



Smithsonian
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Transcript of interview with Irene Hall's
family

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Transcript

Preface

Tape-recorded Interview

with Irene Hall's Family in Oklahoma City

June 9, 1981

Willem Volkersz, Interviewer

Editor's Note:

This transcript is from a series of recordings made by Willem Volkersz over a number of years. They are not formal interviews, but rather records of conversations, often taped during photo-taking tours of the artist's studios or home collections.

The naive/visionary artists in these interviews have unique verbal mannerisms, many of which are difficult or impossible to transcribe accurately into written form. Thus, for grasping certain nuances of speech, researchers will find it advantageous to listen to the original tapes.

Our intent in transcribing these interviews was nonetheless to translate as accurately as possible the spoken word into a comprehensible written form, making changes to clarify but not to interpret. Thus the speaker's grammar is unedited. For example, "them" for "those," "theirselves," and "gotta" were all transcribed as heard. On the other hand, certain changes were made for clarity: " 'cause," was transcribed as "because," " 'fore" as "before," " 'yo" as "your," etc.

Other editorial notations are as follows: Bracketed words are of two types. Those with "[—Ed.]" or "[—WV]" are inserted by the transcriber, editor, or Volkersz. Other bracketed words indicate uncertainty: Two or more words or phrases indicate possible alternatives; "[unintelligible]" and "____" indicate words that are garbled or incomprehensible on the tape, the former being a much longer phrase than the latter; "[noise]" is self-explanatory.

The original format for this document is Microsoft Word 365 version 1908. Some formatting has been lost in web presentation.

Interview

CW: Cleve Warren

LW: Linda Warren

MA: Mary Ann Anders

WV: Willem Volkersz

[Tape 1, side A (cont.); Volkersz' No. H2-2] [45-minute tape sides]

[Participating in this interview are Irene Hall's grandson Cleve Warren, his wife Linda Warren, and Mary Ann Anders, curator of folk art in Oklahoma. Accompanying them, and sometimes participating in the interview, are their young children, Anthony Warren and Jason Volkersz.—Ed.]

[It was Linda Warren, a professional artist, who first introduced me to Irene Hall's work—WV]

WV: That'll make yourself ____.

CW: Oh, it doesn't matter; I'm just playing games in there. Let's see, I'm trying to remember when my, how old my grandmother was when she married my grandfather _____. She was. . . My grandfather we know was born in 1888. We know they married each other in. . .

WV: Do you remember them talking about how much younger she was?

CW: No, I don't. I remember that they were married. . . People married back then, of course, at an earlier age. And I'm not exactly sure. He was a professional baseball player. And he left home at thirteen. He was from western Oklahoma. He was born in Virginia, but his family had migrated out here. His father, they were in the run, the last run, the Cherokee strip Run, which was 1893, and homesteaded land up there. But the father died. He worked for the railroad and he died of typhoid fever in Anthony, Kansas, when my grandfather, I think, was about four or five years old. So she—my grandmother, my grandfather's mother—my great-grandmother, in other words. . .

WV: Right.

CW: . . . was left with about ten kids, you know, and a farm and nobody, and so they all worked on the farm. But my grandfather was, even though they were poor and relatively uneducated, scholastically speaking. . . Their mother was a German immigrant, and she had, that was real important.

MA: Well, your grandfather was, well, your grandfather was more educated wasn't he, than ____ . . .

CW: No, he left school in the eighth grade. But he was a very, you know, he was a self-educated man. He knew art, music, literature, you know.

WV: He read a lot?

CW: Read a lot, yeah. He was real. . .

MA: Personally educated ____ ____.

WV: Yeah.

CW: Yeah, you know, he was into the great masters of everything. You know, he respected virtuosity, regardless of what field it was in. And anyway, he left and worked in Enid [Oklahoma—WV] as a young boy.

WV: Ian?

CW: Enid. Enid, Oklahoma.

WV: Oh, Enid, yeah.

CW: And his family—I believe it was in Carrier, that they lived; anyway, it's west of Enid—and in fact all of the boys in the family had the German work ethic. They were all very hard-working, disciplined, you know. That came through in the later years with my grandfather, because that was, I guess, that could be one reason why he didn't care for my grandmother's artwork. They never got along at all, to my recollection.

WV: Huh.

MA: Was that a real problem?

CW: Yeah, they'd, you know. . .

MA: I mean, was it real?

CW: They'd throw things at each other, you know. They didn't get along at all. I mean, had they have been married in the present day, you know, they'd have been divorced.

WV: Yeah, right, in those days you didn't.

CW: No way, no way.

WV: Yeah, right.

CW: But, you know, of course back then, divorce was a lot tougher and it was not socially acceptable.

WV: Yeah, unacceptable, exactly.

CW: So they stayed married. But I remember, you know, them throwing things at each other, and yelling at each other, and. . .

WV: You witnessed some of those?

CW: Oh, absolutely.

WV: It was pretty common, huh?

CW: He hated her artwork, you know. He was into restoring picture frames. He had arthritis very badly, but he could do, he was amazing with his hands, anything mechanical, or anything that required skill. He was just incredible.

MA: And he was an attorney, was he?

CW: Huh?

MA: Wasn't he an attorney?

CW: No, he was a jack of all trades, really. He owned the first Ford agency in southeastern Oklahoma. He was a professional baseball player before that. In fact, that's how he met my grandmother.

MA: Because that's the story that I love, of how they met. Tell that.

CW: Yeah, now he met my grandmother. . .

WV: How'd they meet, yeah?

CW: Well, he was playing, he started out playing ball in Enid, I believe, and was signed with the Chicago Cubs, their organization, and he was a first baseman and a pitcher. And they came through Eufaula, I believe it was. The. . . He played for the Enid or the Tulsa, or someone. I can't remember the exact minor league franchise. . .

[Tape 2, side B; Volkorsz' No. H2-2 (cont.)]

CW: . . .that he was with. And they played an exhibition game in Eufaula against, you know, a team of local guys there, and, you know, beat them to death. And my grandmother was real young. I'm not sure, but I think he was too; I think he was like maybe 16, 17 years old himself, or maybe 18. She was like 14, 15, somewhere in there. [In the interview with IH conducted one day previous, she said she had been 13 years old—Ed.]

MA: You told me that. She was very young.

CW: They were both very young.

WV: That's interesting, because now you establish somewhat of a difference in ages between them.

CW: I'm not exactly sure.

WV: It's not a very large gap, you know.

CW: No, it's not, yeah.

MA: It was the early day kind of thing that happens, you know.

CW: Say two to five years. Two to five years, somewhere in there, but we're not sure.

WV: Right, yeah.

CW: But anyway, I guess my grandmother was real attractive. They were attracted to each other, and he stayed there and asked my great-grandmother—who I never got to know, who I guess was a pretty remarkable woman in her own way. . .

MA: That's Irene's mother.

CW: Yeah, that was Lizzie. . .

MA: She must have been a very remarkable. . .

CW: She was one of the five white people adopted into the Creek tribe. And the only woman.

MA: But she was, she was Indian in a Creek. . .

CW: She was considered a full-blood, even though she was not. She was an Irishman. She had red hair and

blue eyes and, you know, white skin. But she was adopted. And let's see. Anyway, they got married—who knows when, we're not sure. (chuckles) And they moved, they lived around, let's see, I think he went to Tulsa—so he must have been playing for Tulsa, I guess, professional baseball.

WV: I see.

CW: Then they went to Denver, and they lived in Denver for a while, because he was pitching up there. And he threw both innings of a double header, with the Cubs, I think like an exhibition game or something. He was in the major leagues for a very, very short time. But he hurt his arm. He threw, you know, a double header, which was not, I mean, that was not uncommon in those days for men to pitch twenty innings.

WV: Wow.

CW: But, you know, nevertheless. . .

WV: Didn't have the relief pitchers.

CW: Right. You know, and hurt his arm and that was the end of his career. Because after he hurt his arm and it affected his hitting, and he realized that he wasn't. . . You know, I think he was maybe 22 or 23 when this happened, but we're not sure. But anyway. . .

WV: So we're talking about, what, dates now, twenties?

CW: No. The early part of, in the teens, maybe, during the war.

WV: Wait, oh, the teens, oh boy.

MA: That's even earlier. [unintelligible] They talked about early 1900s, like ____.

WV: Yeah, wait.

CW: Even earlier. Because they used to travel a lot. Even after he didn't play, he would go to Kansas City, to Chicago, to St. Louis, to see, you know, like his hero was like Ty Cobb. He was, he talked. . .

MA: It was a circuit before even the twenties; it was early, like teens, and early ____.

CW: Yeah, the thing that I remember Granny. . .

MA: ____ and that kind of thing.

CW: Yeah, the thing that I remember Granny telling me about this, is that she used to travel with the ballteam, you know.

MA: She went with them? She traveled with them?

WV: She mentioned that to me, too.

CW: Yeah, she traveled with them.

MA: [unintelligible]

CW: And that they had an apartment. They stayed in hotels. They stayed in a hotel in Denver, and I think he was—can't remember—I think he was up there a year, I mean, you know, one season or two, and she was very young. They had just been married, and, yeah, just been married a short time, and they promoted him up to, I guess, what would be now triple-A baseball. And they were living in a hotel in Denver, and he was making, you know, I don't know what the salary exactly was—let's say \$20 a week, you know, big money for most people back then. You know, a ballplayer—I guess comparable to today—a pretty good living. And she took his money that he made one week and she went out and bought a hat at the most expensive store in Denver. And she was real young, maybe 17, you know, 16, 17 years old.

MA: Yes, I think she married him, what, at 14 or 15, because she told me she married him very young—I mean, really young—13 or 14.

WV: Wow.

CW: And once again, when he came back to the room—he'd been at ballpark practicing, you know—and when he came back to the room, he found that she had bought this hat. The German work, thrift, he exploded about the hat and made her take back the hat, and I think she left him because of that, for a while. (laughter)

MA: Oh, really?

WV: That was too frivolous to buy, right?

CW: Absolutely. To buy a hat, you know, it was one of those Gibs[on]. . . I remember that it was a Gibson girl hat, you know, with the ostrich feathers and everything, and he made her take it back. . .

MA: That would be wonderful to have a picture of her with hat, because she wonderful, and that would be splendid. I would love that, to see Irene in that hat.

CW: We're not sure, but anyway, we know that he pitched a little bit for the Cubs, but very, very briefly, because they went to Arizona one year for spring training, and he hurt his arm and his career was through. He knew it was through, so when he quit baseball, he completely quit and got into, got out, you know.

MA: Do you know when that was?

CW: He did a little scouting, though. He did a little scouting for the. . .

MA: When ____ would that be? What time element are we talking about?

CW: I don't know. He was, if you've ever been in our house, if you've seen. . . She ever show you pictures of him playing baseball?

MA: Yes, I've been there, right, and I've seen them. Yes.

WV: I haven't been inside.

CW: Okay.

MA: I've been inside and I've seen all the pictures.

CW: She had pictures of him as a ball player.

MA: Well, I would give a ballpark figure. . .

WV: Ballpark figure. Yeah, right, good one.

MA: I'm sorry. I don't mind wasting tape time. I would suggest the 1920s at the latest, is that correct?

CW: Well, I don't believe there was. . .

MA: Am I wrong?

CW: It had to be earlier than that, because. . .

MA: Earlier than the twenties.

CW: Because it had to be like in the teens, maybe, you know, just as the war started, or just as my aunt was born, because my. . .

MA: It was before World War I, okay.

WV: Because my mother was born in 1916 and my aunt was born in 1914, so it had to be in there, in that era. Not any later than 1918.

WV: Wow.

MA: So we can date that kind of thing then, about the early, the teens, you're talking about?

CW: Yeah, from the ____ . . .

MA: That was a real early kind of thing.

WV: Do you yourself have any clippings?

CW: No, we have. . . The only thing we have are pictures of him pitching.

MA: That's good, because we can document clothing and we can then get the kind of thing ____ ____.

CW: I can tell you the kind of ball cap they wore were the kind where it was like very, very short bill and it's just almost the crown of the head. They were like very small caps, you know.

WV: I see. An old-time baseball player, somebody who probably knows baseball could probably. . .

CW: Could tell you.

WV: Yeah.

CW: Could tell you an approximation. But I know he was with the Cubs organization because he used to talk about Zach Wilson, Three-fingered Mordecai Brown, Tinkers _____, _____. I mean, you know, I grew up on all that stuff.

MA: Three?

CW: Three-fingered Mordecai Brown.

MA: Make sure. . . Three-fingered Mordecai Brown.

CW: Yeah, he was a ballplayer—a pitcher, as a matter of fact—that my grandfather knew personally, who had his, who was in a mining accident as a young man and had severed, he only had three fingers and part of the thumb. And he was a pitcher and pitched with that hand. I think he was, I don't know if he's in the Hall of Fame or not, but he's a well-known guy, and he knew a lot of the ballplayers, and he scouted for a couple of the major league teams in that particular area of Oklahoma. But in his own way, he [CW's grandfather—Ed.] was as remarkable as my grandmother. Because he was, like I said, a self-educated man, and highly intelligent, highly disciplined. He and my grandmother were both about as far away as you could be from each other. I mean, he was. . .

WV: In terms of temperament.

CW: Temperament, personality, taste. And it's incredible. I can't imagine that they were ever married. I don't understand why. It must have been a strong physical attraction.

MA: How did it last? I want to know that.

CW: The only thing I can figure out is that when they met there must have been a hell of a strong physical attraction, you know.

WV: Right.

MA: Is that _____?

CW: He was like six feet two, blue eyes, blond hair, you know.

WV: And a baseball player, you know.

CW: A baseball player.

MA: [unintelligible]

CW: And she was the Indian maiden, you know.

WV: Indian maiden, right.

MA: That's how it started, but how did it, what. . . Was it social things that kept that going?

CW: Absolutely not. They had nothing in common. They hated each other. (chuckles)

MA: I know exactly. She told me that and I know the things that. . . [continues, unintelligibly]

WV: But it was the social stigma probably of divorce; without any question. . .

CW: Yeah, and in a small town. I mean, like I lived in Eufaula for practically the first ten years of my life, and I never knew anyone there that was divorced. I mean, it was a. . .

MA: So you think it was the social milieu, the thing that happened, and. . .

CW: Yeah.

WV: Right, yeah. I think that's true for my parents, still _____, they go at other, you know. Not that any, I mean, it never gets violent, you know. And I think, "Why do you put up with this?" And I think, "Why, of course." You know, it's totally out of the question to consider any of the alternatives, you know.

LW: How did he feel about her interest in psychic phenomena?

CW: He thought it was bullshit.

MA: But it wasn't, was it?

CW: Thought it was bullshit, thought she was crazy.

MA: What do you think about that?

CW: What do I think about it?

MA: You think it's bullshit, don't you?

CW: No, I think it's real, for her.

MA: I think it's real for her, too. I think that's a good answer; I like that.

CW: I think it's real, because I've, I know. . .

MA: I think it's real, too. I agree with you. I like your answer _____ for her.

CW: I've had her do a couple of things for me, just in my business, you know, in bands and stuff, because I was real concerned about different personnel changes that were about to happen, what I was going to do. And boy, she's been right on the money—every time. [snaps his fingers]

WV: Gee, that's great.

MA: I [unintelligible].

CW: So I don't like to delve into that very much with her because, you know. . .

MA: I think, Cleve, that we are—how do you say it?—[says "intrepidors"; probably means intrepid trespassers—Ed.] on that phenomenon. I don't like it and I've dealt with you a long time, and I feel very cautious about that. I want those kinds of things to be dealt with in a very sensible way. And I. . . I believe in it. I believe in it.

CW: Oh, I do, too.

MA: And I want you to get that out.

WV: Not really, _____ that _____ with her.

CW: But I just don't, I don't like to. . .

MA: I don't ever it to be. . . I never want it to be. . .

CW: That's another side of Granny, you know, that's. . .

MA: Yes, but I want that side. . . I need that, but I don't want that side of Granny to be something for public debate.

MA: Exploited or. . .

CW: Yeah.

MA: You know, I want to exploit it. I want you to somehow tell us about that. I don't know how to do it.

CW: Well. . .

LW: Does it go way, way back? Like early _____.

CW: Yeah, to just before, before I was born. [all talk at once] She's always been sort of a town gypsy, you know, fortune teller.

MA: You know, she told me that she wants me to have, well, the. . . We have like four or five skulls [cow skulls

which IH has painted—WV]. She called and says she wants me to have the one skull, the red one, that's going. . . It's a specific skull because she that has meaning for me. And I am just delighted. I will take that skull, and I want it. And I will do [take—WV] the only one that she says. Because she says it has meaning. And I would never do that without that. I, you know, I think that is, you know, a total sense of her integrity and her sense of what she feels toward me.

WV: Yeah.

MA: And that's the kind of thing that, you know, I want Cleve to. . .

CW: Well, she's always, you know, as far as I can remember, been that way, as far as, you know, delving into the mystic, you know.

