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[Begin Tape 4547. Begin Session II.]

JAMIE DIGILORMO: Alright well it is November seventeenth . . .

JUDY MONTGOMERY-GAUTHIA: Seventeenth.

DIGILORMO: Two thousand fifteen. We're here at 313 Prater Road with Ms. Judy
Montgomery-Gauthia.

GAUTHIA: Yes.

DIGILORMO: [00:13] And we are, let's see, sitting here hoping that the weather doesn't
get too bad.

GAUTHIA: Yes.

DIGILORMO: It's a pretty nasty day out. The wind is kicking so . . .

GAUTHIA: Yes, Lord.

DIGILORMO: Hopefully we won't get . . . have to bunker down here in the middle of the interview.

GAUTHIA: Right. No electricity, no lights, no nothing.

DIGILORMO: Right! Right. That would really put a damper on things. Well so I've got a series of questions.

GAUTHIA: Okay.

DIGILORMO: [00:42] And they're all sort of broken down into different categories. So we'll start with your childhood and kind of move up through young adulthood, and into your being an adult and things like that and how it relates to Mossville.

GAUTHIA: Okay.

DIGILORMO: So first question I wanted to ask you about is the home that you were raised in.

GAUTHIA: Okay.

DIGILORMO: So could you describe that home?

GAUTHIA: Yeah. It's gone now.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: Through Sasol. They bought it out.

DIGILORMO: Okay. Where was that located?

GAUTHIA: [01:21] Right here one Prater Road. Right down the street to the right.

DIGILORMO: Oh, okay.

GAUTHIA: It was . . . Rodney [Caesar?] had owned it. Or the family because he had done already passed away before they got a chance to sell.

DIGILORMO: So this wasn't the house that y'all were . . .?

GAUTHIA: That we was raised in [disagrees].

DIGILORMO: Okay. I thought it was.

GAUTHIA: No. So it was, I guess, fairly a big house.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: [01:42] And they . . . We was five in the family. Raise up [Keat?]. Go up on it.
And . . .

DIGILORMO: Five children?

GAUTHIA: Yeah. Five children.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: And my parents . . . of course my parents always was taking someone in so . . .

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: But other than just us, it was just . . . I guess we got along because my parents didn't believe in us fighting amongst ourselves or . . .

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Oh, sorry about that.

DIGILORMO: Oh, no.

GAUTHIA: We . . . I was kind of the easy-going person.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: [02:24] I didn't like to catch whippings, so I didn't buck the system.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: So . . .

DIGILORMO: So did you have chores and things like that you had to do?

GAUTHIA: Oh yeah. Yeah. Mama gave us things to do. I was one of these, I'm never in a hurry. I'm always moving slow. Nonchalant. Nothing bothers me. I always say I can do it. I got time. I'll do it later type thing. My sister Sally, she was on the fast side so she moved faster than me. She believed in getting her chores done. [laughs] Then Mama looked around seen still got some stuff need to be done. She don't look at it like it's just for Judy to do now. She be mad at both of us. And Sally'd be trying to explain to her, "No, Mama I did my work. That's for Judy." And boy she'd get a slap. [laughs] Stuff like that. So I didn't catch no slapping because I'd just say, "Okay, Mama. I'm going coming. I'm doing it. I'm going to do it."

DIGILORMO: What kind of chores did y'all have to do?

GAUTHIA: Like washing the dishes, ironing, stuff like that.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: [03:35] Maybe she was trying to teach us a little cooking, too. I don't know.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. Okay.

GAUTHIA: Type thing.

DIGILORMO: Did you learn to cook from your mom?

GAUTHIA: Just a very little. Not . . . I wasn't . . . My mama was a good cook. Her and my dad both. But I didn't learn how to cook.

DIGILORMO: Oh, I got you.

GAUTHIA: I don't like cooking, so cooking is not my dish. I didn't mind being a helper in the kitchen. But I don't like cooking. But sometime I have to . . .

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: [04:09] But it's, like my mother she loved to cook. It didn't take her long to cook.

Just like y'all here. She'll slip off and she'll pull something out the deep freezer. Start cooking.

That's the type of lady she was.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: And she liked to feed people. She liked to feed everybody.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Talk to anybody in Mossville. They probably done all ate over here at my parents' place.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: So that's how we was raised.

DIGILORMO: So your parents . . . Your father worked for Conoco?

GAUTHIA: Yes. At the plant.

DIGILORMO: [04:44] And your mother took care of the home or does she work outside of the home?

GAUTHIA: Well she took care, and she kind of worked a little outside the home. I don't remember exactly when. But then my parents had went into the nightclub business. And Mama used to do that because Daddy was working.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: So that's how that was. But I don't remember what year.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Maybe my brother or somebody else. Sally maybe, but I don't remember.

DIGILORMO: Did you have a lot of children on the road or in the neighborhood that you would play with? Were there a lot of families at the time you were growing up?

GAUTHIA: [05:19] Yeah, but Mama kind of liked to leave us stay in the house or in the yard. She didn't like us to roam.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: My brothers, they would sneak off. They was I guess kind of rascals. They would sneak off and go playing, but Sally and we I more had to stay in the house. She didn't care for us going out. Maybe because we was female. She really didn't want none of us to go to [. . .?] but

the boys would catch whippings. They used to go swimming in a dynamite hole. I don't know where that was. I never went.

DIGILORMO: What is a dynamite hole? Just a . . .

GAUTHIA: A big hole.

DIGILORMO: [05:52] A crater left from some explosion or something?

GAUTHIA: I don't know why they . . . How they got that name I don't know, but I can imagine something like that. Some kind of big hole right here in Mossville and they go swimming out there.

DIGILORMO: [06:05] So what'd you do? What did you and your sister do for fun if y'all weren't able to roam?

GAUTHIA: I don't know. Mama always kept us busy doing something.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Yeah, so . . . And then I always worked so slow, so [phone makes noise].

DIGILORMO: You want us to pause so you can answer?

GAUTHIA: [whispers] [don't matter?]

DIGILORMO: Okay. So let's see . . . I guess this sort of follows on the last question. I had wanted to ask you what you did for fun as a young child.

GAUTHIA: Okay. Okay.

DIGILORMO: You say you had mostly chores to do to keep you busy.

GAUTHIA: Yeah. Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Was there anything you looked forward to doing?

GAUTHIA: [06:53] No, I guess I never did have a high goals or things like that. I just took one day at a time.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: I just never did . . .

DIGILORMO: No hobbies or anything like that?

GAUTHIA: No. I don't remember any hobbies.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: We had to help my parents in the club. They would let us do little things like . . .

DIGILORMO: So when did you start working or helping out?

GAUTHIA: I guess just real young like . . .

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: [07:23] Sometime they would instead of go walk all the way to the club they'd bring some beer and put it in the refrigerator. Some little half of pints they'd put it in the bedroom. And they would just ask us to go get it out the box or out the bedroom. So that's what I was say we was working at a real young age. I don't remember. Probably illegal, too. [laughs]

DIGILORMO: So Club Paradise. That was the name of your parent's club?

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: How far was that walking distance from your house?

GAUTHIA: Oh, it was in the same yard.

