

**ELLIS CARRINGTON, SR.**

**Interview 244a**

**July 15 and 29, 2002, at Lufkin, Texas**

**R.L. Kuykendall, Interviewer**

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**ABSTRACT:** In this interview with R.L. Kuykendall, Ellis Carrington, Sr., reminisces about his life as an African American man in Lufkin, Texas from 1922 to 2002. Mr. Carrington recalls going to school at Dunbar High School, quitting school and getting married, working for Lufkin Foundry and the railroad, surviving the Depression, and raising his family. Mr. Carrington talks about racial discrimination, segregated schools, life in Lufkin's African American Community throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, celebrations, businesses, and community leaders.

**R. L. Kuykendall (hereafter RLK):** July 15<sup>th</sup> Lufkin Texas. I'm interviewing Mr. Carrington and you will hear other voices will be voices of his two sons as we go through this process. Now, it will take us more than this one sitting to try to get everything because I'm sure he can't remember everything at one time and we will arrange things. But, it is important that we get the information and it will be saved on tape. I have a plan to have it at the museum, but at any rate we will do this, let them do the talking. Every now and then my voice, my name is R. L. Kuykendall, you will hear me asking some questions for further information that they might have left out. The next voices you will hear will be Mr. Carrington and his sons.

**Ellis Carrington, Sr. (hereafter ECS):** I have lived in Lufkin since 1922. I had a half sister who is deceased. My mother's maiden name was Jessie Myers. Her father was W. S. Myers and her mother was Elizabeth Myers. They came from Arkansas. My father then was Paul Carrington. His mother and father was named Frank Carrington and Deidra Carrington. They lived in Leggett out on a farm in Leggett, Texas. I was born in New Willard, Texas in 1909, December the 2<sup>nd</sup>. When I came to Lufkin I started the middle session of 1922 in January at Lucky Ward High School, at Lucky Ward School here in Lufkin.

**RLK:** Where was it located?

**ECS:** On Chestnut where the family's home the Lilly's stay on Chestnut. Do you know them?

**RLK:** Yes.

**ECS:** That is the old school. All right, and I think Brandon was built in 1923, well yes Dunbar. I went to school there. Professor Brandon was the principal. I was promoted to the ninth grade when I quit school and married at an early age.

**RLK:** Let me ask you this; is there anything that you can think of that may have happened that you remembered when you were in elementary school, some kind of incidents that may have occurred that you can remember that you can talk about?

**ECS:** Not off hand, not off hand. I don't remember anything particular happened.

**RLK:** Okay well let me ask you this, what was school like in terms of your textbooks? Did you have textbooks? Did the state supply them?

**ECS:** We got the school books after the white schools got...studied the books then they gave them to us to study. They got new books and we got the books that they studied. So, we...I guess what you might call a second rate education.

**Charles Carrington (hereafter CC):** That was even going on when I started to school.

**RLK:** What is your name?

**CC:** My name is Charles Carrington. I'm the baby boy of the family. I'm sure it was going on when my brother started.

**Ellis Carrington, Jr. (hereafter ECJ):** Yes, in fact in '36 when I started school it was the same way.

**CC:** It was the same way when I started in '41.

**ECJ:** All the football and basketball was handed down, everything was that way.

**CC:** Everything was hand me downs. We got smelly uniforms, basketball uniforms, football uniforms and the books was written all over them so it made it kind of confusing if you tried to go by what someone else had written down in the book for an answer. I learned to ignore it all and just went on my ability.

**RLK:** Okay, Mr. Carrington just talk.

**ECS:** Okay, let me see where I was. I first started to work at the Lufkin Foundry & Machine Company in 1926 as a tool maker. I got laid off and I hauled logs driving a log truck for Ed Roach when I was a youngster when I was about sixteen years old. I worked at the Angelina Hotel as a bellhop back in 1930 up until around '42 when I was hired as a brakeman on the Southern Pacific Railroad.

**RLK:** Excuse me let me ask you this, you said you quit school in the ninth grade?

**ECS:** Close to the ninth grade, yes.

**RLK:** Would you tell me a reason or the reason that you quit school or the circumstances that caused it to happen?

**ECS:** I married at an early age. I quit school to marry at an early age.

**RLK:** Oh okay.

**ECS:** I wasn't quite eighteen years old.

**RLK:** Does it have anything to do with you may have been maybe disgusted with school or just the fact that you wanted to marry this person?

**ECS:** I was just young and fell in love with the girl and my parents...I had her uncle to get my first marriage license. My auntie saw it in the paper and then showed it to my grandfather which reared me, you know, and he made me give them back to him and he carried them back, you know. So, he and I didn't...we started to school in 1926 or 1927. I didn't start to school that school year. My grandfather and I both were working at Lufkin Foundry. We were eating breakfast right here and I ate slow until he left ahead of me, you know, and that is reason I come on. I was usually about a block ahead of him. Every time he would look back I would walk like I was trying to catch up with him and I never did catch up to him. When he went in the foundry to work I went up the street to the county clerk's office, which was Bud Austin at that time. He was in his office. I went there and told him who I was and what I wanted and he asked me how old I was and I told him. He said, "well if you told me you was twenty or something I would have given them to you." I said, "well my grandfather taught me not to lie because if you tell one you going to have to tell another." He said, "do the girls mother know ya'll were going to marry?" I told him yes but I hadn't never said nothing to her.

**CC:** He was going to wait until he got away with it. (laughter)

**ECS:** He said, "well you go get her and bring her up here and if she says yes I will give you the license." So, I go down to what is called the One Thousand Block, where it used to be the One Thousand Block. You ever heard of that? One Thousand Alley was right there where the old light company used to be. They had a pool hall down there and a barber shop. Alex Princeton was the taxi driver, which he was fond of me as a youngster. I got him to go out to Lufkin Land to pick up my wife's, the girls mother and she said it was okay and he gave me my license. We came on down to Walker Quarters where she was staying with her grandmother, Tina Hadnot, and by the time we got there Reverend Ingram, on the wagon, was passing by about 11 o'clock that morning and we stopped him and he come in there and married us down there in...it was called Walker Quarters but it was her own street, Tina Hadnot.

**CC:** Do you know where Walker Quarters used to be?

**RLK:** Well, yes, I was about to ask you is some more about Walker Quarters. Can you tell me, see that is part of the ward that I'm responsible for, and there are things that are not really clear as to how it came about.

**ECS:** Well Walker had a bunch of rent houses there and it was called old Walker Quarters, but it came next to the wives grandmother's property. So this street and everything was called Walker Quarters you see so, she lived...that made her live in the Walker Quarters area.

**RLK:** And Walker was whom?

**ECS:** D. H. Walker I guess it was, yes. I'm not sure if it was D. H. Walker at that time or not but it was called the Walker Quarters.

**CC:** He owned quite a bit of property around Lufkin during that era and it was around my grandparent's property and so, he had a lot of rent houses and consequently over that period of time he had a store, a couple of grocery stores in town and he consequently tried to buy up all the property around there. And then the Caldwell's lived down below the Walker Quarters. It was the Caldwell family, Mr. Rob and his boys and their families all lived in that area down towards the trestle down there where the Conner's live down the track there.

**ECS:** I'm trying to think of the woman's name that stays right there before you get to the Caldwell's house.

**CC:** Oh, are you talking about Mr. & Mrs. Hadnot that lived directly on the other side of us, across the alley? That was the Hadnot's, some cousins of theirs, the Caldwell's.

