

Marion Fuller
Interview 45a
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ABSTRACT: In an interview with Becky Bailey, Josephine Rutland Frederick, Marion Fuller, and Jim Fuller reminisce about life in Diboll. All three grew up in Diboll and recall school, games, the Depression, going to Lufkin and Houston, the mill whistles, and the visits from the Klu Klux Klan. Mr. Fuller remembers the beginnings of the fire department and working in the commissary and Mrs. Fuller and Mrs. Frederick recall growing up as neighbors – supporting World War I efforts as children and going on picnics to Emporia and Ryan’s Lake. They also recall Chester Willis, Mr. Rutland, and T.L.L. Temple.

Interview between Becky Bailey, Marion and Jim Fuller and Mrs. Josephine Rutland Fredrick. Today is Diboll Day, 1984. We are meeting at the Temple Memorial Library:

Marion Fuller (hereafter MF): I was born in Diboll and lived here for 38 years so that is a pretty long time and I remember a lot of things about our childhood, as Josephine will, that we did in Diboll. We went to Sunday school in that lodge building that you saw out there but it was a good Sunday school. We did our own amusements. We didn’t buy many things. We did play jacks, as that is about all that I remember buying, but we played paper dolls that we cut out of Sears Roebuck catalogs and we, we had bouncing boards. We could pick up boards and put something in the middle like a seesaw only you jump and we would jump high, high and we would even swing on the tree limbs in her yard. It was just fun things. We would slip off to White Oak Creek and go in swimming. Play like we were movie stars, I was always Mary Miles Minter and....

Becky Bailey (hereafter BB): Where is White Oak Creek?

Jim Fuller (hereafter JF): It is out here, it is called Stovall Creek some.

MF: It is a little way out of town, it is filled in now, I imagine. You don’t realize it when you pass it because it used to be away out in the country.

Josephine Rutland Frederick (hereafter JRF): Now it is right here under us.

MF: But we weren’t deprived at all. I think the town was a good town for a small sawmill town, to me it was. If I was an underprivileged child I didn’t know it.

BB: So was everyone else.

MF: You remember those happy childhoods and I remember one time it was decided that the company send oysters out to the people on Christmas, it was a big can of oysters, that was a treat, you know, back there and little things we did enjoy. Josephine and I used to ride around with Chester Willis in the delivery wagon from the Southern Pine Lumber Company store; you know we would go with him.

BB: Oh did the commissary deliver?

JRF: Oh yes, they started out with wagon and horses.

MF: That is right. Well I was proud that we weren't custardly deprived either. We used to have Chautauquas and Lyceums to come to town. We learned our music by listening to victrolas and you know writing down the words. We didn't have any "Poppa" you know Rock and Roll. (laughing) I remember going to Lufkin. We would go to Lufkin early in the morning on the TSE [Texas Southeastern], that was the train that took logs in – they called it "take it slow and easy" and it was, you know. It would go away out on the millpond and then it would have to back up and then go on to Lufkin. Then we would catch a later train back to Diboll. Catch the HE&WT [Houston East and West Texas] and they called that "hell every way you take it." But I remember going up there, we would buy records, we bought Galaxy Records and (?) records, you know, good things. John McCormick records, you know, and we would learn the words. I went to school here and finished and I thought it was a good school. I was in the third graduating class you know what I mean, where you really – and we worked awfully hard to get credit for Diboll High School and when I went away in '24 I had my 15 so that I could enter college, you know, which was great. The ones that graduated before us had to take exams because they were not accredited, you know. Had some good teachers.

BB: Do you have some of them down?

MF: Miss Mable Melear when we were seniors. I saw her picture here, she was an angel, she was an angel. I had one superintendent that I will ever be grateful for – Mr. E. P. Gaines, because he went to my uncle and he told him that he thought that I would do pretty good in college and to try to see that I got up there – I have appreciated that so much in my later days. But then later on I taught in the school in Diboll until Jim went into service and we moved from here in '45.

BB: Were you married when you taught here?

MF: Oh yes.

JF: Part of the time.

BB: Part of the time. Oh I had heard that you couldn't be married and...

MF: They didn't want you to marry, no they didn't want you to but we did.

BB: Oh but they didn't care.

MF: They hired some married teachers at that time, but they discouraged it very much.

JRF: That was true everywhere but sometimes they had to.

JF: Jobs were scarce – that was the reason for it. Had one income...

BB: Didn't need two.

JF: That's right.

MF: I taught under Mr. C. H. Miller and Mr. E. H. Bush.

BB: Oh okay – we interviewed Mr. Bush.

MF: My name was Wilmoth, W-I-L-M-O-T-H. I noticed my brother's picture back there in that district championship basketball team.

BB: Oh I don't realize that, George Wilmoth.

MF: Yes.

BB: Is he still living around here?

MF: He lives in Dallas – lives in Dallas.

BB: Lives in Dallas.

MF: Yes and I had an uncle when I was growing up who, his name was W. H. Warner and he was shipping clerk for the planing mill in Diboll for a long time.

