

(Tape 1 of 1)

*Baytown Oral Histories*

**Interviewer:** Mr. William K. Peace

**Interviewee:** Mrs. Willadene Hines

**Third Party:** Sister of Mrs. Willadene Hines

**Interview Date:** Feb 11<sup>th</sup> 1976

**WH:** Do you remember seeing in the paper recently, uhm, the last week where Frank Williamson died?

**WP:** Yeah.

**WH:** Uh, someone in the office had asked me if I knew him and I said, "That name's familiar but I, you know I just, I can't place him." She said his wife's name is Janella, and I, it still didn't ring a bell, you know, and so I thought about that and I thought, And I told her, I said "I remember a last Larry Williamson, he married Iella Sheffield and he died rather young,"

**WP:** Hmm.

**WH:** ...had a heart attack, and I got home and picked up the paper and started reading that. Most of it came to me, of course I knew him. His father worked at Culpepper's and they were members of our church. He had a younger sister named Virginia.

**WP:** It started coming back.

**WH:** And he had a brother named Billy that works at Culpepper's now, and then there's Larry, was in-between, that died, oh a good many years ago, and Janella, of course I knew Janella ; she worked for the city. But I hadn't seen 'em in years, so you know I just kinda-

**WP:** I think that Janella, I think is the one that's, works for the *Baytown Sun*, has that column, Janella...Barton?

**WH:** Oh yeah, But uh-

**WP:** I'm gonna, I think I'm gonna start out and this is uh, an interview with uh, Willadene Hines and let's see, what's your address, Willadene?

**WH:** 803 North Jones.

**WP:** 803 North Jones in Baytown and this is uh, February the 11<sup>th</sup> 1976, and I understand you've been a resident of Baytown uh, quite a few years, uh can you, what's the first address you can remember that your family lived at?

**WH:** 119 West Defee.

**WP:** Uh, do you remember what uh, what, I mean as the property now stands, is the property now still there as it was?

**WH:** Yeah, it's there.

**WP:** Still there, but it's not in your family no more?

**WH:** No. We moved there in 1925 and lived there until, I think about '35.

**WP:** '25 to '35.

**WH:** '34 or '35 and my mother sold it to a gro-, group of doctors that turned it into the Baytown Hospital.

**WP:** Oh the Baytown Hospital.

**WH:** The original Baytown Hospital.

**WP:** You, do you have any idea who, who owned it before your, your family did?

**WH:** I don't know.

**WP:** You don't know they bought it from?

**WH:** I don't know who, I don't guess I ever heard that.

**WP:** Well, Willadene, when you, when you first recall you, it was your, what was, who was uh, who'd your family consist of? I mean how many members, and who was living at that time? You remember who?

**WH:** Well, my father was dead, that's why we moved to Baytown, and my mother, and I had an older sister and brother, and uh,

**WP:** What were their--

**WH:** --that's the brother of my mother lived with us.

**WP:** What are your brother's and sister's names?

**WH:** My brother's name is Shirley Shea Hines and my sister's name is Amy Ruth Hines, her name is changed now.

**WP:** What was your mother's first name?

**WH:** Nettie, Nettie Alice Hines, or Nettie Lines Hines, her madden name was Lines.

**WP:** Lines. Was your mother a native Texan, or was she from out of state?

**WH:** No, she was a native of south Louisiana.

**WP:** South Louisiana. Did uh, do you know, do you know uh, what the circumstances for when uh, your father and mother married? Did they meet in Louisiana?

**WH:** Yes, my father worked in the oil field and, the story goes that he saw her and you know was attracted--

**WP:** Immediately.

**WH:** --met her and dated her and they married and

**WP:** Was, was your father, now what was his full name?

**WH:** His name was Will J Hines.

**WP:** Will J. Hines, and was he, was he now native Texas or was he out of state too?

**WH:** No he was a native of Mississippi. He was born in Kosciusko, Mississippi.

**WP:** Kosciusko yes. That's in the uh, uhm, up toward the Natchez Trace area.

**WH:** Yes, kind it's kind of North.

**WP:** Mhm, uh

**WH:** North central maybe.

**WP:** Did uh, do you remember was he uh, did he, I guess he found himself in Louisiana in the oil business, I guess, and that's how he got down--

**WH:** Yes, he was working in the oil field there and then he went to West Colombia, but they lived in Gayette, which it's no--

**WP:** Probably not a --

**WH:** It's not really a town anymore, it's just a, the remnants of a community.

**WP:** Do you remember what you're, you, the wedding date for your mother and father, when they were married, do you ever recall your mother saying that?

