

VIRGINIA WINSTON

Interview 296a

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Jonathan Gerland, Interviewer

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ABSTRACT:

In this interview with Jonathan Gerland, Angelina County native Virginia Winston reminisces about growing up in Keltys in the 1930's and helping to build her family's businesses and raise her family in Lufkin. The daughter of Simon and Lucille Henderson, she grew up in Keltys with her four siblings and after college married John Winston. Together they built businesses spanning the oil industry, timber, land, construction, and real estate. She recalls going to the local school in Keltys as a child and also the integration of Lufkin's school when her children were students. She also speaks about the Kurth and Wiener families, who invested in the many of the same companies as her father, such as the papermill in Lufkin, Angelina County Lumber Company, and Lufkin Industries.

Jonathan Gerland (hereafter JG): Today's date is July 24, 2020, my name is Jonathan Gerland and I'm at The History Center today with Mrs. Virginia Winston and we're going to do an oral history interview. Mrs. Winston maybe just to get started, just tell us when and where you were born and about who your parents were.

Virginia Winston (hereafter VW): I made a few little notes here. And my mother and daddy were Simon and Lucille Henderson; and Mother lived in Zavalla and Daddy was raised in Keltys. He used to ride the train when he was courting Mother. He would ride the train to Zavalla and they had a pretty long courtship and got married and I am the second of five children. I have an older sister and one that is two years younger, and my brother and then a baby sister. There was 5 of us and we all lived in Keltys. Daddy was...his father, I'll tell you about his father which is kind of interesting; his name was Simon Henderson of course and he was married to my grandmother. Her name was Louise Reed Henderson and I never heard her call Grandpa anything but Mr. Henderson. She was 25 years younger than he and...

JG: That was his second wife, right? He married briefly in Corrigan, didn't he?

VW: Yes, very briefly. So, Mamaw always had a big Christmas and she had a big old two-story house out there at Keltys and a sunroom about this size and a Christmas tree about as big as the room. She always had special little things and my fondest memories is she gave all of us a tricycle or a bicycle and she had our name painted on the handle bars. Oh, that was so special! The day after Christmas she would get her chauffer and Aunt Sally and they would go to Los Angeles and Aunt Sally, my grandfather had a brother and his wife and they had four children and I thought they had a car wreck but they died of diphtheria, both parents died. So, there was Uncle Allen, Uncle George, Uncle Bill and

Aunt Sally. Aunt Sally lived with Mamaw forever and they put Uncle George in the sawmill business. He did special lumbers and stuff like that.

JG: Hardwoods?

VW: Hardwoods, yes, beautiful redwoods and stuff like that. Of course, Daddy didn't like them because he was pretty picky. Uncle Bill was riding on the back of a flat car on the train and the train got too close and he lost one of his legs. When we would spend the night up at Mamaw's house our favorite thing was to go in the closet and scare the people with Uncle Bill's false legs.

JG: Now what year were you born?

VW: 1930.

JG: 1930, okay. So, these memories are in the thirties then of childhood and Christmas and things?

VW: Yes, and so I thought they went to California for pleasure but I found out later that the only dry clinic for alcohol was in Los Angeles at that time and it seems that Grandpa had a problem with his drinking. When prohibition came on, he was world famous for buying a box car load of bourbon whiskey and stored it in the basement of the house.

JG: There in Keltys?

VW: There in Keltys and everybody was welcome to come and get a little fix and he...when prohibition went off, he had a case and a half of bourbon left so it was well used. (laughter)

JG: And what was his name again? Which uncle was that?

VW: This was Simon, grandpa.

JG: Oh, Simon had the whiskey, okay.

VW: But they would go to California and dry him out and he wouldn't ride in the car with Mamaw and the chauffer he rode the train. So Mamaw had this really nice black man chauffer named Vernon, and they came home a day early and low and behold, Inez, his wife, had gotten a boyfriend and the boyfriend was at the house when Vernon came in from California and they had a real bad confrontation and Inez ended up stabbing Vernon to death. In fact, you'll know it's the thirties because Daddy called the Sheriff and went out there and he said...and I could hear him saying it because I traveled around with him a lot; he would say now she is a good woman and she didn't mean to kill him and you just let her go and I'll give her some money and move her to Dallas. And, so the Sheriff said okay. So, fast forward, she lived in Dallas and was never charged with the murder of her husband. My brother who is named Simon but we called him Bubby; he lived in Dallas and lived in

an apartment and it was a terrible mess and I said I bet you I could get ahold of old Inez and she will come over here and take care of you and sure enough, some of her relatives in Keltys knew where she was and I got ahold of her and she worked for Bubby for about 5 or 10 years later. Anyway, we all lived in Keltys.

JG: Describe the town, of course the depression was in the thirties and I want to talk about school and stuff like that but what do you remember about town?

VW: When you turn off the highway to come into Keltys there is some nice houses along the way and one of them was Martha Kerry Kurth's house and then there was some more, Earl Snelling was Mr. Kurth's main bookkeeper and he had a real nice house there. They were all in a row. You went on down and there was the church, the big Kurth mansion, and on the left was the Methodist Church and Mrs. Kurth was a big Methodist and she started the church and got affiliated with the Methodist although Mr. Kurth was German and he was Catholic.

JG: You talking about Joseph? The original ...

VW: Old Joseph, the original father of Ernest and Roy and...

JG: Your grandfather's business partner?

VW: Yes, the boys as they called them. So, my grandmother was real big into school and she started the little Keltys elementary school and they hired a lady; she was the sweetest thing in the world but she was real big and fat and her name was Mabel Malear and they named the school after her.

JG: Did you go to that school?

VW: Oh yes, I went to that school until I went to junior high and...

JG: Talk a little bit about the school. What do you remember about...?

VW: Well the school was...it was really kind of interesting; my grandmother insisted they called them the mill hands, and all the mill hands children had to go to school. Of course, they were all white and I don't recall what happened with the black...but there was a definite line there between the blacks and the whites. You go into the school and the first and second grade were in the same room and there was a big old wooden stove right in the middle of the room and some of the boys in second grade had to go get the wood to keep the fire going when it was going and then the third and fourth grade had the same thing with the same teacher. The fifth grade was by itself because they were trying to groom those children to get ready to go to Lufkin.

JG: So, like a three-room school house then?

