

**Mrs. Jewel Minton**  
**Interview 120a**  
**October 7, 1988**  
**Marie Davis, Interviewer**  
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**Abstract:** In an interview with Marie Davis, Mrs. Jewel Minton reminisces about growing up in East Texas and living in Diboll as a married woman. Born in Weches, Mrs. Minton worked hard as a child and continued working all of her life. Her husband, Lewis Minton, worked for the Texas Southeastern Railroad and they lived in Buggerville, a railroad camp, at Rayville and Boggy Slough, and then in Diboll. She raised seven children, cooked, cleaned, sewed, washed, worked at the handle factory painting handles, and cared for the scout group. Mrs. Minton enjoyed caring for her husband, children, and children's friends and was well known throughout the area for her country breakfasts and frugal living.

**Marie Davis (hereafter MD):** Today I am talking with Mrs. Jewel (Lewis) Minton, she lives at 300 Thompson, Diboll, Texas. Today's date is: October 17, 1988. My name is Marie Davis.

Where were you born?

**Jewel Minton (hereafter JM):** At Weches, Texas. It's right close, I lived right close to where the old Mission Park is now. When I married it was a CCC camp.

**MD:** Where were you born?

**JM:** There at Weches.

**MD:** And when?

**JM:** January 29, 1915.

**MD:** You have any early memories of living at Weches?

**JM:** Oh yes, I remember all about the school there.

**MD:** Did you go into the little town of –

**JM:** Yes, a little town. It had a three room school, that's when they had special prayer for me one Sunday and she had been going, one of the little girls that I went to school with, Nathie Lee Pettibone, she was a Smith, and she went to them and got my address and I got the sweetest letter. I still get letters and cards and it just makes me want to shout.

**MD:** Did you go to church there?

**JM:** Yes, I belonged to the Baptist Church there at Weches, they still have it.

**MD:** What did you do for recreation when you were a child did you play games?

**JM:** Well, I worked most of the time. Me and my sister sawed logs with a crosscut saw and measured it off and split rails and made rail fence, a many a mile. Then we farmed.

**MD:** Did you do that for your own farm or for someone else?

**JM:** Yes, we had to, see it was back – times were hard, people had to work. And my brother married when I was twelve years old. I just had two brothers, one younger and one older. We did, we pulled one of them old crosscut saws and sawed them logs, pine trees down and then we could measure them. We would get a chop axe and split those rails and make – you’ve seen rails, well, we made many a mile.

**MD:** Who were your parents?

**JM:** James Albert and Laura Boykin.

**MD:** Who did you marry?

**JM:** Lewis D. Minton

**MD:** Okay and when did you get married?

**JM:** October 21, 1933.

**MD:** Do you have a story to tell about that?

**JM:** Oh, a wonderful one. I’d like to live it all over, every day of it. We were happy, we had our babies.

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

**JM:** Seven, still all of them are living.

**MD:** Tell me their names.

**JM:** Louise Blake, she married Charles Blake, and Joyce Hofsker, she lives in Pennsylvania now. And then Smith L. Minton, and then Jo Ann, she married a Grigson. Bill Ivey is her first husband, he’s the one, you remember, got killed in front of a freight train here several years ago, up here at this crossing. And was a sweet kid, oh, we loved him – I’ve never lost one of my children but I don’t believe it would hurt any more than when he died. Then Billy Frank Minton and he married a little German girl. And they are the ones who bought this house. They first bought the one up yonder where the telephone