DIGILORMO: The same yard? Okay.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Alright. Wow.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: [07:57] Did it . . .

GAUTHIA: And then after a while then they started having the dance hall. Then we were working there because by then we was bigger and we would work there. And everybody either have to wait tables or . . .

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Work the bars. Work at the door.

DIGILORMO: So it was kind of like a bar before it became a dance hall?

GAUTHIA: Yes.

DIGILORMO: Okay. Alright. Would you had called it a juke joint at first?

GAUTHIA: [08:23] Yeah. I guess so. Something like that.

DIGILORMO: Something like that. So they still had music?

GAUTHIA: Oh, yeah.

DIGILORMO: But it wasn't like a big . . . Where people went and danced and things like that?

GAUTHIA: Right. It was a good-sized club. The dance hall was real big. It could hold thousands of people where the club couldn't hold that many.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: A few hundreds. That's how it was. We just helped out with our parents. That's how we was raised to do.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Just to help.

DIGILORMO: [08:56] I've heard that's there's been a lot of famous people come through that club.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Do you have any memories or were you too young to recognize . . .?

GAUTHIA: [09:04] I can remember like Bobby Blue Bland, he sang beautifully, and I can remember him being a heavy set guy. Nice looking, beautiful face. That's all my parents and them would talk about. Especially my dad. He would be so excited. And Otis Redding, and Johnnie Taylor. Tina Turner. Just everybody I guess they could think of to try to get them to the club. To the dance hall.

DIGILORMO: [09:36] Did you have any experiences with any of these musicians that you can remember?

GAUTHIA: Well I was real young.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. Right.

GAUTHIA: Maybe get them a glass of water, or maybe if they wanted a beer or whatever. Stuff like that.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Stuff . . . Just simple things.

DIGILORMO: Sure. That's pretty amazing.

GAUTHIA: [09:57] Yeah. After I was big enough to go to a club, I always said I didn't need to go to the club. I was raised in a club. I had enough of it.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Like people be thrilled. Say, "Oh, I'm going to the club. I'm old enough to go in now." That was never my highlight because I was raised in it and didn't care for it.

DIGILORMO: Used to it.

GAUTHIA: Used to it. It was common. There was nothing to it.

DIGILORMO: Right. Are there any particular memories that you have? Like not just of famous people, but just anything special or memorable that happened to you at that time working?

GAUTHIA: [10:34] I met my husband.

DIGILORMO: Oh, okay. That's pretty memorable.

GAUTHIA: Yeah. My parents and them would have bingo at the hall.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: And they wasn't giving a bingo. They had let some organization come in and they would give it, but we would work the tables and stuff like that. So my husband was named Larry Gauthia. That was my boyfriend whatever. I met him there. Anyway and he . . . I went to wait on his table and he gave me a tip, and I was so excited. So I say, "Wow." I say, "Whenever he needs something else I'm going to catch that table one more time." I was tickled to get a tip. So my brother was about to go catch that table and I called him back. I said, "No, no, no. I'm getting that table." I say, "He gave me a tip. I'm going to go back." So when I went back he asked me for my phone number and stuff like that. So we had been talking ever since.

DIGILORMO: Wow.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: How old were you at that time?

GAUTHIA: [11:40] Jesus. Probably . . . I think I dated maybe . . . I got married on my birthday.

DIGILORMO: Oh, nice.

GAUTHIA: June the fourteenth, nineteen . . . What was it? I done forgot now. Let's see. '72,

so I guess we dated maybe two or three years. I forgot how many years. So just say it was three years before I got married. So I got married . . . I got married on my birthday so I was twenty-one or twenty-two. Something like that. I done forgot.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: I used to could remember that. But give or take. I was either twenty-one or twenty-two. So I would say about three years before then.

DIGILORMO: [12:36] So you were working at the club while you were going to school?

GAUTHIA: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Okay. Wow.

GAUTHIA: Yeah, so that's how that was.

DIGILORMO: That must have been a little exhausting.

GAUTHIA: Well, no. They wouldn't keep us out.

DIGILORMO: Too late?

GAUTHIA: No.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: [12:53] And I had my graduation party there when I graduated in '69. That was the last year Mossville School had, you know, shut down for the high school.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: So that was in 1969.

DIGILORMO: Wow. Well, so going back to your younger years when you lived with your family and growing up as a young child and young teenager, where did your family get food and groceries from?

GAUTHIA: At one time I imagine, times was hard and they would go and buy groceries. I remember they had a little grocery store right here on Prater Road.

DIGILORMO: Oh really?

GAUTHIA: [Godou's?] and it had some other name, too. [Trahan?] I think or something. But they would . . . We'd go there. Walk to the store and get little things. Then sometimes they'd get more things in Westlake [Louisiana].

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: And they would let them . . . I can remember my parents would have like . . . sign a book and they would buy their grocery like that.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: Then I guess certain time of the two weeks or whatever they would go pay they bill.

DIGILORMO: [14:16] So kind of like on a credit?

GAUTHIA: Yeah. Credit bill.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. Okay.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Was the Westlake grocery store pretty far or was it?

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: [14:28] I'm pretty sure we had to go in a car.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. Do you know if it was owned by white people or black people?

GAUTHIA: Yes. Oh, yes. White.

DIGILORMO: Okay, it was? Alright. I was just wondering real quick. So did they raise . . . Did they have gardens or raise animals at all?

GAUTHIA: [14:46] I can't remember.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. So probably not. If they did it wasn't too extensive.

GAUTHIA: Right.

DIGILORMO: If you don't remember.

GAUTHIA: I don't remember.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: [14:56] But I remember hanging up clothes on the outside on the line. [laughs]
You had to go get it in. If it threatened rain you had to hurry up and go bring the clothes in.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. So how did y'all wash clothes back then?

GAUTHIA: Rubbing board on first by hand. Rubbing board in the tub. Then eventually my daddy said he wanted to get my mother an automatic washing machine.

DIGILORMO: Oh, wow.

GAUTHIA: [15:22] And Mama said, "Well I don't want no fancy thing." She said, "Just give me that old-fashioned thing." And she wanted the kind that you turn. It had two little wheels and you turn it and you pass your clothes.

DIGILORMO: Through it.

GAUTHIA: Yeah. Through it and stuff like that. Daddy said, "No I want to buy you something good that you don't have to work." You just put your clothes in and your detergent and let it wash automatic. And Mom's saying, "I don't know about all of that." She said, "That might break on me."

DIGILORMO: She's a little skeptical.

GAUTHIA: Yeah. But eventually they did get the new kind.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: And a dryer and stuff like that. They didn't have to go outside and hang out clothes anymore.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. I bet that was a relief.

GAUTHIA: [16:04] Yeah.

DIGILORMO: So did your family ever like, hunt or fish?

GAUTHIA: No, I think my daddy maybe did a little hunting. Maybe. I know when they was younger, but I don't think it was in Mossville.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: Because they . . . I can remember somebody said that they didn't have no gun or nothing. They would run and try to catch the rabbit with a stick. Hit the . . .

DIGILORMO: Wow.

GAUTHIA: With a stick. And that's how they would kill it and bring it and cook it at home.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: So you had to be kind of fast on your feet.

