

OLLIE MAE COURTNEY

Interview 245a

February 13, 2003, at Meadows Nursing Home, Lufkin, Texas

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ABSTRACT: In this interview with R.L. Kuykendall and an unknown co-interviewer, Ollie Mae Courtney reminisces about growing up in Angelina County during the first half of the 20th Century. She talks about her family, attending Lufkin High School, farming in Lufkin, World War I, the Depression, World War II, and rationing. She also recalls her first ever car ride, and her father's businesses.

R. L. Kuykendall (hereafter RLK): This is R. L. Kuykendall, a member of the Black Archives Committee. Today is February 13, 2003 and this morning I'm speaking to Mrs. Ollie Mae Courtney who lives in the Meadows Nursing Home.

Ollie Mae Courtney (hereafter OC): It's not no nursing home.

RLK: It's not a nursing home, okay.

OC: It's independent living.

RLK: Okay, the Meadows Independent Living, where she lives. Mrs. Courtney is a resident of Lufkin. You were born here also?

OC: Yes, sir.

RLK: I just wanted to say that she understands this tape will be used for others to understand things that took place during a period of time that she was growing up. I would like to say I appreciate Mrs. Courtney for sharing this information with me and with others who will hear it. Mrs. Courtney could you, would you tell me when you were born?

OC: May 22, 1910.

RLK: May 22, 1910. Did you have any sisters or brothers?

OC: I had three sisters and four brothers.

RLK: Okay, tell me when you started elementary school. Do you remember when you started elementary school?

OC: I started school when I was seven years old.

RLK: Okay, seven years old. Could you have gone before seven?

OC: No, we didn't have a kindergarten then. No such a thing.

RLK: Okay, what was the name of your school, the elementary school?

OC: East Ward School.

RLK: East Ward School, okay. You left elementary, school then did you go to junior high or was it just one setting?

OC: Yes, it was mixed school then. It was called Central Ward then.

RLK: Okay, down on First Street?

OC: Yes.

RLK: Then you went to high school, what was the name of your high school?

OC: Lufkin High School.

RLK: Okay, Lufkin High School.

OC: That is where I broke my arm.

RLK: Okay, you graduated from Lufkin High School?

OC: Yes.

RLK: What year?

OC: In '28 and I got my certificate over there in my drawer.

RLK: Okay, 1928.

OC: It is right here in this drawer. Let me see if this is it. That is not it.

RLK: Okay, but you did graduate in 1928.

OC: There it is, Ollie Mae Horn, see.

RLK: Okay, Mrs. Courtney is showing me her high school graduation certificate. Okay, let me ask you this, after high school what did you do?

OC: After high school?

RLK: After you finished high school?

OC: I farmed for a year.

RLK: Did you go to college?

OC: Not then, after then I did.

RLK: How long do you think it was before you went to college? Did you say you started farming after you finished high school?

OC: Yes, we farmed a year during the Depression.

RLK: Okay, during the Depression. What year is this? I'm trying to establish the time of Depression that you experienced. This was in 1928 also?

OC: It was 1978, no 1928. It was the next year after I married.

RLK: When did you marry?

OC: I married November 17, 1928.

RLK: Okay, then after you married, you then went to college?

OC: Yes, we married just before the Depression.

RLK: And, the Depression was what year?

OC: It was 1928 and the next year we lived on the farm and we moved...

RLK: Well what was happening at that time? I know what the Depression was but anything else happening in Lufkin?

OC: We walked to church; we walked to the (unintelligible) Baptist Church.

RLK: What else was going on during that period of time?

OC: Nothing, we just stayed home.

RLK: You told Lana that you knew something about slavery when you were growing up?

OC: No, I didn't know anything about slavery, but we had two or three years there my husband was in business and we had a man that worked for us that was a slave. He worked as a slave, he was a slave. He would not eat dinner with us, no. His name was Joe. I don't know Joe who, but anyhow we hired him and he ate dinner with us, but he wouldn't eat with us. He said he was a slave and he was going to be a slave.

