

JACK WARNER

Interview 278a

October 22, 2015, at The History Center, Diboll, Texas

Jonathan Gerland, Interviewer

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ABSTRACT: In this interview with Jonathan Gerland, 94 year old Jack Warner recounts growing up on a farm near Diboll during the Great Depression, surviving World War II with the U.S. Navy stationed in New Guinea, playing baseball throughout East Texas, and working in the woods and cotton fields. He reminisces about baseball games including pitching a 13 inning game for the Diboll Millers (with major leaguer Pete Runnels) against the Stephen F. Austin team, playing for the Lufkin Foresters, and one as on New Guinea during the war. He also talks about surviving a tractor accident, raising hogs, building local buildings, and growing and preserving food.

Jonathan Gerland (hereafter JG): Okay, today's date is October 22, 2015. My name is Jonathan Gerland. I'm at The History Center today with Mr. Jack Warner and we are going to do an oral history interview. Maybe Mr. Warner just to begin, tell us where and when you were born.

Jack Warner (hereafter JW): Two miles east of Diboll, 1818.

JG: August 11th?

JW: August 11, 1922. 8-11-22.

JG: 1922, what are some of your earliest memories growing up? Did you grow up out there?

JW: Oh gracious yes, out on the farm. I got memories.

JG: Talk about some of those earliest memories you had. What was it like to live in that day?

JW: You had to preserve everything that you ate, and we did it on the farm and mother had the knowhow and dad worked and brought it in and she would...for instance, when we killed hogs, we would kill five or six at a time. And she would put big crocks, she would slice that ham about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch thick and then pour lard over it. Lay it in that crock, and pour that lard over it, and that lard would keep it.

JG: Keep it preserved.

JW: Yes sir.

JG: Now did y'all salt them and smoke them as well?

JW: Yes, had a smoke house.

JG: Talk about hog killing.

JW: Hog killing?

JG: Yes, talk about that.

JW: We had a little snap shot, crack shot 22 that we killed hogs with, no sights on it, and we had to heat water in a wash pot with pine knots or whatever we had to build a fire with (**JG:** a hot fire) and scald them hogs. If you get it too hot and scald them you had to shave them. If you had it just the right temperature that hair would all slip off. Mother would get it all cut up. It would take awhile to process all of this, and sometimes you would think, well surely there's gonna be a time when we don't have to do this. It crossed my mind back then and sure enough it has materialized.

JG: Were these hogs that you had marked and tagged out in the wild or did you just round up wild hogs?

JW: We had woods full of hogs.

JG: Did you have them marked?

JW: Yes, a crop left and swallow fork in the right.

JG: Okay, alright.

JW: That was our mark.

JG: Talk about that, kind of rounding them up, and going out and marking them.

JW: That is what I want to do. Okay they were in the woods and we had pens, we had dogs to handle those hogs and when we penned them, we would plant a big peanut field and we brung those hogs into a pen in the corner of that field.

JG: Of the peanut field?

JW: Yes, and we would ring their nose all except one or two, and they would do the rooting, root them up and the others eat. That was the way we managed it. We didn't let the hogs out all at one time, they would break out, but let one or two out and they would roam around and come back to the pen you know, to keep them settled down. Finally we were able to put some more out with them, until we turned them all loose together. We were ringing their noses getting them ready for the rooting.

JG: For the rooting, okay. Now who owned the land where you would let the hogs run?

JW: The next door neighbor let us use that for a peanut field. He didn't use it anymore and (**JG:** right) he let us use it for a peanut field and it was quite interesting to see them grow off, fatten. But after they fattened, we would not use them right then. We would put them on sour chops and finish them out and harden them up. So when...

JG: So what is that you would finish them out on?

JW: Oats, I mean chops, corn.

JG: Corn okay.

JW: And, what it would do is harden the meat. If a guy was going to buy one he would take his walking stick and punch him and see how hard he was.

JG: See how hard the meat was huh?

JW: Yes, technology.

JG: So the harder the meat, the better?

JW: Oh yes, the better.

JG: You didn't want fat, huh?

JW: No, no, they wanted them hard for especially for bacon, frying bacon. I can still hear that old skillet popping on that old wood stove. Mother would want me to put wood in the stove and I would get in a corner and I would go to sleep. She would wake me up and say, "I need another fire."

JG: So you would gather the fire, the kindling, the wood and keep the fire going, huh?

JW: Right. Our dad was a timber handler and they wanted him to do whatever...Lindsey Springs, our oldest sister, their oldest daughter, was born at Lindsey Springs.

JG: And what was her name?

JW: Frankie Glass.

JG: Frankie Glass, okay.

JW: She worked at a little store up here. (**JG:** right) This guy here recognized her picture awhile ago. But you know when you think about moving around, they moved Daddy to White City. You know where it is?

JG: Over on the other side of the lake now, yes sir.

JW: Broaddus, back in there.

JG: So y'all lived there for awhile? Did you live in White City?

JW: No Lord no, I hadn't got here yet.

JG: This was before you were born okay.

JW: After that, there was Frankie, Johnny, Ollie and Alton was born at White City and they moved him to Press Switch in Nacogdoches County.

JG: Press Switch?

JW: Press Switch, to put out a track of timber, and while they were there, the first boy was born. They were married sitting in a buggy in Burke, Texas in 1900.

JG: Now tell who your parents were. What were your parent's names?

JW: Enoch Marvin, they nick named him Dod, Dod Warner, everybody know him as Dod.

JG: Dod Warner.

JW: But Enoch Marvin was his name.

JG: Enoch?

JW: Enoch, like in the Bible.

JG: E-n-o-c-h.

JW: Like it is in the Bible.

JG: And what was your mother's name?

JW: Laura Lawrence.

JG: Laura Lawrence, okay.

JW: And she got that name, Lawrence from Lawrence Ryan, which comes down to the other part we are going to tell about. But whenever they moved from Press Switch they bought Garden of Memories. They owned Garden of Memories.

JG: The land where the cemetery is now?

JW: Yes, 350 acres.

JG: 350.

JW: They said Grandpa Massengill rolled up on Dad and rode out to the blacksmith shop where Weldon and Dad was, said “Dod when are you going to pay the note?” “I was going to pay it tomorrow.” He reached inside of his old overcoat and pulled out the deeds and handed to him and said, “That won’t be necessary,” and turned around and rode off. He wanted Dad as close to him as he could get him and he finally got him when he sold that place he moved to Diboll and Grandpa lived three years. They sent him to New Orleans, he had 142 gall stones, it killed him, gangrene had set up. They couldn’t save him.

JG: And what was your grandfather’s name? Here’s you some water if you need some water.

JW: John Andrew Massingill.

JG: Massingill. John A. Massingill. Tell me more about him.

JW: He was a timber agent. And he rode a horse, he dressed up in a suit, white hat and a tie, and rode that horse. They said that he could go through a tract of timber and tell you how many thousand board feet it would cut out.

JG: Just by riding through it?

JW: Yes sir. Now, that is a gift, a gift from God, can’t everybody do that, but anyway...

JG: What did a timber agent do, besides the looking at estimating the timber and everything, did they actually purchase land for people?

JW: For companies.

JG: For companies, okay.

JW: I would tell you a bad story, but I am not going to.

JG: (laughter) Ok. So he was a timber agent for Southern Pine Lumber Company?

JW: Yes.

JG: Okay, did he work for other companies too, or just Southern Pine?