DIGILORMO: Yeah, and have some talent to sneak up on a rabbit.

GAUTHIA: Yeah, yeah. So . . .

DIGILORMO: [16:42] So that's mostly what they would hunt is rabbit? Nothing like squirrel, or deer, or duck?

GAUTHIA: Oh I don't know, but I can remember them saying that.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: That I remember.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. Oh, and what about fishing? Was fishing ever a big deal? Y'all ever eat fish?

GAUTHIA: I don't think . . . Yeah my parents loved it, but my parents don't know how to swim so they didn't . . . They were scared of water, so . . .

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: [17:03] They was not a fisherman.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: They didn't believe in that.

DIGILORMO: What about . . . I've talked to a few families who have gone crabbing down in . . .

GAUTHIA: In Cameron?

DIGILORMO: In Cameron Parish [Louisiana].

GAUTHIA: [17:15] That's what I said. They maybe went buy some but they didn't go . . .

DIGILORMO: They didn't go crabbing. Yeah.

GAUTHIA: No.

DIGILORMO: I got you. So y'all would eat seafood occasionally from down there?

GAUTHIA: Yeah. And you remember years ago the Catholic couldn't eat meat on Friday.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: Or Good Friday. Easter time. So I can remember us . . . Would have seafood then. If parents didn't have seafood they would give us egg.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. Did the people of Mossville ever cater to, like say, little maybe grocery stores, or delis, or restaurants . . . Would they ever cater to Catholics who couldn't eat meat on Friday? Do you remember?

GAUTHIA: Well the school.

DIGILORMO: The school would?

GAUTHIA: [17:59] Yeah. When we'd go to school they wouldn't . . . I guess for the ones that was Catholic you can have I guess like seafood.

DIGILORMO: Right. How . . . What percentage do you think Mossville is in terms of Catholics? Seems like there's a lot.

GAUTHIA: [18:19] Yeah. I would assume the Catholics was more the bigger . . . the higher percentage.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: I guess maybe Baptist after that.

DIGILORMO: But there's not a Catholic church here, right? Y'all had to go to Westlake?

GAUTHIA: Westlake to go to school.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: To go to church. Yeah.

DIGILORMO: That's interesting. Okay so we're moving on to Mossville the school. Do you have some of your . . . some first memories of going to the school when you were very young starting out?

GAUTHIA: [18:56] To tell the truth I don't remember a whole lot. Can't remember my teachers and stuff, but I can remember I had to repeat the third grade. That I remember.

DIGILORMO: Oh yeah.

GAUTHIA: I think I had a ringworm and Mama done kept me out of school because it catches and I guess they didn't want me to pass it to anybody else, so they put me out or whatever the case may be. They keep you out of school for that.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: I had to repeat the third grade.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: [19:26] But other than that I guess everything else went okay.

DIGILORMO: You enjoyed school?

GAUTHIA: I think so. Pretty much. Wasn't crazy about it, but it was just you knew you had to go to school and . . . Stuff like that.

DIGILORMO: Right. Were your parents ever involved in Mossville School in any way?

GAUTHIA: [19:45] No, not really. My mother went to I think one of my sister's basketball games.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: And stuff like that. I can remember one time my brother did something, I don't know what now. And she went to the school . . . How she walked if I remember right to whip him. People don't do that nowadays. [laughs] But she went to whip him.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: That was embarrassing.

DIGILORMO: Yeah I bet so.

GAUTHIA: Everybody looking and saying, "[Nassa?] your mama come here."

DIGILORMO: Yeah. Right.

GAUTHIA: Yeah, so they meant business back then.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. He must have done something. That's funny.

GAUTHIA: Probably fighting because he was a rascal.

DIGILORMO: [20:31] Okay.

GAUTHIA: Mama didn't believe us falling in trouble and stuff like that.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: My parents.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: So they always liked to keep a good rope on us and stuff.

DIGILORMO: So you had siblings that were involved in like sports and stuff like that?

GAUTHIA: Well Sally played basketball. My youngest brother Alvin wanted to play, but my parents didn't believe in us playing sports.

DIGILORMO: Okay. Why is that?

GAUTHIA: [20:58] Just because they figured you were going to get hurt.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: That's why. And I can remember my nephew . . . I call him my nephew, but he's really, I guess, my great-nephew. My daddy's nephew, Jerry Montgomery. We call him J.J. He done made the NFL assistant coach now.

DIGILORMO: Wow.

GAUTHIA: Right out of Mossville. And I can remember my parents, my dad . . . Mama probably whipped, too. Whipping him because he would sneak off to go practice football. To go

play football.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: [21:37] So that was something. And look today . . .

DIGILORMO: And then he showed y'all.

GAUTHIA: He's using that talent to make a living now. So we all so proud of him. My daddy don't remember now, so.

DIGILORMO: [21:50] Yeah.

GAUTHIA: But he would have be very extremely proud of him.

DIGILORMO: I bet so.

GAUTHIA: Yes.

DIGILORMO: What team? Do you remember what team it is?

GAUTHIA: Green Bay Packers, I think.

DIGILORMO: Wow.

GAUTHIA: I'm not one hundred percent sure on that, but I'm pretty sure like Butch would probably know.

DIGILORMO: Yeah I'll have to ask him.

GAUTHIA: [22:08] [Carrie?] Rigmaiden for sure because he used to coach him.

DIGILORMO: Wow.

GAUTHIA: [Agrees]. One of the coaches in Mossville.

DIGILORMO: [22:14] Speaking of coaches. Do you know of a Coach [Clofus?]?

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: That name rings a bell.

GAUTHIA: [Agrees]. Yeah. Clofus.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: I didn't know he was a coach, but I know who you're talking about.

DIGILORMO: Okay. He lived around here?

GAUTHIA: Yes, from Mossville.

DIGILORMO: Okay. Trying to interview him soon. So I was wondering if members of the community remembered him or anything.

GAUTHIA: [22:37] Well I know his daddy was a preacher and stuff. My parents liked everybody so they always thought very highly of everybody in the community.

DIGILORMO: Right. Was he a coach at Mossville when you went there?

GAUTHIA: No.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: No, I think he probably maybe just coached summertime for kids.

DIGILORMO: Oh, I got you.

GAUTHIA: I might be wrong.

DIGILORMO: I got you.

GAUTHIA: Might be recreational sports.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: That's what I said, I don't really remember. He's younger than me, too.

DIGILORMO: Okay. So did you have dances at the school? Would they put on dances?

GAUTHIA: [23:16] Now, let's see. They probably did, but Mama probably really didn't care for us to go. Now I can remember like maybe we was having a class reunion at the rec and we would go there and there was a dance.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: And there was something that just crossed my mind, but what was it? When you said dancing . . . I can't remember now. It skipped my mind, but when you said dancing it was something I was going to say.

DIGILORMO: Maybe it'll come back to you.

GAUTHIA: Yeah. Maybe so.

DIGILORMO: [23:49] So I . . . Let's see. Oh yeah, dancing. What kind of music was . . .
Did you listen to music much growing up?

GAUTHIA: I don't remember. I don't think so.

DIGILORMO: You don't think so?

GAUTHIA: Not that much.