**WH:** No I really don't.

**WP:** But they were married in Louisiana?

**WH:** Mhm-hmm.

**WP:** Did you, you recall have your, hear your mother say anything about where her family came from? Did uh, like her mother and father?

**WH:** Well I think they were from south Louisiana. I don't know...

**WP:** What about, had you ever heard your father say much about his family from Mississippi, what they, had they come to Mississippi uh...

**WH:** His father came to Mississippi from uh, Alabama.

**WP:** Alabama.

**WH:** And originally the, so my aunt discovered in doing a genealogy survey that the Hineses came from, I believe she told me Delaware.

**WP:** Mhm

**WH:** And uh, my grandfather stayed in Mississippi, uh no, he first went to Louisiana and then back to Mississippi, and then he had a brother that settled in the valley. And, uh--

**WP:** Do you happen to recall how many brothers and sisters your daddy had?

**WH:** My daddy had one brother, and three sisters.

**WP:** Had, had, but did you ever know your grandparents on either side of your family?

**WH:** I knew the grandparents on my mother's side. They uh--

**WP:** What was...were their names?

**WH:** My grandfather died uhm, the year after my father did, and I don't really remember him too well. But my grandmother lived, I don't know what year she died, but she lived a while. She was--

**WP:** But she

**WH:** She was aged.

**WP:** Did she stay in Louisiana though? She didn't...

**WH:** Uh no, she lived here, they moved here in 19--, uhm,

**WP:** After ya'll came?

**WH:** '18.

**WP:** Oh, before.

**WH:** My mother's two bachelor brothers moved in here when they were working in the oil field

**WP:** Mhm

**WH:** And they resided over on East Wright.

**WP:** East Wright.

**WH:** And they had, uhm, uh, a married sister that kept house.

**WP:** What was your, your grandmother's name uh?

**WH:** Her maiden name?

**WP:** Yeah, well, her name ...

**WH:** Her married name was Lines,

**WP:** And her maiden name was Gill, Ellen Gill.

**WP:** Did uh, do you ever remember visiting her uh when you--

**WH:** Yes.

**WP:** You do?

**WH:** I used to go from our house over there to visit. I don't know how often, but seems like [Inaudible].

**WP:** You think you could describe just your trip, from your house on uh, uh, over, over to her house?

**WH:** Well, the thing I remember about it most was, there were asphalt streets.

**WP:** Mhm

**WH:** That was an asphalt street,

**WP:** How, how would you

**WH:** And I was like most kids, I was barefooted and the thing that I remember most is, is uhm, stumping my toe on that asphalt and having a sore toe and not being able to wear my shoes and--

**WP:** What about the asphalt being hot in the summer? You remember that?

**WH:** Well it was hot, but you could get off to the--

**WP:** Yeah.

**WH:** On the side and not have to walk on it.

**WP:** You remember, I suppose if you think back, say you left your house? How would have gone to your grandmother's?

**WH:** I left my house on uh, on West Defee and uh, usually I went down the railroad tracks until I got to Wright Street, and then I would cut across and go down Wright Street.

**WP:** Do you recall any buildings in route that, that are probably still standing? That you remember, significant buildings, I mean?

**WH:** Well, not really. Because the one I remembered the most burned, was that a couple years ago? The old Oiler Theater? That was the furniture storage place? And uh, then there was uhm, the frame building across the street, down on the corner that uhm, I don't really know what it was, an old bus station, I guess. And then all those buildings were, they were buildings on Main Street with their backs to the railroad.

**WP:** Right, you're, you were behind the main, the--

**WH:** I was sort of behind them in the rai-, there's a double railroad track and we would walk the center, and uh, when we'd go to the east side of town then we could go all the way to East Fayle.

**WP:** In other words, if I recall the city myself, you'd go across what is Gulf, is Gulf Street now wouldn't you?

**WH:** No.

**WP:** Go, would you cross that and go over the railroad or would you--

**WH:** We'd go, Defee is on this, is north of Gulf and you'd, I lived right in the middle of the first block and get up—And yet another reason we went down the railroad I guess, my mother approved of that because it kept us off the street, you know, it was just a pathway.

**WP:** Uh-huh, do you recall just uhm, if you, how busy the, the railroads were? Were there any trains much? I guess you did worry too much about that.

