

(Tape 1 of 2)

An Oral History Tape Transcription

Of

Interviewer: Martha Mayo

Interviewee: Mrs. Louise Fowler Himes

February 4, 1986

MM: Sterling Municipal Library. I'm having an oral history conversation with Louise Fowler Himes.

MM: If you'll tell me: where were you born?

LH: I was born in Galveston.

MM: And when? Do you mind?

LH: No. October 30, 1898.

MM: Ok. And, who were your parents?

LH: My parents is Samuel J. Baker, my father, and my mother was Frances Hatterman. Well, she was Frances Hatterman - that was her maiden name.

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: And she was a Mrs. Coffee with a little boy when, little boy when my dad married. Her husband died when the baby wasn't but six months old and so I had a half-brother.

MM: Oh. Now, when did you move to Cedar Bayou?

LH: I came to Cedar Bayou in 1918. To teach. My dad brought me over in a little Ford car; we were living in League City at that time. And I lived at the parson's for Cedar Bayou Methodist Church -- parsonage -- with the minister and his wife. There was another teacher and I roomed together there.

MM: How long did it take to get here from League City?

LH: Oh ... now that's the thing. I don't remember just how long we were coming over. I'm sure it was all-day long affair. First time I'd ever been away from home, and of course I felt like he'd just, when he drove off my, it was the end my world. You know?

MM: Yes. Oh.

LH: Among strangers.

MM: You didn't know anybody?

LH: No. He took me to the president of the board to sign the contract, and then he went on. Went back home.

MM: Well how did you find out about the job in Cedar Bayou? How were you hired?

LH: Well, the uh, I, after I had gotten my certificate to teach -- see then, you didn't have to go to college. You went, I took a summer normal course. And then you'd take, took the state examinations. And if you could pass the state examination, then they issued you a certificate. To teach.

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: And that's what happened in my case. And I went to the county superintendent in Houston. And at that time, teachers were hard to get. And they offered me about three or four different places. One of 'em was sev-, teaching seventh grade in Pasadena. But he says, "I wouldn't advise you to take that because," he said, "That's a rough bunch of kids."

MM: Oh my goodness.

LH: And he said, "The one at Cedar Bayou, they have little children." And I said that's what I want.

MM: Now was this part of the county system? The whole part of ...

LH: Harris County.

MM: Harris County system.

LH: Uh-huh.

MM: I see.

LH: And he said you – well he was county superintendent, see? And so, uh, that's how I was hired.

MM: Oh. I see.

LH: And, uh, now I met my husband: he came home – that was during the war – and he came home from the Na-, he was in the Navy, and he came to the school to see his little sister. And, uh, another teacher and I were, well we were getting ready to go a ballgame up in Mont Belvieu. Basketball game. And the superintendent asked me if we had a way. And I said no. And he said we, "Well, I'll just ask this young man out here if you can ride with him." And I said, "Oh no you don't. If you do, I won't go." And, but, evidently he did anyway. The other teacher and I did go with him. But he had a couple of high school girls in the car with him, in the front seat you know, and I never – I just thought, "Whew! What a good-looking sailor!"

MM: [Laughs]

LH: He was. He was really handsome. And, uh, we went to Mont Belvieu to the basketball game. That was my first, that was my ...

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: ... first time I ever saw him.

MM: Oh my goodness.

LH: And then we, as we came back home, and that night they had me in charge of the, we had a Valentine party. See it's almost that time of the year.

MM: Oh, yes.

LH: At the parsonage. And they had me in charge of the games. Church, you know. I was hoping that Delmar would come. But I didn't, I didn't ask him to come, or say anything to him about it because I was – I thought, well, he belongs here in this community and you know him. Sure enough he turned up with his little sister.

MM: Oh my goodness.

LH: Came to the party. And he asked me to be his partner out playing the games. And before the evening was over, he asked me for a date.

MM: Oh my goodness! What, where was your first date? What did you do?

LH: Well, he asked me if I'd go to, he said he had to go up to Crosby to pick up his luggage.

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: His, uh, what kind of bag do they call it?

MM: Army? No.

LH: Duffle bag.

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: To pick up his duffle bag. And I went with him, and I mean I actually – uh, I asked him if he'd mind if the teacher who was rooming with me would go with us?

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: And he said no, no he wouldn't mind. See, I was very cautious. You haaaaaa ...

MM: Yes, yes.

LH: And it was a sailor, you know.

MM: Sure.

LH: And the way I'd been brought up and everything. So, uh, he said sure. So she went with us. And we went up and got his duffle bag. And on the way back we were talking about picture shows. And I said something about I liked Shirley Temple. And Shirley Temple was playing down in Pelly then at the theater in Pelly. And that was, that was *the* show then. Even though Pelly was so rough, rough. You know? But that was the show. So at, when we got back, she walked ahead of us, this other teacher. And he asked me to go to the show.

MM: Oh!

LH: Again I said if you'll ...

MM: Take your friend.

LH: Yes! If my friend can go. "Oh sure," he said. But ... she refused. She said he didn't ask her so I'm not going. So I asked Mrs. Stuart, the minister's wife, what must I do about it? She said, "Now listen, Delmar's a good home boy, we know him, and it's alright. You just go right on." And so I did. That was the beginning of it.

MM: Oh my goodness. And you went to the movies in Pelly?

LH: Yeah.

MM: What was that like?

LH: Well, it was, it was tough. It was bad.

MM: That's what I keep hearing.

LH: It was bad. Why, as we were getting out of the car to start going to the show, the pig jumped out of the ditch.

MM: [Laughs]

LH: The pigs. Just things like that.

MM: My goodness!

LH: And I remember later we went to the show there, and it was a burlesque thing.

