

# Mississippi Oral History Program

Simpson County Historical and Genealogical  
Oral History Project

An Oral History

with

Mary Louise Kennedy

Interviewer: Joe White

Volume 1217, Part 11  
2003

©2014

The University of Southern Mississippi

This transcription of an oral history by The Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage of The University of Southern Mississippi may not be reproduced or published in any form except that quotation of short excerpts of unrestricted transcripts and the associated tape recordings is permissible providing written consent is obtained from The Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage. When literary rights have been retained by the interviewee, written permission to use the material must be obtained from both the interviewee and The Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage.

This oral history is a transcript of a taped conversation. The transcript was edited and punctuation added for readability and clarity. People who are interviewed may review the transcript before publication and are allowed to delete comments they made and to correct factual errors. Additions to the original text are shown in brackets [ ]. Minor deletions are not noted. Original tapes and transcripts are on deposit in the McCain Library and Archives on the campus of The University of Southern Mississippi.



Louis Kyriakoudes, Director  
The Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage  
118 College Drive #5175  
The University of Southern Mississippi  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001  
601-266-4574

*An Oral History with Mary Louise Kennedy, Volume 1217, Part 11*

Interviewer: Joe White

Transcriber: Stephanie Scull-DeArme

Editor: Stephanie Scull-DeArme

## Biography

Mary Louise Kennedy was born to David Jefferson Lewis and Maudie Mae Kennedy in Magee, MS in May 1919. Her father worked for multiple oil companies, including Texaco and the Loreco Oil Company. Kennedy's family moved to D'Lo when she was young. She married Paul Dalton Kennedy in October 1934. They had four children together, two boys and two girls. Paul Kennedy performed various jobs early in their marriage, including employment at a chicken-feed store, carpentry, and as a seismographer. Louise worked in the ladies department at McCalpren's Department Store, ordering inventory. Later in life, Kennedy assisted teachers with handicapped children at Magee High School for four years. She retired at the same time as her husband. Paul retired as the chief of police after serving in the department for twenty years – Louise even worked dispatch for a brief period. After retiring, Louise and Paul bought a farm. They have nine grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren.

## Table of Contents

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Early biography and parents' background.....      | 1        |
| Marriage.....                                     | 6, 8, 25 |
| Church community.....                             | 7        |
| Employment.....                                   | 9, 24    |
| Retirement.....                                   | 10       |
| Children and family life.....                     | 11       |
| Early memories of Magee.....                      | 13       |
| Farming.....                                      | 14       |
| School and education.....                         | 18, 22   |
| Police department.....                            | 20       |
| Hobbies and activities.....                       | 25       |
| Grandfather's traveling silent movie theater..... | 27       |
| Automobiles.....                                  | 29       |

AN ORAL HISTORY  
with  
MARY LOUISE KENNEDY

*This is an interview for the Mississippi Oral History Program of The University of Southern Mississippi. The interview is with Mary Louise Kennedy and is taking place on July 23, 2003. The interviewer is Joe White.*

**White:** My name is Joe White. Today is Wednesday, July 23, 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're interviewing Mrs. Louise Kennedy at her home in Magee. Ms. Kennedy, do you have a middle name?

**Kennedy:** My name's Mary Louise.

**White:** Mary Louise. I was looking at this biographical sheet, and it just didn't have it on it.

**Kennedy:** Well, we didn't put.

**White:** You've never been known as Mary, though.

**Kennedy:** No. (laughter)

**White:** When were you born?

**Kennedy:** I was born May the twenty-fourth, 1919.

**White:** Here in Magee, I believe you had said earlier.

**Kennedy:** Yeah, about a mile out of town.

**White:** OK. Can you tell us the name of your parents, please?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. Daddy, David Jefferson Lewis. Everybody called him Dave. And my mother was Maudie Mae Kennedy.

**White:** And where were they born?

**Kennedy:** They were born in Simpson County; my mother was. My daddy was born in Yazoo County.

**White:** Out in the county, in the rural part of Yazoo County?

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** How did he get down this way? Do you know?

**Kennedy:** Well, (laughter) he said he rode a horse down here from Bentonia, about Satartia. And he got down here, went to work. I don't know what he was doing. And he met my mother.

**White:** He just decided he'd stay (inaudible).

**Kennedy:** Decided he'd stay, um-hm.

**White:** When did they get married?

**Kennedy:** They got married in August of 1918.

**White:** OK. You don't remember the exact date on it. That's all right.

**Kennedy:** No, but I think it was the ninth.

**White:** My wife says I can't remember our anniversary, so I'm not going to try to pin you down too tight there. (laughter) You said you don't know what your daddy did at first here. What did he do later?

**Kennedy:** Well, what he did later, what I remember from a little girl, he drove the Texaco Oil truck here for Mr. George Tendall(?).

**White:** In Magee?

**Kennedy:** In Magee, yeah.

**White:** How big a territory did he cover?

**Kennedy:** Well, I really don't know, but he'd go out in the country, deliver gas. And I used to ride with him a lot of times.

**White:** Oh, is that right?

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** Mostly during the day, then.

