

**BETH DENMAN**  
**Interview 093a**  
**March 5, 1986**  
**Marie Davis, Interviewer**  
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**ABSTRACT:** In this interview with Marie Davis, long time Diboll resident Beth Denman talks about her life in Diboll from the 1950's to the 1980's. When her husband, Joe Denman, moved to Diboll to work for Southern Pine Lumber Company, she followed him and witnessed the town's change from dusty company town to thriving small city. She recalls the process to sell citizens their homes, paving the roads and fencing the livestock, all of the amenities and services the town had, and the sense of camaraderie and community that led to close friendships for children and adults.

**Marie Davis (hereafter MD):** Today I am talking with Beth Denman, she lives at 201 Ennisbrook, Lufkin, Texas. Today's date is March 5, 1986, and my name is Marie Davis. Beth, when and where were you born?

**Beth Denman (hereafter BD):** Marie, I was born in Meridian, Texas, September 3, 1926.

**MD:** Was Meridian a small town?

**BD:** Well, we didn't live there very long. Daddy was a dean of a little college, junior college, they had there and so we left when I was a baby.

**MD:** Where did you grow up?

**BD:** I grew up in a little town called Aquila, Texas, which is northwest of Waco.

**MD:** And is it a small town, too?

**BD:** Gets smaller every day.

**MD:** Tell us a little something about growing up. Did you enjoy your childhood?

**BD:** Oh yes, I really did. Daddy was superintendent of the school all our life there. I was an only child and I grew up in a small town and had just comparative freedom in the little town, to just wander all over. Knew everyone, just always had a real good time; in fact, you know, always thinking of something to do because we made our own entertainment. I married Joe Denman in Waco, Texas, January 10, 1948.

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

**BD:** We have three children, Joe the third, or Trey, and Elizabeth Lisa Warner and then Gina Geanette, GG.

**MD:** And you call her “G.G.”?

**BD:** In fact, everyone at home calls me Gina, or Gina Beth.

**MD:** Okay, how many grandchildren do you have?

**BD:** We have one deceased and Gina Lee Warner and John Carter Denman.

**MD:** Tell me something about your educational background.

**BD:** As I said, I lived my life in Aquila and, of course, I went to the Aquila public school and then I graduated from Baylor University with a BBA in 1946.

**MD:** Have you ever been employed outside the home?

**BD:** Yes, when I was in Baylor, which was then on the term system, I just had a burn out one spring and I taught school at a little place called Axille, outside Waco. And after I graduated I went to work as an interviewer for the Texas Employment Commission, which I dearly loved because I talked to people all day long. Then after we moved – oh, then of course, when Joe was at A&M, after we married, I went to A&M with him and you know, put Hubby through and I worked there in a film library which was serviced Veteran’s Vocational Agriculture School and after we moved to Lufkin I taught out at Hudson on Highway 94 for one year.

**MD:** And when did you move to this part of the state?

**BD:** After Joe graduated from A&M. Of course, he grew up in Lufkin and his parents and grandparents, before him. And he wanted to come back to East Texas, not necessarily Lufkin but it just turned out that that is where we came to. He had a job in San Antonio and one in Ft. Worth but he had heard that Arthur Temple had become president of Southern Pine and he went to him and talked to him and Arthur hired him as his architectural engineer for Southern Pine Lumber Company and we moved to Lufkin. Lived there, oh I suppose nine months before we built our little house in Diboll.

**MD:** What did you think about moving to this part of the state, were you willing to move? Did you think you would like it?

**BD:** Sure, you know, if that’s where Joe wanted to be. I had only one complaint, when I – I thought it was so beautiful over here, but I couldn’t see any place. You know, I had grown up over in Central Texas where we could see towns for miles around and I did, at times, feel I would suffocate, just from not being able to see distances.

**MD:** There is a big difference in that part.

**BD:** You lived there so you know.

**MD:** When you moved to Diboll, what were your feelings about moving to Diboll?

**BD:** Well, Arthur, and I refer to him as Arthur not out of disrespect but that's just what I have always called him; I had met him before we ever moved over here. But he wanted younger people to move there. We had a lot in Lufkin we were planning to build on, but he offered our choice of all these beautiful lots with pine trees for, I think it was \$500.00 and he would have the house built at cost plus 10%. And we selected what we wanted, so we decided that was a great deal and, having grown up in a small town, I thought that would be a lot of fun.