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: Where the men paid so much to put the garter on these dancers up on the stage.

MM: Oh my goodness!

LH: And I, it got pretty rough so I told Delmar, I said, "I'm leaving out of here."

[Laughter]

LH: And people lived in tents down there. You know?

MM: That's what I hear.

LH: Just rough, rough.

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: And talk about your transportation at that time. Uh, we had nothing but jitneys. What they called jitneys. That was Ford cars from, from Pelly – you see, there was three things then: Baytown, Pelly and Goose Creek.

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: And, uh, that was the only way you could get to Houston. Unless you had, uh, catch the mail car here. That brought the mail out, car. And ride to Crosby. Catch the train there and ride to Houston. And through the, when it was real bad weather when we had these big rains and then bottom was all flooded ...

MM: Yeah.

LH: You couldn't get through on the road. So that's the way you had to go.

MM: Oh.

LH: And that's the way my husband came to, for us to be married.

MM: Oh, is that right?

LH: That's the way he came over there. To League City.

MM: Oh. Oh!

LH: We were still – my folks were living at League City.

MM: Oh my goodness.

LH: He got to Houston, then took the Interurban down to League City.

MM: Talk about a roundabout way.

LH: Yes. Just that, and it doesn't take you a half hour to drive over there now, you know.

MM: No. Well how long did it take, like to go from Cedar Bayou to Houston?

LH: Oh, well ... I, I don't know. The roads were terrible then, and little Model T's didn't go very fast, you know.

MM: Yeah.

LH: And we teachers didn't go, uh, alone in those jitneys.

MM: Oh. You don't?

LH: You know. Unless a couple of us would go.

MM: Oh. It was rough – it was too rough?

LH: It was, it was rough men, you know, and things.

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: And so we were very cautious; we had to be.

MM: Oh.

LH: And, uh ... our ...

MM: How many jitneys a day would ... I mean, would it be two a day? Or how many?

LH: Well, I guess it'd all depend on how many passengers were going in, how many times they'd go.

MM: Oh.

LH: Um-hmm.

MM: I see. And they'd catch the train in Crosby.

LH: Uh-huh. Yeah.

MM: My goodness!

LH: Well, these jitneys would go clear on to Houston.

MM: Oh.

LH: If the road was open so they could.

MM: Oh, I see. Oh.

LH: See? That's ...

MM: Well was it a gravel road, or?

LH: Well, gravel or just plain old mud roads.

MM: So rainy weather would really ...

LH: That's the way they all were over in Chambers County. And then I remember after we married, going to over at Hankamer – that's where he was born and raised. And through that road that's 90 now ...

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: Highway 90.

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: They had logs across the road, you know.

MM: Yes.

LH: Like a, like a bridge.

MM: Oh.

LH: For, for – oh, it was a long way because the seat was low then. And muddy. And it would take nearly all day long to even to get over to Hankamer. Cause we'd have to go around, you see, and then come down that old bad road.

MM: Oh my goodness.

LH: And look what a highway they have now.

MM: Yes.

LH: I think about that every time I go down a highway.

MM: I bet you do! What a change. Goodness.

LH: And then after we married and lived in Chambers County, of course all the roads were bad back there. And, uh ... uh, people would come to Houston, come Houston and around to go duck hunting. 'Cause rice fields, you see?

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: And if they bogged down then with their cars, why, they'd hire my husband to pull 'em out with the mule, you know.

MM: Oh. Yes.

LH: He'd charge 'em \$10 to pull 'em out. Ruined 'em. Ruined one mule. She wouldn't ever pull after that.

MM: Oh.

LH: She just wouldn't pull.

MM: Yeah.

[Laughter]

MM: No good to you then I guess.

LH: No. No. No.

MM: Well what was the name of the school?

LH: Cedar Bayou.

MM: Oh, it was Cedar Bayou. And how many grades?

LH: We had through tenth. They finished school at the end of tenth.

MM: You told me there were four teachers?

LH: Yes.

MM: And how ...

LH: Now I had the primary and the first and the second grades.

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: And, uh, the next teacher had the fifth, she had the third, fourth and fifth. Yeah. And then, uh, next teacher had the sixth and the seventh. And then the principal had the high school, which wasn't but just a few kids, you know. One girl graduated from high school that year. And that's Mrs. W.T. Bush. Bessie.

MM: Oh. Yes. Oh, you, I think you gave me her name.

LH: Yeah. She graduated.

MM: How many children did you have?

LH: Me?

MM: In your, in your class.

LH: Oh. Golly. I don't know. I had quite a few, though. I'd say 25 or 30 ...

MM: Oh. [Indecipherable].

LH: ... children. And, uh, and we didn't have a janitor. And so they had been paying the janitor \$12 a month. And so we divided that between the three of us, you see.

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: So that gave us an extra four dollars.

MM: Oh. And what ...

LH: We'd have to, we'd have to make our own fires. And my, I had one or two little boys that was pretty big, and they always stayed and helped me, you know.

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: They'd stay and help me to clean the room and, and you know, and uh ... Course early in the morning it was rough trying to get a fire to warm up the place.

MM: What kind of stove? A ...

LH: Yeah, just that you put wood in. And the old wood was, uh, green pine, spit and fumed and fizzed, you know.

MM: Oh. And smoked?

LH: Yes. Yes. Yes.

MM: Oh. Oh my goodness. And what was your salary?

LH: Sixty dollars a month.

MM: My goodness.

LH: Four dollars extra were the, do the janitor work.

MM: Oh. My goodness. Well now, how did the children get to school? They all walk? Or were they ...

LH: Uh, well, walked or sometimes their parents brought 'em in the horse and buggy, uh. Things like that, you know.