**WH:** No, not too much.

**WP:** There wasn't really

**WH:** The train to Dayton, that was about all. My first train ride was from Goose Creek to Dayton.

**WP:** That was quite a trip wasn't it?

**WH:** That was quite a trip.

**WP:** Now what, do you recall the name of the railroad? With the Missouri Pacific or--

**WH:** Oh the Southern Pacific.

**WP:** Southern Pacific.

**WH:** Then and now.

**WP:** You remember, you don't happen to recall what you paid do you?

**WH:** I didn't pay anything.

**WP:** That was a free ride. [Laughs]

**WH:** [Laughs]

**WP:** Did you--

**WH:** A friend took me, and I'm sure she paid a fare, and I wouldn't know--

**WP:** Do you remember uh waiting the depot for the train to come or do you, the circumstances or

**WH:** Oh I sort of remember being on the platform, I don't recall that I was in the depot; we lived so close, we never--

**WP:** You were used to trains though, weren't you?

**WH:** Yeah.

**WP:** And the tracks. Do you, well, can you remember just thinking back to those days, can you remember what kind of cars, let's see, did your family have a car?

**WH:** My family didn't have a car.

**WP:** Uh-huh, Uh, well you didn't really need one if you lived in town.

**WH:** Well, my uncles did, they had to have a car--

**WP:** Do you remember?

**WH:** And the first one, I guess I really remember was an old Model T that my mother's bachelor brother had, and he at that time worked in Barbers Hill and sometimes uhm, I don't know how old I was, but that was my first time to drive, he had let me sit in his lap and steer the car you know.

**WP:** What do you recall that say, do you remember at that time if you'd took a trip in his car? Say to Barbers Hill or anything? Did you go that way or--

**WH:** Yeah.

**WP:** What kind of roads were they?

**WH:** Oh the roads were terrible. We went to, back to Orange Field where we came from here, and that was just a sort of a major job...

**WP:** A very major. Would you--

**WH:** The roads were not good and you had to go when it was dry and--

**WP:** Not in bad weather.

**WH:** You couldn't go very fast because the roads were bad.

**WP:** Do, do you remember ever making the trip in a car to Houston in those days? In the car?

**WH:** Yes.

**WP:** How would you go?

**WH:** Well, the bus station was at that time had moved from the corner and later it was back there in more recent years. But it was uh sort of in the center of the block between Texas and Defee, and uhm...

**WP:** It was just a short walk.

**WH:** Mr. Greer owned it, and he had a touring car and that was the bus to Houston, it had drop seats.

**WP:** Would it, would it be a regular schedule to go or?

**WH:** Yeah they had a regular schedule as I recall, and you'd have to go to somewhere about the bridge uh, 146 uh, there was a ferry and you'd go across the ferry and stand --

**WP:** Was that called the uh, the Cedar Bayou?

**WH:** And then you'd traveled up by way of Highlands, which Highlands wasn't there then, and you'd turn--

**WP:** How'd you get across that river in Highlands?

**WH:** Well, that's what I'm fixing to tell you. We'd go up what is now to Barrett Station and there was a pump station there, I don't remember what kind, what company, and you would make uh, west turn on that, and it was somewhere in the vicinity of where old Highway 90 is now.

**WP:** Uh-huh

**WH:** But you'd go across the river there and then later

**WP:** Then on the bridge

**WH:** They built the bridge across San Jacinto River that, where we now know, or now call.

**WP:** Yeah, but the bridge, that was the only bridge then wasn't it, kinda where old 90 probably was.

**WH:** Yeah.

**WP:** You recall anything that--

**WH:** And that was an all day trip to Houston.

**WP:** I was just about to say it had to take you all day.

**WH:** When uh you went to Houston it was sort of an all day... Well, in the first place, you had to uhm, I imagine the schedule of the trip was such that people could—

**WP:** Go and come back.

**WH:** --do their shopping or take of their business and then come back in the afternoon.

**WP:** Do you, do you recall anything where it went, where the, the, the uh

**WH:** No, uh-uh.

**WP:** Probably went downtown somewhere I guess.

**WH:** Well it went downtown, but I don't know--

**WP:** Where you got off or anything?

**WH:** No, it was uh, the bus, the first bus station I remember was the one over uh, on the other side of Main, and it was sort of where Old Market Square is now.

**WP:** Mmm-hmm.

**WH:** That was the first one I remember.



**WP:** Did you, at that time, do you recall if they, if they had a train that went over there, was that train they'd--

**WH:** Oh yeah, they had trains.

**WP:** Mhm

**WH:** They had uh, two train stations and we had an inter-urban that was with the Missouri Pacific line that led to here, oh well later. I don't know what year that was either. But left Baytown--

**WP:** This was few years, at least a few years later?

**WH:** And went through Highlands and went to Houston.

**WP:** They had a bridge across the river there I guess.

**WH:** And I don't know where they crossed, I don't remember but it had they did have a bridge.

**WP:** But you, you had made that trip?

**WH:** Ah, few times.

**WP:** Mhm, do you recall how long it took you to go?

**WH:** Not, no, but not very often. We just didn't travel very much then. The grown, the adults went to Houston to take care of business. But uh--

**WP:** Where, where would you, um...For instance, like at Christmas, shopping, like go and buy your Christmas presents, did ya'll just usually go out here in Baytown, or did you ever go out to Houston for that, or--?

