

Victor Tinsley

interviewed by

Mrs. W.A. Schmidt

March 4, 1975

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ORAL HISTORIES OF FORT WORTH, INC.

VICTOR TINSLEY

January 8, 1897

Area: White Settlement

Victor Tinsley
3409 Rogers
Ft. Worth, Texas 76109

Date of Interview: March 4, 1975

"My name is Victor Tinsley. I had five brothers and one sister. My father's name was William Thomas Tinsley and mother's name was Martha Hudgins. My grandfather, E. N. Hudgins, came from Alabama in 1854. He was a circuit riding preacher and organized the first church in Grapevine, Texas. I have heard stories of Indians chasing him as he rode horseback to Jacksboro to preach. My mother was born in Grapevine. She went to college at the old Fort Worth University and came to White Settlement about 1890 to teach school. There she met and married my father in 1893."

"They bought a place on Silver Creek Road about 3 miles west and north of the original White Settlement community. It had a big rock house on it and that's where I was born. It used to be a stop on the stage coach line to the west, and it had one room designated as a post office that still had bars on the windows when I was a boy. There were two former slaves who lived in White Settlement that I remember, John Hickman and Sam Slick. Hickman used to help us with the grain thrashing, and he had a daughter named Belle Grant who rode a horse side saddle from house to house and did washing."

"My grandfather Hudgins died in March, 1901. I remember he used to ride horseback everywhere. In that day and time, when night came, people would ride up to anybody's house and holler, 'Hello, I'm So and So, and I want to spend the night.'. They would fix a meal for the stranger, arrange for them to spend the night and take care of the horse. My grandfather rode a lot, of course, and there were few or no towns between Ft. Worth and Jacksboro at that time, so it was a long, lonesome ride. One night, his horse became scared and started running. When he looked back there were two or three Indians coming at him in a gallop. He said he was fortunate in having a horse that could outrun them so he did get away."

"My dad came to White Settlement sometime in the early 1880's. His family was originally from Kentucky, somewhere south of Louisville. I think they must have heard after the Civil War about how cheap land was there because they went straight to White Settlement. I've attached a copy of the family history from our bible as someone may find it useful."

"Our homeplace had 320 acres and we had two other tracts - one had 60 acres I believe, and then we had another tract but I don't remember how many acres it was. We didn't have wells in those days for water so my dad bought 16 acres on Live Oak Creek that always had water in it. He bought that land for the water for our livestock. I don't remember what we did for drinking water. We did have a cistern that held rain water that drained off the house. That was our refrigerator too. We kept our milk and eggs and whatever else we wanted to keep cool in that cistern. "

"We had an old wooden smokehouse where we kept our meat after it had gone through the salt period. We had no trucks or tractors then and everything we did was with horses. I've ridden many miles up and down the rows plowing. After we harvested the grain we would tie it up and get ready for next fall's planting. We had row crops, corn, cotton and maize and things of that sort, that we would plant and cultivate several times during the year after every rain. If we found weeds in these crops we ran the cultivator between the rows to get all the weeds out. We hauled wheat to Bewley's Mill elevator, located in Ft. Worth at Jennings and Lancaster. I remember my dad taking wheat and corn to Randol's Mill east of Ft. Worth on the Trinity River to have it ground into flour and corn meal. He would leave early in the morning and get home late the next night. Of course, he drove a wagon and team and since none of the roads were paved at that time, quite often after a rainy spell, he would get stuck in the mud and have to leave the buggy or wagon until the weather dried up some. Finally, convicts under supervision hauled rocks and graveled the road. "

"I walked to Live Oak School which was about a mile and a half from home in a one room frame building located on Live Oak Creek. This was just west of where Lake Worth was built in about 1912. In high school I drove a horse and buggy to Ft. Worth to a wagon yard on W. Weatherford where I put the horse and then rode the streetcar to the Old Central High School. Mr. Paschal was the principal then and they later named the school 'Paschal High School'. "

"A wagon yard was open overhead with stalls and a big opening in the center where you left your wagon or buggy. The stalls were about 12 feet square where you put the horse. I guess they could take care of 30 or 40 horses and wagons at one time. The Blacksmith shop was right below that where you could have your plow sharpened or have the horses shod. "

