

An Interview with the Last of His Generation

Freda & Lloyd around 1949



Freda & Lloyd, June 8, 2012

Lloyd
George
Carter

(Since the subjects of this interview jumped around quite a bit and our talk was rather conversational, some answers have been slightly paraphrased and non-relevant conversation edited out for better readability. But answers are as close as possible to the actual conversation. Some questions that no answer could be thought of have been edited out.

Entire unedited conversation is available on an audio 2 CD set-a little over 2 hours total of conversation/interview session.)

(The interview was both video recorded and recorded on a small digital recorder.)

Opening Statement

Today is Friday, June 8th, 2012 and I am interviewing my great uncle, Lloyd Carter, and also his wife, Aunt Freda. They've come out to my house so I can ask questions about the early years and can add this to my Carter-Dykes Family Tree Notebook I have just completed.

Uncle Lloyd and Aunt Freda, I know we are going a long ways back down memory lane and that you won't be able to recall everything I'm going to ask. But I do appreciate the answers that you will remember and your giving the current generations (and future ones that may read this later) a glimpse of the early days of the Carters on memories that come back to you as I ask these questions. Okay, let's get started.....

June 20, 2025 - This paraphrased transcript was created in June of 2012 based on a video recording (and non-video recording I had going at the same time) of Lloyd and Freda Carter. For age 94, Lloyd seemed to be in relatively good health (and so did his wife Freda). Looking back I compare this June 8, 2012 recording date and then the October 15, 2012 date that Lloyd passed away just a little over three months later. (His son said he declined quickly after getting a cold.) The original video tape had gotten glitchy with the original audio dropping in and out. So I used the lesser quality audio recording to replace the glitchy audio on part of the video tape. But I also notice that the video is not as long as this transcribed transcript. I may have not recorded a second video tape way back and may have gotten the paraphrased transcript from the lesser audio recording. If I did I will create another YouTube video adding on the lesser audio recording of Lloyd and Freda - extending the video/non-video to include this entire paraphrased transcript.

- Diana Dunn Firey

Uncle Lloyd Carter Interview Questions

Your name is Lloyd George Carter. Why did your parents select this name for you? Did you have a nickname?

I don't know on Lloyd, but the middle name could have been after my dad's brother, George (who you've found in the family tree), but I'm not sure.

Uncle Lloyd, I notice you were born in 1918 in Stuart, Hughes County, Oklahoma. So were at least one other of you kids (Cleo). How did your mom and dad and family happen to live there at that time. Did they have another farm there?

Yes, he had bought an old farm there, but I don't remember anything about it. I believe they lived down there about 7 years, but we were back in Pawnee County by 1920.

Why did he pick that place for a farm?

Why did he pick *any* of them that he did, because there was never any of them that was worth 10 cents?

What would be your earliest childhood memory growing up?

Well, we lived on the old Beers (*not sure on spelling*) place between Sennett and Cleveland. Anyhow, I can faintly remember, probably me and Cleo, we had a big cardboard box set up beside the porch playing in it.

You've told me your dad sold his goods by traveling by horse and wagon. What did he sell and how many miles did he travel out.

Well, I can remember one time, we had a heck of a watermelon crop. He loaded up a load of watermelons and went to Mannford with them trying to sell them for 25 cents a piece. He sold 2 or 3 or 4 and came back with 2 or 3 dollars. He came home and fed the rest of them to the hogs.

He also always dabbled in junk...even when he moved into Cleveland. He made a living in later years buying and selling. Of course Bud also had a store, and you couldn't get into it for all the stuff including log chains.

What year did they move into Cleveland?

Probably early 40's or so.

What crops and animals did your father raise? What provided most of his livelihood throughout his life.

We always had cows, work horses and raised some goats. Back then no one had tractors, so we did all the work with horses.

Did your dad drive?

Someone tried to sell Dad a flatbed truck in the late 20's when we lived around Big Cabin during hay season. They were out in the hay field working and at noon they came in the house for lunch. Afterwards someone talked him into getting behind the wheel to learn how to drive while trying to sell him the truck. There was a freshly graded dirt road with a ridge of dirt along the side. He got his front wheel over into that dirt and the truck got away from him and he hit a telephone pole. He said, 'Well, that's the end of that!'

So he never did learn to drive or own a vehicle?

No, he did not. As far as I know, that's the only time he tried to drive. He never owned a vehicle.

What kind of crops did you raise?

Cotton, corn and small grain.