JW: No he never would work for another...see he was true blue. What he worked for one company, he didn’t switch around and get another one’s work in, in you know. Strictly Southern Pine. And he was quite prosperous. But he at one time was talked into taking some land. In other words, he was going to find out who owned the land and

instead of paying for the... he'd want the land and the timber. They talked him into doing it and he came to Southern Pine and told, them said, "What I did was wrong and I need to pay it back and I give you the deed to that land back" and he did.

JG: So say that again just so it's clear. He bought the timber for the company but kept the land?

JW: Yes, (**JG:** okay) see he asked what they wanted for the timber, and then instead of turning it over to the company, like as customary, he put the land in his deed, the deed in his name, and there was another man done the same thing, but he kept the land.

JG: I think I know who you are talking about. You don't want to mention his name?

JW: No I don't want to mention it because I was friends with the family and I played with Ed in the sand beds and I know what happened.

JG: But Mr. Massingill what you are saying is he did that one time, but later repented.

JW: He did, he did!

JG: Okay.

JW: And I'm glad he did because, honesty is honesty. But somebody said "Well no man ever prospered without doing something bad." I said, "Well there is a lot of things that could be called bad, that is good." What you call it, making good choices. In life you are going to come across people who have made good and finding a way to endure.

JG: So how long approximately did Mr. Massingill work for Southern Pine Lumber Company?

JW: Oh Lord, I can't imagine how many years. Southern Pine wasn't very big at the time. After Emporia burned, they bought the land about 50 acres from Collins C. Diboll and that is where they built Diboll sawmill on. I've sat here looking at a picture that has got the old mill ponds and everything.

JG: He is talking about a panorama photo that was made I guess in the late 30's, early 40's maybe.

JW: Yes.

JG: But we know in company records, Massingill, in fact we have photographs of him in the early 1900's, but you know by 1910 or so Dave Kenley seems to be over the Land and Timber department. Was Massingill still working for the company then?

JW: Yes, he didn't quit working yet.

JG: Oh he did okay. So he worked through the tens and into the twenty's even?

JW: Right.

JG: Was that your mother's father?

JW: Let's see, my mother's dad, yes.

JG: Your mother was a Massingill?

JW: Yes, Thad Lawrence Ryan was her dad, (**JG:** Ok, Ryan) But Thad Lawrence raised grandfather, little boy. Nathaniel was his daddy and while I'm talking about it, there's a plaque in Ryan's Chapel there was a family [unintelligible], Jean and I were out there looking one day and in the lower left hand corner was February 13th. I said, "Jean that is your birthday." I looked over here, August 11th, she was born on his birthday and I was born on his deceased date, and Herb was taking pictures. I said, "Come here a minute; look here" and he cleaned it off and took a picture of it and said that will go in the front page of the history of Ryan's Chapel. Being here 93 years here on earth, and I guess most of the time I remember Grandpa, I never got to see him, because he died in 1917. See he was in the early part of this Southern Pine Lumber Company, but he worked, in 1888, '90's and up to '17. That is how long he worked for them. But I have a fond memory of the family, as they...I had a picture of the old Massingill home. I should have brought it. They are all, it's Christmas time, they are all on the front porch at the other side of Mr. & Mrs. Glass where they lived on 1818, the next house over, old, old house.

JG: Okay. Now you are referring to farm market road 1818, but before that was a farm market road what was that?

JW: It was called the Beulah road.

JG: The Beulah road okay.

JW: Prairie Grove, Beulah.

JG: Was it an old sand road?

JW: Yes, no pavement. Mr. Gerland, I am old enough to remember there was no pavement in this country. Somebody says how can you think back that long? I said riding in a buggy, peddling in Diboll, riding with mother in that buggy and watched them plow up highway 35. Those big teams and turning plows; man they would roll that dirt up and push it up on there.

JG: When they were making Highway 35 through here?

JW: Highway 35.

JG: State Highway 35.

JW: Yes in the late twenties. A lot of people don't know there was a 35, this younger generations, they don't know. But thank God, you have got something they can fall back on and find out what's what. But I think probably Grandpa's tenure was like to '17 and Dad and mother was married in 1900, so that is 7 [17] years before he died. But my dad was running a loader, he was about 30 something years old, and a cable broke and decapitated him.

JG: Oh mercy!

JW: Laid his skull back.

JG: A steam loader?

JW: Yes. I'm getting off the subject.

JG: No, no go ahead.

JW: They saw it was clean and they pulled it back with a bandana they tied it up real tight and put him in the caboose and all that jostling of that caboose, he was alive when they got to Diboll. He only lived to be 53, 53 years old.

JG: A cable had snapped on the loader?

JW: Yes the cable broke and a lot of things happened to him. A mule kicked him.

JG: So how old were you when your father died?

JW: Eight.

JG: Eight years old. So he died in 1930, there about?

JW: 1931.

JG: '31 okay.

JW: Our sister Mildred died one evening in the old county hospital and they brought dad home, Fay Cook did, and the next morning at ten he was dead. But our little mother was bedridden and couldn't even get up. She would quote Paul to you in a bat of an eye. She said, "children I know it is hard for you to understand, but you rejoice in all circumstances." He saw fit to take a daughter and a sister, a husband and a father but he has left me for you. She lived to be 92.

JG: 92.

JW: 92.

JG: So how many siblings did you have, how many brothers and sisters?

JW: I had four brothers, I was the fifth one, and six sisters, eleven children. Somebody said, "my... poor thing." I said "You didn't know Mama." She loved her children.

JG: So you were the youngest one of the boys?

JW: Of the boys.

JG: And you were just eight years old then.

JW: Yes, well really eight and a half, but you can say eight and round it out. But I find that through the years, I've learned a lot about the family that I didn't know about and my older brother Weldon told me about the incident at Garden of Memories.

JG: That was one of your older brothers, Weldon?

JW: Yes he was the oldest one, the eldest. He was born in Press Switch in Nacogdoches County. They were living at Garden of Memories later on, they moved down there, bought that place, but in the mean time they moved to New Willard. They put out a big tract of timber. He was a timber handler. They all wanted him. But while they were at New Willard, Mildred was born. They moved back to Garden of Memories and Morris and Douglas were born up there on that hill.

JG: So was Weldon living, still living at home, when your father died?

JW: Oh yes. He had to take over, he was 23.

JG: And he wasn't married yet?

JW: No, he didn't marry until he was 55.

JG: Really, okay. So he kind of stepped in and helped provide for the family then, for all the brothers and sisters and his mom?

JW: Yes, I got quite a story to tell on him.

JG: Well go ahead.

JW: He was working with George Powell and George always kept an old dull cant hook; Weldon kept his sharp. Well George got his and threw his old dull cant hook down and when he did he turned a log over on the top load so he could top out and slipped and fell across a log on the ground backwards and broke his back, 14 years old. But through the years I asked him, he had a second wreck down below Diboll here, and it hit a big row of

[unintelligible] pylons threw the truck into a big pine tree and sheered the king pin and all the load came in on him. It had pushed the dash in and broke the wheel down against the steering section and pushed the dash up with his knees under it and he couldn't move.

JG: That was back when they had cab-less trucks huh?

JW: Yes.

JG: No cabs on the trucks.

JW: Yes, the old seat was held with two bolts. And he sat there and told them how to get the logs off of him. He said, "You take that visor loose but don't take it off, and slide them logs off the back, skid them."

JG: Pull them straight out the back.

