An Oral History Tape Transcription

Of

Baytown Oral Histories

With

Interviewer: Mrs. Betsy Webber
Interviewee: Mrs. Loris Williams Gun
Third Party: Linda Roberts

Date: Jan 27th 1977
Transcribed by: Lynnette Sargis

(Tape 1 of 1)

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Interviewee: Mrs. Loris Williams Gun
Third Party: Linda Roberts
Date: Jan 27th 1977
BW: …interviewing Mrs. Loris Williams Gun of Mont Belvieu, at Green Acres Convalescence Center where is recuperating from a knee injury. She is a lifelong resident of Mont Belvieu and is a descendant of the old timers that came into West Chambers County in the early 1800’s to settle there.

[Tape cut]


Mrs. Gun, tell me, uh, when you were born, your birthday and the year that you were born.

LG: December the 2-, uh 21st 1906.

BW: And, uh, tell me your parents’ names?

LG: William Oscar Williams,

BW: Well,

LG: And Ora Ola Stubbs.

BW: It was Oscar Williams wasn’t it? You said it was William Oscar.

LG: Was William Oscar. W.O.

BW: Oh his last name is Oscar?

LG: His middle name, William Oscar Williams.

BW: Okay. And Ora Ola Stubbs,

LG: Mhm.

BW: Is that right?

LG: Mhm.

BW: Alright, um, you were telling me who your grandparents were a minute ago, your maternal grandparents.

LG: Fielding Haywood Stubbs and Laura Elvina Tilton.

BW: Alright now who was, uh, Elvina’s father?

LG: Charles Nathan Tilton.

BW: And wasn’t he reputed to have been a member of Jean Lafitte’s, uh, crew? You can’t nod your head on tape [laughs].

LG: [Laughs] yes.

BW: Thank you. Uh, who were your uh father’s uh parents, your paternal grandparents? Who are your paternal grandparents?

LG: Well that was [inaudible],
BW: ‘Kay, that was who?
LG: That’s the one, Oliver.

BW: No, you said awhile ago it was Marion, and, uh, Amanda Melissa Barber
LG: Amanda Melissa, that was daddy’s parents.

BW: That’s your daddy’s parents okay. Now you keep trying to tell me about Oliver, who was Oliver anyhow?
LG: Well that was Grandpa Williams’ daddy.

BW: Okay, well who, what relation was he to your father?
LG: Grandpa, he was his grandfather.

BW: Okay, Oliver Williams was your father’s grandfather then, and he was married to Polly?
LG: Well, they called her Polly, some called her Aunt Polly and some called her Betsy, but I think her na-, her name was Elizabeth.

BW: Elizabeth, alright.
LG: Now it’s in the book.

BW: Okay. Uh, in Flavia Fleischman's Old River Country?
LG: Yeah.

BW: Alright uh you lived uh up Cedar Bayou, north of where the Gulf olefin plant is now, on the Chambers County side when you were a small child, I understand. Is that correct?
LG: Yes.

BW: Uh, and then you moved; where did you move to?
LG: We moved from there, I think, to the old Barber house.

BW: Alright.
LG: We lived there.

BW: Well, how, were you old enough to go to school?
LG: Well, now, I don’t know whether we went to school from down there or not. I don’t think we did.

BW: Where did you go to school?
LG: Barbers Hill.

BW: Okay, well what school, what kind of school was it, can you describe it?
LG: First it was a one room school, and someone threw a 5 gallon can of gasoline on it, stuck a match to it and we were thrilled to death, didn’t think we’d ever have to go to school.

BW: Burned it down? Oh my then what happened, did you have to,

LG: And then they built a new two-room school.

BW: Mhm. Where was it?

LG: Now at that time, we were living at the Joe Fisher place, the other side of Edger Fishers Island, up where the Warren Plant is now.

BW: Mhm.

LG: Went I went to school in the two room school house too. Well I don’t know where I was living when they started it and I’ll tell you I don’t.

BW: Mhm.

LG: When there’s that,

BW: Uh when they talk about Fisher’s Island they don’t mean water do they? They mean uh, a grove of trees or something like that?

LG: A grove of trees.

BW: And like that, they use to speak of those islands, uh, frequently didn’t they?

LG: Well yes the, I don’t know.

BW: Several little places they called “islands,” I understand, over there in West Chambers County.

LG: That’s the only around there, near.

BW: Well how did your father earn a living? What did he do to earn a living?