Did he sell any of that?

We sold the cotton and hauled it to the gin. Where was the gin? I believe the gin was at Mannford. (Freda) Did you ever see them

cotton sacks that they pull – you've seen colored people out in the field. I bet they reach from here to there-they're so long.

We raised an awful lot of what we ate. Mom always put out a good garden. She canned a lot of stuff. She went to the fields with us to work the garden. *(Freda)* I don't know how she did it having 14 kids. . *(Laughter)* There's not a way in the world she could keep from getting pregnant moving all over the place with all those little kids around

Did you all raise your own meat to butcher, hogs, cattle? Describe the process?

We always butchered hogs in the fall. Dad would take a 55 gallon steel drum and bury it in the ground sloped some and fill it with boiling hot water. Of course he killed the hog first and cut its throat to bleed. Then they would slice it up and dip in the boiling water to loosen the hair. And they scraped the hair off. Jess Dunn could have described such as that for you. But that was sure good eating.

(Freda) I tell you, Mrs. Carter even canned fryers. I mean she would take them and cut them up and fry them, and put them in a jar and pour grease on it. I tell you when we went there when I was pregnant with Lee, I would eat until I nearly popped. I was almost ashamed of myself. *(Lloyd)* That was during the depression. The grease sealed them from spoiling and they would keep that way.

Since you didn't have a smoke house? How did you preserve your meat?

The hams and shoulders and such as that, Dad would take a butcher knife and make a hole down to the joint and fill that full of salt. He would put it down in a wooden box and smear them all over good with salt.

You always had all the vegetables you wanted to eat and lot of kids to work the garden.

Mommy always had a big garden....potatoes, beans, peas and she'd always can a lot of that. We raised most of what we ate.

Do you remember the family's reaction when Japan attacked the US at Pearl Harbor?

Me, Alvie and Auldon were all in the army. *(Freda)* Lee was 21 or 22 months old when he was drafted. *(Lloyd)* Alvie volunteered, I think after war broke out. He went to Europe. I think he spent most of his time in France.

Did you all see any action?

Oh my, Auldon, he was in the South Pacific fighting the Japanese. He was on some of those islands that were (in the thick of fighting.)

Could you describe the house you all lived in growing up? *(Lloyd laughs...which one?)* Did your dad build it or was it already there when he moved there

Jess bought the old place off of Dad. *(Freda)* There was a creek nearby. Mrs. Carter and me used to go take a bath in Humpy Creek and boy, that was spring fed and it was cold as ice! *(laughing)*. *(Lloyd)* That was the creek that ran across Dad's place and it was spring fed.. Did you drink the water?

Yes we did. You know, one of my brothers died with typhoid fever - Ira. I had it, Alvie had it, but we didn't have it real bad.

I had wondered what he died of. Was that maybe drinking that water?

We don't know but I suspect it probably was?

Describe any house you remember.

Well, the last one that Mom and Dad lived in before they moved into Cleveland...of course, I lived there before I got away from home and wound up grabbing that *(motioning to Freda and*

laughing.) There had been a house at this site and there had been a basement under it. But that house had burned down or fell down or something years before. Well Dad went down there and he built a house back up over the basement. It had a cistern. After Mom and Dad moved to Cleveland, Jess bought that place and they moved in. *(Freda)* The only thing I remember your mother telling me was she never could go to sleep at night while he was out on a date until she could feel him pulling himself up in the side door or where he slept.

What brothers and sisters of your dad and mom did you hear of or meet.

Well, it seems like when I was small that Bob came to visit Dad one time. I don't remember any particulars about it.

Did your mom ever mention her sisters and who she was closest to?

(Freda) I would say Aunt Amanda in Ardmore?

Did your mom ever mention any younger half sisters?

(Freda) Yes she did. We met Emma one time.

Did your mom and dad ever mention any stories about their growing up years?

I don't know. That's one big regret I have - that I didn't question them about their families. I don't know what they did - were they farmers, ranchers, merchants? I just don't know.

We know about Aunt Anna's boy - he was a baseball umpire...not in the major leagues but in the minor leagues.

Same thing on your mom, did she ever visit Texas after coming to Oklahoma and did her sisters come to see her. Describe.

Me and Ed...took Mom to Texas one time....before I went into the service??? When Mommy died, did all three of those sisters come to see her (*asking Freda*) not sure.

Describe the various places you know you Mom and Dad lived at in Pawnee County or all over. All of their census records say "Cimarron Township, Pawnee County.

