

Mississippi Oral History Program

Simpson County Historical and Genealogical
Oral History Project

An Oral History

With

Denton Ray “Bill” Everett

Interviewer: Joe White

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Biography

Denton Ray Everett was born in Puckett, MS on February 1918 to Frank and May Everett. After graduating from D'Lo High School, Everett went into the Civilian Conservation Corps. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Everett was drafted into the US Army. During World War II Everett was temporarily stationed in Germany before spending the bulk of his time in Belgium. On returning to the US, Everett was stationed in Camp Shelby, near Hattiesburg, MS, and was subsequently given an honorable discharge. He began working in Jackson for Trailways in 1947. He married Charlotte Rose Mangrum in August 1948 and had four children together. Everett served as first alderman of D'Lo in 1957 and would go on to be the city's mayor during the 1960s.

Table of Contents

Personal history and parents' background.....	1
Highway 49, roads, towns, and railroads.....	4
Childhood.....	8
Marriage and the Finkbine Lumber Company.....	10
Civilian Conservation Corps.....	13
Service in the US Army.....	17
Return to the US.....	19
Work for Trailways.....	20
Family.....	21
Life in politics and how D'Lo functions.....	23

AN ORAL HISTORY
with
DENTON RAY "BILL" EVERETT

This is an interview for the Mississippi Oral History Program of The University of Southern Mississippi Simpson County Project. The interview is with Denton Ray "Bill" Everett and is taking place on June 14, 2003. The interviewer is Joe White.

White: My name is Joe White. Today is Saturday, June 14, 2003. This interview is conducted under a grant from the Mississippi Humanities Council as a part of the oral history project directed by The University of Southern Mississippi. Today we are interviewing Mr. Denton R. "Bill" Everett at his home in D'Lo, Mississippi. Mr. Everett, how did you end up with the name Bill when your name is Denton R.?

Everett: I have no idea. I've had people ask that, and they just started calling me Bill.

White: You've always been known as Bill.

Everett: Always been called Bill.

White: Well, what does Denton R. stand for? What's the R for?

Everett: Ray.

White: Denton Ray. So you were born Denton Ray Everett. And when were you born?

Everett: February the twenty-third, 1918.

White: February 23?

Everett: Twenty-third, 1918.

White: OK. And where were you born?

Everett: Puckett, in that vicinity. Where, I don't know.

White: Somewhere around Puckett.

Everett: Somewhere around Puckett.

White: Is that where your folks lived at the time?

Everett: Yeah.

White: Who were your parents?

Everett: Frank and May Everett.

White: That's James Frank Everett, I believe you said.

Everett: Yeah, he was Frank Everett, and May Belle Cook Everett.

White: May Belle Cook Everett. Were they both from Simpson County, or your dad was from Smith County, I believe, originally, wasn't he?

Everett: Yeah, Smith County. Mama lived over in Simpson County.

White: Your dad, I believe, was born in the White Oak Community, you told me earlier.

Everett: That's what I've been told. I don't know much about his family.

White: I noticed in looking at your family Bible a few minutes ago that he was born September the second, 1887, according to that Bible.

Everett: That would be right, I would think.

White: And then your mother May Belle Cook, said, according to that family Bible, was born June 27, 1892. Probably been a while since you read that in there, too, hadn't it?

Everett: Yeah. I really didn't remember those dates. I didn't know.

White: Where was your mom born? You said she was in Simpson County.

Everett: It would be out of Galilee (inaudible).

White: Galilee Community.

Everett: That's down in the southeast corner of Simpson County, I think, because the county line went right down by their house.

White: Pretty close to the edge of the county, then, wasn't it? Smith County, right? Is that where (inaudible)?

Everett: Smith and then Rankin County joined right in there by it, too.

White: Do you remember when they were married? That's right. I remember in the Bible, I saw in the Bible. It was January the fifteenth, 1913. They were married at Galilee, I believe it says. What did your dad do for a living?

Everett: Well, he, when they got married, hearsay—I don't know—they farmed. And later he moved to D'Lo, and he carried the mail from D'Lo to Puckett with a horse and buggy before the cars got popular. And later after that, he ran a garage with, had a taxi service, did mechanical work on T-model cars.

White: Here at D'Lo? He ran T-model taxis, huh?

Everett: Well, we had T-models. And later we had A-model Fords and had just whatever cars was made along then. Seem like I can remember one we had, a Whippet(?) one time.

White: Really? I've heard of those.

Everett: We had a Whippet, and then one time we had a Essex super six and a Hudson, and of course I was just a little boy, but I can remember those.

White: That was here at D'Lo?

Everett: Yeah, here.

White: Where was his garage and taxi service?

Everett: Down across the street from the post office on Main Street.

White: Right downtown, huh?

Everett: At that building there by where Mr.—they've torn it down now, but it was right next to Mr. Charles Edward's(?) machine shop.

White: OK. Yeah. I do remember that area in there. It's across the street from where the museum is now.

Everett: Yeah. They had four buildings there, and they just tore them down last year, I believe, and he had one at the end building there, and he had a garage, had a—

White: Was that the one closest on Highway 49?

Everett: No. He was a little bit further down, just kindly about right in front of the post office.

White: OK. What do you remember about growing up in D'Lo?

Everett: Well, it was just a pretty big town along that time, and I was telling you that he ran a taxi there. If I tell you that, you'd say, "Well, why would people need a taxi in D'Lo?"

White: That was going to be my next question. I think I know some of the answers to it.

Everett: Well, back then, they was five passenger trains went from Jackson to Gulfport every day, each way, through here, and those roads being like they were and cars like they were, most people that came through D'Lo, came on trains, and they would get off. They'd have to have a taxi to go around here. They would even carry them over, out to White Oak or Maten(?) or any of those areas out there, down to Pinola. But at that time, that was about the only way you could get anywhere. When you got out, if your folks didn't meet you, most of them would be meeting a horse and wagon. We had those cars, and I was just a little kid then, but I come up, going and meeting the train every time they run, and usually (inaudible) and haul them around.

