

TOM J. FOUNTAIN: I know all of you know, going up Ponce de Leon, above Sears and Roebucks [sic] at Boulevard Drive, they have going up now, there's a--on the left there, there's a Starvin' Marvin, and on that site was a church where Peter Marshall was pastor--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Yes! Oh!

TJF: --and across the street is a Church's Chicken, and on the other corner over there is an Amoco gas station. Well, my dad, after World War I, moved to Atlanta. He originally was from Gwinnett County, and he moved to Atlanta, and he went to work for the old Standard Oil of Kentucky. Back in those days it was called "Kyso," and Dad went to work there as an attendant at that station. Back in those days they were called "filling stations." And the reason they were called filling stations is that they were not service stations. They did not change oil or do any kind of repairs. You had gas, oil, kerosene, and [inaudible]. I don't think I left out anything [*Tape skips*] You might remember [*audience laughter*]. But the idea of the service followed several years later. But my dad was going to law school--the old Atlanta Law School--at night and working there in the daytime.

They built a station later in 1919 at Little Five Points at Moreland and Euclid. And some of you may remember when there was a little station on the corner, and the station actually faced Euclid Avenue instead of Moreland Avenue, because of the pretty good traffic coming out of Druid Hills, moving downtown, cutting over towards Edgewood. Dad was only there a very short time before he was moved again to East Lake Drive and College Avenue, and at that time it was a small station that faced College Avenue; the address was 1050 West College. Later the station was remodeled. The first time it was remodeled was sometime around 1929, 1930. It was remodeled at the present site, still facing West Howard Avenue. And then later it was remodeled, and it was turned around and taking in the house next door on East Lake, and it became 100 East Lake Drive. That building is still there today. It's being used as a garage, although MARTA construction there cut it off. And it's the little building there that joins the telephone property there.

Thinking back in those days, when Dad first went out there, and a few years later there was right there at that site--though in the old days then, you had the old hand gas pumps; I hope some of you've seen them. If you've been out in the country, where you pumped up the--by hand, manually, you pumped the gasoline up into the

glass globe, and it was fed back down by gravity. And in those days the gasoline tanks were right at the top on the hood. And one of the early things I remember was gas caps, was one of the first accessory items that service stations sold, in two sizes: Size A and Size B, and that fit everything. And today it takes special business if you try to get--just be in the gasoline cap business, because no one place can keep them all; there's so many different configurations, lock sizes, and so forth.

But back in those days--later the lube pits--and I know now you have the Quick Lubes. But back before we had the hydraulic lifts, they had the lube pits. So later the lube pit was added, and they started changing oil for the people and lubricating their cars. And the word you heard back in those days--can you remember? What was the word, do you remember what it was called?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: It was Alemite!

TJF: Y'all remember that? [*Audience reaction in the affirmative*] You know, Alemite--you say, "Get the car Alemited," and that was the grease that was used. Back in--talking to Ms. Mary Moreland here a minute ago, we were talking about one of the neighbors up there, Mr. Albert E. Mayer, whom many of you may remember. He was an attorney in Atlanta with Arnall, Golden & Gregory for many years. Mr. Mayer died just a couple of years ago; he was ninety-seven years old. He would always call up and make sure that you could set aside five quarts of Mobil A, and he knew his size oil filter, and he wanted to tell you the minute he was going to drive over to that pit [*audience laughter*], because he didn't expect--he was the first of the ten-minute oil changes [*audience laughter*].

But other things, coming on up a little bit later in the business, some of the things back in those days that I remember well about Dad's business, him telling me, was about road service. Dad got a T-Model truck he bought used; it was one of the telephone company's old trucks. And he started making service calls in the neighborhood for twenty-five cents. And one of the things back in those days is gasoline didn't have the additives, so rust was a problem in the tanks, or any other trash where they weren't properly maybe filtered out in handling the product. And the servicemen going out back in those days, they didn't need these great big tool chests. You go anyplace now, and the mechanic may have ten or fifteen thousand dollars' worth of tools--you see these big Snap-On boxes. I had a young boy working for me a couple of years ago, he had over twenty-five thousand dollars' worth of hand tools in

one of those Snap-On big, high chests you see. And back in those days they could carry all their tools with them. And remember, they wore the coveralls that had the little pocket on the side, and they had a screwdriver and a pair of pliers--and it wasn't a Phillips-head screwdriver, just an old-fashioned screwdriver. And that was about all the tools they needed to fix the cars back in those days [*laughs*].

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: There was baling wire then.