**WH:** We didn't. We got one present and I imagine my mother ordered them.

**WP:** Probably by catalog...

**WH:** Probably from Sears and Roebuck, or...

**WP:** Oh that reminds me, do you recall offhand the first time that you ever went to the post office in Baytown? Do you remember where it was? And, anything about the post office?

**WH:** The post office, I believe, was on Texas when I recall, I had, we had boxes, but I don't remember what our box number was; for long time I did.

**WP:** Mhm

**WH:** See it was a two digit number.

**WP:** [Laughs] Way before it had--

**WH:** And I remember where it was, and I mean the location in the post office.

**WP:** Yeah, mhm, you remember the postmaster's name?

**WH:** Uhm, no, the first postmaster I guess I really knew was Flo McElhaney and she uhm, was postmistress I believe when this, uhm, big post office was built.

**WP:** I bet, I bet she'll know when it was, I bet she'll know where it is. [Laughs]

**WH:** She probably-

**WP:** She might--

**WH:** Is that all?

**WP:** No it just keeps on getting, [Laughs]

**WH:** ...[Inaudible], what's the first post office you remember?

**WH Sister:** From where?

**WH:** Come in here.

**WP:** On Texas [laughs].

**WH:** There's the one on Texas, and we had a post office box that had two digits.

**WP:** You remember what it was?

**WH:** Was it 16?

**WH Sister:** I don't remember.

**WH:** They had a combination, no key.

**WP:** And you had to move the little combination thing.

**WH:** Yeah, it had a combination.

**WP:** [Laughs] uh, do you remember uh, let's see going back to uh, what uh, do you remember off hand what you're uh, where was the first grocery store you remember?

**WH:** Uh the first grocery store I remember that, that we traded, my mother had an account at Kelly's.

**WP:** Kelly's?

**WH:** Mhm.

**WP:** Where was, do you remember where it was located from your house?

**WH:** It was located uhm, sorta in the middle of the block. Probably about where uhm, that Famous Brand Shoe Store is on Texas Avenue.

**WP:** On Texas Avenue.

**WH:** And it seemed like it jiggled around, it moved you know, maybe, one time or other.

**WP:** Was it a pretty big store?

**WH:** And later on it moved down to uhm, in the, one block west.

**WP:** Mhm

**WH:** Where uhm, probably the TSO is now.

**WP:** Mhm, Do you, if, if you were, if you could think back say to, those, those, back in those days when ya'll first came to Baytown, and you walked down Texas Avenue say from your house, say going west. Can you remember what was on the, what would you be coming to first?

**WH:** It was about two blocks long.

**WP:** Bout two blocks?

**WH:** Bout two blocks long; it was the first and second block were about the only ones that had any stores in it.

**WP:** Mhm, what would uh, what were, what would be a place, would you be able to, what, would, were there a drug store in the area?

**WH:** They had, the drug store was behind us, and it was Wood's drug store.

**WP:** Woods Drug store, and then there was the, with the and the grocery store--

**WH:** And there was the bank on the corner what was it, Security State Bank.

**WP:** The state bank.

**WH:** Its where uhm, I don't know what's in that building now. There on uh, the corner of Ashbel and Texas and next to it--

**WP:** Is it kind of a

**WH:** Was Woods Pharma, Woods drug store.

**WP:** It'd be close to where the--

**WH:** Across the street was Herring's drug store, but,

**WH Sister:** No it's the other block from Penny's

**WP:** The block down?

**WH Sister:** In the first block. Off of 100 block.

**WP:** Did they have a, a picture show?

**WH:** Yeah, we had a, the first movie I remember going to was that old Oiler Theater, and they had silent movies, and then later on the McKinsky's moved the theater around to Texas Avenue in the spot that is now uhm, it was next to Culpepper, where old Culpepper's used to be.

**WP:** Where that tree is in the street?

**WH Sister:** No, you're too far down.

**WP:** Too far down.

**WH Sister:** It's the second block.

**WH:** It was uhm, in the, the second block and on the corner was Gooberman's

**WP:** What was Gooberman's?

**WH:** That's now The Cage.

**WP:** Was that a, a clothing store?

**WH:** It was a clothing store, Gooberman's, and above it was the, the first Baytown Hospital until they bought our house and moved it around to a, 119 West Defee, and then next to it was Culpepper's, and then next to that, I believe was the Texan Theater. But it's been changed, so it's kinda hard to say exactly what spot--.

