

EMMA JONES CALLAGER

Interview 234a

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Angelina County Historical Commission Meeting

Betty Kennedy, Interviewer

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ABSTRACT: In this interview in front of an audience at the Pinewood Park Apartments with Dickie Dixon and Reverend Bettie Kennedy, Emma Jones Callager talks about her childhood going to school in Lufkin, her experiences with her Ingram family relatives, and her work at her church, Long Chapel CME Church in Lufkin. She also discusses the Black church choirs, the years she spent teaching, her daycare center, Manning and Ewing schools, and her travels. She particularly mentions Will Ingram and several houses he built, the Hackneys, and other African American community leaders during segregation.

Dickie Dixon (hereafter DD): Emma Jones Callager, hopefully this will be a first in a series of meetings that we can have. I may be sticking my neck out there, but it will be a long stick out. The first thing I think we ought to do, is I think we ought to all move our chairs in a little closer so we can all be closer to one another. When I was promoting this event I called it Emma Jones Callager's fireside chat, so we can be a little closer, that way we can be a little bit smaller group. This meeting today is a culmination of a lot of events and a lot of people involved. First of all I want to thank Joe Douglas and Nan Ross of Pinewood Park Apartments and the Pinewood Park Learning Center for allowing us to use their facility. Let me tell you that Nan did the Lion's share of putting the refreshments together. (clapping) Also, today we have Heidi Flournoy with us and Heidi worked here before Nan took over at Pinewood Park Learning Center. As I handed out flyers this morning a whole lot of people were really glad that Heidi was going to be here today, so they are going to have a good visit. Also finally I want to thank Carol Riggs; Carol Riggs is president of our Angelina County Historical Commission, for her support in helping get this together. And finally the major credit goes to Bettie Kennedy. Bettie let us know in a meeting one time over at TXU that she had a relative that taught school at Manning. We keyed in on that. We were hoping to bring Emma down this weekend for the Manning reunion and it turned out that Emma came down on her own. Tomorrow is the Manning sawmill reunion. Heidi's family has been involved with keeping that together. As a matter of fact if you check the New Handbook of Texas you will find that the Flournoy family is listed in there as having kept that sawmill reunion alive all this time since 1936. Finally we want to thank Emma for coming.

Emma Jones Callager was a resident of Lufkin as best I can tell, and she will fill me in on this a little better, right before World War I she lived with Bettie's father, Will Ingram. She would go to school in the school year here and go back in the summer to Arkansas to live. She also was a teacher in the black school at Manning and we want to thank her so

much for coming and meeting with us today. I want to turn the program over to Heidi Flournoy.

Heidi Flournoy (hereafter HF): I want to introduce the esteemed Reverend Bettie Kennedy. She is going to give us a little historical background to bring us up to the point where Mrs. Callager can take over in telling us the story.

Bettie Kennedy (hereafter BK): I am going to stand to tell you the history of my family which is Emma's family. Our great-grandfather always said he came from Africa to Jamaica from Jamaica to Georgia from Georgia to Texas, up near Winona near Tyler, Texas and that is part of our roots. I made a little sketch of that as he had told us and I wrote a little poem that goes like this. "From the shores of Africa to the island of Jamaica to the auction blocks of Georgia to the pine hills of East Texas, to freedom to voting to education, to moving all over this great country, to making a difference to being somebody, may the dreams and hopes of our heritage live forever." My heritage is your heritage too. We are going to share in some very valuable information because as we talked this morning I learned an awful lot and she certainly is a wealth of knowledge. It has been arranged by the almighty God that she is here and is as very knowledgeable as she is.

There were twelve children in the Ingram family. That journey from Georgia to Texas was a long journey. You can imagine walking that distance. There were no cars or airplanes. They did have ox driven carts, ox driven wagons. The large wagons carried the large pieces of goods they were bringing. They had furniture on those big wagons. The smaller wagons carried smaller items maybe quilts and boxes and things. The women walked along ox driven carts or wagons and when they got tired they would ride, such a long journey for them to take. As they came from Georgia to Texas they looked at the soil to see the texture of the soil to see where to settle because farming was their major industry. We wore the name of Ingram because the master that brought us here were Ingram's. There are 300 acres of land up at Kilgore, Winona, Tyler area in which that is where they settled. They remained there until after the Emancipation Proclamation. The story goes that Sterling Ingram, who was our grandfather, lived in that area with his 12 children and there was another brother who came on that train, that wagon that they traveled with. It was a covered wagon now. They were on one of the wagons and the other wagon carried the load. They didn't know what happened to Dave. Well Dave came to Athens. He was a preacher so I'm the second preacher in the family. So, he came to this area and (unintelligible).