RLK: What kind of things happened at those time? Slavery was over at the time.

OC: Yes, I didn't know anything about slavery.

RLK: Did he ever say anything about slavery?

OC: No.

RLK: Did your parents ever talk anything about slavery?

OC: My daddy said...my daddy had...I got it wrote down in a book but I don't know where it is at.

RLK: Take your time, take your time and think about it, that is all.

OC: His first wife died and I don't have the date. I got it wrote down somewhere if I just had that book. I don't know where it is, over there in the drawer somewhere. But that was way back in 19...I mean 1838, no it wasn't '38 it was before then. But, he had 21 children and two of them were stepchildren. His wife died and he married again then he married the lady that was already kin to the Courtney's, I mean the Horn's. But he married her and they had...she had two children and he raised all of them. But you see during that time they worked in the fields in the spring and summer. During the winter he would cut logs and build cedar and put it in rivers and he tied that tier with rope and then he floated those logs down the Sabine River to Beaumont and then they walked back home. That is what they did during the winter. Of course, I don't know any of them, but my daddy was the youngest one born in Angelina County. He was born in Angelina County, it wasn't either it was Magnolia Springs, is where he was born. That is where he was born and then he moved to Lufkin and he owned a thousand acres in Magnolia Springs. When he moved to Lufkin he had four boys and one of them died. All of them were born in not Angelina but down at...let me see, not Lake Sabine...must have been Toledo Bend. Of course it's older than Sam Rayburn, but I didn't know them. I knew the four boys. I didn't know the one that died. I didn't know him. But my daddy sold that land and he came to Lufkin and bought 400 acres and there was four boys they had. Of course, one of them I didn't see. The oldest boy lived longer. He was 96 when he died and I remember when he died. He would come to my house and he would say...Noe was our youngest boy and he would say, "Noe now you can carry some of this lumber over there to the sugar mill and help us, help your daddy take sugar cane to make syrup." And he would put them in his arm and make him carry the cane to the mill.

RLK: Tell me what was some of the other things happening at the time, World War I?

OC: World War I? Well, the first year we farmed after...well, they took in the farm where we was farming. It is where Sam Rayburn is and so, we came to Lufkin and of course I was married then. And, so my husband got a job working for Retail Merchants Association and he had a partner that had an office machine shop and I worked in the

office machine shop and he did the other work. Then the office work got so bad and I quit doing that and helped him in the office. When they had an oil boom down at Conroe and we moved to Conroe and he organized the business down there and I worked in the office through that. They had...we had an awful business and we finally sold it and went back to Henderson and then I don't know what...we had a nice brick home out there where Laneville Road joins the Jacksonville Road and we moved out there and had a nice home. And, then we went to Conroe and that is where my son was born.

RLK: Okay, let me ask you did your husband ever serve in the Army?

OC: No, not any of our children went to army. They were too young to go during the first World War and they are too old to go now.

RLK: Did your husband ever serve in World War I?

OC: No, he worked for the railroad then.

RLK: Do you think it was because he was working for the railroad company?

OC: Yes, I draw a retirement from the railroad company.

RLK: Can you tell me something that happened during those years while the war was going on while World War I? What was it like back at home?

OC: See that big home is where we lived when my son was born, no that is not it, but any how that is where the slave quarters and he wouldn't eat with us. My son was in the backyard and he said, she bathed with the little girls over there, they were twins, but I don't remember what happened to them, but anyhow they moved out to Carlisle. Do you know where Carlisle is?

RLK: No, I do not.

OC: Well it is out in the middle of the oil field. My husband went out there lots of times. Anyhow these people moved out there so we decided we would go see them one day and we went out there and on the way there was a mattress blew off a truck and we got that mattress and carried it to them people and he was in oil field a long time and I don't know what happened to them. They had five children and we bought the place from them.

RLK: Do you know of anyone who served? Do you know of anybody that served in the army during World War I?

OC: No, I didn't.

RLK: You didn't know anybody.

OC: No.

RLK: No relatives or anyone?