MM: Do you remember any of the specific problems you had with any of the children? Or any ...

LH: Well ... no not none, none of my little youngsters. I didn't have any problem. One little girl – I was telling something about the other day. The Wilburns – I don't know whether you know the Wilburns.

MM: Uh-huh, I know who they are.

LH: Did you know Etta?

MM: No, no.

LH: You don't? Well, I, she and her brother were both in my room and, and I had a little problem with her and it was funny. She's, she, she sassed me, and uh, and so I was gonna spank her. You know, you – they, they believed in then. Their parents would all the time, "Now, don't behave, you know what to do."

MM: Yes.

LH: And, uh, but I loved every child I had. I really did. And anyway, uh, Etta, Etta ran from me, you know. And her brother stood up and he says, "Mrs. Baker, spank her! Whip her, Mrs. Baker! Whip her, Mrs. Baker!" Well, finally she stopped and I got to her and she said, "Mrs. Baker, if you whip me you'll break my mother's heart."

MM: Oh! [Laughs]

LH: So I didn't.

[Laughter]

LH: But I didn't have any more problem with her. You know.

MM: Oh. Oh my goodness.

LH: Just, Yeah.

MM: Well I guess, I guess the county provided books? Or did the children have to buy their own?

LH: Had to buy their own books.

MM: Oh.

LH: I know we did. While I was going to school. All the way through we had to buy our books. That was the problem. Sometimes it was hard for my daddy to rake up enough money to buy those books.

MM: Oh, yes. Well, but could you buy 'em here? Or did the children have to go into Houston? How did ...

LH: I don't remember just how we got our books here at Cedar Bayou. I don't remember that part of it. I think, I imagine they did like we did: they had the books available at the school and then, then, then we bought 'em.

MM: Oh. I see.

LH: Um-hmm.

MM: Well when you moved to Cedar Bayou, about how many people lived here?

LH: Hmm, I don't know; it was quite a community. Quite a little community. We had, uh, three stores on the bank of the bayou here.

MM: Oh.

LH: And the post office.

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: And we had a blacksmith shop. And then we had another store over, a smith store over there on the highway.

MM: Oh!

LH: And, uh, we had uh, two churches, and the Masonic building. And before we, before we had this, this school that I taught in, they taught school in that Masonic building.

MM: Oh.

LH: A lot of the old-timers went to school in that.

MM: That's the building that's still there?

LH: Still there.

MM: By Cedar Bayou Methodist?

LH: Uh-huh.

MM: What was the other church besides Cedar Bayou Methodist?

LH: It ... Christian. First Christian Church. But, they weren't, they didn't have a pastor when I first came here. They, and so ...

MM: Now where is that located?

LH: Well, it's gone. Long ago. It was right by where Cedar Crest Cemetery is now.

MM: Oh, ok.

LH: Right along there.

MM: I see. Well what kind of stores were they?

LH: Well, general stores. And, uh, I was gonna tell you about the, uh, the way they got the freight in.

MM: Oh.

LH: By boat. The boats came from – well, they had a route from Houston to Cedar Bayou. And then from Galveston to Cedar Bayou. And there's certain days that those boats came in with supplies. Brought supplies, you see? There to the stores or individuals. People would be down there with their wagons and, and you know, to pick up their produce.

MM: Things they had ordered.

LH: Well, yes. They'd order like, uh, things by the case, see?

MM: Oh.

LH: I remember my daddy always bought, like corn by the case and tomatoes by the case, and soap and all those things by the case. We didn't buy one or two cans at a time.

MM: Yeah.

LH: Because, you know, you didn't go to, run to town every day.

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: And, uh, that's the way the supplies came. Right down here at this landing at the end of Cedar Bayou Road where it makes the curb to go on down Ferry Road.

MM: Oh. Well, is that where Ilfree's ...

LH: That's where the landing was.

MM: Is that where Ilfree's store ...

LH: Ilfree's store was there, and McClain's store.

MM: I see. And there was another one? There was a third one?

LH: Yes, uh ... let's see, Ilfree's, McClain's and ... Fischer's. And the post office is Fischer's store at that time.

MM: Oh. In the store itself?

LH: Well, just a, Yeah well a little compartment, Yeah. Off to one side in it. That where the, that's where I got my mail at that time.

MM: Well were most of the people in Cedar Bayou white? Or were there black people? Or ...

LH: Oh Yeah, we had a lot of colored folks that worked for ...

MM: How about ...

LH: Well see, all these shipyards – now that’s something else we had.

MM: Oh, did you?

LH: We had these, uh, I mean not shipyards, but, um ... brickyards.

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: Down the bayou.

MM: Oh that’s right. There were a lot of those, weren’t there?

LH: It was quite – this is made out of Cedar Bayou brick.

MM: Oh, is it?

LH: Uh-huh. That’s Cedar Bayou brick.

MM: Oh! Is that because there was clay along ... is it?

JH: Oh, yes! Good clay. To make brick. Um-hmm.

MM: Well, I thought that must be the reason.

JH: And they had their kilns, you know, their places to process a brick. Make brick out of ‘em.

MM: Oh.

JH: Cook ‘em.

MM: Yes. Well how about Mexican-Americans? Were there many?

JH: No, not at that time.

MM: You don’t remember when they began to move?

JH: When the, after the refinery.

MM: I see. Well I just, just thought that was, would be interesting.

JH: Yeah.

MM: Well where were most of the homes that people lived in in Cedar Bayou?

JH: Well, along the ... there was a lot of ‘em right along the same Cedar Bayou Road right now. This big house that’s just been redone?

MM: Um-hmm.

