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[Begin Tape 4522. Begin Session I.]

JENNIFER CRAMER: Alright. Thank you so much. Okay so today is September twenty-fourth the year 2015, and this is Jennifer Abraham Cramer with the T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History with LSU [Louisiana State University] Libraries. And I'm here today with Edward Butch Lemelle Junior.

EDWARD LEMELLE JUNIOR: Correct.

CRAMER: [00:18] And we are here doing your oral history number one in a series of interviews that we'll be doing a little bit later. So this is the end. We are the tail last, very last interview of a very successful oral history day. The third one that we've had here at the Rigmaiden Center in Mossville, Louisiana. And we're very grateful to be sitting down with you and you were . . . you and your whole family were very . . . Have been very instrumental in these oral history days and we really appreciate your efforts to that end.

LEMELLE: I think my family most of all is very pleased in what you're doing. And would . . . I'm just wishing that everyone would just join in and participate. Which I think we're on a good start though since we started.

CRAMER: We're on a great start. We've got about forty hours of interviews so far.

LEMELLE: That's great.

CRAMER: [01:13] Yeah, and after today we probably have about forty-five.

LEMELLE: And you got a great staff.

CRAMER: We have an exceptional staff. Couldn't do it without them.

LEMELLE: Right. Right.

CRAMER: They're amazing. And everybody's really passionate about it. Everybody really loves it and looks forward to doing it.

LEMELLE: [01:28] And we really, really . . . I know from my heart I appreciate it. I really appreciate it because I always said when this first came about, what would my grandkids and great-grandkids know about Mossville? Because several years ago we were so happy when they start putting it on the map. The name was on the . . . They never had Mossville on the map. I guess about fifteen or twenty years ago they start putting the little bitty fine letters, Lake Charles [Louisiana], Westlake [Louisiana], and they had a little thing that say Sulphur [Louisiana]. And you . . . Mossville! Where is that? So I mark . . . my kids always . . . Grandkids especially want to know a lot about Mossville because I tell them some stories and they can't believe it.

CRAMER: Well that's why we're here. We're getting it all on tape. And this is . . . Or well I say tape. That dates me. We're getting it recorded for posterity.

LEMELLE: Recorded.

CRAMER: [02:22] Yes, indeed. Okay so we're going to start with when and where were you born?

LEMELLE: I was born in the city of Lake Charles, but my parents are Edward and Ida May Lemelle, was residents of Mossville. But I was one of the fortunate kids born in Saint Patrick or either Stevenson's Clinic, and then that way I was brought back home to Mossville. But this has always been my home. I was born February the fourth, 1946. And what was so exciting about that year? If you all recall history in 1945, they had a thing called the ending of a war. And in 1946 a child was born. [Laughter]

And I was . . . Being the only son my mother and father had, I have five sisters and my mother and father were so . . . I guess that's why I'm . . . I got everybody spoiled because I was the baby and the only boy in the family. So being born like I said 1946, and came home, this has been my home day one. Of course, I moved away several times, but found myself back with the pine trees. There's no place like home. Never had to click the heels together, but I always found my way back home. And I always say it's been one of the best places I think in the world to live, because I've lived on the east coast, west coast, and in between and there's no place like Mossville. I can grant you that.

CRAMER: [04:07] You were one of the very first baby boom generation.

LEMELLE: Very first baby booms. This is a good joke I tell people, because I still have kids that still come living with me. My kids are living . . . I said they call us the baby boomers. But I think they should have called this generation the boomerangs because all of them come back home.

CRAMER: [Laughs].

LEMELLE: And I'm not the only one in the area that . . . Our kids, they end up coming back to Mommy and Daddy.

CRAMER: Yes.

LEMELLE: And . . . But one of the first baby boomers. Yes, ma'am.

CRAMER: [04:47] And you're . . . You're Julia's brother?

LEMELLE: I'm Edward . . . Don't let her . . . Please . . .

CRAMER: Oh Ms. Edward Julia.

LEMELLE: Please, her name is Edward Julia. She's my sister. She's nine years older than me.

CRAMER: [05:01] Right. So your dad . . . he . . . I remember her talking about how he spoke French.

