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Interview with
ERNEST GRIFFITH
November 4, 1982

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Floyd Jenkins

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(Signature)

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Business Oral History Collection

Ernest Griffith

Interviewer: Dr. Floyd Jenkins

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Date: November 4, 1982

Dr. Jenkins: This is Floyd Jenkins recording for the Business Archives Project, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas. Today is November 4, 1982. I am talking to Ernest A. Griffith at 2437 Kayewood in Denton, Texas. Mr. Griffith spent a long lifetime, before he retired, in the cotton gin business in west Texas.

Dr. Jenkins: Ernest, let's get this started by getting you to go back and tell anything that you know about your grandparents and parents, and give us what background you know of the family, then work us up to when and where you were born. Then we will just kind of grow you up. So if you know anything about your grandparents, the kind of life they lived or anything, tell us about that.

Mr. Griffith: I guess I know as little about my grandparents as anyone. I was born at Comanche, Texas. I was about five years old when my father passed away, and I know as little about my grandparents as anyone.

Dr. Jenkins: Were they farmers?

Mr. Griffith: Yes. All of my grandparents were farmers. They came from

Tennessee and Missouri. Moved to Comanche back during the Civil War. They have letters that were written to each one back in 1865 and 1866, along in there, telling about the farming conditions, and that the Indians had left Comanche down there now and everything has quieted down. For them to come on out, they had good crops.

Jenkins: How did they get down? In covered wagons?

Griffith: They came in covered wagons. That was the only way of transportation at that time.

Jenkins: You say you have letters?

Griffith: They had letters written back at that time telling them the conditions that existed around Comanche, Texas, at that time.

Jenkins: Have you read those letters?

Griffith: Oh, yes.

Jenkins: Well, whatever you can recall about the things they told to get down here, relate those to us.

Griffith: At that time the weather and everything was very favorable for progressive bumper crops. Everything was favorable for them to come on down here in that part of the state.

Jenkins: Name some more towns around to kind of locate Comanche.

Griffith: Comanche is between Stephenville, Brownwood and De Leon off down in the south and east of Abilene. Abilene is a pretty noted west Texas town. De Leon is down in the peanut country, goober country, they called it.

Jenkins: It is not very highly populated today, and during that time

it was pretty sparsely populated country, wasn't it?

Griffith: That's right, very sparsely populated.

Jenkins: And you say that they talked about the fact that the Indians were no longer a problem?

Griffith: Oh, no. The Indians moved out. They weren't on the war-path at that time, you see. Everything was very favorable for them to move on in, to come on down.

Jenkins: This, you say, was right after the Civil War.

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: The Indians, I think, had headed on out to West Texas and the Panhandle.

Griffith: West and on back north into Oklahoma and back up that way.

Jenkins: So your grandparents came here after the Civil War and were farmers.

Griffith: That's right.

Jenkins: And do you know about when your own parents were born and how they got together?

Griffith: I stated there that my father passed away when I was very young. In fact my father passed away in 1901. So, no, we don't. They did come from back in Tennessee, Missouri, and Arkansas, back in that part of the country. I am sorry I don't recall the dates of that.

Jenkins: Are you the first child?

Griffith: Yes, I was the first child.

Jenkins: You were born when?

Griffith: I was born in 1896.

Jenkins: On what date?

Griffith: September 8, 1896.

Jenkins: So they were probably married the year before that.

Griffith: My mother, I have heard her say time and time again, that I was born on the first anniversary of their marriage. I had three sisters. I have one step sister. I have two sisters living. One lives at Shamrock, Texas. My step sister lives at Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Jenkins: Let me get this straight. Your parents weren't born in Texas, either.

Griffith: No. As far as I know my mother and my dad both were born in Tennessee.

Jenkins: Had your grandparents come down here, or were they still there?

Griffith: No, they had come from back in those eastern countries up in Missouri and Tennessee.

Jenkins: Did your grandparents ever get down to Texas, is what I am getting at?

Griffith: Yes, they got down to Comanche, Texas.

Jenkins: So your grandparents were living there, but you were so young you really didn't know them.

Griffith: That's right.

Jenkins: Okay, let's get you to remember your earliest recollections of Comanche and west Texas, because that is getting back

there to where there weren't many folks out there. So let's get your recollection of what the town was like, what the countryside was like, what it was like going to school. What are some of your earliest recollections?

Griffith: I have very, very little recollection of around Comanche. My most recollections would be my schooling at Texola, Oklahoma. I was in school there until I finished the 8th grade.

Jenkins: You were born in Comanche.

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: And about how old were you when you went to Texola?

Griffith: I was 7 years old. That was where I first entered school. That was my first schooling there. In other words, I didn't get in school until I was 7 years old. At that time they only taught to the 11th grade up there. So we had a big, two story, white school building. I remember my first teacher was Mrs. Burke. She was a very lovely person. She seemed a mother to all of us little kiddoes. My schooling there at Texola, Oklahoma, along with my 3 sisters, was very pleasant to me and a very happy time of my life.

Jenkins: How many grades were in one room with one teacher taking care of it?

Griffith: The best that I remember, Mrs. Burke taught the first and second grades. The best that I remember there were at least two grades in each room.

Jenkins: That was a long way from the one-room schoolhouse, then?

Griffith: Yes, it was. My first year there we had, I believe, five teachers in my first year of schooling there. The best that I remember there were at least two grades in each room all the way through. In the eighth grade now there was only one grade, I believe, in the eighth grade.

Jenkins: Texola must have been a pretty good size town.

Griffith: No, Texola is a very small town. I judge at that time possibly it wasn't over 600 or 700 population.

Jenkins: They must have been bringing them in, kids from out in the country.

Griffith: Yes, around over the territory.

Jenkins: Most everything was farming and ranching around there.

Griffith: Yes, all of it was farming and ranching.

Jenkins: How were the country kids getting to school, do you remember?

Griffith: They walked to school or rode horseback, come in the buggy. That was the mode of transportation back then. We thought nothing of walking a mile or two miles to school back in those days.

Jenkins: There wasn't anything like a busing system.

Griffith: Oh, no. No busing.

Jenkins: If you got there you got there on your own.

Griffith: That's right.

Jenkins: What kind of heating and lighting did you have?

Griffith: We had coal stoves. Most of the lighting was a gas light.

Jenkins: So you did have light in the school.

Griffith: Yes, they had lights. I remember those big gas lights. I don't think we had one in our room. The lights would be in the office building.

Jenkins: All of the light you had came through the windows.

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: Was the schoolhouse a considerable center of activity, other than just going to school?

Griffith: That's right, it was. It was more or less a gathering place. Either that or the little churches that we had back then, too, was used some. A lot of activities were carried on in the schools.

Jenkins: What kinds of social activities and gatherings did the community have, do you recall?

Griffith: Most of it would be singing conventions or maybe a box supper.

Jenkins: What is a box supper?

Griffith: That is where they bring cakes or pies and different things, and they would auction them off. Somebody would have a cake or pie or something and you would bid on it, you see, how much money it would bring for some civic organization or something. That was their way of making money, you see.

Jenkins: Was this the kind where the men bid on the boxes and then they got to eat with the lady that cooked the box?

Griffith: That's right. And they would have what they called a cake walk. If you got on the lucky spot . . .

Jenkins: You won the cake. What about lighting and heating in your home, what do you remember about that?

Griffith: We used the coal oil lamps for lights. Our heating was usually a coal stove or a wood stove.

Jenkins: Did you do lots of wood chopping for that?

Griffith: Oh, not too well.

Jenkins: Who did the wood chopping?

Griffith: I did some of it. But most of our stoves were coal stoves and oil, the cook stoves were . . .

Jenkins: Coal oil?

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: I see. What is your recollection of when you first had electric lighting in a place where you lived?

Griffith: I believe it was when we moved from Texola to Elk City, the first electric lights that we had.

Jenkins: Elk City had electricity when you got there.

Griffith: Yes, they had a light plant.

Jenkins: Do you know about when this was?

Griffith: That was about 1913.

Jenkins: How did they generate that electricity, do you know?

Griffith: Most of it was by big Fairbanks Morse diesel engines.

Jenkins: The city's system.

Griffith: Yes. Elk City power plant was that way, and also then after we left Elk City we moved to this little town of Camargo. The gin, we made our own electricity, we had our

own power plant there. That was all of the electricity there was at that time in this little town. The generating plant that we had at the gin there.

Jenkins: So you were the generating plant. Did you sell any to the rest of the town?

Griffith: No, it was just for the gin and our home.

Jenkins: Oh, your home had electricity?

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: You all were really uptown.

Griffith: Yes, really.

Jenkins: What about natural gas? What is your first recollection of having natural gas in your home?

Griffith: That must have been in 1927 at Weinert, Texas.

Jenkins: Did Weinert have it when you moved there, then?

Griffith: I don't think they did. I don't think they had that.

Jenkins: It was after you got there.

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: Do you remember the coming of natural gas?

Griffith: Really I don't, because I wasn't thinking too much about it at that time.

Jenkins: Well, let's go back and pick you up and get you out of school. But let's look at school a little bit. You went through what grade there at Texola?

Griffith: The 8th grade.

Jenkins: Do you have any particular memories of things that happened then that you would like to relate?

Griffith: Nothing more than that I seemed to be enjoying life and wasn't worried too much about anything at that time.

Jenkins: Recess, what kinds of things did you do at recess?

Griffith: At recess we played ball. We had boxing gloves. Certain ones would want to put on the boxing gloves at recess and box. We would run races. But most of the activities was wanting to play ball. Everybody had the urge to try to make a ball player.