JH: That was the old George place. And it was one of the nicest homes at that time.

MM: Is that Captain George?

LH: Yes!

MM: [indecipherable] Captain George?

LH: Uh-huh. Captain George. Uh-huh.

MM: I see.

LH: And, uh ... there was, there's several houses along there for that matter.

MM: Oh.

LH: And, uh, then going on down the bayou, too. And by the way, it, the – the trees were just lapped over the top of the road ...

MM: Oh!

LH: ... all the way down to where Mr. Thompkins – now, uh, he sold cars. Had a, we bought our first automobile from him and it was a Baby Overland.

MM: Oh.

LH: After we married, there for, when he took the top off that fall, then we bought us a car, and it was a Baby Overland. We bought it from Mr. Thompkins. And he also made caskets.

MM: Mmm-hmm...

LH: And you see at the time, at, at 1918, that's when they had that terrible flu epidemic that so many people died.

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: And left ...

MM: And were there a lot here who came down with that?

LH: Oh, yes. Oh yes, there was a lot of 'em.

MM: And you moved here in the middle of that? Oh my goodness.

LH: I managed to, I managed to get by – well, I did take it.

MM: Oh.

LH: I took it alright. I was pretty sick. But, uh, the doctor came by twice a day to see me. He didn't hardly take his boots off. He was gone day and night waiting on people.

MM: Oh.

LH: Old Dr. Brooks. Old Dr. Brooks.

MM: How did you let him know you already, I mean, how ... did someone go get him for you? Or was there a, a signal that was ...

LH: I, I guess the – I, I don't know. Uh, well, he, he lived not too far from - he had to come by the parsonage to go across the bayou where he was staying at, he was living with the, uh, Shillings, Dr. Shilling's place. Cause Dr. Shilling, Dr. John had gone to the war.

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: And, uh, Mr. and Mrs. Brooks and their daughter was living over there with Mrs. Annie Shilling.

MM: Oh.

LH: And their way to get across the bayou was in a row boat.

MM: My goodness.

LH: To come across the bayou.

MM: That's a lot of work, isn't it?

LH: Yes. Yes.

MM: Goodness.

LH: And we had a lot of people living down the bayou the same way. They came to school even in a – I know the Shepherds lived way down there, and I had a couple of the Shepherd children in my room. And, uh, one every now and then Mrs. Shepherd had them to invite me to come down and eat supper, you know?

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: And we'd get in this boat and go down. It was, they had a motor boat.

MM: Oh!

LH: With a cabin over it.

MM: It was better in bad weather, then, to ride with them.

LH: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

MM: Oh.

LH: But that's the way people got around: either horseback, or by boat. Not too many people had cars, you know.

MM: My goodness.

LH: Um-hmm.

MM: Well were most of the houses wooden? Or did they, were a lot of 'em brick?

LH: No. Most of 'em were wooden.

MM: Even though the brick yards were over here.

LH: Uh-huh, uh-huh. Uh-huh.

MM: How were they heated? Do you ...

LH: Wood stoves.

MM: Wood stoves. Everyb-, just about everybody had that? And ...

LH: Yes. No, we had no such thing as electric – well, I don't remember about the electricity now. I know we had, we didn't have anything like that out on the farm. We had, uh, kerosene oil lamps. Most people did. Very few people, even on this side then had ...

MM: And you cooked on a wood stove, too, I suppose.

LH: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

MM: That's a lot of work!

LH: Yeah. We had our own, uh, well, our water supply was either a well that we'd dug.

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: And we had most always my husband fixed a – we had big old tanks and caught rainwater, you know, and had, uh, these drains on the, that took the water in to the ...

MM: Yes, uh-huh.

LH: And I used that for wash water, and he always fixed it in the house for me, too. He made it as convenient as he could. You know, like to wash dishes and things like that with.

MM: Well I wanted to ask about how you washed clothes. How was that?

LH: Huh!

MM: [Laughs]

LH: The hard way. On a rub board.

MM: Oh my goodness.

LH: Yes. We, why – I got my first my first washing machine just before I had my sixth child.

MM: My goodness.

LH: Water, rub board, a pot out in the yard to boiling when the weather was so you could. And clothesline, you know. And you hung your clothes out there; took nearly all day long for your washing.

MM: Oh my goodness.

LH: And then the next day was ironing day. We didn't have any such thing as perma press or anything like that. Starch and iron.

MM: Oh my goodness. That would be [Laughs] quite a task. How did you keep things cold? Did you have any form of refrigeration, or...

LH: Well, after we got on this side, we could keep ice in the ice box. Cause we could get the ice. But while I was out, we lived on the farm, we couldn't always get – I know my oldest child, he'll be sixty-, would have been 65 tomorrow had he lived. Uh ... I had to put him on a bottle, and the doctor advised me to just use Eagle Brand milk because, he said, because of the refrigeration problem. I couldn't keep cow milk cold all the time, you see?

MM: Yes. Uh-huh.

LH: And he'd be sick but if I ...

MM: Oh. Yes.

LH: So that's what I, what I raised him on is Eagle Brand milk and made lime water to mix it with. That was supposed to make bone so he wouldn't have the rickets.

MM: Oh!

LH: Um-hmm.

MM: I see.

LH: And we didn't have anything, such thing as baby foods back in those days.

MM: You just kept 'em on the bottle, I guess, until they were ...

LH: Yes, until they were right about ...

MM: Until they had enough teeth to eat.

LH: Well, and then we started giving them, like mashed potatoes and soft things like that. Yeah.

MM: Oh, now – what was refrigeration like? Did they deliver ice to your house? Or how did you get ice?

LH: No, you had to go get the ice. Uh, had a certain ice house.

