

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

WITH

JACKIE GRANT

MAY 17, 2014

NACOGDOCHES, TEXAS

INTERVIEWED BY LINDA RENYOLDS

ORAL HISTORY #814

EAST TEXAS RESEARCH CENTER

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EDITORIAL NOTICE

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Joanna Lovejoy transcribed this interview in December 2014. Perky Beisel did a preliminary review and thus Katie Hutto edited the first draft of this transcript. Kelley Snowden made a final transcription review and incorporated her edits in July 2015. Greg Grant reviewed the transcript in September 2015 and Perky Beisel incorporated his comments in January 2016.

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ABSTRACT

Jackie Grant, a longtime resident of Arcadia Texas, talks about her life growing up in rural East Texas. She talks about being in school, and the moving she did as a young girl. She discusses her time as a student at SFA and her living arrangements in Nacogdoches. Grant explains the changes Arcadia has undergone, past community members, and the impact of oil upon the area.

Persons Mentioned: Neil Grant, Greg Grant, Mirt Patterson, Mrs. Lou Wheeler, Lester Hughes, Dalton Pate, Bruce Hughes, Olen Oliver, Noel Grant, Eloy Emanis, Derek Grant, R. L. Gillispie, Jimmy Hudgens, Kelley Snowden, Charlsie Emanis, Marie Emanis McCauley, and Joy Hughes Livingston.

Places Mentioned: Center, Freeport, Timpson, Longview, SFA, White Oak, Tatum, Carthage, Clute, Houston, Beaumont, Texas Tech, University of Texas, Texas A&M, Jodie McClure Elementary School [Longview], Illinois, Ohio, Garrison, Nacogdoches, and Lufkin.

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JACKIE GRANT: Oh I'll go to sleep here.

LINDA REYNOLDS: Oh no, sleepy no sleep because I, I feel like I could do that same thing too. Okay, so Greg's kind gone over it a little bit. Kind of what we're doing here. Um there we go. I, I messed up my camera because my camera battery died.

GRANT: Oh I'm sorry.

REYNOLDS: Um okay you going to go for me? [beeping] Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Okay so this is March 17...March, oh my gosh stop, it is May 17, 2014 this is Linda Reynolds, I am in Arcadia, Texas and I am talking with . . .

GRANT: Jackie Emanis Grant.

REYNOLDS: Grant and we will be talking about Arcadia and the community and all kinds of good stuff we hope. [laughter]

GRANT: Sounds good to me.

REYNOLDS: So how long have you lived here in Arcadia?

GRANT: Well I moved here, uh for the third time in 1954. I was born in this community down the road in uh Mr. Mirt Patterson's house. This room is the same wood from the room I was born in down the road. So uh, when I was about six months old, we left Arcadia because there weren't jobs around and my Daddy had to go uh find a job and he worked at Dow Chemical, which a lot of people did, going to work in Freeport at Dow Chemical and we stayed there a while and then came back when I was around four. And we moved in his old home place. Which is uh uh towards Center back off in the woods. Uh my cousin has a beautiful home out there now, but this wasn't a beautiful home when we moved into. It was an old dog trot [chuckle], and uh I don't remember an awful lot about it. I wasn't the observant kind of person that Greg is. I uh remember that we had to put the milk in the well to keep it cool. And I uh I uh wrote in my picture

presentation about the house catching on fire. A lot of chimney fires in that day and time. And uh my Mother sent me across the pasture to Mrs. Lou Wheeler's store building to uh get help. And I was about four, had a little brother then he would have probably been around one. She couldn't leave and she didn't have a car. So I ran across the pasture, and I cut across, and the reason I ran so fast is cause I was afraid of the bull that was in the next pasture. That's what I remember most of all, was the bull. I wasn't even thinking about the fire. I guess I didn't have sense enough to think about, about my Mother and brother being in danger. I was just afraid and the bull was going to see me. And I got to Mrs. Lou Wheeler's store, but I do remember uh getting, being put in the wagon, and uh Lester Hughes that you just interviewed, his Dad was there, Voyd Hughes and uh bunch of other men put me in the wagon and uh obviously they uh got there quickly because the house didn't burn down. And um but after uh then we moved back to Freeport again, and we weren't here, long. Daddy worked at Dow Chemical until I was middle of the year freshman year and we moved here in '54 in December but uh course it was January around the corner and turned '55. And I uh graduated high school at Timpson. I was not a real happy camper here [chuckle]. I had uh lived in Freeport long enough to know we didn't have a lot. But I uh did go to Houston every summer and buy a few new clothes and we had a bathroom, which I didn't have here, we had uh indoor plumbing water inside the house and it was Clute. I didn't actually live in Freeport, it was outside of Freeport, in Clute, Texas, and uhm. But my Mother who really valued education said, "If you want out of here get an education." So I did. It took me a while, but I finally got an education and I think mainly I did, I worked on negative points cause my Daddy told me that he wasn't going to help me go to school. And I got married and had four kids, but if my Daddy had not told me that I would have never finished cause I kept saying. But I mean I love my Daddy I don't mean that but I wasn't going to let him be right. [chuckle] So I but uh uh in fact Greg and his two brothers and my daughter they're uh all one year apart

all went to my college graduation so [chuckle] but uh anyway. But uh anyway, I always say the good Lord has a sense of humor, because I went, got my college degree to keep from having to live here. But I uh live here now and I'm fine [laughter] so the good Lord just going to say, "I'll show you who's in charge." [laughter]

REYNOLDS: So you really didn't get to live here that long?

GRANT: I didn't I uh lived here uh about three and a half years I really didn't know a lot of people because when you lived out in the country then, kids didn't run back in forth in cars. I was in the band and I had to go back and forth to band rehearsal and my Daddy said he didn't like that either because we didn't have a lot of money. It, it, I, I realize now it was, you know, quite an ordeal for them to come up with money to buy gasOlene for me to go back and forth and so I, I uh didn't leave after I got in from school except to band practice. But then I married my husband who lived down the road. And I, I uh hate to say I guess its cause I loved him, but he was the closest thing around so that was convenient too. But don't tell him I said that. [chuckle] He didn't know how to work the computers [laughter] but uh [laughter] but because of the fact that I was in the band, and he was in the band, that's the way he's made his living. He was in the band, he was the band director and then he owned music stores and recently retired it's been good to us. I uh didn't realize that everything I was doing really had a reason and a purpose. Uh it's too bad that you have to grow up and get my age in your seventies before you realize really even the bad times are times that you will remember because I had to work hard. I had done a little work at home, I wasn't very good about cleaning house or cooking but we had to work hard here. And I didn't like it at all, but goodness nowadays I haven't found anything as hard as I did then, so I don't, I am not afraid of hard work.