White: Were there still any folks using mules and wagons to get around in?

Everett: Oh, yeah. There was still a lot of them, and still didn't have too good of roads in. A lot of places you couldn't hardly go with cars because the roads were bad.

White: Well, not to get you sidetracked, and we are going to get back on the families here, but while we're talking about roads, what did Highway 49 look like then? It went from D'Lo—

Everett: It was just a gravel road from Gulfport to Jackson. This used to be the main highway, right out here. It came down Main Street, turned down here at the corner and went left up here to Dub Smith's. It turned left, went up by the mill, and it went from there on up across, came up by—

White: By the mill, you say?

Everett: —(inaudible) Store.

White: Finkbine Lumber Company, is that what you're talking about when you say the mill?

Everett: Yeah. Went right up through the Finkbine Lumber Company Housing Project, and their mill was over on the left side of it.

White: You're trying to tell me Highway 49 wasn't straight then, was it? (laughter)

Everett: No, sir. (laughter) Well, to tell you how it was. It come out of Mendenhall, and it came by where the old Chevrolet place used to be there, went down, across, and through that area where those churches and that colored funeral home is down there

and went on over across there and went up by Teapot(?). They had this fellow'd run that store there, Teapot. (Inaudible)

White: You know, I had forgotten about that.

Everett: His name was—wasn't it Kennis or McNinis or something like that?

White: Kennis or—

Everett: Lee Kennis(?) I believe it was.

White: Kennis, I believe.

Everett: And he would go to Mendenhall, and it'd take you a pretty good while in T-models and all. And you'd have to stop and buy a Coca-Cola every—

White: Was that up around the intersection of Highways 43 and 13?

Everett: That's [Highway] 43 and [Highway] 13 now. He was right up on top of the store. He had that store there. And it came around that way, and it came down by Dub Hilton's, across the railroad there at his house, and it went on across [Highway] 49 here, and they had a big, wooden bridge that crossed the river down here at the water park. That highway came—

White: Where the (inaudible) D'Lo Water Park is now.

Everett: And the highway went from there on up to the end of Main Street down here. Then it come down Main Street, up this way. It circled that way, went through all these towns. It went down through Braxton the same way. It'd go up to main part of town, down to Braxton, and it'd go up—

White: It was just a main gravel road, then, huh?

Everett: Just a main gravel road, and I guess—I've been thinking about that since I talked to Louise. I guess this highway, first paved road we had down through here was in the [19]30s. They come in, and they redone, cut that drugstore off down here, and there was, where the highway goes straight through, there was a big, three-story hotel, sitting there. They moved that hotel. Man come in there one day with old (inaudible) mules, a windlass-like thing to wind the (inaudible). He was going to move that hotel and all them people. I can remember being a kid and listening to them talk. They was laughing. They said, "They'll never move that hotel with that little mule." In about a week to ten days, he had it turned around there, and that was Cox's Hotel at that time.

White: A wooden-frame hotel?

Everett: Wooden-frame building. It was a three-story building, and it stayed there, and later Mr. Barry Bogan(?) tore that hotel down and built his house out here.

White: Using the lumber.

Everett: Used the lumber out there and rebuilt his house.

White: Well, what did they put under that hotel to make it move? Did they have logs or something?

Everett: He had some little, smooth kindly blocks or logs, and he'd put them in there and turn them certain ways, and then he'd have that mule crank that thing up and move it a little bit.

White: Now, what do you mean when you say, "mule?"

Everett: Just had a mule, old—

White: A mule.

Everett: A mule, that's what he moved it with, a mule. It looked mighty big to that—(laughter) that hotel looked mighty big to that one mule.

White: So you're telling me a mule moved a three-story hotel around—

Everett: That was the power that moved it.

White: Well you said when it cranked it up. Now, what kind of—

Everett: Well, he had a deal like a cane mill thing that goes around, and that would wind a cable on some kind of a drum. I don't remember just what. I was just a little boy, (laughter) but I can remember that mule doing that.

White: I can imagine (laughter) what an impression that made on you.

Everett: It was something, all right, and at that time, where that Blue Goose was, it was a big—

White: The Blue Goose Café?

Everett: Blue Goose Café, they had a big just grocery store, or just any general store. Anything you wanted to buy, Mr. Gus Jones had it there. At that time we had several big stores like that where you could come in and buy a year's supply of groceries to farm with, your fertilize. Of course all that stuff was shipped in here on the railroad. They'd unload it in those stores, and the people'd haul them out, and there was wagons and stuff. Mr. Gus Jones had a big store like that. Bill Mehaffey(?) had one.

Mr. Mangum(?) had one. At that time we had—Merchants Company had a big warehouse sitting down there about where that car wash-a-teria (inaudible) now, and they delivered groceries around to all these stores down here.

White: Was the railroad then where it is now?

Everett: Yeah, railroad was where it was then. They had spur tracks everywhere they would unload all that stuff. Then if you had to, with the trucks and stuff, they had, I don't know whether they could made a day down this far and deliver groceries stuff to these stores. These highways was bad.

White: Well, we talked about bridges earlier. You remember any other bridges around here? They were all wooden, I guess, at that time.

Everett: Yeah. They were all wood that I knew of, and the bridge crossed the river down there, and then it'd come on. The next pretty good bridge would be this Sellers(?) Creek up above town here, where it had a long, wooden bridge.

White: North of D'Lo.

Everett: North of D'Lo. And (inaudible) well, that's all there was then, was wooden bridges.

White: Were they one-lane bridges?

Everett: This was on the highway. They were two lanes, but you take like this one going out to Puckett over that creek; that was a one-lane bridge. And the creek, down, going toward the gravel pit, that was a one-lane bridge.

