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Place of Interview: Pilot Point, Texas

Interviewers: Stephen A. Lohse

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Date: August 21, 1987

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Oral History Collection

Ely and William Sledge

Interviewers: Stephen A. Lohse;  
Susan Lebo

August 21, 1987

Place of Interview: Driving and Walking tour of Pilot Point,  
Texas

[This interview consists of tapes 9 and 10 of the Lake Ray Roberts interview series. The interviews were conducted with old-time residents of an area that was soon to be inundated when the United States Army Corps of Engineers began to fill the lake. This interview begins in the middle of a conversation.]

Mr. Ely Sledge: The mill had been destroyed. One of the relatives sold the field. I didn't know that it had been sold when I came out here looking for it. I saw that it was gone, and then I questioned my parents. They said that my brother came up and sold it. I sure hated that. He just didn't realize the value of it. People came to the mill, and that's where the juice out of it came from. They had a furnace where they cooked it--the syrup.

Mr. Lohse: It was near here?

Mr. Ely Sledge: It was on this place that my grandfather had. He

made syrup here for years, and then my father made syrup here.

Lohse: Oh, jackpot! We didn't know that. Let me do a little introduction here. We're talking today with Mr. Ely Sledge of Pilot Point, Texas. Today is Friday, August 21, 1987, and we are driving with him west, I guess?

E. Sledge: Yes, and north.

Lohse: Northwest, out of Pilot Point, to visit his granddaddy's farm?

E. Sledge: Step-grandfather.

Lohse: Step-grandfather's farm. It's the Richard Israel estate.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: Mr. Sledge started the tape talking about a sorghum mill that was on the property and is now gone. How long did it operate?

E. Sledge: I think probably it was in the late 1950s that the last batch of syrup was made, so it's not been so long ago.

Lohse: Not so long. When did it start?

E. Sledge: I wouldn't know when it started. Well, I'm fifty-three, and it started before my time (chuckle).

Lohse: So, it went back to at least to the 1920s or 1930s.

E. Sledge: Yes, way before then.

[Tape paused briefly, and the interview resumes outside the car, on the farm.]

Lohse: You say you were born here in 1934.

E. Sledge: In 1934, yes. This is a shade tree, and I think I've got a few clippings from some of these limbs.

Lohse: This is a large tree.

E. Sledge: One of the largest that I've seen.

Lohse: Let me get my bearings now. This is south of the house?

E. Sledge: This is west.

Lohse: West, northwest of the house. It's a large hackberry tree. Howdy.

W. Sledge: Hi.

Lohse: It's a giant tree. It canopies the whole yard. It's a giant tree.

E. Sledge: Yes, it does.

Lohse: Under the canopy of the tree is a collection of farm equipment.

E. Sledge: Old stuff that isn't being used.

Lohse: Horse-drawn equipment. Oh, great! It's the real stuff.

E. Sledge: Yes. He purchased this in 1901.

Lohse: The farm?

E. Sledge: Yes. He was born in Mississippi.

Lohse: How old was your grandfather when he came to the area?

E. Sledge: I don't know his exact age when he came here, but he was born a slave in Mississippi. He was born in the early 1850s in Mississippi, and he passed away in

1936.

Lohse: So, he was nearly eighty years old.

E. Sledge: Yes. I was a little fellow at that time, very small.

Lohse: Do you remember him?

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: Did he have a large family?

E. Sledge: No. I don't know of any of his brothers or sisters. I never heard anyone talk about them. He had five children, and one lived to be grown. She's the one my father married, his first marriage, and she died in 1921.

Lohse: And you never knew her?

E. Sledge: No, I didn't know her.

Lohse: When your grandfather died then, the land was not split up?

E. Sledge: No. It's never been split up. He had the two tracts. He had thirty acres here and a fifty-acre tract about half-a-mile down the road. This was the last one that he lived on. The one down the road he bought in 1893.

Lohse: Four years earlier.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: No, eight years earlier.

E. Sledge: Yes. His wife passed in 1900. He bought this in 1901, as a single man.

Lohse: What kinds of things did he do with the land? Was he a farmer?

E. Sledge: Farm, yes.

Lohse: What did he raise?

E. Sledge: Mostly cotton.

Lohse: Cash crop?

E. Sledge: Yes, the cash crop was cotton, and later we started planting peanuts.

Lohse: This is sandy soil?

E. Sledge: Sandy, yes.

Lohse: Sandy soil out here. The machinery we're looking at, I assume, is what he used.

E. Sledge: Yes, that is the type of machinery that he used at that time [gesture]. This was an old planter. You see, it's just rotting out.

Lohse: The wood is rotten.

E. Sledge: Yes, the horse would go on each side of it.

Lohse: It was a two-horse machine.

E. Sledge: Two-horse deal, yes.

Lohse: Planter. It was what they called a surrey-style planter.

E. Sledge: [Gesture] This is a harness. This is a collar that goes on the horse's neck, around the neck.

Lohse: [Gesture] These are harness pieces.

E. Sledge: This yoke goes around the collar.

Lohse: We've got two halves of two different parts.

E. Sledge: Yes, that makes one set.

Lohse: We rarely find wood. We find a lot of the metal

pieces of these, but we hardly ever find wood. These are all decayed.

E. Sledge: [Gesture] This fits around this collar. Then we have chains that hook in there.

Lohse: Trace chains and reins.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: The reins go through there [gesture].

E. Sledge: They look more like they're pulling, but they're actually pushing, because that goes around the neck. We always say they are pulling a plow, but they're actually pushing it (laughter).

Lohse: Yes, the weight hits them on the shoulders.

E. Sledge: That's right. They're really pushing instead of pulling.

Lohse: Sure. [Gesture] Are these girths?

W. Sledge: No, that's a part of a school bus.

Lohse: [Gesture] This takes the weight. These are the straps that they're pulled by. One is leather, and one is canvas.

E. Sledge: They usually have the same type. Both of these sometimes are chains.

Lohse: Plow points. Did your father work the farm, too?

E. Sledge: My father worked it after my step-grandfather passed [died], and my father passed in 1979. He was about ninety-two, I think, when he passed.

Lohse: The two of them look like...

E. Sledge: [Gesture] These are peanut plates.

Lohse: Planter blades, like a spider wheel. You have a set of these.

W. Sledge: Both of those things go together. Both ends go together.

Lohse: These are the canisters that hold the seed, that fit on the planters, that the spider wheels turn around, and the sprockets. I was wondering. I saw a broken pointer, bent, and it got rolled under, a bent point.

E. Sledge: The soil is a little rocky (chuckle).

Lohse: A little rocky. It hit a rock. Did your granddad and dad do their own blacksmithing?

E. Sledge: They did some, yes, but not all of it.

Lohse: The things that it takes to run a farm.

E. Sledge: [Gesture] That's a hay hook.

Lohse: Okay. Yes, and that's a file point [gesture]?

W. Sledge: Yes, but there is something else.

Lohse: I see. [Gesture] That's not actually the point. That's the bracket that holds the blade together at that point.

E. Sledge: Yes, it holds the wings and the point. This is an old deal that it would take two horses to pull.

Lodge: Okay, a two-horse. This would have a seat?

E. Sledge: Yes, it would have the seat. It's made in the same form as that seat on the planter.

Lohse: Did they ever modify any of these to pull with the

tractor, later on?

E. Sledge: They never used a tractor.

Lohse: Never used a tractor? Well, let's see. The sorghum mill was around into the 1950s. Did they farm into the 1950s?

E. Sledge: A little bit, yes. Dad did. The sorghum mill sat in that area over there [gesture] where you see that set of trees. It was in there. Mostly for shade, you know.

Lohse: That makes sense.

E. Sledge: It provided shade.

Lohse: Is there anything left at all down there?

E. Sledge: I think some of the furnished part is left.

Lohse: It might be fun to walk down and take a look at it later on.

E. Sledge: We put some bermuda grass in here with this.

Lohse: Okay, and it's adjustable.

E. Sledge: Yes, it's adjustable.

Lohse: Did it have to be weighted down any, or did it dig itself in?

E. Sledge: In the sand, after you pull this, it would weight itself. The sand was very loose--very loose sand.

Lohse: One horse?

E. Sledge: One to pull that one, and some others with those.

Lohse: Oh, it's a section. I've never seen one of those. That's a new one on me.

E. Sledge: I know you've seen this one now [gesture].

Lohse: I've seen one of these. Let's see, is it a lister beam?

E. Sledge: That's called a turning plow.

Lohse: Turning plow.

E. Sledge: That's more like a half of one of those, and it turns it one way.

Lohse: Turning plow, and the lister is the double.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: "John Deere," it says on the handle. A section-and-a-half. A drag harrow. Most of the spikes are still in place.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: How many sections did they usually drag?

E. Sledge: Two.

Lohse: Two.

E. Sledge: That's another turning plow.

Lohse: Then these plows are complete. The wooden handles, the beam, and the blades, and the wooden handles are still intact.

E. Sledge: [Gesture] This is what they used when they planted something by hand in the furrow. They would use that to cover it with. One horse would pull it. That's seed.

Lohse: It's plow-like here in construction, but it's got a little double blade.

E. Sledge: Yes, that would cover the seeds after you planted them.

Lohse: It would push dirt back in from both sides.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: It looks well-used. It looks like it's been built and built and built again.

E. Sledge: Yes, I think my father probably made that himself (chuckle). You may not have this [gesture]. I haven't seen very many of these. This is called an "A" harrow.

Lohse: An "A" harrow.

E. Sledge: It was made in the shape of an "A." When the plant first came up, they could use that. They'd pull it down the field. You can see that it's adjustable. You could get in as close to the seed as you like without cutting it out. It does a good job in the sand where you have what you call crab grass, a little fine grass, and you need to get it [eliminated] in time.

Lohse: Get it out of the crop.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: And it adjusts the legs. You can made it wider or narrower.

