

CALIFORNIA STATE COLLEGE, BAKERSFIELD

CALIFORNIA ODYSSEY
The 1930s Migration to the Southern San Joaquin ValleyOral History Program

Interview Between

INTERVIEWEE:	James Harvey Lackey
PLACE OF BIRTH:	Hartshorne, Pittsburg County, Oklahoma
INTERVIEWER:	Stacey Jagels
DATES OF INTERVIEWS:	March 31 and April 2, 1981
PLACE OF INTERVIEWS:	Bakersfield, Kern County
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PREFACE

Mr. James Lackey lives with his wife in Greenacres and is retired. Most of his friends and associates have been like himself and he couldn't imagine that what he had to say would interest anyone. He has a very good memory and some very interesting experiences. Mr. Lackey's wife, Louise, was present during the interview, and there are several interruptions which have been deleted in the final transcript.

Stacey Jagels
Interviewer

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INTERVIEWEE: James Lackey (Age: 67)

INTERVIEWER: Stacey Jagels

DATED: March 31, 1981

S.J.: This is an interview with Mr. James Lackey for the California State College, Bakersfield CALIFORNIA ODYSSEY Project by Stacey Jagels at 2619 Verdugo Lane, Bakersfield, California on March 31, 1981 at 10:30 a.m.

S.J.: I thought we'd start first with when and where you were born.

Lackey: I was born in Hartshorne, Oklahoma on January 30, 1914.

S.J.: Could you tell me a little bit about your childhood?

Lackey: There were ten of us kids. We all went through high school. Several of us went through college. I was quite an athlete. My older brother and I got a scholarship to go to college. I played football in college and he did too. That's the way we got to go to school. I went two years and then I got my leg hurt and that was the end of my football. We couldn't get a job after we got out of school. My brother got a job as superintendent of a school back there. A little later on I went to work. I had worked at the coal mines when I was thirteen years old. Age didn't mean nothing then. I worked on top and made \$4.36 a day in 1927 and that was more than I made when I came out here in the 1930s. Then the coal mine at Rock Island shut down in 1929. They went from coal to diesel. Then we didn't have anything to do. My dad had a little farm that didn't make nothing and he worked for the county. Then the WPA [Works Progress Administration] came along. He got on WPA.

S.J.: Why don't we go back just a little bit to when you were a very small boy. You said your father had a farm.

- Lackey: Yes. We worked at the coal mines to get by. My father farmed. Now we get oil money from this farm. When he sold it my mother kept the mineral rights so all of us kids get money from the oil--not much but a little.
- S.J.: Do you remember much about the farm?
- Lackey: Oh yes. We had mules, horses, cows, hogs and chickens. Everything you'd have with a farm we had. When things got rough during the Depression in 1929 everything went boom and that was it. We had to get out of there.
- S.J.: How about when you were living on the farm? Do you remember how large it was--how many acres?
- Lackey: We had 80 acres. Things got rough so we sold part of that. We bought another one and sold it and bought another one. Finally when everything was over we had 40 acres. When they come out here that's all they had left--40 acres. In the 1930s my brother and I come out here and then we'd go back. We worked at DiGiorgio and after the grape season we'd head back to Oklahoma and bring some more people out. And that's how all my kinfolk out here have come out since we have.
- S.J.: How about when you were a little boy back in Oklahoma living on the farm--do you remember doing a lot of chores?
- Lackey: I would tend to the horses. Some of the kids would tend to the cows and the chickens. Each one had his own special thing to do. I never milked a cow in my life. I couldn't. My mother sent me out to milk cows one day and I couldn't get any milk and I threw the bucket away. That was the last time I ever tried to milk. I tended the horses. Some would tend to the hogs and some would milk. Each one had his own thing to do and nobody messed with the other one's.
- S.J.: How many brothers and sisters did you have?
- Lackey: I had nine. There were ten of us kids.
- S.J.: Are you in the middle or near the oldest?
- Lackey: I'm the second and they're all two years apart. There's one set of twins--Arle and Arleen. There's eight of us still living. Our older brother come out with me and he had a pipeline construction company in Taft for twenty years--J.C. Lackey Construction. I was superintendent there. We had an office in Bakersfield, one in Long Beach--Signal Hill and one in Taft. I worked in pipeline construction nearly all my life since I worked at DiGiorgio. When the war started in 1941 I quit

DiGiorgio and went into defense work in the shipyards at Long Beach.

S.J.: Could you tell me a little bit about your parents? Were they born and raised in Oklahoma or did they migrate to Oklahoma from some other place?

Lackey: My mother was born in Arkansas and my dad in Mississippi. They migrated in a covered wagon to Oklahoma. They homesteaded around Hartshorne. The old homestead was in back of Belle Starr Mountain.

S.J.: Do you remember much about the farmhouse you lived in when you were a small boy? How large was it?

Lackey: There were about four or five of us kids to each room and we didn't have any phone or running water. In fact, I didn't talk on the phone until I was in high school. We didn't have electricity either. We had a well for water. We took baths in a washtub every Friday night usually. That's the way it was there. Each one had his own thing to do and that was it. My dad had an old Model-T and I started driving when I was thirteen. We lived about two and a half miles out of town and I drove my mother to town one day and she wouldn't ride back with me. It was raining and I passed her on the way but she was scared to get in with me. She walked all the way home.

S.J.: Did your mother work out in the fields?

Lackey: She'd get up at four o'clock and go out and chop cotton with us. She'd work in the field all day long and come back and cook at night. I don't see how she made it-- hardest working woman I ever seen. Well, she had to or we wouldn't have got by. That's the way she was. And then when farming got bad we went to work around the coal mines and made money that way.

S.J.: Do you remember what crops you raised besides cotton?

Lackey: We raised a lot of corn and watermelons and stuff like that to sell. I'd get on a horse and take a sack of corn up to town to the gristmill and get it ground up for cornmeal. That's the way we got our cornmeal. He would take a third of it when he ground it up for his part. We raised hogs and eggs. We didn't have to buy too much. Mama would make her own clothes out of flour sacks or corn sacks. You'd go to town and get them. She made a lot of her clothes like that.

S.J.: Did your father own this farm or did he rent it?

Lackey: He bought it. He owned it. It was right there by my grandfather's place. All of them bought right around in there and were a

close-knit family until the Depression hit and we started for California.

S.J.: So you had your relatives right near you. Was your family very important then? Did you get together often?

Lackey: We got together all the time. We do here too. I was president of a gathering last year. I had a heck of a time locating some of my cousins. In fact, I found one up in Minnesota that was Uncle Robert's boy--the preacher. He is a Northwest Orient airline pilot. The next reunion will be June 27 and he will be out here.

S.J.: When you were in Oklahoma and all your relatives lived around you do you remember having much contact with other families or did you mostly just associate with your relatives?

Lackey: You knew everybody from miles around. You knew the whole neighborhood. You knew where everybody lived and you spoke to everybody. Every Saturday night everybody went to town. You could see them setting up on the street. Guys up there whittling and smoking cigars. Saturday night was the main event. You worked all the time but Saturday night was your night. Sunday we had to go to Sunday school. Of course, I didn't learn a lot but I had to go.

S.J.: When you worked in the fields you probably did some work before school and after school and maybe on weekends. Did you ever have to stay out of school during the harvesting?

Lackey: They would let school out during the harvest time. They still do back in there. In the field at Rock Island Mines I could be working out there and I could hear them dynamiting underneath me. The tunnel would come in under our field there. Since we've left they've hit a gas well and that's where we get our money from right there at the edge of our field. If we had had that when we were there we wouldn't have had to leave.

S.J.: Did you consider the work you did as very hard or strenuous work? Or did you just take it for granted because that's what you had to do?

Lackey: I just took it for granted because I was young and strong then. It didn't bother me. I worked at the coal mines when I was thirteen years old just like a man 30 or 40 years old did. I had to. All my brothers worked there. I didn't work inside --I worked on top because I was too young to go inside. I made the same wages as the men did. You got \$5 down underneath and \$4.36 on top so there wasn't that much difference.

S.J.: What did you do?

Lackey: I just worked around there and cleaned up around the mines-- anything to do there on top.

S.J.: Whatever they told you to do?

Lackey: Yes. I was thirteen years old. We had to take a first aid course from the Bureau of Mines. I've still got my certificate somewhere. We had to take that course in case somebody got hurt. When I was thirteen years old I passed the test. We took it in a hospital basement in Hartshorne where I lived.

S.J.: The rest of your relatives also worked--you said your brothers worked down below?

Lackey: Yes. Just me and my two older brothers worked there because the mine shut down when the Depression hit in 1929. Rock Island shut down so there was nothing to do. Dad went on the WPA and then I went to the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] and I got \$5 a month and they sent \$25 home.

S.J.: Do you remember if the work at the mine was very strenuous work as compared to your farm work?

Lackey: I don't think it was for me because I was real strong and athletic and it didn't phase me at all. Farm work is just a steady pace. Out at DiGiorgio I was out picking grapes when we first got on there. Then the foreman found out that me and my brother had gone to college and was probably a little smarter than some of the Okies--not that I'm bragging or anything. They brought us in the packing house and we started tallying the fruit when they loaded the cars. We had to keep tally of every kind of grape that would come through. It was in refrigerated cars so that was a good job. But I didn't think I was making enough money so I went to loading cars. It paid forty cents an hour instead of twenty-five.

S.J.: Before 1929 it sounds like you might have had a little bit more money. Were you very well-off as compared to your other relatives or friends that lived in the community?

Lackey: We got along good until then. But when things hit all of us would get a job in the summer.

S.J.: And you had more than enough for food and clothing?

Lackey: Oh yes.

S.J.: Money for extras if you wanted to go into town?

Lackey: Yes. We'd go to town Saturday night. Everybody would go to town. We got by real good then. But when things hit it was rough.

S.J.: Could you tell me a little bit about school--did you like school?

Lackey: I never missed a day. I went four years to high school and never missed a day. I loved school because it kept me from working. They didn't have to force none of us kids to go to school because if you didn't go to school you had to work. I went four years to high school and I wasn't late or missed a day and I lived two and a half miles out of town.

S.J.: You walked to school?

Lackey: Yes. The last years they put a bus in. We rode a bus to school but I couldn't ride it home because I played football and I had to practice after school. So after school I'd have to walk home. Me and my brother went to college because we were football players. We went to Eastern Oklahoma A & M.

S.J.: What kind of a school did you go to when you were young? Was it a little schoolhouse?

Lackey: There was a little grade school down in the corner of our field. We had 38 acres and the school took two acres in the corner. They had two teachers. One teacher would teach four or five grades. Millie Bradley was my first teacher. I'll never forget her. I was real bashful when I went to school. I'd crawl under the desk. They didn't even know I was in school for a long time. I was scared to death. Finally I got over that shyness. We had basketball courts and we played basketball there. It was just an old two-room country school. All of my brothers and sisters went to that school. The smaller ones graduated out here. In 1938 my father sold the farm and kept the mineral rights. He bought an old truck. He brought the whole bunch out to Arvin. I had a little old two-room house and \$3 a month is all he charged us for rent and they stayed there. I got them all jobs at DiGiorgio and they started to work.

S.J.: How about when you went to high school back in Oklahoma? Did you go to a very large school? You said it was large enough to have a football team.

Lackey: We were undefeated in football. We had a championship team. They called it the Choctaw Conference. There were 45 in my graduating class. Probably there would be about 70 to start as freshmen and by the time they got to their senior year some dropped out.

S.J.: You said after high school you went to college for a couple of years?

Lackey: Two years.

S.J.: Where was that?

Lackey: Wilburton--Eastern Oklahoma A & M College. We couldn't have gone but I had a scholarship and the coach got me a job working in a restaurant for my meals. We slept in a fire station at night and every time they had a fire we got \$3 for making this run. Maybe you fight fire all day but it paid \$3. You didn't want to miss it. A lot of times the whistle would blow and I'd jump out of that bunk and just catch the back end of that truck because I wanted that \$3. I didn't get anything for working at the restaurant except my meals. I'd have to open up at four o'clock in the morning to feed the Rock Island railroad men when they came through. That was the way I went to college. My brother fired the boilers at the girl's dormitory. He had a good job. That was his job and we both slept at the fire station.

The coach got us the job and everything for playing football. That was our scholarship and we got free tuition. We weren't out nothing but what little clothes we had. We'd probably go home every two weeks and take our clothes home and mother would wash them and clean them up. We'd head back and then we'd take trips for football--maybe be gone for two or three days. We didn't go too far--maybe a couple hundred miles.

S.J.: Do you remember your classes that you took at college? Did you enjoy going to college?

Lackey: Yes. I have a five-year state teacher's certificate. My brother eventually got to be superintendent of a school back there before we come out here. I think he got \$125 a month. I finished college in 1934 and it was rough to get a job so I went to the CCC.

S.J.: You were well educated as compared to most of the other people your age.

Lackey: During that time I would say we were. But of course over time you forget a lot. I can look back on my teachers now and I don't think they're as smart as these eighth grade kids are now. They were smart for their time but things have advanced so far since then.

