

Oral History interview with
Lucille Hardee Thorpe and
Dan Thorpe II

Interviewed by
Libby Warner

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Manatee Historical Society Oral History Project

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May 2, 2004

Bradenton, Florida

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LUCILLE THORPE AND DAN THORPE II
MANATEE HISTORY
MAY 2, 2004

MR. THORPE: I was born January the 15th, 1916 in Old Manatee. Dr. McDuffy delivered me. It was down on Manatee Avenue is where I was born.

MRS. WARNER: Whereabouts on Manatee Avenue?

MR. THORPE: Well, they've torn the house down. It's where, oh, what's-his-name, Hudson used to live at the foot of 11th Street East, on Manatee and 11th Street East.

And Dad, he was, he went bankrupt with the Old Manatee Supply Store.

MRS. WARNER: Oh, the one that's on the, still the building that's on the corner down there by the park?

MR. THORPE: Yeah, they had a grocery store down there next to the railroad tracks. And Daddy went bankrupt. So then he became postmaster of Manatee, Old Manatee, and Mother was his assistant.

MRS. WARNER: No kidding. Where was the post office then?

MR. THORPE: It was - they've torn it down. It was next to Azmon's there,

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in a building just east of Azmon's.
Used to be a grocery store run by Mr. McCarty.

MRS. WARNER: That was still on
Manatee Avenue in Old Manatee?

MR. THORPE: In old Manatee. And
Dad came here from, they came here from
Townsend, Georgia. They went down to into
(unintelligible) where they had turpentine
and lumber, you see, and then they moved from
there down to here in Old Manatee.

And Captain Davis built the first bridge
across the river there, the Seaboard Railroad.
And they couldn't get the railroad from the
river up to the avenue, so one night they just
laid the tracks on top the ground, and got the
railroad into Old Manatee where the old
station used to be.

MRS. WARNER: They didn't put any
crossties or anything?

MR. THORPE: Yes, put the crossties
and laid the rails on top of those crossties.

MRS. WARNER: Without making a mound
or anything for it?

MR. THORPE: McNeil wouldn't let
them on there. He owned that property.

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MRS. WARNER: McNeil? Do you know his first name?

MR. THORPE: No, I don't. But that's the way they got past him.

And then my - Captain Davis's daughter Maude married Uncle Elijah.

MRS. WARNER: Isaac?

MR. THORPE: Elijah. And he, that's when that Manatee Supply building came into effect. And they had the bank and everything there.

MRS. WARNER: In the Supply, they had the bank in there?

MR. THORPE: Manatee Supply Company, yeah.

MRS. WARNER: What was the bank's name?

MR. THORPE: Manatee Bank, Manatee Banking Company. And they - of course, then, I was born in January, 1915, (sic) and I'm named after my dad. I'm a junior, Daniel Leahy Thorpe, Junior. That's L-E-A-H-Y, if you don't know how to spell Leahy.

MRS. WARNER: How do you spell it?

MR. THORPE: L-E-A-H-Y, Daniel Leahy

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Thorpe. And we, Daddy was named after his uncle, Daniel Donnelly.

And we lived in, down on 15th Street East. Captain Davis lived on the river down there. And C. H. Davis and Aunt Bess, and Aunt Maude was Captain Davis's daughter, and married Elijah Thorpe, you see, so that's how we got in with the Davises.

MRS. WARNER: I see.

MR. THORPE: And also Raymond Ruse (phonetic) married Maude Davis. It's so confusing to me.

And we did pretty well all that time. I went to school in the old Manatee Elementary School and I graduated from there to Bradenton High.

MRS. WARNER: Did you go to this school up here, that's where you started school?

MR. THORPE: I started school in that old building that they tore down and put that elementary on top of it.

MRS. WARNER: In Manatee, Old Manatee.

Now, tell us something about your childhood. What did you do in your childhood? What did the kids do in

The Twenty-Third Psalm

The Lord is my Shepherd: I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul: He leadth me in the
paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death. I will fear no evil:
for thou art with me: thy rod and
thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the
presence of mine enemies:
thou anointest my head with oil:
my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow
me all the days of my life: and I will
dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

IN MEMORY OF

DANIEL L. THORPE, JR.

DATE OF BIRTH

January 15, 1916

DATE OF DEATH

August 24, 2004

FUNERAL SERVICE

Thursday 11:00 A.M.

August 26, 2004

Shannon Funeral Home

v Town Chapel

Bradenton, Florida

OFFICIATING

Pastor Michael Thorpe

INTERMENT

Mansion Memorial Park

Ellenton, Florida

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those days?

MR. THORPE: Little bit of everything.

MRS. WARNER: Well, let's tell everything, then.

MR. THORPE: All my friends, there was Ron Perry and Edwin Plumber, Edward Plumber, and we were together all the time.

MRS. WARNER: Did they live close to you?

MR. THORPE: Yeah. Edward Plumber's dad was the foreman of the Seaboard Railroad gang, and Ronald Perry's dad was Clyde Perry.

MRS. WARNER: Is that P-E-R--R-Y?

MR. THORPE: That's right. C. H. Perry used to have a store, a grocery store, on 15th Street East, about Fourth Avenue and 15th Street East.

Then I went into scouting. Dad became chairman of the Court of Honor of the Boy Scouts of America, and I made Eagle Scout while he was there. And we, then I became scoutmaster of old Troop 9 in Palmetto, and then moved from there to scoutmaster of old Troop 7, no, Troop 4, Palmetto, Troop 9 in Manatee. And I

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stayed in scouting for years.

My dad, well, he retired out of scouting in 1945.

MRS. WARNER: Oh, he stayed in it a long time.

MR. THORPE: Oh yeah, he became president of Sunnyland Council and stayed there for I don't know how many years.

MRS. WARNER: Well now, what did they do in scouting those days? Was it any different to now?

MR. THORPE: Lot different. Scouting now is a joke far as I'm concerned.

MRS. WARNER: It is?

MR. THORPE: Because we used to have to do things. We had to pass tests and we had to study for them. Just like I went for my civics merit badge, Judge Harris was my tutor on that. And when I got through with him and passed my civics merit badge, I didn't have to open my U.S. History book at all. And so we just kept busy all the time.

MRS. WARNER: So you really had to study books like school?

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MR. THORPE: That's right. In other words, you had to do it. These days they take and read a book and then take the exam on it. Then we had to do it. It's all the difference in the world. Of course, they just said that that wasn't necessary, but I said it was.

MRS. WARNER: Did you go camping?

MR. THORPE: Oh, we went camping all the time. You can't go camping where we used to go camping.

MRS. WARNER: Where did you go?

MR. THORPE: Middle of Lake Manatee. I can remember going down in there and that's where some folks made liquor. And they'd come and meet me out where they were and I had to keep the boys from going in there.

MRS. WARNER: In other words, by that time you were helping the boys and you were through scouting as far as a child?

MR. THORPE: Yeah, I was their scoutmaster of Troop 7 - Troop 9, Manatee Methodist Church down there. I was baptized in the old Manatee Baptist Church down here. Later I joined Troop 7, First Presbyterian Church in Bradenton. And when I left there I ended up in Troop 4 and all that bunch.