LG: He was a farmer.

BW: What did he farm, corn?

LG: Cotton.

BW: Uh, up on top of the salt dome?

LG: Down where I was telling you, where they built the house on the bayou.

BW: Oh.

LG: In there, and then at the, uh, this side of the railroad, on the Fisher place. We lived there, and he farmed.

BW: This was before the days of oil and liquefied petroleum gas was and,

LG: No, my daddy worked on the first oil well they ever drilled in Barbers Hill.
BW: Oh really, when was that?
LG: I don’t know what year.
BW: Okay do you remember which well it was?
LG: Higgins.
BW: The Higgins, in the beginning.
LG: Higgins drilled the first uh oil well on Barbers Hill.
BW: Mr. I. N. Kemp has lived in that area for quite a while, hasn’t he?
LG: Yeah but he’s over there at the old Welford place.
BW: Uh-huh. How many, uh, were there in your family?
LG: There were 12 of us and 10 living until a few years ago. I lost a sister, and now, and I’ve lost 2 brothers.
BW: Where,
LG: My momma raised 5 girls and 5 boys.
BW: What can you tell me about the development of Barbers Hill as you uh at, through your lifetime what di-, what changes have you seen in Barbers Hill?
LG: Well,
BW: In Mont Belvieu?
LG: The oil field and the building of the homes and all the lots. See, we cut up the land in lots and sold ‘em; people built their homes.
BW: Do you remember when the uh first homes were built and why?
LG: Oh yes I remember riding the stick horse all over the pasture.
BW: Really? [Laughs].
LG: From Grandpa’s store, he had the store there first, and then Uncle Watson.
BW: Which grandpa had the store?
LG: Grandpa Williams.
BW: Mkay.
LG: Then Uncle Watson and Uncle Ross had a store there, and we had the pasture. Our houses was at the edge of the pasture, and we rode, rode stick horses through the pasture to Grandmama’s back door after a bread and butter sandwich.
BW: Where could you go from your house; what was the most accessible, uh, town? If ya’ll wanted to go to town to buy groceries, where would you go?
LG: Well we bought ‘em there at Barbers Hill. We had a big grocery store, you see, the family did all around town.

BW: And this was before, uh, State Highway 146 was put in right?

LG: Grandma gave the road for the first uh,

BW: Grandma Williams?

LG: Gave the land.

BW: Uh-huh.

LG: Most of it, for the first road. They didn’t call it a highway then, it wasn’t blacktop or anything; it was just a graded road in Barbers Hill.

BW: Do you know where the road went?

LG: Well it, yes. from Mills Bennett’s office there, down in the flat they called it. Course not that far down then, I guess it did too. It’s,

BW: Was Mills Bennett’s o-, office the same place it is now? On the,

LG: Well not when I was, uh I was grown when Mills Bennett had his office there, you might say.

BW: Well where else did the road go?

LG: To on through and hit the Dayton road.

BW: Went to Dayton.

LG: Hit the Dayton Highway, Dayton road.

BW: Was there, what, did the route follow uh pretty much the uh,

LG: Come right through town of what’s Barbers Hill now.

BW: Was it the route,

LG: [Inaudible] now.

BW: Oh Loop 207, was it, um, did it follow pretty much the route of 146 or the Dayton Road over in Cove?

LG: Uh no the Dayton Road, Dayton Road,

BW: You know there’s Dayton o-, Old River really.

LG: No, river road went up through Old River.

BW: I know but,

LG: Through Dayton.
BW: Right off of there, there’s a Dayton Road. If you go down 565, you’ll turn off in the open, where the Days lived

LG: I know.

BW: And I’ve been to that part, and that road is supposed to go to Dayton.

LG: Yeah that road goes to Dayton, but that was from the lower place. No, this one didn’t.

BW: Okay this was another Dayton road?

LG: This road come right on through and went right on, on up through town.

BW: Mhm.

LG: To Dayton. Now, years ago they used to not have a road to Dayton; it was just riding across the prairie.

BW: Yeah.

LG: That’s where Grandma’s two brothers was found dead. Um, Albert Barber and Will Barber.

BW: What happened to them?

LG: Well, they had been to Dayton horse stack and failed to come home, and when they didn’t come in and their horses I believe come in -- I’m not positive. Anyway, they went looking for ‘em and they found ‘em both dead. They went,

BW: Did, what happened, did they think foul play?

