



Tom Stoltenborg

Hillsborough Remembers

Picture a river where moss-draped live oaks filter the sunlight, as a boy in a row boat drifts by, fishing line trailing in the water. Tan, barefoot, carefree, this describes the childhood of Tom Stoltenborg, growing up in Palm River. Tom's memories of that earlier time are vivid and his stories create an appreciation for the innocence of that care-free youth.

Tom also wrote an article, entitled "The Country Boy", for his six great-grandchildren in May, 2000 so that they could have an understanding of how he lived as a child. In it, he describes every day items that we no longer use. He has graciously allowed some of that article to be displayed here.

Now this is an interview being conducted on, [interruption] being conducted on July 3, 2001 at Mr. [Tom] Stoltenborg's (TS) home. My name is Steve Szekely (SS), representing the Hillsborough County Public Library System's Oral History Collection Project.

[recorder is turned off and then back on]

Tom Stoltenborg: I was born in Tifton, Georgia, August 11, 1918. Ah, we moved to Jacksonville when I was about two, and then to Tampa when I was about three and a half. We lived in a house at Florida and Keys, that is no longer in existence, and then in 1924 we moved to, to Palm River, into a large house at, uh, where there was no electricity. We lived out on the river, the last house on the river before you came to McKay Bay and, uh, those were the best years of my life, living there even though we didn't have electricity. Uh, us kids especially didn't miss it because times, bedtime came and we didn't care if there was electricity or not.

Ah, I started, I started school in 1924, the Palm River School, a little three-



room school and ah, one room was the first, second and third grade, another room, ah, fourth and fifth, and then the large, older kids were sixth and seventh

and they were in another room. There was no running water, we did have electricity and, ah, no indoor plumbing. There was a little outhouse on either side of the property; one for

the boys, one for the girls. And we got our water from a pitcher pump, uh, just off the front corner of the school building and, of course, there was always muddy there. We'd have to pump. We'd hold our hands over the, uh, the front of the pump to let the water collect as a dam and uh, the water would get deep enough where we could lap it up, [laughter] sorta like a dog, I guess.

And, ah, we never missed not having this, uh, what they'd call the better quality of life, because everybody was the same way, back then. And, uh, there was more of a family atmosphere in that area, including 22nd Street Causeway, probably no more than two or three dozen families. Uh, I remember a couple of Dutch families, uh, who worked on their farm and their kids would bring duck eggs, boiled duck eggs, for their lunch. And, uh, we used to gather 'round and watch 'em break 'em open, because you almost had to have a hammer. And, uh then uh, we'd trade 'em back.

Uh, my dad was the manager for Lykes Brothers, so we always had some kind o' meat sandwiches. And uh, the uh, can't, some of the kids didn't have meat sandwiches. They would bring biscuits with fried, uh, fried potato on it and I loved potatoes, so I would trade them my meat sandwiches for their potato biscuit sandwiches. [laughter] And, uh we'd share some at lunch time.

Ah, we got, I guess, fifteen minute recess and we'd play as much as we could, but at lunch time, uh, all the boys would play baseball, which was a real sport back in those days. And, uh, most of the time, it was a hard rubber ball and we'd play "work up" and you'd work your way to bat. Out in the field, if you caught a fly, you'd went right to bat. Otherwise, you had to work your way up through the outfielder and the

bases, down to bat. And, uh, so sometimes you didn't get to bat during that lunch period. But uh, there was always time for that later, y'know.

And the older boys, when a new kid would come to school, it was mostly country out there, was a lot of woods, swamp. And, uh, they would, uh, at lunch time, they'd take the new kid out, new boy, out to fox and hounds. 'Course, he would be the fox, they would be the hounds. And, uh, so they would take him to the swamp, which wasn't too far away from the school and then they'd lose him there. And the poor kid, sometimes he'd make it back 'fore school let out, [laughter] mosquito bites all over him, scratched and everything. Absolutely bewildered, you know.

And uh, the school teacher, the principal and the teachers, they'd want complete command. You did whatever you were told, or else. And, uh, first three grades, uh, that particular teacher, she kept us under control. If we, uh, didn't do what she wanted, she'd, we'd have to hold our open palm out. She had a wooden ruler. She'd hit us in the palm of the hand and it didn't take many times of that, 'fore you decided it was best to do as you were told. But the older kids, the, uh, the principal was also the teacher of the sixth and seventh grade, and Paul Kicklighter, and, uh, he later became a judge.

But, he was fresh out of college and he was pretty much going to make a name for himself and the kids didn't like him at all. But, ah, he would make 'em, if the boys misbehaved, he would have 'em cut some palmetto fronds and cut the thorns off, or other times, leave the thorns on them. I don't know if you've seen them or not, but anyway, he'd switch 'em with that. So, I was sayin' previously, we'd played ball at lunch, well, he was going to

play with some of the kids, and my brother was pitchin'. And uh, Kicklighter hit the ball, and my brother caught it, and he waited till Kicklighter was almost to first base, now this was a hard rubber ball, just like a baseball. But he was almost to first base, and then hit him right in the side. [laughter] Doubled 'im over. So, from that time on, we weren't allowed to play ball anymore.

Steve Szekely: *Too dangerous.*
[laugh]

TS: Then after school, Palm River Road then, wasn't paved. It was a graded limestone road, and, uh, all the kids, we walked everywhere. We didn't have any transportation other than walking. No matter it was a block or two or three miles, we walked. And uh, after school, when we let off steam, we might have had some argument during the day. Then after school we would have a fight. By the time we rolled around in that limestone, and it was time to get home, we was, it was like we was covered with flour, you know.

And then I remember when they paved Palm River Road and they had, they didn't have bulldozers then, they had scrapers and they had big scrapers for two-horse mule, uh, two-mule team. Some of them were horses, mostly mules, and the man in back of 'em, he had a lever that he could activate that thing where it would dig into the dirt where they excavated for the road. And then they had the horse-drawn scrapers, ah, that they would lower the blade and level it off, whatever, you know.

And uh, they paved it with gravel, which was a big deal for us, you know because uh, the minute we'd get out of sight of home, well, we'd take our shoes off. We wore tennis shoes, they call 'em sneakers now, instead of

tennis shoes. We would take them off and go barefoot all day, you know, school and everything. And, uh, the road would get so hot, that we'd step off onto the shoulder and they had these huge clumps of sand spurs and uh, we'd stand the road as long as we could, and then we'd have to hop off to cool our feet, get full of sand spurs, then sit down in the street to get sand spurs out. [laughter]

TS (continued): But, uh, we were, I guess, about a mile from school and uh, we'd make sure to walk and pick up kids along the way, you know. And uh, then uh, the nearest, there was a little store on the corner, about two blocks, corner of 50th Street and Palm River Road. And they had canned goods and stuff like that. Mr. Rawls was the storekeeper when we first moved out there, and uh, cold drinks and stuff like that. There was always a porch and we'd sit there on the edge of the porch and drink our cold drink, which were a nickel.



