

Joe Merrell Candy Kitchen

JM: My dad was David Harris Merrell and he lived at Bunker Hill. My dad, in his early years there I guess probably in his late teens, decided to go to Texas and get rich I suppose, and he did so and he went to Texas and got a job as a candy making factory. And got quite well, doing very well in this and also a young lady out in Texas was, in fact they, they got married, and after a few, few years of marriage there they decided to come back to Tennessee. And after getting back to Tennessee, back to the areas where my dad grew up, he decided to get into the candy making business, so he went to, they moved to Alabama, a couple of places there and did candy making. Then my dad decided that they'd just go back to Bunker Hill, where his home was and, this I guess was in about the 1925. Started and built a candy making factory at the old home place and for a year or two there and my dad and mother decided to buy a farm that joined this place and build another candy making factory and did candy making there for a few years, I guess about probably 1925. I was born during this particular time and I can barely remember the candy making time. They discontinued the candy making when I was oh four or five years old I suppose. I can remember some of it but just very vaguely. After this, Dad, after buying this other farm, then they just went into cattle and farming rather than candy making.

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JM: There were three stores there. One was a place where the farmers would bring their corn in and have it ground into and made into whatever.

CT: You mean there was a like a mill there, oh really? Oh.

JM: Yes .At this particular time most not too very many people had cars so they would go horseback a lot of times, and wagons and so forth, carrying corn to have it processed so that they could use it for food and feed also.

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JM: It was at least 3 stores there most of the time. Different areas there and also I believe we mentioned there were actually 3 churches there too, Church of God, and the Methodist and Church of Christ. They were all in, right in the little Bunker Hill area. It was a real active little community. Things were really going well at that time. Of course as the years moved along, and more people had opportunities to have their own vehicles and could go to Pulaski and other places, Bunker Hill began to kind of, well to say the least it wasn't very active, and finally then just after I-65 I guess was the last think that really took away from the little village, and at this particular time then Bunker Hill is just about gone.

Joe Merrell Water Caves and Water Trough

JM: Yes, Bunker Hill had two large caves that had really, really good water. And this was a neat thing. There was an old concrete trough there in Bunker Hill, that you had a big tall spout up on top, where you could jump up on the edge of the thing there and get a drink. And I remember one time in the winter, I jumped up on the concrete thing there to get a drink of water and I didn't realize that it was frozen. Naturally then, as I stepped on the ice, I just slipped off into the trough. A cold winter night, winter afternoon. This was a, I could remember that for a long time.

Joe Merrell School Bus

JM: Oh, we had an old school bus that come by. A very crude bus compared to the ones now. The seats in the bus were long ways, from front to back, one on each side and one down the middle.

CT: Oh.

JM: That was kind of a strange thing. And I remember one particular old bus, that the center thing was, came loose from the floor, and then it would turn over one way or another, then. A lot of the kids would get this thing rippling and turn, enjoyed seeing it turn over and spill everybody on the, riding on that center aisle.

CT: So in other words, you just had three long seats, one down each side and then one down the middle.

Joe Merrell Horseback Ride and Gospel Singing

JM: I had a horse that was very special to me when I was growing up. I was too young I guess maybe twelve or thirteen years old, and didn't drive at that time, and didn't have much to drive at those days, but I remember one particular thing that I was excited about. They were going to have a singing at Dellrose one night and I wanted to go so bad and Dad said, "Well I don't really, I don't care about it." And nobody wanted to go but me. So I asked permission then and, "Well can I ride old Matt to the singing?" That's the horse. And they said "Yeah, you can ride old Matt and go if you want to." So I loaded up and took off. I think it was about five miles from our house to Dellrose. And that was the first time I had ever heard, seen the gospel singers. I wish I could think right now of the ones that were there, but right now it doesn't register. I can't remember. But anyway it was really really a fascinating thing for me to be able to see the professional singers sing and to hear them. I got up and got ready to go home and it was the darkest night I had ever seen, I think. I got the old horse untied from the tree and got on the horse and I couldn't tell which way to go where, or anything. I just turned Old Matt loose and he carried me home that night. The only thing I could see was sometime his shoe would hit the gravel and a little spark of fire would. I noticed that, that's the only thing. That was a really special time for me, like I said I always have enjoyed singing, and to see that group and ride the horse was really a special thing.