S.J.: At the time did you feel fortunate that you had this scholarship and were able to get an education?

- Lackey: Oh definitely. In fact, when I got out of high school in 1932 I didn't know I was going to get this scholarship. Me and my brother caught a freight train and come out to Arvin and tried to get a job. I was right out of high school and we couldn't get a job. We slept under the trees out there. We went down to Arvin to the bakery and I'd bum stuff from old Joe Lombdrid who ran the bakery. I'd bum second-hand stuff that they didn't sell that day and then he'd put us back in the garden pulling weeds for our eats. We slept under trees and took baths in the canal. We had some friends that were working there. That's how come we came out. They were living in a bunkhouse and they would steal us sandwiches and bring them to us in the evening. I'll tell you--it was rough then.
- S.J.: And you went back to Oklahoma because you were unable to find a job?
- Lackey: We couldn't get a job here so we went back and went to school. We went back to Oklahoma. We were writing letters to my mother. Then she told me that we had a scholarship so we went back. I graduated from high school in 1932 and finished college in 1934. I couldn't find anything so I went in the CCC.
- S.J.: Could you tell me a little bit more about Oklahoma? You mentioned the Baptist church earlier when we were talking. I take it then that your family was religious. It was important for you to go to church.
- Lackey: All of us were. All of us were Southern Baptists. My dad built the church in Lamont in 1938 or 1939. In fact, he put up a tent when he first come out here and started church.
- S.J.: So when you were back in Oklahoma it was important that you go to church every Sunday.
- Lackey: Everybody went to church, yes ma'am. All the family were church members. In fact, I was baptized when I was twelve or thirteen.
- S.J.: Do you remember revivals in Oklahoma?
- Lackey: They all had revivals. Two of my uncles were preachers back there -- Uncle Robert and Uncle Emmet. Uncle Emmet built the church right over here one block. He was a minister back there and I think he's the one that baptized me. They baptized you out in the ponds you know. All of the Rock Island Mines had water ponds there to get their water so they baptized them right out there. We had to go to church. That was a must on Sunday.
- S.J.: Do you remember much about the revivals and what they were like?

- Lackey: Ministers would just have them in any church. They would even have the Holy Rollers. We used to go up to those that have tents. They would put up a big tent. They just moved from town to town. When they have revivals they always bring another minister.
- S.J.: Do you remember if you enjoyed it?
- Lackey: We had to. I always was a little rowdy and I liked to play so I really didn't care too much for church, but I went because my dad made me. As far as enjoying it I'd rather have been out playing. That was the way I was.
- S.J.: How about activities in the church? I've heard that the church was kind of a social gathering place too as well as a place for worship.
- Lackey: Yes. They always had their socials and then they had big pie suppers or box suppers. That's the way they raised their money. Your girl or your mother or sisters would take the pies and then the men would buy them. You'd always try to bid against somebody who had a sweet girl so you could eat with this girl. You just bid it up a little and they'd raise the price of them. Church was always the gathering place for the community. Everybody seemed to go to church. It was just a must then. That was all.
- S.J.: What other activities were there besides church?
- Lackey: Parties in homes. They'd have parties in homes where they'd play Ring Around the Rosie and that kind of thing.
- S.J.: Was there ever much leisure time left in the evenings after all the work?
- Lackey: Saturday nights. That was it. Saturday nights was the big night for everybody. They would go to town Saturday night and you could always look forward to the Fourth of July. The whole town shut down and had big picnics.
- S.J.: I wanted to ask you a little bit about the land where you lived. Now is this in eastern Oklahoma?
- Lackey: Yes, the southeastern part.
- S.J.: Could you describe to me what the land was like and whether it had rolling hills and trees? Was it pretty?
- Lackey: It was flat and there were creeks running through there where we'd go fishing every night. Where we farmed it was flat. There were trees all around. I thought there were big mountains then but since I've come out here I see that they are just little old

hills. I thought Belle Starr Mountain where my grandfather settled was something but it ain't even just a rolling hill. It was mostly flat country where we lived. At the Rock Island Mines there where they got the coal out they had big shale. That's what they surfaced the road with. After it would burn it made red shale and they would put that on the road. My dad used to tend to the roads a lot and work for the county and he made money that way when he couldn't make nothing on the farm. Everybody had little farms--maybe 40, 50 or 60 acres. One time I think the biggest we had was 80 acres. Then things got rough and he'd sell some of it and then build a house on another part. If he would have kept the mineral rights--he only kept mineral rights on the one when he come out here--we would have been pretty well-off.

S.J.: Do you have very happy memories of your childhood on the farm?

Lackey: Oh definitely, yes. There was always something for us to do-- hunting and fishing. Maybe if we got the work done my dad would load us in the wagon and we'd go down on a creek and stay all night and fish. We got a lot of fish. Then we had coon dogs to go hunt possums and we had rabbit dogs too. I'd take these dogs and jump a rabbit and I'd bring rabbits home to eat. That's the way we got by. With ten kids we had to do something. And all of us were home at one time till me and my older brother couldn't get by there and just finally had to leave.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 1

S.J.: When you worked on the farm you had nine brothers and sisters to help out with the farm work, but did your father ever have occasion to hire other hands to come in?

Lackey: No, we did it all ourselves. In fact, we didn't have any money to hire anybody. No, we did it all ourselves. We raised watermelons and cantaloupes--a lot of things to sell. Dad would peddle them in a wagon. He would go up to town and take them all around and sell them to the stores. That's the way we got by.

S.J.: I've talked to some people who said when times got very hard and there was no cash they would barter with their neighbors.

Lackey: That's the way my mother bartered for me. She gave the doctor some chickens and things when I was born. He come out there in a buggy. Mama said it was snowing like everything and he was

out there covering his horse up and she kept hollering, "Come on in, come on in!" When he got in there I was already born. They gave him chickens and we'd take eggs to town and trade to the store for different items.

S.J.: But they gave him chickens--that was a very common thing?

Lackey: Everybody did that. Then they would sell them to people that didn't have them. You'd get flour, sugar--things that you couldn't raise at home. We raised cornmeal and a lot of things --berries, peaches and meats. You just had to get your things like sugar, salt and flour. That's about all you'd buy or barter for.

S.J.: Did you ever trade labor with a relative or a neighbor that needed a little on their farm?

Lackey: During the combine season, yes. If they had oats or anything like that we'd go over and work in their field and then they would come trade with us. There was no money involved because we didn't have it. I've worked in a lot of different people's fields. I think we got \$1 a day and one meal for working on a farm and it was ten hours a day. You'd take off an hour for mealtime. They'd feed you and then you'd lay around and rest a little bit before you'd go back to that old hot field. I tell you--I was glad to get out of there. But ever since I've been here I've had a yearning to go back. In fact, I'd like to just sell out tomorrow and go back.

S.J.: Do you ever remember seeing tractors on the land then?

Lackey: They had a steam tractor that pulled a combine. That was all I ever seen.

S.J.: Was that very common or did most people still use horses or mules?

Lackey: The tractors would come in out of Kansas. They'd travel from state to state. They'd start in a harvest up north and then they would come right on down and just a regular crew would work with it. In fact, there was one that broke down parked over there by our old school. It stayed there for twenty years right off the road there by the school. It was a big old steam [tractor] that pulled the combines. There were crews that would just go through and do that and you'd go from field to field to help them until they'd move on out of the county and go somewhere else. That was the only tractors that I ever seen. When it broke down there it stayed there by that school and us kids played on that. I know it was there for twenty years or longer.

- S.J.: You said that where you worked at the coal mines it had to shut down in 1929.
- Lackey: It was shut down when the railroads went to diesel. Rock Island owned those coal mines. There were three big coal mines there. Everybody in that town had little farms and they'd work at the coal mines.
- S.J.: What happened to your family's finances? How did that hurt your particular family?
- Lackey: That's when Roosevelt got in and he started the WPA--that's Works Progress Administration. Then he started the CCC. I went to that and I built trails in the Grand Canyon. They shipped me to Cheyenne, Wyoming first and I was up there. I only got \$5 a month and they sent \$25 home.
- S.J.: When was that?
- Lackey: That was 1935.
- S.J.: Before these programs were started--before you went to the CCC and your father got in with the WPA--there must have been a period of time where you had very little or no work and things were rough.
- Lackey: Oh definitely, yes. Roosevelt didn't get in till 1932 and in 1929 the banks and everything went busted. Everybody back in there had a little money from working the mines and had a bankbook. They just lost everything and then from 1929 until Roosevelt Hoover was in. That turned me against Republicans. You may be a Republican but I'm the hardest headed Democrat you ever seen in your life. Hoover liked to have starved us all to death. It was rough when he got in in 1928, but he only served one term. Then Roosevelt got in and things started picking up. They [the government] bought the cattle and they'd shoot them. They all gathered in our lot there. We had a big lot. People from all over the neighborhood would bring their cattle in there and the government men said, "I'll give you \$20 for that one; I'll give \$10 for that one; I'll give you \$20 for that one." If you didn't want it you didn't have to take it but they were starving to death anyway. I would skin them. I had a blocking tackle. I would skin them and I'd get \$1 for the hides. I'd take them up to town and I'd sell them. That was where I got my money. You got to keep the meat. The government just gave you that. You'd kill them and then the whole neighborhood would come and get the meat and then they would can it. They had these canning factories. They'd can a lot of it. My mother canned a lot of it. When they'd shoot these cattle anybody that wanted them could have them. The government bought them from me. People come from all around

that didn't have cattle. They'd take them but I kept the hides myself because I'd get \$1 out of them and that was a lot of money for me then. I forget how many we had shot. They were just starving to death. They'd have certain areas that the government said to bring them to. Our place was the headquarters where they brought them for the neighborhood. I forget how many we had shot. We just couldn't support them.

S.J.: How about pigs? Did they do that with the hogs too?

Lackey: Seemed like they did. Now I'm not too up on that but I think they did the hogs that way too. You had more cattle than pigs then.

S.J.: How did you feel about that? Did you feel that that was wrong?

Lackey: Oh, we were happy.

S.J.: You were happy to do this because of the money?

Lackey: Oh, glad to get the money. Definitely. It tickled me to death.

S.J.: Some people have said that the government had the cattle shot and then burned them and wouldn't allow anyone to eat the meat. Did you ever hear of that happening at another place?

Lackey: Not where I was. In fact, even the colored people would bring pans over there and get the blood and make blood pudding. We didn't. But I've seen a lot of colored people that lived over across the hill from us and they would bring pans over there. When they'd shoot them we'd stick them to let them bleed and the colored people would get the blood and make blood pudding.

S.J.: But in your case all this meat was eaten or canned?

Lackey: Oh, definitely. If the government shot it anybody could get it. That was to help the people.

S.J.: It sounds like that program did help your family.

Lackey: It did mine. They would have died. We just couldn't feed them. I made money by skinning them hides and taking them up to McAlester and selling them. My dad got money for having them shot and then we got the meat so it helped us three ways.

S.J.: How about plowing under crops or not planting crops? I've heard that the government had a special program where they actually paid farmers to plow under or not to plant.

- Lackey: I think that was later. We never were in on any of that because my folks left in 1938 and that must have come later. I've read about that but that happened after we left.
- S.J.: So you didn't have any personal experience with that?
- Lackey: We weren't in on that. Everything we planted we had to harvest.
- S.J.: We were just talking about when Hoover was President from 1928 to 1932 and at that time your family was not doing well at all. Could you give me some idea about how bad things were? Did you go hungry every day?
- Lackey: I tell you, we have set down to eat and had biscuits and gravy. A lot of times that was our meal. For supper we had corn bread and sweet milk and I still love it. We had a long table and there would be ten of us kids there. A lot of times I've set down to just biscuits and gravy. Maybe it wasn't time to kill a hog or a cow or something like that.
- S.J.: And so there certainly wasn't money for anything else?
- Lackey: You didn't have any luxuries at all. Definitely not. That was out of the question. Just essentials.
- S.J.: Was everybody else that you knew in the same situation?
- Lackey: Everybody. In my neighborhood, in the county where I was, that's why they left. Of course I didn't know about the rest of the state. But where I lived they had to get out of there. In fact all my cousins come out here since I have. They came out in the 1930s.
- S.J.: You mentioned that Hoover turned you against Republicans. Could you explain that a little bit more? What specific things made you feel this way?
- Lackey: I figured that he was for the wealthy people and I didn't have anything and that's why I was that way. Of course I guess I'm wrong, but to tell you the truth I have never voted Republican in my life. Well, I'll take it back. I voted for Trice Harvey 'cause he's a good friend of mine. He comes here and takes my boy and they go play basketball--Trice Harvey, the Supervisor. [Harvey is on the Kern County Board of Supervisors.] And I lived in Taft where he went to school. He was quite a football player in college.
- S.J.: But other than that you've been turned against Republicans since then?