REYNOLDS: Why did your dad come back and stay?

GRANT: My Daddy was sick, uh. We uh I think we almost thought it was more emotional, but I don't think it actually was. We didn't realize it until he passed away and he passed away when he was seventy. He was younger

than me. But nobody, I took him to the doctors in Shreveport, I took him to Houston, I took him all over. Nobody found an answer for his condition. He would break out all over and then it would make blisters. I've never seen anyone with leprosy, it wasn't leprosy, they would have known it. But I can tell you what it was and nobody said this but he worked in the caustic department at Dow Chemical before there was any protective clothing and I know that that was the culprit. I think that's what it had to do with it. When he came back he get, he did settle down and he had some enjoyable times. My Daddy was a character. I mean he could hunt, fish, uh he was a handsome man, and I uh asked a cousin of mine that's in the Garrison Nursing Home, he will be 103 in uh September, and I asked him, his name is Dalton Pate, and I asked him "Was my dad Eloy Emanis as good at sports as he said he was?" cause Dalton would play with him a lot, and he said, "Your Daddy was even better than he said he was." And I understand that he at one time uh he wanted to go try out for the uh, oh it wasn't the major league but the farm teams is that what they call 'em? But he uh had to have a dollar to ride the train and he couldn't come up with a dollar and so he never got to go. And uh but anyway, he was supposed to have been a good sportsman. And but he could hunt coons. He's drug me and my brother and my husband and Greg and his two brothers. We've all been coon hunting. He loved to get outdoors and he was a country gentleman through and through. But at least even though he had some illness in the end, he lived where he wanted to live. There's something about Arcadia that has a pull to all the men that have been here. We women [laughs] we enjoy it because I think of the men we follow, the men if you have talked to Greg I mean he is Arcadia through and through.

REYNOLDS: He's very passionate about this place.

GRANT: And uh my second son, who wasn't able to be here, he's a veterinarian uh he lives in Center but he has a place out here. He has land out here. My oldest son has land out here, he's in Longview. It's not too far to come, but everybody seems to want to come back some are fortunate enough to be able

to and some are not. Uh we always had uh came back with the kids. Uh my husband always ran cows when he had businesses in Longview in Tyler and in several other places, so they were used to working. But um they liked it they enjoyed it.

REYNOLDS: So uh how did your dad get into working with Dow Chemical?

GRANT: Um it seemed that was the place everybody left here to go, it was uh it's a big business and uh Dow Chemical and that's where people before had gone and gotten good jobs that's just kinda where everybody went to Freeport to Dow Chemical. And many of the people, I would imagine that half the population of Clute all came from East Texas and a lot in Freeport and Velasco too, but uh a lot of them, but uh many of the relatives uh uh from this Arcadia area are still in Clute because that's where they went to work at Dow Chemical.

REYNOLDS: It uh it's just interesting cause either you were a farmer or rancher or whatever here or you went to Houston or Beaumont or something.

GRANT: Uh some some did go to Houston but uh many, many went there and of course farming even when we came here in '54, you couldn't make a living at farming. We had cotton it was too humid uh, uh boll weevils were still a big thing. I have gone through the cotton, and we didn't have a lot, but it uh looked like a lot to me. I mean Daddy started me on one end of a hundred acres and I thought okay. Handed me a hoe and I thought I'll die here, I'll never finish. But I finished. But I walked through it with poison one time and you could hear the boll weevils chomping. And uh it was just so humid it wasn't good and my Mother finally told him one time said, "I can't afford for you to farm anymore." At that time she just worked at the grocery stores. Mother always wanted to be a nurse, but it didn't happen until she was in her fifties and she had to get special permission to go to Panola to get her LVN license. She had already gotten to the age where you had to get special permission. But she finally got her license and worked as a nurse, but that was after I had already left home and got my college degree and had children before she was able to get her education. So she really believed in

it. My brother Ronnie, I wish he was here, uh but I found out that a good friend of his passed away and there having a memorial service for him today. And my brother is three years younger than me and Ronnie Emanis and uhm, but he has some pictures and texts on them and I tell everyone he was the good one, I wasn't. He was the sweet one I had a mouth on me.

REYNOLDS: How did you get with Neil and not Noel then?

GRANT: Noel is six years older than Neil and I uh told you I'm sorry I got a one track mind, and I was looking for a way out. And Neil was smart. Noel wouldn't go to school. In fact, I guess Noel was already gone by the time I came cause he was six years older but I didn't even really know him. But Neil was smart he liked school, he was good in the band. He uh probably told you he was excellent on his horn. There's uh all state band that's uh a prestigious group that you have to go through several tryouts to get to and most kids are fortunate to make it in their senior years and he made it through when he was twelve years old. And uh he uh was always good at music and um he was in the band with me and we played in the Timpson High School band which was small and I moved in here as a freshman. And the band director actually came and told me I had to try out for the band. I could never figure that one out. I figured they would have uh been glad to have somebody extra. And he told me no matter how good I was, I was going to sit last chair and Neil sat first chair trumpet and I was last chair clarinet and we were side-by-side. And I never heard a note I played because he played so loud all the time. I told him I was going to marry him cause he uh played much louder than me, but I also admired him because he was smart and he was going to go to school.

REYNOLDS: So how did you meet him though?