And, uh, my older brother and I, Dick, we'd go fishing and mama would get us a dime, and we would get us a cold drink for a nickel. [cough] Excuse me. And a can of potted meat, which was five cents, a can of potted meat or Vienna Sausage and we'd either get a box of saltines and Uneda biscuit. Each one was a nickel. And we'd go climb down under the railroad bridge and we'd have our lunch right there, you know. We always had a fishing line in our pocket, a hand line. We'd a fish anywhere we wanted and get snails off the bull rushes. And uh, the sheephead liked those, you know. And uh, they'd hang around the pilin', so we could nearly always catch sheephead.

SS: *Are they good to eat?*

TS: Pardon?

SS: *Are sheephead good to eat?*

TS: Yep, uh huh. I don't know if you've ever seen a sheephead. They're kinda long, narrow fish, silver with black stripes. Similar to a drum, much the same way, and they also did the, we'd catch yellow tails and uh, sheephead and once in a while, a grunt, and mangrove snappers. They was real good to eat. But the best part uh, about being a kid back then, the rivers was clean, white sand bottom and we could swim in the river without worryin' about disease, plenty of fishing. Sometimes I'd get in my boat and just drift along the shore and uh, look at the sea life, you know. There in the mangroves, the food chain began. And, uh, this is why my childhood meant so much to me.

Mr. Tom Lykes gave my brother and I each a horse. Our first was a Cuban cow pony; it was crippled, they was good for us to ride and later he gave me a little Shetland pony, a little mare and mean as a snake. She'd kick me and bite me, whatever she could do, you know, but, I'd saddle my horse and ride for hours and hours. And uh, the nearest uh, store where we could get fishhooks and all was in Oak Park, which was at 7th Avenue or East Broadway and 50th Street and that was probably about three miles, I guess. But, ah, Dick and I, it never, never entered our head that that was a long walk, you know. If we wanted bb's or fishing equipment or whatever, well we'd walk up there.

And all along 50th Street was mostly swamp land then, where all the warehouses are now. Adamo Drive was not in existence then. That was all owned by Lykes Brothers. And uh, we'd meander along and take our

time, probably take us an hour or so to walk up there, another hour back. But we didn't mind. And, uh, one week we'd spend the rest of the day fishing, or hollering, whatever we wanted to do and that. And, uh, in the evening, right about dusk in the spring and summer, you could hear whippoorwills. First one, way off here, then some, one over here, then another one over here. Pretty soon they'd be all around us.

And huge coveys of quail and uh, 'course, alligators in the pond. There was a pond in the back, probably half a mile into the woods, the McKays owned the woods, the D. B. McKay family. And uh, there was a pond there, pretty good sized pond, and there was a big, big ole bull gator in there. And in mating season you could hear him roarin' for miles all around there. And, there were wildcats in the woods and, uh, it was just a time that, 'course I guess, in Alaska and places like that, they still are uh, lucky enough to have that kind of life.

But kids don't have the kind of life then. Uh, I got all kinds of exercise, walking around everywhere I wanted to go and, uh, rowin' the boat there, I'd row two or three miles, you know. My great-grandson couldn't believe it when we'd hear an outboard motor, uh that was a real treat, to see a boat with an outboard motor, goin' up there. We all went out to watch it. And some of the lucky kids had sailboats and uh, they would sail while we had to row. Then, kids got all the exercise they needed back then. Of course, we didn't have radio or TV or any of that.

SS: *Did your family have a car?*

TS: Oh, yeah, we had a car, a model T Ford. And, uh, a lot of week nights, we'd all pile into the car. By then we had a two-door sedan, and thanks to the Lykes Brothers, and uh, we'd, all

of the family'd pile into the car and



just drive around. And I learned all the old songs that came down, of course, they had from come down to sheet music, from Vaudeville, you know. And, uh, all the old Irish songs, you know, "Mother McCree", "When Irish Eyes are Smiling", all the songs like that.

My dad had a pretty good voice, Mama did too, and, uh, as kids, learned all those songs by ridin' around like that. And, uh, then sometimes we'd go to the beach. Uh, this was before Gandy bridge or any of the bridges were built. We had to uh, go around to Oldsmar, which was a family subdivision that was started by R. E. Olds who uh, made the Oldsmobile automobile. And we'd go all the way around there and we used to go to Pass-a-Grille beach and, uh, spend the day.

And then the Lykes Brothers had what they called a cottage over to Indian Rocks Beach. It was a great big two-story house and, uh, lot of times we could go over there and spend a couple of weeks. And these houses, these big houses, uh, were, maybe a quarter or half a mile apart and it was just wild beach. You could stand on the beach with a hand line and catch all the fish, mostly whiting, but, uh, that you wanted.

And you'd walk all along the beach and the waves would come up and the coquinas would come up by the thousands, I guess about a million. A lot of people made coquina soup out of that. Um, then later on, well uh, we,

we moved back into town in 1929 and lived at the corner of Central and Wilder. Hillsborough High was only two years old at that time. And uh, my brother and sister went to school there and then ().

SS: *Why did your family move back to the city?*

TS: 'Cause we were living in Palm River and that was, that was strictly country. The house we lived in had been what they called a road house, people stopped there overnight when they'd go into town. There was a garage there would hold probably four, four cars or six, maybe, even, and a servant house. And an ice box, not a refrigerator. The ice box, where they put their ice, would hold 300 pounds of ice. And, so uh, people would stay there overnight or longer and then go on into town.

SS: *Where was the plant that your father managed?*

TS: It was at the Seaboard, it was between the coastline and Seaboard tracks on 50th Street. The plant itself was right next to the Seaboard tracks, Lykes Brothers owned all that property, acres and acres.

SS: *When you moved back to, uh, to Tampa, did your father drive to work?*

TS: Yes, um hmm. By then he had a, I guess before we moved, about that time, he had, it was a 1928 Chevy, which was really somethin' back then, roll-up windows and everything, you know. [laugh] And uh, we lived in town, just about a year, and moved back out to Palm River. Uh, on a map, I could show you that. We moved into what we called the Van Eepoel house. The Van Eepoel's owned, uh, they were Belgian in ancestry, and they owned what was called the Tampa Stock Farms Dairy, which was

probably about a mile or so away from there, off of 50th Street, huge dairy.

And, uh, so we moved into their house and in the side like there, there was a pantry there, and in the pantry, uh, I don't know whether it was Mr. Van Eepoel or one of the relatives, had served in WWI, but there was a WWI helmet, a gas mask, and two or three things, which I don't remember now. But we only lived there about a year, uh, 1930, and the latter part of 1930, we moved to another house which was right on the river. The Van Eepoel house was on the river also.

And this, uh, this third house we moved into was this great big, two-story brick house, right where the river widens out there. And, uh, we lived there until I was in my late teens and left home and, uh, those houses are no longer there. But, uh, as I mentioned to you over the phone, you asked me, "What was the highlight of my life?" and I'm going on 83 and my childhood was the highlight of my life. Because, uh, those times are gone.