- Lackey: That is right. And I didn't know he was a Republican when I voted for him or he probably wouldn't have gotten my vote, and he's a good friend of mine. I like him well.
- S.J.: How about before Hoover? Did you have any political views?
- Lackey: I was only thirteen years old. But I know I heard my folks talk about him. "Chicken in every pot," they said, "and a car in every garage," and all that stuff. He had the chicken and we had the pot.
- S.J.: So when Roosevelt came into power you supported him. You were very pro-Roosevelt.
- Lackey: Oh definitely. I thought Roosevelt was one of the greatest things that ever was. I still do. I don't know why but that's when we started getting on our feet.
- S.J.: Do you remember how the drought affected your father's farm?
- Lackey: A lot of years we didn't make a dime. Plant cotton out there and it'd get up maybe that high and the boll weevils would eat it up. We didn't have the chemicals we have now. You were just hoping that you'd make something. You didn't know if you were going to get it or not. It was just a 30 percent chance that you were going to get anything. A lot of times cotton wasn't even worth going out there and picking. But we had our meat, chickens, eggs, butter and milk.
- S.J.: But the drought especially affected cotton?
- Lackey: All the crops. You would plant cotton and the boll weevils eat it up too. Always something. You plant something and there's something to get it.
- S.J.: How about the dust storms? I know you lived in eastern Oklahoma and you didn't experience them as much as western Oklahoma did.
- Lackey: The dust storms were mostly in the west. We'd have to go out there and pick the potato bugs off of the potatoes by hand. We'd take a fruit jar and put kerosene in it and go down the rows and pick them potato bugs off and put them in the jar to kill them to keep them from eating our potatoes up. Things like that you had to do by hand. Now you just spray with an airplane. But we had to go out there and pick them. I'll never forget things like that. You just can't.
- S.J.: Do you remember whether people talked about the drought and attributed it to something? Did people think this was just God's will or did people speculate as to why there was a drought?

- Lackey: I wouldn't know about that. The dust bowl was in the western part where they raised wheat and it was dry there. We had a little rain where we were. Out in the western part of Oklahoma, in the plains, was where your big dust was. We had a lot of dust but they had it worse out there.
- S.J.: Some people have said that part of the problem with the farms in Oklahoma in the 1930s was that farming methods were not very sophisticated and people didn't use the land very well. For instance, not very many farmers practiced crop rotation. They'd plant cotton in a field year after year after year.
- Lackey: That's right. They weren't scientific or wise enough then. You didn't have your agricultural commissioner to tell you how to do things like you do here. We had watermelon patches and that's where the watermelons were but why they didn't know enough to rotate and change I don't know.
- S.J.: That depleted the nutrients in the soil.
- Lackey: I don't know, but those people just weren't educated to that. They were just old hardworking people.
- S.J.: How about the way they planted? I've heard that when they plant in straight rows that's not as good for the land as when you plant in curves. Do you remember that? Was it straight rows?
- Lackey: Yes. We planted in straight rows. We'd set a stake in the middle and one on each end and head the team right down the stakes. Then you'd mark over ten feet and line them up and that's the way you made your rows. Now they've got markers on the tractors that marks it when they go. Of course some of them weren't straight. Them old mules would wander a little bit but you tried to keep it straight. That's the way you made your row there.
- S.J.: Do you think that it's possible that the way people used their land, the way they planted, might have had something to do with why the land wasn't productive?
- Lackey: I know it did. They just wore the land out with that one crop. That one crop had to have certain vitamins or nutrients out of the soil. It just kept getting the same thing out every year. If they would have rotated it would have kept the soil built up. They just did not know. They weren't that smart. But it's come a long way since the 1930s. I can see how things have progressed.
- S.J.: You left Oklahoma the first time in 1932?

- Lackey: 1932. We come on a freight train out here. Our friend got killed under the wheels over in Ash Fork, Arizona. We met another guy on the railroad and I was the fastest. I would let my brother catch it first before it would get going too fast. Then we met a buddy. In Ash Fork, Arizona I said to my brother, "Now you get it before it gets going too fast to catch it. I caught it next and I looked back and this other guy tried to catch it and he went under the wheels. I looked back. It chopped him all to pieces. I can just see his bones and legs bouncing under there. The train went on its way. They'd keep you off the train. They were rough. They'd keep you off till it would get going fast. They didn't want you on it. They'd throw coals at you. They had bulls that ride the train and knocked you off.
- S.J.: Were you ever thrown off?
- Lackey: A lot of times. We got thrown off over here in Barstow. They shot at us. We walked seven miles out of Barstow to catch it up that grade. They kept us off. They had bulls. They didn't want you on the train.
- S.J.: Were you ever hurt when you were thrown off the train?
- Lackey: Oh no. I could catch them faster than anybody that ever run. They'd throw you off and maybe you'd have to wait two or three days and then we'd go and bum. It was rough bumming. We bummed our meals. Maybe we'd leave Oklahoma with \$1. We would bum on the way. Along the railroads it's all bummed out. Everybody'd done got all people had to give out so we would go around in town. In fact, in Amarillo we got so hungry that we'd go around and follow the milkman. He'd set a carton of milk on the house step and we'd go get it before daylight to drink it. We had to. In fact, we stayed in jail there in Amarillo one time. We asked to stay in there. We were hungry, cold and starving to death. They fed us jackrabbit soup. That's what we ate there in jail.
- S.J.: So you viewed the jail as a place to sleep in and get a meal too?
- Lackey: Oh definitely. I'd go to these missions. They had soup lines and I've made a lot of those. In any town we'd go and ask. We were hungry. A lot of times you couldn't bum nothing to eat. In fact, I even bummed here in Arvin when I came out in the 1930s. That old Mexican that run that bakery down there was good to us. That's the first time I ever ate maple sticks. We'd pull weeds in his garden.
- S.J.: Was that the only time you went to a jail for food and shelter or were there other times?
- Lackey: That's the only time I stayed in jail, but we asked to stay. We've stayed in missions. In jail they searched us. We had to

leave all our things at the desk. We slept there on the floor. There were probably 50 or 60 men in there. The next morning we got up.

S.J.: So this was quite a common thing. There were many other people who were bumming around?

Lackey: Oh, trains were loaded. People had started moving. They just had to get out. I've helped whole families on them. You know sometimes whenever the train is stopped you can get in the boxcar and shut the door and they can't get to you. Now we even slept down in the reefers where they put ice in. We got in there when we couldn't find no other place. Right on top of them. They used to have water stations across the desert when they had steam and coal. They had to stop and get water. We'd get off and run out on the desert and stretch our legs and get a little exercise. They'd give that highball. We always knew the signals when it was going to move. We'd run and grab it and here we'd go. I've come to Bakersfield two or three times on a freight train from back there.

S.J.: Where did you sleep--just anywhere you could find?

Lackey: We'd go around the house a way and sleep. We were sleeping in Amarillo one time and some other bum stole all my brother's clothes. We always took a sack of stuff--maybe a razor and two or three sets of old clothes. He was sleeping there one time and somebody stole all his clothes. Didn't have nothing but what he had on.

S.J.: But you rode the trains and took milk from people.

Lackey: We didn't figure we were stealing. We were, though.

S.J.: You didn't think of it that way?

Lackey: Maybe he'd have three or four bottles of milk. We'd just get one. We wouldn't raid them. When they woke up they had them but there was one short.

S.J.: You felt that you were in such dire circumstances that you had to do this. Is that the way you felt?

Lakey: We could have gotten thrown in jail if we'd been caught. It wasn't right. We knew that.

S.J.: How did you feel when your brother's clothes were stolen?

Lackey: He had what he had on and that was it. We'd sleep and put them under our head for a pillow--sleep off the side somewhere

under the bushes or under railroad trestles or anywhere like that. Maybe they had hobo camps where they'd make soup. We were just young kids but most of them old hobos were older.

S.J.: Were you and your brother upset when his clothes were stolen or did you think that perhaps someone else needed them more?

Lackey: Well, I just figured that somebody didn't have any.

S.J.: So it wasn't a terribly upsetting thing?

Lackey: Oh no, it wasn't that big a deal, no it really wasn't. When we landed over in Barstow one time the bulls shot at us. All the trains had bulls to try to keep you off. But we were running and these bulls were shooting at us. We were going up a hill right over here in Barstow. They kept us off of there so long that we walked seven miles out of town to catch it to get away from them. It was up a grade where you wouldn't be going fast.

S.J.: Did that scare you enough to prevent you from doing that again?

Lackey: Well, sure. If my kids would do that I'd have a heart attack. They don't even know what we went through. Even seeing one of mine doing it would scare me to death. I guess my mother worried too.

S.J.: But you were young and as you say very healthy and strong and perhaps a little fearless.

Lackey: The first time I was just out of high school in 1932. I was a football, basketball and baseball star and I was quite an athlete. In fact I was on the first baseball team they had at Lamont.

S.J.: Do you remember how long it took riding these trains to get from Oklahoma to California?

Lackey: Depends on if you can catch the next train. A lot of times you didn't catch it.

S.J.: The first time in 1932 do you remember about how long?

Lackey: It would take us about a week.

S.J.: Do you remember if you considered this an adventure?

Lackey: I figured it was something to do. We probably had \$1 apiece when we got on. We figured on bumming or mooching our meals which we did. Then we knew they had soup lines. We'd make all of those. In fact we bummed and went to Denver one time. They put us in a big motel up there. Then they shifted us up to another place. They give us a whole set of winter clothes.

We got them clothes and we caught that next truck to town and left. My brother taught school up there. They found out he was a schoolteacher in this transient camp. We made a lot of transient camps. Then he got a job teaching school up there for a while.

S.J.: This was sort of like a government camp?

Lackey: Yes. I never did teach so I couldn't get a job after I got out of school. It was rough to get a job back there, I'll tell you. You had to pay the school board.

S.J.: Did you know people who actually did that?

Lackey: I know people that actually did. I could name them but I wouldn't do it.

S.J.: Did you ever wonder if they needed a job where they got the money to pay the school board?

Lackey: You'd give them \$100 and you had you a job teaching school. That's just how rough it was.

S.J.: Do you think bribery like that was common in other areas too?

Lackey: It was common in all other areas back there. To teach school you'd bribe one of the members of the school board. You only gave it to one because the others didn't know he was getting it. In fact my dad was on the school board and that's why I know all this.

S.J.: How about other areas of government?

Lackey: I wouldn't know about other areas. My cousin was sheriff of Pittsburg County--that's where the pen is in McAlester. My uncle was a district judge and my other cousin was county superintendent. They all were up in there awhile until everything just fell apart.

END OF TAPE 1, SIDE 2

S.J.: We were talking earlier about when you came out the first time in 1932. Now when you came out here you couldn't find any work.

Lackey: That's right. I went out there at Arvin and bummed around. We had a couple of friends in the bunkhouse from back in Oklahoma and that's why we came out. They said we might get a job out here. They were staying at the DiGiorgio bunkhouse.

I think it cost 50 cents a day for board, room and meals or something like that. They would slip us food. They'd wrap us sandwiches and they'd bring it to us under the trees where we were sleeping at night. We stayed around Arvin and bummed and never did get a job in 1932, so we went back home. Finally we got this scholarship to college and me and my brother went on to college after a couple of years. I got my ligaments torn loose in my knee so I couldn't play anymore. Of course now they operate and there's nothing to it. Hell, I didn't have no money to pay for a doctor or nothing--no insurance. It ain't like it is now. One of my boys was quarterback for the Bakersfield Drillers. He was a pitcher on the Drillers baseball team and won the valley championship. He's a good athlete. He's the one that went to Cal State [California State College, Bakersfield] over there the second year it was there. He went to Fresno University [California State University, Fresno] and got a scholarship. He lacked a few credits but he finished up there. He's the one that owns a toy store in Oildale.

S.J.: So after you got out of college did you look for employment in Oklahoma?

Lackey: After I got out of college in 1934 I started roaming again. There was nothing doing. A dollar here and a dollar there. Finally Roosevelt started the CCC. I had a heck of a time getting in the CCC. I finally got into that at \$5 a month and \$25 home. That's the way it was.

S.J.: Where did they send you?

Lackey: Cheyenne, Wyoming. I stayed up there and the winter hit. It got cold. We were working up there in a camp in Cheyenne --Fort Francis E. Warren--that's where the big Army base is. We were working out there on the parks and it snowed and got about two feet deep and then they shipped us to the bottom of the Grand Canyon. We built trails down in there. That was in 1935.

S.J.: So you worked most of the time in the CCC in the Grand Canyon?

Lackey: In the Grand Canyon building trails. We walked down in there. They got a big dude ranch in there. You go down that Kaibab Trail and it's seven miles you walk. It is rough. I used to see these big dudes from Chicago and New York ride these mules down in there--it's quite a walk. You could go down there and stay all night for \$5. Now I think it's \$100. And I've always said I'm going back someday and ride a mule down.

S.J.: Was that difficult work building the trails there?