BB: What did your dad do?

MF: Pardon?

BB: What did your daddy do?

MF: I didn't have one. We were an odd family.

JRF: She lived with that uncle.

BB: Oh, okay. Oh, you lived with your uncle?

MF: He was my mother's twin brother.

BB: Oh okay, and he was foreman of the planing mill?

MF: They called it shipping clerk.

BB: Shipping clerk.

MF: We said it was an odd family because my mother's name, she married a Wilmoth and her twin brother's name was Warner see. W. H. Warner, and then my aunt lived with us with her daughter and they were Walls – so we could put “w” on the pillowcases and be safe.

BB: Pillowcases and be safe...

BB: Okay – Mr. Fuller how about you?

JF: Well, I guess you had better let me have this.

MF: Yes.

JF: My name is Jim Fuller. I was born in Diboll in 1907. I don't know just what year my daddy started preaching but he worked at the planer in Diboll and when he started preaching we moved from here and went to a little town of Gary, and another town we went to I think was Geneva. But I moved back here in about 1925 or 26 and I worked at the commissary for about 15 years. Mr. Rutland was the boss and he had, I give him credit for being the most patient man. We had a bunch in the store there that thought about nothing but having a good time and he was tolerant with us – he knew our hearts were right and our customers were patient, too, because we didn't do anything but cut up. I remember one time we had a fellow here by the name of William Ruth, we called him Shine, but after he made this trip they called him Reverend Ruth. He went down to – what was the name of that little town?

JRF: Moscow, wasn't it?

JF: What, no... But anyway Reverend Ruth...

MF: Splendora.

JF: Splendora, went off one weekend to have a good time. Went off down to Splendora and run out of money and so he just decided he would make him an appointment to preach and so he did – he made the appointment and the fellow – when he got up to preach he said he was going to preach on Nora and the ox – and he said the Lord said to Nora, “Nora I want you to build me an ox.” And so he did – he got enough money to get back home from that preaching assignment – he was quite a character – we had a lot of fun with him in the commissary – we kept caskets upstairs and also we had a place up there were we joined the stove pipe – we put brads in them to make them hold and we would get Shine and some of the rest of them to go up there with us to hold these pipes

while we braded them but we got the idea that was the same room that the caskets were in – we handled caskets at that time. And one day I got up there and got behind the casket and they brought Shine up there to help with – weld these stovepipes and I made a little groan – made one of those caskets move a little bit – about that time Shine decided it was time for him to leave and he started running. And he got out there where, there was a way you went you had to turn and he couldn't make that turn and he fell down. Oh we laughed at him. We had a lot of fun at his expense. We...another thing we had, we had little wires – people sit on the counter – we had a big wrapping counter there and people would sit upon this counter and we wired it one time. We got the idea to put a little electricity in it – either electricity or a needle that would come up through the counter and stick people. And so then we would shock them, you know. I remember one lady that came in there and when we shocked her she went and got her a pair of pliers and a screwdriver and she tore our little play pretty up. And oh, I don't know we pulled so many pranks. Chester Willis.

JRF: I bet they have told about Chester Willis, haven't they?

BB: No.

MF: He knows a lot about Chester Willis, they were buddies. They were in business together.

JF: Chester Willis was the delivery man and he and I had the Red Ball Freight Agency together and Chester would do the hauling and I would do the clerical work and we got all kind of strange things there that was left over from the Red Ball Freight Agency, you know, why they would leave a lot of things there. Chester and I bought hogs together. Somebody would come in and want a little money and we would buy hogs. Chester kept our horse, too. We had horses to ride and he had a lot over there where he kept his delivery mules over there and we had a lot of fun – what, what....

MF: I am thinking about his philosophy. Chester was a philosopher.

JF: Yes Chester would say, "Just because a rooster crows it ain't day."

MF: "They threw muddy water."

JF: "Tell a gar from a cat."

MF: He was smart.

JF: He was. If he had been a white man he would have been a millionaire. He really did know how, he would get a crew together to get them to help him and he would do anything, he could move anything. He was a real operator. I thought a lot of him, in fact, the business. I came back one time and he didn't know me – it hurt my feelings.

BB: How long were you all in business together?

JRF: Aw, they just did that on the side.

JF: Oh, I don't know, we were – about 4 or 5 years.

BB: Did you rent horses, too, or did you...

JF: No, we had some.

MF: We always had horses to ride but you forgot to say he said he courted in ...

JF: Oh, yes, Chester was the only one that had a horse...I mean a car. We didn't have a car. He always had a pretty good car and we would borrow it from him. I remember one time he came to me, I finally got a car and he came to me and told me said "Mr. Fuller," said "I've got to – my mamma died and I have got to go to Texarkana" and he said "I want to use your car." Of course, he got it.