Emma Jones Callager (hereafter EC): I can't remember what grade it was then, but I was maybe a little older than a ten year old today, might be a little younger, but we lived on Chestnut and the principal was...

BK: You attended Lucky Ward School?

EC: Yes, that is right. I went across town to a larger school, high school and it was a different principal but I cannot even remember his name.

BK: Okay, now you would come every fall and go to school here and return to Stamps, Arkansas for the summer months.

EC: Yes, my mother took care of us. My father died when I was three and she had to be the mother and the father, so she kept the work going on. She was a laundress, washing with a rug board and tub, that kind of washing. So, naturally I was a big girl and I could go there and keep the fire up. If I couldn't wash anything then I could help keep the fires up and we got wood chips from cutting wood all the winter to keep the fires up to wash so I could go to school in the fall. Well, then after the grade school, we got ready for college. We were in a different school. Most of the class went to Prairie View. Prairie View had a little college and they had one year of high school work so the black children could have science. They thought at that particular time that blacks couldn't learn science and we heard it from the superintendent's mouth. We looked him in his face when he said, "I'm sorry, but you just cannot learn science." And naturally we had to take a science course at Prairie View and that was the last year they had it for our class up there. Well a friend of mine from Lufkin, Alva Johnson, took the course in science and she was physics major although she went to Lufkin to get a job because she took ill after she graduated and her father passed and she had to go to work at any place she could get. Work then was plentiful as they are now, they are too plentiful now. I worked in a little place, from here 70 miles, in Ewing, Texas for seventy five dollars a month. I worked one year because I stayed out of school one year because my mother was getting older and with the work she was doing it was hard on her so I got out of school a year earlier and I took a job at Ewing.

BK: When did you go to college entirely? After you left Ewing where did you go?

EC: I went to Prairie View then I went to Texas College at Tyler. We are all CME [Colored Methodist Episcopal] Methodist and we thought we had to go and hold the school up, especially the Methodist children (laughter) although it is a good school, I learned the extracurricular. I took basketball and tennis because I wasn't a limber girl, I was a stiff girl. I took those courses because they were available and I took them back to my home town which is a sawmill town and not very good schools, so I took the tennis and all so...

BK: I want you to share also the singing. She spent time to teach daddy how to sing, Will Ingram, how to sing. He sang tenor and you taught him to sing.

EC: Oh yes. The children don't know much about this kind of singing. In the sawmill town we didn't have many pianos there to play music with and there weren't any musicians to teach the music. But they taught the music by notes, do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do, were the notes that you play, and they could give the people that were taking this book that had never heard of music before and that tune do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do, and they would sing this song. We started the CME Church down there on Lighting Street there and we taught the people to sing without piano, without music. Well, that was our sort of music and we taught the people to sing and by Sunday evenings at the church we would

get in a run there with my uncle and he would learn and I was his teacher. I was, I guess about 11 years old and I taught do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do in the black churches in Lufkin because the Baptist churches would also meet in the evening to start to learn songs. And my uncle was a bass but he had the teacher man to learn tenor, so he would naturally hype his voice and sing and learn a song to sing. We had a congregation every Sunday and meet at different churches and have these songs and the best singers of both songs you had learned and they would talk about a lot of too many wrong numbers, not that anybody would know the difference because they didn't know too much about do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do. Well the CME Church, what was the name of that church?

BK: Longs Chapel.

EC: Longs Chapel, took the...for years because Long Chapel would know the songs because they had a teacher to teach do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do. (laughter)

BK: Emma I would like for you to point out one thing about your mother. This was unusual to me that she could carry a load of clothes on her head and in both arms and walk bare footed to the [unintelligible] to pick them up.

