

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
WITH
JOY HUGHES LIVINGSTON

MAY 17, 2014

ARCADIA, TEXAS

INTERVIEWED BY DR. PERKY BEISEL

ORAL HISTORY #812

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Amanda Carr transcribed this interview in September 2014. Perky Beisel reviewed the draft of this transcript. Her corrections were incorporated into this final transcript by Amanda Carr in November 2014.

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ABSTRACT

Joy Hughes Livingston, a native of Arcadia, Texas, talks about her experience growing up in the rural community during the 1940s. She discusses her farm life as a youth in Arcadia through to her administrative career after attending business school in Nacogdoches, Texas which extended more than fifty years.

Persons Mentioned: Van & Elie (Patterson) Hughes, Mrs. Bicker, Ellen/Ella & Chester Hope/Hote; Dr. C.M. Carr; Dianna (Dinah) Oliver; Boyd Hughes; Mrs. Bussey; S.R. Menard; James Earl Rhodes; Travis & Carolyn (McElroy) Price; John Covington; Mr. Livingston; Dr. Walter Warren; Mr. Mooseburg; F. M. Hughes; Boyd Hughes; Earline Crawford; Mr. Gentry; Mr. Starkey; George Powdrill; James Earl Rhodes; Mr. Travis and Carolyn (McElroy) Price; Mr. L.D. Pates; John Covington; Henry Grant; May Chapman Grant; Dr. Walter Warren.

Places Mentioned: Arcadia, Texas; Rainsville Community; Hollow Rock Mountain, Shelby County; Powdrill Hill; Cooper School; Timpson, Texas; Nacogdoches, Texas; Center, Texas; Patton Auction Barn; Wicher's Lake; Pleasant Grove; Campti, Texas; Waterman, Texas; Huber, Texas.

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PERKY BEISEL: Today is May 17, 2014. We're at the home of Greg Grant in Arcadia, Texas. I'm Perky Beisel, and I'm going to be interviewing Joy Hughes Livingston, and so, to get us started, why don't you tell me a little bit about when you were born, where, who your parents were, a little bit about your early childhood.

JOY HUGHES LIVINGSTON: I'm the daughter of Van and Elie Hughes, Elie Patterson Hughes—

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: —and I was born about four miles from Arcadia in what they call the Rainesville Community. No one has ever heard of it, but at one time they had a post office there and different things, but uh, my father's... father—my grandfather Hughes—had owned this house, and as the six boys would get married, they would move to what they called the “weening” house—

BEISEL: —Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: ...and that is where I was born.

BEISEL: Uh-huh, and that was on the—

[clock chimes]

LIVINGSTON: —Near Hollow Rock Mountain, about four or five miles up the road here, and the country doctor, Dr. Warren, came out to deliver me. Later, when I was around two years old, we moved to Arcadia, uh, to a house on Farm Road 138, about three or four miles where we are sitting now. Daddy

purchased land from various ones, for a very small sum, and uh... I walked to school, starting I think in 1936, and I walked three miles.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: We passed by where we are now, at Arcadia Crossroads, and we traveled on up... west to the Cooper School—

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: —and uh, we never, ever, uh ever got to ride in a car, except for one occasion, our teacher—drove from Center down—and she would pick us up. She'd find us walking and she'd pick us up, and let us ride in her car., and once incident I remember well is the car door opened and swung back. Well, the—she started the car up and the door wasn't closed good and it swung back and broke—

BEISEL: Oh no!

LIVINGSTON: —the hinge off. That was quite exciting.

BEISEL: [chuckles] I bet.

LIVINGSTON: Her name was Mrs. Bicker.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: But, my first teacher was named Mrs. Ella/Ellen Hope/Hote. Her husband, Chester Hope, I noticed in some of the deeds I brought, was the county clerk here at one time.

BEISEL: Oh, in Shelby County?

LIVINGSTON: In Shelby County, yes. And uh... it was uh... it was uh, they call that “The Good Ole Days,” I, but to me it was not the good ole days. [Beisel chuckles] Walking home from school... when it was hot or when it had been raining, it was muddy, and we had umbrellas, and uh, raincoats and overshoes and then we [clears throat] had to walk up what we call the

Powdrill Hill that was real steep. We'd have all our books, and clothes and paraphernalia, and—

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: —we'd be so tired we could hardly get up that hill.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: Then we'd have to go home, and not just sit down. We had no TV or any type of entertainment. I think we *might* have had a radio at that time. I'm not real sure, but that would have been 1936 to 1940.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: So, but, uh, we didn't get to play or anything. We had work—they made us work.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: We to bring in the—we had a wood stove, and we had to bring in the wood for the stove and the wood for the fireplace. That was the only way they heated the house.

BEISEL: Right, right. What kind of house was it?

LIVINGSTON: That particular house was unpainted, and had the dogtrot down the center. It was the well—of course there was no running water—but right at the end of the dogtrot there was a well. You could just walk right up to it and just draw water up, and to keep our butter fresh and our milk fresh, we would put it in another bucket and drop it down into the well—

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: —and uh, that would keep it cool and from ruining.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm. What kind of chores did you have to when you got—what kind of chores did you have to do when you got home from school or, or during the summertime?