TJF: Baling wire! [*Audience laughter*] That's right. That was the whole set--pliers, screwdriver, and baling wire. But they would go out, and lots of times they'd get to you, and your car would be stalled, and they would check it. And if it wasn't the battery, if they had fire there, they would disconnect the fuel line. And they were so simple then, because you raised the hood, they could try to crank it. If you looked at the bowl on the carburetor--it wasn't like the cars are today, where so many of them don't even have carburetors anymore. And they could look and see that the fuel wasn't coming in, they would disconnect that line and just take their mouths and get down and blow back into the tank [*audience laughter*], screw the little nut back on, and have you to crank up. It wasn't very many times that we went out on service calls in those days if we couldn't start the car without having to call a wrecker. Today, with the electronic ignitions, the fuel injections, and the cars without distributors, just about every time you go out and the car won't stall [*sic*]--or if it stalls and won't crank, I was looking at our track record yesterday: we probably towed better than sixty percent of the automobiles yesterday that we had service calls on. We'd lots rather them just get you started right quick and move on to the next call, you know; because the boys own radios, and so they can just move from one location to the next.

One of the things back in those days of the twenty-five-cent road service, Dad hired a young Black man named Sam King. Sam came to us from the country to Dad, and Sam, I guess maybe just wasn't sure of himself, having worked on the farm; and Sam was very slow. And he drove the car, a little truck, that way. So, the neighbors got--they would see the little pickup truck going down the road, and so somebody starts saying, "Well, there goes Lightning." And really they were referring to Sam King's speed, not the truck; but then when Sam finally later left us, then the people still say--referred to truck as "Lightning." So, several years later--I don't remember just where--but Dad finally picked up and started advertising "Lightning Road Service" [*audience laughter*], but Lightning Road Service actually went back to the employee Sam King.

Sam had a good story; started with Dad up there and ended up head mechanic of a truck line, and he did real well for himself. And he always, when he came through, he used to tell me that he got lots of good training there with my father, and said one thing my dad taught him that he was still trying to teach his mechanics is when you pick up a tool, you're supposed to go back and put it where you picked it up [*audience reaction*] and not leave it where you last used it [*laughs*].

But another thing back in those days were the old six-volt batteries. You know the twelve-volt batteries like you have today, they don't give you a warning. You can just crank up and drive somewhere and be sitting at a red light and have the battery go dead on you sitting in the middle of the street. But back in the days of the old six-volt batteries, they would get slower and slower and slower; and you could realize that it was time for you to get something checked on your car. So that's the reason, back in the old days, we didn't really have as much road service as we do today. Now, the difference was in the electrical system, the difference between the six volts and the twelve volts.

You know, coming on up in the '30s, I don't know where you people bought your gas and traded, but just to remind you of a few of the places and some characters that were really unique businessmen and just became parts of the family; and I traveled a good bit at one time with the dealer association, and I always felt this way about our competitors here in Decatur, in this general area. But I never went anywhere and found as many good service stations and service station dealers as we had here as competitors. Some of you might live out toward Avondale and might remember Charlie [Tunis? Kunis?]. Charlie used to have a Citgo station out there, and he was really just an institution in that era.

And coming on up College Avenue there at Columbia Drive, you remember Nelson Maynard. And Nelson was really a--he was on the city commission, and Nelson was just really an outstanding--graduated from Georgia Tech. And coming on up there were several stations in between, but they had a turnover of personnel; but the ones that I remember, the stickers.

And you remember up there at Mead Road and West College, and that was Gasoline Alley. How many of y'all remember the Gasoline Alley [*affirmative audience reactions*]? Remember there was a comic strip about "Gasoline Alley," and I think that's probably where they took the name or vice versa, I don't know. But then you went on

up to Oakhurst there, and you had our station up there at the corner of East Lake Road and West College Avenue.

Going on up McLendon Avenue, there used to be, at Clifton, next to McMichael's supermarket. there was a station, L. R. Steele. Does anybody remember Mr. Steele? Remember Mr. Steele? He was quite a--you know, he had a big sign up there: "Steele, your friendly neighbor." And he was famous for a little post he had out on the street there, a hitching post, and a little caption coming down that said, "Steele itching for business." And he had a little spot for the pets, for the ladies, and for the men--three different positions, you know, for scratching your back [*audience reaction*]. Mr. Steele was quite a personality. He later, after he retired--I was pleased that he and I remained friends for many years, because he lived over at Philips Tower over on Church Street in his latter years until he passed away a couple of years ago. But I used to enjoy visiting with him and talking about some of the old-timers in our business.

But you know, cutting on over to in the Emory area, there was Jimmy Broome, who had the Chevron station down there at the little village; and also, across the street was Tom Burns [*audience response, "Yeah"*]. Some of you know him [*inaudible audience exchange*]. I heard Tom Burns one time, somebody referred to him, said he was a doctor--he was a doctor of automotive services [*audience reaction*]. He was certainly well thought of over in that area and was really a part of many families over there.

