

Interviewee: Knox, Gloria

Interview Date: November 6, 2002

HHA # 00254

Interviewee: Gloria Knox

Interviewer: Steven Wiltz

Interview Date: November 6, 2002

Interview Site: Lafayette, LA

Interview Module & No.: MMS: SW026

Transcriber: Lauren Penney

Transcriber's note: The majority of the interviewer's backchanneling and "uhs" and "ums" have not been transcribed for the purposes of readability. At points during the interview the audio breaks out; it is unclear how much material was lost during these breaks.]

Ethnographic preface:

In 1906, Gloria Knox was born in north Louisiana (Coushatta) to a family of teachers; her father sold Singer sewing machines and her mother was a teacher. When she graduated from Shreveport High School at the age of 16 she went to business school. After which she was hired as the first women for The Texas Company. She met and married her husband in the company; her husband was their wildcat drilling superintendent. While her husband was moved around, she worked in the office for a variety of companies, including MacMillan, Federal Petroleum Company; all the time she studied gas cards, which led her into doing land title work. They settled in Lafayette when her son was nine years old in 1935. Around that time she was the landman for American Republics. She was one of the committee members who urged Mister Heymann to build the Oil Center. During her interview she discusses the development and impact of the Oil Center, the way that the Heymanns and the oil industry have made Lafayette what it is today, and female landmen.

TRANSCRIPTION

Interviewer initials: [SW]

Interviewee initials: [GK]

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SW: Interview with Missus Gloria Knox, November sixth, 2002, in her home. Um, you said you came here in 1935 uh-

GK: Yes.

SW: Where are you originally from?

GK: Well, you know, [I guess?] you move around a lot. And originally I was born Coushatta in north Louisiana. I finished high school in uh, Shreveport High. We moved to Shreveport and I finished there. And then went on and got an education and went to work for the The Texas Company. I was the first lady they ever hired to do work for them.

SW: What year was that?

GK: Oh dear I don't know. Countin' back. I'm 96, you know, I'm counting back.

SW: Okay. [Both chuckle]

GK: Finished high school when I was 16.

SW: That puts it in the-

GK: And then I had uh, college. I went to uh, Normal up there they called it then. [Inaudible].

SW: Okay yeah.

GK: And then, then, but I finished, went to business school, 'cause I heard I could, they were gonna hire some ladies and I didn't wanna be a teacher. All my family were teachers and I didn't wanna be a teacher.

SW: Your father was a teacher as well?

GK: Huh?

SW: Your father was a teacher?

GK: No, my father was s-, was a Singer sewing machine salesman.

SW: Ah.

GK: For Red River Parish.

SW: But your mother was a teacher.

GK: Uh hm. And uh, grandmother, grandfather, and all. They were all in the school system.

SW: That didn't appeal to you?

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GK: Huh? No.

SW: Teaching didn't appeal to you, so you went-

GK: No, I didn't do that. That, I didn't, never did want that. So I went to work for The Texas Company and I was the only girl over there, and then I married in The Texas Company. And uh, my husband was uh, had finished A and M and, Texas A and M and he was their wildcat drilling superintendent. And uh, he was uh, drilling wells in uh, Arkansas. So we married and, and went to live in Arkansas. And I, I had one son, he was born in Arkansas up in El Dorado. And then from there we moved down to Houma, in south Louisiana, and he was workin' there. Then he, they moved him up here out of New Iberia and he was out here drillin' the wildcats out in the Atchafalaya swamp. And in the meantime after I had uh, had my, while I was in uh, El Dorado I was workin' for a pipeline company. And uh, so I worked there until my son was born. Then after that I uh, went back to work for The Texas Company and then I, he was moved to south Louisiana. I got a job with uh, MacMillan [Inaudible] they were pipeliners. And from there I went to uh, the um, Federal Petroleum Company out of Houston. And from there we went to Lake Charles and we drilled some wells on Lake Charles. In the meantime I had been, I was in charge of the office all the time.

SW: That's, that's, is that what you did for The Texas Company and-

GK: And then for all the other companies too, I was workin', I was runnin' the office. I was office manager.

SW: Oh okay.

GK: And in the meantime studying gas cards and things like that. Just, I was just a eager beaver. Eager, I was just interested in it. So I finally was in charge of everything and then I got into the land work. And then um, we went to Houma and then they moved back to New Iberia. That was his last move. And so I went, we couldn't get anyplace to live in Lafayette so we rented a house in New Iberia for a little while. Until we finally found a house here in Lafayette.

SW: Why was it difficult to find a house in Lafayette?

