Thursday, April 7, 1977. My name is Betsy Webber. I'm with the Baytown Sun and I'm making this taped interview with Jim Nelson at the sportind wood store for the Baytown Oral History Tape Collection.

Mr. Nelson, is Jim Nelson your full name?

James M. Nelson is my full name.

How long have you been in Bnt?

Well, I came with my family in 1919. I was just under 5 years old when we arrived here. My early recollections will be from the standpoint of a child. That's when I came with my mother and father from Denton County, Tex. The reason we moved down here was because my grandfather, Dr. N. L. Dudley, had already settled here a couple of years before. There was a great need for a doctor down here. He wrote and told papa there were plenty of jobs and all that stuff. That's the reason my family moved down here from Denton County, Tex.

DID YOUR FATHER GO TO WORK DOWN HERE?

Well, he worked at many jobs during his lifetime. He was county treasurer of Denton County for period, he was a druggist. He owned 2 or 3 drug stores in small towns around in Denton County at one time. Before WWI the doctor told him if he didn't get out of the store and into the sunshine and do some hard work he was going to die. Mama said they nearly starved to death while he was learning to be a farmer. He was a wheat farmer there. Immediately after the war, they moved down here.

DID HE SET UP A DRUGSTORE DOWN HERE?

He did. He didn't work in one down here. What they did -- Dr. Dudley and papa -- and Mr. Woods finally bought out the whole deal.

WHICH WOODS IS THAT?

His sons were Merle and Lynn (and Richard) Woods. I don't know Mr. Woods initials, but he was the druggist and he finally bought out the store there. It was on Ashbel and Texas Avenue, north east corner of that intersection where the drug store was.

DID YOU TELL ME YOUR GRANDFATHER BOUGHT A BLOCK DOWNTOWN FOR $400?
When Grandpa moved up here, the original population center was
down there around the mouth of Goose Creek Stream because most
of the boat transportation. And this is where the people started
settling heavily. And then where Pelly eventually was the people
started settling up there. This is where my grandfather's first
medical office was. About in the middle of the old town of
Pelly, finally was named Pelly. But they called the area down
around the docks Old Town and they called the Pelly area Middle
Town and this was New Town, what’s now the Texas Avenue business
section was referred to as New Town when it first started. So he
came up to New Town to build him a home up there. He built his
home at Defee and Ashbel, facing north, there weren’t any houses
or anything on that whole block of Texas Avenue and Defee and
West Ashbel and Gaillard. The reason he bought that whole block
He bought it for $400 -- was that he had a horse and bumpy to
make his house calls on. He was a general practitioner, I
believe they call them. And he’d have to catch that horse in a
hurry when he had to make an emergency call and he didn’t want
to have to chase him all over the prairie so he fenced in that
block and made a horse pasture out of it. And then later on as
the town started developing, people would come along and offer
him a couple of hundred dollars for a 50-foot front on Texas
Avenue. And he’d sell it because he was making money, making
a big profit. He finally sold out all the Texas Avenue frontage
over there for little or nothing like that. It was good money
in those days though. After Grandpa died, the estate sold that
100x100 corner where his home and office was -- they sold
that for I guess at least 10 times -- that 100x100 -- as least
10 times when the estate sold it as all the rest of the block
sold for back there when he sold it out. Now Dr. Dudley was my
father’s step-father. Almost people thought he was my mother’s
father because he wasn’t named Nelson and we were. They just
assumed it must have been mama’s family, but actually my real
grandfather died when Papa was five years old. Then Grandma
Nelson married Dr. Dudley and he was our grandfather on my
fathers side and he was a good one.
He was a real fine religious person and he was real good to us. He couldn't have been a better grandfather. But actually he was my father's stepfather.

WHEN DID HE DIE?

Well, let's see. Grandpa died in about 1941. He hadn't been in practice for a good long time. For several years at that time. He brought Dr. Ham Davis in to help him there in the practice and finally just gradually eased out and turned the whole practice over to Ham Davis. And Ham Davis bought the property there where the office and old residence was located on the 100x100 block that I mentioned there. Ham bought the whole thing after my grandfather died.

DID HE HAVE ANY HOSPITAL FACILITIES HE USED?

He had his own clinic there. He built this office and had an upstairs to it and he had several small rooms there and a nurse. So that he and any operations -- most of the eye, ear and nose and throat operations would just be hospitalized a day or two, just keep them there where he could watch them.

WASN'T HE A GENERAL PRACTITIONER?

Oh, he had quit practicing. I don't know just when it happened but he became an eye, ear, nose and throat specialist. I would say some time between 1922 and 25. He quit practicing and went back to med school and became qualified as an eye, ear, nose and throat specialist. And that's what he was all during his later life. That's what Ham Davis is.

I didn't clarify that.