JW: Straight out the back, when you get to this log that is holding the seat, move it just enough to get the seat loose, but bind me was the lines off the team to this seat, and you get me out put me in a pickup and lay me on my side. They brought him to the county hospital and Dr. J. C. Clements took another shot of his back.

JG: X-ray?

JW: Yes, I couldn't say x-ray, x-ray of his back, and sent it to Mayo Clinic with an explanation. They'd already sent one, when he first got it broke and said, "Don't touch this man you will kill him." So, later on I kept asking him if he ever looked up and thanked him for straightening his back. "Oh that is something that just happened." Well, they had in the foyer a before picture of the x-ray and after and right underneath it, act of God. And that is what the Mayo Clinic called it and they were right, too.

JG: And that was Weldon, Weldon Warner?

JW: Weldon.

JG: Weldon.

JW: They said if it had gone another three quarter of an inch it would have killed him, and if it would have lacked that much going, it wouldn't have straightened his back. What precision, huh? We know and I've had things happen to me that I knew who was behind it. My tractor, my 3000 Ford diesel tractor ran over me. You didn't know about it?

JG: No.

JW: I was down on the lane getting some dirt for my daughter's flower beds and the strap came off the scoop and I was going to get off and I got a hammer on the side of the frame, and as a I lifted up my elbow hit something and my funny bone and it dropped that

hammer. Well I always kill the tractor before I get off, and for some reason or other I didn't and I walked around it and reached down to get the hammer and I saw it moving. It wasn't nobody there but the tractor and me and God and a woods full of angels. That is the truth. I called on them. When it started up I had this boot on right here.

JG: He is holding up his leg to show me his boots.

JW: I'm going to show you the rest of it in a minute.

JG: Okay, now he is showing me his leg. Oh wow!

JW: That is the tractor tire. He branded me.

JG: Ran right over you didn't he.

JW: When it got there, I said, "Lord I need your helpers" and I felt a load come off of me. Had it picked up another two inches the tire would have spun and ate my body up. When it came on up I heard the ribs cracking, ten cracks in my ribs. Now Mr. Gerland, I haven't felt no pain yet. You can readily see God's hand in it.

JG: How long ago was this?

JW: June, was a year ago.

JG: Just a year ago.

JW: Yes June a year ago.

JG: Wow, you were 92!

JW: I was 92. My pastor said, Brother Jack he chose you, prepared you to do something for Him. I said, "Well, he got my attention". After it cracked those ribs I saw the tire coming and I put my head, turned my head in a little low place there. I had on these glasses. It ran over my head and when it ran off, I heard the engine on my tractor pick up, the fluttering stopped. And I was always talking to the Lord, and I said, "Lord you know if I could get up, turn over, I could get up." And Mr. Gerland it looked like he just picked me up, somebody did, sat me up out there. I hadn't opened my eyes because I was afraid dirt from the tractor wheel would get in my implants and I reached over and this finger was torn.

JG: His left index finger.

JW: Yes, left index finger was torn and when they sewed it up it made a 7, with 7 stitches. Hello! Six days he rested and seventh day rest, anyway, I had these glasses on and this was bleeding real bad, and I reached going to take them off and I said no that

will go in my ear so I reached over and got the glasses, same glasses, they hadn't been touched, haven't been reset or nothing.

JG: He is taking his glasses off to show me.

JW: No scratches on the glasses, so whenever I opened my eyes to be sure I didn't have any dirt, I opened my eyes I was blind except for one thing of light, gray wall like this room here, and in that was a dark gray circles off set this way, what you call it, yes offset, throughout the whole picture was nothing but that.

JG: Nothing but circles?

JW: Circles. I couldn't figure out why the circles, but He did, he knew why. I said, "Thank you Lord for letting me see just a little bit of heaven." It was beautiful! You couldn't describe it any other way. And so I started walking, I thought I was walking but it wasn't me, and that picture just disintegrated, just [unintelligible] right out of the way. When I got to the house, I had come through rough terrain and it felt like I was walking on carpet. And I walked through my shop where the lawn mowers were, little old narrow trail couldn't hardly...a healthy young man would have trouble walking the path I went. And when I stepped up on the carport I said, "Okay Lord I get your message, one set of footprints in the sand." Mr. Gerland, he was carrying me and I picked up a stick I thought I needed to walk with, about 3 foot long. I walked to the door and knocked on the door and didn't arouse Jean. She was sitting in her lounge chair relaxing and I hit that door with that stick. She came to the door. She said, "Are you trying to tear that door down?" I said, "Honey I would tear any door down to get to you, but don't argue with me, see how bad this is bleeding, my finger is bleeding, call 911 because I don't want to bleed to death." That wasn't the case. I didn't let her know what happened because I didn't want her to go through a shock. So I thought when the paramedics get here they can do something for her if she does. So they drove up. I was sitting outside on a bench and she gave me a cushion to sit on and I was sitting there and they said, "Mr. Warner you look good enough your wife could put you in the car and drive you to the hospital." I said, "Sir I got news for you I could probably drive that car and go right on to the hospital." Mr. Gerland I haven't felt no pain yet.

JG: But you had ten broke ribs?

JW: Ten cracked ribs, they weren't broke. They came on and I started telling my story and they told that boy working with him, he said, "Get that stretcher out here now." They took me to the hospital, Woodland Heights. When I got there the ER doctor was a black guy from Africa, almost seven foot tall. And I was still joking and kidding about this whole thing. Somebody said, "How did you do that?" I said "I couldn't have without Him." And, I know that.

JG: Without the Lord you're saying.

JW: Without the Lord, you bet, and He is all of it. But I took time to describe to the doctor and he said he is bleeding from the ears and punctured lungs, and something else, small fracture, which was an old scar as a kid. I said, "Well doctor, I've always wanted to take a ride in a helicopter. I know that you ordered it." He said, "Yes sir I had to order it." I said, "That is the policy of the hospital and I know that. But what college did you go to?" He told me in Africa where he went. Well, I said, "Well you need to go back and re-graduate and tell them I'm not bleeding from the ears and my lungs are not punctured. If they were they would be gurgling and the fracture is an old break." It did not happen during this, but I know you have to order this helicopter; it's a policy of the hospital to keep them in the clear. But, it was real funny when they put me on the helicopter, I said, "Pilot can you shut that door." It was just pop, pop, pop, pop, pop. He said "Why?" I said, "Because I'm tired I want to take a nap." He said, "Well you will get one after while we will be in Tyler in a little while." But, a nurse on the helicopter had gotten my daughter's telephone number so she could tell her when they got to Tyler and they got me and attending me and she stepped outside to call Lynn and said anybody ever tell you you had an awesome Father, oh yes many times. She said "you know what he did?" She said, "No telling." She said, "We had to wake him up, he slept all the way from Lufkin to Tyler and we had to wake him up to get him off the helicopter." Mr. Gerland how long do you think I stayed in that hospital?

JG: I don't know.

JW: Same amount of days that Christ stayed in the grave, three days, out of there I come. They said "Mr. Warner you are healing faster than anybody we ever saw." During this whole thing, you could see God's hand in it. Now this is a testimony that can't everybody, I wouldn't want it to happen to you, unless God planned it. Now that is a good testimony in anybody's book. So what is next? (laughter)

JG: Let's talk about what school did you go to?

JW: Diboll.

JG: Diboll okay. How did you get to school?

JW: Walked, I walked two miles to school and ran two miles back home.

JG: Now why did you run?