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I went everywhere.

MRS. WARNER: You liked that, scoutmaster?

MR. THORPE: I was the first member of the Demolay in Manatee County, and was a past master of them. And they, Ed (unintelligible) was one of the directors there and we all quit. And this present
A Demolay is not the same original Demolay of Manatee County.

But I was there for I don't know how many years. I just got sick and tired. Seemed like every time I turned around I was on, had to do something. You know what I mean? I got tired and not being able to do what I wanted to do. Oh, I enjoyed it, and I miss some of it sometimes. Of course, practically all that crowd is gone now.

MRS. WARNER: What were some of the children, boys that you had in your troop, do you remember their names? Any of them still around?

MR. THORPE: Well, they're - Sam Robinson is over on the East Coast someplace and (unintelligible) works at the post office in Bradenton. He retired from the army. And who is it now, what's his name, but anyway, there's so many of them that I worked with, they see me now.

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And I laughed one day, I was with my assistant scoutmaster over in Bradenton, we were getting some gas and stuff to go out camping, and this one boy, well, it's George Harrison Jr. - Danny was my scoutmaster, and that's back before the war. And things like that, you know, you start where you're feeling old.

MRS. WARNER: I know what you mean.

MR. THORPE: But there was never a dull moment.

MRS. WARNER: I can see that. Did you go on long marches, hikes?

MR. THORPE: Oh, we did that all the time.

MRS. WARNER: Did you all walk clear on out there to where you camped?

MR. THORPE: Sometimes we did.

MRS. WARNER: You did? That was quite a long walk.

MR. THORPE: We used to - it was Millard White and that crowd from Bradenton, we used to hike out to Perico Island from the Presbyterian Church. And we were always going on (unintelligible). That was part of scouting.

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MRS. WARNER: Did you go scalloping and doing things like that?

MR. THORPE: I didn't do much of that at all. I had too many other things to keep me busy. I was always studying, had my nose in a book practically all the time.

MRS. WARNER: Did you like to read other things besides studying for your tests and whatnot, like kids' books, those days?

MR. THORPE: They used to buy books in an old mangy library run by the Woman's Club here.

MRS. WARNER: Where was it?

MR. THORPE: It was in - well, it was the old Mills house where it was originally down there on 11th Street East. And then they moved to, oh, where was it they moved to - the old Arcade Building, in the upstairs up there. But I'd read a book and then I'd find one I wanted to read and they'd get it for me to read.

MRS. WARNER: Oh, nice. What were some of the boys' books back then?

MR. THORPE: Well, you had Tom Swift, I think I read all the Tom Swift books. And of course, I read some of

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those heavy books, too.

My teachers were Mildred Vanderipe was one of my teachers, and Mrs. R. E. Link was a teacher down there at this school. Then when I went to Bradenton it was Dietrich and all this crowd. But I enjoyed it. But like I said, we had some of that crowd here.

But we used to go down, I used to go to Davis house there, Grandpa Davis.

MRS. WARNER: That was on 15th Street East on the river.

MR. THORPE: Yeah, I used to go down there all the time. And of course, my Aunt Maude would come down there to see them, and my Uncle Isaac, that's how he'd meet her family.

Now Mother had a brother-in-law lives in Parrish, who married her sister. And he was Dad's first cousin and he married my mother's sister.

MRS. WARNER: Double cousins.

MR. THORPE: Double cousins. And he had a grocery store until he died up in Parrish.

MRS. WARNER: What was his name, do you remember?

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MR. THORPE: Matheson, Burke
Matheson.

MRS. WARNER: Didn't they get mixed
up with the Richards family somehow,
Mathesons, Aunt Bessie, Richards?

MR. THORPE: Yeah. We're kin to
everybody in Parrish, I think. That's the best
way to put it.

MRS. WARNER: Well, seemed to me
like I remember something about that.
See, Aunt Bessie was my grandmother's
sister-in-law. She married my grandmother's
brother, Uncle Dan, Dan Richards.

MR. THORPE: I think I remember
something about that. It's so vague.

MRS. WARNER: Everybody was sort of
kin to everybody those days because there
wasn't that many people.

MR. THORPE: That's right. It's
like Travis Gaines, they'd get to talking
about people down in Parrish, and he tells them
you better shut up, your talking, them's my
kinfolk.

MRS. WARNER: We miss old Travis, he
was quite a guy.

MR. THORPE: He was quite a guy.

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MRS. WARNER: How many children were there in your graduating class?

MR. THORPE: Ninety some odd.

MRS. WARNER: There was ninety? And you graduated then over in Manatee High School?

MR. THORPE: It was Bradenton High. It didn't become Manatee County High until I think Lucille went to school out there. It was Manatee High, and I don't know, it's all mixed up for me.

MRS. WARNER: I know it gets mixed up. What year was that that you graduated?

MR. THORPE: My real graduation was 1933, but it's recorded as 1935. I stayed back an extra year for music with Pop Grant. See, I played in the band and orchestra.

MRS. WARNER: Oh, what did you play?

MR. THORPE: Bass, contrabass tuba and then I started playing slide bass with the dance orchestra. I played in the old Buddy Burt Dance Band. I was the original bass player for him. And I quit that, it was in 1941, I guess it was.

Because I went in the service in

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January of 1942 in Jacksonville, and then went to Mayport, and then Mayport to Savannah, Georgia, old Fort Pulaski, and from old Fort Pulaski to Naval Base in Washington, D.C.,

I was in the supply, and they made the big move, moving the divisions from there to Cleveland, Ohio. And then I was in charge of the (inaudible) division there in Cleveland. And I begged to get out of there and ended up in Adack (phonetic) Alaska for 24 months. And from there I went to New Caledonia for about 11 or 12 months, and then I came home.

MRS. WARNER: Oh, I see. How about in Caledonia?

MR. THORPE: Oh, just regular naval base. I was in what you call the advance base.

MRS. WARNER: Were you in the Navy, then?

MR. THORPE: Yeah, Naval Supply.

MRS. WARNER: Well you were probably near 28 or so, weren't you, when you got in the service?

MR. THORPE: I don't know. Seems like it's such a long time. Well, you figure it was 1942 when I went into the

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Navy.

MRS. WARNER: And you were born in 1916?

MR. THORPE: That's right. So that's the way it goes.

MRS. WARNER: You were probably about 26.

MR. THORPE: I was in the late twenties. And I got married. I don't even mention that.

MRS. WARNER: That was a first marriage? Oh, I see.

MR. THORPE: As a Christmas present, a request for a divorce in Christmas of 1942.

MRS. WARNER: That was after you had gotten in the service?

MR. THORPE: Yeah.

MRS. WARNER: Well kids those days, I guess, kind of rushed because of the times.

MR. THORPE: Well, she was a no good woman. I didn't know it. All the boys ran (inaudible) brother-in-laws and the sisters knew all about her, but didn't tell me anything about it. And I asked

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them why, and they said well, you wouldn't have believed us. And I guess they're right, I don't know. Then I met 'Cille when I got out of the service. That was in 1946, I think it was.

MRS. WARNER: You didn't see any action at all?

