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Interviewer: Lareatha Clay
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Speaker Identification:
Lareatha Clay: LC
Trogie Shankle: TS
Larutha Odom Clay: LOC

TRANSCRIPT BEGIN

LC: —2004. This is a conversation with Trogie Shankle and Larutha Clay in the Liberty Community, Texas, in Newton County. Okay let's talk about the clock.

LOC: Okay let's talk about the clock.

LC: So where did you get the clock from?

TS: I don't know.

LC: You don't know!

TS: No. It was a commissary here somewhere. Mama didn't have no clock in the house. And she picked English peas and Papa carried them over there. And they didn't need no money for nothing. They trade—and that was her trade. And she got that clock with her English peas crop.

LOC: One picking of English peas?

TS: I don't know how many pickings she made but what she got that clock for. I think that clock cost—it cost less than three dollars.

[Laughter]

LC: You know the guy who picked Big Mamma's clock said it cost about five bucks but now it's probably worth two hundred, three hundred dollars.

TS: Well you see that clock—if I tell the truth that clock is near eighty years old.

LC: It's probably older than that.

LOC: Yes.

TS: Well I'm 94 and when Mama learned me how to tell the time—or tell her where the short hand was and where the long was—and that clock I know what in our home before I went to school. And I started at school at six years old.

LOC: [Laughter] Oh my goodness!

TS: And I'm 94.

LC: What was your mother's name?

TS: Dosia. D-O-S-I-A. [*name also appears as Docia in some records*]

LOC: She was a Farr?

TS: No. My mama was a Twine—was a McCarter.

LOC: Your grandmother—that's what I'm talking about.

TS: Now you get right! Grandma Sophie was a Farr.

LOC: Yeah. And your mother was a what?

TS: A Twine—McCall. Mama was a Twine and Daddy was a McCarter.

LOC: Okay so Dosia Shankle was a Twine.

TS: McCarter. Her mama was a Twine.

LOC: Oh! That's right. She was kin to those McCarters.

TS: Yeah! You see that's where y'all got kin to us in. You didn't know that did you?

LOC: I'm kin to you on the Shankle side!

TS: You kin to me on the McCarter side.

LOC: On the McCarter side too. Okay!

TS: You see Old Man John Wesley—

LC: John Wesley Lewis.

TS: Old Man John Wesley Lewis and Elek(??) Lewis and Earl Lee(??) McCarter were brothers. Listen. Let me get this right. Uncle Elek(??) and Grandpa Earl Lee(??) were brothers. And the Lewis come out of Uncle Elek.

LOC: And John Wesley was Elek's(??) son.

TS: That's right. But him and Earl Lee(??) was brothers. You know back then hardly ever was any one man had one family. Now here you go getting tickled. I'm just telling you like it happened. That's it!

[Laughter]

LOC: Okay. So Dosia came from Earl Lee(??) McCarter—that was her daddy?

TS: Earl Lee McCarter. Earl Lee McCarter where Dosia come from. And Tim come from Jim Shankle. That's my daddy.

LC: Your daddy's name was Tim?

TS: Yes. James Timothy Shankle.

LOC: He came from Houston?

TS: And he came from Houston.

LOC: He was from Houston Shankle. See that's what I was looking at over here. Sophie Farr married Houston Shankle and they had Chaney Shankle—

TS: Yes. That's a girl. But I never did remember her. She died young.

LOC: She died young. And Donnie Shankle—he lived up to almost 63. That's his offspring—those Henderson children. And that man in Cincinnati—that's Lee Shankle. And that reverend that lives next door to David in Eugene. All those—Thelonious Shankle—all of them Donnie's children. Okay. Now Floyd Shankle is the next one and he lived over there by Houston Shankle.

TS: Yes. Where's George?

LOC: George came next?

TS: George in there somewhere.

LOC: Yes he's in there. But I don't know which one came next! Okay. See Lareatha—there's Old Man George and then they had a Little George. This man named his son George. I don't know—you know that [inaudible].

TS: Huh?

LOC: Do you know who's the oldest out of this bunch? This Houston Shankle bunch.

TS: Well yes I know the oldest—

LOC: Tim is right behind Pate—

TS: Tim is the oldest.