**ECS:** Well, I know.

**ECJ:** Vertice and Harold Hadnot.

**CC:** Yes, Vertice and Harold Hadnot.

**ECS:** June Caldwell built a house right next to my grandmother's property.

**RLK:** Since this following, once you got the license you went on and did you get married that same day or what?

**ECS:** That was October 4, 1927.

**CC:** The same day, that was the day they got married. He was on his way to work and didn't go to work, got married that same day.

**ECS:** Yes, the same day, October 4, 1927.

**RLK:** Well tell me about, who this is you said your uncle, you were following your uncle to work.

**CC:** Grandfather.

**RLK:** Your grandfather. What did he say when he found out?

**ECS:** He said, "Well you are married." So, I didn't come home that night I stayed with my wife and the next morning we met there on the railroad crossing going to work. He said, "Well you out run me didn't you." I say, "Yes." He said, "Well just stay in there and fight it and if you need any help holler." So, he taken it real nice and everything and from then on until...but then later on I started to foul around at the pool hall there at One Thousand Alley. It was a domino shack and a pool hall, you know, and he didn't like that because he was religious. And, he got angry with me about something and he told me said, "If somebody come and tell me you were dead I wouldn't get up and uncross my legs off my porch to come see about you" because he was angry, you know. He didn't mean that and of course, after that I began to live more like he wanted me to and we were good friends again.

**RLK:** What kind of things were going on in those years? The war hadn't started but, what was life like in Lufkin, race relations and all those other things?

**ECS:** Well they had a curfew that you had to be off the streets at nine o'clock.

**CC:** A curfew.

**ECS:** Where the fire station was, not the fire station the electric thing was they would blow the whistle every night at nine o'clock for everybody to be off the street.

**RLK:** Was that everybody or just blacks or what?

**ECS:** Well unless you were a policeman or something, you know. And, if you were caught, they had a policeman named Charlie Swan, and if he caught you after nine o'clock he would asked you, "Where you going son?" I say, "I'm going home." He would say, "You better get on home."

**RLK:** Do you know why it was like that? Did they ever say why they had the curfew? Did something happen or something?

**ECS:** To try to keep burglars down I guess. If people didn't have any reason to be out that late you was supposed to been at home, you know. It was some special duty for them to be out after nine o'clock. The library, before they built the new one where the Kurth Library, there used to be a fire station there.

**RLK:** Okay, what year do you think this was?

**ECS:** Oh, 1921-22. The fire station was there.

**CC:** Was that near One Thousand Alley too or where was it?

**ECS:** It was right where the station used to be, the train station.

**CC:** Oh okay, alright.

**ECS:** Before the fire station and a big tall stand pipe they built the train station. They had the express office there too right beside...what street is that down there?

**ECJ:** Douglas and Franklin.

**CC:** The one that makes the circle around?

**ECS:** No, the one that goes right down beside the track?

**CC:** Angelina.

**RLK:** Angelina.

**ECS:** Well, it went right down beside the track and Cotton Square wasn't there then. Charlie Gann had a restaurant right to your left there facing the library. Charlie Gann had a restaurant there had a big long bench out on the side of the street. Then the Ruby Café was right on Frank Street just as you come out from the underpass to your left was called the Ruby Café.

**RLK:** Let me ask you something. I was told, we are going back to Walkers Quarters, were there ever any establishments or businesses in that area?

**CC:** Yes, Uncle Felix had a...

**ECS:** Had the domino shack called it the domino shack there.

**ECJ:** It was a dance hall and restaurant was there.

**RLK:** Do we know what time of year we are talking about?

**CC:** Yes, this is the 1940's when I was a kid. I'm sure it was there prior to that. It was there in the thirties too.

**ECS:** The Angelina Hotel was there too.

**CC:** The Angelina Hotel came along after we kind of grew up a little bit, but that was there and then before the war they had a wrecking yard, a salvage yard just across Abney. Yes, right across from Uncle Felix's place.

**ECS:** Well that used to be the cotton gin.

**CC:** Yes, the cotton gin and the picket factory all on the other side.

**ECS:** You know when you cross the railroad track over Abney and go to where you get...let's see...go down in there well, right there was a cotton gin.

**RLK:** So, that is possibly behind where the grocery store was located at one time.

**CC:** Well, you know where the washateria is?

**RLK:** Yes.

**CC:** Back towards Kelty's right in that vacant spot right in there. That was the cotton gin in there on that street going down there. I can't think of that street.

**RLK:** And you are talking about the early forties?

**CC:** It was the thirties.

**ECS:** That was along about in the '20's when the cotton gin was there.

**CC:** In the '20's the cotton gin was probably there because it was there when I was a kid. I was born in '33 and I remember it being there. I remember it being there, but when I was going to school I remember when the war broke out what I was doing. We used to get scrap iron and save lard and that kind of stuff and take it over there and sell it to a guy named E.Y. He had his tongue was missing.

**ECJ:** E.Y. Garrett.

**CC:** Yes, he worked there. (telephone ringing)

**RLK:** Let me just cut it off for a minute.

### **TAPE STOPPED**

**ECS:** The cotton gin was over there and the Daniel Hotel was built along about that time. Black people worked over there at it. I don't know, I forget what year it was operating, but I don't know what is the old man's name that stayed over there across the track from us?

**CC:** Crouch?

**ECS:** Mr. Crouch, yes, which is on Treadwell now, the west end of Treadwell is where he lived.

**RLK:** Is there something in particular about him or you just...

**ECS:** He was just one of the guys.

**CC:** No, he had the wood business. He cut and sold pulpwood. He did that for a number of years.

**ECS:** For your fireplace you know.

**CC:** He sold firewood and Slim Jenkins was across from him. He did mechanic work.

**RLK:** I knew him.

**CC:** When I was a kid I painted Mr. Crouch's house, used to stack cords of wood for him when he cut it. That was one of my first little jobs. That was even before I started to school.

**RLK:** This was about?

**CC:** I was five years old.

**RLK:** Okay, so that was about '38, '39.

**CC:** Yes, before I started school I done that. But, the year they built the Daniel Hotel he was talking about that was in the '40's. It had to be somewhere around '46.

**RLK:** How would you describe the city as related to the black neighborhood, did you have the amenities or types of things you needed like water and lights and all those kind of things? Did you have streets that were?

**ECS:** Well we had...I drove for (unintelligible).

**RLK:** Do you know if people requested to have more than you had or were people just kind of silent about it and just accepted what was there that you had?

**ECS:** Well you had to accept what they had to offer, you know, you couldn't do nothing about it. They had these scavenger wagons to come by and behind the property was (unintelligible) and the patty wagon come by and clean out the toilet, you know. That is the way we used to do around here.

**RLK:** How about water?

**ECS:** Well, you had...most people had wells. When we moved up here they had water.

**RLK:** What year we talking about right now when you still had wells?

**ECS:** Around 1941, after my Aunt Clyde and them and my grandfather and them died my wife, we stayed out on Cotton Belt in Walker Quarters in a little two room shack. My auntie had a chance to move up here to take care of the property, you know, and she put me in here and we stayed in here until I started to work for the railroad in '42. After so

long a time she wanted to sell the place, my Auntie Clyde wanted to sell this place and I wouldn't sign for them to sell it. Not long after that my wife had saved some money, which I didn't know, and we bought the place out from all the rest of them. That was in 1944, '45 I think. So, she was going to sell it out from under me and I'm living here you see and I bought the rest of it out.

**RLK:** This place right here?

**ECS:** This place right here. My grandfather bought this place along about 1923 or '24 I think, somewhere along there.

**RLK:** Was there any problem in...again I'm going back to the relationships that existed from a racial point and some of the things that were kept away from you just because, can you think of that? You bought this place it was in what was called a black neighborhood I guess at the time?

