

# FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

## *ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE*

**Dorothy Pollard Hightower**

Interviewees: **Sally Rachuig Kelly**

**Mary Norton Shelton**

Interview Date: 04/04/2010

Interviewers: Bruce Kelly, Jane Goodsill

Transcriber: Marsha Smith

Other participants include Scotty Hightower BASS (daughter of Dorothy Hightower, Chuck KELLY (son of Sally Kelly) and Nancy Shelton PRUITT (daughter of Mary Shelton). 39 Pages



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**Sally**



**Dot**



**Mary**

*Transcript*

KELLY, B: Mary, can you described the first time you came to Sugar Land?

SHELTON: Well, the first time I came to Sugar Land (chuckles), you know, my sister, got a job in Sugar Land. My daddy had died and left Mama with my older sister [Kitty], and myself and the younger sister [Sally]. Betty Norton got a job as a P.E. teacher after finishing at The University of Texas. Mr. Borden was up there, and looking for a P.E. teacher, and that's what she'd graduated in. So he told her that he'd hire her but she had to go to Sugar Land and meet with the school board.

So she got on the bus and came to Sugar Land. Mr. Rozelle met her—it was dusk—and he said, 'There's no place for you to stay here. There's no roomin' house or anything. You can't stay here.' So she got back on the bus and went on into Houston. I guess she found a place. Anyway she had to come back out and meet with the school board, and they hired her. So then, when she got to Sugar Land, there was no place for her to live, because the Teacherage was full. So she said, 'Mama, if you will move to Sugar Land, they will allow me to rent a house.' Mama said, 'Boy, that's good.' Sally and I were still in school. I was a seventh grader when I came to Sugar Land. Well it was early morning, when my brother brought us to Sugar Land. It had [just] rained. And San Antonio evidently was having a drought or something, because it was dry and hot. But Sugar Land was BEAUTIFUL. The crepe myrtles were blooming, and of course, this was early September, cause school started right after Labor Day. Anyway, Sugar Land was WONDERFUL. So we drove up to the house where we were to live. There were verbenas down the sidewalk, all these beautiful verbenas in the early morning—it was just like heaven! And we LOVED Sugar Land. We STILL love Sugar Land. (laughs)

There was no room for my sister, a P.E. teacher to live at The Teacherage. So we moved to a house on 4th Street

KELLY, B: Who were some of your neighbors? Do you remember your neighbors?

SHELTON: Mr. and Mrs. Claude Washburn were there. Now, Claude Washburn was my age and was in school with me. And he was in the war. And he went to the Navy and he was captured in Bataan I think, and was captured all during the war. But he lived through it and came back and I got to see him one time.

He came back and was driving a car, and a train hit him and killed him. After he went through ALL of the war, all the horror, and then get home and have a train kill him. That's just almost unbelievable. He was in my graduating class.

KELLY, B: Can you describe your first day at school?

SHELTON: Oh, well, not really. Of course, I was a seventh grader and—

KELLY, S: Who was your teacher?

SHELTON: We had a teacher for every subject. Well, of course Miss Manning— she had daughter, Maragret manning, who worked as a telephone operator.

We had boys in one room. Miss Manning had the boys.

KELLY, S: OH!

SHELTON: And the—usually the English teacher had the girls.

KELLY, S: Oh, it was segregated?

SHELTON: Yes, for the homeroom. And then you went to the different classes. We had typing and we had Spanish and we had home economics. And we had a—you talk about a first class gym! We had a first class home economics cottage.

KELLY, S: We DID. It was definitely—

SHELTON: Boy, it was special.

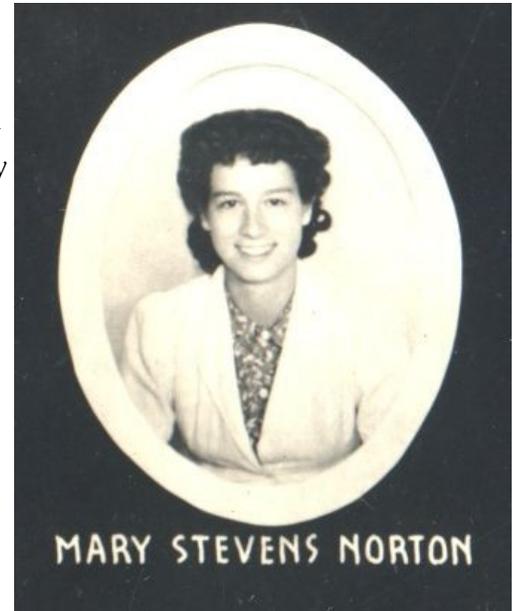
KELLY, S: Had a grand piano in it!

SHELTON: It DID. And had a—we served the School Board—always served the School Board [meals].

KELLY, S: Yes!

SHELTON: ALWAYS served the School Board. That was—

KELLY, S: Crystal and china. Everything that you could—



SHELTON: It was first class!

HIGHTOWER: M.R. Woods had china, crystal, yes ma'am.

BASS: You mentioned Mr. Barden. Was he a principal?

KELLY, S: Superintendent.

SHELTON: No, he was a superintendent.

HIGHTOWER: Is that the photo I've kept all these years?

BASS: Yeah.

HIGHTOWER: Because we didn't know who it was.

BASS: Because we don't know who that man is.

SHELTON: I don't know who that is either.

GOODSILL: Why don't you show us the picture so I can get it on film?

BASS: It says Ethridge, Principal Ethridge.

SHELTON: Was he a principal?

KELLY, S: Well, I know he was a teacher. Because he taught Charles in, I think, the sixth grade. Mr. Ethridge—

SHELTON: Yeah.

KELLY, S: He might have just been a homeroom teacher, you know.

BASS: I don't know. But we never—Mother said—it was before we were here.

HIGHTOWER: Well, for goodness sakes, we've kept that for many years....

(all laugh)

SHELTON: Yeah, Mr. Ethridge—

KELLY, S: Uh huh. You didn't have him then?



SHELTON: No, I didn't.

HIGHTOWER: I had never heard that name!

KELLY, S: Yeah.

SHELTON: Well, now, they were from the people, I think, in Huntsville, the Ethridges, because, when Dolly Landin went to Huntsville, and of course, we had known Mr. Ethridge. I think he came over to our house when we lived on Fourth St. Because he was there.

KELLY, B: And how long did you live on Fourth St.?

SHELTON: Well, five years when my sister taught. As long as she taught.

HIGHTOWER: For some reason, somebody told me, or I don't know—I didn't dream it—that THAT street was called Teachers' Street. That there were a lot of teachers on that street.

SHELTON: Not to my knowledge.

HIGHTOWER: And maybe that was after y'all moved, because there was Bill—Mr. —

KELLY, S: Did Mr. Barden live on 5th Street?

HIGHTOWER: Dzierzanowski lived there and another teacher lived there.

GOODSILL: After five years, what happened?

SHELTON: Oh, well, after five years, my sister married and of course, that put her out of teaching. She couldn't teach.

GOODSILL: Before we go any further, tell me your sister's full name.

SHELTON: Well, in that time, it was Elizabeth Blackstone Norton, but then she married. When she married, then she couldn't teach any more.



PRUITT: But they called her Betty.

GOODSILL: Tell me your other sisters' names.