GRANT: Well [laughter], it's a good thing my brother's not here because he would tell on me. Uh we rode school buses and if you read my text, you would see we caught the school bus out here and it took us a long time to get to school we rode thirty miles to get to school and we would have to catch it before daylight and Neil rode the school bus with me. Well, we had started school,

I mean I had started school my freshman year, and I guess I don't know what there was about me, I never was a beauty that wasn't my thing. I am still looking for my thing but that was never it, but when we came back and something about me caught Neil's eye because he was going to walk me back to the house, because the bus went down this way and then came back for it came to his house. And I wasn't allowed to date until I was seventeen, so I was really afraid of boys so I ran all the way to the house, and it made my brother mad because he liked Neil. And he came and told my Mother, said that Neil was going to speak to Jackie and she ran away from him so anyway. Uh so yes we lived out in the same neighborhood, but you didn't run back and forth to houses like kids do now days. After we did start dating which was later on, like I said, I wasn't I uh I was. Uh it was the end of my junior in my senior year before I uh could date and uh he would play his horn to me while I sat here because we didn't have telephones so he would play and send lullabies through the air and uh we would go to the movie every now and then, but he didn't have a lot of money either so.

REYNOLDS: So with this house, you lived in this house?

GRANT: I lived in this house. It doesn't look like it does now. Uh Lester and uh his parents Voyd and Nara and his brother Bruce uh they had uh kept it pretty nice. And then they uh built a new home, like a brick home um down the road here a couple miles down the road, and uh when we moved here we used every penny we had to buy the place there wasn't anything to fix it up. And Daddy was sick then uh and couldn't work for a long while and Mother worked in the grocery store and that didn't bring in a lot of money. There wasn't Mother, Daddy grew a garden, he did farm farming type chores. Mother put up food at night after she came home from the grocery store. I didn't even realize how hard she was working until I grew up and uh I should have been more understanding and still I was a pill because I didn't want to live here. But it's like I say too bad that you understand these things too late in life. Um but Mother could cook. I, I remember getting on the school bus at Timpson and everybody running to the store buying a bar of

candy or something and I didn't have any money, but I don't remember being upset about it because Mother could cook so good, I just soon about, have her left over biscuits. I mean she was an excellent cook, I don't remember her every following a recipe either. But she would stay up at night after she got in from the grocery store, and you don't get in at four or five o'clock working at a grocery store. Even then they stayed open late, I don't know how she held up, but this past Mother's Day, my mother's been gone four years and, in fact, I buried her on Mother's Day four years ago. She was tough little lady. She was little thing, a tiny lady. But I really admired her and I caused her a great deal of trouble, but I hope I made up for it because my mother had degeneration of the retina and went blind, probably partially blind about ten years before she passed away, and about five years before she died she was totally blind and married Olen Oliver after my Daddy passed away in '82. Olen lived down out here and was raised in Arcadia also, and he was the last of, I don't know, a number of children and he played with my Mother when they were little, they both lived in the same area and he had lost his wife too and so after she passed away, he and my Mother married. And uh so I looked after Mother as best I could for many years, and then she had to be put in the nursing home. And now Olen is still alive but he's in the nursing home in Houston, he's ninety-six and he's told Greg many things about Arcadia. I wish he were still here Greg's probably given you a lot of information that he's written down with Olen Oliver, and a unique man. In fact a house down one of the uh country oh not farm-to-market um one of the roads off of 138 that he built by himself when he was eighty years old and he cut the trees and took it to the saw mill, when he was eighty, and built everything except for the plumbing and one of his sons who is a plumber and, and he was a unique man but a temper. But uh he's always been good to me. My Mother told him when she married him that they had been married about twenty-one years when she passed away, that uh you know, you better be nice to my kids so I guessed he listened and we didn't have any problems.

REYNOLDS: Did your mom work a, a grocery store in Timpson?

GRANT: No, she worked in Center. Uh out here in Arcadia? At the time, I don't know now cause I never had any, uh my kids went to school in Longview. If uh you lived here, you went to school in Timpson, but our telephone was from Center, if we had one. Our mail was from Center, we went to church in Center, we brought groceries in Center, so I never really knew many people in town in Timpson. Because all I did was, and like I said, kids didn't drive back and forth in town in those days. I, I was fortunate I got to go to band rehearsal and even though that wasn't my livelihood like my husband I went to school at Stephen F. Austin and uh Jimmy Hudgins was the band director there. They didn't have much of a scholarship and he said, "I could give you a scholarship, but I can give you more if you want to work for me." And I said, "I'll work. I need more money." So um that's what got me through school.

REYNOLDS: So what was it like to be a wife, a Mother, and the, a student? I mean how were you able to balance those three things?

GRANT: Probably not very good if you talk to my husband. I remember one time I was in the bed squalling and he said "Either quite or stop crying." [laughter] But I'll have to tell you this, I made better grades after I had kids you know uh I'm not dumb, but I found college a little harder my husband is extremely intelligent, thank goodness all the kids took after him, don't tell him I told you that [laughter] it will go to his head. But uh the older I got I did fine with grades, but I learned to organize my time and that has done me a world of good because when you have four kids uh the oldest one was three when the fourth one was born and I um started teaching school after the uh youngest, I think she was about three, when I started teaching school. And I taught school for about seven or eight years and then decided my husband's was gone more and more with his business. When you're in a business of your own, it's not an eight-to-five job, it's all week long. And we talked about it and we decided that one of us needed to be around the house more. So I quit, uh, to be more of a mother, but I enjoyed teaching. I enjoyed

teaching, I was a better teacher than I was a mother, because by the time I got home my patience had had it. [laughter]

REYNOLDS: That's why I didn't become a teacher. [laughter]

GRANT: That's what I told the kids, I put up with it all day I'm not putting up with it a second longer. But I taught in school and I really think it was easier when I taught than it is now for the teachers.

REYNOLDS: What grades did you teach?

GRANT: I started out in the third grade at White Oak, Texas. My husband was a band director and uh I taught there for one year which was a good school to teach in, and then he moved at Longview High School, and I taught at one of their schools, Jodie McClure, on the south side of town. And I taught fifth grade, but I lived on the north side of town and uh the oldest boy just started school and I uh asked for a transfer and all they had open to transfer was for me was the first grade. So I taught five more years in the first grade. I wasn't a very good first grade teacher, I still I really do uh better with a kids that are a little older. Yeah I really liked fifth grade.