- Lackey: No. You didn't work hard. You had tents down there and a mess hall and recreation. In fact we walked up one time and carried a pool table down. They tore the pool table all to pieces. We carried a pool table down to have recreation. Most of the kids that were in there were from my home town. We just signed up and they put us all on a passenger train. That was the first passenger train I ever rode. They sent us to Cheyenne. We knew everybody. Everybody was from right there. Probably 200 of us got on this train and left Oklahoma at one time. I've got the picture that was taken in Cheyenne.
- S.J.: You said it was snowing in Cheyenne, but did you do any work up there?
- Lackey: No, that's when they shipped us out. When the weather got bad--in the winter we couldn't do anything so they shipped us down to the Grand Canyon where it's warm all the time.
- S.J.: Did you enjoy working down in the Grand Canyon?
- Lackey: Oh no. I was the type that had to have activity. All of the fellows were from impoverished homes--people that were hard up. I was 22 years old then. I got to be assistant leader in there. That paid \$5 more so I got \$10 where the rest of them was getting \$5. You'd have a work crew. You'd be kind of the boss of them. We did a lot of work and we had recreation ball teams. In fact I was on a ball team there. We'd go around and play different CCC units. That was our recreation. They had pool tables and a big rec hall too. And we had boxing matches. In fact I got a picture here of me boxing up there with the champion of the camp, Butch Konsire.
- S.J.: You said that you got \$5 a month and they sent home \$25 to your family. Could you tell me a little bit about how your family was doing at that time?
- Lackey: Well, that's what they lived on.
- S.J.: That really helped them a lot?
- Lackey: Oh, it helped them a lot. That was why they had that. Twenty-five dollars was a lot of money. A dime was a dime. They used to advertise for the show there in our field. They had a big billboard and they'd give us a ticket. I didn't like shows and I'd sell mine for a dime to get the dime. They'd give us two tickets to advertise every week on this billboard we had in our field. If somebody wanted a ticket I'd go up town and sell it for a dime so I'd get the money. Didn't sound like much, but by golly, it was a lot.

- S.J.: Some people have said that because the CCC was a government program it was a form of aid and some people didn't think it should have existed. Did you think of it as help from the government or did you regard it as a job you were being paid to do?
- Lackey: I figured that I was helping the environment and the government. I'd been to school and I could see that we were doing good. I didn't think that it was relief or anything like that. I figured that I had a job and I worked just as hard as I did otherwise. Eventually I got \$10 because I was assistant leader. I think a leader got \$15 to keep. The other guys got \$5 and that was their money for that month. A lot of guys would gamble and they'd borrow ahead of time and never could pay you back. Well that caused a little friction. I don't think there was a colored guy in [the picture of the group]. That was in 1935 before all this integration. Of course where I lived blacks had their own school. We never went to school with a colored guy in our life. In fact my kids never went to school with them till I moved to Bakersfield. I lived in Taft for twenty years and there were none there. When I moved here I was scared to death for my boys to go to Bakersfield High. But they fit in beautifully.
- S.J.: We were just talking about the CCC. Did you think that the work you did there was valuable? It wasn't just busy work or something like that?
- Lackey: We built trails for sightseeing and things like that. It was something to get the guys off of the street. There was nothing else for them to do. It was to get them away and to help us and our families. The Civilian Conservation Corps was the name of it. It helped the country and the people too.
- S.J.: You said your father got involved with the WPA. Do you remember much about that?
- Lackey: Yes. They used to build sidewalks and parks there. They worked on the roads or anything like that. A lot of people back there got on WPA. It was a government project--nothing else to do. They'd build bridges and work on the roads and the highways.
- S.J.: Did he still have his farm at that time or had he sold it?
- Lackey: He had his farm but he couldn't make nothing on it. He didn't sell it until 1938 when he come to Lamont. I'll never forget it. He pulled up there in that old truck and with the old tarp on it it looked like the Beverly Hillbillies. He had seven of the kids in there and he had a one-legged guy driving it. He was a mechanic. If it had broke down he could have fixed it. Papa, mama and seven kids and Joe Miller come out

there. I had a little old two-room house there. They all shackled up with me for a while until he could get a job out at DiGiorgio around the packing house.

S.J.: After you graduated from college you said you looked around but you couldn't find any work so when did you decide to come out to California again --was that in 1935?

Lackey: 1936. I got out of the CCC and we caught a freight train to come out here. We got off in east Bakersfield and then we caught that old spur line out to Arvin. We were starved to death. Clifton got off there and ate them Thompson grapes. He got sick and vomited. He must have eaten a gallon. I tell you they were the best thing I ever ate in my life. We hung around there-- slept under the trees. Couldn't get on at first so went to bumming. Guys would bring us stuff. It was all in the same area. Finally we got on there at DiGiorgio and we got a place to stay. We stayed in the bunkhouse.

S.J.: At DiGiorgio?

Lackey: DiGiorgio. We stayed right there in the bunkhouse. We were picking grapes. Then they found out we were a little smarter than some of the Okies and that's when we went into the packing house and started tallying.

S.J.: First in 1932 and then again in 1936 when you made your trips to California did you ever consider going someplace else or was it always California that you wanted to come to?

Lackey: It was always California. Never went east. Everything was west.

S.J.: You just always thought that California would be the place to be?

Lackey: Never did go east. I don't know why. The freight train runs this way.

S.J.: Did people in Oklahoma talk about California and what it was like out here?

Lackey: Definitely. Somebody would come out here and make \$1 or \$2 and they'd go back and they'd tell them about it just like we did. We'd get a little slack in the grapes for two or three weeks and we'd head back to Okie and bring somebody else back. That'd pay our expenses and then we could go back and brag about what we done.

S.J.: Do you remember the sorts of rumors there were about California? What sort of a place California was?

Lackey: I didn't like it at first. They would tell you that you could get a job--that was the main thing. There were no jobs

back there. Main thing was you could get a job out here. I worked around in Shafter and picked up potatoes over there for Mettler.

S.J.: So when you came out here you expected to be able to find a job easily?

Lackey: Yes. We didn't for a while but finally when the crops got going good we did. Nearly everybody could get a job and then they had a government camp there at Weed Patch where most of the transient people were.

S.J.: Were you disappointed when you got here?

Lackey: When I got out here I was homesick. I wanted to make a little money to go back and then I don't know how many trips I made till I decided I liked it. Too much Okie in me. Back there it was close knit and everything. Out here people didn't seem to worry about anybody else. Back there they did. Everybody knew what everybody did and if you got sick everybody helped you but out here you didn't know your next door neighbor.

S.J.: Nobody seemed to care.

Lackey: That's right. That's the way it was at first. But I had no trouble blending in. I could talk and have a conversation with most anybody.

S.J.: California had the reputation as the land of plenty. You heard that you'd have a job here and when you came out here you found out that that wasn't the case at all.

Lackey: Yes. When we came out here we were mostly around our people from Oklahoma. That's mostly the people that we mingled with because they were out on the farms. We weren't in town in Bakersfield. We were with our own people from Okie and Texas and Arkansas, and we spoke their language and we got along real good. We never had any trouble.

S.J.: So once you did find a job you were satisfied?

Lackey: When we found a job we were on Fifth Avenue in New York City. We moved into that bunkhouse, we could get a shower, we had our own room and things like that. Had a little radio too. Then after I got married they had houses on the ranch here for \$3 a month.

S.J.: Do you remember if very many people were disappointed enough with California that they went back to Oklahoma permanently?

Lackey: Yes, a lot of them. Lots of them never could adjust. A lot of families I know went straight back. Stayed a little while, got enough money and that was it. They just could not adjust to it.

It was different back in Oklahoma than what it was here. It was a different climate. You had your tornadoes and all that lightning and stuff like that. People get scared of the earthquakes here. After a little earthquake in 1952 they just loaded up and went back. That scared them to death. That don't bother me, but that lightning and thunder does. Now we were back there the year before last in Shawnee. We had 22 of us that went in the cellar. Big tornado coming through and the siren was blowing. Man, I was scared to death. Here nothing like that bothers me. Lightning was striking--you could just see it hitting everywhere. We were running to that cellar. I don't know why I want to go back. When we went back for the high school reunion two years ago we got eaten up with chiggers. They got on Louise in her clothes and she scratched till she was bleeding till we got back to California. Them chiggers! Do you know what a chigger is? You can't see them. They make little red things. They get on your legs. You walk out in the grass and you've got them. You can't get out and sit on a lawn like you can here. But we'd forgotten about it. We parked our trailer there, got out and was having a good time.

S.J.: So when you first came out to California you were very impressed with the climate?

Lackey: Here it was hot but the heat don't bother me.

S.J.: How about the way the land looked? This is a very flat valley and it seems to be endless. Did the difference in landscape bother you?

Lackey: Yes. Back there you'd see trees and hills and lakes and streams. Here there's nothing but an old dry desert and that got me. I just couldn't go for that at all. Here you could just see for miles before all the smog come in. You used to come off of the grapevine up there and you could just see this whole valley before the smog come in.

S.J.: Do you remember the first time you came on the train through the Tehachapis and saw the valley--do you remember what you thought?

Lackey: Yes. I knew I was getting close to where I was going and I was happy. We got off right there at east Bakersfield, went in a filling station there and cleaned up and asked around the railroad yard for the little spur line that goes out to Arvin. They told us it was after noon and we waited around. They showed us where to go. We got on that spur line and rode that freight train right out to Arvin. We couldn't have gotten out there. I never was any good at highwaying it.

S.J.: But how about when you first came out of the mountains and you saw this huge valley? Do you remember what you thought? Was it very awesome and beautiful?

- Lackey: I kind of remember knowing what to look for from the guys coming back and telling me and that's how it was. We come out one year and the wildflowers were blooming. Wheeler Ridge wasn't farmland. We used to go out and picnic after we moved out. It was beautiful. Everything was big. We were just used to a little old community back there. It was close knit. Out here it was spread out. This is the biggest world I ever seen, that's just the way it seemed to me. It took me a long time to get adjusted even after I got here. I'd want to run back every chance I'd get. Then finally I got to where I wouldn't live nowhere else.
- S.J.: Your first job then was at DiGiorgio and you lived there?
- Lackey: Yes.
- S.J.: Could you tell me about that job? You said they put you in the packing shed.
- Lackey: They put us out in the fields first. Later they put us in the packing house. It wasn't very long till they found out we had a little sense. We were out there maybe two or three weeks. I didn't like that. That was picking grapes on them vines and packing them there. You'd pack them right there or you'd pick some and they'd send them into the packing house. So we got talking to the foreman. They needed some guys who could tally and figure out what was going in the car so they found out about me and my brother and they moved us in the packing house and there we stayed.
- S.J.: So that was much easier work?
- Lackey: Just standing around with a tally sheet in your hand. When the grapes on conveyors come they had guys in there loading them and you just checked the tiers to see what kind they were. It was refrigerated cars. You know how hot it gets out there, about 110°. We were in there where it was cool. Man, I was in Seventh Heaven! I think we got a nickel an hour more. I think we got 30 cents for that.
- S.J.: How long did you work there?
- Lackey: I worked from 1936 until the war started.
- S.J.: So you worked at DiGiorgio the whole time in the late 1930s?
- Lackey: Yes. All the time I was at DiGiorgio that was my only job. I loved it out there. I was on the baseball team and we got to know people. I got married there and my wife's folks lived on the ranch. The war started and I figured I've got to do something constructive. I went to the shipyards in Long Beach and was a certified pipe welder.

- S.J.: When you were at DiGiorgio could you tell me a little bit about your employers and the ranchers there? Did you feel that they treated you well? Were they good to you?
- Lackey: Oh good. I was right in with them. Hartford Allen, the one that done the hiring, was eventually on our baseball team. Alec Germanetti was a big softball pitcher. He lives over in Kern City now. I think he's still living. And there was little Joe DiGiorgio. One of my cousins died two weeks ago--Joe Priddy. Little Joe DiGiorgio went to his funeral. That's how much he thought of him. He was my first cousin. Joe was a watchman at the packing house. I was surprised to see little Joe DiGiorgio at the funeral. You know a guy like that is a millionaire. You wouldn't expect him to go to a guy's funeral like that, but by golly he was there. I didn't get to talk to him. I just saw him as he was leaving. I was going to talk to him because I know him real well.
- S.J.: So you felt that you were close to your employers? They were good to you?
- Lackey: Definitely. We just got along good with them. In fact they were just like us. They were common people.
- S.J.: Did you feel that the pay you received was fair?
- Lackey: Yes. Anything they'd have paid me I'd have been happy with. I take that back. In 1939 my other brother there wanted a nickel an hour raise and they wouldn't give it to him. So he quit and then when he quit they gave me the nickel and I took his job. Now isn't that something? He went to work for Pacific Pipeline. He was an estimator right here in Bakersfield. Roy Price owned it and he's a millionaire. Then after the war in 1945 my brother started his own company and I guess he nearly got to be a millionaire too. He had money. Why I've seen him tip waiters \$100. That's the way he threw his money away. He had this company in Taft for twenty years. I worked there after the war. I moved from Long Beach straight to Taft.
- S.J.: When you were working for DiGiorgio you said you were tallying for a while. Did you do that all the time?
- Lackey: No. I got wised up and started loading cars that paid 70 cents an hour so that paid a lot more. I got to be one of the fastest car loaders there was out there. When they come in on the conveyor you put them in tiers and then nail them. You've got strippers where you get your hands full of nails. I got real good at that. I started loading so I got where I was real good. We'd load 20 to 30 cars of grapes a day and I got paid 70 cents. So I was really in the chips I thought.
- S.J.: Was that strenuous work?