SHELTON: Well, the one that really didn't live in Sugar Land a lot was Katherine Norton. And then I was Mary Norton, and my youngest sister was Sally Norton. All those Nortons. Okay, we came because of Betty. And then, when she married, then that meant, we thought it meant we wouldn't have a house, you know. BUT all the teachers knew Mama so Mama and I moved to the Teacherage.

[Before that] the teachers [who lived at the Teacherage] were having to go to the Imperial Inn to eat or to the root beer stand, and they wanted to know if Mr. Ulrich would let Mama live there and cook for them. And they ate right there at the Teacherage.

HIGHTOWER: Mrs. Matoska lived there but she had to leave when they disbanded the Teacherage.

SHELTON: Well, that was later.

HIGHTOWER: That was later.

KELLY, S: So, Mary, they didn't have boarding until your mother came in?

SHELTON: That's right.

KELLY, S: She started the food, the dining room.

SHELTON: Yeah, the dining room, uh huh.

KELLY, S: Is that right!

SHELTON: They had a housemother and her husband—Mr. Rutledge—I don't know what his name was. He was the barber.

KELLY, S: Okay.

SHELTON: And they moved to Rosenberg, I believe. They were at the Teacherage. But all they did was be a housemother, you might say.

KELLY, S: I see. Yeah.

SHELTON: And why they needed that. The teachers were there nine months and rent went on for twelve months. That was the proper way (laughs), I'm sure.

SHELTON: But when Mama took it over, she cooked. And we lived there. Then my sister [Sally] graduated and I was in business school. And I lived in Houston, but I'd come out every weekend. Then I worked, then, in Sugar Land.

KELLY, S: What was your first job?

SHELTON: My first job in Sugar Land? I worked for Mr. Guenther, in the Credit and Collections Department. I worked with charge tickets for the company charge accounts.

KELLY, S: Oh, you did?!

SHELTON: Back in what they called the credit and collection department. Ninette Brune, that was Dolly Landin's oldest sister— was SO wonderful. Let's see. Mr. Guenther was back there and Gus Vogelsand, Mr. Krehmeier

KELLY, S: Was Mr. Krehmeier in that?

SHELTON: Yes, Mr. Krehmeier was back there in one office. They kind of made a little office back in the back of the general [store]— the Credit and Collerction Department. And Gus Vogelsang—do you remember—now he married one of the Jenkins girls.

KELLY, S: Gladys?

SHELTON: Yeah, I believe it was Gladys.

KELLY, S: Gladys Jenkins.

SHELTON: Uh huh. And he worked there. And Ninette Loper Brune.

KELLY, S: Broom?

SHELTON: I don't know how you spell it. [see [www.easttexasnews.com/Obituaries/Obituaries\\_Groveton/November2007/november25\\_december2\\_2007.html](http://www.easttexasnews.com/Obituaries/Obituaries_Groveton/November2007/november25_december2_2007.html)] But he was the farm manager at that time.

GOODSILL: So, you were in business school?

SHELTON: I went to business school for a while.

GOODSILL: Kind of ahead of your time, weren't you? (smile in her voice)

SHELTON: (laughs). Well, I guess. It didn't do me much good.

KELLY, S, SHELTON & GOODSILL: (laughing)

SHELTON: Anyway, I came back to Sugar Land.

SHELTON: I worked in the credit & collections department. Then, when May Doll Douglas left the bank, they wanted me to come to the bank, so then I went to the bank.

KELLY, S: Oh, May Doll Douglas worked in the bank?

SHELTON: And then she went in to work for, I believe it was Houston National Bank.

KELLY, S: Okay, she went into Houston.

GOODSILL: Tell us how you met your husband.

SHELTON: Well, we went to school together. I came in September of the 7th grade, and he came in January of the 7th grade. His daddy was a driller for Humble and so he was living with his daddy. So therefore, we went to school together, graduated together and everything.

GOODSILL: And where did they live?

SHELTON: Well, they lived in a boarding house. Mrs. Smith ran the Imperial Inn and they lived in the Imperial Inn. And then when he [the father] left [for work], he left Herbert here by himself, because Mrs. Smith and Mr. Smith said they'd take care of him. And his mother said, 'You let him live there or we'll go to court'. (laughs) So he got to stay here! And Mr. and Mrs. Smith, they were jewels.

They had a son, [Buster] just a year older than Herbert. And Buster, and Herbert roomed together. And they'd swim out there in the creek and they'd be swimming across to Jack Albert at the Ulrich's place, you know. (laughing) They'd see Mr. Smith coming across the bridge, because they had a light on the bridge, and they'd hop in the creek and swim back and get in the bed. 'We've been here all night' [mimicking the boys innocently saying that]. (laughter)

PRUITT: Well, they'd hold their clothes above their heads and swim across the creek. (more laughter from all)

GOODSILL: And what was his full name? Herbert's full name.

SHELTON: Herbert Raymond Shelton. He was actually six months younger. Because his birthday is a December birthday, and mine's a May birthday. What am I going to be? Eighty-nine? I'm going to be eighty-nine and he would be eighty-eight. And then he'd turn eighty-nine in December.

PRUITT: You need to explain why Dad [Herbert] came to Sugar Land in 7th grade. We know why you came, because of Betty's job. Mama came in order as chaperone so Betty could get the job. So why did Daddy come?

SHELTON: Well, he was with HIS daddy when he had to drill out in the Sugar Land oil field.

PRUITT: So, Daddy didn't want to move from Sugar Land.

SHELTON: That's right. He was just a 7th grader, getting ready to play football, you know, and all that kind of stuff, and didn't want to move! And his daddy would be moving, moving, moving, as a driller for Humble Oil.

PRUITT: And when they divorced, Mr. Shelton had custody of Herbert, so that's why he allowed the Smiths to take care of him.

SHELTON: Yes, well, of course, there was nothing legal about that! (chuckles)

KELLY, S: Just a gentleman's agreement!

SHELTON: Yeah (laughing).

GOODSILL: He probably had the eyes of the town on him anyway! People were watching!

SHELTON: Yeah (laughing). Well, the thing is, that his mother could see that Herbert was happy there, and she knew the Smiths, because she'd been down to see about him. And she knew it was all-fine.

HIGHTOWER: But then, who was it that always picked up Herbert? They went to our church.

SHELTON: How in thunder would I ever not remember his name?

HIGHTOWER: She was from Cleveland. His wife was...?

SHELTON: He would pick up Herbert and ...

HIGHTOWER: And take him to church.

SHELTON: He would pick up Herbert. He was VERY outgoing. And they had one daughter that would always come to our reunion.

HIGHTOWER: Oh she was a beauty!

SHELTON: Always come to our reunion.

PRUITT: I've never heard this.

SHELTON: BURNS! BURNS!

KELLY, S: OH, yes! That lived out at the Camp. Oh yeah, Barbara Burns.

SHELTON: And he would always pick up Herbert.

KELLY, S: What WAS his first name?

SHELTON: Emmitt!

KELLY, S: Emmitt Burns. And Edith.

SHELTON: Yeah! Emmitt & Edith.

KELLY, S: So he picked up Herbert and brought him to church. He'd make sure that he was in church (laughing).

SHELTON: Right.

KELLY, S: Emmitt lived in back of us at the Humble Camp.