Uh, we walked everywhere and the few people that had cars, uh, when they'd come along, they'd always stop and ask if you wanted to ride. Kids weren't afraid to ride with anybody then because they were safe. And, uh, everybody was thoughtful of everyone else. We seldom locked the doors to the house when we left. And during the Depression, people would, uh, they were just vagrants, they would go from one area to another, trying to find work, trying to find food.

And, uh, they'd come to our house and mama would usually give 'em a sandwich or somethin'. And they'd gladly chopped a whole pile of wood or anything you gave 'em to do, for that sandwich. And uh, it didn't impress me much then, but I think back about it now and especially during the

Depression and uh, people just begged for work. And, uh, they, the people helped other people with families, give 'em food or a few bucks. Nobody had that much money.

I know when I started working, Lykes Brothers, after school, I rode a bicycle from Palm River to Hillsborough High, which was about fourteen miles. And, I'd get out at three, I'd go home to change clothes and I'd go back to the plant, which is about two miles. Uh, I'd work from four till eight every night and four till twelve on Saturday, and I got six dollars for it. And when I got out of school, I worked full-time, which was five full days, a half a day on Saturday, and I got twelve dollars.

SS: *What did they have you doing?*

the foreman at Hav-A-Tampa Cigar Company, I'd save him, he had a lot of hunting dogs, I'd save him a big wooden box of beef bones and didn't charge him. And for those, for his hunting dogs, and he always gave me a big package of premium cigars.

TS: Uh, I worked at the, uh, shipping desk, mostly, the shipping area. We'd put up the orders. The salesmen would go out and get the orders, Tampa, Ybor City, West Tampa, St.Pete. And they would call the orders in and uh, then we would put up the orders. And then customers would come in and we'd fill the orders and, um, we, uh, Friday night was our late night. Uh, we'd take the big orders for the weekend in our business. And so we'd work till usually eleven, twelve o'clock at night and put up those orders and we had a lot of customers in Ybor City, West Tampa, and then, there were a lot of grocery stores in downtown Tampa, and mom and pop groceries all over; no supermarkets back then and, uh...

SS: *Did restaurants buy directly from the plant, or were there middlemen involved?*

TS: Uh, they, uh, they bought directly. There was a restaurant, Cuervo's Restaurant in Ybor City and, uh, I think the name was Ralph Cuervo, I'm not sure. But anyway, uh, I would save him, Al Cuervo was his name, I would save him a box of beef tenderloins and he'd come pick them up every Friday. And, uh, of course, beef tenderloins were the expensive cut, you know. And, uh, the foreman at Hav-A-Tampa Cigar Company, I'd save him, he had a lot of hunting dogs, I'd save him a big wooden box of beef bones and didn't charge him. And for those, for his hunting dogs, and he always gave me

a big package of premium cigars. When I was a kid, I didn't smoke but I'd try once in a while and get sick.

But Al Cuervo, uh, one time, my first wife and I, we went to a movie. Back then, you could go to the Tampa Theatre. The admission was a quarter a person and after the movie, go to the Goody-Goody drive-in, get a hamburger and a cup of coffee or a cold drink, and have money for a tip for a dollar to keep. But anyway, but we had been to the movie, and, uh, we stopped in Ybor City. Al had told me, said, "Come by and see me when you're out in Ybor City." So I think I had fifty cents in my pocket after going to the movie and everything. But anyway, we went in and right away Al took us to a private room. And, uh, yeah, me with fifty cents in

my pocket, you know, it kind of shook me up.

Pretty soon, well, here comes the waiter with a big tray of hors d'oeuvres, y'know, little pieces of salami and olives, beautiful tray. So we sat there, you know, we looked at each other, y'know, how we gonna pay for this, y'know. So, uh, pretty soon Al came back there and, he says, uh, 'I've got your order all ready, all entered for you.' And that really scared me, you know.

So then, we waited awhile lookin' at the little things there. And pretty soon, here comes the waiter. There's two big trays, filet of beef tenderloin, in Ybor City they call it filette, filette steak, I call 'em filet, otherwise. But uh, here was this huge meal, y'know and they brought dessert, and everything, Spanish dessert. And, so, when we were through, well, Al came back, ask how we liked the meal, y'know. We thanked him and uh, "How much do I owe ya, Al?", trembling voice! [laugh] "No, no, no, nothin', nothin'!" So, thank goodness we got out of there in one piece. But, uh, that's the way the Latin people are, if they like you, you know, and you're their friend for life.

SS: *Can we take a break here?*

TS: Yeah.

(recorder is turned off and then back on.)

TS (continues): I was with Lykes Brothers about seven years and then I went to National Bisquit and I worked there nine years. And, uh, left there and then a couple years later, I went to work for Westinghouse. Worked there thirty years before I retired. Westinghouse Electric Supply and uh, even back then, in those days, that was in the fifties, uh, times were so different from now. Uh, where I

worked, I also, my wife, she worked at G.E. Supply, which was right around the corner. And, uh, Westinghouse had built a new building there and, I'm not sure of the time frame.

But anyway, where our building was, is where the Tampa Bay Lightning parking garage is now. And uh, back then, it was all industrial, three or four electrical supply and wholesalers; Raybro, Electric Supply, GE and Florida Electric Supply, Westinghouse. And other industrials, which is all gone now in hotels and, uh, sports arenas, everything there now.

SS: *It seems like an awful lot of electrical supplies companies to such a small town, when you get right down to it.*

TS: Ah, well, and then there was more of 'em, Graybar was on the other side of town and uh...

SS: *How was it they had enough business?*

TS: Oh, well, there's a lot of business.

[a female is heard in the background]

TS: Uh huh. It was just after the war, and Tampa was beginning to boom. Up until then, Tampa had been, it was kinda large, but it was more or less of a village. I remember when the first traffic light uh, was put into use. Uh, it was battery operated and uh, it was mounted on a pole. It was like a lantern inside, two green lenses, two red lenses. And a cop would stand out in the middle of the intersection. I'm not sure, seems to me like it was Cass and Franklin, I may be wrong there.

Ah, but anyway, there was a lever on the side and he'd turn it to whichever way he wanted the traffic to go. And then, excuse me, when they finally put up traffic lights, uh, when the light

would change, a bell would ring. Ding, ding, ding, to alert you to the fact that the b., the light was changing. And, uh, the railroad ran right through town down Cass Street and, uh, each intersection, on a tall pole, there was a little house like up there, and a man sat there twenty-four hours a day. Not the same man, actually, and, uh, when the trains would come, well he'd pump the gates down, the crossing gates, and then, it was also a bell--

SS: *They were hydraulic?*

TS: Yeah. And, uh, there was a bell on the gate, so, that was calling while it was coming down, and all the traffic, if you happened to be going parallel to the tracks on Cass Street. When the train came up along the side, you were supposed to stop till the train went by.

SS: *And, why was that?*

TS: Oh, safety, I guess. And, uh, I guess you've noticed the uh, the old iron bridge, uh north of the University there on the river that's always raised?