JRF: Well, my father brought Chester Willis and his wife down from Cass County up around, near Texarkana, and they lived in our back yard for a long time. Of course, then I think one of the scariest things that ever happened to me, or to all of us probably, was when the Klu Klux Klan marched. They would come down the TSE track with this flaming cross and then they would go through town and they would put crosses maybe in every other yard and, of course, as a child that scared us, and Chester it scared him to death because he was living in our back yard. And I know when he saw them he ran in his house and got under the bed and it took awhile for us to get him out. But he was really a character and he kept our yard and Marion and I used to work for him for \$0.10 a day. He would clean the yard and he would give us a dime apiece but we were proud to get that. You could buy more with a dime then but as I said, I lived here, I was born in 1909 and then I went away to school, you know, when I was about 14 and then I married in '34 – no I married in '33 and lived in Jacksonville. Then when Charles came back I came back here and lived about a year and then moved to Lufkin and taught there for 30 years but I have wonderful memories down here because we had a wonderful group of friends like Marion and I. I had – I was an only child but I can't remember when Marion and I weren't friends. We lived right there together and we did everything together. We traveled and daddy would take us to Houston. That was a wonderful experience. We would eat at the Rice Hotel and the Brazos Courts. We had a wonderful life and now we are still enjoying each other. We take nice trips every year or two or three times a year if we can get enough money together. But, as I said, now when I was in school here in elementary and I remember two outstanding teachers, Miss Melear, Mable Melear and Miss Ezelle McCall who was Ward Burke's aunt, the lawyer that was here. And she used to stay – she lived at Burke, but she would stay with us during the week and go home on Friday and they would drive up in this horse and buggy to get her and I can remember that. And we had, like Marion said we had good teachers as I said in that other article, two of our teachers became professors at the University of Texas and, by the way, they married each other, too, didn't they? But we did, we had good schools and just a good life and the company was always good to us. The type of person that I am – I enjoyed when the company on Juneteenth (June 19th) now they really entertained us (the blacks) – they

had about a three day entertainment, they had a barbecue, they had a big baseball game and that was always my favorite, baseball, and I would go and it would be just – it would go on and they would fight a little and fuss a little but it was always fun. And then, and then they had on Sunday, they had church and they would bring these different choirs and I remember the one up – it was sponsored by the Christian Church but I can't think, what was that? Do you remember? It was out near Hawkins, Texas. They had the most beautiful singer, you know, and they would bring all this music in. Then they would dance and I would get Chester and Josie to take me to the dance. Of course, I was just little but I would sit on the side and watch them and so really I looked forward more to Juneteenth than I did July 4th. But there was never a dull time, we had a wonderful time and the company, as I said, was very good to us. I remember Mr. Temple, Mr. Tom Temple, the founder, when they would come here – I noticed the picture of the Temple party – well, they ate at the hotel right next door to my house and then they would come out and sit in our yard and we would all visit. And one night he was over there and I think I was chewing gum and he told me “Josephine, if you won't chew gum any more, I will buy you a bicycle.” So that was the end of my gum chewing. He got me the bicycle and my children at school that I taught, they always said, “Mrs. Frederick, you are the crankiest thing about gum chewing I ever did know,” and I said, “Well, I learned that a long time ago.” And I said, “If you don't do it, you might get a bicycle one of these days.” But we just had a wonderful time and we enjoy coming back. The only thing – my mind – we can't remember the things that we would like to remember and names – we certainly can't. But it is just great to be back.

JF: I would like to tell a little something about the fire department. I was a member of the original fire department. We had made quite a bit to do about it; the company furnished us a truck, of course, and we were all volunteers and we were real proud of our caps. We finally got caps—we had one member of the fire department – the first one there got to drive. And I was working in the store right across the street from where it was kept and lot of the time I was the first one there and one fellow came in there one time and he said, “I want to go by that house and get my cap.”

BB: What kind of an alarm system did you have?

JRF: Whistle.

MF: Whistle – Marion, you ought to tell them about the time you and Josephine went to Houston and played in the Rice Hotel in the lobby.

JRF: No, no, we have told them enough about that – don't need to tell that. Some things we are not going to tell – it wouldn't do Diboll a bit of good.

BB: Well, I want to know some more about the fire department.

JF: What would you like to know about it?

BB: Well, when was it that you started it?

JF: I really don't remember. I really don't.

JRF: It was after I left here...when did...I moved away in '38 and it was after '38. You all didn't have one when I was here.

BB: It was after then.

JRF: But it was pretty soon after that.

JF: I remember when they had a fire, a grass fire up here in the Ryan's Chapel community and they wanted the fire department to come up there and I couldn't get anybody to go with me. And so I went on up there and I couldn't even find the fire and I came back and put the fire truck up. And the very next fire I was out of town and we came in just as they were trying to get away and they had run out of gasoline in it. And the fire truck was right down there in front of Mr. Durham's house and had run out of gas.

BB: Were there telephone and that sort of thing?

JRF: No.

JF: No, we didn't have telephones.

JRF: We had one in the office and one in the commissary.

BB: How would you even find out about a fire? Somebody would just have to...

JRF: They would just have to come tell you. They would usually go to the mill and then they would ring the fire whistle. We knew the sounds, you know, and then of course, you could tell pretty well, we could see the whole town practically.

