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HAMILTON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW WITH
LILLIAN WILHELM

1 (INTRODUCTION)

2 MR. EIDSON: Hi. I'm Jim Eidson with the
3 Hamilton County Historical Commission, and it's
4 January 25, 2018. Today we're going to be interviewing
5 Lillian Wilhelm, a long-time Hamilton resident. You
6 know, one of the things about Texas history is that you
7 can find our great events recorded within our written
8 texts, but it's oftentimes hard to find out what life
9 was like for the people who lived here in Hamilton
10 County, and Lillian I think will be able to tell a good
11 portion of that story. Thank you.

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1 (INTERVIEW)

2 MR. MCMULLEN: Good afternoon. My name is
3 Andy McMullen. This is January the 25th, 2018, and we
4 are here in the conference room of McMullen & Henkes,
5 and we're going to get an opportunity to visit with
6 Ms. Lillian Wilhelm, who was a teacher in the Hamilton
7 Independent School District for many years, and we'll
8 find out all about that. But, Ms. Wilhelm, we want to
9 thank you so much. You are the first person that we
10 have had the opportunity to visit with as part of the
11 program of the Hamilton County Historical Commission
12 to -- to get information in a permanent form that future
13 generations can know about us, and that's what we are --
14 are about here today, to learn through you your story so
15 that future generations can know about that. And we
16 appreciate very much your willingness to take your time
17 and to do this for the people of Hamilton County and the
18 future generations of Hamilton County.

19 So with that, Lillian, I would -- we're
20 just going to be visiting today, and I want you to be
21 comfortable. And I would like to, first of all, ask you
22 what year you were born in. In this age of computer --
23 and this cyber security, I'm not going to ask your full
24 date of birth, but just what year were you born in?

1 MR. MCMULLEN: And where were you born?

2 MS. WILHELM: I was born in a little
3 community called Wesley. It's about 14 miles from
4 Brenham, home of the famous Blue Bell ice cream.

5 MR. MCMULLEN: That's where Brenham is.
6 Is it -- or was Wesley the home of Brenham?

7 MS. WILHELM: Wesley -- no. Brenham was
8 the larger town.

9 MR. MCMULLEN: Yeah. I --

10 MS. WILHELM: We were about, oh, 15 miles
11 from Brenham, but that was a long way in that day.

12 MR. MCMULLEN: Yes. And did you know the
13 people that started Blue Bell ice cream?

14 MS. WILHELM: Yes, I did. We went to
15 church in Brenham, a Lutheran -- of course, there were
16 many Lutherans there, and Kruse was -- who heads the
17 Blue Bell ice cream, was a member of that church. So I
18 didn't know him just real intimately. We didn't visit
19 with him, but his home was right on the corner from the
20 church. So that was interesting. And, of course, when
21 I was young, they didn't have the ice cream. I don't
22 think they did, but they would pick up cream from the
23 farmers way out in Wesley and make cheese and butter and
24 stuff like that, and then sometimes we would get cheese

25 from them in place of the milk.

5

1 MR. MCMULLEN: Okay. And -- well, that's
2 very interesting. And so your father was one of the
3 dairy farmers that they dealt with?

4 MS. WILHELM: No, not really a dairy
5 farmer. We drew -- we grew cotton and corn but we had
6 cows besides --

7 MR. MCMULLEN: I see.

8 MS. WILHELM: -- we milked.

9 MR. MCMULLEN: Okay.

10 MS. WILHELM: The boys milked and I just
11 watched, and every once in while they'll squirt me a --
12 squirt me some milk.

13 MR. MCMULLEN: At the -- I'd like to deal
14 with something initially about how you came to Hamilton
15 and where you came to Hamilton County from when you
16 began teaching here.

17 MS. WILHELM: Well, I had older -- I had
18 three older brothers, and the one that was at Tarlton --
19 that was why I went to John Tarlton after I graduated
20 from Reagan in Houston. And then -- they were just a
21 two-year college then. We had uniforms and we wore
22 black ties when we were underclassmen, and when we got
23 to be a senior, we wore white ties with our chambrey
24 uniforms. And then I went on to Baylor.

1 and when you came to Hamilton, where did you -- you were
2 married to Jake Wilhelm, who was the elementary
3 principal here in Hamilton for many years, but when you
4 came to Hamilton, where did you come from, you and Jake?