DIGILORMO: Didn't . . .

GAUTHIA: I'm not a big music fan.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: No.

DIGILORMO: [24:08] So you . . . And that's funny that you grew up listening to music
in clubs and stuff but you're not a . . .

GAUTHIA: Yeah. Yeah. We'd listened to it I guess because the jukebox.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: We knew . . . I guess back then we knew all the latest songs because my parents would get the latest and we'd hear it all the time through the club.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. Do you remember any of the songs or what was popular?

GAUTHIA: Al Green. I loved him.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: [24:36] And he had a song says, "Judy in the sky." And I didn't even know it until my husband told me about it, so.

DIGILORMO: That's sweet.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Awesome. Well so some other just basic questions about Mossville. Were there places where you went to buy clothes around here? Or did you have to go outside the community?

GAUTHIA: Yeah we had to go outside.

DIGILORMO: [24:59] Okay.

GAUTHIA: And I can remember my parents used to go to Sears and buy clothes.

DIGILORMO: Okay. In Lake Charles [Louisiana]?

GAUTHIA: Yes. In Lake Charles. And we'd buy it on time. Oh, and that's what I wanted to say. I can remember the Conoco plant would give a party. A Christmas party.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: [25:18] And they'd give us gifts and give us food and stuff like that and we would be so excited.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: They'd go on the stage and have the presents there and I think they would call names or something. I forgot exactly how it went, but they'd give everybody in the family gifts. So I liked that.

DIGILORMO: I wonder how long they kept doing that.

GAUTHIA: I don't remember.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: But I can remember that.

DIGILORMO: What years did your father work there? Do you remember? Or about what decade?

GAUTHIA: [25:49] I can imagine at . . . Probably in the '60s. I'm pretty sure.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: And he worked until I would say probably in the '80s.

DIGILORMO: Oh wow.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Wow.

GAUTHIA: [26:05] Could be longer than that but I'm just estimating.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: I think Wes has a pretty good memory so he would probably be the one to could tell you more.

DIGILORMO: Yeah he told me that he worked there for a really long time and retired there.

GAUTHIA: Yes. Yeah. Yeah my daddy too retired and my Uncle John.

DIGILORMO: [26:22] Okay.

GAUTHIA: They all retired there.

DIGILORMO: Interesting.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: The reason I ask is because both my parents worked at Conoco in the late '70s, early '80s.

GAUTHIA: Okay.

DIGILORMO: But I was too young to remember if there were any family functions and stuff like that.

GAUTHIA: Okay. Like the Christmas parties and stuff.

DIGILORMO: [26:43] Yeah. Exactly. There probably was, but . . .

GAUTHIA: And then I might be wrong. They could have been maybe just doing it for the black community because we was . . . Maybe didn't have a whole lot of money.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: My parents didn't make as much money as the operators type thing.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: So it could be that, too. [something crashes]

DIGILORMO: Oh, goodness! Let me get that.

GAUTHIA: That's . . . Just leave it. Ain't going to hurt nothing.

DIGILORMO: Okay. I'll pick it up in a second.

GAUTHIA: Look it might want to fly down again.

DIGILORMO: [27:11] Yeah. Right. No guarantee it'll stay.

GAUTHIA: Yeah. So anyway . . .

DIGILORMO: Was there . . . did they often do or ever do . . . Can you remember any events that were put on strictly for the black employees?

GAUTHIA: [27:28] Well that's what I said. I remember that, but I don't know what else. I can't remember what else, but I remember about the Christmas parties.

DIGILORMO: Yeah, that's interesting.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: So let's see. Oh, yeah. Another kind of general question about where you would go if you wanted to, let's say, get your hair done or anything like that. Was there . . . barbershops in Mossville that you could go to?

GAUTHIA: Well I can remember my parents . . . My dad would go get his hair cut in Sulphur [Louisiana] at [Bellow's?] Barbershop.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: And every so often my mama would say, "I'm going to get a haircut, too." So she would go in, get her hair cut short.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: [28:17] And of course my mother and Sally had some beautiful hair.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: My hair didn't . . . Was a little different from theys. My texture was different. I needed a straightening iron so that was a little different.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: But I can remember kinfoles was doing it and Mama didn't like that.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: She always wanted to make me feel good. She say, "Judy, you got some good hair." And honey baby, I did not have no good hair. [laughs] I had some nappy hair. I can remember crying many days.

DIGILORMO: Oh, no.

GAUTHIA: [28:48] When they'd comb that tangle out it would be, "Ahh! It hurts! It hurts!" Type of thing like that. And I liked it when Sally would comb my hair because she would comb

me pretty. And where my parents and my mother would comb it, two big old horse plaits. Stuff like that. She didn't really worry about trying to fix it to look cute type thing. But Sally would hurt my hair. She would be pulling it. She'd say, "Girl, you want me to comb your hair? Be still and hush up." So I can remember that.

DIGILORMO: [29:18] You tender-headed?

GAUTHIA: I really wasn't tender-headed, but it just would hurt a lot.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: [29:23] No, I don't think I was ever tender-headed. It's just, that's what I said. My hair [?] was totally different from Mama's, and Sally's, and my brother's, too. I would say all the time my daddy hair wasn't . . . It's turned straight now since he's gotten older, but I say we took after Daddy's . . . And it was Nelson and myself. And Alvin and Allen tooked after my mama's straighter hair. They had some good stuff, so. I'm proud of my hair, though. [laughs]

DIGILORMO: Yeah. I like your hair.

GAUTHIA: [29:56] But Mama really would say I had some good hair just like her and Sally and I couldn't figure that out for nothing in the world. I said to myself, "I'm the only one that be crying," [laughs] because I had some tangles and stuff like that. My cousin, they wanted to press my hair and Mama didn't care for me to do that because she thought, "Oh, that's going to mess

your hair up."

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: No, they was trying to help my hair. Make it easier for me to comb it, or they comb it and stuff like that but . . .

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: [30:28] Yeah, so she really wanted me to feel special on my hair, but I knew better.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: Yes indeed, so.

DIGILORMO: So did people . . . So if there wasn't a barbershop here, did you mention that people would go to other people's houses? Like say there would be someone in the community that could cut hair and so they would do it out their house? Or just everybody went . . .?

GAUTHIA: Yeah, probably so.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: [30:54] Yeah. I'm pretty sure Mama . . . Daddy would take the boys to the barbershop, too. Sally and my mother didn't really have to do too much to theys. I'm the only one needed some special needs, so.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Them was always like maybe kinfolks mostly until after I got bigger and then I wanted to go get it professional done, but other than that . . .

DIGILORMO: Yeah. Alright. Well so you mentioned that you graduated the last class of Mossville.

GAUTHIA: Yeah, 1969.

DIGILORMO: When that was going on, were you aware of how significant it was that you were part of that moment in history?

GAUTHIA: [31:34] Well, I don't know.

DIGILORMO: I mean how'd people feel about the closing down of . . .?

GAUTHIA: Of the school?

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: They had a lot of them voice their opinion, but I'm easygoing so I just go with the flow. I never was a person to, I guess say, buck the system.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: If that's what they going to do it's okay with me. I'll just be in agreement to whatever going on.