GK: Uh, because they didn't want the oil people here, number one. Number two was they were sure that they were just gonna rob 'em and do everything else to 'em. They, all, they thought they were real roughnecks. But-

SW: So they had a reputation?

GK: Yeah, we had to, we really had to give 'em a, when we came here there was only uh... uh, City Service had an office here and uh, Sun Oil Company had an office here. And we were doin' some leasin' here, I was donin' some leasin' out of at Arnaudville then. So we finally got a house and we moved to Lafayette. And later on we finally, we uh, built a home here. 'Cause I had a little nine year old boy that didn't have any friends. Everywhere we went he didn't stay long enough to have any friends. And I, so I told Mister Stewart, who was head of The Texas Company, that was our last move, we wasn't goin' anymore. So we didn't. And uh, so we ended up here in Lafayette [Inaudible].

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SW: You said you uh, you studied gas cards and things?

GK: Uh huh.

SW: Is that what led you into doing the land title work?

GK: Uh huh. Oh yeah.

SW: Can, um, I've never heard anybody call it "gas cards." Can you describe it to me?

GK: Well, Texas Company had mostly gas department and they were uh, they had these cards that they had on the wells, you know. And, and they had to interpret them and they had to read 'em to see how much gas they'd used. The company, whoever who was buyin' the gas, they were sellin' it. Out here at Anse La Butte and uh, also at uh, up here at T-, Bosco and right around in this area.

SW: So you did work for, for Anse La Butte and in Bosco and-

GK: Well I was workin' through them, but uh, land work through them.

SW: Yeah.

GK: Yes.

SW: Oh okay.

GK: But uh, I mean uh, but I was still, I was, at that time I was workin' for uh, I, my company had been bought by American Republics and I was workin' with them. I was their landman. And I had uh, uh, four [ugly?] states, the gas states: Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana.

SW: Oh you had to be sort registered to be able to do that kind of work?

GK: Uh hm.

SW: I see. So you had, you, you were okay with that? And so you guys arrived here in 1935, you said, in Lafayette.

GK: Yeah.

SW: And-

GK: We finally got a house here in 1935.

SW: And then stayed.

GK: And we stayed.

SW: What was uh, what was Lafayette like in 1935 when you arrived?

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GK: Lafayette was a very small little college town. [Pause] And all their livelihood was really the railroad. They, they had big things on the railroad. They had a big, now they remodelin' the station, they got finally got some money [Chuckling] they gonna remodel it. But at that time it was [Audio breaks out]. And uh, the railroad was real, you know, they were haulin' things and it was that way that they were, it was quite, had quite a few people workin' for them. And, but otherwise it was a rather, well it was less than 12,000 people.

SW: But they had enough work for uh, to, you, you were strictly running land titles at this time?

GK: Oh we were, we were leasin' land all right.

SW: Leasin' land.

GK: Leased land all, in all these areas. And that's what uh, the other companies were doin' too. We, by then I had a scout that was workin' for me and uh, also a geologist and we were, we were doin' all that land work.

SW: And there was enough business to go around at that, in the late '30s?

GK: Oh yeah.

SW: You all were busy?

GK: Yeah, and then, then the war took us, came. And so then we all had to double up and do twice as much.

SW: Oh okay.

GK: And the rest of 'em had to go to war. [Pause]

SW: And what about after?

GK: And that was about three years.

SW: Three years.

GK: When it was kind of shut down.

SW: Oh, so y'all didn't do too much work in the uh, during the war?

GK: Well we had to keep 'em runnin'. They needed the fuel.

SW: The fuel, okay.

GK: We had to keep doin' our work. But it was uh, rough.

SW: Yeah. [Slight pause]

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GK: Real rough. [Pause] But it all paid off. Very nice.

SW: After the war, um, what kinds of things happened? I guess everybody came back home-

GK: We, oh we started getting uh, more companies coming in here and you might say it was like a boom. Boom, you know, oil boom, you know. 'Cause they kind of congregated here and they settled here in Lafayette. And, and uh, after we once convinced 'em and got 'em to uh, get some places for us all to live. [Clock chiming] In the meantime we had, we were here. But we were just renting. And uh, the college needed help. The oil, so they, all of the oil people, you know, were, they were all graduates in uh, either geologists and land people, you know, geophysical, the geophysic uh, the geophysic-, physical people were really lookin' for oil and gas. They were big business. And we were all busy. We had lots to do.

SW: Lots of work.

GK: We had plenty of work, yeah.

SW: And, and you were hiring the-

GK: Other pe-

SW: Companies hiring all of these different types of people in this area.