OC: Oh, in the army?

RLK: Yes.

OC: I have got a son and that is his picture right up there. He loves sugar better than anybody I ever saw in my life.

RLK: Okay.

OC: I could pour out a hundred pounds of sugar and put it out in the smoke house and he would go out there with a spoon and just eat that sugar like it...but, he was killed in the Philippines and we never heard from him.

RLK: Okay.

OC: I had another brother that lived until he was about ninety when he died. He was sick through the years but he didn't keep his insurance up. My sister came out here and she wanted to come out here and she had a little old policy that paid her a thousand dollars a month. It cost me about sixteen or eighteen hundred a month to stay out here and she don't have enough money to stay out here. So, she had a car and said she couldn't drive it anymore and she gave it to her son and she just waits for them to do whatever they want to with her.

RLK: Well let me...can you tell me anything about World War I and what happened at that time?

OC: During World War I?

RLK: Yes, what was it like back here at home during the war?

OC: Well I tell you my daddy, you know, in 1919 is when it was bad, it was bad. It was so dry that my daddy went down to where they had a pond and tried to plow up some of that good dirt, you know, to build the pond and he couldn't plow it up. That dirt was so hard you couldn't crack it for nothing, so we give up. He had a hard...we had a hard time but with everything we had on the farm, my daddy didn't do a thing in the world but farm.

RLK: Do you think that because of the war, World War I, that things were so bad at home? Do you think that was the reason?

OC: Oh it wasn't bad on us because we had our living at home. We had every kind of food you want to mention, put it in jars. Before I was born my daddy had a bunch of

squash canned and he had the canning company come through and his pears were just ready to be put in jars, I mean canned and he canned and I bet you he had 500 cans of pears. Of course they were canned before I came.

RLK: Now you said that you during World War I because of the farming your father had done things were not so bad is that right?

OC: Yes.

RLK: What about the people who were not as well off as you were in terms of having a farm and all that how high did they live? What kind of things did they do?

OC: The Lufkin Land and Lumber Company we would go work in the fields until it got too hot to stay out there. Then during the time it was too hot to go to the fields my daddy use to lay down on the porch and we went over to the quarters, we called them the quarters, and we sold groceries over there.

RLK: Okay, they could only work at Lufkin Land and Lumber Company? How did they live otherwise?

OC: Well, they worked at the mill.

RLK: They worked at the mill?

OC: Yes, as soon as I moved out here I saw the lady downstairs and I said "who were you?" And she said "well I was Juanita, I was Juanita Simms." I said "you were, you were next door neighbor to me." My next door neighbor, but she didn't live long.

RLK: Can you remember if there were many poor people at the time? Were there very many poor people in the county?

OC: Oh yes, poor people.

RLK: Can you tell me something about that?

OC: My daddy had plenty of money. He had plenty of money. He bought war bonds like everything, but he said if you make fifty cents today you save a quarter of it tomorrow you might not make a penny.

RLK: How did the poor people live? You said your daddy had lots of money.

OC: Well, I don't know. I tell you they went from trash can to trash can finding something to eat. That is the way they did. Now, we didn't worry about it, no.

RLK: These were black and white people who were very poor at that time? Did they work together or can you tell me something about that? Poor people were of all kinds right, black, white, whatever?

OC: They worked at the mill. It was a lot of people worked at the mill and that is the way this colored girl that was out here and she didn't live long. When I found out who she was, she was my next door neighbor.

RLK: Tell me something, Fourth of July did you ever celebrate Fourth of July?

OC: Oh yes sir!

RLK: Tell us something that you did on Fourth of July, what kind of celebration took place?

OC: Well the colored people always had a holiday then.

RLK: What kind of things did they do on Fourth of July, fun things or whatever?

OC: I have no idea.

RLK: What about you what did you do on Fourth of July?

OC: We played dolls or something. I never did have a doll.

RLK: You never did have a doll. Well, did the county have a big celebration like picnics or something like that?

OC: Yes.

RLK: Can you tell me something about them?