LOC: Tim is the oldest?

TS: Yes.

LOC: And who else?

TS: Donnie. Hardy next.

LOC: Hardy? I didn't know that! I'll tell you all about that—

TS: Well what you doing—you think you know everything!

LOC: I thought I knew everything!

[Laughter]

TS: Lord have mercy!

LOC: Who's else—who's the third?

TS: I think Chaney or Aunt Nora—I don't know which one.

LOC: Chaney—so we'll put Chaney.

TS: And then Lenora—Nora—was Alexander's mother. And me and Alexander were the oldest grandchildren in the family.

LOC: Alexander what?

TS: Alexander Davis.

LOC: Alexander the one who stole somebody's money—Alexander steal somebody's money?

TS: Yes. Alexander Davis.

LC: Okay. Y'all have to tell me this story!

LOC: Alexander stole that safe. Didn't they have a safe there and Alexander stole it?

TS: I don't know. They say he left with it in his tow sack.

LOC: In a suitcase?

TS: In a tow sack. I'm not sure of that—I don't know—I didn't see him.

LC: So what's the story—about how he left with the money. Where did he get the money? Where'd the money come from?

TS: Well he found out where it was. And he caught the back turned and he stole it all and got to walking with it.

LC: And left town?

LOC: People didn't trust the banks—I was talking to Lillie Mae—Lillie Mae was talking about down in Louisiana—how one bank closed and people was just—

TS: Well Thelma said her daddy didn't fool with no bank no more than [inaudible: borrowed??] money. He had a bank account at Burkeville—it used to be a bank at Burkeville. And it went broke overnight. And people had money and didn't collect it. Now you guaranteed for so much money.

LOC: So people kept their money hid around the house.

TS: Kept it in the house. Most of them had a little safe—they call them fireproof with a lock on it.

LC: And he found the money and just took it?

LOC: Took the whole thing.

TS: He got the whole thing.

LOC: Took it somewhere else and blow it up and get it out!

LC: And who'd the money belong to—his grandmother?

TS: Yeah. That's the reason why people have to be careful. You understand me? If people don't know nothing about you they can't do nothing to you. He was raised in the house we done know where everything was. He got up and—

LC: Did he ever come back?

TS: Oh yeah.

LC: They made him—do anything to him?

TS: Well Old Man Houston went and found two dollars to keep him from going to the pen. And they got into his money then—Old Man never was right no more.

LC: Old Man Houston meaning your grandfather?

TS: Yes.

LOC: See this was his daughter's child. And lived in the house with him.

TS: Well you see [inaudible]—his daddy raised them as a family. Yeah. See Houston's mama got sick.

LOC: Who—Nora got killed?

TS: She got sick. Nora did. You understand me? And when she got sick, he brought her back home. [Inaudible].

LOC: And went and married somebody else! That's what I told Cousin Clee(?), You go and take me back home!

LC: Oh he took his wife back home to her parents?

LOC: To her parents, yes.

LC: And when did this happen?

LOC: Way back yonder.

TS: That happened a long time ago.

LC: When—the 1920s?

TS: Oh God. I imagine that's back in the—let's see I was born in 10—1910. And that was after I was born. Because Alexander was born in 1910 too—in January and I was born in May. And he brought her and the baby back home. She wasn't able to tend to herself towards beginning of the new year. But that's common.

LC: That's common? Really?

TS: Yeah. When you find a couple that live together and take care of one another when they get down—that's unusual.

LOC: That's uncommon! That's what he's saying. That's right.

TS: That don't usually happen. Most of the time when one get sick—

LOC: You all stayed married over 75 years?

TS: No, 71—71 years.

LOC: 71 years. That was the 70th anniversary—I was thinking it was 75.

TS: Yes. You see this coming April—the 18th day at 3 o'clock—we'd be married 74 years. If she would've been living. But God stopped that. She died this past July 27th two years ago.

LC: So what was the man's name that brought the woman back and what was the woman that got brought back?

TS: His name was Davis.

LC: And he was your cousin?

TS: Well the woman he brought back was my daddy's sister.

LOC: That was his aunt. Was he down from Bon Wier?

TS: Down here in Biloxi.

LOC: Didn't I tell you? Yes I told you that!

