

Oral Memoirs
of
Bettye Jean Aulin Reagan

An Interview Conducted by

Rebecca Schwandt

April 2, 2015

Regional Initiative for Collecting the History, Experiences, and Stories
(RICHEs) of Central Florida

University of Central Florida RICHES of Central Florida

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Interview Histories

Interviewer: Rebecca Schwandt

Transcriber: Rebecca Schwandt

The recordings and transcripts of the interview were processed in the offices of the RICHES of Central Florida Department, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida.

Project Detail

RICHES of Central Florida is an umbrella program housing interdisciplinary public history projects that bring together different departments at UCF with profit and non-profit sectors of the community.

Central Florida has often been associated with large-scale, commercial tourism and housing development. While those aspects of Central Florida are important to the economic growth of the region, much of its history has remained unnoticed and under researched. The Public History program at UCF links many projects under one initiative to promote the collection and preservation of Central Florida history. By facilitating research that records and presents the stories of communities, businesses, and institutions in Central Florida, RICHES seeks to provide the region with a deeper sense of its heritage. At the same time, the initiative connects the UCF students and faculty with the community and creates a foundation on which Central Floridians can build a better sense of their history.

Rebecca Schwandt is a graduate history student at the University of Central Florida, who conducted this interview as a part of Dr. Lester's "Introduction to Public History" Course.

Bettye Jean Aulin Reagan is an artist whose subject matter is mainly Central Florida, specifically Oviedo and Sanford. Her grandfather Andrew Aulin, Sr. (1843-1918) is credited with naming Oviedo.

Legal Status

Scholarly use of the recording and transcript of the interview with Bettye Jean Aulin Reagan is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on April 2, 2015.

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Abstract

An oral history interview of Bettye Jean Aulin Reagan, conducted by Rebecca Schwandt on April 2, 2015. Born January 27th, 1934, Reagan is the granddaughter of Andrew Aulin, Sr. (1843-1918), who is credited with naming Oviedo, Florida. In this oral history, Reagan discusses growing up in Oviedo, attending school at Oviedo High School, the great technological advances that have occurred during her life, segregation and integration, her hopes and aspirations, and her family life. She also tells stories about her grandfather and talks about the history of the Aulin family, as well as the Lawtons and the Wheelers. Finally, Reagan discusses her career as an artist.

Bettye Jean Aulin Reagan

Oral History Memoir
Interview Number 1

Interviewed by Rebecca Schwandt
April 2, 2015
Lake Mary, Florida

0:00:00

Introduction

Schwandt This is an oral history of Bettye [Jean Aulin] Reagan. The interview is conducted by Rebecca Schwandt at Bettye Reagan's home in Oviedo, er – Lake Mary, Florida...

Reagan Mmhmm.

Schwandt On April 2nd, 2015. Could you please state your full name and birth date for the record?

Reagan Okay, Bettye Jean Reagan. Uh, January 27th, 1934. Uh, born actually in Sanford in the hospital, which I was the first one in my family to be born in the hospital. Everybody else had been born at home, [laughs] which was in Oviedo, and, um, that's where I was raised.

0:00:37

Childhood memories

Schwandt And what is one of your earliest childhood memories?

Reagan My earliest childhood memories was[sic] – we lived, uh – I don't know the name of the road. It goes, uh – it goes beside the Lawton House – where the Lawton House, uh – there's one that goes towards Winter Park and the other one that comes beside it. We lived down that road, across from where the [Oviedo High] School was. That was in a big ol' two story house there, and one – I guess I'll never forget this. When I was – we moved out of that house when I was six years old, but, uh, one day my little brother¹ and I decided to go for a walk out – and you went through the back – we had a – a garden and we had an orange grove. If you kep' on goin', there was a great big ditch there, you walked over, which was scary. We could go all the way to where the cemetery is today. It was there then, through the woods, and we decided we just go for – and we went, which we – unheard of. Today, it would be terrible they would have called the police [laughs], but – and we're out there wandering around in – in the cemetery, and this lady, who knew who we were, came and got us and took us back home, and another time, we went down there, and – and I was gonna fix it so my brother,

¹ Andrew "Andy" Aulin III.

who's two years younger than I am—he had to be—if I was six he had to be four—and I made him a fishing pole out of a stick, a piece of string, and I don't know how I did it, but I took a straight pin and bent it. We got some bread and we tied that string on there, and we went down there to that ditch that we had to cross over, which is really what it was, but it had water in it—to fish, and my little brother fell in head first, and his—there—and his feet are sticking up and I pulled him out [*laughs*]. He's covered with mud [*laughs*], but that was a sca—I used to have nightmares after that about that incident.

