

**Transcript 2005 Interview with Children of JMB, Tape 1 of 2, side 1 of 2**

**00:00:01 Marty Olliff**

My name is Doctor Martin T. Olliff. I'm with the Archives Of Wiregrass History And Culture at Troy University, Dothan. This is an interview with three of Johnny Mack Brown's children, Cynthia Brown, Locky (Lachlan) Brown, and Sally Brown.

This is being conducted in the Sakato Room of the Dothan Civic Center on September 10th, 2005. It's approximately 12:30 in the afternoon.

So I know that I haven't caught y'all's married names, so if you would tell me when you get started, who y'all are . . . if you just introduce yourself, starting with you.

**00:00:47 Cynthia Brown Hale**

I'm Cynthia Brown Hale and my husband is Daniel and we've been married for about 46 years. Amazing. No, I just see that kind of really, I think that's 46, married 1960. My husband and I met at the University of Arizona and that's where . . .

**00:01:15 Marty Olliff**

You currently live in California?

**00:01:17 Cynthia**

No, currently back. We've come 'round circle, so currently back in Tucson, AZ. Oro Valley is the northern part of Tucson, AZ.

But anyway, so that's we retired now. And so that's . . . we're just doing our thing and tracking down Dothan and genealogy and things of that sort, you know, what you do when you get to that point. Anyway . . .

**00:01:45 Marty Olliff**

Locky, would you give us a full introduction of yourself. Tell us where you're living and what you're up to now.

**00:01:51 Locky Brown**

Well, my name is Locky, given name is John Lochlan Brown. And I go by Locky, that's L-O-C-K-Y and Lachlan is L-A-C-H-L-A-N, which kind of is confusing to people, but anyway . . .

I am currently still in business. I've been in the insurance business for 40 some odd years and I am about ready to retire, but I have not quite yet retired. And I anticipate it probably around January 1 [2006].

**00:02:35 Marty Olliff**

Mm-hmm. And now, where do you live?

**00:02:40 Locky Brown**

I live in Ventura, CA, which is just north of Los Angeles.

And our office . . . and I've been working in the Los Angeles area primarily, so I've had a long commute when I do go into the office and it's generally, with that traffic, you know it's sometimes it's a drive just coming home.

I like living in Ventura. Yeah, that's a very nice town.

**00:03:29 Marty Olliff**

And Sally?

**00:03:36 Sally Brown Bergen**

My name is Sally Brown Bergen. I am living in Oslo, Norway. I've been living there for last 34 years. I met my husband at the University of California at Berkeley in the late 60s, and we were married, and I decided to follow him to Norway, and we have been there ever since.

I have two grown sons and I have been teaching for the last 30 years. [I] just retired now and am able to come here and be with you today.

I was a teacher of English.

**00:04:21 Marty Olliff**

English to Norwegian student.

**00:04:23 Sally**

Well, I actually I did start by a teaching in Norwegian schools and I did teach English at that time and but I in the last the last 12 years, I've been working in International School. And so this has been a wonderful experience and I've been with students from all over the world, and they're very motivated students and so and very . . . they educate me really there so varied and diverse. They are a very good group of, of and very disciplined.

**00:05:08 Marty Olliff**

Now, are these students who are the children of ambassadorial staff or are . . . ?

**00:05:12 Sally**

Well, yes. Various yes capacities, business, yes.

**00:05:17 Marty Olliff**

But they come as a consequence of their parents employment, rather than coming directly, OK. Well, how, how excellent is that?

Why did your husband go to Norway?

**00:05:29 Sally**

Well, he's Norwegian.

**00:05:42 Marty Olliff**

Was he at Berkeley studying?

**00:05:45 Sally**

Yes, he was. Yeah. Yeah. So he's an engineer. Structural engineer.

**00:05:59 Marty Olliff**

Well, what was life like in the in the Brown household as children? He was already a pretty well-known movie actor by the time all y'all came along. And what was it like living in in Hollywood?

**00:06:33 Locky**

You know, we didn't live in Hollywood. We were raised in Beverly Hills. And I for . . . I can speak [only] for myself, I never really gave it a lot of thought, you know, just another kid and with another lot of other kids that their parents were in the entertainment business or they're doing other things. And I was just out doing my thing and I was playing baseball and football and I, you know, some of our best friends, their parents were in entertainment. So you know just didn't you really didn't think about that.

**00:07:11 Marty Olliff**

There was so much of it around you, it was just the natural order of things.

**00:07:16 Locky**

It's just that your father was does something that his father does or her father does and you don't think about those things. They're just other kids. And so you just, you know, you make friends and you enjoy the ones that you make friends with.

**00:07:33 Marty Olliff**

Certainly. Certainly. So you played sports, you played organized sports in school . . . baseball and football?

**00:07:41 Locky**

I played baseball and football. I started when I was in Cub Scouts playing the Cub Scout softball before Little League, and played softball and went to Beverly High and played football there and baseball.

And then went to junior college, played football and baseball in junior college one year and then went to the University of Kentucky and played football there for four years and then after that it went into the Navy for four years.

**00:08:22 Marty Olliff**

Was your primary duty in the Navy?

**00:08:24 Locky**

I went into the flight program down in Pensacola. And got caught up in a financial pinch with the government cutting back on funds on gasoline and that sort of thing and not being the greatest candidate for pilot training anyway, I ended up I got my Commission but was dropped later on and was stationed in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for two years.

Then I went to Brunswick, GA and was stationed my last year there. So I was in the in the service just four years.

**00:09:08 Marty Olliff**

Let me bounce back on something that you've said before and, knowing from my own experience having been a Cub Scout and then a Boy Scout that my parents were heavily involved, mom was a den mother, dad was the was the Scout master for a little while, did your father participate at any kind of level in any of those?

**00:09:33 Cynthia**

When did he have time? My goodness. He had movies to make. I guess it was about 6 to 9 movies a year, you know. And when you weren't, you know, memorizing scripts or doing them, you know, I mean, you're taking a breather. And he didn't have time for that.

**00:09:49 Locky**

He loved hunting and fishing too. Loved, loved to do that.

**00:09:56 Marty Olliff**

And so life in the Brown household was really dominated, then, at least at least Johnny Mack's life was dominated by the constant making of movies. And that's a little bit different than other occupations that parents might have.

You were saying that he was either making a movie or memorizing scripts or trying to decompress from that kind of intense activity.

**00:10:24 Cynthia**

Well, you know, when the kids were born, you know, I don't know what it was like a little bit prior to and up to a certain point, but yes, it was pretty routine when it got around to when it affected our lives because he was gone in the morning early to get made-up. Sometimes the big limo would come and pick a whole bunch of them up and take them out to the valley and then sometimes you wouldn't get home till little after hours you know.

By that time, I was little, I had to go to bed. So, you know, I'm saying, "where's Dad?" You know? And he's gone before I get there . . . and my older sister, of course, it appeared differently to her. She's well, "he was always there." Like, "dummy." You know, "he was there" but she was 10 years older than I was, so she could stay up later, you know.

Anyhow. But I think that Dad also had contracts you know and sometime, maybe prior to us getting around on the scene, he wasn't under contract necessarily all the time. He had only a five year contract with MGM when he was doing silents and in the early a leading man roles. And then he went through a series when *Billy the Kid* came along, and then he started going into the Westerns. He went through, I mean, Supreme, Republic, Paramount, different ones [studios], you know. They'd hire him for one movie or another. But then he got a five year contract with the Universal and he made some of the best serials, they said, that they that they ever [had] produced -- the quality and storyline, and dad looked his best at that time too.