I have a little old book back there that my sister gave me just recently. She was doing through some of Papa and mama's stuff and she ran across a little old tiny book small enough to be carried in the pocket and she got to reading it and what do you know, it was Grandpa Dudley's records of babies that he delivered. And I have that. I intend to give it to the library. A lot of prominent people in Baytown are listed in that book. I remember Jack Jacobs, down at the bank, was one of them that he delivered there. In that period of time. I think it was for about three years. It must be for 60 or 70 babies. There was a pretty good population here at that time.
BUT HE WAS HERE BEFORE ROSS STERLING CAME AND STARTED THE REFINERY, I ASSUME?

Well, yes, Grandpa came down here in about 1917. He was here about two years before we moved down here in 1919.

At any event my parents did move down here and papa started looking for some acreage. He found this old Hoskins place we always referred to as the Hoskins place. It was the old Gillette place out on Galveson Bay. Here's a picture of the old house out there that was built by slave labor.

WASN'T GILLETTE A DOCTOR? WASN'T HE THE ONE THAT WAS CONNECTED TO BAYLAND ORPHANAGE?

This was Henry F. Gillette. I don't know whether he was a doctor or not, but I think, I'm not quite sure. This was way before my time, but Miss Anna Wright was the foster daughter of the doctor there.

IT WAS CALLED BELLE PRAIRIE?

Yes, that area there where that house is, there's a pretty long prairie running north. It's on Tri-City Beach Road. You know where the new canal went in to let the water into HL&P? They just missed taking in the old home site there. It's still there. I went out there a few years ago and looked the area over.

RM THAT'S ON TRINITY BAY. IS IT TRINITY BAY?

Yes, uh, huh. Trinity Bay. And we lived there from 1919 to about 1950 when papa and mama moved away. We rented that place. From the hoskins family all those many years.

IS THIS THE HOUSE YOU LIVED IN, THE ONE IN THIS PHOTO?

Oh no. That was just a big pile of bricks, but when we moved there in 1919 there was water everywhere and that was the highest place. That was the only place that was dry. That's the place where papa built our home. Actually our house was located just about if the east wall of our house was about 15 feet from where what the remaining standing three-foot wall, that was all that was left of this wall right here. But this was the high place I don't know. They must have chosen the high place for this old home. But it was built by slave labor before the slaves were freed, and then it burned, it was hit by lightning in the 1915 storm
The walls or something

It cracked the walls or something there and nobody lived in it then and in 1919 lightning struck it. I think it was during a hurricane in 1919, and lightning struck it and set it on fire and that's when it all came down. This old brick building. But papa went out there and he built a little three-room house, just enough we could move in and started getting ready to farm and he did, he farmed and raised cattle there for many years. And he worked on a lot of those wildcat wells, out there in the early days. And lots of those fly by night operators didn't have any money and what they would do they would get men to work for them, give them a small salary and they'd give them stock in the company. If they hit oil, they were going to all be rich and papa had a lot of those stock certificates.

YOU'D BETTER LOOK THEM OVER. THEY MIGHT BE GOOD.

I remember onetime my sister married a fellow during the war. She was with a working in one of those, what do they call them the United something, a deal there to entertain soldiers, USO.

And she met a fellow from Michigan and married him. And he had worked for Sears and after the war he went to work as a manager of Sears. He got pretty rich. I guess he was a millionaire at the time he retired. He's retired now. They were doing pretty well and he came home one day and told Helen, my youngest sister, "I want to tell you something. I invested $10,000 in a wildcat scheme today. I don't want you to get mad at me now."

Helen said, "Oh, that's just fine. Perfectly all right with me. You're going to lose your money of course, but we can afford it. But if you just wanted to get some of those beautiful gilt edged stock certificates of those wildcat oil wells, my daddy's got a trunkful of them that he would have given you."

DID ANY OF THEM EVER TURN OUT TO BE GOOD?

No, none of them ever turned out because down there in that area, that wasn't where the oil was. They just hit a little gas and what not.

WHERE WAS IT? OVER ON TRINITY BAY?
All right, you know where Tri-City Beach crosses over that new canal they dug from Trinity Bay to the bayou. If you stop there and cross the canal and walk in a westerly direction out toward the bay up the south side of the canal about 150 or 200 yards, you'd be standing about where our old house stood. It's gone now and you'd find those old piles of brick there that was the old Gillette home.

IT WAS IN THAT AREA THEY DRILLED FOR OIL? OR IN THE GOOSE CREEK FIELD WHERE THEY STRUCK OIL?

Well, right -- I'll just lay it all out for you. I took some notes when I was talking to Perkins Wright. He said, I worked in the crew of the first attempt to drill for oil in this whole country around here. I said, Well, did you hit oil? And he said, no it was just a dry hole. I was just a kid and they hired me to fire the boiler. It's right there pretty close to where you lived as a boy. I said, that right? Let's go out there and you show me where it was. And it was right beside Tri-City Beach road. He got out and said, you see that old piece of pipe sticking out of the ground? That's part of it right there. It was just off the road. The road just missed it about 20 feet. It was there inside the fence. It's now. That location is now in that canal. It's done now. When they cut that canal, they got that particular location. But he said, I can remember the names of all the people that were on that. Jim Eisenhower was the driller, the other driller was a fellow named Bartlett, he had a couple of boys that worked on that.