GK: Yeah, oh yeah. And then, well, they hired we, then you would get, they would hire you to go out or have, if you had a block of land leased you could, you could sell it to 'em, you see. So, but most of 'em, you know, had their own ideas on it and they just got you to go out and do the work because you had to be able to uh, uh, at least understand French or Cajun. Or else, you know, it just, [get gypped?].

SW: Ah, okay.

GK: But if you didn't understand 'em, [didn't many of us?], well a lot of 'em. And then we usually would hire some, a native, too, you know.

SW: As interpreters.

GK: As an interpreter.

SW: Okay. You, do you speak the French or?

GK: No, but I can understand it.

SW: You understand it.

GK: Yeah.

SW: So you had to be careful, huh? [Chuckles]

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GK: You have to be careful of what you say. [Chuckles]

SW: All these people that were coming in from outside of town, moving here for jobs, where, where were they coming from?

GK: They were coming from uh, Texas and Oklahoma.

SW: Workin' from the fields over there.

GK: [Audio breaks out] wherever there were oilfields. The companies would move in and of course they would bring 'em with 'em. And then they were hiring local people too, you know, because they did have a college here and they did have some education whether they had been working as engineers or anything. So.

SW: When those boom times were goin' on they were always hiring people. Things were always goin' on.

GK: They were always hiring people, yeah. Well it's just, it's like the doil-, the oil companies, I mean the oil business goes up and down. And uh, you can have, there she goes, you know. Just like in I believe in about '80 it took a tumble. Everybody's huntin' jobs for somewhere else, they layin' off everybody, well one of the things that's wrong with 'em now is they have all this computer service and they don't need that many people, you know. And that is really what's bad for these young engineers and geologists and all, comin' in now. Uh, because uh, they have to be schooled on all of these machines that they have because it's almost an electric-type world they livin' in. It's not like gettin' out there and smellin' the dirt [Chuckles] and doin' the [Audio breaks out] anymore, you know.

SW: The old fashioned way? [Chuckles]

GK: The old fashioned way. They don't do it that way anymore.

SW: So you're sayin' the technology has actually uh, made the job market worse for some people?

GK: Oh I know it has.

SW: It's uh-

GK: And not only that but uh, quite a bit of it, you know, uh, it's uh, it kind of, it's goin' up and down, but they change it before the child can get out of college. They got somethin' new goin' on. Which is, I, I really feel bad for 'em.

SW: Difficult now.

GK: Yeah. Because it's hard right now. So, but like I say, we're gradually on a little increase now in the oil business and things are getting a little bit more open. But that might be [Inaudible] uh, uh, third war, you know. Which is a sad thing to say, you know, because that's gonna take all the young men. So.

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SW: [Just like before?].

GK: [Chuckles] You just don't know.

SW: Do you think that uh, while technology kind, or, or is taking jobs from people, has it helped the industry in any way in speculating or exploration or-

GK: Oh I think so. Oh I think it's as, it's a success in a lots, lots of ways. And it's so much faster and it doesn't take, it, it would take, I would say it wouldn't take more than a third of the people to do the work that so many had to be doing it before. Boy that phone rings all the time and then you sit there and press all those buttons and all. And there you got it in front of you, you know. [Both chuckle]

SW: Different from when you guys did it, huh?

GK: Oh, it was a whole lot different. I'm glad I'm not in it. [Both laugh] I know I, it's for the young people, but I feel sorry for them, too. I have two great-grandsons, one's 20 and the other one's 18. I, I feel sorry for them, 'cept they didn't, neither one of 'em are interested in oil.

SW: Did any of your, your children get into-

GK: Uh uh.

SW: Get into the oilfield?

GK: My son didn't, no, my son was in broadcasting.

SW: Okay.

GK: He had the first TV station here. And he, he didn't care for anything, he just wanted to, he threw his diploma at his mama and said, "Here it is. I'm goin' to broadcast the baseball game." It was gonna, they were playin' Houma at that time. [Chuckles] No, he, he didn't like it 'cause his daddy was away from home so much.

SW: Oh okay.

GK: And it's true at that time, you know. And you couldn't go and come there, you just get on, you get on the uh, plane or the helicopter or things and scoot out there and scoot back. You didn't do that before, you had have a [bunk?] somewhere [on?] one of the boats on the water, you know.

SW: Different uh, yeah, I hear the rigs nowadays are like small cities where they have-

GK: Yeah, absolutely.

SW: Food and amenities and everything. Just-

GK: Everything. Catered and everything, yeah. But that's, but that's what it has to be, I mean, it's got to change. But I still think, and I think every part of you people think that uh, it's uh, it's just

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goin' too fast. And uh, I think the best example we got was that election yesterday. Not one-tenth of the people that went to the polls knew what in the world they were talkin' about. Now isn't that true?