EC: Yes, like I said she was a widow rearing three children, one boy and two girls. I was the elder girl and my sister is two years younger and still living at age 92. And when she carried clothes to pick up the laundry you mentioned something about the place where they were suppose to come from. I always would tell my momma she was a Jamaican and she didn't like it. And she would ask me how did I know she was a Jamaican and I would tell her and show her in my book how Jamaicans lived. She could carry a load of clothes on her head and then a heavy load on two arms. At that time we didn't have cars or carriages and people that had their clothes done by laundress didn't have cars either. My mother had to get the work done. She had to take care of her family so she had to have the money so she saw that the clothes were at home and if it was people close together she would put two and three bundles fixed and on her head and one in each arm and bring them home. You would see her coming walking without any shoes on and walking fast, not dragging like we drag now (laughter) and half the time running because she had kids at home and she didn't know what they were doing. She had to get home to them.

BK: Let me point out one other thing unique about her story is that she had irons, smoothing irons, irons that had to be heated on the fire and they were different weights for different children. The iron you had heated there to iron the clothes each iron was a different weight for each of the children to use. So the younger children used a different weight of iron. I saw one of those little irons at your house.

EC: Smoothing irons, you would heat it on the stove or you could make you a fire outdoors and heat them there.

BK: Can you compare the lifestyle between living in Arkansas and Texas? What is the difference when you come to Texas from when you lived in Arkansas?

EC: Well the difference that I knew anything about was it was a man in the homes when I came to Lufkin. Well we had no man in Arkansas. My mother didn't have a man because she said, "I have two girls to rear and I don't want no strange man in the house," so she gave up on married life to take care of her family and she did a good job. She tried to educate all of us. My brother was very, very smart but he had problems and he was ashamed of it. In the first place he stammered and the second place he had falling out spells. When he would go places he would be afraid something would happen and he would have to be taken home because he had fallen out.

BK: This brother was named Willie Jones after Will Ingram. Will Ingram's name is Willie Ingram and she named her son after Willie Ingram. We find that there are six persons in our family named after him, Willie Ingram. I have a daughter that is named Willette so, I dressed it up. What are some of the things as a school girl that you did? I think that would interest these young girls and the school ladies. It could be high school or could be an elementary school. Mention some of the games you played or some of the activities you did that were certainly different than the activities the youngsters are doing today.

EC: The difference between Texas schools at Lufkin we had games, we had rooms to have our different programs in and it was closer to home, but in Arkansas well we had nothing. Our games – we made them and played them ourselves. Some teacher came and talked about basketball and they educated us on basketball and we started playing basketball. We had nothing but the city had nothing to offer the schools. The state had a little something but small towns especially sawmill towns got nothing but we had to have other children to play. We made...I know my brother made a flying jenny we called it then. They are not called a flying jenny they are called merry go rounds, but anyway, we would take safety pins and straight pins to let us ride the merry go rounds. They were amazed we got hurt like they get hurt now. They didn't get hurt anymore then than they get hurt now. It's a bigger number now getting killed and getting hurt.

BK: Emma let me share this with you. I came to live with Daddy in 1934. I was adopted in 1934 so, '32 was when I first came to this area. Some of the things that I found in that time frame, compared to the time frame that you lived with him which may have been 25 years before I came, we found that we ran into things where blacks were not allowed to go to town but on very certain days. We have run across this story in many places and I began to think in my mind maybe why we had the freedom of going to and fro in town because Daddy built houses for all people here, not only for black people but for white people too. So, it gave him a status do you think?

EC: Well he could do other things than just build houses. He could build cabinets in a house where you had to have cabinet builders come in and pay them an extra job to build cabinets. Will Ingram had more to offer to people and he was closer. When he would build a house for you, he could do little extra things that you would have to call other workers in to do. Now one thing happened in Lufkin. I never have worked it out and that is at one time the black folks could not go to town. Something happened and all of what I got, or my uncle wanted me to get he didn't give us the little things I should have gotten he gave me the big things and he could always go downtown anytime regardless of what

color he was. It made a difference. It could have been the work that he did or it could have been that he was a loveable person and he respected you whether you were black or white. He would even give, if somebody had to go to town and were not allowed he would take them and it didn't swell his head either. I wish he...I guess it's a sin for me to wish he were living now. He would be a lot of help to our boys and girls that we have today. Not only do we have them in the cities we have them in small towns and in little towns like sawmill towns, same kind of people doing the same thing.

BK: When you got the job at the sawmill community was it because of prestige that Will Ingram had in this community or was it because you were selected? Were you in a one room or two room school? How many students did you have? Can you remember any of that?