GOODSILL: Well, if Herbert's father worked for Humble Oil, how come they didn't live out at the Humble Camp?

SHELTON: Well, he was a driller. They moved them. You didn't stay in one place. And see, he'd been down in Victoria, in grade school.

KELLY, S: They followed the rig, is what they did.

SHELTON: And so, therefore, he knew he'd be moving again, and Herbert wanted to play football or be in sports, he KNEW he couldn't move.

GOODSILL: And did he end up having a good sports—

SHELTON: Oh yeah. He was good. And he really thought he could maybe play football for A&M. It broke his heart—he had hurt his knee. In those days you didn't have that good surgery on your knee, so he couldn't play. So he kind of lost interest, and I think he was VERY much in love with me (laughs) and so he went to business school in Dallas, and then the war came. And he went to A&M for half a year, I guess.

KELLY, S: Did he play basketball in Sugar Land, too?

SHELTON: Yeah, he did.

KELLY, S: You generally did. The boys played all of the sports.

SHELTON: That's right. Chuzzy [Jenkins] and all of them.

GOODSILL: And after Herbert graduated from business school, what did he do?

SHELTON: Well, he was working for the railroad in Dallas, and he'd come down to see me every once in a while. And of course, there wasn't too much time in there. You know, the war was really coming. You could tell it. And the draft had started. When I was a junior —when we were juniors, we got to pick our senior ring. Remember?

KELLY, S: Yes. Could do it. I didn't.

SHELTON: And I can remember that salesman, because we wanted green stones in our ring. And I remember that salesman saying, "This is the last green stone we'll get, because we get it from Czechoslovakia and..."

KELLY, S: And the war is coming.

SHELTON: They're closing the mine. They said, this'll be the LAST green stone we can get, for you all's ring. I REMEMBER that, because, of course, if you listened, you could tell things were not right.

KELLY, S: Oh yeah. I remember MY family saying, Daddy saying, "It won't be long".

GOODSILL: So Herbert is working for the railroad.

SHELTON: Yeah, a short time.

GOODSILL: And then.

SHELTON: Well, then war came and he joined the service.

GOODSILL: Right away?

SHELTON: Right away. Right after Pearl Harbor. He and a friend of his were in the picture show, and when he came out, they had all these extras on the street. And so they went right down to sign up.

KELLY, S: Now, he joined the Navy?

SHELTON: But he said his mother had to sign for him because he wasn't twenty-one. You know, nowadays, at eighteen, they can do anything, can't they? (laughs) Anyway, he went right in.

GOODSILL: And you were not married yet.

SHELTON: No. We didn't marry until he came back from overseas. Australia.

GOODSILL: Is that where he served? In Australia?

SHELTON: Well, he was a medic— a pharmacist's mate. He got to be chief pharmacist's mate and they were on these LSTs, these landing ships, you know. And so they landed on islands coming up. And then his mother got sick and he got to come home. And so after he got to come home, he didn't have to go back. They assigned him to Corpus and that's when we married.

GOODSILL: What year was that?

SHELTON: In— what year did we get married?

PRUITT: '44?

SHELTON: '44, yeah. '43? '44?

PRUITT: Steve was born in '45?

SHELTON: I guess so. I guess that's right.

GOODSILL: Let's go back just a second and fill in a few of the blanks. Tell me what Herbert's mother's name was.

SHELTON: Her name was Beulah Calloway, because she'd remarried. I don't know what her maiden—second name—was, but Beulah.

GOODSILL: Beulah Calloway. And Herbert's father's name?

SHELTON: Well, he was a junior, so he would be Herbert Raymond Shelton.

GOODSILL: And did Herb have brothers and sisters?

SHELTON: No.

GOODSILL: And tell the names of his children?

SHELTON: My children?

GOODSILL: Your children!

SHELTON: Oh! (laughs) Well, let's see. Raymond Stevens Shelton, Valerie Katherine Shelton Kodell, and Nancy Louise Shelton Pruitt, and Carl Lee Shelton. That's it. That's the four.

GOODSILL: Very good. Let's go back a little bit. How long did you live in the Teacherage?

SHELTON: Well, let's see. We moved in '39, maybe almost '40. '39 is when I graduated and Mama took over the Teacherage. I graduated from high school, we were still on 4th Street. Betty married in '39 and so we had to move, and we moved to the Teacherage.

GOODSILL: And how many teachers were living there at that time?

SHELTON: Well, let's see. There was 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 I guess.

GOODSILL: And you and your mother. And your sister, before she got married.

SHELTON: Yeah. And we lived in one room. But they had the bed that pulled down.

KELLY, S: Murphy bed.

SHELTON: Un huh. I guess that's it.

GOODSILL: So describe your room to us.

SHELTON: Well, that's all it had! (laughs) And then you sat at your little table to make your face up—and that was about all we had in there! Maybe a chair.

GOODSILL: Did you share a bathroom?

SHELTON: Yeah. We shared. We shared a bathroom with two teachers. They had twin beds and we shared a bathroom with them.

GOODSILL: Did it have a clawfoot tub in it? Do you remember?

SHELTON: Yeah!

KELLY, S: They all did. There wasn't any other kind!! (laughs)

SHELTON: Yeah, that's right. I don't know when it was built.

HIGHTOWER: You know, they're making them NOW.

SHELTON: I know it. I don't know why!

KELLY, S: That SAME tub is still in their house.

HIGHTOWER: That same tub is still in Buck's house too.

KELLY, S: Yeah, you want to keep that, because it's special.

GOODSILL: So you, your mother and your sister lived in one room before she got married. Between you was a bathroom and on the other side of the bathroom, there were two teachers.

SHELTON: And that little wing that comes out. They had twin beds.

GOODSILL: And they had their own entrance and exit?

SHELTON: Yeah, they did. They did.

GOODSILL: They had their own door. So there were seven in addition to the three of you. There were TEN women living in the Teacherage.

SHELTON: Yeah.

GOODSILL: Every room was full. Did you all eat together?

SHELTON: Well, yes. Actually, I ate with the teachers and Mama, of course, I guess ate any time. Of course, for three months (summer) Mama had it herself. Now she COULD rent the rooms if somebody wanted a room. But otherwise, she had all the expenses and during the nine months, all the bills—ALL the bills – the rent, the paper and the groceries were added together and one of the teacher's kept it, and divided among them, and that's what they paid. And they could NOT get over it. That they really—

GOODSILL: What couldn't they get over?

SHELTON: How cheap it was. They could NOT get over the convenience of living there and all. And not being expensive, at all.

GOODSILL: And your mom kept all the receipts from what food she bought and kept the expenses very low.

SHELTON: Well, we had a charge account. You know, they talk about these charge accounts where you pay every month—you pay everything you owe. That's nothing NEW! (laughter)

KELLY, S: You can charge at the company store.

SHELTON: Yeah. You pay every month. You don't pay a little bit, you know. You PAY the bill! (laughs)

KELLY, S: Well, did the teachers leave for three months in the summer?

SHELTON: Yeah.

KELLY, S: So it was only a nine-month—

SHELTON: Yeah, job.

KELLY, S: And then the house was empty except for your mother?

SHELTON: Yeah.

KELLY, S: So she kind of had a rest. Or did she rent it out?