REYNOLDS: They haven't quite got that bad attitude yet, but they are still energetic and wanting to learn and they can read and write and go to the bathroom by themselves. [laughter]

GRANT: There's just a calling to teach the first grade, and I'm ashamed to say I didn't really have that calling. There's uh I guess I made my kids grow up too early. That's something I probably shouldn't have done, but there's just things I didn't do for them after they got six years old...you know like pull up their underwear things like that. They had to learn to do things like that themselves and uh people didn't even do that then you know so, but I hope.

REYNOLDS: Your kids turned out fine. [giggle]

GRANT : I hope I was a decent teacher I yeah know I, I in fact one of the young men that I taught in the first grade wasn't anything up to me, but I said I would like to find... y'all can help me...they have an outstanding alumni, I need to nominate him. I'll go online and see if I can find that because you know he was head of Cooper in um medical facilities in um Dallas and now he's

head of all the medical facilities in Texas Tech and he's a good friend of my son Derek who a lot of people in that grade went to Stephen F. to get their undergraduate and then all became doctors or veterinarians or something. So I'm a graduate of Stephen F. so I guess I am a little prejudiced too.

REYNOLDS: What year did you graduate SFA?

GRANT: Uh '66 but I started in '58. [laughter]

REYNOLDS: It, it was a little bit you had had a lot going on for the typical student

GRANT: Well not everyone took all four of their kids when they graduated.
[laughter]

REYNOLDS: I took my two when I graduated.

GRANT: Well good for you. [laughter] We're of uh were of a kin then. [laughter]

REYNOLDS: Well it is uh different when you're a wife, a mother, and I also had to work full time at that point so you.

GRANT: I don't.

REYNOLDS: So school full time was... interrupted.

GRANT: I wouldn't have managed that... well.

REYNOLDS: So something had to give so the kids didn't get the attention they probably could have got... they're fine.

GRANT: Well you know?

REYNOLDS: They're not mass murders so...

GRANT: How old are they your children?

REYNOLDS: Uh twenty-three and eighteen, they're fine. [laughter]

GRANT: Well, if you want to get me off on another line, I really think not saying I did everything right, I think the parents do too much for the children nowadays.

REYNOLDS: There uh what we call helicopter parents and I caught myself being that type of parent um I was like I'm your safety net, nope I can't do that you have to learn and you have to experience these things for yourself hmmm you have to fall, brush it off and keep walking.

GRANT: They're saved from too many things, like I, I said, and...

REYNOLDS: There's no accountability.

GRANT: And when they come across hard times as they get older they won't know how to face them cause they have never faced it before. And I, I almost feel sorry for them because they're too well looked after.

REYNOLDS: They feel that their, that they deserve all of this that I should be doing that for them. And I see that a lot at SFA right now with students there um they're uh privileged I should uh have this done for them...uh no, no, no. I told you, you can't come to me the day before the paper's due and expect me to help you find all this stuff. And well I'll call...you call your momma go ahead I'll tell your momma the same thing I just told you.

GRANT: Well you know a lot of times I'll look for someone come out and help me in the yard and garden or something you can't find anybody to work anymore. They must not have to. I had to I had to find every job and at the time I was whining about it. It was the best thing to ever happen to me, you know, that I had to work.

REYNOLDS: It's uh it's a work ethic something, that you uh can't really teach and have to learn. I'm mean, you can try to.

GRANT: Your right you have to learn it yourself, you can talk about it all day long but if your, forced to into it then.

REYNOLDS: And I've had to work since I was twelve. You know working on the bean fields in Illinois corn fields, bean fields using the hook cutting the weeds out, detasseling corn so uh you know it was great when I got the money, you know, a hundred dollars in 1975 was a lot of money.

GRANT: You understand then. [laughter] You know, my uh second son, that's a veterinarian, tells me that people can't go to college anymore without help like you did. And uh I told him I can understand now the oldest grandson just graduated from A&M. I don't think they can go to UT or A&M or any of those schools like that, but there's a lot the can do to help themselves... You know?

REYNOLDS: Well there's like Angelina Community College you know my oldest daughter went to Angelina first two years and uh I think that's a good way to go of going. If you're not ready for, cause not all high schools prepare

their students for college. And sometimes they need to move to a community college to, and it's cheaper.

GRANT: Well you can find out that I'm old fashioned, because I'm not at all for all this college credit they're getting in high school, because first of all not all high schools have access to as good of teaching in those in the high school accredited classes, as they're supposed to have. And I think you need to be older to get out of college anyway you're not ready for life as it is, much less getting out earlier so I just think that's a bunch of hogwash but I'm sure I'm sounding my age by saying that [laughter] you know?

REYNOLDS: I tried college right after high school and it didn't work.

GRANT: Yeah.

REYNOLDS: It's, it's almost like some folks like me need to learn a little bit about life first then come back and then we better appreciate the education.

GRANT: Well you know even in my case, which I wanted to go to school, I just couldn't get my mind wrapped around it, my act together. I thought I was trying but uh I did better when I was married had a house to look after had four kids. I just started catching on you know and made pretty good grades by then. And I was talking all masters degree course because I had saved all of my electives until the end because I knew I was going to get married and I was riding back-n-forth with people from people working on their master's, so I just took the classes they were taking as electives so anyway...we're not in Arcadia anymore are we? [laughter] We drove out.

REYNOLDS: Well, and to me it's interesting, Arcadia has a lot of higher educated people here in a small community. I've been talking to a lot and there's a lot of bachelors and masters just like, wow that's not something I would expect from a small community. Um I, I, I don't I guess I don't really know what to expect. [chuckle] I just didn't expect there would be so much. I mean obviously education is important to the community as a whole.