And so he did 5 serials which came in like some chapters from 1 to 17 maybe, you know there might be that kind of a thing where they would go repeat after you know, there's but and he did other movies at that point. But then he also got about a, what was it, a 10-year contract with Monogram. But most people today don't have contracts.

So this is very nice that he was able to say, "well, I'm going to make X amount of movies. Perhaps you know, between this and that," during the year that was expected of him, you know, and they may throw in one more or they, you know, might not throw in enough.

But he always got a salary type of the thing for that because he was doing the movie, so that was nice.

**00:12:56 Marty Olliff**

So income was pretty stable along, yeah.

**00:12:57 Cynthia**

Yes. I don't think it's so stable today. You know, I mean that's one big film they pay you 5 million for it, you know, or something. And you make do in case you don't ever make another movie.

**00:13:12 Marty Olliff**

And I suspect that most actors, even though they're not on contract now anymore, don't make the big bucks right up front there. It takes a while.

**00:13:20 Cynthia**

Well, I would say there are very few people who really make that big money, very few people.

We had a friend, Billy Bakewell, William Bakewell, who was an actor, and he finally just went into real estate. And so he loved theater, so he would do theater, you know, or do the movies. But he always had to have some backup because it's just, you know, it was now and then you never knew when the next part was coming along.

**00:13:46 Locky**

That was quite common though, with in in that area with the entertainment business, the film business being up and down. Many of the entertainers, the actors and actresses, did go into the real estate business, so it was very common.

**00:14:06 Marty Olliff**

An interesting choice of occupations I think to get into it has kind of a similar rhythm and flow.

**00:14:13 Locky**

You have a certain regimen that you had to adhere to. But you do have a lot of flexible time.

**00:14:21 Marty Olliff**

Right. Right. So you can go do other projects if you're willing to put that part on hold, regardless of which part we're talking about it, they could both be put on hold for a little while, while the other one was the back up, backed each other up. Interesting. But y'all never did have . . . y'all never experienced that with the with your father. He had longer running contracts that . . .

**00:14:46 Locky**

Well, yes, but, you know, there were gaps in between. So you know, there are times that mother was rather frantic. But you know, there was a lot of stability there for, for, for the most part.

**00:15:06 Marty Olliff**

Now, did your mother work outside of the home at all that you that you recall and she had four young'uns to take care of [ringing cell phone interrupted, apologies and cross talk for a moment]

You were telling the story . . . before you came in on the other tape. Because Cynthia . . . we got Cynthia to tell the story she told last night about y'all being on the stairs. Yeah. Yeah. And this was one of the, as you were saying last night, this was one of the most intense and indeed precious memories you have.

Yeah. Could you retell that story?

**00:15:42 Sally**

I can . . . Cynthia picked up so many details that that I it just impressed me so much that she remembered, but I I can remember the magic of Christmas, the way my parents would, the production that they made for us, and it made it such a special, special memory, it was . . . Cynthia talked about the warmth and the and the waking up in the morning and the anticipation of going into this room that you know behind this room was just this beautiful display that my parents had produced and it was all done without our being there. We were all, of course in bed. And it was just it was a labor of love, I think. And so we were. And it was that anticipation and just sitting on the stairs.

And I was the first one for a change, you know, normally I was at the end of the line, but here I was, the first one . . .

As we sat on the stairs with my sister behind and then Locky in there, and then Jane and it was . . . I even remember being in . . . and Cynthia and I having a twin pajamas, red pajamas and just, you know, we're all it was just it was this great excitement that was behind it. And I just felt it was built up also with Christmas time was with decorations around the house and they and just the atmosphere was . . . it was just culminated at that morning at 6:00 or 7:00 in the morning whenever we were able to, to, to enter that, that wonderful room that we called the drawing room. It was just a fine time.

And then, of course, as she mentioned, there was the friends that surrounded us, that, you know, came to be with us at Christmas and share the Christmas turkey and to and to just . . . and the gathering around the piano and singing and the filming and it was so well documented, as she pointed out, and. And so it's I've just seen a little bit of the footage that was sent me and it was it just it was all brought back it was so intense.

It was intense, but it was intensely wonderful.

**00:18:13 Marty Olliff**

Sure. Sure. Yeah. And that's what I was picking up from you last night. Not only was it a wonderful experience, but, but it's a very obviously for you from the way you tell it, a very focused memory and something that really struck deeply with within you.

Now we've heard about Christmas. What was this the year like? What about birthdays? How did birthdays go?

**00:18:37 Cynthia**

Well, we did have birthdays, but it was sort of downplayed, not quite as much. I think we had birthdays for maybe the 1st birthday for somebody you know, with the cake and all that kind of stuff, you know. But as far as, you know, well, maybe the 5th birthday and then maybe the 10th birthday would be big or the 12th or something that. And I don't ever remember 16th birthday . . .

**00:18:59 Locky**

Well, we always, we always had birthdays, you know . . .

**00:19:02 Cynthia**

They celebrated it, yeah, a little bit, but, I mean, as far as having *lots* of people around or something like that they just sort of . . .

**00:19:06 Locky**

When we were living on the Sierra at 7th birthday, we didn't live on Calle Vista. We OK all the time we rented the house every once a month.

That was in in between when the contracts may have [crosstalk: Mother was having a heart attack] I have a large birthday party. I remember my 7th birthday.

**00:19:26 Cynthia**

Aren't you lucky? [Followed by general laughter]

**00:19:47 Locky**

You were about a year and a half old at that time. So yeah, that was that was rather unusual. I and I later on I had a couple other smaller birthday parties even when we were back on Calle Vista, but as a rule, that was not something that was a big production. I mean, Christmas was a big production.

**00:20:13 Marty Olliff**

Christmas was the biggest production? [crosstalk: Thanksgiving] Ohh, Thanksgiving. Well.

**00:20:19 Locky**

Yeah, Thanksgiving was second. I mean it was, you know, the big spread and . . .

**00:20:22 Cynthia**

And invited guests.

**00:20:23 Locky**

And people, people coming over.

**00:20:25 Sally**

Can you tell him about [difficult to hear: Hoagy Carmichael]?

**00:20:29 Cynthia**

I don't even know about Hoagy. What was that?

**00:20:33 Locky**

Oh. Hoagy Carmichael came over for dinner one evening and Janie and I, and I guess Sally -- Sally wasn't around -- and Cynthia, I guess you were too little. And after dinner, we went into the drawing room, the room where we had Christmas and where the piano was, and he sat down and we sat around facing him, and he started kind of playing with the piano and he played several of his songs that that he had written and it was a very, very nice experience. Yeah, it's very nice.

**00:21:27 Sally**

Not everybody has Hoagy Carmichael come to their house.

**00:21:30 Marty Olliff**

That's true. Only a few people. [General laughter]



**00:21:35 Locky**

Well, and Gene Raymond, who is Jeanette McDonald's husband, was an actor. Well, well known leading man. He flew airplanes during the Second World War and was, I think, kind of like a ferry pilot, you know, he ferried aircraft from place to place.

And he was very talented. And one evening he was with us for dinner. And he did the same thing, he played the piano. But that, you know, those are some of the memories that I think are very warm. Very, very endearing.