TS: Well you see it's about as many Shankles in Biloxi as there is in Shankleville.

[Phone rings]

TS: Oh God. Get that and put that there.

LOC: You said Nora was four—who do you think was five?

LC: Nora was the lady married to the Davis guy that brought her back. And brought the children back too?

TS: Well yeah wasn't there but one kid.

LOC: One child—and that was the one that stole the safe.

LC: So they just ended up staying here and she never marry anybody else?

TS: In other words—when she got able to kind of get around in the house—you not going to put your child out and she down and got nowhere to go. And she just spent the rest of her time there with Granddaddy—with Grandpa.

LOC: That was a big help to them.

LC: So why was she sick? What was wrong with her?

TS: Don't start me.

LOC: Yeah see because doctors didn't care. They didn't know a lot of times!

TS: A lot of time—most of the time they didn't know!

LOC: They didn't know. And if they knew they didn't care.

TS: That's right.

LC: But she eventually did get well?

TS: Kind of. You know—enough to take care of herself.

LC: Okay. But she never got back to normal?

TS: No.

LOC: Was she mentally ill too?

TS: No. She had sense. Now then Henry, Tom, and I say George—they the only three I know went crazy. You know why I say them three went crazy? George killed his self. Henry and Tom end up in the asylum—at that time that's where they killed them—in the asylum. The corruption of their mind. You understand what I'm talking about.

LOC: Henry and George—

TS: Yes. And George killed his self. Henry and Tom—

LOC: I don't think his name is Tom. Tom Shankle is Ed Shankle's daddy.

TS: Naw!

LOC: Then who is Ed Shankle's daddy?

TS: Now let me see. You get in there and see. You might find it somewhere in there. You know Tom—was Tom and Ed brothers?

LOC: Yes. And I'm trying to think of their daddy's name.

TS: Tom was Tom's daddy! You know Tom was a junior. Lived up in Beaumont.

LOC: I didn't know that.

TS: Oh now yes you did!

LC: You talking about Uncle Tom?

TS: Yeah. He was a junior. His daddy went crazy he died in the asylum. And Curley's daddy was named Henry.

LOC: He didn't die in the asylum.

TS: He died in the asylum.

LOC: Henry and John?

TS: Yes.

LC: In what town?

LOC: Must be Rusk.

TS: It was Rusk because they had a place where they treated people—you understand—who were sick [inaudible] at Rusk that's where they treated them at.

LOC: Most of the time they didn't treat them they just let them live there and die. You know what I'm saying.

TS: Well you know what? Back there then—the quicker they die the less time they had to worry!

[Laughter]

LC: Alright so we started off talking about the clock—your mother sold the English peas to get the clock. Did she give it to you after she passed away?

TS: Nope. She gave it to me beforehand. My sister had—Terece—

LOC: That's Terece. She ended up marrying Mr. Peacock [inaudible]—Cheney—maybe that's why they called her Cheney, huh?

TS: She was named after Papa's sister—Cheney.

LC: Okay. So that means you're related to Theresa Peacock?

LOC: Elbert Peacock across the street from the Theresa on our committee. Elbert Peacock married Terece Shankle—[inaudible]—in his old age.

TS: And Terece Shankle—what Elbert—what Cecil got up there—and I—his sister children—

LC: What?

LOC: Lord have mercy. We'll never get this straight! Things are so intertwined around here I didn't know that! So Terece's mama is his mama's sister. You talking about Cecil's wife?

TS: That's what I'm talking about!

LOC: What's her mama's name?

TS: Her name was Caroline.

LOC: Caroline. That was Dosa's sister?

TS: You know they stayed over there with Cecil and T a long time—you remember?

LOC: Yes!

TS: That's my mama's baby sister.

LOC: I forgot her name just like that—Caroline McCarter.

TS: She married—Red Traylor—Caroline did. You know it was a Traylor down in Jamestown. She married one of his boys. Me and him worked together. I told him—I say, You crazier than I am because you're going out there working like hell and spitting up blood all the time all night and riding them old wild horses everyday for a name. I say, I'm gon break these horses they pay me extra.

LC: So he was breaking horses?

TS: Yeah.

