

**DAVID WALKER**

**Interview 227a**

**July 26, 2011, at The History Center, Diboll, Texas**

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**ABSTRACT:** In this interview with Emily Hyatt, former Angelina County School Board President and District Judge David Walker reminisces about his tenure on the school board and his memories of his father, Howard Walker. The elder Walker was a long-time Angelina County school superintendent and his wife (David's mother), Ethel was a long-time teacher. Mr. Walker talks about school consolidations in the county – especially Fairview, Beulah, Bald Hill (Baird), and Burke and all of the controversy that accompanied that process. He also discusses some issues with school transportation. He mentions Doris Balch, superintendent and other members Gene Brookshire and Claude Smithart.

**Emily Hyatt (hereafter EH):** Today's date is July 26, 2011 and I'm here at the History Center with Mr. David Walker and we are going to talk a little bit about his time with the county schools. Mr. Walker we will just get started with basic questions, your name and when and where you were born.

**David Walker (hereafter DW):** Okay, I'm David Walker. I don't have a middle name. I was born, as you stated my father was Howard Walker, my mother was Ethel Cruse Walker. They were both long time school people and I have four sisters and two brothers, raised her in Angelina County all my life. It was kind of interesting how...I got on the school board.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** You know some people came to me and asked me to run for the Angelina County school board and of course my father had been superintendent, you know, for several, many years and that was quite a bit before so, I went to him and I said "what about this" and he said "oh yes, run for it, they don't do anything but take care of the school buses" you know.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** And, that is what they did, they did take care of the county school buses at that time. And, he was right but, he didn't realize and I didn't realize there was a lot of move on to do away with the little schools or, if he did he didn't tell me.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** And, so I now, I agreed to run and then someone else ran. His name was Horace Stubblefield and he was a nice fellow from Temple, but he was connected with Diboll,

his nick name was Stubby. And, he ran and I realized then as this came about that people got him to run because they realized some of the school districts, small school districts, were going to start being done away with so people had a real strong interest in where those little common school districts were going to go. But, anyway to make a long story short I ended up getting elected and Mr. Stubblefield and I remained friends even afterwards and during the campaign although there were some people on the outside trying to stir it up.

**EH:** Right, I'm sure.

**DW:** But, we did and that is how I got on the school board. As a matter of fact I had a little flyer and I think this is when...about the only thing in here, if I'm correct I think that I was sworn in or something here in 1961.

**EH:** Yes, I had in the minutes, we have a record that you were elected in April and your first meeting to be president was May of 1961.

**DW:** Yes, I noticed I was sworn in by Tom Hampton who was in the county clerk of Angelina County.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** So that was from...it stated my term from the first of April '61 to the 6<sup>th</sup> day of April '63.

**EH:** Right, right, okay.

**DW:** But anyway of course I got elected and the first board meeting I went to I realized there was...the board had kind of got at an impasse and there were some people on the board and it especially involved Bald Hill.

**EH:** Yes, yes.

**DW:** Bald Hill, and the person who kind of lived in Bald Hill, I'm sure his name is on there somewhere, but he made the statement real strong that as long as he was on the board there was going to be a school at Bald Hill. But there were a lot of pressure to do something and also on the board at that time was Morgan Flournoy, Bob Flournoy's father, and he was wanting to do something and I kind of agreed with his position and I was pretty important being the chairman 'cause I kind of broke the tie, you know. But to give you an idea about Bald Hill, there were very few students going to that school. As I recall it was a one teacher school and as I recall although, there is nothing wrong with this except it just hadn't kept up with the times of the other schools, they still had outdoor toilets and cistern water.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** It was so...the pressure was so bad that when a house would come vacant down there some of the people who were wanting to do away with the school would rent the house to keep somebody from moving in with kids.