**ECS:** Oh yes.

**Bettie Kennedy (hereafter BK):** It was called the New Addition at the time.

**ECS:** It was called New Addition. That is what it was. They built all these houses around here in New Addition. All the houses were built just like this one next door here. That is the way they was. This house caught a fire and then we remodeled and then after we bought it we did some more remodeling. We put in an addition over there and back there. All the houses in New Addition were built just like this one over here.

**RLK:** Help us out too because you have something you can add to that makes it a joint thing for us.

**BK:** Will Ingram built quite a few of these houses in New Addition, my father did.

**RLK:** Okay.

**BK:** But, I want him to tell the story if he hasn't of his marriage.

**RLK:** The voice you hear now is the voice of Mrs. Bettie Kennedy, my good friend, the only female in the discussion right now. Okay, Mrs. Kennedy.

**BK:** I would like Mr. Carrington to share the marriage of when he married his wife, that morning. Has he told that?

**CC:** Yes.

**BK:** Oh, he has already told that. Well, what about your years being a brakeman. We have little or no history about those men that worked there.

**ECS:** When I started working in August 1942 as a brakeman for Southern Pacific Railroad. I worked there 32 years and 6 months and I was the first black man to be used as a conductor.

**RLK:** This was when?

**ECS:** That was about 1970 and that was the first Negro to be promoted as a conductor. I had a regular job as a brakeman and if I would have accepted the promotion I would have to go on extra as a conductor so I turned it down. But, later on they ran out of conductors. They didn't have a conductor available, rested to go and I was called for a train to go to Shreveport at the 102'nd as a conductor and they let me conduct one although I had...

**CC:** Turn it down.

**ECS:** Turned it down, because they was thinking I was supposed to be a conductor. I made that round and then I made another one, a local. So I made two trips as a conductor but it was about 1970.

**BK:** Mr. Carrington can you recall many of those men? I know Henry Thompson, Bolder Thompson.

**ECS:** Yes, Henry Thompson, Bolder Thompson...

**CC:** Lawrence Johnson, Willie Johnson, J. B.

**BK:** Yes. And, those were good jobs.

**ECS:** Oh yes, very good jobs.

**BK:** They had a boosters club, the women of the brakes men wives. They had a booster club. I remember they had several entertainment fashion shows at the Cotton Club.

**ECS:** Yes, they did. They sure did.

**BK:** McCoy, D. A. McCoy.

**CC:** Yes, I was trying to say that, Joe Gaines.

**BK:** Oh, I'm glad you said him. And, they did an awful lot for the community and they were looked up as elite people of the city, Maggie McCoy's husband and all those.

**RLK:** Let me asked you this. I'm sure at some point you couldn't even be a brakeman or has it always been a situation where you could be.

**ECS:** Oh no, as long as I can remember because something happened along about 1900 I think that a woman or something owned this railroad and when the SP [Southern Pacific]

bought it they had to sign a petition to always have black people and that is what caused us to have this job.

**RLK:** Okay, and that was one of the top jobs for a man.

**ECS:** Oh yes, a top job!

**RLK:** Was the pay pretty good by comparison to others?

**ECS:** Well that is the best paying job there was for a black at that time with an ordinary education, you know.

**RLK:** Well how did that relate to the Foundry? Was it a better paying job than the Foundry?

**CC:** Oh, better paying job, better benefits and everything, yes.

**RLK:** So, it took certain people to be a brakeman.

**ECS:** Yes, you suppose to have a high school education.

**RLK:** Where as compared to the Foundry you may just need to be alive pretty much if you had strength to do the work.

**ECS:** I don't know how I got it. I didn't have a high school education.

**BK:** But, you were extremely brilliant. I've found many people comment that you were an outstanding student even if you did not finish.

**ECS:** Yes, I was.

**RLK:** Yes, because as he said, that is why I was asking your leaving school had nothing to do with I couldn't do the work, it was love!

**BK:** He was brilliant.

**ECS:** I think the three leading students was myself, Vera Blake and Lewis Davis.

**BK:** That is what I heard.

**ECS:** The three top students.

**BK:** Now Vera is still living. She is I am certain in her nineties now. She has been a Methodist preacher and I'm going to get that address for you. Her husband, Durden, that he mentioned has passed away.

**ECS:** I think he committed suicide. I think he did.

**BK:** Wasn't he in Shreveport at that time?

**ECS:** I don't know where he was. I don't recall. I just don't recall where he was.

**RLK:** Relationships, what kind of things happened within the community of Lufkin based on black and white? It tells me a lot when I ask that question of what things were like in a certain locale. I know we all went through pretty much the same kinds of things at that time but some were either better, worse or in between. I guess I'm making a comparative to myself from where I came from and what may have happened because East Texas has had its problems, probably more than some other places in the South.

**ECS:** Well, now the way I see it is what they call "if you stayed in your place you made it all right." If you got out of your place it went the opposite.

**RLK:** What kind of things would have occurred if you got out of your place?

**ECS:** Well, you be low profile and stay in your neighborhood not got out and socialize with the white people.

**RLK:** I say if you happened to have got out of your place what kind of things would happen?

**ECS:** Some kind of restrictions or go to jail or something.

**RLK:** Were there any killings you know of?

**ECS:** I don't think so.

**RLK:** What about the Klan? Was the Klan active around here?

**ECS:** Well it was at one time I think. They killed a boy in court.

**ECJ:** Did he kill a white boy?

**CC:** They said he raped a white woman.

**BK:** Jack Mott?

**ECJ:** Yes, Mott I think it was.

**ECS:** They killed him in the courthouse having his trial.

**CC:** They cut his throat.

**RLK:** Okay now, you mentioned the cutting of throat and there was something told to me about a person's throat was cut by the husband. This man was pretty old?

**ECS:** Yes.

**RLK:** There was question as to how the woman died and once the black guy became the...to testify at some point the husband...

**CC:** He snuck up behind him in the court and cut his throat.

**RLK:** I am told there was a thought that he was about to say something he didn't need to say.

**CC:** Yes.

**RLK:** Well, I guess nobody would ever know that but this is what...

**BK:** That was the early forties.

**CC:** Yes, that happened around about '43 or '44, something like that.

**BK:** I remember the talk about it.

**RLK:** What followed that in terms of any type of punishment to the man? That was thought to be murder wasn't it?

**CC:** No, it never registered. Along in later years the crime that he was accused of, some white guy admitted doing that crime that he was accused of. I forget the guy's name.

**RLK:** What year was this about?

**CC:** They lived over there the other side, the west side of Raguet.

**RLK:** Do you know what year possibly?

**CC:** Like I said, around '43 or '44.

**RLK:** Okay.

**BK:** His name was Mott wasn't it, the black man?

**ECS:** I think it was Mott. I think it was.

**RLK:** He was very old wasn't he?

**BK:** That is what I was told.

**CC:** He was in his forties.

**RLK:** Oh, okay, all right. I was told he was an extremely older person.

**CC:** I don't think so.

**RLK:** This is what I'm saying. We can get different things from different people and you come up with a general area of what.