SHELTON: Well, if anybody needed a room, she rented it out. She could. Of course she didn't serve them, or anything like that.

GOODSILL: What were the rooms like for the teachers? Were they deluxe? Primitive?

SHELTON: Well, just like you've seen them. Just like that.

GOODSILL: Well, I LIVE in that house now, but we've changed it! (laughs)

SHELTON: I know it! Like it was when you bought it. Just like you bought it. It was the same way.

KELLY, S: Well, did each room that was on the porch, did each room have its own bathroom or did they—they had to share?

SHELTON: No, there was a –one of them had a single bath at the end, but those two in the middle had a united bath. And they we had the bath this way. [sideways between the rooms]

KELLY, S: I see. So there were three bathrooms.

GOODSILL: The people who lived there –did they get along with each other, or was it a tense situation?

SHELTON: Well, I never heard of anything ill. NEVER.

GOODSILL: Where did the teachers come from? Far away? Or did they live close by? Did they come far away from Sugar Land, in order to teach here?

SHELTON: I don't know that we really knew where they lived.

HIGHTOWER: Mrs. Matoska lived in Smithville. I know where she lived. Dr. Wheeler knew her and got her the job.

SHELTON: See, we didn't have her. She wasn't in the Teacherage.

HIGHTOWER: Yeah, she stayed in the Teacherage.

SHELTON: She didn't while Mama was there. When Mama had to give it up—her arthritis was really bad. So I don't really know what they did after Mama left.

HIGHTOWER: I don't either. But they still stayed there. And I don't know why they decided to close it.

SHELTON: I don't know. I really don't know.

HIGHTOWER: I just wondered why they decided to close it?

GOODSILL: I wonder if times had changed and women didn't need to be supervised so much and had other options for where to live.

KELLY, S: Well, didn't they allow teachers to be married after the war?

SHELTON: During the war, I think—I don't know whether right during the war they might have had to hire some married teachers. I'm not sure when that changed.

KELLY, S: It seems like it was right after the war. Because all of the teachers that I had, and I graduated in '49, were single, except for the men. I guess it was about 1950.

GOODSILL: Well, so Mary, you married in '44?

GOODSILL: And, Dot, you hadn't come to Sugar Land yet?

HIGHTOWER: No.

GOODSILL: And, Sally, what were you doing in 1944?

KELLY, S: I was in high school.

GOODSILL: You didn't go to their wedding, did you? Did you know them?

KELLY, S: No, Mother did.

SHELTON: I married in Dallas. I went up—Herbert had a mother that was sick and I had a sister in Dallas at that time, my oldest half-sister, in Dallas.

KELLY, S: But my mother knew your mother.

SHELTON: Oh yeah.

KELLY, S: Our parents knew one another. And I think Mother knew the girls.

SHELTON: Well, your mother worked at the post office and she knew EVERYBODY!

(laughter)

KELLY, S: I know it! But I didn't know Mary. Or even Herbert.

HIGHTOWER: Well, they were the first ones I met when we moved to Sugar Land.

KELLY, S: Well, I meant as a girl, growing up. Until they moved out at the Camp, across the street from us, when they were married.

KELLY, B: Mary, did you ever work out at Grand Central?

SHELTON: Not at Grand Central. I worked out at the Sugar Land Feed Mill.

KELLY, B: Tell us about that. Who was in charge of it? When did you work there and who was in charge?

SHELTON: Mr. Bailey was the one that was in charge at that time. Mr. Bailey.

GOODSILL: What was your job?

SHELTON: Secretary. You know, just take orders.

KELLY, B: And where was the feed mill, in those days, when you worked there?

SHELTON: Well, you know where Highway 6 curves—where the railroad veered off? See the railroad cars brought us feed. Brought us oats and corn and so forth. I can remember, when they wanted to stop that railroad. That was something. And Sugar Land, I guess, was thinking about selling anyway.

KELLY, B: That was about where Settlers Way crosses—

GOODSILL: Old Highway 6.

SHELTON: That railroad veered in like that, right there on that curve.

PRUITT: Oilfield Road hit 6 and then, right across was the feed mill. Kind of where that Blockbuster sits.

KELLY, B: Who did they sell the feed to? Was it just used for Sugarland Industries cows?

SHELTON: No. No, they went off into East Texas and down and around Alvin and all.

PRUITT: Brenham, Hempstead, all around.

KELLY, B: The Eldridge, years ago, they had a thing called Mixrite Feed, where he mixed molasses—

SHELTON: And they called it Mixrite Feed.

KELLY, B: Okay. So that was the same mill. Originally it was on the refinery site, many years ago.

SHELTON: Yeah. Many years ago it was across, really, where—

KELLY, B: On Ulrich Street and Imperial Boulevard?

SHELTON: Yeah, back in there, you know.

KELLY, B: I think the second—or the new—raw sugar warehouse replaced where it was. Somewhere before you got to the Quarters.

SHELTON: Yeah, somewhere back in there. And of course they had the dairy back in there too.

KELLY, B: Do you remember the dairy?

SHELTON: Yes. I remember getting milk from the dairy. Delivered on our front door. On Fourth Street. When they HAD the dairy.

KELLY, B: Do you remember who delivered it?

SHELTON: I can see him, but I can't think of his name. Then they did away with the dairy.

KELLY, B: Mr. Scarborough ran it. But he didn't deliver, I don't think.

SHELTON: No, but there was somebody who delivered it for a short time. But I don't remember when that change came. I guess the store then started selling it—selling milk.

KELLY, B: You worked in the bank, you said. Is that correct? Imperial Bank and Trust?

SHELTON: Uh huh.

KELLY, B: Can you describe how it was oriented in the executive office buildings? Where did you enter the bank as a customer?

SHELTON: Okay. You went in the front door. And then you just made a little turn, about "that" much, and then you had two windows and it—you turned back. And of course we could watch the railroad cars, because of course they had that porch, and you could watch the railroad cars go by. And we'd watch the soldiers, you know.

KELLY, S: Well, Mary, then the windows, where you went to do business, you know, the cages—they faced the porch? You could look out on the porch.

SHELTON: Well, the windows where you cashed your checks faced, the front of the post office door, to go into the post office, in the hallway. And the Western Union, over there. But then, they walled it off, you know, we could even see the drug store back over there. And I did the posting for the checks.

KELLY, S: So you could watch people who were going in the drug store? (laughing)—

SHELTON: We could watch the WHOLE thing!

KELLY, B: So it was on the left side as you went in the front. Okay, when you worked there, could you see the Sugarland Industries and Imperial office pool behind you?

SHELTON: Right. Right behind us.

KELLY, B: There was no wall, right? It was all one big area.

SHELTON: There was no wall. Yeah. But down the hall, there was Mr. Thompson—

KELLY, S: Wasn't Harry Thompson at the back? Or am I wrong?

SHELTON: Let's see. Well, Mr. Ulrich and Mr. Kempner—that's who it was. Mr. Ulrich and Mr. Kempner's office were down the hall, but over on that side. Actually behind the post office. And the Western Union. There were two sides and all the offices worked together. You know, both Imperial Sugar and the Sugarland Industries.

KELLY, B: So you worked in that office pool area with everybody else.

SHELTON: Yeah. You knew everybody.

KELLY, B: Who managed the bank when you were there?