building is. They gave \$4,000.00 for it, but it was the best they could do right then. And the doctor, I had gotten in bad health and had to quit work at the Handle Factory. Well, the doctor said, "You don't need to be out there by yourself. You need people, neighbors to come in and visit with you and have coffee." Well, Billy Frank, they slipped down and had that house bought and everything all fixed and come told us. Well, they moved us in, we lived up there about fourteen or fifteen years. Well, we didn't have enough room, our family had got too big. And he got a good chance at this house and bought it. When Lewis passed away, I said, "Ya'll let me move in a small house and rent this one". We had been living here several years when Lewis passed. His little wife said, "Mama, this house is yours as long as you live. Papa would turn over in his grave if he knew that all of us could assemble here after he is gone and all the grandkids come home, because we look forward to it. When we had our two oldest son-in-laws in the Air Force in San Antonio, well, anybody that didn't have a home to come to close by, they brought them home with them on weekends. And Lewis, we lived out there in the country then and he would say, "Dump, I hear them a coming." They would start blowing the car horn at the cattle guard and I'd hop out of the bed, put on a house coat, he would start slicing up old hickory smoked ham and I'd start making homemade buttermilk biscuits for that bunch at that time of the night. Do you know, a bunch of those boys – several of the boys married Diboll girls, and – but a bunch of those boys came to Lewis' funeral. They said they would never forget him. But they didn't have a home close, or nothing, and they would bring them home with them, anybody. We'd say, "Bring them on in, the more the merrier". And they'd say, "And ya'll with seven children", and then this little Leftwich boy. His place was set at the table every morning, just like mine. He came to see me a while back and he said, "Momo, I wish I had a nickel for every bite of meat that was set on this old bench and eaten at this old table."

**MD:** Now, is that all your children, Billy Frank was the last one?

**JM:** Billy Frank, and then there was Frances, who married Robert Mayo. Pesty, everybody called her Pesty, she and then Alton, James Alton is the one in Conroe.

**MD:** What was the story you were telling about when you got married?

**JM:** Well, I was sixteen and my daddy didn't want us to get married, my sister and me, I don't know, he just didn't think we ought to get married. He would say, "Well, now let's plan". He was a sniping, making \$1.45 a day for nine hours.

**MD:** What is sniping?

**JM:** Putting in cross-ties and toting them – I've seen the blood run out of his shoulders where he would have to shoulder them old cross-ties on the section there. At Buggerville, there on 21. The foreman was so mean he wouldn't even let them smoke a cigarette on company time. Times were hard. So we were making it, had to make a living for his mother and his sister and brother and me. We had to live in the house with them for a while, for about a year because he had to make them a living. There wasn't anybody else to do it. So then, we moved – just had a little iron bedstead and a buffet with a mirror in

it, we used for a dresser. And an old willow settee we bought there in Crockett and then we went to Knox's and bought a little vanity dresser and a chest of drawers, there at Crockett. We had this willow settee and some cowhide, I've still got my cowhide, there isn't a broke place in them. Avis Vaught's uncle was making them there on Highway 21 at the river, was making them cowhide bottom chairs and they cost us \$1.00 a piece, but that was a days work.

**MD:** Then he was already working for Southern Pine?

**JM:** He started working for Southern Pine – I've got the paper right yonder with one of his pictures when he got his service pen. Said our records show that you started with this company, February 9, 1925 – He was fourteen.

**MD:** Then you first lived at Buggerville, after you got married?

**JM:** Yes, and it was on Highway 21, close to Weches.

**MD:** Did you live in a boxcar house there?

**JM:** Yes, that's where we lived, in a boxcar.

**MD:** Describe your boxcar house.

**JM:** Well, it was just – you've seen those old cars on the track, you know, all right, they set out on side tracks at the section and we drank river water.

**MD:** Did you boil it or anything?

**JM:** No, we had an old red water tank there, they pumped the water into it. But you had to hand pump it, we didn't have electricity.

**MD:** How many car houses were there?

**JM:** We, now, we had just one.

**MD:** I know, but how many neighbors did you have?

**JM:** Lewis's two brothers. His older brother, a load of logs fell on him the 30<sup>th</sup> of November, 1945, and killed him. That was Mary Jane and Alton. And then his next brother, used to work for the T.S.E. Railroad over here, Ramsey, he died several years ago.

**MD:** Who were your other neighbors there? Besides his brothers, who were some of your other neighbors, or people who lived there?

**JM:** Just Mr. and Mrs. Reed.

**MD:** Oh, and your main job was to keep the –

**JM:** He was the section foreman, Mr. and Mrs. Reed.

**MD:** And their main job while you lived there, was just to keep the railroads – repaired?

**JM:** Yes, you see, they had so many miles, each section had so many miles that they had to keep repairing. They went into Fastrill every two weeks and got the little pay day and got groceries. Well, we didn't live at Ratcliff on down, but in 1937, February 3<sup>rd</sup>, we moved on down in the Boggy Slough Pasture.