EC: Oh yes, I will always remember that. I had children from the first grade to the twelfth grade and even if I had to, if a mother had to go off I had a baby to sit. Sometimes I had a child laying up on my desk to give that mother a chance to go to the city from the sawmill town, from Ewing.

BK: How many children were in your class?

EC: Some classes had twelve, some less, some more like they have now. But Ewing, it wasn't many people lived there but they had a lot of children. I guess people had more children then than they do now because I have been in some places where one family had eight or nine children just like the Ingram family. The Ingram family had eight, nine and twelve children in a family. So, the teacher had to do a lot of things besides teaching and taking care of the other children. The older children didn't get in trouble like children get in now. Children, where are the teachers at? I just don't know why – they are not giving them enough love I guess. Parents don't have much time, got to work and buy the children things while the clothes are about to fall apart when at that time you had no parts and everybody took care of everybody's child. The teacher has to rear some children now.

BK: What were some of the subjects that you taught?

EC: Well I taught from the first grade...you mean like math and reading?

BK: Yes.

EC: Well math came later but you have a time trying to teach first grade children how to read first. You had to teach them to read before they would even know us but the teachers had all of the work to do. All math I taught at night. I taught in the daytime because it wasn't nobody older than me and I was a young lady, well I didn't know too much about the work but I knew what I learned and I tried to teach it to the children. And then we had a basketball team there and we played basketball right up here in Lufkin. When one person got hurt I didn't have anybody to put in I would take my shoes off and stockings and then I would fan (laughter) it in their face. We had people that turned out to be

teachers and taught and people that didn't have much learning they could teach more to the children than the ones that had been to college and had all the learning because they knew what they wanted to do and they tried to give it to the children.

BK: When you left here you went to Stamps and taught school at Stamps?

EC: Yes, I taught one grade here and the money that I had saved out of my \$75 I went to school that next year and finished.

BK: At Texas College?

EC: At Texas College.

BK: How many students did you teach in Stamps? Did you have a principal or upper classman?

EC: Well half the time the children were...at cotton picking time they had to be out picking cotton, chopping cotton time they had to be out chopping cotton. There were farmers there, so it was some of the same work that we did in Arkansas in Stamps we did it in Texas, the same work. Some people would rather take their children out of school and put them in the field than let them go to school. They didn't want to but they kind of had to they had so many children. But those kids made good teachers though they had a hard time in their school sometimes they made good teachers, conscientious teachers, teachers that were interested in the children, in what the children had to teach their children but today our teachers are like some of our parents. I didn't go to school to learn to do this so he doesn't have to go to school to learn to do this, let him get out and pick cotton to make some money and it's not the child's fault they are in the world it's your fault. And it's your fault to get him an education. Tomorrow we are going to have to have education to make it. We can't do laundry like my mother did with a washboard, you going to have to go to school to learn how to use the washing machine and the ironing machines. They are all going to have to have trained children, trained people to use it. Let your child go to school, talk to the parents to send those kids to school to learn, to be obedient, to be loving. We think we have love in school but we don't have it.

I was a CME but I'm Catholic now and when we go to mass and now the Catholics have a big shake up. I don't know what is going to become of it. And we can't turn back on them like you can machinery. We have to go around to your body and to your heart and get something out of there and see what they do with these boys and girls. They don't know what to do. They don't want to go to school. I don't know what tomorrow is going to be like with all of them out of school. See them at night, you go places and they all ganged up in gangs on corners. Sometimes it is dangerous to pass there, your children and my children, white and black. Who are you going to blame? You can't blame nobody but yourself. You got to have love yourself, not love for whites and love for the blacks you got to have love for everybody. When I came here and saw these little children lugging their white babies I wondered if that was our teachers. (laughter) I wondered is that supposed to be something like an elementary...kids. (laughter) Now that is what we

need, we need somebody no matter what color our skin is. This black doesn't rub off. (laughter) I want you to think about you got to love for them to love and you get a certain age and first of all you got children and without marriage and you going to have to love and forget about all this other.

BK: You said you taught square dancing also?

EC: Yes I taught square dancing.

BK: How long did you go to Prairie View?

EC: Just one year. I had to take in all I could while I was getting it.