LIVINGSTON: During the summertime, it was not exactly chores—it was work.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: We had to chop cotton.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: Hoe the corn—

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: Uh... in the field and all, it was just burning hot. I don't think, I didn't—
don't call that "The Good Ole Days."

BEISEL: No. [chuckles]

LIVINGSTON: We—my daddy—he did a lot of things to make money. He tried different
things. The county agent, Mr. Mooseburg, would come out with new
programs and all. One time, he had everybody to raise peanuts.

BEISEL: Really?

LIVINGSTON: *Yes*, and uh, we would have to bend over and pull up those peanuts and
shake all the dirt off. That was one of the worst jobs I think we ever had.

BEISEL: [chuckling]

LIVINGSTON: And uh, but other chores was like helping my mother do the cooking, and
washing dishes, and as I said, bringing in the wood and uh,... of course
we, uh, would pick the cotton and put it on the front porch.

BEISEL: Oh? At the house there?

LIVINGSTON: It would be a *huge* pile of cotton, and we—for fun—we would run and
jump in that big stack of cotton. We had a lot of fun doing that.

BEISEL: And was the cotton loose or did you have it in bags?

LIVINGSTON: Loose.

BEISEL: Oh! So that'd be a great pile.

LIVINGSTON: later it was picked up, carried to the mill, and made into bales.

BEISEL: Do you remember which gin your father used or?

LIVINGSTON: The McWilliams—

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: —Gin, which is about a mile down the road from where we are now.

BEISEL: How long did he plant cotton? Do you remember?

LIVINGSTON: Well, I, We—around 1938 Daddy purchased the land where we're—just south of us now—from Dr. C.M. Carr—

BEISEL: Oh, alright.

LIVINGSTON: —the local physician here. And uh, he had bought—inherited—the place from a Dinah Oliver—he and Margie Oliver. Which I'll go into more detail about, but after we moved to the Dr. Carr house, which was considered one of the nicest homes down here—it served as his office and a home.

BEISEL: Oh, okay.

LIVINGSTON: But, uh, we farmed for many years on a larger scale. Lots of picking cotton and gathering corn, and uh... so many things. I can tell you going to school at Cooper,

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: I didn't have to walk quite as far.

BEISEL: Oh, it was closer?

LIVINGSTON: A little closer, but then uh, in the eighth grade I started going to Timpson High School. The bus would come here to the stores at the crossroads at Arcadia. We had the Jim Crawford store, and his mother-in-law had the Miss Lou Wheeler Store—

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: Two stores, and the bus would come there, and I would walk the eighth of a mile from our house up to get on the bus, but prior to that, daddy, uh, started selling milk.

BEISEL: Oh...!

LIVINGSTON: And uh, a large milk truck would come, and we had the five gallon cans that we milked—I had to milk three or four cows before getting ready to go to school in Timpson.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: And again, that was not “The Good Ole Days” to me. I don’t...

BEISEL: [chuckling] My father—

LIVINGSTON: I don’t miss that a bit.

BEISEL: My father grew up milking cows before school, and he never wants to look at another one again. [chuckles

LIVINGSTON: I always said um, when I marry, I am not going to marry a farmer. I am not going to live on a farm.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: I didn’t enjoy picking cotton. We had to continue that—

BEISEL: Right.

LIVINGSTON: —until I finished high school in Timpson in 1948.

BEISEL: Wow. So, he had cotton quite lengthy—

LIVINGSTON: —Yes, but a long about that time they had slowed down on crowing cotton.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: —But, they—Mr. Mooseberg came out with another program that year for everybody to raise tomatoes... and I think that was the worst of all. Daddy planted about three or four acres of tomatoes, and uh, we had to—the first bad job was pruning them. You broke off a little part of it, and all that juice would get all on your hands and they'd be completely black.

BEISEL: Oh...

LIVINGSTON: —and you could hardly get it off. Well, that was a terrible job. And then we would load the truck and head for Timpson where they had... tomato companies and sheds—tomato sheds they called them—where they packed them, and there'd be a line half a mile long sometime—

BEISEL: Really?

LIVINGSTON: —of farmers with their loads of tomatoes. And I remember once occasion after we'd picked them, they shut the mill down and said, "We're not buying anymore today."

BEISEL: Oh, no.

LIVINGSTON: —so we had to just throw them away.

BEISEL: Oh my goodness! You probably couldn't eat all of them....?

LIVINGSTON: No, they couldn't, no we couldn't. We did a lot of canning, and that was another chore. I didn't enjoy canning, either because we had no air conditioning, no ceiling fans, and uh, but, fortunately, the house had twelve-foot ceiling fans, and uh, with the windows opened it was fairly cool.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: So, uh...

BEISEL: Well, how—how many siblings did you have?

LIVINGSTON: I had one brother.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: F. M. Hughes, and he, unfortunately, was uh, killed in an accident when he was fifty-nine...

BEISEL: Mmm-hhmm.

LIVINGSTON: In Nacogdoches, he—on the Patton Auction Barn, the cattle auction barn.

