

**Jim Rushing**  
**Interview 90a**  
**January 13, 1986**  
**Marie Davis, Interviewer**  
**Retyped by Courtney Lawrence**

**ABSTRACT:** Angelina County native Jim Rushing spent most of his life working for either Southern Pine Lumber Company or the Texas Southeastern Railroad. He worked cattle and fought outlaws at Rayville, served in the Army during World War I, worked on Dred Devereaux's bridge gang, helped John Goodman in the machine shop, and spent most of his career with the TSE Railroad. He also reminisces about the virgin timber, early mornings, and play parties.

**Marie Davis (hereafter MD):** Today I am talking to Mr. Jim Rushing. He lives at 1415 Ryans Chapel Road. Toady's date is January 13, 1986. My name is Marie Davis. Present also is Mrs. Jim Rushing. Mr. Rushing, when were you born?

**Jim Rushing (hereafter JR):** September 11, 1897.

**MD:** And that makes you about 88.

**JR:** It does.

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

**JR:** Up here on the Neches River in Angelina County.

**MD:** In Trinity County?

**JR:** Angelina County.

**MD:** Oh, Angelina County.

**JR:** I am a native of Angelina County.

**MD:** You were born here. Had your parents lived in Angelina County a long time?

**JR:** Yes. They came to Angelina County and settled on Jack Creek. You know up there where Hudson School is.

**MD:** Yes.

**JR:** That school was named after my grandfather.

**MD:** And your grandfather's name is?

**JR:** Hudson. Your mother knows more about them than I do.

**MD:** Well, okay, but I just wanted to hear you say it. Whom did you marry?

**JR:** Myrtle Nolen.

**MD:** How many children do you have?

**JR:** I have one daughter, three grandsons and five great-grandsons.

**MD:** Oh, that's good. And what is your daughter's name?

**JR:** Jackie Bob.

**MD:** What were some of your early jobs that you had after you got big enough to work?

**JR:** Well, I worked on the farms after I got large enough to work. I worked on the farm for people.

**MD:** What was your first paying job?

**JR:** I think it was ten dollars a month, board and washing.

**MD:** Was that farming?

**JR:** Farm work. And I lived with an old couple two years until I got old enough and big enough to hold a public job. That was with old man Bill Welch, Tom Welch's daddy. That is when I went off to the Army.

**MD:** World War I?

**JR:** Yes. I got sick and came back. I didn't work until I got that job at Rayville.

**MD:** What did you do at Rayville?

**JR:** Worked cattle and fought outlaws.

**MD:** Fought outlaws?

**JR:** Yes. See, they made a state game preserve out of that big ranch over there. Those old "hayseeders" had been hunting in there all their lives. They decided when they wanted a deer, in season or out of season, they would slip in there and get one.

**MD:** Was that close to Boggy Slough?

**JR:** Yes. The old Rayville ranch there.

**MD:** That was right after the war?

**JR:** Yes. I was working there when the peace treaty was signed – you know with Germany in World War I. I had gotten stout enough and Dred Devereaux came by there. He had the extra gang working on the track. When I came from work one day, see the track ran right by the ranch house, he was there talking to Captain Ray...the old man. He wanted to know where I had been, and I told him. He said, “I have been looking for you. I wanted to put you back to work.” I asked the old man, “Do you care if I go back to work for Dred?” And he said, “Yeah, sure.” I came back and went to work for him. I worked in the bridge gang several years, and then I got a job in the machine shop.

**MD:** There at Diboll?

**JR:** And then I put in my time from then on out with the TSE [Texas Southeastern] Railroad.

**MD:** Tell me about working on the Rayville Ranch. Can you remember anything about what all you did?

**JR:** Yes, handled stock, took care of stock and fed.

**MD:** Who did this stock belong to?

**JR:** It belonged to the ranch.

**MD:** Now, who did this ranch belong to?

**JR:** Southern Pine Lumber Company. The land all that over there belonged to them.

**MD:** And Captain Ray just kind of looked after it. He was the boss over there?

**JR:** Yes.

**MD:** Then really your first job with Southern Pine was before the war, because you were working for them all the time weren't you?