**BK:** Mr. Carrington had you heard that blacks could not go to town but on certain days? We were running across that.

**ECS:** No, I've never heard of that. The only thing I knew of was the nine o'clock curfew.

**CC:** The curfew. We as kids never had any problem.

**ECS:** No, I had no problem going to town in the daytime, you know what I mean.

**RLK:** And that was for everybody, the curfew.

**CC:** As kids we never had a problem going to town. We would go to movies and things on Saturday, go shopping, go to movies, go to shows during the week and a whole bunch of things. We did a lot of essays on different movies at school and we would go to the movies. I was always out of there and home by nine o'clock. Every once in awhile we wouldn't be but we never got stopped. But, as far as going in and out in the back door of the drug stores or different stores or restaurants or something but otherwise basically you could go shopping in Penny's or Sears and Roebuck, well not Sears, I mean Perry Brother's and all that you could go in and go shopping. You had Woolworths and that but you go to Thompson Drugs you had to stand off to the side to get a fountain. You just couldn't go there and sit down. As time went along I could walk in and sit down and get what I wanted, nobody ever said anything to me in the mid forties.

**RLK:** What was the general attitude of the policeman? Did you see any obvious thing about treatments?

**CC:** About the only obvious thing I ever saw with the police was like I said, it was with different groups or different people, there were some people you didn't bother some people they hassled. And, most of the time even during that period it was the one always with his head down and drawing back and yes sir this or yes sir that, that they would abuse and pick on. People that just went along and did their thing and kind of ignored them they didn't bother them. You had a few blacks to snitch on different ones, which is always bad.

**RLK:** Right, well you will always have them regardless of color, or lack of color.

**BK:** Do you remember Billingsley as a high sheriff? I remember him.

**ECS:** Yes.

**BK:** What about Watt's? I have heard his name called many times.

**ECS:** Well, he was one of the best sheriffs I ever knew of, Watts was. They caught a boy at Hoshall. Hoshall was a little old sawmill down between here and Diboll down on the track. There was a black boy went in the grocery store or something there and this black boy killed him and Watts put him in jail. They were going to break the jail open then hang him, you know, and Watt's was up there and stayed in the jail with him that night and he hollered at the rail run and go to break the jail open and Watt's hollered down there and told them not to do it. They hit it again and he fired in the crowd and I forgot the boy's name that had a scar, the bullet hanged him. That broke that up. That was Sheriff Watts.

**RLK:** Were there any hangings of your knowledge?

**ECS:** Not that I know of.

**BK:** We found a record at the museum that there has been one hanging in Angelina County.

**RLK:** Were you at the historical meeting when Bob Bowman mentioned the first black who was electrocuted but he couldn't remember his name. This is the first, assuming you would want to remember the name, but at any rate.

**ECS:** I think they did electrocute this boy, but I don't remember.

**CC:** Tell them about the boy who they put the belt up his back.

**ECS:** Oh that was down in Polk County back in 1920, '21. We lived out on a farm and there was a creek named (unintelligible) creek. The farmers on the other side of the creek, west of the creek, you know, and somebody did something in Livingston, a black, and they would get him and carry him out there and jack a Model T Ford up and put a belt on the wheel and put it in gear and lay him down and race the motor and that is the way they would whoop them. You could hear him hollering out there. That was back around '20 or '21 somewhere in there.

**RLK:** Okay, I guess we talked about jobs comparing brakeman job to the foundry job. Were they hard to get, either job?

**CC:** I don't think they were hard to come about. There was blacks at the paper mill and blacks at the foundry.

**RLK:** So, the jobs were there.

**CC:** A number of jobs.

**ECJ:** It was just the type of jobs were restricted.

**ECS:** Well the machine shop that is where they dress the casting up for the foundry and carry into the machine shop and screwed it up, well the blacks couldn't operate the machine but they could teach a white boy how to operate the machine but he couldn't do it until later on Inez Tims got that straightened out.

**RLK:** You said Inez got it straight what happened do you know?

**ECS:** Well, I don't know if he went to court or not but he finally got it where they would hire a black man as a machinist. I don't know what he did to do it but he finally got it that way.

**RLK:** Do you think he had I don't know what you call it...

**ECS:** I don't know what happened for it to happen like that but I know he was the instigator in it.

**RLK:** Do you think there were some other things he may have done at the Foundry, some other job changes or something?

**ECS:** That is about the only job change that I know of. That was a restriction on it.

**BK:** They respected Mr. Tims.

**RLK:** That is what I'm trying to say, some kind of leadership skills.

**ECS:** Yes, yes.

**BK:** They respected him.

**RLK:** What did you think about him as a person?

**ECS:** I think he was the cause of them hiring the blacks in the banks too. The jobs that were restricted from blacks. He was instigator in all of that.

**ECJ:** I think what brought that up he became president of the Black Chamber of Commerce in Lufkin. That is what started some of that. He and this group started seeing these things change.

**ECS:** After the Black Chamber of Commerce was organized.

**BK:** So, that was in the forties.

**CC:** That came about after they came back from World War II.

**BK:** Now did he serve in the war?

**RLK:** Inez? As far as I know he didn't.

**CC:** I think the only one of the Tims was I.D.

**RLK:** Sam didn't go?

**CC:** No.

**RLK:** Do you think...

**ECS:** The reason I didn't go I was working for the railroad which was...

**RLK:** War connected, yes.

**BK:** Yes, now the brakeman really was a better living. They had nice cars and dressed very nice and lived in nice homes in the community and they were well respected. To say you were married to a brakeman really was prestige.

**ECS:** Top job.

**BK:** That is right you had prestige in the community.

**RLK:** Do you think that caused any problems?

**ECS:** No, I don't think so.

**RLK:** I asked that because if you were respected and had the best of everything by comparison it surely could suggest other things that went along with it see.

**CC:** You can't say exactly who they were but there were some people that were resentful.

**ECS:** I was trying to think of the guy's name but I can't recall his name now. I got it pictured in my mind.

**RLK:** Well let me say this if it's ugly we don't want to put it on the tape and call his name. (laughter)

**ECS:** My mother married a brakeman, Shed Brady, and he had a Hudson, I forget what you call it, a Hudson something, a large car. You remember those?

**RLK:** Yes, I remember those Hudson's.

**ECS:** I was driving and I was at a young age, you know. I was driving and I was going to make a left turn on First Street off of Frank. That was before they put this underpass here you know, and this guy pulled right up to the wheel and blocked me from making the left turn and stopped right in front of the (unintelligible) where I couldn't move looking in and out like he dared me to do something of which I couldn't do nothing but hit him if I moved, just because I was in this big Hudson Seville, this car you know. That was showing the animosity they had for the blacks, which if you had something they didn't have or what not.

**RLK:** Tell me about entertainment. I know you mentioned the different clubs that we had here because...and the club that was on, was it...tell me about that, was it local people or just.

**ECS:** Yes, the Parker boys, Clemmie T. and Willie Parker owned the Cotton Club. They were two brothers, Willie and Clemmie T.

**RLK:** Was the talent local talent they got people?

**CC:** Oh they had T-Bone Walker and all of them come in, Fats Domino, Ray Charles, all of them.

**BK:** Ray Charles.

**CC:** B.B. King, all those guys came in.

**BK:** Buddy Johnson.

**ECS:** In fact my wife and I used to go to the Cotton Club a lot, you know, when our children grew up...

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**RLK:** We are talking about the Cotton Club.

**BK:** It was one of the elite clubs of our city and they would bring in performers. Help me Ellis to name them, Ray Charles, Buddy Johnson.

**CC:** Tyler Bradshaw, Billy Sandright, Joe Turner, The Daughters of Rhythm and the Sweethearts of Rhythm which was two black woman and they would bring them in and boy could they play, they were real good. Also, let's see who else, Ivory Joe Hunter.

