

**VIVIAN and PATE WARNER**

**Interview 57a**

**April 24, 1985, at 1115 Ross, Lufkin, Texas**

**Marie Davis, Interviewer**

**Dorothy Farley and Shirley Harris, Transcribers**

**ABSTRACT:** In an interview with Marie Davis, Diboll natives Vivian and Pate Warner reminisce about growing up in an East Texas sawmill town. Their memories include school days, children's games, earning money as a child, and family life during the Depression. They also recall well-known Diboll personalities like Mr. Watson Walker, Fannie Farrington, and the Temple family. Both Vivian and Pate worked in the commissary, the hub of community life and commerce. The Warners also discuss gardens and canning, local working conditions, company benefits, funeral practices, health insurance and doctor visits, childbirth practices, and African-American midwives.

**Marie Davis:** Today I am talking to Vivian and Pate Warner; they live at 1115 Ross, Lufkin, Texas. Today's date is April 24, 1985. My name is Marie Davis. Pate, where were you born?

**Pate Warner:** I was born in Diboll, Texas.

**MD:** And when were you born?

**PW:** In 1909.

**MD:** What were your parents' names?

**PW:** My father's name was Fred Warner and my mother's name was Louisa Smith.

**MD:** Do you have any brothers and sisters?

**PW:** I have one brother, I had one brother and two sisters, Larue and Macbeth were my sisters and L. B. was my brother.

**MD:** All right, and how many children do you have?

**PW:** I have one child.

**MD:** Would you like to say something about your grandchild?

**PW:** I have one grandchild, a little girl named Kathleen.

**MD:** Good - and where does she live?

**PW:** She lives in Kentucky.

**MD:** Kentucky? All right – you don't get to see her very often, do you?

**PW:** No, I don't.

**MD:** Not often enough?

**PW:** Not often enough.

**MD:** Did your father work in Diboll?

**PW:** My father worked at the mill in Diboll – he started there about the time it began and he worked until about – what – 19 – I don't – you've got me on that -.

**MD:** All right.

**PW:** About – he worked – I don't know – he worked a long time – until he retired.

**MD:** Have your ancestors lived in Angelina County a long time?

**PW:** Yes, my mother's daddy was named Jephtha Smith, he came here in about 1854 and he was one of the first settlers here, and my grandmother was a Squyres. She came here in about 1830 and he had a big plantation of land out here on 1818, east of Diboll about two miles.

**MD:** Okay – Vivian, tell us something about your personal history – where were you born?

**Vivian Warner:** I was born in Diboll, too.

**MD:** When?

**VW:** In 1913.

**MD:** And what were your parents' names?

**VW:** My father was named Alonzo Smith, most people called him Lon. A lot of people called him Red because he had red hair. One time the Methodist preacher started calling him H. Lon so a lot of people called him that. My mother's name was Alma Bowen.

**MD:** Was she from Diboll?

**VW:** No, well, my father was born, I guess, I'm sure, in Angelina County, out in what is now the Hudson area, but my mother was born in Trinity County.

**MD:** And how many brothers and sisters and their names did you have?

**VW:** All right, I'm the oldest in our family and my sister Marguerite, is next and my two brothers are L. D. Smith and Joe Donald Smith and they both live in Diboll and have both worked for the Temple Industries all these years.

**MD:** Okay – I don't believe we got your son's name.

**VW:** His name is Pate Smith Warner, Jr. – That's three surnames but we usually answer to all of them and although my name was Smith and Pate's mother's name, maiden name was Smith, it was different Smiths and we wanted to name our son that because Pate's mother had named him that.

**MD:** Well, I always thought the Smith was for your family until I saw in the Squyres book that he was a junior and his mother was a Smith.

**VW:** My Smith ancestors came into Texas and the County at about this same time that Pate's grandfather did, but they settled out in what is known as the Hudson area. And they came from Georgia but Pate's Smiths came from Mississippi. They both had large families. Angelina County is just full of all those people.

**MD:** Got lots of kinfolks?

**VW:** Plus Pate's great grandmother being a Squyres, well his grandmother being a Squyres, she was a Burris, she was a Squyres but married a Burris – his great grandmother was a Squyres, that may be the biggest collection of people in the county.

**MD:** I would imagine, because they have been here so long.

**VW:** Longer than these Smiths we are talking about.

**MD:** Okay, since both of you were born in Diboll, what is your first recollection of the town, what did it look like?

**PW:** Well, at that time when we, when I can remember, about where we live, right below what used to be the office down there, you knew everybody in Diboll, you went from one end of the town to the other end and you know who lived where and who the – what was going on with everybody and everybody was always friends and you played with everybody – there wasn't nobody that you didn't play with – and along about that time, why, the cows were always in the street, the hogs were in the street, didn't nobody keep anything up, but they did have picket fences around the yards so the cows and hogs couldn't get in the yards. Vivian, maybe you can add a little bit to that.

**VW:** Well, I'd like to tell what the houses looked like, from my earliest recollection, there were not all that many but they were built in rows and they were nearly always built alike, three rooms in a row with a little hall and then a room beyond that hall and you always called it "the room across the hall" and they were built in these rows back to back with an alley between, that was so the ice wagon could come up in between the backs of the two rows of houses and I'm sure, in the beginning they were not painted, but later on I can remember when they were all white, and the picket fences Pate spoke about, they were painted white.

**PW:** Some of them were, not all of them.

**VW:** Well, maybe not all of them. And a fun thing to do, if your were going to your friend's house up the row or down the row or across the truck, you'd hold a stick against this picket fence as you came along and it was bump – bump – bump and sometimes when the fences were newly painted a fun thing to do, that made a mess, we'd go along and find a blister of that paint that had run down and mash it with our finger and I expect we were not too happily received at home when we got through with that.

**MD:** I guess the doctor played an important part in the town, didn't he?

**PW:** Yes, Marie, they did – I can remember we always had good doctors and some of the first ones I can remember is Dr. Mann and we had a Dr. Talley and a Dr. White and I can remember when Dr. Mann used to ride a horse to each person's house. At that time the people paid \$1.50 a month, if you worked for the Company, why, you paid \$1.50 a month, they cut your wages \$1.50 to pay for the doctor, and if you wanted him to come to your house, you went to the drugstore and they had a tablet behind the counter and they wrote the peoples' name up there that he was supposed to come and see and they would come and see that person. They would come back the next day until this person kinda got all right and sometimes, if you didn't live very far they'd walk, but most of the time, I can remember Dr. Mann even had a buggy, a horse and buggy, a lot of times he'd come in the buggy, he'd tie that buggy, tie that horse to the picket fence and after, I think about the time Dr. Talley and Dr. White got there they might have had cars, I can't remember but it seems like they got to using cars which your couldn't go so far in cars because you couldn't get around in the streets.

**MD:** The streets were muddy when it rained?

**PW:** The streets were real muddy and you couldn't go very far but that's the way you – and they had a Doctor's office upstairs and if you had something kinda bad wrong with you they might carry you up there and do a little something to you up there that they couldn't do at home but, Vivian, you might add something to that.