DIGILORMO: And it didn't affect you so much to where . . .

GAUTHIA: No.

DIGILORMO: It upset you.

GAUTHIA: [32:06] No. They had some that went to Westlake . . .

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: That left before the last class to graduate.

DIGILORMO: Okay. So the school was already starting to thin out.

GAUTHIA: It was beginning . . . yeah. Yeah. They was trying to, I guess, blend it in. Some of them . . . Did go to Westlake.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: [32:30] Some of my classmates.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: So it wasn't a lot, but it was a small group.

DIGILORMO: Did they start bringing white students in before you graduated?

GAUTHIA: No. Just the blacks was going to the white school.

DIGILORMO: Okay. I got you. That wasn't until later when they started . . .

GAUTHIA: [32:46] Right. Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Okay. So after you graduated, what type of work did you do or what was your life like?

GAUTHIA: Well, I would just help my parents at the club.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: Like, I didn't work out. Well I take that back. I did work at Holly Hill a little while and mama really didn't want me to go to work but I begged her. I said, "Mama I just want to go and receive a check." Working for my parents you didn't receive no check.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: And I can remember saying, "Mama, you can have my check. I don't want my check. I just want to have a check."

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Just to say . . .

DIGILORMO: Some independence.

GAUTHIA: [33:22] Yeah. And she let me go and I worked a little while there. So it was okay. You can come in, T. He's waiting to come in. You can come in. You're not going to hurt anything. Okay. I'm sorry keeping you outside. I seen a while ago you wanted to come in and I forgot. That's the little guy that lives here.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: And he's a little weak.

DIGILORMO: I got you.

“T”: My feet are killing me. They asked me this morning why my feet were [?] and I said I don't know.

GAUTHIA: Fluid . . . because your body holding fluid. Yeah.

“T”: They got [. . .?].

GAUTHIA: Yeah. Oh, yeah. Well maybe not to cross over, you do better go around, if you don't mind. He'll just go around.

DIGILORMO: Alright.

GAUTHIA: And we . . . The wind knocked that down. He'll pick it up. So let's see, what else are we going to talk about?

DIGILORMO: [34:29] Well I have a little bit . . . A few questions I wanted to ask you about religion, things like that. You said you're a Catholic.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Your family's Catholic. How big of a role did religion play in your day to day life?

GAUTHIA: I'm one of these . . . I love going to church and I'll go to anybody's church. I can remember one time that they didn't believe in people . . . If you was Catholic, they didn't want you to go out your church.

DIGILORMO: The Catholics didn't or the . . .?

GAUTHIA: No, the Catholics.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: The Catholics, for sure. I didn't see no harm in it myself, you see.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: [35:10] So now I tends to go to anybody's church. Somebody tell me they got church going on, I'm ready. I say, "If I can go, I'll try to go," if I can get somebody to watch my daddy and help my dad.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: So I'd go.

DIGILORMO: Did you ever have any problems going to Baptist, or Pentecostal, or any other types of churches when they . . . If they found out you were Catholic?

GAUTHIA: No. That was way like, later you see.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: No, that was way later.

DIGILORMO: I got you.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: So you've heard stories about that, or in previous generations?

GAUTHIA: [35:41] I don't remember too much about it.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: Because if my parents didn't care for us to go, because that if they didn't want you to go out of your church, that's what we had to do.

DIGILORMO: Okay. So both your parents were pretty spiritual people? Religious people that made sure y'all went to church and all that?

GAUTHIA: Yeah. Oh yeah. Went to catechism and stuff like that.

DIGILORMO: [36:07] Okay. Yeah. How many days a week would you . . . ?

GAUTHIA: I think it was like one day a week you go to catechism.

DIGILORMO: Okay. Yeah.

GAUTHIA: I think maybe they started out on a Saturday.

DIGILORMO: Sounds right. Excellent. Well . . . So what was the Catholic Church in Westlake like?

GAUTHIA: [36:26] Well once they separated they . . . First we used to have to go to the black church. It was an all the black church.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: Then they started letting us go to the big church and then we had to sit in the back of the church. Then the whites was . . . Would be in the front.

DIGILORMO: What year?

GAUTHIA: I don't remember the year.

DIGILORMO: Would that have been in like the '70s?

GAUTHIA: Oh, probably so.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: Yeah. No, it probably was in the '60s.

DIGILORMO: Oh, really?

GAUTHIA: [36:58] I would think in the '60s.

DIGILORMO: So they didn't integrate the churches until after that?

GAUTHIA: Yeah. I don't remember what year.

DIGILORMO: [37:09] Wow.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: And there were still two churches? Or did they shut down one?

GAUTHIA: No, now we just got the one Catholic.

DIGILORMO: Just the one? Okay. Are there a lot of congregants that are from Mossville there?

GAUTHIA: Yeah. The Catholics still goes to . . . Well some goes to Sulphur [Louisiana].

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: Some even goes to Lake Charles. So I guess they just . . .

DIGILORMO: Oh, wow.

GAUTHIA: Now you got a preference to go wherever you choose.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Before, years ago, I think if you belonged to this area that's the church you had supposed to go to. I can remember I say, "Well I'll catch any church service that was available," you see, because a lot of times I was working in my parents' club. So on a Saturday night, it was the longest night you stayed open late. So I would prefer catching an afternoon service on

Sunday.

DIGILORMO: Okay. Yeah.

GAUTHIA: So that's how that was.

DIGILORMO: [38:06] Wow. Well . . . So was this church in Westlake involved in Mossville in any way even though it wasn't located in Mossville? Would they ever hold any type of activities or events here in Mossville to promote the church, or any sort of . . .?

GAUTHIA: I don't remember.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. So probably not a whole lot.

GAUTHIA: No, I don't think so. I remember they used to . . . My parents would buy us donuts on Sunday.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: They had a . . . They would sell donut after church and we'd always like that.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Get to get donuts! [laughs]

DIGILORMO: [38:46] Right.

GAUTHIA: So that was one of our, I guess, highlights to go to church, you see.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. I see that. Where there any weddings in the church? Or funerals for people of Mossville?

GAUTHIA: Probably . . . Back years ago was probably having them in the homes.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: The funerals in the home. Probably weddings, too, I guess.

DIGILORMO: Do you have any memories of any specific or special occasions?

GAUTHIA: [39:23] I can't remember right now. No.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. No big weddings in somebody's home that you can . . .?

GAUTHIA: Well I can remember my parents, when the kids would get married, my siblings, they believed in giving them a little wedding. They would give after the . . . In the hall; the dance

hall.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: So I didn't care for that because I'm kind of, prefer just plain simple. So I didn't tell my parents I was getting married and stuff. They probably assumed I would because I had talked to my husband a long time, but.

DIGILORMO: [40:01] Yeah. When you say the hall you mean . . .

GAUTHIA: The dance hall.

DIGILORMO: The club?

GAUTHIA: Yeah. Well they had the dance hall and the club.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: They club was kind of separated where they go every day there. Then the dance hall is only when they had special function.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: [40:18] You see.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. They would rent it out and do wedding receptions.

GAUTHIA: Yeah. Whatever. Yeah. Entertainment. Special entertainments.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Yeah, so.