**Kennedy:** Uh-huh, during the day.

**White:** He was back at home at night.

**Kennedy:** Um-hm, like to filling stations and stores where they had gas.

**White:** And later he worked for a couple of other companies, oil companies.

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** Didn't he?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. Later he went to work for the Loreco Oil Company.

**White:** Loreco.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. And we moved to D'Lo.

**White:** Moved to D'Lo.

**Kennedy:** We moved to D'Lo.

**White:** They have an office up there?

**Kennedy:** No. His plant was at Mendenhall, but I don't know why we didn't move to Mendenhall, but we moved to D'Lo, and he had a brother that worked with him there. And they lived right next door to us.

**White:** What was his brother's name?

**Kennedy:** Auguste Mills Lewis(?).

**White:** Auguste Mills Lewis.

**Kennedy:** Um-hm.

**White:** Did he have any other brothers and sisters?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. He had one more brother and a sister.

**White:** They didn't live down this way, though, huh?

**Kennedy:** No. They lived up there in Yazoo County.

**White:** How about your mother, Ms. Maudie Mae Kennedy? Did she have brothers and sisters?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. She had some brothers and sisters, and they all lived around here. She had one sister, and let's see, four brothers.

**White:** Do you recall all their names?

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** I'm going to put you on the spot here. (laughter)

**Kennedy:** Her sister was named Birdie Louiza(?), I think the way. And then her older brother was named R.T. Kennedy, and she had twin brothers, D.W. and J.W. They all had initials.

**White:** All went by initials, huh?

**Kennedy:** And then she had a brother Chasteen Kennedy(?).

**White:** Chasteen?

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** And they all lived around here?

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** Do you remember your grandparents' names?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. Evan Kennedy.

**White:** E-V-A-N?

**Kennedy:** E-V-A-N. And Emiline.

**White:** Emiline.

**Kennedy:** Emiline Kennedy.

**White:** Were they from Simpson County?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. They lived around out here somewhere.

**White:** Close to Magee?

**Kennedy:** Yeah, close to Magee. And I remember my great-granddad, my granddaddy's daddy. I just do remember them. He was Reecy Kennedy(?).

**White:** Reecy.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. And his wife was named Roberta.



**White:** And they lived around Magee, too?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. They lived not far. Right down the road there.

**White:** South of Magee.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. (laughter)

**White:** What did most of them do? Farm?

**Kennedy:** I guess so.

**White:** As you remember, huh? (laughter)

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** I wouldn't remember what my great-grandfather did.

**Kennedy:** I don't know what they did but farm; I guess. Well, my granddaddy, Evan Kennedy, when I was a little girl, I don't remember much about it, but he had a movie that he traveled around and showed movies. And it had reading. It didn't have any talking.

**White:** Right, silent movies.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. And he went from place to place with that, showing it, and he was up in the Delta showing it, and—

**White:** Oh, he really traveled.

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** It wasn't just close then, was it?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. And my grandmother, she died on one of those trips. That night when they started to go to bed, she told him, said—there was a cloud coming up, and she said, "You stay up and watch the cloud because I might not wake up." Well, she died.

**White:** She didn't wake up, huh?

**Kennedy:** No. She didn't wake up. And then later, he drove a ice truck. You know how people, they used to—

**White:** We've talked to several people on these tapes about ice trucks. Go ahead. Tell us about it. I'm fascinated.

**Kennedy:** Well, right after Paul and me married, we lived out here next door. His parents fixed [an] apartment out there for us on one side. And he drove a ice truck, and he'd come every day, bringing ice. And I was telling Cheryl(?) today that Ms. Kennedy had a lot of lily trees out there at the side of the house. They had pretty blooms on them, and every morning when he'd come with that ice truck, he'd get him one of them blooms and pin on him. (laughter) I thought that was nice.

**White:** Well, who had the chores of emptying the ice box or the water in the tray?

**Kennedy:** Well, I don't—

**White:** You don't remember that?

**Kennedy:** I guess we all did. (laughter)

**White:** Well, you mentioned Paul. I guess we better go ahead and tell who he is here. That was your husband.

**Kennedy:** Paul is my husband.

**White:** And his name was Paul D. Kennedy?

**Kennedy:** Paul Dalton, yeah.

**White:** Dalton?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. He went by Paul D.

**White:** D-A-L-T-O-N?

**Kennedy:** Um-hm.

**White:** And you guys got married when?

**Kennedy:** Well, we got married October the twenty-second, 1934.

**White:** Here in Magee, is that right?

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** And you were at the ripe, old age of?

**Kennedy:** Fifteen. (laughter)

**White:** I thought I had about figured that out. (laughter)

**Kennedy:** I was fifteen, but Homer Ainsworth(?) married us, and we were the first couple he ever married.

**White:** Is he a preacher or a judge?

**Kennedy:** Yeah, he was a preacher.

**White:** Where did he preach around here?

**Kennedy:** Well, I don't know where he preached then, but he had just started out preaching.

**White:** And y'all were his first couple to try out.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. One time a long time after that, we met up with him, and he said, "I must have done a pretty good job of that. Y'all still together." (laughter)

**White:** A lot better than some preachers these days.

**Kennedy:** But when he died, I think he lived in Clinton. They lived up there.

**White:** So he had moved around some.

**Kennedy:** Um-hm.

**White:** Was he a Baptist minister?

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** He didn't move around quite as much as the Methodist ministers probably did, though, did he?