OC: They would meet at the Brookshire pond. Do you know where the Brookshire pond is?

RLK: Yes.

OC: They would meet over there and have a big time. They would have a picnic over there.

RLK: Was this an all day long picnic?

OC: I guess it was I didn't go.

RLK: Oh, you didn't go. Do you know why you didn't go? Were you too young, too small or what?

OC: I just didn't. We stayed at home I guess.

RLK: Do you know of anybody who may have gone over to Brookshire's pond?

OC: No.

RLK: Do you know anybody or can you remember someone that you knew who went to Brookshire's pond that could tell you something about what happened?

OC: Oh everybody goes up there now.

RLK: Well tell me when you were a young lady what kind of things did you do?

OC: I didn't do a thing in the world but just stay at home and work.

RLK: Was there not anything to do or you just chose not to?

OC: No, we didn't have a CD then. We didn't know what a CD was. We had wash pot and we would boil the clothes in there and got those suds out of there and if it was winter time we just like to freeze there. Of course we usually got up on the back porch because it was too cold outside but, you didn't know what a washing machine was then.

RLK: Well tell me can you remember anything about World War II, the bombing of Pearl Harbor and what happened?

OC: Why sure! I went out there and got off a boat and put big old wreaths around your neck and when you went on the Ticonderoga, now it wasn't...my son was on the Ticonderoga when he got killed at Pearl Harbor. But, we went on...let's see the name of that ship, the Atlantic. No, it wasn't the Atlantic, anyhow it was one they raised and you went on there and it was just as calm as if you had walked into a funeral home and I mean you pull your shoes off and you listened to the music too.

RLK: Do you remember when Pearl Harbor was bombed?

OC: I sure do.

RLK: Do you know how people reacted here at home when Pearl Harbor was bombed? Can you remember anything about how the people reacted?

OC: Well my son, that boy right there was killed on Pearl Harbor. I mean during that attack.

RLK: Well how did people act here back at home?

OC: Oh, well my mother liked to died. It just liked to killed her. He was the baby son and he is the one that ate sugar all the time.

RLK: How did the other people in Angelina County what did they do? What kind of things as a result of it?

OC: My oldest brother was a banker. He worked at the bank and how he got started my daddy would carry stuff to town and he was a Masonic Lodge man and he would go up if it was raining he would pack up and go if it was raining but, he had...the way he got my brother in the bank he got him to go to this college and he first worked for a produce company and then he applied to Houston, no it was at Galveston, he applied down there and he didn't like it down there so he come back home and he went to the bank and he sort of worked for (unintelligible) for a week and when he quit he was the vice president of the bank.

RLK: Which bank was this?

OC: First Bank & Trust.

RLK: In Lufkin?

OC: Yes in Lufkin.

RLK: Up the street there, okay. Can you remember anything after Pearl Harbor was bombed, how was living? Did people have a hard time making a living after World War II?

OC: No, we had plenty of groceries.

RLK: Just the people living in Angelina County can you think of anyone that had a hard time because of the war?

OC: They worked at the sawmill. That girl I was telling you about out here. The first thing I said, "You are Josephine?" She said, "Yes." I said, "Well I'll say." Her husband is deceased from the sawmill so she made pretty good money. Of course, all we did was farm. That is all I knew to do until I got married then we got our own branches you know and my husband was an accountant for the college and he went to Germany and he got me to come over there and we went over the Holy Land, Norway and we was there when...we went to Norway and the snow was twelve feet deep on that railroad. In Amsterdam, you know where Ann Frank took care of the children?

RLK: Yes.

OC: We went up there to that.

RLK: In World War II, yes. Ann Frank you said?

OC: Yes, you know Ann Frank?

RLK: I remember reading about her and the things that she did.

OC: Well she had these doors and the door led that way and they hid and she took care of those there.

RLK: We are still talking about World War II. Do you remember when things were rationed in World War II?

OC: Oh, do I remember it.

RLK: Tell us something about that.

