

SADIE ESTES WOODS

Interview 40a

July 18, 1984 Lufkin, Texas.

Megan Lambert, Interviewer (Also present: Teena Kellum and Marie Davis)

Dorothy Farley, Transcriber

Retyped by Daniel Guerrero

ABSTRACT: Born in 1904, Sadie Estes Woods recalls in this 1984 interview early logging practices of Southern Pine Lumber Company, including tent camps and Mexican railroad labor. In about the middle 1910s she moved with her family to Diboll, where her mother managed the Star Hotel, and Sadie later taught school in Diboll. She mentions such place names as Anderson Crossing, Alcedo or Alceda, Pisgah School, and Ryan's Lake. She tells of social life in early Diboll, including entertainments such as swimming, walking the railroad tracks, dances, and music. Persons mentioned include Richie and Albert Wells, Will Hill, Ike and Lee Estes, Louis Ashford, and T.L.L. Temple.

Megan Lambert: Sadie Estes Woods being interviewed by Megan Lambert on July 18, 1984 at her home, 211 House, Lufkin, Texas. Also present are Teena Kellum and Marie Davis.

Sadie Woods: But I'm not in very good shape. Now, what do you want to know, honey?

ML: Well, could we start with your name, and who your parents were and when you were born if you don't mind telling us that.

SW: No, I don't mind telling you. I was born in Texarkana.

ML: Born in Texarkana. What year?

SW: 1904.

ML: Tell us your name and your parents' names.

SW: My parents' names—Mr. and Mrs. Ike Estes. And they had four children. That was Ruth Estes, who married Jim Pickle in Diboll. That was Sis' parents. You know Sis?

ML: Yes, we spoke to her this morning, as a matter of fact.

SW: She wasn't born when I got here. Anyway, her mother, Ruth, and my brother, Lee, and me, and my younger brother, Herman. They called him Snooks. Snooks Estes. Everybody knew him as Snooks.

ML: That reminds me, Brenda Russell wanted me to ask you, where is John Estes now?

SW: He is in Houston.

ML: In Houston. What is he doing?

SW: I don't know what John is doing. Right now he is in London. I can't keep up with him. You know he is not married.

ML: Oh, well, who could keep up with any man who is not married?

SW: I cannot keep up with John, but my granddaughter was here not long ago from Beaumont, and she had a card from him. He was in London. Just traveling around...sounds great. I haven't seen him since Mr. and Mrs. Rowin's 50th wedding anniversary. And I just really don't know where he is. My youngest brother is one year old...he would be seventy-five next February if he were living. They are all dead except me. I didn't know if you all wanted this or not. I told you we lived out in tents.

ML: I want to hear all about that.

SW: You do. Honey, we were poor people, very poor. Anyway, they were laying tracks out where the best lumber was, out in Southern Pine's tracts. Well, my uncle, W. H. Hill and my other uncle, Joe Campbell....

ML: Is that Will Hill?

SW: Half brothers. Mr. Will Hill.

ML: Mr. Will Hill.

SW: Yes. They rode, I don't know what you would call it...you know to locate the best lumber. They rode on horseback, and then wherever they would pick out to clean out. My father was the head of the crew. They would clean out and cut the brush so they could lay the tracks to run the trains to pick up the logs. Anyway, we had two big tents. One was where you would cook and eat. The other one was the bedroom. And you wouldn't believe this, but they would build up tents about as high as I am tall, maybe, and floor them, so they would be warm.

ML: What do you mean; they would build them up with lumber?

SW: Well, honey, see, they would build a floor with lumber and they would build up the sides like you would build a house. They would be about as high as I am tall. They would put the tents over that, and they came down to the ground. It was real warm and in the summer, they would raise all that and it would be cool. Then to our left, where we lived, and we faced the railroad, they had a little switch out there. They called them switches...but it was a railroad. On our left, they put another big tent and the men that was working with them slept in there. Of course, we didn't have any kind of sewage or

anything like that. Everybody had what we called “Lean To’s.” Then on our right, they had another tent and Mr. and Mrs. Albert J. Wells lived in that. Did you know them?

ML: No.

SW: Well, they have a daughter that lives there in Diboll and she was just a girl. Her name... I cannot think of her name. We always called her “Tumpy”. Do you know A. J. Wells that lives in Diboll?