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: That they'd go get the ice. But, uh ... later they delivered ice. Over in Chambers County, I had a – uh, like a, about this long and about so wide.

MM: Um-hmm?

LH: And there was aluminum pans. And there was three of 'em. One shelf, and then the lower shelf, and then the upper shelf. And you'd put water – they were about that deep, you know. You'd put water in there, and you had a curtain all the way around. And the water would go down like seeping a ... like a ... um, wick in a lamp, you know? Like the oil comes up?

MM: Oh! Uh-huh. Yes.

LH: It's, it'd go down that curtain. And then the wind would course keep that cool.

MM: Oh, cool.

LH: And you could keep your milk like all day without it getting sour that way and things.

MM: Oh!

LH: And we'd put our food and our milk and things in that.

MM: I see. That's interesting.

LH: And then after I, I gave that to a lady friend that lived over there after we moved over there in Harris County.

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: Well, I, we could keep ice, and I didn't need that anymore. But ...

MM: Oh. That, that's very interesting. I've never heard of that type of arrangement.

LH: Yeah.

MM: Well let's see, were there any banks in Cedar Bayou? How about, what about banking? What – or was that a ...

LH: Well ... there was, I guess the First National Bank must have been the first bank they ever had in Goose Creek.

MM: Um-hmm. And people here used the bank in Goose Creek?

LH: I know that's where we used. We used First National Bank.

MM: I see. And you don't remember when that ...

LH: No, I don't. I don't. See, the refinery came in ... well, that's when we first, it was about five years after we married, so that's 1919, 24 ... must have been about '23 or '24 that refinery started.

MM: I think that's about right.

LH: Must have been along about that.

MM: Yeah, I think 1923 is the date they usually give.

LH: Uh-huh.

MM: For that.

LH: Yes. And, uh, that – my husband got a job there after we were broke on the rice farm.

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: The bank foreclosed on us. And, course they had that thing they had mortgaged to 'em, you know.

MM: Oh.

LH: He got salt water. The fin-, the last year why we got salt water and just make any crop.

MM: Oh.

LH: Didn't even make enough for the threshing, so ...

MM: Oh.

LH: So there was no way. See, back then you'd borrow enough money to run you through the year, and maybe you'd make it that fall enough so you could pay that back and maybe have part of the money to run the next year, and have to borrow more money. And that's just the way it went.

MM: Oh.

LH: And, but for about five years we did that. And then ... to tell you the truth, I was glad when we got broke.

MM: Is that right? [Laughs]

LH: Yeah.

MM: Glad to quit that, huh?

LH: Well, it in the long run was best all the way around because he died when, uh, in '38.

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: And there I was with six children all in school. And if he hadn't been working the refinery, we'd had no insurance cause I was even lost that while, when we went broke.

MM: Oh. [26:28]

LH: He had to drop his policy. But working for the refinery he did have some insurance.

MM: Yes. Oh my goodness.

LH: That's what I built this house out of.

MM: Yes. And what year did you build this house?

LH: Had it built in '39.

MM: '39?

LH: I took in roomers and boarders and took care of my family and everything.

MM: And worked hard.

LH: Uh-huh.

MM: Yes. Always, huh?

LH: [Laughs] And everything turned out fine.

MM: Yes.

LH: Yeah. Yeah.

MM: Well back to the early days of Cedar Bayou, what was – was there a police department, or a ... Was there any kind of crime problem?

LH: I don't remember ever having a crime problem.

MM: Ok.

LH: I don't remember.

MM: Would you call the sheriff?

LH: I'd call it just a nice little sleepy village.

MM: Yeah. And you knew everybody?

LH: Uh-huh.

MM: No problems?

LH: No problems.

MM: That's wonderful, isn't it?

LH: Yes, it is.

MM: Really.

LH: No problems that I know anything about at all.

MM: Oh my goodness.

LH: I know that my husband, when he was on the rice farm, he'd come to the bank when it was payday on Saturday, Saturdays he'd pay the help off. Threshing time and planting time is when we had most of our help. And, uh, he'd come to the bank and get money. Never even thought about being held up or anything. Came, come way out there in Chambers County with all the money to pay the hands off.

MM: [Inaudible] That is certainly different. [Laughs]

LH: We didn't, we didn't have a gun, or we didn't have to lock the house.

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: It's only been recently that I've been locking up my house.

MM: Me, too.

LH: And I don't like it.

MM: I don't either. Don't like to live scared.

LH: No.

MM: Just, just don't like to at all.

LH: Uh-uh.

MM: Oh, let me get my glasses on. Let's see, um ... do you remember any special celebrations in the community? Or like for Christmas or Fourth of July in the earlier ...

LH: Well, we always had programs at the school. And programs at the church, you know.

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: And, uh ... I, that's all. I remember one time we – it was April Fools at school, and the principal went home to eat. And while he was gone, why we decided, we teachers decided that we'd take the youngsters and go – Caseys lived way out there where Humana Hospital is now?

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: All that was all prairie out there, you know, at that end. But Mrs. Casey had her house living way out there. And that was nice prairie. Uh, you know, meadow.

MM: Yes, uh-huh.

LH: So we took all, took, we went out there and took all the all the kids with us. And our lunches and everything, you know, and had a picnic out there. Well, when the superintendent got back, no teachers and no children. The only one there was Bessie Bush. She wouldn't go.

MM: [Laughs]

LH: She wouldn't go, but the rest of us all went and had a good time. Had, we came back and brought all of our children back.

MM: So, what ...

LH: Oh, remember it was April Fool's.

MM: Oh.

LH: And ... [Laughs] That's all it was. It was fun. It was fun.

MM: Yeah. And usually pretty weather then.