VW: Yes, and they would try to get them ready and teach them to use proper English and things like that. My memory of the school; you had to raise your hand and beg the teacher to let you go to the bathroom. So, I went to the bathroom and there was a girl out in the hall and her name was Stella Frances, and she said...it was late in the year and she said “do you know that there is not a real Santa Claus?” And, I said “you’re just telling stories, there is a Santa Claus.” I hated that girl forever and I always believed in Santa Claus. But, next to the school was the Baptist Church and the talk of the town there was a fellow that decided he would kill himself and he laid up in his bed and he had a shotgun facing him and he had a string that he could do with his toe and he used the string and shot himself right there. So, when school was out my cousin John, my daddy had one brother; my cousin John and so John and I were kind of running mates and we saw this line outside the church to go view the body and we thought boy we will go get in line and view the body and it was the biggest mistake I’ve ever made in my life, because they didn’t know how to fix the bodies up like they do now and I had bad dreams forever about that.

JG: Seeing the casket?

VW: Yes, every morning we would get up, mother had this maid named Anna that was the loveliest woman, sweetest thing in the world and she would fix us all breakfast and John would come up and we would go to the store. The way Keltys was you went down the street to the church and kind of turned to the right and you would go to the store and the office was on the left and store on the right. The store was just the hub of the town. They sold material and food and they had a meat market and it was just an everything store. The people in the store were real good about taking care of things. But, John and I one day, right at the back of the store was a platform and the railroad track right there and the train would pull up and do something and there was a flat car there and so we thought well golly we will just ride the train to Lufkin. So, John and I got on the train going to Lufkin and Mr. ...anyway, the meat market man called mother and said your child is on the train going to Lufkin.

JG: You were hoboing?

VW: So, mother and Aunt Dot, John’s mother, Aunt Dorothy Nell, met us at the station and it was right by the Coca-Cola plant downtown and they met us there with the fly swatter in hand and, tried to beat us to death because the train was headed for St. Louis. (laughter) We didn’t get to go to St. Louis. (laughter) Aunt Dot, daddy had a brother named John and he was really nice sweet man. He wasn’t as tough as daddy. He played golf and did a lot of things with the children and he had...my grandfather gave him a sawmill in Ewing. A little old bitty town and that is where he and Aunt Dot lived and then they decided to not use that sawmill anymore so they moved back to Keltys. Uncle John and a friend of his that worked at the mill, were walking around the mill site and where the wood, where they would saw all the logs and everything...

JG: The refuse?

VW: Would shoot out and be on fire and it crusted over and Uncle John accidentally stepped on the edge there and underneath was just smoldering things and he was burned really bad. The friend he was with fortunately pulled him out but he was just barbecued and my grandmother sent him to San Antonio to the Air Force base there. It was a big burn hospital there and he lived a week before he died. John and his sister lived with us while Aunt Dot was with him in San Antonio.

JG: So, you were a child when that happened?

VW: Oh yes, about ten years old.

JG: Okay, so around '40 then. Ewing was a hardwood mill I believe so, you were a child so that was pretty traumatic.

VW: Oh yes, it really was; it was a real sad thing.

JG: Do you remember seeing him after the fire while he was still alive?

VW: No, they just bundled him up and sent him straight to San Antonio. It was a really sad thing because he used to play golf and he was notorious at the old Lufkin Country Club. You got to tee off across the lake and then turn to the...the dog leg went to the right, but Uncle John could hit it and could drive the ball across the lake and be on the dogwood trail.

JG: Cut the dog leg off?

VW: Yes, but we used to, Anna would give us breakfast and John would come by and we would go to...started going to the store and across the street from our house was the big Kurth house. Old Sonny, Earnest, Jr. lived there, and so he was notorious mean; I mean everybody was scared to death of him so, John and I were walking and Sonny came out of the house in his housecoat to get his paper; I never will forget it; so we thought we were real smart and we knew this foreign language...

JG: Was he about ten years older than you?

VW: Oh no, he was a good bit older.

JG: A good bit older, okay.

VW: He was probably in his twenties or thirties and we were ten or such and so this foreign language and pig latin; [unintelligible] so, he said Scared him to death and we ran all the way to the store. That was our childhood. You could roam the streets and do anything you wanted to.

JG: So, you and a lot of the people you mentioned are kind of the mill managers and mill owners' children did y'all mingle and play with the mill hands children?

VW: No, there was...we just kind of played with our cousins.

JG: Okay.

VW: And, we all went to...the white children went to school at the Mabel Malear and to tell how well taken care of we were mother, we could walk across a pasture to school and on Monday's mother would go to the Rotary Ann's and Anna would fix us a lunch on a tray with a white napkin and silver and everything and take it to school and all these little mill hand children had little paper sacks with biscuits and syrup and so as soon as they got out of sight we would start trading our food for the biscuits and stuff and, so sure enough I got the trench mouth and the measles and the mumps and everything that you could have. In fact, our thing with the mumps I was about ten years old and I traded around with the food and caught the mumps. So, I was sick in bed with the mumps and my other brothers and sisters didn't have it so there was a two-week incubation period there and so sure enough here all the other four children, mother and daddy, came down with the mumps. I had them in one jaw and then I got them in the other jaw and they all had them in two jaws at the same time and they were really sick. So, they parked me at my grandmothers' house. Boy oh boy I was in heaven! And, I would...she had this big two-story house that had a big balcony on the second floor and we would go out there at night and you could see the sparks from the mill and stars and Aunt Sally would get green grapes and peel them for me. It was really something. And, she had a cat and we would take...she had a big sleeping porch and we would let the cat go to bed with us but she had a little basket and after everybody went to sleep, she would put the cat in the basket and let it down the stairs. It was a really wonderful life. We ate dinner up there every Sunday at Mamaw's house and I never will forget when Pearl Harbor was attacked, Daddy had just bought a big fancy Philco radio for mother, for grandmother, and we listened to the President declare war.

JG: A day which will live in Infamy! You heard that live huh?

VW: Oh yes, we heard it live, we sure did!

JG: Wow!

VW: But there was also back in those days they had a mill at Carmona and the way they ran the sawmills at that time they would cut all the wood around that they could get to the mill and when they cut the forest out they would pick up the mill stuff and move it. A Mr. Keltys came by some way, I just remember his name was Mr. Keltys and he talked to Mr. Kurth and said if they would move to Keltys, the railroad was there, and they could be permanent with the sawmill there because the railroad could bring all the wood in for the mill.

JG: Now you're talking about way before you were born?

VW: No, yes it was way before I was born when they had the Carmona.

JG: Yes, because Mr. Kelty was a sawmill owner before Kurth and your granddad ever came there.

VW: Yes, and the Wieners.

JG: The Wieners came up from Corrigan too didn't they?