LEMELLE: He was.

CRAMER: Or he was . . .?

LEMELLE: He wouldn't teach us.

CRAMER: Why do you think that is?

LEMELLE: [05:11] Because he started off with bad words and my mama would . . . Dared him to let us speak French because he told us a few little bad words. Now Julia's son, he taught him. He's now in Paris, but my father helped him with a lot of French. But my mother never would let my dad because he was more of a comical guy. A jokester, you know, liked to have fun and some of those little words he would tell us. Mama'd say, "Boy, I catch you, I'm going to wash your mouth out with soap."

CRAMER: So tell us a little bit about your grandparents. What their names were on your mom's side and then on your dad's side?

LEMELLE: My mother's father mother . . . I could even go to my mother's great-grandfather. But we'll start at my mother's mother was Ira Pots who married a David Duff

Towner. Back in . . . What year? I don't know. But that was my mother and father's parents. And my mother was the second of eleven children. She was the second born to Ira and David Towner. And my mother was born . . . So to kind of get you an idea, my mother was born in December the sixth, 1903. So that kind of gives you an idea of where the family come from.

[06:45] And just to give you a little history my grandfather . . . My mother said when she was a little girl my grandfather was the son of a former slave, and they were living somewhere in a little place called Kipling, Louisiana somewhere around Sugartown, DeRidder [Louisiana]. And they migrated this way with horse and wagon. She was a little girl because she said they had . . . It had taken them three days to get from there to here. So you know that was a . . . She said she could remember sleeping under the stars until they eventually made it here to the Mossville area.

Which now a lot of that . . . The old Evergreen Road up in that area, what now belongs to Sasol [energy and chemical company], was my mother and father's first home that they had and their home burnt down. From what my mother says she was a little girl, and they moved up here on the Old Spanish Trail. Great, great . . . I had some great, wonderful grandparents. Lord, they could whip good but they loved you to death.

CRAMER: [07:57] What brought them here to Mossville? Why did they move?

LEMELLE: Well I . . . Like I said, my grandfather from the stories they told us was the son of a former slave. And he had taken on that name of a slave owner. And when he was allowed to leave from that area . . . What reason they came this way I think because it . . . Back in those days things were changing as far as work and construction and people building in the areas. And

that caused him to just . . . I guess more or less you'd say a better life. Getting off the farms and all those things. And moving to a place that seemed to be more free than where he was at.

CRAMER: [08:47] What kind of work did he get when he got here?

LEMELLE: My grandfather was more or less a self-employed person. He did a lot of things for himself, and my grandmother was a carpenter, she could do carpentry work. But my grandfather . . . What I can remember some of things that he did was like in the wood . . . He would do a lot of timber work, gardening, raise animals, and he used to take in . . . He actually sold coal. He would take different types of wood and he would burn it until it got down to a coal. He would cool it and the coal was used in homes. He either sold it or gave it to people. That's what they burned . . . The coal heaters and stuff. But he actually had a way that he did . . . He tried to teach us but I don't know, that was too hard for me. He actually did a lot of stuff like that, gardening. And I can remember that a lot about my grandfather. The way he was a great gardener.

My grandmother, now she was a . . . She could build a chicken coop, or a house, or whatever you wanted in an instant. And my grandfather was more or less the person that was the inside. He did the cooking and watching the kids and Grandmother would be doing . . . And from that my mother's . . . Had four brothers and all three, taking after their mother, was professional carpenters. They could build a . . . They would get together; four guys would get together. They would put up the house. One could frame and box in. One was an electrician and did hard work. The other one was a . . . In fact when we go to my mother's house I'm going to get a key, and I'm going to go in, and I'm going to show you some cabinets that her brother built probably in 1960.

And they still in the old house. So you know, that's all I can remember so much about my grandmother and grandfather on my mother's side.

CRAMER: [10:58] Do you know where she learned the carpentry skills? Who taught her? Did she talk about that at all?