GRANT: Well I think uh what you said...you know America started in these small towns you know. And a lot of people you know came out of these small towns with good work ethic and wanted to go to school, you know. But the

thing that uh I guess really brought me back is when Greg really brought me back to realizing, uh how important Arcadia was, when I realized how unique it is that I have so much family history here and so does my husband. That's very unique and here we have two houses. Well this one's Greg's, but Greg's mine so it's my house too. [laughter] That yah know we have these two house that are older homes that have been in both of our families and the good Lord has been good to us, we were able to keep what little we have and um my husband asked me one time I tell him everybody my husband doesn't mind working hard, but spending money hurts him. So I had to do a lot of talking to get some of this to take place. And I think he's very proud of it now he says, "Why do I have to save Arcadia!" [laughter] I said, "Because nobody else is."

REYNOLDS: You know I, I think once word gets out there's just a lot of communities that are small like this that are, I don't want to say dying out, but just aren't as populated as they used to be.

GRANT: That's uh oh yes and of course one of the reasons is Arcadia is being saved is because of Greg, because he writes about it so much. And, and you see the relatives, the different ones we had brought in today, and usually there's not a hand full of people. It's because they want to have their say in you know realizing this project is going on. I, I don't know how y'all started this, but I think it's outstanding, I think it's wonderful.

REYNOLDS: It us just starting because I met with Greg through somebody else and we just interviewed him and I just thought he was fabulous person. He just [thank you] so many great stories and you can see the passion he has for the place and I wanted to capture that and share it with the people. And Kelley Snowden and I started talking and she has a project about voices like the photos, and so we decided we were just going to combine them and put it all together and make it a project about saving well not saving, but just documenting smaller communities. And impacts and why people stay here, what is, what makes them feel close to this community. I mean what is it

they love about this community and what makes it special to them? And a lot of people said family, and the close knit feeling they have.

GRANT: And as you know, I think we're losing that family unit in America today. And I think it's sad too because I think it's what holds our children close to us and holds them so them. So that, I remember one time my oldest grandson and I guess he's twenty-three now, we were teasing him about you don't you go out and do something you shouldn't. And he said it's always easier to act nice than come home and tell everybody what I did. Just with I mean we don't have a huge family but with the grandchildren and the in-laws children, there are seventeen of us and when we get together very frequently and we keep up with each other but it's so good to have extended family even beyond that because I talk to many people good friends that you know they don't even know who their second cousin is much less who their first cousin. And I could go back we have a Pate reunion in October, Greg probably mentioned it to you, and we will have over a hundred people there I can name fourth and fifth cousins who will show up. I mean we and if they're not kin to me on the Pate side then their kin to me on the Emanis side or the Gillespie side.

REYNOLDS: So where somehow they're related.

GRANT: Right and uh that you don't see a lot of that any more.

REYNOLDS: So I, I know you, you said so yourself and Greg said this you just didn't want to be here, it's like Arcadia why do I have to say I want to get out of here, but you seem to have come to terms with staying and actually becoming a part of this? I mean what kind of brought you to this point? Or

GRANT: I have a bathroom now [laugh] I have running water coming out. [laugh] There were spiders in the outhouse I didn't like going out there. [laughter]

REYNOLDS: OK, that beat Noel's moonshine... what?

GRANT: Well first off, my husband like all these men I talk about he loved it here. We lived not too far away. We lived in Longview that's where we raised all the kids they graduated high school from there and they all went off to college. In fact we had four kids in college at one time, and so you know

I'm used to tightening my belt but that's okay I was raised that way. And uh um course my husband wanted to move back here, in uh and in um hmm '82 he said, "I'm ready now." It was hard year to be ready because cause my youngest one, the daughter, the only girl, was graduating from high school. It was hard to start try to build a house with her graduating from high school there is a lot that goes on when uh... you've had some graduate but and uh I.. I'm not a decorator, I'm not sure what my talent it...I'm still looking for it, but it's not building houses. I've never built one before so and uh building out in the country even in is very different, even in Center, it's not a big town like Houston and Dallas. You don't, you got to pick and choose, I tell everybody if you get somebody out to fix something other if you get'em fast you don't want em, the good ones you have to wait for. We started building the house when uh my daughter was a senior and I did a lot of volunteer work in the schools. I made all of her dresses for the prom and the senior celebration. And I uh lost my Daddy and two of my grandmothers that year. It was just a hard year and um but he wanted me to move back here and I uh just he uh will say differently but I tried to do what he tells me mostly, but [laughter] if he and, and by that time you know I uh I thought I was older. I wasn't really all that old, I mean, I was in my forties, but my uh kids were all uh grown up. But the next year was a little harder on me because I had all these friends in Longview and had lived there ever since well, White Oak not's that far away, so I'd been there ever since I graduated from college and my last child when off um to college and they were all gone and I was a little, I, I don't think of myself depressed I'm usually always a happy person even when I'm mad but [laughter] but I was a little depressed. I've always liked dogs so my husband went out he, uh he was off doing something other, and uh came back with this little Jack Russell terrier in his pocket and uh I was without one then, usually not without a dog but I was then and we bonded and she, she kind of helped save me, cause I spent so much time looking after her I didn't have time to whine. [laughter] And it didn't last long it wasn't a severe depression, but I was a little down about it.

REYNOLDS: Well moving from Longview where there's a lot... people.

GRANT: A lot going on, that's right.

REYNOLDS: To Arcadia.

GRANT: Yeah [laughter] and you know I don't want to sound persnickety. I keep saying the good Lord has been good to us my husband worked hard. And I'm just so blessed that I don't need to complain, I don't have any reason to complain. Even if I think I do, I shouldn't be. You know uh where Neil and I started from I can't, I mean we're not Rockefellers or anything even close, but we have so much more now than what we started out with. As a kid, sitting here sometimes I look back and think I can't believe I am where I am now that that I have the opportunity to fix up some houses and do a few things, oops I'm sorry, people in church grab my hands and say let me see you talk now. [laughter] But no I didn't, I didn't, lament moving back he just always told me that when the kids got out of school that was just something we were going to do. Now we kept the house in Longview for a while and he was really good about it he said, "If you get lonesome, get in the car and go back to Longview," and I would and then after a while I would just settle myself out. He's always been very good to me so I don't have anything to complain about.

REYNOLDS: That's a good thing though it is an interesting thing though that there is this draw for the men.

GRANT: There is.

REYNOLDS: To this place.