**VW:** Well, something I remember about the Doctor, that had delivered babies in the home and,

**PW:** Cost you fifteen bucks, I can remember that, too, ten or fifteen bucks – I know it wasn't much.

**VW:** And the baby was usually named after the Doctor. – I'll bet there are fifty people in Diboll that has the name Dale in their name, somehow or other, and your mother would always send the little ones over to the neighbors or farther while the baby was bring born and when you got to come home you had a new little baby.

**MD:** They were pretty inexpensive house calls, weren't they?

**PW:** Yes, it was, \$1.50 a month, is what it cost everybody.

**MD:** And they would usually come.

**PW:** Yes, they would come to see you but I don't know – they would see other people but I don't know if they charged them – I guess they had to charge those, you know people around Burke.

**MD:** The people who didn't work for the company they would charge? What about the school, do you have any fond memories of things happening at school or do you remember who was in your graduating class?

**PW:** Well, I went to school there and I finished in 1928. We had a lot of good teachers, I can remember Mr. Miller was one of them; and the Superintendent, when I graduated, was named H. F. Moore and K. P. Glass and Mr. Armstrong, we had a lot of good teachers, they had a lot of good teachers and I graduated in 1928 and a lot of these folks are already gone but here is the list that I graduated with: Bill Agee – I'm just going to call their names.

**MD:** That will be fine.

**PW:** Bill Agee, Louis Atkinson, Olivette Beard, Elvin Burris, Rhoda Faye Chandler, Minnie Hazel Durham, Edith Burgess, Herman Estes, Archie Ferguson, Johnny Goodman, Mildred Hawkins, Velma Henry Maurine Jett, Helen Kelly, John Lowe Kent, Tom McWhirter, Morelle Moss, Evie Neyland, P. H. Strauss, Pate Warner, Lola Weisinger, Geneva Womack, Thomas Birch and there are a lot of those that are already dead. And we had a 50 year class reunion at Rhoda Faye's when it was 50 years, it must have been in 1978, we had about 12 or 13 there.

**MD:** Was this a pretty big class?

**PW:** This was one of the biggest, well this was the biggest class that graduated, so far and now – I don't know – I guess they have plenty.

**MD:** Yes.

**PW:** And we had a – at that time what you call a study hall, we would all meet in that study hall every morning and had some – a pretty good time over there. We'd all line up, there was about 8 or 10 boys and, one of us would go in at a time and slam the door, the next one would wait a minute, he'd go in and slam the door, and after about five would go in – Bear – we called him Bear Miller, would come back there and say, what's going on Boys? Ya'll all come in at one time and he'd made us all go back out in the hall and we'd all come in at one time. Vivian might know something about the school in her days – she can probably tell you the ones who graduated with her.

**MD:** I graduated in 1930 and I'd like to call the names of the ones in my graduating class – Diboll had a good school and Pate's class there were some from Huntington and Corrigan and in my class some had come up from Corrigan to graduate with us. Occasionally someone would come and live with a friend or a relative from another town far away but they would live there through the school year.

**PW:** Well, this Tom McWhirter, he was from – Atlanta, I think, up in there somewhere, and two or three more of these boys were Thomas Birch was from Corrigan and Atkinson was from Corrigan and Olivette Beard, she was from over about Manning, somewhere, came there to stay with somebody. Maurine Jett was from Moscow; she was boarding there with Mrs. Lang at that time.

**MD:** Did they not have a High School in Corrigan, or do you remember?

**PW:** I don't think they did, Marie, because a lot of them would come to Diboll at that time.

**VW:** You see, this was two years later and we have three, we had more than three from Corrigan. Mary Anderson was one from Corrigan, Johnny Cook, Wilson Kelly, Robert Birch and there's one more. I don't recognize, Mary Maxey, the others were Ruth Burgess; she still lives in what we call Diboll, was born and raised and went through the school and came back to be one of the teachers in Diboll for many, many years. Meryl Glidden was in our class, she had come from Manning. We had twins, Luther Jennings and Lula Jennings and, I believe Lula still lives in Diboll. Our diploma said Myrtle Ruth O'Hara but everyone called her Dot. Aline Scarborough, Redorick Rutland had come to live with the Rutland for that year, for one year I guess it was, and graduated with us. Pate's sister was in our class, Macbeth Warner, Gordy Weeks, Vivian Weeks, Mary Alice Weeks, Bertha Weisinger, Otha Womack, Pat Dial, and Luther Jennings. Our class didn't stick

together like Pate's did, we never had a reunion but his bunch, they all were a real group.

**PW:** If one would do something bad, it was a fun class, and if one would do something bad, the others wouldn't tell on them, oh – I saw one girl pour a bottle of ink in one of the Principal's hats, but didn't nobody know who did it, they never did find out who did it.

**MD:** You mean you were mean back there, too, huh?

**PW:** Yeah, but we didn't tear up anything – back in that day, in the summer time when we were kids school was open, they never did lock the doors, and you went in there and played in the summer time and you wrote on the board, but you didn't tear up anything and like they do now, they have to lock it and everything – but you didn't tear up anything; you knew better than to tear up anything and everybody played in the school in the summer time. Let me read you something here about the first athletic park that was in Diboll in 1925, is it all right if I do that?

**MD:** Yes, sure.

**PW:** Mr. Durham was the big instigator of this, he was the General Manager of the Texas Southeastern Railway and he got the Southern Pine Lumber Co. to give land for this Baseball Park; it was located where the shopping center is over there. At the time that he got it, it was a cotton patch. We'd all go over there in the evening and pull up all those cotton stalks and burn 'em and any trees that were around; well, we burned all that and, this was in 1925. And the first coach we had was R. O. Davis, and his assistant was Pete Hendricks and E. T. Herrick and the people that were on that team, or started to playing ball that year, were Robert Berry, Clifford Jordan, Albert Jackson, Edwin Durham, Aden Vaughn, George Wilmoth, Clayton Kelly, Walter Ferguson, Edgar Austin, Frank Austin, Pate Warner, John Hendricks, Buster Grace, Herman Estes, Chester Jones, Joe Stegall, Beamon Russell, Jake Durham and George Johnson.

**MD:** Okay, now was this a town baseball team?

**PW:** This was a high school, this was the first time that Diboll ever had a high school baseball team and it was the first park that was ever built, about over there where the park is now. A little different from where it is, but that was the first baseball park that was ever built. By the way, Mr. Durham, being the General Manager of the TSE and Mr. Devereaux, he was – he worked with the TSE, they done a lot, got a lot of free work done for the ball park, who knew how to do it. So that was how the ballpark got started.

**VW:** Marie, I would like to tell you something that I remember about school that was fun. Everybody went home for lunch, for dinner, we called it dinner, even the

daddy came home from the mill for dinner and it wasn't that far that everyone lived, so the whole school turned out to go home for dinner and when we came back, before the bell rang to go in, in the fall there were two big hickory nut trees in the school yard. There was a fence around the schoolyard, and the boys threw sticks up in the trees to make the hickory nuts fall and there was a big scramble on for who could get the hickory nuts. And one day after we all went back in, when the bell rang after lunch time, one of the boys was acting bad and the teacher took him out in the hall to give him a paddling and something made the awfulest noise while she was palling him and - his name was Littleton Weeks - they - his parents lived in Diboll, some of his relatives are still in the area - she asked him "Littleton, what is that in your pocket?" He said, "they was hickory huts, but they're busted now" and that was just a good joke from then when we shook hickory nuts out of the tree.