**WP:** Well did they have--

**WH:** They had a sweet shop, a little, little tiny place—

**WP:** I was going to say, did they have a bakery or anything like that?

**WH:** --that was called The Sweet Shop and then next to it was the movies.

**WP:** Would it be a, would that sweet shop be things like bakery products and things like that, or would it be candy?

**WH:** No--

**WP:** It was candy.

**WH:** It was, it was kind of a candy store and a place where they bought things to go to the movie and they just called it a sweet shop.

**WP:** Sweet shop

**WH:** But I don't recall, we bought candy, do you know what else they sold?

**WH Sister:** Well before that all the theater was on the corner of Commerce and Defee

**WH:** Yeah.

**WH Sister:** It's back there a little farther now.

**WH:** Well Bill remembers that, it burned about two years ago.

**WP:** Yeah it did, I remember that. It's that old

**WH Sister:** Yeah, that's what it was.

**WH:** Furniture, Owen.

**WP:** What was it, a furniture store?

**WH:** There was café back there.

**WH Sister:** Eli.

**WH:** That backed up to the end of the alley, to Eli's

**WP:** Eli's?

**WH Sister:** Eli

**WP:** Eli.

**WH:** Eli Café and then next to that.

**WP:** Who ran that, do ya'll remember?

**WH:** Was Kilpatrick's Hardware.

**WP:** You remember who ran that Eli Café?

**WH:** A Greek.

**WP:** A Greek [laughs], a greasy spoon--

**WH Sister:** 'Cause all the girls, lot of them lived [inaudible]

**WH:** One time we went to my sister and brother and a cousin that's my sister's age went to church. We went to the First Baptist Church over on Texas Avenue, East Texas.

**WP:** Was that across the, where 146 is?

**WH:** No, no, it was about--

**WP:** Oh [Inaudible]

**WH:** It was about, it was about, it was on the corner where now there is some offices. On the corner of East Texas and uh,

**WP:** Would it be Fourth? Or Second?

**WH:** About Second Street, about Second Street and it was--

**WH Sister:** Is that as far down as it was?

**WH:** Uh-huh, and it was

**WH Sister:**

**WH:** It was on the uhm, the south east corner of that block, and when we left our place to go to Sunday school and church, we would go out our back door and go down the alley to Commerce and then go down to Texas Avenue and then we'd come back that way and when we came back from church one Sunday my brother and sister and I all passed over a roll of bills, and my cousin saw it and picked it up, and took it home and uh she was told not to say anything about it--

**WP:** [Laughs]

**WH:** And we watched the papers, the paper to uh, you know, see if anybody had lost any money, and course it was uhm, suspected that there was gambling going on you know,

**WP:** [Laughs] The evil!

**WH:** And probably somebody had dropped it--

**WH Sister:** The jitney stand was there, on Commerce, jitneys we called 'em, you know--

**WH:** How much money was in that—

**WP:** Jitney was a cab, wasn't it?

**WH:** --was it 80-something dollars?

**WH Sister:** It just seemed like 62 or 60--

**WH:** Well anyway, something like that--

**WP:** It was a lot of money anyway, seem like.

**WH:** It was a whole lot of money.

**WP:** Right, in those days.

**WH:** And nobody ever claimed it--

**WP:** Did your cousin get to keep it or?

**WH:** Yeah.

**WP:** Did she share it with ya'll or?

**WH:** Oh heavens no, I'm sure she didn't.

**WP:** [Laughs]

**WH:** But anyway, we were kind of put out that three of us walked over it, and she--

**WP:** Yeah, ya'll had your chance and you walked over it!

**WH:** Yeah and then she found it. Also right back of our house was a store that belonged to Izzy Era and it was a man, a men's store.

**WH Sister:** And Bill's grocery store was there.

**WP:** Heard about it, the, uh, Did the uh,--

**WH:** Bill's grocery store

**WH Sister:** Or was that Kelly's ...[Inaudible] or Bill's?

**WH:** Bill's.

**WH Sister:** 'Cause we'd be--

**WH:** Bill's, we didn't trade there, we'd trade with Kelly's and it was--

**WH Sister:** ...[inaudible], Man we'd watch that garbage can and--

**WP:** [Laughs]

**WH Sister:** [Laughs] --get us a banana, well you know it was overripe.

**WP:** Well, it was good just a little overripe.

**WH:** Well now people pick 'em up in the grocery store for, you know--

**WP:** We used to get uhm

**WH Sister:** We used to get a lot of good stuff

**WP:** We used to get, get that day old bread, you know, from the, uh, Tasty Bakery.

**WH:** We never did get any day old bread but we did uh get that half spoiled fruit out and ate was good.

**WP:** I remember my uncle use to, to uh sell strawberries, you know, and he couldn't sell the, the, what he called curled, see that got a curl but they were just as good as anything, you know.