SW: I agree.

GK: Uh, and, and they were frustrated. And uh, they were just standin' around and a-, and they didn't know what all of those things meant or what they were gonna do or what effect it would have on them. They shouldn't do it that way. Politics, that's somethin' else. [Chuckles]

SW: That's a, that's a whole different ball game right there.

GK: [Chuckling] That's another ball game. I'm glad I'm not in that one either.

SW: Me too. Me too, definitely. Um, in the late 1940s they started the uh, the offshore exploration.

GK: Uh huh.

SW: How did that affect uh, you guys-

GK: Didn't affect us.

SW: The land business it didn't-

GK: No. We were land lovers. We were drillin' on land.

SW: Did it take any business away or, or uh-

GK: Oh no. We still see uh, out on, well not only was it so expensive when they first started, but on the other hand there uh, the uh, the wells on the land were not as deep as you had to go and they uh, and the uh, set-ups and all were not as expensive as what you had to have on offshore. And there was still a lot of small rigs that, like in the areas like we were. And we, and right now they're back, they're workin' again because you see the gas and all it's, that's shallo' when you compare it to this offshore. It's not that expensive to get to.

SW: Okay. So you, that was the-

GK: But it's very necessary.

SW: Yeah. So you guys didn't lose any work per se.

GK: Uh uh.

SW: It's in the '50s and the '60s you guys were still-

GK: No they, no.

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SW: Busy.

GK: They were busy. And then 'round the '80s in there we had a big slump. Down we went. [Chuckles]

SW: Everybody went, huh? [Chuckles]

GK: Yeah. And, and we, when the oil goes down, most of 'em all go down.

SW: Definitely.

GK: That's see, the banks and everybody else because there's not any money.

SW: Uh... did you, did you uh, know Mister Heymann?

GK: Very, very well. [Pause]

SW: And he came up with his uh, his, the Oil Center in the early 1950s. How did that uh-

GK: We went to him and got on our knees and begged him to do the Oil Center. [SW chuckles]

SW: It was a good idea, wasn't it?

GK: Oh yeah. That was part of the deal that we had too, gettin' buildin's downtown for us to get some office buildin's. And he had his, the nursery out there, he was sellin' uh, azaleas for 10 cents a piece. He had just a gr-, all that stuff was azaleas and azaleas out there. That was his nursery.

SW: Yeah.

GK: So. We formed a committee and we all went out, pounded on his door and everything else, and just told him that, they just, we had to have some office space and we had to have it together. And so sure enough. You have his [Inaudible] don't you?

SW: Uh hm. We've done some research on him.

GK: That's a man's dream.

SW: That and uh, we read a lot of stuff that's been written about him as well. Uh, you guys were, were working downtown at the time is where all the oil offices were?

GK: Uh hm. Oil offices were downtown.

SW: Everything was downtown and-

GK: We had office uh, well we had an office over at the Guarantee Bank, which is not the Guarantee Bank anymore. We had an office over the uh, uh... MacMillan... it's that uh, it's where the City Bank is now, I think. What was, can't remember now what was the name of, it

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was uh, uh, doc-, dentist's office there. And we had that, we got that. And then we had the uh, building across the street from the Guarantee Bank, that uh, buildin' there. And then the insurance company finally built a buildin' down farther, just 'fore you get to the railroad down there. The insurance people. And uh, we all had offices up there. We moved around as soon as there was anything available that we could spread out a little bit, we were all there. [Chuckles]

SW: So everybody was crowded downtown.

GK: Yeah, uh hm.

SW: And uh, the other companies out of town that wanted to move in, there was no space for 'em until-

GK: Well they came in the best they could. Those that really wanted, we finally had quite a few. And then 'course when we started uh, uh, the Petroleum Club and all, well they all wanted to uh, be sure that they could get space out there.

SW: So the opening of the Oil Center really brought in lots of, lot more companies that wanted to come and relocate here.

GK: Well it brought in some, they got some offices, they came in with that, but uh, the companies were already here, had representatives here, you know.

SW: I see.

GK: But then other ones did too, because companies sell out, you know, and change names and all real often.

SW: Why, why was Lafayette chosen-

GK: Well, they were in the middle of the uh, onshore drillin' at that time. 'Cause you take the, there was, there was not much interest in north Louisiana, you know. But south Louisiana had that. And they had Jennings Field over there and uh, then they uh, Anse La Butte out here, and they had Bosco and all over here north of town, and that's all shallow. And then they had Charenton and, and then you went on down to Terrebonne Parish, you know.