OC: Well, you know I had a blue...wish I would kept it but I threw it away, it was so much sugar and so much meal and so much flour you could get. The flour was hard to get you know. We used...what is it...I guess meal I don't know what. I know we had a whole lot of meal we didn't use and, of course, flour was hard to get because they used it for ammunition, you know.

RLK: Can you tell me something about the rationing stamps? They used tokens and things like that for meat can you tell me something about that?

OC: Well we didn't drink coffee. My husband did but I didn't. I guess he drank it but he would get it for me and him too and he got all he wanted. I don't drink much coffee anyhow but I wish I still had a book but I don't have a book.

RLK: What about rationing stamps for shoes? You had to use rationing stamps for shoes and meat.

OC: I guess so. We had our meat at home.

RLK: So, that didn't affect you very much. Do you know of anyone who had to use stamps in order to get their food and clothing and things like that?

OC: Oh yes, all those people that worked had to use them, of course we had all of them.

RLK: Did they ever talk about any problems they had while using rationing stamps to get things? Was it okay with them?

OC: I don't know.

RLK: What about gas, getting gas for the car?

OC: We didn't have a car. My son went to work at the bank and he learned to drive a car.

RLK: What about getting gas for the car did you have to use ration stamps?

OC: We had a time. I've seen people lined up for half a mile waiting for gas.

RLK: Shoes? Rationing stamps for shoes, did you know anybody who had problems getting shoes because they didn't have stamps?

OC: No, I didn't know them.

RLK: Okay, you mentioned you did go to college after you finished high school.

OC: I went one year.

RLK: One year?

OC: Yes.

RLK: Why?

OC: I couldn't go anymore I didn't have the money.

RLK: When you went to college what were you majoring in? What was the field?

OC: I majored in foreign language. When I was in high school the teacher had to be out sometime and they used me for substitute teaching.

RLK: Okay, did you enjoy that?

OC: Oh yes, I sure did. I loved it! I was French and Spanish too, and see when we went to Italy we went down in the mafia, you know, and we went down there and they used Spanish and French together. And, of course my husband didn't know it but I would talk to anybody and I would tell them what he wanted, but he didn't know any foreign language. He switched schools when he was eighth grade I think, but he went to college some. They weren't as strict with college then as they are now. You have to have upper grades to finish college now. I don't know.

RLK: Did you finish the twelfth grade or what grade did you finish?

OC: Well, we just had eleventh.

RLK: Eleventh grade, okay. Were there very many students in your class?

OC: We had seventy five.

RLK: Seventy five. Do you know if all of them finished?

OC: Yes, I have a list of all of them.

RLK: What kind of work was available for them when they finished high school?

OC: The Foundry was a good place to work.

RLK: Was it about the best place at the time?

OC: It was good then, yes. Of course, the sawmill was still good, but they don't have a sawmill there now.

RLK: So, things compared to today a lot of things were limited that you just didn't have when you finished high school. Like the kids today can finish high school and go to college and learn how to do many different kind of things.

OC: But, see I didn't have money to go to school. I didn't have money.

RLK: Was this at a time when your father didn't have as much money and later on by farming he was able to acquire more money?

OC: Well, when we started I made two dollars a day and saved all of it. I might not make any more and that is true too.

RLK: Okay, so you worked with your husband and you earned money at that time?

OC: Yes, we worked. I have four children. One of them was the one I talked to him today. He is my oldest. He thinks Mama is his thing and I don't care what I do, you all right Mama. And, my other son lives in Mexico and he is a piano player. I mean he can play a piano like nobody's business. And, of course I bought the piano for the oldest boy but he is the one that plays it. All of them took music.

RLK: What does your son do now, the one that was here? What kind of work does your son do the one that is here in Lufkin? You have a son in Lufkin right now?

OC: No, I have a sister here and that is all. She is ten years younger than me and laying in bed right now sick.

RLK: Is there anything else you would like to tell us to let us know, something about Lufkin that we don't know?