SS: *Yeah.*

TS: That was the railroad bridge. The phosphate docks that were out at Port Tampa and also where Harbor Island is now. And, uh, big phosphate docks there and, so the trains, phosphate trains, I think, uh, in the morning, the, uh, full train would go out Port Tampa, afternoon they're empty and so, morning and night they would pump the gates open down there and stop traffic. The city gates coming down as the train would come along, y'know, and then reverse, the train passed the gates to go back there. But there was no time limit on trains for blocking the crossings.

And, I know, at the Seaboard Coastline tracks out by 50th Street in the 20s and 30s, uh, many a time,

we'd set for an hour or more waiting, while the trains blocked the street. And, uh, you just had no course, you just sat. That was the marshallin' yard for the Coastline, east of 50th Street. So they would uh, marshall the cars over the different systems, depending on where the cars were goin'. And uh, they would have so many down there, a lot of times they'd have, this was steam engines, and they would have to hook up another engine at the other end in order to get this engine started. And uh, time for them to start, they would, they would...

There was a big difference between the freight engines and the passenger engines. Freight engines were bigger, for one thing, and uh, you always tell just by the whistle whether it was a freight train or a passenger train. Passenger trains, the whistle tended to be a high, shrill whistle. And, uh, the engineers, they liked to have their own little signal, you know, whistle. And uh, you could tell what train it was, lot of times, by the sound of the whistle. But the freight trains, uh, they were just a raucous, coarse whistle.

And uh, the freight trains were the more powerful, naturally. And when the train had been signaled, maybe with a hundred cars attached, which was a long line of cars, the, uh, engineer when he'd get the signal to go, they didn't have radios in the trains. They had a brakeman on top and he'd signal them to go, and uh, they'd shoot the steam through 'em and those drivers'd just spin, you know. And they would shoot sand under them. They had spouts to shoot sand under the driver to help 'em get a grip.

SS: *Get traction?*

TS: Uh huh, get traction. And uh, even that wasn't enough sometimes. They would, uh, have to hook another

engine at the other end, or sometimes they'd start with double engines. And, uh, on a, on a cool winter night, uh, they were very few airplanes back then, in the 30s and 40s, and so uh, the nights were real still. And on a cold night, uh, you could hear the train, passenger train coming up from Boca Grande, and you could hear that whistle, that shrill whistle, blowing there in the distance, you know and pretty soon you could hear the throb and the drummin' of the drivers on the rail, you know? They'd get louder and louder and louder and the be whistlin' getting' louder, pretty soon you hear that loud whistlin' sound that'd go by the nearest crossin' there and it'd fade away. Just, just kinda made the hair stand up on the back of your neck to hear them there in the distance and, uh...

SS: *Where were you living at the time?*

TS: Pardon me?

SS: *Where were you living?*

TS: In Palm River, in the big brick house down there. And the crossing was on Palm River Road and it was probably a mile from us. But a lot of times, uh, there was no place for kids to go, so the church was the focus of every, of all the activities, other than school. Now on Sunday, all us kids would go to Sunday School and then go to church. And then in the afternoons uh, we'd gather in front of somebody's house, y'know and just play around, ride bikes or walk up and down the street or whatever. And same thing on Sunday night and on Wednesday night, prayer meeting night, and kids, we went, not 'specially for church, but for the social part in there.

And boys and girls would walk up with their arms around each other, you

know, and that was a thrill! (laughter) walk up and down the street. We, we were always in sight of somebody's house, y'know, all the adults could watch. And uh, so that was our social life, uh, centered around the church and every now and then, we'd have a school play and uh, everybody'd go to that. But, uh, other than gatherin' at church or at school, there wasn't too much social life until we got older as teenagers, and got our own transportation. And uh, and walking, everybody walked. Uh, I would think nothin' of rowin' a boat two or three miles, y'know and go fishing, or just to be out on the river and--

SS: *Was there any vaudeville in the area for...*

TS: Uh, funny you should mention that because, on Palm River Road, uh, 'bout several blocks east of where 78th Street is now. Back then 78th was just a deep rut road and Palm River Road ended, this was in the 20s, ended where 301 is now. There was no 301. And, uh, but there was two families lived between where Palm River Road ended and 78th Street, the Livingstons and the Evans families and they were old Vaudevillians.

SS: *Ah.*

TS: And, uh, every now and then, they would put on a Vaudeville play at the school and uh, they were, they were just great to be around them, y'know. They'd tell us, later on when I was married to my first wife, our house was in between the Evans and Livingstons. We lived right next door to the Livingstons, Joe and Gussie Livingston, and, uh, so we became friends. The Livingstons also owned a theater in downtown off Skid Row. I forget the name of it now, but anyway...

SS: *Where was Skid Row?*

TS: Well, you know where the First Methodist Church is?

SS: *Uh huh.*

TS: Franklin Street begins to bend around there. That's where Skid Row started and went on down to where the public, where the old public library is. Uh, on the right hand side, about a block before you get to the public library was the Rialto Theater. That was a boom-time theatre and the Victory Theatre was, uh, on Tampa Street. I can't think of the cross street, right by Maas Brothers. Uh, and that's where I saw my first talky, uh, 1929, I believe it was. And, uh, Victor McLaughlin, and uh, it was a war movie, and I can't think of the name of it now. No, I'm wrong, that wasn't the first talky I saw. Al Jolson was the first talky I saw. And I don't remember the name of it.

brother was named Dick, "What'd they say? What'd they say?" and he'd read it to me, y'know. And uh, so we would spend all of our money. We'd get a certain allowance and we'd spend all of our money, candy and stuff. So then, we'd have to walk home. And we'd walk the Seaboard railroad tracks. Always came by the railroad station, old Union Station and by Lykes Brothers and then we'd get on 50th Street and walk home from there. Of course, you wouldn't dare walk the railroad tracks now.

SS: *How long did it take you to make that walk?*

TS: Uh, probably an hour, an hour and a half, something like that. Hey, we weren't in any special hurry, y'know, throwing rocks and everything. And, uh, but then, when the talkies came

***that's where I saw my
first talky***

SS: *Was it the Jazz Singer?*

TS: Jazz Singer, yeah. That was the first talky we saw. Otherwise, when we'd go to the movie, my older brother and I, Dick and I, uh, dad would take us up to the streetcar, the end of the streetcar line, which was in Gary, which was 'bout two or three miles from our house, maybe, 'bout five miles. The streetcar line ended there and we'd catch the streetcar into town. That was a nickel. And uh, we used to usually go to the Strand Theater. And I don't remember what the cross street was. It was between Franklin and Tampa and these were silent movies.

And at that time I was so little, I didn't know how to read, and so they'd show the scene and the words would come below it and I'd nudge Dick, my older

and (), well that put a whole new face on everything. And uh, when the Tampa Theatre opened, and I don't really remember the year, '27 or '28, I think, 1927, 28. And uh, that was really something: air conditionin'! And, uh, it was so beautiful. Have you ever been in the Tampa Theatre?

SS: *Yeah.*

TS: So beautiful. You go in there, y'know, and uh, kids were so good, (). At the time it opened, we lived at the corner of Central and Wilder, right across from Hillsborough High, was in 1929. And we'd catch the streetcar and rode it, it was a nickel. And uh, the Tampa Theater was a quarter and, boy, we were really something going there. It was just so beautiful, you know, and so different from what we'd been used to. Then we'd catch a movie and, of course, we had money for

candy and stuff while we were there and then catch the streetcar back home. Or if we spent all our money, we'd walk back home and it wasn't all that far.