White: I remember the old cable bridge between here and Pinola, being a one lane.

Everett: Yeah. They fixing to tear that one down now and rebuild; they say, or they talking about it.

White: I read that in the *Simpson County News*.

Everett: Been talking about it several years.

White: It's certainly about time. That bridge down at Mariot(?). Was that the one you're talking about, between Jupiter and Mariot?

Everett: Yes.

White: An old, iron-frame, wooden bridge. I remember riding across that thing just before they closed it and wondering if I was going to make it to the other end of the thing or not.

Everett: It's been in bad shape a long time, but they—

White: Well, you know, we got kind of sidetracked here. I think we need to go back to your early childhood. I believe you were not an only child, were you?

Everett: No. I have—they was six of us, two girls and four boys. One of my brothers died when he was twelve years old, I think. Had pneumonia and died, and the others, we all grew to be pretty old people. My other, one brother just died about a month ago, Jack.

White: Right. I'm looking at your old family Bible here. If I can read this, it's pretty faded writing in pencil. Let's see. Ernest Everett(?) was born December 12, 1913.

Everett: Yeah. He's the one died when he was about twelve years old, I think.

White: From pneumonia, you said. Was there a hospital here then?

Everett: Yeah. They had the hospital here.

White: How many doctors did you have? I keep getting sidetracked. I warned you I would, but we'll get back to it.

Everett: Well, the only doctor that I can remember, and the main one—I'm sure they must have had more. They had a Dr. Flynt(?) was real popular then. I can remember when I was a kid, I fell down and broke my arm and wrist there, and they carried me up there, and they set that arm. That's about the only time I can remember being a patient or anything in it, but I [went] to the hospital at that time.

White: Well, if I'm not mistaken, that's Ms. Flynt's father-in-law. Isn't that the retired teacher who lives here? That was her husband's father, I believe.

Everett: I don't know.

White: I may be wrong, but she had talked about somebody, her uncle, or her husband's uncle, or her husband's grandfather in a previous interview, being a doctor.

Everett: It could have been. I don't know. I just remember the name mostly. And I think—

White: I may be wrong on that. She talked about somebody in her husband's family being a doctor.

Everett: Well, actually the hospital here closed, here. That man had a practice in Jackson for years, I think.

White: Well, maybe I'm confused then by the name. It might not have been the same doctor.

Everett: Well, I might be confused, too. (laughter) I don't know.

White: Also looking in the Bible here, and this is in pretty light print, as I say. I believe James Everett was born December 6, 1914. Is that James?

Everett: Yeah, James Leroy.

White: And Irene Everett was born June 1, 1916. And Denton Ray, that's you, isn't it?

Everett: Yeah.

White: February 23, 1918. Then your brother Jack—you said he died recently—was born April 13, 1920. Does that sound—

Everett: Be about right. He was two years younger than I.

White: And Wilma Louise Everett who was born June 15, 1922.

Everett: Yeah. She died three or four years ago, maybe five.

White: You know, I wish more people still had their family Bibles like this because I've got a twin sister, and it's hard for me to remember her birthday. What do you think about (laughter) that?

Everett: Well, I can't remember, hardly remember mine.

White: Well, that's what I'm talking about. Hers is the same as mine, and I keep forgetting both of them. But we've got you kids all together here, now, in D'Lo. Y'all all went to school here, I would imagine. What was the school like?

Everett: Well, we had this big, three-story school building right across the street here. I did have a picture of it right up here, but I don't know what my wife did with it.

White: It's probably around.

Everett: And I think we had a—that school was mostly—I guess the mill built that school and supported that mostly.

White: Finkbine Lumber Company?

Everett: I think that's right. Now, I don't know that for a fact.

White: Well, there was a separate school district, remember.

Everett: Yeah, it was a separate school district, and it was a good school, I think. And the people from up at the mill had a lot to do with running that. I suspect their tax money did a lot of (inaudible).

White: Probably did. Any of the teachers or principals you remember particularly as—

Everett: Well, yeah. My wife taught over there.

White: Did she? Well, I bet you remember her, then. (laughter)

Everett: First year or two she taught, she taught there. Then we had a—

White: Well, this seems to be a good time—we'll get back to education in just a minute—to mention who your wife is. We haven't mentioned her yet. What's her name? What was her name?

Everett: Charlotte Mangrum.

White: Charlotte Rose Mangrum. Is that right? I believe you told me that.

Everett: That's right.

White: And where was she born?

Everett: You know, now I can't tell you.

White: Hate to put you on the spot there, you see?

Everett: You did. I don't know, but I met her; they lived here in D'Lo, and they run a café right up here. Mr. Mangrum was a carpenter, and they had this—during the war they came here, and he was foreman over here at the box factory at this mill. And since Finkbine was up there, there've been two or three other people run mills up there, and they built boxes up there during World War II.

White: At the old closed Finkbine Lumber Company mill site.

Everett: Closed Finkbine, but when Finkbine went bust, when all the timber disappeared around here, they sold out and left. Finkbine, when I was little kid, I can remember out where we lived out on Puckett Road, they had trees out there, big pine trees that you and I couldn't have reached around and hold our hands together. And I can remember being a kid, and when they cut them trees there close to the house, they put their own—they called it a dummy line—railroad track across the middle of that hill up there, and they cut all that timber, and they would have skidders there that

would have people riding mules and pulling cables out there, a couple or three hundred yards, and then they'd hook to the trees and pull them up there and load them up.

White: Snake it through the (inaudible) stumps and stuff.

Everett: Snake them up through there.

White: What did they cut with? Were they still using two-man, crosscut saws, or did they have power saws?

Everett: You know, now, I was just a kid. I don't remember nothing about how they cut them. (laughter) I can remember what was amazing to watch them people ride them mules, pull them cables out across there.