JW: Well I had work to do. I had to get home and do work. Just thinking about what you had to do to get the job done.

JG: Before it got dark, huh?

JW: Yes, but when I was 17 I took tonsillitis. I couldn't read, it would all run together, and that was practically the end of my schooling. I didn't get to finish the seventh grade,

but Wilbur Kent told Horace Stubblefield, was drafting for him, Jean was working for him, I went to pick her up.

JG: Wilbur Kent the architect.

JW: Yes, the architect and engineer. I walked over to the print, looking at it of the foundation of the present courthouse. And Horace says, "Jack what do you think about it?" I said, "well you got enough [unintelligible] here that bearing will hold up a ten story building but you got a U shape building, with no expansion, you are going to break your building. He came over with a little scale and a red pencil and made dotted lines where I told him to put it. I sat back down. Wilbur came in and walked over and said, "Well Horace everything looks go but what is the red dotted lines?" He said, "Well this is something that Jack called my attention to." He said, "You've got a u shaped building with no expansions, you are going to bust your building all to pieces." He said, "Who is Jack?" I got up and properly introduced myself to him and he said, "Jack where did you go to college?" I said, "Mr. Kent, the best I remember is a 55 acre farm, two miles east of Diboll." He turned to Horace and he said Horace this is what I've been telling you, God has educated this man. And from then on he would call me for consultations. And the Methodist Church in Lufkin they were putting a roof on it, decking, and the superintendent was a friend of mine and he wanted me to eat lunch with him and go look at the building. No braces nowhere, I said Horace, "You are a grown man, you are in charge of this building. You need to put an eye bolt in the apex up there and anchor it in the ground, something turn buckle that you can tighten each end of this building. If you don't, you are going to wish you had." And, I went on. And that afternoon I was working at Southwest Color, sitting in my office the phone rang and it was Horace. He said, "What?" Thigpen was his name, he said, "I just talked to Wilbur and he said asked me who I had gone to lunch with and I told him Jack Warner." He said, "Well call Jack and see what he would do." Mr. Gerland up in each corner of that roof, route out a big hole in there to put a half inch thick angle iron and route that out, corner to corner. When you get all that sheath but over that airplane cable, 5/8 inch, almost as big as my finger, said then you put scales on there and 50 pound increments at the time until you reach 850 pounds and then fill it all back in with plastic and put the wood fillers back in where you can put the roof on your building, which would be pretty deep you know. Well, he told Wilbur and Wilbur called A&M and they okayed it and on each side of that building that is what is across that cable is bracing that building.

JG: That is the Methodist Church sanctuary there in Lufkin?

JW: Yes it is.

JG: And earlier you were talking about the courthouse. It was built in '55right, I think?

JW: Yes. Yes the courthouse was quite something else but I went to work for the county. The last public work I did, I worked for the county as a maintenance superintendent when I left Southwest Color. We won't go into that. It was getting bad out there, dope, back stabbing, throat cutting. I said Lord, "Put me somewhere I can witness"

and he did. Dan Jones hired me, well the court did, and there was a young man from Little Rock Arkansas, a jeweler's son that had a \$750 a day habit.

JG: A \$750 what?

JW: A habit, dope.

JG: Oh okay.

JW: Oh it was terrible and so I kept pressure, God puts pressure on me and I got to where I couldn't stand it no longer, so I went to the sheriff and asked him if I could get Mark out of jail. He said, "No he is headed for Leavenworth." The second time I went in the same thing, "He is going to Leavenworth Jack, we can't let him out of here." I said, "If I have anything to do with it he won't go to Leavenworth." So, I went on and forgot about it a few days and the pressure was still bearing down on me and I walked in and said, "Sheriff Leach what would I have to do to get Mark out of there? I need him." He said, "Do you want to sign your life away?" Through faith I signed it. I never quivered and it is a long story. I'm not going to tell it all, but they came out to the Sheriff's communication on Ewing Road to get him to go to Leavenworth and I had him paint the equipment building and he was kneeling down at the corner, sweat just falling off of him. You could see if falling. He said, "What is wrong with Mark?" I said, "Nothing." He said "It's something." I said, "Well for your information he is praying." "Praying for what?" "Probably praying for you, Sheriff". I said "He will be through in a minute, but I want you to do yourself a favor, me and Mark, when you get to town and get the DA in Little Rock with the DA in Lufkin on telephone with Mark, three way hook-up. They hadn't talked five minutes they said. They said what is going on down there. They said we hired a man that is sold out to God and he said that Mark is ready to go straight. He did? He said, Yes and so he said well take him to Rusk and boil him out." They got him boiled out and said let him go. He left Rusk with his girlfriend, picked him up, and he come straight to my desk and said "Mrs. Warner I don't know where you found him but you better hold onto him." I said, "Mark, now don't go to giving credit, you and I don't deserve any credit." "Yes but I will always be grateful to you for what you've done." There wasn't another man in captivity that would do what you did. I said, "Yes he would if you bearing down on him and put the pressure on him he would." That is the way that came out. The young man didn't go to Leavenworth. He owns a used car lot in Longview and raised his family.

JG: Well that is good. Talk a little bit more about some of your early days. At seventh grade you weren't able to finish school after that, and so what did you do?

JW: Well I didn't do a whole lot. There was a little oil lease east of us, Ginter Oil Company.

JG: Ginter, G-i-n-t-e-r?

JW: Yes, George Ginter. All the time I worked for him I didn't know he was a World War I Navy officer, high ranking Navy officer.

JG: Is that Mr. Ginter, who you are talking about?

JW: Yes, George Ginter.

JG: George Ginter, okay.

JW: George Ginter, the owner of the oil company and it was pool, this high gravity oil pool come up through something, I don't know how it got there, but it was high gravity oil. You didn't have to reduce it or add anything to it, but Southern Pine used it to fuel with, burn it.

JG: They used it in the locomotives for fuel?

JW: Yes, and some other uses but I forgot what it was. Then after that Williams Brother Pipeline. Jr. Crawford wanted me to go with him to swap for him and that was at Eagle Lake Texas. Eagle Lake is the goose hunting country of the world. No joke about it. Dr. Lehmann in Nacogdoches, the eye doctor, asked me if I could find him a place to take his son goose hunting. I said, "yes I can." I will email it to you when I get home and I did. And they went and had the best time you ever saw. We are looking at something, Williams' Brother Pipeline, while I was there, Uncle Sam called me. When I got to the Lufkin recruiting officer, Navy, I was supposed to show up the next day in Dallas for the Army and I told him, I said...

JG: This is during World War II?

JW: Yes.

JG: Had the war already started?

JW: Oh yes, this is in '42 and it started in '41, December 7, 1941 and this is '42 and I being the youngest boy of the family all the rest of them were 4F's or had too many children and so forth, but after that I wound up at boot camp in the Navy.

JG: At San Diego?

JW: No. Great Lakes Illinois.

JG: Illinois.

JW: I wound up at San Diego.

JG: Oh, okay.