**Kennedy:** No, unh-uh. (laughter)

**White:** Who were your husband's parents? What were their names?

**Kennedy:** Dallas Kennedy and her name was Martha Jane, but everybody called her Jenny.

**White:** Jenny?

**Kennedy:** Um-hm.

**White:** Did they live pretty close?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. They lived right next door out there. That's where they were living when we married.

**White:** How'd you meet your husband? (laughter)

**Kennedy:** Lord, have mercy. (laughter)

**White:** I'm snooping. (laughter)

**Kennedy:** Well, I met him at a kind of a church party they had. They had a cookout in the pasture. We was at Beulah Church, and a plumb bunch of young folks just ran out there, and they roasted wienies and marshmallows and all that kind of stuff. And Ms. Minnie Grayson(?), I don't know if y'all ever knew her or not.

**White:** I've heard the name.

**Kennedy:** She'd tell fortunes. She'd get some coffee or chocolate or something in a cup and stir it around and look at that cup and tell your fortune. Anyhow, that's when we met.

**White:** Which fortune did she predict?

**Kennedy:** I don't know that. (laughter) Forgot that.

**White:** I thought maybe she predicted you were going to get married.

**Kennedy:** No. (laughter) We met. That's where we met, and then later on, we lived at Mendenhall at that time. My daddy died when I was twelve, and—

**White:** Was that when you lived in D'Lo?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. And we moved; my mother rented a house in Mendenhall. And Paul was working with a surveying company or something. Anyhow, he roomed with us a while up there. So anyhow, that's where we got to know each other better.

**White:** That's how my grandparents met.

**Kennedy:** Oh, really?

**White:** He was rooming with her family down in Pinola. And what did Paul do after you guys got married?

**Kennedy:** Well, he was working with a seismograph when we married, and he did that a while, and then he worked with a chicken-feed store here in town. And he did carpentry work.

**White:** Stayed busy, huh?

**Kennedy:** Stayed busy.

**White:** I think you stayed busy, too. Didn't you?

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** Don't I remember you working in a store downtown?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. I worked at McCalpren's(?) a long time.

**White:** McCalpren's Department Store. What did you do with them down there?

**Kennedy:** Well, I worked in the lady's department, and I went to Dallas with them, Ms. Mac and Ms. Hodge(?). We did the buying for the ladies.

**White:** McCalpren's was mostly a men's department store for a number of years, wasn't it?

**Kennedy:** Well, a long time, but then it got to be everything; had lady's, children's, men's, and the shoe department.

**White:** All the rest of it almost took over that men's stuff before—

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** —they finally sold the store.

**Kennedy:** It really was a nice store.

**White:** Did you work there until you retired?

**Kennedy:** Well, not quite. I quit, and I worked over at the school with the handicapped, helped the teachers with the handicapped children.

**White:** Part of Magee High School?

**Kennedy:** Uh-huh, for a while.

**White:** Did you enjoy that?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. I enjoyed it. I think I worked about four years doing that, and by that time, Paul retired, and I decided I would, too. (laughter)

**White:** Did you guys do any traveling or anything?

**Kennedy:** Not much. Paul wasn't much of a traveler. He loved to go hunting and go to the farm. We have a farm over there.

**White:** Did you inherit the farm, or did you buy one?

**Kennedy:** We bought one. We bought a farm.

**White:** Where is it, or where was it?

**Kennedy:** Well, it's out on—

**White:** You still own it?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. That's the Raighly(?) Road, I think. (laughter) Go out that ways, just about two miles out there.

**White:** Pretty big place?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. Well, now, it's 135 acres right now.

**White:** That's a pretty big place. (laughter)

**Kennedy:** Yeah. We got pine trees out there now, but he had everything imaginable out there, chickens, guineas, cats, ducks, horses, cows. (laughter)

**White:** Y'all ever live out there, or did you just—

**Kennedy:** No. We never did live out there. We talked about building out there, but we never did.

**White:** Is there a house on the place?

**Kennedy:** There's an old house; we call the Sugar Shack. (laughter)

**White:** I'm almost afraid, but why do you call it the Sugar Shack? (laughter)

**Kennedy:** Well, I don't know. Paul named it that. (laughter)

**White:** You didn't ask too many questions, either, huh?

**Kennedy:** He said, "We'll go out to the Sugar Shack a while." (laughter)

**White:** When did you buy the farm?

**Kennedy:** Oh, well, I don't know exactly.

**White:** Been a while, though, huh?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. It's been a long time, about thirty-five years ago, I guess.

**White:** You have had it a pretty good while. You got family members living out there?

**Kennedy:** No. Nobody lives out there. We just, my son mostly sees to it out there. We just go out there when we want to. It's got fish ponds on it, about three. And we used to have horses out there. One time we had about ten horses out there, and at one time we had a horse-riding arena out there.