LOC: Breaking horses means training them.

TS: Training them to pull—carry them logs and things out. And them horses was wild. Get them up over here and bring them in there. And here he is—and everybody else there. And Red act a fool and get on there.

LC: What was his name?

TS: Red Traylor.

LOC: We talking about Terece's mama now.

TS: Terece's daddy—that's Terece's daddy. Red was. I thought two or three times to ask did y'all want something cold to drink?

LOC: Oh no. No thank you.

LC: No thank you.

TS: I was just winding up when y'all come in.

LOC: Now let's go back to this tree—now we're trying to get—

TS: Now what you trying to get? You gon have to work one at a time!

LOC: Nora Shankle is four. And I want to know who is fifth.

TS: Well—Nora—let me see—Aunt Della, Aunt Hattie—

LOC: Wait a minute now—you counting them.

TS: I'm trying to get back to them! Get around.

LOC: I was talking about Della this morning. I told you there were three girls—Della and Hattie and Cora.

TS: You see that's the [inaudible] side of the family—Aunt Cora and Aunt Nora's up there about together somewhere.

LOC: Okay so I'll put Cora five. What about Hattie?

TS: Aunt Hattie. Aunt Hattie—yeah she down there. And then Aunt Della was the baby girl.

LOC: So you had all these girls then you get back to the boys.

TS: Well now here—you stopped at Donnie—at Hardy didn't you? Tim, Hardy—

LOC: Then we shifted over to Cheney.

TS: Let's go back to the boys now. Let's go back to—Donnie. Then we come down to Uncle Florence(?). Then we come down to Uncle Willie. Then come down to Uncle Pate.

LOC: That's Hollis' mother—Uncle Willie—Uncle Tim?

TS: You got them?

LOC: Yes. We got nobody left but George and Pate.

LC: He said Pate was last.

LOC: Pate was the baby?

TS: Pate was the last one. Yes.

LOC: Okay. And George?

TS: George is up there next to Donnie.

LOC: George just died. He's the one up there in—

TS: He's next to—Donnie. You've got to be careful, it's a lot of Georges! See Old Man Jim Shankle had a George. Old Man Houston Shankle had a George. Old Man George Shankle had a George. You

understand me? And Old Man Houston—George had two Georges. Cause Papa [inaudible] had a boy named George and then his boy was named George. They just wore George out in the Shankle family!

LOC: Okay. I found out that Uncle Tom's daddy name was George—John.

TS: That's right. That's right! And Ed. That's where Ed's daddy is—John.

LOC: Ed and Tom were brothers.

TS: Yeah that's right.

LOC: And Charlie Houston—this Charlie that died—that's was Hap's boy? Hap Shankle's son.

TS: Yeah. Old Man Hap's son. Your mother's sister married him. And she died in childbirth.

LOC: She died in childbirth. That's why she didn't want me to have any children. She just knew I was gon die. She died and then Hap married Gertrude.

TS: That's right.

LOC: And had these four children. And I didn't know why—

LC: Did the baby die too?

LOC: Yes. See there was Hattie and Addie they were buddies. And Uncle Eddie and Johnny were the oldest boys. And then Addie and Hattie were the girls. And so after Hattie died they had a bunch of boys. A bunch of boys! Then they had Quella(?) and Bet.

TS: Yes Quella(?) and Bet. Bet the only one still living.

LOC: Right.

TS: I told her we were the lost ark in the family!

LOC: Now John Shankle—it's John and Houston and Henry and—

TS: You ought to start at Henry.

LOC: Why—he's the oldest?

TS: He's the oldest.

LOC: I didn't know that.

TS: That's Curlee's daddy. Henry was.

LOC: Oh yeah? I didn't know.

TS: Well I might be lying! Let me go ahead—you go carry on like you want to because I can't remember too good.

LOC: Well nobody's going to dispute you I tell you that!

TS: Huh?

LOC: There's nobody here to dispute you! You're the last one here now! Yes sir!

[Laughter]

TS: Well I thank God for me being here.

LOC: And got a good memory—that's the thing about it. Okay. Now on this tree we have Delcie and Addie and Mary Jane—

TS: Yep. That's John.

LOC: And Tom and Memmie and May.

TS: Yes.