LG: Thought maybe they had been poisoned or --; course they, each one, had a jug of whiskey tied to their saddle on [inaudible].

BW: Well, I imagine if it was, um--. Did, tell me a little bit more about the Main Street that is now Loop 207 in Mont Belvieu; uh, what kind of stores were there on the uh loop on the street, on Main Street?

LG: Well now is that called the Loop? Through there?

BW: It is now it’s called Loop 207; it’s also called Main Street.

LG: Well then there wasn’t but, uh -- when I was a kid growing up -- the one store.

BW: What store was it?

LG: That was Williams’.

BW: Williams’ Grocery Store?

LG: Uh-huh.

BW: What else did they sell?

LG: And then later everything, general merchandise. General Mercantile, it was called.
**BW:** Do you remember the Busch Drug Store?

**LG:** Oh yes I do, I was a kid when Jack Busch put the drug store in. First Amos Fisher had a drug store there; he’s the one that built it and run it for a while, and then Jack Busch I guess bought him out I don’t remember.

**BW:** What about the Methodist church?

**LG:** The Methodist church has been there ever since I can remember, because that’s where my daddy, all of ‘em, used to go to church. But the Methodist Church is the only church in Barbers Hill, and then, in later years, Grandma gave the land and helped to build the First Church of Christ.

**BW:** And that was Grandma Williams.

**LG:** Mhm.

**BW:** That’s over there where the Barber’s Cemetery,

**LG:** Yes.

**BW:** The Barber-Williams Cemetery is; I have been there.

**LG:** Now we have a new church.

**BW:** Yes, that’s, that’s nice; I like that new church; it’s really very nice. What about the school? Now we were talking about the school. You went to that little one-room school that burned down and then they built another one,

**LG:** Two-room.

**BW:** Two-room school, and that was up on the hill, too. Now was it anywhere near the Methodist church?

**LG:** No, no. It’s where the school is now.

**BW:** Oh, out there on the school property, alright. I believe that some, some of the Barbers donated that land to the school district, didn’t they? Or do you know?

**LG:** Well I’ve heard them say something about that uh football field; I really don’t know.

**BW:** Yeah. Um, did you finish school at the two-room school?

**LG:** Oh, I only went to the 8th grade. Decided I had education enough and quit.

**BW:** [Laughs] But it was always that same building?

**LG:** Mhm.

**BW:** They had not built anymore?

**LG:** They built more on later. But it was after, I think, after I had quit school; I’m not positive.

**BW:** What’s the first good size school out there that you recall?
LG: Well, they built two more. They built another two-room building and then had four rooms and then I don’t know if they had anymore until they built the new brick school or not.

BW: After you stopped going to school, uh, what did you do? Did you get married?

LG: Oh no.

BW: What did you do?

LG: Sit around Grandma’s and asked questions [laughs].

BW: Did you learn something?

LG: Oh yes. I stayed there quite a bit; then my daddy had a store at Cedar Bayou for a while, and, of course, I helped him at the store there and,

BW: Was it down by the ferry?

LG: Right across from the ferry, uh-huh. Uncle Ross had a store there across,

BW: I believe Ilfrey’s had a store over there.

LG: Well this was this side there,

BW: Okay was it across,

LG: Other side, I mean. Across the ferry.

BW: What was it called?

LG: S. R. Williams, I guess.

BW: S. R. Williams.

LG: When we bought it, I don’t know, and I. R. Williams and uh C.O. Williams; they all had the store, and then my daddy took it over from Uncle Ross.

BW: And it was on the West Chambers County side of the bayou.

LG: Yeah, across the bayou, Chambers County side.

BW: And there was a ferry there, wasn’t there?

LG: Oh yes.

BW: Was it a hand ferry?

LG: That’s where I learned to drive.

BW: Oh really?

LG: Mhm.

BW: Was it a hand ferry or,

LG: Yes.
BW: And, well, tell me how you worked a hand ferry, could it handle a car?

LG: Pull it with a cable.

BW: Okay, could you drive your car on it?

LG: Oh yes, sometimes they’d have to hold the ferry for me, I couldn’t make it up the hill and I’d come back on the ferry. Old, uh, let’s see, I believe is name is Shade, some colored man there, pulled the ferry across, and that’s where Uncle Cyrus learned me to drive, coming to Baytown.

BW: Oh? Uncle Cyrus

LG: Cyrus Williams, brother-in-law to my daddy.