**White:** Was that just for the family and friends?

**Kennedy:** Well, we had some horse shows out there, yeah. But then the family just enjoyed it, too.

**White:** Well, you mentioned family, and you've almost mentioned (inaudible). I believe you had a child or two during those years.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. I had four. (laughter)

**White:** Can you name them and tell us a little bit about them? When they came along?

**Kennedy:** I have Paul Lewis is the oldest one, and then Barbara, and Dave, and Cheryl.

**White:** Cheryl, who is here with us today. Do you remember when they were all born?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. (laughter) I can remember that better than I can remember their age. (laughter)

**White:** Oh, is that right?

**Kennedy:** Paul was born in [19]36, June [19]36, and Barbara was born in December of [19]38, and Dave was born in August, 1940, and Cheryl was born in December of [19]43.

**White:** Well, you almost got them all in prewar there, but you just missed it a little bit on that last (laughter) one.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. I skipped a little bit.

**White:** Do they all live around here now?

**Kennedy:** Dave and Cheryl lives here, and Barbara, I lost Barbara, will be two years in September. She lived out here, next door.

**White:** Your parent's place?

**Kennedy:** Uh-huh. She had cancer.

**White:** How many grandchildren do you have?

**Kennedy:** Well, I got nine grandchildren, twelve great-grandchildren.

**White:** My heavens. (laughter)

**Kennedy:** Pretty big family.

**White:** You need to build a big house out there on that farm; it sounds like to me. (laughter)

**Kennedy:** We had my birthday party up at the D'Lo Rocks in May, and I think there was about thirty-two of us there.

**White:** Did the mosquitoes eat you up?

**Kennedy:** No.

**White:** No. They wouldn't be bad in May, would they?

**Kennedy:** It was a beautiful day. It couldn't have been no better. And everybody was there except two of the great-grandchildren, (inaudible). But we had a good day. We just really had a good time.

**White:** What all did you do?

**Kennedy:** Well, we carried all kind of food and watermelon and everything. And one of my grandsons brought his kayak, and they had a good time riding in that. And finally I went down there and got in that thing. (laughter)

**White:** Oh, you did? I was just going to ask you if you went wading around those rocks.



**Kennedy:** I told Dave, I said, "I just want to get down there and wade." Used to, when we lived at D'Lo, we used to go down there, and the whole family, we had pictures made down there when my daddy was living. And I told Dave, I said, "I'd just like to get down there and wade in that." He said, "Come on, Mama." It's a steep hill, you know.

**White:** It sure is.

**Kennedy:** So anyhow, him and one of those boys helped me get down there, and when I got down there, they wanted me to get in that little boat, I call it. And so I got in it. (laughter) Cheryl made a picture.

**White:** You were pretty cooperative (laughter) on your birthday then, weren't you?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. We had a good time.

**White:** It sounds like it.

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** It really does.

**Kennedy:** We did.

**White:** Let's get back to some early memories of Magee and some folks that impressed you around here. You mentioned a Baptist minister married you. Have you been a Baptist all your life?

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** What [churches] have you belonged to around here?

**Kennedy:** Well, I belong to First Baptist Church, right down here. But I joined the church at Beulah(?). That's where my mother went.

**White:** Beulah's south of town here, isn't it?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. See, after my daddy died, and we left Mendenhall, she bought a house down here, about I guess it's a mile or maybe a mile and a half from town. And we went to Beulah Church, and that's where I joined the church.

**White:** Said you were about twelve when your dad died? Isn't that what you said, roughly?

**Kennedy:** Yeah, um-hm. And then after I married, Paul belonged here, and I moved my letter up here. Been here ever since, so—

**White:** Y'all must not have lived in Mendenhall too, too long.

**Kennedy:** No. We didn't. See, after my daddy died, I guess that Loreco Oil Plant was still—my daddy's brother was working there, managing.

**White:** That's the one you told me was close to the railroad there in Mendenhall.

**Kennedy:** Uh-huh, yeah. So we stayed there a while until we got all that straightened out. And her people lived, her daddy and all of them lived down here, so she bought that house down there. So that's where I lived when we got married.

**White:** Moved back down to Magee, and you pretty much stayed here since then, haven't you?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. Paul and me, we've just been here most of our married life. We moved to Collins one time when Cheryl was a baby. Paul bought that farm. He always wanted (laughter) a farm, and he bought that farm down there; Cheryl was a month old. And I had never seen it. (laughter) And you talking about the hog-killing and all, a while ago? Well, they did all that and had hogs hanging up out there, you know, and chitterlings and everything.

**White:** Must have been a cold (inaudible).

**Kennedy:** Cracklings, all that.

**White:** Now, who was doing that? Your husband?

**Kennedy:** Paul. Yeah.

**White:** He raised the hogs.

**Kennedy:** And some of the neighbors.

**White:** They had a real hog-killing time down there.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. His neighbor up there was Dale Shoemake(?). And Paul, he had never had a farm, but he wanted to. He'd ease off up there, and see Dale, see what kind of plow he had on his plow, and come back.