White: You didn't want much to do with the work end of the thing, huh? (laughter)

Everett: Yeah. And they would pull them in there, and then they'd bring them up here, and they had this big mill pond, and they dumped them in there till they cut them. And I don't know where all them logs come from, but they had logging camps in around quite a few places here, but I don't know that much about the logging operation. I was just too little to know about that, but I can remember those big trees out there, that area just past where the corporation limit. They was all, that timber was there, and they cut it all, hauled it off.

White: Finally didn't have anything left to cut around here.

Everett: When it got that way, wasn't nothing to cut, and so Finkbine Lumber Company went under.

White: Well, where did you meet your wife? Do you remember that? There wasn't a lot of places to go around D'Lo, were there?

Everett: Well, at that time, it got to where there wasn't many places. (laughter) We had shows to go to. We'd go to the show at Mendenhall, Magee. Sanatorium had a show down, theater, and we'd go to the show down there. And they ran this café up here. I probably met her up there at the café. I really couldn't remember that one.

White: What was it, the Blue Goose? Was that—

Everett: No. They had one up here. That was City Service. They had a café and service station there.

White: The one on the left, the service station that—

Everett: On the right up here, going north.

White: I don't remember that one.

Everett: Well, they've torn that building down and built a house there now. Mr. Bynum lives there in the house now.

White: The last restaurant and service station I remember is the one on the left up there where Ned Walters had a repair shop for a while.

Everett: Yeah. That's where Jesse Barefield came here—

White: Barefield.

Everett: —and built.

White: That's what I was trying to remember.

Everett: He built a truck stop and had that, and then when the highway came through, Jesse had sold that out to a Garner, I believe, and he went over on the highway and bought that lot, built over there.

White: That's when the four-lane Highway 49 came through to the east of town.

Everett: That's when [Highway] 49 came through here.

White: Yeah, that was Garner's Steak House, I believe.

Everett: I think it was.

White: When they first built that over there, the [19]60s.

Everett: Seem like he got killed in an automobile wreck while he owned that.

White: I don't remember. I wasn't living around here then. That'd be the mid-1960s, though, mid- to late [19]60s.

Everett: Seem like he hit a deer up here about Piney Woods in a car, and it killed him. I'm pretty sure that he got killed in an automobile accident while he owned that.

White: Get back to your courting days here, though. I notice that you had told me earlier that you and your wife married August 19, 1948.

Everett: Right. (phone rings)

White: And where did y'all get married?

Everett: We got married over at Mendenhall in Brother Jones' home over there.

White: That's Reverend C.C. Jones, I believe.

Everett: Reverend C.C. We just got married during (inaudible) days. I worked, drove a bus, that next day to New Orleans (inaudible). She went with me down there on a honeymoon.

White: Took a honeymoon on the bus, then. That's what you—(laughter)

Everett: Well, she just went with me. Wasn't much honeymoon to have time you drive—

White: Just working, huh?

Everett: During that time you drive a bus from Jackson to New Orleans, you probably haul a couple hundred people that are getting on and off all the way. So it was a pretty busy day.

White: Well, you know, we kind of glossed through some years. We got you married and everything, but when you got out of D'Lo High School, what did you do? You didn't start driving a bus immediately, did you?

Everett: No. I went into CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] right after I got out of school.

White: Civilian Conservation?

Everett: Civilian Conservation Corps. Then there wasn't no work around here, and that was when they took all of them and put them in these camps, give us five dollars and sent twenty-five dollars home every month.

White: What year was that? You remember?

Everett: I was, I think, seventeen years old then. That'd made about what? Thirty-five?

White: Thirty-five, 1935.

Everett: Sometime along then, and I stayed in the CCC for, I think, about three years. I went to Pennsylvania and stayed a couple of years and went to California and stayed a year.

White: You showed me a picture earlier of your group made in Pennsylvania.

Everett: Then after I came back and got out, I just picked up little, odd jobs around here for a while; then went in the Army, and after I came out of the Army, I started driving a bus.

White: Well, we going to get back to all of those in just a minute, but I'm curious about the Civilian Conservation Corps. I've always heard about it. What did you do?

Everett: Well, I don't know. They just—

White: And how did you live?

Everett: They just sent letters out and told me I was eligible to join. And we went up to the armory, and they swore us in up there. Then they shipped us down to Pensacola and issued us clothes, about like when you was in the Army. They give you a issue of all clothes, what you need.

White: Did anybody join from D'Lo here with you?

Everett: Don't think. No, wasn't nobody here that went with me. And after we went to Pennsylvania, we was in a State camp up there where we did work, built roads. We built a big pond. They had us a training school over there for different kind of forestry service training, and I stayed up there. And since I, Charlotte and I've been married, we went to Niagara Falls one time, which was about a hundred miles from where our camp was, and we went by where the campsite was. But then, where we had the company street up and down there, they's trees that growed up you couldn't reach around. The buildings been torn down and all.

White: The trees grew back, huh?

Everett: Yeah. They had, each camp, they had about 200 people, I guess, in each one I was in.

White: Did you live in Army-barrack type barracks?

Everett: We had barracks, Army-type barracks. We had, in Pennsylvania, we had five barracks, (phone rings) and we, they'd pay us all just like in the Army and all. And during the day they would have the forestry service that would take us out, and we'd build roads, and we set out trees. We even had a deal where we walked through the woods and just pulled up gooseberries. I don't know why. Something about them gooseberries, flies got on some of the other trees they didn't want killed, and they'd kill them. And we'd do that.

White: That was for forest protection, then, basically I guess.

Everett: It was forest protection, yeah. We did that.

White: They feed you pretty well?

Everett: Had fine food. Of course, they had those cooks, and we'd have just a balanced meal. We'd have just like going in a Army mess hall to eat. And it was real good, I thought.

White: They didn't mind working you pretty hard for that food, though, did they?