E. Sledge: Right.

Lohse: It's plow-like in shape, also with the adjustable spikes.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: And the wooden handles are still in place. I've never seen one of those, either.

E. Sledge: I think I've only seen two: this one and one more.

Lohse: Did you ever walk behind any of these?

E. Sledge: No. I was the youngest of the children, so I didn't have to do it (laughter). I did some [cotton] chopping.

Lohse: [Gesture] This was a what?

E. Sledge: That's called a single tree and a double tree.

Lohse: There's another one.

E. Sledge: There's two of them that's pulling. One horse would be here [gesture], and the other horse would be over there [gesture]. Like, this right here would be a better example [gesture]. We have two here.

Lohse: Yes, okay, and it's metal.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: It's all metal. There's no wood in it. Then I see some more pieces.

E. Sledge: Yes, that's something that was the case in most single trees. There's a double tree there [gestures].

Lohse: Double tree.

E. Sledge: That's a single.

W. Sledge: This is the center piece.

Lohse: Oh, okay. The tree is still attached to the drag harrow there. All metal. All of these trees are all

metal. I see more, too.

E. Sledge: They used to kill their own meat, as you know, years ago. People used to carry their own things to do this with. They used to use a barrel, you know, a tin barrel or something, after they had killed them. They would put them in the water. Then later on, they started using what you call a vat. You've seen one of those before.

Lohse: [Gesture] Is this what they called a scalding vat?

E. Sledge: Scalding vat, yes. This they used, and they had a limb up there [gesture]. You see one of those chains--it's still up there--where they used to hang the hogs. They'd put a chain on there, and it would pull him out, see, after you get him in the water. You'd pull him out, and you'd have platform there.

Lohse: And dump him back out. This beam platform was what was sat on and was used, right here [gesture].

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: That's pretty fancy. We've seen one or two of them, but that's pretty fancy.

E. Sledge: [Gesture] This is just an old cultivator.

Lohse: Homemade.

W. Sledge: [Gesture] This is a riding cultivator, where you plow the trench.

Lohse: Cultivator.

W. Sledge: Yes, it had four plows on it: the two outside ones

and the ones here in the middle. These are the two that ran closer to the plant.

Lohse: [Gesture] And this is a weeder?

E. Sledge: Yes, plow, adjustable. This was used to keep from getting too close to the plant as they plowed along. That would move the feet.

Lohse: Yes, so you don't pull up your crops.

E. Sledge: That's right. [Gestures] This adjusts. This pulls up closer.

Lohse: Yes, this is two-horse-type.

E. Sledge: That's the tongue again, one on each side.

Lohse: Okay, the tree is still down here. Okay, it had a metal tongue.

E. Sledge: [Gesture] This raised the feet, these things. You'd raise these up and go on down the road.

Lohse: It had a lever action, and it all still works. These look in good condition--obviously used but obviously in good condition, still working. Sulky-style again. Two mowers.

E. Sledge: To cut hay with.

Lohse: Heavier wheels on these.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: This is the sickle surface blade.

E. Sledge: There was steel right down here [gesture].

Lohse: A sickle blade. [Gesture] Here it is, intact. So, these mowers have, compared to a cultivator and wagons

and other things I see around, heavy duty wheels on them---very heavy. What was the purpose of that?

E. Sledge: Well, for durability.

Lohse: I was wondering. The turning of the wheels, is that the drive mechanism that drives the blade?

E. Sledge: Yes, that drives the blade, the gears in here.

Lohse: "Dain" mower.

E. Sledge: Most of these metal tongues my father put in, so he wouldn't have to replace them.

Lohse: And he didn't. They're still here. This is pipe. A water pipe?

E. Sledge: [Gesture] There's another one.

Lohse: There's a cultivator like we're talking about, with the pipe tongue, and here's another cultivator [gestures].

E. Sledge: It's the little tool carrier here, that he put tools in, whatever he would need. If something went wrong, they'd get out a tool and work on it.

Lohse: A little container on the wooden tongue. This cultivator has a wooden tongue. What is the function of the wood, on top here [gesture]?

E. Sledge: That's just something somebody left in there. It has no function at all. You don't want to get in [walk into] this [gesture]. You might not know what that is.

Lohse: Bull nettle.

E. Sledge: Yes, it'll [the plant's stickers will] "bite."

Lohse: It "bites." I've been "bit."

W. Sledge: After the hay is stacked, then it has to be raked.

Lohse: When your granddad and your dad were here together, did they farm at the same time occasionally?

E. Sledge: I suppose they did, yes.

Lohse: Run two teams to work the fields?

E. Sledge: They also, you know, rented other land and farmed.

Lohse: So, you farmed actually more than the 120 acres that your granddad owned.

E. Sledge: [Gesture] This is a rake.

Lohse: Sulky-style rake, at least four-foot diameter wheels.

E. Sledge: [Gesture] That one's in the ground. It's been there so long [that it's partially buried].

Lohse: It's been here long enough to have small trees growing around it. I've been told, I think, [gesture] this is what they call a dump rake?

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: It's a dump-style. It fills up, and then you dump it.

E. Sledge: Then you dump it. [Gesture] That is a wagon. It has a frame and everything on it. We pulled this to town.

Lohse: It has metal wheels.

E. Sledge: Metal wheels, yes.

Lohse: Metal spoke wheels.

E. Sledge: There were some wood ones, but I guess they've all rotted.

Lohse: I see some rims. No, those [gesture] are barrel hoops, aren't they?

E. Sledge: Just like we had to take a wheel off the \_\_\_\_\_ sometime, we had to do that to the wagon. [Gesture] That's what that is, under that nut--a hub. I just saw it over there today, and I just brought it out here and put it on there.

Lohse: Yes, a hub tool, and it looks handmade.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: Did this style wagon have a name? Is there a particular name for it? I'm not familiar with wagon names.

E. Sledge: Not that I know of.

Lohse: It was not a buckboard.

E. Sledge: [Gesture] This part here is what they call a \_\_\_\_\_.

Lohse: [Gesture] This is the front of the wagon?

E. Sledge: Yes, [gesture] this was the front. [Gesture] This comes to a point there, and the tongue goes in it.

Lohse: Some of it is missing.

E. Sledge: Yes, time got some of that.

Lohse: It stayed remarkably well together.

E. Sledge: [Gesture] That's another one, like that fellow there has, over by the house.

Lohse: Your dad and your granddad, did they lease or sharecrop?

E. Sledge: They mostly farmed for themselves, and they rented.

Lohse: Was it a cash rent?

E. Sledge: No. I don't know whether cotton was on a fourth at that time or what--something like that, you know. For different things, there was a different ratio of what you made.

Lohse: On a share.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: The rent, the crop. How much land did they have under rent?

E. Sledge: I think about the most that they farmed together was about 150 to 200 acres, something like that. That's fifty acres down there that they owned and worked. Then Dad rented fifty acres from another friend, a lady that had a farm of fifty acres.

Lohse: So, they were busy.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: Any livestock? Did they have any cattle?

E. Sledge: Yes, they had some cattle. We used to run some cattle along here, the other fifty acres down there, until about three years ago. Half the lake was coming through, and we had to get rid of it.

Lohse: Until recently. Up around the house, then, they had hogs.

E. Sledge: Yes. There's a fellow who has some hogs out here now, a friend, not too far away.

Lohse: There still are. Chickens?

E. Sledge: Yes, we used to raise a lot of chickens right under this tree there, in that little house there [gesture]. That has fallen down there.

Lohse: That was the chicken house. Was it built as a chicken house?

E. Sledge: Yes. The little one is falling down. That was screened in. Mother raised chickens there for years.

Lohse: The little one? Are you were talking about the little shed that's against the tree?

E. Sledge: Yes, the little one, because she always had hers hatched. She took the eggs, and the chickens hatched. She took them to the hatchery. A friend right up on the hill there had a hatchery.

Lohse: Okay, she didn't hatch them herself.

E. Sledge: She always had them laying about a hundred or more. It would take too many hens to sit on them. [Gesture] That's the fellow coming out from down there now, who leased a little spot for his hogs.

Lohse: Now, do you lease land?

E. Sledge: Well, the lake now has gotten all this, except 3 8/10 acres.

Lohse: Okay, so 130 acres now...

E. Sledge: There's thirty acres in this block, and fifty in the other.

Lohse: Eighty acres.

E. Sledge: But the fifty, they got all of that, the lake did, and they're getting all of this, except 3 8/10.

Lohse: Was there any difference in it, or was it all bottom land or top land?

E. Sledge: This is not bottom land at all in here. On the other farm, some of it was bottom land.

Lohse: Did you raise different things in different places?

E. Sledge: On the other farm, they mostly raised corn and cotton. The other one wouldn't raise peanuts good. That'd be in the bottom-type soil.

Lohse: Did they have a garden?

E. Sledge: Yes, the garden spot's over here [gesture]. On the other side of that building over there is where the garden used to be. There used to be an orchard down in that area.

Lohse: In a leisurely manner, we'll stroll down there.

E. Sledge: Okay. There's a well up here [gesture], where we'd get water. We all stayed fairly healthy then. If we drank water out of there now, we'd be at the doctor's in the next thirty minutes, wouldn't we?

Lohse: I hear that the water in this area was really nice, really sweet water. How long has this house been here?

E. Sledge: Before 1900. How much earlier, I'm not sure.

Lohse: And your grandfather built how much?

E. Sledge: Two of the rooms. A man by the name of Finch did the

rest. This well still has water in it and has never gone dry, that we know of.

Lohse: What is that? About fifty feet deep?

E. Sledge: Oh, a little less.

Lohse: About fifty feet or a little less, about forty feet to the water?

E. Sledge: Yes, and there's a little pulley deal here [gesture], where you would draw from. Someone took it off. It was an old antique deal.

Lohse: That's a shame. It's a hand-dug well.

E. Sledge: Hand-dug, yes.

Lohse: The well is rock-lined, and circular, and it's about forty feet down to the water there, and it's never gone dry.