It scared me so bad, and another time, at that same area, where my daddy² had planted all the strawberries, I took the bucket one day and I picked every strawberry in the patch, and they were all green, so we didn't have strawberries that year [*laughs*]. That's[sic] my first memories [*laughs*], but then, I swear I started school in first grade, and I got to go to school a year early. I went when I was five. My birthday was in January, but you were—but—and you weren't supposed to go to school, but, uh, a man from Oviedo, Mr.—Mr. Gore, was a—on the school board, and, uh, his son was Frank—Frankie D. Gore, and he's a school—well, I guess he's not now, but he was a school teacher—grew up to be a school teacher. He got to go—his birthday was the same as mine was. So my Mama³ said, "Well, if you[sic] can go to school—well, if he can go, you can go." So they had to let me go. So I got to go to school when I was five and get out early, and those are some of the first things I remember [*sniffs*].

0:03:46

Childhood games and entertainment

Schwandt And what kind of games did you play as a young child?

Reagan We, you know—we made up our games. We did things—I guess we couldn't say we—we, uh—I remember that, uh, we took the—we—We lived in another—we moved two more times, and we lived up where the—we were surrounded by orange groves, and every year, when they got ready to pick the oranges, they would come out and they would dump all the orange crates. If you know what an orange—old-fashioned orange box looks—it's got a division in the middle and they would stack them, and we would make a great fort. Me and my brother would get out there and make this great big fort and, uh, play in that.

Then, we would also fix a, uh—a little thing in the back yard and play storekeeper, and in those days, you—what you did with you garbage—you didn't have garbage collection. You dug a great big hole in your backyard somewhere. you put all the—your trash that you had and we put it in the hole and then—and you tried to burn it, if you could, and then you'd fill the hole in, and then you dig another hole, but we would get anything that came in a carton, a box, and we would save all those and we would put them up on the table, and

² Andrew Aulin, Jr.

³ Mary Alice Powell Aulin.

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we would play like we had a store, and y – anybody came to the store, and we would pull the – we got in trouble for this – we pulled the leaves off the orange tree. That was our money. We made out like that was dollars, and we would do that, and we would, uh, play cops and robbers, and we – we would get a little saw, which my daddy had – we weren't s'posed to use, and saw out little – just a little thing that look like a – a pistol, but of course, it wasn't. It was just a little thing, and we would run around and chase each other, and then another time, we decided we would go find Indian mound[sic]. We had a wild imagination, I guess, and we went out with a shovel, and we found a little mound way away from the house. I don't know how we got away with all that, and we would dig and dig. 'Course, we never found anything [laughs], but we – but we spent a lot of time doing that sort of thing.

We – you just came up with your own ideas, you know, but as far as havin' a lot of toys, we didn't, but we – we made, uh, treehouses. We'd climb a tree, and put boards up on it and climb up, and we didn't really have a house, but we would put a couple boards up there – make out like we did. Or we would do another thing. We would cut off palmetto[sic] – big, uh, palmetto[sic] palms, you know, and we would put them around some trees, and we would have a little house, and that's the kinda thing we did growin' up, but as far as havin' a lot of toys or anything, we didn't. We didn't do that. Not like today, and of course, there was no TV, of course, and you listened to the radio at night. That's the only time you listen to it.

Schwandt Do you remember any radio shows?

Reagan Yes, uh, *The Lone Ranger*. Every – we always listened to *The Lone Ranger*, and, uh, something else came on. Um, cowboy show came on – another one. I can't think of the name of that one. Trigger – who was⁴ – he had the horse named Trigger? Uh, anyway, we – we did listen to those kind of sh – and then, uh, *Grand Ole Opry* came on Every Saturday night. We listened to that, uh, but – and everybody just sat around the radio. it was quiet and you listened to it.

0:07:29

Friends and pets

Schwandt Who were your childhood friends?

Reagan Uh, some of the – the same people that I started out with in the first grade. I – they were still with me when I graduated [laughs], and I don't know how many people were in the first grade, becau – but probably 20 or so, and, uh, when I graduated there were nine, but most of 'em, I had started out with in the first grade, and, uh, some – a couple of 'em lived close to me, and we would go to each other's house n' play, but – or, actually, a lot of times, we went to the school ground and play. They have swing sets there, and, uh, they had a field to play

⁴ Roy Rogers (born Leonard Franklin Slye) in *The Roy Rogers Show*.