**PW:** Well, another good thing about those people bringing those lunches, Bill Agee, P. H. Strauss and I finally figured how - if we got hungry, they had what they called a "cloak room", I guess. I don't know what they call them now but anyway, they would put these lunches up on a shelf and we would find some excuse to go in this cloakroom and we knew, usually knew, the people who brought their cake or something like that in their lunches and we'd get in that lunch and eat that cake and wrap it back up, so that went on about two weeks and finally, they caught us doing that and that put a quietus to eating the people's cake.

**VW:** That was some of the students that came from Burke. And they learned that one girl brought strawberries in her lunch because her parents had a strawberry patch and hers was mostly whose lunch they would get in. Everybody knew everybody.

**PW:** One time we had a Superintendent in Diboll named Mr. Denton and he died while he was teaching there and they put his body down, I don't know what that is called now but then we called it the Library, it was down there where some of those people boarded or something - what did they call it?

**MD:** Where Love Wood Products is now?

**PW:** Yeah, Love Wood Products and we went in one door and out the other door, just like you do in a chapel and, I don't know how many people were there, but they were lined up and we just walked in and out.

**MD:** The whole school?

**PW:** The whole school went down there, had us look at him, it wasn't where you wanted to go or not, you just went, you know if they said to do something, why you did it, it's not like it is now.

**VW:** Marie, I'd like to tell you about we did once a week, we called it "going to chapel" - every class marched in while someone played the piano, a March tune, and you sat in sections. Mr. H. B. Stegall was the Superintendent that I remember

most, and he would go up on the stage and pass his hand over the crowd and say “is everybody happy?” and all the children would say “yes” and later we, ...

**PW:** He’d let you out thirty minutes early, too, the louder you talked, why; he’d let you out thirty minutes early.

**VW:** In the summer time, we would go in the auditorium, it had an elevated floor and a stage down low and we were allowed to play in there and we played the piano and go up on the stage and made like we were having a play; they would have different people to come and give like a program, sing for us, or well, we did what we called recitations in those days.

**MD:** Yeah –

**VW:** And some classes would put on little plays and later on, Mr. Moore, that was the Superintendent when Pate’s class graduated, he has his office there in the auditorium, a little room off the stage and you went up some little stairs to it, he had signs that he put on his door, and he changed them very often. One time he put up a sign that said “Come in without knocking and go out the same way.” Another sign said, “Don’t make excuses, your friends don’t need it and your enemies won’t believe it.”

**MD:** How do you remember those?

**VW:** Somehow they just became indelible in my mind and we thought they were so unusual; he did a lot of unusual things. He must have been from a different state; he was not an East Texan.

**PW:** He was a bachelor, though, he didn’t have a wife, no family; he stayed up there in what we called the Library and ate down at the Hotel.

**VW:** There were several bedrooms in this library, that we called it, and men who didn’t have a family lived up there. It was interesting, there were stairs there in the middle that went up to the upstairs rooms children would go there and play on that porch and go up the stairs; the stairs were sort of unusual then, there were stairs in the Commissary Store and, well, more that one set of stairs and an elevator and it was so interesting to children. It was not an elevator as we know it now but we called it an elevator and you pulled it by a rope and a big wheel that raised it up. It was a freight elevator, that’s what it was.

**PW:** Yes.

**VW:** This Library had a pretty yard; there was a good bit of space between it and the office.

**PW:** The Temples stayed there, Mr. Tom Temple, Mr. Arthur, Sr. they stayed there and ate at the hotel, when they'd come but everybody knew when they were there.

**MD:** When they came down from Texarkana?

**PW:** When they came down from Texarkana, when I was a little boy I was always glad they came. They had a tennis court over there, I guess kinda behind where the truck shop is now, and I'd go over there and chase tennis balls for them. They had a big court and they had a wire on each end but sometimes those balls would go out the side and you go over there and chase balls for them sometimes and get .25 cents or .50 cents – I was rich when I came from over there.

**MD:** I mean.

**PW:** Mr. Temple got where he knew me by name because I stayed over there when they played that tennis. I was over there every time. I was glad when they came, they were nice though, kind to you and everything, friendly.

**MD:** When they came down from Texarkana, people knew they were coming, usually?

**PW:** I think so, Marie, I don't really know but I think they did know when they were coming.

**MD:** What did you do for recreation?

**PW:** Well, went in swimming down at the creek in the summer time, that's White Oak Creek, that's right behind the office now, there were 3 or 4 pretty good holes down there, everybody went there and went in swimming, you'd have an old pair of overalls, or something like that – you didn't have a bathing suit, didn't have any money to buy a bathing suit and play ball. You were talking about – what do you all – the colored played the whites when I was a little kid, we played them nearly every day when I was 12 or 13 years old. We integrated way back there; we knew all of them and they knew all of us. I don't know, at night you always went up around the store and everything like that. Had some parties sometimes. We had a lot of country parties out on – out this way, out on 1818 out there. I remember Mr. Lee Massingill used to give a lot of parties. Another time I remember about Mr. Lee Massingill and his first wife was named Jessie and, of course I went to the Methodist Church and Vivian did, too, and at Easter Sunday Mr. Lee Massingill would have an Easter Egg Hunt out here at his house in Diboll and you walked out that road, and I'll bet there would be – I don't know how many – everybody would meet out there on Sunday afternoons, old folds would hide the eggs and the kids would hunt them.

**MD:** Was this for the whole town or just for the Methodist?

**PW:** The Methodist Church, well, the whole town could come, it wouldn't make any difference. It didn't make any difference. If you wanted to go out there and bring somebody – I know some people lived by us – they were Baptist – they went out there big as we did. Vivian might remember something about that, too, she went

**MD:** What did the girls do for recreation, Vivian?

**VW:** We played dolls, as all girls did, I guess, paper dolls and something we liked to do that children wouldn't imagine doing these days. We had a main railroad track, what they called Southern Pacific?

**PW:** Yeah, HE&WT

**VW:** And then we had the TSE railroad track that was the Company business but we would take a stick and each one hold one end of it and we would walk the railroad tracks and the idea of the game was to see how many rails you would walk, you and your partner would walk without falling off.

**VW:** - are we back on walking the railroad tracks?

**MD:** Yes

**VW:** Uh, I've forgotten what I said now – another thing we would do on the railroad track – we'd take two nails and cross them and when the train ran over them that would make us a little pair of miniature scissors, or if we had a penny we might put that penny on there and let it get mashed and make it bigger, that was a fun thing to do and when children got a little bit bigger, on Sunday afternoon they would go over by the mill pond and the railroad tracks over there had a motor car that you pumped by hand, the boys could get it out of the little shop or wherever they kept it in and we'd ride a little ways on that – hand car was what you called it, wasn't it? That was fun to do and we played around the lumberyard and I never will forget, I can tell it today if I smell something like it, the smell of those sheds, the lath mills and where they steamed the lumber, Pate, what is it?

