

TUEY McCARTY DAVIS

Interview 167a

August 1, 2006, at her home in Burke, Texas

Patsy Colbert, Interviewer

Patsy Colbert, Transcriber

ABSTRACT: In this interview with Patsy Colbert, Tuey McCarty Davis reminisces about growing up in Burke. She mentions attending school in the two-story school building in Burke, driving her father's Model-T car to school in Diboll and Lufkin, visiting the stores owned by Miss Ina McCall, the Courtney's, and the Keel's and the Campbell's. She also mentions her grandfather Harvey Belote and his Burke sawmill, which closed before she was born.

Patsy Colbert (hereafter PC): I'm Patsy Colbert. Today's date is August 1, 2006 and I will be interviewing Mrs. Tuey McCarty Davis, in her home at Burke today. Mrs. Tuey, can you tell me when you were born?

Tuey Davis (hereafter TD): I was born August 10, 1914.

PC: And where were you born?

TD: At Burke.

PC: At Burke. Do you know the house place where you lived, the location?

TD: I know where they said I lived. Right there where...right across from the post office. Shoot I can't think.

PC: Mrs. Ina's post office or...?

TD: Across the road behind that store building that used to be there. Where the Franklin's lived – there was a house there.

PC: By the Burke Baptist Church?

TD: No.

PC: Across the road?

TD: Yes, across the road.

PC: Across from the tracks.

TD: Where the Franklins live. The house was right there.

PC: Okay. And what were your parents' names?

TD: Lee McCarty and Bobbie Belote McCarty.

PC: And your grandparents' names?

TD: Harvey Belote and Nannie Belote.

PC: Okay. And it was your grandfather, Harvey Belote that had the sawmill in Burke.

TD: Well that was what I was told, that he had a sawmill down from the post office. There was a pond back down there. I was going to say where Mrs. Bloomfield lived, but you don't know where Mrs. Bloomfield lived. (laughter)

PC: Down from the post office?

TD: Yes.

PC: Like north, back up toward Hoshall?

TD: Just in front of the post office and down the railroad track there. That is what I heard; I didn't see it.

PC: Do you remember your grandfather telling you stories about the sawmill or anything?

TD: No.

PC: Did your family have any photographs of the sawmill that you ever saw?

TD: No.

PC: Okay. Do you remember your grandfather running a store? I know he ran a store from 1903 to 1914, and possibly later than that. Do you have any knowledge of that?

TD: I wasn't born until 1914.

PC: Right. So he didn't have a store when you were a child that you remember?

TD: Not that I remember. He moved away from here.

PC: He moved away?

TD: Yes.

PC: When you were a child?

TD: Well I wasn't very big.

PC: And you don't remember hearing any stories about the store, or any photographs?

TD: Only that he owned a drug store.

PC: Yes ma'am. Can you tell me what life was like growing up at Burke? Any particular memories that you have growing up?

TD: Well it was just like everybody else. There was a depression. Everybody didn't have anything.

PC: Didn't have anything.

TD: Had plenty to eat, everybody had plenty to eat. There wasn't much money going around.

PC: What did your father do for a living?

TD: He was a farmer.

PC: A farmer. Did they own a lot of land to farm or did he farm for someone else?

TD: Well he owned...my mother and them owned 40 acres.

PC: Forty acres, so he farmed that for a living as a farmer.

TD: Oh yes, yes.

PC: So do you remember going to the cannery and the tomato shed?

TD: Oh yes, oh yes. I worked in the tomato shed.

PC: You did?

TD: Oh yes.

PC: After you were out of school or during school?

TD: I probably was going to school.

PC: You started to school probably in about 1920. You would have been 6 years old.

TD: Yes.

PC: You attended the Burke School?

TD: Yes.

PC: Do you remember who your teacher was, or any of your teachers?

TD: Well I remember the faces but I can't remember their names. (laughter)

PC: Do you have any particular teacher that stands out? Or any particular school...

TD: Well Mrs. Maddie was the only one that ever give me a whipping. (laughter)

PC: And what grade was that, do you know?

TD: Oh sure, I had just started. And my brother, Ned had gone upstairs and she told me not to go and I took off anyway. (laughter)

PC: Was he your older brother?

TD: He was the only brother I had and he died when he was 13 years old.

PC: Oh, and what was his name?

TD: Ned.