LEMELLE: More or less herself. And like you said, some of these things I could . . . When we get ready, because some things in the family that's hush-hush. My grandmother was a . . . Actually her mother was a slave and she was the child of a slave owner. And she never wanted us to talk . . . Because he was in Irishman and she had a lot of Irish in her, and when you see the pictures you'll see it. That she was fair fair with green eyes. And I think that's where she got a lot of her skills because that's a lot of things that they did in construction and building when she was a little girl back . . .

But some of those things like the family they . . . I had an auntie she slap you if you ask her, "What was grandma's daddy was named?" She'd slap you. "Boy, you don't need to be talking about that." So that's why I think . . . I know that's where she got a lot of her carpentry skills . . . Learning how to do things out, because this was what they had to do.

CRAMER: [12:12] Where did . . . Where was your mom . . . Where was she before they came here? I think you told me that, but I can't remember.

LEMELLE: My grandmother?

CRAMER: Yes. Where was she?

LEMELLE: This was around Kipling.

CRAMER: [12:24] Kipling.

LEMELLE: Some . . .

CRAMER: Where? Where is Kipling?

LEMELLE: Kipling is a few miles from Sugartown. The area of Sugartown in DeRidder, Louisiana.

CRAMER: Okay.

LEMELLE: [12:34] It was just another little . . . Say like Lake Charles, Westlake, Mossville. It was just a little place that they call . . . Had a different name as from DeRidder or Sugartown. My mama always said it was from Kipling, and some said no, they was from Sugartown. So I think they were kind of in between where they lived at because I think the old people went from one farm to another. He might have been here for cotton season and over here for something else before he migrated this way.

CRAMER: So did he work for the lumber industry at all when he got here?

LEMELLE: No.

CRAMER: Okay. Not at all.

LEMELLE: [13:06] My grandfather was more self-employed.

CRAMER: Like he's self-employed?

LEMELLE: Right.

CRAMER: And so what was . . . When he was working for himself, what are some of the things that he did?

LEMELLE: [13:16] That's what I was telling you a minute ago. He did a lot of lumber, but not as far as working in a mill. And a lot of his skills came from, like I say, from gardening. And I know he sold a lot, a lot of coals.

CRAMER: That's right. Where did he learn that? Where did he learn . . . ?

LEMELLE: [13:35] I have no idea.

CRAMER: Did he talk about? Because you said he tried to teach ya'll how to do it and ya'll are like, "No."

LEMELLE: I have no idea where picked that up at.

CRAMER: Yeah.

LEMELLE: And why. But again, like I say, my grandfather was more . . . After that he was more of an inside man. He did most . . . Because Julia said Grandmother could cook. I said, "Man, my grandma couldn't cook. Grandpa did all the cooking." So he was more like the house man that I can remember about him.

CRAMER: [14:02] So when we come back for a further interview, I do want to ask you about his garden and anything you might remember about what he gardened, and if he gardened by the moon, and all that kind of stuff. So I do want to get back with that.

LEMELLE: Definitely by the moon.

CRAMER: Right.

LEMELLE: [14:16] We going to talk about those things, because back in this community years ago we had the creditors . . . That we didn't have the stores that would handle some of the things. And we had creditors in Westlake and they would load up their wagons and go down and make groceries. And my grandfather . . . I can remember so many times that they would have like what we call a butchery. And he may have had . . . he may . . . They might would get together and butcher six hogs in one day. And the meat was spread from one end of the

community to the other. And the person out here might have a garden with sweet potatoes. One might have a garden full off [wash?] potatoes. And they all shared. One brought the meat, the other one bring the vegetables. Because my grandfather, he used to grow a lot, a lot of watermelons. But he picked that up from Sugartown, how to do that. That's what he saw them do in that area. So he was great at . . . My grandfather was just a great gardener. He had a green thumb. Like mine.

CRAMER: What time of year were the butcheries typically?

LEMELLE: [15:32] November. December.

CRAMER: Right about . . .

LEMELLE: Cool . . . The cool weather.

CRAMER: Soon?

LEMELLE: Right, the cool weather. They always was cold weather. Very seldom they did any butchering during the heat, because they didn't want things to waste, the cold weather.

CRAMER: [15:44] So how did they preserve the meat?