**PW:** The dry kilns.

**VW:** Dry kilns, it had a particular odor that – oh, it was just real to us children.

**PW:** At that time they didn't care if you – you could go all over the lumberyard, all up in the Planer Mill and play.

**VW:** And play – it wasn't considered a hazard although it probably was hazardous, children were careful; you knew how to play about such things. This wasn't necessarily fun but when the Planer Mill would blow off – that's what we called the end of the day, they would blow a whistle that meant the day was over, well, people particularly who lived nearest there, the children would be ready and your mother wanted you to go up on the Planer Mill dolly run and pick up pieces of

wood to burn in the cook stove the next day, and if you had a good friend that was working there he would have you a little stack all stacked up, and getting splinters in your feet was that thing that happened all the time, you'd get splinters in your feet on that dolly run playing about on it. We played in the boxcars, they had a particular sound that children just love to play in the, I guess, I don't know, sometimes you would find things in there and you were always looking for something.

**MD:** Did you have any odd jobs when you were growing up?

**PW:** To make a little money?

**MD:** You said picking up some tennis balls –

**PW:** Yeah, I chased tennis balls and made a little money like that and then I had pigeons, and they helped theirself, Mr. Green had a bunch of horses over there but they'd go over there and get that grain and I sold those pigeons to Mrs. Walker and Mrs. Durham and they gave me .25 cents a piece for them. I partly dressed them and carried them up there but when I went up there they would pay me right then – that was the good part about it, they gave me the cash, wasn't no checks or nothing like that, they always – and I got to know Mrs. Walker real good, I went to her house more than I did Mrs. Durham's and I would always go in there, a lot of times Mr. Walker would be there and he was real friendly – he knew everybody in town, you'd think he didn't know boys by name but he did, he would ask me about people all around and he was real nice and called me by my first name. You'd really have to like him.

**MD:** Mr. Walker, did they have children?

**PW:** They didn't have any children – she had some brothers that worked there, I think three of them, wasn't it Vivian?

**VW:** At least three – there names, last names was Effinger – they were from Virginia as I recall, anyway, they were not east Texans and Mr. Walker was real southern gentleman, wore white suits, white linen suits, white shoes and a white panama hat,

**PW:** They had ham shipped here, when we worked in the store they would have hams shipped here and we would hang them in the store.

**VW:** They were called Virginia hams and they were wrapped in canvas and dipped in something that hardened around them and when Mrs. Walker wanted one she would send whoever was working for them.

**MD:** And they would cut one down and sent to her?

**PW:** I guess the market would slice it for them.

**MD:** But he knew everybody?

**PW:** Oh, he knew everybody, he might not call everybody's name, but if you got around him, after you'd talk to him a little bit, he knew everybody, he knew their first name, he could ask me about people I didn't even think he knew and he knew them.

**MD:** Pate, when did you start working in the Commissary?

**PW:** I think it was about 1934, something like that, some where along about that time.

**MD:** What department did you work in?

**PW:** I worked in the grocery department and the men's department, too. I worked in both departments.

**MD:** Vivian, you worked for?

**VW:** Mrs. Farrington – over in the dry goods, when we went to work in the Commissary, it was after Franklin Delano Roosevelt became President and it was after the depression.

**PW:** Just as the depression was getting over and they had this NRA and everybody had to work short hours, isn't that right?

**VW:** Well, this particular time when I started to work, I think you started before I did – it had changed in the Government to be called WPA – Works Progress Administration – and you had to have a certain number of people on the job for a certain number of hours. Of course, you didn't work very much but, Oh, we were glad to get those jobs and I worked for a long time with Mrs. Farrington – she was not an east Texan either, and, if I remember right, she came to Diboll as a bride of Mr. Farrington from St. Louis, Missouri and there were such interesting and unusual, and different from the average people we were acquainted with. She was a devout Christian, her church, or her belief was Christian Science, but she did an awful lot in the Methodist church and the Baptist church and especially when the camps at Fastrill cut out and all those people moved in, she established a little Mission over on the east side of town.

**PW:** About where the Baptist church is now?

**VW:** Yes, probably right in that area, give or take a little and she worked for those people, she would help any one that needed help and she was a very refined lady. Like I said, Mr. Walker was a real southern gentleman. Mrs. Walker and Mrs. Farrington knew all the proper manners, etiquette, and Mrs. Farrington was an accomplished seamstress, that's how she was making her living in St. Louis; she

was designing and making clothes she could do just anything with sewing and her favorite color scheme for an outfit you called it an outfit in those days, had and dress, shoes and gloves, was navy blue trimmed with Kelly green – she said that was in her trousseau to get married and that was her favorite colors. She was a real nice person to work with. I learned a lot from her.

**MD:** Did you have a lot of fun working in the store?

**VW:** More fun than a barrel of monkeys.

**MD:** A lot of funny things happened?

**PW:** Anybody that didn't know Ed Day, you had to know him to appreciate him, he was – he would go off on Saturday night, fishing, and naturally, he would hear a lot of things that nobody else would hear and he heard a lion one time down at Ryan's Lake fishing and Bill Agee, Jim and Lefty – we like to have run him crazy about roaring like a lion – one day Mr. Rutland came and saw Bill and me in the wareroom and he said "Pate, you and Bill let this lion hunt come to a close" and I mean we didn't hunt any more lions. One time Mr. Ed, he had an old car, well, it was a new car he had a wreck, and the only place that could fix it was in Houston and so he carried it to Houston and the people name was C. Jim Steward and Stevenson, or something, anyway, Jim Fuller went over to the other offices and called him on the phone and told him, "Mr. Ed. – is this Mr. Ed Day from Diboll?" He said – yeah – Jim said – "your car has been let out by mistake and it has gone up to north Texas, Abilene". Mr. Ed said "my God, that car will be wore out before it gets back" and he hung up the phone, so we knew what it was all about, you know, and didn't nobody say anything about it for a long time but every day we'd ask him – "have you heard from your car?" – he'd say – "no" – but you had to know him to appreciate him. All - everybody liked him, everybody like Mr. Ed and Mr. Ed never had an enemy in his life, did he?

**VW:** No, he didn't.

**PW:** And he liked to have the fiddle music and the guitar – he could play a guitar – get him out on Saturday night, he was a pretty good entertainer – lots of things went on in the store – there were some good times in there, most everybody got what they wanted, it was during some depression times that was pretty hard but didn't nobody go hungry.

**VW:** The Company helped people during that time.

**PW:** They helped the people a whole lot. The expression that Mr. Ed had all the times was when somebody, Mr. Rutland or somebody would come around and you knew everything was getting pretty edgy, why, he say "now, boys, every tub on its own bottom"

**MD:** Vivian, we said something about Mrs. Farrington, what do you remember about Mr. Farrington?

**VW:** I remember Mr. Farrington well; he was the Post Master in the store, it was up on the north end of the store and I can remember when the old store was built – I can't say that I remember the old store but this present building that is standing there now – I can remember when it was built.

**MD:** Did they just enlarge the other store or did they tear it down?

**PW:** No. They tore it down.

**VW:** And built in a little different site.

**PW:** Moved it outside and built this big store,

**VW:** It was built on the railroad track so that TSE could back cars down there and unload the groceries into the store.

**PW:** You see, flour and all that stuff came in boxcars. We didn't have any trucks.

**MD:** Well, now did you – how did you get your sugar and stuff, was it in bags or did you bag it up?

**PW:** No, you bagged all that – your coffee, your sugar and all that, your rice, you bagged it in .10, .25, or .50 cents and a dollar. Vivian is going to tell about – go ahead and tell about Mr. Farrington.