**00:22:26 Cynthia**

I was just thinking about [unintelligible]. I've never heard the Hoagy Carmichael one because I was too little.

But I remember a very endearing one that happened with me and Lou Ayers, and we called him Sarge Lou, and he came to . . . he was part of the party, the parties or the people that would come. And I just remember him sitting down with me at the piano and we were playing, you know, I was about five, or four, I don't know, four, I think. And I just remember him being so sweet. And then he came up the stairs with me because I had to go to bed, you know, I always had to go to bed early, anyway, so we went up the stairs and he came up with me because I didn't want to go to bed yet, you know? And he was playing hide the penny with me in my dollhouse.

It's just very sweet that this man would do that. But it was cute because we were, you know, playing, I don't know, something like the "Bullfrog Sat on the Lily Pad," you know, or "Chopsticks" or something he was trying to teach me. But anyway, he was a very sweet person and just happened to . . . I thought about, you know, well, as somebody who's had that piano . . .

**00:23:41 Locky**

Mother always wanted us to be a little broader than just, you know, in other words, to have other interests, well-rounded. Yeah. Yeah. So, Janie, I, and Cynthia and I don't know if Sally because I was out of the house by that time, but we all had to take piano lessons. [laughter and crosstalk] I wasn't around.

And anyways, Janie played by ear, I couldn't play. And Cynthia played. Did you read [music?]

**00:24:22 Cynthia**

I think Janie played by music. I struggled to play by [reading music].

**00:24:28 Locky**

Well, I think Janey was pretty much by ear, yeah.

**00:24:30 Cynthia**

She could play by ear. I could play by ear, but I yeah.

**00:24:33 Locky**

Well, you played your graduation.

**00:24:34 Cynthia**

I played big pieces, but I had to really be forced to do that.

**00:24:37 Locky**

You play your graduation, grade school. She played the piano for her graduation . . .

**00:24:49 Cynthia**

Traumatic experience. [laughter] That's like giving a speech in [unintelligible due to cross talk].

**00:24:52 Locky**

I had no talent from that, but I couldn't avoid it and then [Cynthia interjects, "and being a lefty"] yeah, well, and also . . . but after that, I I still couldn't avoid it and I got in the 4th grade, I got hooked into . . . since I couldn't play the piano, I got hooked into taking violin lessons.

**00:25:15 Marty Olliff**

So the piano was just not quite complex enough for you?

**00:25:17 Locky**

Right, right. Right, right. So I had to take the violin, and I'm left-handed. But I was playing with her right-handed violin, so anyway, I guess I became ambidextrous.

My violin teacher told me -- or told my mother -- that it'd probably be best if I stuck with sports. [general laughter] So I gave that up and then got trapped into one other very short period of time and having to take the piano again and mother finally, after that, just gave up.

**00:26:00 Marty Olliff**

Now I remember taking piano and I remember my mother was something of a slave driver about at least, you know, a certain amount of time per day, and I think it got shorter and shorter as I rebelled more and more, and I never did take very long.

What about y'all's mom? Was she that kind of slave driver, absolutely insistent on a certain amount of time [for practice]?

**00:26:21 Locky**

With me, I know that I had to put in a certain amount of time and, I suspect, it's same with you.

**00:26:30 Cynthia**

Oh yeah, she was the disciplinarian. She was the one who was there all the time, and she saw to it that we got the lessons and the whatever, you know, what would be swimming or taking to or the dancing lessons or the music lessons happen to come into the house because of the piano.

**00:26:50 Marty Olliff**

So your piano teacher came to your house. A house call?

**00:26:55 Locky**

Right, right.

**00:27:00 Cynthia**

This is . . . A lot of other friends we knew. I think that's not, I don't know, maybe that's uncommon today I don't know.

**00:27:07 Marty Olliff**

I couldn't tell you today. When I was growing up, we went to our piano teacher's house. Although we had a piano, hers was better. And so we went there. I couldn't speak to anybody [today].

**00:27:16 Locky**

Yeah, taking violin. I went to his home, but yeah. But piano, the piano teachers that we had, and it all seemed to come up.

**00:27:32 Marty Olliff**

You know, different places do different things. Very interesting. Do you have any stories about piano lessons?

**00:27:42 Sally**

Well, yes, I was. I guess I do. My piano teacher, I think she probably realized I was not going to be a pianist at a very early stage in my piano [career]. I did persevere for seven years with piano. However, I finally gave it up to my own relief and I think probably her relief as well.

But piano lessons, I just . . . unfortunately I was just not a dedicated. I really wanted to be able to play, of course. And to be able to play without having to do much work.

But I with the minimal amount of work I was . . . she would come and obviously identified that that I was had not practiced during the week or at least maybe to an hour before she came, I would sort of trying to remember . . .

But she was a strict piano teacher, and so she, but she was a, but she was very thorough, very thorough. And she had us do the recitals, remember, we into these recitals. And of course, we had to play. And it was a very daunting experience playing with her.

**00:29:00 Cynthia**

I got out of [that]. I didn't do any for her, I don't think.

**00:29:04 Sally**

Ohh, good for you. Well, I and we went to people's homes and it was, you know, lovely tea and the little girls who were taking these piano lessons would perform, you know, *expertly* and of course I sort of did my best and hope for and hope for the best that that was primarily all. Yeah. Those are my piano days.

**00:29:27 Marty Olliff**

I wonder how many of our contemporaries have these awful memories, memories of piano lessons and piano recitals and traumatic experience in playing music that we just couldn't quite do.

**00:29:37 Cynthia**

But I always felt like it was a duty, you know. They have given us these lessons and mother expects me to do something with this and I have to do this. This horrible talent show that's going to be at the school, and I've got to do that because of this duty to perform, you know. So anyway, I did do a talent show just about fainted dead away before I got on, you know, I just almost couldn't take it.

I've tried to avoid them, but I mean I really felt duty bound at our grammar school to play for the graduation and then played for this talent show and I think I may have played something for graduation at the Marlborough [School], I don't know.

But anyway, it was just horrific to have to do it. I'm very glad I still have the pieces today. I've memorized them all and I probably can get some more back if I could think of what even the names of them were.

But I never did what Janie did, which was able to play the piano for Christmas. I've never been able to sit down and play all the Christmas carols, but she was able to do that. So anyway, she read music. I never ever learn to really read. I couldn't tell you what key I was even playing in.

I just remember I was saying . . .

**END OF SIDE 1 OF 2, TAPE 1 OF 2**

**Transcript 2005 Interview with Children of JMB, Tape 1 of 2, side 2 of 2**

**00:00:02 Marty Olliff**

We're on side two of tape, September 10<sup>th</sup>, Saturday with the members of the Brown family.

The question I want to ask has to do with coming off this idea that you had of piano playing being a duty and you felt duty bound to do well.

I wonder and I've noticed this in my own children, that as I got older and my younger children came up, I was a little mellower with my younger kids. Did that dynamic work in this family as well? Everybody's pointing -- for the benefit of those who can't see -- everybody's pointing at each other.

[Much laughter and joking crosstalk about younger children being "oppressed."]

Let me ask the question the way that my children would probably ask it: is Sally spoiled?

**00:01:22 Locky Brown**

No, I don't think so. Not now. [More laughter] Her husband has taken care of that. [More laughter] Yeah, she she's lived in Norway for the last 34 years.