I remember -- I don't remember what his name was, but the boys were named Dick and Jack. They worked on the drilling rig. The others were -- he called it the Goose Creek Oil Co.

THAT WAS IN 1906 OR 1907?

yes. The other fellows working on it were Bill Yawn, Bud Smith from Barbers Hill and another Smith, who was a cousin to Bud Smith, I guess from Barbers Hill too. And Elmer Shook and Perkins Wright fired the boiler.

THIS IS PATILLO HIGGINS. IT WAS PATILLO HIGGINS.

All right, I was just rewriting it down like it sounded to me. I that what it is?
That's the one that drilled at Gladys City.

Oh, well he was telling about another deal. This was a dry hole here. And I said well when did they hit oil? And he said, well, the third well drilled on John Gaillard's property was the first real oil producer. And the first oil that was on our property, Miss Anna Wright's property, down there on the bay -- this fellow Himmans drilled it and they hit oil for the first time on their property. There wasn't very much oil, but they did hit oil on the property for the first time. And that's the driller that drilled it.

If I'm not mistaken he's the same fellow that drilled at Barbers Hill later and then brought in the well in Gladys City.

How did you spell it?

P-A-T-T-L-L-O

They've done a lot of research out in Barbers Hill about him.

Jean McGinty has a picture of the first well he drilled out there. But of course the big thing was over at Gladys City in Beaumont.

Did they have it listed that he drilled the first producer on the Wright property?

I don't know. I'll have to ask her.

Anyway this is what Perkins Wright told me about it. And the reason they drilled, they chose that location, was because we had a water well about 50 yards from there and it was already in existence as a flowing well, an artesian well. When we came there the water was flowing, we didn't have to pump any water. It was about 75 yards from our house. And but there was gas coming out with the water all the time. When we were kids, we'd go there and we'd hold our hands over the side of the pitcher pump. When it would flow we put a pitcher pump over there, and we would hold our hands over that thing for a little bit, then strike a match and stick it in there and it would go Poof!

The gas -- you could just hold it for a minute and it. The fact that this gas was coming out, they said there must be oil there and that's the reason they chose that location, because of the gas coming out of the water well, there on that old property.
WELL, HE DIDN'T MISS IT FAR, DID HE?
Not too far. In fact they found quite a lot of oil after
Let's see, they sold that property later -- the Gillette
family -- there was an oil man from Beaumont there, and he
drilled all around the house where we lived there and they
brought in about 12 to 15 producing wells out there around
our old house area. But the oil was real fine sand down there
and they could never keep them flowing because they would
sand up. Just couldn't get a screen. They couldn't screen
out that fine sand. And they finally gave up on that oil
production. It was costing them more to keep those wells
producing than it was worth. Phelan was his name. It will
be somewhere in these records here.
HE'S THE ONE THAT BOUGHT THE GILLETTE PROPERTY?
YES, we called it the Hoskins property because the Gillette
girl married Mr. Hoskins, it was in their name. You can
read all that at your leisure if you want to. A fellow came
down here later on. Phelan knew the property and they
wanted to establish a property line and her father was the
only one who knew where it was. And they wrote down what
I told them and asked me to give them an affidavit to that
effect.
J. H. PHELAN. THIS HAS SOME GOOD INFORMATION IN IT.
Anyway my dad finally as the years went on there, he worked
with me on the drilling rig with the Sun Oil Co. Finally he
got to be a pumper there in the Sun oil field and he retired
from there. He was over 70 when he finally retired because they
didn't have any compulsory retirement and he was in such good
health. Actually the truth of the matter was that some of the
fellows that were 45 years younger than him were in such poor
health that Papa was kinda doing their jobs for them and he
felt obligated to stay there as long as any of those old men
hadn't reached retirement age. If he quit, they'd find out he'd been carrying those guys that couldn't do their jobs. Anyways he
liked his work. And he did retire from the Sun Oil Co. as well as
from the farm. It was mostly cattle. We quit raising cotton corn and stuff when all the kids were gone and he couldn't do it by himself. He started running cattle on about 400 acres of land that we had leased from the Hoskins. Mr. Hoskins always, they never would sell it. Papa tried to buy that land when it was worth maybe $75 or $100 an acre. He tried to buy that land a time or two, but Mr. Hoskins would never agree to it because he just knew that that whole area down there was floating on a pool of oil and all those crooked oil men would drill those holes and find that oil and cap them up and try to get his land away from him.

WHAT WERE HOSKINS INITIALS?

It might be in here. They'd be sure and get their details straight. It's just here name. His wife's name because she was the one that inherited it. She was a Sillette, see?