**VW:** Okay, in the beginning this little post office was real little, in the beginning of when I can remember it, and Mr. Farrington was the Post Master. At one time my mother's sister worked in there is probably why I remember it so well. I would hang out down there sometime, but when the train ran and, it seems like they came pretty close together around noon time, one went up and one went down – well, the mail was carried into the Post Office. It was not only the Post Office but Mr. Farrington had a watch shop; he handled some nice jewelry and fine cut glass, had a show case in there and oh, if you could buy a piece of that cut glass you were doing good, or a ring or a watch and he worked on watches. But this Post Office, I'm sure everyone has seen a little Post Office like it; it had a little window and they closed that window while they were processing the mail and there were a few boxes on either side and I suppose they cancelled the letters as having been received, but when you'd hear that stamp hit on the stamp, hit on the letter, you'd know they were soon going to open that window and you could ask for your mail, and you either asked – “do I have any mail?”, because they knew who everybody was, or, if you had a box you'd say “is there any mail in my box?” and later on though, when there were more people who lived in Diboll they made – they enlarged it, I guess you'd say; they had a partition all the way, and

two entrances, an entrance into where the workers were and an entrance into where the post office boxes were, we called them a lock box.

**PW:** Lock box.

**VW:** It had a combination and you had to know your combination.

**PW:** You paid for your lock box, too.

**VW:** Yes, you paid – you'd turn it over to a number to the right and back to the left and then it would open and once again when they'd cancel that mail and hit on that stamp and then a letter you'd know they were through – some people would open their box and every letter that was put in there by the time the postal workers, why they'd get it right then. Later on, Miss Zettie Kelly was the Post Master for a long time. I guess Mr. Farrington had the first gasoline pump, too, in town.

**PW:** The first gasoline pump, it was a hand pump, it was out in front, kind of at the side of that building or where that building is now, the old office building and it was a hand pump and if you wanted any gas you bought it from Mr. Farrington. I think gas was .15 cents or .20 cents a gallon, or something like that.

**VW:** It was red, wasn't it?

**PW:** Yes, he was the only man that had any gas; you had to get it there. He didn't open on Sunday, seems like he opened a little while on Sunday morning.

**VW:** That was the first gas pump.

**PW:** The first gas pump that here ever was in Diboll. That is a fact.

**VW:** And he didn't keep any gas in there, if you wanted some and then he pumped –  
**PW:** Pumped it up by hand.

**VW:** However much you said you wanted because somebody could come up and get some, I guess.

**PW:** Well, if you bought 3 or 4 gallons you were in high cotton.

**MD:** You could go a long way on that.

**VW:** Oh yes, you could go to Lufkin on a gallon of gas.

**PW:** Then later on Les Estes opened a filling station up on the highway.

**MD:** Did you feel there was a great deal of difference between people because of their jobs they had or where they lived or were people more or less mingled together, did you feel any different, very much different?

**PW:** Down there about that time, Marie, there wasn't much difference; you take the Durham's, they had more than other boy, but they played with everybody and, of course, they called that "silk stocking row" didn't they, Vivian?

**VW:** I think so.

**PW:** Down in there where I lived it was "tin can alley" and on down below it was "snuffy ridge" and up around the planer; they had a lot of houses up in there and they called that "smoky road" where all those cinders fell and you knew everybody and if somebody asked where they lived – he lives on tin can alley – such a house and if he lived on the back, he lived on the last dip of snuffy.

**VW:** That was mostly for fun.

**PW:** Oh yes, those people were good people down there, I played with all of them.

**VW:** Oh yes.

**PW:** They were some of the best ones I played with. But if you had a dime, Jake Durham and Edwin Durham would let you keep their bicycles a couple of days. Everybody learned to ride a bicycle on Jake's and Ed's and Josephine Rutland's.

**MD:** Oh they were the ones who had the first bicycles?

**PW:** They had the first bicycles.

**MD:** We haven't said anything about the drugstore, what do you remember about the drugstore?

**VW:** I remember particularly about the drugstore at Christmas time. Mr. Agee was the druggist, pharmacist; we called him the druggist and people worked for him. It had a nice soda fountain and some days, after dinner in the summer time when it was real hot, we lived not far from the Commissary, well, Momma would let us go and buy an ice cream cone and they'd put these dips of ice cream in the cone and, if you were two children or three children or four children, or if Momma wanted one, too, you'd bring them all back in your hand like that they would put a paper napkin over it. Of course, they were pretty good melted by the time you got home with it, but it was good to us then. And at Christmas time Mr. Agee would bring out some wooden tables that – he'd put up the first table down and then the next one on top of it and probably - there were three of them and he would have a shipment of toys to come in.

**PW:** You didn't go to Lufkin to buy your toys, you bought them in Diboll when we were kids, and every family that bought any Christmas toys, they bought there at – they carried back there and kept them back, put your name on them.

**VW:** That was like before 1925, something like that and you'd go down there and you'd look at those toys and you'd look at them and look at them, and if your parents could, they'd go and pick out something for you, it might not be just what you wished for; they would pick out what they could buy for you or what they wanted you to have and Mr. Agee would box it up and put it back in the wareroom.

**MD:** Seems like that would be the first layaway.

**PW:** Oh yes, that was the first layaway there was.

**VW:** And then at Christmas time you'd get these toys.

**PW:** And then they said – always said if you didn't have anything, they had a big Christmas tree at the auditorium and they could call out people's names and you'd go up there, but I never was lucky enough to get anything. I remember one time though, Carl Ferguson was playing Santa Claus and he caught on fire up there.

**VW:** His beard.

**PW:** Caught his beard on fire.

**VW:** He nearly fought those boys, too, when they teased him about it.

**PW:** Yes, we called him Santa Claus for a long time. He sure would get mad. But we had a good time, everybody had something for Christmas. About all you got though, was a apple, an orange, a little candy, you might get one toy, but you didn't get much. You got, maybe some marbles, or something. Didn't anybody have any money to buy anything – there were a few people who did, but not many.

**MD:** But everybody was happy?

**PW:** Oh yes, they were happy.

**VW:** And we found other things to do besides with toys. Speaking of marbles, that was a great pastime – the yards, for a period of time, didn't have any grass on them and you'd dig those holes and there were a number of games you could play.

**PW:** You could play "keeps" – you'd dig a round tunnel like this table, you'd ante up, like you or Vivian and I played, you could put two in and then you'd toss for the first shot, see who could get closest to the line and then whoever did, shot first

and you kept what marbles you knocked out – some boys were pretty good shots, they'd have a pocket full of marbles.

**VW:** If you had a pocketknife you played mumblety-peg –

**PW:** Yes, and root the peg if you got beat.

**VW:** And if you had a ball you played games with the ball; one was called “sevens” – whatever feat you could do with your ball and you were playing, you know, against each other you'd start off – you'd throw the ball on the floor and catch it and you'd do it seven times but if you missed, then the ball was passed to the next person and as it went around these feats got harder to do and you'd find out who was the winner. And swings, we all had swings.