Marie Davis: I think the son has moved back there.

SW: Yes, the parents have died...both of them. The daughter...now this boy was not born at this time...the daughter...we called her “Tumpy”, but her name was Gertie and I don’t know her last name. I will tell you who does now, Sis (Pickle) Davis. She sees her all the time. The last time I was down there, I saw her. She moved away, but she moved back. The brother, I understand ... he lives there, too, now. You all might ask him. But Sis Davis sees her all the time. Of course, Sis, when she worked at the post office, saw everybody. Well, anyway, they lived on the right of us, and that was all that was out there.

ML: When you say, “out there”, what was the place where you were?

SW: Honey, it didn’t have any name.

ML: Oh, no. It wasn’t Fastrill or anything like that?

SW: Oh, now, that was before we got there.

ML: Long before Fastrill, huh?

SW: Oh, I wasn’t at Fastrill. But I was at two or three of those other camps. No, it had no name. It was just sitting over there on the side of the railroad.

ML: About where was it?

SW: I cannot...I was trying to think. See, I was very small myself. I don’t know if anybody knows where the Anderson Crossing is or not. But anyway...

ML: I think we would be able to find that out.

SW: I don’t know who you would find out from, but it was just above what they called the Anderson Crossing. But it was still Southern Pine’s.

ML: Was Anderson Crossing a creek? Was it near a river?

SW: Oh, where the tents were? You are thinking of one of the camps now.

ML: I am just guessing because it was called “Crossing.”

SW: No, there was a great big house up on the hill... a two story house. Of course, it looked like a mansion to us and we called it the Anderson Crossing. The tracks ran across this. And we would meet them there to walk to school. We walked a mile and a half to school to a little old school named Pisgah. And I can't tell you where it was either. But I know it was a mile and a half and I know we walked. They would bring Mexicans out there, and my brother was scared to death. We would see them working on the tracks, and we would go way out in the woods and come back to keep from going by them. He was so afraid.

ML: Was your brother older?

SW: Yes, that was Lee.

ML: He was kinda taking care of the little ones.

SW: I was taking care of him! Because if I was sick, he wouldn't go to school.

ML: Oh, that sounds like a good deal.

SW: He wouldn't go anywhere I wouldn't go. No, he was older. You never knew Lee Estes and Jewel. Well, let me see now. We stayed out there at those camps. They would saw a tree down and saw up some wood. And it was our job to keep wood in the house and then we would go out... and we had a little wagon and find these rich...

ML: Pine knots?

SW: Yes, rich pine knots to get splinters to start the fire. This is so far ahead of you girls until you can't imagine it.

MD: I still do that for the fireplace.

ML: Those things...you can't replace them.

SW: Well, anyway, that's what my mother...we were running the hotel part then...at least we were cooking for these men. I can't remember any of the men that stayed out there except the Wells boys...Harrison, Richie Thomas and Albert J: they are the ones that lived on the right of us. They had an organ and on Saturday night...that's all we had to do...they danced of course, I was a little girl, but my sister was nearly grown. We would go over at their house and they would play the organ and sing.

ML: Did someone have to pump the organ? Was it a pump organ?

SW: Yes. And then all of the Wells boys could play anything...violin, guitars...anything. They were musicians...you know just natural musicians.

ML: Wonderful.

SW: Yes, it was wonderful. We would go over there where the organ was. They would let me go, but I was little. We moved from there to one of the camps and I don't know which one was the first one. One of them was... never did live at Fastrill.... Bluff City and Walkerton was one and Alceda was one and then Fastrill. But my mother decided... well, we didn't have much to go on for education, you know...she decided that she wanted something better than that. Of course, at that time, Diboll looked like a city to us...coming out of the tents. And so we moved to Diboll, and she took the Star Hotel.

ML: Did she take it right away when you came to Diboll?

SW: She moved from Alceda to the hotel. They had told her that if she would come and take it, you know, my father was sick most of this time and he wasn't able to work the last two years he lived. When he died, he was sixty years old, and that is young for today. And so, we all had to work. We all worked. We washed dishes. We came up the hard way. Then we moved in there. I remember the first day we went to school. You know, there would be two or three grades in that same room. Well, I sat in the seat with one of the Copes girls. You know, Marie, don't you...Ida. While I was going to school, I don't remember who the superintendent was. It seems to me it was Mr. Hamner, I think. But I am not sure. Anyway, that first day we were in school, of course, you know how we felt...right out of the sticks. I don't know if you remember George Powell or not?