THAT WAS KIND OF OUT FROM TOWN WHERE YOU LIVED THEN?

WHERE DID YOU GO TO SCHOOL?

We went to school right here in what's Baytown now. It was Goose Creek then. We had to just about make our own roads. We'd go north through that Belle Prairie and come out at the end of James Street. In dry weather that was probably the best way to come to town.

THE EAST END OF JAMES?

Yes the east end of James. We'd hit it down there. But in bad weather, we pretty near had to go along the bay front. There was lots of shell and stuff along there. Building material to build roads was plentiful and we'd just patch up the road ourselves so we could get thold old Model T's over them and get up to the Evergreen area where the public road started.

THERE WAS A ROAD OUT TO YOUR HOUSE THEN?

We made the roads. There wasn't any public roads. No public road until they put that Tri-City Beach Road in through there and I was already in college by that time so I didn't get to travel any of it going to school.

WAS THE ROAD YOU MADE NEAR WHERE THE TRI-CITY BEACH ROAD IS NOW?

OR DID I FOLLOW THE BAY FRONT MORE?
The road along the bay front went below the hill between the water and the rise the hill was down close to the water front all along that bay, all the way up to Evergreen. We'd come up on the hill just east of Evergreen and get on the public road and come that way. And the road across Belle Prairie it followed, oh I'd say for a mile or so it followed pretty much the Tri-City Beach Road going north from the old house there. It just veered off to the right maybe a half a mile, for the first mile and a half of travel there.

THE SCHOOL YOU WENT TO, WAS IT AT THE CORNER OF STERLING AND COMMERCE? /-------------------?

Let's see. I don't know just where Sterling would be. There weren't any streets or anything, there was just a big old school grounds over there across Commerce, across the RR track and across Commerce. There was just a big old school grounds and there wasn't any streets through there in those days. That's the reason I don't know just exactly what street it was on.

But it WAS SOMEWHERE NEAR WHERE COMMERCE IS NOW?

It would have been just west of commerce. And there was a big horse barn and they converted it into a schoolhouse. And there were so many students that we only went for about half a day. We didn't get much of an education in the early days there.

They wouldn't even let me in until I was 8 years old. Because my birthday was a little late coming, you know. And I didn't get in and I was pretty near a year late in school. I don't know if that's good or bad. But that's where I started over there. I went to the first and second grades in the old barn and then I went to the third grade over on Pruett Street. Pearl, what's the name of that grade school?

HORACE MANN, ISN'T IT?

Grade school where we went to school?

Pearl: Anson Jones

Anson Jones. Yeah, I knew it wasn't Horace Mann. Because that's where I went to jr. high. And then went to REL.

YOU WENT TO THIRD, FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH AT ANSON JONES?
Yes, either 6th or 7th I was in Jr. high, but I did go to Jr. high at Horace Mann.

HORACE MANN WAS A SENIOR HIGH AT ONE TIME WASN'T IT?

It sure was. But I was in grade school when it was a senior high. It was my next oldest brother Robert who is a dentist in Dallas. He went to high school in that building. And then they built REL. And they made a Jr. high out of it.

And that's about the time I got up there.

SO YOU ARE A GRADUATE OF REL?

Certainly. And when I go to REL-Sterling football games, I wear a blue windbreaker so that the Sterling will know I support them and I wear a maroon cap so everybody will know I graduated from REL. By George.

I HOPE YOU CAN KEEP IT UP. SOMETIMES IT'S HARD.TO KEEP YOUR LOYALTIES STRAIGHT. YOU SPOKE OF THE LOT THAT BELONGED TO YOUR GRANDFATHER. DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN TEXAS AVENUE BEGAN TO DEVELOP BUSINESSES?

Well, it was in a very short while. I think grandma thought Defee would be the main street, but within a year or two it was obvious Texas Avenue would be the main street. They were mostly mud streets. I remember when I was a kid playing in the mud right there on Ashbel, near his office. It was a long time before there were any hard surface streets. But the town grew pretty rapidly along in that time. I was just small and we didn't live in town. In fact, it was pretty rough in town.

Pretty rough element. I know mama talked about my father; he said well, he wasn't going to let anyone say anything rude to mama on the streets and it was very likely to happen so it was just best for her to stay home until things settled down to keep him from getting in a fight with somebody. Nobody ever wins a fight. Everybody loses. Just like wars. Everybody loses. But there was some danger.

DO YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE KKK?

About 1921, 22 and 23.

Well my wife remembers them better. Because she said that they'd wake up at night with them marching down the main street of town here.
WHAT WAS YOUR WIFE’S NAME BEFORE SHE MARRIED?
She was Pearl Hollingshead.

AND YOU LIVED IN TOWN? (To Pearl) DID YOU SEE THE PARADES?
I was just a little old kid but I remember them marching down with their white sheets and their torches. That’s an impression. I don’t know what date it was or anything like that. We lived on the corner of Murril and Main. It was just a muddy street.

