

**Aden “Lefty” and Flava Vaughn**  
**Interview 063a**  
**June 19, 1985**  
**Marie Davis, Interviewer**  
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**Abstract:** In this interview with Marie Davis, Aden “Lefty” Vaughn and his wife Flava reminisce about Diboll’s past. They discuss family history, schooldays, the commissary, recreation, transportation, and baseball. They mention Mr. Rutland, Chester Willis, and Professor Jackson.

**Marie Davis (hereafter MD):** Today I am talking to Aden and Flava Vaughn, P. O. Box 486, Diboll, Texas. Today’s date is June 19, 1985 and my name is Marie Davis. Flava, when were you born?

**Flava Vaughn (hereafter FV):** I was born on January 15, 1915.

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

**FV:** I was born in New Willard, Texas.

**MD:** And when did you move to Diboll?

**FV:** I moved to Diboll when I was 10 months old and have been living here ever since.

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

**FV:** My daddy was Sage Ward and my mother was Ruth Ward. My mother’s name was Wimberley before she married and, of course, she married my daddy, Sage Ward.

**MD:** Now, had they lived around New Willard most of their lives?

**FV:** Yes, they were young, they were real young and they would move quite often. They talked often of Jefferson, Texas, and they came to New Willard to visit my mother’s brother and during that time I was born.

**MD:** And later they moved to Diboll?

**FV:** Later they moved to Diboll.

**MD:** And he worked for the Company?

**FV:** He worked for the Company and he was a Millwright. One day they had a visitor to visit the plant and this man asked “What is that man doing over there that is just sitting on

the bench, just kinda day dreaming?” The foreman said “Well, that man is a Millwright and when he sits around you can say that the mill is running real, real good.”

**MD:** So he worked when something went wrong?

**FV:** Yes, he was a Millwright; they maintain the mill and do the repairs to the machinery.

**MD:** And he worked until he retired from the Company?

**FV:** Yes, he did; I can't remember just when he retired but he had several years; He worked for the Company many, many years.

**MD:** Okay and what is your child's name?

**FV:** We just have one son, and his name is Gary Fenley Vaughn.

**MD:** And how many grandchildren do you have?

**FV:** We have two. We have Gary Ward Vaughn, which is the oldest and then we have James Bryant, which is the youngest.

**MD:** Lefty, when were you born?

**Aden “Lefty” Vaughn (hereafter LV):** I was born in 1909, August 7. Now, they call me “Lefty” because I pitched a lot of baseball. My name is A. F. Vaughn or Aden F. Vaughn.

**MD:** I wanted to get that in there.

**LV:** Now then, my parents, my daddy lived here almost all of his life, fact is, he was born out here at Fairview, Texas. Then he moved in here when he was about 13 years old and started working for the Company. That's when Mr. Tom Temple was here, or he was running the Company. His name is Zeff Vaughn and my mother was a Dubose. They were married, I don't know – anyway they moved to Diboll when they were real young and he worked for the Company. He was a plumber and he kept up the kilns at the mill. That was his occupation. I believe he put the first bathroom in the old library, that was the first bathtub commode that was put in Diboll.

**MD:** I wonder if they had a septic tank, do you think?

**LV:** I think so. They had a septic tank back then.

**MD:** They didn't have city sewage, did they?

**LV:** No.

**MD:** Okay, and how many brothers and sisters do you have?

**LV:** Oh, I had – I have four brothers and one sister. Lee Vaughn worked at the shop, that's the oldest, he worked at the shop for many years. And my next brother was named Dillon Vaughn, he worked at the sawmill. He was a block setter and later he moved to Ewing and was sawing over there. The next one was named Woody, that's the other boy and he worked in the lath mill here. My sister was named Bobbie and she married Felbert Copeland. They moved from here, I believe, they moved back to New Willard and he worked there for a long time. And, of course, I was the youngest one.

**FV:** May I butt in here?

**MD:** Please do.

**FV:** Lefty's sister married Felbert Copeland and his sister ran the old – what they called the old Beanery. The Old Beanery, you know. There were two hotels in Diboll. The Star Hotel and what we called the Beanery where all the employees that didn't have homes and all, they would have a room at the Beanery and they would take their meals there. Late in the afternoon you'd see them sitting all across that long porch at the Beanery. They just seemed to enjoy that so.