MA: Yeah. She says that the red-and-white skull is my skull, and I'm supposed to have that.

CW: But a lot, I have to confess, I think a lot of it, of lot of stuff that she, especially that she directs toward the family, you know, are just her, you know, her wishes. . .

WV: Yeah.

CW: . . .That she says that are psychic a certain way.

MA: Do you think that's just family and not psychic?

CW: Well, some of it I really feel is, you know, just, you know, "I don't want you to do this because. . ."

MA: Yeah, but you've known her when she was younger, Cleve. You know, I haven't known her since she was a little. . .

CW: Well, some of it's real and some of it's bullshit, and you have to know Granny real well like I do, enough to separate the two from, you know, one from the other. But she's for real on some of that stuff. She scares me. She's scary on some of it, that she's predicted. . .

LW: Well, that's all ____ ____.

CW: . . .I know that she's predicted, you know, about certain people dying and. . .

WV: Yeah, she's told me stories.

CW: Yeah, I'm sure you're familiar with all of that.

MA: Well, yeah, because my kids have been to school with her and then we've been through the ____ all that.

CW: Yeah. . . But my grandfather thought it was just total horse manure, you know, he just couldn't. . . Like I said, his background and the way he was, you know, I mean, like when my mother started piano lessons, you know, it was for her to learn, you know, Wagner and Bach and, you know, and Haydn and that sort of thing, and not learn, you know, boogie woogie piano. Boy, just that would not happen at all.

WV: Yeah, right, right, yeah.

CW: And he was under the great master. . .

WV: An old stern Germanic.

CW: Really, you know. Very disciplined. Very, very disciplined, you know. And he was that. . . And that's still evident today with my mother and my aunt, in some respects, and somewhat on my own, because my grandfather raised me until we moved here because my mother was ill. . .

MA: [unintelligible]

CW: . . .and my father was traveling a lot.

MA: Do you think that's a traditional immigrant, or is that a. . .

CW: That's just a. . . I don't know, just German people that I know.

MA: [unintelligible]

CW: Well, you grew up in Kansas.

MA: Well, I know that. (laughs)

CW: You grew up in a . . .

MA: Well, I did the same thing; that's why I was asking.

CW: Yeah.

MA: You know, I grew up in the same kind of total kind of sense of discipline. It was a Scandinavian discipline, but it was there, and that's why I was asking. Is it the same kind of tradition, that total kind of sense of. . .

CW: Yeah, and real, and a very, very. . .

MA: And did you grow up in that?

CW: Yeah, I did. I certainly did. You know, were. . .

MA: So that Granny had that kind of ____.

CW: Granny was, I tell you what, my grandfather was so, had such a strong will or an ego about him, he was just, I mean, it was just like everyone was subservient to him, and he ____.

MA: But he didn't have that immigrant tradition that Granny had ____, ____, ____?

CW: He just had an incredibly strong personality though.

MA: [unintelligible] What did he have?

CW: I mean, he just had a magnetic, forceful, domineering personality. You did what he did [probably meant said—Ed.], or you. . . Which is incredible because. . .

MA: She ____ ____ did it until he died?

CW: Yes, he was that way from forever. And it's amazing, they say. . .

MA: ____ what you grew up, though, ____ ____.

CW: Oh, absolutely. And it's incredible that my grandmother was able to even do her artwork, because he hated it, he threw it out, you know, she was castigated, just, I mean, it was just. . .

WV: Now, was this work that she did already on the outside of the house, or was this stuff that. . .

CW: Oh, yeah, he, see, when I was a young boy growing up in Eufaula, my, I lived, my parents bought a home there. When I was five years old, they bought a home there. My dad was in the oil business and traveled a lot, and my mother was ill and she really couldn't take care of me—she was having a lot of health problems. And plus, my grandfather was, you know, he took an interest in me—I don't know why, but, you know, more so than my sister or my cousin, I guess because I was there. But anyway, you know, I was, you know, raised in his, the way he thought a child should be raised. And I can remember him always thinking that my grandmother's artwork was, you know, lunacy, that it was, you know, there was no artistic value in his eye to it at all. It was merely junk and trash. And he. . .

WV: What ____ ____?

CW: . . .in fact, he was so, he felt so strongly about it that they never lived, he never lived in that home when I was there, when I lived in Eufaula. He never lived in that home. He lived with us. He lived with my mother and my father.

WV: (chortles???) Hah!

CW: He would not, he would not go into that home.

WV: Really?

CW: He would not go in. . .

WV: Really? Was he embarrassed by it?

CW: He was humiliated by it. And, and he did everything he could, applied every bit of psychological pressure and, and verbal abuse and everything he could to get my grandmother to stop that. There were several occasions that he, you know. . . He was into crystal, you know, cut glass, you know, porcelain things, and he had a great eye for it. In fact, he and my aunt. . . He was into really, really into woodworking and furniture. He had a marvelous gift about that. He and my aunt—my aunt, Virginia, lives in Tulsa—really had a thing for birdseye maple, and they travelled all over the Midwest for birdseye maple furniture, and she's got a home that's incredible, of birdseye maple furniture—the whole home. And she's got a mantle there that was, it came from William Allen White's home in Emporia, Kansas. It's a birdseye maple and black marble mantle.

WV: Oh.

CW: It's incredible! And he restored all of this. . . He restored, I've got a bedroom suite in there that he restored. The guy was amazing with wood and that sort of thing. He was just a. . .

WV: Did he have a shop?

CW: Well, he did, you know, he just files and stuff, not really a shop. No motorized tools.

WV: Yeah, it was all hand tools.

CW: It was all hand tools and, you know, he was like a master craftsman. Anything, he, he would—once again that German, or Germanic upbringing—anything he did, it was so competitive, he was just the best at whatever he did, you know, I guess. . . .

WV: Like the ball club. . . Whether it was ball playing, or woodworking, or whatever, right?

CW: Ball playing. Or whether it was in the oil business about getting leases. Or whether it was selling cars when he had his car, his Ford agency. Whatever he did. And he was really into educating, into education, in thinking that. . .

WV: That's Germanic too.

CW: . . .you know, that you should get as much education as possible. And he, and he was, they were very well off financially before the Depression in the twenties when my Mom and my aunt were small girls. He would take off the summer and—you know, when they were out of school—and they would travel around the United States. They were in every state. They were, you know, to Oregon. And he was quite a hunter too, a sportsman.

MA: That was your, that was ____?

CW: My grand. . . Husband. This is Grover.

MA: Huh, ____ that ____ ____.

WV: How would they travel? By car, or what?

CW: Yeah, by car.

MA: That was early, that was very early [unintelligible].

CW: They drove the Lincoln Highway, you know, back in the twenties.

MA: They drove what?

CW: The Lincoln Highway. You remember the Lincoln Highway, which is now I-80. I mean that was a dirt road. . .

MA: It was kind of like they were pioneers [unintelligible].

CW: Yes. But he believed that, he believed that that, you know, that they should get out and see the countryside and see the historical places and stuff. Uh, you know, Boston and Chicago and Washington. . .

WV: So who would go on these trips?

CW: Oh, my grandmother and, I mean, everybody went. My grandmother said "We're going. You get in the car and go." And that was in the days when people, very few people, not a whole lot of people had cars.

WV: Right. That's [unintelligible].

CW: And they would be gone the whole summer.

MA: Irene had. . . Irene had a very strong personality to match her husband's, didn't she?

CW: Oh, absolutely.

WV: That's probably what caused some of the friction, right?

MA: Right, but it was there [unintelligible]. . .

CW: That's right.

WV: She was not exactly subservient.

MA: . . . talked to you and I've talked to, and I've talked, you know, we've talked about it and that was. . .

CW: Oh, it was, they have had. . .

Diane Volkorsz (DV): At what point in her life did she start making the art, or how did she start?

CW: It was as long as I can remember.

MA: Oh. [unintelligible]

CW: I've got, I've got, I've got pictures of my Mom's where I was, you know, just learning to walk, and all the gourd tree and the rock garden and all of that stuff was there.

WV: When your mother was a real young child?

CW: No, when I was.

WV: Oh, when you were.

CW: But my mother said that she remembers that, you know, that my grandmother doing all that stuff. My grandmother was a packrat, as you know. She has to be to. . .

WV: That's what that's about, in part, isn't it?

MA: I, she told me when we visited, when John Brandenburg and I went down there and she was talking to us, and she said that the inside things like the horseshoes—which I think are wonderful, I love them—but they were horseshoes with the plastic [decorated with glitter and plastic flowers—WV], and she said those were the early kinds of things, that she did the inside things early because her husband didn't like the outside things. And I just, I want to know about that. Is that right?

CW: Well. . .

MA: ____ tell me correctly? Was it a. . .

CW: As long as I can remember, you know, about. . .

MA: Just how early is early?

CW: Boy, I don't know. You'd have to ask my mother about that because. . .

MA: Well, she said about the thirties. Is that right?

CW: Could. . . I'm sure it was because I know, for me, I can always remember as long as, you know—and I have a good memory—I can remember the goord tree and the rocks around the tree. Of course the goord tree now is gone. She's cut it down.

MA: Right.

CW: And another thing that's funny too. My grandfather loved trees. He was, you know, he loved trees. He had a huge pine, he had a huge pine tree back there on the side of the house, on the side of. . .

MA: And that's the one that she's decorated and we have pictures of, right?

CW: Well, no, that, that was the oak tree.

MA: That's not the right one?

CW: There was, there was an oak tree in front of the house. And that was a big oak tree. The day, the week after my grandfather died she cut that pine tree down.

WV: Ohh.

MA: Ohh. [groans & laughter]

CW: She cut it down. It was like a symbol of dominance, you know.

MA: A symbol that she was gonna do it, she cut it down.

CW: That's right.

WV: Ohh.

CW: And another thing, too, is about a month or two after he died she bought a car, and she's never owned a car.

WV: Ohhh, boy.

MA: Is that the one that's out in the back? [everyone talking at once—Ed.]

CW: That's it.

WV: That's that old Nash?

CW: Metropolitan.

MA: And she'd drive it. . .

WV: When did he die?

CW: He died in September, September the tenth, 1960. Died at my parents' home—appropriate enough, watching a baseball game.

WV: Oh, really?!

CW: Yeah.

LW: A heart attack. [He's] like granny, too; he dreamed that his grandfather was going to die that morning.

MA: Oh, she did?

LW: No, Cleve did. He woke up in ____ ____.

WV: Oh, really? Oh, boy.

MA: Did you dream that, Cleve? Did you dream your grandfather was going to die?

CW: Yeah, and he died that day.

WV: And you were real close to him.

CW: Very, very close.

WV: Geesh.

CW: Closer than my father. [talking all at once—Ed.]

WV: Did you, did you do anything about that?

CW: Oh, I told him.

MA: Were you closer to your grandfather than you were to your grandmother?

CW: Oh, absolutely. Oh, yes.

LW: He spent the night with Cleve every night.

MA: Oh, really?

CW: Yeah, he used to read me Thornton W. Burgess stories every night.

LW: And took Cleve to school every day.

CW: And took me to school every day.

MA: So actually your grandfather was a personality that we need to document as much as, as ____.

CW: Yeah, like I said he was, he was in his own way, in his own way, as remarkable as my grandmother. He was an amazing man. He was like a Renaissance man in the early 1900s. Anything he did, he did well. I mean anything.

MA: He was kind of a man of all seasons? A man of. . .

CW: He was a man. . . But he was incredibly domineering and a one- dimensional kind of person.

MA: [inaudible question]

CW: Oh, absolutely.

WV: Sure, there's two sides to that one, you know.

CW: Yeah. Absolutely.

MA: It's not a good thing. . .

CW: No, there was bad, you know, I mean, just as granny, you know. You know, he, I'm sure was so physically and mentally intimidating to Granny that, that. . . There's a couple of wild stories that I'll have to tell you here in a little bit, but one of my grandmother attempting to murder him one time.

WV: [unintelligible]

MA: Well, how would do we put that into the context?

CW: I don't know.

MA: [unintelligible] I want that. Tell me.

CW: I don't know, but she. . .

MA: Well, don't tell me that, tell me that, I want that, tell me the story. [unintelligible]

CW: Okay. Well, my grandfather was so domineering and so, had such an incessant. . .

MA: Your grandfather?

CW: Yes, Grover. "Hop." His nickname was Hop Hall because of his pitching days. He had a hop on his fast ball. It moved. And that's how he got his name Hop. I called him Pop. My mother was a sophomore - or let's see now, a freshman?—a freshman at Oklahoma State, when it was Oklahoma A & M. My grandfather. . .

MA: 'Cause I taught her [students, ____].

CW: Okay. All right, now.

MA: I know [that, know].

CW: Uh, at. . . My grandfather believed that the whole family should get the education, so they moved to Stillwater. He moved the family from Eufaula to Stillwater and he believed in, you know, like I said, he was very strong on education.

WV: Your grandfather moved the family?

MA: [unintelligible]

CW: Yes, moved the whole family from Eufaula to Stillwater while my aunt and my Mom were in school up

there.

WV: Wow.

CW: And he went to the classes as well.

WV: (laughs)

CW: To make sure that not only that they were going to class, but for, you know, just for his own benefit.

WV: That's extraordinary.

CW: And my father was in school up there on an athletic scholarship, so, you know, it was like the whole family. My Dad lived in the back of their house. They had a rented house there in Stillwater. And they had had a, my grandmother and grandfather had had a particularly terrible fight. They never got along. As long as my mother and my aunt can remember, they never got along.

MA: I know your fa—. I'm trying to get the family connection. I've taught Jeff.

CW: And Greg.

MA: And Greg. I need to know. . . I'm trying to sort back, because it was your grand—, it was your father at Stillwater. That's not too far along, back.

CW: That was in the early thirties.

MA: ____ thirties.

CW: That was in the early thirties because. . .

MA: I know your sister. How do I fit that in? Give me a clue.

CW: Okay. Well, my mother, my mother and father met when, he was from, my father was from a little town—it's not even a town, just a community, you know, farms that were close together—called Bower, which is now covered up by the lake. And they were very, very poor.

MA: Yeah, of Eufaula, yeah, I got that, all right.

CW: Pittsburgh County.

MA: Yeah, yeah. I understand that.

CW: They were very, very poor, a very ignorant family, nowhere, cotton, you know, one step ahead of being sharecroppers is where they were. My father didn't start school until he was eight so he was two years ahead of my. . .

MA: So you are ____ with that, through that ____?

CW: Yeah, so he was two years ahead of my school, of my mother in school, although four years chronologically older than her. And they met when she was in the seventh grade and he was in the ninth grade and they went steady from then on, till he died.

MA: And because, yeah I picked that up ____ ____.

CW: So anyway, when he, when my father was high school age, his parents said, you know, told him to quit high school and stay and help work on, you know, on the farm, pick cotton and, you know, slop the hogs and all that other stuff. And he said that he didn't want to live on the farm. He didn't want to, you know, mess with. . . He hated farming, so he moved into town and worked as a cook and went to high school from the time he was sixteen, because he was twenty when he graduated from high school.

WV: All be darned. He did it.

MA: ____, he did it, he went through that ____.

CW: So he lived, he lived, he lived uh with my. . . He was nineteen or twenty when he graduated, but he lived with, his last, his senior year in high school he lived with my grandmother and grandfather Hall, Granny and Pop. He lived with them because he, you know, he was going with my mother, and he was, had been going with her for a long time and his parents wouldn't help him out. They couldn't. They were too poor, so he stayed with

them.

WV: I see.

CW: Then when he got his athletic scholarship to Oklahoma State in football and wrestling, they, you know, they went up there together. Everybody, he moved the whole family up there.

MA: So that would be how Jeff, how I would then teach Jeff, how that would come about.

CW: Yeah.

MA: It was through that, yeah.

CW: Well, anyway, they were, my grandparents, and my Mom and Dad, and my aunt were all living in this house in Stillwater. And my Dad slept out on the back porch.

MA: Do you know where that was in Stillwater? [unintelligible]

CW: No.

MA: Could I have a, I would like. . . Do you have an address?

CW: My mother would know. My mother would know. [Both talking at once—Ed.]

MA: Could I go get that and do that?

CW: My mother would know. I don't. . .

MA: Can you get that for me later on?

CW: Yeah, she'll be, well, you know, I could call her for you.

MA: I'll get it sometime, that's fine.

CW: But anyway, they, my mother said she remembered one night it was a particularly terrible fight they had between them and that she remembered that she told, you know, it was just a horrible fight. And they didn't sleep together by the way (laughter). They did not occupy the same bed.

MA: Granny and the idea. . .

CW: Yeah.

MA: The other. No, I knew that. (laughs)

CW: And Pop. They didn't sleep together. I don't know what their sexual thing was happening there. There's no telling.

WV: (laughs)

CW: I wouldn't even venture a guess, you know.

WV: Yeah, right.

MA: That was sort of up for grabs. (laughs)

CW: Yeah, I have no idea. I know. . .