PC: Ned. So you were following your big brother weren't you?

TD: I was following my brother.

PC: And how did he die?

TD: He died from appendicitis operation.

PC: Really, well my goodness, that is unfortunate.

TD: Yes it is.

PC: Do you remember the school itself? Did you go to school in the old two-story [building]?

TD: Yes I started to school there. I started in the two-story [building].

PC: In the two-story. Do you remember what happened to that building?

TD: They tore it down.

PC: They tore it down.

TD: And built the one they got over there now.

PC: Do you remember, was it just in bad shape and they tore it down to build the new one?

TD: I don't know why they did. Why do they tear these beautiful courthouses down and build something. It is a mess.

PC: Do you remember the time frame from when that might have been? Or what grade you were in? About how old you were?

TD: I don't have the least idea.

PC: Were you in elementary school when they tore it down?

TD: I don't know, I might have been out of school, I don't know.

PC: You don't know. And how long did you go to school at Burke then, like the years? Did you just go...

TD: I went five or six years I guess, or seven. And then a couple of years, or a year, I went to Diboll. Then I went to Lufkin.

PC: You went to Diboll. And you went to Diboll after they, because it only went so many grades at Burke and then you went to Diboll?

TD: No.

PC: You just chose to go to Diboll.

TD: Well my parents chose to send me.

PC: Yes ma'am. You were telling me a story about a model T car – you drove it.

TD: Oh yes, I drove it.

PC: Can you tell me that story?

TD: Well I just drove it to school.

PC: To Diboll?

TD: Yes, and to Lufkin one year I think, or two.

PC: So how old were you then? Do you know?

TD: I was still a kid.

PC: Right, did your father own it?

TD: Oh yes.

PC: And he let you drive it to school?

TD: Oh yes.

PC: That was a big deal wasn't it?

TD: I didn't think anything about it. (laughter)

PC: Did a lot of people have vehicles and go to school, or did most of the kids go by bus?

TD: I don't know. There wasn't any buses going to Burke then.

PC: Well that is what I was going to ask you, if you remember any school buses in Burke?

TD: When they had the bus, it went to Lufkin.

PC: They didn't get buses until they went to Lufkin. Okay. Do you know as far as like electricity, did you have electricity? Do you remember getting electricity when you were a kid?

TD: I was nearly grown when we got electricity. It was...

PC: In Burke?

TD: Yes.

PC: Do you remember maybe when, some time frame, if you were already out of school?

TD: I don't know Patsy, I didn't pay any attention to time then. It didn't mean anything then.

PC: Right, we never did think we were going to get old, did we?

TD: No.

PC: Do you, I know you remember Mrs. Ina of course at the post office.

TD: I certainly do.

PC: Do you have special memories that you want to share about Mrs. Ina McCall?

TD: Well I could tell you a lot of them. (laughter) Cause I stayed over there a lot.

PC: She was a wonderful lady.

TD: She was scared of storms.

PC: Was she?

TD: Oh yes. I've seen her run up and down that hallway over in that house. "Oh my Lord what are we going to do, what are we going to do. Oh my Lord what are we going to do."

PC: She would just get frantic, huh? (laughter)

TD: It would scare her to death.

PC: Now you were telling me about the post office. There were two doors at the back?

TD: Oh yes.

PC: And one door led to the Masonic lodge?

TD: Yes, the Masonic, the mason's owned that building. It wasn't the McCall's.

PC: Okay.

TD: They owned the building and the McCall's rented it from them.

PC: Okay.

TD: And the Eastern Stars and the Mason's met upstairs. And the, before then I guess it was an office, and they had a phone back there, the only phone in Burke at that time.

PC: The only phone. I guess everybody went there – if they needed to use the phone they went to the post office, huh.

TD: Mrs. Ina used the phone for you. You didn't use it.

PC: Oh, okay. She would call for you.

TD: Oh yes, and if somebody called, oh she would worry to death until she sent somebody to tell you you had a phone call.

PC: Yes ma'am. During the depression you were just a young teenager, a teenage girl. Did you, I know you remember going through the depression. Can you share anything with me about how people made it in Burke during the Depression? Anything particular that went on?

TD: Well if somebody had something, they shared it.

PC: They shared it.

TD: Like if you...there wasn't any fresh meat around and if you killed a beef, you couldn't keep it so you'd just peddle it out to your neighbors and around. And if you had meat, everybody had meat.