MD: My mother tells tales about George Powell.

SW: Anyway, he was a good guy in a way. But he and Homer Rogers...he married one of the Copes girls.

MD: Dana.

SW: He (Homer Rogers) died two weeks after my husband. They sat behind us, and if you looked behind you, ole George would do that (finger across throat, as if to cut). He would scare the life out of anybody. And it would just scare me so bad that I would just shake because I wasn't used to anything like that. He didn't mean a thing on earth except to scare the fool out of us. He scared me so bad, but later when he was police chief up here, he was a real good friend of mine. I don't know, it kinda scared us. My brother, Lee, was in that same room and he never could say words with "ing" in them, like "Livingston" or "Huntington", this teacher, seems like her name was Ruby. Anyway, instead of helping him, see. Well, she would make him read before the class and she would laugh with them. And she was supposed to be helping him, see. Well, she did that so many times that he quit school. She would call on him every time...she knew that...I will never forgive her. I might not go to heaven for that one reason. But anyway, he

quit...he was fourteen years old and he went to work over at the mill. And over there they had what they called the "Dolly Run." You are too young to remember that, aren't you Marie?

MD: I remember that.

SW: You know they had those little dollies...

MD: Carts?

SW: Yes, well, he was the mechanic on those cars. He could fix any car that ever ran. And he was only fourteen. See, in those days you could start work any time. He and Willie Rogers, who lives here, Grady Steed and Bryant Hays...they drove those cars and Lee kept them up. Sunday afternoon the only thing we would have to do would be to walk around over the saw mill. Of course, that was fun. And then, at that time, in Diboll, they would cut all the electricity off at 9:00. We had to have lamps, kerosene lamps.

ML: When you say "At that time", about when would that have been? How old were you at that time?

SW: Honey, as best I remember, I was about eight or nine when we got into Diboll. I would say nine.

ML: And was that quite a while that they had that cutting off the light at 9:00?

SW: Yes. They would cut off all electricity at 9:00. Of course, we had no way of cooling. We didn't even have any fans. The only telephone in Diboll at that time was over in the office, if you know what I am talking about. If anything happened, you had to go over there to make a telephone call...if there was a death or something. And we had parties a lot...we had a good time...don't think we didn't. My mother, there at the old hotel, would let us dance. They moved the tables back. Diboll boys and girls loved to dance. And then Mrs. Ed Steed, her house was always opened to us. We could dance there. Then over there where we called the "Library"...I don't know what they call it now...

MD: Love Wood Products.

SW: Is that it? Well, you know where I am talking about, Marie. Well, Mrs. Farrington would take care of it, and she would let us dance over there.

ML: Why was that called the library?

SW: I don't know.

MD: I think they intended to make a library out of it.

SW: They kept it there for the Temple party when they would come down from Texarkana. Oh, everybody had to bow and scrape. They called it the library...I don't know why. Mrs. Farrington would oversee it. Mrs. Farrington worked in the store, I guess you say the dry goods part. And at that time, they called them drummers.

ML: Drummers?

SW: Drummers...they would come by and you know, show their clothes certain day...

ML: Traveling sales people?

SW: Yes. They called them drummers then. Nowadays, we don't even have them, I don't guess. But anyway, she would know a week or two before they were coming and you would go there and if there was anything you wanted to buy, you could buy it from him. They would pay for it, and let you pay it out. Then on the other side, in that same building, was the grocery department. Then upstairs they had a little furniture. But on the right of that was the drugstore, and then on down on the end was the post office. Mr. Farrington was the first postmaster and then Miss Zettie Kelly. And then on the other end was the market.

ML: Meat market?

SW: Meat market. That is where you would go and get your meat. And in front of there, there used to be two long benches that you could go and sit, you know, in front of the store, if you wanted to. It was a good gathering place for the young boys. One day my youngest brother was sitting on the top of it and he got tickled, fell off, and broke his arm.