**White:** So he could do the same type thing.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. Then we could do the same thing. But anyhow, they helped—

**White:** That's a good way to learn farming.

**Kennedy:** They helped with the hog-killing and all. We stayed there two years.  
(laughter)

**White:** Out from Collins down there? From Collins? You stayed at Collins two years?

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** And then moved back up this way.

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** You said when y'all had first got married, his parents added onto the house here next door?

**Kennedy:** No. They didn't add on. They just divided it somehow. Yeah.

**White:** Yeah. I misunderstood.

**Kennedy:** But Paul got the lumber from down there to build this house.

**White:** This house that we're in today.

**Kennedy:** Uh-huh, yeah, off of that farm, and—

**White:** Did he cut the wood himself?

**Kennedy:** He cut the wood, carried it to the sawmill, and that was kind of hard times then, in [19]34. And he went to Vicksburg and bought the hardwood floor (inaudible).

**White:** It's still pretty today, isn't it?

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** Mighty pretty.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. I had it covered up a while, and then I had the carpet took up and had it redone.

**White:** Well, it looks very, very nice.

**Kennedy:** Thank you. My grandson did that.

**White:** Which grandson?

**Kennedy:** Well, that's Trevor.

**White:** Trevor, OK. (laughter) Give him full credit.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. Trevor did that. He lives in Hattiesburg.

**White:** What do you remember about the lumber? How long did it take to get the lumber? Didn't they have to stack it and cure it or something? Do you remember that?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. But I don't know how long. We was ready to come back up here.

**White:** Were y'all still living down there?

**Kennedy:** But one time, why we's down—see, now, Paul always loved cows and cattle. He had a bunch of cows, and the house where we lived, you turn off the main road up there, and it's about three or four blocks, I guess you'd call it, that road that went down to the house where we lived. And one day I was out there, and a bunch of cows come down that little road, and I tried to run them off. I thought they was somebody else's cows, and they was ours. (laughter)

**White:** Well, did you manage to get rid of them, or did they stay?

**Kennedy:** No. Paul come along. He said, "Louise, them's our cows!" (laughter)

**White:** Well, was that an old farmhouse that you were living in?

**Kennedy:** Yeah, it was. And it had one of them wells you talking about out there. And first thing Paul did, he leased some oil land to an oil company, and he put us in a water, electric—

**White:** A pump?

**Kennedy:** —pump, yeah. And Lord, that was worth the money.

**White:** Was there an old water tank and windmill out there, or did you have to hand-pump it?

**Kennedy:** No. It just had a well. No. It was electric pump. I don't know (inaudible). But that was some experience, that two years.

**White:** Well, what was washing clothes like out there?

**Kennedy:** Ooh! It was awful. (laughter)

**White:** Did you have to wash them by hand, or did you have a ringer washer?

**Kennedy:** We had to wash them with the tubs and the wash pots, but I was lucky. They got some woman to help do some of that, most of that. (laughter)

**White:** That helps.

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** What kind of soap did y'all use in that wash pot and everything? Do you remember? I'm kind of running a survey here. (laughter)

**Kennedy:** I don't remember that.

**White:** What else was it like living out on a farm back before modern appliances came in?

**Kennedy:** Well, we didn't have a washing machine. I didn't have one till my children was all past the baby stage, and I was proud to get that. But when we lived down at Collins, we always had a horse, a little horse that the whole family rode. And I always loved to ride horses. And we had a little store across, about a mile from where we lived. There was a little woman had a little, country store. And then up on the hill, some more people lived, and I'd ride that horse over to that store, and there was a bridge down there. And when that horse (laughter) would get there, I'd just let her run. And her feet would just make such a noise on that bridge.

**White:** Wooden bridge?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. And Ms. Sanford lived up on the hill. She said, "Ms. Kennedy, I saw you riding that horse." (laughter)

**White:** Most people were in cars by then, I think. Weren't they?

**Kennedy:** Oh, goodness.

**White:** What kind of car did you guys have when you first got married?

**Kennedy:** Paul had an A-Model with a rumble seat in it.

**White:** Oh, he was uptown with that rumble seat.

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** You can't fit four kids in there too easily, though, can you?

**Kennedy:** No. We didn't have (inaudible). (laughter)

**White:** I'm going to stop the tape here. We're almost at the end. And we'll take a little break.

**Kennedy:** OK. Good. (End of tape one, side one; interview continues on tape one, side two)

**White:** —years and what it was like (laughter) going to school. Where'd you start school?

**Kennedy:** Well, down here at Magee. Ms. Mamie Lockhart(?) was my first teacher, and she taught all my children.

**White:** Is that right?

**Kennedy:** In the first grade. Used to have a primer, and she was one of my favorite people because she was so patient and kind, sweet to everybody. And—

**White:** Who were some of your buddies in the first grade?

**Kennedy:** Well, Grace Runnels(?) and me were good friends, and we lived across the street from one another. She was my best friend for a long time. I had Idell Taylor(?). She was a good friend.