VW: Yes, I don't know how the Wiener's got into it. Mr. Wiener was a bookkeeper and they had a house right there in Keltys and then my grandmother's house but the little mill hand people made fun of them being Jews. So the Wiener children had a real hard time and so they decided...Mr. Sam and Eli Wiener; and Sam was the oldest and the way the Jewish church worked then the one in charge would say this one can give so much money to the church. And so, Sam, said...or Eli said Sam could give so much to the church and he said that was too much and they got made and didn't speak to each other again until they died. They were dead before they spoke again. One of them, Eli I think, moved to Dallas and Sam moved to Shreveport and Sam had a son named Jacque Wiener...

JG: Jacque, yes.

VW: And he was a lawyer and brilliant man and he was on the board of the Lufkin Foundry and the banks and everything. He was the wheel turner and he lived in Shreveport. And let's see...

JG: Tell me about your father and all his business interest. I know he followed in his father's footsteps with the mill and I guess the foundry as well.

VW: Well daddy was in kind of a bad spot, you can say, he Mr. Kurth and Mr. Wiener they were all partners with my grandfather and the grandfather died early so daddy took his place and he was probably twenty or so years younger than Mr. Kurth and Mr. Wiener. But he stood his ground and did really good and they accepted him as a partner and I guess as you know they started Lufkin National bank and Texas Foundries and Lufkin Foundry and practically everything in Lufkin and then the Papermill. This Mr. Herty came to town and had a method to make paper out of Southern Yellow Pine because it was mostly white pine up in Minnesota and Canada and so they got together and decided to build the Papermill. And, they went through lots of trouble getting it done but they got it done and they rolled the first roll of paper out from the mill and we had that big house we lived in there were four bedrooms upstairs and I could hear Daddy talking on the phone; we had one phone and it was upstairs; so Ted Dealy that was the chairman...

JG: From Dallas?

VW: ...of the Dallas Morning News was on the board so of course the first roll of paper went to the Dallas Morning News but the ink ran. And oh, that was a bad day, a black rock. (laughter)

JG: I saw that movie on TV just the other day, Spencer Tracey.

VW: They...all of them were invested up to the hilt in that mill and for it to go bad boy I mean it was a bad day.

JG: So, you remember Mr. Dealy was on the phone with your dad?

VW: Yes, and they were talking about what they were going to do and how they were going to cure the problem and I mean it was bad things because Daddy had made a big investment but he gave the five of us quite a bit of Papermill stock which made us rich because they went back and reworked everything.

JG: About 1940, I guess.

VW: Yes, they got it all going, got the mill running.

JG: But you actually remember that moment of him being on the phone?

VW: Yes, I remember hearing him...

JG: You were only about 10 then right?

VW: Yes, he wore these, for underclothes he had a one suit thing and it just buttoned up here and I could see him in that old union suit thing he wore talking on the phone and oh they were saying! But back in those days we had one of the few attic fans and boy that was a real luxury then. You know, you keep the windows open and the attic fan would keep you cool, we thought we were really cool.

JG: Now your home did you always grow up with electricity?

VW: Oh yes.

JG: Did you have running water?

VW: Oh yes, we had everything.

JG: Indoor plumbing?

VW: And we had our maid was named Anna, and she would get us all cooked up and she had another cook and you know, you had a lot of black help and I can remember Anna putting us all in the bathtub and bathing us at night and things. She had a little shanty she called it outside, not too far from the main house that she lived in so she was available all the time and we just loved her.

JG: What was her last name?

VW: Anna Green.

JG: Green.

VW: And she worked for Mother 60 years.

JG: Sixty years. Now did she have a family too or was she?

VW: She had a husband and no children.

JG: No children. Did her husband work?

VW: Yes, he worked...I think he worked at the mill. I'm not sure.

JG: Okay.

VW: But he was kind of mean to her and he would get drunk and...

JG: Do you remember what his name was?

VW: Let's see, I'll think of it in a minute.

JG: That is okay. You were talking he was mean to her.

VW: Yes, and he was coming up the steps; they lived in this little shanty upstairs and he was coming up the steps and she shot him and killed him.

JG: Wow!

VW: I can remember...

JG: At y'all house?

VW: Right behind our house.

JG: Behind the house okay.

VW: And so, Daddy heard it and he called the police and I can remember I had my pajamas on and I said...Anna was on the porch or somewhere. I can remember seeing her and so I went to the corner and showed them where to go pick up Dement. Dement was his name and anyway he died. Anna of course stayed and I was trying to think if I had anything else, I needed to tell you.

JG: Well, tell me about your mother.

VW: Mother, she was just a mother; she didn't do a lot. I was a daddy's girl and I used to go to the office with him. He would go to the office on Sunday and I would go down there and do the adding machine and do all that kind of stuff. Then when let's see...I don't know

if they sold the company or what but one interesting thing that you would like to know they were always competitive with the Temples because they sold lumber and we sold lumber and it was always kind of a nip and tuck thing. So, Daddy and Mr. Kurth and Mr. Wiener decided to start the Lufkin Daily News and to build a new building and at that time the Temple's had a construction company and they took bids on the building which is standing right now, and, the Temples were the lowest ones. And I can remember hearing them say boy are we going to take their bid or not, but they decided that money won out and they were so low on the bid that they gave the bid to the Temple Construction company and that kind of smoothed some things over and things got a little friendlier after that.

JG: Do you remember if some of the squabbles were over the cable television?

VW: Yes...

JG: Do you remember that?

VW: Yes.

JG: What did you hear?

VW: Well, I didn't hear a lot of that because about that time I was in college so I wasn't close to it. My main memory of college, Mother called to tell us that the Perry Brothers building was on fire and burned down and we had to come home and see the big fire at the Perry Brother's building. They built that back.

JG: I don't want to get into college just yet but let's talk about school; you talked a little bit about elementary school but let's talk about high school and how did you meet your husband? Tell me about your husband; what was his background.

VW: Well, I was going to school at Keltys and fixing to go to Lufkin...

JG: High School?

VW: To junior high.

JG: Okay, Junior high.

VW: And right next door to where we lived was Dave Thompson. He was the main bookkeeper at the office and he had two daughters, Boo Thompson and Lou Thompson and so Boo played the piano and she was real pretty and real popular and all the boys just loved her.

JG: How would that be spelled?

VW: B double O.

JG: Just B-o-o.

VW: Boo, Boo Thompson, so she told me she said there is a little boy that sits at the piano with me and turns the pages for me and you just got to meet him. His name is John Winston and, when you go to Junior High, I want to introduce y'all.

JG: He was the page turner.

VW: He turned the page for her when she was playing the piano. She played the piano for church and stuff like that. So, I went to Junior High and I met John and we just hit it off and went through junior high and high school and on again and off again. He was a big football player and you're on and then another boy came along that was a big basketball player and you would change around but you know, we ended up marrying.