And uh, then we had the Strand Theater which was the one where we'd go to the silent movies. The Victory Theatre, which was where the first talky was shown, and the Tampa Theatre which was just the latest thing. The Florida Theatre which was across from the Tampa Theatre. The Rialto, which was almost to the far end of Franklin Street and uh, then in Ybor City there was the Ritz Theatre.

And uh, but, uh, most of the theatres only cost you a dime for kids on Saturdays, the matinee y'know? So for a quarter...well, in Seminole Heights was the Seminole Theatre, which was on Florida Avenue down from Central Avenue, where we lived in, right straight down. And, uh, I'd get a quarter and on Saturday they would have the uh, news reels. They'd have had two or three serials, and show up to the part they wanted to make you come back next week, y'know. Uh, and then they had travelogues and uh, two or three comedies, and two or three features, usually westerns, and all this was for a dime.

SS: *How many hours did it take?*

TS: Uh, you'd sit there for about an hour. I'd get right out on the front row. I'd be sitting there with my head, head tilted back to see the screen and uh, and eatin' Walnettos and popcorn. Everything was a nickel. And, so, get a quarter or fifty cents allowance and just sit there and gorge myself to death. (chuckles) And, uh, all those westerns and all.

And then my brother and sister went to Hillsborough High School, which was only two years old and then we moved

back to Palm River into the big brick house, that, uh, I described earlier. And uh, lived right on the bend of the river there. My dad was the manager of Lykes Brothers Meat Packing. And, but, uh, we had a boat there and we had to row the boat 'cause we didn't have a motor. Outboard motors were fairly new then. Not too many people had them. We didn't think anything about rowin' the boat.

Uh, there was this old railroad trestle at the mouth of McKay Bay from Palm River and they had the uprights and the cross pieces but they had never finished it. It was started during WWI and that's where we did our fishing. We'd row the boat down there and tie it up to the pilings and we'd use an oar to knock the barnacles off and that would draw the sheephead. And they were, they were hard to catch. They'd kinda just suck the bait in and you had to wait until you were sure the hook was in, now you'd use a small hook, and then jerk it and catch 'em. And, uh...

SS: *Pretty smart fish.*

TS: Yeah, yeah, they were. And, uh, we'd catch drums, which resembled a sheephead, and mangrove snappers and uh, shiners and different kinds. We had all the fish we could eat. We had our own oyster bar. This was in the original place, when we first moved out there. Uh, when I was, I started the first grade, so I would have been six, 1924. And, uh, the Yankee tourists would come down our lane and Dick and I would go out and get oysters from the oyster bar. They'd eat those raw oysters and the river was very clean then. And, uh, just watch them eat those raw oysters and our stomachs would churn [laugh].

So we'd catch crabs, about a bucketful and we'd build a fire out in the yard and set a wash tub there, throw the

crabs in and uh, salt. And uh, we'd just stay out in the yard there and feast on crabs. Oh, boy, you couldn't beat 'em. You could catch a tub full of crabs, we'd wade a lot, croker sack, a croker sack is a feed sack, not many people know what croker sack is.

And, uh, we had, we had our own cow. And, uh, good milk. Now, we'd get blackberries by the bucketful. This was in the 20s. And we had to watch out for rattlesnakes. They liked to hang around the uh, blackberry bushes to just to eat the mice that feed on the blackberries. So we would pick blackberries by the bucketful and we had a, a black lady, uh, our housekeeper, Grace was her name, and, uh, boy, could she ever cook. But we would, uh, pick blackberries by the bucketful, we had our own cow, and a lot of times for supper we'd have blackberries and milk and sugar.

SS: *What did your family do for clothing back then? When you were living in Palm River?*

TS: Well, um, Ybor City and Tampa. That was a kind of a ritual. Like I said, dad was a manager at Lykes Brothers and, um, on Saturday he'd come home about noon, 'scuse me, and uh, we'd have lunch. We'll all pile into the car. Back then it was a Model-T Ford, furnished by Lykes Brothers. And our first stop was Ybor City, which was in the 20s, and, uh, dime stores had just converted over to electric light from gas light. The gas fixtures were still there and, uh, so, uh, we'd park the car. It was angled parking back then and, uh, streetcar was running down there.

And Dad would park the car and he'd go to the bolita joints and uh, Momma would go where she wanted, and us kids would scatter to the dime stores, Kress and uh, Woolworth and all the dime stores in a row there, y'know.

And we'd get our allowance, and all of them had basements. And we'd start in the basement, poke through everything. We didn't want to spend all our money in one spot (laughter). And, uh, we were told what time to be back at the car, y'know? And no problem about us being by ourselves, uh, nobody bothered kids. And this was Ybor City when it was Ybor City.

Uh, the, uh, the young girls would dress up in their best, y'know. And they'd parade up and down Seventh Avenue, and they had dueñas, who'd parade in back of 'em, an aunt or a mother or trusted family friend. And they wouldn't be but two or three paces behind 'em and the boys, teenage boys would line up along the curb. And most all of them were from cigar maker families and they all had white duck pants and white shirts. I mean, so white they'd blind you almost in the sun, and they'd stand there, y'know, along the side and eyein' the girls. The girls would look at them out of the corner of their eye, y'know. The boys couldn't say anything, cause, uh, the dueñas, they were watchin' 'em like a hawk but that was a standard Ybor City ritual.

And, uh, then the coffee houses, the Latin coffee houses along there, you could get a huge Cuban sandwich, and I mean real good Cuban sandwich, not like the ones you get now. Uh, small ones ten cents and the large ones fifteen. Same with deviled crabs. Uh, get deviled crabs for a nickel. Big deviled crabs with real crab meat in them. There's a, on each corner there's a guy with a bicycle there and a glass case mounted on the handlebar. And he'd have a sterno can, you know, lit to keep those deviled crabs hot, or warm. And for nickel, get a deviled crab and they were really good. And, uh, so we'd spend some of our allowance. We got a certain amount of allowance, you know, buy trinkets in the dime stores

and they were really dime stores then, nickel and dime store. And, uh, we'd get our deviled crabs and, uh, wander all up and down goin' in, visiting all the stores.

And the, uh, the cigar makers were, there was a Saturday ritual that, they would line up along the curbside of the sidewalk, jabberin' in Spanish, you know. 'Course, us kids, we didn't know what they was saying and, uh, but, uh, they would have very heated arguments, politics mostly. And uh, but we would wander up and down there, as safe as could be. And at a certain time we would all meet back at the car.

Then we'd go into Tampa, find a parking place there and we start over again and we also had a time. Then, my dad liked to go to the Elks Club, play cards, so the rest of us were on our own, until time, a set time and then we'd go, one of us go to the Elks Club and get him, and then we'd go home.