MA: Nobody knew? (laughs)

CW: I mean there was, I mean, I would, you'd think that being the grandson that my mother or my aunt or somebody would say "Well, yeah, they were hanging out with so and so."

WV: Yeah, right.

CW: But I never heard any of that.

WV: Never heard.

MA: Nothing.

CW: Nothing. 'Cause my grandfather was an incredibly moral, straight-ahead person. Now Granny I'm not sure about. I don't know. [laughter]

WV: Some doubts there.

CW: There might be some doubts there. I think there might have been some dallying around on her part when she was in California by herself when my aunt was living out there, but we don't know. We have no way of telling, but. . .

MA: Granny was in California by herself?

CW: Well, she went out there to visit my aunt when my cousin was born.

MA: Just for a short time, then?

CW: This was during the war.

MA: What? Second World War.

CW: Yes, this was when my aunt was pregnant and [had] just given birth to my cousin. Anyway, they were living in Stillwater, they had this horrible fight, and Granny was, she, although it's hard to believe now, I remember her temper. I remember Granny, you know, had a wild temper, and she was at times crazy, you know, insane, you know.

MA: Granny was?

CW: Yeah, she'd could go crazy on you. (laughs) You know, with her temper.

MA: She doesn't do that now does she?

CW: No. No, no. She could be extremely hateful and extremely mean, you know, I mean she just . . . Some people's personality is just like that. And I can remember her—as a child—her being that way on occasion, just being, you know, really really mean. And she and my grandfather, like I said, were in an awful, awful fight. And everybody had gone to bed. It was about two or three in the morning. And my father was sleeping out on the screened-in back porch behind the kitchen area of this rent house they were living in in Stillwater. And he heard a commotion in the kitchen, like the drawer being pulled out, and he thought someone was breaking into the house. And he was a real big, physical guy, you know, football. . .

WV: Right, right.

CW: . . . player and wrestler. And he was, in fact, he was playing football in the one of the few times in which O.S.U had a winning season and Win Waldorf was the coach up there. And, so anyway, he thought that somebody was breaking into the house, you know, there was a burglary in progress, so he followed who he thought was breaking into the house, followed them into the bedroom, and tackled them and brought him. . . It was my grandmother with a butcher knife. She was going after my grandfather.

WV: Ohh.

CW: She was gonna, she was gonna get him.

WV: Ohh, ohh.

CW: He, and he, you know. And this, and then, needless to say, this kind of. . .

WV: What an event.

CW: Yeah, it was pretty shocking.

MA: That's an event, right.

CW: And, you know, she. . . I think, you know, had it not been for my father, she probably would have murdered him. I mean, she was that insane, you know, her temper just got, you know, her emotions just took over.

MA: They both were then, the tempers. . .

CW: Yeah, it was just incredible. . .

MA: . . .there was a constant conflict going on [with them].

CW: Yeah, he had a temper too, you know. I can remember him throwing cold cream jars at her, you know, just as he was trying to strike out, you know, just as hard as if he was trying to strike out a batter.

WV: I'm real curious as to whether, like her work on the house changed a lot after he died. I mean, you said she bought a car, she did some other things. Did her work change? Do you know?

CW: I can't really remember that. I don't think so. I can just remember that, that, even though she didn't like him, I can remember that she had a great deal of respect for his taste in art.

MA: The tree, all the tree, the wonderful tree that we have pictures of, and the tree was high. . . [Speaking about a large tree beside the house decorated with painted gourds and cow skulls—WV]

CW: It was huge. It was huge then.

MA: . . .and huge, and then the, and then all the dolls and all the things under it, but that was not, that was before he died, wasn't it?

CW: Yeah, well, he never went down there.

MA: And he was not, he didn't live with her?

CW: No. Not while I, not while I, when I lived in Eufaula, which was from 1954. . .

MA: All the time she told me this, that was that wonderful tree, that that tree was there, and she told me. . .

CW: The big oak tree.

MA: Yes, she told me that.

WV: The one that became the gourd tree, you mean?

CW: Yeah, that was the gourd tree. It was a big, big. . .

WV: Right.

MA: And all the gourds were on it, on it.

WV: What happened? How did it die?

MA: How did that happen?

CW: Well, she kept cutting. . . Granny loved to trim, to. . .

WV: Right.

CW: . . .you know, to work in the yard, to cut things. . .

WV: Right.

CW: . . .to trim the hedge, trim the trees. She kept cutting the thing back so much that it finally just croaked.

WV: Oh. [laughter from all] What's this thing about the lightning striking?

CW: Well.

WV: I thought she told me that lightning struck the tree.

CW: She said. . . Yeah, I think that the lightning struck it, but, you know, I mean, it just knocked off a few of the branches. It did, it wasn't, wasn't anything. . .

WV: That's what she sort of likes you to think, probably, that lightning struck the tree.

CW: She killed the tree. She kept cutting it back and cutting it back and cutting it back.

WV: Ohhh.

MA: But he did not live with her during that time. [unintelligible, both talking at once].

CW: Well, he did not live with her as long as I can remember.

MA: [inaudible question—Ed.]

CW: Hmm?

MA: When can you remember?

CW: Well, I, we moved, let's see. . .

MA: Give me a date.

CW: I tell you what. . .

MA: I know that, Cleve. I'm aware of that, and I want to ____ ____ ____.

CW: We lived, we lived, let's see, we lived in Witchita Falls in 1951? 1951? They came to visit us? Took me to [Shaddock]. He had relatives out there, in western Oklahoma, so '51 they were still living in Eufaula, I guess they were still living together at that time, but. . .

MA: She's told me that, right.

CW: Okay, then we moved to Oklahoma City right after that. We left, we lived here in Oklahoma City, and we lived over on 25th Street. Let's see. It would be. . . We moved to Eufaula in 1953. I can remember that. Because it was a very, very hot summer.

MA: She told that, that it was in the early fifties, ____.

CW: I was five years old when we moved to Eufaula, because 1953 was a particularly hot summer and they had to remodel the house for us to move in, because they put in a bathroom, and they had to put in an air conditioning thing, because it was incredibly hot. Fifty-three, summer 1953, and I can remember how hot it was, so we moved there in 1953. When our family moved there, my father was working out of, for an oil field supply company in Tulsa, a place called Mud Products. It sold drilling fluids, and he did not. . . My mother was very sick, and that's why we moved to Eufaula, is because he was on the road continually, travelling in Oklahoma, Texas and Kansas, you know, on oil, you know, on oil-well sites, and with drilling, his drilling muds. So my grandfather moved into that house from the day that we moved there. I can remember him being there [in his daughter's house—WV] and not living down there [with Irene—WV]. Now I can remember spending the night with him a couple of times down at the old house.

MA: ____ ____ _____. Do you remember, did he live with. . . ?

CW: With our family.

MA: Irene and _____. So that would be the first. . .

CW: The first that I can remember is 1953.

MA: Fifty-three, okay.

CW: Fifty-three.

MA: So that would be almost thirty years ago.

CW: Yeah. Uh, so, and I can remember that, and, let's see, what else? And I can remember spending the night down there a few times with him, and she slept in one bedroom and my grandfather and I slept in another.

MA: What was the thing about that? What did you think about that? What was the split?

CW: That was the norm for them. They didn't get along. That was the norm.

MA: I think that's great. That's a great [influence, improvement] for her.

WV: Just accept it.

CW: Yeah, yeah.

MA: Just accept it, right. Good.

WV: [unintelligible]

MA: Great. That's how you [do it].

CW: They didn't, they didn't get along.

MA: You don't worry about it, you just. . .

CW: One time the house blew up. I can remember when the house. . . Did she ever tell you about that, the house blowing up?

MA: No.

CW: Yeah, there was a gas leak and. . .

MA: She showed me all the ____s.

CW: She was lucky she wasn't killed. Yeah, it blew up. I mean, it blew. . .

WV: Which house is this, now?

CW: The one. . .

WV: The one that I've been at.

MA: That blew up? That one she's in?

CW: Yeah, it blew up, in 1954, fifty-five. I mean, it blew up.

MA: [They] had to hang the laundry on the line, and I had to do all that, but I didn't ____ ____ know all that.

CW: Yeah, it blew up. She, it was either a gas leak, or she left the stove on too long, or was a little loose. 'Cause Granny—she won't tell you this—Granny likes to get loose. She likes to drink.

MA: How loose does she get?

CW: She likes to, well, she. . . My mother tends to exaggerate, but she likes to get out there. She likes to drink. She will drink if you give her half a chance.

MA: Well, ____ told me that, she told me that.

CW: Which her mother, my great-grandmother, really disapproved of. My grandfather. . . That's one reason why he moved out, is my mother told me, that's one reason why he moved out.

MA: Irene's husband moved out because she drank too much?

CW: Yeah, yeah, she drank, and that was just, you know, it was just horrible.

WV: Ahh. [unintelligible]

CW: He, a bootlegger came over to collect a debt one day, and he paid him off and said that's it, you know.

MA: And your grandfather knew that.

CW: Yeah. And he didn't like her drinking and he didn't. . . He didn't like anything she did. You have to understand that those people were as opposite as you can get. I don't, like I'm amazed. . .

MA: I understand that because I'm understand what you're. . .

WV: Yeah, sure, I understand.

CW: But anyway, my grandfather, like I said, he had a painting that was smuggled out of Germany during World War I in a cane. We still don't know who the artist is, but it's incredible. . .

MA: She showed me, though, ____.

CW: Have you seen that over there, my mother's ____?

MA: Yeah, she showed it to me, right. I don't know.

CW: Okay, well that, amazingly enough, that thing wasn't. . . There's one scratch on it where a piece of plaster. . .

MA: She showed me that one painting and she said that that's where it came from.

CW: Yeah, how a guy hauled it out in a cane and all that. Yeah, well, my gran—, strangely enough, as different as their tastes were in everything—I mean everything: where Granny was flamboyant, my grandfather was really conservative. I mean, he was ultra- conservative in his dress and his behavior, and morals and whatever—that she respected his opinion and respected his taste in art.

WV: Hmm.

CW: 'Cause she knew that he was an educated man. She did respect that about him.

WV: Oh, yeah.

CW: Even though she. . .

WV: She really had ____.

CW: Even though she didn't like him, she respected him.

WV: She must have very little education, if any.

CW: Yeah, she. . .

WV: She went to school as a. . .

CW: She didn't go to high school I know that.

MA: No, she told me, she said that she married him when she was fourteen, she ran away from her mother. Her mother didn't want her marrying him, and he was a baseball player and she snuck out at night and she married him at what, fourteen or fifteen? Something like that.

CW: Yeah, she was real young. She never went to high school, I know that.

MA: No. She was incredibly ____.

LW: She went to school in Tulsa, didn't she?

CW: Yeah, she went to a Catholic school. Did she ever tell you this?

MA: No, she didn't!

CW: Oh, yeah, see, she had a real bizarre upbringing. (chuckles) My grandmother is so strange. She is really, has got so many different personalities. I remember as a young kid—remember when wrestling, you know, TV wrestling was big? You know, everybody. . .

WV: Sure.

CW: . . .used to watch TV wrestling, you know, the guys with the masks, you know, and pulling the hair and all that?

WV: Oh, yeah.

CW: My grandmother would sit and still does, on like football games—she's a big OU [University of Oklahoma—WV] football fan. She'll sit with the rosary in front of the TV, but she goes to the Baptist church. She'll sit and, you know, and pray with the rosary beads, but she goes to the Baptist church. Now figure that one out.

WV: Well, she went to Catholic school.

MA: Yeah, she. . .

CW: Because she went to Catholic school.

[Interruption in taping]

MA: Was all this years before all this happened, before we [unintelligible] in the fifties and then the tree in

1957. What is the, what's the [unintelligible]. And now we have this, and I have these wonderful photos of her, of the doll fence and the really mythic kinds of people things, I think are wonderful, and I'd like to know about it. How do we get from the fact that she, that her husband was like. . . How do we get to this?

CW: Well, I don't, you mean. . .

MA: What does it ____? How does it connect? How do you connect? How do I connect?

CW: I don't. . . That'd be hard to answer, because I don't really know.

[For a time several speak simultaneously (including children) and the recording quality is too poor to decipher everyone.—Ed.]

WV: [unintelligible]

CW: Oh, ____ that the gourd tree and the rocks and that. . .

MA: Yeah, what is it, when, how did the gourd tree come about? How did we get the gourd tree?

CW: I never, I never really asked, you know.

MA: She just did it? How did we get the gourd tree?

LW: I think somebody brought her some gourds. One time a man from California or something?

MA: That's how we got the gourd tree?

CW: That's how she started in on that, but I don't remember when that, you know, I don't have any idea when that was or. . .

MA: So that's a sort of ____ ____ . . .

CW: I tell you what, what I think. I don't know this for a fact. You'd have to verify this with my mother or my aunt, but I don't know. Her mother, Irene's mother, my great-grandmother. . .

MA: This is Irene's mother.

CW: . . .was very, very strict also. She and my grandfather got along very well.

MA?: Oh, the father, yeah.

CW: Whenever, whenever my grandfather could not handle Irene, he would call Mrs. Gibson [noise] her mother. Granny is not, she is really her own person. She's not like either her mother or her father—according to. . .

MA: How did she get that way?

CW: I don't really know. My mother, ____ my mother and I talked about it. . .

MA: [unintelligible]

CW: My mother and I have talked about that. I don't know. Perhaps it was being married at such a young age, and then being in large cities, you know, seeing, going from a very, very sheltered environment to, you know, living with the ball team.

WV: Yeah, like, traveling to Denver and ____.

CW: Traveling. Traveling to Denver and to Kansas City and Chicago and Omaha and Tulsa and stuff.

MA: Sounds like a enlightening kind of thing.

CW: Perhaps. That was a. . .

WV: Do you think her Indian heritage has anything to do with some of her outlooks and things?

CW: Well, that's. . . Her Indian heritage has been pretty convenient, actually.

MA: Right, that's, how do I reconcile [unintelligible] and those things?

CW: Because, because, like a lot of people in Eufaula, the fullbloods were really, they were discriminated against, and the whiter you were the better you were.

WV: Right.

CW: And she really didn't come into her Indian thing until the past twenty years.

WV: Ohh.

MA: No, it's like Irene told me, when we were driving back to Oklahoma City, she says, "Well," I asked her about it, and she said, "Well, Mary Ann, you know that everyone in Eufaula is poor Indian." In other words, she was telling me, what she was doing was putting me down as far as asking her about that. She was saying, you know, "We're all Indian."

CW: Well, just about everybody here is.

MA: And I asked her, and she was telling me, we're all Creek.

CW: But. . .

MA: And I [sympathize] with that, I. . .

CW: I think. . . Granny enjoys being unique. She revels in that.

MA: [unintelligible] tell me what. . .

CW: And like I said, being Indian with her has been a matter of convenience for the past twenty years.

MA: Yeah, it helps, doesn't it, it makes the. . .

WV: Her aura.

CW: Her thing, yeah. But. . .

WV: Well, how Indian is she? Is it. . .?

CW: Well, let's see, her mother is considered a full-blood. Yes, because her mother was adopted.

MA: She ____ ____.

CW: Her mother was adopted into the tribe, so her mother was a white woman.

WV: Oh, that's right.

MA: Yeah, because she told me that she was what? half Creek, that she was not, that half breed Creek was. . .

CW: Really more white.

MA: More white than it was. . .

CW: Because her mother, like I say, was adopted in ____ tribe.

MA: Let's go through that again.

WV: Now the Indian part in her is really an adopted Indian?

CW: No, her, actually she's a quarter, because her father, [Micko] Gibson, was a half. Okay, when you get into blood. . .

WV: Yeah, right, actual blood, yeah.

CW: . . . actual blood, she's a quarter, because her father was a half- breed Creek Indian, you know.

WV: Okay.

CW: But her mother was adopted.

WV: Adopted.

CW: So in other words she was treated, her mother was treated as a full- blood, and she was one of five white people I guess that was adopted into the Creek tribe—and the only woman.

WV: Oh.

CW: So, let's see. And as far as from one place to the other, I think all the art stuff and the gourd thing and all that—now I'm not sure; you'd have to verify this with my mother—I think it started after 1944. I think it started, you know, right around just as the war was coming to an end, World War II, because of my grandmother.

MA: How does that, what does that have to do with World War Two?

[Tape 2, side A; Volkorsz' H3-1]

[The beginning of this tape side repeats a bit of what was recorded at the end of Tape 1, side B, because the copy is a different length from the original; it was not retranscribed here—Ed.]

CW: Well, it probably had nothing to do with it other than my grandmother, great-grandmother, died in 1944. And those were two very, very dominant personalities. . .

MA: Dominant thing, yeah.

CW: My grandfather and her mother.

MA: Okay, let's [deal with it, go over it]. Irene's husband's mother died. Okay. That, that was ____ . . .

CW: No, no, no, no, no.

MA: No?

CW: Her mother died.