**White:** Who were some of your other favorite teachers on up through elementary (inaudible)?

**Kennedy:** Well, Ms. Moselle Angrum(?) was one of my favorite teachers. She taught math. And Ms. Mildred Whitten(?), you remember her?

**White:** Oh, yes. She taught in Mendenhall.

**Kennedy:** She was a English teacher.

**White:** Was she down here, or did you go to school in Mendenhall?

**Kennedy:** She taught down here a while. And see, I got married. I was just starting like the tenth grade, but later on, we (inaudible) Eulah Lott. I don't know if you know her or not.

**White:** Know the name.

**Kennedy:** She worked down here at the police station, and we took different courses down here. They'd teach science and history and stuff like that, math. And we took different courses like that, and then we took typing class; did that. And finally we took the GED [General Educational Development] test and got our diplomas.

**White:** I believe your husband had some connection with the police station at one time or another.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. He was the chief of police.

**White:** I don't think we mentioned that, so we need to get around to it in a few minutes. But go ahead with what you're talking about.

**Kennedy:** Well, they were my best teachers I remember, Moselle and Ms. Whitten, and one time Monroe Ball(?). You remember him?

**White:** I remember hearing of him. I didn't know him.

**Kennedy:** Well, he was a—they had a new school not long before I married down at Dixie. And I went one year down there before we married. He was superintendent. He was a good teacher. So anyhow—

**White:** What kind of discipline did they have in the school then?

**Kennedy:** A lot better than it is now. (laughter)

**White:** You remember anybody getting a whipping?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. I've seen some of them get a whipping with a paddle.

**White:** What did they have to do to get a whipping back then?

**Kennedy:** Well, I don't know.

**White:** You didn't get one, so you don't know.

**Kennedy:** No. I don't know. (laughter) They just misbehaved, I guess. That's all.

**White:** Discipline was pretty good then.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. It was pretty good. It's bad now, the children. Cheryl's daughter is a teacher, and she has a time with some of them.

**White:** They can be a problem; I'm sure.

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** How did your husband get into law enforcement?

**Kennedy:** Well, he worked off from home a lot with his (inaudible) work, carpentry. And so he decided he'd run for marshal so he could stay at home. And he did, and he got elected, and later on he got the radio in.

**White:** Dispatch.

**Kennedy:** Um-hm, dispatch. And I worked at that a while.

**White:** Is that right?

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** In the city police department?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. So he stayed there twenty years until he retired.

**White:** And was chief of police when he retired.

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** What year did he retire? Do you remember?

**Kennedy:** I think it was [19]74. I'm not sure.

**White:** Somewhere along in there.

**Kennedy:** Um-hm. He's got a plaque in there that's got it on it, but I can't—in there in that other room.

**White:** Who were some of the people that you came across in the church over the years that have been an influence to you or good friends to you?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. Well, I got a lot of good friends down at the church, and of course now I'm a senior citizen, and we just have the best class down there, I think.  
(laughter)

**White:** Sunday school class?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. Sunday school class. We've got a room full, and we have a great teacher. What year was that, Cheryl?

**Cheryl:** Seventy-eight.

**Kennedy:** Seventy-eight?

**White:** Seventy-eight.



**Kennedy:** So anyhow—

**White:** I think you've been active in Eastern Star, too, haven't you?

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** Tell us a little bit about that.

**Kennedy:** Well, that's been a long time. I hadn't been in a while, but I did go for several years. And I just kind of got wore out of it.

**White:** What did you like about it before you got wore out of it? (laughter)

**Kennedy:** Well, we had a good time. I was an officer, and I hadn't been to that in a while, though. But—

**White:** Who were some of the other people who were active in Eastern Star when you came through?

**Kennedy:** Well, R.J. Smith and Margie(?) was always there. And they were the matron and were the patron for years.

**White:** They were the mainstays, then.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. And Leila Langley(?), she was there a long time. I don't remember who all was there right now.

**White:** How old were you back in D'Lo? Did you go to school at D'Lo at all?

**Kennedy:** Yeah, went to school over there, and I don't know if you remember where the school used to be over there.

**White:** At the old (inaudible).

**Kennedy:** And we lived right close to town, just up the street from the drugstore there.

**White:** Just off of Main Street.

**Kennedy:** And we'd go down there and get milkshakes and meet our little boyfriends down there.

**White:** I can tell what you remember from school in D'Lo. That (laughter) sounds pretty interesting. What was D'Lo like then? What was downtown D'Lo like?

**Kennedy:** Well, it was pretty good. They had that corner drugstore, and had Mr. Mangum(?) had a big store (phone rings) there down on Main Street. And it was several stores in there.

**White:** A bigger business district than they've got today?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. I remember I had a friend that lived, go right down Main Street, straight on down; there's a house. Daniels used to live, Irita Daniels(?).