BW: Did he live on, in Cedar Bayou or on Chambers County side?

LG: He lived, he lived on the, he lived on the same of the ferry but now I think he is within, I don’t know whether that was in the Cedar Bayou, yes it was in Cedar Bayou because I know Uncle Ross lived there afterwards, and he couldn’t boat at Barbers Hill.

BW: Was that the best route to get to Baytown if anybody wanted to go to Baytown?

LG: Oh yes.

BW: Across the ferry there?

LG: Mhm it’s the only way to come from Barbers Hill.

BW: Through Cedar Bayou.

LG: And the road used to be just shelled and ooohh it was so bad you couldn’t get over it sometimes. I used to have to ride horseback and cut through the pasture to go from Cedar Bayou to Barbers Hill to the bank out there.

BW: Where’d you do your banking?

LG: Barbers Hill.

BW: Was the name?

LG: The Barbers Hill Bank.

BW: There was bank there?

LG: Mhm.

BW: Wasn’t it down on, on Main Street too?

LG: Yes by Doctor Sherrill’s.

BW: I believe that uh office is still there, the building is still there.

LG: The old building, I think, is torn down. They have a new bank there now you see.
BW: Yes uh-huh. Tell me about uh well where was Doctor Sherrill’s office?

LG: Oh right out in his front yard, little office. We used to go by there from school a lot of times and go in and clean up his office and he had a skull of a white person and a skull of a negro and they’re teeth would fall out and we used to put their teeth back in.

BW: [Laughs] Did they have,

LG: And ask him questions.

BW: Was he office on Main Street?

LG: It was in his yard, off of Main Street.

BW: Yeah, his house was on Main Street.

LG: His house was on Main. Well it, the yard, the house, office was out in the front yard just a little, I think it was a little two-room building.

BW: You know where uh the First Baptist Church is now?

LG: Mhm.

BW: Was that street there at, while you were going to school?

LG: No, you just went across the pasture.

BW: Mhm.

LG: There was several big crawfish ponds there.

BW: Mm. Well after you worked awhile for, at your father’s store,

LG: Well I just helped him when he needed me, you know, and went to the bank and come to Baytown by the bread and ice and stuff for the store.

BW: Well how important was boating, uh, transportation by boat?

LG: I don’t know too much about that now; Uncle Claude and one of the, and Sam Sjolander had a freight boat.

BW: Uncle Claude Williams?

LG: Mhm.

BW: They had a freight boat? Did you ever hear of a man named Captain George?

LG: Yeah, that’s whose house out there that they’re restoring now.

BW: Mhm.

LG: My daughter-in-law was telling me about that the other day, a house across from the school, and she said, “Who was that old boat captain?” And I said, “Well, there was a Captain Kelly and, of course, that would stand in front of [inaudible] store.” And she said, “No, this big old white house across from the school,” and I said, “Oh, that’s the old George house.”
BW: Yes, Captain George. Uh, the Mitchell’s had bought it. Buddy and Kay Mitchell and they have renovated; uh, Kay is the sister of Harry Days.

LG: Well, that’s [inaudible] was trying to tell me something about the Days.

BW: I, I understand that Captain George had uh excursion boats that were running,

LG: Well, see, I don’t know anything about all of that.

BW: You don’t remember anything about that?

LG: Oh no, uh-uh. I wasn’t living in Cedar Bayou then.

BW: Did you know how the, your, was it your Uncle who had the store there, or your father?

LG: Mhm, two or three different ones had the store, and then Daddy was the last--

BW: Okay how did they get uh, uh goods to sell in the store? Did they come by boat or they?

LG: Oh no, they come by freight, the uh produce and all. They had uh, uh trucks that come up from Houston.

BW: Oh, they didn’t come by uh railroad then,

LG: Oh no, they, salesmen would come around, and take your order and they, uh,

BW: And the trucks would come across the ferry, on the hand ferry?

LG: Mhm.

BW: From Baytown?

LG: Yeah, there was always someone there to pull the ferry.

BW: Alright what did your people do for entertainment when you were kids?

LG: Oh we had lots of parties, dances.

BW: Where did you have the parties and dances?

LG: I always went to Barbers Hill; well, had some in uh Baytown. We used to have a party every now and then.

BW: And was there a big pavilion or something like that or was there--?

LG: We went to Sylvan Beach a lot of times to the pavilion over there.

BW: Were most of the dances in people’s homes?