MA: Oh, Irene's mother died.

CW: Yes. Like I said, when my grandmother, when Irene would get too difficult to control, when she would become irrational, my grandfather would call Granny Gibson, Irene's mother.

MA: Okay, and that was Irene's mother, all right.

CW: And she would come over. And she called my, she never called her by Irene. She called her Babe.

MA: Babe?

CW: Babe, 'cause she was the littlest. She was the youngest.

WV: Of what? Twelve or something?

CW: Six.

WV: Oh, six.

MA: Six, that's young! [MA appears to be thinking they are talking about IH's age—Ed.]

CW: She had three brothers, and there were three girls and three boys.

WV: What is she referring to when she says she's one of the last surviving of twelve or something like that?

CW: Well, no. She, she lost both sisters, died in childbirth. She had one brother, that was. . . Let's see, all three brothers died. . . Let's see, the last one died [Spy], [Ispy Hitcher] her, who was the oldest, was left home at a young age. He was thrown out of the house. He was a professional gambler.

WV: Hmm.

CW: And an alcoholic. He left home at about fifteen. Her other brother, Pearl, died. [speaking to his son:] Anthony? [back to WV:] Her other brother died, Pearl died, trying to save Alex [Posey], the famous Indian poet.

MA: I've heard of him. He did all that stuff. . .

CW: Her brother. . . He drowned in North Canadian River, Alex Posey did, during a flood.

MA: Yeah, that was a whole kind of thing there in MacIntosh County.

CW: Yeah, he was a very famous Indian poet. And he tried to ford a swollen stream and was swept away, and her younger brother, Pearl, who was about thirteen or fourteen at the time, tried to save him.

WV: Wow.

CW: In fact, did pull the body out of the river, but from that he got ____ typhoid fever.

[There is a brief section (20 seconds?) where the tape appears to have been erased (probably by the transcriber). WV has supplied the missing material from his original recording—Ed./Trans.]

WV: The thing that I was curious about is about a lot of the work that we see now, beyond the skulls and gourds, are like things she picks up, like at a Goodwill and those kinds of stores, but how about the early work. What was the early work? How did she even think about going to a junk store or second hand store and buying things like that? Do you any ideas?

CW: She was always that way. I can remember when we lived here in Oklahoma City before in the early fifties, of her and my grandfather coming over to visit, and whenever they would, we would go downtown. She would have my mother take me and her downtown to the Goodwill and she would, she would always go to like to the Woolworth's and the Kress's and, you know, Walgreen's, and that sort of thing and then we'd wind up at Goodwill. And I mean I can remember going to Goodwill, you know, store with her when it was down, right south of downtown. This was like, you know, fifty-one, fifty-two, fifty. . .

MA: Fifty-two?

CW: I can remember going places with her. Now that might have been. . .

MA: Because that's a long time ago.

CW: Yeah, she was into the junk and stuff.

MA: 1980, ____ ____, 1980.

WV: [speaking to group or to Jason?] ____ she got there with that. . .

MA: And that's Irene's ____ ____ long time ago.

[Both WV and CW interrupt to speak to their sons for a bit about their noise.—Ed.]

MA: How do I make those connections?

CW: Boy, I tell ya, my Mom would really be able to help you on a lot of this stuff. But I can remember going to those Goodwill places and her buying junk. Could be because of my grandfather going and buying antiques, okay. He was, he was. . .

MA: He did that previous. . .

CW: Oh, yes. He did that for years and years. He was fascinated by [those things, antiques] especially in restoring antiques.

MA: Well, when I. . .

CW: That might have been her way of. . .

MA: Yeah, because I ____ . . .

CW: I don't know how convoluted it might have been. . .

MA: . . . ____ when I talked to her, because she showed me ____ when I worked with him. She started out by showing me her antiques and those kinds of things, and I said, "Irene, I love this, but this is not ____ ____." And it took me a whole day practically for me to get her to show me the things that she had done, not the things that she thought I wanted her to see.

WV: Yeah.

MA: Because she wanted to show me. She took me all through her house.

CW: She was never accepted. People never accepted her artwork there.

MA: She wanted me to show her [meant to say "to show me"—Ed.] the pictures, the this, the that, everything _____.

WV: I think that's probably why maybe she went to the antiques.

MA: [unintelligible]

CW: Could be. Because people never really, people in Eufaula, you have to understand that. . .

MA: It took me like. . .

CW: . . .it's not a very enlightened community, you know.

WV: I understand.

MA: It wasn't until I _____, yeah.

CW: It's poor, for the most part. It's relatively uneducated, and people there just, they just think of her as being kind of a local nut, you know.

WV: [laughs]

CW: I mean, really.

MA: Well, but they don't, they. . .

CW: I mean, they don't think of her as being crazy. They just think of her as being odd, you know.

WV: Yeah, right.

CW: That she's not like the rest of the community. It's not that they look down on her or anything like that.

WV: Oh, sure.

CW: No, that's not it. But they, they, you know—and she is an accepted member of the community—but, you know, it's like, "Well, Mrs. Hall," if you know what I'm saying, I mean to say. She's known and, people just know what she is. And I think she kind of revels in that, you know. I mean, she enjoys the attention that that brings.

WV: And another thing that's interesting, Mary Ann, is that I've found that most of the women—a lot of the women, not all—that I have documented, they tend to be gatherers of objects, which they then use in building structures. In others words, they don't start from scratch—carving or something like that—the ones who at least work three-dimensionally, but they often are women. I know one woman in Wichita too who goes and buys. . .

MA: They build on what they have, right.

WV: . . .who buys ready-made objects, but through, transfuses them, you know, transforms them. . .

CW: Yeah, right.

WV: . . .through placing 'em in a certain way or painting 'em or stringing 'em or. . .

CW: Dismembering or whatever?

WV: Yeah, dismembering or whatever. I think that women traditionally haven't had the skills to go out, like to carve or whatever, you know.

CW: And I think, I think that might be, like I said from my grandfather being an accomplished, you know, woodsmith. . .

WV: Woodworker, yeah.

CW: . . .you know, and woodworker, whatever. And like I said he collected antiques and I think that. . .

MA: He may have _____. . .

CW: . . .that this might have, might have been in her own convoluted way, a form of her trying to gain his acceptance.

WV: Yep.

CW: I don't know. But, you know, she still treasures the antiques and stuff that he gathered.

MA: Yes, because when I, the first time I went through her house, what Irene wanted to portray to me was what she had that was of the antique and the traditional kind of thing. And I was not interested in that. What I wanted to know about was what she was doing with the people, the totem kind that stands outside. And I wanted to know about that. And what she wanted to tell me—and it took me, you know, hours—she told me about the other things. And I know about what she told me. She wanted to tell me about the European tradition, and she told me about the Greek tradition, told me about the whatever ____ ____ . . .

CW: It was, that was my grandfather.

MA: Yeah, the grandfather. And she told me all those things that she wanted me to know, and it was like hours before I could get her to tell me even about what I wanted to know about, the dolls outside. And then finally she told me, she said "Well, you know, it takes a long time to do this, and it's hard. You can't just get the dolls to look the way they do, and it's not. . .

CW: Now are you. . .

MA: And then finally I realized that what she was telling me was [that, not] her thing, but it, it was not, I hadn't, she didn't tell me, she took me all through her house before I ever got to the. . .

CW: Well, that's because, like I said, I think that's because she was not really she was not accepted even in her own family and still isn't.

MA: Yeah, it's interesting. . .

WV: She ____ for something that's safe.

MA: Yes. She was not as willing to accept even what she was doing until we had gone through the whole thing and she had satisfied herself that I was okay and that I would accept what they ____ ____ with the Greek tradition; it was all that stuff. And then after I had done that I was okay and she would accept what I wanted.

CW: Well now, are you familiar with her going in graveyards?

MA: Yes, she told me that she went to graveyards and. . .

WV: No, I don't know about that.

CW: Okay, well. . .

MA: And she told me that ____ were, that. . . I haven't been out there, but she said she had to rework the graves, and she had to do it for her, whatever she was doing, and she told me that.

CW: Yeah, that's a real bizarre aspect of. . .

MA: And that I couldn't go out there until she had done that.

CW: Well, that's a real bizarre aspect of my grandmother. That's almost a. . .

MA: Because I wanted to ____ ____ her.

CW: . . .a metaphysical thing with her.

MA: Because that's the [unintelligible].

CW: Yeah, that's like, it's like her communion with the spirits, so to speak. She. . .

MA: But what spirits, Cleve?

CW: My grandfather. . .

MA: He's not Indian spirits.

CW: No, no.

MA: . . . _____ universal spirits, isn't it?

CW: Her mother, her brother, my dad. She got along with my, she really liked my father, her son-in-law, George, real, real well. He, he was surprisingly more tolerant of her than my mother was. I think that had to go with my mother being around my grandfather so much, but my father was more tolerant of her and was, was helpful toward her. In fact, he would even bring her things from the oilfields, you know, bits of, you know, metal or. . .

WV: Yeah.

CW: . . . you know, things for her to, you know, to do with what she wanted. She liked my dad real well. There was great deal of mutual respect there, you know. But she spends a lot of time—and it's about three miles from her house to the graveyard. . .

MA: Yeah, I've been past that. Then she's told me about that. But I haven't been there personally.

WV: [unintelligible, to Jason]

CW: She, she walks out there. It's about three miles.

MA: She walks out there?

CW: Yeah. She walks. It's about three miles, and. . . And it's really strange. But she works on all of the graves, and she'll even work on friends' graves.

WV: Oh, really.

CW: Yeah, she'll work on 'em, you know, landscape. . .

WV: So the relatives you were talking about are buried in that cemetery?

CW: Yeah, yeah. And she'll do the landscaping.

WV: Has she done any kind of, has she done anything unusual?

CW: But it's weird; she does landscaping with plastic flowers.

WV: Ahh.

CW: And here's some that's really bizarre. My grandfather, Irene's husband, you know, she's got plastic flowers over, you know, her mom's grave, and my dad's grave, and my grandfather's grave. He hated plastic flowers.

WV: [laughs]

CW: Detested them. I mean, you know, there weren't words strong enough to convey his feelings about, you know. . .

WV: Sure, sure. They weren't the real thing, yeah, and here his grave is decorated with them, huh?

CW: Yeah. But I mean it's not, it's not. . .

MA: She didn't leave it alone. She decorated it.

CW: Yeah, she decorates them, paints, you know, paints and stuff out there. . .

WV: She has such a need to decorate, didn't she?

CW: Yeah, she has a need. . .

WV: She's a real decorator.

CW: Decorator, right, and some bizarre decorations. You know, she'll paint the trees around the grave, you know, whitewash 'em. . .

WV: Do you think that like the work around her house is primarily decoration?

CW: I do. I don't, I mean she doesn't. . .

WV: ____ there to be any great meaning, ____ ____.

CW: No, no. There is no meaning. It's just expression, just decoration.

MA: Do you really think that, Cleve?

CW: Yeah, I do. I, 'cause she has. . . I mean, it's a real instinctive kind of thing. You know, there's no thought about it at all. I don't think there's any really intellectual process going on. She's just doing what she feels.

WV: Rather than an intellectual, how about a spiritual one?

CW: She's just doing what she feels.

WV: Well, that's it.

MA: Yeah, but that's exactly, that's ____ ____ think.

CW: I mean, she just, you know, I mean she just, that's her way of expressing herself, you know.

MA: ____, Cleve. [unintelligible]

CW: And being different. You have to understand that Granny enjoys being different. She enjoys being in the spotlight. She enjoys people talking about her. You know, it's like the old story of. . . Who was it that said that, you know, press: it doesn't matter whether it's good or bad just as long as her name is in the paper.

WV: As you get the press. Yeah.

CW: You know, at least they're talking about you. That's kind of how Granny is. I mean, you know, she enjoys being in the spotlight, you know.

WV: Well. . .

CW: That's why she's into jewelry. That's why she's into, you know, fixing herself up, that's why she's into. . .

MA: But it's more than that, isn't it, Cleve?

CW: She enjoys the attention, Mary Ann.

MA: Well, I know that. I'm aware of that.

WV: I see a possible difference, possibly, without knowing what it is necessarily, between like all the toys, which looks like almost a field of color, you know, versus, say, the gourds and the skulls, which seem to have this potential of having some kind of spiritual overtones, you know. Because they're organic things and therefore have like, oh, you know, those kinds of overtones, spiritual kinds of qualities. The toys seem to be, you know, beautiful, saturated colored walls, almost.

CW: Um hmm.

WV: I'm not. . . And I guess I'm asking you: I guess you don't necessarily see any particular kind of. . .

CW: She doesn't, I'll tell you what, she doesn't think of it as art.

MA: No.

CW: She doesn't think of it as art as you or I would, you know, all right?

MA: They almost seem to be an existential kind of thing. In other words, we kind of, we have come to think existential things, where the thing itself is [this] thing. And there are no other meanings besides that. In other words, what she's saying is that. and it's possible to ____ ____ that. What you're saying is that the thing itself is the meaning, and I don't agree with that, really. However, I think what she's doing is doing that kind of thing. It's a very existential kind of thing. The wall of dolls, the linear kind of thing that ____ ____, wood kind of figures, are a very existential kind of thing in saying this is it, this is it, it's paint. The statement is paint. The statement is that. [long pause]

WV: You see any diff—. . .

MA: Tom Wolfe has said that it's the painted word, and I see those connections between the very expressionistic, [impressions, impressionistic] of contemporary art and the folk art in this case. However, I don't know that I want to go on record that I think that it's expressionistic or that it's extentionalist. However, I really think that I have come to the point where I feel that it's extentionalist. I mean, I think we have to face that, of what they're doing. [noise] And I don't think that we need to think that in a conscious kind of sense because I think it can be very unconscious.

CW: Well, that's, that's, I think that the thing. I don't think it's a conscious. . .

MA: No, because I think ____ ____.

CW: . . .kind of deal at all. I mean she just does what, just. . .

MA: Right, okay.

CW: You know, it's like the plastic flowers on the graves, you know.

MA: Yeah, and I think that's ____ ____ the ____.

WV: Yet she does make decisions. I mean she does buy. . .

MA: Well, she does, right, yeah, ____ ____.

WV: . . .plastic colored toys, and she does get skulls, and does ____ ____, you know.

CW: Yeah, she, she enjoys. . . I think you know this much about her, that she enjoys vibrant colors. That's, that's, she relates to that. She does not, you know, I don't think she. . .

MA: She even enjoys the TV meetings, and I just. . .

CW: Right.

MA: When she was with me and with Judy, we had five thousand, we had five cameras there from all, all the states, and, you know, she was with me. There was no doubt but what I understood what Irene and I were doing. We were, we were doing media, and she knew it and I knew it.

CW: Yeah, she definitely, she understands that.

WV: Really aware of that.

CW: She is, she really is.

MA: And she's ____.

CW: But I don't think she relates so much to technical expertise. . .

MA: No, but it's a feeling. . .

WV: Oh, yeah.

CW: But. . .

MA: She knew we were doing media.

WV: What. . .

CW: She, she understands. . . I think that's one reason why she and Linda get along so good is color. Like Linda, I think, has a really great sense of color about her work, and about what she does, you know. Her conception is more, is not, it's just, you know, it's so much color involved in what she does, the different shapes, and I think that she and Linda relate to each other as artists on a level of color. Granny, you know, like Linda is like, she likes, like purples, blues, you know, you know, shades off of that. Well, my grandmother likes really vibrant, alive, exciting like reds, oranges, yellows.

MA: It's the ____, the [hair], and the reds, right.

CW: Especially red.

WV: Mary Ann, what do you think about the idea of the—going out a little bit on a limb—but I've thought about

—but I can't go into a monologue here—about what place women have in the environmental folk art that I've documented. How about the idea women have traditionally been the decorators—especially the home decorators, and as relative to. . .

CW: Oh, by the way, here's here's a point on that that might be of some help to you. She was terrible around the house, not domestic at all.

MA: No, she's terrible around the house. I've been in her house. It's terrible. She's horrible around the house.

CW: Always. Always. She could never cook. She could never sew. She could never. . .

WV: [laughs]

CW: . . .she could never fulfill what. . . That could be one reason why of her art. . .

MA: She was never practical.

WV: ____ ____.

CW: She, that was one reason my grandfather and her. . .

WV: [unintelligible]

CW: Oh, you know, he could not understand why she wouldn't want, didn't cook, and didn't sew, and didn't clean, and. . .

WV: Well, this could be another reason then for her establishing some kind of identity through her work.

MA: She told me that. She said that, that she could never do that. Because when we went through her house, she said, "well, I could never do those things I was supposed to do."

CW: Well, I'm surprised she admitted, admitted that to you.

MA: Well. . .

CW: That's pretty. . . She's not one to open up about things like that.

MA: I've been. . . No, she's not. . .

CW: No, she really isn't.

MA: No, and it was probably because I had been around a while, I don't know.

CW: Yeah. Absolutely. Absolutely.