JG: What kind of background did he come from? His family?

VW: His daddy worked at Lufkin Foundry. He was a Lufkin Foundry worker; he was a welder. And, John would...mother would take us to the picture show and she would pick up John to make sure everything was under snuff, you know. He would ride his bicycle but he was embarrassed that he had ridden his bicycle; they didn't have a car or one car or something like that, anyway they weren't poor but they weren't...they just got along. And, so anyway we ended up married and he ended up being extremely successful with everything he touched. He...

JG: Now where did you go to college?

VW: Texas University.

JG: University of Texas. Did he go as well?

VW: No, he got a scholarship to play football at Kilgore Junior College and he went there for two years. He was on the team that Kilgore Junior College won the Junior College thing of the year of something; some big thing. He went to Texas.

JG: Did y'all graduate the same year from high school in '47?

VW: Yes, back then you could stay over a year to play football which is what he did. He was actually a year ahead of me but he stayed over to play football so we graduated at the same time.

JG: Oh okay. Then you went to University of Texas and he went to Kilgore.

VW: Yes.

JG: Were y'all steadily dating?

VW: Yes, off and on, you know, you'd go and get in the sorority and have dates in sorority stuff but when he came, we kind of got...he pledged Kappa Sig and I pledged Tri Del and we just kind of went back and forth and eventually got engaged and married.

JG: What year did y'all get married?

VW: 1950, I think.

JG: So, you graduated from UT?

VW: Yes.

JG: What was your degree in?

VW: Home Economics.

JG: Home Economics.

VW: Yes, that is the only thing I could graduate in that I didn't have to take Spanish so I took Home Economics.

JG: I was going to ask you earlier when you were a child growing up did you ever think of what you wanted to do or be when you grew up or anything like that?

VW: No, not anything.

JG: Any hobbies other than riding trains?

VW: No, well John and I decided that we weren't being treated right so we decided to run away from home. So, he had a wagon and we went to his mother's pantry and put all these can goods in the wagon...

JG: Now is this John your future husband or your cousin?

VW: My cousin.

JG: Your cousin.

VW: And we struck out down the road. Aunt Dot saw us and she was right on us and she said "where are y'all going?" we said "we are running away from home." She said "well y'all go right ahead." So, we went down there and we had all these can goods but we didn't have an opener.

JG: Starve to death.

VW: Yes, so we started crying and then they took us home and made us put all the can goods back up. Then he had...John had a tree house in the back. The house is still there, but we had a tree house and we were both 8 or so years old so Aunt Dot had a bridge club and back then she would have two or three tables of bridge at her house and two or three maids serving desserts and everything but they were all smoking. So, when they would leave John and I went in there and got some of the cigarette butts and so then we decided we would just go buy a package of cigarettes. Well, we couldn't go to the store because we knew they would tell, so we went somewhere else and bought a package; I never will forget...a pack of the Lucky Strike green. It was green and with a red thing like this. So, we took them up to his tree house and we decided we were going to smoke cigarettes and we lit them up and got to coughing and got sick and thought we were going to die.

JG: And you were stuck in the treehouse.

VW: So, we got down from the tree house and dug a hole and buried them so we didn't have to tell what we were doing. And another thing...Brenda told me to be sure and tell you this.

JG: Brenda Elliott?

VW: Yes, when I got out of college and was married there was a group of about 20 women decided we needed to do something good for the town of Lufkin and we met over at Patricia Clements, Dr. Clements house. We had a big meeting and big conflag and we decided that we would start the Lufkin Junior League, the Service League. So, we all got together and started the Service League and elected some officers; got us a uniform and our first project was called the bargain box and we rented a place downtown and people would bring their used clothes in there and we would sell them for nickels and dimes and that is how we made our first money. Of course, that went on and got bigger and bigger until it was now a Junior League.

JG: What are some of the projects the Junior League has supported and funded and started?

VW: Well, they had a big thing on...they got a big banner out right now for the back-to-school program where they give the backpacks to the children in all the different grades. Oh, they have had gobs of really good things.

JG: I mean the early days, when y'all started the club what were some of the things y'all were wanting to do and were able to do?

VW: Mostly it had to do with school.

JG: Schools.

VW: Yes, because most of us had children in school. We did some tutoring and help children.

JG: So, education.

VW: Mother...a big project they started real early was to give shoes to the children, the needy children.

JG: What about the Museum, Museum of East Texas?

VW: Yes, got that going.

JG: Were you involved with that in any detail?

VW: Yes, I did that and then we started that Christmas tree thing where they have all the Christmas trees and I was real big into that, decorating the trees and...

JG: Was that your idea?

VW: No, it wasn't my idea, but I helped with it. Another thing we did that was a lot of fun; I don't know who started that Lufkin thing...anyway it was...we decided that we would do the hushpuppy contest.

JG: Yes, the Hushpuppy Olympics?

VW: Yes, so Jan McCaulier, who is married to Lynn, and Flora O'Quinn, who is married to Billy O'Quinn, and me we were the first hushpuppy people.

JG: The Southern Hushpuppy Olympics, yes.

VW: And, we got in there and cooked and I got Anna to sit in a rocking chair and she would chew on a straw and we would cook a hushpuppy and get her to taste it to see if it was alright and everything. We were the very first ones. We didn't have any competition but now it's just ballooned to where there is all kinds of...

JG: Can you share some of your ingredients?

VW: We just used what Anna did, you know, cornmeal in boiling hot water and salt and...

JG: No special ingredients, no secrets?

VW: No, we didn't know to do that then, you know, we just cooked them and they had some people up there to taste them and oh yum, yum, they thought it was good and need some peas or cornbread or turnip greens to go with it. (laughter) That was a lot of fun.

JG: You did that for quite awhile didn't you?

VW: Yes, we did. We did it two or three times until we kind of got people interested that would start contesting. So, after it got going, we quite because now there is ten or twelve of them that do it.

JG: Where do the proceeds of that go?

VW: It goes...I don't know. I don't really remember where that goes but it goes someplace.

JG: We are kind of jumping around. I hope that is okay.

VW: Sure, it is. I wish you would ask me more questions. I think I'm through with my little list I had.

JG: Tell me about how you and your husband got involved with the business the Winston Land and Cattle Company.

VW: Well, we got married and he was in the Air Force. He was a bombardier on a B-29 and he got sent to Spokane, Washington and soon after we married, we drove up to Spokane and was at Fairchild Air Force Base for about 6 months and then he was sent to Korea. And, I went home and of course of all things I was pregnant when I went home and I lived with Mother and Daddy. Daddy took me to the hospital and I had our first son.

