

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Victoria Davis Webb

COLLECTION: 4700.1957

IDENTIFICATION: New Orleans resident and Hurricane Katrina survivor

INTERVIEWER: Jennifer Abraham

SERIES: Voices in the Storm: Hurricane Katrina Survivors in Pointe Coupee Parish

INTERVIEW DATE: March 8, 2007

FOCUS DATES: 2005-2007

ABSTRACT:

Tape 3817

Introduction; Webb born in Scotlandville, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1923 to Louise Valdery and Alcide Davis; parents spent most of their lives in New Roads, Louisiana, then lived in New Orleans; her grandmothers Easter Davis and Marie Valdery were also from New Roads; one grandmother lived to 108; Webb's mother lived to 102 and her father to 95; visiting grandparents in New Roads when she was growing up; grandmother Easter only spoke Creole, family members interpreted for her; Easter had a way of making sure her grandchildren knew she loved them, hugged and kissed them and always sent them home with goodies; Webb's mother spoke Creole and wasn't a strong English speaker; Webb once broke up with a boyfriend who laughed at her mother's talking; maternal grandfather was a teacher; her mother married young and had fourteen children; doesn't know where her grandfather taught, heard he was a very smart man; her mother went to school at a church in New Roads; her father was the best farmer, was approached by an agricultural extension agent who wanted to write about him; the farm was in New Roads "on the island" near Patin Dyke; father was a good provider who had a large garden and pecan trees, raised hogs and cows; mother made sausage and father made crackling; purifying hogs before slaughter; curing hog meat with salt and storing sausage in shortening; they were poor but didn't want for anything; they had good neighbors; she was best friends with a Caucasian girl named [Ideller?]; [Ideller's] father would bring [Ideller] and Webb to the movies on Saturdays; theater was white-only but [Ideller's] father made sure that nothing happened to Webb; [Ideller's] father also took them to the malt shop; Webb believes that [Ideller] has passed away, believes her last name was [Shoosha?]; the [Shoosha's] relatives were the [Bonds?], they had a nursery and florist; Webb's neighbors were the [Dabbadees?], they were in charge of a little post office; a man named Jarreau was the postman; Webb and relatives present at the interview try to explain where the island was in New Roads; they lived next to the post office and the [Dabbadees]; disagreement over how close they lived to False River; Webb's father had cows for milk; Webb once tried to milk the cow and almost got kicked; her brothers helped her father on the farm; as she and her siblings got older, they left New Roads to pursue education and careers; Webb lived in Los

Angeles for a time after getting married, later moved to New Orleans; experienced a bad earthquake in Los Angeles in the 1960s; surviving the earthquake was a miracle; Webb names her siblings: Buford, Mary, Harry, Junior, Louise, Joseph, David, Elizabeth, Catherine, Victoria, Clara Jane, Alfred, and Claude; Webb is among the youngest; she doesn't recall stories of the 1927 Flood, remembers Hurricanes Andrew and George; her brothers Harry and Junior would go out at night dancing and scare their mother when they came home; she recalls staying up to listen to them tell stories about the good times they had; Webb left her home in Gentilly ahead of Hurricane Katrina on a Sunday; most hotels in New Orleans were booked, but she called around and found a room at a hotel that accepted pets; she was there with [Siola?], Harry, and Clara; the second night in the hotel the weather got bad; [Siola's] car was underwater in the parking lot; hotel was on Canal Street and LaSalle Street; after the storm, people were walking in the street with water up to their chests, water coming into the hotel; hotel staff directed them to a point where they would be evacuated by boat; her nephew tried to make it back to his home but couldn't, he was staying at Tulane University with his wife; she was afraid of not being able to bring her dog, Max; Max behaved himself "like a human being" when they loaded onto the boat; boat took them to Tulane where they stayed overnight in a parking garage; other people in the garage that night offered to watch Max while she slept but she didn't trust them; hearing rumors that they wouldn't be able to bring their pets; she befriended a man with two dogs who assured her that they could take their pets; Clara came with them and had to leave Harry at Tulane because only the sick patients were being evacuated; walking six flights of stairs to leave the parking garage got her heart racing so Clara took Max; everyone had to stay in line to evacuate, Clara and Max were directed one way and Webb another; Webb and [Siola?] were evacuated to Lafayette, Louisiana, by helicopter; arriving at the hospital, they had to remove their shoes, were given shots and an opportunity to bathe; bus took them to a shelter in Lafayette which was cramped with mattress all over the floor; there was no fighting or stealing at the shelter; shoe store near the shelter was offering free shoes to anyone who needed them; the shoe salesman and his family were so warm and wonderful to her; people visiting the shelter offered rides to various cities, a woman offered to take her to New Roads; a nurse on the bus was on her way to Baton Rouge; discussing religion with the women who gave her a ride; arriving in Baton Rouge, Webb felt her heart racing again, the nurse got her to a hospital and checked her in; another nurse at the hospital comforted her; the doctor gave her a shot and observed her for a few hours before letting her go; nurse got her something to eat; man in the hospital waiting room offered them a ride to New Roads; her nephew was on his way to the same hospital to pick someone up, but they couldn't contact him; as they left the hospital with the man who offered a ride, her nephew arrived; nephew took them to Bush, Louisiana; nephew's daughter offered her trailer for Webb to stay in and was so welcoming; only downside was they didn't allow Max in the house; during a storm, she stayed in a truck with Max; trying to locate her brothers Harry and Claude after evacuating; another nephew's wife, Brenda, searched online and located Harry in a nursing home; reuniting with Harry was emotional; they brought Harry home to New Roads; Brenda also located Claude, seeing him again was a miracle; their brother, Junior, wasn't located for three or four months; deciding to come to New Roads because they couldn't return to New Orleans; her nephew arranged for them to stay in a trailer in New Roads where she could keep Max inside; Webb wondered if she would be able to share her story; she closes with a prayer; conclusion.

TAPE: 1 (T3817)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 1 hour, 13 minutes

PAGES TRANSCRIPT: 46 pages

PHOTOGRAPHS / PHOTOGRAPHER: 1 photo of Webb. Photographer David Breidenbach.

OTHER MATERIALS: Voices in the Storm reception program (2 pgs)

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