

**The David and Barbara Pryor Center
for
Arkansas Oral and Visual History**

University of Arkansas
365 N. McIlroy Ave.
Fayetteville, AR 72701
(479) 575-6829

Arkansas Memories Project

Jewell Murphy Alderson
Interviewed by Kris Katrosh
January 26, 2009
El Dorado, Arkansas

Objective

Oral history is a collection of an individual's memories and opinions. As such, it is subject to the innate fallibility of memory and is susceptible to inaccuracy. All researchers using these interviews should be aware of this reality and are encouraged to seek corroborating documentation when using any oral history interview.

The Pryor Center's objective is to collect audio and video recordings of interviews along with scanned images of family photographs and documents. These donated materials are carefully preserved, catalogued, and deposited in the Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville. The transcripts, audio files, video highlight clips, and photographs are made available on the Pryor Center Web site at <https://pryorcenter.uark.edu>. The Pryor Center recommends that researchers utilize the audio recordings and highlight clips, in addition to the transcripts, to enhance their connection with the interviewee.

Transcript Methodology

The Pryor Center recognizes that we cannot reproduce the spoken word in a written document; however, we strive to produce a transcript that represents the characteristics and unique qualities of the interviewee's speech pattern, style of speech, regional dialect, and personality. For the first twenty minutes of the interview, we attempt to transcribe verbatim all words and utterances that are spoken, such as uhs and ahs, false starts, and repetitions. Some of these elements are omitted after the first twenty minutes to improve readability.

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 16th Edition*. We employ the following guidelines for consistency and readability:

- Em dashes separate repeated/false starts and incomplete/redirected sentences.
- Ellipses indicate the interruption of one speaker by another.
- Italics identify foreign words or terms and words emphasized by the speaker.
- Question marks enclose proper nouns for which we cannot verify the spelling and words that we cannot understand with certainty.

- Brackets enclose
 - italicized annotations of nonverbal sounds, such as laughter, and audible sounds, such as a doorbell ringing;
 - annotations for clarification and identification; and
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

Citation Information

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Kris Katrosh interviewed Jewell Murphy Alderson on January 26, 2009, in El Dorado, Arkansas.

[00:00:00]

Kris Katrosh: Well, we're gonna start by—uh—with doin' a little business here, first. I need for you to—uh—tell us your name and spell it for us.

Jewell Alderson: Tell . . .

KK: Go ahead and tell us your name.

JA: Jewell—*J-E-W-E-L-L* . . .

KK: Mh-hmm.

JA: . . . Murphy—*M-U-R-P-H-Y* . . .

KK: Uh-huh.

JA: . . . Alderson—*A-L-D-E-R-S-O-N*.

KK: Okay. Great. Um—and—uh—we're here at the Boyd and Jewell Alderson home—uh—in El Dorado, Arkansas, and we're recording this on—uh—January 26, 2009. And—uh—all I need to do now is verbally ask you if it's okay if we—uh—are able to record this interview and put it in the—uh—Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History, so that other people can learn from it. Is that okay with you?

JA: Uh-hmm.

[00:00:56] KK: Okay. Great. Uh—so, what's your very—uh—

earliest memory as a child? What's the first thing that comes to mind when you think of your childhood?

JA: Uh—well, my parents had three children. There's six years difference between each one. I was the youngest one, and I had a sister six years older and my brother twelve years older. And that's—I—I don't know exactly what you want from . . .

KK: No [*laughs*], that's fine.

JA: . . . ear—early [*laughs*] days.

Trey Marley: Birth date.

[00:01:33] KK: What—what—what was your—what day were you bur—were you born? When were you born?

JA: I . . .

KK: When were you born?

JA: January the twenty-third, 1915.

[00:01:45] KK: Uh-huh. And—uh—where did you live when you were . . .

JA: Uh—we lived at a little house on North Washington, but when I was very small, we moved next door to Warner Brown Hospital, a three-story house. There's pictures of it out here in the hall.

KK: Mh-hmm. Mh-hmm.

JA: And I lived there and got married there, and [*pauses*] I guess all of us did. I don't remember all of it, but—but I don't . . .

KK: Was it . . .

JA: I don't know what [*laughs*]. . .

[00:02:21] KK: No, that's fine. I'll ask you questions. What—was it unusual to be—to have a three-story home in El Dorado at that time?

JA: I didn't know anything [*laughs*] else but the three-story house. We had the oil boom durin' that time . . .

KK: Mh-hmm.

JA: . . . and what—really, the house was three-story—had one bathroom for all of it. We had to—my da—mother never would rent anything to anybody except durin' that oil boom, people boomed in here, but she never would feed any of 'em.

KK: Mh-hmm.

JA: She gave 'em—I mean, had all—they had 'em a room and all, all over the house. We moved up clear to the third floor . . .

KK: Mh-hmm.

JA: . . . [*laughs*] and it—you can imagine what a lotta people had with one bathroom. [*KK laughs*] The bathroom—the commode was divided in one part and the bathtub and lavatory and—and another part all connected. But you cou—you could go to one without the other.

KK: Mh-hmm.

JA: But we had a lotta people durin' the oil boom.

[00:03:38] KK: So that was a—that was a big change then when they came in.

JA: Hmm?

KK: That was a big change then when . . .

JA: Oh, yes. The town was so empty, and we—I—we didn't need the money, but [*unclear word*] Mama let someone have the livin' room and dinin' room and all marked off. But she wouldn't let anybody cook over there.