JG: Now you were born at the new Memorial hospital?

VW: Yes.

JG: I mean your child was born at the new Memorial?

VW: Yes.

JG: I wanted to ask you about the hospital, but go ahead and continue what you are talking about.

VW: Anyway, he got home and he had a choice since he had been in Korea, he had a choice to...no he was in Japan and he had a choice of where he wanted to be and he chose Austin. We had both been to school in Austin so we lived in Austin for a while.

JG: Did he ever fly in jets?

VW: No.

JG: Always the prop planes?

VW: The B-29's. So, then he came home and we moved back...decided we wanted to move back to Lufkin and we did.

JG: So your first child was...

VW: He was born in Austin...no he was born in Lufkin.

JG: At Memorial Hospital, right?

VW: Yes.

JG: And who was that?

VW: Randy.

JG: Okay, then y'all moved to Austin?

VW: Yes, when he got discharged and anyway, we had a good time at the Air Force and it was a good experience for both of us and they would have all kind of things at the PX and the officers club. He was a Second Lieutenant and it was real good experience. Let's see I had this written down someplace, but I lost it. But anyway, that was mainly when we came back to Lufkin a man named Dick Phylon had the Mobile gasoline agency and he was going to retire and so John thought that would really be a good thing, so he worked and worked and called and messed and we did everything we could to own the Mobile Gasoline Agency and he finally succeeded in getting it. Mr. Phylon was doing about 50,000 gallons a month when we took it over and I never will forget he had an old beat-up office in this poor old man who worked for him was named Lucille Tucker and he had something wrong with his elbow, anyway we got Mr. Tucker and he went to work and he was a real salesman and in a matter of a short time he doubled the sales to 100,000 and then finally got it up into the millions. He built service stations around and...

JG: Mobile?

VW: Yes, and did real good with that and he ended up selling it to this boy, I have forgotten his name now, but anyway he sold it for a big profit. By then he was buying land...

JG: He was buying land?

VW: Yes, and his main thing he did was he would go to the sale of the first Tuesday of every month for the...

JG: Livestock auction?

VW: No, where they sell houses, the repossessed houses and he would sit up there at the Courthouse and we would drive around, we would get a list of all the houses that were for sale and we would drive around. I would drive and he would get out and look. I would drive and he would write stuff down. We always wanted one that had a...what did he want...they had a lot of money in the house but couldn't finish paying the payments and we would bid on those. So, he would get the house and he would practically resell it before

we got it because we were running short on money and he would resell a house before he even got it for a nice profit and that is how we got into the rental business with these houses. And, he just did great with that and there was something else I was about to tell you that was real interesting. We still had Mobile, and that was a good money maker. Then we bought those houses and he started buying land. And oh, he had a friend that worked for Owens Illinois, his name slips me but anyway...Glen something...anyway an old friend came by and he said Owens Illinois is having a real hard time with their stock and we need to raise some cash and we are going to sell some land would you be interested in buying some land from us? He was a land man and so we got all the maps of where they had land on Farm to Market roads and did each one of those and as they came up for sale, we would buy the ones on the Farm to Market roads.

JG: So, these are like cut over lands they had recently logged over?

VW: No, they had houses and pastures, nothing specific just different tracts of land.

JG: Do you remember about how large they would go up to?

VW: They would go to 100 to 150 acres.

JG: So relatively small tracts, not like 3,000 acres.

VW: Yes, small tracts. So, we did that and kept some and sold some because we were short of cash. A year or two later old Glen came back and they needed to raise some more money so we got the maps out again and went all over and these were more on country roads and different things and larger tracts. So, we went and bought a bunch of land again. We found out real quick what land poor meant and so anyway we sold some pieces like out on 103.

JG: Highway 103?

VW: Yes, George Henderson's place out there, we sold that to him and then they came up with a big deal that would just make his mouth water. They had a place where our tree farm is for sale and Owens Illinois had planted it all in trees and they had a trailer or something up on the hill where our clubhouse now is.

JG: Are you talking about the one up in Nacogdoches County?

VW: Yes.

JG: On the west side of the highway?

VW: Yes, the 3,000 acres.

JG: Okay.

VW: Yes, and so that came up and we just could not swing the money deal so John went to Daddy and he said that he thought it was just a prince of a piece of land. So, Daddy had a trust for the five of us and he bought part of it in those trust.

JG: So, each child got a part or not?

VW: Well in the trust. So, when Daddy died, we had our choice of taking land or cash and my sisters that lived in Houston and around didn't want land and of course I took land and they took stocks and bonds and cash. Bubby, that is when I kind of got a little cross wise with him; he wanted to have that place because it was a prime hunting place and there was some land over on 103 and he had it appraised and he had this appraised real low and this one high and some shenanigans about the appraisal and it just took me and I just stood up to him and said no that is not going to do. So, I ended up with the 3,000 acres. So, he wanted to get as you went in there was a 500-acre tract that was a little separate and he wanted that and I said no I'm not going to share a drive with you, nothing. And, so anyway he didn't know how to manage money; he didn't know how to borrow it and he just couldn't manage it so he ended up with the place at 103 and I ended up with the 3,000 acres in Nacogdoches County. He was really burned up about that and when we went up on the hill, they had cut the electric off to the ground and left the water running and a lot of things like that that weren't very nice but anyway we got all that settled and we ended up getting Acorn to come and go over the land and tell us what to do.

JG: You talking about Acorn Forestry?

VW: Yes, and they came in and surveyed everything because we didn't know what to do, and John just lived with them going over the land. So, we clear cut some; pulpwood some. They stayed out there; we finally got Keith Carroll from Huntington to come in and he stayed out there for over a year logging because they had not done anything to the land in probably 5 or 6 years or more. So, Keith stayed out there for over a year and they would pulpwood some and clear cut some and you know and do everything you did and we got it. Then the land was right at 3,000 acres so you could ride to the back and there was a big highline, huge highline and so there was a tract of land back there on the Red Town road back there that belonged to Jeff Badders. Jeff had bought it because he had a bunch of boy kids and he thought they would use it, well nobody liked it so, Jeff decided that he would sell it. So, we went and looked at it and he wanted that land so bad. It would square off our place and we would just sit up on this hill and look and so I finally said look if I wanted something that bad, I would manage to get it so he did. So, he took Jeff's price, whatever Jeff wanted for it, so about a short time later a pipeline wanted to come through there and they were going to do the chemical that would develop films and it had to go right down that pipeline right through Jeff's place. John wanted Jeff to have it surveyed and pay, I think it was 12 or 15 hundred an acre. He wanted this flat price for it so we ended up paying the flat price for it so when we got it, we had it surveyed and it came out ten acres more than what Jeff thought it was and then here come the pipeline and he negotiated that pipeline. He negotiated for a month and finally settled on a price and as it ended up, we had \$125 an acre for the land with the extra ten acres and the pipeline coming through. So, he made just a killing deal on that.