5 MS. WILHELM: Oh, okay. When we first
6 married, our first job was in Amarillo at the
7 Presbyterian Home for Children, and then after eight
8 years there, we -- we bought a little place in Gustine,
9 and we, of course, were -- he was a country boy, and I
10 was a country girl. So we came, and he -- he had a
11 chance to get a job in Gustine as principal of the
12 elementary school there. So we came to Gustine, but it
13 was '55 and the drought came, and, of course, I did not
14 have my degree. And so he had a chance to get a job at
15 Baylor -- not at Baylor, at Waco at the Methodist home.
16 So we went so that I could finish my degree at Baylor
17 University, which I did. Then from there, we went down
18 to Clear Creek. He knew somebody there, and we went to
19 Clear Creek. And it was -- we lived in -- in League
20 City but the Clear Creek School District was a
21 consolidated school district with four small schools.
22 It was just a small place, League City was, and we were
23 there, and he started out as a teacher and then became a
24 principal, and I was a home economics teacher in the

25 junior high. And we loved it there. It was a quiet

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1 little place. And then, of course, NASA located down
2 there.

3 MR. MCMULLEN: And if you'd -- for those
4 of us that aren't that familiar with that part of Texas,
5 where is it in relation to NASA?

6 MS. WILHELM: Oh, well, NASA is right
7 there in the bay area. It's Kemah, League City,
8 Seabrook. And now when you go down there -- we had such
9 a problem deciding whether we wanted to leave to come,
10 and now when you go down there, it's -- oh, it's all
11 grown together practically, Houston and the NASA area.
12 They call it the NASA area now, which is really
13 Seabrook, Kemah, La Porte, and that area there below
14 Houston.

15 MR. MCMULLEN: And while you were in that
16 area, you were Presbyterian; is that correct?

17 MS. WILHELM: Right.

18 MR. MCMULLEN: And you formed some
19 wonderful relationships in --

20 MS. WILHELM: Yes. That was something
21 that was really exciting to us because I really hadn't
22 been -- well, I hadn't been with anybody that was quite
23 famous, I thought, and then the Glenns --

24 MR. MCMULLEN: This would be John Glenn?

1 Presbyterian also. The way we became a Presbyterian --
2 when we went to Amarillo -- of course, I grew up
3 Lutheran, but we would take the children to the
4 Presbyterian church and then we would go to the Lutheran
5 church. Well, we thought that didn't make sense. So we
6 just converted to the Presbyterian church. Then when we
7 came down to Webster -- well, when we were in Gustine,
8 they didn't have a Presbyterian church, so we were
9 Methodists. So then when we went down to League City,
10 there was a Presbyterian church at Webster, which was
11 just three miles, and we went. Then when the NASA
12 people came, they -- I remember when they came, the
13 original seven. They brought their children. I was at
14 the junior high, and, of course, our children, they were
15 all little country kids. And they had security that
16 came with their children and everybody was looking out
17 the window. We had no class because this was John Glenn
18 and Deke Slayton and, oh, all the seven original ones.
19 And, oh, my. But they were just really fine folks. And
20 then come to find out that John Glenn and Buzz Aldrin --
21 of course, Buzz Aldrin was not in the original seven,
22 but they were Presbyterian, and then Charlie -- Charlie
23 Bassett, yes, the one that was burned in -- when they
24 had the accident in one of -- there were -- there were

25 three of them that were Presbyterian, and we got to know

9

1 them real well because the church was so small. And
2 they became elders, and we -- I served with Glenn at one
3 time, and then when Aldrin went to the moon --

4 MR. MCMULLEN: You're talking about Buzz
5 Aldrin?

6 MS. WILHELM: Uh-huh. Yes. He was --
7 Buzz, that really wasn't his name, but his older sisters
8 couldn't pronounce brother, so they called him Buzz, and
9 that's how he got his name Buzz. And I think he's
10 changed it, though, to an original name now. And, of
11 course, the seven original astronauts are all dead now.
12 John Glenn died in December of '16, and Annie Glenn --
13 if you ever read any stories about them -- I think
14 Reader's Digest had a story -- I didn't get it. I wish
15 I had -- of her. She really had some problems moving
16 around, and some people were unkind because she would go
17 into a store and want to buy something and it wouldn't
18 come out, and she just really stuttered bad. And, of
19 course, they were just sweethearts from children.
20 They -- John used to always say, "We met in the
21 playpen." And so they were interesting but such common
22 folks. Well, the Glenns had a daughter that was a year
23 older than our daughter, Carolyn, and we called her
24 Lynn. She was Lynn Glenn. And kind of in visiting with

25 them in small groups -- she went to Mount Holyoke, and

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1 so the Glenns talked Marjorie into going there.

2 MR. MCMULLEN: Marjorie is your daughter?

3 MS. WILHELM: Marjorie is our daughter.

4 And, of course, gosh, to send our daughter way up there,

5 we --

6 MR. MCMULLEN: Mount Holyoke is where?

7 MS. WILHELM: Mount Holyoke is in

8 Massachusetts -- in Massachusetts. Well, she went. And

9 the Glenns, of course, they flew up so often, but every

10 time they went, they always included Marjorie in it.