**MD:** Could you describe Diboll, what it was like when you moved there? What year did you move?

**BD:** Moved in 1951.

**MD:** Can you describe your first impressions of Diboll?

**BD:** Well, of course, I had my first impression before I moved there because Joe worked there and I was down there a bit. Well, I liked it. You know, I liked the people, the people were so great and I thought the commissary was just neat, you know. I had never seen a commissary before and I thought it was neat. It was all there together. Everyone was so friendly, you know, Mr. Hines, I guess Mr. Hines must have been the postmaster at that time.

**MD:** Yes, at one time he was.

**BD:** But later, if anything was wrong with us, he had been the druggist and we would just call Mr. Hines, and went to him and, you know, "I'm dying, what can I do?" He would tell us what to get and he cured most of us.

**MD:** Yes, he worked in the drugstore for a long, long time here.

**BD:** Of course, Dr. Dale was there. We paid – I've forgotten what – and we could go to the doctor every day if he wanted to see us, not that we did it, but some people went pretty often.

**MD:** He would also make house calls wouldn't he?

**BD:** I don't know; I don't guess I ever needed him but I guess he would if we had called him.

**MD:** For what – about like a dollar and a half, monthly?

**BD:** Something like that, and I can't remember what the garbage pick-up was. But I know when they built the house, and I will digress a little, we were in with one of the little '50's lumber sales lots, and they put such good wood in that original house and they braced it, every time it called for two nails they would put four. Jewel Brown and his crew built it and, if they ever tear down the original part of that house; well, in fact, we did go through the bathroom for some reason and there were three ceilings up there; they had gotten a little off on the first ceiling and, instead of taking it out, they covered it up. Then later on we covered it – Burke and Griffin later remodeled and he said “What are you doing with three ceilings in your bathroom? And I remember, too, Jewel and his crew were working on another house and I threw some papers in the garbage can one day and we burned garbage then. Somehow they fell out and the pines had never been raked, I started a mighty fire, which I knew nothing about. I was in the house grading papers and they came and put it all out and told me about it. So, you know, everyone just did wonderful things for you. Oh, we could have burned the whole new house down.

**MD:** When you first moved there, did the company still own the houses?

**BD:** Yes, let's see, the Farleys had built and the Foggs, and Lottie Temple and I – Joe and I built our houses at the same time, next door to each other. For the most part the company still owned the houses but Arthur wanted to get out of the housing business and also wanted to encourage people to build their own homes in Diboll.

**MD:** So it wasn't long after that? Well, now, did this house belong to the company or did he sell it to you all?

**BD:** We built it.

**MD:** Oh, so it was your house?

**BD:** Built it with the company labor cost plus 10% - \$500.00 for the lot, it was a nice big lot.

**MD:** Well, you were probably one of the first to own a house in Diboll proper?

**BD:** Well, the Farleys had built, as I said, and the Foggs had built. I'm trying to think and then there was no one between their house, none of the – and the George Smiths, I knew there was someone else – and then there was no one between those houses and down there where we built. Where all the houses are now there was nothing, that was all open space. The red town houses were still there but every house in town other than the red town houses, as I recall, was painted white and we painted ours, we stained the bottom of it redwood and painted the top, the batts along the top, green and it was referred to as the funny looking little green house.

**MD:** Oh, is that right?

**BD:** And Mr. Anthony, who was in charge of housing, thought it was the tackiest thing he had ever seen. As sweet as he was, he did not like our house.

**MD:** Well, I guess it was about that time people started – most people had white houses and then they started using color, didn't they?

**BD:** They had white houses, and also fences around and we didn't put a fence, neither did Lottie. The cattle roamed freely, especially from the Conn Farm, which was down the way then, and oh, for years I had horses hooves, holes where the horses walked through the yard because it was wet. I also had a running battle with an old – a big old pig. She used to come and dump over my garbage can, so I buried a hoe in her back once and she ran off and the hoe fell out and she never came back. I always wondered if she died. I thought she may have died of blood poisoning.

**MD:** So that was about what Diboll was like then?

**BD:** Well, there was the one paved street and, I guess, it had been, as I said, the Houston Highway. I don't believe we had any streetlights but we did have one thing that Lufkin didn't have and don't think Waco had it either, and that was dial telephones. So when people in Lufkin said anything to me about Diboll I always said "But we have dial telephones and I still remember my telephone number – 2002. It was a party line with Ruby Booker. We shared a party line.