**00:01:45 Cynthia Brown Hale**

Sally is not spoiled. I don't think we, you know, she's not a spoiled person and she hasn't been given everything that the rest of us have been given. Because by the time she came along, Dad's career was really, you know, at its end because television came in and everybody didn't know, "Oh my God, it was this thing going to take off, you know, what do we do with this television? Is it going to, you know, what is it going to do?" And the movie houses stood very vacant.

It was scary. You wondered if another movie was ever going to be made, you know, to go into these beautiful edifices of gold and gilt and everything. And they were [unintelligible]. Something else has happened, you know? And so Dad's contract came to an end at that point. And so it was a little iffy, you know, and what was going to happen next? And anyway, so a lot bad things happened to a lot of actors at that point and if they could be picked up, or if they could move into the live theater . . . live television, which is a little scary too, then they made the transition.

Now Hopalong Cassidy bought all of his movies. Pop Sherman had told him to do that type of thing. He went ahead and mortgaged his home and bought all of his movies. And it was, in retrospect certainly, a very, very smart move on his part, because that is all you ever saw practically at the very beginning, was Hoppy and the black and white, you know. And so that was a very smart move. And he made a lot of money doing that.

But Dad didn't own his movies. A lot of people didn't own their movies. You know, we never had a reel of movies from a movie, you know ,that he did in our house.

So people always said, "well, don't you have all of his movies?" No. And they didn't get residuals at that time either for the movies that were whatever was happening there. But I know there was a group of actors, I think Carol Burnett somehow or another figured in there, that eventually put their foot down and went to the motion picture industry and just said "we want a part of, you know, we're tired of having the studios make all the money and we want to. If our movie is being played, we want to have a percentage of that." And however miniscule it was going to be.

And of course, by that time that they ever got that through it was like "well, OK, we'll do it. Everything that is post 1948 will get the residuals." Well, all of Dad's movies were pre 1948. They were down in the

20s, thirties and, you know, and they could just never show those other ones and not have to worry about that.

**00:04:41 Locky**

They paid them a lump sum for that.

They paid him a lump sum in place of any residuals, and then anything after a certain date then they would give a residual and everything he did was acquired.

**00:04:57 Cynthia**

Anyway, so that was . . .

**00:05:00 Marty Olliff**

When the contracts ran out as TV was coming on and it was disrupting the movie industry as it had grown. What did your father do for income? Anything? Or did he simply retire?

**00:05:14 Cynthia**

Well, let's say it was very difficult at that point to figure out where you wanted to go, you know, I mean, he did do some Perry Mason, you know, show maybe I can't [remember if] was just one or if it was two or three or something, And then he did, you know, that was his guest shots or that one time thing. And then there was that, what, Tales of Wells Fargo or the Iron Horse or something they did with Dale Robertson. And then, I don't know, I know he did some guest shots for Ken Murray back in New York and I don't know what else, Locky?

**00:05:46 Locky**

He did a few films with Rod Cameron and, you know, like he played the sheriff or something like that, but no, things were, you know, very hard to come in between. And so finally, when most of that just sort of ran out and, you know, he tried other things just to kind of stay active.

Mother was saying, he'll find something, you know [general laughter, Cynthia says, "get out from under my [Mother's] feet!"] to get out of the house. And so he ended up as an assistant manager at the Tail of the Cock, which was a very nice restaurant in in Los Angeles, and he did that for several years and he really enjoyed that, you know, meeting people that he had known or that had known him, so it was it was a very nice way to spend some time and make some additional money.

**00:06:48 Cynthia**

And lure, you know, like. Oh well, we know so and so at our . . . and then people come in to see Johnny Mack.

**00:06:55 Locky**

And then he got to know, then he . . . that was in Los Angeles. And then there's another Tail of the Cock out into the Valley. And he went out there for a while. And he got to know very well, a group of fellows

that were in the entertainment business that hung out or were close to that restaurant. And he and Mickey Rooney became very good friends. And he used to say how talented Mickey Rooney was. And several others. Richard Arlen, I believe, was one of the others that used to going out there. Anyway, there was several that he got to know quite well.

And so he did what he could and then after, after a while, he finally just retired.

**00:07:46 Marty Olliff**

Were you still in the house when he was looking around for a different career? How did that affect the household?

**00:07:58 Sally Brown Bergen**

Well, certainly there was a certain amount of uncertainty, naturally, and my mother was, though in real estate, and that was she was kept. She kept busy.

**00:08:09 Cynthia**

I think she started doing that, what, in her 50s? I think that was her first time to get out.

**00:08:15 Marty Olliff**

Once most of the kids were out of the house and you were, doubtless in school and relatively self-sufficient so she could go off . . .

**00:08:16 Sally**

Yes. I was in school.

**00:08:22 Locky**

And we sold our Calle Vista home, too, to some friends of the family. We had access to the tennis court and when I went to work in Beverly for insurance agency, [I] had a tennis group that used to go up to our old home and play tennis on a regular basis and just love it.

In fact, the gentleman that I worked for in the insurance industry or at the agency was a friend that was in at my dad's tennis group years before. So he was, you know, in his later years he was playing tennis with me in our foursome that we had. So it's it's very nice, we had a great relationship.

**00:09:24 Marty Olliff**

That's excellent. That's excellent. When your dad was under contract and making movies did he have any kind of group around him that, I guess we would call now, a gang of friends [Cynthia: groupies!]?

Not so much "groupies," but did he run with, I guess what the kids today would call a "posse"? Did he just?

Have a group of guys he hung around with that were over at the house? Card playing buddies?

**00:09:50 Locky**

No, no. You know, he had friends that he did things with, they hunted, went fishing, played tennis. He had a group that came up every week. They played twice a week, and the women played tennis once a week. But, there was no groupies or hangers-on or anything like that.

**00:10:15 Marty Olliff**

Right. But he did have this coterie of buddies that that he had some activities with.

**00:10:18 Locky**

Oh yeah, sure, yeah, but not necessarily in the entertainment business.

**00:10:25 Sally**

Yeah, very few actually. I mean they had parties, had the friends that came over, had entertainment, but seems like his regular friends that were there on the tennis court all the time, only occasionally would somebody from the motion picture group come.

**00:10:46 Locky**

Well, they're mostly business, I mean, [overlapping with Sally] Justin Dart, who was at Rexall.

And Harry Becker, who was a big, big buddy of his for fishing. We used to go off -- he and his son, uh, step son, Dan Knight -- would go off up in the Sierras and go fishing and spend, you know, days, you know, a week or something up, like doing that.

And Frank W Smith, who owned Hollywood Sporting Goods, would come up, play tennis occasionally. Just about everybody of any sort had played up at our court at one time or the other. I mean my sister Jane said that she used to sit down there on the court and watch Bob Wagner, you know, he came up and played tennis up there.

These things you don't try to record them in your in your mind because they, you know, just people, yeah.

**00:11:54 Marty Olliff**

It's a natural occurrence. You see it happening every day or every week and so yeah, it makes no difference. And I'm not particularly starstruck and obviously y'all are not particularly starstruck. I found interesting the.

The idea that you would have somebody like Hoagy Carmichael come over and play the piano, and I find that interesting because of the level of talent that you were exposed to on a more or less regular basis.

**00:12:23 Cynthia**

We just didn't. We weren't aware of it. You know, we really weren't aware of any of them. You know, they were friends. I mean, Jeanette MacDonald would come over for, you know, and wondered why she



couldn't sing at my wedding. Or and I couldn't. Never occurred to me to ask, you know, or, you know, they're just different people that were around all the time.