**EH:** Oh, so the school wouldn't grow.

**DW:** So the school wouldn't grow and most of the people down there transferred their children into Lufkin or Huntington anyway.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** But anyway, I broke the tie and that was the beginning, then. It had been a long time before any school districts had been done away with and then once that was done of course there was a lot of...it wasn't easy because there were a lot of hard feelings with people out there. We had Mrs. Balch go to everybody and fill out questionnaires of where they wanted their kids to go to school and some said Huntington and some said Lufkin. But anyway after that happened then the other schools got in line more or less, you know. I don't know the order for sure but then Fairview...

**EH:** Yes, I think you addressed in that same meeting where there was the Baird and the Bald Hill with the competing petitions between these parents and these parents, at the same meeting there was also Fairview.

**DW:** Fairview and then of course after Fairview there was Beulah and then Burke.

**EH:** Yes.

**DW:** All those were pretty controversial. We got sued a couple of times.

**EH:** Yes.

**DW:** I remember I represented the board since I had gotten to be...I was a young lawyer. I was a young lawyer so they didn't have to hire a lawyer.

**EH:** Well that was good.

**DW:** And I was real happy the first time I went to court on one of them. I went before Judge Moore, James Moore, who was also a district judge here. He had grown up here and got to be a district judge. That is when they had the district in, district court for three counties, anyway I remember his comments. He ruled in our favor and his comments was in the court room, "Y'all are doing a good job. Just keep what you are doing." It was good enough to win!

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** And then for him to compliment us too so, I felt good about that.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** But then of course after the Burke that pretty well, then that pretty well, everything settled down.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** I guess it was after my second term there, then I wasn't on the board, but then they began to move to do away with the county school board.

**EH:** Yes, yes.

**DW:** I think Gene Brookshire who had been on the board, he took my place as chairman and I think then he was chairman and I think Claude Smithhart took Gene Brookshire's place.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** They were friends of mine and still are, they still are and they are still living of course. But anyway, that was a real good experience but I credited Morgan Flournoy for having the push to start doing away, because I don't know whether you knew Morgan Flournoy, but he was pretty strong willed individual. He was kind of like my father and he didn't make any bones about it. The school needed to be done away with and I agreed with his position.

**EH:** It was difficult to compete, coming from one [room] school.

**DW:** We had...he was outspoken to do something and I agreed with his position very strongly but then some of the others they didn't want to do anything and then some are just kind of sitting back. You know how that goes.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** And, that is just the way, all of them were good people, they were all good people and they are looking after interest and of course, you know, it was an interesting side of all this, you know my mother taught school down at Beulah.

**EH:** Yes.

**DW:** Did you know that?

**EH:** I think I saw the records.

**DW:** She was one of those having seven children and she had taught before she ever got married way back in...I hate to say those dates but, way back in the...I guess in the twenties, you know.

**EH:** Yes.

**DW:** In the 1920's and then after we all left home, well then she loved to teach and she couldn't teach because she needed more hours, although she had taught years before.

**EH:** The rules had changed.

**DW:** Although she couldn't drive she went back and forth to SFA with a carpool and got her teaching degree at the age of about 59.

**EH:** Wow!

**DW:** And then she started teaching at Beulah.

**EH:** Oh, okay.

**DW:** I still see some of those kids that she taught and they just tell me what a great teacher she was. And I know she was, she loved it.

**EH:** Well she loved it that much.

**DW:** She did, she loved it that much. Like I said, some of the family had to drive her down or there was a two teacher school and the other teacher usually picked her up.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** And of course that school was done away with, but my mother was doing a fantastic job down there. But anyway that was an area that...I was trying to think if I let my term run out or resign. I got to be city attorney and then I resigned as city attorney when I got to be a judge and all. I know I was city attorney in about...from about...I got those figures somewhere, about '65 to '69. I was appointed judge in '69 and that kept me busy for twenty something years.

**EH:** It's hard to do much more than that.

**DW:** Yes, and I got to be a judge when they divided up the district and made the 159<sup>th</sup> District Court, the first court for Angelina County. Gosh, that was a long time ago. I was appointed by Preston Smith. A lot of people now a day's say "who was he."