KK: Mh-hmm.

JA: They went out to eat and then come back.

KK: When you—uh—when you would walk down the street as the oil boom was goin' on, what was different about what was outside?

JA: Uh—we could do—I mean, we could go alone anywhere we wanted when—when I was a little girl, and I started to school. I walked to the school by myself . . .

KK: Mh-hmm.

JA: . . . and I walked one day, and I got kinda scared, and I turned around and, I came back, and my mother was standin' out on the front walk, and she said, "What are you doin' home?" I said, "I forgot to kiss you." And I got by with that [*laughter*]*—*went on back. But we—they would just give you information tellin'

you wanna go to school in the mornin'—seemed like they had two sessions and said, "I want you to go in the mornin'. You're a little sharper in the mornin' [*laughs*] than you are [*laughter*] another time." So anyway, I went on—school on that same block, all—clear through high school.

[00:05:16] KK: Did you come home for lunch in those days?

JA: Uh—sometime I did.

KK: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

JA: But I—I could walk home pretty easy.

[00:05:25] KK: Yeah. Well—uh—so you didn't go to school really with your brother and sister because they were older, right?

JA: Oh, no. They weren't ever in school with me.

KK: Mh-hmm.

JA: I don't even think Lillian was in school. They had a—a high school right next to the grammar school that was a college at that time that . . .

KK: Mh-hmm.

JA: . . . they have it written up in the book where the college is where the high—the day school was all the time, but it was never a college.

KK: Hmm.

JA: Never.

KK: Yeah. So it's not all completely perfect in the book.

JA: Hm-mm.

KK: Yeah.

JA: Yeah.

KK: Well, that's why were interviewing you [*JA laughs*], so we can get the real facts. [*Laughter*]

JA: Uh-huh. that's—what you wanna know? You got to tell me.

KK: No, that's fine. You're doin' great. Um . . .

[00:06:22] TM: Kris, I was curious—to interject for a second—what El Dorado was like before the boom hit and . . .

KK: Mh-hmm.

TM: . . . and that kinda thing.

KK: Mh-hmm.

TM: Yeah, if there's any memories of that.

KK: You know, obviously there weren't as many people when the boom was goin' on—before the boom was goin' on, so what was life like here?

JA: Well, you could go anywhere you wanted to by yourself and [*laughs*] picture shows or anywhere. We had—never did have anybody go with us anywhere.

KK: Mh-hmm.

JA: It was just a different world then.

KK: Mh-hmm.

JA: And my pride and joy is sittin' over there. He—wonderful little boy. He lost his brother but . . .

KK: Mh-hmm.

JA: . . . he wasn't anything like him.

Edwin Boyd Alderson, Jr.: Mother, do you remember—uh—is that all right?

KK: Sure.

[00:07:22] EA: Yeah. Do you remember when you went to see the Busey well come in?

JA: Oh, we went to all the wells that were comin' in. I was just a child then. And you never knew where that well was gon' come in. You'd move over this side and then over that side and that well pumpin' out, I guess, in a pit, wasn't—I [*laughs*—I kinda forgot. I wasn't very big then.

[00:07:53] KK: Was that an exciting thing for the town whenever there was a . . .

JA: Mh-hmm.

KK: . . . an oil [*sounds in background*] . . .

JA: Uh-huh.

KK: An oil boom.

JA: Yeah, it all scattered all around town—then seemed like it ruined

all of Boyd's mama's stuff—her chickens and everything else got showered with oil. And—uh—we have pictures that—on the—that were on the wall. They're just scattered in oil—oil. But that Busey well is—is out on Magnolia Road and we—I guess they've still got a somethin' up there, haven't they, to . . .

EA: The oil and gas . . .

JA: That Busey well is one of the best. 'Course, we lived in town, but your—Edwin's parents—they had oil wells on their property, didn't they, all the way—all around. But we lived 422 West Oak in—three-story house. I don't know whether you looked . . .

KK: Mh-hmm.

JA: . . . at the picture of the house or not but . . .

[00:09:04] EA: Mother, another famous person that came out of the oil boom—so many people made money during that time—of course, one of the most famous was H. L. Hunt Jr.

JA: Uh-huh.

EA: And you spent a lotta time at their house. Tell us about that—what it was like . . .

JA: Uh—I—I remember when they moved here. They lived in a little house close to town, and I went home with her one day and then they built that huge house. I don't know why they tore it down. I think people just used it up or somethin'. But anyway, they

tore that whole—but she was a good friend of mine and . . .

KK: Mh-hmm.

JA: I went everywhere . . .

ED: That was Margaret, wasn't it—Margaret . . .

JA: . . . with her, and she spent lots of nights with me. Her mother and da—her daddy [*laughs*—I—I don't know how to describe him. He had a lotta wives [*laughter*], I think. And—but Mr. Hunt was—before we could drive, he'd drive us to the picture show and come back and get us, and we just real good friends. And they mo—moved back to Dallas, and then it was all kinda over. [*Laughs*]

KK: Yeah, that was a long ways away in those days.

JA: Mh-hmm.

[00:10:29] KK: Who else did you have that was a good friend . . .

JA: I . . .

KK: . . . in those days?

JA: Talk a little bit louder.

KK: I'm sorry. Who else did you have that was a good friend . . .

JA: Oh.

KK: . . . in those early days?

JA: Well, I—I—I can't even think of—I had a lotta—fu—uh—friends, but I can't think of all of 'em right . . .