Everett: Well, I'm going to tell you the truth. These people here in Mississippi, you hear them talk about working in the CCC. They would really work them hard, but now, we, they wasn't too hard; didn't slave-drive us too much. We had a good time.

White: Pretty good group, huh?

Everett: Yeah. We had some good people working us, and we built roads and all. We had equipment to build it with. It just wasn't bad at all. I ran, while we was in there, I ran the PX [post exchange] one time for about six months, and I'd just open that deal up every night and sell a little candy and cigarettes and Coca-Colas. During the day, I could just loaf off. I did that for about six months, and I went back to work for the forestry service, drove a truck. (End of digital file named tape one, side one. The interview continues on digital file named tape one, side two.)

White: —the Civilian Conservation Corps there. And we got you in Pennsylvania, I believe. You said you also worked in California. Is that right?

Everett: Yeah. We went from Ridgeway, Pennsylvania, out to Berkeley, California. We was in a State park out there. We built picnic tables and roads through the park. We had one platoon of men that worked down at the Berkeley college all the time. I don't know what they did, now. I never did get on that detail, but they had a crew that went down there every day for that. And we built roads around, built golf courses, and during the summertime they had these people up on the mountain, where they had the big redwood trees. In the spring of the year we was out there that time, and we carried all their trucks and equipment up there for the camp to move in, which was about a four-day deal. You take a (inaudible) truck with a twenty-five-mile-an-hour go, (laughter) and you don't go very far in a day, especially up in them mountains. We'd carry that equipment up there, and we did a lot of work out there. I enjoyed out there, and we was right in town. We'd work till we'd walk up on the hill and catch the city bus. We'd go to Berkeley, Oakland, San Francisco, just a lot of recreation there. Didn't have a lot of CCC camps that had the advantage that one did. And there the temperatures never do get real cold, never did get too hot there. It stayed kindly a normal temperature, and I enjoyed being in California. And we lived there and came back to Camp Beauregard, Louisiana, and then they divided us around and put us in these Mississippi camps where they really made you work. (laughter)

White: Got back home, huh?

Everett: Yeah. We got back home, and we got down here. I went to Camp Seven down here at New Augusta. (Inaudible) now we go through New Augusta, going to visit our daughter in Florida. I say, “Yeah, we’d come over here, and they’d get flour for that many men. It’d take a boxcar load of flour for them just to have biscuits (inaudible).” We’d go down there and have to load them hundred-pound sacks of flour (inaudible) all day. You put in a real day’s work. We hauled them, picked up our supplies. Then most stuff came by rail, like when we first started here about this deal in the roads. Then you didn’t see these trucks come down through here; they delivering stuff. Well, it’d take them two or three hours to get down this far. So you never did see. That’s something during the past; you didn’t see a truck, didn’t hardly, delivering stuff.

White: Were y’all working mostly on roads then?

Everett: Yeah. We built roads mostly down Camp Seven. We’d set out pine trees. We had two or three road crews, and (inaudible).

White: Y’all probably worked on that big national forest down there, too.

Everett: Yeah. We were in the national forest deal there; Bienville, I believe it is.

White: Yeah.

Everett: And while we was down there, I worked. And they had a big equipment depot. Everybody, they’d bring trucks from all over this area in there, and overhaul them. And I had experience in California with mechanicing and all, and so I worked for the equipment people down there. I painted trucks down there for them, worked on Caterpillars. It was kindly hard, and it was educational, and it was something different all the time.

White: Well, when did you get out of the CCC? Were you still working for them in Mississippi when you got out?

Everett: Yeah. I got out when I was down in Camp Seven. I stayed down there six months and got out, and I came home. I don’t know. That was—really, I can’t remember dates. I don’t know when it was to tell you the truth. But the CCC kindly broke up then, and it wasn’t too long the war came along.

White: That would be the late 1930s, basically, though, [19]38, [19]39.

Everett: Yeah, something like that.

White: Somewhere along in there. And then the war came along. You were living in D’Lo. What were you doing when the war broke out?

Everett: I was helping Mr. Bostick(?) build a house in Jackson at that time. We had a car, and they had several carpenters down here. I just hauled them up there. Mr. J.J. Bostick, he was a contractor, a foreman on the job, and I worked with him quite a while, and I was doing that until I went in the Army, then. And after Pearl Harbor, I went in the Army. And then I went up to Fort Riley, Kansas, during the wintertime. We took basic training up there in the snow.

White: Were you drafted, or did you join?

Everett: They drafted me. I tried to join, and I'm color blind. You got on a blue shirt (inaudible). (laughter)

White: It's white. (laughter)

Everett: No. I was color blind. We had a neighbor down here, (inaudible), we were joining the Navy, and they was going to send us to California. We had ourselves ready to go and all, got up there. I passed the test the first time. This time I was color blind; they wouldn't help me, so I came back home.

White: Well, tell us a little bit about your Army experiences. Where did you have boot camp?

Everett: I had boot camp up at Fort Riley, Kansas. Was up there, I guess thirteen weeks or something like that.

White: Was that much of a change from the CCC experience?

Everett: Oh, yeah. It's a lot of change there. And we got out. We took basic training. We learned how. We joined a cavalry deal. We had horses up there. And the time I was up there, there was Kenny Valentine(?) over here at Mendenhall; he was up there, taking basic training. They's a couple of Coleman(?) boys up there taking basic training, and there was quite a few from Mendenhall up there at that time.

White: A lot of Simpson County folks.

Everett: No, not—some Simpson County and around, and after we took basic training there, they transferred us down to Camp Livingston, Louisiana. We had horses when I got there. We went in and joined National Guard Black Horse Group out of Chicago. If you don't think it's hard, you try to join a group like that and try to get ahead or something another. They run that thing, and we just did what they said.

White: Didn't have much choice, huh?