SHELTON: Boots Helmcamp.

GOODSILL: What kind of work did Herb do?

SHELTON: Well, Herb never worked in Sugar Land. He didn't work in Sugar Land at all. After the service, he worked, well for a short time, for Hughes Tool, but only a VERY short time. And then he went—he was at the drug store when Mr. Standifer said, 'Herb, my girl's leaving. Won't you come to work for us out at the Humble Camp?' That's how he got the job. And he said, 'Yeah!' Of course they knew Herbert's daddy. And so he went to work in the office there. In the Sugar Land Oil Field office.

KELLY, S: Out where we lived [Humble Camp], there was a big office building across the street, and Herbert worked in that.

GOODSILL: And, so did you move there, Mary? To live there?

SHELTON: Let's see—when he went out there, I was living with Dorothy Harrington and we didn't have a place. But Mr. Almond, Humble office manager, lived at the camp in a small house.

KELLY, S: Yes! Jake Almond. Was it a three room house?

SHELTON: Really, two rooms and a little side where you had a shower and a kitchen. It was not an oilfield house AT ALL. I mean, it was—but it was not authentic. Mr. Almond was not married, so he had that house. Well, right shortly after we moved there, he married. So he was eligible for a house. So he got a house and left the little house. Well, they let Herbert and I have the little house, so we moved out there.

KELLY, S: I remember when y'all moved out there.

SHELTON: And then, you know, we didn't have a car. We didn't have transportation. When Herbert first started working, he got permission to ride the school bus out to the office—out to Oilfield Road. And he'd catch a salesman or something coming back in, after his work was over—5:00.

KELLY, S: Just whoever was coming into town, he'd—

SHELTON: Uh huh. He'd catch a ride. And that was when we lived with Dot Harrington. And of course, we had Steve then, as little. But you know the Lord just takes care of you.

GOODSILL: Why don't the two of you describe what the Humble Camp was like, as if we'd never heard of it before.

SHELTON: Well, there were two rows of houses.

KELLY, S: Let's hear it from Mary's point of view.

SHELTON: (laughs) There were two rows of houses and they lived in one house—

KELLY, S: There were three rows.

SHELTON: Were there three rows?

KELLY, S: Uh huh. Row 1, row 2 and row 3.

SHELTON: Okay. I didn't realize that.

KELLY, S: You never went to the third row, then (laughing).

SHELTON: (laughs) Maybe. And eventually they did take care of the gas. Your daddy worked for the—

KELLY, S: Pipeline.

SHELTON: Pipeline. The pipeline and also Humble workers—the refining end—both of them—that was the Camp. So therefore they needed houses.

KELLY, S: And Herbert worked for the refining—the office for the refining. Mr. Standifer was his boss. And my father was head of the pipeline.

SHELTON: So HE was the boss of the pipeline.

KELLY, S: Yes, uh huh.

GOODSILL: So it was such a community that they actually had a little pharmacy out there?

KELLY, S: We didn't have a pharmacy. We had a—were y'all there when we had the store?

SHELTON: No. But there was a store out there.

KELLY, S: And it was run from the Sugarland Industries—they ran that store.

KELLY, B: There was a barber shop too.

SHELTON: And actually, there was a store.

KELLY, S: Oh really?

SHELTON: I knew that they had that store. I never did come here, but I knew they had it.

KELLY, B: The Dew House —they moved the old Dew Plantation House to Kitty Hollow Park and they were able to get one of the display cabinets from the store and move it out to that house.

SHELTON: Is that right?

KELLY, B: If you ever go out there, you can see it.

SHELTON: That's interesting.

GOODSILL: In the three rows of houses, how many total houses do you think there were, Sally?

KELLY, S: I was trying to think about that. I think there were probably seven on the first row, seven on the second row and probably nine on the back row.

GOODSILL: And was it just men who were working or was it families?

KELLY, S: They would all be employees that had permanent jobs in that area. They wouldn't be men who worked on the wells. It would be oilers and what they would call engineers. Daddy had people that were called oilers—

SHELTON: Because they had a plant—a whole big plant to run.

KELLY, S: And then they had a BIG refinery out there. But the pipeline did not supply that refinery. The pipeline went straight to Pierce Junction and on into Baytown. Now the refinery did something different, and I don't know whether it was gas—the gas plant, or what. But it was a separate thing. But yet, owned by, what was then the Humble Company.

GOODSILL: And, so the men that lived out there had families?

KELLY, S: Oh yes, Uh huh.

SHELTON: The school board—

KELLY, S: As a matter of fact, everybody had to have a family before they would be qualified to live there —there were no single men, except Mr. Almond.

SHELTON: Yeah. They had that other little—it was not what you would call a regular house.

KELLY, S: Yeah. It was more like a little apartment, but with a house “look”.

GOODSILL: That's what most people lived in?

KELLY, S: No, no, no. This one man.

GOODSILL: And the rest of the houses were---

KELLY, S: Well, two bedroom, living room—

SHELTON: A five room house, basically.

KELLY, S: Bathroom and kitchen. A typical company-kind of house.

GOODSILL: How old were you when your family lived out there, Sally?

KELLY, S: Well, they moved to Sugar Land in 1931; lived in that first little red brick house on Brooks Street, for about six months, until our house was built and then they moved out. So I guess I was probably another year older, maybe by the time. I've forgotten what year we moved out there.

GOODSILL: So you truly were out there from baby on.

KELLY, S: Yes. They built the house for Mother and Daddy. The Camp was new. It was coming in as new.

GOODSILL: Was it a fun place to live as a child?

KELLY, S: It was a wonderful place.

GOODSILL: Why?

SHELTON: They had a regular utility fun house.

KELLY, S: Oh yes, we had a recreation hall, a swimming pool.

SHELTON: In fact, our freshman party was out there.

KELLY, S: Bridge parties, dances for the children. Tacky parties in those days. The grown-ups had—but it was a BIG hall and it had a kitchen with dishes and a stove. I'm not sure about the refrigerator. But then next to the recreation hall, the men built a swimming pool for all the children out there. And then we had a big playground next to that. Of course they had a garden club. It was a little planned community, all its own.

SHELTON: I remember, we had our freshman high school party out there.

KELLY, S: Oh, did you! And Mrs. Standifer—who sponsored that?

SHELTON: Well, my sister was one of the freshman sponsors and I don't know how they got it—

KELLY, S: It had to come from—you had to get it from one of the employees—Mr. Standifer.

SHELTON: Well, you see, Connie was in our class.

KELLY, S: Connie! That's why it was! Connie Standifer. Now, Mr. Standifer had more employees than Daddy did. More worked for him than Daddy. That part of it was bigger. But really nice family. They lived right in back of us. But they had a better house! (laughter) They had the BEST house in that area.

GOODSILL: What's your speculation about why they closed down the Camp, and when did they close it?

KELLY, S: They closed the field down. And because of new technology after the war—and that's why Mother and Daddy moved to La Grange, because they built a new pumping apparatus between La Grange and Giddings. And he was—they lived there, I think, about six weeks before that explosion. And Daddy was hurt and died.

GOODSILL: Why don't you tell us your dad and your mom's names, their full names?

KELLY, S: He was Herbert Albert Rachuig and Mother was Mayme Adams Rachuig.

GOODSILL: And they had two children?