**EH:** That is right, that is right. We have just, with all those different schools that you named, Beulah, Fairview, it's obvious from reading the records and from talking to other people that feelings were strong on all sides. And part of the problem, it looks to me, is that people knew when the small community school closed that it was a blow to the community itself.

**DW:** It affected their community and did away with their community more or less.

**EH:** One thing that struck me with the Baird, Bald Hill is that they wanted to keep the school building as a community center, trying to keep their community.

**DW:** Yes, these were people who felt strongly about their communities and they wanted to keep their communities. They realized if they lost their school their community would go down but that was just the way things were working.

**EH:** Absolutely.

**DW:** And not just here but all over East Texas and I guess all over the state.

**EH:** All over the state.

**DW:** Yes, that was the way it worked.

**EH:** Angelina County lost its county school system in 1971 and the whole state did away with that system in 1972.

**DW:** I remember when we had some of the hearings on Burke area that it filled up the court room. There was standing room only and we used the district courtroom and it's a large courtroom, if you are familiar with it, and it filled it up. People were lined up around the walls.

**EH:** Wow!

**DW:** We took testimony from various ones. And of course some of the testimonies were why it would be better to go to Lufkin and why it would be better to go to Diboll. I remember some people testifying that there were certain courses taught at Lufkin that were not taught.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** We heard all that.

**EH:** And the representatives from Diboll defending their school saying what they thought about their school.

**DW:** I guess overall it worked out for the best after whatever we did for various schools and whatever the school people did it seemed like the people adjusted to it pretty well because I didn't hear of any long lingering criticism and I probably would have.

**EH:** You would have heard.

**DW:** There was criticism at the time but the people were pretty good about adjusting to it and that is always good. You know a lot of times wherever sometimes decisions are

made and people just seem like they never can adjust to it in certain situations. But all those schools, it seemed like that everybody finally adjusted and it didn't take too long and they adjusted pretty well and that was good for the students as well as the communities as well.

**EH:** Yes.

**DW:** Like you said a lot of them made their school the community center and that sort of thing.

**EH:** Right, I know when Beulah joined Diboll they made sure there was a representative from the Beulah community on the Diboll school board for awhile and Marshall Capps was that representative. I know from looking at Diboll's records he was very insistent on making sure the people of Beulah were not forgotten and were represented in the decisions in Diboll.

**DW:** Well, you know there is a farm road from Beulah that went right into Diboll. I forget that number...

**EH:** Yes, 1818, right.

**DW:** It comes right into Diboll here.

**EH:** It was easy to get here ...and that was also... with closing the schools in the sixties that was when integration started and so there was a lot of upheaval all around in the school system. Marshall Capps joined the school board in 1962 in Diboll and the next year integration really started in Diboll.

**DW:** Yes, they started first I think in Angelina County didn't they?

**EH:** Yes, yes. And there is not really anything in the county school records about integration.

**DW:** That is right, that didn't really come up, sure didn't.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** I know I was aware of it because I had children in school when integration took place, you know. I have five children and I had two that were either in high school or going in to high school at the time of integration.

**EH:** In Lufkin?

**DW:** Yes, in Lufkin.

**EH:** That was a few years later, late sixties or early seventies. It was... lots of controversy all around in many issues with regards to the schools.

**DW:** Yes.

**EH:** There is also, as we have looked through the county school records, not just from your tenure but we have them from the early 1900's, there is not a lot about the African American schools. We know they had them because every now and then they are mentioned and we have memories from people who attended them throughout the county but we have not been able to find any records of how they were managed. Do you know if there were separate records kept or if they just no one really paid much attention to them?

**DW:** I don't know, I don't know. I guess it...I really don't know. I know a little bit how my father went around to those schools but of course, I was on the county board during Mrs. Balch's term and she had taken over from Mr. Balch, you know.