E. Sledge: Never.

Lohse: Did it get replaced with a drilled well later?

E. Sledge: No.

Lohse: It never did. This is the original water supply.

E. Sledge: This is the original.

Lohse: When was this dug?

E. Sledge: That, I do not know. Do you recall William?

W. Sledge: The only thing I know is when they cleaned it out.

E. Sledge: The shelf and so far is rock. Then from there on down, it seemed to be like sand rock, like, it's dug through a sand rock, doesn't it? Do you notice, after you get so far in there, it is not rock anymore? Can

you tell that?

Lohse: I see what you mean. That's about--what is it--ten or twelve feet down there? It doesn't seem to be lined anymore, and it's smooth-sided. I see what you mean. Did anything interesting come out of it when it was cleaned? Any tools or things like that?

E. Sledge: A barn stood in that area. It's probably down now. See where those posts are sitting up, in that area [gesture]. That's where the barn used to be.

Lohse: The four posts back there.

E. Sledge: In that area is where the barn used to sit.

Lohse: We're looking now west of the house?

E. Sledge: We're looking southwest.

Lohse: Southwest.

E. Sledge: This was the garden area. See where it was? It was an awful big one, wasn't it?

Lohse: It is large, and it's fenced. It's completely fenced in.

E. Sledge: It's fenced in, so horses and cattle couldn't get into it.

Lohse: Still fenced. What did they raise in the garden?

E. Sledge: Well, you just name it. They would raise cabbage, peas, onions, corns, greens, squash, cucumbers, watermelons, tomatoes. English peas would grow up to here [gesture].

Lohse: Green beans?

E. Sledge: Green beans.

Lohse: And the garden, I guess, is south of the house?

E. Sledge: That's correct. The garden is south of the house. There were some people who had some hogs down farther here, in a place that the lake got. They haven't any place to put things, so I let them put them up here, since I wasn't using it--some friends of mine.

Lohse: [Gesture] Is this the location of the original hog pens?

E. Sledge: Yes, they were usually in this area, so they just brought theirs in this area. That's the same old pen there, with that iron beside it. It was there when I was a little tot (laughter).

Lohse: Now, that's vicious-looking stuff.

E. Sledge: Yes, I don't what that is. I asked my brother and daddy what was that was made out of, and where did it come from from.

Lohse: What was it originally?

E. Sledge: Yes, what did it come off?

W. Sledge: It looked like it might have been calico or something. You know those deals.

Lohse: The hog pens have been here since you were a kid?

E. Sledge: Off and on, yes. These people have had theirs here about a year-and-a-half. My father-in-law brought some out here for a few years. He raised some until he passed.

Lohse: Did you have a pasture for your work animals: horses or mules?

E. Sledge: Yes, there were work animals. It was a wood lot and pasture. You can see the woods. There were some more poplars down in that area, that the horses mostly ran in.

Lohse: Did you have a milk cow?

E. Sledge: Yes, they had some cows years back. I was fortunate. I didn't have to do much of that, either, when I was growing up.

Lohse: Was it a big family? Did you have lots of brothers and sisters?

E. Sledge: No sisters. I had four brothers. There're only three of us now.

Lohse: Did any of them farm?

E. Sledge: No, not after they left home. They'd had enough farming.

Lohse: When did they leave home?

E. Sledge: I was born in 1934, and the one next to me was born in 1931. The next ones were born in 1928, 1926, and 1921. They all left after they got grown. Some went into the service, you know. My older brother went into the service in about 1943, someplace in there. He didn't come back after he did two hitches [tours of duty] in the service.

Lohse: So, you were born in the Depression.

E. Sledge: That is correct.

Lohse: And you grew up in the Depression.

E. Sledge: That's correct.

Lohse: What effect did that have on farming and on your family life here?

E. Sledge: Well, I was really too young to know too much about it.

Lohse: It seemed normal to you.

E. Sledge: Yes. I only know what I've heard them say about it. [Gesture] That's another old plow there. One with a disk, I believe, is hidden over there.

Lohse: Would any of these have been used to do the garden?

E. Sledge: They could have, but I'm sure that wasn't used in the garden. It wouldn't have been necessary to use that in the garden. That's a pretty heavy plow. It could have been used more for this bottom land. That would practically sink in the sand, as loose as it was out there.

Lohse: So, it was five boys and your dad and your mom?

E. Sledge: Yes.

[Tape 1, Side 2]

E. Sledge: He's the only blood grandson, our older brother. He passed in 1969, at age forty-eight.

Lohse: The other four of you were step-grandsons.

E. Sledge: That's correct.

Lohse: Your mom, then, was the lady of the house?

E. Sledge: Yes, Martha Sledge.

Lohse: So, she did all of the housework?

E. Sledge: Yes, that's correct.

Lohse: Let's see. What'd we have: five boys, Dad, and Granddad?

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: She did all the housework for seven men. What was her day like?

E. Sledge: It sure was a busy day. She liked to work. She also worked in the field a little bit. I don't know how she found time, but she did. She was a hard-working lady. She lived to be ninety-three.

Lohse: And it didn't disagree with her a bit, either.

E. Sledge: She was born in 1889.

Lohse: Was this her garden then? Did she do the most to take care of it?

E. Sledge: Yes, she did most of the gardening, most of the planting and all. Her father was a farmer, too.

Lohse: So, she knew what she was doing.

E. Sledge: I would say that she knew more about farming than my dad, but he was the man, so...(chuckle).

Lohse: Did she can and preserve?

E. Sledge: Yes, she canned. There's an old canner up there in the smokehouse up that she used to use. She had a pantry in the old house up where she kept the stuff that she canned. Lot of things we didn't have to buy.

We had our own hogs. The meat then, they could keep it without it being refrigerated. We cured it out. We cured it with salt and smoked it. You'd hang it up, and it would still be good.

Lohse: So, there was a smokehouse up there.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: Did she have a root cellar?

E. Sledge: No. I think there was a cellar once. I remember one being there, but it was a little before my time, so I don't know too much about it. I remember one caving in a time or two.

Lohse: I was going to ask, did it cave in?

E. Sledge: Yes. You're at the gate, as you come in there, to your left, where the cellar used to be. It's kind of a little mound.

Lohse: She canned and preserved everything out of the garden?

E. Sledge: Yes, corn, tomatoes, green beans. We didn't have a deep freeze when I was a kid, but later on she got a deep freeze to keep those things like that. Back in the early 1940s, you didn't have your own yet.

Lohse: You said you had an orchard. What kind of orchard?

E. Sledge: Peaches and plums.

Lohse: It's gone now.

E. Sledge: Yes. And we had a few apple trees and pears.

Lohse: When was wash day?

E. Sledge: I think that it was mostly on Friday and Saturday.

Lohse: That must have been a chore for seven men.

E. Sledge: Some wash was done all through the week, but the main day was Friday.

Lohse: Is the house on its original location?

E. Sledge: Original location, yes.

Lohse: It was built there?

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: Is that the original house?

E. Sledge: Yes, it's the original location and the original house.

Lohse: Let's stroll up and look around the house. Is there anything down here you want to talk about?

E. Sledge: I don't think there's anything more.

Lohse: Is there anymore machinery?

W. Sledge: No.

Lohse: Is that a [wood] splitter up there [gesture]? Did you do any timbering?

E. Sledge: Yes, most of the timbering came from the back part.

Lohse: Up here?

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: Did your granddad cut all his own lumber on the place here, all of this fencing and building material?

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: Did he buy any?

E. Sledge: I think he did buy some.

Lohse: Maybe some house siding or something like that. Did

he ever cut any of his own timber and take it to a sawmill?

E. Sledge: Not that I know of. I never heard him talk about carrying it too far away. I was about three years old when he passed, so most of my information I got from my father and mother.

Lohse: How long did you live here?

E. Sledge: Until I finished--well, basically, I guess you might say--elementary school. Here at Pilot Point, we had the eighth grade at that time. After that I had to go up to Denton, to Fred Moore [Colored School]. I'm sure you know where that is. We had to catch a bus. I don't mean a school bus at that time.

Lohse: You caught what?

E. Sledge: The Trailways [Bus Company line]. It ran from Whitesboro [Texas] through.

Lohse: You had to go to school on a Trailways bus.

E. Sledge: Yes. And then the passengers got so few that they stopped the Trailways, so I had to just catch people going to work.

Lohse: Catch a ride.

E. Sledge: They were working down there, doing day work. They'd let me out at the bus station, and I'd walk from there to Fred Moore. Then, by the time of the last class at Fred Moore, I was worried about getting a way back home (chuckle). I finished there in 1954. Then I

went to Prairie View [College, now Prairie View A & M University, Texas].

Lohse: Which one of these was the smokehouse [gesture]?

E. Sledge: The smokehouse was down here [gesture], just where the tree is there, where you see that cultivator in the tree there. That was the smokehouse.

Lohse: And that's--what--southwest of the house again?

E. Sledge: Yes, that's south of the house. Right above there, where you see this other small tree and the little pile of wood there [gesture], that's what they called the chicken house, for the grown chickens.

Lohse: The grown-up chickens.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: Okay, it collapsed. [Gesture] That's an outhouse?

E. Sledge: Yes. [Gesture] That's a little ol' shed.

Lohse: Sheds, the toolsheds, for [agricultural] chemicals, [live-stock] medicines, and stock-type stuff. When were these built?

E. Sledge: Years ago. I don't know. I couldn't give you a year on that. We could walk down here where the sorghum mill was, if you would like to see that.

Lohse: I'd like that. The house is on a stone foundation. When did electricity come in? When did your folks get electricity?

E. Sledge: [No answer.]

[Tape paused briefly.]

E. Sledge: I got out of Prairie View in 1959, in January. I went into the service for two years and then came to North Texas [State College, now the University of North Texas, Denton, Texas]. That was in 1961. I did graduate work at North Texas.