MR. THORPE: Well, action, we were in Thousand Islands out of Tokyo, up in the Aleutian Islands, and we were being flown over by the Japanese fleet. And the Japanese ships were stationed at our harbor, watching us like a hawk, and they were dive bombing us all the time. It didn't do anything, but they just - well, you can see what, they were trying to find out where we were.

MRS. WARNER: What would you do when they were dive bombing?

MR. THORPE: We'd just stay in our huts.

MRS. WARNER: In your huts?

MR. THORPE: Yeah, Quonset huts.

MRS. WARNER: And they didn't hit you then?

MR. THORPE: They couldn't find us.

MRS. WARNER: Was it covered with

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something?

MR. THORPE: The huts were in the country and covered up. It was rough up there. I mean, just like I heard somebody say wasn't anything happening up there, I says, no, there wasn't anything happened up there, but, I said, there was sure a lot going on. They really planned the invasion of Japan for May Day.

And so, in other words, we had all the supplies up there, in case they started to invade we could take care of the fleet.

MRS. WARNER: Oh, they kept bringing in supplies, then, and storing them there?

MR. THORPE: Yeah, they knew - they watched us, make sure what we did. But they -

MRS. WARNER: They never sank any of the boats or ships?

MR. THORPE: Well, we were pretty well protected up there, but still it was very uncomfortable.

And then we went out to New Caledonia, what you call decommissioning. I started helping decommission a bunch of those ABC bases

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and all that up there.

MRS. WARNER: Getting ready to go home?

MR. THORPE: Getting ready to go home.

MRS. WARNER: Was that after Japan surrendered?

MR. THORPE: Yeah, they had just surrendered. And boy, that was one big day up there, too, when Japan surrendered. Also the day that the Germans surrendered. I mean you never saw such a drunken bunch of guys in all your life. I drank so much I don't remember. I just passed out. It was such a relief. I'm not proud of it, but...

MRS. WARNER: Well, I would have done the same, too.

MR. THORPE: But we lived a long - I tell you, you lived many a year in such a short period of time.

MRS. WARNER: I bet. Was anybody wounded that you knew about?

MR. THORPE: Yeah, I was in the Lawton Division. I see a bunch of them from the Lawton Division there. And in just a few days I'd be pulling their

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locker cards, they'd been killed in action.

And I was there when Grayson Prince (phonetic) died. I was in B.C., and I pulled his card. We pulled all those cards and make up a new group from them, you see. And I couldn't believe, he was down in the Keys, in that area. From what I understand he fell off the ship, but I don't know.

I tell you, for a long time you couldn't get me to talk about it, period. I just wanted to forget it all.

MRS. WARNER: I know. One of my jobs is to interview veterans of World War II. We're trying to gather up all the information we can about that period. And lots of men say that same thing you do, that they can only now start talking about it.

MR. THORPE: And I still have nightmares.

MRS. WARNER: Can you hear those bombs at night and all?

MR. THORPE: All I hear is the airplanes just dive bombing. And somebody said well, you weren't in the war. I said, well, that's your opinion.

MRS. WARNER: Sounds like you were

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in the middle of it.

MR. THORPE: Japanese around us all over the place. They'd come in, you'd look up and they'd be eating dinner, the ones that went into Kiska (phonetic) and all that.

MRS. WARNER: How did they get in?

MR. THORPE: Well, they was there and they didn't catch them?

MRS. WARNER: They would sneak in and eat with you? No kidding. I haven't heard that story. That's a good one.

MR. THORPE: Well, we never thought a thing about it until they arrested them.

MRS. WARNER: And if they didn't get caught they would sneak out and come back in again, probably. I'll be darned. They were hungry.

MR. THORPE: The main ones, that's what they were, they were hungry, the main bunch in Kiska. And the last bunch was in that too. You never knew.

MRS. WARNER: They never attacked you or anything?

MR. THORPE: No. We listened to

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that woman disc jockey, she'd play music for us.

MRS. WARNER: Disc jockey, what was her name? The one in Japan? I know the one you're talking about, too, that was always trying to get the boys to come and surrender.

MR. THORPE: And while I was there I had the radio -

MRS. WARNER: Tokyo Rose.

MR. THORPE: Tokyo Rose. I was listening to her one night and hearing about Steve Raymond being up there, and where he was and everything.

MRS. WARNER: You mean she announced that?

MR. THORPE: Yeah, they gave a message supposed to be from them. And some of the boys asked are you going to write their parents? I said nope. I says, I don't want, they could be lying, and there's no use getting somebody's hopes up.

MRS. WARNER: I wish I had known that. I interviewed Steve Raymond about a month ago.

MR. THORPE: Steve's quite a character.

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MRS. WARNER: He didn't mention anything about that, so maybe it was a hoax.

MR. THORPE: He might not have even known about it. I don't know.

I'll never forget the first Christmas we got back, we all met down at the old Anna Maria Pavilion, the whole crowd of us. And the women set over here, and the men set over here. And you should have heard the tales.

MRS. WARNER: I bet.

MR. THORPE: And Steve, he'd go so far and just shut up. And the only way you got him to talk was get him drunk.

MRS. WARNER: Well, he was the one that had the Bataan death march.

MR. THORPE: That's right.

MRS. WARNER: He told about it this time. He said like you said, that he didn't like to talk about it, but now he can talk about it.

MR. THORPE: Well then he talked about it, but he had to be drunk to talk about it. And he said what kept him going was him being a Boy Scout.

MRS. WARNER: Who were some of the

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other men, do you remember their names?

MR. THORPE: I was never with any of the bunch from here, I was always with a different -

MRS. WARNER: Different bunch you didn't know.

MR. THORPE: I didn't know. And I found out you made friends. You weren't lost. Some of them you wished you'd forget, though.

Just like I said, it was rough. I was under -

MRS. WARNER: It was a strain and nerves.

MR. THORPE: I was all right when I was outside the United States, but soon as I got back in the States I was ready to come home.

MRS. WARNER: Did you get out then when you got back or did you have to stay a while.

MR. THORPE: Well, we got where, you know, they gave us those records to get out, you know, where we had so many points. I got out because my dad was retired post office and he was in bad health. So I got out on those grounds easier and faster. I came home, and I

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arrived in San Francisco on December the 8th, day after Pearl Harbor. And then I went to the base there off of an island there, and was shipped to Jacksonville Naval Air and was discharged from Jacksonville Air.

MRS. WARNER: How did you get home? Train?

MR. THORPE: Train. I came from Jacksonville out there, train to Jacksonville, then was discharged in Jacksonville.

MRS. WARNER: Do you remember the date?

MR. THORPE: 17th of January, I think it was.

MRS. WARNER: In '46 or '45?

MR. THORPE: '45. Around that time, anyway.

MR. WARNER: Had you met your second wife by then?

MR. THORPE: No, I didn't meet her until - you remember when I worked in Pelot's?

MRS. WARNER: No, I don't remember that. Is that the first thing you did when you returned?

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MR. THORPE: I came out, I wanted to be an undertaker. And so when I came here you had to pay your way, and I said I paid enough already and I'm not going to give them another darned penny. So I gave that up and went back in the post office.

And I met Lucille in Pelot's Pharmacy. She was a clerk.