THEY FINALLY HAD TO DISORGANIZE THE KKK HERE. THERE WERE A FEW THINGS THAT HAPPENED THAT WERE SORT OF UNFORTUNATE. I THINK THEY FINALLY GAVE UP ON THE KLAN. SOME OF THE MEN I TALKED TO ABOUT IT SAID THE PURPOSE WAS TO HELP ESTABLISH LAW AND ORDER. THEY TRIED TO BET HELP FROM THE SHERIFF’S OFFICE AND NOBODY WOULD PAY MUCH ATTENTION TO THEM.

There’s always the bully type people that will get into an organization like that. Where they’re anonymous they sometimes get just as bad as the crooks. They’re not out in the open where everyone can see what’s going on, you know.

SINCE YOU KNEW SO MUCH ABOUT THIS OIL AND EVERYTHING, HOW COME YOU DIDN’T GET OUT THERE IN THE REFINERY AND WORK OUT THERE.

HOW DID YOU END UP HERE AT A SPORTING GOODS STORE?
I was a little too young to work in the oil fields when my father and brothers were doing all that. When there was so much activity going on. I was born in 1914. By the time I was big enough to work in the oil fields, things had settled down, there weren’t so many jobs available. I heard them talk about if you wanted a job in the oil fields down there in the early days, when they were drilling so many wells, all you had to do was just go down there and stand around until one of the guys on the rig got killed or crippled and you got his job. This was pretty rough going.

YES, BUT THERE WAS A BIG REFINERY OVER THERE AND PEOPLE WERE COMING FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY TO GET JOBS.

My brother Bob, the dentist, worked at the ref. a summer or two when he was down to college. He went to Baylor. And he’d come home telling about working out there in that mud and stuff.
Said they were -- for example they'd have about 20 men and they were going to move a big pipe and they'd have some poles underneath this pipe and a man on each side of the pipe -- pairs of men -- holding onto those poles and they were going to lift this pipe up and move it somewhere and the foreman would holler OK heave and everybody would grasp the pole and come up with it and the pipe never would move and all the men would go to their knees in the mud.

It must have been rough. Bob was telling me about that. He'd walk up to Evergreen and ride with Blondie Heintschel, I believe, from there out to the refinery where he was working and he'd come home with him and walk the other two miles on down back home.

DID YOU STILL HAVE TO WALK TO HIGH SCHOOL?

We'd come in a Model T Ford or a horse and buggy. We didn't walk it too much, but we -- if anything happened, we'd just set out walking. We didn't think anything about walking five miles. We'd go right through the woods because it was just as good or maybe better than the roads that people had been driving up and down. We'd just go straight through the woods when we'd walk home.

BUT THERE ARE A COUPLE OF GULLIES BETWEEN HERE AND THERE NOW. There is. We'd just have to jump across them or find a log. We knew all the routes through the woods.

HOW ABOUT THE CHANGES IN THE ROADS? YOU WERE IN COLLEGE WHEN TRI-CITY BEACH ROAD WAS BUILT? ROADS IMPROVED. DID YOU GO TO HOUSTON AT ANY TIME?

Yes, I remember we would do on that -- on a shell road over there and it's all real hazy there. I remember my sister driving an old Model T Ford and ran into two boys. She and another car collided coming back from Houston one night knocked the front wheel off the old car. I remember that. I remember a narrow shell road, but I don't remember those too well.

DID YOU GO TO LIBERTY OR DAYTON OR MONT BELVIEU OR CEDAR BAYOU? Pearl and her family lived over there and they used to go over that old high bridge over there at Liberty. They said that was a really exciting event. Going over that bridge.
WHERE DID YOU GO TO COLLEGE?

UT -- I studied mechanical engineering. I got a degree in mechanical engineering and I worked at it for several years. I worked as a contract cost estimator in Houston for an insulation company for a couple of years. And I put in my application with the Humble Co. when I got out of college.

One day they called me over there and -- this was in the impression days -- jobs were awful hard to find -- and they called me and asked me if I was still interested in a job and I asked how much they paid and I could do to work in the labor band for about what I was making over there as an engineer for this insulation co. so I pulled up stakes and came on out and went to work for Humble, worked for them about 5 months, then had a hunting accident. My brother let a gun go off and shoot me through the foot. A shot gun. It put me on crutches about two years. And when I got back on my feet again I went to work for an industrial line of goods, Raybestos Manhattan out of Pa. and they were making masks and stuff to use primarily in industry and they needed an engineer for a salesman and that's where I started my life as a salesman. And then after the war that job played out and they were fixing to move me away from here and I didn't want to move away from here and that's when I went into sporting goods. After WWII.

YOU STARTED THE STORE HERE? BOUGHT THE EQUIPMENT?