KK: Mh-hmm.

[00:10:55] KK: So you were born in 1915, and the oil boom came in, in the 1920s. So you were really young when that happened.

JA: Uh-huh. Real young.

KK: And—uh—so how—how old were you when the oil boom started to—to go down a little bit? Do you remember how old you were?

JA: I—I don't—I really don't—don't know.

KK: Were you still in school when the oil boom kinda slowed down?

JA: Uh-huh.

KK: Yeah.

JA: All of South Washington was filled with places to eat, and it was—I—I don't remember too much about it, but it was a . . .

KK: Were the streets real crowded when the oil boom was goin' on? Were there a lotta people?

JA: Yeah, they was. We had a lotta—down South Washington, eat—eating places for people to eat. It was a sight. Kinda tacky, little [*laughter*] places, but I don't—I don't feel like I'm tellin'—doin' right tellin' you anything. I . . .

KK: No, you're doin' fine. You're doin' fine. It takes a while to—to get goin'. It's a long time ago. Some of these memories are a long time ago.

JA: Mh-hmm. Yeah.

[00:12:21] EA: Mother, you always loved cars, growin' up. Tell us about . . .

JA: I . . .

EA: You always loved cars, growing up, and your daddy did, too. Tell us about your first car.

EA: Oh, well. Mama was waxin' the floors all in that big house, and I put on somethin' to help 'em and got a splinter in the bottom of my foot. And they took me to the doctor, and—uh—my daddy asked me—said, "Wouldn't you like to have a car?" I said, "Yeah, I'd like to have a car." We didn't have any—I mean, there wasn't anything about 'em. You didn't have a—anything to fill out or do. You just [*KK laughs*] bought a car. And we went up ?Marx? and bought a—a—I think—I believe Daddy paid around five hundred dollars is my recollection for that car. And it [*laughs*] just had one seat in it, and I love music and all, and we had a radio in the house—wind-up kind—and I put it in the back of the seat in the car. There was just one seat, and I pu—took a lotta children in that car. [*Laughs*]

[00:13:43] KK: Was that like a Victrola?

JA: Mh-hmm.

KK: So you put records . . .

JA: Uh-huh.

KK: That musta been some sight.

JA: It was. [*Laughs*] It was one. And I could go most anywhere. I went out to Smackover and different places. Yeah. I had a cousin my age that ran around with me the most, and we took turns drivin' that long drive to [*laughs*]*—it was just—had a good time.*

[00:14:21] KK: How—how old were you when you got that car? Do you remember?

JA: I was early junior high. I for—can't . . .

KK: Mh-hmm. Wow, so might have been—maybe only twelve or thirteen years old?

JA: Mh-hmm. I don't . . .

KK: So you didn't have to have . . .

JA: You . . .

KK: . . . any license or anything.

JA: You didn't have to have license or anything.

KK: Mh-hmm.

JA: I know Margaret Hunt ran into somethin', drivin' my car. And I can remember Daddy talkin' to Mr. Hunt [*KK laughs*] about fixin' the car. She was—she was drivin' it that time. [*Laughs*] No, you didn't have a license. I—I don't even remember about anything bein' put up on the car about what it was and I don't—I

don't remember.

[00:15:17] KK: So there was a transition there that went from horses and horse and buggies to cars. Did you kinda grow up through that?

JA: I—I didn't grow up with horses. Our house was so big, and the Warner Brown Hospital was right next door, and that's where I learned to drive. I could drive from my back yard to their yard and then back and back. I remember Mama was havin' a party or somethin' on day, and she said, "Well, just go on and drive down to that grocery store and back." And I did. I don't . . .

KK: Well, that's a good way to learn.

JA: Hmm?

KK: That was a good way to learn.

JA: Yeah. [*KK laughs*] That's right.

TM: I'm amazed you put a—a radio in the back of that thing.

That . . .

EA: Actually it was a record player.

TM: A record player.

KK: Yeah, it was Victrola.

TM: Wow.

KK: Yeah.

TM: That musta been somethin'. [*Laughs*]

JA: I can't hear you.

KK: So that was a—when you drove around town with that Victrola in the back, did that attract a lot of attention? Did people think that was fun and . . .

JA: No, it was very ordinary. [*Laughter*]

KK: So did other people do that, too?

JA: Mh-hmm.

KK: Yeah.

[00:16:36] EA: Mother, tell a—about you love to dance, and you all used to have dances. Tell about the German dances—what they called it.

JA: I can't hear you.

ED: I said you love to dance and . . .

JA: Oh

EA: . . . and—uh—you love music. Tell 'em about the German dances—what they were like.

JA: A . . .

EA: I bet they don't even know what that is.

JA: . . . a German dance was somethin' that you could go to after twelve at night. You cou—and folks let me go. Dancin' was all we had. And we had sororities and fraternities, which I object to now, but we had all of that then. And the boys'd pay for the

music, and they had to get somebody come, and we'd dance till bedtime. Sometimes the boys'd give 'em a little extra money to dance a little bit longer. But that—that was a ma—main thing we did, was dance.

[00:17:37] KK: So that was one of your big entertainment . . .

JA: Uh-huh.

KK: . . . was to dance—go to dances. What other kinda things did you guys do for fun?

JA: I don't . . .

[00:17:48] KK: You went to—you went to the movies, right? That was one thing.

JA: Oh, yeah, went to a lotta movies.