**MD:** Well, good.

**BD:** We had – I told you the commissary, of course, and we had the Antler Hotel and the Dairy Kream, not Queen, but Kream, and a Tonk, I didn't go to the Tonk much for some reason.

**MD:** Well, that was during my time.

**BD:** And the movie, you know, was there and had open gas heaters, do you remember that? That was before they built the little shopping center, which incidentally, the shopping center in Pineland and Diboll were, I guess, Joe's first two jobs for the company. Then, of course, we did get a movie there. I guess... I'm sure the Dairy Kream was there, and made the best hamburgers and the best hotdogs – Jay Boren ran it, Jay and Myrtle.

**MD:** Then you were there when they tore down the Antlers?

**BD:** Oh yes, when they burned it, but let me tell you, they just threw a lot of that stuff away. Except Joe did save some of it that he knew, things that were just priceless. When he was a boy he had gone to dances down there and he saved some light fixtures that we used in our den when we finally added on to our house but he said that he knew up under all that black stuff he thought those things were pure brass. He could remember from when he was a boy. He saved those and we did use them and later Arthur came down,

after we polished and spent hours and finally got globes ordered and all, Arthur had a fit – he said, “Oh, you stole those.” And Joe said “Yes, off the pile they were fixing to burn.” So there is no telling what burned from that Antler Hotel. But also, I remember one day we were talking. When I first came I was teaching at Hudson but the sewing club asked me to join just immediately, you know, when I quit teaching and Sis Davis said something one day and this has always been so funny to me, that she lived in Snuffy, the part of town. She said it was Snuffy and I said “Well, Sis, if you live in Snuffy, where do I live?” She said “You live one dip below.” I’ve always thought that was so funny. We lived in what was called the Farley Addition. We had, also, the old scout house and then we had a little park up where the library is now. It had a merry-go-round and a little wading pool and, oh maybe two or three other things for the children to play on, but that was the park. The Antler Hotel, we only went there on special occasions, maybe on Sunday for lunch. The rest of the time when we ate out was at the Dairy Kream. But we did meet at the Antlers in the afternoons and a lot for coffee, you know. Of course, after they put the shopping center in we had a drugstore and they had little booths and we met there. That was sort of the meeting place, too.

**MD:** Do you remember the reaction to people when they found out they were going to get the shopping center, were they happy about it?

**BD:** I don’t know, I guess, probably when they started the first phase of that. I may have still been in Lufkin then.

**MD:** In moving to a – well, you had already lived in a small town but moving to Diboll – everybody there just about working for the same company, did you find those people to be different or have a different outlook or anything than other people you had known?

**BD:** Well, I don’t know really, at that particular time in my life I had a baby, shortly after I moved there and then another one, we had Lisa thirteen and a half months later so I guess I didn’t think much about it because about the time we moved there John and Ruby Booker moved there and were our backyard neighbors and, then of course, Bob Burns, who was from St. Louis, and he married Jean from Wisconsin and they moved in and the Maynards came from Nacogdoches and I guess, they were just people. Everyone you know, and I didn’t think anything about them being any different. Sherrel Fears who – I guess Sherrel had grown up in Diboll and Vina Ola lived right behind us and they were always real friendly. Lottie moved next door.

**MD:** Through the years have there been any special people that you remember right at first, that you kind of kept up with?

**BD:** Oh, my goodness, heavens, yes. Of course, as I mentioned the sewing club girls, Virginia Nelson, Sis Davis, Wynona Harrison, Winnie Dell – Willie Dell, who passed away recently. Goodness, there are just so many of those. Everyone in it practically. We kept up with each other whether they moved away or not. Then, of course, I mentioned Mr. Anthony and Mr. Hines. Oh, and of course, Mr. & Mrs. Farley. Mr. Farley saw potential in Joe and wanted to give him an opportunity. Mrs. Davis at the Pine Bough

who was always so sweet to the children. Some people may not know this but when the children went to the movie, she would stay until the movie was over and keep the Pine Bough open so they could come in and call the parents to come pick them up.