DIGILORMO: So what happened to the club? Why did it get shut down?

GAUTHIA: I would assume my parents were getting where they were kind of getting tired of it.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: [40:36] My daddy had done already retired from the plant. It just . . . And by then my mom and them had done built this new house here. So then it wasn't in walking distance. Well it was walking distance, but not like in the same yard, you see.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: They had a good little piece to walk. So I guess they just kind of got tired and decided to shut it down.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. So they didn't sell it to try to keep it going. They just . . .

GAUTHIA: I think they just closed it.

DIGILORMO: Closed it.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: [41:06] Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Wow. Did he own any other clubs?

GAUTHIA: No.

DIGILORMO: Okay, just that one.

GAUTHIA: [Agrees].

DIGILORMO: Alright. That must have been kind of hard to watch that piece of Mossville go.

GAUTHIA: Oh no. We was . . . No. I guess everybody was kind of . . . tired and was ready for it to . . .

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: [41:29] I guess the excitement kind of was going away. Because my parents, them wasn't giving the dance halls. Those big entertainment anymore, so.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: They just kind of eventually just kind of, for whatever reason shut it down.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. Well so growing up where would you have received medical treatment or attention if you got sick, or hurt? Was there somewhere around here? Or did you pretty much have to go to Lake Charles or something?

GAUTHIA: Yeah you had to go either to Sulphur or Lake Charles. And if you didn't have insurance you go to Moss Regional.

DIGILORMO: Moss Regional?

GAUTHIA: [Agrees]

DIGILORMO: [42:12] Okay.

GAUTHIA: Yeah that's the charity hospital. I can remember when I got married I didn't have any insurance because I was . . . I guess I got too old. My parents . . . I got dropped from the insurance after a while.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: I got pregnant after a couple of years after I was married. And I didn't have no insurance and I was pregnant. And I can remember this and I just thought my daddy was so special. He had told me. He says, "Judy, since you don't have no insurance, I don't want you to go have your baby at Moss Regional Charity." He said, "Because they don't give you medicine when you hurting. They just let you suffer." He said, "I'm going to send you to the pay hospital, and I'm going to pay for it." He said, "Even if I don't have the money I'll make a loan and see that you go." To a pay hospital to have my baby. I was fortunate, God blessed me that my husband was a veteran and they sent me some insurance and I was covered, so my parents didn't have to send me to a pay hospital and I didn't have to go to Moss Regional.

DIGILORMO: Wow, that's a blessing.

GAUTHIA: Yeah. And I still have my insurance today.

DIGILORMO: Nice.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: [43:32] Yeah, it can be a mess without it.

GAUTHIA: Yes.

DIGILORMO: So was there anyone . . . Say you didn't have like a real bad illness or anything like that, but there was something maybe sore throat, or headaches, was there anyone in the area that treated people?

GAUTHIA: Yeah they . . . I can remember my parents taking us to people and they would treat us. Instead of go to the doctor we we'd go there.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: And he would heal us.

DIGILORMO: Wow.

GAUTHIA: For headaches, stomach aches, worms, whatever.

DIGILORMO: Do you remember any of the treatments?

GAUTHIA: [44:10] I don't remember. They would pray over us.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: Or sometime, I can remember they telling us take some garlic and wear it around your waist or something. Kind of keep the worms away . . . something like that. I don't remember how.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: But I remember something about the garlic.

DIGILORMO: The garlic. That's interesting.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: [44:32] Do you remember . . . I mean I know you probably were a small child, but in your memory did it ever work or make you feel better?

GAUTHIA: I think it would work. Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. Wow.

GAUTHIA: Because that's the only place we had to go.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: So I'm pretty sure it worked.

DIGILORMO: Were there quite a few people or just like one or two in the community that had these sort of . . . the knowledge?

GAUTHIA: No, it wasn't a whole lot.

DIGILORMO: [44:52] Okay.

GAUTHIA: No, everybody would go to the same one.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Do you remember any names by any chance? I mean I'm sure they may not be around anymore.

GAUTHIA: No. They not around, but I don't remember the name.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: And sometime they would go in the woods and they knew certain herbs and they would go get that and boil that and give us certain herbs to take. I remember that mamou tea. Sassafras tea, so.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. Is that spelled the same way as Mamou, the town?

GAUTHIA: [45:28] I think so. Probably so. I don't know.

DIGILORMO: I wonder if it comes from there.

GAUTHIA: I don't know.

DIGILORMO: That's interesting. What about your parents? Did they ever have any like little remedies around the house for stuff like sore throat? I mean maybe not as extensive as going and searching for herbs, but just little whatever in the house?

GAUTHIA: Well my parents always kept anything that would . . . They felt like we needed for . . . to be sick. So I don't remember. Cough syrup. Oh, the Watkins. They used to . . . I can remember people would sell Watkins out of they car. And they would come in the communities

and stop by different houses to see if you wanted to buy anything. They'd have it in the trunk of they car, or inside they car, and you'd go look and see what you want.

DIGILORMO: And what is . . . ?

GAUTHIA: Like cough syrups.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: [46:21] Rubs . . . to rub your knee or whatever type thing like that.

DIGILORMO: And what did you call them?

GAUTHIA: Watkins.

DIGILORMO: W-A-K?

GAUTHIA: K-I-N. Might be apostrophe S. And it's still around today, Watkins.

DIGILORMO: Really? That's interesting.

GAUTHIA: [46:40] Yeah they got a place in Sulphur that has a sign that says, "Watkins," that they sell Watkins out the home.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. Well I'll have to look into that.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Never heard of that before. Okay, well let's see. Got a few questions about just the community in general. If you personally . . . And there's no right or wrong answer.

GAUTHIA: Okay.

DIGILORMO: But if you personally had to name the boundaries, the geographical boundaries, of Mossville what would you say they were? I mean you could use streets, or buildings . . .

GAUTHIA: [47:18] Well the end of Prater Road. That was like Mossville to . . .

DIGILORMO: Where it hits [Highway] 90.

GAUTHIA: Yeah, 90 to Prater. And in Sulphur I would say off of Old Spanish Trail all the way . . . They have Evergreen Road. That was considered like Mossville, too. And then you go until Westlake past the school house. That would be Mossville.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. Okay. Yeah and I guess Westlake would be north of Mossville. All back there?

GAUTHIA: [Agrees].

DIGILORMO: [48:00] Okay. Interesting. So what do you know about the names of the streets here in Mossville?

GAUTHIA: Well, they got a Moss Avenue and I'm assuming they had an elderly family, they was Mosses. And I think that's how they got some of they names from. So I don't know too much about that history like that.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. It does seem like a lot of the names are named after prominent families . . .

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Here in Mossville. Which it seems like there should almost be a Montgomery Avenue somewhere.

GAUTHIA: Right. Right. [laughs]

DIGILORMO: [48:37] How do we petition for that? [laughs]

GAUTHIA: I don't know. There's a little kind of late right now.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Because look, all them streets is fading away now.

DIGILORMO: You're right. You're right about that.

GAUTHIA: Yeah you take a ride in Mossville and this is not the same.

DIGILORMO: How is it . . . I mean I know you've seen so many changes over the years.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: What are some of the biggest changes you've seen?