LH: Oh, it was beautiful weather.

MM: I bet it was beautiful, Yeah.

LH: Pretty day. The kids had a good time, so did we.

MM: Is that J.O. Ca-, I, there's a man at our church named J.O. Casey. Or was, I don't think he's living. Is that the same Casey you're talking about? I ...

LH: My best ...

MM: Mrs. Wight is, was one of, was his sister, and then ... I can't think of, there's a third one.

LH: Mrs. Wight?

MM: Uh-huh. W-I-G-H-T.

LH: Oh. I don't know her.

MM: And she, I know she was a Casey. I just wondered if that was the same ...

LH: Well these Caseys, uh ... these Caseys were ... well, Mrs. Casey was a widow when I came here, but her husband had had a brickyard right down, right down this way.

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: And, uh, one of, her mother and, lived right where the – do you know this brick home is down here on Cedar Bayou Road with, where all the pecan trees are? Older [indecipherable]?

MM: I've seen it. Uh-huh.

LH: Well, that was the, her mother's place then.

MM: Oh.

LH: And Elton, her oldest son when he came back from the war, stayed with his grandmother till she died. And then he, she willed that all to him.

MM: Oh.

LH: Elton Casey. Well he'd dead now, of course. His wife and I are close, close friends. And, uh ... uh, let's see there was a Basil Casey, and Elton. Elton was older and Basil, and ... Anyway, she had six children. And they're all gone now.

MM: Oh. Doesn't sound like the same family.

LH: Uh-uh. Uh-uh. Now there's a ... Casey over there that, uh ... Glenn Casey? Is that that ...

MM: Um-hmm. Um-hmm. The veterinarian?

LH: Yeah.

MM: Yeah.

LH: That's a grand-

MM: That's, ok that's the family.

LH: Uh-huh. That's the grandson. That's family. Uh-huh.

MM: Were mosquitoes ... I understand mosquitoes were bad.

LH: Oh, yes! Mosquitoes were bad. We all had mosquito bars.

MM: Oh.

LH: You know what a mosquito bar is?

MM: Well, not – I guess it's something with net on it.

LH: Yes. And you hang it up over your bed, and put the, put it, put the net down and tuck it in around so the mosquitoes can't get to Yeah.

MM: Goodness gracious. But they didn't carry malaria, I understand. That that was not ...

LH: Yes they did! I had malaria when we lived out on the bay.

MM: Oh, you ...

[End of tape]

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[Tape 2 of 2]

MM: Yeah, tell me more about the malaria. [Laughs]

LH: Well, water, of course, because that much is mosquitoes, you know, is bad water you drink.

MM: Oh.

LH: And, uh ... some of these wells were just shallow wells.

MM: Well now what about typhoid? Was that a problem?

LH: Yes. My husband had a touch of typhoid after we married, too. But he had been in the service and had had shots, so it was a light case.

MM: Uh-huh. Your children ever get it?

LH: No, my, none of my children ever had it.

MM: Oh. Well that's nice.

LH: No malaria or anything. Course [clears throat] we moved on this side when they were, you know, I had three then when we moved over on this side. So they were all little and, course I boiled the water that I'd mix their milk with, and you know, things like that and ...

MM: Goodness. Your day must have been awful full doing all these things.

LH: It was full, lady!

MM: Oh. Goodness gracious.

LH: Made my own bread, did my own washing, my own ironing, and ...

MM: What about canning and ...

LH: Oh, yes. We made a, had a nice garden, raised our chickens.

MM: Even when you were, even in Cedar Bayou you had ... you had a garden on [Inaudible]?

LH: Oh, yes I had a garden clear till my husband died.

MM: Oh.

LH: Sure did. We had a nice garden and raised our own chickens. I had an incubator and, and hatched my biddies and raised 'em.

MM: Oh. Well, I guess most people had to grow their own vegetables normally.

LH: Oh, yes! Everybody did. We had a milk cow and everything. You know, had our own milk. Butter.

MM: Well, how big a place did you have when you moved over here? I mean, if you had a cow and chickens, how many – did you have several acres?

LH: No. Uh, we lived down the Bailey's Row when we first, you know, that's the, the row of houses at the end of this ... just before you turn to go onto ...

MM: James?

LH: On James, Yeah.

MM: Uh-huh. Ok.

LH: Well, those, where those apartments are down there now that - well there's still a bunch of those little houses along there.

MM: Oh!

LH: You know, just before you get to the park?

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: Well, we called that the Bailey's Row.

MM: Oh.

LH: And we rented one of those for \$15 a month. We had to wait for it to be built. They were, he was just, Mr. Bailey's was just building 'em.

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: And, course they were not papered or anything, just, just sealed houses. Which we were tickled to death to get in because we'd been - rice farm houses, they're not even sealed, you know. They just ...

MM: A lot of air blowing through. Yes, yes.

LH: Yes! Cold, cold, too, when it's wintertime. Well, anyway, that's where we lived first. But we brought the cow and our, my chickens, we had a big enough place we could have 'em.

MM: Oh.

LH: And, uh, then when we built the little place, the third house on this street, we built that.

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: That's where we were living when my husband died.

MM: Oh. I see.

LH: And, uh, we had room enough for our cow and our chickens and our garden.

MM: Oh.

LH: And everything.

MM: Um, do you remember how prohibition affected this area? Was there, were there bootleggers or ...

LH: Well, I'm sure there was some bootleggers. There's bootleggers today with it dry too, I mean with it wet I can tell you.

MM: Oh, is that right?

LH: Oh, certainly. Certainly there is. People break the law with it just as much as they did then. I can tell you know we could walk down the street and not be insulted, and I think that's one reason we didn't have any crime then.