Jenkins: Did the boys and girls play on the same playground?

Griffith: There were no restrictions; however, they were pretty well divided at that time. The boys would all be out there playing ball or basketball. We had a basketball court there on the schoolground. Some of them would be playing basketball, some of them baseball. The girls would be more on one side of the school building and the boys on the other.

Jenkins: They didn't tell you you couldn't . . .

Griffith: No, there were no restrictions whatever.

Jenkins: Did you have organized sports? Of course, through the 8th grade you probably didn't.

Griffith: No, there were no organized sports of any kind.

Jenkins: So you went through the 8th grade at Texola, and then you moved, did you?

Griffith: Moved to Elk City, Oklahoma.

Jenkins: And this was about when?

Griffith: We moved there in 1913.

Jenkins: And did you continue school?

Griffith: I finished the 9th grade at Elk City, Oklahoma. That was as far as I got.

Jenkins: Were you living in town?

Griffith: In town? Yes. Yes, we lived in town.

Jenkins: While you were growing up and getting through the 9th grade, did you do any work of any kind outside of going to school?

Griffith: Oh, yes. In the fall of the year, when we were living in Texola, Oklahoma, a friend of ours had a farm right at the back of our house. In other words when you came up to the fence there they had a cotton farm down there. After school in the fall of the year we would grab our cotton sacks and get out there and pick cotton until dark, you see.

Jenkins: So you lived in town, but you were right on the cotton patch.

Griffith: Oh, yes. That was in the fall of the year. We would hurry home. You would have to go picking cotton in the pretty weather, you see.

Jenkins: How much cotton could you pick?

Griffith: I wasn't too good a cotton picker.

Jenkins: I never was either.

Griffith: I would pick about 150 pounds. Sometimes if I got in there and really worked hard, I could get 200 pounds.

Jenkins: That's a hundred more than I ever got.

Griffith: The only whipping that I can remember getting was over cotton picking. My sister just younger than me was a good

cotton picker. She could just pick that cotton. It was a knack to her to pick cotton. One day, it was on Saturday, there was the friend that this cotton patch belonged to, they had a boy that was about my age. I can remember he chewed what they called this Tiger Fine, cut chewing tobacco. Just before lunch he got his chewing tobacco out and took a big chew. He offered me some of it. So I told him, I said, his name was John Saunders, "John, I don't chew tobacco." He said, "Oh, this here is sweet. This is sweet. You will like this." Well, I filled my jaw full of that Tiger Fine, cut chewing tobacco. In just a little bit I could tell my head began to swim. I was beginning to get sick, and I had a head full of that chewing tobacco. All during lunch hour, we had brought our lunch, when the lunch hour came, I couldn't think about eating anything. It was along the middle of the afternoon before I even got to where I felt like getting up at all. By that time I knew that my sister would have been already a way ahead of me. I would never catch up with her with the amount of cotton I would have to pick to beat her. But anyway I got up, and as sick as I was I kept trying to pick cotton. It finally wound up my sister picked 30 or 40 more pounds of cotton than I had. We went in that night, and the first thing my sister told Mother, she said, "Ernest has been chewing tobacco. He got sick, and he couldn't pick cotton."

She told Mother how much cotton she had picked and how much I had picked. Well, that was it. I knew I was going to get a thrashing. And Mother did. She said, "I am going to give you a whipping." And I knew she was going to when she said she was. I never will forget that. That was the only whipping that I could ever remember Mother giving me, for letting my sister beat me at picking cotton that day.

Jenkins: Did you do any other kind of farm work besides picking cotton?

Griffith: No, that was the only farm work.

Jenkins: That is all that was out there, I guess.

Griffith: That was all that I ever did.

Jenkins: Did you have a family garden or a cow or pigs or chickens or anything like that?

Griffith: Yes, we kept a milk cow all of the time and a little garden. We had a little garden, but I don't remember us ever having any hogs or anything. We always had chickens and a milk cow.

Jenkins: Did you work the garden?

Griffith: Oh, yes, I worked in the garden. I would get out and chop weeds, you know.

Jenkins: Milk the cow?

Griffith: And milk the cow.

Jenkins: Did ya'll have a cream separator of any kind?

Griffith: No, we never did own a cream separator.

Jenkins: The milk was all for family use, I suppose.

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: You just drank it, and made butter and all that kind of thing.

Griffith: Oh, yes. We always had plenty of milk and butter.

Jenkins: You skimmed the cream off, then, as they say. It would rise and you would get it off for the butter.

Griffith: Yes. We never would wean the calf. We would always let the calf suck, you know, so the cows would give down the milk, you see. Well, if I was in a hurry wanting to go somewhere, Mother could always tell when I would let the calf get all of the milk. I would bring in just about half of the milk that she knew that I should bring in.

Jenkins: Did you kill the calf for meat?

Griffith: No. Usually the meat that we would get maybe there would be a neighbor or a farmer lived in close to town that would be feeding out a calf, you know, and we would buy half or a quarter. I don't remember us ever owning or feeding out a calf just to kill at all.

Jenkins: After you weaned it you just sold it, I suppose.

Griffith: Yes. Or maybe sell it to someone to feed out. But we never did feed out.

Jenkins: Was there any beef in the grocery stores at that time?

Griffith: Very little, very little. In fact I don't remember us

ever going to the meat market early to buy meat. We usually always . . .

Jenkins: Bought fresh killed . . .

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: Do you remember getting refrigeration in stores and your home when it came?

Griffith: I think the first refrigeration that we had was ice boxes. We would buy ice. Up until after I was married I don't remember us ever having a refrigerator in the home. It was ice boxes.

Jenkins: Well, do you recall as a child not even having an ice box? Did you always have an ice box, do you remember?

Griffith: No, we didn't. We didn't have an ice box along then. I can remember buying maybe a 50 pound chunk of ice or something like that and bringing it home and wrapping it up in a cotton sack or burlap or something to keep it.

Jenkins: What would you keep on the ice before you got the ice box?

Griffith: Oh, maybe we would have milk or butter, wrap it up in there if you wanted to keep it.

Jenkins: Before you had the ice box did you regularly keep ice, or was this just for special . . .

Griffith: No, we didn't regularly keep it. In fact I don't remember when we could get ice.

Jenkins: Did you go to the ice house to buy ice even at that time, or did people deliver it?

Griffith: We would go to the ice house. There was no delivery then at all.

Jenkins: What is your recollection of buying ice, did you do that in Texola or was it back . . .

Griffith: No, I don't recall buying any ice in Texola.

Jenkins: They just didn't have any kind of cooling device.

Griffith: No, nothing, as I recall. A lot of times if you had milk to keep they would put it out in a breeze or out on a shelf or something and wrap wet cloths around it to keep it.

Jenkins: That was the only way that you had for keeping your butter and things.

Griffith: That's right.

Jenkins: So you got out of school in the 9th grade in what town?

Griffith: Elk City, Oklahoma.

Jenkins: In what year?

Griffith: That was in 1914.

Jenkins: Were you ever a hunter?

Griffith: Yes, I was after I married. Very, very little until after I married.

Jenkins: Were you conscious of wildlife out there and the opportunities to hunt as you were growing up?

Griffith: I didn't think too much about it along then, because I really wasn't too interested.

Jenkins: Okay, let's get you out of school then and pick your life up and see what started happening to you.

Griffith: When we left Elk City, that is when my stepfather came back to Wellington, Texas, to build this gin for Williams and Miller Gin Company.

Jenkins: Okay, let's get started on that.

Griffith: I helped build the gin there at Wellington. That was the beginning of my ginning experience. It was a cotton gin. The first fall that they operated the gin I ran the suction. That was an easy job around the gin, you know, to run the suction. That was my first experience.

Jenkins: Was this the first gin in town?

Griffith: No, at that time there were 4 other gins in Wellington when this gin was built. In fact, at one time Wellington had 11 big cotton gins. They had more cotton gins than any town in the United States.

Jenkins: Where is Wellington?

Griffith: Wellington is up in the little panhandle trip up . . . Do you know where Abilene is?

Jenkins: Yes.

Griffith: Well, all right, Abilene then on north on the panhandle trip, up around Shamrock, Memphis and Childress. It is back this way from Pampa. Pampa is on farther up. Go up through Wichita Falls and Vernon, Quanah and you get to Childress. Wellington is 28 miles due north of Childress.

Jenkins: Right in that little corner.

Griffith: It is right up in that little strip there of the Oklahoma

and Texas line, you see. Wellington is only 14 miles from the Oklahoma line, you know that strip that goes up through there.

Jenkins: Is Wellington still a pretty good size town now?

Griffith: Wellington is the county seat of Collinsworth County, you see. No, Wellington, I wouldn't say just what the population of Wellington is. Wellington hasn't grown like usually a county seat town will. It has just kind of held its own. It is strictly a farming territory around there.

Jenkins: You said at that time there were 11 cotton gins and more cotton gins there than any other town in the United States.

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: It was a center of Oklahoma cotton ginning as well as Texas then, I suppose.

Griffith: At that time there was a big acreage of cotton all over that strictly farming territory. There was no restriction on the acreage, so there was usually a big acreage of cotton there. There was a large territory.

Jenkins: Had they started irrigating that yet?

Griffith: No. In fact you might say there is no irrigation in that territory now.

Jenkins: They got sufficient rainfall.

Griffith: Yes. It was strictly a dry land farming.

Jenkins: Okay, let's grow you up in the cotton ginning business and that first gin that you helped build, you say.

Griffith: That was the beginning, as I say, of my ginning. In the meantime then I was called by a friend at Eastland, and he wanted me to come down there. I go to Eastland and go to work down there in a drugstore.