MA: The fact that she, because she could through her house and ____ told me and did all that and said "No, she never did ____.

CW: She was into dressing well. . . She was into clothes.

MA: Yes, because she tried to tell me that everything was ____ . . .

CW: She, you know, my grandfather made a lot of money before the bottom fell out of the Depression, because, you know, he was an oil speculator. And oil speculators just about lost everything during that period of time. He managed to hold on. He managed to have enough little things happening where they didn't go completely down the tube, but he lost. . . He was a very, very wealthy man at one time, you know, in the twenties.

MA: Irene's husband, yeah.

CW: Grover, Hop. He was a wealthy, wealthy man.

MA: Yeah.

CW: And he believed, you know, even though he didn't get along with her, even though they had their differences, you know, he believed in his family looking the part, and he always wore those flat-brimmed straw hats.

WV: Uh huh.

CW: Always wore those. I can remember him, till he died he wore those things.

WV: Oh.

CW: And suspenders.

WV: Huh!

CW: You know.

MA: Well, he. . .

CW: And, but he always dressed, she always had, you know, it was really weird. Granny would wear rags and embarrass him around town. . . I mean, you know, she'd be running around, she'd look like the rag lady. I mean really. . .

WV: [chuckles]

CW: . . .like she ought to be having a junk wagon, like Sanford and Son. I'm serious!

MA: That's her _____

CW: But, when she felt like gettin' dressed up, she really got dressed up. Now she had really, really expensive clothes.

MA: That may be because when she felt like telling me about what she had, she showed me all the expensive stuff.

WV: Huh.

MA: Yeah. She took me through her home, and I saw from the bedroom to the kitchen all the stuff that was, the Greek kind of portrait things that were, that were thirties imita—that were reproduction. They're gorgeous. They're wonderful. And what she was telling me was, [following added by WV from original tape:] I have all these standard kinds of things to show you, and she showed me all teh things that I was supposed to know about as far as Greek kinds of standards of life. And only after she showed me that could I go out and hung up the clothes on her laundry and could I do that. And then she would show me and she would tell me about the dolls or the outside and I could take the skulls and I could hang up the clothes, because that's what I was supposed to do. And I could do that. But I could not do that until she'd showed me all the other stuff, of the standard, Greek kinds of things.

[Tape 2, Side B, Volkorsz H3-1 cont.]

MA: And after that I was okay and she would let me do that.

WV: What's the reference to Greek? I'm not sure if I follow that.

MA: Well, I don't know. Because it was, the things were Greek since they had the _____, they showed they were. . . She wanted me to know that she knew what the Greek tradition was, and they were there. There was exten—, reproductions or whatever it was.

WV: Have you see her wardrobe?

MA: Yes!

WV: And it was pretty neat?

MA: Yes!

WV: And this was all back, dates back quite a ways, I suppose.

MA: Yes, and she showed me that. But I didn't ever get to see it until, until I could, until I was okay, and that I was all right about. . . Well, Cleve, what was I all right about? (laughs) What was it?

CW: You were accepted.

MA: I was accepted about what?

CW: Well, that she accepted you. That she, that she knew that you weren't out to try to control her, okay.

MA: Well, no, she controlled me.

CW: Or put her down. Or, you know, make fun of her, or whatever, that you were genuinely interested in her and what she did, you know.

WV: When I asked her questions about her work, _____ a little closer. . .

CW: Was she evasive? Was she evasive at first?

WV: Yeah, she very much. . .

MA: Yeah, she's evasive to me, right.

WV: Is that because she. . . I've seen that though before with other folk artists, and it could just be that they don't really want to talk about that part of themselves. Or is that something else?

CW: Well, I've had a theory about that. I think that, that. . . I don't think that there's anybody around there, or has been through there in so long, that Granny can relate to on an intellectual level about her art, about her feelings, about that sort of thing. I think that they're in her head and I think she could express them, but I just don't think there's anybody, you know, I mean that's a pretty isolated area, you know, I mean, there's not, that's not exactly your cultural mecca.

WV: Yeah.

CW: And I think that she's real defensive about it.

WV: She's had to be [quite] _____, _____.

MA: Yeah, right.

CW: Yeah, because of just living where she is.

MA: And. . .

CW: So, so, you know, she'd rather talk to you about about OU football and the Salmon Brothers. . .

MA: Right.

WV: Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's what happens there.

CW: . . .and J. C. Watts and what's happening there in Eufaula and how it's grown and about the lake and all these Oklahoma City people moving in and buying it than she would about your art. You've really gotta spend some time with her and let her know that, how you feel about things, to cut through all the bullshit to really get down to things. I mean, you've gotta really spend some time with her, 'cause otherwise she'll just give you the old, sounds like she's on the Eufaula Chamber of Commerce.

WV: Yeah, right.

MA: Yeah, that means that. . .

CW: But that's. . . I mean, you just have to understand that it's just, I mean she was put down for that stuff for thirty, over thirty, years, you know.

MA: Yeah, how did you deal with it? How does she deal with it?

CW: You know, so she just, so she just doesn't really pay any attention. She ignores it all, one. And two, she, you know, when people try to talk to her about that, she tries to relate to 'em in terms that she thinks most people will understand. I think.

WV: Yeah.

CW: You know, OU football.

WV: Well, besides, when you start talking about your work, you reveal a lot about yourself.

CW: Yeah.

WV: And so you gotta know somebody pretty well before you start doing that. I mean I, we were talking about that earlier. If I start talking about my work, you know, I mean, I'm beginning to see some insights into my own work that I've been doing for like twenty years.

CW: Um hmm.

WV: And I don't want everybody to know about maybe why I make things, you know. I mean, I just like 'em to look at the piece and respond to it.

CW: Yeah.

WV: I don't everybody to know _____ either. So I think some of that is maybe in there, too, you know.

CW: Yeah.

WV: I'm still scared, it's a little scary kind of ground, you know, when—oh, [you know], you start talking about Freudian kinds of elements, you know, in your work, or something like that—I mean, that wouldn't be the case with her necessarily, but. . .

CW: Yeah, right.

WV: . . .but work. . .

CW: Exactly.

WV: . . .I mean, [unintelligible] it's very personal. You know, it stems from something very personal and very person kinds of needs. And if you ask her, start asking her about that, that means she has to reveal some things that she might not want to reveal to just everybody, you know. I can, I can respect that, you know.

CW: Well, that's, that's. . .

[Interruption in taping; there is considerable microphone noise from here on out, and the children return to the conversation in full force—Ed.]

WV: What'll happen to your, to her place, you think, when. . .

CW: It'll be sold. It's too valuable.

WV: And. . .

MA: It won't stay in the family?

CW: No. Nobody wants it.

WV: [unintelligible] I mean, not the house, but I mean the stuff will be torn down, probably.

MA: We're gonna lose it then?

Anthony Warren: Nobody wants it. Not even me.

CW: It'll be gone.

Jason Volkersz: What?

CW: Go on, Anthony, beat it.

MA: Well. . .

CW: Where, you know, I've thought about that. That's one reason why she has me as executor of her estate.

WV: Oh, huh.

CW: And, but I don't really know. I don't know what to, you know, I wouldn't know what to do.

MA: What'll [we, you] do with it?

CW: What would happen to it? I mean, who would want it?

WV: Well, that's an interesting question that Mary Ann and I were even sort of discussing in different respects, too, as to what happens to these places. And there's only a real small percentage of places like that, that really are preserved and when, you know, somebody, or somebody says this is important enough to hold, to preserve, maintain, maybe charge [admission—WV], you know.

CW: Unfortunately, in that respect, that's very valuable commercial property now where she lives.

WV: Right, right there, sure. Right across from the grocery store.

CW: And then, see, the lot across the street sold for I believe \$75,000, so. . .

MA: I did, of course, make initial statement, and we tried it, and I did get, I tried. . . It is now on the State Register of Historic Places and the nomination is in to Washington and is on review for the. . .

WV: National Register?

MA: . . .the National Register of Historic Places, which I think probably it will get on, which means that it's going to be, or we could have it declared an endangered spec—, (chuckles) an endangered species. In other words, we could cite that we felt that her place was historic property that was endangered by either encroaching commercialism or whatever, and that we. . .

CW: Well, you better do it, and you better do it fast.

WV: You can't really, can you really stop. . .

MA: Can I stop it? Well. . .

WV: Can you really stop industry or whoever, whoever wants it. . .

MA: Yes, I can because if I have that on the National Register, I can say, "You cannot do that, you cannot tear it down." I can do that.

WV: I thought that all being on the National Register list, all that that meant was that they can't get. . .

MA: Well, you could tear it down if you want to, but. . .

WV: . . .they can't get federal funding to tear it down.

MA: Yeah, right. You can't tear it down. However, whatever they do in Eufaula is bound to be done with federal funds until the. . . We have a letter. . .

WV: You have a letter, yeah.

MA: . . .I hope that I can keep that, so that it will not be torn down, that we can have that leverage: you can't tear it down because it it's a national [piece of] property.

CW: Well. . .

WV: The problem with her work, of course, is that it's not terribly permanent. . .

MA: I know that, [unintelligible]

WV: . . .it's not terrible permanent in nature.

MA: I'm gonna have to work that out.

WV: You know, it's not like concrete and glass and. . . A lot of places that I see are very permanent.

MA: I [have, know]. We've pushed that and we're going to get it on the National Register. It's already a state landmark. It has been designated such.

CW: Well, you better. . .

MA: How I can keep that. . .

CW: It's best that you do that because that property right now she was offered last year \$90,000 for her lot there.

MA: Because I can, I can get, we can get. . .

CW: You know, they just want to bulldoze it down and put on a, you know, a 7-11, or, you know, or a. . .

WV: Sure.

MA: If we can get those kinds of property declared endangered species, _____ance, and then we can do something with them. But we have to, we have to get that kind of a designation before we can do it.

CW: Yeah, well, I'll guarantee ya. . .

MA: I'm working, I've done, you know what I've done for it, what I can do. . .

CW: You might have. . . I tell you what. It's really weird now; you might have, you would have some help from me and possibly my sister, but from my mother and my aunt, no.

MA: I'm not gonna get it, right.

CW: You're not gonna get any help from them. At all. Forget about that.

MA: Well, I don't really need it.

LW: What are you talking. . .

CW: Well, I was just telling 'em that Granny's place, you know, when she dies. . .

MA: Well, your mother must want that to go. She wouldn't that _____, would she?

CW: She doesn't care anything about it.

MA: Well, I can get restricted covenants. I could get the kinds of things that give me options on the first refusal. If we can possibly get those.

CW: The thing to do. . .

MA: The only _____ to me is. . .

WV: What happens, if you. . . If that happens. . .

MA: _____.

WV: Somebody has to maintain it. . .

MA: Yeah. Right.

WV: And what would you do? Her place has been changing over the years, right?

CW: Well, the thing, the thing what you'd have to do- and in some ways in some ways my mother and my aunt I think would be receptive to it.

MA: I think they would do that.

CW: I think would be receptive, you know.

MA: Right.

LW: But she doesn't have anything to do with your mother's house after Granny dies.

CW: Yeah. Well. . .

LW: You know that.

CW: Yeah, but I mean still she would be in the middle of it, I mean, you'd have to deal with her, regardless, I, 'cause that's just the way she is. But I think that if you approached everyone about it, I think they would be receptive.

MA: I think they would too.

CW: You know, but you'd have. . . 'Cause. . .

LW: But that stuff weathers. I mean, how would you ever do it?

WV: Yeah, the maintenance. . .

MA: Well. . . [continues talking during WV's next passage, but unintelligible]

WV: . . .the maintenance. The maintenance, that's what I was gonna talk about. The maintenance would be a difficult thing, and then, you know, then the whole idea about who buys it, who maintains it, you know, do you charge admission—all those kinds of things, you've got problems, of course.

LW: She constantly redresses and repaints all that stuff.

WV: I know, I know.

MA: Well, she does it now, right. That's true. _____ people _____.

WV: And nobody could ever reproduce that, you know.

MA: [unintelligible]

LW: And I could see the whole doll fence _____, you know, or a section of that being preserved.

MA: Right. If we don't do that, it's gonna go. We've got to do that, we've got to get that fence preserved. We've got to get some kind of. . .

CW: You know, like, now, like _____ rocks, you know, in the front yard and stuff? Well, she's redone that several times and that.

MA: Well, that's what I'm [saying]. . .

CW: And she's has, and she's repainted it and stuff. That that will, you know, I don't see how you could maintain that really.

WV: Right.

CW: You know, you just have to. . .

MA: We have to have some restricted covenant with some kind of. . .

CW: One thing you should do, Mary Ann. . .

MA: . . .the kinds of things which would allow us to have first refusals on sale of land. We have to have those kinds of things before we can do anything.

CW: One thing you should do, if you get a chance, you should call my mother sometime this week, and you should go over there. She's got pictures of what the house used to look like.

MA: [unintelligible]

LW: Or you could get it for Mary Ann.

MA: . . .people that will give me those kinds of things _____ we say. We're going to do this, so if you _____ that kind of thing, I mean, those things, they are willing to maintain it once I get the property, they'll put a person out there to manage the site. . . I just have to have those kinds of things. I can't do it unless I get the property.

CW: Well, you should go over when you get a chance. . .

MA: If I can't get the property, unless you know. . .

CW: Well, you should go talk to my mother, you know, because. . . Well, not only that, just for that alone, but also to get some. . . If you're interested in the historical aspects of things, you know, she'd be able to tell you, you know, date things back a lot further.

MA: Yeah.

CW: And that sort of thing, but I think that, I think if you approached my mother and my aunt and my sister right, you know. . .

MA: Yeah, and. . .

CW: I think that, I mean, as much as my mother and my aunt really could care less about my grandmother's artwork, I think that they have a sense of history about them because of my grandfather, that they would relate to that.

LW: Because I don't mean to sound pessimistic or whatever, but in four or five years with that stuff, if somebody didn't re-dress the dolls and didn't redo that, it wouldn't _____ at all. I mean, so I mean, what would the point. . .

WV: Yeah.

LW: There wouldn't be any advantage to keeping the whole house though, really.

MA: No, when you, the point that _____ing it, you know. No, when you [unintelligible]

LW: [unintelligible]

CW: Well, as far as that, you know. . .

MA: . . .make that kind of commitment, _____, this is how we're gonna keep it, and we're going to do this kind of thing, because—and this is a step back and a step forward, _____, if it was.

LW: Yeah, I'm sure that nobody would care about the doll fence or any of that stuff, anybody, anything to do, but. . .

MA: Oh, I think they would. No, I mean, the, Cleve's family. Nobody _____.

CW: [noise] And the gourds and that sort of thing.

LW: Oh, Cleve's sister had horseshoes at her garage sale—one, just one, the only one she had—and I said, "Phyllis. . . (chuckles)

WV: (laughs) Oh, yeah.

LW: I just went, oh! (chuckles) You know, when Granny saw this, she'd die.

WV/CW: Was she. . .

LW: You know, I said, "I'll buy this." You know, she goes, "Oh, you can have it, _____."

WV: Oh.

LW: Remember? It's the one in our bedroom. But I mean, they'd never care who had, who took any of that stuff.

CW: Although, you know, they don't, like I said, they don't really like Granny's stuff that much. They love Granny, and they, and of course she's Granny.

LW: Yeah.

CW: You know, and everything, but. . . [[My aunt and my mother and my sister, both. . . Well, my aunt and my grandmother, their relations are very strained. They don't get along. 'Cause my grandmother. . . I mean, my aunt treats my grandmother like my grandfather did. You know, it's that very, you know, "Oh, you're helpless, Mother; you can't do that," you know.

WV: Yeah.

CW: Like she's totally incompetent in anything she does. So. . . But both my mother and my aunt have so much of my grandfather in them that they would relate to it on a historical aspect, you know, that you're trying to preserve. . . They would, and they would pick up on that, I think.

MA: Well, what would happen if I came along and said, "I will restore, I will do all this, but I have to have, I have to have property donated," do you think that they'd do it?

LW: You mean the whole land, the whole house? You mean just that _____? Well, you know what? You don't even have to worry about me, because Cleve and I, we could see to that.

MA: I mean, that's not enough to do it [unintelligible] I mean, you know, _____, whatever that property _____. . .

CW: The thing that. . .

LW: Cleve and I have enough, we'll get enough of it to where we'll be able to _____.

MA: What if I said. . . Okay, I. . .

LW: So I don't think you _____ have to worry about that.

CW: No, you know, like you could come take the doll fence away. I mean, you could come and just take the whole fence, if you had a semi, (chuckles), you know, a flatbed semi to take that. . .

MA: Well, I'm not gonna do that.

CW: No, but I mean, you know, what, the big. . .

WV: Well, if it came to that, I would. You know what I mean? Like if it came to. . .

MA: Well, if someone's gonna take it, I'm gonna take it away, right.