**PW:** Talk about ball playing back in those times, we had some pretty good ball players. Hollis Tucker was a good ball player; he made the Texas League and played a while. Buster Jackson was a good ball player, he made – played professional ball, and they had some colored folks that were real ball players but, at that time, the colored folks couldn't get in the League. They had some colored folks over there, I remember some of them named Tet Pearson, they had one named P. J. and Eddie and, boy, they were real ball players, they would have make the Big Leagues, but they couldn't play.

**MD:** You know, there were a lot of black people in Diboll but, you know, did you ever feel that there was a great deal of difference between the black and the whites?

**PW:** No, like I told you awhile ago, we played ball with them over there all the time, went over there to their ball games and, you knew them all, they knew you and, it was kinda like – I don't know – it was just different from what it is now.

**VW:** The only thing, you just didn't go to school or church with them.

**PW:** No, you didn't go to school or church; you just as well to though, you were with them all the other times.

**VW:** They had their own school.

**PW:** They had their own school.

**VW:** But everybody was friends.

**PW:** Oh yes, I hunted with Chester Willis for a long time, he was colored and I'd just as soon go with him as anybody.

**VW:** When we talked about the doctors a while back and that the babies were delivered in the homes, there were two Negro women that – we didn't know it then, but I

am sure they would be called midwives today. Although the doctor was there, he would send word and one of these Negro women would come to help and then she would continue to come to the home for several days or as many days as the mother wanted her, I guess, to help with the baby. One was named Aunt Callie Jackson and, what was the other?

**PW:** I don't remember her

**VW:** Aunt Cassie's last name

**PW:** I don't know what her name was

**VW:** Cassie Kinsey?

**PW:** Kiskey Kizzey, or something like that

**VW:** Cassie Kinsey and everybody loved them and you called them that, you called them Aunt.

**MD:** What do you remember about Aunt Callie?

**VW:** Well, she was a tall stately woman – Callie Jackson – and she wore white clothes, she washed and ironed them and

**PW:** If somebody was sick and you could get her, why, you were well.

**VW:** She'd take care of the sick.

**PW:** Cook

**VW:** Cook for you but I don't know that she would ever do the washing for you, but there were women who did that and you loved for them to come and you treated them nicely, they were doing you a favor but for a price. It was not much, well in comparison it was.

**MD:** My mother says that when I had pneumonia that Aunt Callie Jackson saved my life. She told her exactly what to do – the doctor had almost given up. You know I just remember Aunt Callie . . . . .

**PW:** I can remember one time when my mother was real bad sick and she came to our house and stayed with us. I can remember it just as well, she said "now don't worry, I'll fix her" and sure enough, in a few days she was better.

**VW:** Might be one thing that was so helpful, she was so kind, everyone loved her.

**PW:** Always smiling and, you know, wasn't sassy or anything like that, and Aunt Cassie, she was just a big bunch of fun, just dancing and carrying on like that. I thing her folks were slaves, weren't they, or wasn't she a slave girl?

**VW:** She liked to tell something about that, you could remember being a slave and she claimed she knew when she was born and she lived to be real old – older than Aunt Callie.

**PW:** Marie, didn't you know Uncle Dave Stovall, the slave that was out here or not? I imagine you did.

**MD:** He is buried around here?

**PW:** Yes, he is buried at Prairie Grove. Another thing while we are talking about somebody being buried – is that on now. Well, I can remember when they would go out to Ryan's Chapel, Marie, and they would haul people in wagons and they'd take a rope and let you down. We didn't have any undertakers, back when they had the flu so bad and they would take this rope and let you down and then they'd cover you up right there, the people did.

**MD:** There was no embalming?

**PW:** No, Jim Richards, Hazel Richards' daddy, I guess, dug more graves in Ryan's Chapel than I can remember now. Rat Johnson is supposed to have dug a lot, but Jim Richards was the real helper at something like that. Now, later on, they got these old trucks, you know, just open bed trucks and they would haul people out there in that but the roads were so bad, you usually went in a wagon or something like that. George Johnson was the delivery stable man and he was the one who used to furnish the buggy you could ride in or a wagon.

**VW:** I feel like the lifestyle in Diboll improved and progressed as the years went by; we were not always under certain severe living conditions. As time went on, I think we had real nice things in Diboll. Out churches were nice, our schools were nice.

**PW:** Had good doctors.

**VW:** The shipping in the commissary was quality merchandise.

**PW:** The best you could get. They had Arrow shirts, Stetson hats. I guess on Mrs. Farrington's side you carried the best you could get.

**VW:** The best of merchandise; she knew how to buy those things; she knew what was good.

**MD:** Did Aunt Callie Jackson marry Professor Jackson, the trumpet player?

**VW:** She did, he was a real character, too, a very accomplished musician. Her name was Jackson before she married him and she always called him “Professor”

**PW:** He came from Beaumont, didn’t he, or somewhere down there; he was supposed to have taught Harry James how to play the trumpet.

**MD:** Yes.

**PW:** I don’t know if that’s true or not.

**VW:** Yes, that’s true.

**MD:** Who are some of the other colored people that you remember?

**PW:** Well, Ben Bevins, he worked in the market, helped in the, well, he was the iceman. And Walter Allen, he was the man over the pond; he was a real nice fellow. He was the boss over four or five of those big old Negro’s that kept the logs up in the Mill there. They had chairs down there, and they walked these logs. Mr. Walker thought a lot of Walter Allen. And we had some Randolph’s over there. There was Amos, three or four of those, they were all good people. Had another one names Jack Armstead and they had K. Smith and Carey Smith, What was his name, Vivian?

**VW:** Well, when we wrote out a charge to them they were C. Smith and K. Smith. I don’t remember what K. stood for.

**PW:** C. P. Griffin was a colored fellow that was over there a long time.

**VW:** Well, what I remembered about Ben Bevins – if your Mama sent you to the Icehouse to buy a dime’s worth of ice, Ben would pull out a big, big piece of ice. I have not idea what it would be called, but he would saw with a saw a piece of ice that you wanted and we had checks, those pasteboard checks in that time, and you gave him your check, the money for it, and when he sawed this ice, we would call it sawdust if it was lumber but it was ice – I don’t know what you would call it, but anyway where it fell he would let you get there and pick it up and squeeze it in your hand and eat it and that was a treat.

**MD:** A snowcone?

**VW:** Yes, like a snowcone, that’s exactly what it would be, Marie.

**MD:** Without the flavor.

**VW:** Yes, without any coloring on it.

**PW:** There were a lot of good colored people in Diboll.

**VW:** I remember one Negro woman that worked for Mrs. Farrington, we talked about Mrs. Farrington before, we talked about the Library when the Temple's would come. Well, Mrs. Farrington would know when some of the Temples were coming and she'd tell Nettie, was she Nettie Bevins?

**PW:** Nettie Bevins.

**VW:** Nettie Bevins, she'd say – “now, Nettie, Mr. Temple is coming” and who else was coming – “and I want you to go up there and fix their rooms and change the linens and get them all ready” and she worked for Mrs. Farrington in her home and she was just about Mrs. Farrington's boss. Well, when Nettie would get – Mrs. Farrington kept a lot of young men, well, sometimes it would young women, school teachers, in her home, and when Nettie finished, when they had all had breakfast and all gone to work, she would come over to the store and she would stand there and wait for Mrs. Farrington to tell her what's for dinner – if she got tired of waiting she'd tell Mrs. Farrington what's for dinner.