Everett: We took all kind of training there, and I stayed there. Looked like we was going to stay there during the war, but (inaudible) Sunday nights, Walter Winchell used to come on, and he'd make all these comments about what's going on.

White: Oh, Walter Winchell, newscaster, yes, uh-huh.

Everett: Yeah. And he said, “What’s the 106th Cavalry going to do? Stay at Camp Livingstone till the war is over?” That week we started moving. (laughter) We went to Texas, and then from Texas, we went to New York and went to England and Scotland. And I was over in England when they had the D-day over there and all. And we went in about two days after D-day. We went in. We had a vehicle to (inaudible) water would come off them boats, and water’d come up over them. And after that, we got in Normandy. We was there. I went over there; that was in June. I got wounded in July, the twenty-fifth, over there, but we was fighting in them hedgerows. It was pretty hot over there. We was just doing reconnaissance work. I drove an M8 Armored car over there, and I never will forget. One day they sent us up (inaudible) there. For some reason or another, I backed off in a ditch and got stuck. The man got ahead of me in an armored car. One of them Eighty-Eights hit him right in the front and blowed a hole about four inches big through it. It exploded and killed every one of them.

White: Right as he was getting ahead of you, huh?

Everett: Well, I don’t know. It’s just, those things, when you drive one of them armored cars, all you got is that little slot, about like that, that you can look forward. You can’t look nowhere else. So you just have to (inaudible) on your own, go where you thought you (inaudible). But it was quite often you could see those M8 Armored cars. That’s that car with the six wheels on it, and it’s got armor, and they had 37mm guns, .50 caliber and .30 caliber. And quite often you’d see one of them where the Eighty-Eight chewed a hole through it. That metal just wasn’t heavy enough on the front of them. So we did that. After I got wounded there, I went back to England then, in a hospital.

White: Recuperated.

Everett: Stayed. After that was over, they sent me back to Germany, but I went back up to my outfit. I was up there on the, before they had the Battle of the Bulge. I spent the night before they had that up there. And that day the captain called me down. He said, “Everett,” said, “you’re a limited assignment. Don’t mean a thing in the world. Just sign this paper, and you’ll be regular assignment.” I said, “What happens if I don’t sign it.” He said, “You going back to the rear.” I said, “Well, I got my clothes already packed.” (laughter) So we went back, and I worked in (inaudible) till the war was over. The war was over; we was over in Belgium at that time. And we stayed there. You know when you’re not a hero and got all them medals and all, you got points for every one of them medals and stuff you had. Well, I wasn’t none of that. So I didn’t have a lot of medals, so I had to stay over there a long time before I could come home. It took, oh, about six months after the war was over before we got to come home. During that time, we was processing men, sending them home. Before they’d send them home, they’d give them new uniforms and take their guns in and all

that kind of stuff. So we did all that kind of work. And Army, I don't know. I had a good life in the Army. I was stationed over at Camp Livingston there quite a while, and I could come home every month or two.

White: You were still in the Army then for about how long after you got back to the States?

Everett: Well, when we came back to the States, that was before I went overseas I was over there.

White: Oh, OK, I'm sorry.

Everett: I could come home then, but after we got back to the States, I, the best I remember, they sent us on to Camp Shelby, and we got let out.

White: You were discharged right out of Camp Shelby then. Do you remember when you got out?

Everett: You know, I really don't. I could probably holler up my discharge, but I don't have no idea—

White: I was just curious about it. How'd you get home from Camp Shelby down in Hattiesburg?

Everett: They give you a little piece of paper for a travel voucher, and we'd buy a bus ticket. They took us into Hattiesburg, and we caught the bus home.

White: What was bus travel like then? About like it is now? Did they stop at every town?

Everett: Well, they don't stop at every town now. (laughter) They did then. Then every town, you'd pick up a bunch of them, put a bunch of them off, and they'd ride for sixteen cents a fare. You could ride from here to Mendenhall for sixteen cents.

White: Is that right?

Everett: Of course it got to where, I suspect it'd be a dollar, a dollar and a half, now, but driving a bus, I picked up a many a one and put them off that way.

White: But you came on back to D'Lo, then, and it must have been shortly after that that you met Miss Charlotte Rose Mangrum, huh?

Everett: Yeah. I worked for Mr. Lowery(?) down here in the store for a while, and then I quit that and worked for Trailways. She just couldn't stand it; we had to get married, (laughter) or maybe I just couldn't stand it.

White: You went to work for Trailways in the late [19]40s, then, [19]46?

Everett: Forty-seven.

White: Nineteen forty-seven.

Everett: I went to work. I can remember that day. It was September the first, 1947.

White: Were the headquarters located in Jackson then?

Everett: Well, I worked out of Jackson. Our headquarters, Mr. Morgan Walker(?) owned that deal, and he lived over at Alexandria, Louisiana. We were, I think we was Tri-State(?) or Southern Trailways. We had a bunch of names.

White: The different divisions.

Everett: Yeah. And Mr. Walker owned this division we had, and we worked and got to be a bigger company. And our company made a lot of money, and we went to work and just really got rich. We trained for five dollars a day. That's what they paid us to start, and finally we got to where we made a living.

White: How long was your route?

Everett: We would usually run from, say, Jackson to Mobile or New Orleans, Memphis. We finally got to where we were going from Jackson to Birmingham, along, when I quit. We were extending more of the local work; wasn't hauling as much local stuff, so you didn't have to stop as much, and we'd make longer runs.

White: How long was your day, and how often did you get home? Did you get home every night?

Everett: Well, now, the way I worked, I had a regular run. I'd leave here, say, noon one day and drive to Memphis, spend the night, get back about noon the next day. Then I'd be off till noon the next day. Had a lot of off time.

White: How many years did you work for the bus company?

Everett: I worked for them thirty-two years. I have a plaque up there where I got a two-million-mile safety plaque.