11 And Marjorie was going to work on his senate race before

12 he fell in the tub and had the accident. Of course, he

13 came back and then served as senator for I think

14 16 years or something there, and that's how she came and

15 became a Yankee, as we say.

16 MR. MCMULLEN: When you say "she came,"

17 who, your daughter?

18 MS. WILHELM: Uh-huh. Yes.

19 MR. MCMULLEN: Your daughter went to Mount

20 Holyoke?

21 MS. WILHELM: Mount Holyoke. Yes.

22 Uh-huh.

23 MR. MCMULLEN: And she was there with John

24 Glenn's daughter.

25 MS. WILHELM: Right. Right. Lynn was, of

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1 course, one year older, but they -- when the Glenns went
2 up, they took Lynn out. Well, they always included
3 Marjorie because we didn't get up there that often, and
4 we'll always remember that. And by the way, I don't
5 know whether you know, you know, Mrs. Annie Glenn, when
6 she was 53 -- after they left here, they finally found a
7 doctor in Virginia, and she speaks quite fluently
8 compared to what she did and often makes talks and
9 things now. She's a very, very sweet person.

10 MR. EIDSON: Wonderful.

11 MS. WILHELM: But I had a lot of --

12 MR. MCMULLEN: Well, you -- you had a
13 close friendship with the Glenns, did you not?

14 MS. WILHELM: Yes. Uh-huh.

15 MR. MCMULLEN: And did the Glenns ever
16 visit you in Hamilton?

17 MS. WILHELM: One time, they came, yes.

18 MR. MCMULLEN: And they came to your home
19 in Hamilton?

20 MS. WILHELM: They came to the old house
21 that burned down. Just to show you how every --
22 ordinary people they were, they just enjoyed that so
23 much because there the bathroom facilities weren't
24 100 percent, but they loved the outdoors. And we had a

25 lot of the friends from Clear Creek that came to visit

12

1 us. And we put a lot of our things -- like the books

2 and the annuals from high school, we put them out there,

3 and then the house burned.

4 MR. MCMULLEN: I see.

5 MS. WILHELM: And that was a sad

6 situation, but as you say, we cope with it.

7 MR. MCMULLEN: Well, did they enjoy the

8 terrain of Hamilton County?

9 MS. WILHELM: Yes, they did. They did.

10 Of course, they stayed out there most of the time. They

11 loved walking around the country there.

12 MR. MCMULLEN: Yes. Well, and then there

13 was also a connection with Buzz Aldrin, the second man

14 on the moon.

15 MS. WILHELM: Yes, Buzz Aldrin. He was

16 really a character. Now, we were -- our church -- and

17 this was a real big occasion. The church in Webster was

18 very small, Buzz was an elder, and he was the second

19 person to walk on the moon. So he was going to take

20 communion on the moon, and Dean Woodruff, who was our

21 minister at that time -- we had -- that was a big

22 occasion. We fixed a little kit for him to take the

23 communion elements, which he took up to the moon, but he

24 had to do it in secret because it was a time that the

1 MR. MCMULLEN: Well, Madalyn Murray

2 O'Hair --

3 MS. WILHELM: Yes. The atheist, Madalyn

4 O'Hair, had a suit against them. So NASA administration

5 told him, "Be sure not to mention anything about, you

6 know, religion." So Aldrin didn't. He took it

7 secretly, though. And so that was the first food and

8 the first liquid on the moon. But when he left -- and

9 it was Apollo 11 -- yeah, I think -- 8 -- Apollo 11, I

10 think. It was 8 when she brought the suit. When he

11 left, he said, "When I survey the heavens" -- it was

12 taken from Psalm 8: When I survey the heavens and the

13 work of your fingers and this moon and the stars which

14 you created, why is it that you were mindful of man?

15 And that was a verse -- of course, all of our Sunday

16 school kids, they knew that verse. We taught them.

17 Yes. He was a very personable fellow, and he's in

18 Florida now. I think he's the only one living, but I

19 don't have any contact with him anymore.

20 MR. MCMULLEN: Well -- so you've kind of

21 broke some ground to tell that story today, haven't you?

22 MS. WILHELM: Well, good. Good. Yes.

23 That was an exciting time for us, because my

24 childhood -- what we came from was, oh, gosh, and we

25 just thought they were the moon, but they only went to

14

1 the moon.

2 MR. MCMULLEN: Yes. Yes.

3 MS. WILHELM: But they were -- they were
4 very good, ordinary people, all of them. We really
5 liked them. And then it just grew and grew down there
6 in that area.

7 MR. MCMULLEN: Well, let's start at the
8 beginning of your -- of your family history as far as
9 when your family came to Texas. Do you -- can you tell
10 that?