"The only high schools in Ft. Worth were Central High School and Northside High School. My last two years of high school were spent at Northside High. All of the football games were played on a vacant railroad property now facing Vickery St. just south of the old T. P. railroad station. Other than school activities, a big part of our social life was 'sing-ins' where all the young people would gather at someone's house for group singing, usually on Saturday or Sunday night. "

"I well remember the big fire on the south side in Ft. Worth. We had been in the picture show. I think the name of the movie was 'Phillip Egypt'. There was a big fire in the movie and when we came out of the picture show, we could see flames going across the street in Ft. Worth by looking down Houston St. That night, from White Settlement, we could see the glare from the fire that was still burning on the south side."

"After I graduated from high school in 1918 there was plenty of work to do on the farm to keep me busy - feeding the cattle, feeding the horses and hogs, milking cows and hoeing corn, cotton, etc. We sold butter and eggs to residents in Ft. Worth and every Saturday we drove a horse to town to make the deliveries. I remember E. H. Keller who sold wagons and buggies was one of our best customers. Nearly all of our customers lived on the west side of what used to be W. C. Stripling's store."

"We went to church in White Settlement and we had a Union Sunday School. The Baptists would preach one Sunday, the Methodists one Sunday, and the Campbellites one Sunday. My father was Church Clerk in 1905 when the Baptists decided to build their own church. I came to Ft. Worth with him to get the first wagon load of lumber for the new church. My father is mentioned in a book on the history of White Settlement Baptist Church by Mrs. Henry Cook, On Wings of Eagles."

"My dad and I used to drive cattle to Ft. Worth down White Settlement Road and what is now called Ohio Garden Road. We would drive to 20th or 21st Street, I think now it is North 20th and North Main, and then on down to the stockyards. We never had large herds, only about 15 or 20 or 25 head. This was in the early years, 1904, 1905 and 1906. My dad became ill with what we called consumption in 1907. He had always heard that you had to get to dry country so he hitched up his wagon and team and headed west. He went to New Mexico through Pecos and on toward the valley. I remember we would get letters from him every week or two. He had an old maid sister, my aunt, and she went with him and helped him some. For almost two years he traveled that way, staying out in that part of the country. I don't think it did him any good and he died in 1909."

"Two of his brothers seemed to have the same problem. They moved to New Mexico and one of them died about the same time my dad died. The other one lived a few years later. My grandfather, their father, lived to an old age though. In fact, he lived on one of my dad's places out in White Settlement. I never did know if my grandfather was in the Civil War but he had two brothers who were both killed in that war. My mother's grandfather had two sons that were members of the Grapevine Volunteers that were killed in the Civil War. Her grandfather married a Miss Proctor in 1842 and they have 9 children. She

died in 1858 and he married a Miss Baker in 1860. They also had 9 children, and she died in 1895. "

"When I was in high school I remember one night I wanted to get home early for a party and the river was out of its banks and over the road. I thought I could make it over the White Settlement road so I decided to go home that way. When I got to the river I kept going and when I had driven about a hundred yards I could feel the buggy starting to sway a little bit. The next thing I knew, the buggy, horse and I were all going downstream off the road. The water was about 10 feet deep and I saw a pecan tree on the right that was in a good position to catch the buggy between the wheels. The horse was trying to swim, rearing up, and I couldn't get him unhitched. I finally got him loose and hung onto him while he swam to the bank. "

"I well remember the first car I ever saw. In fact, Dr. Julian Field, the doctor who brought me into the world, had a ranch right close to ours and he had the first one I had ever seen. It had wheels the same size as a buggy and everytime that automobile would come by, our horses would all run to it, look at it, and turn around and run the other way. One morning when we were driving to Sunday School in the buggy, all of a sudden the horse began running and I couldn't imagine what was wrong with that horse. Finally, we looked around and there was an automobile right behind us. He had seen it and was really trying to get out of the way. Dr Julian Field brought many babies into the world. The Julian Field Masonic Lodge is named for him. "