And coming over into Decatur, you know, let's get our orientation here, going down Ponce de Leon, do you remember down on the right, there was a Texaco station down there that was Newsome [sp?] and Allman [sp?]. Remember Newsome [sp?] and Allman [sp?]? Then Paul Newsome moved across the street into the Pure Oil station, and he moved across the street, and he and his brother became Newsome Brothers. And then later they moved further down on the corner where Maier and Berkele's jewelry is there; and the Newsomes' [sp?] station was there for a number of years.

And across the street, when they were at the Pure Oil station, you remember there was Gulf station right on the same side of the street, it was a small Gulf station? And that was Mr. Greely [sp?]. You remember Mr. Oliver Greely? And his son later, after Mr. Greely died, he moved out on Scott Boulevard and built the station which is behind my place up on Scott Boulevard, which is a Texaco station now. And that station was built by Mr. Oliver Greely, who was in the building business also.

Just to mention a few friends, in back up there in Oakhurst, going back to our station back in the '30s and go down a little memory lane with you, remember up there across from us was Redding's [sp?] Pharmacy, and then next to us was [inaudible] grocery store, and down at the end of that little block of stores was Mr. Rufus Martin. He had a shoe shop, a pressing club, a barber shop, and a ladies' beauty parlor there. Some of you remember that? Didn't live in that area.

How many of you, have you ever been out in the country and seen this sign and you wondered about it? You ever been out in the country and saw a sign that says "Free Air"? [*Inaudible audience exchanges*] Have you ever seen one? [*Affirmative audience responses*] OK, back in the old days--in the early days of the cars, and maybe going back to Pop's time, you know, one of the things you got when you bought an automobile was an air pump. And one thing then you had rubber innertubes, and those tubes were porous; and so, they would lose air just naturally over a period of time. So, going into the old filling stations, as they were being converted to service stations, an important function was getting air in your tires. And back in those days you did not have sealed cooling systems, and so when you went in, and you got a little gas, you also had to get a little water; that was all part of it in those days. Well, later, when they started to come out with the first electric air compressors, when they was out, that was a drawing card in some areas in small towns and countries. Of course, back in a city like Atlanta, Decatur, as soon as one person got one, everybody had one; so, it was no edge on your competition. But in some small towns, you could have some successful merchant, maybe owned that little general store, and he got an air compressor and put out front there and put up a big sign, "Free Air." And that was just a little way of drawing some traffic.

You know one of the things, thinking back to the old days, is a gasoline store. As you know--I don't remember the size tanks we had up there at East Lake and College, but they must have been very small. In 1952, when I first was at Scott Boulevard and North Decatur Road, the tanks out there were directly under each dispenser. We had four dispensers, they had single hoses, and under each dispenser was a thousand-gallon tank. We would be given shipping dates, and they would tell us the minimum/maximum order that we could call in and request; and we would figure out how much we needed, and they would deliver us, say, like two days a week, and we had to make sure we'd bought whatever we product we needed those two days. To

show you the difference today, my station out there today has 25,000-gallon storage. A friend of mine the other day just changed his tanks over because we're having to change them over from steel tanks to fiberglass to comply with the Environmental Protection Code now, and I think we have till '93 that I think all the steel tanks that have to be changed; I believe I'm right on that date. But all the steel tanks are going to give way to new tanks, and most of them are going to be fiberglass; some of them are going to be double-lined.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Why is that?

TJF: For safety, the danger of underground leaks, seepage.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: I see, I see.

TJF: Digressing a little bit, but we have to read our--I have a computer that can read my meters, but the government says that I have to manually go out and take the numbers down off of each dispenser every night, and we have to track the sales to make sure that if we have any loss, we're supposed to report it immediately. We have to keep the shrinkage--we have to figure all that in, and we have to have the right type figures. Furthermore, the law says that we have to have those figures available any time they walk in, and it's supposed to be done on a daily basis. And furthermore, we also have to check for--Chevron, at least, requires that we check for water every day. Now, you'll get water in from condensation, not from water being put in gasoline [*laughs*]. Furthermore, the water is heavier than gasoline, and it settles to the bottom. The other thing, too, tanks are put in like this on a tilt, slightly, and you draw up here, and you fill down here. And we can number our tanks, and we draw below a thousand gallons; the pumps won't pump below that point. So, there's always that safety in there to make sure that what you get is clean and is properly filtered.

Another thing, too, about in the old days, it used to be fun. They were friends of ours. You could call up, and some of you remember going down here on Ponce de Leon Avenue after you cross Sycamore, remember when there were several oil jobbers down there that had the tanks? You remember that, Mr. Bailey? Sinclair had a plant, and old Kyso had a plant down there; W. W. Boyett was the agent there for many, many years. And back in those days, they--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Frank Thomas [inaudible].