**JR:** No, at Diboll there at the machine shop, and Dred Devereaux's, the repairman.

**MD:** Where did you live when you worked for Mr. Devereaux in the bridge gang?

**JR:** I boarded with my Aunt Victory Ashworth, Wes's mother.

**MD:** When you came to Diboll and went to work in the machine shop, what did you all do up there?

**JR:** Well, we repaired cars, engines, locomotives, sawmill parts. We did most anything they wanted done.

**MD:** Was this about 1920 or something like that.

**JR:** Yes, I imagine.

**MD:** Who were some of the people you worked with in the early days at the shop?

**JR:** I worked as a helper for old man John Goodman. He was the air mechanic. He took care of all the air on the engines and on the cars. They built their own log cars. They built standard cars so they could go over any road they wanted to. See, they had to put air brakes on them. When they built a car, we piped it up and put the air to it.

**MD:** Oh, did they make the railroad cars up there?

**JR:** Oh, yes.

**MD:** Oh, they did! I'd thought they bought them somewhere.

**JR:** Well, they bought a lot of steel cars, but they made most of their log cars out of their own timber. They cut the timber and brought it in there. They cut the sills that they wanted, dried it, carried it over there to the shop and built the cars.

**MD:** Can you remember anyone else beside Mr. Goodman in the early days that you worked with?

**JR:** Yes, Jim McCall, old man Mickey Sullivan, Tom Lester, Charlie Frierson.

**MD:** Oh, yes, I remember them.

**JR:** That was about all.

**MD:** What do you remember about Uncle Mickey Sullivan?

**JR:** Nothing...he was just an old Irishman. He was a pretty good workman, but you couldn't half understand what he was talking about.

**MD:** Oh, he really had that Irish brogue.

**JR:** Oh, yes.

**MD:** He was later Justice of the Peace, wasn't he?

**JR:** No, he tried to be, but he got beat.

**MD:** When you were growing up, just a child, what did you all play? What games did you play? Do you remember much about your early childhood?

**JR:** Oh, we didn't have much games. They worked me from daylight to dark, and when I got a chance, I went to bed.

**MD:** You were tired at night, huh?

**JR:** Yes. And after I got up and thought I was grown, my brother worked down on the farm there, he would go to dances and I would go with him.

**MD:** Oh?

**JR:** We had a nice time.

**MD:** In people's houses?

**JR:** Yes. Old country dances. I guess you have heard your mother talk about those old country dances.

**MD:** Yes, she called them "play parties."

**JR:** There were play parties and the regular old dance.

**MD:** Then you worked for the company up until you retired?

**JR:** Yes, let's see was it '62 when I retired?

**Myrtle Rushing (hereafter MR):** Yes.

**JR:** In 1962 I retired off the TSE.

**MD:** Tell me what you did on the TSE.

**JR:** I broke switch cars, first one thing and another, and finally got up to firing the engine and the last ten years, I handled the engine.

**MD:** What did you fire the engine with?

**JR:** Fuel oil and finally they bought us a diesel.

**MD:** Did you ever hear of them firing the engine with pine knots.

**JR:** Oh, yeah.

**MD:** Did you ever work in the shop when they did that?

**JR:** No. When I was a kid, I remember helping a fellow cut wood for the engines. He would get the pine knots and get them to burning and throw that green wood in there. I didn't do much of that.

**MD:** That was before your time? When you were working on the TSE, would they build a track wherever they needed to go?

**JR:** See, The TSE built their track from Diboll to Lufkin and then out to Gilbert. Southern Pine coupled up and went on out in the woods from there.