No. This bldg. here belongs to the Aaron Estate. I started in across the street over there and another fellow Joe Dihart -- I had appliances and some sporting goods there -- he was -- he started the sporting goods here in this building when it was brand new in 1947. He propositioned me to put my stock over here and go into partnership with him, which I did and this worked fine about a year and then we decided it was not going to make a living for both of us. So we decided on a buy or sell deal there and I bought him out and went into sporting goods business. In 1947, that's when I bought him out. That's 30 years.

YOU GOT MARRIED?

WHERE DID YOU LIVE AFTER MARRIED?
Before I was married I was in and out of Baytown for about 5 years. I wasn't actually living in Baytown. And when we first got married we lived in a little old brick apt. house there for about 6 months, right over there on the corner of Sterling. Just north of the Post office -- Gaillard on the northwest corner in those apartments, they are still there. We lived in one of those apartments. Then we moved down in the 600 block of Texas Avenue where that oh, there's a filling station there, Shamrock. That's the location where the house was located that we rented down there. We finally bought this old house over on 500 E. Adoue. We live there now.

HOW MANY CHILDREN DO YOU HAVE?

We have three.

WHAT ARE THEIR NAMES?

Linda is the oldest. She married Mike Nance from this area here. In fact Mike is the great-grandson of Mrs. Anna Wright J. He was from one of the old families here. He's a career man in the air force and they are in England now. They have lived in Germany. He was in Turkey, but Linda couldn't go to Turkey, because of the situation over there. He's a non-com, one of the highest set. technical set. or something. They are real happy with the air force. They have two children. A 10 year old son and they adopted a child in Germany when Charles was five years old and she's started to school. She must be about. My middle name is Martillus after my grandfather. We didn't want to hang that on him so we did name him Mart. They called my grandfather, great grandfather on my mother's side, Uncle Mart so we just named him mart. He lives in Houston right now. He works for Western Electric and they had bought a new house out there close to Western Electric. He got a chance for advancement by doing to Dallas so they're in the process of moving to Dallas. They've got a new home they've been in just about a month. They have a profit in that home already.

DID HE MARRY A BTN. GIRL?

Well she was more or less a Baytown girl. Rosemary Norton.
And her aunt and uncle live here and she went to REL a year and a half when she was living with her aunt and uncle. Her uncle and her father were in education there. He's head of some college in West Texas, I can't remember the name of it.

The uncle is. Her father is more or less retired now but he was all down in Guatemala and much of South America, working for U.S. Govt. in some kind of a school deal down there.

And Rosemary and her sister both speak Spanish fluently. They went to a Spanish speaking school down there.

DO THEY HAVE ANY CHILDREN?
You saw them running around the store here. They have one two and one three. And they say that's all.

WHO IS YOUR OTHER CHILD?
That's Tommy. Thomas Nelson. He's a lawyer in Dallas.

Actually his office is in Terrell, he's with McBracken, Shields etc.

IS HIS WIFE FROM BATTOWN? WHO IS SHE?
Yes. Lita, Max Mosesman's daughter. They don't have any children.

DID ALL YOUR CHILDREN GRAD FROM REL?
Yes. Linda went to LC, graduated. Mart went to UH in electrical eng., worked for Bell Telephone, transferred to Western Electric. Took another degree in computer science.

Thomas went to UT graduated from there with a BA and took law degree from UT law school.

Lita is fixing to get her master's in special ed. She went to UT.

Mart went to UH, decided that on his own.

Talki about living down there on that bayou. When I was just a little bitty kid, we'd get in the wagon and go down there.

Papa would want to mail something to Denton or somewhere. They had a regular mail route. That boat would pass an old dock down there on the bayou, Cedar Bayou. We'd go down there and wait until that boat would go by and wave to him and he'd come into the dock, take those packages aboard that boat and
take them on into Houston and send them off. I remember doing that a time or two.

THERE WAS AN OLD POST OFFICE DOWN ON CEDAR BAYLU THAT SAM HOUSTON WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE GOT MAIL AT.

Oh, talking about Sam Houston, Mrs. Hoskins, Sarah, told me when she was quite elderly and was reminiscing when she was a girl. That was a fine home they had down there. She said they would entertain people quite often. Sam Houston would visit them there because he lived across Cedar Bayou there, his old home place was down at Cedar Point. One night they were having a big party and Sam Houston got a little too much to drink so some of the men took him upstairs and put him to bed. And the party was going on. She was just a young girl. This made quite an impression on her. She said after while she looked up and here's Sam Houston wrapped in a sheet, on the balcony. And he walked to the head of the stairs and he misses his step and falls and loses his sheet and rolls out stark naked on the floor at the bottom of the stairs.

She said she was there and she saw it.