TJF: Pardon?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Frank Thomas

TJF: Frank Thomas, that's right, Mr. Thomas, from Pure Oil Company.

[*Several inaudible audience exchanges*]

TJF: Right, uh-huh, I forgot about Mr. Frank. But back in those days, you know, you could call, you could always spend a few minutes talking to the clerk there on the desk. And you knew him and his family and everything. We don't get to talk to them anymore. When we get ready to order product, we have to order like--if I want to get gas tomorrow night after six, because my deliveries are restricted for traffic, I have to phone it in the day before, before 12:00. Furthermore, I dial into the computer, punch it all in with a Touch-tone phone, and [inaudible--sounds like "CARS"?] the name of the computer out there, gives me a confirmation number, which I can call him or her back and still talk to him by punching into the telephone, but we don't get to talk to the dispatchers anymore. And those shipping orders are compiled by the computer, and [inaudible] shipped out to the terminal, those things are printed out, and when the drivers come in, he just has a stack of delivery orders there, and they [inaudible] computers are, the memory's in the computer to calculate how long it takes him to load, how long it takes him to drive to the next destination, the unloading time, whether or not the truck has to be moved more than once, the time back to the terminal, and what time he can be back to the next destination. And it's amazing how efficient it is. They move a tremendous amount of product with a minimum number of people and trucks.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Did you have different qualities of gas [inaudible] delivery at that time?

TJF: Yes, ma'am. They have different compartments.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: [Inaudible] compartments

TJF: Yeah, if you check with Plantation Pipeline, which is out at Doraville, I think they have tours out there that you can go to, and they will explain to you how product is separated coming up a pipeline and how they know. The dispatcher out there has a schedule of the product moving through the pipeline, whether or not it's going to stop here or go in a bypass and us going on up further north or whose product it is. And, they'll know at, say, at 10:00 tonight, maybe they're going to be receiving Texaco Premium, and at 10:00 on or about, they're going to switch over to maybe Chevron Regular. Well, the [inaudible] will indicate on his manifest there whether or not it's going to be a difference in specific gravity, a difference in color, or whether or not it

will be a dye [inaudible--plug?] at the separation point. And they're sitting there, and at a certain time when they see the change indication, they switch from one terminal tank to the other. And it's done electronic switching, and it's instantaneous, and that's the way they separate product.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Tom, [inaudible phrase] old Standard Oil wagon out there.

TJF: Did he?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: My father used to have [inaudible] when he was [inaudible].

TJF: Is that right? That's interesting, I haven't seen that.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: They drove that wagon for years.

TJF: Is that right?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Uh-huh

TJF: Uh-huh, I'll have to look for that sometime--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: You didn't mention Mr. Parks [inaudible] tear down Mr. Hayes's store--I mean, [inaudible phrase] on the corner down there on--

TJF: Mr. Parks? Lawton Parks, that's right.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Lawton Parks, yes

TJF: That's where Don Davis now, that's right. I forgot about him. Yeah, he and a guy named Hoke Jennings. You know, the best I can remember, for a long time the Newsomes had such a good reputation around Decatur. Stations came and went, and operators would come and go, you know, and the stations that stuck usually were an outgrowth of Newsomes. Hoke Jennings, who was with Newsome, he and Lawton Parks went in business together, and then, at the Pure Oil station, when the Newsomes moved down to where Maier and Berkele is. And Mr. Jennings's health was a problem. After about a year he got out, and Lawton Parks stayed there, moved to where you said, and then later he sold out to Don Davis.

Also, over here on the corner, [*Points to the window.*] right over here where the Water Works building was--I'd forgotten about that--they used to build a service station there back in the '20s, and Mr. Roy Walker ran that, and his wife worked at the courthouse. Do you remember that, Mr. Bailey? And funny story, you know, the Kyso Standard, they learned a little lesson about Decatur, because Mr. Walker, he was running a good station; he was doing a big business, had a very big business over

there. But he had other interests, and about 1:00 in the afternoon he turned it over to the system manager and left; so, somebody got the idea that they probably could do the thing better than he was doing it, so they took it back over and made it a company-operated station. And I doubt if they ever got it back up to forty percent of his volume.

Finally, my family, we had it for a while back in the '40s; but, because of the war and the personnel shortage of people, Dad--he was trying to hold onto that station for me--and we finally gave it up. [Inaudible], Mr. Bailey, you probably remember better than I do--around '40, '41, '42, and I think we finally--and I don't remember what year the Water Works Department finally took that property back over there. But I'd even forgotten about us operating that--we did several [rest inaudible].