KK: When you first started goin', were they—uh—were they silent films?

JA: Uh—the first real place we had is one that the Masons [Richard and wife, Vertis] have now. That was our main telev. . .

EA: Rialto.

JA: . . . picture show. But they had somebody playin' a piano . . .

KK: Mh-hmm.

JA: . . . when they'd walk real fast and all. [*Laughter*] But it was different but . . .

KK: What was the name of that theater? Do you remember?

JA: It's—what is it now?

EA: Rialto. Rialto.

JA: Rialto.

KK: Hmm. Okay.

JA: And wouldn't let colored people go, except they go outside and walk up some stairs on the outside. And they could sit way up at the top, but they couldn't just go in.

KK: Uh-hmm.

JA: It's funny.

KK: So you saw a lotta changes there, too . . .

JA: Oh, yeah. [*Laughs*]

KK: . . . in race relations, right?

JA: Sure did. Sure did. Mh-hmm.

[00:19:00] KK: So when you were goin' to school, of course, it was all segregated at that time.

JA: Fore Edwin got out—when he got outta high school is when they changed up and . . .

KK: Mh-hmm.

JA: Was it Little Rock that did the biggest changes?

KK: Yeah, they had the Central High School . . .

JA: Mh-hmm.

KK: . . . crisis up there—integration crisis . . .

JA: Mh-hmm.

KK: . . . and that kinda focused a lotta attention on it. And then ball teams started integrating and . . .

JA: Hmm?

KK: Ball teams. You know, like baseball and football . . .

JA: Mh-hmm.

KK: . . . started havin' . . .

JA: Mh-hmm.

KK: . . . black and white play together. Do you remember all that?

JA: Yeah.

KK: Remember when that happened?

JA: I remem—yeah.

KK: Did you have a—a feeling one way or the other about any of that?

JA: No.

KK: Mh-hmm.

[00:19:59] EA: My brother and I were very fortunate. Mother and Dad, as much as possible in the [19]40s—we were just encouraged very much to be very tolerant . . .

KK: Mh-hmm.

EA: . . . with regard to race. And it was nice to have been brought up that way without—without the kind of prejudice that a . . .

KK: Yeah.

EA: . . . lot of people had to endure.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:21] KK: Yeah. So it sounded like that you and Boyd were fairly progressive about . . .

EA: Very.

KK: . . . the stance on race. Do you agree with that?

[00:20:32] JA: Hmm. Yeah. We had two big hotels then, and they'd had places you could dance. And the other big place that I can't remember who owned it had good food to eat—that hotel. And all the—it's all full when the ball—I can't think of what I was fixin' to say. My—I guess I've lost it.

KK: No, that's okay.

EA: See, that was the Randolph and the Garrett Hotel were the two . . .

JA: Randolph and Garrett Hotel. I think the Randolph had more gan—dancin' places than the other one. The other one was good for food.

KK: So what kinda ages of people would go there to dance? Was it all ages or was it just mainly for . . .

JA: Well, mostly high school. High school. High school.

KK: Was that the best way to socialize in those days . . .

JA: Yeah. Uh-huh.

KK: . . . was at those dances? Is that where you saw your friends
and . . .

JA: Go to the da—and dancin' and that's all—really, all we did was
go to dances.

[00:22:04] KK: What's the furthest you ever took your car when you
were young?

JA: Hmm?

KK: How far did you drive your car when you were young? What's
the furthest you ever took it? Do you remember?

JA: I imagine eleven, twelve. [*Unclear word*] young when Daddy
bought me that first car.

EA: Tell him about goin' to Camden and needin' some . . .

JA: I can't—I don't . . .

EA: Tell him about goin' to Camden and needing some gasoline—
what you did.

JA: Oh, I [*laughs*] . . .

EA: It's a funny story.

JA: My cousin and I drove to Camden. She had some kinfolks there
that we'd stay with. And one night I was low on gasoline. We
drove back to El Dorado and filled up and then went back.

[*Laughter*]

KK: Well, I guess there weren't gas stations everywhere in those days, right? So you had to plan ahead.

EA: We had a good time.

KK: So when—go ahead.

[00:23:06] EA: Tell us a little about goin' travelin' with your dad with . . .

JA: Hmm?

EA: Tell us a little bit about traveling with your dad, O. G. Murphy from Marshall Field.

JA: Oh, when I was just a little bitty girl, he worked for Marshall Field in Chicago, and he's peddled—I don't know what you call it, but he had box after box of things to show the little towns around El Dorado. And he wanted me to go with him on some of 'em. And I [*laughs*] remember one time I went, and Daddy says, "She's five years old." I said, "No, I just turned six." [*KK laughs*] And I kept tellin'—I didn't realize Daddy paid a difference for me at five to go in than he did six. But I tried to correct him, and [*laughter*] he'd go with me. And on the third story, he'd keep all these boxes of things, and I'd get 'em out and play with 'em—put 'em on and all that. He never did say anything.

EA: To—and he took you to Chicago once or twice, didn't he?

JA: Yeah. Uh-huh.

EA: Tell about that.

JA: I went—had some straightenin' done on my teeth there once, and Daddy left us in Chicago—went—I went to the picture show nearly every day when I's in Chicago, and I can't think of—colored man that . . .

[00:24:50] KK: Was that Cab Calloway when you went to see . . .

JA: Yeah, that was Cab Calloway. I'd go—ever time he'd change and go to the picture show.