**MD:** Now, it was right across from...?

**FV:** From the Depot.

**LV:** Right across from the Depot.

**MD:** Now her name was Mrs. Williams?

**FV:** Yes, what was her given name?

**LV:** Della

**FV:** Della, Della Williams – Della and Fate Williams ran the Beanery.

**MD:** Good, okay. Aden, have your ancestors been in Angelina County a long time?

**LV:** Oh, a long time. My grandfather came from New Jersey on a boat and he came in with, I believe, a load of cotton and pulled it down at – what pass is that down there?

**MD:** Sabine Pass?

**LV:** Sabine Pass – He came in Sabine Pass down there and he quit the boat after it was unloaded and went to Houston, got a job. They were building this railroad through here so he, when he got as far as Burke up here, he met my grandmother there and they were

married and he just worked on the railroad and stayed in town. Then he bought a place out there at Fairview, Texas and he lived there for years and years. That was back when they were Indians riding horses through there. They came to his house a whole lot of times back then. They raised a big family, I believe, let's see, there was one, the oldest girl was named Eliza, and the next one was named Ella. The oldest boy was named, well, my daddy was the oldest boy, and then the next one was Uncle Obed Vaughn, who lived at Burke for years and years and then Uncle Carey Vaughn lived at Burke for years. And Uncle Willie Vaughn still lives, he lives just out of Lufkin, he lives right at the edge of Lufkin. He still lives there.

**MD:** Is he in his 90's?

**LV:** No, he is 89, I believe. Now then, later, my grandmother who I never did see, she passed away and he married again, he married a – well, I can't think who it was but, anyway he married a lady and they had a child from that, and that daughter, which would be my half-aunt, married a McDonald and they raised seven children out at Fairview and they are still scattered all around through there.

**FV:** Didn't your granddaddy live to be --?

**LV:** Ninety-eight years old. I'll tell you, he fought in the Civil War, and he used to tell a story that when he was a boy – I mean when he was young, back from the war, he was over at Homer, now that was the county seat then. He was standing with his arm on the porch and there was somebody shot and hit him in the shoulder; he was a kinda high tempered fellow so he wouldn't let them give him an anesthetic or anything, he just let them cut it out, he just held his arm on the porch and let them cut that thing out. He must have been tough.

**MD:** Well, then your grandmother –

**LV:** My grandmother was a Burris. Now then, I always say that I am related to nearly everybody in the county because the Squyres and Burrises, even the Havards, I am related to that whole group.

**MD:** Yes, because they came here in 1830. The Squyres did and so, just about everybody in Angelina County, even me.

**LV:** Yes, all the way down.

**MD:** Okay, do you have any other stories that you can remember your grandfather told, about the way the country around here looked?

**LV:** Oh, listen, he told me that land sold for \$3.00 an acre all over this country and some of it sold for \$1.00 an acre. That's back when Mr. Tom Temple was buying all this land in here and doing this. The people couldn't pay the taxes on it, that's the reason they had to sell it. My daddy told me that he traded a little old horse for 40 acres one time because

the people couldn't pay the taxes on it, and he traded that horse for 40 acres. That was something to me. Later on when we moved from Diboll to Bald Hill, when I was 10 years old, my daddy bought 107 acres and he gave \$1,500.00 for it. The Burton Egg Farm is on that property now. My grandfather has told a lot of stories of – about the early settlers here, that I don't remember all of those things. But I want to tell you that he lived to be 98 years old; he died in 1937. I believe he was born in 1836, died in 1937 and he would see a lot of changes from the ox wagon all the way up to the airplane. He saw those.

**MD:** He was just a young man when he got off that boat?

**LV:** Oh yes, he was young, he was real young.

**FV:** What cemetery is he buried in?

**LV:** He is buried in the White House Cemetery, just out of Lufkin. As I told you, I was born in Diboll in 1909, started school in 1915. Well, I was a pretty slow student, I'll tell you. If it hadn't been for the girls I would never have graduated from high school.

**MD:** You had some help?

**LV:** Oh, I had help. I pitched baseball and they wrote all my themes and they'd tell me, you know, they would read a book and I would make the report. They would take me out there on the stile and tell it to me and I could make a better report than they could on that thing. I don't know, but I really believe, don't they have a class now for slow students?

**MD:** Yes.

**LV:** Well, I'd have been in that class.

**MD:** Oh, I doubt that.

**LV:** Yes, we moved from here in 1919 to Bald Hill and my daddy moved on the farthest side and if somebody else lived in the house he would have been in a tent on the other side.

**MD:** Oh, he liked freedom, huh?

**LV:** Yes. But back to Diboll, this has been a boon to me. I always thought, well, when they say Diboll, they are talking about me because I am a big part of it. I've enjoyed every minute of it that I have lived here. If I pass away tomorrow everybody can say, "Well, he really enjoyed life."