BK: Our lives are very parallel, you see that. I attended Prairie View also, finished in the class of '53. We both grew up at the house of Will Ingram. We also our paths crossed in many other ways. I think we think along the same lines. Some of the stories you mentioned about your mother and her ability, tell the story about Daddy and the arguments that they had. I thought this was a humorous story. Your mother's mother had passed away.

EC: Yes, she had they call it now tuberculosis but she had consumption and before she passed she had, her mother had lived in Gladewater, Texas about ten or twelve miles out of downtown Gladewater, she had to have...the Ingram children they had nine boys and 4 girls. One family nine boys and four girls and then when they would get in a wagon and drive fifteen miles to town to get groceries or what not they would have to leave the children alone. Well my husband was taught housekeeping by her mother. She lived in Tyler when she was coming up and she taught her daughter how to keep house and everything, my mother. When her mother died that left my mother to have to go to her grandmother with these nine boys and four girls and these boys didn't know anything about keeping a dresser clean or keeping things stacked nicely. When I came down to see him, I was teaching in Stamps and I would bring my mother down because they were close buddies when they were growing up and my uncle wanted me to go and see about my cousins up here and being gone and they were from Houston, I mean on the ocean.

BK: Galveston.

EC: Galveston, I wanted to know about them and asked me if I thought I could drive there. I said I think so. So, I got the kids around there and we went and when I came back my momma and my uncle were angry with each other and when I found out what was the cause of it Uncle Will told his side and my momma told her side and my uncle said, "Missy wanted the dresser kept spotless and everything in its place and I went back and moved something". They were buds, she was loving to Uncle Will and he was loving to her. They were very close, where the other brothers were not. Well he said, they were fussing and he said, "I asked her what was it" and she said, "well what about it" and he said, "you see these hands I can't get some things out of my hands" (laughing) "and there is something in my work I can't do. I got scars all over my hand and what caused it your

momma hit me.” (laughter) She said, “yes, but what did you do?” “I moved something on the dresser and she asked me to put it back and I didn’t.” They got to arguing and he moved something else and then he was going to get back at her and when he attempted to take his share she hit him with a glass and the glass cut him all around. And not being taken care of like...he couldn’t do some of his carpenter work on account of my momma. (laughter) Then she said, “well you are getting along all right now.” He said, “well I’m not and you wouldn’t be getting along all right if I could have caught you.” My momma was a fast runner and he got after her and she ran out in the woods and hid around a log or something. He said, “I’ll go to my grave with those scars” and he did and she went to her grave with scars on her heart because she hated she did it but being a child she didn’t regret it.

BK: Emma Walker continuously...she would come and stay with Daddy when he became very ill in ’45 and passed away in ’46. There is a lot of love there but I thought this story would be one you might enjoy hearing. What was the means of transportation? All of my life Daddy had some means of transportation. Was there a dodge? He had a blue car and a truck?

EC: Yes, it was (unintelligible) was the last car he bought and because he was a carpenter, before he started carpentering here in Lufkin he worked on a truck.

BK: He worked for Moore Grocery

EC: Was it Moore Grocery? He delivered parts from a store.

BK: He worked at Lufkin Industries also where he hauled iron. That was some of the early years. They just had their hundred year celebration. Would you change your life if you could what would you change? If you could change what has happened in your life of 95 years?

EC: I would change for a man in the family. No woman got no business trying to rear their children, thinking that the man is a stranger. If you court a man marry him and let them take care of your children. No children, mother’s rear children and they have peace in the family and that makes a family separate. I just know it from my own family. My mother had her people and my brother was older and I’m the next, the middle, my sisters were little bears, and my brother was a big bear. He should have done big bear work but he didn’t because my mother didn’t make him do it. My sister and I did it. We cut wood, we picked up chips. I picked up chips where there were no chips. (laughter) I don’t know just, you are made to marry. When you get of age, marry and if you do that will teach the children something. They can love a father like they can love a mother and a father can take care of a child like a mother can. I’ve always said that is one thing that you could do is get married and have a family and educate those children. Don’t let little children grow up like you let a pig grow up in a pen or a cat grow up in a house. You better have a cat. (laughter) I have seventeen cats.

BK: That is another story. Tell us about your mother and the cats.