Jenkins: Doing what?

Griffith: I was, I guess, a flunky. I worked all over the store. Soda jerk and patent medicine, all over the store there. Then after World War I was over I go back to Wellington, and I keep books at the gin there one year for my stepfather. I go back now to where my uncle was building this gin at Anson, Texas. He called me and wanted me to come there and help him build that gin at Anson.

Jenkins: How far was Anson?

Griffith: Anson is about 150 miles from Wellington.

Jenkins: Which direction?

Griffith: South of Wellington. We built the gin that summer there. Then that is when this friend of mine over at Sweetwater, Texas, wanted me to come over there and work in a drugstore over there. So I go over there and work over there in Sweetwater.

Jenkins: This is slack season of the gin.

Griffith: Yes, this was in the summer. In the meantime, while I was in Sweetwater this friend of mine, Charles Farris, wanted me to buy interest in a drugstore at Colorado City with him, which I did. We were there about, well,

less than a year at Colorado City until I sold my interest there and go back to Wellington. That was in 1921.

Jenkins: Now you said you helped build these gins. Were you part owner of these gins?

Griffith: No, I was just a day laborer. My uncle, the gin that was built at Anson was his. But then after I sell my drug-store at Colorado City I go back to Wellington, and I go back to work with the Williams and Miller Gin Company there, which my stepfather was still manager of this gin there.

Jenkins: Who owned the gin? Was it a co-op or something?

Griffith: No, Williams and Miller. It was privately owned. Then in 1924 my stepfather went to Spur, Texas, and he and his brother built a gin at Spur.

Jenkins: Where is Spur?

Griffith: Spur, that is in Dickens County down off of the plains off of Lubbock. It is 90 miles from Lubbock right down off of the caprock.

Jenkins: More or less east, then.

Griffith: Yes, east.

Jenkins: Where were you married?

Griffith: In Wellington--1923.

Jenkins: Who did you marry?

Griffith: I married Clela Clay.

Jenkins: Was she a local girl?

Griffith: Oh, yes, she was a Wellington girl. Really, she would want

me to say Clela Flada Clay. At that time I was still working for the Williams and Miller Gin Company. In the meantime they had built an ice plant there at Wellington, cold water, cold salt-water plant. Her daddy lived on this corner of a street, and right across the street on the other corner we built our first home, a nice little brick home. We only lived there about 6 months, I guess, until Mr. Sam Williams, the Williams of this Miller and Williams Gin Company, called me and wanted me to come to Elk City. He was manufacturing a little concern to make parcel carriers to put in cars at that time, you know. No place for any kind of luggage or anything in the cars. So he wanted me to come down there and take charge of that. I went down there in the spring and stayed that summer. It developed that this little gin at Camargo, Oklahoma, just on the north banks of the Canadian River, he wanted me to go up there and manage that gin for him. We moved to Camargo. That was the first gin that I managed of my own in Camargo, Oklahoma.

Jenkins: This was what year?

Griffith: That was in 1925.

Jenkins: What kind of equipment? Has cotton ginning changed much from that early equipment? What was the equipment like? Let's talk first about the ginning equipment itself.

Griffith: In the beginning along back at that time all we had was just maybe 3 or 4 gin stands, 60-saw gin stands in there.

You had no cleaning equipment because everything was picked cotton. You didn't need any cleaners or any burr extractors or anything at that time. Most of your gin stands were only 60-saw stands. As I say, everything was picked cotton.

Jenkins: So it was clean stuff when it got there, pretty well.

Griffith: Oh, yes. You needed no cleaners for your cotton at all. And it was dry. You had to wait in the morning to get out to go and picking it if there was a big dew on it. You had to wait until the sun dried it out before you even started picking cotton.

Jenkins: How did the farmers get their cotton to the gin at that time?

Griffith: At that time there were a few Ford trucks, but most of it was by wagon and team. That was about the only transportation they had. They were very, very few. It was a rare thing that anyone ever came to the gin in a truck.

Jenkins: Now after you ginned it and baled it, was it shipped out primarily by rail then from the gin?

Griffith: At that time practically everything was by rail.

Jenkins: And where were you shipping it to mostly, do you remember?

Griffith: Most of it at the time I was at Carmargo, Oklahoma, the compress, the only compress there was, was back to Elk City, Oklahoma. All of the cotton was shipped back to the compress at Elk City.

Jenkins: Now what does the compress do? At the gin you bale it, right?

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: What does the compress do? What did it do?

Griffith: It is compressed down to about 1/4 of the size that it is when it comes from the gin.

Jenkins: So all they do is make it a smaller package.

Griffith: A smaller package, that's right.

Jenkins: For shipping farther.

Griffith: That's right.

Jenkins: That is the only function of a compress, to make smaller packages?

Griffith: That's right. And storage. They usually have storage for whatever they think the capacity will be of the production of that year, you see, to hold or store the cotton.

Jenkins: Do we still have compresses today?

Griffith: Yes. The 1930's and 40's was the height in number of compresses. In the 50's, the number of compresses started decreasing because of the acreage reduction, and then, too, after the government got into buying and making loans on cotton, it went into government warehouses, you see, and was stored instead of compresses having to take care of it.

Jenkins: Okay, let's get you back now to managing your gin and grow you from there and see what was happening to you. You had not got into buying gins yet.

Griffith: No. I operated the gin at Camargo one season. Then my uncle, George Williamson, who had the gin at Anson, Texas, called me and wanted me to come to Weinert, Texas, and manage a gin there for him. So we moved to Weinert in 1927. I managed the gins there at Weinert this one season for my Uncle George. Then the next year, before the beginning of the gin season, Will Stith and I bought Mr. Cranston's interest.

Jenkins: Do you remember what you paid for it?

Griffith: We paid \$25,000.

Jenkins: How did you finance it?

Griffith: My partner financed it for both of us. We operated that year. We had a good season that year. The next year then in 1928 my partner, Mr. Cranston, wanted to sell out. A friend of mine, we called him Uncle Will Stith. He wasn't an uncle of mine, but everybody called him Uncle Will. He wanted to buy Mr. Cranston's interest. So he did.

Jenkins: What was your interest in the place, though. He did all of the financing, what was your interest based on?

Griffith: 50-50.

Jenkins: But since he financed it all, where does your 50% come from? You were paying him back?

Griffith: I was paying him \$12,500, you see, for the \$25,000 we paid for it.

Jenkins: You were paying that off kind of monthly or so.

Griffith: Yes. So when Uncle Will Stith bought Mr. Cranston out, then we operated as the Griffith and Stith Gin from 1929 until 1941. We operated as Griffith and Stith Gins.

Jenkins: That was what location, now?

Griffith: That was in Weinert, Texas. In 1941 I bought Mr. Stith's interest. That is, I bought his widow's interest. Will had passed away the year before, and I bought his widow's interest then. From then on until I sold out in 1946 it was operated as Griffith's Independent Ginner of Weinert. After I bought out Uncle Will Stith's interest, we also retained 1/4 interest in the gin at Anson and Radium ; but we later sold that and then just operated as the Gin at Weinert, Texas.

Jenkins: At one time you owned one and parts of two others?

Griffith: Two others, yes, at Anson and also Radium .

Jenkins: Why did you get out of those gins?

Griffith: At that time one was plenty to worry about, without having to worry about any more. That was all that I could see after.

Jenkins: Were the others making money? You just didn't have the time to get around to them?

Griffith: Yes, but you wanted to devote more time to the one that you needed to look after more. At that time it wasn't any problem making money in the gin business if you've got the cotton to gin.

Jenkins: That is one of my questions. How do you make money in a cotton gin? Where does your income come from? Do you ever get involved in buying cotton? Just where does your income come from?

Griffith: Very few ginners ever made any money in buying cotton. That was always a pretty competitive end of the cotton industry. To get back to the beginning of it, ordinarily they were street buyers. The gins weren't buying cotton at first. When I first went into the gin business there was very little cotton bought by the gins because there were street buyers. They would take their cotton down the street, and there were buyers on the street. The gins didn't buy cotton at all. So finally the ginners maybe would get a little slack ginning and wanted to get a little more business. Some of them began to break over and go to buying cotton. Then the cotton that they ginned they would bid a pretty good price on it. They would raise it a quarter of a cent or half a cent trying to get more business, you see. The first thing you knew all of the gins were buying cotton, buying what they ginned, you see. That practically did away with the street buyers. Most of the time the ginners that bid on a bale of cotton, he bid more than the bale was worth because he had his ginning to kind of fall back on to help take care of his loss.

Jenkins: Before cotton gins started buying cotton, how did they make their money?

Griffith: It was off of the revenue of charging so much per 100 for ginning. Most everything back then was picked cotton. Our revenue per hundred was 25¢ per 100 to gin the cotton. At that time we got \$1.50 for bagging and tying, that is wrapping, you see. Say on 1,500 pounds of seed cotton @25¢ would run about \$3.50. Bagging and ties \$1.50. You would wind up around \$5.00 or \$5.50 for revenue for bagging and ties and your ginning on 1,500 pounds of seed cotton.

Jenkins: What about the seed now?

Griffith: Ordinarily the seed would vary in price per ton. I have seen the time that cotton seed wouldn't even pay the ginning on a bale of cotton. Then there were times that you would have maybe \$7, \$8, \$10 or \$12 premium check between the ginning and the price of ginning, you see.

Jenkins: Let me get this. The farmer brought in his cotton and you ginned it. You charged him for this, and he retained the title to the cotton.

Griffith: Oh, yes.

Jenkins: What about the seed, though?