JW: But what I did, after boot camp I went to San Diego, but while I'm in boot camp the chief had us out running and the old boy issued me the wrong size shoe and I fell out against the building pulling my shoes off and he dismissed everybody and came back and wanted to know why I wasn't running. I said, "Chief if I was at battle, I would run until I dropped dead but this is senseless to ruin a man's feet." Without your feet you can't motivate. He said, "Well you are going to run." I said, "I will run with you." He fell out with spinal meningitis and wound up in the hospital. I went to see him and apologized and he said, "Jack you don't owe me no apology there will be some changes made in this boot camp and you were right." He said, "you got the number of the guy that issues shoes?" I said, "Name and number" and I handed it to him. He said, "Well wherever you go I wish you the best." So that ended that. I came home and went to San Diego. We were sending troops out to the Coral Sea Battle, hot, the Jap's were walking on them and fixing to invade Australia, New Zealand, all of it. And we sent so many troops and equipment, they couldn't stand it. They pushed them right back up through the Straits across the Equator and while we are in [unintelligible]...this is a long story. We were at Camp [unintelligible] the Seabees's were building our base at Hollandia, three degrees off the equator. When they got it partially completed they shipped us up there, working on the black out and everything else, because the Jap's were still just north of us. And I thought well Lord we got to have some time to do some recreation, but I said we got to get this war over. Well, the ship ran over a coral reef while I was in New Guinea, but before New Guinea we were sending all these troops out, you know, and equipment, they sent us to Norfolk Virginia to go to North Africa. While we were training to secure North Africa, sent us back to San Francisco and from San Francisco, while I was there it was 104th. I was on a supply truck with a beautiful Hawaiian girl, Sheila Moore. Archie came to me, my chief says, "Jack I hate to break up your party but we need you." I said "For what Archie?" "Silver braise all the main pipe, big heavy pipe in the bottom of that submarine, 327 feet, four lies, had a silver braise, insert fittings, anyway cut it all the way through. If you went in on your stomach you stayed on your stomach because you couldn't turn over. That is how claustrophobia it is. He said, "Jack you are the only one that passed it." I said, "well I wonder why?" He said, "I have no idea, but there it is." I went in on my back, I did it in record time and without a pin hole, no leak, and the base commander got me a Presidential Citation for doing that one job. It's been a real experience. We left there, we wound up in the Coral Sea where we had been sending all the troops and we moved on up to New Guinea, Hollandia, Humbolt Bay, Dutch owned, that was Dutch half of New Guinea. So while I was there, a friend of mine went to a metal smith's class in New Mexico and he gave me those books. He said, I'm a machinist not a metal smith, and from those books, I was able to do everything that the Navy needed done while I was in New Guinea, except for a couple of things. One of them was a cast iron slab and they wanted a hunk of that so long, 30 inches or something like that, and while Archie was telling me about it I said, "Archie I got it." He said, "Just like that?" I said, "Yes sir. I'm going to the stores and get a high gauge pressure gauge, hoses, torques, everything and when I got back I put a hawk burner out a [unintelligible] over a slab put it underneath it and heated it hot, hot, hot and I took an inch and a half bar, about two inches wide, of steel and laid on that center post line that I had on that piece and I had to wear an asbestos suit to burn it. But Mr. Gerland, when I hit that trigger and that started blowing that steel, the steel of the cast iron was so hot, that the

steel knocked the cast iron stuff out. I told them I would put some sand on the floor so when it falls off it won't break it, they did, so I got to the other end and came back to cut it off, plopp. I didn't know that Archie had gathered a crowd. All the chiefs and officers were standing in the shop door. They began to holler and clap their hands. I said, "Well Archie I didn't know you were going to gather a crowd." He said, "I been telling them about you, that nothing I've asked you to do, that you haven't done." And the foundry was pouring brass and couldn't. Just like honeycomb. Well in this book it said something about different climates and I put a roll of solid core solder, one pound in a batch of it, and it turned out perfect. That is just some of the things. And this ship that run over the coral reef bent the screw shaft, and Archie came to me and said, "Did you tell me you could build a circular burner?" I said, "Yes sir I can." He said, "Well let's go to the drawing board." I cut straps and one close to the shaft...

JG: You want some water there.

JW: Close to the shaft, and a bigger rig around the top on the outside with these washers, welded them in. I put a, in this top I put a baffle to come in with water here and went all the way around and come out right here. It kept everything cool. Anyway, straightened that shaft and I couldn't get one in Australia and didn't have none at home, they couldn't find one. And, when it got straight I saw it when it started moving. We had two lathes being set up, one with a motor and the other just a bed and I saw it straightening and I said let it run fast as it would. Archie said, "Now that you got it straight how are you going to hold it?" I said, "You see that fine sprinkler head hanging on that door?" "Yes I do." I said, "It will be straight." So, when it started I would take that spray and go swish, swish, back and forth until it cooled off and one of the men are still living that machined that shaft over here at Marlin. The other was at Vicksburg; he passed away, Henry Jarvin. They said they put a dial indicator on it, 1,000 soft. I said, well I had some help didn't I. We know what that help was.

JG: I want to talk about baseball a little bit but let's talk about some of your lumbering, your timber work. You brought here a photograph from 1948, where you cut one pine tree you said was a 137 feet tall.

JW: That is correct.

JG: Tell me a little bit about that.

JW: Well the company wanted it for build timber and another logger wouldn't touch it.

JG: Why wouldn't they touch it?

JW: It was too big a job for them. Doug told them...

JG: Doug your brother.

JW: Doug my brother, Doug said if you will get Jack, he will engineer it to get that tree. They said well he is on the payroll, he pitches ball for us and works out at the planer, most of the time he don't do nothing. But, anyway the tree was 137 feet tall.

JG: What kind of pine was it?

JW: Yellow pine.

JG: Loblolly or short leaf, long leaf?

JW: No, short leaf but it was the last of the Mohicans, I mean there wasn't any more timber that big around.

JG: So it was short leaf.

JW: Yes short leaf, yellow pine. That is what Diboll cut its teeth on, that yellow pine. I don't know, but what when I walked down there and looked at it I told Doug, my brother, I said now I'm going to have to cut these little trees here and hold them on the stump, to where they are up with the bolster and the trees over here quite a ways from these trees that I cut down and when the tree fell, it went down and went to swaying just up and down until it stopped moving and I was able to cut it and back the truck down and put a forked limb on the bolster to keep from turning it over and move down until I got a load. The second log was too big I couldn't get it on. This picture here showing 3,100 board feet of lumber but if I've gotten the second cut on it would have been over 4,000 feet.

JG: All four logs were from the same tree?

JW: Yes, there were five of them.

JG: Five logs from the same tree.

JW: Wait, seven, sixteen foot cut.

JG: Seven logs sixteen foot.

JW: 108, 112, 108. And then from there on, we measured to the top of the tree where it hit and it was actually a little over 137, but we didn't count it because it wasn't plain enough, but it had to be some engineering to get that tree, especially with the old truck we had.

JG: So it had seven 16 feet long logs from one tree?

JW: Yes.

JG: And these are the three biggest ones here in the picture?

JW: No, the second cut I couldn't get on.

JG: Oh okay.

JW: See I had topped out with that third one but I had to go to the fourth to get this one on.

JG: So is this one the largest one is that the one at the bottom on the ground and then that one?

JW: Now this is the small end of those logs.

JG: The small end. You had the big end close to the truck, yes.

JW: The big end was close to the truck and there is a time...

JG: So it was probably over 5,000 feet in just that one tree then is what you are saying, all together.

JW: Shoot more than that.

JG: Three thousand for those three.

JW: If I had got the second log on, this is the third log and this is the fourth one. Had I got this one to top out with there is no telling how much board feet, over 4,000. But we will stop at that anyway.

JG: Okay.

JW: It was a job that they said was well done. When I got the last logs into the mill they called me down to the office and gave me a bonus for getting that log.