**WH Sister:** I'm sure.

**WP:** Alright, do you ya'll remember off hand what uh, uh, say year--, can you remember going to silent films?

**WH:** Mhm-hmm.

**WP:** Do you, do you remember--

**WH:** Tom Mix.

**WP:** Do you remember what happ-, what happened when you went in? Did they have somebody play the piano for you?

**WH Sister:** I remember that old goofy guy, he was just--

**WH:** Charlie Chaplin and Tom Mix.

**WP:** Did they have somebody there to play the piano or something like that, or was it silent?

**WH:** No, we, we weren't that uptown.

**WP:** Mhm-hmm. [Laughs]

**WH Sister:** It was just uhm--

**WP:** Too expensive for you

**WH:** Well what we used to do if we couldn't get the nickel to, required to go, well we'd uhm, walk along the sidewalk, the thing was built right, and it had uhm, air holes, you know, kinda at

the feet so they'd have air, circulation of air in there and uh, course we'd go peek through those holes if nobody was sitting in those seats and we couldn't--

**WP:** Look.

**WH:** You know, we could see what was going on and we'd do that sometimes.

**WP:** It didn't have any noise anyways though, right? There wasn't no use to it. ...So was it pretty exciting then? I guess it was.

**WH:** I think when they moved around to Texas Avenue. Well our, our big thang of the week was going to the show on Friday nights.

**WP:** Did they have a big uh--

**WH:** We'd go early and we'd, they always had theses uh, serials, these continued things you know, along with the movie.

**WP:** Do uh, you remember how long that lasted?

**WH:** Oh sometimes they have this on the weekends like that, they'd have two serials wouldn't they?

**WH Sister:** I don't remember that, I don't remember much of that.

**WH:** And a comedy and then the show. We'd be gone two or three hours, I'm sure.

**WP:** [Laughs] Ya'll were right downtown in other words

**WH:** Yeah

**WP:** You had some--

**WH Sister:** Boy, we had to stay in pretty well.

**WH:** Yeah we weren't, we didn't run the streets.

**WP:** Did your--

**WH:** Like some kids would.

**WP:** Yeah, did your mother, I guess ya'll had to check in with your mother a lot then wouldn't you and stay close.

**WH:** yes.

**WP:** Did uh, did she uhm, did she make sure you were, ya'll went together and, you know a bunch of you went together and--

**WH:** We went together when we were that young.

**WP:** Now you said that, that you had, this, the house ya'll lived in did you, you said that your mother was, was there was there someone, did someone, was it an apartment house?



**WH:** Well my mother was uhm, untrained to make a living and course women, there weren't too many jobs women could do then, aside from being a waitress and, and that wasn't considered very high class and she didn't want to do that. So uh, so she could stay at home with us, we were all school kids, she uhm, this brother uh and she bought this place, and he lived with us and our apartment was on the back. Kind of like a lean-to, shed, one, one story were we lived, and the rest of it was two story and we had rooms and apartments.

**WP:** Two bed apartments?

**WH:** We had three apartments and then one, two, three, four, five, one time we had six rooms.

**WP:** Mhm, were these usually uhm, uhm, married, single people or married people?

**WH:** Well no, they were mostly married people.

**WP:** Mostly married people. Did they, would people that lived-

**WH:** As I was saying the ones that had the rooms were, mother tried to men but sometimes she had to take women, to keep 'em rented and, and uh, but she'd rather have men because they're easier to, you know, they're--

**WP:** Did she, you, do you remember ever, ever her having any trouble with the any of the renters in the--?

**WH:** Oh yes she did, she asked people to move.

**WP:** [Laughs] How about paying the rent? They ever--?

**WH:** Oh, Well, we, there's still people in Baytown that owe us money.

**WH Sister:** ...[Inaudible] Even people in the school system that owes us money [Laughs]

**WP:** Is that so?

**WH:** That's right.

**WH Sister:** You know

**WP:** That's a shame, I guess they did have school teachers live there? I guess school teachers lived there some.

**WH:** Well no they later became uh, you know. Their standard of living got higher but they, they probably don't even remember they owe that money, but the people that they owe it to remember it.