**White:** Well, that was when the Depression started, right about the time y'all were living in D'Lo, I believe, too, didn't it? Twenty-nine. You remember any of the—you weren't working then, though, so you might not have been too impressed by that. (laughter)

**Kennedy:** No, I wasn't working. Daddy always had a good job, and I didn't know nothing about—

**White:** Depression didn't affect you much.

**Kennedy:** They had a lot of good friends up there. Mr. Besian Butler(?) and Lonnie Burnham(?) and his wife and Gussie Thompson(?) and Louis Thompson(?). They had just a kind of a group there, and Dad's brother and his wife, Auguste, and they lived there, too. And we had a pretty good time at D'Lo. (laughter)

**White:** And then you didn't live in Mendenhall too long.

**Kennedy:** No.

**White:** Did you go to school at all in Mendenhall?

**Kennedy:** Yeah, uh-huh.

**White:** Who was your teacher there?

**Kennedy:** Well, I think a Ms. Shoemake. Vernie Shoemake's(?) wife was the teacher there.

**White:** And then you moved back down to Magee, and before too long got married.

**Kennedy:** Got married. And Cheryl wanted me to tell you about when I lived down by the railroad, down there. Paul was at work, and the railroad just went—from my kitchen you could just look down the railroad, see what's coming up the railroad. And used to be a lot of tramps, roaming around, and I had three babies then, Paul Lewis, Barbara, and Dave. And Dave was just a baby. Well, we was there by ourselves, and I saw a tramp coming up the railroad with his pack. And I run and locked all the doors, and I told them to be quiet. (laughter) And he come, and he knocked on the

door, front door, just knocked. And nobody went to the door, of course. And he went all around the house, knocking on doors. And finally he left, but he acted like he wanted to knock the door down. Well, I went in there to see about the young ones. They was all up under the bed. (laughter)

**White:** Hiding, huh?

**Kennedy:** Dave was just a baby. I don't know—just about a year old, I guess, but he was up under that bed, too. (laughter)

**White:** A lot of tramps came to the door for something to eat during that time.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. They wanted something to eat, but I wasn't fixing to go to the door by myself.

**White:** A lot of them riding the railroad cars, too; I imagine (inaudible).

**Kennedy:** I imagine so.

**White:** That was the end of the Depression, late [19]30s and early [19]40s, huh?

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** When did you start working at McCalpern's Department Store?

**Kennedy:** Well, before I worked there, I worked for Magee Fashion Shop for Ms. Dukes, Ms. Beulah Dukes(?). And well, I don't remember just when I started. The kids was all in school.

**White:** Got them old enough to get in school and started to work, huh?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. And then Ms. Dukes sold her store out, and Tom McCalpern wanted me to work for him, so I went down there and worked with them.

**White:** Tom was running it by then.

**Kennedy:** Uh-huh. He had customers from everywhere, and he'd make them such good deals on those nice suits and things, the men. Sometimes some of them would come in a plane out here at this little airfield out here, (inaudible). And somebody from the store would meet them out there. They'd spend the day.

**White:** Buying clothes, huh?

**Kennedy:** Um-hm. So after I worked there a while, well, then they sold the store out to Art Hodge(?), but still Tom and them stayed there a long time after he bought it to

try to keep, get him into it. And then I started going to market with them. I went about five years.

**White:** When you retired or quit from down there, Art Hodge owned the store at the time?

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** And that was shortly after your husband retired, I think you had said.

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** So that must have been somewhere in the late [19]70s. Is that right? Or around (inaudible).

**Kennedy:** Seventy-eight, I believe.

**White:** Very soon after he retired then, huh?

**Kennedy:** Um-hm, yeah. After he retired, I decided I would, too. But I was working at the school when I retired.

**White:** Right. Is there anybody or anything you can think of that you really want to add to this interview before we finish up today?

**Kennedy:** Well, I noticed in my little paper y'all gave me, it asked about some stressful moments. Well, I'd say that when Paul died, that was one.

**White:** I'm sure that was.

**Kennedy:** And then when I lost Barbara. That was the worst.

**White:** Were they both sick very long?

**Kennedy:** Paul had heart surgery, and no, he wasn't sick too long. I think it was about six weeks, maybe, something like that. But Barbara was sick about twelve years.

**White:** That's a long time to fight that.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. She'd get better, and then she'd get worse.

**White:** A long time to fight that. But his heart surgery just didn't do him much good, then?

**Kennedy:** No, it didn't.

**White:** Well, you talked about the sad parts of life and the stressful parts of life. What are some of the best parts of life that you remember, too? Because you got to remember the good (inaudible).

**Kennedy:** One of the best parts was when—well, I think the best part is when we were at home with the children. And Paul was a fireman, too. And the firemen had a ball every year. And we went dancing. We all (phone rings), we enjoyed dancing.

**White:** Both of you liked dancing?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. I specially enjoyed it.

**White:** What kind of dancing did you do?

**Kennedy:** Just danced. (laughter)

**White:** Anything, huh?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. My daddy's people all played music. When we'd go to their house, his daddy played the violin, and his brother picked the guitar. And they all just—

**White:** They'd sing and dance (inaudible).

**Kennedy:** Yeah, and dance. And when we lived at D'Lo, that group I was telling you about, my mama and daddy and Mr. and Ms. Burnham, Butler, all of them, they'd get together just about every Saturday night, and they had Ralph Noler(?) play the records and dance. And I was just a young one, but I danced with all them old men. (laughter)

**White:** When did you learn how to dance?

**Kennedy:** All my life I've danced.

**White:** Is that right?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. I don't know when I learned. But like I said, when I was little, they had the Charleston; we did that. And—

**White:** You just always danced.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. I did. We used to go to Pinola when they had dances out there.