**MD:** What did you live in there?

**JM:** A two room house.

**MD:** Now, let's go back and talk about your boxcar house. What did it look like?

**JM:** Well, it had some sliding – old heavy glass windows that slid.

**MD:** Was it a real boxcar?

**JM:** Yes, a real boxcar, just an old boxcar that they set off.

**MD:** Did you have one or two?

**JM:** I had one.

**MD:** Then you ate and slept –

**JM:** All in that little boxcar. Well, we had to move after we had another baby, that's when we moved out right beside, just across the track, right beside the section foreman's house. We moved into Mr. Dred Devereaux's Bunk house. That's where the bridge gang came to sleep.

**MD:** You got your water from this big tank at the river? They had pumped it in there by hand. You didn't have any electricity, how did you do your washing?

**JM:** With a rub board –

**MD:** Did you have to go down to the river to get the water?

**JM:** Well, we had – we could turn on that water there, and had some faucets and put it in the pot and boil it. I never did know what a pamper was.

**MD:** No, I didn't either. What about your heat, did you have a stove?

**JM:** We had a wood heater and wood cook stove.

**MD:** Did they seal the boxcar?

**JM:** No, it was just a regular old boxcar.

**MD:** Did you have a garden there?

**JM:** Well, no, we didn't have room enough to have a garden, but now, after we moved on down.

**MD:** After you left there where did you move?

**JM:** Down to the Boggy Slough Pasture, there out from Apple Springs.

**MD:** What kind of house did you live in there?

**JM:** It was just a little old two room and there were cracks in the floors. My kids would stick my spoons through the cracks and I would have to crawl up under the house and get them.

**MD:** What kind of house did they have for you in the Boggy Slough pasture?

**JM:** It was just a little two room, it was one big room, about like that but it would hold two bedsteads.

**MD:** It wasn't a boxcar house?

**JM:** No, it was just a little old wooden house.

**MD:** Could have moved that?

**JM:** No.

**MD:** That wasn't one they could pick up and move.

**JM:** The strips had come loose from the walls and it snowed one year and there were streaks of snow across our beds.

**MD:** Did you have to pay rent?

**JM:** \$3.00 a month.

**MD:** Where did you have to go to get your groceries?

**JM:** We had to come into Diboll – that’s what Mr. Cruthirds was talking about, he worked in the old commissary. He said, “I remember when they could come in here, I remember just as well”. You had to get enough to do you for two weeks because they would just come in every two weeks.

**MD:** Did you come over here to get your pay check?

**JM:** Yes.

**MD:** When you moved to the Boggy Slough pasture where did you get your water then?

**JM:** From a spring.

**MD:** You had children by this time?

**JM:** I had five. The oldest one was six years old.

**MD:** About what year was this?

**JM:** Well, we moved in there the third day of March of ’37, and we lived there, then we moved into Diboll out of the pasture, the 8<sup>th</sup> day of June in ’41.

**MD:** When you were living in the pasture, did you have electricity?

**JM:** No.

**MD:** What did you use for lights?

**JM:** One coal oil lamp.

**MD:** And you had a cook stove?

**JM:** Yes, we had a wood cook stove and a wood heater.

**MD:** Did anybody else live there?

**JM:** Yes, you take, everybody knew him as Shorty. He was a pasture rider. Henry Evans, in Pineland, was our next door neighbor. I’ll tell you, Mr. Albert Grumbles was a pasture rider and they lived right next door to us.

**MD:** What did Mr. Minton do? What was his job?

**JM:** Sniped on the railroad.

**MD:** He still did that?

**JM:** Yes, he worked for Temple – he retired –

**MD:** His main job was on the railroad?

**JM:** Yes

**MD:** Did you have any children in school when you lived there or were they all too little?

**JM:** No, they were all too little, started to school in Diboll and all seven got a diploma.

**MD:** Did your husband have long hours?

**JM:** Sometimes, now you see, when he drove the labor bus.

**MD:** I mean, when you were in the Pasture?

**JM:** In the Pasture? Well yes, they had to start by seven and work eight or nine hours.

**MD:** Then you moved to Diboll in 1941?

**JM:** Yes, the 8<sup>th</sup> day of June in '41.

**MD:** That was about the time Fastrill moved.

**JM:** Fastrill moved the last of August.

**MD:** You were one of the first ones

**JM:** We had already moved in. Tincey and Shorty Evans, we moved on the same old truck. The Company had a truck that came out and we moved in a little Red Town house.