LEMELLE: I can remember my grandfather . . . He had several ways that he preserved meat,

and one way was astonishing to us, because he had in his backyard, I can remember like yesterday, he dug a hole about six foot deep and about eight foot wide. And back in those days they had a wagon that would come from Westlake they call the iceman. But my grandfather dug this deal. Little old short man . . . He was short in stature, but nothing but man. And when he dug it he boarded it all up around. It was more like a basement but it was just out in the yard. And some of his butchering we'd bring it in there, then the iceman would come and they put ice down there and wrap it up in some canvas. The big old thick canvas. They had a way. And then they had . . . I believe I still got it, one of them. They had what they call a crockpots. They would take the crockpots and salt their meat down and put the meat in the crockpots, and they'd last look like forever, what we didn't steal out of it. So that was one way I can remember him preserving a lot of his food.

[17:12] And canning, that's where they did a lot of canning certain time of the year, but they didn't can like we do now. They would actually can like okra . . . Different things. They would can their okra, tomatoes, and all that. And the way they canned it then they was in jars. And that jar once they sealed it, you put that jar in the cabinet, it would last five years. So because at that time they didn't have refrigeration. And what we . . . Well I guess that's where we got the name ice box from. They would come and this guy would bring a block of ice and put some in the outside and then bring some ice and put it in the house in the little old icebox. It was good days though. One thing about, it we never went without anything to eat.

CRAMER: That's right.

LEMELLE: [18:04] Never, never. I'm going to tell you a story one day about my . . . I can tell

you a story about my grandfather now.

CRAMER: Let's do it.

LEMELLE: My grandmother was a praying woman who loved her grandkids. She loved us dear and she always taught us the Bible. And its two things she taught me that I'll never forget. She said, "I've never . . ." And I learned this scripture when I was like a little kid. That, "I've never seen the righteous forsaken, nor her seed." She was talking about herself, or her seed bag bread. She said, "I want you to always remember that." At that time it didn't mean nothing to me, but as time passed in our life we have never, never went without anything. Never. None of her ancestors, I mean her kids up under her; grandkids, great-great-greats. None of us has ever suffered. We've always remembered the voice of Grandmother and my grandfather.

[19:06] Oh, Grandpa Duff. I can see it. He was a loving, loving grandfather. He . . . They just loved us. And he always taught us about family . . . Family values. That was so great to us because his thing was, you could choose your friends but your family is yours. And I have a first cousin named Rogers. And we got into a . . . This is a true story. We got into a scrap one day fussing, doing some little bad things. And my grandfather saw us and he called us. Picture this. There's two trees that he had in this yard and they had what we call the little cocklebur tree that was sitting on the side of his house. A tree here and a tree there. In between that tree was the bench that he sat on and we had to sit around his feet. And he would teach us.

So he called my cousin and I over, and these particular trees they call it a gum tree. They had a little cocklebur, a little ball and it was full of like little stickers. So he called us over and he made myself pick up one and he had my cousin pick up one. This is a story I'll never forget. And

he said, "Why you boys out there cutting up with one another?" Of course we tried to lie our way out of it. And he said, "Do you see these two trees?" Said, "Yes, Grandpa." He said, "This is me and this is your grandmother." He say, "This bench is like what ties she and I together. We are one." And he said, "All of these little cockleburs? That's y'all." I never forget it. And he said, "A family is like . . . Just like all these little cockleburs." Only he said, "A family is just like that."

[21:07] And he had me, my cousin, and he'd taken . . . He said, "Now Butch, Rogers, y'all join those burrs together." And we stuck them together and they stuck together. He said, "Now turn them loose." And when we dropped them they stayed hooked together. He said, "That's what family's about." He said . . . And he made us pile up. I mean we had a pile of cockleburs like that high. He made us get them all up . . . Pile them. Just started piling. He said, "This is my . . . This is your family and forever you will always be stuck together." He was a . . . They just had so many . . . So much [mother width?]. So much mother width. And mother width and praying people. That's what . . . That's what got us over where we are. A great-grandmother and great-grandfather. And we had it. And the . . . they had . . . You know they say it takes a village to raise a kid? This what this was, a village that raise kids. Yes, ma'am. So ya'll can take that out because my grandmother and my grandfather . . . I get emotional about it.