"I used to keep honey bees and I liked to rob them. We used to go out and hunt bee trees. After Dr. Julian Fields moved from White Settlement, Dr. Cozby at Azle was our doctor and instead of a car he had a surrey with two horses. I remember one time my mother had gone to town to deliver the milk and eggs and left the boys at home so we decided to go swimming. On the way to the creek we passed a big tree and saw a little rabbit run into a hole in the tree. We persuaded our younger brother to reach in there and get the rabbit. When he did, he jerked his hand back and had bloody prints on his hand and we knew it was a snake bite. We put one of the boys on a horse to ride 3 1/2 miles to Mr. Joe Farmer's house to call the doctor. Of course, Dr. Cozby was in Azle and that was 10 miles so with his surrey and horses, it took him quite a while to get there. In the meantime, another of my brothers was sent to a neighbor's where we knew he kept a little liquor on hand. We had always heard that liquor was good for snake bite. So this brother went up to Rowlands and said that we wanted to borrow all the whiskey he had because one of the boys had been bitten by a snake. I don't know what we would have done if he had given us any whiskey because we didn't know what to do with it. Finally, we saw the doctor coming out of the woods and onto the prairie with the horses trotting

fast. After he had treated the snake bite, he said 'Let's go down and see what kind of snake it was'. We built a little fire in the tree and a big copperhead snake came crawling out. "

"We had always heard that rattlesnakes were the really dangerous kind. My brother was fine after the doctor treated the copperhead bite. One time I had an axe over my shoulder and was going down to get wood for heating and cooking. I found a big rattlesnake on the way to the woods and I chopped him half in two. I thought he would die immediately. I picked up the end the head was on and that snake turned and almost got me before I could turn him loose. "

"I mentioned that Mr. Farmer had a phone, and that was the only one in White Settlement. All we had was kerosene lamps, we didn't get electricity until after I got out of college and went to work for the telephone company. "

"The oldtimers in White Settlement were the Farmers, the Rowlands and the Grants. One of the oldest was Fess Farmer. Nearly all of the Farmers were inter-married, in fact, we were cousins of some of them. The Allens, the Tinsleys, were oldtimers too. Jud Rowland's son, Jeff, had a daughter who very recently died. She was Mrs. Norman and she was about 90 years old. Her husband, Carroll, still lives on part of the old Jud Rowland place and the land was granted in his name as the Jud Rowland survey. They had property joining our property on the West, South, Southeast and North. In fact, we were surrounded by Rowlands on every side but the east. "

"Three stores in Ft. Worth are very vivid in my memory, Jack Coulson Drug, which was just west of the courthouse, George P. Williams Grocery which was on Second and Houston, and W. C. Stripling Clothing. W. C. Stripling, at that time, was advertising a lot about the price of things. Their slogan was "The Price is Right". My older brother saw their sign, went home and painted a great big sign on our barn at the farm that said "The Price is the Thing". Jack Coulson Drug Store is where we got our drug supplies. We got things like quinine because then they didn't have medical supplies like they do now. Quinine was good for almost anything. We did our grocery trading with George P. Williams. They were always buying eggs and butter that we had left over. "

"I have picked many bales of cotton. In fact, I have one unpleasant thought about that. I had a cousin just younger than I. I was always very particular with my cotton and if there was even a dead leaf on it, I would pull that off. I wanted my cotton to be white and clean. My cousin would just pull burrs and all - you know the thing that opens up is a cotton burr - and he wasn't particular with his and would always have a few more pounds than I when he weighed in. My daddy gave me a whipping one time because I didn't pick as much cotton as he did. "

"World War I was going on when I got out of high school, so, in June, 1918, I went into the army. Nearly everybody had the flu when I was in the army and we did very little work while I was there. I was in Depot 4 in San Antonio and was sent to the Officer's Training School in Waco on November 10, 1918. Of course, on November 11, the next day, the Armistice was signed and on November 12, a telegram came down to discharge all the people who were in training, but I was in Company "Q" and they started with Company "A" and it was December before I got out of the service. "

"I decided that I did not want to be a farmer - the work was too hard. So, I went to the University of Texas for four years and graduated with an engineering degree. A recruiting team from Southwestern Bell Telephone Company came down shortly before I graduated and their offer looked better than any other offer that I had then. When they offered me the job they asked where I wanted to work and I told them Ft. Worth - that's the only town that I love. My service with Southwestern Bell began in June, 1923, in Ft. Worth. "