Griffith: Here is what it finally wound up to. Say the price of the bagging and ties and the ginning came to \$5.00 or \$5.50 or \$6.00, whatever it figured out. All right, say he had 800 pounds of seed or 900 pounds of seed, and say maybe at the price received at that time, say he had 800 pounds of seed or 900 pounds. The seed would be worth \$15.00

or \$20.00 or whatever it might be. He owed you \$5.50 for ginning, and you owe him maybe \$15.00 for his seed. You deduct the price of the ginning from his amount of the seed, and then you give him a check for the difference.

Jenkins: So you were a cotton seed dealer.

Griffith: Oh, yes. You retained all of the cotton seed. And then in turn a lot of times it would be just a straight out cash deal for ginning, and they would take the cotton seed home maybe for cow feed or planting seed or whatever.

Jenkins: When you retained cotton seed, though, what did the gin do with the cotton seed?

Griffith: We would in turn then ship them to the oil mill. In my territory we had the Rule Joyton Cotton Oil Company at Stamford, Texas. We had the Munday Cotton Oil Mill, which was only about 8 miles from my gin there at Weinert up to the Munday mill. I shipped lots of cotton seed to Fort Worth. The Trader's Oil Mill was a big buyer of west Texas cotton seed. In our particular territory the cotton seed that was raised in that territory out there would usually bring a dollar or two more a ton than other places all around because it had a better oil content than some of the other seed in different territories.

Jenkins: Did the farmers ever choose the kind of cotton for the seed rather than for the cotton?

Griffith: It was for the production of lints, you know. Ordinarily

1,500 pounds of seed cotton, picked cotton, you would get from 30% to 33% lint per 100 pounds of seed cotton. So it just depends on the kind of cotton that you are raising. There were several different varieties of cotton that would produce more lint per hundred than others. We have what they call a half-and-half cotton which is a very short staple, you see. You might call it buzz fuzz which produces, some of it, up as high as 35% or 40% lint, you see, per hundred pounds of seed cotton.

Jenkins: What I was wondering is, did the farmers choose the cotton almost entirely for the lint, or did some of them grow it because the seed gave them a better return?

Griffith: No, no. It was mostly for lint, because that was where they got their money, where they could get more lint per 100 pounds.

Jenkins: The difference in the price for the oil wasn't a significant amount?

Griffith: Well, no. Here was the difference in the lint and the staple. You take this half-and-half. A lot of it wouldn't be over $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch staple, you see. Then you get on up into $\frac{7}{8}$'s and $\frac{15}{16}$'s or 1 inch staples like that, that is what the price will govern, on the length of staple. The mills that were buying cotton, you might have a mill over here that wanted a 1,000 bales of 1-inch staple. That cotton would bring a premium, you see, over $\frac{7}{8}$'s or

this half-and-half buzz fuzz.

Jenkins: Why is that? Why is a long staple better than the short staple?

Griffith: It is a stronger fiber, and it mills so much better and makes better quality material, you see.

Jenkins: What is your recollection of what the cotton pickers were getting per pound, the ones who picked the cotton? What was that running, about then?

Griffith: I can remember back in picking cotton back in the beginning. Around 75¢ a hundred or \$1.00 a hundred. When it got up to \$1.00 a hundred that was a good price for picking cotton.

Jenkins: What are some of the top prices? What did cotton get at tops, do you suppose?

Griffith: In picking or pulling?

Jenkins: Let's not get to the bolls yet, when they were just picking the cotton.

Griffith: The most I remember was about \$1.00 a hundred.

Jenkins: And then when you got to pulling bolls it was . . .

Griffith: When they got to pulling bolls, bolls got up to \$1.00 a hundred. I can remember some of the boys, when they got to pulling bolls they would pull 1,000 pounds a day, and then they would quit. They had made all of the money they wanted to.

Jenkins: What was the variety in the price, variations in the price, of cotton that the buyers were giving? How little and how much did it vary in price per pound that the buyers were

giving? When they bought it from the gin, when the buyers bought it from the gin, what did they give for it per pound?

Griffith: That would be governed as to what the market was, you see.

Jenkins: That is what I was getting at. How much did the market vary in your career?

Griffith: You mean from the low price of lint cotton to the high?

Jenkins: Yes.

Griffith: I have bought just as good of cotton that was ever ginned, I have bought it for 5¢ a pound. And at one time in my gin career I bought 50 bales of cotton at one time at 50¢ a pound. That was the highest that I ever paid for cotton. Back in 1919 and 1920 everybody thought cotton would go to \$1.00 a pound. It never did get to where it was worth 50¢ a pound, but some of them just for publicity did just like I did. I bought those 50 bales for 50¢ a pound just as more publicity. Just as I remember I lost about \$2.50 a bale on those just to say that I bought cotton at 50¢ a pound.

Jenkins: How many bales per day could you gin?

Griffith: I would usually in a peak, I had "580" Continental Gins, and with no breakdowns, good running, I could usually run around 100 to 110 bales every 24 hours.

Jenkins: During the peak of the cotton season, how many hours a day would you bale?

Griffith: Out of 24 hours, we could usually get in around 22 hours.

We would usually close down twice in 24 hours and clean up, get all of the lint and everything swept down and get everything cleaned up, and oil and check everything when we were running day and night. It would usually take about an hour each time to get everything cleaned up.

Jenkins: Running that many hours, how did you arrange your workers' work schedule and your work schedule? How many hours of that day would you be there?

Griffith: Some days I would be there all day and all night. But usually you would get your crew together, and you have your day crew and your night crew. So I don't say it braggedly, but I think I was very fortunate in the men that I had all through my gin career. I had men that were with me when I started in the gin business and with me when I quit.

Jenkins: How many did you have that lasted that long?

Griffith: I had two men, two men.

Jenkins: They started with you in what year?

Griffith: They started with me in 1927 and were with me when I sold out in 1946.

Jenkins: Almost 20 years. The Weinert gin was the principal gin. You only got in and out of two others.

Griffith: Yes, the Weinert gin was my principal gin that I owned.

Jenkins: How long would this peak season last, when you really had to hump it every hour that you could stay busy?

Griffith: Usually, I would say, through from about the 15th of

September on up through December. After the first of the year, after Christmas, it would slow down. But you could figure from about the 15th of September on up through December.

Jenkins: What were some of the sizes of the cotton farms? Were they huge farms or most of them small farmers?

Griffith: Most of them were average. I would say until they began to cut down on the cotton acreage, most of the farms would run around 160 to 200 acres a farm, you see. It would depend on the size family they had, for a lot of them, as to how much cotton they would plant or what was the acreage that they could cultivate. Some of them, even after they got into the tractor farming, of course, that increased the production and acreage. Then when the government began to cut down on the acreage, that cut out a lot of little farmers, because they didn't have acreage enough to make a living on the cotton acreage.

Jenkins: You didn't have any real big cotton farmers, did you?

Griffith: No, there were no plantations like there are in Louisiana, Mississippi and all back in there.

Jenkins: Was fire much of a hazard in the cotton gin business?

Griffith: Oh, yes. That is one reason that I would shut down twice every 24 hours to clean up, to get rid of a lot of that fire hazard. That lint all over everything, you see. Another thing, especially in west Texas, you had a lot of

static electricity out there, you see, that would set a fire in a gin. We had to keep everything grounded, all of our motors, gin stands and everything grounded for static electricity.

Jenkins: Let's work up into the Depression now, what was happening in your business and what was happening in the town and your experience with the Depression of the '30s.

Griffith: Well, really the Depression of the '30s really didn't hurt the gin business too much, not like it did a lot of the merchants and things like that. We still had good production all through the '30s in the gin business. Of course it got down there. Everything got cheap. I couldn't make the money that I had been making, but it didn't affect the gin business.

Jenkins: You did not as well, but you did well during the Depression.

Griffith: Yes. However, another thing where I was very fortunate which some others weren't, in the Depression the little bank there at Weinert where I was doing business went under. But I was very, very fortunate that I didn't lose but just a very little there. When it closed then, I had the bank in Haskell and the bank in Munday both. That night after we got word, that they got word that the bank had closed, the banker at Haskell and the banker at Munday both came to me and told me that they would take care of me either way I went.

Jenkins: You didn't have enough in the Weinert bank to hurt you when it went under?

Griffith: No. Fortunately I had given drafts on coal, and I had drafts on, the best I remember, I had drafts on over 1,000 bales of cotton that I hadn't deposited.

Jenkins: What is your recollection of what you really did lose? Do you know?

Griffith: I don't think I lost over, the best I remember, probably \$1,000. They had cleared all of my drafts, you see, that I had given them, and they had cleared all of them. And it happened that I had drafts on cotton seed and cotton that I hadn't deposited. So that is what saved me.

Jenkins: So you personally did all right during the Depression?

Griffith: Absolutely.

Jenkins: What about the town of Weinert? Did the town experience the Depression very much?

Griffith: The farmers in the territory, they were the ones that it hurt. The business in town, they had one big grocery store, one hardware store, but other than that . . . Weinert was only about a little over 300 population. But it was the farmers in the territory that got hurt.

Jenkins: The way you operated financially with the farmers, you didn't stand much risk of losing. You took what they owed you out of the cotton.

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: So you didn't do a credit business.

Griffith: In a way I did. Not only me, but all of the gins. It was customary for the gins to carry planting seed. So a lot of the farmers there, I would have maybe 3 or 4 or 5 thousand dollars worth of planting seed out to the farmers, you know. I lost some money on the planting seed. I had a lot of coal business. The farmers there would buy coal.

Jenkins: What about this coal business?

Griffith: Farmers, you know, buy coal for fuel. No gas, no wood.