BEISEL: So, it's just the two of you. So you *really* had to pitch in and work.

LIVINGSTON: We both did. My brother and I would fight. We'd be hoeing cotton and fussing, and I remember one time I hit him with a hoe. I was so sorry I did that. [chuckles]

BEISEL: He might have deserved it. Who knows? [chuckles]

LIVINGSTON: Yes, uh, I was a little bit older than him.

BEISEL: Oh... okay.

LIVINGSTON: But uh, I never did—Dr. Carr was a very interesting character.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: He uh, —I never did meet him, even though I was around nine or ten years old when we moved to the house after Daddy bought the property. Dr. Carr had inherited—he and Margie Oliver—inherited the property where my house is, from a Dinah Oliver in nineteen, uh, 1915, according to some of the deeds I have.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: And uh, —

BEISEL: How do you spell that? A Dinah? Is than an A-D—

LIVINGSTON: Well, it's spelt D-I-A-N-N-A—

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: —but they called her “Dinah” I think—

BEISEL: Hmmm.

LIVINGSTON: —instead of Dianna.

BEISEL: Oh, okay. Hmmm. Do you know anything about her, or about that name?

LIVINGSTON: Well, I know that she was a sister to Joe Oliver, who lived next door to us, and my aunt Betty Patterson, who lives just inside of here—of course she's not alive now. But, I didn't know the connection of Dr. Carr and Margie Oliver who inherited this property from uh, Dinah Oliver, and then uh, my daddy purchased it from Dr. Carr in 1938.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: I looked at some deeds and testamentary—

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: —uh, things the other day and was noticing my uncle Boyd Hughes, who was the broth—my daddy Van Hughes's brother, he was county clerk at the time.

BEISEL: Ahhh.

LIVINGSTON: That was interesting, but then, Dr. Carr... went to homes, and delivered babies, and went by horseback—

BEISEL: Mmmmm.

LIVINGSTON: —and patients came to his house and all. I wished I had met him, but uh—

BEISEL: Mmm!

LIVINGSTON: —quite colorful character. Interesting.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm. Were there any stories about him...? That you can recall?

LIVINGSTON: I just... know of one. My aunt, Earline Crawford, he delivered one of her children. That's about—

BEISEL: Oh, Okay.

LIVINGSTON: —all I know, uh... I couldn't find anything on the internet about him. I tried to, but—

BEISEL: That would be interesting—to know where he perhaps got his training and—

LIVINGSTON: —Mmm-hmm, and I don't know where he came from or the connection between The Olivers and him. He was the executor of Dinah's will and so forth and inherited the land and then later after my dad, Van Hughes, purchased it, he bought surrounding property-

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: —from Joe Oliver and different people, and uh... that's where we are today. I still—well, I lived there until I graduated from high school and uh, went to college in Nacogdoches—business college—

BEISEL: Uh-huh.

LIVINGSTON: —and uh, then got married and lived in Center ever since.

BEISEL: How much land did your father end up owning? Do you remember how much acreage that was?

LIVINGSTON: Well, here and on one Farm Road 138—at different times—he ended up owning 512 acres.

BEISEL: Oh my goodness! Now did he have any sharecroppers or tenant farmers that helped him?

LIVINGSTON: No, he didn't. We had a man, a single man that lived with us, that lived on the farm. His name was Mr. Gentry—

BEISEL: Mmm!

LIVINGSTON: —and he was quite colorful. My friend and I one time—we were mischievous and uh,—Mr. Gentry would, as we would sit down at the

table to eat, every time this came up in the conversation about his prior employer... that wouldn't put the sugar on the table. They'd remove the sugar. He wanted a lot of sugar in his coffee and all.

BEISEL: Oh...

LIVINGSTON: So he would sit down at the table, and in a little bit he'd say, "She wouldn't put the sugar on the table."

BEISEL: [chuckles]

LIVINGSTON: So, my friend, that was spending the night, and I thought up this idea. Let's get some salt and [chuckles] turn the bed sheet back and sprinkle all in his bed, and he'll think it's sugar.

BEISEL: [chuckles]

LIVINGSTON: So we did that, and of course he talked to my daddy. Those girls—they've put salt in my bed, and he thought it was terrible.

BEISEL: [chuckles]

LIVINGSTON: So after my brother passed away in 1992—uh, he has three boys.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: And, uh, we divided the land between them and me, and I have the house—

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: —and part of the acreage, and uh, I rent it.

BEISEL: But you live in Center?

LIVINGSTON: I live in Center, yes.

BEISEL: Well, so, tell me about going to school in Timpson. Did you enjoy that? Over there?

LIVINGSTON: Oh, I loved going to school in Timpson, yes. I uh, loved riding the bus. Sometimes we'd slip in the ditch and all the kids would have to get out and help push the bus—

BEISEL: Oh my!

LIVINGSTON: —back up on the road.

BEISEL: Today the bus driver would be in so much trouble if that happened.
[chuckles]

LIVINGSTON: I know it, but uh, and then I had an aunt that lived in Timpson, and if it was real rainy and the roads were real bad my parents would let me spend the night with her, and I loved that—being in Timpson. Her daughter lived with her and we would go to Wicher's Lake. That was—they had a dance hall, and it was—the floor went out over the water, and had a jukebox. We just loved going there, dancing and having a good time.