GRANT: There is a connection and but I will tell you this. That I think I am the only one woman that's been here for any length of time most of these men out here get married and bring women in, they don't stay. They're gone.

REYNOLDS: I, I think it takes like a pioneer woman, it takes the right kind of personality and just to be able to it's not that far from town even if you were to live here today... I mean me. I would love it. I'm just, I'm tired of city. I, I'm actually a country girl at heart.

GRANT: Well, well I, I do to now, I love it and I wish I loved it more when I was here. I fussed through a lot of opportunities, but I'm not sure that a lot of teenage girls don't. [laughter] You know uh but yeah I love it. I get on my red mule and of course Greg has three dogs that live with me all the time and then I have two of my own. And you know we just go out and I just like getting out there, it's my time to think and talk to God and cry or whatever I need to do, or scream [laughter] or be mad. [laughter]

REYNOLDS: Uh... So you've been here, a while now have you seen any changes here since you came back in '82? I mean, besides what Greg has done?

GRANT: Only what we've done no, it's uh a slow moving place that's not all bad, you know. Greg lived in many different places, you know San Antonio, my daughter graduated from UT in Austin, I would go there many a times. Greg taught at LSU for a while and went to school there. I get to go to enough big towns and Neil is still involved in things. Uh we go see grandkids that are in the Dallas area and any time I get back I'm ready to get back to my hill. I'm ready to put on my gown and walk outside but I could walk outside without my gown if I wanted to [laughter] but I don't.

REYNOLDS: True but you, you have a great view from our little sun area, your sunroom it's a great view back there.

GRANT: Yeah. Well, thank you and uh no I really enjoy it. So I don't, I don't have any uh I just, and the grandkids, I really the grandkids all lead such busy lives all kids do now-a-days, although I looked back and mine lived busy lives too and they all enjoy it and I'm tickled to death that they still like to come and want to bring their friends. And I'm not sure how much their friends enjoy it, [laughter] but the grandkids to bring them, you know.

REYNOLDS: At least they still have that connection here they weren't raised here but...

GRANT: They weren't raised here but they uh look at it I know the oldest one that's about uh just graduated is about to go off to his job uh we have some land and uh that's not connected to all of our land and my husband actually bought it for Greg and I, it was in our family, the Emanis family, because he cuts a lot of timber to run cows on and we wanted some place that the

timber wasn't cut for the animals and the birds especially so he said okay here's fifty acres and we will never cut the timber. And when they uh started all this gas exploration here around here while there was uh talk about putting one there and the oldest grandson oh he was more upset than me, he thought they were uh going to cut the timber. Cause I had told him uh you're to see that this is never cut, we got, you know, 1200 more acres y'all can do with what you want, but this fifty acres is to always have trees on it and you know and uh thank goodness they uh changed their minds about doing uh well there. The gas exploration you were talking about changed us. That's uh the biggest change that's uh been made. There was a time when they came in, and they uh first came in '82 and uh over at we uh call it the chicken house, have y'all been over there? My husband and uh son raises uh chickens, it's uh back this way uh of to the uh left its uh, uh um in in fact there's a too much uh going on for uh y'all to remember. I uh shouldn't expect you to uh I'm sorry but uh, in '82 they uh started a well there and because we had uh not built our house and uh I told them teasing that I'm about to build a new house so uh find something for me because I need the money. [chuckle] And uh I think about all we got out of it was uh they pay you to when they um uh tear up the land you know uh destruction of the land. And it uh never amounted to anything and then uh they came back. I'm not good with dates... uh probably ten years ago, and they uh started all this gas exploration and it was going on every place. Trucks running up and down, huge trucks and uh once you lease the land you have no uh option, to uh they want to put a well there uh they can put a well, and uh all the beautiful trees, they uh just they uh just to seemed to love bulldozing them down. I uh just I'm I just couldn't stand it, and my uh second son called Greg and I tree huggers. And I said uh you're one too, uh you just refuse to admit to it. But uh the Big Momma's Dog Trot have you been to that one? All right well they were going to uh put one uh right behind the fence back there and we were uh just starting to uh redo it and I uh got all upset and uh Greg was uh really beside himself. And uh they uh happened to have sent a

lady out uh to meet us, because they uh were uh drilling on uh several of uh our lands and uh the head lady from Chicago to meet us. And uh she left a card and so I uh went whining to my husband and uh he said, "What did you do with that card from the head lady?" And uh I gave it to him and uh he's a very good business man, and, and uh by the time uh he got threw they uh had moved the well uh back behind some tress and uh its back there but uh there's a row of trees, you can't see it and uh I uh don't know why they uh couldn't do it uh that way there...lots of stuff. This way they were going to use some huge post oak trees it was in a gully it looks to me like it would have been easier to put it back there to begin with, but uh he saved a bunch of other trees for us, you know so he comes in handy. [laughter]

REYNOLDS: Keep him around.

GRANT: He uh comes in handy yeah. [chuckling while speaking] But uh I just see no reason these uh huge a beautiful trees when uh you can do something else, and uh now a days slant drilling is all right it's not illegal anymore and I though you don't have to uh put it right on top of that big tree you uh go over here [laugh]. And uh but uh then that dropped off, you know and they uh built all of these uh motels in Center and uh now they're setting there uh hardly anyone in them because uh you know they were fighting for places for them. But uh really and truly, my husband enjoyed the heyday of that uh which wasn't uh that long ago, but uh I really wish they had uh really never come. And I uh just those pads they uh will never grow grass again where they put them uh they say they will, they won't. Uh that place the first place they did uh back in '82 hadn't. It's uh just rock and gravel and nasty looking and it will never be pretty again and uh I wasn't that hungry uh it has been good to us, be honest with you the uh way we were able to do uh some of the work around here is using what we got from Arcadia to uh put uh back into Arcadia. And um but anyway that was a biggest change uh I should have though about that when you uh asked me. But uh they're kinda gone now but uh they uh say they will be back, that it's there, but uh the price of the gas is not enough, not worth them uh drilling any further down. On um

so uh there are still doing a little of it but uh not like they used to [beeping].
Oh is it through with me? [laughter] Or uh are you through with me? Uh
surely you're sick of listening to these people. [laughter]

REYNOLDS: Nah no I got it. No, no it's uh just telling me that my tape is running out
which is fine. Um it always. I only have one tape per person. And we have
been trying to keep it to forty-five minutes to an hour because uh if we need
to do a second one we can call and say hey can we can come talk later with
you about this or expand upon this? I know uh Greg was saying you may
want to do this or not want to do this? I was like it will be fine. [chuckle]

GRANT: Well uh I'm really glad that uh my aunts you now uh Charlsie who is uh
ninety-four and Marie who is in her eighties. Joy, uh um... Hughes
Covington Livingston, those are the people who uh really know about
Arcadia.