Jenkins: And you handled coal?

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: Through the gin?

Griffith: Yes. I shipped coal in there. There is a little coal mine over here at Throckmorton. I would get a lot of that Throckmorton coal, Thurber coal. I shipped in a lot of Colorado coal out of Colorado.

Jenkins: Newcastle? Is there some coal at Newcastle, Texas?

Griffith: Oh, yes. Yes, I had a gin friend out there, a bunch of them would get around in the office and get to talking of ways to get ginned and everything. I was handling this Newcastle and Throckmorton coal. So I had a friend, old Uncle Jim Alexander, and he would say, "Well, there is one thing about this coal that Griff sells. You can put in

one scuttle full of coal and take out two scuttles full of clinkers."

Jenkins: Well, was the coal business substantial?

Griffith: No, it was merely trying to help your customers, just a convenience for them. They needed the coal, and usually it was handy for them to come in with a bale of cotton, and if they needed 400 or 500 pounds or a ton of coal, why, go load it on.

Jenkins: What is your recollection of what coal was selling for at that time?

Griffith: Around \$12 or \$15 a ton.

Jenkins: I see. Now your cotton gin business was highly seasonal. What did you do in the off-season?

Griffith: Usually in the off-season, the first thing I would do on the tail end of your winding up of the season, I would start in repairing. And I would repair, do everything that I could while everything was fresh on my mind. The men all knew what needed to be fixed. So we would start in repairing. Maybe by the time we closed down for the season, maybe I would have everything repaired, all except maybe filing gin saws or something, you know, that you could do. The rest of the time I would just visit with the customers. Then when I would get back, from what little hunting I did, and wind up the season. Along about that time then, at that time, the old Crazy Hotel over at Mineral Wells

would always have summer rates where you could come down and take the baths and just vacation. So Mrs. Griffith and our son, we only had the one son, would come down to Mineral Wells and maybe stay a month or as long as we wanted to come down there during the summer.

Jenkins: How long was your off-season, then, after you got through and got everything repaired, how much time did you have before the busy season again?

Griffith: Usually I would say from March until around the first of September.

Jenkins: You had a lot of free time then.

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: And you didn't get into any kind of business in this off season. You just enjoyed life.

Griffith: Yes. I say I wouldn't, during the graining harvest I bought milo and wheat. So that would take up part of my summer.

Jenkins: So you were a grain buyer.

Griffith: Yes. I was associated with the Kimbell Milling Company in the grain business.

Jenkins: The Kimbell that we know here?

Griffith: Yes. When they began to cut down on the cotton acreage, they went into milo and wheat. It developed into a pretty good grain country there now. They have had to cut down on the cotton acreage.

Jenkins: So the Depression, then, you saw the farmers having a pretty tough time.

Griffith: That's right.

Jenkins: How about the people in the drugstores, the people who depended on the farmers, did you see much Depression among them, or was the town small enough that it didn't hurt it too much?

Griffith: Well, here is the thing about it: It hurt everybody back then. They were doing a lot of credit business depending on the farmer to pay in the fall when they harvested their crops. And prices got down so low that a lot of them if they were very heavily involved, why, they just couldn't make it, you see. There were a lot of failures, just because good people, if they had had the money they would have paid, willingly paid, but they just didn't have it.

Jenkins: Well, there wasn't much unemployment in town, I suppose.

Griffith: No.

Jenkins: There weren't enough people.

Griffith: No, there weren't enough people.

Jenkins: What kind of bales per acre were people getting on cotton out there at that time?

Griffith: Most of the dry land farming there if you got, I would say, a third of a bale per acre would be about average. Some of it would drop down to around, oh, say a fourth of a bale.

Of course, it depended on the season and on some of that territory there, some of that kind of sub-irrigated sandy land would produce, with any rainfall whatever, some of it would produce up around one half a bale per acre. Maybe some a little better. But on an average I would say from a fourth to a third.

Jenkins: In this part of the country people get more per acre than that wouldn't they, because of the rainfall, etc.

Griffith: I don't know. The way they harvest everything now, I would say it would still run about a third.

Jenkins: Out there.

Griffith: There and even here. It might get up to around one half bale.

Jenkins: I was wondering, it seems out in that part of the country I have seen not only with cotton but with milo, a skip-row crop.

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: To take advantage of more of the moisture. Did they do a lot of that kind of planting then, skip row?

Griffith: Yes, quite a bit of it. You get in that irrigated on out around Lubbock and Idalou and on out in there in that irrigated, there is a lot of it out there that will make 2 or 3 bales per acre.

Jenkins: That is what I was wondering. So skip-row is very common out in the dry land farming.

Griffith: Yes, very common. They get better production that way and also saving part of their land, too, you see.

Jenkins: Were they rotating their crops much out there?

Griffith: Oh, yes.

Jenkins: Between cotton and milo?

Griffith: Yes. I would say most of the farmers would try to rotate every year.

Jenkins: Do you remember when the tractor started coming in and what kind of effects this had on farming out there?

Griffith: Yes, at that time you could plant all of the acreage in any quantity that you wanted to. When the tractor came in, of course, there were a lot of farmers. They would go all out on all cotton maybe or all milo, you see. It would just depend on the price. Say cotton was a big price this year and not too much production, acreage. Maybe this next year then everybody would try to plant cotton.

Jenkins: What is your recollection of when tractors first came into general use out in that area?

Griffith: I would say mostly around in the early '30s. I would say maybe around '28 to '30, along there that they began to get into the tractor business.

Jenkins: You got out of this business in the '40s, did you?

Griffith: In '46.

Jenkins: And there was still an awful lot of hand picking going on. Most of it was still hand picked, I guess?

Griffith: Yes, they were then. Well, not hand picked, it was hand balled. They were bolling.

Jenkins: But it was still by hand.

Griffith: Yes, bolling. Back then Mexican labor would come in in the fall of the year for just strictly pulling cotton. Really that was one thing that caused me to get out of the gin business when I did, because this Mexican labor began to come in. Some of the gins would build houses for all of this transient labor. They would have houses around their gin property there, maybe for 50 or 75 Mexican boll pullers. And they would furnish that all free for them to get them to bring the cotton to them. And they were building trailers and furnishing them to the farmers, you see, to come in and get one. Also this cotton picking and machine harvesting, you see, where they would fill these trailers with three or four bales of cotton and come in. Some of the ginners started in furnishing all of that free of charge. So I thought I saw the handwriting on the wall, and I didn't want to build a bunch of camp houses and furnish wood and water and everything for them, so I just decided that it was a good time to get out of the gin business.

Jenkins: The gin business must have become extremely competitive for them to feel like they had to do that. What was happening? Was this when the number of gins started tapering off about this time?

Griffith: Really, the thing of it was, along about then was when the

government began to cut down on the acreage, you see, cutting acreage down, and it was making it more competitive to get the cotton. You weren't getting the volume, you weren't rushed. With the number of gins that we had you weren't rushed with the production and your acreage.

Jenkins: So there just got to be less cotton for the ginners, is that right?

Griffith: That's right.

Jenkins: They started throat cutting or whatever you want to call it. So at one time, you say, what town had 11 gins?

Griffith: Wellington had 11 gins. Weinert never did have but three gins. That was the most Weinert ever had at one time.

Jenkins: When did the number of gins start falling?

Griffith: The number of gins started falling up in the middle '50s.

Jenkins: So you sold your gin, somebody bought it and continued to operate it.

Griffith: They bought it, and it only operated two seasons until it burned down. There was a big co-op gin in Weinert that also burned down. And at this time right now there are only two gins in Weinert. Four gins have burned in Weinert, but there never were but three at one time. In other words, the co-op was built after two of the others burned.

Jenkins: So now there are only two gins.

Griffith: Two gins.

Jenkins: How about Wellington?

Griffith: Wellington has two gins. One big double battery co-op in Wellington. It gins, I guess, 85% of the cotton that comes to Wellington, that one gin.

Jenkins: Well, is there less cotton being raised out there, or the capacity of the gins gone up, or both?

Griffith: Your acreage has been cut. The government has cut your acreage. They just allow so many acres to a farmer; however they have got it back now. With your less acreage that you have now with all of your irrigation and everything, you still get back a big production of baled cotton, you see, even though there is less that you have. But the increase in production has still held up the number of bales produced.

Jenkins: But the advent of man-made fibers has had a lot to do with that, too, I guess, hasn't it?

Griffith: Oh, yes.

Jenkins: There isn't the demand for cotton that there used to be.

Griffith: No. It was at one time. You take around 12 to 14 million bales of cotton would be consumed without any problem, you see, whatever. But now with all of your synthetics and everything coming in now, that has cut down your use of cotton tremendously.

Jenkins: Has the capacity of gins gone up? Are they capable of ginning more per day now than they used to?

Griffith: Yes. I stated there where a steady run on "580's" gin stands was no problem whatever around 100 or 110 if you had good luck. I guess a few bales of picked cotton in with it there, you could run around 115, maybe 120, bales every 24 hours. But that was an extra good run. You had no problems, no choke-ups, no breakdowns or anything. Well now then, with the gins that they have now, they can gin all the way from 10 to 12 to 14 bales an hour. So even with all of this machine gathered cotton, you see.

Jenkins: What caused us to go from picking cotton to pulling bolls and how did that affect the gin?

Griffith: In gathering, it was faster. And then the manufacturing gin people, kept coming up with the machinery that could handle this rough gathered cotton just about as easy and as good as hand picked cotton. But still at the same time it was that extra expense that it put on the ginner, you see, of getting all of this cleaning equipment and burr machines and extra equipment in there that caused your ginning on the average cotton to run 35¢ to 40¢ a hundred, and maybe at that time \$2 for bagging and ties. Now then on this rough picked cotton like they have now, it will run, I will say, from \$45 to \$48 a bale. Where before picked cotton wasn't running over \$5.00 or \$5.50, you see.