**BK:** B. B. King.

**CC:** B.B. King, T-Bone Walker. A lot of the old bands back then.

**RLK:** Ivory Joe Hunter.

**CC:** Ivory Joe Hunter, right.

**BK:** And also those times they weren't playing in white clubs necessarily so they went to the black clubs in the cities.

**RLK:** Well let me ask you something in terms of what I saw when I got here. Where was the parking? You got name people coming into town so, I'm sure there were a lot of people.

**CC:** They were up and down the streets.

**ECJ:** Some people let you park in their yards you know, because they knew that was some type of entertainment so, they would let you park in their yards free of charge.

**RLK:** Okay.

**ECJ:** And, too there wasn't too many blacks that had cars at that time.

**BK:** That is right.

**RLK:** So, you were walking anyway. (laughter)

**ECJ:** Yes, you were walking most of the time anyway. Also, Dad tell them about the Pine Grove Hall over there was one of the places.

**ECS:** Yes, there was one called Pine Grove was right over there.

**RLK:** Where is over here?

**ECS:** Well, Grove Street, it was right across the street over there.

**RLK:** About what time?

**ECS:** That was back in the early twenties up till around '45 I think. No, it wasn't in the twenties, I think it was the thirties.

**CC:** The thirties, yes.

**RLK:** What about the club down the street, what period of time was this one?

**CC:** The Parker boys built that around '46 after they came out of the military, out of the service. They got together with the resources there and built it.

**BK:** I'm wondering if Woody is still living. I haven't heard if he is.

**CC:** I heard Woody is still living but Clemmie T. has passed away.

**ECS:** Yes, Woody is still living.

**BK:** There were several cafes that were referred to as cafes and there were pool halls. Uncle Billy Spencer had a pool hall. We talked about that.

**ECS:** Yes, we talked about that.

**CC:** Also, there was another little dance place over on Cotton Belt that was owned by Church Wells.

**RLK:** On Cotton Belt?

**CC:** On Cotton Belt, yes.

**ECS:** The church had a spot over there.

**RLK:** Where? See I'm trying to visualize it as I know Cotton Belt right now.

**ECS:** Well the Kelty's stay on Cotton Belt right at the creek there next to the bridge and Church Wells was the next house off of that.

**RLK:** It was a club?

**ECS:** He had a little old club off in there.

**RLK:** Okay, he had kind of a house thing almost.

**ECS:** Yes.

**BK:** Charlie Malone's was sort of a big place.

**RLK:** Where? I've heard of it but where was Charlie Malone's?

**BK:** It is where the primary area is now.

**ECS:** Right down there on the front nearly

**RLK:** Okay.

**ECS:** Right nearly vacant up there now.

**CC:** The hotel was down there by Professor Thomas.

**ECS:** Before that building was built he had a café.

**RLK:** On Kelty's and James there used to be a big two story building. They tore it down recently. Yes, it's James yes.

**CC:** On Kelty's and O'Quinn there used to be a Star Hotel there.

**RLK:** Well, I don't know what it was that is what I'm asking. It was a two story building.

**CC:** That was the Star Hotel.

**RLK:** Okay, they've torn it down since I've been here. It wasn't functional when I got here.

**BK:** That was the Daniel Hotel he is talking about.

**CC:** The Daniel Hotel was on the front next to the track there. Daniel Hotel was on James on the right side going down. The Daniels Hotel was in there.

**BK:** That is the one they just tore down recently. The Stars went down a long time ago.

**RLK:** Where was it?

**ECJ:** The Stars was at O'Quinn and Kelty's over on what you call the northeast corner of O'Quinn there.

**RLK:** Yes, well I think that building was still there when I got here but I didn't know what it was. It has been torn down since. It was pretty close to where the church is. It sat right on the corner of O'Quinn and Kelty's.

**CC:** Would you guys like a soda or something?

**RLK:** No not for me thank you.

**ECJ:** There was a guy named Clyde Davis. He had two little night club dance halls. One was down there near the trestles off of Cotton Belt. He owned that club until up around '44 or '45. Then he moved from there to North Street I believe it was North and Cotton Belt. He had a dance hall there also.

**ECS:** Who was that?

**ECJ:** Clyde Davis, you remember he married Marsilee.

**CC:** Did you tell him about the Little Ducks End?

**ECJ:** Yes, Little Ducks End was owned by him.

**ECS:** That was down by the Walker Quarters.

**CC:** It was down by Mr. Rob down there.

**ECJ:** Mr. McClendon had a place on Wilson Street They had a big dance club there. He also had a lot of the name actors and things that came in.

**RLK:** What time of year was this?

**ECJ:** That was in the forties up until sometime around the fifties. Also, they had a place called House of Blue Lights out near Lufkin Land where you could go and dance and that was a fun place.

**ECS:** They had a place out there called Paradise Inn.

**BK:** Paradise Inn.

**RLK:** Let me ask you this. You spoke of Lufkin Land, has Lufkin Land ever been more than I see right now in terms of population?

**BK:** That is where the sawmill was at Lufkin Land, the Lone Star.

**RLK:** Well there was a sawmill at Wal-Mart where Sam's is now, is that the one.

**BK:** No, it was farther back. The pond is still there and several of the houses are still there. When you go down Wood Street and Sunrise there are one or two old houses there. I don't remember the sawmill. I remember the Vaughn's and they had a creosote plant near where I live there. But, the commissary was out in that area so that was the heart of Lufkin.

**ECS:** It was on Denman I think.

**BK:** Well I don't know why they tore that building down because it was a pretty building.

**RLK:** Well, if you compare what I know as Lufkin today and Lufkin Land would we say at one time there was more people in Lufkin Land than here?

**CC:** Not per say, no. Lufkin Land was just about like Lufkin Land is now except for the sawmill and other things being out there.

**RLK:** So you went to work there.

**CC:** Yes, you went to work out there.

**RLK:** So, it has never been, to your knowledge, very populated?

**CC:** No, well it was always people out there but I couldn't say it was more populated than the New Addition of Lufkin.

**BK:** You had the bound areas. I think Lufkin Avenue was the bound area.

**CC:** Yes, bound as far as Lufkin Land itself, yes. Lufkin Land began there and went out and Lufkin was over here and then the New Addition was over here and the high school was another addition over on what they called old Lufkin.

**BK:** Old Lufkin.

**RLK:** It kind of grew up in additions Lufkin did.

**CC:** Yes, just like First Ward, Second Ward, Third Ward in Houston but it was just additions. That is basically what that was.

**RLK:** Okay, I was talking to a young lady and she said she can remember in the forties, the late forties, that there were very few streets. They had little...

**CC:** They weren't paved.

**BK:** Trails, that is right. That went way down in the years.

**CC:** That happened in the fifties. They didn't have blacks outside of here until after I left. I left here in '51.

**BK:** The homeowners had to pay for the paving then.

**RLK:** They still do because you get curb and gutter anyway.

**ECS:** Paul used to be known as the Brookshire farm.

**RLK:** You mentioned that and I need to check on that because there is a book in the mayor's office of the streets.

**BK:** The pavement went so far and it just cut off where the blacks lived.

**ECS:** On North Raguet after you passed Abney it was a black church, the New Zion Church up there but when they got ready to pave they went this way and came out by the railroad track by Mrs. Thompson's. They didn't pave down by the church.

**CC:** It didn't go very far past the ice house when they put that ice house in there in 1942.

**ECJ:** That is when they put the highway along there.

**ECS:** They didn't come down by the church they went through the white neighborhood back over there.

**BK:** Even where I lived and growing up as a child which was you could hardly separate us because Bremond came down, cut off, Chestnut was dirt because that is where we lived in that block. Paul Street came down, cut off, blacks lived in that area. It is sad to say but, that is the way it was.