I remember waiting for Charlie McCarthy and Edgar Bergen. The Bergens were, evidently, friends, the family that he weren't really ever involved on a family basis with them, but they were friends of the family's. And I just remember one time sitting in the day . . . I knew they were having a party that night and prior to it I was "have him bring Charlie McCarthy, have him bring it over because I want to see them." And so I'm sure I was pestering them to death. But anyway. And I'm so disappointed because that was the time Candace came, Candy. But, and she was delivered that night, and that's . . . they never came. And I when I get a hold of Candy, well . . . [general laughter] I've never met her yet, but I have a bone to pick with her.

**00:13:33 Locky**

Edgar Bergen performed for Jane's, one Jane's birthdays. So I can I can remember him being there, and I can also remember going out to his car and he had his dummies. He had Mortimer in the in the back seat and I was kind of, I guess, getting a little bit too curious, I don't know what, but anyway he caught me as I was kind of peeking in there and so he opened the door and I opened the case and showed, you know, Mortimer Snerd. But no, I remember him being there at one of Jane's birthday parties.

In fact, there's some old pictures around somewhere that used to be of him at the birthday party.

**00:14:23 Marty Olliff**

Do you remember having well-known people coming over to the house a little bit later in a career or had life changed a bit by then?

**00:14:39 Sally**

I remember there was Jeannette MacDonald and I remember Charlie Farrell. He was a fine actor.

Let's see, who else can I remember? Of course, Ken Murray, who was an entertainer. But I think it was basically those. I can't remember too many really.

**00:15:08 Cynthia**

Well, at that point too, they had sold their big house. And so the big gatherings that we used to have, you know, on a yearly basis decreased to pretty much nil, I don't remember ever them having a party at the Towers. Do you? And they moved to the Park LaBrea Towers which were right there on Wilshire Miracle Mile. Anyway. And they stayed there and then Sally went to school from there. She would hop on the bus [unintelligible] and go down to Marlborough.

**00:15:39 Marty Olliff**

Backing way back up, one of the issues I remember -- and other people may have asked you about because I'm not completely conversant with the literature, your father's biographies -- but I know that he had a difficult time making the transition into talkies, and certainly became less of a leading man figure because of his accent. And I had understood that he had voice training?

**00:16:16 Locky**

Yes, he did, but I don't. I don't think that he became less of a leading man because of it.

**00:16:23 Cynthia**

People speculate, you know. Writers want to say something, and so they say, "oh, well, it must have been that," you know, or it must have been something that I don't think that was a biggie really.

**00:16:33 Locky**

No, he took voice lessons and he always maintained his Southern accent or drawl to, you know, but not to the point where he had a high kind of a pitch voice and he developed a very low, very wonderful voice.

**00:16:50 Marty Olliff**

And my question then is, did he speak that way at home, or did he revert back to an older [southern accent]?

**00:16:58 Cynthia**

Sure, they brought his voice down, I suppose. I think he even took opera, didn't he? Well, voice lessons, voice training, whatever you call it, you know, to bring it down to a certain level. And. Yeah, very, very nice voice. I guess after that.

**00:16:59 Locky**

Very distinctive.

**00:17:19 Cynthia**

And everybody remembers he had a slight tinge of the southern, no, it wasn't really so southern, but it was just a slight tinge.

**00:17:28 Marty Olliff**

Just enough to make it distinctive and a little bit, "you're not sure what you're really hearing there."

I remember hearing him from last year, which was the first time I was ever cognizant of seeing Johnny Mack Brown movies when they had the birthday celebration at Landmark Park. We watched a few movies out there and yeah, I heard that little softness that was, to a southern ear obviously southern, but may not have been to a western ear, particularly southern.

Your mother, I pointed to you, Sally, and but all y'all's mother went into real estate. And how long was she in real estate? What kind of real estate did she sell and how did that career go for her?

**00:18:29 Sally**

Well, she sold homes in Beverly Hills, and she was an *expert* at it because many of these homes she had been in before. She knew who lived there, or who lived there and she could give the history behind it.

So in that sense she was really very, very, you know, aware of the surroundings and made the people who were her clients, give them a greater interest in the homes.

**00:19:04 Locky**

She could give the best tour around, I think, yeah.

**00:19:07 Cynthia**

We often wondered if we shouldn't have just put it in the car, put a tape recorder on and just go up and down the streets of Beverly Hills, slowly, asking in that house and, you know, and who owned it. And you know, because I mean everybody who was . . .

**00:19:18 Marty Olliff**

Well, it's a relatively small community of people who know each other fairly well.

**00:19:29 Cynthia**

Concentrated with movie people and people who are behind the scenes, the directors, the producers, and the actors as well.

**00:19:37 Locky**

The complexion has changed entirely. Now it's entirely different.

But and then a lot of the old houses that have been torn down and big new and big, big, new obnoxious looking things have been put in. You know, it's the whole quaintness is gone

**00:20:01 Cynthia**

We used to see, like, Doris Day hopping on her bicycle and going down to the same bakery. We would go to get croissants or whatever they were you know, at the [unintelligible] bakery, or you'd run across the street and especially at Christmas time, you would see Elizabeth Taylor walking this way and Ursula Andress walking that way and you know somebody else, you're standing next to you and then, oh, yeah, it was so and so else. You know, it was always you could just see all these people.

I always was astounded at now looking back because I didn't wasn't aware of it at the time so much, but like we all went to Hawthorne School, which was a grammar school. It was a public grammar school there and in Beverly Hills, and there were four public grammar schools there. And we just happened to be in this area. But the people that were there, that were the dads and the moms, I mean, I remember Ralph Edwards's wife was the PTA president one year. And they were doing a big fair and Dad was going to be the fellow who crowned the Queen and shot the guns and did something else, you know.

And the people, like on our Mayday, maypole dances, we would be ushered into The Art Room where Ben Nye and all his [crew] making them. Ben Nye is not necessarily a well-known name to the public at large, but to the industry he was the like the Max Factor of painting and things of this sort for your makeup. So here he was personally putting it on us, you know, and sending us out to their Maypole dances. And you know, just different people. It was just a just a remarkable amount. When you had a

mother-father night to come or you had a production at the school or whatever it was, I mean, the audience, you could just point out Cornell Wilde you know, or Wendell Corey. You know, just all over.

And so we didn't know who these people were, particularly at the time at all, because you know, and we didn't know who the mothers and fathers were when we went over to play at their house. You know, there'd be producers and directors and stuff and well, those were people that you didn't see on the screen and you really didn't know what a heck a producer did anyway. And you know, and you weren't interested in it. You were swinging on their swings, you know, or swimming in their pool or something.

**00:22:21 Marty Olliff**

And it's only a reflection that you realize . . .

**00:22:23 Cynthia**

Oh yeah. I mean, when you say, oh, wow, you know, there really was a lot of people there that other people wouldn't mind being there, you know, fly on the wall. Ezio Pinza. He was the grandfather of somebody there. Sally had her friend Melinda Marx who was Groucho Marx's, you know, daughter. And then the Veronica Lake [unintelligible]. And Donna Reed, you know, on and on, you know, just they're just kids in the room.

Yeah, it's. And, you know, you just did the . . . like Locky was into the, what, Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts or whatever it was. And you know, just it was the same old thing, you know, and just the mothers were there to do whatever and carry on and it was just a just a different level that we just weren't that aware of, you know, at the importance or anything like that. It was just school as usual.