OC: Listen when I was little out here where this is this was farm country. There wasn't nothing out here and this place is built on a hill and our place out from Lufkin was built on a hill. Right now, when I was little there was a well at this street back this side. There

wasn't any street here this was all pasture land and before we had a garden. The sugar mill was out there in the cow pasture. The cows tore them down. It had land that went down to the pasture. We had a pasture there and it went way down there a hundred acres. When I was little I went with my daddy and we went over here where my aunt had a pond and had cows and a pond fenced. I said he went over there and carried a gun with him. He said, "You let my cows out." I said, "come on Brandy let's go home." And Brandy came on and we went home. He said, "if you put that lock up I'm going to put a lock on that gate and if you put another one out here I'm going to have you arrested" and he said "I mean it to."

RLK: Let me ask you this as you grew up and became a young lady did you continue to farm with your husband or did you start doing some other kind of work?

OC: No, we moved back up to Lufkin and he went to work for a Retail Merchants Association. Do you know what that is?

RLK: I know what it is, yes.

OC: It's where you check on people to see how they paid their bills. So, I did that and a man that done it with him had a grocery store and so I worked in the grocery store. Now, this was upstairs. We noticed some silk cord missing out of where I had worked from misses so he stayed up there with me and the man knew he was up there wasn't going to come in there. But, anyhow we moved and that was during the oil boom down there. It was at Henderson. My son had an emergency operation and he went out on the porch and I said, "the doctor said you are doing okay". "I guess I am" and he jumped off that porch and he said, "I can run now." (laughing)

RLK: I guess he could. Is there something else you can tell us about growing up living in Lufkin what kind of things?

OC: Lufkin wasn't big as a tick when I was a growing up. Always was people having good gardens and if you lived at the mill they had a little church there and there was Second Baptist over here. My daddy said this is the poor folks place and this is the rich folks place. We belonged over here, but we went to his church for years.

RLK: What all kind of things happened, the Papermill was being built then? Was the Papermill out there then?

OC: No, wasn't no Papermill. I remember when...I don't know what the date was but oh land that Papermill hasn't been there that long. I had a friend that used to live in this and he and his wife, his wife is still living, but they lived right here where I'm living and he had little imitation birds out here.

RLK: Did you ever go out to Kelty's? Wasn't it a Papermill out there or wood mill out there?

OC: I haven't been out to Kelty's. I went out there two years ago for an association meeting but I haven't been back.

RLK: Did you go when you were a young lady out to Kelty's for any reason?

OC: No, I didn't. The lady that lived out there, Martha Huey Courtney, not Courtney it was Kurth, Martha Courtney was the daughter of the man out there.

RLK: Do you know anything about Glen Hardware, used to sell coffins, Glen Hardware used to sell coffins? Glen Hardware sold coffins. You know that you are buried in?

OC: Who?

RLK: Glen's Hardware?

OC: I don't know.

Unknown: Before the funeral homes were here.

RLK: Before we had funeral homes Glen Hardware sold coffins for people to be buried in.

Unknown: Glen Hardware, the hardware store in the middle of Lufkin used to sell coffins before they had funeral homes here. Do you remember that?

OC: Oh it was Glenn's, Glenn's Hardware, yes.

RLK: Can you tell us something about that?

OC: I don't know a thing about it. There is just a little bit that I know about that. But, he had everything and they do a good job. They had no air conditioned huh? They still have good business anyhow. But they don't have no ambulance and all that. I think the ambulances are about to take the business away from us.

RLK: Well, I'm just trying to get as much as I can from you about what happened as you were growing up and how you saw Lufkin make changes.

OC: The people that lived next door to us, they moved and on the way out there a mattress flew off, I told you about, and I took it to them and I don't know what happened. But, my son the other day when they had the oil boom down on the coast at Orange, well they were too young to go to the funeral, no too young to go to war, well he drove up where his mother and daddy used to live at Brashear, Texas. Do you know where Brashear is?

RLK: No ma'am.