**MD:** Pate, tell us your alligator story.

**PW:** Well, back in those times, why you walked down to the Neches River to fish, you could catch all the fish you wanted, a lot of times what we would do is catch our bait, what they called bank hooks, put them on a pole and set it down in there. One time I went in there and found an alligator's nest and I broke a few eggs and those alligators were just about ready to hatch out so I left all those eggs there but I found an old bucket there that you made coffee in, a gallon syrup bucket, so I brought some eggs home. I think I had 10, or maybe 12, oh, about the size of turkey eggs, and I had an old frizzly hen back in those times, old frizzly hen. I don't know if you ever saw any of them or not, did you ever know what a frizzly chicken was? Well, its feathers were turned the wrong way. Well, this old frizzly hen set all the time so I put these eggs under this hen and she set on them a long time. I began to think they never were going to hatch, but one day two of them pipped out, you know how a little chicken pips? When that nose came out and that hen flew off that nest – I don't know if I ever saw that old hen or not, but anyway, they all hatched and I put those alligators in a trunk. I kept them a long time and Mr. Walker knew I had them. I was carrying pigeons up there to them and he would ask me about them. Finally he told me one day – “Pate what are you going to do about those alligators?” I said “I don't know, sir” he said “if you don't mind, put them in the Millpond” and I said “all right”. I will put them over there for you”. So I got tired of them. Everybody in town came to look at those alligators, little alligators. It was a good thing to see, if you hadn't see them.

**MD:** Did you keep them in water at home?

**PW:** No, I kept them on the ground, I had a little old hole they could crawl in but, anyway, I carried them over there, I think I carried six over there, I kept them through a winter and they would freeze, just as stiff as they could be, and then they would thaw out and just begin to crawl around, couldn't freeze them. And that's the reason I put those alligators over there in the pond. I think I put five or six over there. And he told me way after that, "well, he appreciated me putting these alligators – he talked real fast putting those alligators over there. So that was the alligator story.

**MD:** Now tell us the story about the man coming back to life.

**PW:** Marie, I'd better not tell that one, that's some of your cousins.

**MD:** That's okay.

**PW:** You know, a long time ago when anybody died here in Diboll, you knew when they did because they gathered these Cape Jessamine, what do you, you don't call them that now, what do you call them?

**VW:** Gardenia?

**PW:** Gardenia, that changed, everything changed – cause you could smell those things half a mile. But this fellow out here on 1818 was about to die of pneumonia – this is supposed to be a true story. So they got some people to come out there and stay with him; they thought he was right at death's door so the family left these folks there with him and they had a little toddy, a little corn juice they'd fixed and they were drinking pretty heavy themselves, so they decided they'd give him some of it.

**MD:** The dead man?

**PW:** The sick man – so they got a tablespoon and got a glass and poured this stuff in it and they gave him a tablespoonful of it and they liked to not get it down him but the next one he swallowed it pretty good, so they waited about 30 or 40 minutes and they gave him a couple more tablespoons full and he looked so good they just kept giving him a little bit and the next morning - this family came back and they really thought he was going to be dead and when they got there why, the man wanted some breakfast – he was feeling so good. That is a true story and I would call some names but...

**MD:** Why do you all think that Diboll continued to grow when so many other sawmill towns have not?

**PW:** Well, Marie, they had good management and they had a lot of timber and sooner or later, they started perpetual care and individual cutting, that's what, and they had a lot of land, big acreage; I guess that's what you call it. And, of course, when Mr. Arthur took over, why, he brought it on out to things beside lumber. I guess

the lumber business he depended on that all the time, I don't know – what do you think?

**VW:** Well I think one thing that adds to that is the Temples always took care of their people; they were interested in their business but they were interested in the people that worked for them and while it was for their interest they wanted to have them to have all the advantages they needed. The Temples were loyal to the people – their workers, - and their workers were loyal to the Company. Instead of drifting about from here to there, working conditions were always good, they believed in treating their people fairly and housing conditions improved the living conditions in Diboll.

**PW:** They were good to their employees, that's the reason the union never could come in. Lots of folks would come down there and try to organize these Unions in Diboll.

**VW:** It wasn't really needed.

**PW:** It wasn't needed, they paid fair wages as much as anybody else. It just never could go over.

**MD:** Vivian, what work did your father do?

**VW:** My father left home from his parent's home when he was about 14 years old. They tell the story about him that he was plowing one day and when he plowed to the end of the row he laid his plow over, unhitched the mule, or horse and said "I plowed my last row" so he left home and went to work for Southern Pine Lumber Company in the woods and later on he came on into Diboll and worked on the TSE Railroad. He had different jobs with the Railroad, at one time he was a conductor on the log train, then after that, he was the Depot Agent, it was his duty to route the trains in and out, sell tickets. People did buy tickets to ride to Lufkin on the train and for many years he worked at that and after he left the railroad he was the owner of what we called the "pressing shop". We say cleaners today, but then we called the pressing shop. He did a good business there for a number of years and different ones of us worked for him too. It was a community affair; you saw lots of people, made lots of friends. One particular thing that my daddy was always teased about, the calaboose sat out in front of the pressing shop and it had a dirt floor in it at that time. There were other calaboooses but this particular one sat out in front. Once a man was locked up because he was drunk so he decided he would dig out and he began to dig out under the walls and he got half way out and half way in and couldn't get back in and he couldn't get out so he called to my father and he went over and saw what was the matter and he came back to his pressing shop and got his shovel and dug him out. So anyway, he was teased about that for a awful long time, for helping a prisoner escape.

**MD:** You said there were other calaboooses in town?

**VW:** Yes, that one was out in front of the pressing shop and then, later, there was another one built that has a wooden floor in it and it was in back and they locked people up in it.

**MD:** Did they lock them up just to let them cool off and then later transfer them to Lufkin, or was it according to their crimes?

**VW:** Different things, sometimes they could pay their fines, sometimes they had a little Court – I don't remember where they conducted that Court.

**PW:** They had a Courthouse over there in – Judge Kelly was the Judge and you always got fined regardless of what you did – I think the fine was \$11.70 or something like that if you were drunk or something. Another service the Company did in Diboll at that time way back there, if you weren't able to buy a coffin, after they came in, they made them and they would get this material and stuff. Vivian will tell you about that, but the people who made these coffins was usually Mr. Charlie Weeks and Mr. Wes Weeks and I think Mr. C. B. Otis had a big hand in it and they made them down to what was then called the flooring shed – molding shed- and they were real nice. They did a good job and they lined them inside. Vivian can tell you what they gave them to line them with. You tell what they did.

**MD:** The Company was furnishing these?

**PW:** The Company would furnish the material and also the labor; this labor was free and that was another service that they gave.

**VW:** When the men were ready to finish off these coffins, they would come and Mrs. Farrington knew all the things to give them that they would need. It was usually a batting of cotton to pad it with on the inside and white material and she would even give some little lace edging to go all the way around it, and for the outside she gave them gray outing and it made a nice looking coffin, a well built one and people appreciated that service for free for the Company employees.