EC: Well my mother loved cats because she didn't have anybody to love but her children. (laughter) She could tell a cat what to do and if she told a child what to do and the mother goes off and comes back and it's not done. You know they are going to...but, you didn't do it. So, the cat will do what he's told. Now Nan has a tomcat. I don't know what you call her but when nobody was around my cane my cats will come and kiss the cane or they got to play with the cane or smell the cane. This cat did the same identical thing. Mitch was with me, he didn't go to her, he came to me because I had a cane and he stayed right there with me. Her daddy was sick to bed, I was sitting there and he came and tried to be loveable to me, the cat did and then when Mitch came in he disappeared.

BK: Someone asked to tell about the day care center that you got started there in Stamps.

EC: After I retired a friend of mine and I started a day care center because Stamps wasn't growing any, didn't seem to be, but we didn't have any good organization there that would stay any time. As soon as the money got piled up somewhere someone would always take the money and disappear with it or something. So, naturally what you do is just quit but what we are supposed to do is stay with it and help people. But when the money disappears we quit. But, then later so many children came up and the government was helping families with children and we thought we could get a little help there also. We started it, the day care center and by the way it is still going.

Unknown: What is the name of it?

BK: What is the name of the day care center?

EC: I can't recall it.

BK: She can't recall it.

EC: I think we have about eighteen children there now. When we need money we all get together and decide what we going to do to raise our money. I said let's have a pick up beer cans and pop cans and get a little money. They are still using that, selling cans for the day care children. These children are getting more things now since they are into the day care centers. When they get into public school that helps them go on with them and the teachers when they need money to pay the gas bill and all.

BK: Also you donated a portion of land for a park there.

EC: Well there are no parks there and I have given about thirty acres, I haven't given it to them. It's theirs for 99 years. If they get on my nerves too much I can get rid of it. (laughter) I don't take any money for it. I let them use it. Sorry I did it! (laughter) I have learned my children. They used to say, "Let's get out of the house and you better be quiet when we go to Mrs. Callager's" but now I have a plum tree and they start before they even quit growing, they start and I can be out raking the yard or doing something and very quietly they start getting overbearing. I have a cyclone fence all around the house

and they will get over the fence and I'll hear a noise and look up "what you doing in that tree?" "Getting plums." "Well get out of it."

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EC: They had a picture of a house, a Negro woman, we have a picture of my grandmother, but her cheek bones you can tell she is Indian; her cheek bones are so high. It looks like her eyes are half closed and I don't know, she was awful mean woman. She didn't have any patience. At that time if...the blacks couldn't do anything to a white. You couldn't kill a white although they were being...trying to take care of themselves any maybe they got shot or whatnot but anytime a black killed a white they didn't send him to the pen. They would do what they wanted to do with them and the laws would let them do it. Well, I should say the law let them do it but they shouldn't. Well, she did something the kids would go in her house and get something like those crumbs I had, I had to run them out all the time and then they still come in. They used to say, "this is Mrs. Callager's house but don't go by her house driving fast. She will get out there and stop you." They don't do that now. They climb over and I tell them to stay off the fence because...there are so many climbing it. But, what good does it do. You don't want to tell the police. The family is not able to pay the police fine so that is what they do is put a fine on the family. So, what do you do? Go out there and shoot it.

My great-grandmother killed a child. It was coming into her house. This old Indian woman got sick before she died and she shot the child and the child died. If the child hadn't died this wouldn't have happened but they went and shot her. They set her house on fire and as she came out of the fire they shot her. They were after her in the first place and that is the way they could get her. We don't have to do that today. Education, education and religion teaches better and they both go together. You got to have an education and you should have a good religious background to be an educated teacher because you got to prove your children.

BK: Some of the things we have now answered, Emma was asking about this facility here and you so graciously answered that. I'm sure she is going to take this back to Arkansas with her. Mrs. Douglas was sharing the facility here and what those are here and certainly she will take that back. But, now you realize that she is certainly concerned about the children and families and people and education. I was telling her this morning that I am so honored to be a part of her family, to have known her. As we talked this morning she is certainly gracious to share her history with me and has made my life richer by knowing her. Everything worked out so beautifully when she came to the graduation to see my grandchildren graduate. She is going to remain here because she wants to hear me preach on Sunday morning, so I'm rehearsing the sermon. (laughter) But I'm honored to have her remain in Lufkin to go to church. Something else you notice, she mentioned CME, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, we were colored until 1958 when colored wasn't a very nice word and we changed the C to Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, and our pastor in the CME Church. We are not the oldest we are the third black organized church in Texas. We grew out of the United Methodist Church

south, so we are cousins to the First United Methodist Church. Emma mentioned the school Texas College, is a CME School and she attended there. There is another cousin, Gladys is what 85? Gladys Squire is she about 85, our cousin?