One of the stories--fond memories I have about my dad--being [inaudible] during the Depression years he and Mr. [name inaudible--Kamansky?] and the service station people, they came daily in contact with everybody, and they knew people, and people would come by and talk to them and share with them. And Dad and Mr. [Kamansky?], from time to time, would be called on to help somebody in the hard times there back in the '30s; and they never talked about it. But I did know this, that Jake [inaudible], he was called, Jake and Dad would get together about once a week and tally up what they had done, and they would split it, one dollar or two and the other one a dollar or two.

But one man that used to be around Decatur, and he told me this story a number of times, he said, back in the hard times of the Depression he lived in Clarkston. And said he finally managed to buy him a little pickup truck, and he couldn't get a job. So, he started going up to the old Atlantic Ice and Coal Plant up at north Kirkwood--and you know, you went up College Avenue, north Kirkwood, and it was one more block over on the corner of Howard Street. This lady is nodding that she remembers it. And there was an ice plant there, and he would buy big blocks of ice and cut it up into little bitty pieces and then go back and sell it door-to-door in Scottdale and Clarkston. And this man told me, he said, you know, he said he had something happen--I don't know what it was, a little crisis in the family; and he prevailed on Dad to let him have sixty cents' worth of gas. Now, that was three gallons back in those days. Remember, there was five gallons for a dollar. And he said that every day he went back by there, and the man had an ice cooler, and he would chisel some ice for him and put that in the cooler for him, and that was the interest on the money [audience

laughter], because he said it took him a long time to ever pay Daddy that sixty cents [*audience reaction*].

I'll answer--oh, you get me started, I could talk longer, but I think maybe I'd like to stop right now and see if anybody'd like to ask me any questions I hope I can answer.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: How about Hayes? When did they start?

TJF: Which one was that?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Hayes, here on DeKalb Avenue

TJF: Hayes Auto Service, that was a gas station there.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: They had a filling station.

TJF: That was a filling station. You know, Hayes has been over there since back about '50--'49 or '50. And they finally took that station and just made it into a garage.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: [Inaudible] when I first moved here.

TJF: Right, and you know, right on up the street from there, there was two stations. There was a little small station on the corner that was Manning's; and then down on the other corner, there was another little old Kyso station. And then later, Mr. Manning, he owned that whole block, and he finally built--on the other end of the block, he built the big building. And that building today is being used by MARTA. And when MARTA took his property, he moved out below me on Scott Boulevard there across from Banner Ford.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Same guy still run it?

TJF: Manning [inaudible]? [*Responding to AUDIENCE MEMBER's inaudible comment*] Yes, uh-huh. It's--well, Mr. Manning's still living. He's probably up in his eighties. But the Hayes brothers, the manager over there, Howard is his last name, and he bought--[*Responding to AUDIENCE MEMBER's inaudible comment*] That's right. Warren Howard, right. Warren bought the business from the Hayes brothers. And the Hayes brothers own a couple of Chrysler-Plymouth agencies up in Gwinnett County. [*Responding to AUDIENCE MEMBER's inaudible comment*] That's right.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Tell them what you told me about why there was a service station on every corner at one time [rest inaudible].

TJF: Going back in the '50s and the '60s, after World War II--and you know, just think about the changes to the automobile. The first ones probably were the real rich people that bought them as novelties, because we had a good trolley system, and all of

us basically lived--there was a community to serve you there, like the grocery stores and the drug stores were in communities. They were sprinkled all over everywhere. But then later, as we started moving out, the car became more of a necessity for us, and the competition, all the big oil companies wanting to expand their markets. So, they were faced with the thing of one, of getting the product to you where you wanted to buy it. And so consequently, you would see a shopping center built, and then all of a sudden everybody is trying to buy property around there; because Chevron only sold Chevron gas, and Phillips sold Gulf gas, and so consequently if they were going to be represented, they had to have a facility.

So, a good example of what I'm talking about is you remember when Mr. Scarborough built the Clairmont and North Decatur Road businesses out there, you ended up with a Shell station, a Gulf station, an Amoco Station, a Phillips station, and a Texaco station. You had five stations right there at one intersection.

[Beginning of second tape; some recording may have been lost in transition.]

You remember, I know, when they built Lenox Square, Gulf paid a premium to get on that corner there on more or less what I call the back corner--or one of the back corners--on the side of Lenox Road there, to which back there--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Very unusual architecture.

TJF: Right

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: [Inaudible--could be a name; Ryan?]

TJF: They paid a premium for that, and Chevron, I think, paid an equal premium. And if you remember [inaudible] on Peachtree Road, coming around the curve there, there was a Chevron station right on the corner. I think everything had so much red ink on it that I don't know who had to explain that; but it was a prestige location, but it never was profitable. The ground rent was too high.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: When did Standard turn into Chevron?