- Lackey: Strenuous? God almighty, I can't hardly bend over now. That'd kill you. I'd have to straighten up the boxes and they weighed 32 pounds. I handled thousands of them a day. Let's see. A thousand and thirty-two boxes went in the car. I'll never forget it. It was hard work.
- S.J.: And you thought that it was worth all that hard work to get the extra money?
- Lackey: I was making just about twice what the ones in the packing house were. Some of the hardest work that I ever did was loading cars. But you had to be good and you had to be fast because them guys out there running the lidding machine were working piece work. The more lids they put on the more money they made. Well they made it hard on you. You had to work, boy.
- S.J.: Because you were paid by the hour?
- Lackey: Paid by the hour. We didn't get paid by the car. The contractor got paid by the car. The harder we worked, the faster we worked, the more he made. That was the size of it.
- S.J.: Did you ever do any other jobs at DiGiorgio?
- Lackey: Yes. I swamped on a truck and then I irrigated. Then I worked out putting the trellises up on the grapes in the wintertime when work was slow with nothing to do. So we'd work on the ranch. We'd put up the posts for the trellises for the grapevines to run on. They didn't have grapes all the time.
- S.J.: What other crops did you work in?
- Lackey: They had grapes. They had asparagus and I cut asparagus out in the field. Then I was inspector in the shed for asparagus in the early spring. They had asparagus, peaches, plums, pomegranates and all different varieties of grapes. They had cold storage there. When the market would get glutted and the price dropped they'd stick them downstairs in this cold storage. In fact I helped build the cold storage. And they'd store them there until the price went up and then they'd go to market.
- S.J.: Did you have an off-season there? You said in the wintertime you put these trellises up but was there a time when you weren't working?
- Lackey: Yes, that's when I'd head to Okie. I'd run to Okie and tell them to come out.
- S.J.: You'd go back on the train then?
- Lackey: No. Finally in 1937 after I got to work I got me a little old 1926 Chrysler to go back in. But it didn't cost much for gas. I think \$13.15 one way is what it cost me. And I brought passengers

back for \$20. Well hell, I had it made. We wouldn't stop on the road. We'd pack a lunch there in Okie and that was our eats till we got to California.

S.J.: About how long would that take you to get to California?

Lackey: About 30 hours. We had it timed.

S.J.: Did you take turns driving? One person would sleep and one would drive?

Lackey: Oh yes. One would drive awhile and then the other one would drive awhile. We never stayed in a hotel. We'd sleep on the side of the road or pull off or maybe drive straight through. We did that a lot of times. Just drive straight through. Once we got us a car we were doing pretty good. We thought we were.

END OF TAPE 2, SIDE 1

S.J.: Do you remember about how many trips you made in these off-seasons?

Lackey: Oh, I've made at least a dozen.

S.J.: In the 1930s?

Lackey: Oh yes. In the 1930s I made at least that many before I got adjusted. It just couldn't get that Okie out of me that's all.

S.J.: Part of the reason was to bring other people out here?

Lackey: That's the way I'd pay for my trip. I didn't make any money but it would just pay your expenses.

S.J.: What people did you bring? Just your family?

Lackey: Cousins. Why a lot of my cousins rode with me--Joe Priddy, Judith, and Thomas Lackey. I'd just bring a lot of them or tell them about it. They'd follow me. That's the way we got started out here.

S.J.: And everyone wanted to come to California--they were anxious to?

Lackey: They wanted a job. They wanted to improve themselves. They would have all worked if they'd had a job but there was just nothing there. I was just thinking if my kids would have grown up there what they would have been doing now. Nothing. There is no work there even now. We were back there in that one town and I'd say half of those stores in that town where I lived

were boarded up. Right today in that one town where I lived. They've got one electronic factory there. It's a government deal. Used to be the coal mines. That's all that's keeping that town up is that electronic factory. And there are people out on the farms.

S.J.: When you would bring them out to California would you introduce them so they could have jobs?

Lackey: I'd get them jobs. I was kind of like a politician.

S.J.: You helped them settle there?

Lackey: Yes. I got to where I knew all the bosses. I'd get them jobs or they'd find one. Some of them would move on. Now one of my cousins that come out with me didn't stay here long. He went up to Big Pine up in Bishop and he's lived there ever since 1937. He won't get out of them hills. He's a prospector. He moved right on up there.

S.J.: Do you remember having car trouble on all those trips back and forth?

Lackey: Every time I'd go back I'd go to Joe Miller, the one that brought my dad out, and I'd give him a pint of whiskey to work on my car. He'd do anything. He liked that whiskey. He'd work on that car if I had trouble. He'd get it tuned up for me before I'd come back. All I had to do was go get him a pint of whiskey--bootleg whiskey--and that's all he wanted.

S.J.: Do you remember seeing other cars? A lot of people have a stereotype of the Okie coming out in a big jalopy with the mattress on top.

Lackey: That's the way my dad came. He had that big old tarpaulin over it and all them kids and the cooking stove and they'd stop by the side of the road. After I seen the Beverly Hillbillies it reminded me of my dad.

S.J.: Did you see a lot of cars like that coming out?

Lackey: A lot of people coming out like that. A rich Okie's got two mattresses, and the poor ones have one. It beat all I ever seen.

S.J.: Did you feel that you were pretty fortunate then?

Lackey: To get a job? Definitely.

S.J.: Because you had your job and you had your car.

Lackey: I had a house out there for \$3. They had little cabins there on the ranch.

- S.J.: Since you made so many trips back and forth you had to come across the border into California many times. Do you remember ever having any trouble coming across the border?
- Lackey: No, they'd check you and go through your stuff and we'd go back and take grapes but we'd have to have a federal stamp on those grapes before you could take them across. We didn't have any trouble. We'd have to unload everything and go through it. I didn't like that but what the heck, that's the law--you have to abide by it.
- S.J.: Do you remember whether the officials there very polite?
- Lackey: They never gave me any trouble. Of course you can't argue with them. They're the boss. If I'm working for a guy and he tells me to do something, if I don't do it I'm going to quit. If he tells me something I'm supposed to do it. You see what I mean. He's the boss and he's getting paid to boss. I'm not getting paid to boss. But they told me to unload it. I unloaded everything. They'd go through your trunk. They'd even tear your suitcases and go through them and check everything out. I don't know what they were looking for but that was the rules. They're not so strict now. Last time we come through there last year with a trailer house he just looked in the icebox to see if we had something. We had apricots. And he said, "Did you get these in Oklahoma?" and I said I got them out in Lamont. I had them all the way, but he didn't take them. One time we had to set there and eat apples. He wouldn't let us bring apples or something across and I said, "I'll just eat them right here," so we ate them right there.
- S.J.: So basically you didn't have any unusual trouble?
- Lackey: No unusual experiences. They let us come right through.
- S.J.: When you were working at DiGiorgio do you remember seeing women and children working in the fields there?
- Lackey: Mostly men. Women worked in the packing house. I don't recall women. Women worked in the packing house and the men worked in the fields. That was it. I don't remember any women working. They might have worked on other farms but DiGiorgio had a big packing house that used a lot of women.
- S.J.: In your off-season you spent most of your time going back and forth to Oklahoma?
- Lackey: If there was no work. They'd lay you off maybe two or three weeks and I'd head back.

- S.J.: How about your other leisure time? If you had a few days here and there or a weekend do you remember what you did in your free time?
- Lackey: On the weekends we'd go to Weed Patch, that government camp, and play cards. We'd play all night. We'd go there Friday or Saturday night and we'd play clear till Sunday. They had dances there and music. Everything was going on at that government camp. Then I'd play any kind of game there is. Dominos--I'm one of the best in the world. Checkers too.
- S.J.: At the government there were dances?
- Lackey: They had dances every Saturday night and then we'd go over to people that lived in the camp there and play cards. We'd play maybe a dime a game or something like that, which you could afford. Me and my brother were pretty good. We'd always win a little extra money.
- S.J.: Do you remember seeing very many migrant workers? Workers who had to travel from place to place looking for work?
- Lackey: Yes. When they shut down there in the winter they would head to other places down the Imperial Valley. When I got on there they liked me and my brother and they gave us permanent jobs. In fact we both married when we were there. He went back to Oklahoma and picked up his wife and brought her back out there and they gave him a house to live in. Then I got married and they gave me a little house.
- S.J.: Do you remember very many of the migrant workers? What were their conditions like?
- Lackey: They just lived wherever they could--in tents and under trees and everything. That's what I did at first. It wasn't permanent. They had a certain bunch there that worked steady. They gave you houses there. I got one that way and I worked pretty steady. If I hadn't gotten onto the packing house I'd have just been another old peon out there picking grapes.
- S.J.: Do you think that these people who were migrant workers and were not settled could have been taken advantage of by the growers?
- Lackey: I don't think so, not out there. I didn't see anybody taking advantage of anyone. It was a nice place in the 1930s to work. It was friendly and the bosses were good. In fact I talked to the old man DiGiorgio, the one that owned it, and little Joe. They'd come in the cars where I was loading cars and I'd just set there and talk to them and they was just like common people. All the bosses were swell.

- S.J.: So they treated migrant Okies as they treated their permanent employees?
- Lackey: Oh yes. There was no abuse that I could see. I got around a lot then. I didn't just stand still and I could see what was going on and I thought it was pretty fair. The only thing was that my brother left because they wouldn't give him a nickel an hour raise. Forty cents a day--now isn't that something? He left in 1939 and he got to where he spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in bulldozers and tractors and all that kind of stuff. That deal over the nickel changed his life right there.
- S.J.: Do you remember if people ever came around trying to organize unions in the 1930s?
- Lackey: That happened after I left. They did. They had a big strike out there and I left then.
- S.J.: But when you were there did you hear of any attempts to organize?
- Lackey: You didn't know nothing about a union.
- S.J.: How about strikes? Did you ever hear about people striking?
- Lackey: Not when I was there from 1935 to 1940. There was nothing like that. Everybody seemed to be happy because you couldn't go nowhere else and work. They just blended in.
- S.J.: Lucky to have a job as it was.
- Lackey: Yes. You strike, you're liable to be starving to death. In 1939 when it got slack out there in the winter we'd drive over to Camp Roberts and we stayed over there in a tent and we helped build that big Army base there. That's where my dad and one of my brothers got in a carpenter's union. My dad retired out of the carpenter's union and so did my brother. We worked on that. I forget what we made there now but we made a lot more than we did at DiGiorgio because it was government construction. We did it just in the spare time when they didn't really have a job for us. In the wintertime things got slow out there. They got everything caught up. Then they had a Jap camp there, a Filipino camp, a Mexican camp and I forget how many different kinds of nationalities. When the war broke out in 1941 they made me a guard down there over the Japs at Camp Eight.
- S.J.: Where was that camp?
- Lackey: DiGiorgio. They had a big camp there and they didn't know what them Japs was going to do when the Japs attacked. I didn't leave there until after the war started. I figured I'd better get into some construction or something. They

made me a guard down there over the Japs at Camp Eight at DiGiorgio. They didn't know what they was going to do and finally I think they moved them all out and put them in concentration camps. They had a big bathhouse and men and women would go around there and take a bath together. It didn't matter if it was your wife or whose wife it was. That's the way Japs were then--they even done that here. Out there I'd be guard and I'd see all of them come there with a towel wrapped around and they all go in there and take a shower together. It didn't mean nothing to them. Everywhere you'd see a Jap then, they had a camera. I don't know why but they were always taking pictures. In 1942 I left and went to Long Beach and that's where I went to work in a shipyard and I got to be a high-pressure pipe welder. That paid a little more --two bits an hour more than a regular pipe welder. I was always trying to get a little more money.

END OF TAPE 2, SIDE 2

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S.J.: Last time we were talking about when you worked on the DiGiorgio Ranch and you said you lived there on the ranch in a home there. Could you tell me a little bit more about that home--describe it to me?

Lackey: They had little cabins there. It was about two rooms and they had them there for the workers they wanted to keep year round. Of course we didn't work year round because there was a slack period, but we lived there. It cost us \$3 a month. I think we got water, electricity and we had butane for heat so it really wasn't that expensive. Of course we weren't making much and that's why they had such cheap rent. But if you lived off the ranch it cost you quite a bit more. This way we could just walk to work. We didn't even have to buy gas or anything for the car and everything was real simple.

S.J.: Did you live with your brother there?

Lackey: My brother had his own house. We lived in a bunkhouse at first. I got the bunkhouse, board and room for \$1 a day or something like that. When we first came there we weren't married so we lived in the bunkhouse. After we got married they decided they'd like for us to stay so they give us a house.

S.J.: What was the bunkhouse like?

Lackey: It was a big long bunkhouse. It had different rooms in it. You didn't lock your door. Nobody would steal anything. A whole bunch of guys lived in there in the bunkhouse and then

they had a mess hall where they had cooks. I think they had Japanese cooks or Chinese cooks and you would eat there at the mess hall. Everybody would eat together. They would bring you in at noon on a truck to eat and then take you back out to work.