**MD:** Oh, that's great.

**BD:** Yes, and so many people did little things like that for the children. Diboll as always been, since I've been there, very child – children oriented, you know. Everything for the children. Of course, Mr. Dred Devereaux and all his funny things. I know people have told you about him. Jay and Myrtle Boren, Mr. & Mrs. Hines again, Mr. & Mrs. York. Of course, your mother, Mrs. Glass, I remember how she always tried. In the little shopping center they said, had such high hopes. I think Arthur maybe wanted that patterned after a little center in Oregon called the Village Green, Eugene, Oregon he had seen and he wanted flowerbeds and everything. I remember your mother worked at the variety store and she, oh, she tried so hard – she and Mrs. Davis at the Pine Bough.

I probably shouldn't mention this but the boys would come over from the Dairy Kream and go to the bathroom in her flower bed and she would be just crushed, but she tried, and oh, Mrs. Purdy with her rhythm band and the music. Of course, I'm a Methodist and our church and the wonderful church birthday parties she always promoted. She was a worker. And of course, Robert and Rita Ramsey and the Franks were here when I came. Heavenly days, oh, and Doug and Lucille Warner always were there. There are just so many people. The Foggs, Mr. Fogg, who was killed shortly afterward but Mrs. Fogg was always so sweet to me. Just the people in general were always, so nice to me. Miss Bea, Bea Burkhalter, Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd, that's another couple that was always nice to me, and Flava and Lefty Vaughn.

**MD:** I think people in general in Diboll looked out after each other, we've had that mentioned, you know, several times on our interviews that they – everybody would, I guess, working for the same company, they all sort of had the same interests and if somebody got sick everybody was concerned.

**BD:** They really were, we moved in March and I had Trey in September and Dean Arrington had a little jewelry shop at that time, and she didn't know us very well but she gave Trey a little baby ring. And people sent flowers, also, I mentioned a lot of the – the people I mentioned a little while ago were the white people but there were so many of the blacks. There was a dear, dear lady named Adeline Bivens and her husband, Ben Bivens, had been a slave and she came down and baby sat for me a lot, and her daughter, Nettie Bea, lived in Houston. In fact Nettie Bea and I still keep up with each other. She brought Nettie Bea's daughter, Adeline's little granddaughter, Linda, and she brought Linda all wrapped up in a blanket and Linda and my children played. That went on for a long time and, of course, there was Florene Cade who is deceased, her husband is, I think, still in Diboll but Florene educated all of her boys and then her daughter wanted to go to Prairie View and she would come down and work for me to earn money to buy her clothes. Of course, Chester Willis, he's been mentioned a lot, and a dear lady who still lives in Diboll, Dee Moses, and Vestry Smiley and Carrie Mitchell, I believe you mentioned her a while ago and then, Willie Mae Garrett, who is deceased. When I came there Willie Mae

worked for me. She also washed, oh, she washed for I don't know how many people, she had a washhouse. And one day after Lisa got a little older we went over to pick up the shirts and Willie Mae said, "Well, I'm sorry" she said "But I went in the house and two of Mr. Denman's shirts boiled out of the pot and fell in the fire. But I'll pay for it." And I said "No, Willie Mae, I know it was not your fault, just forget it." So when we drove away Lisa knew how hard times were and she said "Well, mother, why didn't you let her pay you for those shirts?" I said "No, Lisa, we don't have any money but she has less than I do and she didn't intend to do it and I couldn't let her pay me for those shirts." But she offered to. You know, we always had this friendship and understanding so I think there was a great understanding there and a great love with the black and white people.

**MD:** That's come through, you now, with the older people that were born there in the early 1900's and it was still there in the 1950's when you came there.

**BD:** I'll tell you, it was a matter of depending on each other and helping each other is what it was. We really got to know each other because we helped each other.

**MD:** Yes, we've talked a little bit about the town, how it was when you came there and it was just after you came there that it really started to change, wasn't it?

**BD:** Yes, that was, I guess why it was so exciting, as I said, every one gets their kicks different ways and it was exciting to me because the whole time I was there, which was a period of thirty-one years or so, the whole time I was there it was growing and building and changing and anyone who wanted to work and help on these changes and become involved could. I always felt I was a part of it, I was involved in it because I was interested in it, you know. I think when Arthur came there, Arthur Temple, he had a dream for the town and, of course, that dream became Joe's dream and my dream.

**MD:** When they started selling the houses to people that wanted to buy one down there and the company was more or less getting rid of them, do you remember, did the people – were they in favor of this, or did some of them not want to – well, let me phrase it another way – did they want the company to keep the houses and let them just rent them at this low rate of rent?