TJF: Ooh, gosh, it was more than twenty years ago, twenty-five years ago.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: It was Standard for a long time. My father worked for them [inaudible]. And John D. Rockefeller owned [inaudible]. I have a Rockefeller dime.

TJF: You have a Rockefeller dime.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: I saved [inaudible].

TJF: Well, going back in those days, she's asking about when did Standard-- actually, you know, going back in 1911, '12, when Teddy Roosevelt broke up Standard Oil Company, and he said, you know what, it's too powerful and too big--ninety percent of everything was Mr. John D.--and he broke it up, so you had all these different Standard Oil Companies. And you had Standard Oil Company of New York, which was Esso--[*Correcting himself*] Standard Oil of New Jersey, which was Esso. You had Standard Oil of New York, which was Mobil. You had Standard Oil of Indiana, which was Amoco. You had Standard Oil of California, which was Chevron. And then you had Standard Oil of Kentucky, which was the old Kyso Company, we called it, or Standard. Each one of these would somewhere along the way would use the name Standard in their market; but they could not go into someone else's market and still call themselves Standard. That's the reason they all went through name changes.

Esso, or Standard Oil of New Jersey, when the government said that the old Kyso Company--that's what broke us up. At one time Kyso Company was not a refinement company; they were merely a marketing company. And the government came in, because they were buying--they had contracted about ninety percent of their gasoline from Esso, and ten percent they bought open-market, anybody's they wanted to, to meet their specs. They also had an agreement with Esso to market their motor oil, but they also had a marketing agreement with Standard Oil of New York to market Mobil oil; and also, Standard Oil of Kentucky used all Mobil's industrial greases. So, we were giving both of them some business in the five Southern states without having to compete with them. So finally, someone in the Justice Department said that was a bad arrangement, so they ordered them to cease and desist any business relations between the three companies there in this market. So, the old Kyso Company was too small. I think the book value, if I remember the number right, was something like \$450 million was the total value of the old Kyso Company at that point in time. And so, the government allowed him to merge with Standard Oil of California, which was Chevron. And the first year that they merged, Chevron set aside \$400 million for an infusion of cash into Kysoland, they called it; and it was \$200 million for a facelift and \$200 million to build the only refinery down in Pascagoula, Mississippi.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: [Inaudible] Kentucky since [inaudible].

TJF: Right

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: You know, Gulf and Standard just hated each other in those days. But now Chevron owns Gulf, am I right?

TJF: That's right. But that was a friendly--that was the first of the big LPOs. [*To moderator*] Am I running over time?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: To go back even further than you can recollect, remember [*inaudible*], the first pump in Decatur was not at a service station. It was in front of a hardware store right on Sycamore Street or right across about where Bailey's Shoe Shop was, Massey Hardware. And you drove up and just parked parallel with the curb and blew the horn, and the hardware man came out and met you. And you had to get--if you had a Ford, which our family did, and you had to get out of the front seat and take up the front seat [*rest of sentence inaudible due to audience laughter*]. Also, the first T-Model Ford I had, if a hill was too steep, I had to turn around and back up the hill; because, even though the gas tank was on the rear end, it was a gravity feed, and back it up the hill, it would run down to the [*inaudible*]. [*Next comment inaudible due to audience laughter.*]

TJF: Andy, you remind me of something I'd forgotten. Also, over right across the street, over where Watkins Pharmacy is, [*brief inaudible exchange between audience members*], there used to be an alleyway that went back through there. And in the back of there, those stores, there was a garage, and I believe the man's name was Kerr [*pronounced "car"*]? Buster--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Bud Kerr, was the owner of the garage, K-E-double R.

TJF: Kerr, right.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Lived down here on [*inaudible*].

TJF: And they had a gas pump out on the street--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: That's right, on the street--

TJF: --right across from the train station, and you had to stop your car, walk back into the [*inaudible*] and get somebody to come out [*inaudible*].

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: [*Makes inaudible remarks simultaneously with previous speaker.*] The first filling station was owned by [*inaudible name*], right catty-corner across from the Presbyterian Church. MARTA owns the property now. But it was a filling station. He was sort of a [*inaudible*--"pot-bellied"?] no-good young man. His daddy financed him, and, of course, they did more poker-playing than they did

selling gas. But that had three pumps, and it was--you cut in from Sycamore and Church Street.

TJF: You know, I think, if I'm not mistaken, I think they took those gas pumps out, and it became a tire--a Dunlop tire store.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: I think you're right.

TJF: I think they did, they took back--and we were still a drive-in station.

[Exchange of several inaudible, simultaneous comments among audience members]

TJF: That's right.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: [Inaudible] before the city bought it, that was a privately owned the swimming pool.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: You have mentioned Pure Oil. But back there some time, it was Woco Pep. *[Various comments of agreement from audience members.]* And also, I have not heard you mention Sunoco.