**CC:** That is the way it was.

**RLK:** Where you are living now, I was told that was the white area of Lufkin Land?

**BK:** Behind me there was a white area. Where I'm living now that house was connected with that creosote plant.

**RLK:** Okay.

**BK:** A Shelby, Blake Shelby? Will Shelby?

**ECS:** Something like that. I forget now.

**BK:** Something like that, okay, had some connection, another words they might have been a foreman or something. And, that is me putting it in my terms there.

**RLK:** Tell me about World War I, II, I for you. Can you tell me anything about World War I what it was like?

**ECS:** My daddy went to World War I. He got hurt in the army in World War I. He showed me a picture when he was on the back steps of the hospital before he was dismissed from the hospital, but I don't know what become of those pictures.

**RLK:** Well what happened, you were too young to understand what happened in Lufkin during World War I?

**ECS:** We were staying in Polk County during World War I, when it first broke out.

**RLK:** You know sometimes as it has been and still is, you go to service and it does make...I remember when my father grew up in World War II a black man could not wear his uniform when he came home on leave in town.

**ECS:** Where was this at?

**RLK:** In Warden, Texas.

**CC:** Well I imagine there was a lot of things going on because as a kid I remember how things was in Mississippi when billboards, man I said I would never go to Mississippi. I wouldn't be caught dead in that state.

**RLK:** I guess this would include all of you, World War II, did you find anything that the war improved or the people improved because of World War II in Lufkin or some things that you knew before World War II remained the same or just kind of a comparison if it had any effect of the way we live in Lufkin?

**BK:** Yes, many people came here because of jobs, the foundries at that time began to make guns and war equipment, tanks and many people came to Lufkin to work. Now many who didn't move here to live would come in and work and go home in the evenings, but it certainly upped the economic status of our community.

**ECS:** After World War I [II] it was a little song came out about how you going to keep them down on the farms after you've seen the prairie.

**RLK:** Yes, I remember that too. (laughter)

**BK:** I had forgot about that one. (laughter)

**ECS:** How you going to keep them down on the farm after they seen the prairie.

**RLK:** Did the race relations seem to show any difference?

**ECS:** Well after World War I...

**RLK:** Two.

**ECS:** ...they did hang quite a few negroes.

**RLK:** How about after World War II, did you see things?

**ECS:** Well I don't know much about World War II. The white soldiers told the white woman and (unintelligible) that the blacks had a tail, you know, and all that kind of stuff.

**BK:** That is right.

**CC:** When they found out what kind of tail it was they might have thought different. (laughter)

**RLK:** Hush! (laughter)

**BK:** Mr. Carrington I don't know if you've talked about this but Mr. Fears who was very light and very fair, in fact he was more white than he was black, but he had talked that when he was alone he would go into places and sit and be served because they didn't

know what race he was because of his color and he was in World War I. Now, what about your color has that gotten you many places because you are fair?

**ECS:** No, not me but I had a first cousin, Jessie Lee, she could pass for white. She was in Chigaco for awhile, but and we were walking as kids, she was two years my senior, and where the old Cash Drug used to be we were walking down the sidewalk on this side of First Street with our hands together and we were stopped and wanted to know why because they thought she was white and I was black.

**BK:** My goodness.

**RLK:** Well, tell me this; do you know of anyone at those times that was black that was actually passing, as we say, in Lufkin.

**BK:** Mr. Fears has told many instances where he...

**RLK:** Was it what he was doing or someone else assumed?

**BK:** No, he could just go in and they would assume he was white, even in the movies he said he could go and just sit down and see the movie while others of us went upstairs.

**RLK:** It is pitiful to be ignorant isn't it?

**ECS:** Oh yes.

**ECJ:** What was this guy's name that used to go to the Pines Theater and they said they locked him up because they caught him in there and found out who he was? When they carried him to jail he had a pistol in his long hair.

**CC:** I forget who that was.

**ECJ:** Amornine or something like that.

**ECS:** Something like that, he had a twenty five automatic under his hair.

**ECJ:** He got out and left and went to California. I don't think he ever came back.

**RLK:** Do you know of anyone who left Lufkin because of those kind of problems other than the one you just mentioned?

**ECS:** Well this guy that killed, shot a lawman off the steps up in old Lufkin. What was his name?

**CC:** Ralph Jackson.

**RLK:** When was this?

**ECS:** He was a little brown skin guy and he was (unintelligible). He killed a what you call a loan man, you know, that you borrowed money from the loan company and you couldn't pay them.

**CC:** A loan shark.

**RLK:** That is what they were.

**ECS:** They would want to beat you up. They came to his house to beat him up and he shot them off his steps.

**RLK:** Do you know when this was, about?

**ECS:** It must have been in the twenties or thirties. They dressed him up as a woman and slipped him away from here to keep from being bothered. Later on thirty or forty years he came back. I can't think of his name. He was a little brown skin guy.

**RLK:** Rosie Lillie's husband left under those circumstances. I don't know if you are familiar with it, Rosie Lilly.

**BK:** Roy Lilly?

**RLK:** No, this is Rosie's husband.

**BK:** I knew Roy.

**RLK:** That was his cousin. That was the one that what you call it was married to. Roy was married to Viola Lilly wasn't he?

**BK:** Yes.

**RLK:** You are talking about Allen.

**BK:** Yes, Allen.

**RLK:** I think he had some fisticuffs or something like that with them.

**ECS:** Yes, something like that yes, he sure did.

**RLK:** He left and went to Kansas. I can say this now because he is dead and gone so, you know, right.

**CC:** There were several incidents I heard about things like that, but I never did know any detail of what went on during that time.

**RLK:** And, things for us happened wherever we were, the same kind of things. Maybe less in one place than the other but the fact you are who you are. There is always a nut someplace.

**CC:** At different times we would go for a ride, Daddy had a car and we would go to Henderson and you would see signs up “the black is land the white is people” and you know, you had to be careful going through places which was different than Lufkin.

**RLK:** And driving down a highway taking those little greasy bags with sandwiches in it.

**CC:** Oh yes, all that stuff happened. It was quite a task getting around and getting along, but I was the type of person I just couldn’t stand...

**ECS:** A guy asked me what I was. He said, “If you ain’t a nigger what are you?” I told him I was a (unintelligible). Of course that was the way I talked then, you know.

**RLK:** Was anything different during the Korean War here in Lufkin?

**ECS:** I don’t recall that.

**RLK:** Okay, Vietnam?

**ECS:** I know at one time the only two black people had an automobile were Austerine’s daddy and...

**BK:** Arthur Johnston.

**ECS:** ...Arthur Johnston and Henry Bud, the Bud family.

**RLK:** Would we be sorry to say that we felt during World War II...

**ECS:** Those were two outstanding families.

**CC:** Mrs. Duke there, she had a big old Buick at one time.

**BK:** That was later. Her cousin gave that to her when she died.

**RLK:** I guess we have said in some fashion things improved during the years, during the war years in Lufkin. Would you say one way or the other that things improved at those times or worsened or maybe the jobs that you had spoke of maybe were improved?

**BK:** Schools opened and we can toss the ball on that, schools in later years on integration.

**RLK:** Well before those times, again I'm looking at society, what it was and what it is making comparisons in terms of the way things were for blacks anyway in the city and then we will see as progress was made coming up with what you are speaking of there.

**CC:** I think it probably did change because we got more books, things got a little bit better, you could get better uniforms or at least they started getting new uniforms after World War II.