REYNOLDS: I did talk to Marie but uh she left when she was twelve.

GRANT: That's uh right to uh go to the...

REYNOLDS: So.

GRANT: The Masonic home.

REYNOLDS: Masonic Home and so she, she still had her perspective about what was
going on here for those first twelve years. And like you were here for a
period and then you were gone, and you're here, and so you have a slightly
different perspective.

GRANT: I uh wasn't as good as uh Greg at paying attention to uh what was going on
you know. Of course I remember loving Miss Lou's store that was right
over here. Because uh we couldn't spend a lot of money there because we
didn't have a lot of money but now when uh I would need a dress, and it
would have to be a pretty big occasion, they carried materials there uh so we
would go and I would uh buy a piece of material and Mother would make
me uh dress for whatever I needed. She uh didn't so by pattern she would
just sew my uh mother could do anything.

REYNOLDS: Your mama sounds great. [chuckle]

GRANT: She uh could do anything and uh I really never realized it until I uh grew up and uh I don't know how she uh had time to do it. Uh we could have Thanksgiving here and she would work all day the day before and she would cook everything that morning and she didn't go buy anything like we do. She would make the dressing, the turkey, the pies everything was uh made that morning, and uh lunch, we would have lunch at twelve o'clock. And uh I'm pretty fast uh, uh but I'm not that fast I'll never be that fast you know and I didn't know that. I uh wanted to know how to cook that was uh another thing that God uh played a trick on me. He uh gave me all these kids so that I would have to learn. My mother would work late hours and uh she would say, "I want you to uh have the cornbread ready when uh I get home." And uh I could look out this window, in uh Greg's kitchen, and I could see her uh coming in front of Mr. Mirt's house and I could uh get in there and get the cornbread stirred up and uh in the oven by the time uh she came out of that garage in there, because uh I would uh wait. I spent more time looking out the window waiting on my mother than I did making the cornbread. [laughter]

REYNOLDS: You made cornbread?

GRANT: I uh could have uh made the cornbread and uh had it eaten by the time. [laughter].

REYNOLDS: So uh when you lived in this house, was there plumbing? In the bathroom or kitchen? So uh did you guys bring it in when Greg took over the house?

GRANT: My mother and daddy did after I, uh after I uh left. They uh got indoor plumbing. But uh not, until I mean, I never actually lived here uh, when I uh went away in uh in '58, I uh went to started that summer at SFA. And Neil had uh started the year before, and Neil uh finish uh college in two and a half years, and I uh was doing pretty good, uh I was a senior by the time I was nineteen. But uh then I started having babies, don't marry a Catholic. [laughter]

REYNOLDS: So did you live in Nacogdoches when you went to SFA?

GRANT: I uh lived in Nacogdoches, but I told you I didn't have any money but uh my mother gave me five dollars a week and uh that's all I had and uh it was up to me to find out where the rest of it came from...I uh raised Manchester Terriers and sold the first group of dogs. There was twelve of them and uh one died, uh she had thirteen, and that's where I made my first tuition. And then uh my band director who uh gave me uh a job, and helped my find jobs. And uh I would work when it was time for registrar uh I would work at track meets any time there was anything extra. But I couldn't live in the dorms, so I lived with a lady who needed a companion because her husband was gone a lot and it was on the other side of Nacogdoches back over on the em south side of Nacogdoches across the bridge, um... where the train tracks are.

REYNOLDS: Did you walk to SFA?

GRANT: Half of the time and I told my grandkids and the sad part of it was I was still overweight. [laughter] It didn't help a bit how about... I have always been a healthy person. Neil took me sometimes, but he wasn't always around. And there was a bus, even back in those days, but it wasn't dependable. Sometimes I would manage to find it and sometimes I couldn't but I walked a lot.

REYNOLDS: Do you remember the lady you were a companion to? What her name was?

GRANT: Okay uh her daughter, I don't remember her name but her daughter was Gillispie uh her daughter was uh my cousin, uh R. L. Gillispie was about my daddy's first cousin, so he would be about my third cousin. It was his wife's mother, and I have forgotten her name, but uh her husband worked for the railroad. And uh I would think at the middle of the night and he was gone a lot she didn't like staying by herself. So I stayed with her for room, but no board I had to come up with, you know.

REYNOLDS: Food...

GRANT: Food and then afterword's when she finally decided something happened, I don't know whether she moved off uh I think she moved off or no her husband retired so she didn't need me anymore. And I lived in an apartment

with a group of girls, and at that time you didn't live in an apartment because you had money, ...you lived in apartments because you didn't have money. And a whole bunch of us shared the expense of the apartment.

REYNOLDS: Where was the apartment at?

GRANT: Oh, was it on Wettermark. It was a well, well yes but uh it was kind of ... house but it, it had a lot of rooms, apartments for the college stay in. And I stayed with a lot of people in the band and people I had gone to school with at Timpson. And it wasn't very expensive, it was closer and I didn't have to walk as far, and uh we fixed our own meals and when I would come home, which was very seldom because I didn't have a car, you know I tell the kids I was just as far away. You can't walk from SFA to here if you don't have a car. So I was just as far as you are at A&M or UT because I couldn't come home. We didn't have phones so and we didn't have cell phones, so you didn't have any contact you know but it's all right like I said... I'm telling you, it was good for me. I probably would have been a little on the spoiled side anyway. [laughter] It wasn't bad.

REYNOLDS: So did Neil stay on campus?