MM: Oh, I bet you're right.

LH: Yes.

MM: I bet you're right.

LH: That's right.

MM: And so you're saying it ...

LH: I, we lived at Bay City before we moved to League City. And League City was wet. And I remember how scared I was to walk down the street, go by a saloon, you know.

MM: Um-hmm. And now Pelly was a lot of drinking. Little bit rough.

LH: Rough, Yeah. Oh Yeah, oh Yeah, oh Yeah. Oh Yeah.

MM: Did Cedar Bayou have bars, or ...

LH: No.

MM: They just didn't have 'em?

LH: No, no.

MM: What made it such a nice community.

LH: Yeah, that's right.

MM: So Prohibition had no real effect on this, this area, really?

LH: Well ...

MM: On Cedar Bayou.

LH: You mean, you mean in being wet?

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: The wet part didn't bother – no, cause we were dry.

MM: Oh.

LH: I remember a lot of elections we voted, you know, and everything. I always voted for dry ticket. Always.

MM: So it was ... I see. I wasn't aware that ...

LH: Um-hmm. Oh, Yeah.

MM: It had been like that. Well let's see, I asked you about crime, and you said you didn't remember any. [Laughs]

LH: No, I don't.

MM: How about hurricanes?

LH: Well, I'll tell you what: back then there was Ku Klux Klan, too. And that's another reas- ...

MM: Yes, tell me about that.

LH: That's another reason we didn't have crime much. If anybody did wrong, they were just ...

MM: That's what I understand that ...

LH: ... whipped and tarred and feathered.

MM: ... that that was what the Klan's ...

LH: Yeah.

MM: ... activity was centered on rather than racial.

LH: That's right. Yeah, crime. Um-hmm.

MM: Did, did you ever see any of the Klan? Any of their activities, or?

LH: Well, I've seen, I've seen lights, I've seen 'em where they'd meet, you know. Like out in the, that prairie I was telling you about?

MM: Uh-huh. Um-hmm.

LH: Uh, but uh, you know that some of the prominent men in the community belonged to that Klan then.

MM: That's what I understand.

LH: They did. And I, I, I know of one certain individual I knew that got tarred and feathered.

MM: Oh my goodness!

LH: Well ... he needed it.

MM: [Laughs] He was...How did he get it off? How do you get that off? [Laughs] Or did he just leave town?

LH: I don't remember how, what he did. But I know that that was the rumor at the time and why he did it.

MM: Oh.

LH: He was, he was soliciting for his wife.

MM: Oh my goodness.

LH: In Pelly.

MM: Oh.

LH: I tell you what.

MM: Oh, my. Oh dear.

LH: Just things like that were taken care of.

MM: Yes.

LH: By the Ku Klux Klan. I think some time we need something like that now. Something, or ...

MM: Citizens.

LH: Grrrr! It's so bad that you're afraid to get out your back door hardly. Now.

MM: That's right. Well, were there any hurricanes? What year did you ...

LH: Yes, ma'am, there was hurricanes! I was in Galveston storm.

MM: Oh you were?

LH: As a baby.

MM: The 1906?

LH: 1900 storm.

MM: 1900 storm. Well you must have been very little.

LH: I was little. Well I was born in October 19 ... 1898 see.

MM: Yes.

LH: And, and, uh ...

MM: Oh my goodness.

LH: I was little; I don't remember anything about it. But my dad says, told me plenty about it, and he helped to bury dead. We lived at Arcadia at that time. Just before you get to Galveston.

MM: I know where that is. Uh-huh.

LH: And, uh, he helped to bury the dead. He said you could step from one body to the other one. And they had to get on the windward side and just dig a shallow grave and just roll 'em over there with their shovel and then cover 'em up.

MM: Oh my goodness.

LH: And, uh, I had an uncle that was drowned that night, and a cousin born that night.

MM: Is that right?

LH: His wife gave birth to a boy, a son, that night that he drowned.

MM: Oh. Oh my goodness.

LH: So, uh ... and then, when I was, we moved from Galveston up to Hill County. And my mother died with T.B.

MM: Oh.

LH: And they was afraid my dad was infected with it, and so we went to higher climate, you know. Meantime he had married my stepmother.

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: And, to get we kids together, cause we were taken away from Mama when she was sick, you know.

MM: Oh yes, I guess.

LH: Some of the kin folks of either side took care of we four.

MM: Oh.

LH: And the half-brother. And, uh ...

MM: Where's Hill County? Where is ...

LH: Uh, you know where Whitney, Texas, is? And Hillsboro?

MM: Hillsboro I do.

LH: Uh, huh. Well, that's Hill County.

MM: Oh, alright.

LH: Um-hmm.

MM: So you weren't in the path of any hurricanes. You got away.

LH: No, but we moved back to the coast country. Later. I was 10 years old and we moved back to the coast country. My dad - some of his people were in the nursery business, and that's what my dad was interested in. He blacksmithed up in Hill County. Had a blacksmith shop. I've got a picture of it. And, uh, where, he, uh, made wagon wheels and he made, you know, sharpened plows and did all those kind of things that the farmers needed then.

MM: Yeah. Um-hmm.

LH: Well ...

MM: But the hurricane ... when?

LH: We had just moved back, just shortly before this hurricane came, and there was no way then that we got any warnings.

MM: No, that's what ...

LH: My dad knew by the way that the clouds were and everything that, that there was a tropical disturbance. And I know my mother had just baked bread the day before. Eight loaves of bread and two pans of rolls is what she always fixed, you know.

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: Enough bread to last us.

MM: Oh. Uh-huh.