But uh, there was angular parking back then and uh, streetlights in the center of the streets. And that's all they lit, was just at the intersection. But we didn't have to worry, you know, us kids, we'd come back to the car and we would scatter. And we'd wander back to the car when we knew it was about time for us to be there. And we'd sit there in the dark, waiting for mom and dad; pretty soon they'd come back. But, uh...

SS: *But you had to be there first, of course, right?*

TS: Usually, we were, yeah. But, uh, that was no big problem, as long as you were there on time. A lot of times, you know, when we were all there one of us would go to the Elks Club and call for Dad and when we'd go home, we'd have a late supper. Uh, usually

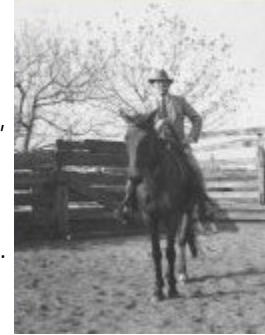
we'd stop out in Ybor City just east of Nebraska--

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

[START TAPE 1, SIDE B]

TS: We'd stop, uh, there were a couple of Jewish delicatessens right there on the, uh, north side of 7th Avenue. And we'd always stop there on our way home. Dad was from Denmark, he liked pumpernickel, the darker, the better, limburger cheese and all that, he'd get that. 'Course bein' a manager at Lykes Brothers, he knew all the storekeepers, you know. Uh, because they bought meat from Lykes Brothers.

So, uh, he'd get salt herring and uh, pickled herring and all that kind of stuff. We'd stop at two or three stores. By the time we'd get home, uh, it'd be around nine



o'clock and we'd have supper. And uh, we'd sit in the kitchen there, and dad would have his salt herring, limburger and Roquefort cheese and pumpernickel. Momma liked that too. And, uh, they'd buy lunch meats, stuff for us kids. We didn't care much for that kind of stuff.

But, uh, Saturday was always a special day in our lives when we were kids because we spent the whole afternoon and on into the evening, usually around 8:30 or 9:00. And uh, the stores were kid-friendly back then. You could go in and pick up stuff and examine it, see if you wanted it or not, you know? All kinds of goodies and uh, nickel and dime. And uh, they wouldn't, they wouldn't tell you to put it down or watch you like a hawk, because nobody thought of stealin' anything, y'know. And uh, 'cause if

you did, boy, you were in big trouble if you got caught. And, uh, that, uh, I look at my childhood as the best part of my life. I've had a good life.

But, uh, dad bein' from Denmark, oh, he taught us a little bit of Danish, which I don't remember any of. In fact, by the time, uh, well by the time I was in my early childhood, he found it real hard to correspond with his sister in uh, Denmark.

SS: *Hmm. ()*

TS: But, uh, along with that, there used to be a Danish freighter come in. This was in the 20s. A Danish freighter would come in and dock, and, uh, dad would go down there and have supper with the captain and he'd always bring us Danish newspapers. Had the same funnies, Katznjammer Kids and all that. Had the same funnies as ours, but they were in Danish. And us kids used to love to try to figure out what they were saying. A lot of times dad would translate it for us.

And, but, uh, back than, in the 20s and even into the early 30s, kids were free to go anywhere. You didn't have to worry. I would ride my horse. Mr. Tom Lykes, uh, gave me a Shetland pony. We already had a Cuban cow pony.

And, uh, I would ride my horse all over the woods, never have to worry about people bothering me, you know? And, uh, I'd ride for miles and miles. A lot of times I'd take me an apple and maybe a sandwich, ride into the woods. I loved to read and, uh, dad, this wasn't too long after WWI and I just, uh, that's how I learned to read real good. Because I'd read dad's magazines; western stories and there were war magazines, wasn't too long after WWI. I loved to read about the aerial dogfights and all the airplanes.

And uh, so I took the magazines and an apple or something like that, go out in the woods. I had a police dog that I had bought for ten dollars, a birthday gift, and that dog and I were inseparable. And I'd go out on the river in a rowboat. Well he was right there, Fritz was his name; German shepherd and uh, I'd go on my horse and he'd follow me, you know. And old Fritz and I and the horse. I'd tie the horse up and then sit down under the tree and I'd read by the hour.

SS: *Um hmm.*

TS: Then I had a friend over on 22nd Street Causeway, lived down a canal. And uh, when Dick, my older brother decided he didn't want to ride the horse anymore. We'd give the Cuban cow pony to uh, these horses both been given to us by, uh, Mr. Tom Lykes. Well, we gave the Cuban cow pony to a friend of mine, George, uh, whatever his name is, I can't think of it now. But anyway, I kept the little Shetland pony, little black mare. I named her Black Beauty. She was a mean little thing. I had to watch when I was ridin'. I was always barefoot and uh, sometimes I rode bareback, sometimes I rode with a saddle, but I always had to watch when she'd lay her ears back, I'd pull my feet back, because

she'd turn around and bite me.
[laugh]

And, uh, when I was putting the bridle on, well,

uh, she's always tryin' when I'd forget and stand right by her and she'd put her hoof on my foot. I couldn't budge



her to save my neck. I'd scream and holler and beat on her and everything, and when she'd ready, she'd move her foot off of mine. Man, that hurt. But, uh, and she'd try to bite my foot, you know, when her ears laid back.

But uh, I'd ride all over Palm River, 22nd Street, all over that area. Uh, this was before 301 was built. And uh, 78th Street was just a dirt road. Garcia had a pig farm there, where Tampa Armature Works is now, all the rest of it was woods. And then, across the railroad, the road, uh, was a dirt road that went on up to, uh, what finally became 301 and uh, Tampa () was right in there.

But, uh, just as you turned east from the river on that dirt road was a place called Kraft Springs, it was a flowing well and uh, they sold the water for a penny a jug. You bring your own jug, but, uh, us kids, I'd ride my horse over there, y'know, hot summer day and uh, I'd just get off and the well was flowin', I'd just drink what I wanted, and they didn't care. Bury my face in that cold water and, uh, () was, uh, after 301 was built () before () Palm River and 301 and () went to school there. And, so, a lot of times I'd go down there.

I remember one time, on Saturday, my best friend, Arthur Lavoie, he and I were hunting. We had our shotguns with us and we were going down the railroad track and back of Campoamor's Dairy and there were some others, came out for the day and one of their hired hands left and he'd stolen some stuff. So they were lookin' for him. So Arthur and I, we had got our shotguns, you know, and, 'scuse me, so we were gonna go on a manhunt [laugh].

But, uh, we were bigshots as teenagers and we would go out hunting every Saturday, just about.

Arthur'd come down to the house and we'd go, we'd go hunting. And uh, never did shoot much of anything, but the fish, we always carried a hand line, Dick and I carried a hand line. And speakin' of my older brother, Dick, while we was still lived in that first house in the 20s in Palm River, uh, my youngest brother was born and so we begged, Dick and I begged Mom and Dad to let us name the new baby. So we named him Harry, and we were Tom, Dick and Harry.