**MD:** Who was one of your favorite teachers?

**LV:** Oh, Mrs. O.H. Weise was my favorite; was she your teacher, too?

**MD:** She was my teacher, too.

**LV:** She was mine and she was hers. All the way up and down. Now she taught me history. Mrs. Weise taught and she loved everybody. Now, I'll tell you –

**MD:** Especially the boys.

**LV:** Oh, she loved the boys, and I guess, I don't know that she was partial to us, I had to get my work up but ....

**MD:** But you could get away with things?

**LV:** Oh yes, we could get away with little things, yes. Our – I remember one time we had a Mrs. Latisa English that came from Groveton over here and she taught in this school and she was one of my teachers. We had a Mrs. Fish back yonder when I was about in the third grade and she was one of my teachers.

**MD:** Who was the Superintendent?

**LV:** Well, H. B. Stegall was the Superintendent back in 1922. I remember he was superintendent of schools at that time. I don't know how far back he went but anyway, we moved back to Diboll from out in the country there. We didn't stay out there, we moved back in 1922 and I started back to school and I finally got out, you know. The teacher thought I was a teacher, is the reason they got me out. Yes.

**MD:** Flava, you went to school here all your life?

**FV:** Yes, I did. Back there you had to be seven years old to start school. My birthday is in January and, therefore I had to wait until September to go and that threw me back a little. I started to school in 1922 and Mrs. Picqueno was my first grade teacher. I was looking at the first annual that Diboll school put out and her picture was in there. We just had, when I graduated, I graduated from the eleventh grade, because back then there was no twelfth grade, that is something they added later.

**MD:** Did you have any favorite teachers?

**FV:** Well, just like everyone else I loved Mrs. Weise, she taught me in the third grade and I liked Meta Strauss. I like her, she was real sweet, she was good. And there was just everyone – I remember, anyway, there was Mr. Bush. Mr. Bush was a teacher then in high school and he taught me. And that's along about the time, I believe, Mr. Moore was Superintendent.

**MD:** Lefty, what is your first remembrance of Diboll?

**LV:** Well, I remember the old store, the old commissary. It was a small building and what I can remember, Mr. Rutland was over the store but the first manager of it, that I

remember, was Mr. Hunter and he had two stepsons, one of them was Dick Bardo and Jerry Bardo, that's the two boys and he had one daughter that I remember, her name was Ada Hunter. He lived here, oh, he stayed here a long time and, later on, after we moved away from here, he was still here and then when we moved back I believe he was gone.

**MD:** What was that expression you were telling me that he used?

**LV:** Oh, listen, he used to – when he was waiting on somebody and they would draw their checks and come by, he would wait on somebody and they would want a dime's worth of beans, a dime's worth of rice, a dime's worth of coffee, a dime's worth of black-eyed peas and they bought that in the dime's worth back then. It was scooped up and weighed, you know, a dime a pound, I think was what it was. When he would get one waited on, he would holler “get it and get out, old Dude, who'll be next, please?” He would take them one right after the other, he could wait on no telling how many people. They weren't out on the counter here; you had to get all of that stuff and bring it in front of them and they would pay you off in those Diboll checks. They were in five, ten cent, twenty-five, fifty, dollar and five dollars. I don't know whether there was a ten dollar one, but I don't remember. But that was the denominations. Those checks, for years and years, Mr. Strauss, back in that day, signed all the checks. I believe he was the one that signed them and then they put them in glue, they were made of pasteboard and they put them in glue after this and were laid out to dry. Then they put them in the office. I believe people bought those things a lot of them, people sold them for cash, you know; they would draw them out ahead of time and go to Lufkin sometimes, but most of them traded at Diboll with us.

**MD:** When did you go to work in the commissary?

**LV:** In June 1929 and I worked there, I worked in the drug store first for Mr. Will Agee. He and Bernice Hines were in there and I was on the soda fountain. Then later I moved from there into the grocery store. I stayed in there about five years and then I took over the feed department. We sold over a hundred sacks of feed everyday –

**MD:** Everybody had a cow?

**LV:** Oh, everybody had cows, then they had pigs, they had horses and all, back in that day. I remember Mr. George Johnson, even before this time, Mr. George Johnson used to run a livery stable, I believe is what they call it, where you could go and rent a horse or you could rent a horse and buggy, or you could get a hack.