**00:23:20 Marty Olliff**

How were you all as students?

[Crosstalk and joking]

**00:23:35 Cynthia**

I won't speak for all, but I think we all were more interested in sports and outdoor.

And I was really good at swimming and running. They would always put me against the boys, you know. Well, let's see how they do against her before we go out on that field, you know, and I just I wish I could have, you know, done more like instead of [being taken to] all the dancing classes and taken to the trials for the Little Olympics you know or something like that because I always was the tomboy you know.

I loved to play Cowboys and Indians and you know and swim . . . it seemed like most of my life was underwater. It's just looking out the window, wishing we were somewhere else besides conjugating verbs or something . . . or dissecting thing.

So I got A's in music, in art, in geography, because I did wonderful maps, you know, I could make them beautiful. But as far as math was concerned, that was something that was really difficult for me. And I had this great math teacher and he was really neat. And I, you know, I really liked him, and he liked me.

And he wrote me a poem, I guess when I left and graduated. It was cute. It was something about she likes dogs, cats and dogs and all kinds of horses, but can't stand arithmetic courses. The kind of girl that should wear crown. That's you, Cindy Brown or something like that. It's cute. Anyway, you know, I mean, what could I do? You know, you don't. You're not. I I wasn't a mathematician, you know. And I just didn't gravitate that way. And we all seem to be a little more arty or, you know, musical. Or at least maybe Sally, Janie and I, I certainly, I don't know, Sally. You're perhaps a little more studious than I was.

So I would just say, you know average maybe. You know, by the average a little bit maybe on some of the things, but I always felt you know the heavy things because it was math and English you know and this boring structural sentence things which I think they've given up on today, I don't think they do that anymore. But anyway I just wanted to be active. I was a kind of an active child rather than more than a good student.

**00:26:06 Marty Olliff**

And you went on to become a teacher, were you a good student?

**00:26:19 Sally**

I identified with Cynthia and I think in grammar school I was very much just of a dreamer and I would sort of going out the window or I'd be thinking about other things.

And I loved stories and I loved being told stories. My mathematics was not my forte. I was not inclined at all. But I've always felt . . . As a child, I liked to write little poems, too, and things like that. So I've always had a sort of inclination towards, I guess you could say, towards literature I've always liked it.

And I was maybe a late bloomer, if you will. I knew that I wanted to do something somehow, and I love the idea of teaching. And I think one of the things that this school that we went to went to a girls school in Los Angeles and I had a teacher [in my junior year of high school] who was just freshly out of college and she would sit in front of the class and she would read Emily Dickinson or Robert Frost, who were her favorites. And I can see this woman who was sitting there was not, you know, she was rather ordinary looking, but as she read this poetry, I saw this, this beauty come over her. She became beautiful as she read. And I just saw this relationship she had with the poetry and I and I just thought, "this was this was glorious, this was wonderful," and it made me it just . . . She was a very much of a person who made me feel that this is something to pursue.

But it happens that you just, you know, life takes on its various forms and you don't know really what I'm going to. I studied at the university I studied English and got my degree in English. But who knows what you're going to do. You're going to travel to another country, what other circumstance will present themselves? So I wasn't sure what I was going to do. I really fell into it more or less. It just happened and I had the degree to be able to do it and to keep myself occupied eventually. Just I just stuck with it.

**00:28:45 Marty Olliff**

Was your degree in education, or was it in liberal arts? Straight English?

**00:28:51 Sally**

Liberal arts [education].

**00:28:53 Marty Olliff**

Literature is your forte or structure?

**00:28:56 Sally**

Well, actually, literature is what I like. And so I studied that quite . . . and I've been teaching. In the last years, I've been teaching in a program that's called International Baccalaureate Program, which is a, which is a wonderful, intense program. And I taught World Lit, it was called English but it was basically World Lit.

**00:29:19 Marty Olliff**

Our youngest daughter was in that program when we lived in Auburn, AL, where the university is, and they have one of the programs there. But then when we moved to Dothan, we moved her between 10th and 11th grade, they don't have the International Baccalaureate Program here and we withdrew her from that. Which she was very happy about because she was not looking forward to having to do the summer work. But then when she came to Dothan from Auburn, she realized what she had lost.

**00:29:52 Sally**

That's a wonderful program.

**00:29:53 Marty Olliff**

And it was. Yeah. I'm a little sad that we were not able to keep her in in the program, but we decided living 100 miles away from our kid was not a good idea, especially when nobody there wanted her. So no, of course I'm teasing, but yes, I know what the IB program is and it is a very good program and I wish you a lot more school systems had it, and I congratulate you for teaching in it.

Let me ask one more question about your mother, and back to the real estate thing. Was your mother cut out for doing real estate? Did it become a calling to her? I realized that she may have just stumbled into it, but was it something that she embraced wholeheartedly?

**00:30:48 Sally**

I would say she went into real estate for reasons, but I think she was very good in the sense that she always loved homes. She loved looking at homes and I remember being with her on these sitting with her on these homes and I think it fascinated me too. I think a little of that has rubbed up on me because she would go into these rooms . . .

**END OF SIDE 2 OF 2, TAPE 1 OF 2**

**Transcript 2005 Interview with Children of JMB, Tape 2 of 2, side 1 of 1**

[N.b.: Conversation continued while tape was being changed, shifted from Sally to Locky]

**00:00:02 Locky Brown**

[Mother] was having physical problems, maybe about four or five years prior to her passing, so she passed in '86, and so I'd say probably about '82, '83. So whenever she started real estate, I don't remember the date, but then up until about [19]83 I guess.

**00:00:30 Sally Brown Bergen**

I think around '58.

**00:00:32 Marty Olliff**

So she started in '58 and she worked into her 70s.

**00:00:34 Cynthia Brown Hale [with much crosstalk from Sally and Locky]**

I think that or maybe a little later, little later, maybe she was studying up to that, but I think maybe. She was working for Joe Sirenko down and in Los Angeles, at the magazines that that was . . . you were on Fountain, we were on Fountain at the time.

**00:00:52 Locky**

Yeah, but she hadn't started real estate at that time.

**00:00:54 Cynthia [Crosstalk from Sally]**

No. She was thinking about it . . . doing decorating at that time or something like that. So it was after that.

**00:00:59 Locky**

That was in the early '60s.

**00:01:02 Cynthia**

Yeah, it would be early '60s. [Unintelligible].

**00:01:03 Locky**

[19]60, '61 because I came home from the service in '60 end of '60, by November '60.

**00:01:12 Cynthia**

Yeah, because you weren't there for the wedding.

**00:01:19 Locky**

She went in in '58, I was in Cuba at that time.

**00:01:28 Marty Olliff**

I would say then that she really must have thoroughly enjoyed it and felt really accomplished because she was in it for more than 20 years.

**00:01:35 Locky**

She enjoyed it. Yeah, but it was tough. It was hard on her because, you know, she was kind of a proud person, you know? And didn't, you know, like to ask.

**00:01:50 Cynthia**

She was the first lady to be employed by the Tishman Company, I think. So that seemed to be a major . . . but not that she sold the world and set the world on fire, but anyway she . . .

**00:02:14 Marty Olliff**

The first lady to be employed by a formerly all-male company is a pretty big deal .

**00:02:15 Cynthia**

Yeah, yeah. And she remained in real estate or in a form of it for the county of Los Angeles up until her passing.