Lohse: You graduated from where?

E. Sledge: North Texas.

Lohse: What is your field?

E. Sledge: Mathematics.

Lohse: Math.

E. Sledge: I've been teaching in the Denton public schools since 1962.

Lohse: Mr. Sledge has been teaching in the Denton Public School System since 1962.

E. Sledge: How long have you been in North Texas?

Lohse: Oh, I've been here just about five months now. I'm from Houston [Texas].

E. Sledge: You don't know any of the old-timers over there in Education Department?

Lohse: No, sir, I wouldn't.

E. Sledge: Dr. [Reginald] Hindley?

Lohse: I wouldn't know anybody in the Higher Education Department.

E. Sledge: [Gesture] This is the area that he furnished. It was in here, and it came out to this area, out to here.

Lohse: It's a brick structure.

E. Sledge: Yes. They put the wood in from this [opening] in here [gesture]. That was a copper pan that was from this length back to where you see the chimney part go up. And I suppose that copper pan should have been about this wide [gesture], where you put the juice in, you know, that came from the syrup, the cane.

Lohse: About four four feet wide, and it ran the length of this oven?

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: About four feet wide and, I'd say, about twelve feet long. It was brick, and stone, too.

E. Sledge: Yes, rock. They built a lot of out of rock. There was a lot of rocks that they could get from surrounding farms. The mill was here [gesture], and I cried--I really did--when I came and found that it had been moved. Those people didn't know the value of that when they sold that.

Lohse: And all that's left are four piers, four columns. It looks heavy duty.

E. Sledge: It was a big metal deal. It had big rollers on it. See, the team would go around, a little bit farther back than she is there [gesture]. It had a big pole that would go out that way [gesture]. They fed it from this side [gesture], from where it was sitting. [Multiple gestures] The plumbing would come out the other end, over here, on the side. That was stocked

up over here. That was stocked over here, and the juice came from the cane. There was a barrel that would sit there to catch it.

Lohse: Okay, and when that was full, it would be dumped in the copper pan.

E. Sledge: Yes. It had another strainer that sat up there, and then there was a faucet deal that you turned on it. This raw juice crawled into the pan and cooked.

Lohse: This cane is sugar cane?

E. Sledge: Yes, but a different kind. It was whatever kind that Dad could cook.

Lohse: Whatever they got. Oh, that is a shame that it's gone.

E. Sledge: It was better than any of this sorghum syrup that I've been able to buy.

Lohse: I like sorghum.

E. Sledge: Yes, but this was a lot better.

Lohse: Was this a community sort of a thing? Did the neighbors bring their cane in?

E. Sledge: Yes, yes.

Lohse: Did your family do this for a share of the syrup?

E. Sledge: Yes, they would do it on a share basis of the syrup or so much a gallon.

Lohse: So, this was a community industry, community business. Yes, that's a shame that's gone.

[Tape paused briefly.]

E. Sledge: I thought maybe that the cattle had gotten in and just knocked it over. One day I just happened to come down and wanted to look at it. I saw it was gone, and back to the house I went, to tell Mother and them that someone had stolen it (laughter). So, this provided the earliest shed that they had over this furnished deal. The trees, you know, furnish a lot of shade, where it wouldn't be so hot. That cedar tree and stuff wasn't in there. That was all out. There was the big tree. These large trees were still here. There was another one over there that provided shade.

Lohse: These oaks have been here for quite a while.

E. Sledge: This certain area here was blocked in, fenced in, and sometimes this whole yard was full, stacked up with cane.

Lohse: Was it seasonal?

E. Sledge: Yes. From as far as Tioga [Texas], my father brought cane here. It was the only one in the area, that I've known of. My granddaddy on my mother's side made syrup, too, but that was down by Mustang [Texas]. That was before my day, because they moved and went to Wichita [Wichita Falls, Texas] before I was born. So, there was syrup-making on both sides of my family (laughter).

Lohse: Family industry. I see a grapevine here [gesture]. Is that wild [reference to so-called mustang grapes]?

E. Sledge: That is wild.

Lohse: You didn't have grapes, also?

E. Sledge: Some of these vines were what you'd call wild grapes.

Lohse: Do you know where the brick came from to make this mill?

E. Sledge: No, I do not, but a lot of these rocks came off the place here--the rocks you see, that are in here. A lot of it was rock.

Lohse: I see that the bottom [consists of] several feet of rock.

E. Sledge: Most of the original structure was probably rock. As they repaired it, some of the later ones [operator's] used a little white brick.

Lohse: That looks reasonable, for later patching. What kinds of jars and bottles was the finished product put up in?

E. Sledge: They used jugs; they used kegs. A lot of people used a fifty-gallon drum or keg. It depended upon the amount of syrup they made. Some of the smaller batches used the crock jugs. Do you remember the crock jugs and things they used to have? They used all that, or just plain jars or gallon buckets.

Lohse: There was no special container. It was just what people preferred.

E. Sledge: Yes. They could use those five-gallon jugs and take some type of cork stopper and stop it.

Lohse: That looks like a piece of railroad tie there [gesture].

E. Sledge: That's from an old part of a railroad [right-of-way] here. It's a lot of different than the ones they use now. They are a lot larger [wider gauge] now.

Lohse: There's that narrow-gauge railroad. Where did that come from?

E. Sledge: Probably from this track up here. It used to have a small train. It didn't pull as much weight as they carry now. They had smaller rails.

Lohse: There was a track near here?

E. Sledge: Yes. You know, we crossed it [the old right-of-way] right up here [gesture].

Lohse: Okay, it's still there.

E. Sledge: Yes. It has been moved. If you look to your left as you go across the track, you'll see there's another road, where they're moving it over the lake.

Lohse: When did the railroad come through here?

E. Sledge: I do not recall what year that would be. It was before my day, too, but I don't recall what year.

Lohse: Before the 1930s?

E. Sledge: Yes, before the 1930s.

Lohse: Did the railroad make any difference in lifestyle or any difference that you know of?

E. Sledge: No, I can't recall any difference.

Lohse: Like, did it provide different building material, or

did things get cheaper or more expensive or anything around here? Did things come from farther away or anything?

E. Sledge: No, I can't remember any change, because it was here ever since I've been here. I don't know the difference.

Lohse: Like, Depression differences. It was normal to you. Are we on a hill?

E. Sledge: Yes, we're on a hill. That was a tank [stock watering tank or pond] down there [gesture]. It probably sloped off, sloped back down to the other way. That is was you call a branch [gesture].

Lohse: A branch of seasonal running water?

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: Do you remember the first radio your family had?

E. Sledge: Yes, it was a little tube radio, the first I remember. We used to listen to the fights: Joe Louis and that bunch, "Jersey Joe" Walcott (laughter). You probably don't remember those, do you?

Lohse: By name, just the name only. No, that was before my time.

E. Sledge: On the night of the fights, they would come from far and near. Everybody'd sit around.

Lohse: Did you have the first radio in the area?

E. Sledge: No, I don't know if it was the first one, but I can recall, when we were small, the floor was full.

Everybody was sitting around trying to listen.

Lohse: Trying to get closer to the radio.

E. Sledge: Closer to it, yes, to hear.

Lohse: Women and children got farther away.

E. Sledge: They would come and play dominoes until time for the fight to come on. Then after the fight, they'd go [leave]. They would play dominoes until the fight.

Lohse: Was it a picnic? Did you bring food?

E. Sledge: No, because, see, it was close enough, you know. They would go back home to eat or eat before they left or something like that. There may have been a time or two when they had watermelon or something like that.

Lohse: A little refreshment or something. What kinds of social events did you have out here: gatherings, picnics?

E. Sledge: Basically, it was picnics, ball games. School was about two-and-a-half miles to the north of here.

Lohse: Which school was that?

E. Sledge: That was Odell Burch School. That was his name. It was a one-room schoolhouse.

Lohse: Log?

E. Sledge: No, it was frame.

Lohse: Church functions?

E. Sledge: Church functions. The church and school were on the ground.

Lohse: Same building or same ground?

E. Sledge: Well, it was the same building for a while, yes, because the school burned. Then they had school for several years in the church. The first school I went to was in the church, the little church. That church was the same church, by name, that I belong to now, Saint James Baptist Church. It just moved from out there about two years ago, after this lake came in. Of course, we had bought property in town sometime before that. We just held onto it to get more [a higher price] out of it. We were waiting for the lake, hopefully.

Lohse: When was that church established?

E. Sledge: That church was established pretty close to about 1900 by Reverend Moss.

Lohse: Was your grandfather a founder?

E. Sledge: Yes, he was one of those founders.

Lohse: He was a founding father of Saint James Baptist Church. When did you get your first telephone? Do you remember a telephone?

E. Sledge: Oh, that was after I had gotten married. I wasn't home when they got the phone here.

Lohse: Party line?

E. Sledge: As a kid at home, we didn't have a phone. Of course, we hooked on to lights the first time they came through here. We were glad to get on those.

Lohse: Was that after World War II?

E. Sledge: Yes, that was after World War II when the lights [electrification] came through here. It was in the mid-1940s, I would say.

Lohse: It seems to have been near 1947, something like that, and everybody hooked in just as soon as it came through?

E. Sledge: Yes. I don't know any that didn't hook on [to the electric utility service]. We got tired of those globes, kerosene light. I'll bet that you don't know anything about that. Have you ever seen a kerosene light, what we used to call coal oil light?

Lohse: Lanterns, kerosene lantern.

E. Sledge: Yes, that you pump.

Lohse: With the air pressure.

E. Sledge: The others had just that wick, you know. It goes down, and you just turn it up and light it and put the globe on. It would smut up, and then you had to clean it out again.

Lohse: Well, that was light. How did you heat--your grandfather and your father? How did they heat?

E. Sledge: They heated by wood--the wood stove.

Lohse: Cook?

E. Sledge: Yes, cook by the wood stove.

Lohse: It was the same stove?