LG: San Jacinto monument. Yes uh-huh and then Mills Bennett had a bunk house for a while. They used to have square dances when I was a kid there. I went several times to see ‘em dance, square dance.

BW: No movies?
LG: Come to Baytown for the movies. Then after I was older, and all grown I used to go to the Majestic in Houston all the time, at night we’d go to the movie.

BW: How was the best way to get to Houston?

LG: Well, you could go up by Crosby or come by Baytown there on,

BW: Market Street was in by then wasn’t it?

LG: Yeah Market Street on down I guess.

BW: That, the bridge I believe was put in in 1928.

LG: You know I didn’t pay too much attention to all of that, because there but two lanes I’m guessing.

BW: You just went the way the roads leads.

LG: That was just natural, never thought anything about it.

BW: Did ya’ll have very close ties with Dayton?

LG: No.

BW: No, rarely ever went to Dayton, is that right?

LG: Hardly.

BW: Mhm. Okay

LG: Not till lately here, [inaudible].

BW: When, when did you get married?

LG: Oh my goodness alive, you ask me a question now I don’t remember. You know I’d have to look to see [laughs].

BW: Who did you marry? Maybe you can remember that? [Laughs].

LG: Yeah, I think I can. Clive Gun from Kosse, Texas; he was working in the oil field at Barbers Hill.

BW: Did you make your home after you married in Mont Belvieu?

LG: Uh-huh.

BW: …And you reared a family?

LG: Four children.

BW: Four children, mhm.

LG: Johnny Gun, Joe Russell Gun and Claude Allen Gun and Elizabeth Mitchell; she was the oldest.
**BW:** Uh, do they still live in the area?

**LG:** They all live there. Well, Joe Russell, now since I gave up housekeeping and moved to the apartment at my daughter’s, uh, he’s living on Massey Thompkins Road; has an apartment.

**BW:** Do you have any grandchildren?

**LG:** I have 11.

**BW:** How nice. Umm--

[Tape cut.]

**BW:** Tell me about uh the time when, as a child, you used to play with Sam Houston’s boot jack.

**LG:** Well, Sam Houston used to come to Mother Barber’s house; that was Grandma Williams’ mother. We all called her Mother.

**BW:** Was that Mrs. Amos Barber?

**LG:** Yes, and she used to--; he used to come there and stay sometimes for 2 months at a time.

**BW:** Hm.

**LG:** And he went off and left a bunch of his thangs in a basket upstairs and never did come back after ‘em, and when we moved there, the boot jack was still there, and we used to play with it all the time, and Mama gave it to Uncle Josh Williams. Because he wore cowboy boots and somebody [inaudible].

**LR:** What was the story that you were telling me about your grandmother cooking a rat or something?

**LG:** The little slave negroes. See, Grandpa Barber had slaves when she was little. And they were all out playing one day and they had a big watermelon patch, and they told this little slave negro boy that they caught a rat out playing. That if they cooked the rat and he’d eat it, well, he could the biggest watermelon in the patch. And they roasted the rat over a fire, and he ate it, and it made him deathly sick.

**BW:** Did he get the watermelon?

**LG:** Yes, she said he should have known better because he could have had the watermelon anyway. Because he always planted a patch to have plenty of melons that the slaves could go and get one anytime they wanted it; same with the vegetables and everything.

**BW:** The other voice on the tape was that of Linda Roberts who was assisting with the recording of this tape [clears throat].

[Tape cut]