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baseball and all that, and – and then, another thing, we had a cow, and – to get – for milk – and every day, my daddy would take that cow with a chain on it and go across the road to the school grounds [*laughs*], which had some woods on it – a little bit of woods, and he would stake the cow out there on – and the cow would eat the grass on the school ground, and then we’d bring it in every night, and that was – nobody thought there was anything wrong with that. That was just what you did, and it’s crazy. Things change so much, but today, you couldn’t think of doin’ something like that [*laughs*].

Another thing that we would do when we got a little bit older, um – where the school is, the railroad track ran right behind the school, and we would be watchin’ the ball game on Sunday afternoon, which everybody in town went, and there would be s – just a bunch of people get up a game – you know, choose up, and then they would play baseball, and everybody would be there to watch it, and these boys would figure out how to let...

[*clock chimes*]

Reagan Some of the air out of the tires on the car and get it on the railroad track, and they would – we would be sitting her watching the ball game and way out there past the field, there goes the car down the railroad track, and that was the highlight of the thing [*laughs*] – of the day. I don’t know how they did that. Sometimes, they’d get off and it’d go, “Bump, bump, bump, bump” down there too [*laughs*]. Oh.

Schwandt Did you have any other animals besides the milk cow?

Reagan Oh, yeah. Well, we had, uh – we had a dog. I had two dogs I’ll never forget. Uh, the first one we got – well[?], we – we got this white Spitz, and we had that dog for 14 years. His name was Troubles, and, uh, he – he was, uh, just a lifelong pet, and, uh, then one time, my daddy brought home a little, black puppy. Uh, when he was workin’ with – for Nelson and Company, which was Wheeler’s.⁵ Uh, he was, uh, a man who checked the fruit. He was a fruit tester, and when they would go to pick oranges in the groves, he had all this equipment and he would, uh – slice the fruit and put the juice in, and he knew how to measure to see how much solid it had, how much sugar it had. They had to do that when they picked the oranges to know what kind of thing it was. Anyway, while he was – was gone one day, somebody gave him a little puppy. He brought it home, and we already had that other dog, and my mother said – and I thought it was my dog. It was my dog. Uh, I called her Black Beauty, ‘cause I had just read that book, *Black Beauty*, and I had that that dog for a couple weeks. My mother kept sayin’ all the time, “You can’t keep that dog. You can’t keep that dog.” Well, I kept it three or four months, and one day, I came home from school and the dog wasn’t there, and my mother had given it to somebody who was walkin’ by and saw it, and

⁵ Wheeler Fertilizer Company.

she asked if they wanted that dog. She – we couldn't have two dogs. She gave my dog away, and I was very, very heartbroken [*laughs*] about that, but, uh, Anyway, we knew who had it and we used to go down and see the dog all the time, bum, but that was – that was the only pets we ever had was those two dogs and the cow, of course. [*inaudible*]. That was it.

0:11:46

Siblings and childhood aspirations

Schwandt How many siblings do you have?

Reagan I had, uh – I had two sisters and two brothers, and I still have one sister and one brother. The others are all passed away.

Schwandt And how did you get along with your siblings?

Reagan Good. Well, there was a big, uh – there was seven years difference between my older – my older sister, ⁶ who's here, and, uh, I had a – my older sister was 10 years older than me, and then [*Alice*] Kathryn [*Aulin Bunch*] was next to her, and then I had a brother⁷ – was seven years older, and then there was me and my younger brother, who's two years younger, who still lives in Oviedo, and, uh, so, we were, uh – my sister will be the first to tell you that me and my brother were spoiled, because we were younger, then there was seven years difference, and by the time we came along, we – we didn't have to do all the work that they had to do, and she says we got by with a lot of stuff, which not true [*laughs*], but, uh, 'cause they grew up and they left home. We were still at home, you know, for seven more years, but, uh – and[?] today she lives in so[?] close to me now. She used to live in Orlando most all her life and now she lives here.

Schwandt What did you want to be when you grew up?

Reagan Oh, I wanted to be, uh, a teacher, and I wanted to teach English and literature, which I loved, and, uh, P.E.,⁸ and the reason I wanted to teach P.E. – one reason – cause I loved sports and all that. We used to have these girls in our P.E. class, which we would go, eh – different times of the year, you did different things. We had basketball. We actually didn't have a lot of sports, but we played basketball and softball. That was the only two sports that girls played, and, uh – but those girls – so many of them were la – lazy, and they would just say, "Oh, um, you know, I'm havin' my period and I can't play," and so they'd sit in the gym, you know, and just sit there and not do anything, and that wasn't true. They[?] just lazy, and I always said, "One day I'ma be a P.E. teacher and nobody's gonna be sitting in there on the bench, 'cause I'm gonna give them a trashcan and they're gonna walk around the school yard and pick up the trash, if they can't do anything else." That was my goal, but I didn't get to do any of

⁶ Mary Leonora Aulin Bartlett.