11 MS. WILHELM: Oh, gosh. I don't -- I
12 don't remember when they came to Texas. I'll take --

13 MR. EIDSON: 1850s.

14 MS. WILHELM: I don't recall. No, I
15 don't. I don't really. I know they settled in New Ulm,
16 Texas.

17 MR. MCMULLEN: What was that name?

18 MS. WILHELM: New Ulm. New Ulm. N-e-w,
19 U-l-m.

20 MR. MCMULLEN: Okay.

21 MS. WILHELM: And that's where both of my
22 parents -- their parents came from, and then we moved
23 out towards Wesley and finally bought land there, and
24 that's where Dad settled.

25 MR. MCMULLEN: All right. Did you speak

15

1 German as a child?

2 MS. WILHELM: Yes. My grandmother lived
3 with us. This is something I would like to tell young
4 people today. If you have a chance -- anything you
5 learn, you grasp it and try not to lose it. I did --
6 and she didn't speak English. She just spoke German.
7 And Mother, of course, worked in the fields with Dad and
8 my brothers, and so I was at home with my grandmother,
9 and she only spoke German. So we ran the household,
10 Grandma and I did.

11 MR. MCMULLEN: And that's because you were
12 the youngest of five children?

13 MS. WILHELM: Right. I was the youngest
14 of five children.

15 MR. MCMULLEN: Okay.

16 MS. WILHELM: The oldest was a girl and
17 then three boys and then myself, and the three boys just
18 really spoiled me.

19 MR. MCMULLEN: And the -- the three boys,
20 two of them made a tremendous sacrifice to this country.

21 MS. WILHELM: Uh-huh.

22 MR. MCMULLEN: You had one of your
23 brothers that during World War II was in the Navy.

24 MS. WILHELM: Right.

25 MR. MCMULLEN: And what happened to him?

16

1 MS. WILHELM: He was killed in the

2 Pacific --

3 MR. MCMULLEN: And what was his name?

4 MS. WILHELM: Edmund, and we called him

5 Honey. Everybody called him Honey.

6 MR. MCMULLEN: Okay. And I interrupted

7 you. I'm sorry. He was on a ship when he --

8 MS. WILHELM: No. He was on a plane. He

9 was killed in a plane.

10 MR. MCMULLEN: Okay. But it was during

11 World War II?

12 MS. WILHELM: Right. During World War II.

13 MR. MCMULLEN: And where was that that he

14 died?

15 MS. WILHELM: In the -- it was in the

16 Pacific, and I don't know exactly where --

17 MR. MCMULLEN: All right.

18 MS. WILHELM: -- but it was...

19 MR. MCMULLEN: And then you had another

20 brother that made a tremendous sacrifice at the Battle

21 of the Bulge.

22 MS. WILHELM: Right. He was a

23 paratrooper.

24 MR. MCMULLEN: And tell us about him and

25 what happened to him.

17

1 MS. WILHELM: Well, when he finished --
2 and, of course, when the next -- when Honey was killed,
3 he really was not drafted, but he joined. He was so
4 upset because they had done that to Honey. So he was
5 going to go and fight all the Germans, and -- well, not
6 that bad. But, anyway, he joined, and he was in the
7 paratroopers. And then in the Battle of the Bulge, it
8 was Christmas Eve I think when they -- during Christmas
9 that they -- that the Nazis bombed where he was, and on
10 Christmas Eve, the remnants of what was left -- they had
11 so many dead men around, I think -- and he lost his leg,
12 but he was still alive. And they were -- had some songs
13 they were singing and everything, and he was outside and
14 they heard the planes coming again. So he, of course,
15 couldn't move, but it was a black man that pulled him in
16 the trench, and he just happened to survive. And he
17 came home, but he came home all, you know, beat up, and
18 he --

19 MR. MCMULLEN: What we now call PS- --
20 PTSD.

21 MS. WILHELM: A syndrome. Of course, we
22 didn't know about it then. I know I was a teenager
23 then, and sometimes he would get these occasions when he
24 just really, I guess, recalled things from the war.

1 one thing that -- he saw the light and he said "Get
2 under the bed" and "Get in the closet," and he was just
3 frantic, you know, because he thought they were coming,
4 and I -- and he had a lot of -- a lot of sort of
5 occasions like that. But then he did get really better.
6 You know, he went back and finished his degree, and he
7 taught school in the Valley.

8 MR. MCMULLEN: Where in the Valley?

9 MS. WILHELM: Well, he was at Wharton and
10 then he was -- he went down as far as Harlingen and he
11 taught there and just really enjoyed it, you know, and
12 he was good with the kids, I guess. He told them a lot
13 of war stories probably, which they enjoyed, and he had
14 a lot of Spanish kids, and when they had a parade, they
15 would fix up his truck for him. He would ride on it,
16 but he enjoyed that a lot.