**MD:** What was a hack?

**LV:** A hack, is where you had two horses hooked to it and it had two seats, you had a front seat and a back seat.

**MD:** You could go courting in that?

**LV:** That's right, you really could, now that was before my days of courtin'. You know, but you could go courtin' in that and people would rent those things and go courtin' in them. But Mr. George Johnson was the veterinarian here, too. He was a "Jack of all trades" and he did the veterinary work around. He used to come to the grocery store where I was working and buy his medicine to doctor the horses and cattle with and I remember he bought a whole lot of that stuff from us.

**MD:** When they were – like Mr. Agee and Mr. Hines, medicine was a lot different. Did they have to mix a lot of their medicine?

**LV:** Well, you know what, the prescriptions they mixed all of that, but now, we had all of that medicine on the counters – like you can go into your modern stores now and just pick it up and carry it on up front, but they'd go get it and bring it to you, we sold it that way. But now, they filled prescriptions and I remember Dr. Dale and Dr. Beasley were here and they would write a lot of prescriptions, you know. I think, back in that day, those folks thought everybody had malaria and they had to have a purgative every week. Oh, you are going to have to have all of that.

**MD:** It wasn't self-service, was it?

**LV:** Oh, nothing was self-service; we had to go get everything everybody wanted. They weren't allowed to come behind the counter or anything.

**FV:** May I say something, please?

**MD:** Yes.

**FV:** I remember the candy counter in the grocery department. There was the drug store, we called it, was in one building, not a building, but a department and the groceries in the other. The candy counter was in the grocery department. There was a clerk in there named Ed Day. He loved kids and I – the kids loved him because we would take our nickels and we would go in the grocery department and we'd hang around. We wouldn't let any clerk wait on us because we knew Mr. Ed Day would give us a little more than five little pieces for a nickel, because he loved the kids. That's the way we would do; we'd get more for our money by waiting around for Mr. Ed Day.

**LV:** While I was working in the grocery department, I moved over in the grocery department and one day there was a – it was during the depression – there was an old "Paddy" came through and he asked me for something to eat so I got him some lunchmeat and gave him some crackers and, I remember I thought possibly I was going to get in trouble because Mr. Rutland was up in the office looking down that way and, after the old fellow got his lunch and started out he whistled – motioned for me to come up there. I thought I was in trouble now. Got up there and he said "I saw what you did and I approve of it" said "Don't turn down anybody that wants something to eat, you give it to him". So that was – I think that was one reason the store prospered because the feeling that he had.



**MD:** That's good.

**LV:** Mr. Bud Rutland was a good man. One time – I think he would take any kind of medicine. I remember that one time he was – he thought anything Aunt Fannie was taking it would be good for him, so she was taking wine of Cardui so he just got to taking it – said it was doing him fine. Yes, he said that was really helping him.

**MD:** He believed it helped him, too.

**LV:** Our meat market man was named, our butcher, we'll say, was named Mr. Locke and he had two boys and when they moved here they moved from Livingston so the youngest was named R. C. and we called him "Crack" because we thought he was cracked brained, you know.

**MD:** Oh, yes.

**LV:** One day, we had a little baseball team before we got to high school and he called back to Livingston to get a game with Livingston with the small boys down there. He went over there and the telephone was on the wall and he would ring that thing three or four times, and finally he got central and he would holler "Hello, Central, this is R. C. Locke in Diboll, give me "Two Twody Two- James Bailey, please." James Bailey was the old boy that was going to get the ball game, and sure enough we got a game and went down there and played that ball game.

**MD:** When you were working in the store, was anything pre-packaged or did you have to package everything up?

**LV:** Yes, we packaged all that stuff. Well, let's see, we'll start off with meal, rice, coffee, then we come to navy beans, pinto beans, big limas, all of those in the bean line. We packaged those up in 10 and 25 cent packages. We had sugar and, during the depression one time, I remember one lady came in there and she wanted a dollars worth of sugar and she didn't have a stamp for it and she couldn't understand why she couldn't have a dollars worth of sugar, she had been buying it that way all of her life. That was Mrs. Barnum. Mrs. Ashford was always the finest lady I ever waited on. She always got me to wait on her and she said "Lefty, get the corn that will squirt you in the eye when you mash it."

**FV:** I remember when they would measure this dimes worth of coffee, sugar and things like that. It was always around, they would start it right after lunch, early afternoon. They would empty it in a No. 3 washtub and then they would dip out and put it in sacks, they would have the sack on the scales, they would scoop until it was the amount they needed. But No. 3 washtub made it real handy.