S.J.: Was it fairly clean and pleasant?

Lackey: Oh it was nice. It was nice to me compared to what I was used to. It was real nice there. I liked to work there. You didn't make much but it didn't cost you much to live either.

S.J.: Other people who worked on the ranch but weren't permanent hands had to find someplace else to live?

Lackey: Yes. They would live at Weed Patch at the government camp. That was cheap. Most of the transient people would live there. It didn't cost them any more than it did me. Then there were some people at Lamont and places like that. Your whole family worked if they were big enough. You'd see whole families working because the more kids they had the more money they got.

S.J.: You had been to that camp at night for dances and playing cards and things like that. Do you remember much about the camp?

Lackey: Not too much. We'd go there every weekend Friday and Saturday night. We'd play cards and they'd have dances and that's about all there was around there.

S.J.: Do you remember ever visiting anyone there to see what it was like where they lived?

Lackey: In their home? Yes. We'd go in the homes and play cards with different people that lived there. They worked on the ranch and they'd invite you over and we'd go out to their homes. Their homes were no different from ours--just like we lived.

S.J.: But these were structured houses. I've heard that some of the government camps had platforms you'd put tents on.

Lackey: That's the way a lot of them were. A lot of them were that way. In fact, DiGiorgio had some out there where I was at. They moved boxcars out on DiGiorgio and my brother lived in a boxcar. They made houses out of those refrigerated cars. They'd move them out there and that's the way they set a lot of permanent houses out there. In fact he lived in one of the first ones they ever brought out. They brought a whole bunch of them. I guess the railroad got rid of them. They were old and that's what he lived in out there.

- S.J.: How would you compare the way you lived first in the bunkhouse and then in the house on the DiGiorgio Ranch with the way other farmworkers lived? Do you think you were about average or perhaps living a little bit better than a lot of the other workers?
- Lackey: Once we got on the ranch we just figured we had it made. You figured that you've got a permanent job and you don't have to don't have to worry about anything. They'd lay off the people that didn't live on the ranch first. The ones they'd keep were the ones that lived on the ranch longer than the rest of them. Of course we were out of work quite a bit. In the wintertime it was slow and then a lot of times there was nothing to do. But the ones that lived there they tried to keep steady.
- S.J.: Do you remember ever seeing any ditch camps where people lived under bridges or near ditches where there was water? People would throw up tents or paper shacks or camp out in the open.
- Lackey: That's what we did when we first come out. We lived under trees.
- S.J.: Do you remember seeing a congregation of people doing this in one place?
- Lackey: No, I didn't. They established that government camp. My folks lived in a tent when they first come out too. They moved in with me and then they had this big old truck. Part of them lived in it and part of them slept with me until they got them a little old house. I don't know what they paid for it. Then I got them all jobs out there and then they were pretty well settled.
- S.J.: You said when you moved into the house on DiGiorgio you were married and then you mentioned you were married in 1936.
- Lackey: Yes. We come out there in early spring.
- S.J.: Then you had children in 1937?
- Lackey: My oldest daughter was born in 1937 out at Kern General Hospital. That's where everybody was born. It was kind of a relief deal. It didn't cost you nothing there so we'd go there. In fact my first two daughters were born there in Kern General Hospital on Flower Street. I think the second was born in 1939. Then the war started. That's when I left.
- S.J.: How about a doctor's care? Did your wife get any care from a doctor before her children were born?

- Lackey: If she did it was from the county doctors. She'd go for a checkup to the hospital--that's the only place. We didn't ever remember having a doctor bill. Of course DiGiorgio had their own doctor there--Dr. DeSmit. He put his office out there and he stayed there till he died. That's the only practice he ever had. Then he opened his private office. Dr. DeSmit was his name. I'll never forget him.
- S.J.: Did you see him? Did any member of your family have an opportunity to see him?
- Lackey: Oh yes. My mother and dad used to go to him when they come out there. All my family went to him. In fact he's doctored me there on the ranch if I got sick or hurt.
- S.J.: Did you pay him or did DiGiorgio handle that?
- Lackey: I never paid him a dime. I guess it was free. He doctored me. Never sent me a bill even. So I guess DiGiorgio paid him. Of course he did outside practice too. Those people would pay him but when I lived on the ranch and he doctored me I never gave him a dime. He might have charged and I didn't have it.
- S.J.: How did you hear about Kern General and the fact that it wouldn't cost anything? Was this common knowledge? Anybody could go to that hospital?
- Lackey: Yes. County hospital. Everybody knew that. If you didn't have money for a doctor and if you were going to have any babies your wife just went up there and that was it.
- S.J.: When you or your wife had medical care at Kern General did you find that the services were good and that everyone treated you fairly well?
- Lackey: Definitely. I thought that was something because I wasn't used to anything like that being free. Usually we had to pay for everything. We would just go up there and the doctor would attend to her. I think the baby stayed five or six days then. Now they run you home the next day.
- S.J.: Because this was free did you consider that a form of relief or aid?
- Lackey: I hadn't really given it a thought. I just knew it was there and I was taking advantage of it. I knew somebody had to pay the bill, but I don't know who. I guess we paid it in our taxes. Of course I wasn't making enough to pay any taxes. We couldn't have any doctor bills. Of course we worked on Saturdays. We'd make a little extra money but there's no time and a half where I worked. There's all this straight time. In 1937 I was probably getting 30 cents an hour or 35 cents

an hour. Every year you'd probably get a little nickel raise or something.

S.J.: Some of the people who were native Californians or called themselves native Californians criticize people who came and used the county hospital free. Did you ever hear anything about that?

Lackey: Never. In fact if I did, I didn't realize it at the time.

S.J.: Everyone you came into contact with then was very polite and helpful?

Lackey: Oh yes. That's where everyone went so they wouldn't be criticizing one another.

S.J.: Did you ever have a bad winter or slack season where you took some aid from the government food or money?

Lackey: No, not after I was out there. I'd go out and work on the side. I know one spring or one fall it got slow and me and my brother bought a couple of cotton sacks down at Arvin. We were going out to pick a little cotton. We got to the field and he looked at that cotton field. He said he didn't plant the damn stuff and he wasn't going to pick it. He took his sack back to Cheever's Variety Store in Arvin and got his money back. I picked all day and didn't make enough to pay for my sack. So he was a little smarter than I was. I worked all day and I had the sack and didn't pick anymore and lost money. So that was the end of our cotton picking. We picked in Okie a little. There was nothing doing on the ranch so we thought we'd go down there and pick a little cotton. I think the sack probably cost \$2. Here I picked all day and didn't make enough to pay for my sack.

S.J.: So when times got really tough you found more work?

Lackey: You just went out and worked wherever you could get a little job. Just like when I went over to Paso Robles and worked on that Army base at Camp Roberts. If they didn't have work for you where you lived they'd let you go out and work. If you lived off the ranch you just went from one job to another.

S.J.: Did you know very many people that had bad times and had to take some money from the government?

Lackey: No, not really, I didn't.

S.J.: Was that something people would talk about if they did?

Lackey: They had the WPA and we worked on that. My dad did. We didn't think nothing of the CCC because it was a project and there

was things to be done. We had to have some kind of money to make a living.

S.J.: When you first moved out here most of the people you came into contact with were like yourself--from Oklahoma or Texas. But when you did come into contact with other people in town did you ever have any problems with them? Did you experience any hostilities?

Lackey: I got along good with them. They were all friendly to me. I was just that outgoing type anyway. I'd see most of the people that were from back east. There just was that kind of people out here around Arvin, Lamont and Weed Patch. It was just all drifters in there.

S.J.: But when you did come into contact with people who weren't like that did you have any problems?

Lackey: Didn't have any problems at all. I never did.

S.J.: Did you hear about people who did have problems?

Lackey: No. Things seemed to work smooth where I was at. Different parts of the county or state they could have been a little different. But there it seemed like they depended on us to do their work. They looked forward to that. Somebody had to do it. Them Okies coming out here was a good deal for us and it was good for them. They got their work done pretty cheap. Of course I guess that was the going wage at the time.

S.J.: When you first came out here did you miss Oklahoma? You went back dozens of times.

Lackey: Oh, I went back a dozen times. Man, I hated this place but I couldn't do nothing in Oklahoma. There was nothing to do. It took me three or four years before I even liked it out here at all. It just was a job.

S.J.: So this didn't feel like home then?

Lackey: Oh, definitely not. There were no trees here--just big open wide spaces. Where we lived in Oklahoma there were rolling hills and trees and it's just a different country. Dry and humid here. Back there we had rain, and cyclones and storms and lightning. But you come out here and for six months you wouldn't even see any rain. That's what got me. It's a different climate. And the country--you could just see for miles here. It just wasn't home for me. It took me a long time to get adjusted.

S.J.: After you got married out here did you attend church?

- Lackey: No. That's when I got out of church. In fact my letter from my church is still back there where I was baptized. I don't go to church anymore. I know I should, but I don't.
- S.J.: Did you ever have any contact with any of the schools here? Your children were born in 1937 and 1939 so they wouldn't have been of school age. Do you ever remember hearing anything about the schools where the migrant children were?
- Lackey: My children started school in Long Beach.
- S.J.: When you were here in the 1930s did you have any neighbors or friends that had children of school age?
- Lackey: I had brothers and sisters that were school age. They went to Bakersfield High. They went on a bus. In 1938 that was the only high school here.
- S.J.: Do you remember them talking very much about the school?
- Lackey: No, I really don't. I was married and wasn't home then. The young ones were home but I was gone so I really didn't hear them say too much about it.
- S.J.: Have you read The Grapes of Wrath or seen the movie?
- Lackey: Oh yes. I've seen the movie. John Steinbeck wrote that.
- S.J.: Do you have any thoughts about that?
- Lackey: Well, it's a lot of exaggeration. I think a lot of it is true. But he wrote the book to sell. Then they made the movie. That's as far as I know.
- S.J.: You just thought it was exaggerated?
- Lackey: Oh, definitely. A lot of it was -- lot of truth to it too. I can see how we were and my folks were when they come out.
- S.J.: Can you remember any of the things that you thought weren't true about it?
- Lackey: I don't know. I've forgotten a lot about it but I did read it. I saw it. I wouldn't know about all what he was talking about.
- S.J.: I wanted to ask you a little bit about the word Okie. Now people use it in jest. They don't really mean anything terribly derogatory when they say it. But back in the 1930s it probably was a much more serious thing for someone to call you an Okie.

- Lackey: It was for a lot of them. A lot of them would get mad and fight. I could call them dumb Okies and make fun of them but I'm from back there. I'm really one of them but I make fun of them more than regular natives would. I said it just as a joke.
- S.J.: How about in the 1930s when people used the term Okies?
- Lackey: It didn't bother me. No, it didn't bother me at all. Because most of the people I was in contact with were from back there and they'd joke amongst themselves. I imagine if some native come up and called me something like that I would have probably knocked his block off. But with guys that you know from there and you know they're kidding you just have fun. I would call some guys dumb Okies. They know I'm an Okie too and they don't get mad. But you let a native or somebody like that say it and you probably had a fight on your hands.
- S.J.: You said you did hear about fights?
- Lackey: Yes. I've heard that expression ever since I come out here. Dumb Okie. There were probably a lot of dumb ones and smart ones. But it didn't bother me.
- S.J.: Did you ever hear much about any discrimination against Okies? Other people might have told you of incidents where they weren't treated fairly.
- Lackey: I blended right in with the general population and I got along good.
- S.J.: No problems?
- Lackey: Not for me but with some people it could have been different. Of course I had went to school quite a bit and I could talk their language if they could talk mine. That was the difference of course. I probably talked a little funny like all Okies did when they first come out. Maybe I still do.
- S.J.: Did you ever have any problems with that?
- Lackey: No, I never did but I could hear a person talk and I could tell you if he was an Okie or not. Now Louise's daughter had trouble when she went to North High. She had that Okie talk. Even had fights up in Hanford.
- S.J.: But as far as you're concerned you never had any problems?
- Lackey: Oh no, I could get along with a lot of people. I don't know as I had a fight out there at all--only in boxing matches. We'd have things like that. I'd get in wrestling matches and everything like that, but not fights.

S.J.: People that did take offense to this and did get in fights perhaps were looking for trouble.

Lackey: No, they weren't looking for trouble but they weren't running from it either. I never seen an Okie run from trouble at all. If you corner an Okie he's going to fight. They wouldn't run but they'd hold their own. I always did and I guess the rest of them did too. Of course a lot of times I didn't win but I was there. I had enough brothers and friends that could come to my aid. There were six of us boys so we didn't have any trouble like that.

S.J.: You mentioned several times that when World War II started you moved down to the Los Angeles area. Could you tell me a little bit more about that?