MRS. WARNER: How long did you work there in Pelot's then?

MR. THORPE: Oh, from when I first got out of the service until I went back in the post office, sometime in September of 1942, I believe it was. I can't remember. Then I went back there and Lucille and I were married in 1947.

MRS. WARNER: What did you do in Pelot's?

MR. THORPE: I was in charge of the fountain. And he cried like a baby the day I told him I was quitting and went back to the post office. And he offered to put me through pharmacy school. I said no. I didn't want to be obligated to anybody.

MRS. WARNER: Well, you were just independent. I don't blame you a bit.

MR. THORPE: And I'm still

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independent. It's hard to do some of the things I have to do now, even.

MRS. WARNER: Let's see now, those days how did you get on in the post office and become a -

MR. THORPE: See, I worked in the Bradenton Post Office - I mean Palmetto Post Office, back before the war. So when I came back I resigned. Then when I came back in, I decided I didn't want to go back to the Palmetto Post Office, and ended up going in the Bradenton Post Office.

MRS. WARNER: Was that in the Arcade Building then?

MR. THORPE: Well, that was one of the places I was stationed at. I served as a clerk and as a carrier out of the main post office.

MRS. WARNER: Where was the main post office then?

MR. THORPE: Off the corner of Manatee Avenue and 19th Street West.

MRS. WARNER: In the Arcade Building? There was an Arcade Building there.

MR. THORPE: Arcade is the old Manatee Post Office.

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MRS. WARNER: Well, I mean in Bradenton.

MR. THORPE: Yes, in Old Manatee.

MRS. WARNER: And that was the main post office?

MR. THORPE: That was the Manatee Post Office. The main post office was in West Bradenton at Manatee Avenue and Ninth Street West where it is now.

MRS. WARNER: Was Manatee by that time that you came back, had it been taken over by Bradenton?

MR. THORPE: That's right, it had.

MRS. WARNER: And it became Manatee Station?

MR. THORPE: That's right. And Dad was the supervisor of this until he retired in 1945.

MRS. WARNER: That's about the time it was taken over, wasn't it? Did he retire because he was mad at that?

MR. THORPE: Bad health. He had a heart attack.

MRS. WARNER: Well, so many people around that time wore black ribbon around their arms and things because

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they felt so bad about being taken over by Bradenton.

MR. THORPE: We didn't like it, I'll tell you. I was in the service and someone wrote to me about it and asked me what I thought about it. I said I don't think it's a very good idea because Manatee lost its identity. But it all worked out for the best.

MRS. WARNER: Finally Manatee Station disappeared and it became Bradenton then.

MR. THORPE: They still kept the station there for years. And the day that I retired is when they closed the station.

MRS. WARNER: It was? What day was that, remember?

MR. THORPE: No. I was 67 years old, I can tell you that. They came after me to do something about it. I said, well, I gave you your chance and you wouldn't listen to me. It's your worry now. I said, I don't want any part of it.

MRS. WARNER: And you retired.

MR. THORPE: And I retired. And Lucille couldn't get me to even go buy a stamp from them for years.

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MRS. WARNER: Well, you had a route at first, was that it?

MR. THORPE: I was a substitute carrier and I would substitute for different routes throughout the city of Bradenton. And also in Palmetto. I was still a substitute in Palmetto before I went to Bradenton.

And that was a drinking bunch in Palmetto. And I knew if I was going to quit drinking I couldn't go back there.

MRS. WARNER: I see. Well about how many employees were there in the post office at the time you took over?

MR. THORPE: There was 13 carriers.

MRS. WARNER: Thirteen carriers. Good night, I'd hate to say how many there are now.

MR. THORPE: They had 13, in other words, there was actually 12 and then they made another one right shortly after I got there. So it was 13. And then it grows now, I don't know how many there are.

MRS. WARNER: How did they keep track of - you were substituting, you had different places to go all the time - how did you keep track of where everybody lived?

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MR. THORPE: You just learn. You just learn, that's how.

MRS. WARNER: Seems to me like that would be a hard job.

MR. THORPE: Well, after you get used to it you'd be surprised what you can do.

MRS. WARNER: Those days, you know, a lot of times they just had your name down and Bradenton. They didn't bother to put an address.

MR. THORPE: Well, it's just like for years in Palmetto that's the way it was. And then it changed from named streets to numbered streets, and then we had a mess over in Palmetto.

I don't now, some of those guys in the old Palmetto Post Office said I was the first one that ever graduated in the post office there.

MRS. WARNER: How many clerks did they have over here? Did you remember anything about that?

MR. THORPE: They had a supervisor and one clerk at the Manatee Station, and in Bradenton they had one, two, three, four, about six clerks.

MRS. WARNER: Who was the postmaster

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at that time? What was his name used to be a postmaster?

MR. THORPE: Let's see. Briggs was one of them. And Shorty Evans was postmaster here.

MRS. WARNER: Shorty Evans?

MR. THORPE: Yeah.

MRS. WARNER: Was he before Dick?

MR. THORPE: Yeah. And then Shorty Evans was before him, and then, man used to be in the First National Bank was postmaster. And he's the one got, he's the one I went to work for in Bradenton. I can't think of his name.

MRS. WARNER: First National Bank. Well, you might think about it.

MR. THORPE: But he went back to the bank after he quit the post office. After he was fired, let's put it that way. Oh, I can't think of his name. Lucille would probably remember it.

MRS. WARNER: You said you met her because she was in Pelot's?

MR. THORPE: That's right. See, I'm 15 years older than she is, and I had no idea of getting married. But I tell you, when I met her it was a wonderful

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thing, all the difference in the world.

MRS. WARNER: What was her maiden name?

MR. THORPE: Hardee, H-A-R-D-E-E.

MRS. WARNER: Was she born here too?

MR. THORPE: Yeah. We're living within one house of where she was born.

MRS. WARNER: Oh, I see.

MR. THORPE: Her uncle built the house we lived in. And 'Cille was just two houses from there.

MRS. WARNER: What year was that that you got married?

MR. THORPE: In '47. I'm pretty sure that's right.

MRS. WARNER: And you were by that time in the post office?

MR. THORPE: Oh, yeah, I was back in the post office. I'd been serving as a substitute carrier when I met her. And then of course we had our four children. Danny the third, Diane, Darlene, and Michael. Michael is a minister.

MRS. WARNER: They're all still living?

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MR. THORPE: Yes.

MRS. WARNER: I think that's wonderful. So many people I know of have lost their children and they're still living.

MR. THORPE: Michael's a minister in Jacksonville. Diane's a schoolteacher over in West Palm Beach, she's teaching some kind of science. And Diane - that's Diane, and Darlene's a secretary out here at Bashaw.

MRS. WARNER: In where?

MR. THORPE: Bashaw.

MRS. WARNER: A school?

MR. THORPE: Yeah.

MRS. WARNER: Dan is your oldest, then?

MR. THORPE: Dan is the oldest boy. It was Diane, Darlene, Danny, and Michael.

MRS. WARNER: And Dan served as chief of police in Bradenton for a long time.

MR. THORPE: Yeah, he's retired, I think it's about five years. And I was so glad when he quit and retired. He's

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had it rough, I'll tell you.