CRAMER: I'm . . . You're making me emotional, too. That's alright. It's an emotional thing.

LEMELLE: [22:18] And you know what else? My niece Kim. She ended up owning the land where my grandmother and grandfather lived. And dedicated it . . . Or donated it for the church.

CRAMER: Which church?

LEMELLE: Mossville Truth. Who has now moved to Lake Charles.

CRAMER: Is that Mossville Truth Tabernacle?

LEMELLE: [22:38] Right. We were there . . . That church was built on my grandmother and grandfather's property that Kim donated for the church. And we just moved but . . . And another thing about that place, we always said it would be a holy grounds. Holy, holy because that's what my grandmother said her place would always be a place to feed hungry or . . . Because that's what they did. And when my pastor was getting ready to demo [demolish] to make ready to build a church, my grandmother and grandfather's house was still standing. And he had trucks that was to come and tear down and haul it off.

And that man paced up and down and he couldn't. He paid those guys, the truckers, he paid them. He said, "Y'all go ahead on I'm going . . . I got to make another decision." And he told me he said, "I can't tear this house down. I can't let it leave." He went and rented a machine and dug a hole. My grandmother's house is still there. He would not let them haul it off. He said, "Not a nail from this house is going to leave." So he buried it. So the holy ground is yet still there. I don't know what Sasol is going to do. Somebody might get saved over there. But it's been so much with our family man, that's why I didn't want to do this interview.

CRAMER: Is that the house that you took me to?

LEMELLE: [24:21] No.

CRAMER: Okay.

LEMELLE: That's where the church was. My mother's and them was right across the street.

CRAMER: Okay.

LEMELLE: The old house. Yeah my mother's house is across the street from my grandmother.

CRAMER: [24:31] Maybe next time we could maybe draw a little memory map or something. Like a map where you kind of can point to me where things were.

LEMELLE: Right. Yeah.

CRAMER: That way I can maybe get a visual on things.

LEMELLE: Right.

CRAMER: [24:43] Is that bench and those trees still there? Are they still there?

LEMELLE: No. All that's gone.

CRAMER: Do you have any pictures of that anywhere? Do you think?

LEMELLE: I probably can find some pictures of my grandmother and grandfather's. I don't know about the trees. But their fifty year anniversary when we were all small we've got . . . I have pictures of that and I'm outside where they had their reception. Their fifty year. In fact I have a plate from my grandmother and grandfather's fifty year anniversary. Then I have, from my mother and father's fifty year, I got some things from them. And then I have my wife and I twenty-five and waiting on the fifty. But we have pictures. I can find some picture of the old place.

CRAMER: Okay. And that was all . . . That was your mother's parents?

LEMELLE: My mother's parents.

CRAMER: That we just talked about.

LEMELLE: [25:41] Right.

CRAMER: That's quite . . . Those were quite some stories. And then you said your other grandparents were really, really close. Like right across the . . .?

LEMELLE: No this was the close . . . My mother and father . . .

CRAMER: Okay.

LEMELLE: My father father I knew but his mother, his biological mother, he was only seven years old when she passed away. Now I knew my other grandmother, but they were . . . They lived in New Iberia [Louisiana].

CRAMER: What are their names? What were their names?

LEMELLE: [26:09] My grandfather's name was [Elwah?] Lemelle. My daddy's biological mother . . . Her last name was Louis. Marie Louis.

CRAMER: Do you think . . . Is that Louis L-O-U-I-S? Or L-E-W-I-S?

LEMELLE: L-O-U-I-S.

CRAMER: Now is there some French in there?

LEMELLE: Oh yeah. All French.

CRAMER: From that New Iberia area? Okay.

LEMELLE: New Iberia. My grandfather was . . . Actually my father was born in Leonsville. That's around Opelousas.

CRAMER: Okay.

LEMELLE: Leonsville, Arnouldville. And I think he left there when he was a kid because my grandfather moved probably when my dad was about seven, eight years old, his mother died. Then my grandfather up and left and went to New Iberia and my dad was on his own.

CRAMER: What did she die of? Do you know? Did they talk about it?