Let's see...the Beers Place, I think we moved to Big Cabin, from there...might be Creek County, west of Highway 48 there on Terlton Road. Then from there we moved in that old rock house over the basement before Jess bought it.

Did they own or rent their properties and how many acres.

Two that I recall that he just rented. But most he bought.

Are any of the properties now under water from the Keystone Lake?

Part of the one near Humpy Creek is under water. The lake backs up way back up that Creek. It's not a flowing creek like it used to be.

You were not that far from the Cimarron River, were you?

Oh no. We were farming right on out to the bluff. We have pictures of us...Fern (Sissom) and Alvie when we was dating at the Cimarron. Alvie was in love in Fern and everyone assumed that Alvie would marry Fern when he got back but she married George Harbison (*not sure of spelling*).

Do you remember the names of the neighboring families around you in the early years. Can you name all that you can remember?

A lot of places, we didn't even have neighbors. But there was the Reas (*not sure of spelling*)...and the Sneeds.

Before any automobile, how did you get back and forth in the early days when you were a boy.

Wagon with horses mostly.

Did your parents have electric service.

No. Mama never had electric or running water while out on the farm.

Did he ever drill a water well.

I think all the places we lived, we had water wells, but no electric to make it running water.

Did your mom use a wood cook stove for cooking and baking?

Yes

Obviously the early years would not have included indoor plumbing, how about the later years?

(Freda) There in the town of Cleveland, they were forced to have indoor plumbing and the stool was so high it would pinch my butt.

Did you own a radio growing up. What radio shows did you all listen to.

In the later years of my years at home, I got one hooked with a car battery to operate it. You would take the battery in to town every once in a while to have it charged up.

What would you all listen to?

Well, I think we listened to the Grand Ole Opry. Dad liked to listen to the news and he had some favorite radio preachers that he liked to listen to.

Obviously, you all never had a TV. I'm doing this for the benefit of not only my generation but the younger generation that can't imagine growing up like you all did.

You know, I was just talking about the younger generation...talking about school. I bet 90% of the graduates today don't know a thing in

the world about that (*pointing to his WWI cap*) because I don't think they're teaching it.

According to the 1940 census record, your dad said he had -0- years of schooling and your mom went through grade -5-. Your mom probably knew how to read and write, is that correct? Could your dad do either?

No he could not read or write. He would sign his name with an X. He could not read or write. As I was told, he went to school a day or a day in a half. He got the measles and it settled in his eyes and he never went back to school. He could see well enough to work...and don't try to ever out count him on his money. But he couldn't see good enough for reading or writing.

Mom could read good and she could write.

(We review how much schooling that everyone had Alvie Finley-0, Clemmie-5 years, Lloyd, Alvie and Auldon had according to the 1940 census record. Lloyd-6 years, Alvie-6 years, and Auldon-7 years - all at Rigsby School.)

(*Freda*) Down at Rigsby school when Lloyd was going there, he wrote on the door of the school, "Old Lady Ward is a fool." And so she was trying to find out who did that. Finally this one girl told on him and Lloyd got a paddling.

Did you walk to school and how far?

I walked and I think it was a mile and a half each way.

Was it like a one room school house?

Yes with a big old pot belly stove.

Personally, what would have been your worst and best subjects?

Well, I would say English was my worst. I liked history, I liked geography, I liked arithmetic and I was good at spelling.

What chores did you and the others perform growing up.

Feeding the livestock, milking the cows, cutting wood, and carrying it in.

What time did the day begin and what time did everyone turn in.

We were always up before daylight. And when I got big enough, my job was to build a fire in the heating stove in the winter time. And we had to turn in after dark pert nearly.

Of course you came from such a large family, could you describe the personalities of your brothers and sisters.

Mean. (*lots of laughing*).

(Freda) Tell him about the time Raymond sassed Mr. Carter. (Lloyd) Dad was carrying two buckets of slop from the house to the barn to slop the hogs and Raymond was nearby and Dad said something to him and told him to do something and Raymond sassed him. And Raymond said, "What are you going to do about it". Dad put the slop buckets down and said "I can show you quicker than I can tell you" and Raymond jumped the fence and took off.

Do you remember any animals growing up, pet dogs, horses that you fondly remember?

Nothing special. We always had dogs and cats.

My father, your nephew Curtis Dunn, remembers Bible recitation around the table when he stayed there. What do you know of this?