LOC: Frank Shankle and Johnny Shankle—

LC: Now who's tree is that?

LOC: That's John Shankle. That's Uncle Tom's people.

TS: That's John Shankle.

LOC: And he married Elvira Simmons.

TS: Yes that's right. That's what gets me messed up. You see—Shankles married into other families. Just like y'all Odoms. Now y'all is just as much Shankle as I is.

LOC: That's what I keep telling these McBrides! These McBrides right talking like they a different family. They just as much Shankle as the rest of them!

TS: They's a lie!

LOC: That's right!

TS: And here's the thing about it—the McBrides what they running around here with—Grandma Winnie had her when Grandpa Jim got her. That's they bunch.

LOC: Okay. But Grandma Winnie they mama.

TS: That's right! She they mama. But still I wonder about that. You understand me?

LOC: We can straighten it—we can't figure it out.

TS: I ain't got it figured out.

LOC: We can't figure it out! That's slavery.

TS: Old slavery. That's all it is to it.

LOC: And like your thing you said—he didn't marry—what you say—Crece(??) mother didn't marry this older man they had a relationship. Well we all know what that meant back in slavery times. It was rape that's what it was.

TS: Yes that's right. And that's where this McBride come from. See when she was sold as slavery the old boss had went through with her. You see?

LOC: And she had three children.

TS: Yes. Had three children—Perkin, Rollin and McBride.

LOC: But see Mary didn't get to be a McBride until she married Steve. But they call her a Rollins too I didn't know that.

TS: Who?

LOC: Mary. She was a Rollins before she married McBride. See she married Old Man Steve McBride after she got here. After they came to Shankleville. And Steve McBride was the one that started the college.

TS: Yep. He the one get the college and had the saw mill down there and everything.

LC: Saw mill. Where was the saw mill?

TS: Down there on the creek—you know where Cat Creek is?

LC: Yes—I think.

TS: Yeah. The saw mill foundation is still there the last time I was there. Right in there a little beyond Leon's house.

LOC: Okay. Leon is Willie Pate's brother that moved back here.

LC: Oh okay.

TS: Is he moved back?

LOC: I mean no—that's his family big house. I saw him at the homecoming this time. That's Cat Creek right down there—you know we passed there going on up to Aunt Jeanne's house by that bog? That's Cat Creek I didn't know.

TS: Yeah. There's a saw mill there—

LOC: Let me write that down.

TS: It's a saw mill there, gin and corn mill all over there.

LC: So was he considered to be kind of a rich person—McBride?

TS: Well a lot of people you know—well lots of people—

LC: A lot of people what?

TS: [Inaudible]—he wasn't no more than nobody else. Is I'm right?

[Laughter]

LC: I guess so—I wasn't around!

TS: When they dead they gon sleep. I don't care what else you got.

LOC: Just like everybody else. And they not taking anything to the grave.

TS: Ain't no need trying to let that swell your head. You hear? Just thank God cause you knew how [inaudible].

LOC: I don't think it's an asset to go back and dig up blood. You know. I don't think it's an asset—

LC: What do you mean?

LOC: Dig up white blood. See that seems to be the whole philosophy here. That Steve McBride had white relatives. But that didn't make him a man. And I don't see why we need to bring that up at this point in our lives. We just move on do the best we can with what we have.

TS: That's all we got to do—go with what we cook up with.

LOC: That's right.

TS: Now you know Old Man Steve McBride was my wife's grandfather.

LC: Really?

TS: We had his picture here—just like that here. Hooking up eight-wheel log trucks. And when Thelma got to the place she couldn't get around somebody taken it out of this house. I ain't found it since. I was saving it like a souvenir just like that clock.

LOC: And you said that was Thelma's grandfather?

TS: Thelma's grandfather. Old Man Steve McBride was Thelma's granddaddy.

LC: So how was she his granddaughter—by what child?

TS: America Kyle(??) was Old Man Steve's daughter. And America Kyle was my wife's mama's mama. Her mama was a Harris. You know people just made it back there then.

LOC: What was the Harris lady's first name?

TS: Let's see—I can't tell you. But I'll say this much—before me and my wife got married me and Harris cleared up that—

TRANSCRIPT END