LEMELLE: My dad's mother? Never did know. Because from what my dad say he can remember . . . That all he could remember was seeing a lot of blood. So we figure that she had a miscarriage or something. Back then they didn't know. He just remembers seeing his mother bleeding, and some of this stuff we can take off what I'm just telling you all.

CRAMER: [27:40] Right. Well it was very common, unfortunately.

LEMELLE: It was very common then. After that my dad and his brothers, they kind of had to . . . They were more or less on their own and my father end up going to live on a former slave property, and they'd taken care of him. When he was fourteen years old he went to work on an oil platform, and I'm going to bring you the papers and show you, my father went to work on an oil platform.

CRAMER: How old?

LEMELLE: When he was fourteen. My dad was born in [1908?] and he went to work on this platform at fourteen years old. And the story that we gathered, and I have proof of it, that the

owner of the land and the rigs and everything was a Gardener . . . Name was Gardener. And my dad say one day at payday he had been working and what they would do, they would take your name down and you come up to the house to get your money. And the owner happened to see the name Lemelle and she told the foreman to go bring that kid Lemelle to her. I got the papers at the house.

And when she brought him to the house she discovered that my father's family, Lemelle's, was in to their family. From the wars. François Lemelle. She kept my dad . . . What they call then was the big house and gave him a responsibility of helping her with her kids and around in the house. He raised Marie Belle Gardener. He raised her from a baby. When she was grown and got married to a David Garrison he followed her and he worked in that family probably seventy years. True story.

CRAMER: Wow.

LEMELLE: [30:10] And I have the papers where François . . . and that's why she brought him out of . . . That's how my dad got out of where he was at. Through the name and through this people with love and feelings for you. And he'd taken care of her from a baby. Then he ended up coming to work for her here in Lake Charles. Raised her . . . Raised her kids and her grandkids.

CRAMER: So that's what brought him this way then?

LEMELLE: That's what brought him this way. That's what freed him from where he was at out on the boardwalks to the house. You know they got this movie from something to the White

House? My dad went from the . . . He used to tell us he said, "Baby ya'll don't know what I went through." He said that actually the people that they sent him to when he was a kid at seven years old, he said in the winter time people back then had what they called arthritis, or rheumatoid arthritis. And he said the owner was so mean and they . . . He used to tell him, my dad, he said the man would take and bring him and tell him to lay down that he could put his feet . . . That the soreness would leave out of him and go into somebody else's body. That was just old things that they believed. And he say he was so glad to get away from there he ran off. At fourteen years old he left. He stayed there for seven years and he left and that's when he ended up where he was at taking care of this little old girl and ended up this little girl turned up to be his . . . Turned in to be his key to life. Yes indeed. I could almost make you cry sometimes.

CRAMER: You did already.

LEMELLE: [31:55] Well, don't cry. Be glad for us. See like Julia's son? He wouldn't . . . He would not be where he's at in Paris if it wasn't for the Lemelle name because my . . . The ancestors that came from France, there was a François Lemelle that had a bakery there. And when Jeffery left he was Jeffery Gardener and he got there and he said he came home and they asked him could he change his name? So he put the . . . Added the Lemelle to it and he say, "Man everything start happening good." Yeah.

CRAMER: Well I know that we could do . . . We could keep going. And I want . . . I really do want to continue . . .

LEMELLE: [The questions started?]

CRAMER: So we're going to maybe pause it here and then make a plan to come back and do this for a good long time because that was only question number two for me.

LEMELLE: How many questions you have?

CRAMER: [32:57] Like thirty.

LEMELLE: Question, baby!

CRAMER: I tell you what. In closing just today's up. What is one thing that you want people to know about Mossville? Because it's changing rapidly. I mean even since we started coming in January it has really undergone a lot of changes if you . . . One thing that you want everybody to know, and the kids who . . . the young kids that are in the community now, and the people who come in later, what do you want people to know?

LEMELLE: According to my history, I guess to sum it up would be for me to say this was one of the most wonderful places to be born and raised in, and a community that everybody loved everyone and everyone taking care of everyone. Since the 1800s up until now, I would say in the last fifteen years, was a dramatic change because people from other places began to move in here and families . . . Older families died out. And a lot of family love just disappeared . . . Closeness. Because you didn't have . . . relatives wasn't necessarily . . . They were important but friends

were just as important as relatives because people that you grew up with was like brothers and sisters. Like sisters and brothers, that's how we grew up here.