BEISEL: Uh-huh.

LIVINGSTON: Timpson is a great school. We—on May 3rd we had our, uh, class reunion.

BEISEL: Ahh.

LIVINGSTON: It was our sixty-something year. Let's see, uh, forty-eight to uh, . . . our 64th year, I believe . . . and, uh, we always enjoy those.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: But in school I was third in my class.

BEISEL: Oh, wonderful! What was your favorite subject in school?

LIVINGSTON: I loved math a lot . . . The teachers were wonderful. We discussed them last Saturday when we had the reunion—how, that if we had teachers like that today, we wouldn't have the problems we do.

BEISEL: Right.

LIVINGSTON: Because they were very strict, and they were there for you to learn.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: I was the class favorite for a couple of years, and then uh, FFA [Future Farmers of America] sweetheart, and so I really, I really enjoyed school, but an unfortunate thing happened in my junior year—I came down with rheumatic fever.

BEISEL: Oh my goodness!

LIVINGSTON: So, at the time the only... way they treated it was just complete bed rest and sulfur drug. They had a doctor in Timpson that was familiar with it, none of the others here were—

BEISEL: So, it was [interrupted]—

LIVINGSTON: —had not heard of it.

BEISEL: Did they figure out how you came down with it?

LIVINGSTON: Yes, I had the strep throat.

BEISEL: Ahh.

LIVINGSTON: So, I had to miss all my junior year, but they were so nice. They just gave me the books on Texas history and a few subjects, and I studied and... took tests, and passed them and was able to graduate with my class in '48.

BEISEL: Right.

LIVINGSTON: Number three in my class, so obviously [I was] proud of that. Our principle, Mr. Starkey, was quite a colorful character—had kind of red hair—but, he always dressed so nice, different from now—white shirt and tie. You could hear him coming down the hall—I knew his steps. When I was trying to be FFA sweetheart, you had to raise money. You had others you were running against. It was kind of like a political race.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: The one with the most money got to be the sweetheart. So, I—we were poor, and I needed a way to raise money, so I came up with this idea—we had goats. So, I had the idea to carry a baby goat to school, get a big box and put some straw in there. The grammar school and high school were all in one building—it still is.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: I would have a little rope around his neck and a pretty red bow and show him to the grammar children and tell them to bring their money the next day and take a chance on him.

BEISEL: Ahh.

LIVINGSTON: So, I did that the first day, and the second day I'm in the hall with my friend, George Powdrill. Uh, I hear these footsteps coming, and it's Mr. Starkey, and sees the goat and he said, "I mean, get that goat out of this school. Now."

BEISEL: [chuckling]

LIVINGSTON: Well, I didn't know what I was going to do. I had a problem.

BEISEL: Right!

LIVINGSTON: But, uh, I thought for a minute, I had this special teacher, Mrs. Bussey, and I knew that she had an off period. So I went in her room, I said, "Mrs. Bussey..."—I told her about my problem. I said, "Would you keep my little goat under your desk until I can figure out a way to keep him?" She said she would, and she did. So, then, I decided—which was not a good thing—but, I would go to the superintendent, go over Mr. Starkey's head—

BEISEL: Uh, oh.

LIVINGSTON: —and uh, I went to Mr. Menard—and uh, Mr. S. R. Menard, who was a good teacher—and explain to him my situation and how we could make

money for the school and everything, and could I keep the goat. He said yes. So, the uh, caretaker kept him in the bathroom in this box overnight—

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: —and the next day I made the sales—

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: —and made enough money to be the sweetheart, and uh, brought the goat home. He lived happily ever after.

BEISEL: [laughing]

LIVINGSTON: But, uh, Mr. Starkey—another occasion—I just mentioned a few times [unintelligible] I think he didn't like me, and I said—I had this boyfriend I liked, and he wanted me to wear his ring. I had it on a chain around my neck.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: And uh, I was walking in the hall, and I hear these footsteps again—Mr. Starkey—and James Earl Rhodes, my boyfriend, he's coming the other way. Mr. Starkey sees this ring and he says, "You get that ring off of your neck right now and give that to him." Well I jerked it off real fast and it went bouncing down the hall, and uh, he—James Earl—comes over up to where we are and he looks at him and he said, "I want you—you get you a girl closer to town." He was the only boy that had a car.

BEISEL: Ohhh.

LIVINGSTON: He said, "Get you a girl closer to town because Arcadia is too far."

BEISEL: Aww.

LIVINGSTON: So, I decided that Mr. Sharkey did not like me. So, now then maybe you need to ask a question about Arcadia.

BEISEL: [laughing] Well... [chuckles] no. When you, when you graduated from high school, so you went to SFA [Stephen F. Austin State University] for business school?

LIVINGSTON: I went to Nacogdoches Business College.

BEISEL: Okay. Business College. Where was that located?

LIVINGSTON: Well, it was located downtown upstairs...