KK: That musta been somethin' to see him. He was really somethin', wasn't he?

JA: Mh-hmm.

[00:25:07] KK: Yeah. So what—you went as a really, pretty young. You went by yourself?

JA: Mh-hmm.

KK: And it was safe to do that then, huh?

JA: Uh-huh. I had a cousin that mother died when she was little, and my grandmother raised her, and she went with us a lot on—to—Helen McMann. Her daddy died—I mean, mother died she was little. She had two sisters, but my grandmother raised her. She was my age. But I just—we walked everywhere we went.

[Laughs]

KK: Yeah.

JA: To picture shows . . .

KK: Yeah.

JA: . . . and everything. And they had two prices at the picture show. If you'd get there before six o'clock, it was cheaper. And we'd try to make it there before six.

KK: So maybe . . .

JA: And . . .

KK: . . . like, after school or whatever?

JA: Uh-huh.

KK: Yeah.

[00:26:28] EA: Mother, tell us what most you remember about your dad, O. G. Murphy. Describe him—your father—O. G. Murphy.

JA: O. G. What about him?

EA: Just what do you remember most about him?

JA: Well, he wasn't at home very much when we was at Chicago. He worked for Samples. My grandfather owned it, and he'd died, and my daddy worked there. And he married my mother, and she—I can't think of what—a tellin'—I can't remember what I was tellin'.

EA: About O. G., your dad.

JA: Well, he wasn't around. Main thing—when he'd come home from

Chicago, he'd bring some Fannie May candy [*KK laughs*], and Dan brought me some Fannie May candy the other day. Daddy'd always bring us some candy.

[00:27:38] EA: And he would sing a song early in the morning.

JA: Oh, yeah. [*Laughs*]

EA: A kinda Irish-type song. What was it? Do you remember?

JA: [*Sing-song*] "Nice to get up in the morning when the sun begins to shine around three or four or five o'clock in the good ol' summertime. And when was cloud or something—mulky overhead, it's nice to get up in the morning, but a lot nicer to lie in the bed." [*KK laughs*] He'd sing that—top of his voice when he'd get up.

KK: That's great. That's a good memory. You still remember it today just like it was then, huh?

JA: Mh-hmm.

KK: Yeah. So he seemed like a pretty cheerful guy.

JA: He was. He really was.

[00:28:26] KK: And what was your mom [*Louella Sample Murphy*] like?

JA: She was tops. [*Laughter*] She—my mother—they live—where did they live fore they moved to El Dorado? I've forgotten.

EA: Her father lived in Oakland, Louisiana.

JA: And they built a house where our Family Life Center is at church. A big ol' house. I've got pictures of it. And had a big family. My grandfather—my mother was next to the oldest, and my other aunt was the oldest, and then there were nine grandchildren. And he died kinda suddenly of—what did they call it? Heart somethin' or another.

EA: Croup colic.

JA: And he died. And my grandmother had another child when—after he died, a little girl, and there were seven boys and my mama and a sister, and then Ruth came along after my grandfather died. [*Tapping sound begins in background*] I think he was a wealthy man. Don't you think he was?

EA: Very. Mh-hmm.

KK: Is that TV killin' you?

TM: We might—yeah, we have a TV that's popped on.

[Tape stopped]

[00:30:03] JA: During the war, I'll—when we'd let peoples live in our house and all in our breakfast room, you'd have to go through a dinin' room to get to it, and we had it rented. And we'd go outside and then come back in the kitchen. [*Laughs*]

KK: That'd be World War II, right?

JA: A long, long time.

[00:30:29] EA: Do you remember about the rationing in World War II? It seems like I remember . . .

JA: Couldn't get shoes. I mean [pauses], so much money for groceries, and I can't—I know Edwin was little, and we couldn't buy shoes. And we'd go out to Junction City or somewhere—some little store—and try to buy him some shoes. He's my pride and joy. [*KK laughs*]

KK: Well, it was tough during the war, wasn't it?

JA: Hmm?

KK: It was tough during the war.

JA: Mh-hmm.

KK: Did you have family members that were in the war?

JA: I think Clark, Mama's brother, I think, went to part of the war. But I—he was real young, but he went anyway. But that's about all I remember about that.

KK: But that was a big change, too, just kinda like the oil boom.

JA: Mh-hmm.

KK: You had—now you had all these people in uniform and the young men were all goin' off.

JA: Mh-hmm.

[00:31:59] KK: So how did you meet Boyd?

JA: [*Laughs*] He was my age, but he'd repeated one class twice,

and I got ahead of him. And then he was in my grade in first grade, but I don't remember him, and he doesn't remember me. He said he remembered Helen, my sister-in-law [*laughs*—I mean, my cousin. But . . .

KK: And then when did you see him again?

JA: Hmm?

KK: When did you see him again after . . .

JA: Oh, when we were in high school, I filled in papers for him. He—I've forgotten what they called 'em. He could tell you.

EA: Dyslexic. He . . .

JA: Anyway I'd do all that for him [*laughs*] and really didn't start goin' with him till quite a bit older. But . . .

[00:33:12] KK: So you got outta high school. And where did you go to college?

JA: Judson College in Miss—I can't even think of the name of my—Judson. It was a girls' college and . . .

KK: Was that in Mississippi?

JA: Mh-hmm.

KK: Yeah.

