to school with it, you know. And he...it was mostly his work car.

END OF INTERVIEW