

## T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

### ABSTRACT

**INTERVIEWEE NAME:** Judy Montgomery-Gauthia      **COLLECTION:** 4700.2575

**IDENTIFICATION:** Judy Montgomery-Gauthia was a lifelong resident of Mossville, Louisiana. Her parents ran the popular Paradise Club nightclub.

**INTERVIEWER:** Jamie Digilormo

**SERIES:** Mossville History Project – Oral History Day & Field Interviews

**INTERVIEW DATE:** September 24, 2015 & November 17, 2015

**FOCUS DATES:** 1950s-1970s

### ABSTRACT:

#### Session I

##### **Tape 4518**

Digilormo explains purpose of project; born in Lafayette, Louisiana, on June fourteenth, 1950; family in Lafayette goes back at least two generations; she was in last high school call to graduate in Mossville in 1969; had one sister and three brothers; home was on Prater Road; family now lives on different house on Prater Road; family was very community-minded; family ran a nightclub; as kids, helped sell liquor in house; family is Catholic, attended Saint John Bosco in Westlake; hasn't been to church much lately because busy taking care of her father; is very Christian; house was always full of people; looks forward to selling Mossville property.

#### Session II

##### **Tape 4547**

Sasol bought out family home, so it's no longer there; five children in her family; Judy was nonchalant about chores, while sister Sally very diligent; never liked cooking; mother liked to cook for everybody in Mossville; mother worked in nightclub business; brothers used to swim in dynamite hole, catch whippings for it; helped out with nightclub business from very young age; Paradise Club shared a yard with their house; when older, waited tables in dance hall, worked bar and door; dance hall was huge, could hold thousands; never liked nightclubs later, got her fill as child; met husband, Larry Gauthia, while waiting tables during bingo game; got married on her birthday after dating two or three years; had graduation party at Paradise when she graduated in 1969; buying on credit at grocery stores in Mossville and Westlake; mother's reluctance to acquire new-fangled washing machine; eventually got washer and dryer; rabbit hunting with just a stick; parents were scared of water, couldn't swim, so didn't fish; seafood and eggs on Fridays since they were Catholic; school offered seafood lunch to Catholic students on Fridays; guesses that Mossville was majority Catholic, followed by Baptist; repeated third grade due to ringworm;

mother once walked five miles to school to whip Judy's brother when he got in trouble; parents worried kids would get hurt playing sports; great-nephew is an assistant NFL coach now; Judy is not interested in music now; loved Al Green; Conoco would host Christmas parties for black employees; barber shop in Sulphur; attitudes toward hair; closing of Mossville High School; worked in her parents' nightclub after high school, but yearned for more independence and a paycheck; loves going to church, doesn't care which denomination; slow integration of Catholic church in Westlake; parents had wedding parties for Judy's siblings in dance hall, but she wanted something simple so didn't tell them she was getting married; closing of Paradise Club; medical care in Sulphur and Lake Charles, or the Moss Regional charity hospital; father wanted to send her to have her baby at a pay hospital rather than suffer delivery at Moss Regional; fortunately husband's veterans benefits came through so she could go to pay hospital; visited treater for headaches, stomach aches, worms; herbs and teas healers used; defines boundaries of Mossville; Judy was eager to sell property to Sasol; working with Road Home to make sure her repairs are done on property before sale finalized; differing views within her family about selling; her sister Sally wants their father to live out his days in Mossville home; Butch Lemelle drops by; father's involvement in politics, including hosting barbecues and events for politicians; Judy's mother got tired of all the events; parents were illiterate; parents cried if their candidates lost; parents were devoted to helping community members, black and white; parents gave her their old house after she married; her husband was classified 100 percent disabled due to nerve damage in war, but preferred to work than get government check; husband worked at race track; strong work ethic of father.

**TAPES:** 2 (T4518, T4547)

**TOTAL PLAYING TIME:** 1 hour, 19 minutes

**# PAGES TRANSCRIPT:** 111 pages, total

T4518 (Session I) 23 pages

T4547 (Session II) 88 pages

**PHOTOGRAPHS / PHOTOGRAPHER:** Four photographs taken during interview at the Rigmaiden Recreational Center for the third Mossville Oral History Day. Photographer Charlotte Willcox.

**OTHER MATERIALS:** Biographical data form; Correspondence; Interview questions

**RESTRICTIONS:** none