MF: I am sure they have already told the 11:15 cornbread whistle, haven't they?

BB: Heard something about it. Was it 11:15 or...

MF: There was one at 5 o'clock in the morning to wake people up for a time and the 11:15 was cornbread whistle and then, of course, they had one at 12 o'clock.

JRF: And one at 5 when they would go home, when the workday was over at 5.

BB: How would you know a fire whistle? I mean would they have a certain number?

JRF: It would go a certain way and then it would go real fast, you know and you would know that it wasn't the normal thing.

BB: Just like some emergency.

JF: As little as you think about it, it didn't take the word long to get around.

JRF: No.

JF: Because, you see, it was all right here in the radius of the store and office, that is about all there was and somebody would...

MF: Would pass the word. I wonder if anybody has ever said anything about Mr. Frank Farrington who came here and had the first car that was ever brought into Diboll.

BB: Not a whole lot.

JRF: I think Julia Ashford is going to tell them that because she is the one that rode in it all the time. They couldn't get it out without Julia going.

BB: Oh, she liked to go, too?

MF: It was the first car that I rode in.

JF: Well, all of us. It was the first car in Diboll.

BB: Well, Mr. Weeks – the only thing that I know about it is Mr. Weeks told us that Mr. Farrington took it all apart when he first got it so that he would know how to work on it. He said that he laid all the parts out and then he went right back and put them all back together.

JRF: That is about right then.

BB: He told Mr. Weeks that he could watch if he kept his hands in his pockets.

JF: What Weeks was this?

JRF: Herbert Weeks – yes.

BB: Herbert Weeks.

MF: I was in a class with Herbert.

JF: Herbert – yes.

BB: Well, tell me about the riding in the car. Did he take all the kids to ride?

MF: He took everybody, I think, because he knew it was a treat, you know, and they had never seen one.

JRF: We had to stand in line, you know, he would take a few – he wouldn't take us far because the roads were so bad. You couldn't go too far right then and I think the first really good road we had was from here out to the chapel, that is the cemetery, you know. And so they did have that, that was where we would ride when.... I know after my daddy got a car Chester drove our car and he would put us in there, if it was late at night or getting late in the afternoon and he was kind of scared of haints and he wouldn't go – he wouldn't take you late in the afternoon – it had to be daylight or he wouldn't go but that was the best road. – Mr. Farrington would take a few and he would bring those back and then a few more he would take.

MF: But even after we got cars it took hours to get to Lufkin.

JRF: Sure, sure.

MF: Because of the roads.

JRF: Roads, sure. Yes.

BB: I was looking at the... today they had in the parade that old log truck.

JRF: Yes.

BB: That old log truck that was in there. When did they start having those as a common thing in the... you know using them.

JRF: The trucks.

BB: In the mill and things.

JRF: Now at first when we were here they brought the logs from – the mules and the train – and then....

JF: And then they would pull it down to the mill.

MF: Pond.

JF: But they later started trucking.

JRF: Trucking after they got roads but at first they had to use those mules, you know.

BB: Do you think it was in the 40's before they got the log trucks really started?

JRF: No, I think it was before that. No, it was before that

MF: Because the war came on then, was coming on then, you know in the 40's, 41.

JRF: Yes.

BB: You used to have a July 4th celebration here?

MF: Oh yes.

BB: What was it like?

JRF: It was just like...they furnished us with barbecue, didn't they? Didn't the company do that?

MF: I guess people turned out all dressed up with umbrellas and we had picnics.

JRF: We had picnics. Ours was more of a picnic thing but this the company did, and, boy, you could smell that barbecue for a day or two.

BB: And they usually had a political speaker.

JRF: Speeches, too. That was the political time on the fourth of July but most of it was picnics. We would make homemade ice cream, fried chicken and everybody would gather.

BB: Where would you go?

MF: Like on the school ground.

JRF: Well – school ground and one time we went to Emporia – it was a pond down there and we went down there and then...I remember Chester and Josie used to take our group on a picnic down to that Stovall Creek or that so, you know, and they didn't have – when the old folks got tired and wouldn't go, well then they would take you on there and we would have things like that but to me that Juneteenth celebration was really – it was really...

BB: More fun?

JRF: Yes, and it was absolutely and the company went out to make it fine and they would bring in these good baseball teams to play against them and we had good bands come in and play for the dances and as I said, on Sunday these singers would come from these colleges, you know, these choirs and it was just beautiful.

MF: But now I had a cousin lived with me that was older than I was, and they – I have had pictures of them – they would walk down the railroad track to Emporia – that was a Sunday afternoon...

JF: Affair.

MF: Affair and there is something else I want to tell about.

BB: Was there much left in Emporia?

MF: Well, it would be boys and girls, you know, couples and they were just out and there wasn't anything else to do...no cars.

JRF: It was just a pretty picnic place and you could ride a boat, you could fish – they fished there a lot.

JF: Walk the railroad track.

BB: But there wasn't anything left in the town?

JF: No – no town.

BB: Yes, but didn't there used to be a mill and all that?