Jenkins: The shortage of labor and the cost of labor then made it more economical to pull bolls.

Griffith: Yes. You take a big cotton crop, if it hadn't been for all of this extra labor that came in in the fall to gather cotton it would have been probably half of it wasted in the field.

Jenkins: Now before we started pulling bolls you had cotton which you sold, and had the seed which you sold. When you started dealing with burrs, how did you get rid of the burrs?

Griffith: Back early the gins built what you call a burr burner, off away from the gin, and you would pipe from where your burrs came from your burr machine, you see, were blown out into this burner. And you burned your burrs. You could ask Mrs. Griffith, this gin smoke, boy, it gave her a fit, where they were burning those burrs. A lot of them still burn them, the burrs. But a lot of farmers have learned the value of those burrs for fertilizer. They haul them. The gins have big bins that they catch those burrs in, and all the farmer has got to do is to drive under there and dump them. He will take them out to his farm and scatter them and use it to build the soil back.

Jenkins: Now there is cotton, there is cotton seed, there are cotton burrs, what about cotton seed hulls? What is that?

Griffith: Your hulls, you get your hulls at the oil mill after they extract the seed, the kernels, from the hull there.

Jenkins: So that is part of the covering of the seed?

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: What do we do with that? What have we done with cotton seed hulls?

Griffith: That is used for feed mixtures. The ranchers use hulls and the cotton seed meal, a mixture, for feeding their cattle.

Jenkins: So if you use the burrs for fertilizer, then everything is used.

Griffith: Absolutely.

Jenkins: The cotton, the oil, the hulls, the burrs, all go back into production.

Griffith: That's right.

Jenkins: Let's get you up to selling out now and what led you to that and selling out, and then I want to ask you some more things.

Griffith: As I said, the reason that I sold out was after World War II, and as I said I was associated with Kimbell Milling Company also in the grain business. Mr. Kimbell and I wanted to go down around San Angelo, Ballinger, and Winters in there and go into the grain business strictly, you see, and get out of the cotton business. So I had a chance to sell out to Trader's Oil Mill over in Fort Worth. I had had a good season, and I was going to have a big repair bill to get my plant back in first class ginning condition. They wanted the gin worse than I wanted to keep it. So I made a deal with them to sell my plant to them. In the meantime then, that was right after World War II, Mr. Kimbell said, "Well, we can't get material now to build elevators. I

have some cotton gins over at Sherman, Texas. Why don't you come over to Sherman and take charge of those cotton gins and operate them until conditions get back to where we can get materials to build elevators?" I told him, "All right, I will do that." So we moved to Sherman. When I got over to Sherman I found out that he had 29 cotton gins over there in the territory. We had a gin up here at Sanger, one over at Pilot Point, over at McKinney and every town back into Sherman there. And Whitesboro, Bonham, Whitewright, and all over that area. I started in with them. So that gets back to when they were cutting the acreage. He had some little worn out cotton gins that weren't getting over 300 or 400 bales a year. He had one over here at Aubrey. The last year they operated over there I think they ginned about 150 bales over there and stayed broke down about half the time. I went out to Fort Worth and told Mr. Kimbell, I said, "Mr. Kimbell, out of the 29 gins you have, you have about 7 or 8 over there that are in condition to run and that will gin enough cotton to make any money." And he said, "Well, why don't you go to dismantling those that are not making any money and are not going to gin any cotton." I started in dismantling several. We had three little gins out north of Bonham out in there, and all three of them wouldn't gin 500 bales all year. So we shut those down. Conditions never did get any better to where we could get

material to build elevators. So I kept staying on with those gins over there. So along about 8 or 9 years after I had been over there, I told Mr. Kimbell, I said, "Mr. Kimbell, conditions are not getting any better about getting material to build elevators. And I sold out of the gin business out in west Texas to get out of the gin business, and here I have been over here 8 or 9 years fooling with these little old worn out cotton gins. I am just getting tired of it." He said, "Well, conditions will get better." He talked me into staying on. But in the meantime, then, each year there I would cut down these gins. At the time I talked to him I think we only had 11 cotton gins that were operating.

Jenkins: It was in the mid-fifties by now?

Griffith: Oh, yes. This was about '54, I believe, or '53. But anyway, conditions never did get any better. Finally they got down to where we only had about 5 cotton gins left over there at that time.

Jenkins: Well, he then must have owned most of the cotton gins in that whole part of the country.

Griffith: He did. He owned practically all of them, all of them in those little towns over there were all his gins. Then in 1955 I told him, I said, "Mr. Kimbell, I am tired of the gin business. As I told you, I sold out in west Texas to get out of the gin business. Here I have been down here now

10 years fooling with these little worn out cotton gins." He said, "Why don't you transfer to the grain department. Maybe things will pick up." So I let him talk me into transferring to the grain department. When I transferred to the grain department then we had to move from Sherman to Woodward, Oklahoma. I got up to Woodward, Oklahoma, and I found out when I got up there that they had 59 country elevators up there instead of cotton gins. Anyway, it was a change, and I enjoyed the grain business. It was very fascinating. My territory was so large and it was so much driving, that after four years up there at Woodward it got to be too much driving. It was exactly 1,000 miles from the time I left before I made my territory rounds. I told him I was going to ask for a leave. He wanted to know what I was going to do. I said, "Well, I don't know, but I want to ask for a leave." At that time our son and his family lived in Dallas. We have the one son who is a doctor in Dallas. So I said, "I may go to Denton." At that time they had this big mill down here, which was Kimbell-Diamond Mill here. He said, "Go to Denton, and you may decide you want to take that mill at Denton." So we did. Mrs. Griffith and I came to Denton. Ernest Trietsch had just built this home here and just about had it finished. At that time this was a nice part of Denton. So we decided that we would just buy this home here. In the meantime Mr. Kimbell said,

"If you decide that you want that mill at Denton, let me know." After we got here I looked it over. I soon saw that I didn't want to fool with it. That is the reason that we are in Denton. I quit up there because the territory was just too big and too much driving. I thought, well, I would rest awhile. After I got to Denton, as I said, I decided that I didn't want the mill here.

Jenkins: You got out of the grain business.

Griffith: I got out of the grain business, I got out of the gin business and retired.

Jenkins: Before we pick up there, let's go back and see what you were doing in the grain business and what was happening to the grain business. How many years were you at it?

Griffith: I was 4 years at Woodward, Oklahoma, in the grain business. We had storage at different places. At Hooker and Forgan, Oklahoma we had big elevators. And at Cordell, Oklahoma, we had a big elevator, government storage. My job was I had to inspect all of the grain that was stored in all of those and check to see that the bushels were there that were supposed to be there. Over at Chatanooga, Oklahoma, and the panhandle and Pampa, Texas. In other words, I went from Enid, Oklahoma, all the way into Amarillo and around back there. But my job was to inspect the elevators, inspect the grain, keep record of it to see that the elevators were cleaned up and inspection and everything was as supposed to be.

Jenkins: So you retired essentially from running businesses in what year?

Griffith: 1960. We moved to Denton here in 1960.

Jenkins: Let me go back and just highlight a few things now and kind of do a little summarizing. You were involved, you owned outright one gin, and you were a partner in two a couple of years.

Griffith: Yes, partner in two.

Jenkins: And you were owner of the one in Weinert.

Griffith: Owned the one at Weinert.

Jenkins: From what year? When did you buy that one?

Griffith: In 1928.

Jenkins: And you sold it in . . .?

Griffith: '46.

Jenkins: Over that period of time was your capacity for ginning about the same? Did you ever expand much?

Griffith: No, you could figure on just about the same run every year up until the government began to cut your production, acreage. As I say, I was very fortunate at Weinert, because one year out of all of those years did we have anything like a crop failure. All the other years were just about on the level every year. You could figure pretty well.

Jenkins: Even during the Depression.

Griffith: Even during the Depression, yes.

Jenkins: I guess the drought wasn't felt as much. They didn't get much water to begin with.

Griffith: It just didn't affect it very much.

Jenkins: Is that right? How far would people bring cotton to your gin?

Griffith: I would say they wouldn't be over 12 or 14 miles.

Jenkins: Very local then.

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: How about the number of employees that you had over the years? That was pretty stable, too, I suppose?

Griffith: Yes. I always figured for just a day crew about 6 or 7 men.

Jenkins: And that was all through the years.

Griffith: That would be just for a day crew. Now, of course, if you get rushed during the peak season, maybe I would have one man with a truck taking the cotton to the cotton yard, or I would have one man where we were crowded where, say, they would come in and leave their wagon or truck or whatever, leave it on the yard and want somebody to pull it under the suction for them. I would have one man do that, get them lined up where we always had cotton to gin, you see.

Jenkins: Did you use much parttime help?

Griffith: Very little.

Jenkins: What about off season, what did these people do?

Griffith: I would usually use about three of them then to repair. I would use all of them up until the ginning season closed, and then I would usually keep about three men to get all that knew the things that we were having trouble with.

Jenkins: Would this keep them on the payroll most of the year, then?

Griffith: No. I would only keep maybe one man all year.

Jenkins: Most of these people would come back to you, then?

Griffith: Yes. They would be local people, you know, that depended on that kind of work. And they would all want to come back the next year.

Jenkins: Were some of these farmers themselves? What were these people doing on the off season, is what I am getting at?