⁷ Charles Warren Aulin.

⁸ Physical Education.

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those things [*laughs*], 'cause I didn't get to go to college, as much as I wanted to, Uh, but, uh, it all turned out okay anyway, but that's...

0:14:27

Favorite books

Reagan I loved school. I loved school. I would go to school – as soon as I was old enough to be able to do this – the teachers always came to school in those days – two weeks before school, the teachers would be at school gettin' their classrooms ready, and they always stayed for two weeks after school was out, and I would go to school and find my teacher that I was gonna have, and I would ask her what I would do to help her, and I would stay there, because I just loved going to school, and I was always not happy when school was out every year. I loved school.

Schwandt What – you mentioned you wanted to be a – a[sic] English teacher. What were some of your favorite books?

Reagan Oh, gee [*laughs*]. Uh, I remember *Heidi*, when I was little. *Heidi*, you know? if you ever read that book, and, uh, then, um – oh, after I got older, I remember books I read, but I can't think of any right off the – oh, I'll never forget, I'ma tell you a funny story about this book. We had this little book that somebody gave us on the life of Abraham Lincoln, and it was a child's book. You know it had pictures of Lincoln and it was written so a child could understand. Well, you know when you get up in the high school, you got to write a book report. You gotta read a book every six weeks – well, we did then – and you gotta bi – write a book report on it and turn it in. Well, we had this book. I didn't do this, but my brothers did. They got the Abraham Lincoln book, which you could read in 15 minutes if you were an adult, you know, and they would almost copy it word for word and turn that thing in for a book report, and got by with it, but I [*laughs*] – I always remembered that, but I used to, uh, uh – we had – in Oviedo, actually, they had, uh – we had a drugstore, which was the place. The number one place in Oviedo was the drugstore. They also had a section down there where they had like library books – new books that were written today, you know – modern books, and you could go check 'em out, and, uh, I would go down there and check books out there, and I had a teacher, um, uh, her name was Miss Walker, and, uh, she got married later her name was Ms. Anderson, but she told me about these books and she would recommend a book for me to read, and I would go down to the drugstore and check it out and read those books, and then after I got married and had kids, eh, hardly had time to read, but every day when they took a nap after lunch, I would – I was a member of a book club and I would my – I'm still reading today.

0:17:18

Mary Alice Powell Aulin and sewing

Schwandt Uh, in an earlier conversation you mentioned your mother was a seamstress.

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Reagan Yes.

Schwandt Can you elaborate on some of the things she did[?]?

Reagan Yes. Um, my mother, uh, was – oh, she – she packed oranges for 25 years for Nelson and Company. I remember that well, ‘cause we would go down there sometimes after s – we’d have to go down there and see her about something, but, um – but she also was a seamstress, and she learned to do this on her own. My mother came to Oviedo on the train from Sanford. She only got to go to school to the eighth grade, and she loved school. That was another thing. She lived over here in Sanford and she came out there to operate the telephone service – the – be the telephone operator, and, uh, that’s where she met my father, but, um, I don’t know when or how she learned to sew, because I know that she was young, uh – maybe 16, 17 years old then, when she came out there, and, uh, I never heard about her mother sewing so I – I – I didn’t ever know how she ever learned, but she was very good. She made all our clothes. Never had a bought dress. Never had anything bought, until one day she did get me a big coat. I have a picture. It’s in one of my books. That – it was a – really a store-bought coat. It looked like fur. It wasn’t, but it was – I – I – there’s a picture of me in that book in school, standing there in that big old coat [laughs], but she made, uh – she made all my clothes, and, uh – and my – my sister’s too, and she made – she sewed for other people. They would come to the house, uh, she made clothes for them too, but she made me a – something I’ll never forget – she made me a red coat. It was like a red, wool coat – bright red – and in the inside was satin lines. It was full-length, you know, like a – I was only about 10 years old, and I thought that was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen, and I wanted to wear it to school, but she said, “No, that was to wear to church,” you know, that was special. I finally remember I got to wear it to school, but I never forgot that, and to this day, not too long ago, I learned a song that Dolly Parton wrote, my – *Coat of Many Colors*. I don’t know if you’ve ever heard – are familiar with that. Anyway, that always made me – we weren’t that hard up. It wasn’t made out of rags, like her coat was, but every time I heard that song, I think about my red coat that my mother made me.