CW: The big thing is that [unintelligible] that they don't care about any of her stuff—my aunt, my sister, my mom—they really don't care about her stuff. It's my grandfather's stuff, the antiques and stuff that are left, they care about that.

WV: Yeah.

MA: Well. . .

CW: But they don't care about her, you know, her gourds, her doll fence, her plastic, you know, her sun glasses rack that she's gotten from the trashbin at the grocery store that she's painted, you know, that she claims is, you know, some sort of. . .

MA: All right, we need a legal recourse, then. . .

CW: . . .you know. . .

MA: I need a legal recourse.

CW: So. . .

MA: Get me to designate that as _____ property.

MA: I don't think that Granny would really want anything like that to _____ plan, I mean, _____.

MA: I know that, but I _____, I've got, I can't do anything else but that.

LW: [No, So] I mean, I think that that would make her feel. . . I don't know if she would want that. Because it would make her feel _____ about dying.

MA: No. I don't think so either, but the only way that we can ever preserve that is to get some kind of restricted covenant. We need those kinds of things that say. . .

LW: But it's not. . .

MA: But it's not, that they can't sell it. We need the kind of restricted covenant that says that. . .

CW: See, the property. . .

MA: But, Cleve, we can't, you can't sell it till we give you the permission for _____, [anything] we need.

CW: The thing is. . .

LW: I don't think that that would be necessary because Cleve will get enough of it and he wants to, something to be done with it that, and I am really concerned about it. . .

MA: Well, I know that, but. . .

LW: That he'll be able to [unintelligible, noise]

MA: All we need is something that says you're not going to sell it out from under anybody, and you're not. . .

CW: Well, the thing is is that. . .

MA: To a developer, to a MacDonalds, who'll tear it down.

CW: Well, the thing is, though, is that, you know, there might be some heat on that, because once. . .

LW: I don't think that it really, I don't think that that, I think that that would be a real bad thing to do, with what I know about it. I don't that that's necessary.

CW: Yeah. . . But, you know, what I'm saying, what I'm saying is that that is real, right now that's probably the most prime commercial property in that town.

MA: Yeah, right, and we can't let that _____ everybody that wants it, right.

CW: The bank is across, there's a bank across the street. They just bought up, you know, that little boot store and stuff, right directly across from Granny's little boot store and car wash and stuff. They just bought that; they're building a big drive-in thing there.

WV: Ohh. Ohh, then they're. . . Oh.

MA: [unintelligible] How do you, how do you keep that?

CW: So, you know, it's developing there, and she's gonna be surrounded. There's a Sonic [drive-in—WV] across the street. You know, they're building something else up the street. They're eventually gonna, you know, somebody's, they're gonna buy those two homes on the same block as hers and tear 'em down. You know, it's just a matter of. . .

MA: How do we keep, how do we keep your grandmother's property from being torn down? How do we keep that?

LW/MA?: [unintelligible]

MA: Who has the legal right to sell it? Where am I going to go?

CW: Well, you _____.

LW: _____ keep that. I think that you, I don't, I don't think that, I think that then whoever, whatever happens after she's gone. . .

MA: Is it your mother? Is it Irene?

CW: It's my mother and my sister and myself.

MA: Yeah, but you shouldn't even say that (nervous chuckle) 'cause aunt, I mean, you don't really know, but that Cleve is gonna have some of it [unintelligible, competition from one of the kids].

CW: [speaking to one of the kids?:] Really?

WV: (laughs)

MA: You know, how do I get, how do I preserve that? And I'm willing to do it. I mean, I'm serious [unintelligible—LW & MA talking at same time—Ed.]

LW: [unintelligible—LW & MA talking at same time—Ed.]

MA: I've done everything I can. I've done the National Register. I've done this, I've done that. Now I'm down to the point where you're going to have to do something with that property.

LW: That I'm sure that if. . .

MA: . . .to keep that property from being destroyed.

LW: I'm sure that as long as. . .

MA: And it's not my property. It's your property.

LW: Well, I'm sure as long as somebody's willing to take it, that it'll, that Cleve and his mother will see, that Cleve really will see that something is done.

CW: Well. . .

MA: But we don't. . . All right, let's not _____. (laughs?)

CW: In some ways, I think that it'll stay in the family, because my sister I think would like to eventually move back there, you know. Granny has told us that she always wants us to _____ keep the home.

MA: So there's enough interest in the family that we don't really need to worry about it.

LW: I'm sure, 'cause I know Cleve [wants to], and I don't think the rest of them care about it, where they [would, wouldn't] want it destroyed or _____ do that, and Cleve would have something to say about it, you know, _____ I'm sure.

MA: You know, because I think I can do, and Willem can do, all the things he can to make it nationally prominent. We've done that. And Willem has done total kinds of things in significance nationally. And I have done what I can do to get it listed nationally. I've done the National Register, and it's on the historic landmarks tour. It will be listed in the National Register [noise] property if we get it through Washington.

LW: That's really nice.

MA: The problem with that is that they've stopped those listings when Reagan came in, and with the [noise] that kind of thing where he had to have owner consent. . . Well, we all knew that the owner consented. I mean, we knew Irene wanted it on that, but then that was kind of that _____, and that took about six months to get that kind of thing straightened out, so it'll be listed, I think shortly. [last ten words added by WV from original tape—Ed.]

[Tape 2, side 2; Volkersz' H3-1.]

CW: Oh, absolutely.

WV: It was pretty common, huh?

CW: He hated her artwork, you know. He was into restoring picture frames. He had arthritis very badly, but he could do, he was amazing with his hands, anything mechanical, or anything that required skill. He was just incredible.

LW/MA?: And he wasn't an attorney, was he?

CW: Huh?

LW/MA?: Wasn't he an attorney?

CW: No, he was a jack of all trades, really. He owned the first Ford agency in southeastern Oklahoma. He was a professional baseball player before. In fact, that's how he met my grandmother.

LW/MA?: Because that's the story that I don't believe, of how they met. Tell that.

CW: Yeah, now he met my grandmother. . .

WV: How'd they meet, yeah?

CW: Well, he was playing, he started out playing ball in Enid, I believe, and was signed with the Chicago Cubs, their organization, and he was a first baseman and a pitcher. And they came through Eufaula, I believe it was. He played. . .

[Tape 2, side B; Volkersz' No. H2-2 (cont.)]

CW: . . .that he was with. And they played an exhibition game in Eufaula against, you know, a team of local guys there, and, you know, beat them to death. And my grandmother was real young. I'm not sure, but I think he

was too; I think he was like maybe 16, 17 years old himself, or maybe 18. She was like 14, 15, somewhere in there. [In the interview with her conducted one day previous to this one, she said she had been 13 years old—Ed.]

LW/MA?: You told me that. She was very young.

CW: They were both very young.

WV: You have to ____ because now you establish somewhat of a difference in ages between them.

CW: I'm not exactly sure.

WV: It's not a very large gap, you know.

CW: No, it's not, yeah.

LW/MA?: It was the early day kind of thing that happens, you know.

CW: Say two to five years. Two to five years, somewhere in there, but we're not sure.

WV: Right, yeah.

CW: But anyway, I guess my grandmother was real attractive. You know, they were attracted to each, and he stayed there and asked my great-grandmother—who I never got to know, who I guess was a pretty remarkable woman in her own way. . .

LW/MA?: That's Irene's mother.

CW: Yeah, that was a living. . .

LW/MA?: She must have been a very remarkable. . .

CW: She was one of the five white people adopted into the Creek tribe. And the only woman.

LW/MA?: But she was, she was Indian in a Creek. . .

CW: She was considered a full-blood, even though she was not. She was an Irishman. She had red hair and blue eyes and, you know, white skin. But she was adopted. And let's see. Anyway, they got married—who knows when, we're not sure. (chuckles) And they moved, they lived around, let's see, I think he went to Tulsa—so he must have been playing for Tulsa, I guess, professional baseball.

WV: I see.

CW: Then they went to Denver, and they lived in Denver for a while, because he was pitching up there. And he threw both innings of a double header, with the Cubs, I think like an exhibition game or something. He was in the major leagues for a very, very short time. But he hurt his arm. He threw, you know, a double header, which was not, I mean, that was not uncommon in those days for men to pitch twenty innings.

WV: Wow.

CW: But, you know, nevertheless. . .

WV: Didn't have the relief pitchers.

CW: Right. You know, and hurt his arm and that was the end of his career. Because after he hurt his arm and it affected his hitting, and he realized that he wasn't. . . You know, I think he was maybe 22 or 23 when this happened, but we're not sure. But anyway. . .

WV: So we're talking about, what, dates now, twenties?

CW: No. The early part of, in the teens, maybe, during the war.

WV: Wait, oh, the teens, oh boy.

LW/MA?: That's even earlier. [unintelligible] They talked about early 1900s, like ____.

WV: Yeah, wait.

CW: Even earlier. Because they used to travel a lot. Even after he didn't play, he would go to Kansas City, to Chicago, to St. Louis, to see, you know, like his hero was like Ty Cobb. He was, he talked. . .

LW/MA?: It was a circuit before even the twenties; it was early, like teens, and early ____.

CW: Yeah, the thing that I remember Granny. . .

LW/MA?: ____ ____ and that kind of thing.

CW: Yeah, the thing that I remember Granny telling me about this, is that she used to travel with the ballteam, you know.

LW/MA?: She went with them? She traveled with them?

WV: She mentioned that to me, too.

CW: Yeah, she traveled with them.

LW/MA?: [unintelligible]

CW: And that they had an apartment. They stayed in a hotel in Denver, and I think he was—can't remember—I think he was up there a year, I mean, you know, one season or two, and she was very young. They had just been married, and, yeah, just been married a short time, and they promoted him up to, I guess, what would be now triple-A baseball. And they were living in a hotel in Denver, and he was making, you know, I don't know what the salary exactly was—let's say \$20 a week, you know, big money for most people back then. You know, a ballplayer—I guess comparable to today—a pretty good living. And she took his money that he made one week and she went out and bought a hat at the most expensive store in Denver. And she was real young, maybe 17, you know, 16, 17 years old.

LW/MA?: Yes, I think she married him, what, at 14 or 15, because she told me she married him very young—I mean, really young—13 or 14.

WV: Wow.

CW: And once again, when he came back to the room—he'd been at ballpark practicing, you know—and when he came back to the room, he found that she had bought this hat. The German work, thrift, he exploded about the hat and made her take back the hat, and I think she left him because of that, for a while. (laughter)

LW/MA?: Oh really?

WV: That was too frivolous to buy, right?

CW: Absolutely. To buy a hat, you know, it was one of those gifts. . . I remember that it was a Gibson girl hat, you know, with the ostrich feathers and everything, and he made her take it back. . .

LW/MA?: That would be wonderful ____ ____ a picture of her with hat, because she wonderful, and that would be splendid. I would love that, to see Irene in that hat.

CW: We're not sure, but anyway, we know that he pitched a little bit for the Cubs, but very, very briefly, because [he, they] went to Arizona one year for spring training, and he hurt his arm and his career was through. He knew it was through, so when he quit baseball, he completely quit and got into, got out, you know.

LW/MA?: Do you know when that was?

CW: He did a little scouting, though. He did a little scouting for the. . .

LW/MA?: When ____ would that be? What time element are we talking about?

CW: I don't know. He was, if you've ever been in our house, if you've seen. . . She ever show you pictures of him playing baseball?

LW/MA?: Yes, I've been there, right, and I've seen them. Yes.

WV: I haven't been inside.

CW: Okay.

LW/MA?: I've been inside and I've seen all the pictures.

CW: She had pictures of him as a ball player.

LW/MA?: Well, I would give a ballpark figure. . .

WV: Ballpark figure. Yeah, right, good one.

LW/MA?: I'm sorry. I don't mind wasting tape time. I would suggest the 1920s at the latest, is that correct?

CW: Well, I don't believe there was. . .

LW/MA?: Am I wrong?

CW: It had to be earlier than that, because. . .

LW/MA?: Earlier than the twenties.

CW: Because it had to be like in the teens, maybe, you know, just as the war started, or just as my aunt was born, because my. . .

LW/MA?: It was before World War I, okay.

WV: Because my mother was born in 1916 and my aunt was born in 1914, so it had to be in there, in that era. Not any later than 1918.

WV: Wow.

LW/MA?: So we can date that kind of thing then, about the early, the teens, you're talking about?

CW: Yeah, from the ____ . . .

LW/MA?: That was a real early kind of thing.

WV: Do you yourself have any clippings?

CW: No, we have. . . The only thing we have are pictures of him pitching.

LW/MA?: That's good, because we can document clothing and we can then get the kind of thing ____ ____.

CW: I can tell you the kind of ball cap they wore were the kind where it was like very, very short bill and it's just almost the crown of the head. They were like very small caps, you know.

WV: I see. An old-time baseball player, somebody who probably knows baseball could probably. . .

CW: Could tell you.

WV: Yeah.

CW: Could tell you an approximation. But I know he was with the Cubs organization because he used to talk about Zach Wilson, Three-fingered Mordecai Brown, Tinkers ____, ____. I mean, you know, I grew up on all that stuff.

LW/MA?: Three?

CW: Three-fingered Mordecai Brown.

LW/MA?: Make sure. . . Three-fingered Mordecai Brown.

CW: Yeah, he was a ballplayer—a pitcher, as a matter of fact—that my grandfather knew personally, who had his, who was in a mining accident as a young man and had severed, he only had three fingers and part of the thumb. And he was a pitcher and pitched with that hand. I think he was, I don't know if he's in the Hall of Fame or not, but he's a well-known guy, and he knew a lot of the ballplayers, and he scouted for a couple of the major league teams in that particular area of Oklahoma. But in his own way, he [CW's grandfather—Ed.] was as remarkable as my grandmother. Because he was, like I said, a self-educated man, and highly intelligent, highly disciplined. He and my grandmother were both about as far away as you could be from each other. I mean, he was. . .

WV: Sense of temperament.

CW: Temperament, personality, taste. And it's incredible. I can't imagine that they were ever married. I don't understand why. It must have been a strong physical attraction.

LW/MA?: How did it last? I want to know that.

CW: The only thing I can figure out is that when they met there must have been a hell of a strong physical attraction, you know.

WV: Right.

LW/MA?: Is that _____?

CW: He was like six feet two, blue eyes, blond hair, you know.

WV: And a baseball player, you know.

CW: A baseball player.

LW/MA?: [unintelligible]

CW: And She was the Indian maiden, you know.

WV: Indian maiden, right.

LW/MA?: That's how it started, but how did it, what. . . Was it social things that kept that going?

CW: Absolutely not. They had nothing in common. They hated each other. (chuckles)

LW/MA?: I know exactly. She told me that and I know the things that. . . [continues, unintelligibly]

WV: But it was the social stigma probably of divorce; without any question. . .

CW: Yeah, and in a small town. I mean, like I lived in Eufaula for practically the first ten years of my life, and I never knew anyone there that was divorced. I mean, it was a. . .

LW/MA?: So you think it was the social milieu, the thing that happened, and. . .

CW: Yeah.

WV: Right, yeah. I think that's true for my parents, still _____, they go at other, you know. Not that any, I mean, it never gets violent, you know. And I think, "Why do you put up with this?" And I think, "Why, of course." You know, it's totally out of the question to consider any of the alternatives, you know.

LW/MA?: How did he feel about her interest in psychic phenomena?

CW: He thought it was bullshit.

LW/MA?: But it wasn't, was it?

CW: Thought it was bullshit, thought she was crazy.

LW/MA?: What do you think about that?

CW: What do I think about it?

LW/MA?: You think it's bullshit, don't you?

CW: No, I think it's real, for her.

LW/MA?: I think it's real for her, too. I think that's a good answer; I like that.

CW: I think it's real, because I've, I know. . .

LW/MA?: I think it's real, too. I agree with you. I like your answer _____ for her.

CW: I've had her do a couple of things for me, just in my business, you know, in bands and stuff, because I was real concerned about different personnel changes that were about to happen, what I was going to do. And boy, she's been right on the money—every time. [snaps his fingers]

WV: Gee, that's great.

LW/MA?: I [unintelligible].

CW: So I don't like to delve into that very much with her because, you know. . .

LW/MA?: I think, Cleve, that we are—how do you say it?—[says "intrepidors"; probably means intrepid trespassers—Ed.] on that phenomenon. I don't like it and I've [dealt, felt] with you a long time, and I feel very [caustic, cautious] about that. I want those kinds of things to be dealt with in a very sensitive way. And I. . . I believe in it. I believe in it.

CW: Oh, I do, too.

LW/MA?: And I want you to get that out.

WV: Not really, ____ that ____ with her.

CW: But I just don't, I don't like to. . .

LW/MA?: I don't ever it to be. . . I never want it to be. . .

CW: That's another side of Granny, you know, that's. . .

LW/MA?: Yes, but I want that side. . . I [need, mean] that, but I don't want that side of Granny to be something for public debate.

LW/MA?: Exploited or. . .

CW: Yeah.