17 MR. EIDSON: Ms. Wilhelm, you told a story
18 about your education from early on and your transport to
19 and from school further into the Houston School
20 District. Could you share that?

21 MS. WILHELM: Oh. Oh, golly, that was a
22 traumatic part in my life, and I believe if I had had a
23 chance to be a dropout as I was there at Reagan, I
24 believe I would have run off, but I didn't have anyplace

25 to run really, and I knew that my dad and mom would be

19

1 so disappointed if I -- because they were high on
2 education. Well, I went to this little Wesley school.
3 It was just a two-room school. Our library was the
4 cloakroom where we hung our coats and hats and the books
5 there. And my brother -- when the youngest -- when
6 Walter finished there -- it was only 9th grade when he
7 went there, and we actually walked three miles. A lot
8 of people say, yeah, she's just taken [sic] that up, but
9 we actually did. We walked three miles. But then when
10 he finished, then they didn't think I should be walking
11 through the woods or anything like that. So they bought
12 me a little pony. I don't know where they got the
13 money, but, anyway, I guess ponies were cheap then, but
14 they bought me a pony. Well, that was like having a car
15 at school. So I rose from just nobody to -- I was
16 Ms. Wesley then. I was at 100 percent. Then I finished
17 there, and we couldn't go to Brenham because we
18 couldn't -- I couldn't ride my horse to Brenham and
19 there was no -- there were no buses and we didn't have a
20 car to go that far each day. So I had a sister that was
21 married in Houston. So they insisted I go there. Well,
22 we didn't go to Houston too often because it was far,
23 too, but I went, and she took me to Reagan, the John
24 Reagan school, and --

25 MR. MCMULLEN: How big was that school?

20

1 MS. WILHELM: Oh, it was like New York.

2 To me, it was so big, I just thought, "Oh, my land."

3 No -- but it had a basement and then -- it was three

4 stories, and here I came from this little two-story.

5 And I did real well. I read well, I was a good

6 mathematician, and everything. And, of course, when I

7 had the pony, I was just it. I was way up there.

8 MR. EIDSON: This was in Houston?

9 MS. WILHELM: This was in Houston, yes,

10 and went to Reagan. Well, my sister took me there, and

11 then I don't know whether she was a counselor or what,

12 but they would get me registered. And when I was small,

13 I had long hair. My grandmother braided it, you know,

14 this French way, and that stayed braided that way for

15 several days. We'd just kind of comb it here, but I had

16 these long braids. And I don't know what they thought

17 of me, but they put me in a class with sort of --

18 special ed, I guess it was. I think it was, I don't

19 know, grooming or something like that. Well, I didn't

20 dare say, "No, I don't want that." I had to go there,

21 and it was a longer class. Well, I soon found out that

22 those kids were all special, but they were kind and they

23 were good and they showed me just where all the

24 restrooms were on every floor, and I got to really

25 liking them. They didn't seem to know much, but I

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1 helped them with everything. And one day the teacher --
2 this was about two weeks that I was in there. One day
3 the teacher asked me -- she says "What are you doing in
4 this class," and goodness, I thought, "Lady, if you
5 don't know, we're both in trouble." So -- okay. She
6 said "Wait for me after class right there," and, oh, me,
7 I thought I would get a demerit. You know, I had -- we
8 didn't have demerits at Wesley. Whenever it was time to
9 come in, Mr. Schroeder just rang the bell and we went
10 in. Maybe we were in a hot baseball game and he let us
11 go and then we stayed over. Well, I stayed there, and
12 all the time, my heart was just beating, and I didn't
13 know -- I didn't do anything wrong, but I didn't know
14 what she wanted with me. So she took me down to the
15 office. Well, she said, "You don't need to be in that
16 class. You need to be in some of these other classes."
17 So they put me -- this is -- the class that I was in was
18 really three hours, I think, instead of the one regular
19 hour. So here I had to go to the other classes, and
20 that's when I wanted to just run off. But finally I
21 caught on and, boy, I was doing fine. Then -- from then
22 on, I never had too much trouble going to Tarlton or any
23 place like that. But that was really -- that -- I went
24 from -- from 99 and 9/10s to zero and that was not

25 funny. You laugh about it.

22

1 MR. EIDSON: It is now.

2 (BRIEF INTERRUPTION)

3 MS. WILHELM: Well, anyway, after my low
4 there, I finally graduated, and I was one of the -- see,
5 I'm going to brag a little. I was one of the honor
6 graduates. And, of course, my mother and dad and the
7 whole family, that was just really something. And after
8 that, I went to John Tarlton, and, of course, at John
9 Tarlton, my brother had already kind of established a
10 name there for me, and so that was good.