So that, uh, and she sewed everything, and then what happened years later – I always said – every night my mother would sit there by the sewing machine and sew, and we’d be sittin’ listenin’ to the radio, and she would sew ‘til late, and I said, “There’s one thing I’m never gonna to do. I am never gonna sew,” ‘cause I thought it was just too much work. Well, got married. my husband gives me a sewing machine for Christmas, plus lessons over in Orlando, so I’d go take lessons, and so I did that, and low ‘n’ behold, I – liked it, and I can – I made my kid’s clothes, and I have pictures – Easter pictures where everybody’s – even my little boys’ coats. we all had dresses that – just alike, and we all had hats and gloves, and we would go to church, and – I mean, some of them are little kids, and we got movies of all this, and we would go to church, and then – especially on Easter and Mother’s Day, we went to Morrison’s Cafeteria after church, the

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only time we ever went out to eat, and we would go there, and then we would go to Lake Eola in Orlando to the Easter parade, and go up on the platform at— at Lake Eola, and walk across there with our Easter outfits on, and the last thing I made was, uh,—my daughter—one of my daughters got married, and I made her, uh, all the dresses for that, and it was like a Southern Belle-type thing, and the wedding was here at our yard, and, uh, I made all the dresses for that, but I haven't made—and I made all my kids little—they had a band, uh, that they played. They had guitars and all that, and we had—all of them played, but the—the four younger ones were playing in a little group that started out doin' it for school, and it got—they got good, and we played it, eh, for Doctor's Day, for Fourth of July. So I made them outfits alike, you know, vest-like things to wear for that, and that—I really enjoyed being able to do all that. It was neat [*taps on table*].

0:22:17

Childhood homes

Schwandt Um, in an earlier conversation, you mention several different houses you moved to...

Reagan Mmhmm.

Schwandt Throughout the years. Uh, could you describe them?

Reagan Yes, the first house we lived in, it was called "The West House," 'cause Mrs. West owned it—was the one—was across from the school, and then we moved—I'll never forget that, because we didn't have electricity at that house. We had lanterns, like oil lanterns, and, uh, Then I remember when we moved, and my mother was so excited, because that—the house we moved in is still there, and, uh, it's—you go by the Lawton House and go on down, through that red light, up the hill, and it—it's on the left. It sits up on top that hill there still. It's funny—it doesn't look near as big as it did, when I was growin' up. Everything looks smaller, but, uh, we moved in that house, and—electricity, running water. We had—the house we lived in had a pump outside. You pumped the water and brought it in—before. Now, we had water. You turned the faucet on. You could take a bath in the bathtub. That was a big thing for us. That was our first time to do that, and, uh, so that was—we really liked that house, and my mother wanted to buy it. We didn't—we were renting, and, uh, the lady sold it to somebody else, so we didn't get to buy it. So we—we had to move.

So we moved down back into town into an area that—the house is not there today, because it's the parking lot of First Baptist Church [of Oviedo]—where the house was. It was real small, but then there were only—all my brothers and sisters—the older ones—Just me and my little brother were still home, so it was okay, 'cause we just needed—and we actually slept on this sleeping porch—bunk beds. I slept on top and he slept on bottom, and then a lil' later, when I got a little older, they moved me into the dining room, and they opened the couch up every

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night and slept on it [*laughs*], but, uh, that's where we lived, until I left home, and – and then after my mother got sick, uh – she had a, um, Parkinson's [Disease].

[*clock chimes*]

Reagan And she stayed there as long as she could, and, uh – very independent person – very. Always wanted to take care of everything herself. Never wanted any charity from anybody – very independent, and, uh, so, um, she was nur – in the nursing home in Orlando – in Winter Park, and – and then eventually, she ran out of money, and she had to stay there, 'cause she cou – and she still had her house, and, uh, she – she took the money, and sold the house, and used it to pay her hospital bill until.

0:24:56 **RECORDING CUTS OFF**

0:24:59 **Community events**

Schwandt Were there any community events that you would attend regularly?

Reagan Uh, actually, very few, um, community events. Most everything centered around either school or church, and, uh, that[sic] was[sic] the activities for – and the other thing though, in the summertime – very important – the swimming pool. Oviedo had a pool. No – Sanford didn't have one, Longwood didn't have one, and there weren't any in people's homes, in those days. They didn't do that, but there – Oviedo had a swimming pool – a good, big, record[?]-sized pool, and then they had a baby pool next to it. Everybody came from Sanford and everything out there. My daddy ran the pool, and so, every day in the summertime, we'd go to the pool. Every day, after lunch, you'd go to the pool, and then, also, they had a dance floor and an old juke – juke organ, you know, and, uh, so that was a very popular place people went, in the summertime. You'd go all the time, and, uh, that was very important part of our life in those days. That and – actually, we didn't do much else.