GRANT: No, Neil was in just as bad of shape as I was. He had cows and uh he lived across the street from me, where we live now not here across he lived down that road and he had cows before he went to school and his mot...dad died when he was oh about fourteen or fifteen I forget and he had minor disabilities removed. And so he took care of all his business like I said Noel was already gone. Noel married when he was sixteen, I think, and uh he was already gone and Neil took care of all the business and his mother and so uh his mother had remarried and they had a fish market and he would stay there sometimes. He had a car, he would come back he just stayed where ever he didn't have a place to lay his head either, but like I said he was always intent on getting his education. Noel wasn't, that wasn't Noel's thing. Now Noel is a smart man. Uh you know he, he lives in our house now and he works for Neil and if there's any small kind of plumbing, gas, carpentry he can do any

of that, now my husband's one, he's the brain knowledge you know, he can fix something's but not like Noel, they're two completely different people.

REYNOLDS: It's just funny seeing them together It's just interesting dynamics, watching them.

GRANT: Yeah well I don't want to say a lot, but... [laughter]

REYNOLDS: Can't hear that! [laughter].

GRANT: I'm in the habit of doing that, I'm trying to learn in my old age.

REYNOLDS: You know, when you reach this point. [laughter]

GRANT: But Neil was always a fine young man, you know he was voted most likely to succeed, and probably is one of the most successful ones.

REYNOLDS: So, so did you get married when he graduated?

GRANT: Uh no well uh he had graduated, I was still in school. He was nineteen and I was eighteen, but uh he had gotten a job at nineteen. Uh he was teaching school, I mean our eighteen and nineteen and our parents, I mean they couldn't help us, there wasn't anything they could do to help us. I mean they loved us, but they couldn't help us. So we had to help ourselves, but that was all right too, he's always been person who always felt like he could take care of the situation. You know sometimes it gets a little annoying but [laughter] like I'm smarter than you, you know, [laughter] I thought, but I can cook and you can't [laughter] cause he cannot. [laughter]

REYNOLDS: Like I said, I come from a long line of well documented bad cooks.

GRANT: But uh we didn't um we didn't have uh any problems except for the fact that when we first got married, I was still trying to go to school a little bit. And I would live. I lived at that apartment building and he lived in Tatum and then um we had to do that for a little while and then during the summer after we got married we lived in his mother's house, in his house. His Mother didn't live there anymore. And then we actually lived here for a little while and then he went back to Tatum to teach again, and uh we bought a place over there. And uh but we've always had connections uh I was close to my mother and daddy and we would come back and visit with them. He was close to his mother. Like I said he lost his daddy at a very early age. I never

met his daddy. When we moved back his daddy was sick with a kidney disease and uh which nowadays can be taken care of, but at the time it couldn't be. So I never knew his daddy but I understand he was he was a workaholic too. My husband, since he's retired, he's gotten to where he takes a, actually takes a breath of fresh air and doesn't work as much anymore you know, but uh he's very much more of a workaholic.

REYNOLDS: Just enjoy the time that you have.

GRANT: I really never had another boyfriend. Like I said I wasn't allowed to date 'til I was older and then Mother told me one time, I heard her and my daddy and she and my daddy fussing, and he was saying, "Well I don't know why she has to marry a farmer." And my mother said, "Well you made us come back to this God forsaken place, what else do you think she was going to find?" [chuckles] They had their sometimes.

REYNOLDS: Doesn't really seem like mom liked the place either.

GRANT: You know she was she was raised here too, but both of them had hard lives. Mother had, a, you know she remembers a lot of good times and uh her sister and you see I have a lot of longevity in my family. My mother's sister is still living, she's ninety-eight also, and uh I go to Lufkin to have my hair done, my cousin does it, and I go to visit his mother which is my aunt, she's in the nursing home. At ninety-eight...then I visit my cousin in Garrison who's a 102, so there a lot of longevity.

REYNOLDS: Yeah that's the...

GRANT: Dalton Pate...

REYNOLDS: Yeah Greg was telling me that.

GRANT: I had asked him about something's about um I know that Dalton was raised by them, these two were are his grandparents it's, it's kind of odd that I can talk to somebody that was actually raised by, you know, this couple, but Dalton was my daddy's age. So he can tell me a lot about my daddy, but his mind is still pretty good, but he can't hear and I can only talk to him about ten minutes because even though my voice is strong, you try to talk loud and it gets to you after a while you know and I would love to talk to him longer.

But there is longevity on my side, my husband's side. His daddy passed away, but his mother was in her nineties when she passed away so and she was LVN also, but with my mother being in an LVN and his mother being in an LVN, and they were to busy working and taking care of us so.

REYNOLDS: So there's just a lot of education here and it's just really interesting.

GRANT: My kids were very close to their grandmother and granddaddy, it shows you, goes to show you, that you don't have to buy their love. My mother and daddy didn't have anything at all. But they are dearly loved, my daughter one being a girl, coming to the country wasn't that much of a thing she wanted to and her senior year in high school she got mono. And uh, in fact, she was very good on her horn and was supposed to be trying out for the all-state band, and she was too sick to go. And some friends of ours would have a party every year in Carthage. Mother said just bring her here and um y'all go on and go to the party. So brought her and she my mother worked at the hospital and she said your daddy will look after her. And um he, he did, he I mean he looked after her too well. She said I would try to take a nap and papa would come say, "Are you all right? Are you all right?" [chuckle] She said finally I just got up and he said, "You go to come watch the New Year's Eve."

REYNOLDS: The ball drop.

GRANT: The ball drop, she said I came and watched it with him and uh that was the last time she saw him. Within a month he passed away, and it was just kind of like it was meant to be, she had never wanted to come. I mean she want to come, but she wanted she you know was seventeen year high school girl, they don't want, you know, and uh she uh she was so glad she had that opportunity to spend that all by herself.

REYNOLDS: That that time you, you just never know when it's going to be the last time you're going to see somebody.

GRANT: That's right.

REYNOLDS: Anyway okay, so it's been like almost an hour now. [chuckle]

GRANT: I'm sorry.

REYNOLDS: No, no that's okay. That's we have been trying to keep it to that point and we have a release form for you to sign, and uh if...