JRF: I think maybe the first one before it was Temple but that was before me.

MF: That was before my momma moved to Diboll.

JRF: Yes, it was just, yes, that was the first, but that wasn't the one that we knew about but when we came along that was all gone and there was no sign – it was just that pond, I guess, that was left but it was a good place to fish and you could get out in the boat.

MF: Well, we had fun going out to Ryan's Chapel (Lake) – that is where the company pumped their water, wasn't it? You remember we swam and every now and then that pump would...I think they got their water from there.

JF: Marion, I don't know how they used that Ryan's Lake water but they didn't. They used condensed steam water.

JRF: Steam, yes, we had the purest water you could have. Yes, we had the purest water that you could have. They had the steam...condensed steam.

JF: Steam – condensed steam.

MF: But we had a good time.

BB: You had distilled water to drink, bathe and all that.

JRF: Yes – oh yes, everything.

MF: But they were pumping that Ryan's Lake water into here for something.

JF: Well, if you remember, we had two lines that came into Diboll.

JRF: Well, and it was used at the mill but we got the steam and our water came from the steam.

JF: Yes, for your yard, they had some pond water.

JF: Yes.

JF: And it wasn't pure but...

JRF: In those days they furnished our electricity, you know, the mill made the electricity and every Saturday night at 12 o'clock we knew the lights were going out because that is when they had to repair or get it fixed for the next week. But, boy, you got your candles and your lantern because you had to get ready for 12 o'clock on Saturday night because that was it, but it came back on, on Sunday. That would be all right because it was just from midnight, yes, from midnight till morning to get. And we were all ready for the midnight shut down. I can remember as a child, two of the things I could – disturbed me – was ever so often they closed the mill, you know, to repair and everything and so I would hear them talking about they were going to close down the mill. Well, I had a vision of them closing it down and it worried me to death. I know, too, another thing that worried me – it was during the Depression – since my father worked in the store and it just happened that the company was good about handing out and seeing that no one went hungry but they would try to check up and see who, as they called it, if they owed a lot or any thing, let's check on that because he is in the hole and that was ...I had visions of them down in a hole and I would think, well, why don't they get him out. Those two things I remember as a small child that worried me – when the mill closed down and somebody was in the hole.

MF: I don't know why there wasn't an actress in our group because we got together so often on Sunday afternoon and if we had gone to a movie we would play it out. Two of us would be girls, you remember, two boys and all like that and sometimes we went over in the lumber, you remember, we would go over to the sheds, I guess they called them, where the lumber was stacked and that would be our back ground – we would play over there.

JRF: And we would come out from behind the lumber – that was our stage.

MF: We would play over there all Sunday afternoon – isn't it odd?

JF: What about the first movie – “Catching on Fire.”

JRF: Well, my uncle, Mr. Ernest Rutland and Mr. Henderson had the first picture show, or movie, or whatever.

MF: Mr. Copes.

JRF: I am talking about the first one that I remember, Marion, but I know that the thing about it – it was in a tin building and, boy, if it rained – that rain hit that tin I tore out home and everybody else because you couldn't hear the movie or anything else. But it literally scared me to death.

MF: I will never forget one of the serials, The Voice on the Wires, you know, every week they were continued – Mary Pickford was a big – of course we would all...

BB: A good way to get you back every week.

JRF: Yes, that's right. These serials – kinda like the soap operas.

MF: Once a week.

JRF: Only they weren't like soap operas – I guarantee you.

MF: "The Affairs of Pauline" now you know about that.

BB: Oh yes, I have seen some of that.

JRF: She was on the railroad track ties once or twice.

MF: Jumped from the building.

BB: Now what is this about a fire in a movie?

JF: Well, the equipment would catch fire back there.

MF: That was away back before.

JRF: Before the one that I was talking about.

BB: Oh.

MF: It was a crude, crude...

JF: What are you talking about?

MF: I don't know.

JF: Well, it would catch and "shut it down Basset," don't you know?

MF: Yes.

JF: One fellow, I don't know if he was the operator or who he was – that was before my day but I heard them talking about it.

MF: Mine, too.

JF: And they said the equipment would catch on fire, you know, those lights get awfully hot back there and when it would get too hot they would say – “shut it down Basset.”

BB: Hot – oh I see.

JRF: It's on fire and then they would work and work and finally get it going but that was before my time.

JF: That was all silent, you know.

MF: “Diamond from the Sky” was another serial.

JRF: I don't remember anything that I saw. I don't think I looked at much – I talked most of the time. I would go from, I table-hopped.

MF: You don't remember? Oh, there would be a hand come out on the telephone and take the telephone, you know, “The Voice on the Wire.”

BB: Oh, I see a mystery, oh dear.

JRF: And we used to – I don't know whether anybody has mentioned this, or not, we had two main churches – the Methodist and the Baptist, and the Methodist would have church one Sunday and the Baptist would have church the next and I thought that was always – and I think it made a good relationship, you know and things like that.