MRS. WARNER: I bet he did. He's a nice man.

MR. THORPE: It's paid off, he got a darn good retirement.

MRS. WARNER: That's wonderful.

MR. THORPE: He and Poston went round and round. He's like I am, I haven't any use for Poston. He hadn't either. How in the world he got in, people go just crazy.

MRS. WARNER: Well, they were sick and tired of the one that was in there. So is there anybody to run against him?

MR. THORPE: I tell you, when they lost Bill Evers they lost a good man. I don't care what anybody says. He was honest. And he was Danny's friend. He's my friend too, far as that goes, but he was Danny's friend. And when he retired, when he lost he took care of Danny.

MRS. WARNER: That's great.

MR. THORPE: And so when Danny got ready to retire, Poston tried every way in the world to kick him out, and so when Danny finally made up his mind, he made the papers and (unintelligible) to

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go out on. And Poston gave him everything he asked for.

MRS. WARNER: That was great. He deserved it. That's quite a responsible job he had, being chief of police.

MR. THORPE: And it's the worst political job you ever have in your life.

MRS. WARNER: It Is?

MR. THORPE: Yeah, it's bad.

MRS. WARNER: I don't know much about that end of it.

MR. THORPE: Well, see, police, the mayor can hire and fire anytime he's good and ready. And you haven't got a leg to stand on unless you got a strong backing. And of course, Danny had a darn good backing. All the law officers in there now swear by Danny.

(END OF TAPE SIDE)

MRS. WARNER: I was going to say, now, you're retired, well, gosh, you've been retired a long time.

MR. THORPE: Over 25 years.

MRS. WARNER: What have you been doing with yourself?

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MR. THORPE: Nothing. I haven't been doing anything more than what I've had to. But I said when I retired, I retired. They tried to get me to run for City Council. I said no way.

MRS. WARNER: Oh boy, I wouldn't want that job either.

MR. THORPE: Old Azmon, what's his name?

MRS. WARNER: The one that had Azmon's store here in Manatee?

MR. THORPE: Rudy, came out and says, he says, you run, I'll help put you in. I said no you won't. Danny often asked me why I didn't. I says, why did you retire.

MRS. WARNER: Too much pressure.

MR. THORPE: He says too much pressure. And see, I'm 88 years old now. I was 88 in January.

MRS. WARNER: I'm 82. Time goes, doesn't it?

MR. THORPE: It sure does.

MRS. WARNER: I was going to ask you too, you gave me a picture, your son did, about the train out there. And it was your father, wasn't it?

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MR. THORPE: No, that was Lucille's father.

MRS. WARNER: Oh, Lucille's father. Do you know anything about that train yourself?

MR. THORPE: Well, that train was originally Manatee Train Company. It was a lumber train and it came from North Florida. And then Hoke Smith, something happened to him, had a heart attack or something, he had to give it up, and Pop Hardee took it over for years. And he ran the heavy equipment for Manatee (unintelligible) on it. And his dad also worked for Lee Cypress. And that's the one you should be able to talk to?

MRS. WARNER: Is he still living? What was his name?

MR. THORPE: Hardee.

MRS. WARNER: No, Cybert? Oh you mean - okay, I get it. I was just mixed up.

MR. THORPE: Mr. Hardee was a, oh he was a character.

MRS. WARNER: The pictures looked it.

MR. THORPE: Oh, you never knew what

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he was going to do. We'd get over there for an evening and I'd get in an argument, people would think we was going to start a fight. But he struck at me and I went right back at him. I laughed. I think it hurt 'Cille's folks (unintelligible) us getting married, you know. So that's one of the reasons I didn't count on getting married.

But anyways, when I went to - he came home from Lee Cypress and sitting on the porch, stockings, in his stocking feet, propped up on the railing. And I said, we'll get along. And that's true. That's the way it was. We got along.
And he was just a wonderful person.

MRS. WARNER: Do you know how long he worked for the (inaudible)?

MR. THORPE: No, I don't. 'Cille might be able to tell you.

MRS. WARNER: He probably worked a long time, didn't he? When you first knew him was he with the Manatee Crate Mill.

MR. THORPE: He was with Florida Grapefruit. And then he was with the (unintelligible) and all that, Manatee Crate got him when Hoke Smith died. But he'd sit down and tell you some yarn when he was down in the Everglades and Lee Cypress. And he's always full of

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something, you never knew what he could come up with.

MRS. WARNER: Well, you know, you came along about the time the Crate Mill started. Can you tell me something about the Crate Mill?

MR. THORPE: I can't tell you much about them. All I remember is when they had a fire everybody went down to help put it out.

MRS. WARNER: Oh? What was the fire?

MR. THORPE: Well, those mills caught fire all the time. It burned down the boiler room and all that two or three different times. And Dad went down to help them fight it. Then I started in when I got old enough to do it.

MRS. WARNER: Well, did anybody get killed there doing that?

MR. THORPE: No, only ones got killed was the ones that worked on equipment. It was rough. No protection at all.

MRS. WARNER: What kind of equipment are you referring to?

MR. THORPE: Making the baskets.

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MRS. WARNER: Saws and different things like that?

MR. THORPE: Yeah. But I - I've forgotten so much.

MRS. WARNER: Well, did they always call it Pumpkin Center? What, do you have any idea why they named it that?

MR. THORPE: It was just - I don't know. Nobody knows. It's just like you know yourself, you go to certain places and it picks up a name, somebody starts calling it that.

Just like the former school superintendent, what's his name? But he was born in Pumpkin Center, and he's proud of it. And he's bring that out. He and 'Cille graduated together, and we go to their dinners and all that, he says where's Dan and 'Cille. 'Cille's going to, I know it's fifth something anniversary this week, Thursday this week.

MRS. WARNER: Fiftieth anniversary of her graduation?

MR. THORPE: Graduating from Manatee County High.

MRS. WARNER: It was Manatee County High by then, it was Bradenton High when you

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MR. THORPE: Bradenton High, now it's just Manatee High.

MRS. WARNER: I graduated in '39 and I think it was Manatee County High School then, because our yearbook was MACOHI.

MR. THORPE: I graduated in '30. Actually my graduation was 1933, but I stayed back for a year, an extra year of music, so they got me out in 1934.

MRS. WARNER: Well, Joe was about that time too, my husband.

MR. THORPE: Joe and I were in the same class, wasn't he?

MRS. WARNER: Oh, he was?

MR. THORPE: I can't remember. I'm pretty sure. That's where I first remember Joe was in high school.

MRS. WARNER: He loved history. That's why he got interested in all this history.

MR. THORPE: Well, I tell you, it's like they tried to get me in this thing here. I just don't want any part of it.

MRS. WARNER: Well, you just don't care about that.

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MR. THORPE: I just don't care about that. I tell you, you get in so many arguments over things. And I'm through arguing with anybody. Just like the old hotel there, they call it Wiggins Store now, but that was a hotel. That's when they had docks out the end of Old Main Street.

MRS. WARNER: This building we're in.

MR. THORPE: And this was originally a hotel. I think Walpole was the guy that ran the hotel.

MRS. WARNER: Walpole?