**EH:** Right, right.

**DW:** And... but I don't know if they kept their own records or if they had any particular records or not.

**EH:** Because they are in the census, you know, each year when each school was there are this many students in each school, they are listed, but so we know they were there but, there is no...the same records that were kept with the white schools about repairs done or teachers pay or different things like that, we don't have as many records.

**DW:** The majority of those people are all dead now.

**EH:** Right, right. And, of course once districts started becoming independent those issues wouldn't have been really in the county school, the most well known black schools in Angelina County are of course in Lufkin so I guess Lufkin would have kept those records if there were any records. So that was when we were doing research on county schools trying to get a picture of everybody in the county it was hard to see how those were.

**DW:** I imagine you are about the most knowledgeable one around now on county schools.

**EH:** We have gone through all those records several times.

**DW:** I know everybody that served on that Angelina County board; I'm sure they are dead. I remember some of them died while they were still in office there. The one from Zavalla died and we got somebody else but anyway, yes, Gene Brookshire and Claude Smithhart are still living that served on the board.



**EH:** Okay.

**DW:** They're still friends and I still see them but I think everybody else that I served with are deceased. I am almost positive they are. I ran into a fellow who used to work with my mother and I guess he was a principal and I think his name was Mann but I'm not sure of that. He had been a county judge in Woodville and then he came up and he ended up teaching up there. My mother,...I think he is still living but he is pretty old but he lives in Woodville.

**EH:** Okay, okay.

**DW:** But I don't know a whole lot more I can say about the county school board except that I remember that there was a Dr. Forrest served on there. I believe he was a Dr. Forrest. I don't know if he was...and he was real, real old and feeble when he was on there. I remember we...he just kept wanting to be on there and we had to kind of talk him into retiring and we gave him a retirement party.

**EH:** Right, that was good.

**DW:** I forget who took his place.

**EH:** As far as other things the school board did beside consolidating and dealing with student transfers, the transportation...

**DW:** Yes, we spent a lot of our time on transportation.

**EH:** ...it seemed to take a lot of the meetings.

**DW:** We had complaints about school bus drivers and we had to take those up and we had I remember... I think we had a lot to do with their pay.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** Yes, we spent a lot of our time actually with the transportation. They would call that the unit road system, no that was a county term. What did they call that?

**EH:** I have written down they called it the county unit system I guess.

**DW:** Yes, unit system, that is what it was, the unit system. Then later of course when they started talking about doing away with the county schools then they put those back to all the schools.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** Yes, that was a big job when I was on there, taking care of the school buses and I remember sometimes we gave raises to the drivers and then we fired somebody.

**EH:** Yes, that is in the records as well.

**DW:** Yes, we fired some of the bus drivers and stuff.

**EH:** And it seems like even though some of the districts in the county were independent you were still responsible for part, at least part of their transportation, like buying buses and managing routes and things like that.

**DW:** Yes, that is right. That was a big part of our time and I guess that was the main job they had other than when these decisions came up and of course, we also were involved in transferring students, we had to okay that. I know some of the school districts didn't like us transferring students. It took away from their school as you know.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** I remember we got a letter or two of complaint or something about that but I was always very much for transferring kids who wanted to go to another school and they are willing to pay the price, you know, it cost them, you know like fifteen dollars a month or something back then.

**EH:** Which was quite a sacrifice.

**DW:** Of course, which was more money, that is more like fifty or a hundred dollars now. But yes I was always wanting them to if that is what they wanted to do. But I could realize the school that they were coming from sometimes objected to that.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** I remember I got a letter or something about that one time. You probably have that letter in there somewhere.

**EH:** Probably, I know with Beulah and several of the others they knew when they lost students they would have a harder time staying open.

**DW:** Another...here is a...you probably have that but here is Mr. Pate complaining about us transferring, in effect. (looking through papers)

**EH:** Most of what we have are the official records. We don't have a lot of correspondence or anything like that.

**DW:** If you want that you can have it. (referring to a document)

**EH:** Okay, thank you.

**DW:** This was a letter relating to some of our hearings, you know, it has in it.

**EH:** Okay, thank you. I saw in one place where somebody had to go to Austin to defend the decision that you made.

**DW:** Yes, this was a hearing and this was probably in Austin a hearing we had. I don't know, let's see, well it relates to a hearing.