JG: Who was it do you remember who it was at the time?

JW: No I don't.

JG: You don't remember the name?

JW: No lord that has been a hundred years. I was 25 there I believe or 26.

JG: Okay, 1948.

JW: The year before this, is when I pitched the ballgame, 13 innings.

JG: Yes, tell about that. He donated us a baseball last week.

JW: I'm going to start where it started.

JG: Okay, start at the beginning.

JW: In the jungles of New Guinea (**JG:** okay) the government built us a baseball field. It costs them a million dollars, but all the islands would come and play on that field. Now Bob Lemon was from the St. Louis Browns, and he was a thumper, thumped the ball sort of like this. (**JG:** okay) but he was successful with it.

JG: A pitcher?

JW: Yes he was a pitcher. He was pitching that day.

JG: Is that like a knuckle ball.

JW: No it's not a knuckle ball. See, it's just two fingers, thump it like that. But anyway, he and Suitcase Johnson, who was a tall black guy, almost seven foot tall.

JG: Suitcase Johnson.

JW: Johnson, Kansas City Monarchs, you don't ever hear of them anymore.

JG: And he is a black man.

JW: Yes.

JG: Okay.

JW: A black boy and in the ninth inning, nothing to nothing, two outs, I said, "Bob what would you think if I told you I'm going to win you a ballgame. What would you call it?" "A miracle." I said, "Well you are fixing to see a miracle." I watched him and every first pitch was right down at belt high, right down the middle. And I turned and instead of facing the plate, I turned and faced him and put my feet apart like I wanted and when he threw the ball, I met it, when my wrist broke you could feel the power on that bat. It went right out in the jungle. They never did find that ball. He was throwing it so fast and when I hit it solid it left there. I trotted around like I could do it any day I wanted to. So that ended the ball game. Bob said if we get out of this war alive, you are coming to the St. Louis Browns. I said, "I will do it." Not thinking what I would find at home. Well, this is where the matches of the SFA and the Diboll Millers in '47. This is where it started, in New Guinea. Well he came on home and Joe Gallagher was playing for Bob and got injured and couldn't play no more. Bob got him a job coaching at SFA college, but he told him he said before you go down there, you be sure and get your feet planted solid on the ground because there is a guy playing for them, I think he is pitching. If he is, you never saw a perfect specimen of a man and I weighed 208 pounds. When they told me, Jack Sweeney come to me and said SFA wants to play us a ballgame. Well I said, "When?" "Oh a couple of weeks, weekends, Saturday."

JG: Now Jack Sweeny was the manager of the Millers?

JW: Jack Sweeny was the manager of the Millers, yes. I made some phone calls during the time and got a hold of Emmitt Batiste, from the Indian Village in Livingston. I said, "Emmitt" I said something like that, he recognized my voice and he said, "Jack what you got?" I said, "A ballgame and I'm calling the best catcher in the state of Texas. I need you bad." Because he would hold a target, just I mean, just still as an Indian could. I was privileged to have Pete Runnels playing third base and Bobby Farley at short stop, Whitlow at second, Hilary Poulard playing first base and Junior Cook left field, Cecil Harper was in the center field, and Billy Martin played right field. That made the team, that is all that played that day, just the nine of us, but I don't know how I stood up. but Mr. Gerland. there is certain way you can use your arm and it won't tire. Most pitchers come out with their hand backward. I'm looking at my hand backward when it comes out but if they would only just turn it. What happens, your rotary cuff in your arm when you turn the back of your hand down and come over you just keep on, but if you come out this way you got to twist your arm. That is the difference. That is why I didn't tire.

JG: So you had a bigger wind up then, is that what you are saying?

JW: No it's just to relax your rotary cuff in your shoulder. It has free lance, it doesn't twist it or nothing. That gives you the advantage of being able to endure. A real funny, they made so many errors behind me till they tied up in the ninth inning, 8 and 8. And, I walked in the dugout I said, "Pete you bat behind me if I get on will you bring me in and win this ballgame?" He said, "Why?" I said, "I'm beginning to get tired." He said, "I can't imagine you getting tired you just pitched 13 innings." Nolan told me, which is Nolan Ryan, he is related to me, I'm related to him, he may not claim the other side but that is okay, he said, "That is unheard of. I have never heard of nobody pitching a 13 inning ballgame." I said, "Well that 13 is good luck." But, I turned around left handed, I could bat or throw either way, left handed or right handed. Of course I am better right handed. When I was kid Orville Burgess changed me over from left to right. He didn't like left handed playing catch with him. Anyway I said, I got up left handed hit it down the right field line fair about six inches, went up in the corner, I stopped at second because I knew that old boy had an arm and if I started to third he would throw me out. I waited and Pete stepped up there and slapped the ball against the right center field wall and I came home. I will never forget it as long as I live. Joe met me when I crossed the plate. He said, "Jack come on up to college and get you an education and pitch ball for us." I said, "Joe you know what you got if you got me educated?" He says, "What?" I said, "Education beyond intelligence." He says, "A million dollar arm and a two bit head." All my life I have laughed about it. But when Nolan told me that nobody could control that ball, palm ball.

JG: He is talking about the palm ball.

JW: Yes, a man from Diboll by the name of Buster Jackson went to the majors with it. He taught me how to throw that ball. He must have been a good teacher because I had perfect control of it.

JG: Describe it for the recording, about how you would hold the ball and what kind of action it would have?

JW: The palm ball is the one you put all the way up in your sock of your hand and grip it with your finger and thumb, no other.

JG: Your little finger, your pinky and your thumb.

JW: Yes sir.

JG: And the three middle fingers are away from the ball.

JW: Yes, that was the unique thing about it. It was so heavy, it was like a brick bat. It was dead. It wasn't a live ball.

JG: No rotation on it?

JW: No, well yes it did, but the right way. Depended on which finger I touched it with. If I touched it with this one it rotated the other way. That's what kept them mixed up 'cause anybody knows if you're pitching a baseball game, don't throw the same speed all the time. Change your speeds. And of course we know that when you add more fingers to the ball, it slows it down so I used one finger for fast ball. They said, well you can't grip that ball good enough for one finger. I said, "Well let me put it in my hand and take it away from me." They couldn't get it. So I said, "Well, the proof is in the pudding," and I said, "The thing about it is..."

JG: So your one finger was it your middle finger or your index finger for your fast ball?

JW: Fast ball? My index finger. I had a grip like a monkey but when I turned it loose my wrist go back further then, than it does now. When I threw it I snapped my wrist like that and Emmett Batiste said, "When you did that," said, "That ball come in there just before it got to the bat and jump about four inches high." That was the difference, technique. And, nobody else had it. I want to explain something about after the war. I went to Dr. Cook in Lufkin and got these shots and I told him I wanted to get rid of it, I didn't want to keep taking them shots.

JG: Shots? For what?

JW: To build us up in the Navy, in the military, the Navy.

JG: Like steroid shots?

JW: No it wasn't steroid shots, they were similar but wasn't exactly the same. I don't know how to explain it, booster shots. It was called booster shots. He said, well there is a danger risking it. I said yes sir I know. During that time, me coming out from under those shots, there would be days I wouldn't be on. It happened at Buff Stadium, but my catcher wouldn't hold me a target. I threw at a target. I didn't just throw at a base, home base across it, I threw at a target, spot pitch and I walked two men and the third one come up and hit it to Whitlow and it was a piece of paper, the wind blowed a piece of paper across there where the ball was going and Whitlow tripped on his own foot and fell on that ball. When he fell on it nobody could get it, knocked the breathe out of him and they all run home. I told Jack I said, "Jack you might as well pull me and get Ray in here, Ray Rector. Old Ray is slow and easy on curve balls drop, and he got them out.