JA: And I—we had—there were two more girls from El Dorado that went and that were my age. And then they had—one of their grandmothers sent 'em two years older than I was went to

college at Judson. And Julia ?Boozman? was my best friend. She had a sister older. But anyways, they all died fore I did. [Laughter] All gone.

KK: Yeah. So at least you were around some other people from El Dorado . . .

JA: I—yeah.

KK: . . . when you were there.

JA: Mh-hmm.

KK: That musta been helpful.

JA: That was. I think maybe that's the reason I went to Judson, was on account of those girls. They were—I think those girls—their grandmother sent 'em for two years is all, and the older one went a year before we did. And then Julia and I went a year—two years.

[00:35:53] KK: I understand you had another man interested in you besides Boyd in those days.

JA: That's his talk. [Laughter] I went with one boy a good while, but Boyd said I was real serious about him, but I guess I wasn't. He bought license for us to get married, and he bought me a wa—a ring and this, that, and the other, and I wore 'em around my neck. And that—one of my friends'd take us out and try to get me to marry him on the road. [KK laughs] Take me out,

and I'd said, "No." And he'd say, "You couldn't do it, could you?"

I said, "Uh-uh." [*KK laughs*] And Boyd's real glad that I didn't.

KK: So did you keep in touch with Boyd while you were in college?

JA: Uh-huh. Some, but I was goin' with another boy then.

KK: Hmm.

JA: Oh, I can't even think.

KK: So . . .

JA: L. C. ?Truell?.

KK: And was he from El Dorado as well?

JA: He lived with so—grandparents or somethin'. I don't know what happened to him with his parents. But he'd lived with his grandparents and delivered groceries for 'em, but he never did have a car or anything.

[00:36:29] KK: So then how did you end up with Boyd?

JA: I don't know. [*KK laughs*] He worked all the time, but he always—whenever he could get a date with me, he got it.

[*Laughs*]

KK: Was he persistent?

JA: Hmm.

KK: Yeah.

JA: Seemed like I had a date with one at—one day, and maybe he—
Boyd worked all the time at the Safeway when we were

together. But he got a date when he could. He never did—he went with some other girls, but he never did get serious about anybody but me. He's ser—still serious. [*Laughter*]

KK: He's still serious about you, right? [*Laughter*]

JA: He sure did. We got married over at my family's home. We got pictures out there of when we got married. We were twenty. Both of us were twenty. Boyd's nine days older than I am.

KK: Oh. So he . . .

JA: We didn't go to school together all the time. I went to jun—the regular ol' school, and they put some children at where it's [*unclear word*]. They moved him to another school that was just little shacks they made at Yocum School, and he went there. But I stayed at the same school all the time.

EA: West Avenue School.

JA: Hmm?

EA: West Avenue. Wasn't that the name?

JA: They didn't call . . .

EA: West Avenue.

TM: Would you like a drink?

[Tape stopped]

[00:38:37] KK: So where did you live after you got married?

JA: My uncle [Clark Sample] had a [*sighs*—I can't think, Boyd—

Edwin. I had that buildin' up—nearly uptown for years and years, and my uncle owned it and Mama and Daddy got us a place there. He—they didn't charge us anything. [*KK laughs*] Mama bought us some furniture. It was—but it was a hot place, I'll [*laughter*] tell you. It had buildin's all around us, and at night we'd sprinkle the sheets with water to cool it off a little. It was so hot. But in those days, we didn't know the difference. We didn't. We bought a fan and paid it out on our grocery bill. [*KK laughs*] Boy, it was nice.

KK: That was probably a big help.

JA: Oh. [*Laughs*]

[00:39:52] KK: Yeah. And then where did you live after that?

JA: Mama and them bought us a house on 830—on west—oh, Lord, I can't think anymore. We lived there a long time on Cedar Street—corner of Cedar—used to be called ?Bahlott?, but it's changed the name. And we lived there, and then we had it completely remodeled, and I took the children over at Mama's. Boyd was on the road a lot and they—we'd stay at Mama's and they remodeled that house. Boy [*laughs*—Boyd was travelin' a lot and he—told me—said, "Don't move that bathroom. Please don't." It was way down at one end of that house, and I moved it between the two bedrooms, and he came home and stepped

through it, I think. He had told me not to remodel that bathroom, but I did. [KK *laughs*] Was a pretty bathroom, and it had somethin' above it to put the towels and stuff. Tom Harris did it all.

KK: So when he was away, you made the decisions, right?

JA: No [*laughter*], I didn't.

KK: Exactly. [*Laughs*]

JA: I've forgotten where all Daddy went. He was gone a lot.

EA: Well, he opened those fields up in the north—in North and South Dakota and Montana when he was doing so much drilling for Marine Oil. Her dad was president of Marine Oil and Dad worked for Marine Oil.

[00:41:48] KK: He worked hard, didn't he?

JA: Real hard. He worked hard for a long time. I've forgotten how much he made a day when he—I mean, a week. Nine dollars, I believe, when he worked at Safeway and didn't have much. But things were a lot cheaper . . .

KK: Yeah.

JA: . . . then.

[00:42:20] KK: Well, then, he started makin' a lot more money when he went over to the oil company, didn't he?

JA: Well, yeah. He . . .

KK: Yeah, I was reading that he was only makin' about a \$1.50 a day at so—Safeway, but he was makin' \$4.50, \$5 a day when he moved over to oil.

JA: Yeah.

KK: And then when he moved up . . .

JA: Work . . .

KK: . . . it got to be quite a bit more.