**LR:** How prevalent was slavery during this period of time?

**LG:** That’s when everybody had slaves.
BW: This had to before 1865, because that’s when the slaves were freed.
LR: Mhm.
BW: There weren’t any slaves after that.
LG: I know there some of his slave negroes that, there was someone coming around buying slaves, and he and Grandma said that they were afraid that he would sell ‘em and they’d say, “Oh Mister, please don’t sell me; please don’t sell me.”
BW: That must have been Amos.
LG: Uh-huh, and he said, “Don’t worry,” he said “There are not any of you for sale.”
LR: How many did he have?
BW: There are quite a few slave cemeteries over in West, West Chambers County that I have heard about; I haven’t seen them.
LG: Mhm.
BW: Um, out in the pastures, places like that. Ernest Ben Winfree was telling me that there’s,
LR: Well, down [inaudible]
BW: I’m sure you would know about that,
LG: Oh yes.
BW: Down in the Cove area where the black people, uh, did stay after they were freed.
LG: Yes, I know. Grandmama Stubbs, Grandmama Tilda, her mother and Grandmama, I guess, was living over there -- you cut across the marsh, that’s in the time of the North and the South, and uh Hazard Brown’s daddy -- I believe that’s the way it was put -- and his wife, Hazard’s mother, put Grandmama’s mother and when Grandmama was little and another baby or two, and all across in the marsh in the cut grass, and they were afraid that he’d, maybe a baby’ d cry or something; they were crossing over to safety.
BW: Was that during the Civil War?
LG: Mhm
BW: Uh, the first Stubbs that came, uh, back in about the 1820’s sometime, was his name Washington Stubbs?
LG: Well I guess it was because that was uh, uh Grandpa Stubbs’ daddy, and then he had a brother named Washington too.
BW: There were two of ‘em one; was called George Washington Stubbs, wasn’t he?
LG: Well that must have been [inaudible], but I just don’t remember. Now the old Stubbs Cemetery, you know where that is, don’t you?
BW: Yeah I think I’ve been there.
LG: Going in to the Mackey place where they used to live you know. Down on the [Inaudible] Road?

BW: I’m not sure. Yes I’ve been up in there hmh.

LG: Well they’re gonna erect a plaque now, I guess Aunt Flavia’s told you about it.

BW: No.

LG: Uh before Uncle Freeman died, I have the papers at my house yet, that I hung onto. Uh she went there, and they um, he give the names of everybody that was buried in the old cu-, uh Stubbs Cemetery, and they had it notarized and it’s on record in Anahuac and uh they’re gonna erect a plaque with all of the names on it because you know some of the tombstones and all are gone.

BW: I don’t think there many of ‘em that were there. It’s real hard to keep those old cemeteries up.

LG: Well they were just, wasn’t kept up you see for so many years.

BW: When uh did people start using automobiles a lot, do you remember be-, before the time of automobiles?

LG: Well, I think Hugh Wilbert had the first automobile on Barbers Hill that I remember, but my daddy said the first automobile that was on Barbers Hill uh they called him Joe [inaudible]. That was uh Uncle Daniel Lawrence’s, some kin to him his keeping, and he saw the car and come running in, hollering, “Oh, Unc! Unc! There’s a buggy running away without horse,” or something to that effect.

BW: Didn’t take long before everybody had cars, did it? What about telephones?

LG: Well, I don’t know just when they were installed, but I know Grandma Williams had a telephone for a long, long time. Everybody around there. One of those crank types?

BW: Yeah. Uh industries have grown a lot in the Mont Belvieu area and uh I wonder if you noticed the development of the industries there as you were growing up?

LG: Oh yes, there used to, yes because there used to be nothing but pasture and cattle.

BW: Uh did it make any, much impression on you where, was there anything about the sale of land to the industries that might have come across, to your attention uh back in those days?

LG: Well Grandpa had his all cut up in lots, the pastures. All that’s where all the town of Barbers Hill,

BW: Grew up.

LG: Grew up. and it’s built a bunch of rent houses, sold the lots, different ones, I lived -- out on, that one time I haven’t sold it -- my aunt, the uh, where the first house was built on Barbers Hill next to the cemetery.

BW: Next to the Barber-Williams Cemetery?
LG: Next to the Barber’s Cemetery.

BW: Mhm. Do you remember uh when they started drilling the jug wells out there?

LG: Oh yes.

BW: What did people think about that?

LG: Well thought we’d all get blown up some day. Which we might!

BW: They still think so don’t they?

LG: Had an explosion after drilling the well and hit one of those gas pockets just here last week.

BW: That was at Arco Chemical Company where they had it.

You still live up on the hill?

LG: No I still have my home there, and I haven’t moved everything from it; still have, have all my utilities up and part of my furniture is still there and stove, washer and dryer and everything. My granddaughter, Jonny’s daughter that married the 6th of August, and her husband are living in my house.

BW: But you live at Cherry Point.

LG: And I’ve moved up there in an apartment at my daughter’s, Elizabeth Mitchell’s.

BW: Cherry Point is a little farther from the industrial activity.

LG: About a mile up the highway uh-huh. On the Dayton Highway.

LR: Do you remember much about the early growth of Baytown?

LG: Well, when I used to come Baytown all the time and you know where Sears and all out there, all north of there was a pasture.

BW: That’s where the trees…

LG: And the front, no the south, used to be where Bessie and Henry Pruett, their house was about the only house there for quite a while in those trees there in front of the library as well as I remember it even before the Sears.