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: I can't remember which building—

BEISEL: —Was it what, down off Main Street?

LIVINGSTON: On Main Street.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: Mr. Travis Price and Carolyn were—and she's still living.

BEISEL: Okay. Carolyn Price?

LIVINGSTON: He's dead.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: Mmm-hmm. She's still living. She was a beautiful girl, very popular at SFA—

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: —when she was there. She was a McElroy.

BEISEL: And so they had this business college, and so uh, what did you do with that? Did you go get a job somewhere?

LIVINGSTON: Yes, they uh,—I got a bookkeeping job at Mize Manufacturing Company—

BEISEL: Oh! Right—

LIVINGSTON: —which was wonderful. The man that hired me was from this area just up—Mr. L.D. Pates.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: The Pates were from Arcadia, and uh, Pleasant Grove, just two or three miles up the road, [bell rings] so—Mr. L.D. Pates. I was a bookkeeper—

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: —and I worked there for several years until I got married.

BEISEL: Ahh. And then who did you, who did you marry?

LIVINGSTON: John Covington.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: And they had the lumber company, and after a few years, I started wor—I worked there for fifty, fifty-five years.

BEISEL: Oh my goodness!

LIVINGSTON: I still go in every day—

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: —but I don't spend over two hours.

BEISEL: Right. There in, in?

LIVINGSTON: In Center.

BEISEL: In Center, okay.

LIVINGSTON: It's a building material company similar to Lowe's but on a smaller scale.

BEISEL: Okay, okay.

LIVINGSTON: But, I've always enjoyed the work.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm, and so you've always worked at like an office doing—

LIVINGSTON: Yes.

BEISEL: —accounting and bookkeeping and that type of thing?

LIVINGSTON: Accounting and selling. Now I mainly sell floor covering—

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: —which I like.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: In the meantime, in 1961, we put in a propane gas company—

BEISEL: Oh!

LIVINGSTON: —and uh, I ran that.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: Because my husband got... down sick and couldn't work.

BEISEL: Right. Right. Now, now, I have to ask, because you, you signed as Livingston, so how did you get...?

LIVINGSTON: Well, he passed away in 1998. Mr. Livingston's wife had passed away two weeks before—

BEISEL: Aww...

LIVINGSTON: —and our daughters had been friends—

BEISEL: Oh!

LIVINGSTON: —in school and college, and uh, so, we got together and uh, married in 2000.

BEISEL: Oh! Wonderful!

LIVINGSTON: He passed away in 2013, but we had, uh, thirteen wonderful years together.

BEISEL: Thirteen wonderful years together there, and was he from this area as well?

LIVINGSTON: Yes, he was. Next community, Waterman. [chuckles]

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: You'll have to do a story on Waterman. They have quite a history.

BEISEL: Really?

LIVINGSTON: Yeah, railroad and all in there, but, uh...

BEISEL: Now, did you ever take the railroad out of Timpson to go travel anywhere?

LIVINGSTON: I never did, no.

BEISEL: Because now most people around here would have used horses and wagons before the farm-to-market roads came in?

LIVINGSTON: Well, I-I, there is so much I can tell. I can remember that we didn't have a car—

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: —and we went places in the wagon.

BEISEL: In the wagon. Did you father use horses or mules or both?

LIVINGSTON: Horses, and he had mules that he farmed with—

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: —plowed and all.

[clock chimes]

BEISEL: Do you remember what kind of horses did he had? Did he have a specific breed or just some draft?

LIVINGSTON: No, just plain ordinary horses. I'm not educated on horse breeds that much.

BEISEL: Now you mentioned goats, what were—how did your family get into goats? You don't hear that too often around here.

LIVINGSTON: Daddy just did a lot of different things. We just—anything there was a market for, well, he would try it.

BEISEL: Were they milk goats or?

LIVINGSTON: No, he just sold meat goats.

BEISEL: Okay, because milking goats is work, too.

LIVINGSTON: They were good to eat some kind of weeds in the pasture, too, and uh, but he finally got rid of the goats.

BEISEL: Okay... Well now, um, when you think about this town and growing up, what, what buildings or places were here then that aren't here anymore that you remember?

LIVINGSTON: Well, Greg has already mentioned you know the uh, Masonic Lodge building.

BEISEL: Right.

LIVINGSTON: Uh, I was there many times—

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: —uh, and we would have the homecoming around it, and I have always been active in gospel singing, and they would have the homecoming in the bottom part of the Masonic Lodge—

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: —the gospel singing in there.

BEISEL: As part of the homecoming—

LIVINGSTON: Yes.

BEISEL: —would be the singing?

LIVINGSTON: Mmm-hmm.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: We still have the homecomings. In fact, tomorrow, I am going to Campti—

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: —to their—it's for the benefit of the cemetery, but you know, they have a big lunch like we had today, and then they'll have the singing in the afternoon.

BEISEL: Oh, that'll be fun. Did you—do you remember visiting the cemetery much as a child? You know, do you remember going to the cemetery for anything besides just the homecomings or a funeral?

LIVINGSTON: Well, not very often, but uh, the cemetery that I am interested in is the Pleasant Grove [Cemetery] one, which is about four miles—three miles up the road.. I guess you can say it's part of Arcadia, too.