White: Never did get tired of driving that bus?

Everett: Oh, yeah. You get tired. It's some days you think you'll never make it. (laughter)

White: Well, I believe you made it home often enough that y'all had a family, didn't you?

Everett: Oh, yeah. We had four kids.

White: Four kids. Could you name them and tell us when they were born?

Everett: Well, I don't know whether I could tell you when they was born. Billy, he—

White: Well, I'm putting you on the spot here, see.

Everett: Billy is the oldest one, William Ray, and he's the oldest one.

White: Where's he live now?

Everett: He's the game warden in this area, and he lives across town over here. And next one's Sammy. He was born in 1951. I can kind of remember that because I stayed in Memphis that night, and it snowed, and the baby came that night. I can't—

White: And you were out of town.

Everett: So Sammy was born in [19]51, and he's married and got two boys. He lives up on the reservoir, him and Mr. Lyle (laughter) own the Southern Tractor dealer here in Richland, and the next daughter, Susie, she lives down on the Coast. She teaches in the Gulfport school system. We was old. She went to school over at Mendenhall. We was down at Hattiesburg at the mall the other day, and you probably remember Prescoll Wiggington(?).

White: Oh, yes.

Everett: We run into him and his family down there. They just had (inaudible). They hadn't saw Sue since so long, went to (inaudible) school. Charlie taught school, and we just had a real little, short reunion down there; went to Wiggins. And then Nancy the baby, she lives down in Brandon, Florida. She's a registered nurse, and she works in a hospital, a charge nurse down there, and she's married. They got one girl, twelve years old, and her husband runs a medical express deal, sells insurance, stuff like that in Tampa, so.

White: Well, Miss Rose, did she teach school?

Everett: T. Rose you mean?

White: Right. (laughter)

Everett: T. Rose. Yeah, she taught, started teaching over here. I guess teachers were scarce along then, and I think she started going to college. After she got two or three years over there, she started teaching, and then she went to school for a whole bunch of years to finish up, get her degree.

White: Where'd she go to school?

Everett: She went to, oh, she started off over at Hinds Junior—

White: Hinds Junior College now.

Everett: She went there, and then she went to Millsaps up here. She went to summer school a lot of it, and she taught school over here, and then she taught school out in Harrisville, I think, about thirteen years. She went out there and taught, and they cut out on that school and made it just a grammar school, I think. And she came back and went to Mendenhall then, her and Mrs. Dyer(?). You know her, I bet.

White: Right.

Everett: They were teaching out there together, and Mrs. Dyer went to public at that time. So she taught over here till she got to where she hated to go to school every (laughter) day. You know, school deal is wild. It got to where the kids was kindly rowdy, and you couldn't do much to them or with them, so she got to where she hated to go to school. And I said, "Just quit. All we're doing is paying income tax anyway." So she just went ahead, and she had enough time to retire, and she took her retirement.

White: Well, it sounds like a good time to—

Everett: And now, she's in there, real busy right now, doing a crossword puzzle, (laughter) I'll bet you.

White: Well, that's a good thing to do. You know?

Everett: Yeah. I think it's real educational. I ain't got sense (laughter) enough to do one (inaudible). But she does. She—

White: Well, somehow during these years you got interested in politics, I believe. Didn't you? Because I know you were mayor of D'Lo for a couple of years.

Everett: Yeah. I was mayor a number of years over here. I was alderman, too, and I got in that because there wouldn't nobody else run around here. And then seemed like when I got to mayor, (inaudible) Cockrell(?) was mayor, and he died.

White: That was during the 1960s? You were first alderman in 1957, I believe, somewhere along in there.

Everett: Yeah. I think I had the first alderman then, and this must have been along in the [19]60s, and I was mayor for four or five terms. Of course, all it was was a lot of headaches. You didn't make no money.

White: What kind of money did you make as mayor in the [19]60s? I know you remember that big salary.

Everett: Well, when I went out of office, I was making \$200 a month then, and while I was in office, there was one time we had the mayor's salary set at five dollars, but we didn't have no money, so we (laughter) didn't pay it.

White: You didn't make the five dollars (inaudible).

Everett: No. You just had talked about it, (laughter) and the aldermen, they used to come for—I think they made a dollar, it seemed like. And the town owned the water system, and at that time we took free water. You know this water system here is kindly a confusing deal. The Finkbine Lumber Company gave this water system to the town of D'Lo, which would include the water tank. That's about what we got. The time when Finkbine had it, they had a six-inch water line run to the river. They pumped their water up here and distilled it at the mill.

White: Pumped it out of the river and treated it.

Everett: Now, after the town took it over, they put down deep wells up there, and we have, at the present, we have two wells and two tanks and have a real good water system. During my time as mayor, the town put in a complete sewer system, which it's pretty rough living around here in the summertime with all those full septic tanks running in the ditches and stuff, so we put in a complete sewer system. We have other water, two water tanks now. We got two wells. We have good waterlines. We have fire hydrants, and we're connected with Mendenhall Fire Department. We get a, I think we get a nine rating now. Usually they'll give you a ten rating, but I think we got a nine rating since we got better water system, got more fire hydrants and stuff. And a bunch of our men here in D'Lo, they're volunteer firemen over at Mendenhall. So in other words, Mendenhall has got a wonderful volunteer fire service, which we help with. Some of our money goes in it, too, but not much. They've got most of it. We just reap some of the benefits from it.

White: Well, over the years now—we've got you up to current time now. Over the years, who are some of the people in the families around D'Lo that you remember dealing with?

Everett: Well, we started off; we used to have Dr. Ross here that lived downtown, and he had a office here in town, and he just general practice, I think you would say. Years ago, we had Dr. Mehaffey(?) the dentist over here. He had his office here in D'Lo and lived across the street.

White: Was there a drugstore here?