SW: So Lafayette was a good location.

GK: Yeah, it was great location. And [Audio breaks out] [Clock ringing] they wouldn't let any females be members of the Petroleum Club.

SW: Hm.

GK: It's only in the last 10 years we've had any ladies.

SW: Oh okay, but you knew what was goin' on over there anyway?

GK: Well yeah, I was workin' and sellin' stock for 'em. I mean, my, I have, I have an office

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there. We had an office there, in the buildin's. We were the, moved in, one of the first to move in.

SW: In uh, in Building 1?

GK: Huh?

SW: In Building 1?

GK: Uh huh.

SW: The first one.

GK: And there we stayed.

SW: You, you were working and selling stock for him, but you didn't become a member until?

GK: My husband was a member, see I-

SW: Oh okay, so you-

GK: See he was, he worked for, he was landman for uh, Kirby Oil and Gas.

SW: So you were able to go over there?

GK: Uh hm.

SW: Still, I see, I see, okay. I was confused.

GK: We couldn't, we couldn't uh, but you couldn't go over there, the ladies couldn't go for lunch or anything like that.

SW: I see.

GK: Like the men could, uh, go for breakfast in the morning. If they had an affair or anything, the ladies were of course invited, you know. But uh, there were no memberships, no lady memberships.

SW: Until recently.

GK: 'Til recently.

SW: Oh okay. But you guys you had, you said you had an office downtown, but then y'all, y'all were one of the first ones to move in, into the Oil Center. That was uh, in '53 or '54, thereabouts.

GK: Yeah we were, we were down uh, at the in-, that insurance building, the new building down there. And Sun Oil was too. Sun Oil stayed I think longer than we did, but we moved, well, we moved to the Oil Center, 'cause I was one, on the committee out there tryin' to get Mister Heymann to build the buildings. And didn't make any difference, I could do whatever I th-, tell

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the company I thought we needed that's what we needed. And we did.

SW: You guys were really pushing Mister Heymann to, to get those buildings built.

GK: Yeah.

SW: And, so we'd say that you, you guys were the, the impetus behind the-

GK: That's right. And most... I guess, let's see, maybe... I don't know whether there's anyone livin' or not, I guess I'm about the only one livin'. In the beginning, they farm- [Audio breaks out; when audio returns it is at previous point starting "into the Oil Center. That was uh, in '53 or '54, thereabouts." Transcription picks up with new material] the uh, the bank uh, the uh, it wasn't at the Petroleum Club, it was, they, an investment company in order to raise the money, you know, to build it.

SW: And y'all formed a committee to-

GK: Uh hm. And they formed a company. And then they uh, uh, then they got to build the building.

SW: How did Mister Heymann react in the beginning when, when you guys were-

GK: He was not interested in us.

SW: He didn't wanna do it? He wanted to keep his, his uh, nursery?

GK: He had his big store downtown. 'Course his family came in here with a wagon and sold stuff off the wagon.

SW: What, what eventually convinced him?

GK: I don't know, I guess we hounded on him too. [SW chuckles] He liked us, but business and likin' people different things [for Jews?]. [Chuckles]

SW: He must've seen some sort-

GK: And he had gradually come up his own way, you know. Did it all himself. How he and his mo- [Audio breaks out] [Chuckles]

SW: He must've seen some, some profit potential eventually or you think maybe he eventually saw that, that that was a good opportunity here?

GK: Well, he must have and then later on we got him into the uh [Audio breaks out] we uh, went, we built the uh, uh... auditorium out there, you know. We went to him for that and he gave us the money for that. So we passed some bonds and got it built. It was on, I was on the committee out there buildin' that too. And then the next thing we did, we went over [Chuckling] and built the Cajun Dome.

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SW: It's, it's not the same committee, y'all formed a different committee for the auditorium and then-

GK: They were different committees. Most of 'em [Inaudible] uh, the ones that we were on for the uh, auditorium, see that, that was in the Oil Center. And that, but, and then at the same time he gave the land for the uh, hospital.

SW: Hm.

GK: So we, that made the area out there, you see. And uh, then over at Blackham Coliseum that's, we used it, too, but uh, it was really a horse barn, you know. That's where they had the uh, midwinter fair. And uh, and so then we got s-, uh, enough money from the [Audio breaks out] to build a dome. And so then uh, USL came in on it. And we, they, of course Mister Heymann too. But we were all diggin' that dirt. I laughed the other day [Chuckling] was lookin' at some old pictures and there different, different people there. I, looked like I was [Inaudible] [Chuckling] diggin' that dirt for all those things. I've, makes me tired to think about it. [Both chuckle]

SW: S- [Audio breaks out] work. [Chuckles]

GK: Yes, but it was uh, very nice work. And in the meantime we brought in, I mean with the companies comin' in, you know, you might say we brought in uh, our uh, title people, you know. And the college crew. And the professors got better. And uh, they had some more money, you know, 'cause it was just a small college. [Slight pause]

SW: So things were kind of changing there, at that point. Uh, m-

GK: When the oil people came in here, gradually...