**MD:** Lefty, did the men do most of the buying when you first started there?

**LV:** No, no, women folks bought.

**MD:** I thought maybe when they got off from work they would come by there.

**LV:** Well, a lot of them did, but the women folks drew the checks in the morning and would get the groceries and have it prepared. At 11:15 was when the 11:15 whistle blew, and that was for the ladies to put the cornbread in the stove and have it ready at 12:00 o'clock. Then twelve o'clock would go and they would come in but they could be off talking or something and be busy with something else –

**MD:** And the man would come home and ?

**LV:** Wouldn't have any lunch. That's what they did.

**FV:** We really depended on that 11:15 whistle.

**LV:** We sold – we handled the best things you could buy, like over in the men's department, we handled a fine line of clothes. We handled the Stetson hats and we handled another hat, but every man wore a hat back in those days. We handled a Davis hat that was cheaper than the Stetson. Then we handled the Nunnbusch shoes and the Edgerton was one just under that. Then we handled a line of work shoes, you know, the kind of work shoes men bought. We had the test overalls and Lee was the best overalls, it was a kind of knock-about overall, it was nicer than that test overall, and most of our people wore overalls in those days. We handled arrow shirts, handled Wimberly ties, I thought I would never forget all those things we handled.

**MD:** Well, that's good, to get those things down. People could charge, couldn't they, at the store?

**LV:** Oh yes, you put them on a ticket. But they got to where they had to sign the ticket after a while, because some of the people sometime would come back and say they didn't get this. They had forgotten what they got, so they had them sign the ticket when they bought it and when they came back we'd say well, is this your handwriting? They would have to say "Yes" then they would remember buying it but that was just for us, you know. Waiting on those people and they would say we charged them with something they didn't get. They would just forget it.

**MD:** They would pay at payday time?

**LV:** Yes, every two weeks would be payday and then they would pay up.

**MD:** They could draw though, couldn't they?

**LV:** Oh, yes, you could draw chips back in that time, and then later on, during the depression, we had a little "Whitehorse" slip, we called it, and either Mr. O'Hara or Mr.

Strauss would have to sign that slip for people to get. Then they finally would go over there and Mr. Nelson would sign it, Fred Nelson.

**MD:** And that was called a “Whitehorse”?

**LV:** “Whitehorse” yes, that is getting money in advance on your wage, and that would be taken out of your payroll when you got it.

**MD:** During the depression, did people cut down on their buying very much, could you tell any difference in the store?

**LV:** I’ll tell you what, we just had to, everybody made a living and that’s about all. If it hadn’t been for the store though, the Company would have had a hard time paying off. The people would come and buy from us and then that money went right back into the office, see, and that kept the mill running. During the depression, that’s when the NRA started. You know, if it hadn’t been for NRA we would have worked from daylight until dark for a dollar a day, but that helped in that it caused the companies, now our company was fair as far as I was concerned, but we had people that worked ten hours and they needed some time off. So NRA came in and that allowed us to have certain time off.

**MD:** Did you have to hire more people?

**LV:** No, we got along with less people; during that time, we didn’t stay open as long. When I started to work we opened at 7:30 every morning and we had a noon break, we had our lunch time. Then about four or five o’clock we’d have a little thirty minute period off and then we would work on until 8:00 or 8:30. That was our day. I started to work over there for \$60.00 a month in the drug store and that was in 1929. That was when the depression started and I got cut back to \$43.00 a month. Then later on, I did get some time off when this NRA came in.

**MD:** You didn’t work so much an hour, you just had monthly wage?

**LV:** Yes, there wasn’t any hourly wage at all. At the mill now, they worked for hourly wage. We were by the month.

**MD:** They first just had a small commissary, didn’t they?

**LV:** That’s right, they had a small commissary and the officials of the Company met, they were going to build a larger commissary but Mr. Ashford was the man that said we are not just going to build a larger store, we’re going to build a building that will hold everything. The way they built the building was, and they decided they would build it that way, so that they had the meat market and ice house on one end and then on up farther we had the grocery store and inside of that grocery store we had the men’s department and a little over further we had the ladies’ department, then the next one was the drug store and then from there upstairs was the doctor’s office and the land and timber department was up there, too. Then we had the post office at the end of it. I

remember the first gas pump I ever saw. It was handled by Mr. Farrington who was over the post office. He was Postmaster and he handled all of the gas pumps.

**MD:** Was that the first gas you ever used in your car?

**LV:** Oh yes, yes.

**MD:** You got it there?

**LV:** Yes, eleven cents a gallon.

**MD:** Oh, that's cheap enough.

**LV:** Fact is I didn't have a car then. It was a good long time before I owned a car but I remember that gas station, I mean gas pump, right at the end of the store.