SS: *Uh huh, that's right.*

TS: And uh, but anyhow, Dick and I would wander all over those woods and uh, fish, we always carried a hand line. All we had to do was step down into the bullrushes, to get some snails, and crack the shell, put them on. And they had a hard shell to run a hook through it and the fish had a hard, hard time getting that off. So we could fish anywhere up and down the river. And there were, uh, very few houses. So most of it was open, for us to fish. And uh, then when we finally got a boat, well we had to row everywhere and, uh, on down on what we called the Point, that belonged to the McKay family. It was west of our family, uh, our house.

And uh, it was about two or three blocks into their property, uh what we called the point, there's a nice little sandy beach there. And, uh, we had a ball down there, we'd go swimming down there. Uh, go out in the boat, we'd... One time, uh, my wife and I were rowing along the river there and we were almost out to McKay Bay, and we moved up into the bullrushes, to see all kinda animal and sea life. We pulled up into there and there was a wooden platform in there and an old still, that we'd never known was there before. And, uh, we thought that was kinda interesting.

But, uh, Dick and I always carried a hand line in our pocket, so we could fish anywhere along the river and, uh, very seldom did we use a fishing pole back then. And uh, we'd go over across from where we lived to Lykes Brothers' pasture. The river went west of the Palm River Bridge, about two blocks, it came here and then it widened out and this was where we lived over here and the bay was up here, McKay Bay and this is McKay property. But over here was the Lykes' pasture and there was nice, uh, I guess the Indians had broken a lot of sea shells there, oyster shells, I mean, and nice sandy beach there and we'd

attention to where I was going and I got into some quicksand. And my horse finally was able to find his way through there, but from then on I watched what I was doin'.

But I worked for quite a while at Lykes Brothers, uh, packing sausage and uh, shipping part of the place. I didn't never work in the killin' floor. And then later, when they built the new plant up by the Coastline tracks, I worked in the sausage kitchen. And uh, finally went to work for National Biscuit and quit there and had a couple of other jobs and then went to Westinghouse and that's where I ended my working career.

the Indians had broken a lot of sea shells there, oyster shells, I mean, and nice sandy beach there and we'd go over and build a fire and we'd catch these fish and fry our fish over there.

go over and build a fire and we'd catch these fish and fry our fish over there. And later on, after I grew up and went to work for Lykes Brothers, uh, Mr. H. T. Lykes gave me another horse and, uh, this was during the Depression. And my car broke down and I didn't have the money to fix it, so I rode my horse to work. It was about four or five miles and I had, during the Depression I was poor and I couldn't afford to buy feed. I let my horse graze at home and so, I'd ride my horse to work and so I'd put him out there and let them feed him. And then so I wouldn't uh, get anything I wasn't entitled to, in the afternoon I'd go out and help 'em drive the cattle in for the next day's kill.

And, uh, so this was a horse, 'bout the color of a palomino, these were cow ponies and they knew what to do when you get out in the woods, y'know. You didn't guide them too much because they knew where to go and what to do. And I know this one time I was chasing an old Brahma bull out in the woods and I wasn't paying too much

SS: *Let me just finish it up by asking, um, the electrical supply business, you were in that for thirty years? How did that change during that time?*

TS: Well, back then, uh, (woman speaks in background)...yeah, nobody, for instance, the utilities, Tampa Electric, Florida Power, they didn't buy anything direct. They all went through a distributor. They went strictly by the columns. For instance, uh, fittings, uh columns and so forth. There was three columns. I'll use the manufacturer, Thomas and Betts, as an example. Uh, the first column was a high column and the middle column and the low column was the third column, okay? Ah, say, a package of couplings was ten, a standard package. Okay. If they bought, if they only wanted five, then they paid the high price, which was the first column. Uh, if they wanted seven, they'd pay middle column and if they bought a standard package of ten, this is just an example, they'd pay the low column.

SS: *Cheaper price...*

TS: Yeah. Okay, Tampa Electric, uh, they would give us an order for fittings and these were conduit fittings. They'd give us an order for fittings and if we, by chance... If they ordered less than a standard package and we gave them a standard package price, they would make us go back and bill them at the higher price. And, back then you, you'd go strictly by the column. And, uh, you sold wholesale only and you didn't, nobody else bought from you. And, uh, you, different wholesale distributors, Graybar, Raybro, stock different manufacturer's products and uh, we stocked Steel City, which was a switch box manufacturer, as a step. Thomas and Betts was a fittings and uh, different kind of wire and so forth.

So then, you went strictly by the column and as times progressed, 'scuse me, well, um, the, uh, even the different, uh, electrical, we called them jobbers, which we would give jobber price, which was usually a low column. And then they, uh, people who did the electrical work, uh, they, we would bill them usually by the column. Then it got to where they would shop around, to the Westinghouse, Graybar, Raybro. They would shop around for the best price and you had to to get to where you had to cut even below the standard package, which was the low price, buy it below standard package price.

And uh, when the utilities, Tampa Electric and so forth, uh, they got to where they wanted you to quote 'em for maybe six months at a time. And if the market price went up, wire or whatever, you had to give 'em that price. So then the wholesalers began to go to the manufacturers and they would get quotes from them. And uh, sometimes you'd, the price would be just maybe 5% above the cost. And uh, you really couldn't make any kind

of profit at all on that, so from the time I started Westinghouse to the time I left, uh, let's see, I retired when I was 64. I'm 83 now. What is that, 27, 17 years?

SS: *19 years.*

TS: 17 years.

SS: *19 years.*

TS: 19...

SS: *19.*

TS: 19 years? Boy, it don't seem that long. Well, times had changed so much that even the little contractors, electrical contractors, they shopped around. And uh, they would, uh, they would want cost plus. Not package and standard prices, they would want cost plus prices and they'd shop around 'til they got it. Even on just little ole \$150, \$200 jobs. And uh, before, when I first started, we'd adhere to the columns, standard package, the middle column and the high column and uh, on wire and everything else. And, uh, it was, instead of a business where the uh, distributors and the purchaser knew what the prices was gonna be, even the small contractors, they would shop the prices around until you never knew whether you were gonna get an order or not.

And then on job bids, 150, 200 thousand or more jobs, uh, it was dog eat dog. You would have to go to the manufacturers and the different agents handled certain lines. Well, they would get their lines specified and, like some agents would go, deal with Graybar or Raybro. Some would be with us and if those, their lines were specified, we couldn't get 'em. So, we'd try to bid with alternatives, but most of the time, they wouldn't be accepted. And uh, then after you got these big jobs, uh, you had to, uh,

bring the stuff in within the time frame that they would use. The lighting fixtures, course they would be near the last. Uh, the conduit and uh, wire, would be first, and uh, then you'd progress right on up to what was left.

SS: *It's just in time for the labor laws that they're talking about now.*

TS: Right. Because they didn't want to store 'em. They wanted us to store 'em, see, and we didn't have the space for large jobs to store 'em. And uh, so we would try to coordinate, and uh--

SS: *Coordinate with the manufacturers?*

TS: Right. And with the contractors. And uh, finally we uh, we got a job through Robison Electric up in Orlando when they first built that Naval, uh, I guess you'd call it a Naval Base, although it was a training station. Well, we got a lot of the business on that through and Robison. And uh, it was bad enough when it was a job in town, but when it was out of town like that, it was pretty hard to coordinate all these different manufacturers. And, uh, so you had to keep a job account folder. The salesman for that particular, the inside salesman instead of the outside salesman, would handle the job account. And everybody had to coordinate there, y'know, in order to get this shipped on time and not ahead of time. The contractors would really hold your feet to the fire, if you got there ahead of time. And they didn't want it, well lots of times, you'd have to bring it back into your warehouse.