EC: Yes.

BK: She would have been here but she felt that she was not very mobile and she thought it would be too great a responsibility to come. That would have been awesome to have both of them here for this reunion. Do you have a question you would like to ask her?

Unknown: Mrs. Callager did you happen to go to Texas College with a man from Lufkin named Hugh Hackney by any chance?

BK: Did you go to Texas College with Hugh Hackney?

EC: No, he was older. He was older but I knew him when I was a kid.

BK: They were very good friends and grew up together in church. Olivia Hackney taught school here for years. Was it Trinity where she taught before she came to Lufkin?

EC: She was with her husband and she would go back every fall and teach at this place out west.

BK: Another question?

Unknown: How about some of those trips she has taken?

BK: Oh yes, now that is something. The trips you have taken to California through the years. How old was she Al when she finished her last trip? How many have you taken?

EC: I just wouldn't know. I have driven out there and we just got in the car in the middle of the night whenever I hear about and I would go by myself. Never had any accidents and naturally I drove fast. I wanted to get there. You can't get there dragging. (laughter) I drove fast. And before then when I would go I would go in the summer and I'd pick up my niece, my brother's two grandchildren in Indianapolis and pick them up and then come back and pick up my family, my momma and Alma my girl. I didn't bring her but she is still my girl because I reared her. I had her when she was knee high, when she was a little nursing baby, her mother...I had her also and she went to college. She didn't finish college but she went. So, Alma is...I reared her.

BK: All of this is very confusing. If you want to get confused let me share this with you. Alma and I are first cousins. Emma took Alma and raised her, Will took me and raised me and really did become not only first cousins but we are really sisters. It is a confusing story. We think Emma made her...in 1990 she made her last trip to California...in her early nineties.

EC: If I don't pass soon, I'm going again. (laughter)

BK: She said that months ago, so don't you be surprised. I am telling you!

EC: This has certainly been an experience to me and this trip this time. When Betty told me that they wanted to interview me I thought what in the world are they going to ask me because I can't remember one day from another. I can be talking to Adam about something I have got to do tomorrow and I think I'm going to do it today and I just don't remember. If you don't have somebody to think for you sometimes you wake up in the morning and you have to go somewhere and you blow up the boys tires. You just don't control it. I don't care how you use your brain. You can't pick it up in your hand and control it. It has got to stay there and wait for it to stay there in your head and it will have to do itself.

BK: Were you living with Daddy when he had the grocery store on Chestnut? Will Ingram when he had the grocery store?

EC: No.

BK: That was before your time. Will Ingram had a grocery store at 408 Chestnut.

EC: Well, I guess you would call it a grocery, you could get groceries there. They had mostly stuff for children. (Unintelligible) That is where the money came from.

BK: Were you living there at that time?

EC: Yes, he was working on all those trucks. Well who is it that knew him then?

BK: Oh, these folks don't know him. (laughter) But I had heard that story and that Hugh Hackney's sister Sadie was their clerk in the store. She tended the store for Daddy. Well was he a carpenter during that same time frame? The time the store was there was he carpentering also?

EC: No, when he drove the truck he worked, he wasn't in carpentry then. He did it afterwards when he got older. I guess there was more money in the carpentry than in the truck driving so he started that. And, when he died he was a carpenter.

BK: There were two houses that were not finished.

EC: Yes, because when I went to helping him when my aunt and them had too many hair do's and had their hands full, she was a beautician, he would take me with him and I would work for extra pay. I can't think of the people now that I knew then who they were that he was working on their place. I helped him. I did long work for him and he said "I'm going to teach you to build cabinets" but he didn't because I couldn't stay with him all the time. That is when the work was so, I had to go home.

BK: Did you teach school in El Paso when you moved to El Paso? Or you taught school after you came back from El Paso to Sams?

EC: Oh yes, I taught when I...yes after I lived in El Paso before I got married. When I got back home that is when I did most of my teaching when I came back home.

BK: Other questions?

Unknown: Yes, when you were in California did you meet a man named Tom Henderson?