**EH:** Okay, we will definitely look at those.

**DW:** This is where they were running down the children. I'm sure you have that, for some reason I ended up with those minutes there.

**EH:** Yes, we do.

**DW:** I'm sure you have some of the lawsuits and stuff.

**EH:** It seemed that you had the same lawyers.

**DW:** Yes, Sumner Williams represented and Parker McVicker was one.

**EH:** Yes, all the different schools had the same lawyers.

**DW:** They are both dead. Parker is dead and he just died about a year ago. Sumner Williams has been dead about twenty years.

**EH:** They were obviously interested in the schools and willing to represent families. One thing we've seen in the records and talking to people is that the students in Angelina County always had a lot of people very concerned about the schools. The people wanted the best for their children throughout the whole history.

**DW:** Here is a letter that I...kind of gives an idea about my feelings about the transfer of the children of the schools. I don't know what the rest of these pertain to the lawsuit.

**EH:** Okay, well we appreciate that.

**DW:** It was kind of funny, I used to pick at my daddy, I would say, "Daddy you told me it wasn't nothing to it and I've been sued twice and had all these hearings and people are mad at me." (laughter)

**EH:** Well he knew you could handle it.

**DW:** Yes, he thought that was funny. My daddy thought that was great.

**EH:** Well, let's talk a little bit about him if you wouldn't mind. We know that he was county superintendent here in Angelina County twice, '26 to '30 and then '34 to '38. And he was a long time educator through all the different things in his life.

**DW:** Yes, he taught over in Louisiana and he taught, you've got some of the pictures where he taught at Dunn School or Bethlehem or somewhere he taught.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** And then he taught in Louisiana and then he taught over in San Augustine and then I think he came back from San Augustine and that is when he ran for county school superintendent. I was just a child when he was county school but that was in the old court house.

**EH:** Yes, yes, the old courthouse.

**DW:** I remember as a kid I would go down there and go up the stairs and it had the dome.

**EH:** Right. I know you were just a child but, do you remember any of the issues that he dealt with or any memories of that time period?

**DW:** Well I remember the elections, you know. I remember the elections, the contest and that is back when they, you know, a big political job you know. Back then it wasn't any television and there wasn't any...well the communications weren't like it is now and people went to these speakings, you know and the pie suppers. That was the old days of the pie suppers. And of course, as a kid I went to those events and but the speaking, not just hundreds but thousands of people turned out for those speakings you know. I remember that part of it because us kids passed out cards and stuff.

**EH:** You were part of his campaign.

**DW:** That is right and then it turned around when I ran for judge or got appointed then I had an opponent he passed out cards for me.

**EH:** That was good.

**DW:** Yes, I don't remember the school issues back then but I remember him being in office and I remember the campaigns and the elections.

**EH:** Well, it kind of came full circle. He was one of the ones that started looking at consolidating some of the smaller schools and recognizing that even though he was a product of the small schools in Angelina County and then all those issues you dealt with when you were on the school board.

**DW:** I have got some pictures that apparently I don't think you...somewhere he...but the class he taught. I noticed one picture that you have there doesn't just have him in it it also has my uncle.

**EH:** Yes, this was we think when he attended school at Cordaway Springs.

**DW:** Yes, see there is my Uncle Claude, and here is my Aunt Genna and Aunt Maggie is in there. I'm trying to think, yes Genna Walker and then there is Maggie Walker.

**EH:** Right, okay.

**DW:** I think this is Maggie and I think this is Genna and that is my Uncle Claude.

**EH:** So, at that time the family lived up there in the northern part of the county?

**DW:** Yes, of course daddy never did really go to a formal school. He went to Red Town some and then later he was taught a lot by his mother apparently but, then he went to Sam Houston University and later went back again and got a couple of degrees from there. My mother also went to Sam Houston.