SW: In, in throughout the '50s and into the '60s.

GK: It got better, better here, we got more uh, into the uh, area. But you, just like now, right now the town is made up of a nucleus, you might say, of uh, native-type people. I mean, people who've been here a long time and, and all. And uh, then the new ones are all comin' in, you know. And they're the ones with all the new ideas, you know, the whole thing. So they're ch-, gonna change the whole look of the town.

SW: Well the-, these people during the '50s and '60s that were comin' in to work from uh, Texas and Oklahoma and, and whatnot, uh-

GK: Most of 'em we knew 'em or had met 'em in our business and all before, you know.

SW: But they weren't from Lafayette.

GK: No.

SW: A lot of 'em were from out of town.

GK: No. None of 'em. Not, very few of 'em were.

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SW: And they made Lafayette their home.

GK: They made Laf-, they, and they just like I would say I am a native, since you've been here-

SW: Yeah.

GK: I'm, I'm an oil native since I can't even th-, well, one of the first of them to come in here. But uh, no, they just made it their home and from then on they didn't wanna go anywhere else. And a lot of 'em when they've been offered transfers quit the job and got a job with somebody else, they didn't want uh, it's turned out to be a very nice place for children. We were laughin' the other day about the uh, where the theater was downtown, there on the corner. And uh, the kids used to ride their bicycle, you didn't think anything of it, you know. They'd go to the show by themselves. A couple of the boys, I mean, when my child was 10, 11, 12 years old, he road his bicycle down to the picture show. We never thought anything about it. With, with a little friend, you know. But it's a different story now.

SW: It's much bigger.

GK: In fact [Inaudible] [Audio breaks out] far out of town, they gotta get a ride [Chuckles] to get there, at that age, I mean, [along with that thing?].

SW: Yeah.

GK: So, but you have to expect change.

SW: How, how did those people, those people movin' in and, and they became transplants, how did they change the town? I mean, what, what kind of politics did they bring here or uh, religion or um, types of food that they ate?

GK: Well-

SW: Did they make any changes like that or did the area change them?

GK: They, yeah, you see, this, this town was the 90 percent Catholic. And we all came in and built our churches. For our own religion. It didn't bother us. Used to be very strict, but Catholic church is not very strict anymore. But it u-, you used to, if you were uh, gettin' married, "Oh, I'm gettin' married in the Catholic church," unless you were a member you could not be married in the Catholic church. And if one of you were a member, you married on the alter, on the side, but you didn't marry comin' down that aisle. But that's all changed now.

SW: Yeah.

GK: And not only that, uh, our minister can go down to be in the ceremonies for funerals and things like that, you know, at the Catholic church. That was a no-no. But they had to change. Number one reason was they had to change was because all the old people are all nearly dead and gone. And, and the young ones, it doesn't make any difference to 'em. Just so it's church. Which is fine I think if you have a, if you have a religion, that's all you need.

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SW: Yeah. I think uh-

GK: I don't think it matters what it is.

SW: The church is just happy that they come to church now, I think.

GK: Yeah. Because-

SW: So they just say, "Alright, fine."

GK: And, and, and uh, 'course uh, all of us would know that uh, you can't go to church but they don't ask for some kind of extra donation.

SW: Yeah.

GK: Well I know they're havin' a hard time, but they just [Audio breaks out] too fast all these [Audio breaks out]. 'Mean and that thing that we voted on yesterday for a new library.

SW: Yeah I saw that. [Pause]

GK: Four million dollars to add on and renovate the one we have and then three others. But I don't know why we should be buildin' Scott and, and then libraries, why can't they build with taxes and build their own?

SW: Yeah.

GK: 'Course [that's?] not a very nice thing to say, I guess. [SW chuckles] But uh, but when you think about the taxes and, and they are, we are gonna pay extra taxes for it. But the money's not bein' handled right.

SW: That's uh, Louisiana politics for ya, huh? [Chuckles]

GK: Uh hm. But I'll tell you it's like Washington is worse.

SW: Yeah, I think so.

GK: Really it is [Audio breaks out] what they were payin' those men to me [Audio breaks out] [Inaudible, audio breaks in and out frequently] million dollar home down there in Florida and everything like. Never had a dime, never even fin- [Audio breaks out] [Chuckles] But he had a brain.