ML: He must have gotten tickled pretty bad.

SW: Oh, he did. But he was just a kid. And then my other brother, Lee, he finally bought him a Model "T" I guess you would call it. You know it was when you twisted them to start them...you all don't remember that. Anyway, he was trying to start that and broke his arm. But then those were minor things.

ML: Tell us about the Star Hotel. What all was involved in the running of that?

SW: The company, Southern Pine, that was their building. Everything there was their buildings. Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Rutland lived on this (South) side of us and on the right (North) side Mr. and Mrs. O. H. Weise lived. On down there, Mrs. Ashford lived...Mrs. Farrington next...then Mrs. Ashford and then where Clyde Thompson lives is where Mr. and Mrs. Walker lived. Mr. Walker was, I guess you would call it, the manager of the whole works at that time...everything. And his wife wouldn't let anybody work on her car except my brother. And I sent them pictures, at least I let them have them...remember when they had Diboll Day and they showed all those old pictures...

MD: 1976.

SW: Yes. Well, I let them have most of mine, but they were supposed to have sent them back...but something tells me they did...but I can't find them. I know that Paul Durham has the picture of the first garage filling station that was ever in Diboll and that was Lee's, my brother. And I know Paul must have that somewhere, if you all want pictures. Well, see in this hotel deal...mother ran the hotel. The company furnished the house and then the workers...everybody...even Mr. and Mrs. Farrington, ate over there.

ML: How many people would you say your mother had to feed in a day?

SW: Oh, a lot of these traveling salesmen, you call them, they would travel for miles to get there so they could eat with Mama because she had table after table, big long tables. She put the food on the table, you know. You could eat as long as you could eat. And it was good cooked food. She had help to cook.

ML: How much help did she have?

SW: We had one colored woman that helped cook and then we had a colored man that helped us wash dishes. They had to build up...the dishpan you would call it, was as long as from here over there. It was lined...I guess it was tin. And they built up a stand where we could stand on it and wash the dishes. We worked anyway, oh, I don't know how many people but everybody that worked around over there and worked in the office ate. And then over at this place where they called the library slept over there, especially those that worked in the office...like Eck Prud'homme. I don't think you know him.

MD: Yes, ma'am, he was at Pineland when I worked in the office.

SW: They would sleep over there and eat at my mother's. And we, my sister helped and my mother too. We had to wait the tables. And in those days, my daddy was there, but he was sick...they talk about tips now. If anybody had tipped us, my daddy would have killed them.

ML: He would have been so offended, huh?

SW: Yes, he was strict.

MD: How much were the meals? Do you know how much they paid for the meals?

SW: I don't know. It seems like they paid seventy-five cents a day and was for three meals...three good meals, too. They cooked breakfast then like we would cook lunch or supper now.

MD: Who was the colored woman who did the cooking?

SW: Well, the first one we had was Eula Clark...she's dead. The next one we had...she was written up not long ago...Cora Nash. You know, she was written up in the paper not too long ago. Well, she helped us and I believe it was Cora's husband who helped wash the dishes.

MD: They did an interview with Cora before she died.

SW: Yes... "Bunt" (Robert Nash) they called him. They sent me copy of that that was in the paper. Cora's daughter calls me once a week now. Cora always called me once a week to see how I was. Cora was with us a long time...so was Bunt. He helped wash the dishes. I don't remember, but seems like that is the only two we had. Sometimes they didn't show up and when they didn't show up, mother got us out of bed at three o'clock in the morning to start cooking. They say I'm a good cook and I say, "Well, I ought to. I've been cooking since I was eight years old." Then let me see, there was something else I wanted to tell you all. Oh, then when we got to Diboll, of course, we thought we had gone to heaven. We made friends real quick. Myrtle Copeland was living then...don't know if you remember her or not. She died last year. She married a Sheffield. They had what they called the "Beanery" on the next corner. Mr. and Mrs. Rutland lived between us and Mr. and Mrs. Dave Kenley lived down there. Of course, Dave is dead and Mrs. Kenley is one hundred years old now.

ML: We talked to her a couple of weeks ago.

SW: They tell me, but I haven't seen her in a long time, because I haven't been able...they had a big party down here at the Christian Church for her and I wasn't able to go. I love Mrs. Kenley. But they tell me her mind is sharp as can be.