**EH:** Okay.

**DW:** But, she didn't get a degree either but he later went back and got a degree. But, both of them loved school teaching, they really did.

**EH:** Right, and then I guess later in his life he was concerned with preserving the records of the school and of the counties.

**DW:** Yes, that was his big hobby. That was his big hobby after he kind of basically retired. After he got out of the school business he got in the real estate business and got in the appraisal business and buying right of ways and that was the last thing really. He knew so many people and he loved people that the counties and cities and highway departments were instrumental in him helping buy a lot of the right of ways for the various highways and streets and stuff where they widen them. He even did that for some other counties besides Angelina County. But, he was always interested in school and his hobby was getting those school records. He loved to and he loved if he found a picture of somebody or somebody would give him a picture of one of the schools and he was real proud of it and he would have it framed and he would show it to me and other people, you know.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** He remembered that school you know, and he kept up with the schools. He was very knowledgeable about the little communities where the schools used to be. I would be with him in a car and other people too and you know he liked to ride around. But, he would point out son right there is where such and such school used to be. Well, there is nothing there but trees or a vacant lot or something now and I'd say "are you sure daddy." And, then he could start telling me who the trustees were and sometimes I would know them.

**EH:** Right. Well if you had to visit all the schools. We have one of his books where he recorded all of his visit to all the schools to make his reports. He had to go and he is really honest in his assessment. Some of them he's pointing out where the teachers weren't doing what they should be doing or the facilities were bad. We like his, 'cause we are in Diboll here, we like his assessment of Diboll where he writes that it's the best school that he has visited that year. He was very honest in his assessments.

**DW:** I'm sure he did a good job because he liked what he did. There is no question about that, he liked what he did. He liked that kind of work and he liked school work. And, like I said he kind of got his the hard way. He never did go to a regular school. He went to a school up in Red Town and he stayed with the sheriff because they lived over in Crawford Creek bottom or somewhere.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** He went and stayed with the sheriff and went to school up around Red Town then later goes to Sam Houston and you know, doesn't have all the formal education to even go to college.

**EH:** Right, but he was obviously motivated and self taught.

**DW:** He was always a hard worker too. He worked hard at everything he did.

**EH:** He had a lot of life experience.

**DW:** Right, right. Yes, after he got out of Sam Houston in World War I, you know, he wandered out to California and got into building a...I guess it would be what you call a large high lines, electrical, and did a lot of surveying or got into that and then of course after he and mother got married of course they got back into the school teaching business.

**EH:** Right, a little more stable.

**DW:** Before they got married he came back and got in the school business.

**EH:** Was your mother from Louisiana?

**DW:** No, no, she was from Angelina County but basically she was from Woodville area.

**EH:** Oh, Woodville okay.

**DW:** She was a Cruse and there is an old Cruse Cemetery down there and she did a lot of work on the family. I don't know if you've ever seen one of those on the Cruse side of the family. He mentions it in his book. You know the book he wrote?

**EH:** Yes.

**DW:** When she was about in the sixth grade, well no, she was in elementary school her folks moved up here to Angelina County. Actually, my grandmother and grandfather lived out on Old Union Road. You know where the Old Union Road is?

**EH:** Yes, I do.

**DW:** Some of her heirs are still out there on that property and most of mother's family are buried in the Old Union Cemetery. She is buried at Garden of Memories but, her mother and father are buried in the Old Union Cemetery and she has several aunts and uncles and cousins buried out there. She had a pretty large family but, her folks came from Woodville area. She is still related to a lot of the people down there.

**EH:** Okay.

**DW:** She did a history on her family which I have. It's out of date right now because she died but, hers was very accurate. She was more particular about things than my daddy was.

**EH:** Right.

**DW:** That is the reason I knew she was such a good school teacher, you know. She was really good but, yes, she was from this area too.

**EH:** Okay, a long time family.

**DW:** Right, like I said her family moved up here when she was just in elementary school but, they came from Woodville but is still East Texas.