**BD:** Marie, I really don't remember. I do, you know, among all the many things Joe has done down there, oh goodness, I believe, someone died and Joe took over in charge of the houses, that was one of his many little duties but, yes.

**MD:** Mr. Jackson, maybe?

**BD:** Yes, that's who it was. But I'm sure, that was like any other thing, probably some people were thrilled to death to be able to own a home at such a fair price because, I used to could quote figures but that's been too long ago, especially the red town houses they sold very, very reasonably to people, and probably all the houses very reasonably but I'm sure, it's like anything else, some people liked it. And I imagine there were one or two who didn't because they had always lived in a company house. You probably remember



the little building Mr. Anthony had with all the rolls of wallpaper. If you wanted to wallpaper your house, re-do it, you just went over there and looked through and got the paper you wanted and went back and papered your house. I'm sure there were people who liked that way of living, but that is just natural.

**MD:** They didn't have any responsibility, as far as taxes and upkeep?

**BD:** That's right. You know, and I'm sure they enjoyed that way of living whereas there were lots of them who were thrilled to death to be able to do it themselves, do what they wanted to and when they wanted to.

**MD:** And private home ownership, maybe?

**BD:** And pride, but that's just human nature.

**MD:** What do you think about the quality of life in Diboll through the years?

**BD:** Well, when I moved there it was such a small town and we made our own entertainment, you know. Things centered around the church and the school, the PTA and the PTA carnivals, that was always a lot of fun, doing the carnivals. Of course, the scouts and just our friends. We played lots of card games, I remember. No one could afford a barbecue pit but John Booker dug a hole in the back yard and he had a screen wire. He put it over the hole and that's what we barbecued on. I mean, we had some mighty barbecues in the back yard. We played, as I said, a lot of card games. I know, that people there as a whole, have more money and things, more boats, better cars, the parks are lovely. You know, Diboll is an exceptional town in having so many wonderful facilities. People can't believe it is all there, you know, when they just go down the highway – when you take them around they can't believe it's all there. But I wonder if there is as much social exchange. You know, as I said, we made our own entertainment with friends. Of course, I guess a lot of that is due to TV; people seem to stay in their own homes more.

**MD:** You mean, compared then with now.

**BD:** Well, sure. When I moved there, you have to think, there was no air conditioning, you know, we had those attic fans, or ceiling fans, and we stayed out in the yard a lot. Well, we put a little picnic table between our house and the Bookers and moved all the swing sets and little sand beds and made a little area where the children could play and the mothers could play cards on the table. Then the daddies came in the afternoon and we were out under the trees and we just got together more. It didn't take as much to make us happy because we didn't have so much.

**MD:** You made yourself happy, didn't you?

**BD:** We just didn't have as much, like that barbecue pit.

**MD:** Well, that was ingenuity, I guess.

**BD:** Oh my goodness, we had a whole lot of it – I remember Mr. Purdy, this is one little thing, he made – took boards and he took coffee cans and made a train for Trey and put a coffee can on the front for the smoke stack and he painted it all and gave it to Trey, he especially liked Trey. And it would hold two people and those little boys loved that. Then John Booker used to make airplanes for them out of old boards, scrap materials. They had some mighty dogfights with those airplanes.

**MD:** You mentioned the Halloween carnival a while ago, tell us about that. How was it put on, by the PTA?

**BD:** Well, oh yes, and if I remember, each room would be assigned to something, maybe like first grade had the fishpond. We went out and begged all the prizes we could for the fishpond and, you know, you progressed, and finally, in maybe the third or fourth grade you worked in stew. Rat Johnson didn't have any children but he always gave his time freely, he would take off Saturday afternoons to do the stew. The children brought canned goods and Rat got the wash pots and we got out there and he was the supervisor of the stew and we worked all Saturday afternoon on the stew. It absolutely had to be the most delicious stew you had ever tasted in your whole life. Never tasted any as good. Also as people stirred the stew Rat would say "Stir that stew," you know, and every time I think of the stew I think of Rat and "Stir that stew."

**MD:** Did they call it "Slumgullion?" That's what they called it when I was growing up. They called the stew "Slumgullion."

**BD:** I don't remember that word, maybe it was, I think it was stew because of Rat telling us to "Stir that stew." It was a lot of fun and, of course, they always had a big program and all the little children would put on an act. Each class was responsible for it. I mean, if you didn't get into the gymnasium real early you didn't get a seat, the whole community went to it.