ML: Absolutely! She didn't miss a trick the whole time we were talking.

SW: She's awfully sweet lady. They lived just below us there in Diboll. I wanted to go to her party...a big party down here at the Christian Church. They tell me a lot of people were there.

(End of side one of tape)

SW: ...the earlier things that happened there.

ML: At the hotel?

SW: Yes, and the commissary. You know it was called the commissary then.

ML: Yes.

SW: It is where the office is up there now. I hope they don't tear that down.

ML: Oh, is there some chance that they might?

SW: I heard so, but you know they fixed it inside. It is beautiful...the wood in it is just beautiful.

ML: Well, I haven't been in yet.

SW: I was down there several times when Ward Burke was there. He was doing lawyer work for me. And it is perfectly beautiful in there. But of course, it has the best wood in it. Used to they sold ice around there where the meat market was. And then the old depot was right on down there. One time, me and my brother were playing out in the front yard. We had a big yard and we didn't know what shrubbery was or grass either. In fact, we had to sweep the yard. Any way this old man from Burke, a Mr. Clark, he came every morning and brought vegetables and fresh fruits and things. He would come to Mama's house first and have coffee and she would buy from him. He had gone around there to get some ice. (I'm not calling any names). But some man drove up there and shot him out of his buggy. My mother ran to the front door and told us, to come in there quick... "You didn't see nothing." She was afraid they would take us to court. We ran in the house and we didn't know nothing. But we sure saw the man shoot him out of his buggy. Diboll was pretty bad. It used to get the name, too, of having the prettiest girls in the world and the meanest men.

ML: Really. That's one I hadn't heard yet.

SW: Well, that's what they said.

ML: Speaking of not putting names in there, if anything comes on the tape that you would rather us not use, just tell us at the end and we'll...

SW: Well, don't name any names. But it did have a lot of beautiful girls, I'll tell you. These boys would come in from Lufkin and Manning and places to see the girls and it would make the boys in Diboll real mad. We didn't have much entertainment. We danced...the whole crowd danced.

ML: What music would you use?

SW: Seemed like to me somebody in the crowd had an old record player, but I can't remember who it was. Half the time we didn't have any music. We used to dance an old dance called "Skip to my Lou". J. D. Green, Mrs. Thompson's brother, you could hear him over half of Diboll...and he would call it, kinda like a square dance. We could dance, too, and we would all dance to that. Names like J. D. Green, Grady Steed, and Louis Ashford, I don't mind calling them because they ran around with us, you know...Myrtle Copeland, and Ada Hunter. Mr. Hunter had something to do with the store. Of course, Mr. W. P. Rutland was in charge of the store. They lived next door to us about twenty-five years. Their daughter lives here in town, Josephine Fredrick. That is all we had for entertainment. On Sunday afternoon we would walk down the track just to be walking. It was something to do.

One time, a long time ago, the bridge, the bridge down there where the river bridge is, it washed out. It is three miles from Diboll down there. A bunch of us decided we wanted to see it, and we walked down there. On the way coming back we met two men...I can't think of their names, but they lived in Diboll...to one of them I said, "Well, how does it look down there?" He said, "Well, I tell you the bridge is up on its end and there is a piano on top of it playing 'Who'd Thought It'." We went down to see it. Of course, it didn't have a piano on it, but it was standing up on its end.

Then the only place we had to go swimming Mr. Clyde Thompson ought to remember this however, I was there before he was. The first time I ever saw Clyde Thompson in my life, he had on short pants, knickers. My brother and all the other boys wore them. Down there where they used to call Emporia, I don't know what they call it now, they filled up that old lake. They have a residence down there now.

MD: It is about where the Catholic Church is now.

SW: I don't know honey I haven't been down in there. I don't know anybody in Diboll much. But anyway, that lake down there, we didn't know it at the time, but it drained off the Negro quarters. We would go swimming down there and I took typhoid fever and half of Diboll had it and I assume that is where we got it. They had a club house down there and every once in a while they would have dances down there and people would come out of Lufkin and all around. I can't remember now what we used for music on that occasion. We would slip off. We used to go to Ryan's Lake. My younger brother and I used to walk out there and camp and stay all night.