LH: She cooked twice a week. Baked. And she put that bread inside this - we had a big box where she'd put her quilts. Had a lot of quilts then, you know. We didn't have electric blankets, or, or, or how, uh, these central heating systems and all those kind of things.

MM: That's right. If you're gonna stay warm, you had to have a quilt.

LH: You had three or four quilts piled on you, you know. And a feather bed.

MM: Oh.

LH: We had some feather beds. And she had the feather beds up in the loft in this big ol' barn. And, uh, in this quilt box, she put her bread, and put the lid on that, you know, and so that the bread wouldn't get wet.

MM: Oh my goodness.

LH: And, uh ... well, to make a long story short, the house went to pieces. The one, we got the first part of it came from the south. No, the first part of it must have come from the north - Yeah, it came from the south. And then the next came from the north. And we, we uh, were sitting along the porch, Momma put coats on all of us, and I had a little crippled sister that had to be carried. And, uh, we held hands, and Momma got on one side, and Pop on the other, and we kids in between. And, uh, we had to, the whole, the barn blew up to pieces. And as it came sailing by, why, it just missed the house.

MM: Oh.

LH: But the house went off the blocks. And we were on the porch, away from the wind, ready to leave out. And just as soon as the barn went to pieces, well Pop says, "Alright. Let's go now." And we, we did. We could hardly, well - couldn't hardly walk. Course I was carrying ...

MM: Yeah, the wind. Uh-huh.

LH: Carrying Amy, my little sister, and ... And Momma had a big ol' tarp that she carried - I don't know how she got it out there. And she had an apron that she had made out of, uh, out of the material that you make cotton sacks out of.

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: I don't know if you ever saw a cotton sack in your life.

MM: Yeah. Oh, Yeah I've seen 'em. I have lots of 'em.

LH: Well, that's, she had this apron.

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: And, uh, course that was pretty, pretty good to put over.

MM: Yeah.

LH: And, uh, we got out to a levy. See there was no rice farming in the beginning.

MM: Um-hmm.

LH: And my dad had gotten this land, and they were gonna have a nursery there. That's what the idea was. And we got to this levy and we laid down flat on the ground and covered up with this tarp in case ...

MM: Oh!

LH: And we lay there until there was a lull. And there was two houses. And here they came just dancing. And they finally went to pieces, but none of the, none of the ... wreckage came, hit us or anything.

MM: How scary.

LH: So then, when the lull came then, we got back to the house and Momma put dry clothes on Amy as quick as she could and got her into bed. And, uh, cause the house had gone off the blocks alright, and the furniture had shifted, but that didn't make any difference, the beds were still dry.

MM: Everything was still there, huh?

LH: Yeah. And, uh, there was a neighbor across the railroad track from us, and she was pregnant and had two little children, and pregnant, and Pop could see that their house was damaged. So he says, "I'm going to see about the Gouds." And he went over there. And then they, their house was damaged so bad they decided to come on over to our house. And I know, I remember they had a great big ol' watermelon they brought with 'em. And they didn't any more than get there, until here that storm came in the other direction. You see the eye of it just passed up.

MM: Yeah. Uh-huh.

LH: And momma had put coats back on kids and, and bundled Amy up, and we got back the other direction then and laid down. And that time ...

MM: Went back to the levy again, you mean?

LH: The no, not, the opposite direction.

MM: Oh, oh. Yes, yes.

LH: The opposite direction. Cause it came back from the other direction. And, uh, we stayed out there till it was over then. Then the Gouds' father and mother lived on up the railroad track about, oh I guess a mile or two miles maybe. I know we walked up that railroad track to go up to – and all of us went there because, by that time, beds and everything else were damaged, you see.

MM: Yes, uh-huh.

LH: You know, wet.

MM: Oh.

LH: And so we went to this other Goud's house, and they had to pry - the porch roof was down, you know.

MM: Whoops. There goes the microphone.

LH: Damaged. Uh-oh.

MM: We can just ... excuse me. There, ok.

LH: And we stayed there, uh, we stayed there at their house. Momma got, uh, looked in the clo-, in drawers and things. They were off on vacation, the old folks were. The Gouds. But this was their parents', you see.

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: House. And so we went in, just made ourselves at home. Course they'd had, they had food there, and they had ...

MM: Uh-huh.

LH: ...you know, some dry beds and everything, and that's where we went.

MM: Oh my goodness. Well you really did have an experience.

LH: Oh, yes. And then I was in, after that we had the 1915 storm.

MM: That was a bad one.

LH: At Bay City. And that was a bad one. We didn't have, we were in a stronger house that time, and wasn't as much damage done or anything; we didn't have to leave it or anything.

MM: When was the next one you were in? Do you remember?

LH: Well ... [Laughs] I don't know. I've been in a couple since we've been in this house. I've been in every one of 'em. [Laughs]

MM: You're a real veteran!

LH: Yeah.

MM: Oh, this has all just been so interesting. Is there anything else about the, that I haven't asked about about both what Cedar Bayou was like and your life was like?

LH: No. Um-mm.

MM: I can't ... I tried and tried to think of all the different things ...

LH: Yeah. Well ...

MM: ... you had experienced. What about clothes? Did you make your own clothes?

LH: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

MM: But you'd have to order the fabric, I, or ... I guess the stores carried it.

LH: Well ... well, the stores carried some, you know, here on Cedar Bayou. And then course when they, when the refinery came then, and began to build up down there, well the stores moved to Bay-, to downtown, you know. Ilfree's Store was on Main Street in town. In Baytown.

MM: Oh. Oh, I didn't realize that.

LH: Yeah. It was Goose Creek then.

MM: Oh.

LH: Um-hmm. So.

MM: Well that's ...

[End of tape]

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