Lackey: I went to Los Angeles in 1942 when the war started. My sister and her husband had already went down there and he got a job in the shipyards. DiGiorgio paid 45 cents an hour I imagine. Of course I was loading cars that time and I was getting 70 cents an hour. Down there it paid \$1 or \$2 an hour. I thought that was big money. I went down there and got a job at Cal Ship. So I worked over there. Got in the pipefitter's union. I thought I wanted to do better than this so I went to welding school and took up welding. I got to be a welder. I wanted a little more money than that so I got to be a high-pressure pipe welder. That paid 25 cents an hour more. I was doing pretty good down there and making pretty good money for the times. I was making probably three times as much down there as I would at DiGiorgio. But house rent and everything was higher. My cousin that died the other day stayed out at DiGiorgio till he retired. I think he was out there 30 years till they sold out and then he had to quit. They sold that ranch to--I think--S.A.Camp and that put him out of a job right there. He didn't have any pension. All he had when he retired was social security.

S.J.: So then when you moved to Los Angeles you said you made a lot more but then again it cost a lot more to live. In the end do you think you were any better off?

Lackey: I was way ahead. I had got me into another trade. If I'd stayed out there I would have never known anything--just old hard work is all. When I was loading cars that was the hardest work I ever done but here I could learn pipe fitting or welding or shipbuilding or different trades and that's what I was doing.

S.J.: So in a sense the war really helped you?

Lackey: Yes. It helped me and then I was classified 3A. I was in defense. I was married and had two children. In fact my

youngest daughter was born down there at Memorial Hospital in Long Beach just about the time the war ended in 1945. I made more money down there but I didn't like it down there. Just as quick as the war was over I come to Taft. My brother had his pipeline construction business.

S.J.: Did the war affect you in any other ways? Were there members of your family in the war?

Lackey: They all branched out and went into construction after the war started. Even my dad worked on the ranch over there and he got in the carpenter's union and he was a carpenter all his life. Then one of my other brothers got in the carpenter business and he carpentered all his life. There was a lot of building going on -- government Army bases and things like that.

S.J.: Did any members of your family fight?

Lackey: Oh yes. My brother was on the B52 bombers that bombed Japan all the time. He was over in Saipan. He had all his missions in Japan bombing and then he was home when the war was over. If you make so many missions you get to come home on a furlough and I think he had all his missions. He lives in Oildale. He's an operator.

S.J.: So you didn't lose anyone close to you?

Lackey: I lost a close cousin. He was a bomber pilot. In fact the Americans killed him. The Japs captured him after he got shot down and they were taking him to Japan and the Americans bombed the ship he was on. It was a Jap ship. They were taking him to prison camp. I have a cousin that was a policeman. He got captured on Bataan. I think he was in prison camp three or four years. He's here in Bakersfield now. He's my first cousin. But as far as losing anyone--not in my immediate family. Just my one cousin. My younger brother was in the Korean War but they all come out of it safe--none of them got killed.

S.J.: Then you say after the war you came right back to Kern County to Taft.

Lackey: Yes. I didn't like it down at Long Beach. Too many people for me. I was used to a small place and during the war they had the blackouts. You had to have car pools and you had to have so many tires and if you drove to work you had to get stamps to buy gas and this and that. It was just too many people and I come to Taft and my brother had already started his own pipeline company. I was superintendent for him and done jobs everywhere laying pipeline. It was hard work but I enjoyed it and made good money.

S.J.: Then did you continue to work with him until you retired?

Lackey: Twenty years. I was there twenty years and I belonged to the pipefitters Local 460 here in Bakersfield. In fact Mel Younger is our lawyer for the union and so we wouldn't have him if he wasn't a Democrat.

END OF TAPE 3, SIDE 1

S.J.: Even though you didn't like California the first few years you were here, in retrospect are you glad that you came here to California?

Lackey: Oh yes. I just was thinking the other day about if my kids had been raised in Oklahoma. There's nothing they could do. Here they've got opportunities. They can do anything they want to. Back there still there's nothing to do where I was raised. There's just one little electronic factory in that town. They make electronic components for the government. Most of the people are still on welfare and relief back there and here your kids have a lot of opportunities if they've got the ambition. Of course a lot of kids don't want to work to start with but all my children, six of them, got jobs. I never have to worry about them. I guess they all make good money. They never ask me for anything. I helped them through college, the ones that I could. The older boy come home one day about out of money. I said, "Here's your \$2,000. Go down there and finish for a while." He worked and then he was in Korea so he got a government GI Bill to go to school on. He didn't have to borrow any money and pay it back. He went on his own.

S.J.: Where did he go to school?

Lackey: He [Jim] graduated from San Diego University. Steven got a scholarship to Fresno to play ball. Jim got his degree and was going to teach school. I told him they're laying off teachers --too many of them. He got to thinking. I called him one day and I said, "Well Jimmy, I can get you in the union if you want to come back up here," and he come up just like that. Already got his degree and everything. What if he's teaching school--what would he be making?

Mike, my younger boy, made \$40,000 last year and he's just twenty years old. Jimmy didn't hardly make that much because he made over \$30,000.

S.J.: Is that your middle boy?

Lackey: Jimmy's the one that graduated from San Diego--the oldest boy --and he made over \$30,000 but the job that he was on wasn't

with much overtime. You get on a good overtime job and it's all double time. My younger boy worked out in Elk Hills.

S.J.: Your other boy is also in the pipefitter's union?

Lackey: Got him in there too right out of high school. He's the one that could have gone to the Air Force Academy. He was the one that would have really done good in college. He's the one that had the brains but he likes this. But what the heck. He's got more now than I had in 40 years, so what the heck. I don't blame him. He's twenty and he'll get his journeyman's card at the end of this year and I said, "If you get your journeyman's card you can go to college and then work when you're not in college just to get by." But, hell fire, he's probably going to stick with this for the rest of his life. We got a good pension plan. Every year you work you get \$50 on your credit. In ten years you have a \$500 pension, in twenty years you have \$1,000. That's the way it works. A credit each year is worth \$50. Then you've got your social security on top of that when you retire, so you can make it real nice. He can retire at 40 years. That would be \$20,000 when he's 40 years old. [He could] go to another trade or anything.

S.J.: Then your middle boy is the one who owns a toy store?

Lackey: Steve. He's the one that went to Fresno. He's the ballplayer. He played pro-ball up in Tri-City Ports in Washington and then he played for the Portland Mavericks. That's where he was doing good and he got his leg broke. He was a pitcher, got a line drive and broke his leg. He called me one day and that was the end of him. But that's after he'd finished college. He'd thought he'd make it in pro-ball and it's rough. They don't pay you much.

S.J.: So he went into business for himself?

Lackey: Yes. He used to run Toy World in Valley Plaza. He managed that well. He worked there while he was in high school. That's where he learned to trade. Then he took merchandizing in college so he was manager of that Toy World in Valley Plaza. Worked there when he was in high school and worked there a long time. He built that trade up. In fact it done more business than any toy store they had in California. In fact they done over a million dollars just last year. They were going to transfer him up north somewhere to build up another store somewhere and he didn't want to leave Bakersfield.

S.J.: You said your wife's children were living at home and you helped raise them too.

Lackey: Yes. Wetanah was just ready to graduate from high school and she had a knot on her leg and we took her to the doctor. The

doctor said I think she's got cancer. We had her examined more and sure enough it was cancer. They wanted to cut her leg off. She didn't want her leg cut off because she was on a swimming team over there and so we gave her the best medical treatment we could and finally we got her in the City of Hope in Los Angeles. McDonald in Oildale helped us get her in there and they kept her in there and that's where she passed away. Lived a year and a half after they found out she had cancer-- just a little old knot there. She was quite a horsewoman and we thought she got bumped riding the horse. After they discovered it she was eaten up with cancer. She was eighteen years old-- just ready to get her diploma.

S.J.: Was that the only daughter that you had?

Lackey: That was the only daughter that was home when we got married. I had three boys so I moved the boys over here. She just had the house built and me and the three boys moved in. We got married in 1965.

S.J.: So as you were saying before your kids had a lot more opportunities here in California than they would have had in Oklahoma?

Lackey: In fact if they were in Oklahoma and if they had gotten big enough they would have left just like I did. Then they would have scattered all over the United States here. I've got them all together right around here. I've got a daughter in Visalia. She works for the State in a welfare office. All my children are here. One daughter's secretary to the president of Tenneco and Jimmy and Michael are pipefitters. My other daughter's in the business office for the telephone company.

S.J.: So you're pretty happy with all your kids?

Lackey: Yes. They come here every holiday. They're here all the time. We have parties and barbecues. In fact nearly every day somebody calls and wants to come out.

S.J.: Do you have any ties to Oklahoma now -- relatives that are still back there?

Lackey: Everybody in my family has left there. There was a bunch of them. I don't have anybody back there in Oklahoma. We go back for the high school reunion and see her two children that live there in Shawnee, Oklahoma. Otherwise there's nobody for me to go see.

S.J.: Then you feel like California is really your home?

Lackey: There's no other place. I tried to get my mother to go back. Why, she wouldn't go back there. She just loved it out here-- tornadoes and all that. We had cyclones there. Tear your house up. Come through her town one day and just tore the whole town up. This is our home now and this is where it's going to be.

END OF INTERVIEW

ADDENDUM

1. Article from THE CALIFORNIA SOUTHERN BAPTIST on
R. W. Lackey
2. Invitation to Family Picnic
3. ACROSS THE YEARS ON TWO CONTINENTS -- a Family History
by Albert J. Lackey (1977)

Forty Years of Leadership

by Elliott Smith

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth—and California.

Many people the world over suspect that God made a mistake when he made California. After all, doesn't every American aberration originate there?

What we do know for sure is that God provided in California a challenging opportunity for Southern Baptists. During the past forty years we have responded with varying degrees of effort. And this effort is reflected in the men who have provided leadership.

THE BEGINNING YEARS

(1940-1944): Executive-Secretary R. W. Lackey; Presidents Sam Wilcoxon, Isam B. Hodges, John O. Scott



R. W. Lackey

R. W. Lackey, born in Cameron, Oklahoma, August 19, 1885, was the first executive-secretary of the fledgling state convention. He had preached in a revival meeting at Lamont early in 1939 and had helped Sam Wilcoxon develop a constitution for the San Joaquin Valley Missionary Baptist Association which was formed on April 13, 1939. Early in 1940, Lackey moved from Oklahoma to become the first pastor of the First Southern Baptist Church of Bakersfield. Shortly afterward, he was serving both as pastor of the Bakersfield church and as association missionary.

It was primarily through Lackey's efforts that the infant California convention won affiliation with the SBC in 1942 at San Antonio. It was also Lackey who most forcefully voiced the rationale for a Southern Baptist presence on the West Coast. He explained that when the first Southern Baptists had "looked around for a place of worship and service they found themselves out of step with religious organizations around them." Lackey wrote, "to unite with any one of these organizations meant sacrificing both faith and practice."

Lackey was not reelected at the 1944 convention. During his four years as executive-secretary, the convention had grown from 14 to 75 churches and from 1,039 to 5,184 members. Many of its future emphases had already been born. For instance, the need for ethnic ministries had been voiced by Isam B. Hodges. Writing for the July, 1944, issue of *The California Southern Baptist*, Hodges said: "We face one of the greatest missionary fields there is in all of the country. In the San Francisco Bay area there are thirty-five nationalities ... Christ must be promoted in all of his beauty and power and love."

THE BUILDING YEARS

(1945-1950): Executive-Secretary A. F. Crittendon; Presidents John O. Scott, Hollis A. Burge, S. G. Posey

Atha Floyd Crittendon, a native of Martin, Tennessee, came to California from a nine-year pastorate of the First Baptist Church of Ponca City, Oklahoma. Floyd Looney, then editor of *The California Southern Baptist*, wrote: "He is old enough (54) to be ripe in experience and seasoned enough to be aggressive."

Crittendon was aggressive. He traveled the state extensively, as had Lackey. President John O. Scott gave leadership to the work. The number of churches rose by 350 percent, and membership grew by 650 percent during Crittendon's six-year tenure.

The following factors were involved in the success of the Crittendon years. 1) The war had ended. 2) The city and rural missions programs were expanded. Missionaries who were church-starters were employed.



A. F. Crittendon

One of them, George Kendall, organized more than 30 churches during his ministry. 3) Capable staff people were brought into the state office. One staff person, Brooksie Howell, came before Crittendon and continued on into the Posey years. Elmer Gray wrote of her work in *Heirs of Promise*: "The W.M.U. enjoyed greater growth under her leadership than any similar women's organization in Southern Baptist history." 4) The already flickering interest in ethnic ministries grew. (See related stories.) 5) *The California Southern Baptist*, under Floyd Looney's editorship, became an effective agent of Southern Baptist news and promotion.

When Crittendon failed to receive a favorable vote in 1950, the minutes of the convention relate that he rose to his feet in the Full Gospel Tabernacle of Bakersfield and said: "I have done my best. I can't fully understand God's will, but if you have expressed God's will, I am willing to abide by it. God bless you. Get together, keep together, and go on to greater things."

THE CLIMBING YEARS

(1951-1960) Executive-Secretary S. G. Posey; Presidents J. L. Brantley, Robert D. Hughes, Byron F. Todd, Arlie L. McDaniel, Charles L. McClain

(Continued on page 16)

Years of Leaders (Continued)



S. G. Posey

California Southern Baptists did get together and go on to greater things—with Shelton Gambrell Posey.