BK: When you were in California did you meet a man name Tom Henderson?

EC: I don't remember it. Help me remember it. I can't remember it. I am aging now. I am 95. I was 95 this past February so I can't remember if it happened.

BK: Other questions? What was your food like? Let's talk about food, the diet of your time living in Lufkin. Now, this is before McDonalds now and What-a-burgers and all the other fast foods now. What would your diet be like, what would your dinner be like? What would you eat?

EC: The same thing we eat now only more of it, the things that you grew. The greens, all of the greens and corn and mostly what you grew right in line with...because we had a big patch that Momma saved more money eating from her garden than she did from the store. I never knew you could eat lamb and goats and people eat now, which is all right, nothing wrong with it, we just didn't have it. We didn't eat a lot of meats. We ate more vegetables and fruits. When my daddy lived before he passed he had a fruit place for us and we had all during the spring and summer we had fruits like we have fruit now only we have more different types of fruit than what we grew then. We had a plum place but after he died my momma didn't have anybody to take care of it and the worms ate them up. The food was the same as we eat now. We have all different types of food now that we had then. We have cauliflower and different types.

BK: I think our hour may be up.

Unknown: Did you teach out at Manning?

BK: Do what?

Unknown: Did she teach at Manning?

BK: She is saying Euron, where is Euron?

Unknown: Ewing, I think she is saying Ewing.

BK: Where is Ewing?

Unknown: Out 103, so that is it.

Unknown: I've got a question. Tell me about, I know in the old days people didn't run to the doctor but they would get remedies from the woods or make home remedies if they were sick. Can you tell about some of those?

EC: Well, no they did not run to the doctor. They didn't have doctors to run to. We have more doctors now than then. They had midwives. They did a lot of help too. You know what midwives are? They are some of the old women that knew more about how to take care of the children and when the would be mothers "go and get the midwife." The midwives were not educated and so many people died from the midwives they stopped using them. I don't think they use the mid-wives today. I don't know what they do out in the world but they don't use midwives today. They have doctors because sometime when a woman was giving birth to a child and if the woman needs to be operated on or needs to be well...so many of them passed, died from birth. The Indians they would, the women would be on horses and they would go change places to live and get ready to have her baby she would have to get out under a tree and then when the baby was born she had to get up on her horse and catch up with the bunch that went off. They didn't stand around like they stand around now. (laughter)

Unknown: What would you do back in the early days for flu or cold, that kind of thing? What kind of remedies?

EC: For the flu or a cold?

Unknown: Flu or a bad cold if you were sick with a cough, fever or sneezing what kind of remedies? Did they ever make tea?

EC: Oh yes, they made tea and cooked some of the old...I hate to talk about this because a child died this past fall eating something that wasn't fit to eat. It was poisoned to eat. So you don't know what you are getting when you are getting plants. It can be detrimental to them rather than helping so it's not a good idea to talk about "this plants good for you and this plants good for you, this isn't good for you" because all plants look alike when they get out in the woods. If they see a berry they think all berries are fitting to eat and some of them are poison as they can be and so it's best not to do too much talking about that for kids. They ate them then and they died then. I think the most died it done helped! (laughter)

Unknown: So you are not going to tell me what those teas are made of?

EC: Well they have a tea that I really like and I've been trying to order it. I think it's from the root of a tree. I can't think of the name of it.

Unknown: Sassafras?

EC: No not sassafras.

Unknown: Is it rhubarb?

EC: Rhubarb no, but it's very good for you. If can think of the name...the name that goes with me is the root. I never knew the tree.

Unknown: How about poke roots? Poke roots?

Unknown: Like poke salad.

Unknown: Emma what about the tea, there was a special kind of tea you had to drink for bed wetting. It was called cow chip.

Unknown: Oh dear, I heard about that one.

Unknown: What kind of tea did they fix for keeping a child from wetting the bed?

EC: I guess make (unintelligible) for pick up. (laughter)

Unknown: Get up in the night and change sheets. (laughter)

BK: We are honored to have Alma and Berniece Harris from Arkansas with us. Emma you are so blessed to be here and we are so blessed to have you. I'm going to turn it back to Dickie.

DD: Thank you so much for coming. We hope before you go you will get a chance to visit with one another more on a one on one basis and enjoy the refreshments. Thank you so much. Let's give Emma a hand.

END OF INTERVIEW