**EH:** Yes, it is still Deep East Texas well good. Let me see if we've covered everything. One more issue from the county school board minutes that we don't know much about...right before you came on the board they closed what is referred to as the Veterans Vocational School. We haven't really seen any other references to that and I'm assuming it was something set up after World War II, sort of G. I bill or something like that.

**DW:** I don't know, I don't recall.

**EH:** There were some issues with equipment after the school closed, you know, selling the equipment and who to give it to and all.

**DW:** I don't recall anything about that. I might should but I don't.

**EH:** That is okay. That is just the only reference we have ever seen to it so we were curious about that.

**DW:** Right, okay.

**EH:** I think we've covered most everything, the consolidation issues, the transportation issues.

**DW:** Okay.

**EH:** With transportation there were several meetings where buses between Redland and Lufkin were an issue particularly with the River Crest Community, which community they should belong to and can the buses getting down there.

**DW:** I remember there was a boundary dispute between Diboll and Lufkin too and we helped resolve that.

**EH:** Yes.

**DW:** As a matter of fact I remember I have that. You probably got that too.

**EH:** Yes, I believe we have those.

**DW:** Do you have the field notes where they re-drew the lines?

**EH:** Yes.

**DW:** I remember that took a lot of work on that because it was kind of...we worked on that a good while. It was also a boundary issue between Diboll and Lufkin that we helped resolve.

**EH:** Also some issues between Huntington and Zavalla of where the line should be and where students should go and which direction.

**DW:** Yes, I remember something about that. I remember way back there a lot of talk that Huntington and Zavalla ought to combine but, you know now they've got pretty good school districts.

**EH:** Yes, they do.

**DW:** I am really impressed with Zavalla building that elementary school.

**EH:** Yes, I saw the photos in the newspaper. It looks like a nice school.

**DW:** It's really strange how their new schools kind of came about. You know, the old school which was probably built by the WPA or something, it burned, arson, some kids got in there, well I say kids they were adults and they robbed the office there to kind of hide the evidence. They were all drunk and they burnt the place and they had to pass a bond issue and raise taxes and they built that.

**EH:** Right.



**DW:** They had a lot of problems down there getting people to go for it. But, I'm really proud of them. They've come along and built a new elementary school.

**EH:** Yes, yes.

**DW:** So, I'm really proud of Zavalla because I remember they had a really hard time when that little school was burned. They had to try to figure out and go in there and build a new one. I remember, of course, I was a judge that sent some of those to the penitentiary for burning it, you know.

**EH:** Right, right. They had some issues I think with Huntington as well as parents wanting their kids to go to Huntington and one of their arguments against transferring land out of their district was with the McGee Bend Dam went in, what was then called the McGee Bend Dam, they lost a lot of taxable land so, they didn't think it was fair.

**DW:** Yes, I remember that coming up too. They did lose a lot.

**EH:** A lot of that would have been company owned land and that was also an issue with transferring land I think in the Fairview situations and in Huntington and Zavalla with Southern Pine not wanting to transfer to a different district so.

**DW:** Right.

**EH:** Well I think those are all the questions I have for you. If you have anything else you would like to say...

**DW:** Well I don't know... I wish I had a better memory; maybe I could tell you some better stories or something.

**EH:** That is all right. We are just trying to get the full picture here.

**DW:** I just remember, like I said, that it was real interesting. The whole thing as you look back at it, the parents and those people were very concerned in those communities because like I said, we would have those hearings and they filled up the courtroom. That is a big courtroom and the greatest thing of all to me is that whatever decisions it ended up being the people accepted it and went on. No long term hard feelings that I'm aware about.

**EH:** Right, right.

**DW:** You know, that speaks well of the people when they can accept it and make the best of it and go on is my thing.

**EH:** Yes, it does, it does. Well thank you Mr. Walker.

**DW:** Okay, nice to visit with you.

**EH:** Nice to visit with you as well.

**END OF INTERVIEW**