You know when we moved -- Geroge George Zalente, he was a Negro slave and when the slaves were freed, Mr. Gillette must have been a very kindly slave master because when the slaves were freed after the Civil War, he called all the slaves together and told the OK Mr. Lincoln has declared all the slaves to be free so you can all, I'm going to give each of you so much money and you can buy your train ticket to anywhere you want to go. And some of them had heard about maybe Atlanta, Ga. like that was heaven or something. Each one had some place they would like to go to and he bought them a train ticket to wherever they wanted to go, and sent them off and he came to George and he was 12 years old at this time and Mrs. Hoskins told us about this. Mr. Gillette said alright George, where you want to go? and he was born there but he never did know who his father was and his mother had died before he was 12 years old, and so he didn't have any family and he started crying and he said well I want to stay here. So Mr. Gillette said, all right if you want to stay here, you certainly can.
you're free and not a slave any more. When they moved away from that property down there, what they did they set aside. Five acres of land out there next to the west fence on the bay. There was a lot of land below the big hill next to the water. The high hill about a 22, 24 foot bank where his old log cabin, where he lived. And he was living there when we moved there. When they'd have a blow, papa would get worried about it and George told him, I've been living right here for all these many years, there's never been any hurricane, 1915, 1919, named the all. I've stayed right here and never been afraid so he said they'd not all that bad. It was about 22, 24 foot elevation where his cabin was. Much of that land has eroded. Sam Houston home gone.

I tried to find that one.

The site of Bell Prairie still there.

Yes it's about 200 yards from the high bank on the bay. It's set well back from the bay. Plus there's a marshy area about 400 yds wide below this big bank that forms a little barrier reef and the waves don't come up and hit this high bank in that area. That's the reason the bank's still there just like it was when George lived there. The waves don't come up high enough on the bank. Marshy area breaks the waves.

Interest in boating, fishing and hunting?

All my life. Used to trap muskrats in that marshy area in front of the house when we were kids. Wen I was about 12 and Joe was about 10, we John Wright moved away from down there and left a bunch of field and stream magazines and we picked them up and got to reading them and that hunting and fishing was for us. Brack ducks were plentiful on that day and time. Down there on Ash Lake that's the lake on your left as you cross the drawbridge on Cedar Bayou. Alongside CB. Some kind of lilies growing in there, we called them banana lilies because they were looked like a little, bitty stalk of bananas. Those canvass backs loved to eat those stalks and they would come in there at night by the thousands in that lake and pull up those lilies and eat the roots off them. That's where
If we hunted, we needed some decoys. We didn't have any. We had found one or two in the drift down there and that's all we had. Mr. Bill Wright who lived close to mouth of CB, in his first shop there in his workshop there he had some decoys that didn't have any heads on them. So we -- we tried to talk him out of them one time and he said no, he was going to put some heads on them -- that was Bill Wright, John Wright's father, -- he was an elderly person then, just had one eye, he was a brother to Mrs. Anna Wright's husband, George, -- and they had another brother named Tom. The three Wright brothers had come over here from England and they started, put up a brick yard down on CB. They used the money to buy the land. He decided to give them to us because he wasn't going to put any heads on them anyway. I got me some white pine and I started whittling out the heads for the decoys and I found out that that wasn't any too big a job. We put the heads on those 11 and we'd found a couple of them in the drift. We had about 12 or 14 decoys. We could see those canvass backs were white in the middle and black on each end. We didn't know what color their heads were cause we couldn't get that close. We just painted the heads green. It didn't matter to the ducks. They just came to them just fine. We had some old single barreled shotguns and we would wait until those ducks got think in those decoys and we'd shoot and shoot with those single barreled shotguns and kill as many as we could with one shot because we didn't have very many shells.

WHERE DID YOU SHOP?
This was a by that time, 10 or 112 yrs old, the business section on Texas Ave. was pretty well established. I remember my brother Tom, he's retired now. He ended up as president of the Gulf Publishing Co. in Houston. He worked for Mr. Joiner. He was the main grocery store on Tex. Ave. One day Mrs. Brown comes in and she was fixing to get some butter. Tom liked to have got fired over this because Mrs. Brown reaches in to get some butter and tom told her, no, no don't get that. Get that in the back it's the freshest butter.
After Mrs. Brown was gone Mr. Joiner liked to have run Tom off from there. They had hardware stores too, like Ilfrey's Hardware. I don't know when it was put in there, but I bought a lot of shells from Ilfrey's Hardware. It was in the same block on the north side of Texas Ave. There was a pretty well established business district by the time I got big enough to buy something. We didn't have much money to buy anything with.

WHO WERE YOUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS?

There were seven of us. All still living except the youngest. My youngest brother Arthur was in WWII. He had some pretty bad experiences during the war and he never did recover from that. We considered him a war victim. He was a pilot in the air force. He flew a B-24. That's the old potbellied bombers they used so heavily in Europe there. But they didn't have a very high ceiling and boy they stayed right down in that flak and those German fighter planes -- well, they got shot up something terrible. He flew 30 missions over there. He went to England with an air squadron -- group -- with 60 planes, flew over to England and started bombing there. He died after the war. He died in 1952.

