

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Myrtle Marie Rosamore

COLLECTION: 4700.2470

IDENTIFICATION: Grew up and raised a family in Mossville, Louisiana

INTERVIEWER: Chelsea Arseneault

SERIES: Mossville History Project - Oral History Day & Field Interviews

INTERVIEW DATES: January 23, 2015; June 30, 2015

FOCUS DATES: 1960s-70s; present day

ABSTRACT:

Tape 4406, Session I

Born in Lake Charles, Louisiana at the Moss Regional Hospital in 1960; parents are Elmer and Georgia Braxton; grandparents are [Aretha?] and Lee Braxton; her great-grandparents are Tom Rigmaiden and Melissa Perkins Rigmaiden; has four children and fourteen grandchildren; has two daughters with identical twins, and her mother is an identical twin; earliest memory of Mossville is her cousin getting stung by a wasp; later memories include outdoor activities such as camping and fishing; moved away a year ago, but raised her family in Mossville; remembers when the roads changed from gravel to blacktop; maternal grandmother's garden; family property on Evergreen Road; her father's ducks, guinea fowl, emus and geese; mother planted many flowers; memories of gathering eggs; recalls beautiful purple emu eggs; they were taught all the necessary skills for survival; Mossville founded on tradition of self-sufficiency; attended Mossville High School until 1975, when they started bussing kids to either Sulphur or Westlake; recalls favorite teachers; attended CNA school, and later finished nursing school; after her marriage ended, she had to "stand up and be a woman about things", and has been a nurse for eighteen years, but now works at the sheriff's department; entertainment options while growing up; everyone was her family; Mossville has changed so much, she's almost glad she doesn't live there anymore; wants people to know the history of the area, and how her ancestors were freed slaves who made a space of their own; though the plant has taken over the town, they should be recognized for giving them the financial ability to move somewhere else and start over; grateful the memory of Mossville will live on.

Tape 4482, Session II

Geographical boundaries of Mossville; community history; hunting behind their house until dirt companies like Gene [Cow?] and Mcmanus started buying the property; they used dirt pits as a swimming pond and fishing hole; said the fish would "just come"; father taught her to hunt and clean fish, and she still enjoys fishing; enjoys listening to nature sounds, like she did when she

was a young girl before they cleared out the woods; selling hides; big feast after a coon hunt; to her, it looked like a dog, and smelled musky; some elders used to eat possums, armadillos, and her grandmother would eat turtles; times changed drastically; Walter B. Smith opened a gas station in Mossville called Bel 7/11, and Rosamore worked there when she was a teen-ager; recalls when Mossville got water; before, they had to use wells; used to have kerosene lamps; family gatherings; they would play jacks and hopscotch, and one year, her brother built a treehouse; Christmas memories; father used to work at the plants; family would cook together; superior flavor of food cooked outside; she attended Willow Springs Baptist Church in Sulphur; would sing solos in the choir; entertainment options for youth; Masonic Hall, where they could have record hops; camping near Houston River on the “country slab”; weddings were a community event; two churches in Mossville when she was growing up, others came later; funerals; real country store on Prater Road where you could buy bologna and have it cut to size; slaughterhouse called Elkins and Lejay’s; remembers Pete Moss and his wife Mrs. Virginia riding in a horse and buggy; Tony Bernard’s rodeo, called Tony’s Arena; ghost stories; Evergreen Road the “haunted road”; everyone knew it was haunted, and everyone knew to stay away from the sycamore tree; grandmother’s mom, Melissa Perkins, was full-blooded Cherokee, but can’t be proved; dad’s great-great-great grandfather, Griffin Braxton, came in 1860; squatter rights; community discipline; home remedies, like “monkey blood”; back then, there was always a mid-wife in the family; school band; school activities; uncle is a healer, and would blow three times in children’s mouths to remove rash; grandfather died of eating too fast on an empty stomach; buyouts a blessing for some, others are upset about it; everyone in the community related somehow; adjusting to life outside of Mossville; will always have her memories; they can change the name, but to her, it will always be Mossville.

TAPES: 2 (T4406, 4482)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 2 hours, 2 minutes

PAGES INDEX: T4406 (Session I) 3 pages

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 96 pages, total

T4406 (Session I) 25 pages

T4482 (Session II) 71 pages

PHOTOGRAPHS / PHOTOGRAPHER: Two photographs of Rosamore and interviewer Arseneault taken during interview. Photographer Charlotte Willcox.

OTHER MATERIALS: Biographical data form; Interview questions (6 pgs); Correspondence

RESTRICTIONS: none