GAUTHIA: [48:59] Just the community getting smaller and smaller. But I'm happy for it.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: I'm very happy. I'm proud. When they first started in . . . that would be Bel Air. In Bel Air I always said, "Boy, I wish they could come my way." They wouldn't have no problem buying my land. They can sure have it. I'm going to be one of the eager ones. I probably be one of the first ones and look like I'm almost the last one. Not the last, but that's what it feels like a little time. But I am getting a little tab closer to getting everything resolved because the

people from Road Home came and inspect my place and they can see that I did my repairs and elevation, so I'm thankful for that. So we supposed to . . . I don't know if I'm supposed to say that or not but . . .

DIGILORMO: [49:49] We can always . . .

GAUTHIA: Okay delete what you don't want.

DIGILORMO: Delete it. Yeah absolutely.

GAUTHIA: Well we supposed to . . . The guy came out and he's going to . . . He turned the paper in. He told me he turned his report in. They going to look at it. Road Home panel . . . Review panel going to look at it and decide what they going to tell me.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: So I'm hoping I get my clearance so I can sell. So I can be one of the eager persons to say, "Hey! I'm done with Sasol and my place."

DIGILORMO: [50:18] Yeah. Right.

GAUTHIA: And I thank God that we did have something to sell.

DIGILORMO: Has it just become such a hassle living near . . . ?

GAUTHIA: The plant? Yes, it is.

DIGILORMO: That it's time to go?

GAUTHIA: Yes. Yes. And like I tried to tell my sister, but she said she don't want to do anything long as my daddy's still here.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: But the way I look at it, as long as he's with me my daddy's going to be fine. He's attached to me. He sees me all the time and I'm dealing with him and enjoying him, and happy to take care of him. And he'll be fine no matter where I go. And wherever I go he would be with me.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: [50:58] So somebody said that maybe she's afraid that he would have to go to a nursing home, and it wasn't that. I just would prefer selling and getting out the area. Sasol done sent me my package and I don't know, I felt like they was trying to tempt us. Say, "Okay, here's . . . This is the offer. Y'all interested?" Type thing.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Everybody got a package in the family. Sally came by and visited to tell me that she don't want us to sell.

DIGILORMO: Wow.

GAUTHIA: She said, "I don't want nobody worrying me. I don't want nobody worrying me." Then I told her I'd prefer us just leaving it mostly between she and I because my youngest brother, Alvin, he's nonchalant. He'll go with whatever the program is and my oldest brother, too. Even though he has a good mind. He just . . . I figure whatever I do he'd be in agreement.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: He did tell me . . . because Sally had told me . . . That was before she sold. She said that they was in the process trying to negotiate to sell and stuff. She said that she would move her house and then add a big, big room and have all of them stay. My daddy and my two brothers. I kind of laughed to myself. But I told Allen what Sally's saying and Allen says, "I'm not going to Sally and I'm not going to Bobby Jean." And he meant it, so.

DIGILORMO: [52:36] So your sister Sally sold, but she doesn't want you to?

GAUTHIA: No because she wants Daddy to stay in the home until he expires.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: Yeah that's the reason why. So . . . Come in. Come on.

EDWARD BUTCH LEMELLE: [52:50] I don't know why I'm fitting to knock, I ain't ever knocked before.

DIGILORMO: Hey Mr. Butch, how you doing?

LEMELLE: I'm wonderful, thank you.

GAUTHIA: Come on. Have a seat.

LEMELLE: No, I'm just dropping something off. Hey, darling.

GAUTHIA: Okay. They told me you was coming by.

LEMELLE: Yeah. I popped over.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Oh is that the . . .

GAUTHIA: Just fine. Just fine.

LEMELLE: [53:07] That's good.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Thank you. Thank you.

LEMELLE: So y'all . . . I hate to disturb y'all.

DIGILORMO: Oh no.

GAUTHIA: No, that's okay.

LEMELLE: You didn't need me for nothing?

GAUTHIA: [53:14] No.

LEMELLE: Okay. Alright. That's it, Chelsea.

CHELSEA ARSENEAULT: Got it.

LEMELLE: They left it in my truck.

ARSENEAULT: Thank you so much.

LEMELLE: Alright. Okay.

GAUTHIA: Alright.

LEMELLE: I'm going to be by. I'll see y'all later, Ms. Judy.

GAUTHIA: Okay.

DIGILORMO: Mr. Butch.

LEMELLE: Yes?

DIGILORMO: [53:27] You going to be at the meeting tomorrow?

LEMELLE: Tomorrow?

DIGILORMO: [agrees]

LEMELLE: Yes.

DIGILORMO: Okay. Great. We'll see you there.

LEMELLE: Oral history here? Yeah. One o'clock.

DIGILORMO: Yes, sir.

LEMELLE: I've got the key so you know I got to be there.

ARSENEAULT: We'll be there.

DIGILORMO: Well then we'll follow you.

LEMELLE: You guys will be here early in the morning or what? Are you all staying all night?

DIGILORMO: [53:45] Yeah. Yeah, we're spending the night. We'll be here all tomorrow.

LEMELLE: If you want to just satisfy your curiosity we have a . . . Excuse me, Judy.

GAUTHIA: No, go ahead.

LEMELLE: We have a young lady from the press is going to come out and meet us at eight o'clock in the morning. Talk about our Mossville reunion committee.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

LEMELLE: Because what we're trying to do is put all this in together.

ARSENEAULT: Right.

LEMELLE: So I'm just telling you guys if you're up and moving you might want to just come glimpse what's going on.

DIGILORMO: That'd be great. You know where she's from?

LEMELLE: Lake Charles.

DIGILORMO: [54:19] Oh, okay. So it's a local one.

LEMELLE: Channel Seven. Right.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

LEMELLE: [54:22] KPLC News.

ARSENEAULT: Get some coffee. Get up early and . . .

DIGILORMO: Yeah, head over.

LEMELLE: So I'm telling you, it's going to be at the rec center. Might be good, too.

DIGILORMO: Yeah, you're right.

ARSENEAULT: Okay.

LEMELLE: [54:31] You guys could pick up a little something there.

ARSENEAULT: Okay.

DIGILORMO: Thanks for the invite.

LEMELLE: Know how you like to . . .

DIGILORMO: Oh yes, well, we do.

GAUTHIA: Alright.

LEMELLE: Alright. Y'all take care. I'll see you guys in the morning of tomorrow.

DIGILORMO: [54:41] Alright, sounds good. Have a good one. Alright.

ARSENEAULT: It's almost an hour.

DIGILORMO: It's almost an hour. Okay. I've got a couple more questions if you're all right with that.

GAUTHIA: Okay. Go ahead.

DIGILORMO: Okay. Let's see, asked you about the streets. Oh yeah, are there any popular stories, urban legends, or myths about any areas or structures in Mossville?

GAUTHIA: [55:10] Not that I remember. I can't remember nothing. Maybe if you mention something maybe it might pop up.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. You know, I mean since Mossville's so old . . . Been around for so long, certain stories have come to be sort of infamous for . . . I know . . .

GAUTHIA: Come on!