ELEEST

Tom. He's 71 now. Bob is a dentist in Dallas he's 69.

Then a 5 year skip, so Mattie is about 65, I'm 63.

Then Joe and Helen are retired. I'm the only one who's still working, if you call this work. I think it's kind of fun in there. Joe retired from Exxon last year. He's 2 yrs. younger than me. Helen is the one who married the manager from Sears and did so well financially. She's two years younger than Joe, so she's 4 years younger than me, so she's 59. Husband is Gordon McCorkle. He must have been a real fine man. He opened stores all over town. Paid him well.

They lived out of Chicago in a town named Freeport just after WWII. Moved him to Kansas City, had 4, 5 little stores. Went to Omaha, Neb. Moved around a lot.

Tom, Bob, Mattie, Helen, Joe, Arthur
I started telling you about that deal. They had 60 planes in that deal and in 30 missions they lost 120 planes out of that group.

60 to START, 0 LOST 120. They're replace.

They would come back with 20 or 30 missing and they'd put in a whole new batch. When this thing was all over, he was one of five original pilots still alive. He didn't have any of his crew left that he went over there with. They were killed by flak and machine gun fire and stuff off and on and he had a whole new crew flying with him after 30 missions. It was a real bad experience.

WERE YOU IN WWII?

No, I had a hunting accident and nearly shot my foot off. My brother Joe led a gun go off, he was unloading his gun and shot me in the foot. That happened in 1939, Friday 13 of Oct. They wouldn't have me. I tried to get in the AF, I figured you wouldn't have to walk if you're going to fly. They wouldn't have you if you couldn't walk. They'd take one eye-d people and one-armed people, but you had to have two good feet.

WAS THE FISHING BETTER THEN?

No, the fishing wasn't all that good. Because all of the pollution from the oil operations especially that Goose Creek Field out there in LTabs Bay kept the water messed up so the fishing wasn't very good, right around here. We were pretty limited as far as traveling was concerned. But as far as we could row a boat -out in that bay there wasn't all that too good of fishing. We could catch enough fish to eat, but nothing unusual, as far as fishing was concerned. About that pollution deal. I remember seeing at night there was enough oil on that bay out in front of our house that caught fire and it burned across that bay for hours there, kind of like a prairie fire a long line of flame on the edge. I imagine some wells blew. It was burning right across that bay. There was that much oil on the water.

I wasn't very big boy that looked something terrible

PEOPLE DID SWIM AT EVERGREEN, DIDN'T THEY?

Yes, but that was in later years when we swam at Evergreen
That was quite a resort area in its time.

THERE WAS A PARK THERE AND A PAVILION?

The pavilion went out there about 1/4 of a mile and there was a reef or shoal, shallower out there. Muddy everywhere and this was a sandy bottom where you could stand up.

THANK YOU.

Mattie is the one member of the family that probably contributed more to the history or good of this community than any of the rest of us. in that she was a librarian she was on the advisory committee for the library when they created the Baytown library, city library. She was a very knowledgeable about libraries. She was a scrapper, too. She wouldn't compromise on anything but the best in that library. She had to have the building like it ought to be, the arrangements like they should be, got a topnotch librarian Hank Blascek, some people give her credit for insisting, that everything bethe best in that library and I think it turned out to be one of the finer libraries in this whole area. If you don't think that library is being used, just go down there any night.

Mattie is 2 yrs. older than I. She had a lot of experience getting her college education. Incidentally all 7 children had a college education which is something unusual, especially for a farmer, and a bunch of farm children. Tom had gone to work for Gulf Publishing Co. in their office in Pittsburg and she went up there and lived with Tom and his wife and went to Rm Pitt for two years. She got a teachers cert. and started teaching. She was librarian at HM. She kept on taking classes at the university of Houston and had them transferred to UT, then took a years leave of absence and got her BA degree from Ut and became librarian for REL-Meantime she married. She and her husband, Henry Skeet had one daughter. Henry died of undulant fever, most unusual.

Flairly young, Pitt was first two years of college, got a teachers cert. with 2 yrs. Henry Skeet was a rancher from W. Tex. When depression came on he had 60 sections of land 120 sections under lease added. He had it almost paid for. When depression came, he couldn't finish paying.
Came here to work for Exxon. Liked raw milk, blught it and got undulant fever.

She went to TWU in Denton and got MS in library science.
Later she again to Rob Howard and both had lived alone so lone didn’t work out, they separated after 5, 10 yrs.
Divorced now. She lives in San Antonio, daughter and 2 grand live ther. She went from here to library in Kerrville, new library about 4, 5 yrs. Then job at Montgomery county library in Conroe became available and she took that. Then retired.

RECORD OF GRANDFATHER’S DELIVERIES OF BABIES FROM 1918 to 1922.
NAMES OF BAYTONIANS HE DELIVERED. 66 /120 280 entries,
two sets of twins 1 set of triplets