LR: You remember when Baytown was kind of a tent city?

LG: Oh no.

LR: That was before the--?

LG: I didn’t, no, that, uh--; we wasn’t allowed to go to Pelly for the shows, that was an oil field and a rough town anyway.

LR: Why? Because it was rough?

LG: Yeah, we slipped off once in a while and see a show there but we were…
**BW:** Uh, Mont Belvieu first was an oil town itself wasn’t it? Well, not first. First it was an agricultural community.

**LG:** Well in 1928 is when I remember Barbers Hill being an oil boom, and I worked there for J. B. Casey Store and then daddy had a little store there for a while. Then I worked in the post office there some, helped the post office, and then I worked in the drug store for Jack Busch for a short time.

**BW:** Then after the oil kind of boomed out that’s when these industries moved in with the…

**LG:** Oh yes.

**BW:** Uh liquefied petroleum,

**LG:** That’s just been a few years ago you see.

**BW:** Yes, mhm.

**LG:** Used to be [inaudible] Lee and Mills Bennett and Mills Bennett had the biggest uh, uh industry there, I guess. Then my brothers used to work for Mills Bennett. Uh, Thurman, one of ‘em, went to work on pipeline, Mills Bennett when he was about 13 years old.

**BW:** They had pipelines, uh…

**LG:** Well, they were just little ones around there then that had out here, I guess, from one well there, but I just don’t remember. But anyway Willie Smith was the um one that they worked for, and they were just kids.

**BW:** Do you remember going fishing or hunting or swimming?

**LG:** Oh I never did go fishing too much, I did some, I never got any. Shot an owl one time in Fisher’s Island, but that’s about all and had a blue face on my shoulder for a long time with a gun, shot uh,

**LR:** Could you ever swim anywhere?

**LG:** We went to Sylvan Beach and then we come to Evergreen to go bathing, to go swimming.

**LR:** Where was Evergreen?

**LG:** The other side of Pelly, off down where it is today.

**BW:** It’s off of Tabb’s Bay isn’t it?

**LG:** Somewhere, I don’t know the,

**BW:** The shore of Tabb’s Bay.

**LG:** I don’t know; they just called it Evergreen.

**BW:** Down Evergreen road, that’s where Ashbel Smith’s old home was.

**LG:** Yeah.
BW: So that was in the oil field area too, close to the oil field area.

LG: Yeah mhm.

BW: But it was a sort of a resort people liked to go down to.

LG: Yeah they had bathhouses.

BW: And there was a pier?

LG: Oh yes, there was a pier there.

LR: The long pier to keep you from getting into the mud, wasn’t it?

LG: I imagine, I don’t know I hadn’t been there too much.

BW: From what I understand.

LG: But we use to go in the canal, swimming between, uh, Barbers Hill and Old River.

BW: That canal’s been there a long time?

LG: Mhm.

BW: What was the canal for?

LG: Water the rice.

BW: The rice farms?

LG: Grandpa Stubb’s rice farm, a long time, years ago, and he give part of the land -- just the use of it -- to the canal company, and they furnished him with water for his rice.

BW: Do you know where that water comes from?

LG: Comes out of Old River.

BW: Old River?

LG: They have a pumping plant up there, you see.

BW: I wasn’t sure where the water came from.

LR: The, were there still rice farms around that area?

LG: Oh yes.

BW: There still are, aren’t there. Teddy Griffith does some rice farming.

LG: I don’t know just where he is, but the Irishes…

BW: Yes.

LG: See, they’re descendants of the Stubbs.

BW: Mhm. Lot of ’em over around Cove,
LG: There are [inaudible] Stubbs and C. T. Joseph, Laurence Schaffer,

BW: But that’s more over in the Cove area.

LG: Oh, that’s Cove area, uh-huh.

[Tape cut]

BW: You were telling me that the slaves, uh, built the,

LG: The slaves dug the first well.

BW: Where?

LG: At the old Barber place, just right, uh, north of my kitchen window when I lived in the house I lived in, the rent house.

BW: Do you know how deep they had to go to get water?

LG: Oh I think was about, I don’t know whether it was 40 or 80 feet. I don’t know, it’s deep.

BW: Pretty good water out there.

LG: It was, uh-huh. Just right north of the cemetery.

BW: Mhm.