11 MR. MCMULLEN: Well, and one of the
12 problems about the restrooms when you were in that
13 two-room schoolhouse -- it was a two-room schoolhouse,
14 was it not?

15 MS. WILHELM: Yes.

16 MR. MCMULLEN: About how many students
17 were there?

18 MS. WILHELM: I guess there were maybe
19 25 --

20 MR. MCMULLEN: All right.

21 MS. WILHELM: -- and all of that.

22 MR. MCMULLEN: In that two-room
23 schoolhouse --

24 MS. WILHELM: Two outhouses.

25 MR. MCMULLEN: -- there were two

23

1 outhouses?

2 MS. WILHELM: Right.

3 MR. MCMULLEN: And so you knew where the
4 restrooms were there. They were outside, weren't they?

5 MS. WILHELM: I know. They were outside.

6 And to go to a place that had them on the inside -- and

7 what would I have done if they had had all those

8 unisex -- oh, my, I would have just died, wouldn't I?

9 Goodness.

10 MR. MCMULLEN: But --

11 MS. WILHELM: You know, I often think,

12 thought, about kindergarten children today. I don't

13 know what schools have, all these different types of

14 restrooms. You must have -- they must have an

15 orientation for that.

16 MR. MCMULLEN: Well, they may.

17 MS. WILHELM: It's confusing to even an

18 older woman.

19 MR. MCMULLEN: They may well. They may

20 well.

21 MS. WILHELM: I don't know.

22 MR. MCMULLEN: Well, then you -- you came

23 to Hamilton from -- when the decision was made for you

24 to leave Clear Lake --

25 MS. WILHELM: Uh-huh.

24

1 MR. MCMULLEN: -- and to come to Hamilton,
2 you already -- you and your husband -- your late
3 husband, Jake, already had some land in Hamilton, did
4 you not?

5 MS. WILHELM: Yes. We -- in August
6 of '61, we bought 400 acres, and, of course, we couldn't
7 pay cash for it. We didn't have it. So a widow lady,
8 Ms. Ethel Jones, took a lien, of course, on the property
9 and we paid her, and it had no house on it. And the
10 next year, we were foolish enough -- because his brother
11 had located some property that had this old house on it,
12 and we bought it. And then is when the drought hit us,
13 and he was the only one really working, and -- oh, in
14 fact, our -- Campbell was the --

15 MR. MCMULLEN: Andy Campbell.

16 MS. WILHELM: Andy Campbell --

17 MR. MCMULLEN: Andrew Campbell.

18 MS. WILHELM: -- yeah, Andy Campbell was
19 there, and he worked with us, and he said, well, he
20 didn't know any other way out. He said "Now, if
21 Ms. Ethel would take a second lien on that" -- because
22 we couldn't sell our Gustine place. It was so dry. So
23 he said, "We'll call" -- "I'll call her." And so we
24 were to meet in his office, and she was there. And, of

25 course, we just made our payments to her. We really

25

1 didn't get intimate with her, but he was going to ask
2 her if she would take a second lien on that property.
3 Then we could get a loan and pay the man off. In fact,
4 it went so far as to posting on the courthouse that this
5 property was being foreclosed. Well, some ads, but --

6 MR. MCMULLEN: But --

7 MS. WILHELM: -- but then when we went in,
8 Andy asked us to be excused. He wanted to talk to
9 Ms. Ethel of what she would be getting, and she said
10 "Oh, no. Don't" -- "just fix the papers," and said,
11 "I've lived long enough. He looks like an honest man."
12 Goodness, after he went -- left that office, I think our
13 blood pressure went 200, but then we were able to save
14 that. And then, of course, during that time, we had
15 saved some money in Clear Creek and we were doing all
16 right then.

17 MR. MCMULLEN: All right.

18 MS. WILHELM: So everything -- it was up
19 and down, up and down.

20 MR. MCMULLEN: Well, you've learned from
21 that, have you not --

22 MS. WILHELM: Oh, yes.

23 MR. MCMULLEN: -- that you would like to
24 share with future young people about staying with it and

1 MS. WILHELM: Staying with it, by all
2 means, and you get something good. Even in that course
3 that I was at Reagan, I learned to roll my hair. So
4 that was good. There's bound to be something good in
5 everything, and there's bound to be -- and there's still
6 a lot of good people.

7 MR. MCMULLEN: All right. And --

8 MS. WILHELM: But -- I don't know -- I
9 think we're losing some of our kindness and loving and
10 caring. I remember a comedy that -- what was it? --
11 Nancy -- that little comedy one day had -- she cut her
12 foot or something at school and there was so much to-do
13 about it, and when she went home and talked to her
14 mother, she said, "And all I wanted was a hug."