JA: . . . worked for Lion Oil a pretty good long time. And then what was his ?next?—Daddy had somethin'.

EA: He worked for Marine.

JA: Marine Oil Company.

EA: Marine Oil.

JA: My . . .

EA: And then after Marine he went out on his own.

JA: Mh-hmm.

EA: Independent oil producer.

[00:43:04] KK: So your lives changed a lot from when he worked at Safeway to when he did better in the oil fields. What kinda changes took place? You started out in this apartment with no air-conditioning and no fan and then . . .

JA: No. [*Laughs*]

KK: And then what did you—what were you able to do when you had

more money?

JA: Not anything till he got on with Lion Oil, and it was pretty hard work. He—asbestos. He'd come home coated with asbestos. And then my daddy started a oil company, and Boyd went to work with him. And . . .

KK: And did . . .

JA: . . . Daddy made pretty good for a poor person to get—he was a little country boy, but I don't know how he and your daddy met, but it would—a long time ago. See my little Tracy girl?

KK: Uh-huh.

[00:44:31] JA: Then we built this house out here. Daddy had some land. I think Daddy died before we got through with this house. Mama . . .

EA: He did.

JA: . . . helped us a lot. Daddy had heart trouble, and we didn't have a good heart doctor here, and he'd go to—where did he go? I . . .

EA: Hot Springs.

JA: Hot Springs. [*Creaking sounds*] And he went over and had an examination, and he was doin' pretty good with this doctor. And walk—was gonna walk back to the hotel and it hit him on the way, and he just went in and sat down and died. He drove to

Hot Springs. Boyd went over there and brought his car back and all of that. I've forgotten how old Daddy was. He . . .

KK: Well, that had to be a pretty big shock at the time.

JA: It was.

[00:46:05] KK: And how did your mother hold up during all that?

JA: She's pretty good. Mama's pretty good about anything.

KK: Yeah.

JA: My mama was one of a kind. [*Laughter*] She really was.

TM: Can we talk about her a little bit?

KK: How do you mean that she was one of a kind? What was she like?

JA: So good at anything, and she kept good help all the time—good cook and—Edwin and them—when they went to school out close to Mama, they eat dinner with her every day.

EA: Mother, she raised several children that were not her own at your house.

JA: Oh, well . . .

EA: Wasn't there somebody there almost all the time?

JA: Uh . . .

EA: Of relatives?

JA: Uncle—that man that lost his wife. Mama took . . .

EA: Dr. ?Purefoy?.

[00:47:16] JA: No. No, not Dr. ?Purefoy?. Daddy's brother died, and Mama and Daddy took the oldest girl and the youngest for a while, and then they divided 'em all out between the other kinfolks. But we had two of 'em. I remember one had a little ol' boy. He'd go around the ho—"Auntie, where are you at?" [KK *laughs*] He's pitiful [*laughs*] kinda. [*Unclear word*] didn't have any mama. But we kept 'em a long time. We put a—Mama and them put a sleepin' porch across the back of that house. I don't know whether you even remember that or not. And they tore it down. It was—had—Daddy had a radio out there in the—on that sleepin' porch about that long.

KK: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

JA: He'd go over there and twist a little and then go here and twist a little. [KK *laughs*] Get to play [*laughs*] a little bit. But he always had somethin' goin'.

[00:48:33] KK: Yeah, seemed like he was like a—almost like an inventor. He could build anything.

JA: Mh-hmm.

KK: And didn't he make a—some swings and playground stuff for the kids outta old oil pipe?

EA: Dad did.

JA: No, I don't . . .

KK: Oh, was that Boyd that did that?

EA: Yeah, that was Boyd.

JA: I don't—Daddy was gone a whole lot when I was little. Have to go to Chicago on a air—not a airplane—a—I . . .

KK: Did he go on the train?

JA: Mh-hmm. Train.

KK: Yeah, it took a long time to get anywhere . . .

JA: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

KK: . . . those days, didn't it?

[00:49:35] EA: Mother, you told me somethin' kind of interesting about the time you spent at the Hunts' house. You told me something kinda interesting about the time you spent at the Hunts' house. You know, they had trouble with Hassie Hunt. You remember Hassie was the . . .

JA: Oh, yeah.

EA: . . . the troubled—tell about how you could kinda calm him. Tell about Margaret and Hassie and . . .

JA: Hassie . . .

EA: . . . the Hunt . . .

JA: Hassie was, I think, a little off. He went to school and all that, and he could drive some and all, but they—that house was kinda three story—Margaret's room on second floor and Hassie was

right up above. And they had quite a few more children besides Hassie. But when Margaret had moved away and married, she took Hassie and put him in a house, and she tended to him. He—I'm sure he's dead. Hassie Hunt. I don't know—you know, when they moved, they didn't tear that house down. I guess sold it to somebody. The people rented it a long time and then tore it down. That whole lot's vacant. Sometime Margaret and I'd wanna go somewhere, but we didn't wanna take all the—people lived across the street—we'd drop them off after school and then make a turn and go off somewhere else. Julia Moody—they lived across the street. Julia ?Boozman?. But Margaret and I were the best friends.

[00:51:46] KK: So you—after you got married to Boyd and you moved into the house, what—y'know, eventually you had children, right? Tell us about that.