But it also may be because of mother being in it and my sister [Jane] being in it. When I had an opportunity like OK what am I going to do now? You know, maybe I'll do this or maybe I'll do that.

I thought, "well, I've always wanted to do real estate, you know, let's quit [unintelligible] and do real estate." But I did. I went ahead and got my real estate license from Arizona and I started work for Coldwell Banker.

But just things happen and changes and my husband's health went downhill and we had to do other things you know, and we won't go into all that. But it inspired me to go ahead and get. I always thought, "oh, well, hey, you're in a real estate, I can maybe can do that," you know, but it really helps when you are in the area or know people because then you have a base to draw from.

When you're out there on your own, in a brand new area, don't know anybody that starts fishing, talk about cold calls, you really start from . . . and I thought, well, you know, Dan wanted me to do something else with him in conjunction and I just thought, well, OK, you know, I thought through all this, maybe I just wanted to score, you know, getting my license in there, you know? But I didn't keep it up because we just had, you know, we just couldn't do it. So yeah, I had other things to do so.

**00:03:41 Locky**

One thing I would like to say, which hasn't been brought out is our older sister Jane.

[She] was a very good artist, very good painter and very good portraits, did landscapes and other things she did. And I have several of her paintings and hung in my house, and I don't know how many more she has around, but there she was. She studied art all her life and . . .



**00:04:11 Cynthia**

Part of those lessons. 12 years old.

**00:04:15 Locky**

Yeah, and she studied art too, not only in, you know, in school, but out of school, too. She went to Chouinard [Art Institute] and some of these other academies.

**00:04:28 Cynthia**

She also, when she was here in Dothan, she was here at the University of Alabama for two years, and she won a little contest, I remember at the State Fair with her artwork as I recall.

**00:04:43 Marty Olliff**

Now, now she made her living as a real estate agent?

**00:04:46 Locky**

She worked for the County of Los Angeles.

**00:04:48 Cynthia**

Yeah, basically. She transferred into that area. She had worked in real estate and different things. As I mentioned the Tishman, the big group and there's some other ones. But anyway, she basically really for about 17 or 18 years of her life . . .

**00:05:03 Locky**

She was she worked for the Hilton chain too.

**00:05:05 Cynthia**

Well, that was very good. Yeah, very early on. That was one of her first jobs as publicity agent, the publicity person for the Hilton Hotel.

**00:05:13 Marty Olliff**

And so for her art was a hobby, not a way of making a living. So few artists can make a living at it.

**00:05:20 Cynthia**

Right, right. And yeah, the same type of thing, you know.

**00:05:23 Marty Olliff**

But she's very, very skilled.

**00:05:24 Locky**

And very adept. Very good.

**00:05:25 Cynthia**

She was very good. She almost had an French Impressionistic style. She liked lots of light in her paintings. And then she gravitated into the portrait. She seemed to, in her later years, do the more portraits, and did them of friends and things of that sort.

And then one thing, too, that Locky was surprised to hear, was that she had like a big, thick book of just poetry. And she used to send her poems off to something or other, that they make a big binder of everybody's poems. You know, I'm sure it's it was just a deal where, you know, they want you to buy the book for \$30.00 or \$50.00, and you get to see your name in it. But it was something that gave her pleasure.

So I have a whole binder of poems, and some of them are cute and funny, you know, and kind of tongue in cheek. Others are based on history, you know, historical things that are happening around at the time. I mean, might be outer space and all. And interesting things. And then a lot of them are religious, meaning more from a metaphysical aspect rather than an actual religion in particular, but more metaphysical and spiritual, I should say.

So she's very gifted in the arts, so that all goes with the piano and the music and the art, you know.

**00:07:00 Marty Olliff**

What did she die from?

**00:07:01 Cynthia**

Well, she died from being anorexic. It was kind of a weird thing to have that late in life, but anyway.

**00:07:08 Locky**

It was because that she was being treated for a thyroid condition, and the doctor was giving her certain medication, which she was not able to pull food down and I got a phone call. I was at the office, which I wasn't at the office at the time, but somebody . . .

I hadn't seen her for about a year, even though she lived fairly close, I hadn't seen her.

And the last time I saw her, she, you know, was overweight. She weighed about 180 lbs. or something like that. Well, the next thing I know they had to take her home. So I went over to see her and then see how she was. And she was just skin and bones and I just couldn't believe it.

Fortunately, I spent the night with her and took her to the hospital the next day, she had an appointment. I won't go into any details, but I think that that there is a serious malpractice exposure there from her, from her physician.

Anyway she recovered. She went into the hospital. She got some strength back and a few months later, maybe within the year, she went with Cynthia and Danny and her children to the Shakespeare Festival in Oregon, and while she was there, she caught the flu and . . .

**00:08:59 Cynthia**

Died on the way back with us. But she was having a good time up to the very end.

It was something that I heard when Locky said that he was called to look in on her. Her friends from work had brought her home one day and I think things have been going on that we didn't know about. You know that she just didn't, you know, pass on to us. And when Locky and I saw her one time at the Golden Boot Awards or the pre party, we kind of both looked at each other, because we had invited Janie to come, too, and we kind of looked at each other and said, "my God, what is going on?" You know, she was so gone . . . thin . . .

**00:09:37 Locky**

She had recovered, though, far better at that time than she had looked when I had seen her the first time and taken to the hospital. She was at least able to, you know, look presentable and move around and do things and go places, you know, but she still is very frail.

**00:10:03 Cynthia**

Very frail. Yes. And I think if the Dachau you know, people from the German concentration camp, you know, I mean, it got to be that way. That's what anorexic, you know. And there's psychological problems with that, you know. And anyway, it was just something that . . .

**00:10:23 Locky**

Well, it's just a very unfortunate situation.

**00:10:28 Cynthia**

We won't go through all of it.

She called me one day and just said, "well, where are you going and what are you doing? And blah, blah blah, blah, blah." And I said, "well, we're going up to Ashland, Oregon to see the, you know, [Shakespeare] festival and all that bit." And long story short, you know, Janie, do you think, you know, she really wanted to come. And I said "well are you sure you can drive? Are you sure you really want to do this? And [she replied] "yeah, I want to do it because I've never been to Oregon and I've never been on a road . . . and I've never been down a river rafting thing." We had to change our plans and we made it a little float rather than a river raft.

The Shakespearean festival was something that was fun and interesting to go to and we've gone to it several years and anyway, and she just wanted to go. So anyway, I said, "well, if you think you can make it up here, then we'll drive the rest of the way," you know? So we had a delightful time. She came up and she, you know, brought the car and we went on up and we were sightseeing and chitter chattering along all the way.

In the meantime, she's not eating really much. She would sit there and cut her food as though she had a steak and everything and just it. It's just part of the anorexic thing, you know. And they just don't eat

very much. And as I said, I think it's a psychological thing. And I think her friend hit it on the head. And as I said, I won't go into that.

But anyway, she was having a good time and was certainly conscious up to the end. And you know, talking a little bit, you know. I had put her in the hospital because of this thing that they had up there as flu. That and of course, with her resistance being down there just didn't help any.

**00:12:15 Marty Olliff**

She wasn't strong enough to fight it off.

**00:12:18 Speaker 4**

Right. And she'd been fighting this for a whole year, you know, fighting this and this is sort of like, you know, this was something that just wasn't good. She could have been at home and she could have been lying there for you know, who knows what? Because when those people, those friends, brought her home the first time a year before, she said, "I would have just passed on all those this world, I didn't have the energy to pick up the phone or call anybody." You know, she was just blah.