**MD:** Well, now was the log trains different from the TSE?

**JR:** Yes.

**MD:** It wasn't really the same?

**JR:** No. When I was working on the log train (I broke on the log train for five years) and while I did that I learned to fire and relieve the fireman. It wasn't anything to it except put a little water and oil in it.

**MD:** On the log train, when you were working on that, would you have to get up real early in the morning?

**JR:** Yes, ma'am. It was four o'clock, wasn't it, honey?

**MR:** Three or three-thirty.

**JR:** We would make up our train and go from here to Fastrill, that was fifty-two miles, carry a bunch of log cars to load and pick up 32 cars, bring them back and unload them in the pond, went back and got another string. Two trips a day.

**MD:** Two trips a day to Fastrill. Was it 52 miles one way?

**JR:** Yes, 52 miles one way.

**MD:** When you first started working on the log train, were the logs a lot larger than they are now?

**JR:** Oh yes, it was virgin timber. You would cut long-length logs. The log cars were 30 foot and you unloaded in the pond and sent them up to the mill and the scaler up there cut the logs the length they wanted the timber cut.

**MD:** Did you see a change in the woods all that time you were working? You know it used to be such heavy forest, the trees were so big.

**JR:** Yes. It wasn't much to it with log hauling. They cleaned it as they went.

**MD:** During the Depression, in the early thirties, did that affect you very much in your working?

**JR:** No, we got to work three days a week. Usually Dred Devereaux had something for us to do when we were not working on the train...repairing the skidway and first one thing and another. I think I was working on the TSE when the Depression was over. On the TSE, we had to run everyday if we didn't do anything but run the engine over the track and come back because that was the law.

**MD:** Oh, is that right? You had to use the track every day.

**JR:** Yes, from Lufkin to Diboll. Well, we pulled passengers for a while during the Depression. We had a pretty good passenger business.

**MD:** How much did it cost to ride to Lufkin. Do you remember?

**JR:** I don't remember.

**MR:** Twenty-five cents.

**MD:** twenty-five cents, Mrs. Rushing says.

**JR:** It didn't cost us anything because I got a pass...got her a pass and Jackie Bob a pass. We could go anywhere on those passes. I went to Waco once on my pass.

**MD:** Oh, you could go anywhere in the state on your pass, that you wanted to go. Well, that was nice. How many different engines did you have at one time on the TSE?

**JR:** Just one. Every four years you had to overhaul that engine whether it needed it or not.

**MD:** That was the law, I guess.

**JR:** We would get one from Southern Pine. They had several log engines out in the woods.

**MD:** And you would use that one until you got yours repaired?

**JR:** Yes.

**MD:** Well, I am glad to know that the logging operations were different from the TSE. It was just separate...by law, I guess.

**JR:** You know they had a lot of timber down in San Augustine County. They called it White City. I don't know how many trains they ran over that road. That was before I went to work for the railroad.

**MD:** What did you mainly haul on the TSE?

**JR:** Well, we hauled lumber out of Diboll to Lufkin, gave it over to the Cotton Belt and to the Southern Pacific. Sometimes a contractor would put out some logs on the sidetrack up there and we would load them on a car and bring them to Diboll. We were getting pay for it.

**MD:** I guess you saw a lot of changes all those years you were working, gradual change.

**JR:** Yes, when you are working for the other company, they change all the time.

**MD:** I guess there were a lot of changes in railroad law, wasn't it?

**JR:** Well, it didn't bother us too much. After they got the timber out of San Augustine County, they didn't pay much attention to our little road. We had to have a standard watch. We had to have it inspected every 30 days.

**MD:** When you were working there, who was the manager of the TSE?

**JR:** E. C. Durham.

**MD:** And after he left, who?

**JR:** C. A. Jordan. I think they made Temple Webber President of the TSE.

**MD:** What about Mr. Boots Jackson? Did he work for the TSE?

**JR:** Yeah, he came on there later. Yes, he was kind of a business manager.

**MD:** What was Mr. Durham like? Did you enjoy working for him?

**JR:** Oh yes, Mr. Durham was a nice fellow. He didn't have much to say to the men that worked unless they got ugly on the job and didn't behave themselves and then he would tear them up like a "sow's nest." Charlie Fairchild fell off the car and it ran over him.