We rode our bikes a lot. That, we did. Uh, walked everywhere. We didn't have a car. In fact, most – a lot of people didn't, uh, and at – at school, there would be three – maybe – kids that drove a car to school, when they got in high school. The other cars belonged to the teachers, and these boys usually were from Slavia, and the reason they got to do that was – as soon as school was out they could go home and start workin' out in the farms there, but, uh – and you walked everywhere. We walked all the way from my[?] house down to the pool, and the crazy part was, eh, we'd do it at night. I would be 15 years old, and I'd be walkin' home with another friend, and she lived somewhere else, and she's goin' to her house and I'd wa – we'd walk all the way home in the dark at 10 o'clock at night. Nobody thought anything about it.

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Today, you wouldn't do that at all. I wouldn't think of letting my kids to do that, but in those days, it was not a problem, 'n you didn't lock your door at our house. If you—Mama did decide to lock the door. The windows that went from the porch into the hou—*[laughs]* to the living room—all you had to do was raise it up and go in. I mean, anybody could com—there was—no one broke into houses. There was not any of that. You hardly ever heard of anybody stealing anything. That didn't happen, in those days. You just didn't have like we have today. Uh, it is so different. Everybody took care of everybody else, uh, but as far as, uh, entertainment and all, we rode our bikes to Lake Charm. That was a big thing. Get on your bike and ride out from Oviedo to Lake Charm—you know where that is—and ride around the lake. That was what we did. My brother would catch fish, and he'd sell it to the people that he went by there homes on his way home, and he stopped and sell his fish stock[?]. Yeah *[taps on table]*.

Schwandt As I understand, you attended the First Baptist Church of Oviedo?

Reagan Right.

Schwandt Uh, what're some memories of services or events?

Reagan Uh, they had, uh, uh—like when you were real little, they had what they called Sunbeam Band, When you were little. I remember going to that, Sittin' in the little red chairs, and learnin', uh, little songs that I've never forgot. I could sing them for you to this day, and they learned them in Sunbeam Band, and then, as you got older, they had a girls' organizin—organization called GAs—Girls' Auxiliaries somethin'—and—and that was extra that you—so it gave you something else to go to, and you learned all kinds of scripture verses, and you learned so much, and then you got promoted up to another level, and all of that, and the boys had something called RAs—Royal Ambassadors—and they did that, and, uh, you had, uh, the Christmas program, and, uh, that was always a big thing every year—the Christmas program in our Church, And, you went to Church, uh, every Sunday morning and at—Sunday night, and that was what all the teenagers did.

0:29:36

Car accident and the local doctor

Reagan And then, uh, I'll never forget this, uh—when—my mother would always say, "Come straight home from church." This was where we lived, right—we lived next to the church almo—within a block of the church, and this was—I was a senior in high school, and, uh, this particular night, *[inaudible]* my friend—girlfriend lived right down the street from me, and these two boys ask us if we wanted to go for a ride, and, uh, I didn't particularly want to go with this guy, but I knew she did, so I was going to help her out, and, um, we said, "Okay," and I knew I was supposed to go home, but I didn't. So we got in the car with them and we went from Oviedo out to Slavia. You know where that is? Turned down a little dirt road that's now right where the, um, nursing home is out there.

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Now, there's a dirt road that went down there, and got down there, and this guy's gonna park, and I said, "Nope." I said, "I want to go home." So he was not happy. Meanwhile[?], this other couple's in the back seat.

So he takes off and tears down the road, and we get to the hard road – the road that goes to Winter Park today, and he instead – he goin' too fast, and he turns and rolls the car. Rolled it over two or three times. I went through the windshield, landed on the – on the railroad track. The railroad track went by there, and the car – I looked and I was alright. The car is upside down, the wheels are still goin' around [*laughs*], the lights are on. We had a friend that lived right down the road from there. They heard it, and they came up, and, uh – but in the meantime, a car with a lady in it from Oviedo came drivin' by. She saw the accident, and anyway, it scared them, because they didn't know where – I wasn't in the car. They thought maybe I was under the car, but I wasn't, but the – I di – I lost my shoe – one of my shoes. Couldn't find it, but anyway, this lady knew me, knew my parents, and she said, "I'll take you home," and this was about 10 'o clock at night.