But times changed so.... Ah, when I was younger and we were younger, people took care of each other. And in later years, after the war, WWII, uh, it became more of a dog-eat-dog world. And uh, you, you had to bid on everything and uh, the, uh, different

utilities and, uh, they, of course, they wouldn't tell you what you was bidding against. It was against the law, you can't do it. You just had to go in blind, y'know. And some of these, uh, wholesalers, boy, they'd go in and get special prices from their factories and they'd go in at our cost, a lot of times.

Uh, bein' a chain, Westinghouse, nationwide chain like that, we were restricted into how low we could go without getting permission from headquarters. And uh, so we had a fight on our hands But, uh, especially in my older years at Westinghouse, it was, she went to work for GE not too long after that, the inside manager at Westinghouse, uh, got her the job at GE. And uh, so we were working for competitors for a while there, but uh, it was a pleasure to work back then. It got so competitive [phone interruption], got so competitive that, uh, the, uh, all the distributors having to cut prices and the utilities would just make you uh. cut prices to the bone and uh, you couldn't make any profit. Uh, it just wasn't planned for.

SS: *That's when Westinghouse eventually sold out of that business.*

TS: Yeah, they did. I don't know who owns Westinghouse, now, but Westinghouse sold off almost all of the business. At one time, uh, they had what they called the Westinghouse Employee Council. There's uh, so many regions, I forget how many regions and uh, representatives from each region. We were in the southeastern region. And I was the representative appointed, which was a pretty prestigious thing, you know.

We'd meet in Pittsburgh every three months and from all, representatives from all over the country, Westinghouse Electric Supply. And uh, the uh, Vice President, Matt Pacifico, would be there, to preside over the

first meetings and all. And, uh, but we, they told us from the very start that whatever we said or did could not be held against us. If we disagreed with something they were doin', let it be known; it wouldn't be held against us. We were free to speak our minds, you know.

What they wanted was suggestions, uh, of better ways to improve Westinghouse. And uh, I was responsible for the Southeastern District, which encompassed Georgia, Florida and Alabama, I think. And uh, so, it was my job. I would contact the branch managers of all different branches and, uh, ask them to get their employees to make suggestions. And we, we gave premiums or prizes, if you want to call it that, for good suggestions.

And then we would meet in Pittsburgh, uh, three or four times a year. First time I ever saw snow, it was up there. Uh, we'd meet at a hotel in a meeting room and this one meeting, it was early spring when we'd been up there. And, uh, there was a little bitty pockets of snow on the way from the airport to the hotel, but then, uh, the meeting had just started and the lady that was presiding over the meeting, well, she knew that I was the only that hadn't seen snow and she, uh, opened the blind and said, "Anyone that hadn't seen snow better look now." Melting as soon as it hit the ground. And so that was the first time.

You know, my mother was born in Minnesota, my dad in Denmark. That was the first time I had seen snow. Uh, my older brother was born in Minnesota. My older sister in Moultrie, Georgia. I was born in Tifton, Georgia and my younger brother was born in Palm River, at Tampa, it is now.

SS: *No two in one place.*

TS: Yeah. Uh, Dad went to work in meat packing houses in Minnesota, most Scandinavians went to Minnesota. And, uh, that's when, where he and mom married. And then uh, I don't know how he got started into the business, but uh, they came South. Uh, he would come and he would supervise the building of packing houses, meat packing houses. And then he would manage them for a while and then he'd go onto another one. So, uh, that's why we moved around. My sister was born in Moultrie and I was born in Tifton, and my younger, my oldest brother in Albert Lea, Minnesota.

By the way, my mother, I had gotten her to write down a few little memoirs. She lived, she and her family, she was just a little girl. They lived at the foot of what was called Circus Hill. Uh, the circus trains would come in there, to the sidings, unload, 'scuse me, and then wagons and paraded go up the hill to the circus camp. [cough] Excuse me.

SS: *Mm hm.*

TS: Her father, uh, was friends with Buffalo Bill. And she said that, uh, many times when the circus would come, the Buffalo Bill Circus, their house was at the foot of Circus Hill. And many times, when the circus would come there, Buffalo Bill would come sit on their porch, as the parade went by, up the hill and she would sit on his lap. And uh, so, I thought that was rather interesting. And, uh, then, uh, her, uh, her grandfather, my great-grandfather, who was a soldier from the Union Army in the Civil War. And, uh, I have a letter that he wrote to my great-grandmother and, in April of 1863. He was stationed at Fort Snelling, Minnesota. I'll show it to you, if you like, before you go, but anyway, uh, he was in the Union Army.

'Course, I'm red-blooded Southerner and none my family was in the Confederate Army, none of my immediate family. Now I had uncles and all and cousins and their families were in the Confederate Army. And I, uh, have my Confederate Flag up there and I'll fly it on Confederate Memorial Day. But uh, I never knew too much about my great-grandparents, but he also fought in the Indian War in Minnesota. Uh, y'know they had several Indian massacres there and he fought in the Indian War.

Uh, they, he and my great-grandmother migrated to Minnesota in the early, about the 1830s, I think, something like that. And, the first winter they lived in a corncrib, that they fixed up as a house. And then he built a log cabin and then he was able to build a home, but, uh, he hated Indians. He'd seen some of the atrocities, you know. He hated Indians with a passion.

And my mother, after she and dad were married, she had a couple of pillows on the couch, with Indian heads on 'em and a picture on the wall of an Indian head. And when he would come to the house, when my great-grandparents would come to the house, she would have to turn the pillows over, and turn that picture to the wall, 'cause he hated Indians so bad.

But the story goes that my great-grandmother, uh, she treated... The whites back then, you know, this was before and during the Civil War, so they would pack up and go to camp with their husbands. And the story goes that uh, she would treat the sick and wounded Indians the same as she would the Americans soldiers, the Union soldiers. And, uh, in gratitude, the Indians made her a complete buckskin outfit. Now, this is, that's the

story. I have never seen it, but this was passed on through the family.

And the story also goes that some of the officers, ah, and I believe this was during the Civil War, uh, they wanted pancakes, and she didn't have a thing to flip 'em with. So one of the officers had the blacksmith make a, what do you call, a spatula, out of this sword, so she could flip the pancakes. And, uh, they, what was I gonna say? Uh, I don't know. Anyway, after the war, he owned a stable, he was also a jockey. And it was quite different than now, being a jockey. My mother's father worked for him at the stable and I had a picture of this stable and all of the family and I guess that's about pretty much my story. Uh, I can't think of too much more.

SS: Oh. Well, it was fascinating.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE B]

[END OF INTERVIEW]