ML: Your parents didn't mind that?

SW: No, not as long as the two of us were together. See times weren't like they are now. I don't get out of my house after dark. Anyway, we would go down there and have a picnic. One time J. D. Green, and I don't know who the others were, went down there and built a...took lumber and built a place to dance on. We had a few parties down there...we danced and we went in swimming all time. We would put watermelons in the lake to cool. Mr. Prud'homme and Miss Alice Ashford, she's Dr. Dale's wife, they were chaperones...we didn't go anywhere without chaperones...they did care what we did. We would go swimming and get out and dance. Somebody went back to town and told my mother that we were going swimming and going dancing in our bathing suits. My mother sent word down there by whoever was smart enough to tell her, Mr. Prud'homme, word to "Bring her home and bring her home now." So he took me and I didn't get to go to any parties down there. That's the way mother was.

ML: How old were you?

SW: I don't know how old I was, honey. I imagine about fourteen or along there. We weren't dancing in the bathing suits anyway. Somebody left and went up there and told that we were. Some of them might have been, but I sure wasn't. I wouldn't have been caught dead in a bathing suit because my knees were too close together. Anyway, my brother was there. And all the time he was there I felt protected, anyway our bunch

didn't do like they do now. No sir, we didn't. And Mr. Green, Ossie's daddy, he was what we called the law man there at that time. I mean he meant business. I can't understand why they didn't name a street for Mr. Green and one for my mother in Diboll. I told Clyde that. He said I have been told that by Ossie. I said, "You know my mother worked for Temple so much, and then there was my brother, Lee, he worked for them, too. And Mr. Green did, too. And they were some of the older ones. Mr. and Mrs. Farrington always took us. I have some pictures over there, even though they didn't send my pictures back. I didn't know if you all were interested in pictures.

ML: Oh, sure.

SW: When we lived out in the tents, we didn't know what a camera was. We were too poor to buy one.

ML: Could we look at some of the pictures and you tell us about them?

SW: Yes. But I wish I could have found those, but I couldn't to save my life. Now you don't want that...that's my mother and youngest brother.

ML: How come we don't want to see them?

SW: That is made here.

ML: And it is a colored picture, too. That's a colored picture, too.

SW: Honey, I can't see.

ML: It's got a red roof on the barn.

SW: I can see just enough to see what they are now. Now I wanted you all to see this. I didn't tell you yet about these camps. When we moved to this camp, this was, I think...anyway this was the little school house they had. And that is the bunch of kids. This was after we moved into one of the camps. And there was the teacher right there. This was Jim Butler right here and that was named Mrs. Mary Wallace and these are the kids. Now, I am on there, my brother is on there, my young brother is down here somewhere. You see that girl right there...that is me. You see the boy that has his head hung down, that is my brother. He wouldn't let anybody take his picture. This is an old picture...that is when we lived out in one of the camps. That is my mother and grandmother...Campbell. She is buried out at Ryan's Chapel and so is my Uncle Will. But you know I don't even know where my grandfather is buried. See I had two...my grandmother was married twice. Her maiden name was Campbell and she married a Hill then she married a Campbell.

MD: Did you ever go to the school that was out on the Arrington road, you know?

SW: No.

MD: Miss Ossie said she had a picture of it.

SW: You mean in Diboll?

MD: Yes, I guess it was about the first school.

SW: I don't know...where I first went to school was there in Diboll. But I have been out all in there. You know the Greens used to live out there and we would go out there all time.

MD: It was out that way.

SW: Yes, I know where you are talking about. Or used to know, I wouldn't know now. Let's see about this one. This was made at one of the camps, too. Let's see...my sister is on here.

ML: It says...has a few things on the back...says "To Sadie from Eva Hill, White City Camp"...Eva Hill.

SW: She was...do you remember Gilbert Hill?

MD: Yes ma'am.

SW: See, Eva Hill was a half sister to him, but she died very young.

ML: Did you live in White City?

SW: I didn't ...they did. My Uncle Will was living there and she was living with them. This is terrible. That was made...I'll tell you the name...it was Bluff City.

ML: You know, some of those pictures are quite clear.

SW: What does that say on the back?

MD: Ruth Estes, Stella Hines, Sadie Estes...Hines,McClain, Smith Roach.