LW: You know, I want to exploit it. I want you to somehow tell us about that. I don't know how to do it.

CW: Well. . .

MA: Does it go way, way back? Like early ____.

CW: Yeah, to just before, before I was born. [all talk at once] She's always been sort of a town gypsy, you know, fortune teller.

LW: You know, she told me that she wants me to have, well, the. . . We have like four or five skulls. She called and says she wants me to have the one skull, the red one, that's going. . . It's a specific skull because she that has meaning for me. And I am just delighted. I will take that skull, and I want it. And I will be the only one that she says. Because she says it has meaning. And I would never do that without that. I, you know, I think that is, you know, a total sense of her integrity and her sense of what she feels toward me.

WV: Yeah.

LW: And that's the kind of thing that, you know, I want Cleve to. . .

CW: Well, she's always, you know, as far as I can remember, been that way, as far as, you know, delving into the mystic, you know.

LW: Yeah. She says that the red-and-white skull is my skull, and I'm supposed to have that.

CW: But a lot, I have to confess, I think a lot of it, of lot of stuff that she, especially that she directs toward the family, you know, are just her, you know, her wishes. . .

WV: Yeah.

CW: . . . That she says that are psychic a certain way.

LW: Do you think that's just family and not psychic?

CW: Well, some of it I really feel is, you know, just, you know, "I don't want you to do this because. . ."

LW: Yeah, but you've known her when she was younger, Cleve. You know, I haven't known her since she was a little. . .

CW: Well, some of it's real and some of it's bullshit, and you have known Granny real well like I do, to know to separate the two from, you know, one from the other. But she's for real on some of that stuff. She scares me. She's scary on some of it, that she's predicted. . .

LW: Well, that's all ____ ____.

CW: . . . I know that she's predicted, you know, about certain people dying and. . .

WV: Yeah, she's told me stories.

CW: Yeah, I'm sure you're familiar with all of that.

LW/MA?: Well, yeah, because my kids have been to school with her and then we've been through the ____ all that.

CW: Yeah. . . But my grandfather thought it was just total horse manure, you know, he just couldn't. . . Like I said, his background and the way he was, you know, I mean, like when my mother started piano lessons, you know, it was for her to learn, you know, Wagner and Bach and, you know, and Haydn and that sort of thing, and not learn, you know, the boogie woogie piano. Boy, just that would not happen at all.

WV: Yeah, right, right, yeah.

CW: And he was under the great master. . .

WV: [That, An] old stern Germanic.

CW: Really, you know. Very disciplined. Very, very disciplined, you know. And he was that. . . And that's still evident today with my mother and my aunt, in some respects, and somewhat on my own, because my grandfather raised me, until we moved here, because my mother was ill. . .

LW/MA?: [unintelligible]

CW: . . . and my father was traveling a lot.

LW/MA?: Do you think that's a tradition [of an immigrant], or is that a. . .

CW: That's just a. . . I don't ____, just German people that I know.

LW/MA?: [unintelligible]

CW: Well, you grew up in Kansas.

LW/MA?: Well, I know that. (laughs)

CW: You grew up in a. . .

LW/MA?: Well, I did the same thing; that's why I was asking.

CW: Yeah.

LW/MA?: You know, I grew up in the same kind of total kind of sense of discipline. It was a Scandinavian discipline, but it was there, and that's what I was asking. Is it the same kind of tradition, that total kind of sense of. . .

CW: Yeah, and real, and a very, very. . .

LW/MA?: And you grow up in that.

CW: Yeah, I did. I certainly did. You know, were. . .

LW/MA?: So that Granny had that kind of ____.

CW: Granny, I tell you what, my grandfather was so, had such a strong will or an ego about him, he was just, I mean, it was just like everyone was subservient to him, and he ____.

LW/MA?: But he didn't have that immigrant tradition that Granny had ____, ____ ____?

CW: He just had an incredibly strong personality though.

LW/MA?: [unintelligible] What did he have?

CW: I mean, he just had a magnetic, forceful, domineering personality. You did what he did [probably meant said—Ed.], or you. . . Which is incredible because. . .

LW/MA?: _____ she did it until he'd gone.

CW: Yes, he was that way from forever. And it's amazing, they say. . .

LW/MA?: _____ what you grew up, though, _____.

CW: Oh, absolutely. And it's incredible that my grandmother was able to even do her artwork, because he hated it, he threw it out, you know, she was castigated, just, I mean, it was just. . .

WV: Now, was this work that she did already on the outside of the house, or was this stuff that. . .

CW: Oh, yeah, he, see, when I was a young boy growing up in Eufaula, my, I lived, my parents bought a home there. When I was five years old, they bought a home there. My dad was in the oil business and traveled a lot, and my mother was ill and she really couldn't take care of me—she was having a lot of health problems. And plus, my grandfather was, you know, he took an interest in me—I don't know why, but, you know, moreso than my sister or my cousin, I guess because I was there. But anyway, you know, I was, you know, raised in his, the way he thought a child should be raised. And I can remember him always thinking that my grandmother's artwork was, you know, lunacy, that it was, you know, there was no artistic value in his eye to it at all. It was merely junk and trash. And he. . .

WV: What _____?

CW: In fact, he was so, he felt so strongly about it that they never lived, he never lived in that home when I was there, when I lived in Eufaula. He never lived in that home. He lived with us. He lived with my mother and my father.

WV: (chortles???)

CW: He would not . . . he would not go into that home.

LW/MA?:

WV: Really?

CW: He would not go in. . . .

LW/MA?:

WV: Really? Was he embarrassed by it?

CW: He was humiliated by it. And . . . and he did everything he could . . . applied every bit of psychological pressure and . . . and verbal abuse and everything he could to get my grandmother to stop that. There were several occasions that he, you know, was into crystal, uh, you know, cut glass, you know, porcelain things. He had a great eye for it. In fact, he and my aunt. . . He was into really . . . really into woodworking and furniture and he had a marvelous gift about that. He and my aunt, uh, my aunt Virginia lives in Tulsa really had a thing for birdseye maple and they travelled all over the Midwest for birdseye maple furniture and she's got a home that's incredible, birdseye maple furniture, the whole home. And she's got a mantle there that was . . . it came from William L. _____'s home in _____, Kansas. It's a birdseye maple and black _____ mantle.

WV: Oh.

CW: It's incredible. He restored all of it. . . . He restored. . . . I've got a bed (?) sitting there that he restored. The guy was amazing with wood and that sort of thing. He was just a. . . .

WV: Did he have a shop?

CW: Well, he did, you know, he just files and stuff, not really a shop. No motorized tools.

WV: It was all hand tools.

CW: It was all hand tools and, you know, he was like a master craftsman. Anything, he . . . he was once again a German, Germanic upbringing. Anything he did it was so competitive. He just the best at whatever he did, you know, I guess. . . .

WV: Like the ball club . . . whether it was ball playing. . . .

CW: Ball playing.

WV: Or whatever, right?

CW: Or whether it was in the oil business about getting leases. Or whether it was selling cars when he had his car . . . his Ford agency. Whatever he did. And he was really into educating, into education and thinking that. . . .

WV: That's Germanic too.

CW: You know, that you should get as much education as possible. And he, uh, he was . . . they were very well off financially before the Depression in the twenties when my Mom and my aunt were small girls. He would take off the summer and, you know, when they were out of school and they would travel around the United States. They were in every state. They were to, you know, Oregon. And he was quite a hunter too, a sportsman.

LW/MA?: [Inaudible question.]

CW: Husband. This is Grover.

WV: How'd they travel? By car or what?

CW: Yeah, by car.

LW/MA?: That was early? That was early. . . . [inaudible].

CW: They drove the Lincoln Highway, you know, back in the twenties.

LW/MA?: They drove what?

CW: The Lincoln Highway. You know, the Lincoln Highway, which is now I-80. I mean that was a dirt road. . . .

LW/MA?: . . . kind of like they were pioneers.

CW: Yes.

LW/MA?: [Inaudible.]

CW: He believed that . . . he believed that that, you know, that they should get out and see the countryside and see the historical places and stuff. Uh, you know, Boston and Chicago and Washington. . . .

WV: So who would go on these trips?

CW: Oh, my grandmother and . . . everybody went. My grandmother said we're going. You get in the car and go, and that was in the days when people . . . not a whole lot of people had cars.

WV: Right. That's [inaudible].

CW: And they were gone the whole summer.

LW/MA?: Irene had. . . Irene had a very strong personality [inaudible] her husband, didn't she?

CW: Oh, absolutely.

WV: That's probably what caused her some of the friction, right?

LW/MA?: _____, but it was there. . . .

CW: That's right.

WV: She was not exactly subservient.

LW/MA?: . . . talked to you and I've talked to . . . we've talked about it and that was. . . .

CW: Oh, it was . . . they. . . .

LW/MA?: At what point in her life did she start making the _____ or how did she start?

CW: As long as I can remember.

LW/MA?: Oh.

CW: I've got, I've got, I've got pictures of my Mom's _____, you know, just learning to walk and all the _____ tree and the rock garden and all that stuff was there.

WV: Were you . . . your mother was a real young child?

CW: No, when I was.

WV: Oh, when you were.

CW: But, but my mother said she remembers that, you know, that my grandmother doing all that stuff. My grandmother was a packrat, as you know. She'd have to be to. . . .

WV: That's what that's about.

LW/MA?: I . . . she told me who [inaudible] when John _____ and I went down there and she was talking to us and she said that the inside things like the horseshoes, which I think are wonderful, I love them, I, I, but they were horseshoes with the _____ and she says those were the early kinds of things, that she did the inside things early because her husband didn't like the outside things. And I just, I want to know about that [inaudible].

CW: Well, uh. . . .

LW/MA?: What did [both talking at once].

CW: As long as I can remember. . . .

LW/MA?: How early is early?

CW: Well, I don't know. You'd have to ask my mother about that because. . . .

LW/MA?: Well, she said about the thirties. Was that right?

CW: I'm sure it was because I know for me I always remember as long as . . . and I have a good memory. . . . I can remember the gourd tree and the rocks around the tree. Of course the gourd tree now is gone. She just cut it down.

LW/MA?: Right.

CW: Another thing is my grandfather loved trees. He was, you know, he loved trees. He had a huge pine. He had a huge pine tree back there on the side of the house.

LW/MA?: And that's the one that she's decorated and you have pictures of, right?

CW: Well, no, that's . . . that was the other tree.

LW/MA?: [Inaudible.]

CW: There was . . . there was an oak tree in front of that house. That was a big oak tree. The day, the week after my grandfather died she cut. . . .

WV: Oh.

CW: . . . that pine tree down.

WV: Oh.

LW/MA?: Oh (laughter).

CW: It was like a symbol of dominance, you know.

LW/MA?: Symbol that she was gonna do [inaudible].

CW: Right.

WV: Oh.

CW: And another thing too about a month or two after he died she bought a car. She never owned a car.

WV: Oh.

LW/MA?: Is that the one that's out in the back [everyone talking at once].

CW: That's it. Metropolitan.

WV: When did he die?

CW: He died in September the tenth 1960. Died at my parents' home, appropriate enough, watching a baseball game.

WV: Oh, really.

CW: Yeah.

LW/MA?: [The two talking at once.] He dreamed that his grandfather was going to die that morning.

LW/MA?: Oh, she did?

LW/MA?: No, Cleve did. . . .

LW/MA?: Cleve did [inaudible].

WV: Oh, really? Oh, boy.

LW/MA?: You dreamed she . . . your grandfather was going to die?

CW: Yeah, he died [inaudible].

WV: You were real close to him.

CW: Very, very close.

WV: Geesh.

CW: Closer than my father. [Talking all at once.]

LW/MA?: Were you closer to your grandfather than you were to your grandmother?

CW: Oh, absolutely. Oh, yes.

LW/MA?: He spent the night with Cleve every night.

LW/MA?: Oh, really?

CW: Yeah, read used to read me Thorton W. Burgess stories every night.

LW/MA?: And took Cleve to school every day.

CW: And took me to school every day.

LW/MA?: So actually your grandfather was a personality that we need to document as much as . . . as. . . .

CW: Yeah, like I said he was, he was in his own way, in his own way, as remarkable as my grandmother. He was an amazing man. He was like a Renaissance man in the early 1900's. Anything he did, he did well. I mean anything.

LW/MA?: He was kind of a man of all seasons? A man of. . . .

CW: He was, but he was incredibly domineering and one dimensional person.

LW/MA?: [Inaudible question.]

CW: Oh, absolutely.

WV: Sure, there's two sides to that, you know.

CW: Yeah.

LW/MA?: It's not a good thing. . . .

CW: Absolutely, no, there was bad, you know, just as granny, you know. He, I'm sure, was so physically and mentally intimidating to granny that, that. . . . There's a couple of wild stories that I'll have tell you in a little bit, but one is my grandmother attempting to murder him one time.

WV: [Inaudible.]

LW/MA?: Well, how would you put that into the context?

CW: I don't know.

LW/MA?: [Inaudible.] Tell me.

CW: I don't know, but she. . . .

LW/MA?: Don't tell me that, tell me that [inaudible, all talking at once].

CW: My grandfather was so domineering and so, had such an incessant. . . .

LW/MA?: Your grandfather?

CW: Yes, Grover Hawk. His nickname was Hawk, _____ because of his pitching days. He had a hawk on his fast ball. It moved. That's how he got his name Hawk. I called him [Pa, Pop, Ed.]. My mother was a sophomore or let's see a freshman, a freshman at Oklahoma State when it was Oklahoma A & M. My grandfather. . . .

LW/MA?: My [inaudible].

CW: Okay, now.

LW/MA?: I know now.

CW: Uh, at . . . my grandfather believed that the whole family should get the education, so they moved to Stillwater. He moved the family from Eufaula to Stillwater and he believed in, you know, like I said, he was very strong in education.

WV: Your grandfather moved the family?

LW/MA?: [Inaudible.]

CW: Yes, moved the whole family from Eufaula to Stillwater while my aunt and my Mom were in school up there.

WV: Wow.

CW: And he went to the classes as well.

WV: (Laughter.)

CW: To make sure that not only that they were going to class, but for, you know, just for his own benefit.

WV: That's extraordinary.

CW: And my father was in school up there on an athletic scholarship, so, you know, it was like the whole family. My Dad lived in the back of their house. They had a rented house in Stillwater. And they had had, my grandmother and grandfather had had a particularly terrible fight. They never got along. As long as my mother and my aunt can remember, they never got along.

LW/MA?: I know your fa—. I'm trying to get the family connection. I've taught _____.

CW: And Greg.

LW/MA?: And _____. I need to know. . . . I'm trying to sort back because it was your grand—, it was your father at Stillwater. That's not too far along, back.

CW: That was in the early thirties.

LW/MA?: Thirties.

CW: That was in the early thirties because. . . .

LW/MA?: I know your sister. How do I fit that in? Give me a [inaudible].

CW: Okay. Well, my mother, my mother and father met in. . . . He was from, my father was from a little town. It's not even a town, just a community, you know, farms that were close together, called Bower, which is now covered up by the lake. And they were very, very poor.

LW/MA?: [Inaudible] Eufaula, yeah [inaudible].

CW: Pittsburgh County.

LW/MA?: Yeah, yeah. I understand that.

CW: Very, very poor, very ignorant family, nowhere, cotton, you know, one step ahead of being sharecroppers it what they were. My father didn't start school until he was eight so he was two years ahead of. . . .

LW/MA?: So you are _____ with that?

CW: Yeah, so uh he was two years ahead of my school, of my mother in school, although four years chronologically older than her.

WV: [Inaudible.]

CW: And they met when she was in the seventh grade and he was in the ninth grade and they went steady from then on until he died.

LW/MA?: And because, yeah [inaudible].

CW: So anyway, when he, when my father was high school age his parents said, you know, told him to quit high school and stay and help work on, you know, on the farm, pick cotton and, you know, slop the hogs and all that other stuff. And he said that he didn't want to live on the farm. He didn't want to, you know, mess with. . . . He hated farming, so he moved into town and worked as a cook, uh, and went to high school from the time he was sixteen because he was twenty when he graduated from high school.

WV: All be darned.

LW/MA?: [Inaudible. Sound of children in the background as well.]

CW: So he lived, he lived, he lived uh with my. . . . He was nineteen or twenty when he graduated, but he lived with, his last, his senior year in high school he lived with my grandmother and grandfather Hall, granny and pa. He lived with them because, you know, he was going with my mother, had been going with her for a long time and his parents wouldn't help him out, they couldn't. They were too poor, so he stayed with them.

WV: I see.

CW: Then when he got his athletic scholarship to Oklahoma State in football and wrestling, uh, they, you know, they, they went up there together. Everybody . . . he moved the whole family up there.

LW/MA?: So that would be how, how Jeff, how I would then teach Jeff, how that would come about.

CW: Yeah.

LW/MA?: It was through that.

CW: Well, anyway, my grandparents and my Mom and Dad and my aunt were all living in this house in Stillwater. My Dad slept out on the back porch.