So she gained an extra year from those friends taking care of her, and Locky, and then I came down and helped, trying to make her little food and stuff of the sort. But you know you can't force people to eat. You know, you give them everything you can do, but they don't eat it.

All I can say is that she had a lovely time, you know? She was not in any pain and anyway. And she just didn't have the energy, the, the body just gave out.

**00:13:16 Marty Olliff**

What year was this?

**00:13:19 Cynthia**

Was it '97?

**00:13:19 Marty Olliff**

'97, okay.

Well, I noticed what time it's getting, however I don't want to end this on this sour note. Tell me a story that that makes you happy to tell that you haven't told yet. If you can think of one.

**00:13:39 Cynthia**

Well, Sally told one about her bit on the Santa Claus parade one time. And I told Sally, "well, say this" because we all went on the Santa Claus parade and it was always a special moment and Sally said, "we climbed up a little stairway." HA! It was this long stairway.

The one that was impressive to me was somebody was asking about Dad's character and all that bit and anyway, well, we did the float you know. And there were the little stars that were up there and at that

time they didn't have the long parade. It was just the float. And you know, you throw candy out at everybody as you were going down.

But I was by Santa, too, in the car going back to wherever we were going, being taken back to, anyway, I don't know where I was exactly. I was in the car with Santa and Dad in the back seat, and Santa started to light a cigarette and you know, and Dad *looked* at him, and he's, "No, no, no."

And all I can remember is that he didn't want to have any negative effect on children. He never asked for liquor in his movies, at least I don't remember ever. He was always asking when he got into the bars or buttermilk or something, you know, sarsaparilla . Something that was just tame. And then he never swore in front of women you know, never. He seemed to have this, what they call . . . they attribute to a southern gentleman. And he was always acted like a gentleman in front of the women, which would certainly not fly today, would it? I don't know.

I mean, that was something that you could almost count on. He wasn't going to be gross or say negative, bad things, you know, in front of women, you know, no cursing and etcetera. And it was always open the door for . . . it's always the gentlemanly thing that you think about and that was Dad, he was a polished person.

It was very amusing to read some of these articles on him, supposedly written by him, or somebody interviewed him and, "oh yeah, and Johnny Mack said, "and then we're going to get them guys and him," and these funny little words that were supposed to be little colloquial, ignoramus expressions. Dad was not like that. He loved poetry himself, and he had a little knack for drawing, but he was polished. He was a polished person.

So we didn't live on a ranch, much to my chagrin, and I always thought, "how can I be a part of this family, I don't have a horse," you know. Yeah, I made him promise me, but it never happened. So anyway.

**00:16:44 Marty Olliff**

Did you all ever go out to the sets with him?

**00:16:47 Cynthia**

Very infrequently. Yeah. It wasn't a normal thing like Roy Rogers daughter Cheryl Barnett. She was living there on the set with Roy and Dale, you know, I mean, she just grew up on the set and knew everybody and all the horses and everything.

We rarely saw the set. We were on the other side of, you know, the mountains, so to speak, and didn't go. But occasionally for little, you know, publicity things. I mean, I remember going out once and I guess, Locky did. I don't remember him doing it, and he won't remember my doing it. You know, Sally went out to Corriganville to help open up that theme park.

The valley side was where all the movies seemed to be made and where he would go on a daily basis. And the last thing he would want to do is go back over to the valley on his weekend, you know, so we

didn't get to go over there. You somebody wanted to know if I rode the horse much and, like, *none*, like ever.

I mean, I rode horses, right? And my dad always said, "how can you ride those stable nags?" You know, because you're riding around and the nag, he found the way to get the bit out of his mouth that he's just tearing down somewhere. Heading back to the barn, you know, and I can't stop him. Dad always thought that was so remarkable that I would. You know, how could I do this, you know?

But I think, "well, I would like you to give me a horse too," you know, and I would just wouldn't have to ride those stable nags. But I had friends that had horses.

Do you have a happy thought? Besides jumping over the wall.

**00:18:45 Locky**

Happy thought? I can think of an interesting thought. Big Boy Williams was a very close friend of Dad's and he had a ranch out San Bernardino [or] Riverside somewhere. And I was about seven years old, we went out there, Dad and I, and went horseback riding with Big Boy.

And on the way back, you know, my horse decided he wanted to go home. And Dad said all he could see was this horse taking off. And I'm sitting there holding on. It's *gone*, you know, and [there was] not much I could have done about it. They finally caught up when they got back to the barn.

I was . . . I was there.

**00:20:01 Cynthia**

You have a happy one, Sally?

**00:20:03 Sally**

Well, I'm thinking back. You were talking about birthday parties and people performing or being, you know . . . and I remember Daddy once being invited . . . we had neighbors who had lavish parties for their girls at birthday party and they always thought of, you know, wonderful themes or some very creative, very creative. And one of these themes this neighbor had was come dressed as a bride.

And so, all the little girls now, she was about nine years old. My best friend, who was her sister was 10 years old, and I was always invited to these parties as well.

But this nine year invited all the girls from her class and they came dressed as brides. And Daddy was to be there and be the groom and marry all these girls. And he did that. I thought that was great, quite great of him to stand there. The little girls would come in and they would sign the bridal register and then they would go in and get their little license.

And they were all dressed up in curtains and, you know, whatever, mom could figure out. They had made this altar, you know, with sort of crepe paper and I was to be a bridesmaid and my best friend was to be the other bridesmaid and Daddy was to be the groom and he was to receive all these girls.

And there was a minister who was the father, a little . . . what do you call the boys that carry the ring? [multiple answers: ringbearer] . . . who had a loop cushion with all these little Cracker Jack rings? You know, when you get out of it, Cracker Jack Box, I think. And it was all done in great spirit and Daddy stood there and waited for all these . . . decked out in his cowboy outfit and he had his guns on and all these little girls came up and then the minister said, and the and the girl who was having the birthday party, she had written this. What? When I say the sermon, what they what, what the speech.

And the ministers turns to Daddy, “now do you promise not to smoke or drink or eat crackers in bed? And Daddy had to think.

All these little girls came along and he slipped the ring on their finger and it was all great fun. He loved kids and this was just one of another thing that he did just, you know, the for fun and for the neighbors and for all of us.

He was, you know, he got into the spirit of it.

**00:23:13 Cynthia**

That is a good story.

**00:23:15 Sally**

And wedding cake was had. That was the birthday cake.

**00:23:18 Marty Olliff**

But of course.

Well, time is short for y'all, you need to be someplace in [just a little while].

**00:23:23 Cynthia**

There's always next year, yeah.

**00:23:23 Marty Olliff**

There you go. I want to thank you for letting me record you.

**00:23:27 Locky**

Thank you.

**00:23:30 Cynthia**

Thanks a lot, I hope there's something there.

**00:23:31 Marty Olliff**

There *is* something there.

**00:23:33 Sally**

Thank you very much.

**00:23:34 Marty Olliff**

We didn't have an opportunity to introduce this tape from the other one. This is the end of tape two of the interview between myself, Doctor Martin T Olliff of the Archives of Wiregrass, History and Culture at Troy University, Dothan.

Interviewing members of the Brown family, in fact, Johnny Mack Brown's three surviving children, on September 10th, 2005 in the Sakato Room of the Dothan Civic Center.