So I had to go home, and go in there and wake up my parents. They were already sleepin' – with one – the whole thing that was bothering me was the fact that I lost my shoe – couldn't find it [*laughs*], 'cause I didn't have but one pair of loafers, you know, and I had to wear 'em to school the next day. *What am I gonna wear to school?* Anyway, I had to tell her we – that had[?] – that happened, and I'll never forget. It totaled the car. Totaled it – messed it all up, and the – the guy who was driving – his – nobody got hurt really, luckily. I did have to go in a cou – I got dizzy in a couple days and I had to go over and get x-rayed, and I had a slight concussion, but that was never any more to that, and, uh – but anyway, I felt sorry for the boy that was driving the car, because his mother was pregnant, and they were – she had to have that car to go to the doctor in Sanford. So he was in big trouble. That was a memory I remember[?] [*laughs*] well. Anyway...

Schwandt In a prior conversation, you mentioned the town's doctor. Could you tell me any stories you have of him?

Reagan The town doctor? Dr. Martin, yes. Dr. Martin was the town – and he did everything. He pulled teeth, and, you know, anybody got anything wrong with them. What you hardly ever – I – I don't remember going to him, uh, eh, but just one time. um, my mother – I came – came in from somewhere, one time, and my daddy was washing dishes, and that was unheard of, 'cause I had never seen him wash a dish in my life, or do anything in the kitchen, and he was washing dishes, and I said, "What is goin' on?" I was a teenager, and, uh, he – my – my mother had been doin' it, and there was a knife in the water and she had cut her hand real bad, and he had to take her over to Dr. Martin and get it sewed up, and I remember that, and then, another thing that happened, um – Dr. Martin and his wife, Miss – Mrs. Martin, were very active in our church. Mrs. Martin...

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[clock chimes]

Reagan Taught Sunday school and all that. They – the – this doctor’s office was right next to the church, a little bit behind it – right next to it, and they had a bell out there by the office – doctor’s. The office was right by the home, and if somebody came while the doctor was in church, they would ring the bell and he would hear it, get up and go out of church, and One Sunday that happened. Somebody had done something to their leg, was layin’ on the back of a truck, with no sides on it – just a wooden back – and he goes over to take care of it, and he took that guy’s leg off – the rest of it, while everybody – Of course, as soon as we could get out of church, we all went runnin’ over to see what’s goin’ on, and we’re all standin’ around watchin’ Dr. Martin take a – saw this guy’s leg off, while he’s layin’ on the back of the truck [laughs]. Yeah, he was a character. Yup.

0:35:03

Teachers and discipline

Schwandt And also, um, in an earlier conversation a – about school, you mentioned, uh, the disciplinary actions of certain teachers.

Reagan Yes.

Schwandt What are some experiences that stuck out to you?

Reagan Uh, well, I’m not gonna tell you that story I told you last time, ‘cause I don’t want to get in trouble about that one, but, uh, uh, most of my teachers, uh – it – I’ve always said this, and I’ve probably – you probably know this. Everybody does. You always have certain teachers that are really good teachers and you’ll never forget ‘em. I mean, they – I have – I can remember certain teachers that were just good, and then there were some that, you wonder why they’re doing this, you know, uh, but um, I – we had this one teacher and [clears throat] she was hard to get along with, and she wa – she never had a smile on her face. She was just real sharp, and is always getting on everybody for every little thing, and she taught the fourth grade, and I was getting older by then, you know, ‘cause all the grades, one through 12, went to same school. You walked down the hall and – and this was something that I – I was bad sometimes at – I must have been seventh grade, ‘cause junior high is really the bad time [laughs]. I – if you look at my – I have every report card, and I can – you could pick out the ones I had when I was in seventh and eighth grade, uh, and anyway, she was just always mean to the kids, I thought, and so, she left her door open. She’d be in there talkin’ and you can walk down the hall and you’d hear her or see her in there.

So one day, when we were ki – talking out there on the – before you walk into the main building – on the porch, and, uh, so I said – there was a box – an old cardboard box out there, and I said, “I’m gonna walk down the hall. I’m gonna throw it in her room. See what happens.” So they bet me I wouldn’t do it, so I did it. I walked in, threw it in there, and ran on down the hall. She caught me, and she

took me up to the office, and the principal there knew me, of course, and he knew that she – also that she was a little bit difficult to get along with, and all he did to me was – after she left, he said he'd take care of it, and, uh, he gave me a poem to learn. He says, "Now, just sit here and learn this poem, but don't do that anymore," [laughs] but we had some, uh – we had another teacher, who had been there for many years and taught my older si – you know, that was another thing. The teachers you got – they had already had your older sister, who was a brain.