Griffith: Some of them would have small acreage. They would farm during the summer, you see.

Jenkins: I see. How about your financing this business over the years? Did you have to do much borrowing to keep this thing going?

Griffith: No. Fortunately I never did have any trouble.

Jenkins: You operated out of cash flow. This was a proprietorship. You were the sole owner and everything, I understand. So you didn't have an organization structure. You were it.

Griffith: No. I was the only independent ginner in that territory.

Jenkins: Is that right? Independent in what sense?

Griffith: The others would either be oil mill gins or company gins, you know. Like Anderson Clayton was one of my competitors. Rule Jayton Cotton Oil Company was another competitor of mine. But I never did have any trouble with them because I would sell them cotton seed. I was one of their customers.

Jenkins: So you got along with them.

Griffith: Fortunately, I did.

Jenkins: So there wasn't much turnover then in the cotton gin business there. You were independent and lasted a long time. Were the others . . .

Griffith: The others were the same way all except . . . I had this co-op. They operated about 4 years until they burned down.

Jenkins: What about, say, in Wellington and other places like that, was the independent cotton ginner kind of a rare thing, or was it pretty common?

Griffith: Which, at . . .

Jenkins: Kind of all over really. Of the 11, say, in Wellington, were most of those independent?

Griffith: In Wellington at that time, those 11 were just about 50-50. I know of 4 independents, and the rest of them were oil mill connections.

Jenkins: In Weinert when you were one of three, do you have any idea of the portion of the business you were getting?

Griffith: It was pretty well divided.

Jenkins: All of you about the same size?

Griffith: Yes, it was.

Jenkins: What was the basis of competition? Why would people decide to come to you or to another one rather than to someone else?

Griffith: It was on the quality of service that you were giving. If you kept your gin up in first class condition and you were

giving good service and not broke down all of the time, naturally, especially if the farmer had a bale of cotton he wanted to get it to town and get it sold and get rid of it, you see. And if he knew that he could come to you and get ginned without a wait or break down or something, why, that is where he would come.

Jenkins: You didn't do any advertising or anything like that?

Griffith: I did advertise some, but very little.

Jenkins: Just being out in the community and knowing the folks, I guess.

Griffith: Most of the time during the summer that is what you generally do, visit your farmers around. Get out and see what they were doing. Go out and eat watermelons with them.

Jenkins: I see. Has cotton ginning in this part of the country ever been subject to unionization?

Griffith: Not that I know of.

Jenkins: It wasn't when you were involved with it.

Griffith: No.

Jenkins: What about government regulations? Were there many government regulations concerning cotton gins at the time you were in it?

Griffith: No.

Jenkins: Pretty free of regulations.

Griffith: In other words, you could pretty well operate the way you wanted to.

Jenkins: Let me ask you, have you pretty well kept up with what is

happening in cotton ginning since you got out of it?

Griffith: Well, I have in a way, but the last few years I haven't attended the State Ginners Convention for about 5 or 6 years. Usually I would make the State Ginners meeting in Dallas and all of the machinery and everything, but I haven't the last 6 or 7 years, I guess.

Jenkins: From your exposure, what have been the major changes in the cotton ginning business in methods and machinery and equipment over the years?

Griffith: The big change that has been made is in the volume of capacity that you can get in a day's time with the machinery that they are putting out now.

Jenkins: What about in getting the cotton from the field to the gin. Has there been much change there?

Griffith: Oh, yes, that has been revolutionized considerably because they have these big trailers where they can put all the way from 2 to 4 bales on that trailer, you see. It is all mechanically harvested. They dump it in there. You go around a gin now and you will see those trailers. Anything on the plains you will see those gins out there with 3 or 4 or 5 hundred bales standing around the gin and not ginned.

Jenkins: As I have driven through west Texas the last year or two, I have seen these huge 8 foot high by 20 or 30 foot long stacks out in the field. How do they get those to the gin?

Griffith: It is loaded in these big trailers.

Jenkins: How do they get it on there?

Griffith: Most of the time it is picked up with a lift. They just go in there and scoop it up and dump it over in it.

Jenkins: You say there might be how many bales in that, 4 or 5?

Griffith: Most all of those trailers will handle at least 3 bales and some of them 4.

Jenkins: Now what about the suction? That is almost a thing of the past, too, isn't it, because of the way they bring these in? Don't they auger it in now? Instead of sucking it up through a suction, I saw them augering it, some of it, throwing it in, and it came in through an auger.

Griffith: In loading or at the gin?

Jenkins: At the gin.

Griffith: Yes. Both ways.

Jenkins: Augering it in. Did the suction go out with boll pulling or not? Did they still use the suction with boll pulling?

Griffith: Most of it has for this reason: gins get crowded, you see. And they don't want their truck tied up. They load these trailers. They can unhook these trailers and leave it setting there, and when their time comes it is pulled under. And when they come back the next day their trailer is empty and ready to go.

Jenkins: Any other significant changes in cotton ginning that you are aware of over the years?

Griffith: The number of gin stands and the fact that they are cut down. In other words, where we first started out in

business with, say, 60-saw gin stand or 70-saw gin stand or 80 or 90, now then the new modern stands run up as high as 179 saws to a stand.

Jenkins: What is a saw?

Griffith: That separates the lint from the seed, gin saw. And where we had, say, 5 separate gin saw stands of say 70's or 80's or 90's, now then most of them, some of these smaller gins, just have one big saw. Some of them when you get into these big co-ops will have as many as three or four of those 179 saws.

Jenkins: Let's go back to cotton ginning as you and I remember it. Kind of describe as the truck or the wagon comes up to the gin, what happens to the cotton?

Griffith: You just have one bale usually when you come. All right, you line up here, and when your turn comes you pull under the suction. Your cotton is taken off by air, you see, sucked off the truck or wagon. Usually it will take about 15 minutes to unload your cotton.

Jenkins: Where does the cotton go?

Griffith: Your cotton goes through your cleaners on down to your gin stands, separated out. Say you have "580" gin stands here, you have got this conveyor belt that distributes this cotton. It keeps the feeders all full of cotton.

Jenkins: Go back to the cleaner now. What did the cleaner do?

Griffith: The cleaner separates the trash, if there are any burrs, leaves or anything in there.

Jenkins: But not the seeds? It leaves the seeds?

Griffith: Not the seeds. In other words, you don't get the seed out until you get to your gin stands, the saws.

Jenkins: You clean the trash out and then it comes down to the saws.

Griffith: Yes. But this conveyor belt then, from your cleaners, comes down over all of your stands here and keeps these feeders over each stand full of cotton, which goes in when the feeders over the stands are full, it goes out to what is called the overflow out here. So then after you get off of the truck and your cleaners are all empty up here, everything out, then the air is turned on to your suction here at the overflow. That is picked up and comes back through your stands until it is all ginned out.

Jenkins: Now the cotton goes to the press.

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: Where it is baled?

Griffith: Where it is packed. You turn your press, and then it is packed.

Jenkins: And you wrap it.

Griffith: Right. Wrap it in . . .

Jenkins: Towsack, as we would say, burlap, and then put on steel bands.

Griffith: Your bands on it. And then it is dumped out. Then you what you called your dressed press, put the bagging back on it and turn it, and get ready to put your doors up to your

boxes and get it ready to turn again, for the next bale.

Jenkins: And the seed goes . . .?

Griffith: They weigh the seed now. The seed is conveyed over to a box over your scales there. You weigh your seed. All right, when you get your seed weighed they go into a conveyor. If you bought the seed they go to the seed house. If the man wants to catch these seed to take home, they go to a box out through a hallway out there where he can drive under there and catch his seed. All you have to do is pull a lever and dump those seed out into his truck or wagon or whatever.

Jenkins: Is that essentially what they do today?

Griffith: Yes, it is the same procedure today. In handling your seed there is a conveyor that goes out. There is a trapdoor in that conveyor. If he wants to catch his seed, that trapdoor over the seed box where he will catch his seed is opened. If he doesn't want to catch his seed, they go on to the seed house, and that trapdoor is closed and they go on to the seed house.

Jenkins: Now as I recall when I was working at the cotton gin they did have some storage space for some unginning cotton, where if a farmer brought his cotton in and didn't want to wait, we would suck it up and drop it into storage space. Did you do that?

Griffith: That's right.

Jenkins: Okay.

Griffith: Yes, I had a 100-bale storage place for seed cotton. A lot of farmers would say they wanted to catch their seed or they had a certain variety of cotton seed that they wanted to save. We had a big seed farm, Northern Farm Seed Farm, over there at O'Brien. I had two beds there that would hold 20 bales each, and a lot of farmers would fill those. When they would go to catching their seed they would want that rolled in your gins, they would want that roll dumped and start out with pure seed on this variety of cotton, so that they would be sure to get pure seed. However, it got to where that was another thing, that storage of that cotton, it got to be a nuisance. Oh, it was a headache.

Jenkins: Did you ever get involved in buying some land and raising cotton yourself?

Griffith: No, never did.

Jenkins: So cotton ginning has pretty much been it for you.

Griffith: That's it.

Jenkins: Are there very many cotton gins left in this part of the country? Well, you didn't get here 'till the '40s. There were about as many as there had ever been then in this part of the country.

Griffith: There was a big gin failed over here at Frisco about a couple of years ago, I guess. It closed down.

Jenkins: What I am saying is, when you got here there were probably

as many cotton gins as there had ever been. Cotton ginning hadn't started falling off in the '40s.

Griffith: No, not too much in the '40s, it hadn't.

Jenkins: And you said when you went with Kimbell they had 29.

Griffith: That was in '47.