"Some of the hardest work I ever did with the telephone company was during ice storms when the lines would break. Out in the country you had to pick up the wires, find the poles and replace them. I remember the first pole I ever climbed. It wasn't so hard getting up but I didn't think I would ever get down. We had spurs on the shoes that would stick in the poles which were made out of creosoted pine then just like they are now. They've been the same for the last 40 years or more. The creosote was used to preserve the wood and keep the insects out. "

"In the early 1930's a group of us who worked for the telephone company started going to Colorado every spring and building on a log cabin. We ended up with two cabins with seven private bedrooms, a big sleeping room, a big living room, dining area, and kitchen. Then we would take our families up there every summer for fishing. We built the cabins west of Creede on the Rio Grande River. I still go up there every June and September, and I've always enjoyed it. "

"I married Cleyone Fort in 1927 in the First Methodist Church in Ft. Worth. The church was located at 7th and Lamar then. We have two children who live in Ft. Worth, Victor Tinsley, Jr. and John Fort Tinsley. Vic has three children, Laura Dianne, William Victor and John Constantine. "

"We are now members of the First Methodist Church and I am on the Administrative Board. I am past General Superintendent of the Sunday School there and was at one time Superintendent of Sunday Schools when I attended the White Settlement Baptist Church. I belong to the Julian Field Lodge. We have an organization of people who have 21 years or more of service with the telephone company called "The Telephone Pioneers". I was President of that organization in 1951 and Secretary of the State Chapter in 1955 until my retirement in 1962. The telephone people devote

a great amount of time to charity and community causes. In Texas, and all the states, the Pioneers maintain the talking books for the blind. I am also a member of the downtown Ft. Worth Lion's Club, the Real Estate Board and the Boy Scout organization. I have kept busy since my retirement in 1962. I have served on many Boards at the City Hall - The Travelers' Aid Board, the Zoning Board and presently on the Housing Standards and Neighborhood Improvement Board. I have been Precinct Chairman and Election Judge for several years. "

"The year that I retired I was a delegate of the International Lion's Club at Nice, France. My wife and I were able then to go to places we had heard about but never seen. Nice was a most interesting place but I enjoyed Rome because I remembered so much about the old history. "

"I can't remember many of my old classmates who are still living in Ft. Worth. Louis Thompson worked for Magnolia Refining Company but he is now retired and living here. He and his sister both went to school with me in White Settlement and they are both still in Ft. Worth. Oscar Monnig was in school with me in Paschal High School.

"Fort Worth has really changed in my lifetime. When I was much younger Ft. Worth was a small section close to the courthouse. Transportation has really changed since then. We used to travel by horse and buggy and sometimes by train. Now we fly almost everywhere we don't go in an automobile. "

"In the mid-1940's my mother moved to Ft. Worth since she was not able to stay on the farm in White Settlement any more. We rented it and leased it for several years to a dairyman but in 1947 or 1948, Clyde Burns who had an automobile agency on W. 7th St. bought it. We sold it to him for \$100 an acre - cash, pretty good, we thought. Our old homeplace, a two story rock house, is on Silver Creek Rd., about three miles northwest of White Settlement proper. Mr. Burns was deer hunting south of Pecos about 20 years ago and his horse came in one night without him. They finally found him, shot. They never knew what happened, whether somebody thought he was a deer and shot him or what. Since that time, his wife, the former Verna Coleman, married Johnny Stubbs. Our old homeplace is exactly like it was. She did not sell it. They have since bought the land to the south and west. The house has been modernized a lot since we lived there but on the outside it still looks the same. They have built a large recreational building nearby where they have scout meetings and all sorts of things. There is a great big wagon wheel of lights in the main room there. It's beautiful. I still go out there occasionally and they always make me feel welcome and I feel like, although I am getting along in years, that I am still a youngster. "

FAMILY RECORD
of
WILLIAM AND LUCY TINSLEY

Alanson	Born	July 22, 1815
James Daniel	"	April 11, 1817
Mary Ann	"	July 8, 1819
John Vickolas	"	Oct. 19, 1821
William Taliafarro	"	July 27, 1830
Sarah Jane	"	March 5, 1832
David Roberts	"	Sept. 22, 1835
Caroline	"	Jan. 13, 1837
Gilmore	"	Oct. 29, 1831