15 MR. MCMULLEN: Yes.

16 MS. WILHELM: And I think a lot of people
17 even today, you know, that's something that we forget,
18 and -- I don't know. And it's how you act. One of my
19 sayings I always say, "What you do speaks so loudly, I
20 can't hear what you say."

21 MR. MCMULLEN: Yes. Yes.

22 MS. WILHELM: That's true. But life is
23 good, but it's kind of what you make it, too.

24 MR. MCMULLEN: And you're a believer in

25 discipline as far as school, are you not?

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1 MS. WILHELM: Yes. My husband and I both
2 very much, and I really think that's one thing that
3 maybe hinders the teachers today. I think the
4 technology that they're teaching is wonderful, but I
5 hate for some things to go. For example, I hate for
6 them to leave cursive writing out of the curriculum,
7 but -- whether you're in farming or ranching or
8 whatever, it's so important that you keep up
9 technically, and I have not done that, and I think
10 that's very important. That's a great part. But I went
11 to a retired teachers meeting, and before the meeting,
12 somebody said that one of the teachers needed -- would
13 like to have somebody to tutor I think it was 2nd grade
14 students, and I thought to myself, "Well, now I could do
15 that. I'm pretty good at math. I can do that." Well,
16 the elementary principal happened to do the program that
17 day and she talked about all the things, you know, the
18 little machines and things that they had, and I didn't
19 even volunteer. I knew, no, I couldn't even help a
20 kindergarten kid. They wouldn't know what I was talking
21 about. So I didn't do that.

22 MR. MCMULLEN: After you graduated from
23 Baylor and then -- and then after you came to Hamilton,
24 how many years did you teach in the Hamilton School

1 MS. WILHELM: Sixteen. Sixteen.

2 MR. MCMULLEN: Sixteen years. And all
3 told, how many years did you --

4 MS. WILHELM: Thirty-one.

5 MR. MCMULLEN: Thirty-one years of
6 teaching.

7 MS. WILHELM: Uh-huh. Yeah.

8 MR. MCMULLEN: All right. Well, let's
9 see. Jim, do you have some questions?

10 MR. EIDSON: Well, one of the questions I
11 wanted to ask Lillian is about the behavior of the Leon
12 River that you -- you've sat and watched the Leon River
13 since around '61; is that right?

14 MS. WILHELM: Yes. Uh-huh.

15 MR. MCMULLEN: So tell us about flooding,
16 about the changes you've seen.

17 MS. WILHELM: Oh, goodness. I tell you
18 what, we lost a lot of land and our neighbors did too
19 because every time it would flood, sometimes the river
20 would go this way and sometimes it would go the other
21 way and then it would take the neighbors's land, and
22 that was always a big problem to fix fences and clean
23 the brush that would wash to the fences. And the -- of
24 course, the land on the river is wonderful. I have a

25 wonderful guy that works the wheat land and his father

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1 worked it. Danny Raibourn, did you say -- yeah, Danny.
2 Oh, gosh, I've been so fortunate to have him. Good --
3 he's a good farmer, and the land is rich and good there,
4 and we cleared a lot along the river. And, in fact, we
5 have a -- kind of a pecan orchard there now where --
6 when we first bought it, it was all with briar and stuff
7 and the pecan trees would just grow -- try to get to the
8 sun, but now they're getting big, and we do sell pecans.
9 They're natives, but it's real pretty down there. In
10 fact, it's so pretty, the grandson wants to get married
11 there.

12 MR. EIDSON: My goodness.

13 MS. WILHELM: And I said, "You better have
14 a backup plan if the river comes out."

15 MR. MCMULLEN: Well, I -- since you have
16 mentioned your grandson, you have two daughters. You
17 and your -- you and Jake had two daughters.

18 MS. WILHELM: Uh-huh.

19 MR. MCMULLEN: And one -- they have both
20 done very well. We'll talk about the first one, who is
21 a Montessori teacher in Seattle, Washington.

22 MS. WILHELM: That was the youngest.

23 MR. MCMULLEN: That was the younger child?

24 MS. WILHELM: Uh-huh.

1 older child -- the older daughter.

2 MS. WILHELM: Well, the older daughter
3 is -- she's talks a lot, and she went to law school
4 after she graduated from Mount Holyoke, and she
5 graduated from the University of Houston Law School.