**MD:** What are some of the other projects that you, living there that long – I know you were involved with nearly everything that happened down there?

**BD:** Oh we, during the time I was there I was involved in an awful lot, I mentioned the Booster Club which we started soon after I came there. They always did the Christmas baskets for years and years and several of us were always involved in packing the baskets. The men delivered them.

**MD:** Who would they go to?

**BD:** The needy people in the community with children. Well, and older people, too, who would have no Christmas at all had it not been for the Booster Club. And we would get toys, find out the ages of the children and put toys, along with the meal. Someone planned the menu and the Booster Club bought the turkeys and whatever, meal or rice,

and a lot of canned goods to go in the boxes and then we put the toys in, too. And they would be delivered, I believe, on Christmas Eve, anyway right before Christmas. We would all get together and pack the boxes, several of us who volunteered to work. I did that, and of course, then the Garden Club came on the stream and we got real busy trying to beautify Diboll, planted crepe myrtles which we had a running battle trying to keep our crepe myrtles growing. Then there was the scouts. I had a Cub Scout troop and always drove, I never would have little girls. They were a little emotional but I'd always volunteer to take them on little trips, you know, the candy kitchen or whatever. I did some substitute teaching in the earlier years which I enjoyed.

**MD:** What about the birthday dinners, would you tell us what those were?

**BD:** I'm sure probably someone has already told this. As I remember, the tables were divided into months. Of course, we occasionally combined two months if there weren't many birthdays in one month and two people would take on the table and be hostesses and we decorated the table and, good heavens, we hauled out our very best dishes, wrapped them in towels and took them up there. We tried to make our tables as beautiful as we could. Then they gave us the list of names of people for that particular month who had bought the tickets. We had place cards, you know, and we had those people at our table.

**MD:** Where did you have this?

**BD:** I guess it was the Woodman's – the old Woodman's building, but we also had the school cafeteria and served many purposes, you know, in the early days but that's where the birthday dinner was when I first came, for years. Of course, you know, when I first came to Diboll the school building was just that old wooden building. I had this one friend and she moved there, too, and she used to have a fit about that old building, and I'd say "But it isn't the building, it's the quality of the teachers. They don't learn from being in a new building; they will learn from the good teacher."

**MD:** Did the Garden Club have any special projects?

**BD:** Well, as I said, the big project was to plant the crepe myrtles through town. We had very little money so we could only do one section at a time. I don't remember how many years it took to get all those crepe myrtles planted but we also tried to keep the beds beautified down in the village, the ones that weren't being cared for and around the swimming pool, and, of course, when the library was built and we finally decided that day lilies would be about the best thing we could do, because they didn't require much care.

**MD:** Well, did you literally do this yourselves or did you see that it was done.

**BD:** Oh no, we didn't have any money, we did it ourselves. You'll never believe this, we got out in the middle where we planted the crepe myrtles, about, oh, I don't know, about three times a year and picked up the trash.

**MD:** With all the traffic?

**BD:** Yes, we really did that. Then, of course, we had the little park, you know, where the office is now, that was our park for so many years, where the scout house was and the pool there. Then after the other park was built, the lovely park we have now, the Garden Club did plant some things down in there by the little pavilion that was built down there. But we did it manually.

**MD:** Good exercise. Are you glad your children grew up in a small town?

**BD:** Oh goodness, yes, I really am but not only that, my children are proud. Especially Trey and Lisa, you know, you have to realize that GG came along thirteen or fourteen years later. But Trey and Lisa and all their friends just had the run of the whole house and if they were in a neighbor's yard, the neighbor would look out for them. As time went on, if our children were speeding, people would call us and tell us. They knew we wouldn't tell the children but – it was not because they wanted to tattle, they just wanted to protect the children and the children just grew up in such an atmosphere of just love and interest, I mean they knew people all around them and loved them, they knew their teachers, they knew the ministers. My children went to every Bible School in town, in summer. I mean they went to the Baptist, and ours and Church of Christ. There was a whole group of children who played together and grew up together and, as far as I can remember, they all became good citizens and I'm sure that's because – and responsible citizens. That's because they did have this feeling of love and people being interested in them. Do you realize that when Lisa was growing up she and her girl friends could ride their bicycles out to Ryan Chapel, take a picnic lunch and picnic out there in perfect safety? And I know when Trey went off to college, he went to Texas, and he said it amazed him, the kiddos there had grown up just in one little group. They didn't know anything about people with less money than they had. They did not know anything about black people and Trey had played with black people in his life, you know. He had none of this black/white feeling that was so bad in some places. But Trey always said he was so fortunate and Lisa, too, that they were able to grow up in a town like that with people and know the people. And Trey also said that it was so nice to know his teachers, a close contact with his minister, they always felt that he studied human nature firsthand and he knew about different types of people.