Everett: We had two drugstores here. One of the men that ran a drugstore over here for years was Dr. Walker over in Mendenhall, a little, short man. He did, and then we had a Albritton's(?); had a drugstore here. And we had one they called Caver's(?) Pharmacy down here. George Ferrill(?) ran it. And we had those drugstores for years over here. And also we had Mr. Ed Donald; he ran a grocery store, and he had an undertaking department there, funeral deal. He would—

White: There wasn't a regular—

Everett: Them boys would be playing down there, and we'd hear them out there at night, beating on a—he was building a casket. Somebody died, and he had a hearse, and at the same time Mr. A.P Francis(?) ran a big clothing store down here. You could buy classier clothes there than you could anywhere.

White: Main Street was a little different and a little busier back then.

Everett: Yeah. Francis had that store there, and he had an undertaking business on down there. Then we had a Mr. Rose(?) ran a general store. Mr. Bob Mangrum down there next to the town hall, he had a big, tin building there that just, you could buy anything you wanted. He would supply these farmers during the year, and at that time we had three markets in D'Lo. We had Mr. Bond had one there. At that time they didn't have these electric ice boxes. They'd come in there and put them three-hundred-pound blocks of ice up in them meat coolers, up high, and Mr. Bond had one. John Henry Whitfield(?) and Tom Kelly(?) had one. Then up on this end of town, we had a market, and Jim Alberts(?) owned one.

White: Where did the ice come from? Mendenhall Ice Plant?

Everett: We had a ice plant here in D'Lo at that time at the mill.

White: Where was it located?

Everett: I guess the mill owned that plant, and it was up by the (inaudible) Mercantile, and that plant stayed open for quite a while, but seemed like they finally, they closed it up, and they was getting it over at Mendenhall, but it was up next to the Q(?) Mercantile and up by the Q. That's a big store about like a Wal-Mart right now. And they had their own, they even issued their own kind of money.

White: Scrips.

Everett: (Inaudible) coins. You worked for them, you could go over there and get advance on your check for the next, like, day. And we had that YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] up there where we had a theater, and they had a big pool hall.

White: That was also built by the mill (inaudible).

Everett: (Inaudible) the mill stuff, too. Then we had there, right across the street from the YMCA, there was a man; I guess me being a kid, I don't know, but I guess he was, I took for granted he was the manager of that deal, Mr. Klong(?). His house is still up there where he used to live. He had a little house in the back for his maid, so you know he was a pretty big shot if he had a maid, too. And then on down the other way, go down by that old water tank, they had a big clubhouse up there where these people come in here to buy lumber and stuff; they'd put them, give them a room up at that clubhouse. They'd come in on the train, buy lumber, and ship it out that way.

White: At one point I imagine they had lumber going all over the United States.

Everett: They did. I think they had it going everywhere, and at one time—I believe I'm telling you right, that they shipped some redwoods from California here and cut it in this mill here. After it got out of pine timber, they cut that redwood up there, but then we had (inaudible) we had Mr. Williams had a store up here, and Bill Crout(?) had a store up at the other end of town, and they had the hospital up there. They had a hotel there by the hospital, and they didn't have a lot of stores up in this end of town too much.

White: Most of that had been torn down now?

Everett: Yeah. And then along when the mill went under, they sold those houses, and they tore them down, and you can go out through the country now, and you can still see some of those. They was all made on one—

White: Plan?

Everett: —blueprint or plan.

White: Some of the houses were moved then.

Everett: Yeah. They moved all these houses, tore them down, took them out in the country and rebuilt them back just like they was.

White: So what you're telling me is D'Lo's got a lot quieter these days, and you have, too, then, huh? You finally retired from politics and from—

Everett: That's right.

White: —driving a bus.

Everett: You know one of the houses where they got one that I can—I hadn't been out there in several years, but John Ed Phillips(?) bought one. They're two-story houses like the one up here where the Caspers(?) used to be.

White: That's out on Phillips Lake. I didn't know that—

Everett: Out on Phillips Lake, yeah.

White: I didn't know that was one of those houses.

Everett: And he's got it up on stilts. That's one of the mill houses up there now.

White: Matter of fact I asked somebody recently why he built that house like he did up on stilts. That answers my question. The house was moved out there.

Everett: Well, if you know John Ed Phillips, he was a engineer and smart as a trick, and he always did everything kindly different from everybody else.

White: His own way.

Everett: And another place they've got one of these houses, go down, going to Pinola where you go up that (inaudible) hill? Over on this side there, there's one on the right there that's kindly got these kindly big, full posts on a big porch and all. That's a (inaudible) down there.

White: I didn't realize that.

Everett: And you know at that time, they had from up here on Willow Street, up there, they had four lines of houses; just, I mean every block had them there, all of them built just alike.

White: Um-hm, for their workers.

Everett: For the workers.

White: But D'Lo's still a comfortable place to live. Is that right?

Everett: I think it is, but that's a bad thing to put in there, but we been having a little people stealing stuff here lately.

White: You don't mean it.

Everett: My friend over here got a—I don't know why one man would have three cars and a truck, but other day he had, I think it's a [19]80-something model Oldsmobile. I don't know one model from another. He went out and going to crank it up and let it run a little bit, build the battery up, and it run two or three seconds and

went dead. He said, "Well, I guess somebody stole my gas." He got out and went back and looked. Would you believe they stole the gas tank?

White: The whole gas tank!

Everett: Took the whole gas tank off and left with it. (laughter) That's over here at Joe Quarsh's(?). You might know Joe. You know Joe Quarsh?

White: Yes, I do.

Everett: He drove a bus for thirty-something years with us.

White: Somebody badly needed a gas tank to take it off a running car.

Everett: Yeah, but Joe tells me one day. He said he had a bicycle, had a pump over there, and kids stopped there and pumped their bicycle tires up—

(The interview ends here abruptly.)