KELLY, S: Yes, they had two daughters. Mayme Rachuig Bass Hause, Sally Rachuig Kelly.

SHELTON: Well, I remember them when they were just high school kids.

HIGHTOWER: Well, the first time I met Sally, Dorothy [Hightower] and I went over for coffee.

KELLY, S: Do you know, I remember that day!

GOODSILL: Oh, TELL us about that day!

KELLY, S: Seeing Dot for the first time.

HIGHTOWER: And that's the first time I think I had cinnamon toast. You served cinnamon toast and coffee.

KELLY, S: OH, you came to MY house!

HIGHTOWER: Yeah!

KELLY, S: Oh, I thought it was at Dorothy's house.

HIGHTOWER: No, we came to your house. You were living on Brooks Street.

KELLY, S: On Guenther[106 Guenther]. I remember seeing Tuta [Hightower] sitting in your lap. She was just nine months—

HIGHTOWER: Six months!

KELLY, S: Six months. Just a tiny little thing. A baby. Now you were not with them, though (referring to Scotty Hightower Bass, Tuta's older sister).

KELLY, S: Would you have been in school?

BASS: I would have been five years old.

KELLY, S: Maybe you were there, but I don't remember.

HIGHTOWER: Scotty wasn't there. It was just Tuta.

KELLY, S: Yeah, it was just Tuta for some reason.

HIGHTOWER: Well, see we moved early, before school started.

HIGHTOWER: And y'all had a little breakfast club going. I never joined it—

KELLY, S: Birthday club.

HIGHTOWER: Was it a birthday club? You would go to different houses—

KELLY, S: Yes, to celebrate each birthday.

HIGHTOWER: I didn't participate because I was always teaching.

KELLY, S: Yeah. I can't get over that, that I served cinnamon toast! (laughing)

BASS: And how would she remember what you served!

HIGHTOWER: Because I never had had cinnamon toast. It was good! We have it every time the kids come, now.

BASS: It's our favorite thing now. The kids know Granny's cinnamon toast.

HIGHTOWER: But now they don't want me to make it. Granny makes it better!

BASS: So y'all lived on Guenther then, at that time, when we moved to Sugar Land?

KELLY, S: Yes. When I first met Dot, we were still in—

HIGHTOWER: And then Charles went to OUR church.

KELLY, S: Yes.

BASS: And then did your mother, did Granny, live in that house where she was?

KELLY, S: Well, after Daddy died-- they had built a house up there [Warda, Tx.] that I just told you about. When he died, she moved and stayed at my house for a few months, and then Mr. Bailey, was he the principal when you came?

HIGHTOWER: No, Mr. Ernest was principal when we came.

KELLY, S: Okay. Well, there was a principal named—his last name was Bailey, and they had the house that, I believe, the Merrigans lived in on Guenther Street. So when they were gone for the summer, Mother lived in that house. And in the meantime, she was building her house in Belknap.

BASS: Who built that house?

KELLY, S: The same man that did Frankie's--

HIGHTOWER: Kossa probably (laughing).

KELLY, S: No, it wasn't Kossa, it was a man from Stafford. Just kind of a carpenter. And he built Frankie Parker's house. Or they knew Frank somehow and they recommended him. And he built a REALLY good house for Mother.

BASS: Did he build the Bartolo's house too?

KELLY, S: No, I think he only built those two houses, and then he began to build houses in Stafford. No, Kossa did not start building until later.

HIGHTOWER: And who was with Kossa? They both worked on—

KELLY, S: Oh, did he have a partner?

HIGHTOWER: Uh huh. A young man.

KELLY, S: And then Bass Construction, Nelson, but Bob [Bass] wasn't working for him then, built our house, that I live in now. Nelson did. His men did.

HIGHTOWER: That little building where y'all taught [Merry Moppet Kindergarten on Lakeview and Wood]...

KELLY, S: He built that too. Had the Little Red School House.

HIGHTOWER: --and playground. The kids would be SO interested.

BASS: I remember that—I remember y'all being there. But what year did you open that?

KELLY, S: Well, we opened that—well, actually, when did [Hurricane] Carla hit? We had JUST opened the kindergarten for about two weeks, and Carla, the storm came. And we had it on the highway, right next to the bank, where the old telephone office would be. And were just renting the property, just leasing it. Well, we had it for that year, and then they made us move. Bob Armstrong [President of Imperial Sugar] sold us the lot across the street from the school. He had that lot. He said, 'I will sell that to you and you can move'.

HIGHTOWER: And that was unusual.

KELLY, S: It was VERY unusual. We thought it was over. Nelson built that little house and it wasn't expensive, but, we thought, 'Oh my goodness, just a year and we've got to tear this down!' And he came to me one day and he says, 'Well, I have a lot. And it's where the old Horn house was.' We moved up to Wood Street and Lakeview. Where the Horns had lived.

SHELTON: She WAS a Johnson. She married Gifford Horn.

BASS: She went to school with you?

SHELTON: Yes, she graduated approximately 5 years before me.

KELLY, S: Oh, Margaret.

SHELTON: Margaret graduated from Sugar Land High School.

BASS: Because I think they interviewed her one year for the Cultural Arts Foundation.

SHELTON: I'm sure so, because she remembers when they built The Hill. She remembers when they filled in for The Hill.

KELLY, S: Margaret Johnson married Gifford Horn?

SHELTON: No, but they were kin. That was Margaret's aunt. I think it was HIS sister. The elderly Horn. She taught there for years.

KELLY, S: Oh I know it. She was my first grade teacher. But she was Charles's first grade teacher.

SHELTON: I remember her.

HIGHTOWER: Did you send your children to pre-school?

SHELTON: I sent—was it Valerie? When Mrs. Boyer had a little kindergarten. Valerie went. But I didn't send Nancy and Lee. I think she quit. I really think she quit.

KELLY, S: Both of my kids went to her. She was the only thing we had!

HIGHTOWER: I didn't send Scotty because I had to have somebody to take care of Tuta. And I couldn't afford both. So I got Mrs. Binford and they both stayed at home. But she taught them SO much.

SHELTON: Well, they CAN. They CAN teach a whole lot.

HIGHTOWER: Ooooh yes. Fed 'em, put 'em for a nap and all. And then she was there and she'd walk to the corner when Scotty would leave school, first grade. She'd watch for her and Scotty'd see her. She'd help her cross Lakeview.

KELLY, S: Yes, there are some good stories about Mrs. Boyer's kindergarten. My boys can tell you some really funny good things about all their schoolmates.

SHELTON: That's why I didn't sent them! (laughter)

GOODSILL: What was the name of your kindergarten, Sally?

KELLY, S: Merry Moppet. I happened to be in the store the other day, and I saw somebody who said, 'Oh, my kindergarten teacher just walked in' and I looked around, and it was Frankie McFaddin's daughter and I have not SEEN her in years! And yet she lives in Sugar Land, on Lakeview. Kelly does. She looked really good. But you know, once you're a teacher of any kind, it comes back to haunt you, for the good or for the bad (laughs).

SHELTON: Yeah, that's right.

HIGHTOWER: Oh yes! I was telling Mary—the man that's re-doing Jennifer's house is—what did I tell you his name was?

SHELTON: I don't know what you're talking about.