Jenkins: And they trimmed down to how many in a short period of time? 11, you say?

Griffith: 11 when I transferred to the grain department.

Jenkins: So they had halved it in what period? How many years?

Griffith: That was in a period of 10 years it had dropped down. But it had begun to drop some then. For instance, there were 11 tenants on Mr. Kimbell's farm between Whitewright and a little town of Belles near Sherman, in that territory right in there. 11 tenants on it. When I left and transferred to the grain department there was one man farming all of that land that those 11 tenants were on.

Jenkins: And back then almost any little town of any size had at least one cotton gin, didn't it?

Griffith: Oh, yes.

Jenkins: And today in this area where are the cotton gins? How many of them are there? Does Denton have a cotton gin?

Griffith: No.

Jenkins: And Denton at one time had how many cotton gins?

Griffith: Really to tell you the truth I don't know how many Denton had at a time. Sanger had two gins. Pilot Point had two.

The Massey Gin at Pilot Point is the only one that I know that is operating now. There is a little gin up here at Valley View.

Jenkins: Prosper was still operating 3 or 4 years ago. Are they still in?

Griffith: There are two gins. Celina and Prosper. Those are the only two gins in Collin County. Prosper is a big co-op over there. They gin lots of cotton.

Jenkins: How about in west Texas? Are there just as few out there as there are here?

Griffith: West Texas has held up pretty good. They have stayed in a big acreage production out there in west Texas.

Jenkins: How about Weinert? How many does it have?

Griffith: Two.

Jenkins: How about Wellington?

Griffith: I think Wellington, as far as I know, has 2 gins.

Jenkins: So the number of gins has gone down, but the number of bales may not have gone down.

Griffith: Well, the number of bales has gone down in these particular towns. However, I think this past year the bale production was up around 14 million bales, which was way over production.

Jenkins: 14 million in . . .

Griffith: In the United States. On back before so many synthetics to take the use of cotton, 14 million bales was a good supply of lint cotton.

Jenkins: So you are saying back in the peak of production in the United States, the annual production in the United States in number of bales was what?

Griffith: Back then it was, I would say, from 13 to 14½ million bales in the United States.

Jenkins: It is still running about that much, but we have so many more people . . .

Griffith: And too, however, the government buying cotton. They keep a lot of it in storage. Well, let's see, was it last year or year before last? A lot of the cotton got up around 75¢ a pound. Then the next year they just went crazy and we had a way over production, you see, and cotton dropped way down.

Jenkins: Is the use of cotton coming back?

Griffith: No, I think very, very little because we are coming up with more synthetics every day nearly that takes the place of cotton.

Jenkins: You got out of running businesses in 1960, did you?

Griffith: I got out of my own individual business in '46.

Jenkins: And then you retired . . .

Griffith: In 1960, yes, that is when I retired. I got out of the cotton and grain business both.

Jenkins: What have you been doing since then?

Griffith: The first two years that we were here, my mother and father lived at Spur, and both of them were in poor health. And I

stayed out there with them practically all of that time taking care of them until they passed away.

Jenkins: Which was when?

Griffith: In '62 and '63.

Jenkins: You weren't engaged in any business there, just looking after them.

Griffith: No. So then I came back. Jim Ginnings, a builder here, I wasn't doing anything, so he asked me to stay in his office up there at the First State Building and just answer the telephone. If somebody wanted to look at a new home, take them and go out and show them this new home. So I told him I would. I stayed with him 3 years. In the meantime I bought a place over at Lake Bridgeport. I told him, I said, "I bought a cabin over at Lake Bridgeport and I like to fish." He said, "Well, when you want to go fishing just let me know and lock the door and go on over." That lasted about 3 years that way. Finally I told him that I wanted to get out, leave. He moved his office from here over to Pilot Point. He lived in Pilot Point, so he moved his office over there. So I stayed out about a year that way. I was doing a lot of fishing. So Doyle Copus, the manager of Skillern's Drug at that time . . .

Jenkins: This was about when?

Griffith: This was in '65. One day he stopped me and said, "We get a truck of drugs on Thursdays. You are not doing anything,

come down and help us put up drugs on Thursdays and Fridays." I said, "Doyle, I bought a place over at Bridgeport, and I am fishing over there." He said, "That doesn't make any difference. If you want to go fishing, let me know, and I will go with you. Just work two days a week." I said, "Well, all right. I will try." Which I did. The first thing I knew somebody would get sick, and they would call me to come down and work. Or somebody would go on vacation, and they would call me to go work their vacation. The first thing I knew I was working regular, you see.

Jenkins: This is at Skillern's.

Griffith: And I stayed there 8 years. So finally Doyle retired. When he got out, I said, "I am out, too."

Jenkins: That was when?

Griffith: That was in '75. Since '75 I haven't done anything. Only fish. When I go to the lake I have trouble getting off from Mrs. Griffith to go over there, but I thoroughly enjoy it. She doesn't care too much about it. I enjoy it. Me and my friends we have a lot of fun over there.

Jenkins: In all of these years of running that business and since then, have you had time to get involved much in civic and community trade associations during those years?

Griffith: Mrs. Griffith and I, or she did before she broke her hip, she did a lot of church work and was in a lot of different

organizations of the church. And in 1962 they organized a volunteer organization at Flow Hospital. And Mrs. Griffith and I, they organized on February 8, 1962 and Mrs. Griffith and I are the only two active charter members of the organization.

Jenkins: Have you ever gotten much involved with Chambers of Commerce or anything like that?

Griffith: No. I don't bother much with the Chamber of Commerce. I belong to the Rotary Club, but that is the only club that I belong to.

Jenkins: Do you still belong to that?

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: How long have you belonged to that?

Griffith: I was in Rotary over at Sherman when I was over there. I didn't join the Rotary Club here until about 7 or 8 years ago.

Jenkins: I guess Weinert was too small to have much to join there, wasn't it?

Griffith: Yes. Of course, Haskell being the county seat and Weinert a little town, during World War II I was on two or three different boards during World War II down there at Haskell, on the Rationing Board and on the Tire Board. And I belong to the Masonic Lodge. My Commandery membership is at Haskell. My Blue Lodge membership in the Masonic Lodge is at Wellington, Texas, where I got my 50 year pin.

Jenkins: Are you still active?

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: Any other things that you belonged to over the years?

Griffith: No, I don't belong to any other clubs. In fact Rotary Club is the only thing I belong to.

Jenkins: Are there trade associations in the cotton ginning business, where the owners and operators of those get together and swap ideas and publish magazines and stuff like that?

Griffith: Well, nothing, only they have district organizations, state organizations.

Jenkins: Have you ever gotten involved in any of those?

Griffith: When I was active in business I was on the state board.

Jenkins: Tell us about that.

Griffith: That was just the different meetings that you meet around over the state.

Jenkins: For what purposes? What would you do?

Griffith: It would be to discuss the conditions of your territory, what the price of ginning would be, what you were going to charge for this or what you were going to charge for that, what would be the prevailing price of the custom of the ginning, you see.

Jenkins: How did you get on that board?

Griffith: Through your district or the president of the state organization would ask you to be on the board.

Jenkins: By appointment.

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: How did you get to know those people well enough to get appointed?

Griffith: It would be through different meetings, just like you would on your district meeting here which would be maybe four or five counties right here. Then through your State Ginners meeting, like every year at Dallas. They would have the State Ginners meeting, and you would get acquainted with different ones down there. Somebody would say, "Well, we will just put so-and-so in there. He would make a good one to represent you here or there or whatever."

Jenkins: Did just about all of the ginners belong to these associations?

Griffith: Yes. Practically all of them would be involved. They would participate in any dues or anything that would come up that would be anywhere they were needed, any financial help.

Jenkins: Did they publish a magazine as you recall?

Griffith: Yes, the Texas Cotton Ginners Magazine. That is a monthly magazine.

Jenkins: It still comes out, I guess.

Griffith: As far as I know it does.

Jenkins: So you were on the State Board?

Griffith: For about 5 years, I believe it was.

Jenkins: About what time?

Griffith: That was from '50 to '55, I believe, when I was in Sherman.

Jenkins: Were you a member of that when you owned the one in Weinert?

Griffith: Yes.

Jenkins: So you had been with that association most of that time.

Griffith: That's right.

Jenkins: Have you ever been involved in any side ventures?

Griffith: No. Just ginning and grain.

Jenkins: And you retired two or three times.

Griffith: I retired three times since I have been in Denton. I retired before I moved to Denton, and I have retired twice since I have been here.

Jenkins: Is anyone else after you lately?

Griffith: No.

Jenkins: So you are pretty well retired.

Griffith: I am retired.

Jenkins: And did lots of fishing, etc. Okay, I have covered my outline here, but be sure to give you a shot. This is your interview, and we want to be sure that you get into it anything that you want in it. Is there anything that I should have asked you and didn't? Is there anything that you would like to say that I forgot to ask you?

Griffith: No, I don't know of anything. We have enjoyed living in Denton. We enjoy it here. We are close to our son and our grandson.

Jenkins: How old is your grandson?

Griffith: Our grandson is 35 years old. He and his wife, Jackie, live in Dallas, also. They have twin daughters.

Jenkins: So you are close to your great grandchildren.

Griffith: We are close to our great granddaughters. Our son has the one son. He is the communication director for Trammell Crow there in Dallas. Our granddaughter is there in the private school in Dallas. So we are close to all of them here. It makes it convenient to run back and forth in less than an hour's time to see any of them. So we love it here.

Jenkins: If there is nothing else that you can think of that you would like to put in, we will close it now, and I thank you for a real interesting history of cotton ginning in west Texas.