Well, Mommy used to always do this before or after breakfast. She would read a chapter around the table. And then he would pray and then she would.

Where did the Carter family attend church and how often?

Well, probably the last I can remember anything about is Dixie Community Church. Clyde Gibbons which was Virgil's dad was pastor there.

Do you remember anything of your mom and dad having a family bible and if so, what happened to it?

There was one and I don't know who's got it. I would give anything to see what kind of records are in it.

How often did the family go to town and just where was town.

Well, I guess the town we went the most to was Cleveland.

My dad, Curtis Dunn, remembered Grandma Carter as being quite a pie baker. Describe some typical meals and some favorite foods growing up.

She baked a lot. A typical meal would have been fried potatoes, beans, pork meat. I can remember Dad and Jess butchering one beef but we never had beef to eat...but lots of chicken.

My mom could cook the best fried chicken fried in a pan. Also Mom never bought a loaf of bread until later years. (Freda) She would make the best cakes. She would punch holes in the cake where the icing would go down there.

Did you all always eat together as a family.

Yes, unlike the families of today.

Did you all ever go hunting or wild game and if so, what kind. Was this just once in a while or on a regular basis?

We went rabbit hunting and squirrel hunting. Back then, some people ate possum but I don't think we ever did. Back then you could even skin them and sell the hides but we never hunted for that purpose.

We take for granted going to the grocery store and buying fresh fruit (not grown in Oklahoma, bananas, oranges, pineapple). Do you remember any fruit such as this growing up?

I can't remember that we ever did. We probably ate apples. But until Mom and Dad moved to town....they never bought a loaf of bread. She always baked light bread and biscuits.

My dad has mentioned some outings down by the Cimarron River. Do you remember these?

Well, I can remember at the 4th of July there would be a community gathering near Bear Creek for a picnic.

What other things did your family do for leisure and relaxation.

We played horseshoes (*trying to think of others*).

Did you ever have a favorite toy and why?

We didn't have any toys. When I was a kid, Linnie would buy us each some kind of a little toy for Christmas. She would work quite a bit in homes cleaning. Mom and Dad used to hang a sock up for each of each and put an apple, an orange and a candy cane.

What would have been your favorite thing to do for fun growing up?

One thing that kids (not just us) would take a stick and put a stick at the end straight across and then you would roll a metal ring along.

What particular talents did your mom and dad have-what were they really good at. Did either have any hobbies?

(Freda) Mrs. Carter was good at quilting...very good at quilting.

Did either play a musical instrument (guitar), sing or whistle?

At church, they would join in on the singing. (Freda) I thank my mama for my ability to whistle.

Did your mom and dad enjoy music off the radio (or in any other way). Did they have any favorite songs they liked to sing or hum.

They liked the Carter family off the radio. Like I said my dad liked news and radio preachers.

Did either your mom or dad or both have a favorite church hymn.

(Freda) Cleo said Mama's favorite was Beulah Land.

Do you remember your friends from your youth - who were they?

Well, around Cleveland there was one I enjoyed being with, Wilbur Smith.

We know that most of the ladies of your generation were housewives. What particular occupation were all your brothers: You were a truck driver. Bud, Ed, Raymond, Ira, Alvie, Auldon

Alvie drove a truck for a few years and he was a dairy farmer. Raymond started out farming and then had a store up on the highway.

I thought that was Uncle Ed.

Seems like everyone in the family had a store (laughing). Cleo and Irt even had it at one time. It was a general store. It was called Oak Grove. It was near where the Sennet cemetery is today.

(Freda) When Lloyd and me married and they chivalried us, it was near to the 4th. Raymond had some great big 2 inch firecrackers and they threw some under the bed in the room where we were sleeping. We hightailed it out of there. Lloyd said, "If you hold we'll come out" and Raymond said "We can't hold it when they start spewing." But we had to buy treats from the store and treated everyone or they would have thrown Lloyd in the water tank out there. *(lots of laughter)*.

You mentioned Alvie and what he did. What did Auldon do?

He worked for Phillips Petroleum. He starting out by working for a man delivering gasoline. When they first moved him from Tulsa, it was New Jersey. He didn't like it one bit, so they moved him back to Bloomington, Indiana. He retired there and moved to Missouri.

What profession did you choose and why did you choose it?

What hobbies do you all have?