BEISEL: I think, I think it is.

LIVINGSTON: Because he had pictures of—my tombstone is already there. [chuckles]

BEISEL: [chuckles]

LIVINGSTON: My grandparents—okay, my tomb—mine and John's tombstone sits there. Mother and Daddy is beside us. My grandparents—The Pattersons—are next to us, and The Crawfords are next. We're all in a row there—

BEISEL: All together.

LIVINGSTON: —and just a little ways the Hughes—

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: Daddy's parents.

BEISEL: From Rainsville, you said?

LIVINGSTON: Well... yeah. Huber. Huber and Rainsville, yeah.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: The Hughes' were from Huber, but The Patterson's—mother's family—were always from Arcadia.

BEISEL: Okay. Always from Arcadia, and where did her parents live here?

LIVINGSTON: Okay, they lived on Farm Road 138 about three miles up the road towards Center.

BEISEL: Okay, alright, and did they have a farm?

LIVINGSTON: Yes, they had a farm, and they later sold it and moved closer to Center.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: And uh... Daddy bought land from them—

BEISEL: Oh, okay.

LIVINGSTON: —up there... but uh...

BEISEL: So you mentioned the Masonic Lodge, what about those two stores? Did you all shop in the two stores often?

LIVINGSTON: Oh... yes. When I was walking to school, we would want to stop by the store. Some kids would have a nickle to get a drink with. Daddy never would let me have one nickle. He was very conservative with his money. One time—I hate to say it—but I took some eggs, [chuckles] and carried them, and they let me have a drink. [chuckles]

BEISEL: Ahh.

LIVINGSTON: My parents—they were sweet folks—but they were very strict and all. Mother was a good seamstress and sewed my clothes—always had nice clothes and all... I—I think Arcadia is a good place to live, and uh, I remember when I was a young child, they would have reviv—they hardly ever—no one went to church much down here.

BEISEL: Okay. I was going to ask you—which churches or which church you went to.

LIVINGSTON: But during the summer sometime they would have a revival—

BEISEL: Oh....

LIVINGSTON: —in the Masonic Lodge building, and some of the boys around here were very wild and all. They wouldn't go in. They would ride around on horses around the building hollering—

BEISEL: During the revival?!

LIVINGSTON: During the revival, yes. That was quite exciting.

BEISEL: [chuckles]

LIVINGSTON: One time, one boy, they threw highlight on his—in his eyes and he was screaming. So, that was exciting—

BEISEL: [chuckles]

LIVINGSTON: —and then a lot of times, they gathered on the front porches of the store, mainly the Jim Crawford Store.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: Saturday afternoon especially they congregated there. There would be quite a bit of drinking of alcohol going on—

BEISEL: Now was it moonshine or?

LIVINGSTON: I don't know. I'm sure some of both. [chuckles] But it was not unusual to see a few people just laying drunk on the ground. [chuckles]

BEISEL: Oh, my!

LIVINGSTON: Arcadia had kind of a bad name—

BEISEL: Ahh.

LIVINGSTON: —as being a rough place.

BEISEL: Thus the reason your principal wanted—Mr. Starkey—wanted him to stay away—

LIVINGSTON: Coming up, that would be dangerous. [chuckles]

BEISEL: Well, now did you—were you aware of anybody that was making moonshine in the area?

LIVINGSTON: No, not really.

BEISEL: No.

LIVINGSTON: No, I-I—

BEISEL: You stayed away from that. [chuckles]

LIVINGSTON: No, my parents weren't involved in it, so therefore I never was. My brother never fooled with it.

BEISEL: Right. When they had those revivals in the summer, were those preachers that came from out of town, or?

LIVINGSTON: Yes, they were usually out of town.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm. Would people from the bigger area come in to town for those? [unintelligible]

LIVINGSTON: Yes, they wanted to save these heathen people out in Arcadia— [chuckles]

BEISEL: [laughs]

LIVINGSTON: —that they had heard about. My mother, she had never joined a church or anything until after I had married and all.

BEISEL: Really?

LIVINGSTON: They had other activities—community activities—at the Masonic Lodge.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: Whole demonstration, ladies—the county would have the ladies making uh... things. Mother made a—which I have it on the wall—out of copper, you pecked out a design on it—an embroidery piece I have. It's a basket of flowers that she wrote on the back of it. She wanted me to have that.

BEISEL: Right, right.

LIVINGSTON: I have it hanging in the den, and that was—they had activities for the women all the time.

BEISEL: Now was that similar to the Ladies Restroom that they have—they call them Ladies Restrooms that's over in Center—that small building on the square that women could go and take their children, and they would have home demonstrations there? Was it similar to?

LIVINGSTON: Now, I'm not familiar much with those in Center.

BEISEL: Okay. There is a small building on the square on the edge, and I can't remember which direction.

LIVINGSTON: Okay. I know which one I think.

BEISEL: A little kind of one story building, and—I think it's one story—it was a Ladies Restroom where women could go when they're shopping and going in the town and be able to, you know, but apparently they had demonstrations on how to decorate your home or best canning, and that's the type of thing they did here.