E. Sledge: No. We let Carter have that stove--the iron cook stove. Didn't Carter get that?

W. Sledge: Yes.

E. Sledge: The guy who got that, not too long ago, made a barbecue deal out of it. It was an old-type stove.

Lohse: How many burners did it have?

E. Sledge: It had four parts [lids] that you picked up, that you call burners.

Lohse: Warming racks?

E. Sledge: Yes. There's a place where you put the wood, and there was another place where you emptied out the ashes, after the ashes fell through. You'd empty [shake] the grate.

Lohse: Do you remember that?

E. Sledge: Sure!

Lohse: It's all electric now.

E. Sledge: That's correct.

Lohse: How late did your mom use wood stoves?

E. Sledge: Well, after the electric came in, she switched.

Lohse: No longer than necessary.

E. Sledge: Yes, well, she still used it for a while, and then we got butane and used it.

Lohse: Gas.

E. Sledge: Yes, gas. The old tank is still up there.

Lohse: The round one, the sphere?

E. Sledge: Yes. Then later they moved to town. Oh, their health started getting bad.

Lohse: In the 1950s, did you say?

E. Sledge: No, it was later. It was along about 1970 when they moved, early 1970s, not too awfully long ago, when they gave up the old homestead. My dad had been here since 1912, himself. He had his first marriage out here. He married in 1912 and then came back here in 1914.

Lohse: So, your dad was a grown man, then, when your grandfather bought the place. Your dad didn't grow up here then; he was grown man when he came here.

E. Sledge: No, he did not grow up here. My father came from Alabama at a young age. My grandfather bought this place in 1901, and Dad was born in 1898. He remarried in 1912 at age twenty-three. Then he bought the other place down there in 1893. After his wife passed, he lost all his kids but one, practically all in the same year, 1900 and 1901, when he bought this.

Lohse: Epidemic?

E. Sledge: Yes, it was an epidemic. I forgot what they said it was. It was hard getting through that epidemic, just a man trying to raise his kids. He was only able to save one.

Lohse: Did that hit many people in the area?

E. Sledge: Yes, a lot of my mother's people passed during that time.

Lohse: What were your home remedies, medicines? How did you get doctored when you got sick?

E. Sledge: Well, Mother did most of the doctoring--home remedies, different things. I don't remember a doctor coming but a couple of times. That doctor who came, I saw last week in the paper where he passed--Dr. Worth Harris. You might have seen it in the Denton [the Denton Record-Chronicle] paper. I was amazed when I saw it. I didn't know what had happened to him, but he died in a nursing home somewhere here. It was in the Pilot Point paper. That's the only doctor I remember coming here when we were kids. I don't ever remember being sick enough to go to the doctor, until I got up big enough to take care of myself. Now, I'm always in the doctor's office. I have this misery on my neck now. I'm going to a physical therapist three times a week (chuckle).

Lohse: Mama did a good job.

E. Sledge: We didn't need one.

Lohse: Yes, you'd take care of your own medical problems.

E. Sledge: They would give you a little castor oil, I guess, and a little black drop, and that cured everything--when you had the measles, smallpox, chicken pox, or whatever it was. There was always a remedy for it. They would give you some type of tea, and it worked.

Lohse: Home-grown remedies? Did your mom garden her remedies?

E. Sledge: Yes, and it worked. It doesn't work now. It doesn't

work on my family. It doesn't work on my kids  
(laughter).

Lohse: They won't let you practice.

E. Sledge: She had a little of what they called an amulet (?) or poultice (?), something they tied around the neck of the baby, and it kept all the diseases away. They didn't worry about that. I remember that my mother and my wife's mother, when our first child was born, wanted to put some of it around her neck. I told them they weren't going to put any of that mess around there. I came home from work one day, and my mother-in-law had some around there, and you ought to have seen how quick that it got away from around there. They [my children] went to the [actual] doctor a lot.

Lohse: Is that what she told you: "See?"

E. Sledge: Yes. It would be something now to try that stuff.

Lohse: What were your favorite foods? What was your favorite thing to eat here?

E. Sledge: Oh, I liked vegetables,

Lohse: Garden vegetables?

E. Sledge: Yes, spinach, squash, and meat. One thing I liked too much, that wasn't good for me, was sweets (chuckle). Well, you can tell that.

Lohse: What kind of sweets did you have?

E. Sledge: Just any kind, as long as it was sweet.

Lohse: Well, the syrup, of course.

E. Sledge: Yes. I still like syrup, but it doesn't like me.  
Cakes, pies.

Lohse: What kinds of things did you buy from the store?  
Groceries? You said that you didn't buy much.

E. Sledge: You mean Mother?

Lohse: Yes, sir, and your grandfather, as a matter of fact.  
When they went to town, what did they go for?

E. Sledge: Depends on the time of year it was. During the  
gardening time, there wasn't too much to buy, other  
than bread and maybe sugar and stuff like that, and  
flour, meal. Most of the other things you had. They  
already had their meats.

Lohse: Meats and vegetables.

E. Sledge: Yes. Mother canned just about anything you could  
think of: berries, peas, corn, green beans. She made  
her gelatin, and they had syrup for sweetening things.  
We had cows for milk, and we would churn for the  
butter.

Lohse: Cheese, buttermilk?

E. Sledge: Yes. We had a lot of things that we would have had to  
buy.

Lohse: How about the machinery? Where did that come from?

E. Sledge: I don't know. They already had all that machinery.  
Granddad had it years ago. Occasionally, they'd see  
something different that they wanted and would buy it.  
There was no particular place, except maybe from

another farmer, maybe from a neighbor. They were very neighborly then.

I remember a guy up on the hill there by the name of Tatum. His farm was adjacent to ours. Granddad had a big tool place up there, where they kept pliers and things. If he was over there plowing and something broke down, he don't go way up on the hill to get it. He would just come to our place, get what he needed, and go back to work. That's the way it worked. If you were there, you went there. You'd just go over there and get it. You never did have to lock the house. You just pulled the door "to" [closed].

I didn't start locking the house until after I got married and moved to town. Then I had to start locking the house. We never did lock the house. We just pulled the door "to."

Lohse: You knew all your neighbors.

E. Sledge: That's right. When we came back, everything was like it was.

Lohse: Was there a lot of trade among neighbors?

E. Sledge: Yes. If someone needed something, it was borrowed. I guess you'd called it borrowed. If a family needed or wanted some syrup or something, they'd just give them a bucket of syrup.

Lohse: Did your granddad and dad ever get traded flour for

milling the cane or anything like that?

E. Sledge: Not that I know of. Just only for syrup would there be a deal like that. It would be the on share basis, maybe like a fourth gallon or something like that or [so much] per gallon. As far as trading, I don't think so. It could have happened, though.

Lohse: It would just depend.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: Did they help each other out at different times? At harvest time, did people help each other, or with barn building?

E. Sledge: Yes, in the harvesting time. It's like Henry Simmons, this fellow up here, who just passed. He stayed there until he passed, almost like my dad did. He said that when they moved him off that hill, they were going to carry him head first, and that is the way they did. We almost had to take Dad that way. He would come down and help Dad. He finally bought a thresher, himself. He would thresh his, and he would come down and thresh my father's.

Lohse: Did young men work on the crews in the summer?

E. Sledge: Yes, they did. They worked on the crews. Those crews would go from field to field. They had the wagon with the frame on it. They would take a pitchfork and load the peanuts onto the thresher. That was before they had the combines. They didn't have the combines like

they have now. The threshing machine was stationary. It wasn't a mobile deal that would go up and down the fields. It was a stationary deal. You brought it to the thresher. Then you'd have a "carry-out," with the carriers coming in to it. That way, you would throw it off of the wagon onto the carrier.

Lohse: Okay, canvas, belt-style rollers or something like that?

E. Sledge: Yes. Then that was used instead of a big hopper like they have on there now. You had a spout, and then you had these burlap bags, what we used to call "croak" sacks, to catch them in, and then you sewed them, just like a sack of flour. If you've ever seen one of those big wheat sacks, that's the way you sewed it up. When they carried them to the market, they carried them in those bags.

Lohse: Bagged in the field.

E. Sledge: Yes, bagged in the field. Then we'd stack them out in the sun. It takes so many days for them to dry out. Then someone from the place who bought them would come out with a deal they punched the sack with. They would squeeze them to see if they were still gummy-like, if they would have to wait a few more days for them to dry out farther. The sun dried them. Now you take them there, and you know you put them in the machine, in the dryer. That dries them, you know.

You have one weight when you carry them there. After you dry them, there is another weight, with a loss from greenness or dryness. It used to be done in the sun, sitting out in the field.

Lohse: Where did they take their cotton?

E. Sledge: To town, to Pilot Point here.

Lohse: Into Pilot Point.

E. Sledge: Yes. It's still the same place.

Lohse: Same place.

E. Sledge: Yes, same old, massive gin that they still have here.

Lohse: Well, I know that's been there since before your time.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: What were some of your favorite childhood memories around the farm?

E. Sledge: The best one of them was that I was really glad to get off the farm (chuckle). Really, I wasn't a farmer. I wasn't the farmer-type. I was there by circumstance (laughter).

Lohse: I spent summers, when I was a kid, on a farm, too, and that was my farming, when I'd visit.

E. Sledge: As the young folks say, that was not "my bag."

Lohse: Your granddad and your dad, when they were telling stories, what were some of their favorite memories? Did they have any favorite stories?

E. Sledge: I don't recall any that were particularly of any interest. They loved the farm. Well, maybe that was

all they knew to do. That was just life then. I don't guess it was that bad. A lot of them who had a lot better lives and better chances don't seem to have done as well. I don't guess it was so bad after all.

Lohse: Did they hunt and fish around here?