(Freda) Let me tell you something about him (motioning toward Lloyd), he bowled and got into bowling and was a good bowler. He nearly bowled a perfect game. He got a watch and really was good. It surprised everyone because he was so relaxed and had a good delivery. He was probably in his 40's. (Lloyd) The last time I bowled, it kept going in the gutter and laid me up and I could hardly get out of bed for two weeks.

Do you remember any particular phrases your mom and dad were in the habit of saying. Did they both have a sense of humor.

They must have had raising us kids, but nothing in particular.

Describe a memorable happy time growing up in the family.

Well, later on in years, we always pert near had an family get together around Thanksgiving and Christmas with all of us there.

Describe a memorable funny story.

(Freda) Him and Alvie was supposed to be planting peas and they got tired of planting, and planted the rest of the seeds around a stump. Of course they all came up later and that gave them away.

I've seen a lot of pictures of family gatherings. What occasions would your mom and dad, their children and grandchildren get together.

The usual Thanksgiving and Christmas gatherings.

Describe a typical Christmas. Did you all ever bring in a tree. Did you exchange a gift. Was there a Christmas program at the school most years.

I don't remember a tree. I remember a sock they put up for us kids. At Rigsby school, they always would have a Christmas program.

Were birthdays ever celebrated and how were they celebrated?

I don't remember anything.

Describe your mom and dad in their later years. I hear your mom was bedfast. About what period was this.

She was bedfast about 7 years.

What was her main problem.

She had had a stroke. She could talk but the doctor had her in bed because of her high blood pressure.

Did your mother die at home (where they lived for years) or where?

At home. Mom died in his sleep. Dad got up that morning and went in to check on her. (Freda) She snored real bad and Dad didn't hear her snoring.

Where did your father live after leaving his rural property in later years? Where did he die?

He got to where he couldn't farm anymore so that's when they moved into town. (This information paraphrased and gotten off the phone from Freda after the interview). He died there in the house one night. A good friend of his, Calvin M. Rea (who got together with Mr. Carter about every day-they would sit on the bench, visit and whittle). Cal Rae could see Mr. Carter lying on the sofa but could not stir him one morning. He went down to Bud's store and got Bud and they both went back to the house and opened up the house to go in. They said the heat had been turned up (this was Jan 26th) and was so high in the house that it could have exploded. The official cause of death on

the certificate was myocardial infarction (*fancy name for heart attack*) and it was never for certain if he died before it got so hot or because it was so hot.

There's a photo with your Dad wearing dark sunglasses in his older year. Describe your dad's eye condition.

He still had his sight when he died, and his sight was not that much worse than when he was younger.

Being the last one of your generation out of 12 kids and 94 years of age, what advice would you give to the generations following you.

(Freda) Listen. They don't listen to anything you tell to them.

(Lloyd) And get off their butts and do something.

How would you say things have changed for the better than when you were young. How about for the worse?

Well, living conditions are better, good transportation, good roads.

For the worst (Freda) The way kids are not disciplined now days.

(Lloyd) It's not just individual kids today, it's nations. Nations can't get along and up and go to war.

Getting away from your youth and on the subject of marriage to Freda, how many years have you all been married?

(Freda) 71 years the 19th of July.

Lloyd, what would you say is the key to a successful marriage. Freda, what do you have to say?

(Freda) Every time you get mad at each other and they do something you don't like, you don't tuck your tail and get out. You walk through it and that's where your love comes in.

Of all the things you learned from your parents, which do you feel were the most valuable.

Hard work, honesty.

I know I have not thought of everything - anything else you'd like to tell. Have I left anything out, tell me about it.

Well, a lot of people, even people that grew up back then, talk about how hard things were. But I am glad that was my generation. (Freda) I think we came up in the best generation. The things we didn't have back then, that wasn't any big loss. (Lloyd) Take this for instance, Dad used to about every spring, he'd go to the bank and get a loan to buy seed for his crop. He didn't have to put up collateral. He signed his name with an X and his word was good. Anyway Dad couldn't read or write, but I bet he never knowingly in his life beat a man out of a nickel.

What is the one thing you want people to remember about you?

I'm not saying this in any bragging way. But I'm like my dad. To my knowledge, I never beat a man out of a nickel. I worked hard all my life and I'm proud of that. Because I always said, when somebody hired me, they hired me to do a job.

Freda, how about you, what would you like people to remember?

Laugh a lot. Have a sense of humor. I told Lloyd once, if he could find some humor in the situation, he wouldn't be so upset. I think humor is what keeps you young.

(The End)