JG: How long did you play for the Millers, how many years?

JW: Let's see, during the time in '47, '48 I played for Lufkin Foresters, the Lufkin Foresters.

JG: The Foresters.

JW: Lufkin Foresters.

JG: Did you know Roscoe Ivy?

JW: Yes I went to his...

JG: You went to his funeral yesterday or visitation.

JW: ...his visitation, been knowing him all my life. Beater Glass and his daddy were paper and painters. They lived on Southwood, I will show you right where the old house was, and Beater got me to go with him one day. I don't know why he did, but I met Roscoe at this tall and I wasn't much bigger. But I've been knowing him all my life, quite a guy. He had been a lot of places and done a lot of things. But I suppose that me and my brother in law being close to them, working with his daddy and everything I would have never got to meet him until later years. Roscoe and I played a lot of ball together, sure did. That was real funny. He said, "Jack, "he said, "You could out run a deer and jump ten feet." I said, "Well, you do what you can do, to get it done." When I was playing for the Foresters, Cowboy Jones was the manager and I was pitching ball for them and drove the bus, Waco, Shreveport...

JG: Did y'all go to Beaumont?

JW: Yes, Beaumont, all the big towns around. But Beaumont, Biggers, he didn't like to play us, because we would tear him up. He didn't want to.

JG: That is the Exporters, the Beaumont Exporters?

JW: Yes, the Exporters. And anyway the shortstop was sick and Cowboy said, "Can you play shortstop?" I said, "Yes I can play shortstop." I always played back on the grass, to where I had... charge the ball. Always remember play the ball, don't let the ball play you. And they hit one through the mound; it was going out in center field. I ran behind the place and took the ball, crossed over like this and took the ball, and turned in the air and threw him out by that far. I didn't know there was a scout in the stands, and he wanted to talk with me. Cowboy said, "Yes, you and a half a dozen others want to talk to him, but he is not going, he won't go with you." He said, "Why?" He says, "I don't know, he is major league material but won't go." But there is a number of things why, like I told Bob, I said mother was sick in bed and said, "Son don't leave me." So I called Bob and told him. This is the way the game, the match came up, because Bob was the instigator of it.

JG: Talk a little bit more about, you brought some photographs and things in here. Is there something in there that will help us understand a little bit more about the past?

JW: This is a book that my granddaughter put together for me, and it's quite unique. I'm glad you got that.

JG: He is talking about the 1890's Accident school photo with I. D. Fairchild.

JW: Yes, that is a school picture of my mother.

JG: There is your birthplace, two miles east of Diboll. Somebody is throwing a ball right there looks like.

JW: That is my mother with a snowball.

JG: A snowball!

JW: Throwing a snowball at me. See the snow on the roof up there. It wasn't very big but some reason or another...

JG: I will get a copy of that before you go.

JW: Okay, this right here...she started it with the home I was born in, the old house, and I think I'm about 17 years old there. There is John Andrew Massingill, grandfather which is her [his mother] daddy.

JG: Okay.

JW: Laura Lawrence. Now when [unintelligible] died at 31 Mother was near death. She was in bad shape. She never looked like that but one time.

JG: Yes, yes, okay.

JW: You can see her right here. She favors him. This is Pappa and Momma and Ollie, which is Tip Brashear's mother, Frankie, you have met her she worked somewhere around here. Oh Tatum boys had a store around here.

JG: The Tatum's, okay.

JW: And this is a friend, what does it say here? A visitor by the name of Angel. His daddy built this house. I wish I would have brought the picture of Christmas, all the Massingills was on the front porch. That is the only picture I ever had of my daddy. Ollie and Mildred, which died with tonsillitis, and I got a picture of Ollie and her and put Poppa here and Weldon and so forth and so on and got a whole family picture. That was hard work to do, a hard thing to do to come up with. Uh-oh...

JG: Here is some of your Navy photographs.

JW: Here we go in the Navy. This right here is Mojave Desert, California, Christmas time in '42. I wonder if I could get them together and have Christmas dinner with them and I did. I went to Indio and found him and told him what I wanted to do and I went on down the Blythe and Doug and I walked in to the chow line and Marvin walked up behind us. We had Christmas dinner together.

JG: Alright, and that was Blythe, B-l-y-t-h-e, California.

JW: Blythe California, Desert Center. The Navy, oh Lord, Milton Telford right there, no here that is me. (looking at photographs) We went into the Navy together October...we were sworn in on Navy Day, the 27th Day of October.

JG: How about that! And there is some pictures of New Guinea.

JW: Here is some of the natives.

JG: There is the music hall.

JW: Yes, that is where...oh there is a story about that. We are all sitting there in the front and there was a log went out from the theater here and went up...

JG: A log?

JW: ...a log and a house cat got on that log and I told them boys, I said, "If that house cat jumps off that log up there and them rocks start falling, you better go with me under the stage." Well they always left the officers outside so they could leave first, and sure enough it happened. We went under there and it was a stampede. They run over them officers and liked to have stomped them to death. This is because the Japs from Hitapi, which was ten thousand troops of them, and they swam out and they got on our base and killed some of the patients in the hospital ship and so forth. But that takes care of that. And there is Marvin with me in New Guinea.

JG: In the jungle in New Guinea.

JW: Ed Smith's boy is with me somewhere. I didn't get a picture of that I guess to give her.

JG: There you are with some nose art on one of the bombers there.

JW: Medium bombers.

JG: Medium bombs.

JW: Let me tell you a story about that, the medium bombers.

JG: B-25's?

JW: No, medium bombers; they were bigger.

JG: B-24's?

JW: Big enough to carry them good size bombers, bombs, and they could send ten of you down an air strip and they would leave and go out there and bombing Borneo. Borneo was fortified with Japs and one old boy I go with, hollered at me one time and said, "Jack come on and go with me," he says "Which one is this?" He said, "The fiftieth." I said, "I'll see you later." He didn't come back. That was his last trip.

JG: There is that twin trunks tree, that is the park now in the Diboll City Park.

JW: Yes, Doug cut that tree and had it creosoted.

JG: Okay, I definitely want to get a picture of that before you go.

JW: This tree, when it was just saplings you could ride a horse between them. Of course as it grew up it grew closer together, but no telling how many squirrel shots is in this tree that I put in there.

JG: You shot a bunch of squirrels out of there.

JW: Oh I have killed squirrels out of this tree.

JG: What is this PWA project here?

JW: That PWA project is at Lufkin Industries and Mr. Trout came by and he said, "You know boys," he said, "You could make wages, scrap iron out of this. I said, "Yes sir Mr. Trout with the wages you pay we could." He laughed and went on.

JG: There are those logs again huh, '48.

JW: Yes there is the first car, a '39 Dodge.

JG: A '39 Dodge. Is that up at Loves Lookout?

JW: Yes. At Jacksonville.

JG: That is Loves Lookout. I thought I recognized that. And there is the Tonk.

JW: Yes, the old Tonk, you know, used to be over there by the picture show.

JG: Yes sir.

JW: Before it moved.

JG: Now there is a car that has Virginia license plate.