MF: You can bet we would change anything in it. The reason Jim left the store – Angelina County needed its quota for the service. Se in '44 and he had to go, he was getting pretty old then but they took him, of all things they took him in the Marine Corps and he survived it and then went to Texas City.

BB: I have down here talking about the churches – let's go back and talk about that – do you remember playing in the First Methodist that they started building in 1914?

MF: Well, yes – that lodge – in the lodge...?

JRF: But that was before they built over by...

JF: Playing over while they were building – walking on the rafters.

BB: Okay, that was before they built.

BB: Yes.

MF: We went there – we were little – wasn't it '14 or what?

BB: When the church was built.

MF: Well, I would have been 7 years old and we would go down and climb the rafters – you know how children love to play where there is building going on and that is what we did – we were going to have us a new church – pretty good.

BB: Oh yes, was that when the first time – when they had split then and weren't meeting in the same building?

JRF: Nor had...

BB: They already had another...

JRF: You mean...?

BB: For a long time they were meeting in the same building as the Baptist. Was this the first church that they weren't...

MF: The first church they had ever had – Methodist Church.

JRF: 1914 – yes, that is the first one.

BB: And it is down where it is now?

JRF: Where it is now only it was, only they have bricked it up. I think really what they did, they built a new church and they used the educational room, the old church was a part of that.

MF: And then we lived next to it.

JF: We lived right on the corner.

MF: They have torn our house down now, after we married – when I went to college and came back. My family had moved down to the church and later on it was torn down now and the Strauss house... O'Hara house.

JRF: I don't know whether they have torn – see Berniece Hines lived in there last – I don't know – I haven't been down that way.

BB: Okay, there is something else that I want to ask you, Mr. Fuller, they said you knew something about a fund for – a welfare fund.

JF: Yes, we called it an emergency fund and I was on the committee to disperse these funds. Everybody paid \$0.50 a month or if you were married maybe one dollar a month, you know, and we did help people that were in need.

BB: Was this a new thing or was this always – had always been going on?

J: It was new. I remember when it was organized, we never did have a lot of money but it did help some people.

BB: Was it a voluntary contribution?

JRF: Yes, it was voluntary.

BB: Who started it? Whose idea was it?

JF: I really couldn't tell you.

MF: The company's, I imagine.

JF: It could have been Hamp Byerly. I really don't know.

BB: What year are we talking about? Do you remember at all when it was organized?

JRF: I have a feeling it might have been pretty soon after the Depression because that when – but still it wasn't just for the poor people, you know. It was everybody that had an emergency that didn't have money on hand right then, you know it was to help just anybody that had an emergency.

JF: I know one fellow came to me one time – I tried to get around it some way because you used different methods sometimes – he said, "I know you are on that 'mittee. He said, "I want you to help me."

BB: Who was on it with you, do you remember anyone else?

JF: I really don't.

MF: Do you remember anyone who applied?

JF: Yes, but...

JRF: I wouldn't do that

BB: Let's don't do that, okay. Well, did your Dad, you said he became a Methodist minister.

MF: Methodist minister.

BB: Later. Did he ever preach here at all?

JF: Well, we came back and held meetings here, but his last appointment was San Augustine, but he died in 1921.

MF: He died in 1921.

BB: So he never was pastor here?

JF: No.

BB: Okay. It has here that you ran the Antler's Hotel. I want to hear some of that.

MF: For a short time.

JF: We didn't have it very long. The people that lived here had built up a reputation. It was really a show place. They had all kinds of Indian blankets, things like that. Mr. Temple let me try my hand at operating the café, but the help, all the help that I could get and I wasn't there to over see it; I was still holding a job at the commissary. And the help that I could get just took it away...they as fast as I could bring it in they would take it away and I couldn't make it go. It was a full time job.

BB: Tell me something about the Antlers...when was it built and all?

JF: I just don't know.

JRF: Sometimes in the early thirties.

MF: Early thirties.

JRF: Or maybe, because I know when...

MF: What was their name?

JF: Cammack – C A M M A C K.

JRF: It was. I married in '34 and I don't believe it was here then. See, it was after that but after I came back it was here and I came back in '37 so it was probably between '34 and '37 – somewhere in there.

BB: Sounds like there was just lots of boarding houses in town?

JRF: There were because lots of people came...

JF: Couldn't get houses.

MF: Couldn't get houses.

JF: The Company owned all the houses and your rent included your doctor bill, light bill and your water bill at first; you didn't pay anything extra. Of course, later on when they had to buy some electricity.

JRF: After the company quit making it we had to pay for it.

JF: And water, too.

JRF: But there just weren't a lot of homes and then, you know. We used to have a lot of salesmen come through here and they spent the night – traveling men. We called them didn't we – Drummers – traveling men.

MF: But we didn't have – all we had was the hotel over there and the Beanery.

JRF: We had Mrs. Williams Hotel and Mrs. Estes's Hotel.

MF: Well, they called that the Beanery where Mrs. Williams was but there were not many places to stay because we kept some teachers one time – a little girl came to me and begged us to take her because there wasn't any place for teachers to stay so we started keeping a number of them in our home.