**BK:** Football uniforms?

**CC:** Yes, and basketball uniforms. Before then during the war and before then like I said we had hand me downs.

**BK:** You remember the hand-me-downs.

**ECJ:** Oh yes, some of them they had to pin them up on us because we couldn't wear them because they were too big. They didn't fit us.

**ECS:** I think the first touchdown he made his momma was down there telling him to come on. She would out run us all down beside the fence.

**CC:** She out run us all down there.

**ECS:** I thought they were fixing to hang her down there before I went down there and the next thing I know he come up out of the pile and he was gone. (laughter)

**RLK:** And you know we are speaking of these things about comparison of what we got, used things and I've always wondered, didn't we pay taxes? If we paid taxes, you know, those kind of things took place.

**CC:** They are still not getting the benefits.

**RLK:** Still not getting the benefits, this is true.

**CC:** Right here on Culverhouse that equipment has been sitting there for two years almost. They are not doing nothing over there.

**RLK:** Where is that?

**CC:** Right here on Culverhouse. They haven't done a thing up there in the last twelve months or better that I know of. It's just been, the equipments been sitting there ever since I been here these three weeks it's just sitting there. Nobody has worked on that street at all.

**ECS:** I had to pay delinquent taxes on it that they didn't pay. You have to pay your taxes.

**ECJ:** We were talking a few minutes ago about the school and playing football, we would go down there to a place they call Panther stadium down there and we had to play football out there in the rain or heat or snow. We would come out of there smelling and we had no place to go shower and we had to go back and change our clothes. We would go to social dance with girls and never took a shower and stuff like that. They wouldn't even allow us to go into their gym when we were playing basketball in the rain. We played up there on the ground in the mud and stuff playing basketball, a little hard place there where we could bounce the ball in Nacogdoches. Even down in Diboll during the time we were playing if it rained there in Diboll we could go, they would let us go in the gym down there and play basketball. Same thing up there in Apple Springs, they would let you go in the gym and play basketball but here in Lufkin no.

**CC:** One time we had to play down there in Diboll in a cow pen. (laughter)

**BK:** Were you familiar with the team that was carried on the cow truck?

**CC:** Yes, oh yes!

**ECJ:** They would not get us buses. The only time we rode a bus traveling playing football that we had went to Paris, Texas and Wichita Falls, the only time they carried us anywhere and let us ride a bus. The other times they would rent a truck and they kept us down with the canvas tops all down like we were cattle going down there. We would go places like Beaumont and they would talk about us, oh here come the cows and all that kind of stuff. (laughter) Oh man, even the girls in their pep squad uniforms their uniforms nice clean, pressed and had to ride in them cattle trucks. It was degrading you know, but we had to go.

**BK:** That was the purpose of it to degrade you.

**ECJ:** Yes, that is what it was, right.

**RLK:** Okay.

**ECJ:** But the thing about it we excelled the white teams in Lufkin. They did stuff with us and they learned we had different teams than they did. A lot of people came out to see us play football.

**RLK:** I'm going to stop now.

**TAPE STOPPED**

**RLK:** Good morning, I'm R. L. Kuykendall again, visiting with Mr. Carrington. Today is July 29<sup>th</sup> and we will try to get more information from Mr. Carrington so we can all enjoy it. The next voice you will hear will be Mr. Carrington. As I said we were mentioning Hoshall, tell me.

**ECS:** Hoshall, yes it down the old Diboll highway before you get to Diboll it was a grocery store down there. It used to be a little sawmill you see.

**RLK:** What time of year is this? Do you have any idea?

**ECS:** Well this is back in about 19...let's see...Sheriff Watts was sheriff of Angelina County at that time. I can't remember the exact date, you know. It was maybe back in '24 or '25, sometime in there.

**RLK:** What about Hoshall? Did something happen at Hoshall?

**ECS:** A young black man went to rob the store and killed the store keeper and they put him in jail and Watts put him in jail. It was a mob crew going to break in the jail and get him from Watts and Sheriff Watts was in jail with him that night and they got a piece of railroad iron to knock the...break the door in, you know what I mean. They hit it once and he hollered and told them not to do it again to go back home and they did it again and he shot in the crowd and it hit one, I can't recall his name. They got in a squabble they said it went up by his head and that broke it up.

**RLK:** In the process you say somebody was killed or they just?

**ECS:** Yes, this black man was robbing the store and killed the store keeper.

**RLK:** Were these whites in the mob or just mixed mob? Was it a group of people mixed or just whites trying to break into the jail?

**ECS:** It was whites trying to break into the jail.

**RLK:** Okay. So, they were not successful?

**ECS:** No, they weren't successful even after they hit it the second time, the door the second time Sheriff Watts fired in the crowd.

**RLK:** What happened following that? Were they angry with the sheriff?

**ECS:** Nothing happened that I know of but the trial and they electrocuted him.

**RLK:** Oh okay, his name was what?

**ECS:** I don't recall.

**RLK:** This is an incident that you do remember.

**ECS:** This is an incident I remember, yes.

**RLK:** Can you think of any other thing that might have happened, good, bad or whatever?

**ECS:** I don't remember what year it was but, it was a black man killed in the courthouse when they were having his trial.

**RLK:** Where?

**ECS:** Here in Lufkin at the courthouse.

**RLK:** The black man was on trial for what?

**ECS:** I don't recall what it was, what case it was, you know, what it was about but, while he was in the seat a white man came up and cut his throat, killed him with a knife.

**RLK:** Was anything done to the guy who did the killing to your knowledge?

**ECS:** Not a thing.

**RLK:** Do you know about what time of year that was?

**ECS:** No, I don't remember.

**RLK:** But this happened in Lufkin, Texas at the courthouse?

**ECS:** In Lufkin, Texas in the courthouse, sure did.

**RLK:** Any other kinds of things happen like this in Lufkin?

**ECS:** Well I don't recall at the present.

**RLK:** Well tell me something, I'm jumping to things right now but, the 19<sup>th</sup> of June is something in Texas that we celebrate and we, meaning blacks, tell me something about how celebrations took place in Lufkin at that time. Was it a big one or what?

**ECS:** Well I don't recall any 19<sup>th</sup> celebrations in Lufkin to no extent, but as a child before I came to Lufkin, at New Willard we used to have a major 19<sup>th</sup> of June celebration.

**RLK:** Where was this?

**ECS:** At New Willard.

**RLK:** At New Willard.

**ECS:** That is in Polk County. Have you heard of it?

**RLK:** I don't think so.

**ECS:** Just before you get to Livingston.

**RLK:** Yes I do, yes, yes, yes.

**ECS:** They used to have huge sawmill down there. I think it was Caney Creek Lumber Company. I was a kid we lived on a farm out by a sawmill called Bucks. It used to be a sawmill out on a farm on Caney Creek from there. They would take pine straw and barbecue and things like that and soda water which was strawberry and it was so strong it would come out your nose, red soda water. (laughter)

**RLK:** Was it considered a holiday for blacks? The company did this?

**ECS:** Oh yes, it was considered a holiday for blacks. As a matter of fact I was a kid around seven or eight years old.

**RLK:** Okay and the lumber company provided this?

**ECS:** Yes, the lumber company provided it.

**RLK:** Did most of the people in the community work for the lumber company?

**ECS:** Yes, in that town yes they did. All the residents of that town worked for the sawmill. My daddy was a block setter.

**RLK:** What is a block setter? See I don't know.

**ECS:** You know you had a carriage that sawed, cut the log into lumber. The block setter would set the log to the width of the lumber you wanted it to cut.