E. Sledge: Yes, a lot of people hunted and fished a lot. My parents were not too much of hunters and fishermen. A lot of neighbors were fishermen. A lot of people were fishermen. Like my wife, she's a fishermen, but I don't like fishing or hunting, either one. I remember the first time I left the house, I was going to go hunting by myself, because all the other neighbors went. I got down there by a tree, about like from here to you [gesture], and a big ol' \_\_\_\_\_ went by. I just almost dropped the gun. He went up the tree there, and I shot him. I turned around and went back to the house, and I haven't been hunting again, by myself.

[Tape 2, Side 1]

E. Sledge: My mother-in-law had a pet snake. She was not scared of a snake, but she was scared of a little mouse. She'll run from them, but she won't run from a snake. She'll take a stick this long [gesture] and hit a big snake with it. She had one of them big ol' snakes in her room there, on the dresser, and everytime that I would go in there, she reached up to see if it would

scare me. The last time that thing scared me, I took it and threw it away. I cannot stand snakes (laughter). She went around to everybody and wanted to know where her snake was. I didn't say anything. About a year later, I told her what happened.

Lohse: Did you have any pets on the farm?

E. Sledge: Nothing other than dogs and a cat or two. I liked the dogs. I didn't care for cats.

Lohse: Well, I'm running out of questions. Do you want to talk about the house?

E. Sledge: About the only thing we can say about it is that it's falling (laughter).

[Tape paused briefly.]

E. Sledge: My father was the last person who farmed in this area with the team.

Lohse: He farmed with a team until when?

E. Sledge: That's all he ever farmed with.

Lohse: He farmed that way until he quit farming.

E. Sledge: That's correct.

Lohse: Did he farm until 1970, or was he retired before that?

E. Sledge: He farmed a little bit in the 1970s.

Lohse: You were telling me that one of the horses that worked this farm was...

E. Sledge: Yes, one of them that worked on here the last time the farm was worked by a team is still living.

Lohse: So, it's still alive this year.

E. Sledge: Yes, it was alive when I left. He just got off sometime today. I have a lot in town that he ate some grass off of, and I brought him back to the house.

Lohse: Okay, he's still alive. I didn't catch that.

E. Sledge: Still alive, yes.

Lohse: You say you bought out some of your other people.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: Your brothers?

E. Sledge: Yes, and my brother passed before his wife. He inherited from my grandfather, and he was the sole surviving heir of his grandfather.

Lohse: The older brother?

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: You're the oldest boy now, and he was your older brother. So, you are the sole owner now?

E. Sledge: Yes, and the lake bought us out this year. That leaves 3 8/10 acres here. Maybe we might make a living from a nice lake site. Somebody might want to build something on it.

Lohse: They might, since it will be lakefront property. Let's stroll around.

E. Sledge: That would be from that fence over there, oh, I guess until a few feet on the other side [gesture]. See that brown set of bushes there [gesture]? On back that way is probably all the lake will leave, down to the branch there. On the other acres, that hill, I'm

sure, it will never cover, but they wouldn't let me hold onto that hill. They agreed that it wouldn't cover it, but it will be no good because I have no way to get to it.

Lohse: Who lives in that house [gesture]?

E. Sledge: I don't know. I never met them. They go and come so often.

Lohse: That's a very recent house.

E. Sledge: Yes, that was moved in here.

Lohse: Okay.

E. Sledge: That was moved in here. There's never been a house there until that moved in not long ago, about four years ago. The only house was on the hill--the rock house up on the hill. Just like Dad, it has been there for years.

Lohse: That was the nearest neighbor?

E. Sledge: Yes, that was pretty near the nearest.

Lohse: So, is that northwest?

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lohse: On the hill, up there?

E. Sledge: It was the most recent neighbor--that one, yes.

Lohse: That was a stone house?

E. Sledge: Rock.

Lohse: Rock?

E. Sledge: Rock. It was probably built on the farm there, just like those same rocks you saw down there.

[Tape paused briefly.]

Lebo: It didn't really have a community name, then?

E. Sledge: Nothing other than Cooke County. See, the county line is just a little piece back here. You're in Cooke County now, instead of Denton County.

Lebo: Right.

E. Sledge: Yes, and so they called it Cooke County. In this area, we're from Cooke County (chuckle).

Lohse: That's what you tell people, that you're from Cooke County.

E. Sledge: Yes, that's what they all refer to you as--Cooke County.

Lebo: Are most of the people farmers right around this area in Cooke County?

E. Sledge: Yes, mostly all farmers.

Lebo: I heard there were a lot of German families out in this area.

E. Sledge: Yes, that was a German family up there [gesture] that were our best friends.

Lebo: The ones just north of you?

E. Sledge: Yes, to the north, the one on the hill up there, he's a German.

Lebo: Did you ever know a family called Kendrick?

E. Sledge: Kendrick? No.

Lebo: There is, I think, a little family cemetery just south of the junction between [State Highways] 455 and 372.

There is a little cemetery in there that's only got about five or six graves. We just don't really have any information about it?

E. Sledge: No, I don't know them.

Lebo: Have most of the people in this area been buried up at the Saint James Church?

E. Sledge: Most of those black people been buried up there. You know when you came on the highway?

Lebo: Up from Pilot Point?

E. Sledge: Yes. When you came off that highway, coming out here, the first turn, when you turn left, there was a cemetery, if you kept straight. It says "\_\_\_\_\_ Memorial Cemetery." That's where my wife was born. We've got two different cemeteries. There's a Catholic cemetery and the Saint James Cemetery.

Lebo: Were most of the black families in this area Baptist?

E. Sledge: The majority are Baptists.

Lebo: Most of the Germans were Catholic?

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lebo: We noticed that down in Pilot Point, near the cotton gin, it looks like there was some sort of meeting house. Do you remember it at all? Was there some sort of community meeting house in that area?

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lebo: Was that a Masonic club or a church?

E. Sledge: It was probably Knights of Columbus, the KC Hall. It

was German, mostly.

Lebo: Do you know when that closed? We drove by and saw that it was abandoned. We didn't have any idea when it was in use.

E. Sledge: The one I'm thinking about is still in use.

Lebo: This is just about one street over and one block north of the cotton gin. There's a building right there on the corner. It looks like an old school or meeting house of some sort.

E. Sledge: Oh, I don't know about that. Probably somebody used to live in that house. I know what you are talking about. It's not too far from the highway there.

Lebo: Right.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lebo: Were there ever any sawmills in this area?

E. Sledge: Not that I know of.

Lebo: We know that some people cut wood on their own property and pretty much used whatever they could produce. Other people had wood shipped in. I didn't know if there were any sawmills in the area.

E. Sledge: I don't think so.

Lebo: Your grandfather built the house. Did he have any help in building it?

E. Sledge: I know another man by the name of Finch helped put two of the rooms on. I don't know who put the others on. I heard them mention that.

Lebo: So, it has some additions.

Lohse: It has some additions then.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lebo: Did he kind of add on as he had more children?

E. Sledge: No, he didn't have any children when he bought this. His kids had all passed. His original place, where he lived before buying this, was a fifty-acre tract.

Lebo: Up north.

E. Sledge: As I told you, yes. He bought this in 1901, and all the kids had died in 1900. But this is where he moved--from there to here.

Lebo: Did your dad or grandfather ever have any goats or sheep or anything like that?

E. Sledge: I don't know if they had any goats or sheep or not. Do you know, William? Did they have any goats, sheep?

W. Sledge: I don't know.

E. Sledge: This fellow did. He always had sheep.

Lebo: The one north of you did?

E. Sledge: Yes, but he's passed away. He sold that to some guy out of Dallas.

Lebo: Do you ever remember any outlaws in the area?

E. Sledge: No, not in the area.

Lebo: Like, Bonnie [Parker] and Clyde [Barrow]?

E. Sledge: I've heard of Bonnie and Clyde, yes. They hid out...let's see where. Kind of east of here is where they were supposed to have hid out.

Lebo: Down near Pilot Point?

E. Sledge: Yes, kind of going toward Tioga.

Lohse: I guess you went to Pilot Point when you went to town.

E. Sledge: That was town (chuckle).

Lohse: That was town. Did your family go to Dallas or Fort Worth or anyplace else occasionally?

E. Sledge: Yes, we went to Dallas and Fort Worth, occasionally.

Lebo: Did you mostly drive, or did you take the train when you went to Dallas and Fort Worth?

E. Sledge: Mostly drove.

Lohse: When did your grandfather--or was it your father--have his first car? What was the first one?

E. Sledge: That was a 1937 Chevrolet, I believe. Yes, a 1937 Chevrolet, the one with the "knees" on it (chuckle).

Lebo: When did you get to drive it?

E. Sledge: Oh, let's see. I was a little young, too young right then, to drive it.

Lohse: Well, you were three years old.

E. Sledge: Later on, I got to drive another one of the cars.

Lohse: Was there ever a garage here?

E. Sledge: Oh, yes, it was over in that area someplace [gesture]. There was a garage once. It was kind a shed-like on the other side of that deal somewhere. There was a garage over there [gestures].

Lebo: Do you ever remember any traveling peddlers or salesmen?

E. Sledge: Yes, there were a lot of those who came through. There were a lot of what we called bums or tramps. They used to hop trains right up here.

Lebo: What kind of goods did they bring?

E. Sledge: Most of them had some type of stuff, different things that they would come by to sell. Sometimes they would take eggs, chickens, many different things, you know, for it.

Lebo: So, you traded them things for it.

E. Sledge: Yes. Sometimes you'd order the stuff, and you never would see them again, but that's nothing new.

Lebo: No. Did your father have an account at any of the stores in town, or did he always pay cash or trade?

E. Sledge: Mother didn't like credit, so we always bought on cash terms. She couldn't hardly stand to owe nobody. It would worry her to death. That's the type of person she was, but it didn't bother Dad. He could sleep (laughter).

Lebo: Did your mom have a sewing machine?

E. Sledge: Yes, and it got out of there. It was one of the old Singer-type with the peddles, the treadle.

Lebo: Did she order that through the mail, or did she buy that in town?