BB: What would you charge them – board or what?

MF: Sure.

JF: About \$30.00 a month – fed them and some of them we would give them a bed and everything else. We had two girls staying with us and we charged them \$30.00 per month.

MF: Was that what it was?

JF: Yes – that was room and board.

BB: That was almost half their salary, but that is room and board?

JF: That is right – everything was in proportion, relatively.

BB: I was surprised to hear you mention the KKK? I have never heard anyone else mention it.

MF: Oh, I can tell you a man who was tarred and feathered.

JRF: Tarred and feathered.

BB: Here?

JRF: Yes, down around Emporia – he lived down around Emporia.

BB: What did he do?

JRF: Trifling on his wife – they wouldn't have enough tar and feathers now, would they? They couldn't make that many, the chickens couldn't produce that many feathers. That was exactly – but they would march down here and I remember one time I may have been coming from your house or Eunice's and it was just about dark and I was coming across that little bridge and I looked up and saw that flaming cross coming down this track and scared – it liked to have scared me to death and I ran home – I wasn't too far and then that is when Chester – he saw it – and he ran and got up under the bed at his house and I got just as close to mamma – that I believe the most horrifying experience I had here.

BB: Were these people from?

JRF: From Lufkin.

BB: They were from Lufkin and coming down here.

JRF: They were from Lufkin and coming down here to scare us.

MF: To take over.

JRF: To take over.

BB: Was this person that you were talking about that they tarred and feathered – was he white or black?

JRF: Black.

MF: White.

BB: He was a white man. I have never even heard of that before. I thought it was strictly...

JRF: Well, he was.

JF: I don't think they ever bothered the black people at all.

JRF: No, no, but that is the only one that I remember but, of course, they marched through the colored section.

MF: They scared them all.

JRF: But they didn't scare them any more than they scared me I will tell you that and I know one thing their policy was every other house they would leave....

JF: A cross.

JRF: A cross and so they had to leave one in the corner of our yard and so about two weeks after it had been left there Chester was cleaning the yard and my mother told him – “Now, Chester, I have told you twice to move that cross.” And he said “Miss Annie, I have done everything you have ever told me to do but I ain't going to touch that cross.” So really it was a horrifying. I just never will forget it and they did that every so often. I think after the first time and my mother explained...I don't think it was but I was just by myself and I had all these men in those white sheets and it was just a long line. They came down on this train track and then they got off and marched down there. They would march up here and leave all these signs and one over here.

BB: Was this very often that they would do this?

JRF: I don't think too often – no – no – really that is the only time I remember that I can absolutely remember it because I think after that it didn't shock me so.

BB: So we are talking about...?

JRF: But they marched in Lufkin, too – it wasn't just here – they did it in Lufkin, too.

BB: Oh – I am sure that.

JRF: Yes, oh yes.

BB: Was that about the 1920's or so?

JRF: Yes, I imagine, because I would say that I was about 7 or 8. I was born in 1909 so I imagine it was about like that.

BB: Well, tell me something about the commissary now – that your dad ran it.

JRF: Well, he was...he came here pretty soon after it, and he also was the postmaster because they had the post office there in the store and he...

JF: Josephine, get your microphone.

JRF: He had the store and everybody kinda gathered there, you know, in the mornings – they would come by to buy their groceries and they would gather there and visit over with Mrs. Farrington – she had the women's side – Jim had the other and then I know it was like Jim said. The bunch was always full of fun even before he came because when I was small – another thing that I was scared of was false faces and when I would come in over there, they would all – I guess they wanted to get rid of me – and they would all put

one on at the same time and I would leave in a hurry but it was... you got excellent food and the meat market was one of the best. People from Lufkin came down here to buy their steaks and things of that nature and a lot of the meat that Mr. Taylor Powell out here from town – he raised them but a lot of it was sent in from Kansas City, but Mrs. Farrington used to keep this beautiful old handmade Irish lace and we always laughed about people coming from Lufkin and buying the lace and buying their steaks, you know, and so they really did, but they had the very best of things and it was the meeting place.

BB: Did they encourage people to sit around and do that kind of thing?

JRF: Yes, we had a drugstore and cute little tables and chairs, you know, and people would meet down there and drink cokes, or, and I know there was one man there that thought he would hang around there all the time and my dad said when he would go in to get a coke he would ask this man “Would you like to come in and have a coke?” And he would say “No, but I will take a cedar pencil.”

MF: He was Superintendent of the school.

JRF: I don’t know who he was but Purvis – Purvis –

MF: Well, I wanted to say has anybody mentioned an old constable we had name Ratcliffe?

BB: No – okay – Mr...

MF: Mr. Ratcliffe was, I guess you would say, constable, you know, and he was a big man and always wore a big holster with a gun in it and I was scared to death of him – I remember going up the steps of the commissary one time...I remember I would be barefooted and there would be some grass out here and I would run and get on the grass so my feet would get cooler but I got on up there by it and I started to go to the store, you know, the commissary had a market – it was al in one long building, but one was the market, ice house, market and the store and then the drugstore and then the post office...