**RLK:** Okay, okay. What about the 4<sup>th</sup> of July did the same thing take place?

**ECS:** I don't recall anything about the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. I was so small at that time.

**RLK:** What about later years?

**ECS:** Later years in Lufkin it was all a celebration. I won't recall to what extent it was but, I know it was on 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

**RLK:** Okay, can you think of some other? I'm thinking right now. I don't have my slip of paper. Just things that you can think of that you remember good bad right or wrong whatever.

**ECS:** Well, I don't know of anything. I think I mentioned before about where the library was just moved from there used to be a fire station there. Right across from there on the

corner now it was a restaurant called Charlie Gast Restaurant and the station was right behind, they built the station behind where the fire station used to be and the Express office was right across from the restaurant.

**RLK:** Do you know what time of year this was?

**ECS:** No, that was back in 1925 or '26.

**RLK:** Well what can you think of right now that occurred during the thirties, forties or fifties? Did you ever go into service?

**ECS:** No, I didn't go into service. I was working for the railroad and started working for the railroad August 1, 1942 and I was accepted to haul military equipment you know.

**RLK:** Something happened throughout the United States in 1929 and this is when the stock market failed, hard times hit.

**ECS:** Oh, it was hard times in '29. I married in '27 and my kids, the first one was born in 1929 on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> and it was tough times.

**RLK:** Can you kind of describe some of the things that took place?

**ECS:** You go to the grocery store and get a nickel or dime of lard or sugar or what not and it would last you a good while. My wife used to take sugar and brown it and make syrup out of it.

**RLK:** Yes, my mother did that also. Well just generally speaking can you just, not just at your house but throughout your community or as you experienced problems what kind of things did you see happening because of that?

**ECS:** Well about that time or maybe a little after I forget what president it was but, they organized something called the CC Camp. That made jobs for people, you know, and they would make bridges and roads and things.

**RLK:** Had to be Roosevelt.

**ECS:** Yes, they called it the CC Camp.

**RLK:** Did you know anyone who went through the CC Camp and those kind of things.

**ECS:** There was a young man, don't know his name now, but he married and he stationed himself here and made a family here. I don't know his name now, I just know him.

**RLK:** I talked to Mr. Coleman a few years ago about this period of time. Did you know Mr. Howard Coleman at the time?

**ECS:** Howard Coleman?

**RLK:** Yes, used to have the service station.

**ECS:** Yes, I knew of him but, I didn't have much dealing with him.

**RLK:** Oh okay, all right. Any other people have horrible down falls or seem like people eventually do better? How do you think it happened, you did better just married, things got better for you? What do you think caused that to happen?

**ECS:** Well just one of the fortunate ones I guess. I kept trying to provide for my family the best I could. I did odd jobs and what not.

**RLK:** What kind of jobs?

**ECS:** Well I worked at the Foundry & Machine Company in 1926, started in 1926. The school in 1927, 1926, of course I didn't go back to school that year. I married in 1927 as a young kid and then I was working at the foundry in the winter time and would drive a log truck and work at the hotel as a bell hop in the summer, you know. I did that off and on until 1942 until I got a chance to work for the railroad and I went to the railroad for 32 years, 6 months from '42 to October 1, 1975.

**RLK:** Can you think of any families that did very poorly during that time that had some pretty hard times?

**ECS:** Well back in the early days the New Zion Baptist Church was over there on Raguet and Oscar Johnson lived over there close to it and they had the First National put up over there but when they paved they wouldn't pave down in front of the church at that time because it was blacks in a white neighborhood. I don't know what year that was but that is the way they did that. When they paved North Raguet they didn't pave down in the black neighborhood down there.

**RLK:** Quite a few blacks lived on Raguet at that time?

**ECS:** Yes, blacks lived over there. Oscar Johnson lived over there at that time.

**RLK:** I asked that because it doesn't seem to be too many blacks living on Raguet.

**ECS:** No and Mrs. Preston lived on Raguet.

**RLK:** Is that the teacher?

**ECS:** Yes, J. B. Preston was a brakeman. They lived on Raguet just across the railroad track and that is where the street came back in front of the house instead of coming right down the street. They finally did later on. Oscar Johnson family and Bud Sanders as I can recall were the two families that were there at that time.

**RLK:** Anything that you can, other than concerns about your family that happened during that time?

**ECS:** Well, as a kid I used to work at the ice wagon during the summer.

**RLK:** I meant during the Depression.

**ECS:** No, I don't recall anything I would know about that. I can't get anything in mind at the present time.

**RLK:** Okay, what kind of things can you think from that time on up to today, good, bad, whatever? Did you have any incidents unfortunately with the police force or something like that?

**ECS:** No, no I didn't. I was fortunate enough not to ever get in contact with the police. One night in the Walker Quarters they had a man named Felix Webster had a little domino place where you go in and play dominoes and one night there was some gambling there too, you know, and one night we were playing dominoes and the police came and carried everybody to jail, but I wasn't charged with anything. The next morning they turned me loose.

**RLK:** Nobody was charged with anything?

**ECS:** I think it was two or three charged with gambling, shooting dice or something but we were playing dominoes.

**RLK:** So, they weren't called they just came in on their own?

**ECS:** Yes, they just came in, a raid you know. What you call a raid I guess.

**RLK:** And this place was located where at that time?

**ECS:** The Walker Quarters at that time.

**RLK:** Walker Quarters used to be over on Cotton Belt too?

**ECS:** Yes, right between the two tracks, right off of Abney.

**RLK:** Okay, because Cotton Belt is right on the other side of the tracks, yes, okay. Tell me about your children, family, things that occurred with them. Football, baseball, whatever they may have done that have caused the family to become a family.

**ECS:** Well my oldest boy played football and my youngest son, I don't know if he played any football or not.

**RLK:** You say you had one daughter.

**ECS:** Yes, we were the mother and father of six children, four boys and two girls. We had a set of twins but, we were unfortunate with them and another boy. The twins was a girl and a boy. But, we were fortunate to rear three children, two boys and a girl. The girl was the baby.

**RLK:** In essence you could say you had a good life, a medium life, a bad life?

**ECS:** I had a good life; I had a good life. I was fortunate to have a good life. My wife and I were together for 69 years. She passed away on our 69<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We had a good life together.

**RLK:** That is good. Well, is there anything else?

**ECS:** I don't know of anything else that I can come up with now. I have enjoyed it.

**RLK:** See, I've learned. I've learned things from you because as I said earlier I'm not from the area and I've learned a lot of things about the area just talking to you.

**ECS:** I hope I've been informative to you.

**RLK:** Yes, okay I'll guess I'll...

**ECS:** At 92 I guess I'm holding on pretty good but, I'm not as sharp as I used to be.

**RLK:** Well, thank God for the 92 years and He as someone was telling me that God built a brain and the brain has the power to throw things out when it gets full, or whatever it is. So, at 92 I would think that you are doing well. You drive yourself around and you move yourself around.

**ECS:** I'm very fortunate. He blesses me every day.

**RLK:** And, sometimes that is what we forget isn't it.

**ECS:** That is right, that is right. I count my blessings, count them one by one.

**RLK:** Okay, we started this conversation with Mr. Carrington, myself, a couple of weeks ago and as I said earlier this is the 29<sup>th</sup> of July 2002 and I want to put on the tape I appreciate the time that Mr. Carrington has given to me. It becomes historical information to me. I can put two and two together as I talk to different people and I appreciate this that I have learned from him. Thank you Mr. Carrington.

**ECS:** Thank you.

**END OF INTERVIEW**