E. Sledge: Oh, I think that was her mother's. It was very antique, one of the old-type. We had so much stuff there to try to move out, and we left it for a while.

When we came out to look, they had gotten the machine part out. We came out the next time, and they had gotten the rest of it. I heard of a person getting \$6,000 for one of those, a certain one.

Lebo: Oh, really.

E. Sledge: They got \$6,000 for it. They sure did.

Lohse: A rare antique.

E. Sledge: Yes, \$6,000.

Lohse: Did your folks do a lot of mail order?

E. Sledge: Yes, Mother did. She always ordered some shoes for years.

Lebo: Things like lace and yarn and things like that?

E. Sledge: Yes, and a lot of her dresses and things like that she made. A lot of the other things she ordered, like, shoes.

Lebo: Did she ever work outside the home? Did she ever work for other families?

E. Sledge: Oh, she did some washing years back, and ironing. She worked in the field back when I was very small. I can remember that.

Lebo: Was cotton pretty much the main industry in this area?

E. Sledge: Yes, it was then.

Lohse: Cash crop.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lebo: Do you ever remember any Fourth of July celebrations?

E. Sledge: Yes, Fourth of July. And I can even remember some

19th of June celebrations (laughter). [Editor's note: Mr. Sledge is referring to "Juneteenth" Day. On June 19, 1865, Union General Gordon Granger read President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in Galveston, Texas, thus belatedly bringing about the freeing of 250,000 slaves in Texas. Within a short time, Juneteenth was celebrated by African Americans with festivities throughout the state.]

Lebo: What about moonshine? Do you remember a lot of people doing that?

E. Sledge: Yes, they used to make a lot of that. They surely did. They used to make some of that out of the foam and stuff that came from the syrup. They made some of that. They used to make some out of that.

Lebo: Did you ever make any here on the farm?

E. Sledge: I think that Dad did. I think he did. I don't remember it as well, because he was making more or less earlier. When I came along, it was on the way out, the syrup business, but I heard tales of it.

Lebo: Ever test it out as a kid?

E. Sledge: Yes, I heard stories about where they had a pump deal, you know. They would have it hid, you know. They would take someone around behind the pile and get them a little drink (chuckle).

Lebo: Did people around here ever have mules?

E. Sledge: Yes, horses and mules. Dad used to have a set of

mules.

Lebo: But mainly horses.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lebo: Did you use them for a wagon or for in the field?

E. Sledge: Either or both, you might say.

Lebo: Did you ever ride one to school?

E. Sledge: No. I was "country," but I still couldn't ride a horse (chuckle). I was about riding them just about like I am about a snake. I couldn't stay on them too good. I didn't like riding. As a matter of fact, I almost bounced off when they started running fast or loping at some speed. I couldn't ride that way.

Lohse: You couldn't stand the gallop. That's a funny thing. Some people are like that around horses. We've been hearing, you know, in talking to people, that there were people who liked them and people who didn't.

E. Sledge: That's right.

Lohse: There were people who just did not ride.

E. Sledge: My brother handled them well. When they started galloping, it looked like he was just sitting in a chair. But not me. You'd see that much space [gesture] between me and that horse (laughter).

Lebo: Did you ever go to Tioga or Gainesville?

E. Sledge: Yes, quite often.

Lebo: But you did most of your shopping in Pilot Point?

E. Sledge: Yes, that was the shopping place, probably. When we

had gone to Pilot Point, we had gone someplace  
(chuckle).

Lohse: Gone to town.

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lebo: What about dancing? Did a lot of people dance?

E. Sledge: Yes, but mostly you had to go to town for that, after I got old enough. They used to have these dances out here, what they called "swing" or "breakdown" or something. I heard Dad and them talk about it. We'd have these platforms, you know, and they'd dance. Sets, they called them, you know.

Lebo: Square dancing.

E. Sledge: Square dancing, yes, but that was before my time. I don't remember that, but I heard them talk about it. I guess they had them when I was at home, probably. Mother was very religious, so she didn't fool with that, but Dad would go to them. He was going to them in his seventies. He was still going.

Lebo: What about [motion picture] matinees? Did you ever go to matinees, like, on Saturdays?

E. Sledge: No. Of course, after I got up in age, they were having dances uptown here.

Lebo: Did Pilot Point have a moviehouse?

E. Sledge: No, they didn't. Well, yes, they did have one, years back. That's right. They sure did. Coleman is the one who had it. It was on the west side of the

square. It was a joy to go there at that time for popcorn, root beer.

Lohse: Were there other children in the area?

E. Sledge: Oh, yes.

Lohse: Did you play with other kids?

E. Sledge: Yes, I played with other children. There were some right across the track here. There were families all up through here.

Lohse: Did families visit much?

E. Sledge: Quite a bit. But mostly at home, I was by myself most of the time because of the age gap between me and the other one, the one who was next to me.

Lebo: Did your brothers do most of the chores, or did you, as the youngest, have to do some of them?

E. Sledge: I worked as hard as the others, but they did most of the plowing, that type of stuff. I didn't ever fool with the stock or plowing or anything like that.

Lebo: Did you ever help your mother out around the house?

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lebo: Did she ever make soap?

E. Sledge: Yes.

Lebo: Did she make it out in the yard somewhere?

E. Sledge: Yes, in one of these pots. We used to have one out here. Then we took it into town to people. A lot of people liked that to wash their hair with.

Lohse: Lye soap?

E. Sledge: Lye soap.

Lohse: Did she ever cook outdoors when the weather was hot?

E. Sledge: No, Mother always cooked inside. She was not an outdoor cook.

Lebo: We thought maybe she might have put her stove out, her wood-burning stove.

E. Sledge: No, she always cooked inside.

Lebo: Where did your grandfather get the wood for the house? Did he have that shipped in?

E. Sledge: I don't know. We never discussed that.

Lohse: What kind of furniture did your mom have? Did she have her mom's furniture, like, the sewing machine?

E. Sledge: She had that, but it was pretty good furniture, the durable-type.

Lebo: Did your father ever make any?

E. Sledge: No, I don't remember him making any. The house was all torn down, but something was left in here. You can see some of it. Let's see if we can get through the back over here [gesture]. At one time, it was good stuff.

Lohse: Was it made locally, or was it brought in on the train or something?

E. Sledge: It was arranged. Some of it was old, old stuff.

Lohse: Oh, old furniture.

E. Sledge: You can tell what this was before it got rained on and stuff. This was good material.

Lohse: Yes, it's ornate.

E. Sledge: This was good furniture. I remember that was beautiful stuff.

Lohse: It was a bureau with a mirror on the top of it.

E. Sledge: That had been real good stuff.

Lohse: And it's solid wood.

Lebo: You could refinish that. It's a nice piece of wood.

E. Sledge: The rest of it somebody has gotten out of here.

Lohse: It looks like walnut, solid walnut, furniture.

Lebo: It's a beautiful dresser.

E. Sledge: I wish that you could see her bed. Of course, it's at the house in town. Oh, it's about this high, and it's got this big roll on it [gestures]. Have you seen those type?

Lebo: Yes.

E. Sledge: I think that was her mother's bed, and the back comes along about here [gesture], and it's got that big roll on the top.

Lebo: It sounds beautiful.

E. Sledge: It's still good, real good.

Lohse: This was the kitchen [gesture]?

E. Sledge: No, this was the hallway. She did the canning here years ago [gestures].

Lebo: She had a pantry.

E. Sledge: She used to can for years.

Lohse: That's a large pantry, deep.

E. Sledge: This was an old [pie] safe. There was another one that was better than what we moved. People took jars and stuff and scattered them everywhere. This wasn't in here, the stuff on the floor.

Lebo: When was the kitchen added on?

E. Sledge: It's been here ever since I've been here, so I don't know.

Lebo: Probably the 1920s or so?

E. Sledge: Yes, it might have been.

Lohse: So, that was the stove [gesture]?

E. Sledge: A wood-burning stove.

Lohse: There was a second chimney. Did you have a fireplace?

E. Sledge: No, it wasn't a fireplace.

Lohse: This is a wood heater?

E. Sledge: That's a wood heater.

Lohse: We have a brick. It's Nesch Pittsburgh Block.

Lebo: I don't think I've seen any of those.

E. Sledge: Somebody spread those around.

Lebo: It's a type of fire brick.

E. Sledge: There is a lot of old stuff in here. That's where the wood stove would go.

Lebo: Yes, a wood-burning stove.

Lohse: Now, is this room an addition?

E. Sledge: I don't think so.

Lebo: This looks like it might have been the original room.

Lohse: The original house, tongue and groove ceiling.

E. Sledge: I don't know what this thing was [gesture]. Some kind of box.

Lohse: It looks like a telephone box.

E. Sledge: Well, they used it as a telephone box when they got it, but this has been here for a long time. They didn't have no telephone back then. I mean here, that I know of.

Lebo: How did your grandfather travel here? Did he come by wagon?

E. Sledge: I think so. This is one of them machines. We used that to put things in there. Someone got it.

Lohse: The sewing machine was in the living room.

E. Sledge: Yes. They [thieves, vandals] even got all the papers out. I guess they found something interesting in them.

Lohse: That was an ornate dresser.

E. Sledge: Right after, they removed a lot of stuff we had just brought over and thrown in here [to store]. This stuff wasn't in here. That piece of furniture that we looked at was in here.

Lebo: Was this your rocking chair over here [gesture], this little child's rocker?

E. Sledge: I don't know how that got here. That was brought in here. That wasn't originally in here. We brought that from the house. I guess one of the kids brought it out here. There's coat hangers still hanging up

there.

Lohse: The walls are covered with sheet rock, plaster board.  
When did they do that?

E. Sledge: Oh, that was, I guess, twenty years ago.

Lohse: About twenty years ago, the mid 1960s or more.

E. Sledge: Mom's secretary book for church.

Lohse: [Referring to document] It's dated in the 1930s--1938.