S. G. Posey of Brookhaven, Mississippi, was 54 years old when he came to California in 1947 with his wife, Katiebel.

Like Crittendon, he had been accustomed to pastoring large churches. He moved from Baptist Temple of San Antonio to Golden Gate Seminary to become head of the Department of Religious Education. Prior to his pastorate at Baptist Temple, he had been pastor of First Baptist Church of Austin, Texas. That church, at the end of Posey's nine years, had 4000 members.

Posey was an eloquent speaker who inspired others. He was also an able administrator of the Fresno office. R. L. Pattillo, who moved to the Fresno office in 1957 as state Sunday School director, said that Posey combined compassion with administrative ability. That evaluation was typical of those who worked closely with Posey.

Posey's administration is credited with several achievements. The Broadway Plan of Church Finance (now the California Plan) was initiated. California Baptist College was established. The number of churches increased by 470. Church membership rose from 34,061 to 156,176, and Sunday School enrollment increased from 39,202 to 145,097.

The Posey years were blessed with outstanding state presidents.

J. L. Brantley, a Mississippian who had come from Texas in 1942, was president when the 1951 convention adopted a new constitution at Fresno. Among other things, that document added enormously to the tranquility of the executive-secretary by abolishing his annual call. Posey, under the new constitution, had an indefinite call.

It was during Bryon F. Todd's presidency that 110 new Sunday Schools were started in a day, 44 of them in Los Angeles Association. Todd had come to Waterford in 1948. After moving to El Monte, he greatly influenced the early years of California Baptist College.

Arlie L. McDaniel succeeded Todd. He arrived from Arkansas to become pastor of Fresno's Harvard Terrace church on July 4, 1952. A highlight of his presidency was the effort, in 1958, to baptize 50,000 people. Although that ambitious goal was not reached, 14,010 were baptized that year. That total would not be exceeded until 1971.

Charles L. McClain, who followed Arlie McDaniel to the president's podium, was one of the Truett Memorial presidents. Three presidents have been pastor of that Long Beach church during their terms in office. McClain presided at the special convention held in Fresno in 1960. The recommendations of the Long Range Planning Committee, which were adopted at that special convention, provided the organizational structure that has served so well since.

LEVELING, SLOWING

(1961-1965) *Executive-Secretary Grady Cothen; Presidents W. B. Timberlake, R. Edwin Norris, Clyde B. Skidmore*

Grady C. Cothen, a native of Mississippi, came from the First Baptist Church of Birmingham, Alabama, to succeed S. G. Posey.

Cothen and a leveling-off period arrived in California simultaneously. The rate of increase in SBC statistics, as a whole, were slowing. In Cothen's last full year as executive-secretary (1965), total SBC Sun-

day School enrollment declined for the first time since the war.

Perhaps it was an index to the California convention's coming-of-age that it was beginning to reflect statistics similar to the SBC. Church-starting in California had slowed even before Posey's retirement. While the average for Posey's entire decade was 47 new churches per year, in 1959 the number dropped to 37 and, in 1960, to 27. The average during the Cothen years was 20.

The Cothen years were marked by significant additions to the state staff. Through the continuing influence of all of these men and women, the Cothen legacy has been greater than one would expect, given the brevity of his tenure.

W. B. Timberlake was nominated to the presidency by Bob Lewis. He won over



Grady Cothen

Robert W. Stapp and W. E. Harrell. Most of the presidents have been well educated. But Timberlake's background was extraordinary. He had earned both a B.A. and a legal degree from Oklahoma University and a Th.D. from Southwestern Seminary.

R. Edwin Norris moved to the top spot when the president-elect, Robert W. Stapp, left the state. He was described as being the first "totally California product" to become president. He had been converted, called to preach, licensed, and ordained—

ACROSS THE YEARS ON TWO CONTINENTS

Some three centuries ago, there emigrated from WESTERN EUROPE, FRANCE and ENGLAND, our forebears. Surviving the many trials and hardships across the rugged ATLANTIC, they embarked on the EASTERN SHORES of a NEW WORLD we call AMERICA. Historians tell us these forebears of ours consisted of three LACKEY BROTHERS. During an earlier transition move from FRANCE to ENGLAND, the name LACKEY was changed in spelling from the FRENCH "LACQUEZ" to the present ENGLISH spelling of "LACKEY", which means SERVANT.

As time would have it, these three LACKEY BROTHERS joined the GREAT WESTERN MOVEMENT from the wild, bleak, NEW ENGLAND SHORES TO PENNSYLVANIA, ARKANSAS, AND MISSISSIPPI. We have little or no historical record of those two Lackey Brothers who settled in PENNSYLVANIA AND ARKANSAS. We who are here today can proudly hail as descendants from Grandma and Grandpa Lackey and the state of Mississippi.

Current events of today tell us there are LACKEYS, scattered as they are, in many states of our Union. Somehow, during this transition period in America, the name Lackey has been and now is, being worn by generations of people from coast to coast.

The LACKEY generations have come a long way from their humble beginnings in EUROPE as tillers of the soil and NAVAL HEROES to the present generation of today. You will find the name LACKEY in "WHO'S WHO in AMERICA" as AUTHORS, Publishers, and a great number as Ministers of the Gospel. I speak and refer equally as well to you who are cousins and inherited through marriage a different name but are still the sons and daughters of Grandma and Grandpa Lackey's children. You may wear a different name but are still Lackey DESCENDANTS.

Into the marriage union of WILLIAM HENRY LACKEY and ELENA JUDSON GENTRY, better known by us cousins as Grandma and Grandpa Lackey, were born eleven (11) children. Two (2) of these children died in early

YOU ARE INVITED
TO
COUSIN'S SECOND TRI-ANNUAL PICNIC

COME ONE - COME ALL

JASTRO PARK

BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA

4

SUNDAY, JUNE 29, 1980 - 12:00 NOON TO 5:00 P.M.

This will be a Pot-Luck Luncheon. Each family bring a picnic lunch.

We will eat Lunch at 2:00 P.M.

Registration: A Name Tag will be issued to each person upon arrival.
Under each name on the Name Tag will be the name of the
cousin's father or mother: for example,

Mildred Humphrey
(Luther Lackey)

Vera Manning
(Angie Lackey Priddy)

Publicity: Several copies of this announcement are being sent to a
cousin for distribution to members of his/her family members:
brothers, sisters, children, grandchildren, etc. We urge each
cousin receiving these announcements to please forward a copy
to your family members as soon as possible.

Last Time: On Sunday, July 3, 1977 there were 154 present at our First
Picnic. Why not make it 200 or more this time?

This is a good opportunity to come and meet some of your long
LOST COUSINS whom you haven't seen for some time.

Any pictures of the Lackey Generations (however old or new) will
be appreciated for display at the Picnic.

James H. Lackey, President
2619 Verdugo Lane
Bakersfield, California 93308
Telephone: (805) 589-3566

Albert Lackey
2807 Karla Street
Bakersfield, Ca. 93308
Telephone: (805) 589-3026

infancy. Of the remaining eight (8) children who married and reared families there were born fifty-seven (57) grandchildren. Thirty-seven (37) of those fifty seven (57) grandchildren are living today.

The oldest and still living grandchild of the Lackey Family will be, come October 11, this year, 82 years old. Even though he is unable to be with us today in body, I'm sure he is with us in spirit. Some 1,500 miles in distance separates us today from our oldest cousin, CHARLES ALBERT PRIDDY. He has endured several years of ill health, and I'm sure our hearts and prayers go out for him from each of us.

Our second oldest, living cousin is with us today. It's ironic that two of our three oldest cousins come from the same family, and moreover, that only four (4) months and twenty (20) days separate the ages of our second and third oldest cousins. I've learned a long time ago to never ask a woman her age, so I'm going to ask Mildred, our second oldest cousin tell us what she will. She may want to give us her Jack Benny age. I suppose that would be alright. Some of us may never know the difference anyway.

Our third oldest living cousin is also with us today. Vera is the sister of Charlie, our oldest living cousin. What would you like to tell us about, Vera?

Since the birth of our oldest cousin, CHARLIE, to the present time, a period of nearly 82 years, twenty (20) of the grandchildren have departed from this life and entered into their ETERNAL REST.

As a closing TRIBUTE to Grandma and Grandpa Lackey and their eleven children, let us now dwell a few moments upon some of their past achievements. During the span 18 years, 2 months, and 20 days, eleven (11) children were born unto Grandpa and Grandma Lackey's home, six (6) girls and five (5) boys. Two children of the family died in infancy. Mary Savana Lackey, the second child, died at the age of 1 year, 10 months and 11 days. Willie Judson Lackey, the fourth child, died at the age of 1 year, 7 months, and 12 days. Outside the two children who died in infancy, the

other nine lived an average age of 76 years, 5 months, 3 days. Seven of these nine children lived to be 80 years of age or older. Death prematurely prevented the five girls of the family from observing their 50th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY. All five of the boys lived to observe their 50th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY with their families. Our grandparents and their children have all gone on to their reward now. All of our uncles and aunts by marriage have gone to their reward. All but one. We are so happy to have AUNT ONIE and her family with us today. I'm sure she has much she can tell us. We are going to give her that opportunity in just a few minutes.

Let me take a few minutes, if you will, and give you the life span of each of the nine children, (excluding the two who died in infancy). I shall begin with the one who lived longest and continue downward.

1. Uncle Pink - 89 years, 10 months and 29 days.
2. Aunt Sally Bell - 86 years, 5 months, and 9 days.
3. Uncle Luther - 84 years, 8 months, and 24 days.
4. Emmett (my daddy) - 83 years, 5 months and 10 days.
5. Uncle Henry - 81 years, 8 months, and 7 days.
6. Uncle Robert - 81 years, 3 months, and 1 day.
7. Aunt Florence Sparks - 80 years, 9 months and 2 days.
8. Aunt Angie Priddy - 62 years, 8 months and 23 days.
9. Aunt Etta Pennington - 40 years, 2 months and 6 days.

At the age of 18 months, Grandpa and Grandma Lackey became the FOSTER PARENTS of a young boy who became an orphan, having lost his father and mother in a period of two days. This young boy grew to manhood while living with Grandpa and Grandma Lackey until their deaths, a period of some 23 years. We cousins of this generation will always remember that boy we called JOE MILLER. Joe lived among us until the time of his death, May 5, 1957. He died at the age of 52 years, 10 months and 25 days, in Bakersfield, California and is buried in Union Cemetery.

William Henry Lackey (Grandpa) died September 22, 1925 at Hartshorne, Oklahoma at the age of 71 years, 7 months and 5 days, and is buried in the Hartshorne Cemetery.

Elena Judson Lackey (Grandma) died June 1, 1929 at Hartshorne, Oklahoma at the age of 75 years, 3 months, and 5 days and is also buried in the Hartshorne Cemetery.

During the past 71 years (since 1906) thirteen (13) of our cousins, brothers or sisters, have departed this life. Eleven of those 13 were boys.

Grandpa and Grandma Lackey had fifty-seven (57) grandchildren, as stated earlier. Of this number there were thirty (30) boys and twenty-seven (27) girls.

THE THIRTEEN COUSINS WHO HAVE DIED SINCE 1906

Winnie Judson Priddy (Winnie)	8-20-62
William Henry Lackey (William)	9-19-68
Marion Richard Lackey	12-19-09
Martin Leon Lackey (Leon)	6-10-44
Lora Gay Lackey	
Lee Henry Lackey	
John Woodrow Lackey (Woodrow)	10-24-44
William Richard Lackey (Bill)	
Ruby Pennington	8-18-36
Roy Pennington	1-2-71
Jewel Clifton Lackey (Clifton)	3-27-65
Lois Reed Lackey (Lois)	8-15-75
John Alfred Lackey (Alfred)	7-26-57

NUMBER OF CHILDREN BORN INTO EACH OF THE EIGHT LACKEY CHILDREN'S HOMES

<u>BOYS</u>	<u>GIRLS</u>
5	2)
4	2) Priddy
5	4 Luther
	2 Pink
3	2 Robert
1	3 Etta Pennington
3	2 Sparks
6	4 Henry
3	6 Emmett
<u>30</u>	<u>27</u>
TOTAL OF	

5.

In closing, just let me say these final words. The MAKER of this great UNIVERSE, in WHOM the past and present LACKEY generations have had a deep ABIDING FAITH, has not given us the knowledge to know what the future has in store for us. No doubt, in our minds just now, many of us are thinking of the changing scenes that may take place before we next meet. We do not know, but it is altogether possible that the present figures of our living generation will have changed. Some of us here today may cross that GREAT DIVIDE and join those twenty (20) cousins who have gone on before. And so, I close with the four final words - UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN...

ALBERT J. LACKEY

July 3, 1977

Henry Oliver Lackey
b. 1891, Kennedy, Indian
Territory
[His parents from Mississippi]

Alice Oney Thomas Lackey
b. 1893, Indian Territory
[Her parents from Arkansas]

James Harvey Lackey
b. 1914, Hartshorne, Pittsburg
County, Oklahoma
Education: 2 years of college
Church: Baptist

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Michael Dennis Lackey
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