LG: Out in the corner of the yard. Then everybody had their wells in the corner of the yard, and the house didn’t face uh the road out there Main Street. It faced that road, not the same as out in the pasture, it faced the other way. But um when grandpa remodeled the house for Grandma Barber and moved, built a kitchen around the front, well see it was facing the road then.

BW: This tape has been made for the Baytown oral history collection, and Mrs. Barber if you’ll answer out loud so we can get this, I mean Mrs., uh, excuse me, Mrs. um, Gun, if you’ll answer out loud so I can get this on the tape. Uh, do you understand that the tape is to be used for historical purposes?

LG: Oh yes, uh-huh.

BW: …in the uh oral history collection, and it will be used by other people who are studying the history of this area.

LG: I do. That’s alright.

BW: You’ll di-, distributed to the,

LG: Now I told everything as near as I can like you know I, course I don’t remember too much of everything.

BW: Yeah, but you do give permission for people to use it, this information…

LG: Things when I was a kid. But hum I know that uh I’d like to say Grandpa Barber’s slave negroes dug the well, and that’s where Grandpa Barber came in out of the oil, out of the uh field,
and drew a cool bucket of water and got him a drink and started to the house with a bucket of water and dropped dead with a heart attack.

**BW:** Mhm, you mo-, remember what year that was?

**LG:** No I can’t remember.

**BW:** That was his-, you don’t know HIM did you?

**LG:** I didn’t know him, but know here, knew her. Now let’s see, she died in 1910 and I was born in 1906, and I was 4 years old when she died.

**BW:** When she died [clears throat.]

**LG:** Uh-huh, that’s right, and I know that my brother, we used to go there a lot with Mama, along where Daddy put the store, and we’d stop at Mother’s and my little brother, Harvey, she’d call him, she’d say, “Come on Harvey, and sit in my lap,” and I remember telling her, “Mother you don’t have a lap.” She was big and fat.

**BW:** Oh.

**LG:** And Grandma Williams they, she’d laugh about it all the time; she said that, um, she used to, I followed her and was in her tracks all the time. When I was about 3 years old I made every step she made when we were there, and course then she was in the kitchen, doing her own cooking, and uh between the work table and the stove, and I’d get in her way and she’s say, “If you don’t get out of my way, I’m gonna step on you.” So when she’d get in my way I’d say, “Grandma, if you don’t out of my way, I’ma step right over ya.”

**BW:** [Laughs.] I guess people just everybody up in that community, knew each other pretty well didn’t they. Every-, all the Hall-, the, the Lawrence’s and the Winfree’s and the Williams,

**LG:** And the old pecan tree that’s out on Main Street was right out in front of my house. Well that house, the rent house, is still there, and it was out by the north kitchen door. When we were kids, now Mama used to put her tub under there to wash and turn the chair across the door so the babies could stand there, whichever one was the baby, could look and know she’s right there and she’s wash, sometime.

**BW:** You know who planted the tree?

**LG:** Yes, Linnie Barber.

**BW:** Linnie Barber, huh.

**LG:** Yeah now that’s uh, one of the boys at Cove…

**BW:** One of Amos’ sons?

**LG:** No, granddaughter.

**BW:** Oh, a granddaughter.
LG: Albert Barber’s daughter. Albert Barber married a Lawrence, and she died, and they had two children. Arthur Barber and, uh, I believe her name was Selina or something but they called her Linnie. And Grandma Barber raised ‘em. They lived there with her then, their daddy was one that was found dead out in the pasture.

BW: Yeah mhm.

LG: But they lived there with her, I guess, until they married.

BW: And she,

LG: And she planted the pecan tree.

BW: There a lot of old trees out there that look like they have been planted.

LG: And when I was a kid, now when we lived there, the pecans on that tree were bitter. Nobody, we didn’t even pick ‘em up and in the last few years uh those pecans are good after the Wilburns and uh the Smiths and different ones got pecan trees around in the vicinity. You see, one pa-, pecan tree won’t bear,

BW: Mhm.

LG: Without others, pollen from others.

BW: Hm I didn’t know that.

LG: You didn’t know that?

BW: No.

LG: And after that everybody got pecan trees around there then, when it started bearing. And that pecan tree would just be loaded.

BW: And they tasted good?

LG: And they’re good, best little pecans, and I have picked ‘em up by the grocery bags-full.

BW: I’ll bet. This will end the interview today. Thank you.

[END]

Transcribed by: Lynnette Sargis