MR. THORPE: And Walpole was the postmaster when Dad took over the Manatee Post Office.

MRS. WARNER: Did you know his first name at all?

MR. THORPE: I couldn't. At one time I did, Libby, but I don't know, you'd have to look it up. It's probably in some of these books around here.

MRS. WARNER: Oh, I'm sure. I remember one story about that engine out here. We were, of course we used this road here to go to Sarasota area all the time. It's 15th Street East. I guess that was the old Sarasota Road, wasn't

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it?

MR. THORPE: That's right.

MRS. WARNER: Well, one day we were going that way and we got stopped by the little engine crossing the road down here. And it was stopped in the middle of the road. And we were waiting for it to move, and the wheels were spinning, they weren't going anywhere. And so I don't know, must have been Mr. Hardee, I didn't know, but he got out, somebody got out of the cab with a shovel and they got out there in the sand and started getting sand and pouring it under the wheels to get traction.

And then after they did that, then they got back in and it went on. That's the only time I ever remembered it.

MR. THORPE: I used to go down and ride it with him and be his fireman.

MRS. WARNER: Oh, you did?
Whereabouts did it go?

MR. THORPE: It just stayed there in the yard, it didn't go any -

MRS. WARNER: It didn't go very far?

MR. THORPE: It used to go all the way out to Verna, out in that area.

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MRS. WARNER: Oh. Did it go to
Nokatee? (phonetic)

MR. THORPE: Yeah, see, Nokatee,
Manatee Company. And when they
stopped hauling logs into there, it was for
switching the cars there at the - you know what
I mean - place, the Crate Company.

MRS. WARNER: And they'd bring the
logs in wherever they cut them and put them on
the train and then they'd bring them in here.

MR. THORPE: Bring them in here and
then dump them there at the logging pond.

MRS. WARNER: Where was it?

MR. THORPE: It was right there in
back of the crate mill.

MRS. WARNER: Was it a home made
pond?

MR. THORPE: Yeah, and they just had
it kept filled with water.

MRS. WARNER: And that kept the
trees better until they got to use them?

MR. THORPE: Yeah.

MRS. WARNER: I didn't know that.

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That was a good thing to know. I remember one time, I don't know why, Daddy and Mother and I came up here to the crate mill. He had to go to his commissary somewhere and they sent back a pair of stilts to me. He brought back a pair of red stilts with Manatee Crate Company on the side of it.

MR. THORPE: Their store used to be right there where that Amoco station is. I think it's Amoco, or in other words, a Pure Oil station is down there now on 15th Street East.

MRS. WARNER: Could anybody go there and trade or was it just for the Pumpkin Center?

MR. THORPE: No, it was a regular store, anybody could go there. But the people worked in the crate mill they could charge the stuff they got.

MRS. WARNER: I wonder if they got a discount?

MR. THORPE: Nah, they robbed them. They robbed them. I know at Christmastime we used to take batches of groceries and take them down to the little campgrounds, you know. And oh, Libby, you never saw anything like it in your life.

Pumpkin Center was a lot better than

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that area was. See, Pumpkin Center is about out there close where I lived, in that area there.

MRS. WARNER: It started right here, though, didn't it, right across the street up here and went back? There was quite a few houses.

MR. THORPE: Oh, yeah. The crate mill built a bunch of houses for their workers, all on Seventh Avenue there, went out there close to where we lived. And about a 19th Street, 20th Street is where they have their, oh, main bunch, the Pumpkin Center crowd were. That was the high, what you call the high class Pumpkin City.

MRS. WARNER: The bosses? They had quite a lot of people working for them?

MR. THORPE: Oh, yes. They built celery crates and stuff like that.

MRS. WARNER: Celery crates? How about orange crates?

MR. THORPE: Orange crates, anything like that.

MRS. WARNER: Tomato crates and all. That was a big operation. It was one of the largest in this part of the state.

MR. THORPE: Well, it started over

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in Nokatee. And Manatee took over Nokatee.

MRS. WARNER: Who really started that, did you know, here? Burt Stresser, was he -

MR. THORPE: Bert Stresser was one of the main ones, but the main group lived over in Arcadia.

MRS. WARNER: Oh, they did? Some of the old timers over there.

Well, it was a wonderful interview. I appreciate you doing this.

MR. THORPE: Well, I hope you got something out of it.

MRS. WARNER: I wonder if your wife would give me a little interview while she's here.

MR. THORPE: Well, if she's here she'll give you what she can.

MRS. WARNER: All right, what is your name now, your maiden name?

MRS. THORPE: I'm Lucille Hardee Thorpe.

MRS. WARNER: And that's H-A-R-D-E-E?
E?

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MRS. THORPE: Right.

MRS. WARNER: And T-H-O-R-P-E?

MRS. THORPE: That's right.

MRS. WARNER: Okay. And where were you born?

MRS. THORPE: In Manatee.

MRS. WARNER: Whereabouts in Manatee?

MRS. THORPE: I was born on 27th Street East right close to where we live now, in the 800 block, in my grandmother's house. I was delivered by Dr. Blake.

And I've lived in Manatee for most of my life. We moved for a short time to Dixie County, where my dad was a locomotive engineer. And we lived there until 1943 we moved back.

MRS. WARNER: What was he doing there?

MRS. THORPE: He was a locomotive engineer for Putnam Lumber Company in Shamrock.

MRS. WARNER: What year did you come back here then?

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MRS. THORPE: 1943.

MRS. WARNER: So did you really go to school here then?

MRS. THORPE: Yes, I went to Manatee Junior High School, and I graduated from Manatee High School. My class ring says Bradenton High School, but when, the year I graduated in 1948 it was Manatee County High School. All of the schools were combined. And I think there were 206 of us that graduated that year.

That was county wide. And there are about five or six high schools that graduate more than that.

MRS. WARNER: That was quite a big graduation class.

MRS. THORPE: Well, it was the whole county except for the black school. Lincoln was (inaudible), that was before segregation.

MRS. WARNER: And you, after you graduated from school what did you do then?

MRS. THORPE: Well, I married Dan a year before I graduated.

MRS. WARNER: He said you met somewhere?

MRS. THORPE: We met in Pelot's

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Pharmacy. I was working behind the soda fountain. And he came back from the navy and was there for a short while before he went back to the post office.

And he went back to the post office shortly after we were married, or shortly before, I guess. We were married in August of 1947 and I graduated in 1948.

MRS. WARNER: Oh, yes. Can you remember something about your childhood, what you did around here? What did girls do around here those days?

MRS. THORPE: Well, we were bussed to school to Manatee High. But if we wanted to get to a ball game, it was during the war and gas was short and teenagers didn't have cars then. There was a family car, but if you wanted to get to the ball game, you walked. So quite a large group of us would walk to the high school.

MRS. WARNER: No kidding.

MRS. THORPE: I lived on Second Avenue at that time in a big house down in the 1200 block. And mother had bought that, and dad, when we first came back from Shamrock. And we would walk to the high school games. It was safe then, you know, real safe for young people to get out and walk in those

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days. Wasn't much traffic, we didn't have to worry about getting run over.

MRS. WARNER: How long did it take you to get there?