JF: Barbershop.

MF: Yes, barbershop. Well, I looked up and saw that man up there on that store porch...I hightailed it back home. I wouldn’t have gone past him for anything in the world.

JRF: And he was just as good as gold – he and his wife – but it was just that pistol – we just weren’t used to that sort of thing.

MF: Boy, I was scared of him.

JRF: I am still scared of them.

BB: I think I heard somewhere that there was a jail here in Diboll, too.

JF: Yes, they had a little jail over there. It wasn't this big.

JRF: No. Just a little square – keep them long enough to get them to Lufkin, I guess.

BB: You were telling Mr. Devereaux...

JF: Devereaux – yes.

BB: Did he live here?

JF: Jack Devereaux.

BB: Something about some snakes – scared...

JF: Well, we in the store always was thinking of something to do when we would have these people come in there and we had... this day we had a little artificial snake. You could hold him in your hand and it would look like it was moving and there was a lady right across the counter from me and she just put her head on the counter and said, "Oh, my God" and she didn't say anything. She just stood there a few minutes and her boy was standing there by her and I said, "What is the matter with your mother – what is the matter?" He said, "Well, Sir she has trouble with her heart," and it just worried me to death. I didn't know what to do. I was afraid Mr. Rutland would come in there and find her passed out and he would know that I was the cause of it so I told him, "would you like to try to get her out on the porch so she could get some fresh air?" And he said, "Yes, that might do," so he took her on outside and that relieved me.

MF: Tell about the trains.

JF: We used to tell – circulate the word around that a circus train was coming through around 4 o'clock and, boy, they would go home and tell their folks about it and those people would be lined up all up and down in front of the store waiting for that train. Of course, it never came, you know. Some people really got mad about it.

MF: I don't blame them.

BB: I wouldn't either.

MF: I remember one thing, during the first World War...see, we were small but they had us come to knitting, taught us to know... we knitted some socks and things even though I wasn't but about 8 years old, or something like that. And we would meet the soldier train – that was the big thing – well, any meeting of a train was a big thing by Johnny...38 off the train, you know from the...39. We would meet the soldier train and take flowers and the older girls would get names from the soldiers, you know, and write to them. I will

never forget it in going across to Mrs. Estes's Hotel and play a piano for songs like "My Buddy," you know that and what was some of?

JRF: "It Is a Long Way to Temporary."

MF: Yes. Some of those – "Just a Baby's Prayer at Twilight" that would make me cry though. We would just sing them and play. We just thought we were trying to be patriotic and we were small.

JRF: And we folded bandages. We did a lot of things.

MF: We helped with the war then.

JRF: War effort and the library, which didn't have a book in it.

MF: Where the Love Wood Products is – that used to be it.

BB: Where would you meet?

JF: Well, it was just called a library – it wasn't a library.

JRF: I think it was built for that purpose – hoping to make one out of it but then they got to consecrating and we had a good library at school – books were always available to us because we had a good...each room had a good library.

MF: Josephine and I went there one time to visit when the Temple party came. We took them some Dorothy Perkins roses, don't you know, and sat in a chair together and we didn't know what to say but we were visiting them, weren't we?

JRF: Yes, they used to come to my house quite often.

BB: Was it kinda like visiting royalty? When they would come?

JRF: Well, yes, we were real proud when they came because they were always very nice to us, you know, and they would come over and sit in our yard and I would recognize that the Rogers, Carpenters, and Mr. Gilbert, he was sorta head of Southern Pine – it was called Southern Pine Lumber Company then but the Southern Pine offices were in Texarkana. And I remember Mr. Temple used to say it was pretty bad on him because he lived in Arkansas and his business was in Texas so he had a hard time voting because he wanted to vote for the people in Texas because of his business.

BB: How often would they come down?

JRF: Oh, usually in the summer time, you know, now some of the men would come off and on but when they would bring the ladies it would be in the summer because it was pretty bad weather in the winter.

BB: When did they build the house, you know, the Temple house?

JRF: The Temple house?

MF: That was before we left.

JRF: They had built it just...Mr. Temple hadn't been in it very, very long when my father died and he died in 1938. Yes, and he died in '38 because I know daddy used to go down there with Mr. Henry Temple, you know, while they were building it and he would call it "River Oaks," you know, and Mr. Henry would say come down and let's go down and see about the house. He would say, "You mean the one in River Oaks?" So he called it River Oaks but I know it was... they hadn't been over here but a very short while when he died and he died in '38. They were building on it.

BB: Now are you talking about Henry Temple?

JRF: Yes, Henry Temple. He was here when they built it.

BB: Okay, that was Tom Temple's nephew?

JRF: Nephew, yes.

MF: When we were little though, they called the first row up there the "Silk Stocking Row" and the back one was "Snuffy..."

JRF: "Snuffy Ridge"

BB: Snuffy what?

JRF: Ridge. Everybody dipped snuff, I guess. I don't know.

END OF INTERVIEW