**White:** Right down close to the river?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. Out there at the—is that Strong River?

**White:** Strong River.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. They used to—

**White:** One of the names of those places down there was Dink's(?) Place. Is that what it was (inaudible)?

**Kennedy:** Yeah, had a dance hall or something, they called it.

**White:** That's what it was. Run by a man named Dink Hall(?) if I remember right. I wasn't old enough to go to the dances, but I remember them talking about it. I seem to remember a few beer cans involved around down there, (laughter) too.

**Kennedy:** I don't know about that. (laughter)

**White:** Years later we would swim in that same area in the river, and we were always picking up these old Falstaff Beer cans that had the metal strap around the top of them, too. I don't know if that was legal or done openly down there.

**Kennedy:** We used to go out there and have picnics at the river, and I think they had some tables out there somewhere. And you'd just have a picnic and go down there and have a sand bar down there.

**White:** Did they have bands down there, or did they play music records?

**Kennedy:** They had a band at the dance hall.

**White:** You don't remember the name of any of those bands, do you?

**Kennedy:** No. I don't remember that.

**White:** What kind of music did they play? Popular music?

**Kennedy:** No, just good, old dance music. (laughter)

**White:** Any kind.

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** By that I meant was it country and western?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. Yeah, I think it was country.

**White:** That's a long way to go to dance from Magee down to Pinola back in those days.

**Kennedy:** Yeah, but used to didn't think nothing about it.

**White:** You had mentioned earlier, too, talking about entertainment, about, was it your grandfather who did the silent movies?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. My granddaddy, um-hm, Evan Kennedy.

**White:** Evan Kennedy. You had mentioned something about somebody helped him.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. Roy Gardner(?), he was kind of a comedian? And—

**White:** Roy Garner?

**Kennedy:** Gardner.

**White:** Gardner.

**Kennedy:** Um-hm.

**White:** And where was he from?

**Kennedy:** He was from Weathersby, and he went with him on a lot of that and helped him.

**White:** What did he do?

**Kennedy:** Well, he just, like I said, done comedian things, and he'd sell peanuts and stuff like that.

**White:** Where did they set that show up? Did they have a tent?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. He had a tent. He put it all up.

**White:** Oh, they'd set up the seats and all, then, probably. Wouldn't they?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. I guess so, um-hm.

**White:** What about the music? They were silent films, you said. Did they have music?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. It was just reading up there.

**White:** There were the words across the bottom of the film?

**Kennedy:** Uh-huh, yeah.

**White:** Did they have anybody—I know in some of the old theaters and things, they had people play the piano or something while the films were on. Did they have any kind of (inaudible)?

**Kennedy:** He didn't have none of that.

**White:** You don't remember any—

**Kennedy:** No.

**White:** Them talking about any of that, huh?

**Kennedy:** Unh-uh.

**White:** We'd started talking about transportation a while ago, and you mentioned—I'm trying to go over a couple of things that I made a mental note to ask you again about. We were talking about your first vehicle after you got married. You said it was a—

**Kennedy:** He had, I think it was an A-Model, a Ford.

**White:** With a rumble seat.

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** Was it new?

**Kennedy:** No. It wasn't new, but it run good. (laughter)

**White:** Did it have a starter on it, or did it have the crank, turn-crank?

**Kennedy:** Yeah, it had a starter.

**White:** OK. We're talking about modern cars, then, aren't we?

**Kennedy:** Yeah. It had a starter.

**White:** When the children came along, you bound to have gotten a bigger vehicle—

**Kennedy:** Oh, yeah.

**White:** —than that rumble seat.

**Kennedy:** He done got rid of that a long time.



**White:** Who rode in that rumble seat back there?

**Kennedy:** Well, just whoever wanted to. (laughter)

**White:** Wasn't very big, was it?

**Kennedy:** No. It was one big enough for maybe two.

**White:** The rumble seat opened backward, kind of like a truck.

**Kennedy:** Yeah, it just opened up, um-hm.

**White:** The back of the trunk served as the back of the seat.

**Kennedy:** Yeah.

**White:** What other kind of transportation have you had over the years that you liked or didn't like or was a little bit unusual? Have you had any unusual vehicles, ways to get around? Other than that horse you used to walk across the bridge.

**Kennedy:** That horse was the main thing. Well, trucks and just cars.

**White:** All the normal methods of transportation.

**Kennedy:** Yeah. That's all I know.

**White:** Can you think of anybody else you want to mention or anything else you want to say before we finish up here?

**Kennedy:** I don't reckon. Cheryl, you know of anything? (laughter) I don't guess. I think I've told you all of it.

**White:** Well, you hadn't told us a fiftieth of it, (laughter) and we may come back and ask you some more questions later. I do appreciate very much your taking time to do this.

**Kennedy:** Well, thank you.

**White:** Thank you very much.

(end of interview)