MRS. THORPE: I can't even remember. But I can never remember being tired, you know, it didn't seem to tire me. I had plenty of energy.

MRS. WARNER: That was pretty late getting back. They weren't night games, though, were they?

MRS. THORPE: Yes, they were.

MRS. WARNER: You had to come back at midnight?

MRS. THORPE: Well, the games would end about 10, then we would walk back.

And then on the weekends we were brought down to Ligget Drugs or some of the drug stores downtown to have maybe a Coke or maybe a soda.

MRS. WARNER: You're talking about Manatee Town or are you talking about Bradenton?

MRS. THORPE: I'm talking about Bradenton. Manatee didn't have any theaters. There were two theaters downtown, the Princess, I believe, is

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the name of one, and then State Theater. And we would go to the movies on the weekends. And I think it was maybe five or ten cents admission, and Cokes were like five cents.

MRS. WARNER: And you'd walk all that way?

MRS. THORPE: We'd walk. And then there was a bowling alley, we could go in and bowl. That wasn't very expensive. It was before they had the automatic pin setter, so they had the boys that set the pin up. That was neat.

MRS. WARNER: Yeah, I bet it was.

MRS. THORPE: We liked to go down to Manatee and play shuffle board, but there was an old man, Sawyer was his name, that was in charge of it, and he wouldn't let the young people play. And I could never understand why because we didn't do any damage. That was before kids were (inaudible) and, you know, had too much time on their hands.

MRS. WARNER: Well, during the war, can you tell us a little bit about what was available? Like I'm sure they were rationing.

MRS. THORPE: They were rationing sugar and gas, and just about all food

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was rationed. I can remember my dad always had a real pretty garden, and he would always have food, you know, for us, fresh vegetables and things.

I can remember, I was telling somebody the other day, when we were living in Dixie County, we moved away from here when I was five, and came back when I was 13. And I can remember men coming in the middle of the night and taking my mother away. And it kind of bothered me and I asked my dad where she was going. He said, well, she's going to Mrs. Sower's (phonetic) place, she's having a baby. She served as a midwife and delivered the baby. And then she actually was one of the first LPN's in Manatee County.

MRS. WARNER: She was? Where did she work then?

MRS. THORPE: At Bradenton General. Cathy Larrabee, the state told her that all her nurses had to be licensed, so she trained all of them. They had to go to Jacksonville to take their state board, and then they came back. She was quite a - I know I lost her in February, and Dr. Springer came to her funeral, and he said he worked with her a long long time. She was a surgical nurse there the last few years she worked?

MRS. WARNER: You mean this year you

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lost her?

MRS. THORPE: Yes. And he said she was a fine woman. He said she did a lot of things for people that nobody ever knew about. He seemed to know quite a lot about her.

My dad was a lot older and he passed away quite a long time before that.

MRS. WARNER: What was your mother's name?

MRS. THORPE: Doris Hardee.

MRS. WARNER: That wasn't her maiden name, though?

MRS. THORPE: No, Brown was her maiden name.

MRS. WARNER: Where was she born?

MRS. THORPE: She was born in Belle, Florida in 1909. And Daddy was born in Live Oak. And Hardee County is named for a cousin of his that was governor of the state in 1923, Kerry Hardee.

He had an uncle that was a general in the Civil War. He graduated from West Point. And they sent him to France to study war tactics. And he came back - I mean to study the French war tactics. He came back and they wanted

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him to write the war tactics. And there are copies of that book still available.

And they say they used his war tactics as far up as the Vietnam war. That was pretty close.

He quit. He was commandant of cadets and he quit West Point when the war broke out, Civil War, came back to fight for the South.

MRS. WARNER: That was kind of like Lee, Robert E. Lee, he chose the South.

MRS. THORPE: Right. That was amazing, wasn't it?

MRS. WARNER: Yes, it was. Well, you came back here. Now what did your father do after he got moved further north?

MRS. THORPE: Well, up in Shamrock, of course, he was a locomotive engineer. He came back here and went to work in the Everglades. There were no jobs available here, but this was our home and my grandmother still lived here. And he went down to the Everglades to work, Immokalee. And he operated heavy equipment. I can remember one time - Daddy wasn't a real big man.

MRS. WARNER: No, I have that picture of him.

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MRS. THORPE: Do you? And I can remember he was never afraid of anything. They asked him to come to Tampa and unload a big huge dragline off of a barge they brought in from somewhere. And he went up and had to back that down that ramp. Nobody else would do it.

MRS. WARNER: It's just amazing, the things you would do.

MRS. THORPE: And then Hoke Smith, the engineer of this old train had a heart attack, and they did come back and run that train for the Manatee Crate Company. So he was the engineer on that for quite a while. I can't remember how long, but I can remember our children real small and I would take them up on the train.

MRS. WARNER: So he'd let you all ride the train? That would be fun.

MRS. THORPE: The little old black man, Solomon Williams, would just die when he called him Son. He said he was really a good fireman. Said he was the best he'd ever had. Daddy had a real close relationship with all his workers. All of the men that worked, they would get these (inaudible) bring lumbering, lumber company.

MRS. WARNER: Do you remember where

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the little engine went? What did they use it for?

MRS. THORPE: The one up in Shamrock?

MRS. WARNER: No, the one here.

MRS. THORPE: They went about, I guess, I'm not sure, but I think they went out in the woods around Arcadia and Nokatee to haul lumber back for the crate mill. They also had a crate mill over there.

MRS. WARNER: Nokatee Manatee Company.

MRS. THORPE: Um hm. We lived there. Mother and Daddy were living in Arcadia when she was pregnant we me, and she came back here to have me, because Granny was here. So I was delivered in my grandmother's house.

MRS. WARNER: Who delivered you?

MRS. THORPE: Dr. Blake. Dr. McDuffy delivered Dan and Dr. Blake delivered.

MRS. WARNER: Dr. Hollingsworth, I think it was, delivered me.

MRS. THORPE: There were some good old doctors then.

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MRS. WARNER: Yes. Dr. McDuffy, he was a gruff old guy.

MRS. THORPE: Really? Never knew him.

MRS. WARNER: But he was good, he was good.

MRS. THORPE: And Mrs. McDuffy, I can remember her vaguely. I know she was a good friend of Dan's Mother.

MRS. WARNER: I've been always kind of a little puzzled. They said he came here because his wife had TB, and she camped out in a tenet or lived in a tent in the backyard or something. She must have died, did she?

MRS. THORPE: She died, but I thought he died before she did.

MRS. WARNER: Oh, he did?

MRS. THORPE: I believe so, I'm not sure.

MRS. WARNER: Oh. I thought maybe she died of TB. Was that the Mrs. McDuffy here you're referring to?

MRS. THORPE: Yes.

MRS. WARNER: That doesn't sound just right, does it?

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MRS. THORPE: Maybe she did die first, because there was no cure for TB.

MRS. WARNER: No, I know it. You can be cured, though.

MRS. THORPE: Oh, I know that now, but you had to have certain conditions. Now they have all kinds of medications, too. But I think it's complete rest.

MRS. WARNER: Well, how about anything else you can tell about your father and mother?