JA: We didn't have any children for a while, and then we decided we wanted one. We had a little boy. And I went to the hospital. My daddy had a brother that was a doctor, and he had a little hospital out on the edge of town. I've forgotten what street it was. He had a little hospital, and I went out there to have my baby. And it was night when I was stayin' over at Mama's then, and so Boyd and Mama and I got up and went to the hospital.

And so I don't know whether Uncle ?Alvie? gave me somethin' to put me out for a little while [*laughs*], so they could maybe sleep or some—and ?did?. And finally Boyd said—I said, "Well, his head is out. It's been out." And he grabbed me, and they put me in the doctor's office, and that baby swallowed too much somethin' down. He was a beautiful little boy—and swallowed too much, and he didn't live but five or six hours is all he even lived. And I don't know why when I had you and Alan, we used him just the same. [*KK laughs*] Which we shouldn't've done [*laughter*], but we did.

[00:53:25] KK: Well, luckily, they turned out okay.

JA: They did. They—pretty good. [*KK laughs*] Edwin's a little off, but—[*laughter*]. Got pictures of Edwin and Alan, and that's my mama up there but—Edwin, Alan on—good-lookin' little boys.

KK: Yeah.

JA: I lost Alan, but—I don't know what happened to Alan, do you?

EA: No.

JA: He wasn't smart as [*laughs*] you were, but he still—I don't . . .

[00:54:12] TM: Well, what did happen? How did . . .

JA: Had three sons.

KK: Yeah.

EA: Alan had a stroke at fifty-nine.

TM: Hmm.

EA: Died of a stroke New Year's Day [2003].

JA: What am I, sittin' in a kitchen chair?

KK: [*Laughter*] Yeah. Just seemed to look right in here. I don't know why.

EA: [*Unclear words*].

[00:54:44] JA: We built this house, and Edwin was away at college.

I'd write him and tell him what was goin' on. Didn't Alan marry soon after you got home or somethin'? You didn't much like 'em usin' a bathroom with you and all that. [*Laughter*]

EA: He married in high school, but—I'm tryin' to think.

[00:55:21] KK: So when you went to—let's go back to your college days just for a minute. When you went to college, were there boys and girls in the college?

JA: No, there was a boys' college in . . .

EA: [*Unclear word*].

JA: It wasn't close to the school.

KK: So, you went to an all-girls college.

JA: Uh-huh.

KK: And that was kind of typical in those days, maybe.

JA: Judson College.

KK: And what kinda things did they teach you in college?

JA: Every—just everything. And they had one real old buildin' a lotta students lived in. But we lived in a newer part of it. Julia and Ruth ?McWilliams?—she went. Her mama didn't let her go but one my—one time. I think she and James—James was not as smart as Ruth, and she sent him to a fancy college, and it didn't work. But, anyway, Julia didn't go. She didn't go but one to Judson. But I don't . . .

[00:56:33] KK: Did she get married after that?

EA: Julia—yes, she did. She married a Moody.

JA: She married Max Moody.

EA: And her husband—or her—one of her sons is Judge—federal Judge Jim Moody . . .

KK: Hmm, I see.

JA: . . . in Little Rock that David had a great deal to do with his being appointed.

JA: Her other son still lives here, doesn't it?

EA: Yes, he's . . .

JA: I never hear anything about it.

EA: He's a lawyer for Lion Oil. Wallace Moody.

JA: Other one lived in Little Rock when . . .

Diane Alderson: [*Unclear words*]

[00:57:13] EA: Mother, Diane suggested you tell the story about

when you and Dad and Charles and Johnie took one of your first trips together down at the Gulf Coast. Tell 'em about that.

Charles and Johnie Murphy.

JA: Charles and Johnie—they borrowed a car that one of their si—his sister had. It was kinda top-heavy [*laughs*], but he borrowed that car from her, and we went all over. That's 'fore they had the nicer house there. It was just kinda on the road, but we went all around together and had a good, good time. I miss them.

DA: [*Unclear words*]

[00:58:05] EA: Didn't Johnie take all her laundry with her on . . .

JA: Yeah. Uh-huh. She had it in a sack. She was gonna [*KK laughs*] wash it when she got down there.

KK: And did she wash it when she got down there?

JA: I don't think she ever got to it. [*Laughter*] Oh, we had such a good time. Charles got a—somethin' to ride in and I—somethin'—I can't get it through my head anymore.

EA: You were down at Pass Christian, Mississippi.

JA: Uh-huh.

EA: And you . . .

JA: And he . . .

EA: Didn't you charter a boat?

JA: Bought a boat—got a boat, and he said it had clean sheets and everything on it. We had a good time. Ol' Johnie died early, didn't she? She was so much fun. But I don't . . .

[00:59:16] EA: You and Dad traveled a lot with the Oil and Gas Commission.

JA: Oh, yeah. He was chairman of that Oil and Gas Commission for years and years and finally kinda discharged himself [*KK laughs*] and get—had a big party and somebody else took over. But he did it for years and years—Oil and Gas Commission.

[00:59:41] KK: Was that fun, goin' to those functions?

JA: Hmm?

KK: Did you like goin' to those events and meetings?

JA: We've been all over country with the . . .

KK: Did you enjoy that—seein' other parts of the country?

JA: Yeah, we—I've forgotten how many times we went to—can't even think. Oh, my mind's left me.

EA: Santa Fe. You went to Santa Fe.

JA: No, we—outta the country.

EA: Oh.

JA: We went there a lot. But . . .

TM: I need to change tapes.

KK: Okay. [*Words unclear*]

[01:00:31 End of Interview]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]