**MD:** How many Red Town houses were there when you moved in?

**JM:** There were a good many of them.

**MD:** Not too many people were living there?

**JM:** They had to fill them up as they would build them. So they could move Fastrill in, but they moved later.

**MD:** Did you remember how much you paid for the Red Town house, how much rent did you pay?

**JM:** \$3.00 a month, they held it out of your pay checks.



**MD:** Who were some of your neighbors?

**JM:** Well, Jewel and Oren Burchfield, Henry and Tincy Evans, and New Powell and his wife, and Jewel George and Percy.

**MD:** They were old timers here, weren't they?

**JM:** Yes, well, but he worked here for this Company, Grumbles, and they were about our age but there was an old George house. Mrs. Grumbles lives in it now, they have turned it around. There was that old George house up there before they changed the streets up, up there where there are a bunch of oak trees.

**MD:** What did Diboll look like?

**JM:** There wasn't much to it. They had the old commissary, the post office was first, then the drugstore. Lefty Vaughn had a furniture store. Do you know, my baby boy and his wife still have that rocker, it still looks just as nice, bought it from Lefty Vaughn when we moved here.

**MD:** Was the picture show here?

**JM:** Yes, the picture show and the "Tonk", they called it. That old log hotel. My two oldest daughters worked at that, for Mrs. Davis. And then Lee Estes had – where that affiliated grocery – Lee Estes had a garage. That new highway wasn't even through there. That was the highway that ran on around all the curves and the post office was at the end of the commissary. That's where you walked up there and asked for your mail.

**MD:** Were you glad to get to move to Diboll?

**JM:** Oh, I was happy and I have always just loved Diboll. I still have some wonderful friends. I got down sick, they thought when my baby, he was born the 6<sup>th</sup> of July, '46. They thought I had cancer in my female organs.

**MD:** After you moved to Diboll? What did Mr. Minton do?

**JM:** Well, he went to working on the log train.

**MD:** Did he drive – what time did he have to get up?

**JM:** Oh, I had to get up because he left at 3:30 and I packed him a good lunch. I didn't have all this fancy stuff. He didn't care for sandwiches no how. I got up and fixed his lunches, he didn't have too much breakfast before he left. I always cooked it and I would sit down and eat. I fixed him a good lunch, fixed baked sweet potatoes, little fried pies, a little cup of beans and biscuits and ham, sausage.

**MD:** What did you do after he left?

**JM:** I kept house, sewed.

**MD:** Did you ever go back to bed?

**JM:** No

**MD:** What time did you go to bed at night?

**JM:** Sometimes he didn't get in until late and I would have to wait, but I would bathe my children and put them to bed. We didn't have a bathroom and we had a pit toilet. All the red town houses had new pit toilets. But I was happy to have that because out yonder in the Pasture we didn't even have a toilet, we just had to go out in the woods. It was a hard time, but I'd like to go back over it all, I was happy. We had a happy home and they would come in and he saw that our children got fruit. He would buy them apples and oranges, but they didn't waste them, like some of the grandchildren. If it got down to one apple in our house, where there wasn't but one left when we came back into Diboll, it was cut into seven slices. They divided everything and, you know, my children still divide with each other. Now, this oldest son-in-law, his left side is paralyzed and he is one that brought all the boys home.

**MD:** Mrs. Minton, when did you go to work?

**JM:** January, 1948.

**MD:** And where did you work?

**JM:** At Temple White, painted mop and broom handles.

**MD:** How many could you paint?

**JM:** Well, I painted by hand, we didn't have machines at first, you had holes punch in the rubber that fit down on a deal like an ice cream cone and you had to reach down and you had to be just as straight, or it would make a run back on that handle.