MRS. THORPE: I can't remember an awful lot more about them. You know, like I say, Daddy worked and Mother did too, when we were little. I can remember she always had a black woman working for her, and we had one that was like a grandmother to me.

MRS. WARNER: What was her name?

MRS. THORPE: Callie, C-A-L-L-I-E. And one time when I was sick I can remember her bringing me beautiful eyelet embroidery for a petticoat. And in the day she would cook our meals when mother wasn't there. And she wouldn't eat at the table with us. I would ask her, will you sit down and eat? She's say, no, honey, I want to sit out here where it's cool. Well, it was cool to us in the kitchen, you know, or the

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dining room. But she wouldn't sit at the table with us because she didn't feel it was right. And I loved her as much as I did anybody.

So one day I took my dinner out to the back steps and set on the steps with her.

MRS. WARNER: That was nice.

MRS. THORPE: I can remember people coming through, too, strangers. And men, and they would come up and ask if they could chop wood or do something for food. And nobody was ever turned away, they were always fed.

And my grandmother told me one day, she said, well, she said, you know, be careful, you might be entertaining angles unaware. And a lot of those men were family men that weren't away from their families by choice, they were looking for work. So nobody ever went away from the door hungry.

MRS. WARNER: Yes, I remember that period too. I remember my grandmother always gave them something to eat. You weren't scared of them. But nowadays you'd be scared.

MRS. THORPE: You wouldn't dare.

MRS. WARNER: No, times have changed

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for the worse.

MRS. THORPE: They sure have, absolutely. It used to be so nice.

MRS. WARNER: What church did you belong to?

MRS. THORPE: Methodist Church, the old church here in the park was my church. Brother Clark was our minister.

MRS. WARNER: What was his first name, do you remember?

MRS. THORPE: Brother Clark, that's all I can remember. His daughter, they had an adopted daughter, Claudia. And I can remember when Dan and I were dating Claudia had polio. And it just about killed her. We weren't allowed to go near her.

But as Brother Clark got older, you know, he would tell the same joke every Sunday night. He would tell about a family, they had so many children and they lived by a creek. And he said that the old man came up and told him, the mother said, Ma, one of the alligators, an alligator got one of our young 'uns. She said well, my goodness, she said, I thought that somebody was missing. Oh, it was so corny, you know.

My friend Susie Henderson, her

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maiden name was Anderson, played the piano. And the older women, we'd get all over her, they'd say, you're swinging that music too much. You know, you were supposed to be real quiet in church and real reverent. She thought we were being irreverent.

MRS. WARNER: She could enjoy her playing.

MRS. THORPE: Yes, she was. It was very pretty.

MRS. WARNER: Do you remember who some of your schoolteachers were?

MRS. THORPE: Well, I remember Will Parrish, she was one of our ninth grade teachers, and in high school, I can remember those teachers a lot better. Miss Parrish was a real tall stern woman. She was real sweet, though.

But I can remember our teachers in high school. Pop Grant was our Glee Club teacher.

MRS. WARNER: He was there when I was there.

MRS. THORPE: Yes, he was Dan's music teacher. In fact, he told Dan to drop a credit so that he could come back for an extra year of music. So Dan did. He graduated twice. But I wasn't that

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good.

But I had Mrs. Dowd, and Miss Harris for History, and Betty Griggs for Home Ec. I took Home Ec., four years of that. And Mr. Wickersham was my Art teacher and Mr. Barton was my Psychology teacher.

Paul Davis was our principal. He was so nice.

MRS. WARNER: He was the principal about the time I graduated, I think.

MRS. THORPE: Wasn't he sweet?

MRS. WARNER: Yes, he was.

MRS. THORPE: We just had so many nice teachers.

MRS. WARNER: What year did you graduate?

MRS. THORPE: In '48.

MRS. WARNER: That was almost ten years later.

MRS. THORPE: Next Thursday we 're going to have our 56th anniversary, and Worth Henson kind of helped set it you up, know, and it will be at the Bradenton Yacht Club. I think Dan forward to that looks as much as I do. I love

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seeing them all.

MRS. WARNER: That will be nice.
Who were some of the kids then?

MRS. THORPE: Well, Margaret Denson Roser, she lived on 12th Street. She was my best friend. She and Mary Strickland, and she married a Reynolds that lived on 16th - 15th, down across from the church. And Burl Turbeville and his wife, Marge. And Tanya Holleran, I don't know her real name, that's what we always called her, and Raymond will be there.

MRS. WARNER: Do you remember Paul AND Willie Mae Turbeville? They were in that church too.

MRS. THORPE: Yes, they were. I remember them.

MRS. WARNER: Do you remember where they started their bakery?

MRS. THORPE: I think it was right down in Manatee just the other side where the little service station is there now.

MRS. WARNER: In that two-story building?

MRS. THORPE: Urn hm. And I believe they lived upstairs. I can remember

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that pretty well because there was a bar right across the street, Desiderio, and Mother told us never to walk in front of that bar, so we had to walk on this side of the street.

MRS. WARNER: Desiderio. I'll be darned.

MRS. THORPE: And it was a wild place, you know. You might get hit by a flying body coming out the door, a live body.

MRS. WARNER: That's kind of an unusual name for Bradenton. I knew of Alfonso Desiderio. He ran, I think it must have been a second-hand store over there in Palmetto. And I'll bet they were kinfolk, because that name is unusual for around here.

MRS. THORPE: Do you remember Mr. Cuetelo, (phonetic) the barber?

MRS. WARNER: Cuetelo, oh yes, I remember that name.

MRS. THORPE: They were a real sweet family, Italian. And Dan, of course, had the Boy Scout troop, and he cooked spaghetti one night and I think that was the best spaghetti and meatballs I ever had.

MRS. WARNER: Mr. Cuetelo did?

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MRS. THORPE: Um hm, for the Boy Scouts, to raise money.

MRS. WARNER: Where did they hold that?

MRS. THORPE: In the Baptist church, the one that was town down. The one that Dan and I were married in. Dan had been divorced, and Brother Clark did not believe in marrying divorced people, so we went to -

MRS. WARNER: In the Methodist Church they didn't believe?

MRS. THORPE: I found out later they were hurt because I didn't ask to use their church. Well, I didn't think I could be married then. I would love to have. Our daughter was married in that church, and all her kids were christened in that church?

MRS. WARNER: Well, did you quit that church, then?

MRS. THORPE: No, I went back to it, and Dad did too.

MRS. WARNER: And they didn't say anything?

MRS. THORPE: No it was all right for us to come there, even though we were living -

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MRS. WARNER: Couldn't be married there, though. I never realized that at that time they felt like that.

MRS. THORPE: There was such a stigma, anybody that had been divorced. And that wasn't his fault. He loved that girl and he would have still been married to her. Although I told him he did much better the second time around.

MRS. WARNER: He must have. I was thinking about, there was a stigma of divorce back when I was a kid, and any girl that had a baby out of wedlock, that was it for her.

MRS. THORPE: That was really terrible.

MRS. WARNER: They blamed her so much, and the boy, he was never even mentioned.

MRS. THORPE: Well, of course not. We have to run, honey, we've got to go to a visitation.

MRS. WARNER: Well, I am so appreciative of getting this information.
