

Northwest Arkansas Oral History Project
Tommy K. Croxdale Interview Abstract
November 7, 2019

Interviewee	Tommy K. Croxdale
Year of birth	1940
Place of birth	Hiwasse, Benton County, Arkansas
Interviewer	Beverley Helton
Interview date	2019-11-07
Interview location	Hiwasse Community Center; Hiwasse, Benton County, Arkansas
Keywords	<p>Croxdale, Tommy K. Croxdale, Shirley Helton, Beverley Bentonville, Benton County, Arkansas Gravette, Benton County, Arkansas Hiwasse, Benton County, Arkansas Noel, McDonald County, Missouri Spavinaw Creek; Benton County, Arkansas Baseball Fishing Hunting and trapping Recreation Rodeos Small town life Television Truck driving</p>
Description	<p>In school Croxdale learned the name Hiwasse came from the Native American word for 'sunny spot.' Or, as he wonders, could it have come from the early residents who migrated here from (spelled slightly different) Hiwassee, Tennessee. Either way, Croxdale's stories introduce listeners to life and the people in his hometown.</p> <p>Croxdale's stories began with his Grandfather who moved his store from Dixon to Hiwasse. Grandfather continued to run his business during the trip. When customers approached, he stopped the team of horses who were dragging the store on large logs and invited the people in.</p> <p>Croxdale's Dad ran the gas station. Unless she was picking beans or berries, Mom stayed home. Later both parents worked at the school: Dad as a janitor and bus driver; Mom as a cook.</p> <p>Croxdale tells a story that took place when Dad ran the gas station. One night two guys would not leave the station when Dad was closing. Dad left them inside, came home, ate, read the paper, and went back to let them out. When they tried the same thing again, he refused to go back. Only years later did Dad learn the guys took the windows out, got out, and put the windows back in.</p> <p>Then there are Croxdale's stories about fun times throughout his</p>

	<p>life. During his childhood, the area's woods, pastures, and streams made it perfect for hunting and fishing. He enjoyed both, along with the opportunity to provide food for the family. The Sugar and Spavinaw creeks were favorite fishing spots: later the White River. When he wanted to hunt, Croxdale just picked up his rifle and went. And then there were times swimming at Blue Hole, playing baseball, Saturday night square dances, rodeos, and trips to Noel and Bentonville. On one trip to the Bentonville Square he met his future wife, Shirley.</p> <p>Croxdale's family got their first television in the 1950s. With an antenna there were two channels: one from Pittsburg Kansas and the other from Joplin. He watched westerns and Ranger Ed. Today he still uses an antenna; it gets the programming and news he wants.</p> <p>Croxdale went to school in Hiwasse and Gravette, graduating in 1958. Following graduation, he briefly went to the state of Washington and picked apples. Returning to Hiwasse, he was a route salesman, driving for companies that included Bunny Bread and Coca Cola. Later he made telephone cable and submergible well motors.</p> <p>With a chuckle, and a glimpse into Northwest Arkansas small-town life, Croxdale tells of a restaurant owner taking a customer up on his marriage proposal, the Chevy won (and lost) in a card game, the twins who boxed, the farm with a red door on the chicken house, Dad's reaction to falling walnuts, and how a gun became involved in Dad's Model-A repair.</p> <p>As shared by Croxdale, Hiwasse is a 'sunny spot.'</p>
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Questions or Comments	https://nwaoralhistory.org
Interview sidebar	Croxdale remembers penny loafer shoes. "Back in the time you could look at a boy's shoes and tell how well off he was. If he had quarters in them, he was really in the money...pennies he was just about broke...no coins he was broke." [00:36:52]