And I tell you something else we couldn't do. One of my best friends lived across the street his name was Wilford Payne . . . Was one of my dearest friends. If you grew up here and one of your brothers had a girl . . . had a sister you couldn't talk to her. That's just the way it was. That was a pact that we made. Wilford . . . And he had a pretty little sister, but that was just a thing that the way we raised up with each other. It's how close. If you were my brother your sister's my sister. So we . . . You had a boundary. So we had to find somebody that wasn't your friend to court the girls. [Laughter] Yeah.

CRAMER: Well . . .

LEMELLE: [35:38] Well I have a lot of stories I could tell you about this place baby.

CRAMER: I know and I really . . . What I'm thinking is and we can talk about this off tape too is figuring out a way to just come one day stay the night and come back the very next day because there's so much that you have to tell us and that you've retained. The stories that you listen to when you were growing up that your grandparents told you and just . . . I can guarantee there's a lot of people out there don't really understand things like you were talking about today. Salted meat, gardening by the moon, making coal . . . Those are the kinds of things that . . .

LEMELLE: We did everything by the moon. Girls, ladies, you had things by the moon. Grandma knew what your problem was going to be and she told you before it got there. Girls

tighten up. If it was a certain time of the moon you had a toothache, you couldn't have a tooth pulled at a certain time because if you pull it at the wrong moon you would bleed. There was another time that the moon was a certain way you could pull a tooth and it wouldn't bleed at all. Ladies personal stuff . . . Grandmother could tell you things that you should and should not do.

[36:46] And they never hid anything from us. That's one thing I always appreciated about our parents and grandparents. They never hid anything from you. Boys you were taught what you should and should not do, and especially at certain times with a girl if you made a mistake. You just didn't do things because they taught us, and we knew and now the kids don't know anything. Nobody's teaching them. What they hear is out on the street but you didn't have that home teaching. Or you planted . . . My dad would plant certain things you had to plant by the moon.

CRAMER: Yeah there were things you planted in a new moon and there were things you planted in a full moon. I think . . .

LEMELLE: New moon. New moon was when you planted above ground crops. Waste moon you planted below ground.

CRAMER: Gourds.

LEMELLE: Such as your turnips. You didn't plant a turnip and a mustard the same time. Had to be a different moon.

CRAMER: [37:40] Right.

LEMELLE: And I could look at them and I could tell you what kind of moon it is now.

CRAMER: What kind of moon?

LEMELLE: What's the date?

CRAMER: The twenty-fourth.

LEMELLE: Today is the twenty-fourth? This is a September twenty-fourth? In four days . . .

About four days you have a full moon.

CRAMER: [37:55] That's about right.

LEMELLE: Because it should be three-quarter full.

CRAMER: It's waxing. That's right.

LEMELLE: Because you know why else? I'm planting my mustard greens next week. It should be . . .

CRAMER: [Laughs] And that's how you knew. So you still garden by the moon then, too?

LEMELLE: Oh, yeah. Y'all going to have to come get you some vegetables from the house.

CRAMER: Oh, yes. Yes. Well I have . . .

LEMELLE: But whenever you guys are ready just let me know and we going to gather back.

CRAMER: Okay. Alright. We will definitely do that. And so this is just the end of session one on a brief oral history day. And I just wanted to get in there and roll up our sleeves and get started and give you . . . So that we can get some of your story. And on behalf of the T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History and on behalf of the Imperial Calcasieu Museum, with whom we are partnering, it has been a pleasure and we're very grateful for your time today. Thank you.

LEMELLE: Thank you so much. No thank you. What this once was . . . What it once was. Not what it is. Not what is was ten years ago, or what it is now. This used to be a place that you would have loved to been here. From the elementary school here to the high school. You'd have loved to been here. At least, I did. Goodnight.

CRAMER: [39:11] Well, we love being here now.

LEMELLE: Good.

[39:13]

[End Tape 4522. End Session I.]