**MD:** You dipped them?

**JM:** We dipped them, we pulled a tank and put down in there and they marked about an inch and the broom handles were about seven inches, and then we had to line them up. We had a piece of paper in these buggies, they called them, and had little nails in little strips and you couldn't touch them together. You had to clean them, you folded a two sack and fived it there and you cleaned the excess paint off the handles, line them up in little strips, couldn't touch them nowhere. When you hand painted, that wasn't so bad, but I told them – there was me and one more lady could paint 6,000 in eight hours and we were the only ones who could ever do it. I told them, you had to concentrate. It was compared to rubbing your head and patting your stomach at the same time. You know how we used to do that.

**MD:** Did you get paid by the hour or by the number you painted?

**JM:** Yes, when I went to work, I worked for \$0.65 an hour. Then they raised it, when we could get production. Of course, it didn't take me but a few days, by hand painting them then, we didn't have the machines, I got \$0.67.

**MD:** Did you get another machine?

**JM:** They got the painting machines and couldn't nobody ever paint as many as me and Marie Landers. We would get 6,000 in eight hours with that machine.

**MD:** How many did you get when you hand dipped them?

**JM:** 3,040 Mop handles or 3,240 broom handles a day, in eight hours. Then when we had a rush order we had to work a little overtime.

**MD:** How long did you work there?

**JM:** Sixteen and a half years.

**MD:** What were you getting an hour when you left?

**JM:** They had gone to \$1.00.

**MD:** A dollar an hour, and that was the most money you have ever made?

**JM:** That is the most money I ever made. It made me feel good the night that I went to a Credit Union meeting here a couple of years ago and I sat with a bunch – Oneta Hendrick worked in the office and Dick was one of the foremen. Mrs. Ruby worked, Mrs. Trevathan, she is dead and gone now, but there were a good many that worked there. I went to that little meeting and they said, "How can you quilt with your hands crippled up?" That was, just recently, you know, not too long ago. I'll tell you how I quilted and Dick Hendrick spoke up – it made me feel good, he said, "it takes will power". And Mr. Weber said, "Well, she's got the will power, we used to wonder how she could get up and cook for her children, an old time country breakfast, make them home-made biscuits, have that hickory smoked ham baked and she had seven, and the little Leftwich boy ate breakfast with her." Said half of the Diboll kids spend the night there.

**MD:** You had moved out into the country?

**JM:** We had moved –

**MD:** Towards Pine Valley?

**JM:** Yes, back the other side of Borden Chemical, right out there, my children used to walk into the show. But, now the grandchildren don't think they should walk anywhere. Then they caught the school bus down at the forks of the road. There would be a bunch of them. I'd cook them a good old time country breakfast and feed all that bunch. I'd see that my baby boy and the little Leftwich boy, I'd wash off their little faces, comb their hair, and I'd get them all off to school. Then I would start out walking to the handle factory. I'd cut down that highline, go across the Creosote plant and there was an old colored man, He said, "Well, I'll tell you one thing, she could out walk anybody I ever saw in my life, she would come down through there, just a walking, and go up to Copestown and she was stepping". Well, I didn't have but just a little time to punch that time clock, because we punch a time clock. I had to have a black-out spell when I started through the change. They sent me to Tyler to two doctors.

**MD:** Temple White did?

**JM:** Temple White did, to get my disability, and one of the doctors said, "You were thought lots of on your job." I said, "Well, I tried to be, I loved everybody and everybody was good to me. I tried to be and enjoyed working and hated it so bad to have to quit." He said, "well, I'll tell you one thing, they really thought lots of you." I called Temple White office and Mr. Herb, Jr. (The old man was still living then), but Mr. Herb, Jr., said, "She is very disabled, if she wasn't we would be glad to have her back today." Well, then, one day they called me, we'd gotten a telephone, a party line, the only ones they could get out there, wanted me to come to the Temple White office. Well, I did, they paid me my six months back pay.

**MD:** That was a good nest egg, wasn't it?

**JM:** They wanted to thank me and I thanked them after – they were talking like they did at the Credit Union. Mr. Weber said, "Well, she worked there sixteen and a half years and never was late".

**MD:** What were some of the things you did in the town? Did you say you had the cub scouts?

**JM:** Yes, I had the little pack meetings at my house.

**MD:** That was before you –

**JM:** Well, now, I went to work three mornings a week early until we moved out yonder, because I had my little place down by the football field.