OC: Well, it's a little town out from Tyler and he drove up to this house and he looked out there and he said "look there, there is Harley Courtney's come to see me." (laughter) They were too young to go to the war and now they are too old and he stayed with his mother. He preached and he taught school for a long time, but he's preaching now in his daddy's church. His daddy committed suicide but his mother has Alzheimer's you see. He has got a brother that has real good money and when he had...

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OC: He would come and help her while they were having church service. He lives in their mother and daddy's house. Of course his mother is in an Alzheimer's unit. I don't know if people know one another or not.

Unknown: Did your family talk about owning slaves?

OC: Owning what?

Unknown: Slaves.

OC: No, we didn't have slaves then.

Unknown: No before you were born.

OC: Oh yes, they had slaves after my son, I mean...not my son...when we lived in Henderson when he was about four years old and the people next door was a lot younger than him and I don't know what happened to them.

Unknown: You were telling me something about what your earliest memory was. Do you remember?

OC: When I went to the cemetery when my baby boy, the one that died, and he went to the cemetery, of course it's just across the road and we got over there and when we started home, of course we walked over there, and when we started home my daddy said "sister you sure do walk slow." I said "well as fast as I can." I said "you know what I did I put both drawers in the same leg." (laughter)

Unknown: Back then did they have a car to take the casket over to the cemetery?

OC: Not a car, they had a hearse which is what they called them, they had it at the cemetery.

Unknown: But it had a motor, it wasn't pulled by a horse?

OC: No, it didn't have a motor, no. The first time I ever rode in a car I went down to these people's house close to us. It was our rent house and the girl down there that I

played with she was a lot younger than me. I went down there and this is the first time I ever rode in a car. I went down there and I said well, I'm going to ride in the car with you. I didn't know who it was, it was the doctor, didn't nobody else have a car. He was the doctor so I got up there by that pine tree and I said, "let me out now before you get up to the house because Mama would kill me if she knew I was riding in the car."

RLK: There weren't too many cars at that time is that right? There were not too many cars?

OC: No, nobody had a car but the doctor and see this was...well I didn't know who the doctor was but I just rode with him anyhow. (laughter)

Unknown: You walked to church, if you needed to go somewhere else how did you get there?

OC: I didn't go.

Unknown: Okay. (laughter)

RLK: Do you remember what year this was, about what time of year? Do you remember the year?

OC: It was 1920...1930, that is when we lived down there on the farm. We didn't go anywhere else I don't think.

RLK: Okay, well let me ask you again is there anything else you would like to tell us before we leave?

Unknown: Why do you go to the Baptist church?

OC: Because I was always a Baptist.

Unknown: Were your parents Baptist?

OC: No, my mama is a Baptist.

RLK: Your children were also.

OC: My son lives in San Francisco he is expecting a new baby, but he is the oldest one I got, my oldest grandson.

RLK: So, you don't have any children in Lufkin?

OC: No, I got a sister here and she is laying up in the bed right now. Like I was before I got up and went to moving. I said, "what am I doing here."

RLK: Does she live here also? Does your sister live here?

OC: Yes, she lives out there right where she was born. I mean, right where she lived there all this time, but she used to peddle groceries and everything. She worked for another company and she said, "I'll go in business for myself." And, she handled that stuff and she has a bad back and so have I.

RLK: Is she younger than you?

OC: Ten years younger and I'm a whole lot stronger than she is. She...one eye she can't see out of it and I went to the doctor last year and he said you got perfect eyesight for somebody your age.

RLK: That is good, that is good.

OC: I don't know what else to say. I didn't know any of my kids, my uncles, but my daddy was the one that lived longer than grandma did and his name was Purbour, P-u-r-b-o-u-r, but I didn't know him. He would talk about him because he was older than him and when they were young, I told you about it, how much they owned but I knew one of his sisters and he had a grocery store up there where...I don't know what is there now but, his name was Gunter. And, they never had any children and Mr. Hicks owned that other one. My daddy bought it, didn't buy it from his grandson he bought it from Mr. Hicks. Mr. Hicks was a mason.

Unknown: Years ago there was a part of Lufkin up town just about where the courthouse is now that was called Spit & Whittle.