SW: Where is my sister on there? Didn't it say Ruth?

MD: Yes ma'am. Right here.

SW: See, I can't see well enough. Well, that was made on the bridge that went across the river at, I think, that was Walkerton. Yes. This was me before my hair was cut off.

ML: That is pretty.

SW: She thought it was so beautiful, she wouldn't cut it. See, I told you we didn't have a high school at the time I went to high school. My mother sent us up to Jacksonville to Sub-College. It was Alexander and this was made there. I am showing this a feeling proud, I guess.

MD: Is that where you got your teaching certificate?

SW: No. Honey, we were going to High School there...because we didn't have a high school in Diboll.

MD: What year was this?

SW: That was me...(She was queen)

MD: Oh, yes!

SW: They always voted.

MD: You were popular.

SW: Honey, I don't remember the year. My memory is not too good. What does it say back there.

MD: The queen and her court at college.

ML: You must have been about sixteen or so.

SW: Must have been...or younger because in those days I think they graduated from high school about sixteen. It might have been the year I graduated. We didn't have a high school. She sent us up there. All these girls and boys, nearly all, all dead. That was me...I keep that to look at. It was Alexander at that time. What is that? Marie, it looks like a school. It is, isn't it?

MD: Yes.

SW: Out at the camp, I guess.

MD: Yes, probably is. Let's see. Says, "Herman and Ruth".

SW: Yes, we all were out there.

MD: What about the schools at the camps?

SW: Well, that was the only school I can remember (that one I showed you, with the teachers) what did I tell you...

MD: Bluff City.

SW: I think this was made there, too. See, some of them are grown men. You see, they went to school in those days and worked, too.

TK: Let me see the picture of her as the queen. I missed that one.

SW: That is before I went to college. That was after I moved here. There is nobody on there we know. Oh, you wouldn't believe this, Marie. I wanted you to know I looked a little different.

MD: You were always pretty.

ML: That is a lovely picture...gosh.

SW: This was a little later...with long hair. I just laid them out. These are all to pieces...they are so old. But you all can have any of these you want. That was made in Jacksonville. That is Louis Ashford.

MD: Is this Cleo Agee?

SW: Yes, she went there, too. We didn't have a high school. And this is me and my Aunt Veda. She lived with us after her husband died. That is Louis Ashford and I think my brother, Lee. That is Lee and myself. That is Cleo and Lee. Lee was crazy about Cleo.

MD: Mother thought a lot of Cleo. I have heard her talk about her.

SW: She was beautiful. But she died real young. She took pneumonia and they didn't know what to do and it killed her right now. That is my sister and my brother. They cut me off there. And this is the bunch...

MD: Okay, I wanted to ask you...

SW: This is the bunch that taught school there. See, I am in there.

MD: We have a picture of this. Miss Elodie Miles gave me one.

SW: Well, I tell you the day they showed those pictures up there at the library and this girl, whoever it was, might have been one of you all...I don't know. She was naming these and I told her, "You are wrong." And she said, "No, I am not." I said, "I know you are because that is me right there." Well, I didn't have any clothes and I had to wear what I could find. That was my first year, I believe. But she said this last one was Allie Fish. But it is not Allie Fish. But I cannot think of her name to save my soul.

MD: Is that Mr. Bush and Miss Elodie?

SW: Well, that is true, but we all mixed. It didn't make any difference. I borrowed money from Mr. Temple to go to college on. And the old tight wad...he made me pay it back. So I told Arthur not long ago. I was talking to him one day. I said, "You know, Arthur, your old grandpa was the tightest old man I ever knew." He said, "Why, Sadie?" and I said, "Well, I borrowed money from him to go to college, and we would teach nine months and go to school three months. And I never made over \$100 a month and he made me pay every nickel back. I have the receipts where I paid him." He said, "Oh, Sadie, he was just teaching you a lesson." It was an expensive lesson when I didn't have nothing.

ML: You went to school because you wanted to get a teaching certificate.

SW: I wanted to teach. We had to do something besides wash dishes. And do you want this picture of the old hotel?

ML: Well, we want to make sure that we do have a picture of the hotel. I am not sure of what else we have at the library yet. I also don't know if that one can be made darker.