**MD:** Red Town?

**JM:** Yes, Red Town where I'd have my meetings. Well, I'd bake cupcakes and home made cookies to have for my little boys and they are grandpas now. But they meet me and hug my neck.

**MD:** Did you ever add on to your house while you were in Red Town?

**JM:** Yes, they put me two rooms and a back porch, Mr. Temple did.

**MD:** Mr. Henry Temple?

**JM:** Yes.

**MD:** Okay, what church did you go to?

**JM:** Well, now Mrs. Farrington had a little, we used a little Red Town house first. Tincy Evans and me and Mrs. Nellie Tatum and Mrs. Farrington, who ran the dry goods part of the commissary, and we just started us a little church, and Jim Fuller, of our own. And I taught a Sunday School Class. I got up and carried all the children, and we just had us a little church up there that we enjoyed a lot. When we were off kind of to ourselves, we got a milk cow, we had a milk cow and I had chickens and we had some hogs back down where you go to the park now. But we cleared us off a place and had two big gardens down there. I'd can stuff and I'd come home from that handle factory and Lewis would have stuff gathered. We'd get all that and I have picked bushel baskets of the prettiest cucumbers and I'd cook them bread and butter – fourteen day pickles, I have made a many gallon jugs. I'd can off – we didn't have a freezer then, and I'd can a thousand jars of different things, canned tomatoes and I'd make old time chow-chow. I planned this last year, may still make the old time chow-chow. My son raised a garden there at Fort Hood, and he said, "Mama, can you still make the old time chow-chow". I said, "I believe I can". He said, "I remember you used to, you'd boil us a big pot of beans, baked potatoes and you'd make Irish stew and Daddy would come in, it would be after dark a lot of times." That was before he started on the train and said "We'd all sit down there and you'd get a pot of beans, Irish stew and sometimes you would fry up a big batter of steak. I saved my syrup jugs, Blackman syrup and fill each one of them nearly full of chow-chow. Cause there were always several spending the night with us. I enjoyed that bunch of kids coming to spend the night at my house. That's what hurts me now because they won't let me get up and cook breakfast by myself.

**MD:** Let's talk a little bit about what you did with the cub scouts? Who was the leader?

**JM:** Mr. Weber, Mr. A. R. Weber

**MD:** What did you do?

**JM:** Well, we would play games and we had a lesson, I'd read to them and then Lewis would take the boy scouts on a trip. He'd drive a bus and take the bigger boys on trips. But then I'd always have them good cookies and stuff baked and they enjoyed their little meetings.

**MD:** Do you remember some of the kids that were in your group?

**JM:** Levy Ellison and Johnny Ray Ellison. And Sam, my boy, Keecy Burchfield, but I especially remember the little Ellison boy.

**MD:** Has Diboll changed a whole lot since you came here?

**JM:** Oh yes. Of course, they put that highway through and when that came, but then they had added on so much to it. Because that's all there was to Diboll.

**MD:** You made a lot of friends here?

**JM:** Yes, have and they helped prove it through the years.

**MD:** You have had a happy life.

**JM:** I have had a happy, happy life and enjoyed my family, and I still enjoy all of them coming home. I get tired but they are good to me.

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

**JM:** Forty-eight.

**MD:** And how many great-grandchildren?

**JM:** Forty-three.

**MD:** Was Southern Pine a pretty good Company to work for?

**JM:** Oh yes, Lewis thought they were the grandest thing. Now, he didn't want nobody to ever say – making remarks. Like he said, "I'll tell you, if I was" – you see, he was an orphan boy, and his older brothers had married, and he was making a living, like I told you, for his mother and sister and brother. We married October 1, in '33 there in the courthouse in Crockett.

**MD:** But he thought Southern Pine was a good company to work for?

**JM:** Yes, he sure did and he didn't want nobody to make a remark, he said, "Southern Pine" that's what they always called it then, "Kept me and my family from being hungry many a time during the Depression."