**MD:** Did it kill him?

**JR:** Yes. It just broke him all to pieces. He didn't die instantly.

**MD:** Did you have many accidents like that, people getting hurt?

**JR:** No. We were pretty careful about such as that. I believe that Mr. Fairchild was the only one. Oh, we might have sprung an ankle or something like that getting on and off. When we bought that place out there from Dewitt and built that water line out there, we got the best water in East Texas.

**MD:** That was a community project wasn't it? Everybody worked on it, didn't they?

**JR:** Yes. I was a pretty good pipe fitter and they put me through.

**MD:** Oh, you did the plumbing part.

**JR:** Yes, laying the pipe, well, we all worked. See I was working nights then. I would come in get a few hours sleep, and I would go and help lay that line.

**MD:** Oh, yes, everybody was really proud to get that water out there. (Out Farm Road 1818).

**JR:** There was some old fellow...you might remember that big old red dog your daddy had...and the line went right through your yard. Your daddy tied that old dog. Couldn't work for him. He was a booger. He tied him and he tied him too close to that line and this old fellow was working. He went out and got a bite out of him.

**MD:** Did many people get on your track?

**JR:** That was on "94" where those Negroes got killed. They ran into us. We had stopped there to set out some cars on the side track. I guess they had a little too much...what do you call it?

**MD:** Booze.

**JR:** They ran into us. Just killed two of them. That is all.

**MD:** Did you kill a lot of cows or deer?

**JR:** Not many cows, but we sure did murder a lot of deer.

**MD:** A lot of deer came on the track?

**JR:** When the river got up...see the railroad went around the edge of the hills. When they had rains like we have had lately, the river would overflow and run the little deer out on the edge of the hills. We used to kill a lot of deer.

**MD:** They wouldn't bang up the engine or anything like that?

**JR:** No, they were too light.

**MD:** What part of your work did you enjoy most...your early years, or your later years?

**JR:** All of it.

**MD:** You enjoyed all of it.

**JR:** I loved to work as long as I was able to work. I could have still been out there using that engine to switch the planer and factories, you know.

**MD:** Yes, there is a time to rest, isn't it? There is a time for everything.

**JR:** So I quit and we bought this place and paid for it. I had retired then. We are proud of it.

**MD:** Yes, it is pretty.

**JR:** It's all right. Can't anybody tell us to move.

**MD:** What were you telling me about using one engine?

**JR:** We used one engine in the daytime to haul logs with and we used it at night to switch the planer and carry the stuff to Lufkin. That was when Mr. Temple built that concrete plant up there on the road. We would haul most all of that concrete up there and gravel and sand. That is what we would carry up there mostly.

**MD:** What was the number of that engine that you used?

**JR:** We used it until we got the diesel.

**MD:** But the No. 13 was a...

**JR:** Steam engine. That was the engine that I learned how to operate on.

**MD:** Where would you get your water?

**JR:** Water tank. We would fill up our water tank in Diboll when we were using this engine at Fastrill and at the river. When we crossed the river, we stopped and filled up again because it took a lot of water to pull those logs.

**MD:** Do you think people work harder now?

**JR:** No. He's got it to where they do most of the work by power. Before that sawmill burned, they had a turbine engine pulling that machinery there at the sawmill...before the sawmill ever burned. Now it is all electric.

**MD:** By computers...a lot of it.

**JR:** Pushbutton jobs.

**MD:** But the town as a whole, the looks of the town has really changed?

**JR:** Yes, that is what I said. They have all those new buildings there. New grocery stores, dry good stores, that we never had. Those old "hayseeders," they didn't care how it looked just so they could make a dollar.

**MD:** Then you have really enjoyed your work?

**JR:** Sure!