PC: And vegetables?

TD: And vegetables and the same thing.

PC: Do you remember anything particular that your father went through, or shared that you might have over heard your father being concerned at that time?

TD: If it was I didn't pay any attention to it.

PC: Didn't pay any attention, yes ma'am. I showed you the photograph of the Courtney store. Do you remember going there as a child?

TD: Oh yes.

PC: Do you remember the Courtney's?

TC: Sure I do.

PC: And you, you don't happen to remember when they left or...?

TD: Well they didn't leave until they died.

PC: Oh, okay. The lived here, they just happened to...

TD: They moved out of the store and over there where that first little old house there, where it goes down to your mother's.

PC: Okay.

TD: Where the Petty's live. That is where the Courtney's lived at.

PC: Oh okay.

TD: That is where they lived.

PC: Oh, okay. Mr. Courtney built the Petty home, where Mr. & Mrs. Petty live. And they had the store right across the street. And they just lived...

TD: Well they didn't have the store, the house until after they got out of the store.

PC: Oh, okay. And so they lived here until they died.

TD: Oh yes, oh yes.

PC: And they sold the store I think, to the Spears. Is that the one that Mr. & Mrs. Spears bought, Jim Spears? That was before [highway] 59. I think the Spears bought Mr. Courtney's store and then once [highway] 59 went in the Spears moved it. Do you know?

TD: Yes I think that is the way it was. I don't think anybody had it before Jim and Eunice Faye did.

PC: Okay, do you remember anything about the Linvell Campbell store?

TD: I just know they had the store.

PC: It was down close to, across from J.T. Jones's property, right there on the corner.

TD: Yes, yes. But Luther Courtney built it.

PC: Luther Courtney built it?

TD: And then he went over across the road and built that one. And then finally the Campbell's and them went over there.

PC: Went over there. I know...

TD: And then the Keel's had it.

PC: And then the Keel's. So Mr. Campbell had it and then moved up on the highway when highway 59 went in.

TD: Well, Luther built the store.

PC: Who did?

TD: Luther Courtney.

PC: Luther Courtney built the store?

TD: Both places.

PC: He had both stores?

TD: Yes.

PC: Oh, okay.

TD: He built both stores, but when he sold it to Campbell, this one over here. He moved over there.

PC: To the highway?

TD: Yes.

PC: Okay.

TD: And built that one and then he got out.

PC: Okay. And then the one on the highway is the one that Drew Holder ran for about a year. And then the Keel's I think. Something to that affect. I know Mrs. Dubose, C.B. Dubose's wife, she said she was an Anderson. And she was born and raised in Burke.

TD: Yes, she lived over there on the cut off through to Ryan's Chapel.

PC: Through Ryan's Chapel, and her husband, C.B., she said worked for Mr. Campbell.

TD: Oh yes.

PC: That is where he got his grocery training. And then he worked for him up on the highway and then went out to Beulah to run that store.

TD: Yes, and he had a twin sister.

PC: A twin. Can you tell me anything about Uncle Bob Weisinger and his store?

TD: I just know he had a store. I've been there a million times.

PC: Yes ma'am. Did you enjoy going there?

TD: Oh yes, I was a kid. Everybody hung out up there.

PC: How much did a piece of candy cost back then?

TD: I guess a nickel.

PC: Those were the good days weren't they? (laughter) And where did your family attend church?

TD: The Methodist church.

PC: Burke Methodist?

TD: Oh yes.

PC: Do you remember some of the pastors, any particular pastor that you remember?

TD: Not necessarily.

PC: Or any good memory of anything at church?

TD: Well they were just all good.

PC: When did you leave Burke?

TD: Well, when I married my husband he was following construction work. I went with him for about 10 or 12 years. Then we came back and built this house and been here ever since.

PC: And what was your husband's name?

TD: Sam Davis.

PC: Sam Davis. And what year did you marry?

TD: In 60 something, '63 I believe.

PC: In 1963.

TD: Yes.

PC: And then he moved off and worked in construction and after he...

TD: Well he was following construction when he married me. He didn't...

PC: And then when y'all retired you moved back to Burke?

TD: Yes.

PC: Okay, all right. Well Mrs. Tuey I thank you for your time today and for answering my questions about Burke history.

TD: Okay.

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END OF INTERVIEW