E. Sledge: She was secretary of the church for about fifty years.

Lohse: The church accounts for fifty years, did you say?

E. Sledge: Yes. There was some good things in here, but after they went through it, it's a mess. Here's something to do with taxes.

Lohse: State and county tax receipt for 1915.

E. Sledge: For 1916.

Lohse: For 1916.

E. Sledge: That's been awhile, hasn't it?

Lohse: It was is awhile ago--tax receipts.

E. Sledge: [Referring to document] Business records for 1928.

Lohse: [Referring to and gesturing toward document] It's 1928, state and county tax receipt. A letter from Dr. E. E. Ledbetter of Tioga, Texas, 1933.

E. Sledge: [Referring to and gesturing toward documents in trunk] Yes, you were asking about our doctors. The answer to it is right in this trunk. Sheriff \_\_\_\_\_ was from Panola County, Mississippi.

Lohse: [Referring to and gesturing toward document] January

18, 1878.

E. Sledge: That's where he was from--Panola County, Mississippi. I knew he was from Mississippi, but I didn't know where. I'd never looked at this.

Lohse: [Referring to and gesturing toward documents] It appears to be a bundle or a packet of official receipts and official papers.

E. Sledge: I think I'll just take this along.

Lohse: I would.

E. Sledge: [Gesture] This is probably an old band that he tied around that years ago. Panola County, Mississippi. I was going to come back and go through all this stuff. There were so many valuable things that they [thieves, vandals] took. It was disgusting.

Lohse. Oh, yes.

E. Sledge: I just didn't have the heart to go through it. A lot of it, I don't see how it could have been of value to them. [Gesture] This trunk was full of stuff. They [thieves, vandals] dumped the tray out.

Lohse: [Gesture] This is it right here. What we're looking at is a trunk. It's an old wooden, metal-sheathed, steamer-style, hump-backed trunk. [Referring to and gesturing toward documents in trunk] It's got some papers and receipts and letters and ledgers in it. There's one piece of paper dating back to 1887, Mississippi.

E. Sledge: You don't want to get too hot in here.

Lohse: A packet of letters tied with ribbon? Tied with a suspender? A garter belt?

E. Sledge: [Referring to and gesturing toward letter] Let's see if there is a date on this letter. It's not so far back. This is from 1931.

Lohse: From 1931.

E. Sledge: Is it 1887? Is that what it was?

Lohse: It was a packet of letters from 1887.

E. Sledge: Panola County, Mississippi.

Lohse: Panola, Mississippi.

E. Sledge: [Referring to and gesturing toward document] Here's one from 1931.

Lohse: It's a check: [reading from check] "pay to the order of." It's a check from 1931.

E. Sledge: [Reading from check] "H. H. Hardin," isn't it?

Lohse: [Referring to and gesturing toward check] Hardin. It's a packet of checks from First Guaranty Bank of Tioga, Texas.

E. Sledge: [Reading from check,] "L. F. Brown."

Lohse: [Reading from check] "L. F. Brown, \$3.00 for lumber," the note says.

E. Sledge: [Reading from check] It's [signed] by "Rich..."

Lohse: There it is--[reading from check] "Richard Israel."

E. Sledge: [Referring to check] That was his signature.

Lohse: That was very ornate handwriting.

E. Sledge: That was from some of my mother's folks. Where was it from? Dallas, Texas?

Lohse: From Dallas.

E. Sledge: [Referring to and gesturing toward document] Yes, I'll take this. It's dated 1909.

Lohse: [Reading from check] "April 8, 1909."

E. Sledge: That was the original.

Lohse: [Referring to check] It's written to Mr. Richard Israel.

E. Sledge: [Referring to check] From B. F. Armstrong. That's from some part of Georgia.

Lohse: [Referring to check] It looks like it might be south...is that too fast for South Atlanta, Georgia? From 1909.

E. Sledge: I think I'll take this home.

[The group moved back outside.]

E. Sledge: They had several wells. That was about the only thing that had water, that they could get water from. One or two people had windmills. That might have been a stream. A lot of people hauled water from that well.

Lohse: This was a central, community well.

E. Sledge: This was for a lot people who didn't have a well, like, this parcel that had a cistern. That's a thing that they dig, you know They made it in the shape of a well. It's got a concrete bottom and a top and everything. They had a thing that runs around the

house, and it gets the runoff.

Lohse: It collects water.

E. Sledge: If it went dry, they used to come right under that covering down there, right up through there, right to this tree over here [gesture], to get water and carry it back, when I was a kid. Another family down there by the church, he had team. He hauled his water with a barrel from here.

Lohse: Was this one of the first wells in the area or just the best?

E. Sledge: One of the better wells, the best that I know. The water was cool, clear. It just tasted better. Cold water.

Lohse: Well, we're running out of questions again. We've generally covered everything.

E. Sledge: Well, I hope it was basically what you were looking for. As I told you before, there wasn't a whole lot of farming stuff, but there was some.

Lohse: It was a pretty good collection of some things.

E. Sledge: But it was antique.

Lohse: It's the real thing. It's a general cross of a little bit of everything, and two or three of everything, and some things I'd never seen before, and all in good condition, too. To find the wooden parts and the handles and trees and tongues, to find those all together, is something, and leather, harness parts.

E. Sledge: One thing that I would like to carry with me, if I had to get rid of this, would be that tree (chuckle).

Lohse: I see what you mean.

E. Sledge: We would get under that tree, and if we had any type of a barbecue, we wouldn't have to worry about shade.

Lohse: It's a perfectly round umbrella, probably a hundred feet in diameter.

E. Sledge: It almost touches the ground.

Lohse: Spreading shade tree, and it almost touches the ground in a circle.

E. Sledge: I wonder what is the diameter of that thing there. I'd like to measure that from where it touches the ground over there, to back over there where that stove was, just to see.

Lohse: Was it like this when you were a boy?

E. Sledge: No, this thing has grown, grown, and grown. It wasn't over here in the way it is now. One of those freeze storms that came through damaged it a lot. You can see that it affected it a lot. It broke a lot of the limbs. I've never seen one grow like that. I've seen them grow straight up, but not in this shape. After Daddy got old, he used to have one of those beds. He lie in it, out there in the shade.

Lohse: Oh, I meant to tell you on the way over here, more of what we were up to. You know, we got your name from the Richard Israel estate, from the property, looking

for heirs. We got your name again yesterday. We spent the day with Jane Armstrong and looked over her old Scott Jacobs farm out there. One of the things that we always ask, the last question, is might you know somebody, people around, old-timers or heirs of old-timers, people you know, time permitting, of course, who we might talk to. She mentioned you. Of course, we had already had this arranged.

E. Sledge: I know how that probably came about. She's an Armstrong?

Lohse: Jane Armstrong, Scott Jacobs's daughter.

E. Sledge: She probably was a Jacobs who married an Armstrong, I bet. She might be one of the Jacobs daughters.

Lohse: She's Scott Jacobs's daughter, Clint Jacobs's granddaughter.

E. Sledge: Clint Jacobs and my father knew each other.

Lohse: Oh?

E. Sledge: Yes, they weren't too much different in age. Clint might have been a little bit older than Dad. They were long time friends, until death. One of Clint Jacobs's sons used to come here.

[Tape 2, Side 2]

E. Sledge: Bill was the younger child of Clint's. He would come and get Dad at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning, and Dad would get up and go with him. Sometimes he would have problems, you know, and he wanted somebody to talk to.

I think he had cancer or something, and for a lot of years he had problems. Sometimes it would be so cold. My daddy would get up and get out in the cold like this, as old as he was. But he would get up and go with him. His life-long friend.

Lohse: Clint Jacobs--let's see--moved in there in the 1850s. Did your granddaddy live close to him before he moved here, or did he come here straight from Mississippi?

E. Sledge: I think he came not to this place. I believe he came pretty close to the place down there that he bought, in this area, when he came from Mississippi.

Lohse: And we're looking north now.

E. Sledge: Yes, that's about a mile-and-a-half from here--the other farm. They are shaped down the side of the road. How close he was, Richard was, and Clint before, I don't know. I know that they were close for a while, but I don't know how they were in his early life. I don't know how much he knew about Clint then. Dad and he were friends ever since I knew. Mother would talk about him a lot.

Lohse: Did they used to fish together?

E. Sledge: Well, just about anything. They were just friends.

Lohse: Buddies.

E. Sledge: If one needed the other one, he'd work for him some. If he needed anything, well, Clint would help him.

Lohse: Would you happen to know of anybody, any other old-

timers here, you know, around in the area somewhere?  
"Other old-timers," I say, particularly of your  
parents' generation, who lived here or were born here?  
Up north or south of here?

E. Sledge: No, I don't know of anyone that's living on there, you  
know, the original people that's living on their  
property, who would know that much about what the lake  
is taking. No, I don't. I think the most of these  
people who I know now are people that have bought  
property. The property has changed hands.

Lohse: There aren't many left.

E. Sledge: No.

Lohse: Ninety-year-old people, whose parents or grandparents  
settled this land. Their generation of people, there  
are not that many of them left.

E. Sledge: That's correct. I know there are no blacks, that I  
know of. There are not any people who own their  
property. A lot of this property used to belong to  
blacks, but they sold years back. Some didn't sell.  
Some just took up and left, you know, when times got  
hard in the Depression. They left and went to  
California and different places. Some people just  
lost it for taxes. Some people just left and never  
did come back, never did write, didn't come back here.  
I guess they left and didn't look back.

Lohse: A lot of blacks moved south. I forget when that was.

There was a settlement movement down, I think, in Brazoria County [Texas]. A lot of people left, and some came from Oklahoma and from Kansas. It was a move there.

E. Sledge: That pig farm there [gesture] used to belong to a black man by the name of Simpson.

Lohse: Simpson.

E. Sledge: Something happened, and he left. Dan Simpson was his name. I heard Dad talk about him during his research.