JG: When did y'all start burning out there for management?

VW: The people from SFA [Stephen F. Austin State University] came out there all the time and after we got possession of the place we made a donation in Daddy's name or something, anyway they asked, one of the fellows in the forestry department got friendly with John and he wanted to know if we would let them come out there and do some classes. So, of course he said yes, so they came out and they would bring all kinds of students out there to bore the trees to see how old they were. They would take plots and burn and stuff and he got to reading and studying the land and we found out how important it is to keep it burned and so we went on a big burning program. Simon has carried that on...

VW: Your son Simon?

VW: My son Simon, there is a woman named Dawn Stover that is in charge of the wildflowers over at SFA and she wanted to come out. So, Dawn and Simon are thick as two peas in a pod and they ride around and he lets her dig up flower seeds and samples and things like that. "Oh stop" she will say, there is a flower she hasn't seen anywhere and she gives the credit to burning because it pops the seeds and they have found over 700 different wildflowers on the place and she has done that. She went to Boggy Slough but Ellen wouldn't let her dig up any of the plants so, she doesn't go to Boggy Slough anymore because she wants to dig up seeds and things like that. So, that has been a really big thing.

JG: Now I think y'all received the Aldo Leopold Award in 2014 talk about that. What did that mean to you?

VW: Well, let's see, what I was going to tell you something; I was going to tell you this first. When the shuttle went down...

JG: The space shuttle Columbia?

VW: Yes, they wanted to...Dee had a company named Enviro-Vac and they picked up grease from places and they were in Cushing and the driver was picking up the grease and leaving and a head was in the road. The Indian man that was on the shuttle his head and his helmet was sitting in the middle of the road and that was the first one they found. So, then they wanted to go to our place and look for parts, just a big debris field and so they brought a little helicopter in, a little bitty one, and they had two guys one sat over here and one sat over here and they would get in a sling outside so they could see and just do grids back and forth looking for parts. They eventually found a few but not many on our place, but he would start running low on fuel and he came in on a flatbed truck and he would land on that flatbed truck and this boy would jump out and gas him up and he was off again. It was a show to see. I always remember when it was because I was up at the clubhouse. John had told me they were doing that, and I was up at the clubhouse and I could see all this yellow dust flying and that is when it happened because he was stirring up the yellow dust.

JG: The helicopter.

VW: So, what did you say you wanted?

JG: The award, the conservation award, the Aldo Leopold award. What did that mean to you?

VW: It means everything! I will tell you why it's most important. We had a young man that came up there and he, his name skips me, but anyway he worked for the Forest Service and he would come and help with the burning and do a lot of things. So, all of a sudden out of nowhere the highway department came through and they had wanted to know if they could come survey some stuff and we told them no. We didn't want them in there. They came anyway because of eminent domain and like my clubhouse is here, they were going to run the highway right there and cut that 3,000 acres half in two. There wouldn't be any access from across here to get on 59 to log. You would have to go out the back way and do all that and it would just be terrible, so, Jeff, is the boy, he decided that he was going to find some Indian stones and arrows and all kinds of stuff that he was going to get to keep the highway from splitting our place in two. John figured out that it was costing \$8,000 a mile and they could use the main highway and just widen it and we worked and worked and then Simon, my Simon, got real big with the Turkey Federation and they came out there and put turkeys all over the place. Then we had...and they did find some Indian things and we were on that big burning program and the Turkey Federation was really big in helping us too. We were about 80 percent sure they were not going to do this to cut our place into.

JG: Tell me about the cattle part of the business and the Winston H Ranch that is just north of Lufkin. When did y'all obtain that?

VW: Well that belonged to...that land belonged to...I'll have to think of his name. Anyway, John wanted to buy that, and he bought it. He bought about 3 or 4 hundred acres and there was some on the back side that had a big hill and we finally managed to buy that. Then there was some on the side that he needed to buy so we bought that and by then he was in the highway construction business and was doing real good. What he did in the highway that was so good, he would bid these farm to market roads and they were in and outers and it would be a 3 month job for asphalt and stuff like that and he was doing real good with the highway. That is when we got into the helicopters, because we would have three or four jobs going at once and if you had a helicopter you could come on in and see this job and see this job, you know. He hired a boy from Vietnam Veteran to come and live with us for about a month to teach him how to fly the helicopter so, we bought an instrument...

JG: Do you remember what his name was?

VW: No, he was just kind of a...

JG: Now did you get a license too?

VW: No, I didn't get a license.

JG: Did you fly one?

VW: I flew a single engine, a 172, but I didn't fly the helicopter.

JG: Oh okay.

VW: He used that exclusively for the highway business.

JG: What about the cows? When did y'all start getting or buying cattle?

VW: Well John's dad had a place up in Clawson and he had a pretty good size place and he would add land here and add land there and he had some cattle, and so when we got my house place where we had enough land for cattle there so we went to south Texas to this...ended up my dearest friend Henry Clay Kountze, had Brahma cattle, so Grandpa had just mixed breed cows and so ...

JG: Grandpa?

VW: John's grandfather, they called him Grandpa. So, he just had mixed breeds, so Henry Clay had registered red Brahma cows.

JG: Red Brahma's.

VW: So, he had this one man had a bull, great big old speckled bull, a registered red brahma bull, and so I told John I said, "the poor cow, just plain old crossbred cows eats the same amount a registered one, but you get 5 times the money for the registered ones so lets go for the registered business." So, we did, and old Harry English and I went down and bought this bull and I paid \$10,000 for him and then we went to...

JG: And how long ago was that? The \$10,000? I mean about what year do you remember?

VW: It was...well we had grown children. It was in the '60's or '70's. I forgot now. I'm not good on dates.

JG: That is a good bit of money.

VW: Yes, it is! And so we went to south Texas to Henry Clay's ranch and that was part of a great big huge ranch. It was divided into three people and Henry Clay had about 15,000 acres and so we went there and bought a bunch of cows from him. Then the boys coming up and they started messing with them, training them and we were showing at the Fat Stock Show and the boys were showing, you know, the cattle.

JG: You mean in Houston?

VW: In Houston.

JG: Yes.

VW: You know, that is where you had to be if you were going to be in the registered business, because that is where all the Mexicans, south of Mexico came, South Americans, came to buy. Henry was the funniest man I ever met.

JG: Henry who?

VW: Henry Kountze.