**WP:** Yeah, right.

**WH:** You know and it, it wasn't, now it wouldn't be, uh it's not considered a lot of money--

**WP:** But it was a [inaudible].

**WH:** But then it was a lot.

**WP:** Right.

**WH:** And my mother was a widow trying to feed three kids and raise 'em and uh, it was pretty--

**WP:** You mean that they would uh, be obligated to for the, for the--

**WH:** Well sometimes they'd get without a job and maybe right then they couldn't pay, but some years later they could have paid, but they forgot.

**WP:** And they, they lived there in the? The apartments?

**WH:** Mhm

**WH Sister:** Oh she used to get up four o'clock in the morning to catch Mr. Pearson, uh, you know they'd come out early you know, go down the steps quiet, and she'd get up real early to try to get her rent cause he drove a taxi, or a jitney.

**WP:** And he[inaudible], too.

**WH Sister:** And they'd send him to the docks, they went everywhere, but they brought these guys out from the docks..

**WP:** And he had--

**WH:** And he got his money because they were uhm, uh, he had a franchise for going down to the uh, what was then the Humble docks and uh those seamen had money when they hit port so he got his money and he'd even take 'em to Houston you know, and pick 'em up. So he did pretty well.

**WP:** And she would try to get her rent from him.

**WH:** Well.

**WH Sister:** Well yeah.

**WH:** Yeah.

**WP:** Why didn't she throw him out?

**WH Sister:** Oh we used to tell 'em that

**WH:** Well, you

**WH Sister:** But she wouldn't do that.

**WP:** Yeah, well right then she probably wouldn't

**WH Sister:** When I got older, I used to wanna go up there and get their stuff and throw it down from upstairs.

**WP:** I know what you mean.

**WH Sister:** Oh but she would use the law--

**WP:** And he would--

**WH:** She would get some along but uhm, I'm sure it was then like it is now, that some people think cause it's a woman they might could--

**WP:** Take advantage of her.

**WH:** Yeah, they might can get by.

**WH Sister:** She was easygoing with them.

**WH:** But uh

**WP:** Well she's just human, she hate to see anybody out in the cold, but still, they could of, should have paid their rent. Cause it cost her to, to have them there.

**WH:** But anyway, she managed, she managed to feed us and raise us and--

**WH Sister:** And wadn't in debt

**WH:** And wadn't in debt and she paid her taxes and when she died she didn't owe anybody, and so she thought she'd done the right thing and that's all that counts after all.

**WP:** And she, she had the responsibility of raising ya'll, you know with your father dead, and she had to, had that responsibility.

**WH:** Well some of the people in my generation that worked with me that lived other places during the Depression years that had fathers said that they went without meals, and we never did go without a meal, did we?

**WH Sister:** Oh no, we had good meals.

**WH:** We always had food on our table.

**WP:** That was good for ...[Inaudible] because then, that--

**WH:** Well my mother was the manager. You know, we might, we didn't have roast, we might have tomato gravy and fried salt pork and, and uh my uncles all raised a garden, so we all had uh, you know, and they canned, so.

**WH Sister:** And they had a cow or they'd go have a hog butchered you know over in Crosby or something over there.

**WP:** Yeah, well I

**WH:** One time my uncle had a cow out in this area, you know this was kind of way out of town and you'd come out here to milk the cow out on, 'bout where I live now on North Jones.

**WH Sister:** And he had about three gardens down on Texas Avenue down there you'd get [inaudible]

**WH:** When he wasn't working, he'd sell all this stuff.

**WP:** Now if I understand uh then, there was no Tri-Cities, as combined--

**WH:** No.

**WP:** So in other words Pelly was a town by itself and Goose Creek was town and uh Baytown was a town.

**WH:** Mhm

**WP:** Now ya'll actually lived in Goose Creek right?

**WH:** Yeah.

**WP:** So, do you recall any dealings that you ever had say going, any reason to go to Pelly or to Baytown? Did you ever have reason to do that or--? When ya'll were growing up or?

**WH:** Well I went to grammar school at uh, what's uhm, now Anson Jones and of course the kids from Pelly and Goose Creek went to school there, and the ones in old Baytown uh, I guess had a grammar, they had a grammar school out there because the Humble Company gave 'em the property, and they built what used to be uhm, was that San Jacinto? And then San Jacinto moved over by the Catholic hospital?