**MD:** Do you remember the Depression?

**JM:** Oh yes, we married right in the middle of it.

**MD:** You had a hard time?

**JM:** Yes, I have, like I said, I had a hard time on the farm when I was brought up, I plowed with them old plows and then my Daddy had a shingle mule, you boil them blocks me and my sister sawed up, had to measure the length, that's what – well, then they had a pit where they boiled them blocks –

**MD:** In water or oil?

**JM:** In water, sometimes they would put salt in it to preserve it, you see. But then there was a mule, and a knife would come up and the knife was fixed, it had a thin end and a thick end, that mule went around and that big old heavy iron knife, and it would come down and split that chain of that block that had been quartered. Then you boiled them. You had a bowl you placed them in. You lapped the thin ends over and then you would bring it over and there were little strips and haywire and then lift it up.

**MD:** Did you use hardwood?

**JM:** Well, now if they made boards they had a few hardwood, but this was pine where they made the shingles.

**MD:** What part did the mule play?

**JM:** Pulled that knife, that's what made that knife go working up and down. Then they had a syrup mill and it made up syrup for people. Well, we would usually get our pay in syrup because people didn't have any money back then.

**MD:** You would get so much syrup, so many gallons?

**JM:** Of however many you made. We worked hard, and my sister called, she called me just day before yesterday. She lives in Arlington and she is planning on coming and staying some with me. She said she was going to try and come but we talk about – we were proud that we did grow up to work. I believe that's the reason now there are so many divorces, the people – the girls and boys are not prepared to get married. Now, Lewis was six years older than me. But I grew up early – what I'm talking about, had to start to work and we walked about three miles to school there until we moved closer to the school. Our house burned. We had a good house and it was out in the country, about three miles from the school at Weches. We had to walk, all of us children, we didn't think nothing about walking. Then in later years, after our house burned and we had to get a house closer, it was close to the old Mission Park, but when I married that was the 3-C camp. They set out – I took the Crockett Paper and they had pictures of them back long time ago, back in the thirties where the "Tree Monkeys" they called them, would take the little pine trees and set out hundreds of acres. My Uncle lived over on the Alto road, Highway 21, where you go into Alto. They called it the "Farris Farm", they used to bring the convicts from Huntsville over there and they would work on that farm. Where the house was, was where we ate, and it was still there until just a few years ago. It was a big old house and had a long dining room in it and then they had a big old bell about that big

around, and it had a rope. When it would come dinner time every day, they would have men come in out of the field, they would go pull that rope, and ring that bell.

**MD:** If you had to do it over you would be willing to live your life over?

**JM:** I'd be – every day – go back over it. Now, I said, "I'd gladly go back and Joann said, "Mother, you mean you would go back, all them babies, rubbing on that rub board, packing water, sewing on your fingers for everybody?" And I took the backs of my brother-in-law's pants, Lewis's sister's husband and Lewis's khakis and made my older boys little pants on my fingers. I didn't need no pattern. I made all my little girls clothes part of them out of feed sacks, too. But I starched them and ironed them. Pesty still has my wood iron. I didn't have an electric machine until after we moved to Diboll. I bought an electric iron. But I ironed everything and sometimes had to make flour starch, didn't even have bought starch. But I starched all my little kids clothes, that's what Miss Bea Burkhalter and Mrs. Christian said when I was crying after Lewis died, they were loving me down in the store one day. They said, "Mrs. Minton, feel proud", said "Your little kids came and we talked about you never sent back a school picture." And you know how I done? I had a little Calumet Baking Powder can. I saved little dimes from one year to the next. There wasn't a member of my family would spend a little dime because they knew that was theirs. You never sent back the school pictures, us teachers talked about it. "You and that big crowd and said there never was nothing – you saw that your children got the money." I said, "Yes, and they got that money to make them trips." That's what my son, that bought this house said, "Mother, I don't know how you did it, but you saw that we got them \$10.00 bills all our days and you would put it back and save it, make all the school trips." And he said, "Now, listen, I want you to quit sitting around figuring on bills." Now they all tell me that but, thank the good Lord, so far I haven't had to – only the house don't cost me anything.

**MD:** How many quilts have you quilted?

**JM:** 90 – This one will make me 99 – That's just since the kids dad passed away eight years ago.

**MD:** He died in...

**JM:** 80 – the 7<sup>th</sup> of April, 1980.

**END OF INTERVIEW**