JG: Now what is your relationship with him? You mentioned earlier that y'all were good friends. Did I hear you right?

VW: We bought some cattle from him.

JG: How did you know him?

VW: From the Fat Stock Show, we met them, and he was showing cows and we knew he had good cows and he was honest dealer, which you had to really work to get.

JG: Now was he in several different counties down in south Texas? Do you remember the particular town?

VW: Right outside of Edna is where his ranch is.

JG: Okay.

VW: Anyway, we went down and had...we were down there with him coming from the Fat Stock Show and he had this South American man was looking at bulls and he had them in a pen. And we were just kind of talking about how good the cows were and Henry and the man went over to the fence to look at the bull and all of a sudden the man jumped back and he said that there was a snake there. (laughter) Henry picked up a big thing of grass and said, "you SOB you ruined my sale yesterday get out of here."

JG: Was it a rattlesnake?

VW: Yes.

JG: Wow!

VW: He could do anything. But anyway, we had a grand time in the cow business. That was a lot of fun.

JG: What were some of the challenges? You remember any particular challenges that kept you up at night thinking about?

VW: Well no, not really. We just had a good time with it. Every time a cow would get sick or something, he would call the veterinarian and the cow would die and John named him Dr. Kill-a-cow. We had that big sale at our ranch because Henry's was way out in the country and he wanted to sell a bunch of cows and ours was on Hwy 59, so he brought all his cows here.

JG: From south Texas up to here?

VW: Yes, so we had a big sale at our ranch and that was great fun.

JG: How many head did y'all run for maximum operation? Do you remember?

VW: Well probably about 300 at the most.

JG: And they were all registered?

VW: Yes, we would keep the calves, the heifers, and if we got an old mean cow, we would sell her, you know, and different things. But John just loved the cow business, and he was making enough money with the highway that he could afford to do it.

JG: Now did you ride horses a good bit?

VW: No, I didn't do that.

JG: You didn't do any of that. (laughter)

VW: No, but just as soon as the sale was over, they did so good at the sale Mary Sue and I went to Mexico to the spa! We became dear friends.

JG: Kind of jumping back I guess, but I wanted to ask you a little bit about some of the Philanthropic efforts of your family. I know there was Memorial Hospital and the Methodist Church, Lon Morris College. Can you talk a little bit about that? Was that your father?

VW: Daddy was on the board of the Methodist Hospital and he got a lot...in fact I told Horace Cardwell if he went up to Daddy's office and took any more money from him, I was going to put a contract on him. Every time he needed something at the hospital, he would go get Daddy.

JG: You're talking about the Memorial Hospital?

VW: Yes, because at one time it was just for the industries and then they made it where it was public.

JG: Yes.

VW: Mother gave the...they named the baby unit after mother.

JG: Now were all your children born there?

VW: Yes.

JG: Okay.

VW: I was born at the old county hospital and I never will forget that. I had to have my tonsils out, you know, you had to get vaccinated and have your tonsils out before you could go to school.

JG: Yes, I had mine out to before I went to school.

VW: I had mine out and I remember old Dr. Clark said...I had a bed out in the hall for some reason and I wasn't but 6 years old.

JG: Were you a troublemaker?

VW: I don't know, but I was out in the hall and he told me that he had taken my tonsils out and he went fishing with them and the fish wouldn't bite them. (laughter) The fish wouldn't bite my tonsils. I cried. But Daddy, he was always a big giver and he took care of a lot of people that he was real quiet about.

JG: What about Lon Morris College, y'all gave a good bit of support to?

VW: That is Methodist and they were having a hard time and he did.

JG: I think Wiley College as well?

VW: Now John did Wiley College, that was a black college (**JG:** Right, right) and he was good friends with a Methodist preacher that lived there in Marshall and he was real supportive of Wiley College and so John and I gave to that. We were raised to give!

JG: It was something like the Bill and Nita Hattaway fund?

VW: Bill, yes, Bill Hattaway and John got to be good friends.

JG: And that was the Wiley College the historical black college, yes. Did you ever visit Wiley College?

VW: Yes, we visited there. They had a big ceremony and all that. I had a big interest in the Women's Shelter and made a nice big donation to that and about that time Clifford Grum came and Janelle and he and Janelle made a big thing to that. I think that the Women's Shelter serves a big purpose. And you know, they have started in September

getting ready for Christmas because that is when they have the biggest influx of people because daddies get drunk and beat everybody up. They have to have toys and Christmas for the children at home. I was big supporter of that and still do.

JG: Yes.

VW: We help with the Humane Society and then John gave a thing out there at Keltys, I forgot what that was, but he made a big donation for that.

JG: You mentioned earlier about Pearl Harbor and you remembered hearing Franklin Roosevelt for the war declaration. That was pretty interesting. Any other particular big events like that you remember? You were born in 1930 so you lived through the depression and through the war and Vietnam. Do you remember much about the sixties? Any of the civil rights movement?

VW: Oh yes, that was terrible and President Nixon they liked to have killed him with the civil rights stuff.

JG: What do you remember? You were in Lufkin, then right?

VW: Yes.

JG: Do you remember anything particular about integration?

VW: Yes, I was in high school when they integrated Dunbar into Lufkin High School and Dunbar was the black high school. It was really a shame what happened. The Dunbar football team had won the state championship for black football games and then the civil rights thing came around and they had to integrate it into Lufkin High School. It was really a bad thing at that time because they were celebrating their win and Coach Red was the coach and he...they didn't have a coach at Lufkin High and he went to Houston and had a job there in Houston doing something but he was a real popular coach.

JG: Anything about Vietnam?

VW: No, the boy that worked for me his wife's grandfather was at Vietnam. He had a terrible time and he came back and of course was on drugs and then they had him living in a trailer behind the house because he couldn't take care of himself. He lived about 15 years. It was a real sad thing. They've been trying to get something to the cost of his funeral and things like that. The Covid has interfered with that a lot. I didn't have anything to do with it.

JG: You've mentioned a lot about your husband's business interest and things what was your role in the relationship as being a mother?

VW: Well, that is mostly what I did. I helped him some when he got Mobile and we were really struggling, and I went out and did a lot of work for him then. I kind of kept the books and did some things like that.

JG: Any kind of sale contacts or things?

VW: Well, we had all those children we had to take care of.

JG: Well talk about that.

VW: Well, we had Randy was the oldest, then Dee and Simon and Lou Ann, you know, raising boys is something and I had Randy and Dee I had a car for them, and they were supposed to take Simon to school. Simon went to Dunbar High School, that is when they had his grade there, and Randy and Dee were in the Lufkin High and they would park on the street and make Simon walk and there was always a big fight about that. So, I had my yard man take Simon to school and Randy and Dee drove in the car and I had to take Lou Ann. So, it was just something constant all the time raising four children and making sure they're not in drugs and doing bad things and going the wrong way.