TJF: Sunoco?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Uh-huh, Standard Oil of Ohio

TJF: That's right. But they weren't in this--they were in South Georgia, where we didn't have a [rest inaudible]. You like Sunoco?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Also, I would like to ask you about the ice plant. You mentioned the man going over to Kirkwood. What about the ice plant out here in Decatur?

TJF: Yeah, that one was built in 1925. Unfortunately, the reason I know the date of that is when we built our--over on this side of the railroad track, the property was zoned for business, but when we got ready to build, like any time you go to put up something new, there was a certain amount of resistance. And unfortunately, we had to mandamus the city to get a building permit, and we finally won in court. And the court told the city that you didn't have any discretion; the property was zoned, and all he was doing was wanting to use his property for what it was zoned for. So, we were given a permit. But our lawyer, it was John *[tape skips; last name inaudible]* and Bill Zachary, in researching that case, found that the city of Decatur had been mandamus'd one other time, and that was for the building permit for the ice plant on Columbia Drive.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: [Inaudible phrase] to that is, my uncle, my mother's brother, Henry Rogers, where a lot of people call Hunter's Feed Store originally, he built that. That was ice and coal company. And he made an awful lot of money. And Atlantic Ice and Coal decided they wanted to buy him out, and he didn't want to sell. So, they said, well, if you don't sell--so they built right across--you crossed the railroad there then. That was old Oak Street, call it Columbia now. And so right across from him they built this Atlantic Ice and Coal building. And one of the reasons that the city didn't want to give them a permit was it made it higher--that building was higher than the church steeple at Agnes Scott College. [*Audience reactions*] And they didn't want the thing--

TJF: Is that right?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: --and so it broke my uncle. I mean, they ran him out of business. And no one--that building hasn't been torn down, because it's built of solid brick. It had to be, you know, for the ice to function and [inaudible]. So, it is so hard to tear down, because it'd cost more to tear it down, so that thing'll be there when all of us die [*general laughter*].

TJF: Tom?

"TOM" (audience member), *off-camera*: Where--what houses have you lived in around--growing up around here in Atlanta? What schools did you go to?

TJF: I was born in the house at 145 Madison Avenue, and I went to Oakhurst Grammar School, I went to Decatur Boys High back when they didn't allow us boys and girls to get together, except for the library in between, and then I went to Georgia Tech. I was only gone two years in the Air Force. I just love Decatur. Any other questions?

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: You mentioned about the free air. Well, at the time of the First World War, do you remember the IWWs?

TJF: I read about them. I wasn't born yet.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: An organization like that, the International Workers of the World, Communist group? [inaudible] talked about these customers who came in as "IWW customers"? What did they mean? All they wanted was information, wind, and water [*audience laughter and inaudible comments*].

TJF: We don't--some asked me--Ms. Barnes asked me about the fact that there were so many stations, there was a little jingle written back in those days, too, you

know, that somebody came up with; because at every corner, if you went by and you saw them tearing something down and grading, you automatically knew it was going to be another gas station. So, somebody wrote a little jingle, said: "Little corner, don't you cry, 'cause you're going to be a service station by and by" [*audience laughter*].

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Two questions. Isn't the bus station a former gas station here in Decatur?

TJF: Yes, it was, and that was an Esso station.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: How long ago has been [inaudible]?

TJF: That's been probably since '50.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: Well, they tore down the Greyhound station over here.

TJF: Right, they tore down the station, they went out there, and what was it--an old Esso station out there.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: [Inaudible phrase] this building over here [inaudible phrase].

TJF: Right, you know, you reminded me of a poem. You know, going back in the '50s and '60s, the oil companies, way back yonder at one time the oil companies, they--all the stations like my dad started were company-operated. You worked directly for Gulf, directly for Standard, Woco Pep--you were a direct company employee. But then they later found out they could get a better job by leasing them out and letting them just be independent. They would rent the facility and give them a supply contract and let them run them, and that worked out much better. But later on, as everything kept trying to get bigger and bigger and bigger, consolidations and everything, and they at that time--probably lots of people would like and likely tried with Mr. Walker, which was a disaster, they took it back over and made it a company operation, and the business went down; it did not go up. All that knowhow didn't match his personality.

You couldn't get in Avondale--if you went out and built a station in Avondale, just forget it; because you weren't going to get none of Mr. [Kunis? Tunis?]'s business. And it was hard to try to get some of Mr. Newsome's business, and we like to think it was the same way around Fountain Service Station over there.