HIGHTOWER: The man, his wife died, and you raised the boy, here in Sugar Land. Well, his name will come to me. But, anyway, he's building Jennifer's house, and he has a daughter, the same age as Jennifer's daughter.

BASS: Randy Trncak.

HIGHTOWER: And he said, he went to Sugar Land, and you told me he was the most handsome boy.

KELLY, S: Oh, did you say Randy Trncak? [spelling?] Oh he WAS.

HIGHTOWER: Well, he's the nicest thing. But he said he went to school—he said, 'I wasn't in your class, I was in Mrs. Pirtle's class'. And later on he said, 'What did you teach?' I said, 'I taught the slow students.' He said, 'Lord, I'm glad I didn't say I was in your class!' (laughter) But he is the nicest thing.

KELLY, S: He was a nice YOUNG man.

HIGHTOWER: He's been so good—so helpful.

KELLY, S: I remember when his mother died.

HIGHTOWER: I do too.

KELLY, S: Do you remember when his mother died? Randy Trncak's mother?

SHELTON: Oh yes. She was very pretty.

KELLY, S: She was a beautiful woman and just—That was such a shock to the whole community.

SHELTON: She was on the telephone, wasn't she?

KELLY, S: Well, yes. Just dropped dead. Was she a sister? Or was she related to Ken Hall?

SHELTON: I think there were two girls—cousins, weren't they?

KELLY, S: Oh it was cousins, not sisters.

SHELTON: I believe they were cousins. I could be wrong, but I think that's right.

HIGHTOWER: Life is SO short. Meeting people. You've know them forever.

(breaking for coffee, iced tea, etc) Begins second file:

KELLY, S: But, you know, Mary, everybody like you and I and our generation that have lived here, and even Dot, that generation—everybody says it was a WONDERFUL place to live. I haven't heard anybody—there MIGHT have been an incident that somebody might say—but it was really a good place to grow up.

HIGHTOWER: And anytime anybody was sick—the first year I was here, for example—the flu was just rampant.

GOODSILL: And what year was that?

HIGHTOWER: '53. And I can remember Mary coming to pick up one of the children—I guess Steve—and she said, 'Do you feel bad?' and I said, 'Yes. I know I have the flu but, I said, I've gotta stay because we've got a meeting.' (laughter)

GOODSILL: You stay and give it to everybody else? (all laugh)

HIGHTOWER: I went home, and Mary came with this pot of soup. I said, 'Oh, take half of it back. We just can't eat it all.' She said, 'Grandma said the more you eat it, the better it is for you.' (all laugh) First year that we were here! But that's the way everyone was.

KELLY, S: It just was a nice community, even though everybody knew everything about one another! (all laugh) The good, bad AND

the ugly! But still, it was a good place. The school was good.

SHELTON: It helped discipline the young folks too.

KELLY, S: It DID. When you knew that everybody was watching, that helped mother and daddy keep you in line! With the neighbors—

SHELTON: It was helpful.

KELLY, S: It was VERY helpful.

HIGHTOWER: After Dugan was principal at the junior high Judge called Dugan and said, 'Dugan, I just passed that yellow Oldsmobile. Either it's on fire or those [your daughters] girls are smoking.'

(EVERYONE cracks up laughing)

HIGHTOWER: That was Pam and Betty Ann and that group.

GOODSILL: Tell us again what Brooks Street looked like.

KELLY, S: Well, as you came in off of Highway 6, and you came straight up, they still had the two lakes on each side. And a lot of times of course, it would be filled with the water lilies, which was pretty. But coming up and looking at the refinery, there were not but one row of houses on one side. And then on the right-hand side—

SHELTON: Was a plowed field.

KELLY, S: --plowed field.

SHELTON: Teas Nursery for a short time leased that land.

KELLY, S: But it was always clean, plowed. I mean, no weeds or anything. It would be cabbage one year, cabbage is what I can remember mostly. Teas Nursery was further down – kind of close to Highway 6.

SHELTON: But, you know, that median that they had—I have a picture of Betty Dryer and it says, 'Slow'. I'll have to try to find that picture. Brooks Street was separated, out there.

GOODSILL: There was a median at Brooks?

KELLY, S: I called it an esplanade. But it was a median. Now did it have oleanders or was it just crape myrtles? But it bloomed so prettily.

SHELTON: Yeah. It was crape myrtles. They had crepe myrtles all over the place.

KELLY, S: Yeah. The crepe myrtles were in front of every house. They were the common, pretty watermelon color.

GOODSILL: Who did all the gardening?

KELLY, S: Each person—didn't each person do their own?

SHELTON: Well, I guess. I don't know who put them out to begin with.

KELLY, S: Oh, you mean who planted them? I bet the company planted them.

HIGHTOWER: The company, because they were planted when we moved there.

KELLY, S: Because they were too uniform. I mean, they were spaced, and then there would be a pecan tree spaced between. But I think everybody was responsible for the keeping of their own yard. They had an active garden club. The garden club may have done it, but I think it probably was the company, don't you?

SHELTON: Yeah, probably was the company.

HIGHTOWER: Dugan never was one to plant or that sort of thing. But he did plant a little tree and it grew to be about twelve inches tall. He was SO proud that tree was growing, and he'd show it to Herbert. Well, one day the yardman came and cut that tree down. (everybody laughs)

SHELTON: Oh, that's TERRIBLE!

HIGHTOWER: Oh, Dugan cursed and carried on! I can still see Herbert dying laughing over that. But he was SO upset they'd cut his tree down.

KELLY, S: So he never tried again?

HIGHTOWER: NO! He was going to have a garden, across the street. They came over and plowed it up and planted a garden. And we had a tomato that was bigger than this cup. That was the ONLY thing we got out of that garden! (laughter) They teased Dugan! 'That's the most expensive tomato'.

KELLY, S: Well, tell me. Who were your neighbors? McMillan was on one side, and who was on the other?

HIGHTOWER: Baker. Maudie Baker.

KELLY, S: Oh, the Bakers were there! Until they built their house on Oyster Creek.

HIGHTOWER: She was SO funny. She taught everybody in Sugar Land to dance! (laughter)

KELLY, S: Yes, I remember that. She taught dance.

HIGHTOWER: And you know she had never eaten cornbread. And I said, 'Well, the next time I fix cornbread, I'll bring you some, Maudie.' That was when we first moved there. So I took her some cornbread and the next day I saw her out in the yard. And I said, 'Well, how'd you like your cornbread?' 'Well, it was okay after I put some sugar and butter on it.' (all laugh)

KELLY, S: They must not be from Texas.

HIGHTOWER: Oh NO, they were from the North.

KELLY, S: Iowa? You know a lot of people—the McFaddens came from Iowa.

KELLY, S: Well, wasn't he part of the Marshall Canning Plant?

HIGHTOWER: Yes! He was.

KELLY, S: Mr. McFadden hired him.

HIGHTOWER: I always remember and I think about her often. Jay and Buck [grandchildren] said her son was Armand. Was that his name?

SHELTON: Yeah. Armand.

HIGHTOWER: She talked about Armand. 'Armand thinks he's a guest in the house. (all laugh) Instead of living there. He didn't pick up ANYTHING.' She waited on him hand and foot! (laughing) 'Armand thinks he's a guest in the house'.

KELLY, S: Now, they had a daughter too, though, didn't they?