DIGILORMO: [55:29] Chelsea interviewed someone who . . . Pause it. [break in tape]. I hope you don't mind me sharing one of your stories, but she had done an interview where someone had mentioned that a road was haunted, or that there was supposed to be a ghost at the end of it or something like that.

GAUTHIA: Oh, I don't know, I'd like to hear about that.

DIGILORMO: Yeah I'm trying to ask people too.

GAUTHIA: I can't . . . I don't know nothing about it.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: [55:58] I don't remember.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. So yeah, I was just curious to see if you had any memories of that.

GAUTHIA: No, I don't remember.

DIGILORMO: So like Mr. Butch was saying, your family seems to be one of the staples of this community. Could you maybe put into words, your own words, how your family has affected Mossville or influenced Mossville over the years?

GAUTHIA: You know my daddy loved politics so I know . . .

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: That was a big thing in the community.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: He would say all the time that the politician would call him and ask him for advice. "What you think? How you think this should go?" Or what to do.

DIGILORMO: Wow.

GAUTHIA: [56:46] He'd d say, "Well look, I'm going to do this for y'all. I'm going to have a barbeque and gumbos." Whatever. Whatever it take.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: Especially when my parents done had the club they would have . . . They was free to use the hall.

DIGILORMO: Functions?

GAUTHIA: Yeah. To have whatever they wanted there type thing. So Mama would be tired and she'd say, "Valery, this your last one!" And he'd say, "Oh, honey. Okay, honey." But before you know it he done already started telling people that, "Look I'm getting my wife." Everything was, "my wife." "I'm going to get my wife to fix this. She's a good cook."

DIGILORMO: Yeah, right.

GAUTHIA: "She can do it." And stuff like that. And they would do it. She would find herself all into it again.

DIGILORMO: Did he ever run for office himself?

GAUTHIA: [57:33] No.

DIGILORMO: Okay.

GAUTHIA: But Mama would say all the time. She said . . . because my parents didn't know how to read and write even though they been in business . . .

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Most of they life. But Mama would say. She said, "If your daddy just had a little education he would be in the White House."

DIGILORMO: Wow.

GAUTHIA: That's how he was with his politician and everything. I know he would be so honored to know that we have a black president.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Even a lady running for president, too. President . . . Hillary . . .

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: Running for president.

DIGILORMO: [58:10] Right.

GAUTHIA: So he would love that. My parents, both of them. They people would lose . . .
They would cry. They were so much into it until it was like it was a funeral. They would be hurt.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: I'd come the next day and they crying and saying, "Oh, that person lost." They would be so hurt. Stuff like that. So that's how much they put they effort into trying to help them to win.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: [58:38] Whoever they were supporting.

DIGILORMO: What were some of their main causes that they felt were really important to . . .?

GAUTHIA: Like my daddy, I remember help them to get the sewage. Paving the roads. Stuff like that.

DIGILORMO: Wow.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: So like infrastructure for the community?

GAUTHIA: Yeah. Yeah they was willing to try to help everybody. Do whatever it takes to help and stuff like that, so.

DIGILORMO: [59:09] Do you know how he did that? Did he just have connections?

GAUTHIA: Just talking to different ones.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: He didn't mind going out there and talk. If somebody went to jail you called him. I don't care what time of day or night. He was trying to make calls or getting up out of his bed. Go and see about them to help them.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: So that's how they was. He didn't care if you was white. He didn't care. He just would do it. Just help. They just loved to help people you see.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: [59:40] So . . .

DIGILORMO: Well that's beautiful.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: It's an honor to meet your father.

GAUTHIA: Yes.

DIGILORMO: Definitely.

GAUTHIA: He was a fine young man. Everybody looked up to him because he liked to help the people. It's like, so the people go to the store to buy certain things they'd come over here and say, "Hey, y'all got this? Let me see if y'all got this around here."

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: . . . Type thing. They knew they could just get it, you see. Why go buy it when they can come to Valery house and get it type thing. So yeah they just was some awesome people to be around and to be neighbors for, you see.

DIGILORMO: Sounds like it.

GAUTHIA: [1:00:18] Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Well Ms. Judy, that's all the questions I have.

GAUTHIA: Okay.

DIGILORMO: Is there anything that you would maybe like to add or any memories you feel like you want to put on record?

GAUTHIA: My parents, how I can keep up with the year they moved into this new house was the year I got married, 1972. I got married June the fourteenth, 1972 and they was almost through with the house. So they gave us the old house . . .

DIGILORMO: [1:00:51] Okay.

GAUTHIA: On Prater Road, so I never had to go buy a house. I never had to buy no dishes or sheets or towels or anything. Didn't even have to move my clothes. I just stayed in the same house I was raised in. Stuff like that. So that was awesome.

DIGILORMO: Yeah that's . . .

GAUTHIA: I had good parents, you see.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: So that's how that was. And then eventually my husband went to work at the race track because he said he was a veteran and he was a hundred percent disabled but he was telling me all the time. He said that he prefer working for a check instead of just getting a check in the mail. Back then it was sending the checks in the mail. He would say that all the time, so eventually he said, "I'm going to try to go to work." Because he had nerve problems through the service. And he said he wants to be independent and be like most mens that go to work and receive a check like that. I can remember my deceased brother Nelson. He would say, "Man, brother-in-law, if I was to get a check in the mail." He said, "They didn't have no problem with me. I'd never go to work. I'd just sit there and wait for my check once a month." He would be all excited about saying stuff like that. But Larry wasn't that way. Larry said he'd prefer working.

DIGILORMO: Yeah.

GAUTHIA: [1:02:07] And eventually he went to work at the Delta Down.

DIGILORMO: I'm learning that there's a lot of people here, especially men, that have . . . Well I don't want to say just men because women too that have a great work ethic.

GAUTHIA: Yeah, like my daddy. My daddy through the years he'd been working at the plant

and I can remember he said he got sick one time and missed work. And he was trying to go to work that morning and he fell in the bathroom. He had got up to get cleaned up to go to work and he . . .

DIGILORMO: Was still sick.

GAUTHIA: Yeah he was too sick to go. He had to call in and say he couldn't go to work. He said that's the only time he ever missed work.

DIGILORMO: Wow. That's incredible.

GAUTHIA: [1:02:49] Yes. You don't see that often. Nowadays people take off for all kind of excuses under the book, but my daddy wasn't that way. If he was scheduled to go to work he believed in going to work and stuff.

DIGILORMO: Well Miss . . .

GAUTHIA: More people was like that, that would be beautiful, you see.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: We wouldn't be shorthanded at work type thing because everybody would be only scheduled to go to work.

DIGILORMO: Right.

GAUTHIA: Yeah.

DIGILORMO: Yeah. Well, we appreciate you so much.

GAUTHIA: Yes. Yes.

DIGILORMO: Sitting here talking with us. Would you be willing if . . . I'm going to listen back to the interview.

GAUTHIA: Okay.

DIGILORMO: If I think of any other questions.

GAUTHIA: Oh, yeah. Yeah, check back with me.

DIGILORMO: Okay. Great. Great. Excellent. Well we'll go ahead and shut the audio off.

[1:03:38]

[End Tape 4547. End Session II.]