**MD:** Did they deliver?

**LV:** Oh yes, well, I'll tell you what, we had a colored man named Chester Willis, if he had gone any further than the fourth grade he would have made five million dollars; he made four anyway. I'll tell you about Ches. He had four or five jobs going all the time. He fired the boiler under the store back there that furnished heat for that whole building. They hauled slabs from the mill down there and threw them out and put them out and he fired those boilers. He had some boys working for him, that was one of his jobs, and he was delivery man for the store. I remember loading as many as 107 sacks of feed on that truck, I mean wagon. He had a team and wagon and I put 107 sacks of feed on that thing. Then, he had a delivery boy doing that; he didn't do the work; he had someone else doing it for him. Fact is he was pretty smart. Then he carried the mail from over at the Depot, they had a walkway from the store to the Depot and he met the train every day. I have forgotten how many jobs that boy had. He worked for Mr. Rutland around his house, too.

**FV:** He was chauffeur for Mr. Rutland and Mr. Temple.

**MD:** Did he have a car, one of the first cars or was he using someone else's car?

**LV:** No, he was driving for Mr. Rutland. Later on Ches got a truck to haul all of those things. We called it a "Muley Truck." It didn't have a top on it. It had a windshield and a big bed behind it.

**MD:** Did he work there until the store closed down?

**LV:** Yes, he stayed there until the store closed down and then he went with Mr. Arthur, Jr.

**MD:** Flava, what was it like growing up in Diboll?

**FV:** Well, when I was real young, Diboll was just a small community, everyone lived sort of in the shadow of the smoke stack, you know. We could walk anywhere and just get there real quick. But it wasn't long until Diboll began to grow and I have seen it grow all these years. It is just amazing how it has grown, more than even one company, you know. It has just been great. There are a lot of civic clubs and they are doing great. Diboll has just been a wonderful place to live.

**MD:** When you were very young they had a Chautauqua that came to town. Tell us about that.

**FV:** Oh well, that was very good. You bought your tickets in advance. You bought a season ticket. That was maybe for a whole week. It was to stay in Diboll a week. You would buy your ticket and we would walk from the school over to the Chautauqua. Oh, we were thrilled to death. The walk over there was fun, then the Chautauqua was very educational. We would march in, we would be seated. It was in a tent, a big tent. There would be a lecture on health, history, things like that, but there would be some entertainment with it, too. I remember one Chautauqua a woman would do the "Buck and Wing" and they would play the violin and the guitar. Then we would have the lecture at the end. Then we would all stand up, file out and march back to school. It was very educational and it was something entertaining to look forward to.

**MD:** What was the other recreation you had?

**FV:** Let's see, we had one picture show, way back when I was a child, it was over across the railroad tracks. Air dome I believe they called it. But what I got a kick out of is what we called the "Box suppers". Politicking – they would – it would be election year and you, - of course, we didn't have T.V. or radio or anything. What we would do, the politicians would meet in Diboll one night and each one of them would make a little speech and then each lady would fix a box of food, most of them had good old fried chicken, you know. The politicians would bid on the boxes and they would see somebody that they wanted to eat with, thought she might be a good cook, so they would bid on the box and then they would get the box and eat with the lady or man or whoever. That was a lot of fun.

**MD:** They don't do that any more, do they?

**FV:** No, most is through T.V.

**MD:** Now, you weren't always just a housewife, were you?

**FV:** No, I wasn't. The war came, you know, and I was a housewife then. We decided that I should go to school and I took a business course at Satterwhite Business College and Lefty – it came his time to go for his physical – he didn't make the physical – so I went to school and finished and went to work for Southern Pine Lumber Company. I was secretary to Mr. George Smith, this dear person. I worked for him fifteen years. He was a guy that – he did everything by the clock and, you know, things like that rub off on you.

You get to where you want to do things on time, you know. He would come to the office right on the minute, he would leave on time, he was just a great person.

**MD:** You probably learned quite a bit from him, too, didn't you?

**FV:** Oh yes, he was secretary and treasurer to Southern Pine Lumber Company. We worked with taxes and then he had quite a bit of correspondence. He was really a good secretary and treasurer. He was also the treasurer of our church, the Baptist Church and we kept up with that and made up the bulletin.