**MD:** You certainly don't feel they were deprived of anything by growing up in just a so-called small town?

**BD:** Heavens no. Good Heavens, how could they have been deprived? They had their bicycles, they had a swimming pool, they could go to practically every day but I believe it was closed on Mondays. They had a movie to go to, friends, parties, they had little dances. They had parents doing things to entertain them, they came to the skating rink in Lufkin, the bowling alleys, in a little panel truck down to take all of them to Lufkin to learn to bowl. If anything, Trey said he always felt sorry for people who didn't grow up in a small town. He felt sorry for his friends from larger cities because they didn't have quite as much as he did growing up. And, goodness, how many children can take part in a

big parade like our Diboll Day Parade? You'll have to admit they get pretty big, you know. All those children started out riding on the fire truck, that old, old fire truck, to kick off the parade. They just put as many on as they could and then, also, there would always be some kind of float that children could get on if they wanted to.

**MD:** Or help decorate?

**BD:** Oh yes, I mean they were always a part of it. But I know the Garden Club has always entered a float and we always tried to use a lot of children, let them all be a part of it.

**MD:** Do you think today that Diboll Day – don't you think it is a great thing to bring everybody back, who have lived here for a long time?

**BD:** Listen, people who know us and have been here from out of town just cannot believe that that little town has a thing like Diboll Day. It's absolutely wonderful and the town working together. Anyone who wants to be involved in it can certainly get involved and find something to do in it. Think of the pleasure it gives people who come back. Like, you know, when you lived away, to come back and see their friends.

**MD:** And then, too, everybody – all the school classes – that's when their reunion time is and that way, you get to see so many people and everybody makes a special effort to come back, if you have a reunion especially, your class.

**BD:** Yes, as I said, about Trey and Lisa, that group played together so, so there are about five classes who get together at that time, not just one or two. They just kept the group together because it takes that many years to get all that group that played together.

**MD:** What about the school, do you think they got a pretty good education?

**BD:** My children? Well, yes, Trey went on to get his Master's at Texas and Lisa graduated with honors at Baylor and her husband, Richard Warner, also did.

**MD:** That means that they had a pretty good background in high school, grade school?

**BD:** They had to or they couldn't have done that in college and I just think of all those children and how well most of them have done in college, those who went to college.

**MD:** I know that you really feel interested in Diboll, do you have any special hopes and dreams for Diboll for the future?

**BD:** Oh yes, of course, I want Temple-Inland to be a great success. I really do, I just want them to grow and get better and better and I'm sure that it will do that. I hope the town gets better and better. I'm so proud of the parks, the golf course and the nice things we have. I hope it continue to grow, but I don't want it to grow so fast that it outgrows it's facilities, like has happened to a lot of towns in Texas. I hope the facilities keep up with

the growth so it won't just be overrun. I guess I wouldn't want it to get so big that it would lose its own flavor and where people would not be interested in each other, like they always have been.

Oh, Marie, there was someone else I did want to mention back when you were asking me about the people in Diboll. One was Mrs. Hogue and she ran a boarding house when we moved there and we ate with her. Even after Trey was born we ate there. And Mrs. Hogue, well, I called her Mamma Hogue because she took us and she mothered us and she mothered our children. Even the last time I visited her in the nursing home she asked me about our children and even asked about GG, but she was a wonderful person always, to me, and since I had no family in Diboll, I could go to her and talk with her. She was sort of like a mother to me. I really loved her, there was another thing, too, I thought of. When Mr. Lon Smith was there, he had the cleaners and he sold the cleaners when he retired, to a black man named Lloyd. I can't recall Lloyd's last name off hand. But we always took our cleaning to Lloyd and then afterward, Marcellus Jones who was also black, went into the business after Lloyd died, and we took our cleaning to Marcellus. It never really mattered whether the person in business was black or white, it was whether they did the job or not and that was always a wonderful thing, too.

**END OF INTERVIEW**