JG: Were they active in school activities?

VW: Well yes, Dee was...he has always been a sight, he would match pennies all the time. He was gambling back when he was in junior high and he got elected class favorite and I read it in the paper. And I said, "well I didn't think you were in school long enough for anybody to know you because you played hooky so much." He was the kind that liked to...Simon was real big with baseball and Randy played baseball and Dee got the uniform and a red, white and blue glove and all this stuff and he played under the bench and all this stuff. He just liked the outfit. (laughter) You know, you have different ones with different interests.

JG: Right, right, and what about your daughter did she have any particular interest?

VW: No, not really, she was the most...she was the hardest one to raise. She had her own ideas about things and she had some friends that I didn't care for. You know, you don't know what to do. Dee was always industrious; he had a friend that sold trailer houses and he would go with him and they would level them out and do all the stuff like that and Randy was hard; if he had a flat tire, he would just take it off and buy four new tires and if he needed a wrench, he would buy a set of tools and leave them on the floor so, you know, it was just something all the time.

JG: You were born in 1930 and I don't think we ever got your birthday.

VW: September 14th.

JG: September 14th, so you're fixing to be 90 huh?

VW: Yes, and I...they gave me a great big birthday party when I was 80 and Simon engineered it and he had Ralph and Kacoo's to do the thing and we must have had 50 or more people to come. I never had so many flowers and stuff and had a wonderful time. I just didn't want to do that, and I didn't want to do it for my 90th birthday. I told him and he said well I needed to and I said I'm so glad that Covid came so I won't have to have a party because I don't think it will be over by then. (laughter)

JG: No, I don't think so either.

VW: So, anyway I was glad of that.

JG: Looking back over your 89 plus years anything that I haven't asked that you hoped I would ask or?

VW: No, I just had this little, tiny list and I think I've told you more than I needed to.

JG: I'm sure I've neglected to ask you a few things.

VW: Well, I'm looking at that railroad thing and Daddy had...they had a train out at Keltys that would go from the paper mill to the Dunagan switch they called it, then it would come back, so, I had the boys birthday party in the caboose one time riding on the train.

JG: Your boys?

VW: Yes, daddy fixed it where they could ride on the caboose and ride that train.

JG: Did you know Mr. William J. Morrison?

VW: No, I don't think so; not by that name.

JG: He was an engineer. He was the engineer for the 110, locomotive #110.

VW: Oh, something else...Daddy the preacher...oh what was his...he was the most wonderful man that ever was...big Methodist preacher and he wanted a chapel for the Methodist Church.

JG: At Lufkin or Keltys?

VW: For Lufkin and so I told Daddy I think he ought to do that instead of giving so much to the school...to the hospital to do the chapel for the church. So, he decided he would, and he set aside a couple of hundred thousand dollars to build the chapel. So, they got to doing the plans and all that kind of stuff and by the time they got ready to build it they were a little short of money, so Daddy got Mr. Shands, H. J. Shands, to contribute and he bought the organ. He had made...I'll tell you...this is a good story...he got the chapel had...what is his name? The chapel at the church his son was a well to do man in Houston...Bryan...worked for...the names are skipping me...anyway Daddy got him to

make the chapel in honor of his mother and daddy. His daddy was an engineer on the train at the A&NR, so they built the thing. Daddy was at his office and this man's son that has been so successful in Houston worked for...I'll think of these names pretty soon, but anyway he wanted to know if he could go out to Pine Island and take two more men with him and not be disturbed for a week. Daddy owned, he was one...at one time my grandmother was the biggest landowner in East Texas because Grandpa would just sit up there all day long and trade land and get to drinking after lunch and so he ended up owning Pine Island. So, Daddy said yes that he would be glad for him to do it. When the week was up well, he came back in and he said well I've accomplished what I wanted to do. S, Daddy said, "well I'm just curious since you were out at my place what y'all were doing. I heard a lot of noise." He said well I had this good idea to have an Annie Blowout Convention thing to go on these oil wells and we worked and worked and we have gotten it together and I'm fixing to get the patent for it.

And so he did it at our place and about that time is when they shut...sold the company and everybody was out of the office but Daddy and he didn't want to give up his office. It finally got to the point Mother said well you just have to get out of here; you and the bats are here and so that is when he moved his office to the Lufkin National Bank and he was upstairs. Then Dee's company, Environ-vac and Wind Co and his companies were growing so big and the bank came up for sale. They were asking a million dollars for the block there where the big old pink building is, and Dee's word was well it might be worth that much to you, but it's not worth that much to me; I'll give you \$125,000 for it. They didn't have any other offers and they wanted to sell it because Regions was in there, so they took his offer, but he spent another half a million dollars bringing it up to date with the WIFI and telephones and electrical and that is how he has his office down there by the Lufkin National Bank building.

JG: Do you remember going into the bank as a little girl?

VW: Oh yes, I went to the bank all the time because old Roy Kurth was president of the bank and he was such a nice man and he was always so dapper, he had a cigarette holder and he always had a carnation in his pocket. You'd go down there and he would give you nickels and dimes and oh you'd be so rich.

JG: Now as you got older or even when you were younger did you ever hear stories about Mr. Temple, Arthur Temple, Jr.?

VW: No, I didn't.

JG: More from the Henderson and Kurth side of it?

VW: No...

JG: You know you mentioned the newspaper building and we talked about the cable television and that kind of thing.

VW: No, I never did hear anything about him. I ended up just being crazy about him. He was such a prince, I thought. Ann Shands was my dearest friend.

JG: Y'all were in the Junior League, together weren't you?

VW: Oh yes, she and I took several trips together after Bubba died and John died, we would go on a bunch of trips together. Then she married Arthur and I got to know him a lot better then. When Bubba was sick every afternoon about 4:30 or 5:00 o'clock well Arthur and two or three other people and me would go to Bubba's house because he had Parkinson's at the time and everybody would kind of meet over there and talk about what had been going on during the day, have drinks and mess around and visit for a couple of hours and go home. I got to see a lot of Arthur over there because he was always there. Bubba accused him of trying to make out with Ann while he was alive.

JG: Well, if you don't...unless you have something else. I'll guess we will conclude.

VW: Well Brenda is coming over for supper so I think I will.

JG: Okay, it's 3:15.

VW: Yes, I've got plenty of time, but I think I've about told you everything I need to tell you.

JG: Well again I appreciate you doing this and I'll stop it.

VW: Okay.

END OF INTERVIEW