FAMILY RECORD

of

E. N. and S. T. HUDGINS

and

E. N. and S. L. HUDGINS

NAME	BIRTH	MARRIAGE	DEATH
E. N. Hudgins) S. T. Proctor)	May 16, 1814	Jan. 18, 1842	March 24, 1901
John P. Hudgins	Nov. 1842	Jan. 18, 1842	Jan. 1858
Franklin L. Hudgins	April 1844		Jan. 29, 1862
James C. Hudgins	April 25, 1846		Apr. 17, 1864
W. D. Hudgins	Dec. 30, 1847	Dec. 20, 1866	March 1929
Mary E. Hudgins	Mar. 14, 1850	Apr. 8, 1869	
Sarah A. Hudgins	Sept. 2, 1851	July 1870	July 26, 1888
Thomas B. Hudgins	July 1, 1853	Jan. 29, 1874	Aug. 10, 1923
Catherine H. Hudgins	Nov. 28, 1855	Feb. 25, 1875	
Laura Hudgins	Dec. 14, 1858	Aug. 20, 1874	

E. N. Hudgins) S. L. Baker Hudgins)	May 16, 1814	March 13, 1860(2nd)	March 24, 1901
Joseph D. Hudgins	April 18, 1838	March 13, 1860	July 6, 1895
Francis M. Hudgins	Dec. 10, 1860	Jan. 25, 1880	Feb. 2, 1922
Ellen Hudgins	Aug. 29, 1862	Jan. 7, 1880	
Martha Hudgins	Oct. 6, 1864	Oct. 6, 1881	
Lucy Hudgins) Liza Hudgins)	Feb. 3, 1866	May 11, 1893	June 10, 1949
Ida Hudgins	June 28, 1868		Nov. 27, 1887
Nathan Hudgins	" " "	Oct. 25, 1893	Apr. 1953
Minnie Hudgins	Sept. 11, 1870	Oct. 18, 1888	
Lena G. Hudgins	Oct. 17, 1872		Oct. 20, 1872
	June 7, 1874	Sept. 9, 1896	July 25, 1946
	Feb. 27, 1877	Feb. 28, 1895	April 10, 1957

FAMILY RECORD OF D. R. TINSLEY AND V. A. REDFORD TINSLEY
 (From Hopkinsville, Kentucky. Moved to Texas in early 1880's)

<u>NAME</u>	<u>BIRTH</u>	<u>DEATH</u>
David Robert Tinsley	Sept. 22, 1835	April 24, 1906
Victoria Anne Tinsley		March 26, 1896
William Thomas Tinsley	Nov. 11, 1858	March 19, 1909
Ellen Tinsley	April 18, 1862	Aug. 1945
Mary Susan Tinsley	August 4, 1865	Jan. 4, 1891
John Tinsley	March 20, 1867	Jan. 26, 1913
Lizzie Tinsley	Dec. 3, 1869	JAN 1938
George Tinsley	June 20, 1872	
Ida Lou Tinsley	May 28, 1877	Sept. 24, 1882
Hugh Barrow Tinsley	Jan. 4, 1881	Oct. 20, 1881

FAMILY RECORD OF W. T. TINSLEY AND MARTHA HUDGINS TINSLEY

<u>NAME</u>	<u>BIRTH</u>	<u>MARRIAGE</u>	<u>DEATH</u>
William Thomas Tinsley	Nov. 11, 1858	May 11, 1893	March 19, 1909
Martha Hudgins Tinsley	Feb. 3, 1866	May 11, 1893	June 10, 1949
Thomas Ross Tinsley	Aug. 1, 1894	July 19, 1924	Feb. 16, 1974
Victor Tinsley	Jan. 8, 1897	April 17, 1927	
Roy Hudgins Tinsley	Oct. 6, 1898	Jan. 12, 1927	
William Hervey Tinsley	Jan. 22, 1902		Aug. 31, 1929
John Sanda Tinsley	Dec. 10, 1904		
Allie May Tinsley	June 6, 1908		Feb. 24, 1966