You know, sitting back there is Ms. Mary Moreland. About 1950--we're not sure, '50 or '51, she was moving to Decatur, and she broke down there on East Lake in the middle of the railroad track. And she walked across the street, and we went over and

bailed her out, and I'm happy to say, to this day, we're still bailing her out [*audience laughter*], even though she lives in Stone Mountain.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: The other question, didn't you have a car rental service on West Howard and--

TJF: Yes, sir. See, we had--you remember, years ago, the traffic moving from Decatur and Avondale, moving up to town that way, went up West College Avenue all the way to Kirkwood and then came across at Kirkwood there at Hayes--where Hayes Auto Service is. You came across the tracks there. And West Howard, coming from Kirkwood, coming back this way, toward the East Lake MARTA station, you could not drive all the way through there. Part of it was still dirt and very rough terrain. It was later that that was paved, and the traffic started moving over on this side of the track here.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: The streetcar track was along there, too.

TJF: Yes, [*inaudible*] up and down the streetcar track.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: What happened to the business, though, the car rental business?

TJF: Oh, the car--excuse me, I lost that point you were asking me. We--when the traffic--and they opened up West Howard all the way--and the traffic shifted across the tracks. And so many of our customers that were coming from Avondale would cross at Atlanta Avenue and come up that way, so we built that station at that corner, which was a gas station, and a very good-volume station. And we later closed up on the other side of the tracks. But we'd had a problem there when we were building that station. I'm going a little bit around to tell you about how we ended up in the car rental place there. When we built that station, I was out of my field. I was doing the contracting, building it up, and the Man Upstairs took care of me--no other way to explain it. We had already ordered pipe to run, and the city had told me if we put a manhole to catch the water coming out from under West Howard Avenue and then take it through with a 28-inch pipe and put a manhole and a header [*inaudible--dam? down?*] between us and the Redding property, we could go ahead and fill the whole lot in.

And we ordered the pipe, we were all set to go, and we had a grading contractor in, and he finished grading late one afternoon and went back the next morning. The only thing we were dealing with was surface water. And the next morning I got a call real early to come up to see the contractor. And I went up there, and he says, "Look,

we've got a problem. Here's the ditch, and the water's over there." And we discovered we had a spring [*audience reaction*]. We originally were going to build this service station around the entire perimeter, so we ended up having to stay away from that water. So consequently, that's the reason we ended up with a private-brand station that we called Fonoco--that was for Fountain Oil Company. And it was a private brand, and we used to buy our product from Ashland Oil and Refining Company. When MARTA came along, MARTA put us out of the gasoline business there. Today you've got to have high volumes today. You can't have a little gas station anymore. There are few of them left in isolated locations, but in most cases you've got to be prepared to have a very high volume or you can't stay in the ballgame.

So, we ended up with a car rental place there, and we were doing a real good volume. And I leased the thing out to a young man, and he didn't hold it up. He lost it in about ninety days or 120 days. I am hoping, possibly either this year or in the next year or two, that we're going back into the car rental business at that location. We did--

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: What location?

TJF: Over there at West Howard. No, I got out of the car rental business over at Scott Boulevard. The parking got to be a problem.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: What interests me is you said go back at that location.

TJF: Yep. I still have the property up there and still have the business license for a car rental place. We're just inactive at the moment.

AUDIENCE MEMBER, *off-camera*: You told me once about the first windshield wiper and the big fire, Atlanta fire, I believe in 1917 right there, all the dump trucks. I think that's really interesting.

TJF: Well, Dad said he never argued about when cleaning windshields started. He said he didn't know who was the first. But when he started working for the company up there, they did not tell him to clean windshields. The only thing they had was what was called "railroad waste." It was old, stringy rags; and that's what they used to check oil in an automobile. And right after Dad went to work there, the fire of--I believe it was in 1917, they had a big fire, which was up there toward Georgia Baptist Hospital in that area. And they were cleaning it out, and at the intersection there at Ponce de Leon and Boulevard was just knee-deep in mud all the time, with the trucks and the wagons going in and out, cleaning it up and starting, I guess, some new construction. And Dad

said a lady slid in a ditch over there one day, and he sent one of the boys over there to get the car, and the car was muddy, and it was all splashed on the windshield. And this serviceman there cleaned the windshield, washed it off, dried it with a piece of rag he found, and the lady gave him three dollars' tip. And that was more than my dad made in a day [*audience laughter*] as the manager of the station, and he said the next day, that boy came to work with a big bag of rags [*audience laughter*]. So, Dad says that he would never say--he said for all he knows, they were cleaning windshields everywhere. He says he knows how it got started.

But, listen, thank you so much. I've enjoyed [*audience applause drowns out rest of comment*].

MODERATOR: Well, that was fascinating. If you have a few more moments, we have some refreshments in the Superior Courtroom and have as chance to visit with people.

TJF: Fine, thank you very much.

People rise, greet each other, and continue conversations until screen goes blank.

END OF RECORDING

Transcribed by CS