**WH Sister:** uhuh

**WH:** But anyway the school was demolished, it's not--

**WH Sister:** No, it's right there on Humble property.

**WH:** Well was it San Jacinto though?

**WH Sister:** No, I didn't go there, I don't know what they called that school.

**WP:** Is it the one that's over by the, by the docks now?

**WH:** Yeah they, you know tore it down.

**WH Sister:** Mhm

**WH:** And uh, but anyway

**WP:** Might be Baytown elementary or some

**WH:** We all went to the same grammar school with the in Pelly, and it was all the same school district, even then.

**WP:** Mhm

**WH:** After it became a district, and I don't know when it was.

**WP:** It was really a school, uh, Goose Creek Independent School District, even before it was a town [Inaudible]?

**WH:** And my high school was down there where Horace Mann is, you know the first high school until they built Lee out, and then when they built it uh, they built it out there on Goose

Creek stream, kinda between Baytown and Goose Creek and Pelly, it was sort of a central location.

**WP:** Well, now you mean Horace Mann down here on Pruett?

**WH:** Yes,

**WP:** That was the high school?

**WH:** The high school was there. That wadn't the high school, that building is gone. But the high school was on that location. It was also a junior school too, I imagine. The whole--

**WP:** Probably combined, I imagine.

**WH:** But it was Anson Jones and the high school, see, and that was grade school and they might of had what we know as junior school now in part of Anson Jones.

**WH Sister:** Senior high

**WP:** Well that

**WH:** But by the time I was of school age, I went to Anson Jones through the fourth grade, no the third grade. And when I was to go into fourth grade they built Lamar, and I transferred to Lamar.

**WP:** Now where was Lamar located?

**WH:** Where was Lamar?

**WP:** Uh-huh

**WH:** In the same location it is now, on uh North Pruett.

**WP:** North Pruett.

**WH:** Right back of my house, where I live now.

**WP:** Oh, oh right there.

**WH:** Course it's been added onto but, I was one of the first students in Lamar.

**WH Sister:** I didn't realize you--

**WP:** Was it a brand new school there, when you went there?

**WH:** Mhm

**WH Sister:** Oh yeah it was--

**WH:** I went the first year and then, you know, kids, you hate to give up your friends.

**WP:** Do you remember some of your classmates that went there?

**WH:** Oh yes, mhm. Some of them still live here.

**WP:** It was a real new school that probably the--

**WH Sister:** When I went to Robert E. Lee, I went like this.

**WP:** [Laughs]

**WH:** When we went to high school, we didn't have rides.

[Talking over each other.]

**WH:** We didn't have rides.

**WH Sister:** We caught rides.

**WH:** We up and down on Texas Avenue and stood on the corner, and held out our thumb and people picked us up.

**WP:** Ya'll were lazy; I used to walk.

**WH:** [Laughs] we didn't have a car.

**WH Sister:** Well everybody did this, it was real obvious, the public educated to it so they [inaudible].

**WP:** Well did they, they just picked you up?

**WH:** It was perfectly safe because the fact that uhm-

**WP:** They took the place of the school buses did they?

**WH:** Uh people were going to work at the refinery so there were, there was a lot of traffic.

**WP:** Yeah

**WH:** And uh, they'd just pick us up.

**WH Sister:** Our mother wouldn't have let us done it, if it hadn't of been the thing to do.

**WP:** What about a, well everybody did it.

**WH:** Well everybody did it.

**WP:** What about the weather conditions, wouldn't that kind a?

**WH:** If it was raining you had to wear your rain gear.

**WP:** What about, what about when class is out in the afternoon, how'd you get home?

**WH:** We caught a ride and went out on the--

**WP:** Did the shift, did the shift end by the time that--?

**WH:** Well I don't know if it was shift change, but people, some, some of the kids' parents took 'em to and from school if they were lucky enough to have a car.

**WP:** But not many people had cars

**WH:** Naw um

**WP:** Cause I remember that myself.

**WH:** I recall only one uhm, person I know now. Her father worked at the plant and they, there were two girls in the family, and they were the only kids at that time that I remember that sorta had the use of the family car. The rest of the kids got it on occasions.

**WP:** Do you remember what those peoples' name was?

**WH:** Yeah, there names McClurg, was McClurg.

**WP:** McClurg

**WH:** And the two girls, the mother's still living, and the two girls still live in Baytown.

**WP:** What are their names?

**WH:** Well the oldest ones name is uh, Florian Thibodeaux, and her sister's name is uhm, mmmm, I can't recall it.

**WP:** Mhm, I better sw-, switch this.

**WH:** She married a local fella though that grew up here. I just can't recall her name right, fast.

**WP:** I'm gonna turn this tape over.

**WH Sister:** Were you recording this?

**WP:** Yes I did. [END]

**Transcribed By: Lynnette Sargis**