**PW:** I can remember back then, Marie, way back, what they called a “cooling board” and they just put them on what we call sawhorses now, and they had boards and they laid those people on them. I've gone to a lot of houses where people were laying on them and I have even seen them come down and embalm the, they had a bucket and some tubes they put under there, you know. You peep through the window – you weren't supposed to see it.

**MD:** They would do it in the house?

**PW:** Do it in the house, yes.

**MD:** And used to, all the people were brought back home, they were take to –

**PW:** They weren't taken to any – you kept them at home and after that you got the Cape Jasmines – when I smell one today I still think about it.

**MD:** Well, can you think of any other games you played or what you did for recreation?

**VW:** I like to remember this, Marie, we could to about the Mill and get strips, certain kinds of strips, I wouldn't know how to name them, and we would make what we called Tom Walkers, people today call them stilts. At certain times of the year somebody would make a pair and everybody would make a pair, and it was a lot of fun and particularly those that were good on them, they could run races and somebody would see who could build the tallest ones. And even the little ones had the little low ones. Another thing that we did for fun, you'd get one of these strips and get your mother to give you the lid off a lard bucket, lard in those days always came in buckets, and you would nail that lid on the end of that strip for a wheel, and if the gave you two lids, you would put one on each end and use it like a steering wheel, nail it on different than the one down on the end for the wheel. Another thing that we liked to do; it was not every child that had the advantage of this, but I was privileged to get to enjoy it. Above the Auditorium, it was a two story building, a big building, there was the Lodge Hall and different men who belonged to the Lodge, on meeting nights, well, some meeting nights, not every meeting night because it was, there were some things that were secret, but on some nights when it was family night the mothers and the children would come and play around in that big hall, it had pretty furniture in it.

**PW:** Had an old goat you could ride, too, up there in one of those lodges, I don't know which one had it.

**VW:** And sometimes when it wasn't a meeting time we would slip up there and play and part of the initiations for this secret bid in the Lodge was to ride a goat. It was a contraption of a sort of wheels and it pitched.

**PW:** Kinda like one of these bulls that they have now, what do they call these Bulls? Mechanical Bulls?

**MD:** Yes.

**PW:** We would ride that thing and play on it and sit in that furniture and each big chair had a desk in front of it and a gavel and we would beat with that gavel and there was this rack, I guess you would call it, that when the men were voted in, if you voted for the man you gave a white marble and if you didn't vote for him you gave him a black marble and we played with those marbles and that was a lot of fun. And, we played on the stairs.

**MD:** Where was this located?

**VW:** Well, right where the Elementary Campus is now there by the bicycle rack, the bicycle racks are about where the steps were to this Auditorium and, during the depression, some of the ladies had what they called a soup kitchen upstairs in the part of the Lodge Hall but – it was used for other things, too, besides lodges, it was a sort of Community Hall, and when things were so really bad they – it was before any Government programs came in, but just different people would contribute to it and the ladies made soup up there.

**MD:** Do you remember a sewing room?

**VW:** Yes, I do, up there and garments were made for World War II, is that what you were talking about?

**MD:** Yes, well, during the depression maybe.

**VW:** Clothes for local people maybe? Yes, I do remember that. And then that same building was used for Red Cross efforts, folding bandages.

**PW:** They had boxcars with bananas in them and somebody would stay there and sell bananas out of this car and you'd buy them real cheap, oh, I don't know, a big old sack full for a dime, if you could get a dime and then everybody always wanted those banana stalks to put in their chicken house to keep the mites away, that's what they said it would do, but everybody wanted them. Those cars would stay there until they nearly sold out and what he couldn't sell, would be bad, all the kids would gang around there, he'd give you all the bananas you could eat and we always liked to see them come.

**MD:** We didn't talk much about the depression – can you think of anything that happened in Diboll that . . .

**PW:** Yes, just about that time, Marie, they had what you call a cannery and the Bateman's ran it; it was, I don't know just where it would be located now, do you Vivian? Know just where it would be located?

**VW:** Well, I know where it was then

**PW:** Then – but

**VW:** I don't know how to identify where it is now, probably somewhere near the Temple Junior School.

**PW:** Somewhere in that vicinity but, anyway, people didn't have any money to buy any cans and you could carry your produce like tomatoes, corn, anything that you wanted canned and you carried it over there and they would wash it and can it, canned it in rustless tin cans and you got a certain percent of it; I think you got about half of it back and a lot of people would take it over there and, I think some

of these people that didn't have anything, they gave some of this food to them didn't they, Vivian?

**VW:** That's the way I remember it.

**VW:** But that's one of the things that they did and they had, you probably know more about that – Victory Garden – I remember it but ---

**VW:** People were encouraged to garden and those who didn't have a place for a garden at their home, a certain area of land was set aside for what we called a Victory Garden.

**PW:** That was along in there about where the school is.

**MD:** The Company farm?

**PW:** Yes, what we called the Company farm but along in there where the High School is now, or that High School Office.

**VW:** And if you wanted to have a garden over there you could say how many rows you wanted and the Company furnished the labor to make up these rows for you and you planted and that was the result of the cannery. People grew more things and didn't have any way to preserve them so the Company set up this cannery with big pressure cookers and the piece of equipment that seals the cans. You had to take your peas over there already shelled and other things though, they prepared it for you and that was really quality food, that you got back and it helped those people who were not able to garden.

**PW:** Those people would work over there all day. I remember that, the Bateman's and there was about 4 or 5 of them that was over there working and they'd work over there all day every day. I think it'd be on Saturday, wasn't it? I'm not sure but they worked a whole lot, especially in summer because everybody wanted to come at the same time so they had to put it out then.

**MD:** Do you remember during the depression them having a library up at the auditorium? Mrs. Grisham would have been in charge of it?

**VW:** I can't say that I do, Marie.

**PW:** At the Library?

**MD:** The Library, yes, a collection of books, somebody told us that.

**PW:** Marie, I can't recall anything like that. Mrs. Grisham?

**VW:** I remember the Grisham's.

**PW:** Yes, they had a bunch of girls.

**MD:** Yes, when did you leave Diboll?

**PW:** After, I never did come back after the war, it was 1940 what?

**VW:** 5 – well, when you came back it was 1945.

**PW:** Yes, 1945 I went to work on the Railroad and then I worked for Holland Sales and Vivian went to teaching school a little after that.

**MD:** Vivian, what did you do during the war?

**VW:** While Pate was gone during World War II, I worked in Texas City for a while, for Monsanto Chemical Company, but I guess you would say I was lonesome for home and I came back to Diboll and worked in the Pressing Shop for my father and then when Pate got out of service we had an apartment and lived in Lufkin and later bought a home in Lufkin.

**MD:** And did you teach all your time here in Lufkin?

**VW:** No, I went back to SFA as an adult student because I had been to Lon Morris College for two years and I picked up my credits from that and got my teaching certificate and I taught for seven years in Lufkin. Then I changed to Diboll – taught third grade in Special Education. I didn't teach very long, 13 years in all, but it was like coming back home to teach in Diboll. I taught children that were grandchildren of friends I knew or sometimes great grandchildren.

**MD:** Would you say you have had a happy life, you enjoyed life?

**VW:** Oh, yes.

**PW:** Yes, I think we have.

**END OF INTERVIEW**