LIVINGSTON: Yeah, they taught them different things, and the women enjoyed getting together

BEISEL: Right.

LIVINGSTON: It was a good thing. I guess the government was paying for it, I assume. We still have things like that.

BEISEL: Yes.

LIVINGSTON: I now go to the Senior Nutrition Center almost every day. I enjoy it thoroughly.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: We have lunch and then we play Forty-Two [dominoes]—

BEISEL: Oh.

LIVINGSTON: —and whatever other games.

BEISEL: Do you remember any other kind of community events or just—was it families going and playing Forty-Two in the evenings?

LIVINGSTON: Oh, yes. We did that quite a bit. The Pattersons and Hughes all, they loved Forty-Two.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: That's our game.

BEISEL: Are you good at it? [chuckles]

LIVINGSTON: Well, fair. [chuckles]

BEISEL: I've been starting to learn. It's—I never heard of it before I moved to this area, so.

LIVINGSTON: Mmm-hmm. Where are you from?

BEISEL: The Kansas City area, so, but appar—I'm learning that it's a very popular and historic, you know, game around here.

LIVINGSTON: Mmm-hmm. It is. I believe the Texas, the uh, Texas Game—

BEISEL: Oh really?

LIVINGSTON: If you look on the internet—Texas Forty-Two—it’s on there and it tells you about the game, but I believe it is our state game.

BEISEL: Oh!

LIVINGSTON: I may be wrong about that.

BEISEL: You’re probably right.

LIVINGSTON: I think I’m right. You know, we’ve got the flower and the—

BEISEL: Right.

LIVINGSTON: —and the armadillo and all that stuff—

BEISEL: Yes.

LIVINGSTON: —but I believe Forty-Two is our... game. Square dancing is the dance, is that right?

BEISEL: Yes, it is.

LIVINGSTON: I think that’s right.

BEISEL: Now did you have many dances here? You mentioned going to that lake...

LIVINGSTON: We used to... in the eighties. Oh, back in my mother’s day, now they had country dances and all and they’d usually have trouble. Several killings occurred.

BEISEL: Oh, no!

LIVINGSTON: Yes. Greg’s great-grandfather, I believe, was killed at a dance, and his great-grandfather, Henry Grant, lived the next house past our house.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: He married the widow of this one that was killed.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: Aunt May Grant. May Chapman.

BEISEL: Okay, and that happened at a dance or?

LIVINGSTON: Yes.

BEISEL: Oh, okay.

LIVINGSTON: There were several things like that happened at dances.

BEISEL: I never knew a dance could be that exciting. [chuckles]

LIVINGSTON: Well, me either. [chuckles] Obviously it was dangerous to go to one in those days. [chuckles]

BEISEL: Yes, yes, yes.

LIVINGSTON: Arcadia just had a name of having kind of mean people down here. There are certain people they wouldn't let drive through even after—

BEISEL: Really?

LIVINGSTON: Mmm-hmm.

BEISEL: Now when did your, your family get electricity in their home? Do you remember?

LIVINGSTON: Okay, I needed to bring that up. We moved into this house I believe in, around 1940. We had no electricity. We had... just kerosene lamps. The house had a double fireplace—one that faces one room and then backs up and faces another one. Then in the kitchen right in the middle they would have some kind of kerosene stove to heat with, and you just had a lot of quilts you put on at night to try to stay warm—

BEISEL: Right.

LIVINGSTON: —but in 1941 we got electricity. That was a glorious day.

BEISEL: [chuckles]

LIVINGSTON: And then, a year or two later, we got propane gas.

BEISEL: Wow. Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: And that was—but I should have gone into the fact—and we got indoor plumbing. Prior to that, we did not have indoor plumbing. Our well—I still have the well on the front porch.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: We don't have well water system now.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: None is here, but we have the pump and it pumps water in the house.

BEISEL: Right, but the well, the original well, still exists?

LIVINGSTON: Still, yes. Still there. Still in use. That was just wonderful when we got the—I had my picture made standing on top of the propane tank. To have that gas was just wonderful. Prior to that it was just kerosene.

BEISEL: And so was that was for cooking and heating?

LIVINGSTON: Mmm-hmm.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: I remember getting an Aladdin lamp, they called it. It was a better light and everything, and I was so proud of it. Studying you could see a lot better.

BEISEL: [chuckles] Right. That well, is it brick lined or stone lined? Do you know?

LIVINGSTON: It's... I assume it's just dirt.

BEISEL: Just dirt? Oh, wow.

LIVINGSTON: Because it's been there a hundred or so years, I guess.

BEISEL: And it was built to be under the porch so you could get to it out of the rain and things like that?

LIVINGSTON: Well, if you go by the house you can see, no, it's—on one end—

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: —the porch is long. Just part of it is up where you can see it. I had a little fence kind of put around it—for looks—but leave it where you can get to the pump if it conks out.

BEISEL: [chuckles] [unintelligible]

LIVINGSTON: Which is not unusual.

BEISEL: Not unusual.

LIVINGSTON: But, uh, yeah, that was important.