JW: Yes, Junior would come home and Jean, some reason or other she wanted to get out there, and take a picture of that license plate.

JG: With Virginia.

JW: I said okay. Something over here, what does that say?

JG: Love is not perfect until it is shared. So that is you and Jean?

JW: Yes. Lord have mercy.

JG: There you are at the Neches River.

JW: The Neches River.

JG: We have got another picture of people posing with that sign.

JW: Yes a lot of people would take pictures of that.

JG: The highway sign that says Neches River.

JW: That is our wedding.

JG: 1950, June 16th, Calvary Baptist Church, in Lufkin.

JW: Calvary, yes, well you know...

JG: There is the Millers.

JW: Yes, there is the old Millers.

JG: There is your players pass. How about that? 1949.

JW: Let's see, May 3, 1949. That is probably the last time I played with them.

JG: Okay, Rufus Taylor, the business manager.

JW: Yes he sure was, old Rufus.

JG: There is Prince.

JW: That was my saddle horse. There wasn't no better one nowhere.

JG: Old Prince.

JW: There was a black guy, thought he had the fastest traveling horse. And I was out 103, out by the Papermill. I heard a horse's hooves coming and old Prince started doing this, bobbing his head back and forth. I said, "Uh oh, he is going to try to pass me" and I had to let him out. I was just warming up good. He got up right behind me and I just turned Prince a loose and he just walked off and left him. He says "yes sir you sure are horseback." Anyway, as one Jack follows another.

JG: Planting corn in the garden with his brother Weldon's mule.

JW: Weldon's mule.

JG: How about that? Yes. I want to get some copies of some of those pages before you go. Is there anything else you wanted to include in the interview?

JW: You know Mr. Gerland I could sit here and talk all day long and we wouldn't run out of...

JG: Things to tell huh.

JW: Now a lot of people don't know how they kept potatoes and stuff.

JG: Yes, talk about that. We started off talking about your mom and how she kept food, so let's talk more about that.

JW: Well let's do this, potato bins were made in the ground and you take the dirt out and put a row up here so that when you made the wigwam, there is a post in the middle and then when you got them up there, you tied sticks up to it and tied cornstalks with the face down. You get to the top, put a foot tub over the top like that and it would not get wet.

JG: So that kept the potatoes dry.

JW: You could store those sweet potatoes in there for no telling how long, but I have often wondered, and Irish potatoes were kept under the house with a little lime.

JG: Irish potatoes?

JW: Irish potatoes yes, under the house in the sand, good sand and lime, throw lime in it and keep those potatoes until the next digging.

JG: What all crops did you grow yourselves?

JW: Well, besides Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, peas, beans...

JG: Corn?

JW: ...Kentucky wonder [beans], yes, corn and cotton.

JG: Corn and cotton.

JW: See that farm that we were on out there was once a lake, and you could plow it as deep as you wanted to and never change colors but it raised two bales of cotton per acre. Whew. Man it would keep you busy, too. But Mr. Gerland I could pick 300 pounds a day, pick it with my hands.

JG: Picking cotton huh?

JW: Yes sir. Charles Devereaux could too, that is Frank Devereux's brother.

JG: Charles?

JW: Yes Charles, and the farmers would want he and I to pick their cotton for them. We could pick over a bale a week. And I went to see him before he died. He had cancer, in Conroe, but he...I went to see him to see if he had ever made a profession and he told me, he said, "Three weeks ago."

JG: A profession of faith?

JW: Yes, three weeks ago and I said, "Well Charles I wanted to see you so bad through the years, but you stayed drunk." He inherited millions from his aunt. She married a Jew in Detroit, Michigan and they didn't have any children, and she let Charles have all that money and he stayed drunk 42 years. He had an old airplane he would fly out in the gulf on those islands out there and fish all day and drive back home. Things like that, actually it was like a waste, you know, he had wasted his life. And his wife told me, says "It hasn't been easy living with an alcoholic."

JG: Right, yes.

JW: I said, “Yes ma’am I know.” But those people, whenever you think about the things we had to do to survive, and all this I’m telling you about preserving food and everything, that was survival. I often tell a joke about Poppa brought home some steak one night and there was one piece left on the platter and the wind blew the lamp out and I wound up with seven forks in that hand.

JG: Everybody reaching for that steak.

JW: Everybody reaching for that steak.

JG: Well talk a little bit about the Depression. Do you remember some stuff about the Depression, the 1930’s?

JW: Oh man, I was born...

JG: You were born in '22.

JW: ... seven years before the Depression hit and...but we didn’t realize that we were poor because everybody was the same shape.

JG: Everybody was the same way, huh.

JW: They were that way but the Depression was I would say educational to a lot of people (**JG:** yes) and knowing how to survive because there wasn’t any money. Diboll paid off in paper chips.

JG: Tokens and scrip, yes.

JW: Yes. Of course the commissary, they would let you have stuff on credit, and you go in and pay up by the month.

JG: So y’all ate pretty much what you grew yourselves and you got cash from cotton.

JW: Oh we ate good!

JG: But you got money from your cotton right?

JW: Yes.

JG: And working cotton.

JW: You bet. We had to.

JG: What did you use your money for? What did you buy with money?

JW: We didn't have any money. I got a hold of some money to go to the picture show one time and for a quarter you could see the picture show, a bag of popcorn and a drink, for twenty five cents and that is something unheard of.

JG: Was that the old Timberland Theater in Diboll or Lufkin?

JW: Diboll, yes. I'll tell you a little story about that.

JG: Do you remember what movie it was?

JW: Yes a cowboy. Hey incidentally, my dad, the people that worked with him, said he was just like Gary Cooper, talked like him, walked like him and everything, his double.

JG: Yes.

JW: So one night they were having a cowboy picture and Doug had a little black horse, he would go anywhere and it started raining and he rode in that theater with that horse down the aisle. (laughing) Who is the guy that run that show? You called his name awhile ago.

JG: Shirley Daniel?

JW: Shirley Daniel had to come in there and get him, so he took the horse over to his house and put him in a lot. He said, "I want to keep that horse awhile and ride him." Doug said, "Alright but you are going to have to take me home." He said, "Okay when the shows over we will go home." Doug was drinking I'm pretty sure, which I never did do, but just enough to know I didn't want to.

JG: How much older was Doug?

JW: Let's see. Seven years.

JG: About seven years older.

JW: There is seven years between several of us, seven years.

JG: Seven-seven, huh.

JW: Coincidental, I don't know why things turned out like it did. When you think about the Depression, my wife since she was born during the Depression, February 13th, said she has been Depressed ever since. (laughing) Oh there is a lot of stories about Diboll.

JG: Yes.

JW: There is not enough paper to write it all down.

JG: No, well I appreciate you sharing what you did today. Like I said, I do it's going to take a little time for me to make some copies of those, if you don't mind.

JW: You take what time you want, whatever time you need, you can have it.

JG: Okay, well I appreciate it today.

JW: Later on if you think of something, call me.

JG: Okay, I will.

JW: There is so much we could jot down today and finding a way, a stopping place. You have to do it like I told a man about building a house, you can't finish a house, you have to find a stopping place and quit.

JG: Yes, it's a series of days, right.

JW: I didn't realize that my wife worked with your mother.

JG: Yes, she was talking about that the other day.

JW: She thought the world of your mother.

JG: Yes they were in the school district, Lufkin School District in the 1980's. I will go ahead and stop the recording.

JW: Alright.

END OF INTERVIEW