**MD:** Did you enjoy working in the office?

**FV:** Oh I did, I surely did. What I enjoyed a lot was making the payroll.

**MD:** How did you do that?

**FV:** Used to, or pay off. They would go to the bank in Lufkin and bring the payroll back. Oh, they had the police with them, they were really guarded. We would put the money out on the table. The first thing we would do, we would count each bundle – that had to be counted. We were around this table, Mr. Lawrence was on one side of the table and Rhoda Faye Chandler was on the other end and I was next, and then Betty Ruth was next to me, and Mr. Lawrence would count up. The payroll envelopes were made ready with the amount on the envelope and Mr. Lawrence would count out that amount. He would lay it on that envelope, pass it to Rhoda Faye and she would check it. Then she would slide it on around the table to me and I would fold it up and put it in the envelope and Betty Ruth would seal it up and there was the money and we would put it in the box alphabetically.

**MD:** What happened if you came out with money left over?

**FV:** Oh well, I'll tell you, we just knew better.

**MD:** And they paid off in cash then?

**FV:** Yes, and then Rhoda Faye would sit at the window and when the men got off from work they would come by that window and pick up their pay check. They would call their name out, some of them that she didn't know.

**MD:** After you quit the office, did you work anywhere else?

**FV:** Yes, I worked for Bartlett, Baggett and Shands for just a little while because they moved their office to Lufkin and then I decided that I would go – Lefty had added an annex to our building up there in our store and I said that is a good place to have a beauty shop because at that particular time there was only one beauty shop with one operator in Diboll. So I went to beauty school, that took nine months, and I opened the beauty shop and the name of my beauty shop was "Flava's Beauty Walk". It turned out to be good for

us. I stayed there six years. My mother got real ill and we moved her in the house with us so I closed the shop. I have been a housewife ever since.

**MD:** Lefty, you left the store what year? What did you do?

**LV:** In 1949 I gave notice to the Company that I was going into business for myself, so I bought, H. Shivers had bought a little store down near Emporia we used to call it, and I bought that little store down there on the highway. One reason he wanted to sell out they claimed that there were some convicts out and they were having to sleep down there back of that store, it was in the summer time and it was hot and he had to get rid of it. I didn't stay down there, I bought it and went down there. I started out on a shoestring, what I mean, what I bought I paid for out of my hip pocket and then I had to get the cash back, to put it back in my pocket. I stayed there three years and was robbed twice. I had shotgun shells on consignment, \$300.00 worth, and they got every shell and I had to pay for all that stuff. Then later I went back into that thing and I did have a good business down there. I tried to buy that land from Mr. Temple and they wouldn't sell it to me so I moved up to the old Uncle Mickey Sullivan place, up there and then I retired in 1962.

**MD:** What did you have up there?

**LV:** I sold everything from a railroad to a rattle trap. I sold everything, it was a grocery first, then I went into furniture and appliances. I sold a good line of appliances and we had a good business up there.

**MD:** What about some special black people around, can you tell me something about some of them other than Ches?

**LV:** Well, we have mentioned Chester Willis but I remember Aunt Cassie. When I went to take my physical for the service, for the Army, my blood pressure, I guess I had hypertension and it went sky high. When I got there they wrote "rejected" on there and I came home and the people would come in and ask me why I didn't go to the Army and Aunt Cassie asked me that one time and I said "Well, they wrote 'rejected' on there and that meant if I had to go into a battle I would have run over the whole Army behind me I would have been so scared". But I really was rejected on account of hypertension, high blood pressure, you know?

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

**LV:** Oh, Aunt Cassie was a character. All the men always gathered around and she always entertained them with a lot of little words and everybody would just die laughing at Aunt Cassie. I remember Aunt Callie Jackson and Professor Jackson. He carried the mail for the TSE. Now Chester handled all the mail for the Company and put the mail on the train and all. That was a great attraction here in Diboll when the passenger train would go through every day. We didn't have any place else to go, we would go meet the train, see who was on it.

**FV:** And stay until the mail was put up.

**LV:** Yes, wait until the mail was put up. I remember one time we had Shine Ruth, and I am sure Jim has already told about the time we carried him upstairs.

**MD:** What did Shine do, did he help you out in the store?

**LV:** No, now Shine worked in the mill, his name was William Ruth but we called him “Shine” because he shined.

**FV:** He was so black.

**LV:** Yes, but he was a good fellow.

**MD:** Well, Aunt Callie Jackson was what we call a midwife, wasn't she? And she would go and stay with people when they were sick?

**LV:** Yes – I remember Professor Jackson, he played a horn or trumpet or something.

**FV:** Oh, he took lessons from Harry James – oh, he taught Harry James, that's right.

**LV:** You know, one time he told Jake Durham that and Jake said “You just wait right here” – he said “I'm going to call” and he called Harry James and he told him “Yes, he was the one who taught him.”