SW: Makes you wonder, huh? [Both chuckle] So you're sayin', you, you were sayin' most of these people that were comin' from Texas and Oklahoma were also Catholic or were there any that were different? Other different religions?

GK: Oh no, they were all, we were all different. [Audio breaks out] we were Presbyterian, we built that Presbyterian church here.

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SW: Okay. But that's when-

GK: In fact we ended up with three now.

SW: That's what I was getting at. As, as more people from outside came in the-

GK: Some of 'em-

SW: Ninety percent Catholic kind of changed and-

GK: Yeah, well some were [Audio breaks out] didn't bother their religion, I mean.

SW: Right. But it did bring in-

GK: No, it was just in instances where, you know, like if they were having a wedding or, or some-, somethin', you know, that they really wanted to have it done in the Catholic church, 'cause the Catholic church was beautiful, you know. [Coughs]

SW: They uh... but those, those people comin' in did bring about some changes. What about in, in politics? Uh, the people here were [GK coughs]

GK: [In a weak voice] Well I don't know. I guess they had their own. [Both chuckle]

SW: Again that's always a, a contestable thing to talk about. [Chuckles]

GK: Yeah.

SW: And uh-

GK: Oh, those Cajuns talk about politics. [Chuckles] [Slight pause] That's a big part of their life. [Pause]

SW: So as these uh, as more and more people are moving in to occupy those offices, they're bringin' their families with them and so having to build houses and-

GK: Absolutely, oh yes.

SW: How did that change the city?

GK: Well it created some hou-, some uh, construction. Had to build some houses for 'em. And that's what they did. You really uh... when you go over um, the town, you don't find any extra amount of old, old homes anymore. You know, they either have tumbled down or, or the families have gone, you know, old families and, and they want all the new things, you know. But for, I can't see that we, well it looks like to me that all the new things are just uh, all the new houses and all that are comin' in, look at all the subdivisions that are comin' in. But uh, as far as the, well you can just look around you if you ride around and you can see there aren't many old houses. I mean [Clock chiming] the w-, well there, and they were, had been there for years and years and years, you know. Because uh, people had lived here that long. They had Evangeline here and all

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that, you know, so.

SW: Where did you guys build a house when you moved back here-

GK: Right over there.

SW: Down here in this area, the [Saint?] Street area?

GK: Uh huh. Over there on the C-, we were, we built the house, second house on the block over there.

SW: Okay. And those were the uh, the big subdivision areas at that time.

GK: Uh hm.

SW: The Saint Street area-

GK: Yeah.

SW: And, and where else?

GK: This, well this was, this area and all in here, [Inaudible] Gate and all, and then right at the nucleus, well uh, where Mouton Statue is they have a, they took a, we told 'em that all they did was fa- [Audio breaks out] trails. Because those, the streets don't go anywhere. [Chuckles] You try and tell someone you go this way and then you take a right and you go that way, you take a left, now, and they throw up their hand. Until this day no one understands the street. Btu that's how they laid it out. And the only thing they had, the only, they just had that brick, those bricks streets, you know, downtown. They didn't have any mo-, everything else was gravel.

SW: Now they're, they're putting bricks back on the street downtown. [Chuckles]

GK: That's exactly right.

SW: [They put 'em all there?].

GK: That's exactly right.

SW: Um, I've heard the, that the city planners paved the cow trails, I've heard that story many times.

GK: I know.

SW: Go look in the Oil Center, Mister Heymann built those two roads and they both go in a straight line. He didn't work for the city. [Chuckles]

GK: Uh uh.

SW: He built 'em himself, huh?

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GK: That was the cheapest way to build it, yeah.

SW: Do it yourself and then have them-

GK: Hm. Yeah.

SW: That's uh, [I?] kind of laugh about that when I think about that one. [Both chuckle]

GK: Well I can tell ya if you just, e-, really and truly, if you look at a map and you looked at the Mouton Statue, you uh, just wonder. What in the world they meant the way they did those streets.

SW: But the city was, was growing because all these people were bringing their families here.

GK: Yeah.

SW: And they needed to have houses built and then schools and hospitals. So, you, you must have seen from, from the 1950s, say the 1970s uh, a kind of rapid growth?

GK: Oh it was real, everybody was here for good.

SW: And in the '80s they all-

GK: Yeah.

SW: A bunch of 'em left. [Chuckles]

GK: And a lot of, that's exactly right. But that's how our business, and you can say what you [Audio breaks out] but it's oil that made the town.

SW: Yeah.