HIGHTOWER: Yes. She was the sweetest thing.

SHELTON: Surely is, uh huh.

HIGHTOWER: But they were really nice neighbors.

KELLY, S: Well, they were nice people.

SHELTON: They live up in Arkansas now.

KELLY, S: Mary, when did y'all build your house on Venice?

SHELTON: '51.

KELLY, S: I knew it was early. Were y'all one of the first ones?

SHELTON: We came back after Dr. Slaughter, to have Steve's tonsils taken out. And while he was out here, he went up to see Mr. James because he knew Valerie's eye doctor had moved out here.

KELLY, S: Hargrove?

SHELTON: No, it was her glasses doctor.

HIGHTOWER: Oh, I got MY glasses from him.

KELLY, S: Yeah. Everybody did.

SHELTON: Anyway, we knew he moved out here so he went up to see Mr. James. ‘Are you selling lots off here?’ He said, ‘Yes’. So Mr. James took him in to Mr. Kempner, and Mr. Kempner told him to sell him whatever he wanted. And so Herbert said, ‘I really need 100 feet’. So our lot is 100 foot. The other lots were opened because they had opened ours, they went ahead and opened five more—or FOUR more. But they are just 90 feet. But we asked for that 100. We weren’t really aware that they were selling the land.

KELLY, S: He just happened to hear.

SHELTON: He happened to—even though we were keeping up with T.C. and Marjorie.

KELLY, S: Well, now, were you living in Houston at the time?

SHELTON: Yeah. We moved to Houston because—

KELLY, S: He was working at the Humble building.

SHELTON: Yeah. He was working at the building there. So we moved to Garden Villas.

KELLY, S: I always loved that old Humble Oil building. About once a week Daddy had to take some mail in or papers, and if we would be REALLY good, we could go with him. And I remember the building, and how it smelled, with the marble floor.

SHELTON: Yeah. And the lights they had.

KELLY, S: And the lights. Oh yeah. It was just a real treat when you’re small.

GOODSILL: When Sugar Land was transitioning out of being a company town, to being an incorporated city, were you all aware that this was a BIG change, or just—not seem so —

SHELTON: Well, we were really sorry that it was happening. We were sorry. We knew that it was going to happen.

GOODSILL: You knew it was coming.

KELLY, S: Everybody was kind of thrilled, though, to be able to buy their houses.

SHELTON: Yeah. That was a plus.

KELLY, S: (same time) That was a plus.

SHELTON: And that you didn't have to move! You know, it was sad when somebody lived there and grew up here, that they'd have to move. That was sad.

HIGHTOWER: And there was no place for us to move. [houses were built by the company and were limited]

SHELTON: No. That's right.

HIGHTOWER: I know Dugan went up and talked to, I believe it was to Bill Little, and he said, 'I wonder how much they're going to sell them for because I gotta get my money ready.' And he said, 'Well, let me look', and he looked at it and I think it was \$6,400 and some dollars.

KELLY, S: Is that right?

HIGHTOWER: I have my certificate.

KELLY, S: You have your original deed?

HIGHTOWER: And Dugan said, 'We had enough money to pay for it, except we had to borrow \$500 from his momma. We paid her back. But they provided money if you didn't have it.

GOODSILL: So everybody knew that the company houses were not going to be company operated any more. That you needed to buy a house or not live here.

KELLY, S: The Industries. It really was the Industries that made the transition. The sugar company remained the same.

SHELTON: Yeah. It was the Industries.

KELLY, S: Charles and I had already built our house on Oyster Creek so we were out of a company house. But his mother and father bought their house [214 Brooks].

GOODSILL: Do you know how much they paid for that one, just out of curiosity?

KELLY, S: Well, because it was on Brooks Street, it was quite—it was larger. I think they paid about \$10,000. I'm thinking that. I tell you, Chuck would know exactly what it was. But it had hardwood floors.

HIGHTOWER: And I know Ed, across the street, but he had, I think, a lot and a half. His was a lot more money.

KELLY, S: Oh he did? He had a bigger lot?

HIGHTOWER: Frank Dzierzanowski lived there at that time. And Frank said, 'I don't understand how y'all's house was less than my house'. And he questioned it and it was because it was a lot and a half.

GOODSILL: So that must have been quite a change. Sort of a toss-up.

KELLY, S: Well, it made everybody—not scramble—but everybody think, 'do we want to BUY this house or do we...'. And I think MOST people bought their houses.

HIGHTOWER: Yes, they did, because Dugan had told Mr. Livingston that anybody that doesn't want to BUY their house let me know.

KELLY, S: Because when they thought about the alternative of where would I move to—like to Richmond or Rosenberg or something, that they really could buy their house and stay in Sugar Land cheaper.

SHELTON: Yeah. Right!

GOODSILL: And were the shops and so on changed quite a bit? Was it not as much fun, or just as good to shop here?

SHELTON: Well, I don't remember that it made a WHOLE lot of difference.

GOODSILL: There was still a grocery and—

KELLY: Oh yes.

SHELTON: Still everything seemed like it moved along.

GOODSILL: But you couldn't charge it on a big bill.

KELLY, S: Did Guillory's let you charge?

SHELTON: Yeah. We still charged at the grocery store.

HIGHTOWER: I think Tuta would say 'chaage it'.

KELLY, S: (laughs)

SHELTON: I guess it ran through the Sugarland Industries.

HIGHTOWER: When did the grocery store close? I can't remember.

KELLY, S: The Guillory's part? You know I don't remember when they did.

KELLY, S: I don't remember what year that was. But I know at least ten years they were— don't you think?

SHELTON: I think so.

SHELTON: I don't EVER remember paying money to buy the groceries, so it was always a charge. You know, we always charged.

I don't know how Sugar Land took care of that. Who in the office. I guess the upstairs office. See we still had the feed mill, and I'd go upstairs every day to take some of the papers to the Sugarland Industries part.

KELLY, S: Now I don't know how long they had the Chevrolet dealership. That closed pretty early, didn't it? I know Wayburn got to buy the station, the Esso station, and Cullar, wasn't his name Cullar?

SHELTON: His name was Cullar.

KELLY, S: --the Texaco station. And they gave an opportunity for people to buy, even the businesses, if they wanted to. They were really selling out of everything but the refinery part.

GOODSILL: But was it close to that time when the town began to get bigger— Venetian Estates and—

KELLY, S: Yeah. They began to sell lots.

HIGHTOWER: In '53 we moved here and I can remember Venetian Estates—they were digging up all that water and mud and mess. And Dugan said, 'I wouldn't buy a lot out there. That's the craziest thing!' He just couldn't visualize it.

KELLY, S: It's a SWAMP! (all laugh) It was. It was a swamp. Because Charles hunted— that's where the ducks and alligators—

SHELTON: Uh huh. That's right.

HIGHTOWER: Dugan – that just bothered him to no end! (laughing)

KELLY, S: But they began to sell lots and—

HIGHTOWER: They were expensive when they first started.

KELLY, S: Were they? They did it in sections and we bought when the last section at the back was open. I think our lot was \$8,500 and that seemed like a lot.

HIGHTOWER: Oh GOSH! [shocked when thinking about what the lots are selling for now]

GOODSILL: What are the kids looking at?

Interview ends