**MD:** You got your name from playing baseball?

**LV:** That's right and I'll tell you about baseball. I played five years in high school back then it was before interscholastic league and I played from 1925 through 1929. That is, in high school. I started out in seventh grade and played on up to the eleventh. I pitched baseball all those years and I remember even pitching one baseball game here against Timpson, struck out seventeen, got beat two to nothing. That's right, struck out 17 of them. We had a shortstop that made an error and let two men in and that was it, that was the only two runs that was scored. We played a lot of ball around here.

**MD:** Were you with the Old Miller Team?

**LV:** Oh, yes, I was with the Old Miller Team. We played a lot of teams out of Houston. We played the Valley League All Stars. There were a couple of boys that went up from them the next year. I can remember Old Muleshoe Vaughn and then there was another boy by the name of Haas that went up to the Texas League but, even back then they were paying \$150.00 a month for the Texas League, that was the top wage. It was pretty hard to make a living then.

**MD:** Did the Company kind of sponsor you?



**LV:** No, they didn't, the Company didn't sponsor us. We had a team within ourselves and you know that was a big attraction back then. Every Sunday we played baseball and they charged them and that kind of took care of the equipment. Now, we didn't get any money for it, we just loved the game. The manager of our team, the first one was Joe Garner, way back there, he was a butcher here. Then years after Joe Garner, well, we had R. V. Honea as manager but that was when I was going out of baseball. I played some for them. I remember one time we had – in 1940 – we had written on the store porch down there with crayon and it said "Lefty Vaughn's coming back." We were trying to make money for something. So they had a game with a bunch of college boys out of Beaumont. They came up here and, of course, I had to start. He said "I'm going to have to start you" and I said "Well, all right, you just keep someone warmed up because I'm not going to last". Well, the first man got up, I threw one over there and he hit that thing and Billy Hill, it nearly took him down, but he finally threw him out and he came running over there and he asked "Where are you throwing that ball?" I said, "High outside" – He said "Don't let one slip and get inside, I'll get killed sure." Said it was like a shotgun shot at me. And I finally got three men out. Jack Sweeney was backed up against the left field wall, just pushing it and finally caught the last ball. I got the third man out and when I came over there, I said, "Is that man ready, I'm ready to come out of there?" I said, "I started but that's all I can do." But that was really something that was when I was going out. I remember another time that I really got a beating. We went from here to play the prisoners over at Huntsville. We got over there and they told Joe Garner – said "Don't start a lefthander – they will pound him to death." He said "Leave that to me and we'll take care of that." So I got out there and the first three men I threw nine pitches and struck three of them out. Well, my catcher patted me and said "Listen, we've got them on a run." But I want you to know, they made six runs before I could get anybody out the next time. I would throw one and look at the dugout to see if he was sending a man out there but he kept waiting and kept waiting, but I was beat that time. They whipped me, but just about all of our games we'd win by one run or somebody else would win by one run, they were really close games.

**MD:** Did you ever have a lighted field?

**LV:** No, no.

**MD:** You had to play in the afternoon, Sunday afternoon?

**LV:** Sunday afternoon, sometimes we would play a double header, play on Saturday and Sunday but that was a special event and on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and things like that we played all those dates, you know, when we had special events. A lot of times we played double headers. Now Lufkin was a rival with us. Pitsier Garrison and those boys, I remember a catcher was named Garr and Old Red – there's just so many of them.

**MD:** Hellburg?

**LV:** Oh yes, well, that was later years that Hellburg came along. But back then in high school there's just so many – old Goofy Gordan, they just come to me one at a time. But,

anyway, their coach, back in the early days was Coach Kellum. Before me was Buster Jackson that pitched for Diboll. I remember Lufkin came down here and played one day and Tommy Massingill was pitching for Lufkin and they pitched, each one of them pitched a nine inning ball game and Buster Jackson hit one over the fence in the ninth inning, the last of it and we won that one 1 to 0. I think the same thing happened to us up in Lufkin and Tommy Massingill hit a home run and won that game up there so it was just a rivalry and we really enjoyed playing them. All of those boys.

**FV:** Lefty, being a left-handed pitcher, we have people today say, “What is his real name? I don’t believe I have every heard it”.

**LV:** Well, they don’t, even children call me Lefty.

**FV:** He even gets mail “Lefty Vaughn” and the children call him Lefty.

**MD:** They probably heard their parents call him Lefty.

**FV:** Yes, that’s right.

**END OF INTERVIEW**