LW/MA?: Do you know where that was in Stillwater [inaudible]?

CW: No.

LW/MA?: Could I have a, I would like. . . . Do you have an address?

CW: My mother would know. [Both talking at once.]

LW/MA?: Could I go get that and do that?

CW: My mother would know. I don't. . . .

LW/MA?: Can you get that for me later on?

CW: Yeah, she'll be, you know, call her [inaudible].

LW/MA?: Uh huh.

CW: But anyway, uh, they, my mother said she remembered when it was a particularly terrible fight between them and that she remembered that she told, you know, it was just horrible fight. And they didn't sleep together by the way (laughter). They did not [inaudible].

LW/MA?: Granny and. . . .

CW: Yeah.

LW/MA?: The other. No, I knew that (laughter).

CW: They didn't sleep together. I don't know what their sexual thing uh happening.

WV: (laughter)

CW: There's no tellin'. I wouldn't even venture to guess.

WV: Yeah, right.

LW/MA?: That was sort of up for grabs (laughter).

CW: I have no idea. I know. . . .

LW/MA?: Nobody knew? (laughter)

CW: I mean there was, I mean, you'd think that being the grandson that my mother or my aunt or somebody would say well, yeah, they were hanging out with so and so.

WV: Yeah, right.

CW: But I never heard any of that.

WV: Never heard.

LW/MA?: Nothing.

CW: Nothing. 'Cause my grandfather was incredibly moral, straight ahead person. Granny I'm not sure about [laughter from everybody].

WV: Some doubts there.

CW: There might be some doubts there. I think there might have been some dallying around on her part when she was in California by herself when my aunt with her, but we don't know. We have no way of tellin'.

LW/MA?: Granny was in California [inaudible]?

CW: Well, she went out there to to visit my aunt when my cousin was born.

LW/MA?: [Inaudible.]

CW: This was during the war.

LW/MA?: Second world war.

CW: Yes, this was when my aunt was pregnant and just given birth to my cousin. Anyway, they were living in Stillwater, had this terrible fight, and granny was. She, although it's hard to believe now, I remember her temper. I remember granny's, you know, had a wild temper. She was at times crazy, you know, insane, you know.

LW/MA?: Granny was?

CW: Yeah, she'd go crazy on him.

WV: (laughter)

CW: You know. . . .

LW/MA?: [Inaudible] now does she?

CW: No, no, no. She could be extremely hateful and extremely mean, you know. I mean she just [inaudible]. I can remember her as a child her being that way on occasion, just being really really mean. And she and my grandfather were in an awful, awful fight. Everybody had gone to bed. It was about two or three in the morning. My father was sleeping out on the screened in back porch behind the kitchen area of this rent house they were living in in Stillwater. And he heard a commotion in the kitchen, like a drawer being pulled out [children in the background]. And he thought someone was breaking into the house. And he was a real big, physical guy, you know, football. . . .

WV: Yeah, yeah.

CW: . . . player and wrestler. And he was, in fact, playing football in the one of the few times in which he had winning season and Win Waldorf was the coach up there. And, so anyway, he thought that somebody was breaking in to the house, you know, there was a burglary in progress, so he followed who he thought was breaking into the house, followed them into the bedroom and tackled them and brought. . . . It was my grandmother with a butcher knife. She was going after my grandfather.

WV: Oh.

CW: She was gonna, she was gonna get him.

LW/MA?: (laughter)

WV: Oh.

CW: And he, and he, you know. And, then, needless to say, this kind of. . . .

WV: What an event.

CW: Yeah, it was pretty shocking.

LW/MA?: [Inaudible.]

CW: And, you know, she. . . . I think, you know, had it not been for my father, she probably would have murdered him. She was that insane, you know, her temper got, you know, her emotions got. . . .

LW/MA?: They both were then . . . the tempers. . . .

CW: Yeah, it was just incredible. . . .

LW/MA?: Constant conflict [inaudible].

CW: Yeah, he had a temper too, you know. I can remember him throwing cold cream jars at her, you know, just as he was trying to strike out, you know, just as hard as if he was trying to strike out a batter.

WV: I'm real curious as to whether like her work on the house changed a lot after he died. You said she bought a car, she did some other things. Did her work change? Do you know?

CW: I can't really remember that. I don't think so. I can just remember that, that even though she didn't like him I can remember that she had a great deal of respect for his taste in in art.

LW/MA?: The tree, all the tree, the wonderful tree that you have pictures of, and the tree was high. . . .

CW: It was huge.

LW/MA?: Huge.

CW: It was huge then.

LW/MA?: And then all the the _____ and the things under it, but that was not, that was before he died, was it?

CW: Yeah, well, he never went down there.

LW/MA?: And he was not, he didn't live with her.

CW: No. Not while, not while, when I lived in Eufaula, which was from 1954. . . .

LW/MA?: All the time she told me [both talking at once]. That was that wonderful tree, that that tree was there and she. . . .

CW: The big oak tree.

LW/MA?: Yes, she told me that.

WV: The one that became the gourd tree, you mean?

CW: Yeah, that was the gourd tree, big, big. . . .

LW/MA?: All all the gourds [inaudible].

WV: What happened, well, how did it die?

LW/MA?: How did that happen?

CW: Well, she kept cutting. . . . Granny loved to to trim, to. . . .

WV: Right.

CW: . . . you know, to work in the yard, to cut things, to. . . .

WV: Right.

CW: . . . trim the hedge, trim the trees. She kept cutting the thing back so much that it finally just croaked.

WV: Oh. [Laughter from WV and LW/MA?.] What's this thing about the lightning?

CW: Well.

WV: Striking. I thought she told me [inaudible].

CW: She said. . . . Yeah, I think that the lightning struck it, but, you know, just knocked off a few of the branches. It did—, it wasn't, wasn't. . . .

WV: That's what she likes you to think.

CW: She killed the tree. She kept cutting it back and cutting it back and cutting it back.

WV: Oh.

LW/MA?: [Inaudible] live with her during that time [inaudible, both talking at once].

CW: Well, he did not live with her as long as I can remember [both talking at once, children talking].

LW/MA?: When can you remember?

CW: Well, I. . . .

LW/MA?: Give me a date.

CW: I tell you what. . . . [both talking at once] Well, see we lived in Witchita Falls uh in 1951? 1951? They came to visit us? Took me to _____. He had relatives out there, western Oklahoma, so fifty-one they were still living in Eufaula, they, I guess they were still living together at that time, but. . . .

LW/MA?: She's told me [inaudible].

CW: Okay, then we moved to Oklahoma City right after that. We left, we lived here in Oklahoma City. We lived over on 25th Street [clearing his throat]. Let's see. It would be, we moved to Eufaula in 1953. I can remember that. It was a very, very hot summer. I was five years old when we moved to Eufaula because 1953 was a particularly hot summer and they had to remodel the house just to move in because they put in a bathroom and they had to put in an air conditioner because it was incredibly hot. Fifty-three, summer of 1953 [children in background]. And I can remember how hot it was, so we moved there in 1953. When our family moved there, my father was working for an oil supply company in Tulsa, a place called _____ Products. Uh, it sold drilling _____.

He did not, my mother was very sick, and that's why we moved to Eufaula is because he was on the road continually, travelling in Oklahoma, Texas and Kansas, you know, you know, on oil well sites, and with, drilling _____. So my grandfather moved into that house from the day that we moved there. I can remember him being there and not living down there. Now I can remember spending the night with him a couple of times.

LW/MA?: Do you remember. . . .

CW: Down at the old house.

LW/MA?: Did he live with. . . ?

CW: With our family.

LW/MA?: [Inaudible], so that would be the first. . . .

CW: The first that I can remember is 1953.

LW/MA?: Fifty-three, okay.

CW: Fifty-three.

LW/MA?: So that'd be almost thirty years ago.

CW: Yeah. Uh, so I can remember that and uh, let's see, what else? [Children in background.] And I can remember spending the night down there a few times with him and she slept in one bedroom and my grandfather and I slept in another.

LW/MA?: What was the thing about that? What did you think about that? [Inaudible.]

CW: That was the norm for them. They didn't get along. That was the norm.

LW/MA?: [Inaudible.]

WV: Just accepted.

CW: Yeah, yeah.

LW/MA?: Just accepted, right. [Inaudible.]

WV: [Inaudible.]

CW: They didn't, they didn't get along.

LW/MA?: [Inaudible.]

CW: Uh, one time the house blew up. I can remember when the house. . . . Did she ever tell you about that, the house blowing up?

LW/MA?: No.

CW: There was a gas leak and. . . .

LW/MA?: She showed me all [inaudible].

CW: She was lucky she wasn't killed. Yeah, it blew up.

WV: Which house is this now?

CW: The one. . . .

WV: The one that I [inaudible].

LW/MA?: That blew up? That she's in?

CW: Yeah, it blew up, 1954, fifty-five. It blew up.

LW/MA?: I had to hang the laundry on the line. I had to do all that, but I didn't [inaudible].

CW: Yeah, it blew up. She . . . it was either a gas leak or she had the stove on too long or it was a little loose.

'Cause granny, she won't tell you this. Granny likes to get loose. She likes to drink.

LW/MA?: How [inaudible].

CW: She likes to . . . well, she likes to. . . . My mother tends to exaggerate, but she likes to out there. She likes to drink. She will drink if you give her [inaudible] chance.

LW/MA?: [Inaudible.] She told me that.

CW: Which her mother, my great grandmother, really disapproved of. My grandfather. . . . That's one reason why he moved out is what my mother told me.

LW/MA?: Irene's husband moved out. . . .

CW: Is why he moved out.

LW/MA?: Because she drank too much?

CW: Yeah, yeah, she drank, and that was just, you know. It was just horrible.

WV: [Inaudible.]

CW: He . . . the bootlegger came over to collect a debt one day, and he paid him off and said that's it, you know.

LW/MA?: Your grandfather knew that.

CW: Yeah. And he didn't like her drinking and he didn't like anything she did. You have to understand that those people were as opposite as you can get. I don't . . . I'm amazed. . . .

LW/MA?: I understand that because [inaudible].

WV: [Inaudible.]

CW: But anyway, my grandfather, like I said, he had a painting that was smuggled out of Germany during World War I and it came. We still don't know who the uh artist is, but it's incredible. . . .

LW/MA?: She showed [inaudible].

CW: Have you seen that over there?

LW/MA?: Yeah, she showed it to me, right. [Inaudible.]

CW: Okay, well that, amazingly enough, wasn't wasn't, there's one scratch on it where a piece of plaster. . . .

LW/MA?: She showed me that one painting and she said that that's where it came from.

CW: Yeah, [inaudible] and all that. Oh, my gran—, strangely enough, as different as their tastes were in everything, I mean everything, where where granny was flamboyant, my grandfather was really conservative, ultra-conservative in his dress and his behavior, morals and whatever. Uh, that she respected his opinion and respected his taste in art.

WV: Hm.

CW: 'Cause she knew that he was an educated man. She did respect that about him.

WV: Yeah.

CW: Even though she. . . .

WV: [Inaudible.]

CW: Even though she didn't like him, she respected him.

WV: She must have had very little education, if any.

CW: Uh, yeah, she. . . .

WV: She went to school. . . .

CW: She didn't go to high school I know that.

LW/MA?: No, she, but she told me that she married him when she was fourteen, ran away from her mother. Her mother didn't want her marrying him. He was a baseball player and she snuck out at night and married him at what, fourteen or fifteen?

CW: Yeah, she was real young. She never went to high school I know that.

LW/MA?: She was incredibly _____. [Other female voice] She went to school in Tulsa, didn't she?

CW: Yeah, she went to a Catholic school. Did she ever tell you this?

LW/MA?: No.

CW: Oh, yeah, see, she had a real bizarre upbringing (laughter). My grandmother was so strange. She has really got so many different personalities. I remember as a young kid. Remember when wrestling, you know, TV wrestling was big? You know, everybody. . . .

WV: Yeah.

CW: . . . used to watch TV wrestling, you know, you know, you know, the guys with the masks and pulling the hair and all that?

WV: Oh, yeah.

CW: Well, my grandmother would sit and still does [inaudible] football games. She's a big OU football fan. She'll sit with the rosary in front of the TV, but she goes to the Baptist church. She'll sit and, you know, and pray with the rosary beads, but she goes to the Baptist church. Now figure that one out.

WV: Well, she went to Catholic school.

LW/MA?: Yeah, she [inaudible].

CW: She went to Catholic school. [Gap in tape here.]

LW/MA?: Years before all this happened, before she [inaudible]. The tree [inaudible]. And I have these wonderful photos of the _____ and the really mythic kinds of people things, which I think are wonderful, and I'd like to know about it. How do we get from the fact that that she that her husband was like. . . . How do we get to this?

CW: You mean.

LW/MA?: How do we connect? How do you connect? How do I connect?

CW: I don't. . . . That'd be hard to answer because I don't really know.

LW/MA?: [Inaudible.]

WV: [Inaudible.]

CW: Oh, just that the gourd tree and the rocks. . . .

LW/MA?: How did the gourd tree come about? How did we get the gourd tree?

CW: I never, I never really asked, you know.

LW/MA?: She just did it? How did we get the gourd tree? [Other female voice.] I think somebody brought her some gourds. One time a man from California or something? [Back to other female voice.] That's how we got the gourd tree?

CW: That's how she started in on that, but I don't remember when, you know, I don't have any idea when that was or. . . .

LW/MA?: So that's a sort of. . . .

CW: I tell you what, what I think. I don't know this for a fact. You'd have to verify this with my mother or my aunt, I don't know. Her mother, Irene's mother, my great-grandmother. . . .

LW/MA?: Irene's mother?

CW: Was very very strict also. She and my grandfather got along very well. [Female voice talking to child in background.] Whenever, whenever my grandfather could not handle Irene, he would call Mrs. Gibson, her mother. Granny was not . . . she was really her own person. She's not like either her mother or her father according to. . . .

LW/MA?: How did she get that way?

CW: I don't really know. My mother [inaudible].

LW/MA?: [Inaudible.]

CW: My mother and I have talked about that. I don't know. Perhaps it was being married at such a young age, and then being in large cities, you know, seeing (clearing throat), going from a very very sheltered environment to to, you know, living with the ball team.

WV: Travelling.

CW: Travelling.

WV: [Inaudible.]

CW: Travelling to Denver and to Kansas City and Chicago and Omaha and Tulsa and stuff.

LW/MA?: Enlightening kind of thing.

CW: Perhaps that. . . .

WV: Do you think her Indian heritage has anything to do with some of her outlooks and things?

CW: Well, that's, her Indian heritage has been pretty convenient actually.

LW/MA?: Right, that's why who do I reconcile uh [inaudible].

CW: Because, because like a lot of people in Eufaula (clearing the throat) the _____ were, they were discriminated against, and uh the whiter you were the better you were.

WV: Uh huh.

CW: And she really didn't come into her Indian thing until the past twenty years.

MV: [Inaudible.]

LW/MA?: It's like Irene told me when we were driving back to Oklahoma City. She says well, I asked her about it, well, Marianne, you know that everyone in Eufaula is poor Indian. In other words, she was telling me. . . . What she was doing was putting me down as far as asking her about that. She was saying, we're all Indian.

CW: Well, just about everybody here is.

LW/MA?: [Inaudible] and she was telling me, we're all Creek.

CW: But.

LW/MA?: And I I second that, I. . . .

CW: I think granny enjoys being unique. She revels in that.

LW/MA?: [Inaudible.]

CW: And like I said being Indian with her has been a matter of convenience for the past twenty years.

LW/MA?: [Inaudible.]

WV: [Inaudible.]

CW: Her think, yeah. But. . . .

WV: How Indian is she? Is it. . . ?

CW: Well, let's see, her uh her mother is considered a full blood. Her mother was adopted. Her mother was

adopted into the tribe. Her mother was a white woman.

WV: Oh, that's right.

LW/MA?: Because she told me she was what half Creek, that [inaudible].

CW: Really more white.

LW/MA?: Really more white than it was.

CW: That's because her mother was adopted [inaudible].

LW/MA?: Let's go through that again.

WV: [Inaudible] the Indian part in her is really an adopted Indian?

CW: No, actually she's a quarter because her father, _____ Gibson, was a half. Okay, when you get out of the blood.

WV: Yeah.

CW: Yeah, actual blood, she's a quarter because her father was a half-breed Creek Indian.

WV: Okay.

CW: You know, but her mother was. . . .

WV: Adopted.

CW: Adopted, so in other words she was treated, her mother was treated as a full blood and she was one of five white people I guess that was adopted into the Creek tribe and the only woman.

WV: Oh.

CW: So, uh, let's see. As far as from one place to the other, I think all the art stuff and the gourd thing and all that. I'm not sure. You'd have to verify this with my mother. I think it started after 1944. I think it started, you know, right around as the war was coming to an end, World War II because of my grandmother.

LW/MA?: What does that have to do with. . . .

[End of interview]