BEISEL: Well, [interrupted] carry water—

LIVINGSTON: Indoor plumbing, I guess, was number one, because we had outdoor—

BEISEL: Right.

LIVINGSTON: —facilities then, which, in the winter and times like that, it wasn't very—

BEISEL: Raining, cold—

LIVINGSTON: Raining. That was terrible, but we didn't know it then because everybody was the same.

BEISEL: Exactly. Everybody was exactly the same.

LIVINGSTON: After we—and I remember after I went to work—the first thing I wanted to buy was Mother an automatic washer and dryer.

BEISEL: Oh...

LIVINGSTON: Prior to that she just had the wringer type, and prior to that, we just had a big black.... Uh, what do you—wash pot thing you put fire under, you know, and you—

BEISEL: Oh my goodness. Was it cast iron?

LIVINGSTON: Cast iron... thing you put the clothes in and boiled them.

BEISEL: Oh... Would do that outside?

LIVINGSTON: Outside, yes. Of course.

BEISEL: Oh... That's hard work.

LIVINGSTON: And you had to hang the clothes on a line and so, it was just a joy for me to be able to get her a washer and dryer.

BEISEL: Right... I bet she enjoyed that.

LIVINGSTON: Oh, yeah.

BEISEL: I bet that was wonderful.

LIVINGSTON: Yes.

BEISEL: Well, if someone were to ask you, why, why is it important to know about the history of Arcadia, this small town, what would you tell them? Why should we care about it? Besides the fact it's home? [chuckles]

LIVINGSTON: Well, I feel like my children and grandchildren should know the history of it.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: It's like World History—why do we need to know about that?

BEISEL: Right.

LIVINGSTON: It's important. I just think Arcadia should not be forgotten.

BEISEL: Right.

LIVINGSTON: And I'm glad that y'all are doing what you're doing.

BEISEL: Well, we're only being able to do it with your all's help, so—bringing those pictures, and you brought a painting and a photograph. Could you briefly describe what those are? Because we'll connect those pictures to this.

LIVINGSTON: Okay, it's—this picture of the house was made... I'd say in about 1960.

BEISEL: Okay.

LIVINGSTON: It still looks the same today from the outside. Now, Daddy had a beautiful barn—

BEISEL: Oh, all right.

LIVINGSTON: —which, I brought a picture of it. A lot of local artists chose to paint it and sell the paintings, and I brought a picture of the barn. Of course it's in bad shape now. If you take a picture of it now it looks sad.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm. Did he build that himself or was that there when he bought that property?

LIVINGSTON: I wished—I think Daddy built the barn.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm.

LIVINGSTON: I'm almost sure he did—

BEISEL: Sounds like he might have.

LIVINGSTON: —because we raised cattle.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm... So, he never got into the poultry... get into the chickens?

LIVINGSTON: No, he never did. After I married, we were in—the Covingtons— were in it—

BEISEL: Oh...

LIVINGSTON: —but Daddy never did get in it. He—in all the different things that the county agent recommended they do like raising ash potatoes one year and different, uh, just—when cattle prices went up and all, Daddy—for the first time—could make a little money, but we never made any money.

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm. [unintelligible]

LIVINGSTON: With a lot of things.

BEISEL: Right, right. Very inter—and no tobacco? You didn't grow any tobacco?

LIVINGSTON: No, no tobacco.

BEISEL: Alright. I think that went out before the turn of the century.

LIVINGSTON: Must have.

BEISEL: Very, very long ago, yeah.

BEISEL: One last question, just so that we can date everything, when were you born?

LIVINGSTON: I was born October 5, 1931.

BEISEL: Okay, and that was at home when that doctor came to deliver?

LIVINGSTON: At home. Dr. Walter Warren.

BEISEL: Right, okay.

LIVINGSTON: Daddy had to go on a horse. I don't know whether he went all the way to Center or what, but, to get him to come out. My brother was born in the same house, and then we... moved to 138 [chuckles] Arcadia—

BEISEL: Mmm-hmm. Down the road here. Well, wonderful.

LIVINGSTON: —and then to the Dr. Carr house, and... lived there until I married and moved to Center.

BEISEL: [chuckles] Well, is there anything else I—that we need to know right now?

LIVINGSTON: No, I'll think of things after you leave.

BEISEL: Oh, well always. Always.

LIVINGSTON: Yeah, it's hard to get it all just one thing after another that... happened.

BEISEL: That's okay. There's a lot, there's a lot to tell.

LIVINGSTON: Yes, a lot of time is a lot.

BEISEL: Yes, and, you know, forty-five minutes isn't much time to cover all that.

LIVINGSTON: No. [chuckles]

BEISEL: Well, I really appreciate you taking this time out on this beautiful day to do this.

LIVINGSTON: Well, I'm happy to do it.

BEISEL: Wonderful. Well, thank you so much.

LIVINGSTON: Okay, and your name was what?

BEISEL: Perky Beisel. I'm a professor of History at SFA [Stephen F. Austin State University]. This is the fun stuff.

LIVINGSTON: Yeah.

BEISEL: [chuckles] Well, thank you.