GK: Look what they did for the college. [Pause]

SW: It helped the college grow?

GK: It, oh indeed. And they, backed everyone, they backed everything they had out there, you know, and put up money and all.

SW: Ah yeah, I know you can't look at USL athletics without thinkin' Mister Alfred Lambson.

GK: Hm.

SW: He's, he's a huge supporter I think.

GK: Yeah.

SW: The girls' baseball team, I think, wouldn't have any money if it wasn't for him.

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GK: I'm sure of that. But [Audio breaks out] all the oil companies supported [Audio breaks out]. And Mister Heymann did too. [Audio breaks out] He had the property, you know, that was his property.

SW: Yeah.

GK: And he gave it. [Pause] And he did it, not Herbert. Herbert, Mister Maurice didn't, didn't think Herbert knew how. [Chuckles] That must be the way the families work, I don't know.

SW: Didn't have much faith in his son, huh?

GK: No. But then after he was gone, Herbert did a real good job, so [Chuckles] he just didn't give him a change. [Audio breaks out] But the whole town is certainly uh, should be, feel an indebtedness towards the Heymanns. You can say anything you want to, but they really have made the town. The Heymanns and the Oil Center. And the oil business. And 'course now they say the college, well it is true, the college is a wonderful college and all of that. [Audio breaks out] Uh, it isn't for that reason. I mean, it's because of the others helpin' 'em.

SW: Yeah. Kind of a reciprocal-

GK: Uh hm. That's right.

SW: Oh. Um, I just have maybe just one more question. And then I'll get out of your hair. [Chuckles]

GK: [Chuckling] It doesn't make any difference.

SW: Um, while, while you were working as a female landman, you were the first here in town. As, as the years went on did you start to see any more, other female landmen come to the profession or was it always a male-dominated-

GK: No, no uh, they, they gradually hired [Audio breaks out] girls that took some courses in it, you know. But uh, the uh, 'til this day they don't pay 'em what uh, a man gets.

SW: For doin' the same type of work?

GK: Same type of work. They, they just have never, they, they better. And uh, it is a little better and all. But uh, and now [Audio breaks out] all this uh, computer stuff and all, and they're better than the men on [Audio breaks out]. And-

SW: Mister Lambson said the women are better with the details.

GK: Yeah. They are. And uh, they're much better in uh, runnin' records. And uh, they're not only faster but they do a better job than a man 'cause he, but uh, we had, and we had that [when?] uh, they were secretaries, you know, and goin', you'd send to the courthouse to run records for you. But uh [Audio breaks out] uh, but for somehow they just, they haven't [Audio breaks out] however they sure got a lot of [in as?] uh, uh, governors in the race yesterday. [Chuckles] Nine I think.

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SW: I saw that.

GK: Yeah.

SW: And then we're gonna have a runoff here between uh-

GK: Uh, [Silvia?] and [Audio breaks out] No, uh, yeah, she's, no Terrell.

SW: Terrell and uh-

GK: Terrell and uh... what's the other one name?

SW: I don't know, there's been so many con-

GK: From New Orleans.

SW: So many commercials lately, we should both remember. [Audio breaks out] [Chuckles] Oh, I can see her face. Uh, Mary Landrieu.

GK: Yeah, that's who it is.

SW: Landrieu. That's it, yeah. Um, hm. That's pretty interesting. Well, I have to say do, do you want to add anything or?

GK: I don't know, I don't e-, I don't think I needed to add anything. I don't, anything you doin' it's fine, I don't care.

SW: You, you, I [Audio breaks out] my, my goal was to find out uh, somethin' about how the town changed because of the oil people-

GK: It changed, the town really changed from '35 t- [Chuckling] to, to now.

SW: To now.

GK: Yeah.

SW: You said in the beginning they [Audio breaks out] roughnecks and wh-, didn't wanna rent you a house, did that get any better?

GK: Yeah, it did later.

SW: When they saw all the money that was comin' in. [Chuckles]

GK: Oh yeah, but it, it was after, it really was more or less after the services.

SW: Hm. So things kind of changed there. I remember Mister Lambson mentioned that uh, the minute they found out w-, that he worked in the oil business they wanted to raise your rent. [Chuckles]

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GK: Oh, definitely. Or they didn't want to rent to you.

SW: Rent to you at all. Or the, that was the key, they'd say it was 15 dollars a month and they found out where you workin', all of a sudden it was 25 dollars a month. [GK chuckles] Because they'd think you wouldn't rent if it was too high. [Chuckles]

GK: Yep. [Audio breaks out]

SW: Yeah. Well I-

GK: Well I think Alfred-

[END OF RECORDING]