6 MR. MCMULLEN: And she was the editor of
7 the Law Review?

8 MS. WILHELM: Yeah. She was the editor of
9 the Law Review. And then she applied for a clerk for
10 Judge Brown, who was judge of -- what is that district?
11 I've forgotten. But, anyway, when she interviewed with
12 him, she was the only woman or girl to interview, and he
13 said, "Well" -- he says, "I don't know." He said, "I
14 have big suitcases to carry because I have to take all
15 my material, you know, to the different places that I
16 go." And she said "Oh, that would not be any problem
17 because my dad" -- "we have a ranch and I help him. I
18 carry hay bales," and so he said, "You're hired." So
19 she got that job. And then she went on and got a job
20 with -- after that ended, she went with Conoco in
21 Houston, and then DuPont purchased Conoco, and they
22 moved her to the main office in -- oh, gosh, DuPont.
23 Yeah. They lived in Pennsylvania, but it's the next
24 state --

1 MS. WILHELM: -- where the headquarters
2 for DuPont is located, and she worked there until her
3 retirement. And then just before she retired, the
4 government put in that large corporations had to have
5 ethics and compliance commissions. So they asked her if
6 she would stay on because she had worked in that area or
7 something at DuPont, and so she said she didn't know
8 anything about it but she would research it. So she
9 developed the one for DuPont, and a lot of corporations
10 came to DuPont and wanted their pattern or wanted help
11 from Marjorie to set it up. So then she and her husband
12 went into business with compliance and ethics -- ethics
13 and corporate compliance.

14 MR. MCMULLEN: And you now have an
15 established area out on your ranch; is that correct?

16 MS. WILHELM: Yes. They came back. I
17 think she came back because of me, you know, so that I'd
18 have somebody near because they were in Pennsylvania and
19 Margarite was in Washington when Jake passed away, and
20 they said they didn't want that to happen to me. So
21 they have built a place. They live downstairs, and
22 where the garage is, they have an apartment above it,
23 and then they have two bedrooms above the other part,
24 too, with a big kind of assembly room so that maybe when

25 a CEO or somebody that they're thinking of setting up an

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1 ethics and compliance division, they can come and stay
2 because they have accommodations and they have a pool
3 there and, you know, things where people could break and
4 have it -- it's real nice.

5 MR. MCMULLEN: And these people come from
6 all over the world?

7 MS. WILHELM: Yeah. Uh-huh. She has --
8 in fact, she's going to Madrid next month. Yeah, Spain
9 and, oh, Dubai. She goes to Dubai often and Spain.
10 Madrid, she has a couple of clients there besides
11 working with the government there.

12 MR. MCMULLEN: Well, in closing, I think I
13 would like to ask your thoughts about that two-room
14 schoolhouse and your daughter where she is today.

15 MS. WILHELM: I know. Isn't that
16 something? Well, that just -- and I often -- and I
17 often think of that, Andy, too. I just think what if my
18 parents had not insisted that I go on. I would never
19 have -- I'd probably be in that cotton and corn, never
20 probably learned any technology and would still be
21 picking cotton, but it -- uh-huh.

22 MR. MCMULLEN: But that is a message for
23 young people as far as perseverance and dedication --

24 MS. WILHELM: Yeah.

25 MR. MCMULLEN: -- is it not?

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1 MS. WILHELM: Yes, it is -- and I guess it
2 is, and I think that's -- we always tried to establish
3 it in our girls, too, and just...

4 MR. MCMULLEN: All right.

5 MS. WILHELM: And I have great
6 grandchildren and I have grandchildren -- of course, now
7 Jim had three children. They were rather small, and
8 they're quite prominent. They're fortunately on their
9 own. Shannon is a Major in Salt Lake City with the Air
10 Force, and he flies -- he also flies for Delta. I don't
11 know how he does that, but, anyway, he does. And then
12 one is a daughter, and then the one daughter is below
13 Houston, has a Baptist minister as a husband.

14 MR. MCMULLEN: Okay. Well, we thank you
15 so much.

16 Jim, is there anything else you'd like to
17 ask?

18 MR. EIDSON: I think that really covers
19 it. Thank you, Ms. Wilhelm.

20 MR. MCMULLEN: Ms. Wilhelm, thank you so
21 much --

22 MS. WILHELM: Oh, well, I'm so glad.

23 MR. MCMULLEN: -- for sharing your
24 experiences.

25 MS. WILHELM: I tried awfully hard to get

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1 out of this. I'm not much of a speaker, but anyway...

2 MR. MCMULLEN: Well, thank you.

3 MS. WILHELM: But I am grateful for a lot

4 of things, and I've had a lot of good breaks and I've

5 had ups and I've had downs and don't give up.

6 MR. MCMULLEN: Thank you very much.

7 MR. EIDSON: Thank you.

8 (INTERVIEW CONCLUDED)

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1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATION

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3 I, Jamie Cooley, Certified Shorthand

4 Reporter for the State of Texas, do hereby certify that

5 the above and foregoing interview contains a true and

6 correct transcription of all portions of the

7 proceedings, all of which were reported by me.

8 IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, witness my hand on

9 this the 17th day of February, 2018.

10

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