OC: What?

Unknown: Spit & Whittle. Do you know why it was called that?

OC: Because that is where the mason's come to spit I guess. (laughter) But, my daddy used to park up there, he just had an old buggy you know, and he would go up there and park up there and across the street was where the Masonic lodge used to be.

RLK: What street is this?

Unknown: First Street.

RLK: Where the courthouse is now?

Unknown: The courthouse is on Third, this was on First.

RLK: On First, okay, yes First.

Unknown: Can you tell me anything about how businesses have changed in Lufkin?

OC: I didn't get that.

Unknown: How the business, like now we have the super Wal-Mart, back then you had maybe a little grocery store, how have businesses changed?

OC: Oh, they have changed. If my daddy could see Lufkin he would say where am I? He'd be surprised.

RLK: Can you tell us something in terms of the change? What kind of changes have you seen?

OC: Development, development, he would say "where am I."

Unknown: Back before you were born there was a man hung in Cotton Square. Did you hear anyone talk about that?

OC: No, I can remember when a hanging was in Lufkin too.

RLK: Can you tell us something about that?

OC: I sure wasn't going down that street.

RLK: Did you know anybody who was hanged?

OC: No.

RLK: What about the...awhile back in 1941 there was a person who was killed in the courthouse?

OC: Was what?

RLK: Was killed in the courthouse. Can you remember that?

OC: No, I don't remember nothing about that. That was the year my oldest daughter was born.

RLK: But, you don't...well was it in the newspaper, you don't remember reading about it either? This guy was killed in the courthouse.

OC: No, I don't know nothing about that.

RLK: Okay, we had been told by someone else and we were just trying to find out as much information we could about it.

OC: I don't know who it would have been. I don't know. I tell you what this new invasion and all I put it up and I want to save it for my kids.

RLK: Okay.

Unknown: What is the most exciting event that ever happened in your life?

OC: I don't know.

Unknown: You don't know. What is the worst thing that ever happened to you?

OC: I guess when I lost my mother. I went...when my mother died I had my mother, his mother and daddy all in the nursing home taking care of all of them and work too.

Unknown: And how old were you when your mother died?

OC: I can't remember.

RLK: Okay, well.

OC: I guess that is all I know.

RLK: All right, well I want you to know this Mrs. Courtney we do appreciate you giving us this kind of information.

OC: I'm glad to do it.

RLK: It tells us some things we didn't know.

OC: Well, she didn't know all that either. Where are you from?

Unknown: I'm from Washington, D. C.

OC: You are?

Unknown: Yes.

OC: No wonder you know so much about stuff. (laughter)

RLK: One of the reasons, see I'm not from Lufkin either.

OC: Oh, you are not?

RLK: No, I would like to learn more about Lufkin. I've done this with some other persons where I could learn more about the place that I live now.

OC: Well, you know where Lufkin Land is now, that high place there on Lufkin Land, the highest place there belonged to Uncle Dick Knight. Uncle Dick Knight wasn't kin to me but he was...I don't know what he did but, anyhow it is the highest place there and they got a nursing home, not a nursing home, a mobile home there now. His son used to live next door to him and I've been knowing him all these years and he is dead now.

RLK: What was his name?

OC: Uncle Dick Knight.

RLK: Dick Knight?

OC: Dick Knight, my oldest brother was named after him and we called him Uncle Dick. They all phased out. One of Pappa's...Pappa's oldest boy was the brightest young man I ever saw and he was 96 when he died. I got a few years to go yet.

RLK: Well, we hope you make those years and more and more and more.

OC: I went to the doctor last year and said I had the best eyes he ever saw on anybody my age.

RLK: I guess whatever you are doing you need to keep doing that. (laughter) Well I appreciate you all letting us come and talk to you. We have learned some things, and as I said I can take this tape and somebody else can learn from it also.

OC: That will be all right with me. I don't care.

RLK: Okay then, I appreciate this very much. I really do appreciate it.

END OF INTERVIEW