SW: I had one here that I don't know what I did with it. It was cut out of the paper when they ran it. This was my younger brother, Snooks. And that was me when we were in Galveston. We had come up the road a little bit. The hotel...they ran it in the paper several times and I have one here somewhere. Now, I want to show you these. And that was made at Ryan's Lake. That is Mr. Farrington. We had all been in swimming there at Ryan's Lake. And there we were again at Ryan's Lake. Mr. and Mrs. Farrington would take us. Here is the bunch that they would take. This is made there. All of these were at Ryan's Lake. Any of them you want...well, you can come back and get them. I don't want them...it makes me sad to look at them. This was the bunch right here...the girls...but you see there was one gone and that Cleo. My bother wanted that picture. These were the boys. That is Grady Steed, Franklin Farrington, Louis Ashford. We had a little crowd, you know, that we ran with.

ML: Could you tell us some more about your school teaching days. Did you teach in Diboll?

SW: Yes.

ML: How long did you teach there?

SW: Four years.

ML: And what grades did you teach?

SW: The fourth grade was my home grade. One year I taught fifth, sixth, and seventh penmanship. The rest of the time I taught fourth grade all subjects and forty children.

ML: How did you prepare for that at night?

SW: Well, by staying up half of the night. I wasn't very old. I was young. I really shouldn't have been teaching. I was only seventeen. But I swore a lie and I hope God forgives me. I was supposed to be eighteen and swore I was. Mr. Durham knew I was seventeen. He was on the board. He knew, too, that I had to have some work, a school, so they gave me the school. And I loved to teach school. I really did, because I loved the kids. A lot of them down there now like Harrison Weeks...

MD: Louis Wilkerson.

SW: Yes...Renfro...comes by. Did you know he got married long ago? Renfro comes by to see me every once in a while and all that bunch...

MD: And Doug...did you teach Doug?

SW: Yes. And every time school was out, it just grieved me to death because I had to let them go. But when another bunch came in, I would feel the same way. I loved to teach school. I'll tell you we taught school different then from what they do now. We really taught school. You had to if you were going to stay there.

ML: Tell us about it. Tell us about how things were different from school now.

SW: My gosh, honey, let me tell you something. When they gave you a school in Diboll, they issued you a paddle. They said you are going to keep discipline or you are not going to have a job. And I will tell you what saved us there. We never did have the trouble they are having now. And the reason we didn't is because the parents stood behind us. If you got a paddling at school, which I never had to do but one or two times, you got another one when you went home. They knew they were going to get it, because they knew I was going to tell the parents. If I ever gave one in my life, it was because they needed it, you know. I never will forget that little Conner girl and I believe it was Vaughn's wife...what was her name?

MD: Flava?

SW: I believe it was those two. We would go out to play, they would run in the house every five minutes and tell on each other. One day they ran in and I said, "Girls, I'll tell you I am sick and tired of you telling on each other." I just turned them over my knee and gave them a lick or two. And that was the last of that. Mrs. Ward came over there and she wanted to know what was the matter. I went to school in Jacksonville and all the boys shaved their heads.

ML: Oh, why was that?

SW: Oh, I don't know, they were celebrating something.

ML: Celebrating something.

SW: Isn't that awful?

ML: That would be terrible.

SW: This guy, Raymond Crager, he was up there then when we were up there. That was in Jacksonville. These were made in Nacogdoches, I think. You remember Dot O'Hara, don't you Marie?

MD: Yes, ma'am.

SW: That is Dot right there. This is in front of the old commissary. That man is named Miller and that is Ruth Ballenger. That is Cleveland Hines. That was Jim Pickle's sister. That is Erma. (Bateman)

ML: Do you have any special stories you want to tell us?

SW: Well...

ML: We are just about to finish up our tape. But if you have any little funny stories, we would love to hear them.

SW: Well, honey, I don't know...Diboll was pretty wild and pretty calm, too, compared to what things are now. But we did terrible things on Halloween...we didn't have any trick or treat, of course. But anyway, we would take old sheets and cut the eyes out and the nose and run all over town like we were wild. But everybody knew us and there was nothing going on like they do here now. One Halloween, some of the boys and I think my brother was included...(End of Tape)

END OF INTERVIEW