You know, you're supposed to know as much as she did, and, uh, they always compared you, as you went down the kids, but, uh, we had this teacher, and she could be – she was a good teacher, but she – she didn't really – I don't think she had children of her own. I don't think she ever had children, but she would do things that, uh, would hurt people. Like we had this one girl that lived across the railroad track – her home was right over there – and she'd walk to school across the railroad track every day. Nicest person in the world, and one day she did something, and this – this teacher criticized her so badly in front of the whole class, and the girl did not deserve it. She didn't do anything. Oh, she was a little bit late, I think, and I think she was late, because the train was across the track, and she got all over her or bein' late to class and made the girl cry, and she did that to another girl in my class, and I just – it just really – I never, ever forgot it. Even though she was a good teacher, she – she would ridicule students sometimes, and, uh, I thought that – and – and it was embarrassing for that student, in front of the other kids, uh, and so you just remember certain people for certain things, but most of my teachers were good.

0:39:19

School pranks and memories

Reagan

Oh, and I gotta tell you one more school story. Right next to the school, lived – there was some houses, and one of these houses was Mr. McCulley's[sp] house. Charlie McCulley was my – I went to school, first grade through 12. I wish I knew if he was still livin' today. I would love to see him. uh, but anyway, they had chickens – chicken yard, and one night, uh, some of the high school boys got Mr. McCulley's chickens – three or four – and brought them over, and – and for some reason, we were able to get in and out of the school. I don't know what it was, but they knew how to open – pick the lock or something, then go in there, and so, they got these chickens and they had this teacher that was a retired military. His name was Mr. Bayton[sp], and Mr. Bayton was vague. He shouldn't have been teaching history. I mean, he was like – he didn't even know the subject, you know, and he didn't – nobody cared for him, but he was just kinda dumb, and so they put these chickens in his room and shut the door and left them in there [laughs] all night. The next day, he came to school and had all those chickens in there, and another time, they took somebody's old "Model T," and put it in the hall – put it in the hall, and every Halloween, they put a metal trashcan on top of the flagpole, upside down. Nobody ever figured out how they did it, but they – that was – you knew it would be there the next mornin' [laughs].

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Another thing though, when I went to school, what we did every day – they – they had the [American] flag, it stayed in the office, and they had certain people that did this, and they would take the flag out, unfold it, put it on the flagpole, and put the flag up, and that was – and if it rained, you ran out there and took the flag down. You never let the flag stay up there in the rain. You never let it stay up overnight. That was the way it was always. The whole time I was at school, it was that way.

We always had what we called chapel every S – every Friday morning, everybody in the school went to the auditorium and there was a program. A lot of – once a month, you had a pastor of one of the churches come and talked, and it'd be a different one each time, and today, that could never happen. You always had the Pledge of Allegiance every morning before class, and you always said the Lord's Prayer. You did those two the whole time I was in school. Now, things have changed.

0:42:05

Segregation and integration

Schwandt I have read that, uh, Oviedo High did not become integrated until the 1960s. Growing up during segregation, do you recall any incidences where you recognized the separation of races?

Reagan Oh, when I was growing up – I remember when integration started, 'cause we were livin' here, and I had kids in school, and I remember the first day, uh, that it – that the schools were integrated, and my kids were in high school, at that time, but back when – when I was growin' up, it – everything was segregated. Blacks were – rode – if they got on the bus, they had to ride in, uh, like the – we had a bus that came from Orlando to Oviedo. It was called Orlando Transit, and if you got on the bus, all the black people had to sit in the back. They loaded back to front, but this was another thing. They did have buses that went – went out to get kids to go to my school, but blacks didn't have a bus. They – they had to walk to school, and they lived past where I lived up on the hill that – what we called "The Negro Quarters." they were called "The Quarters." They lived – a lot of 'em – there were different places, but there was a group down there. They walks by our house, and they had to walk all the way across town to the black school, and of course, there was – it was no – no integration at all, and, uh, it even, uh – it was just unheard of for, uh – for people to mix up, or – or even – they was[sic] just two separate entities, and, uh, it – gradually, it got better.

I remember like when my daughter, who, uh, just passed away this last summer – when she was a senior in high school, she was yearbook editor, just like I was yearbook editor when I was in school, and, uh – but, uh – and the two years before that, we had integration. it started when my oldest son⁹ was still in sch – still in school, and, um, so there were some black[sic] on her, uh, editor – on

⁹ Daniel Lee Reagan, formerly Daniel Lee McGill.

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her, uh, staff to do the yearbook, and when they got ready to have the ye—the party, there was a big discussion about whose house they could have it at, because that meant black people—kids were gonna come.

The same way with my daughter, uh—my younger daughter, Julie [Karin Reagan], who's a nurse, uh, now. Uh, when she was a cheerleader, uh, we had some black girls that were cheerleaders with her, and, uh, lot of people—it was hard for a lot of people to get used to that. They didn't like it, and—but I remember I took 'em, um, 'cause the parents—the white girls' parents worked too. I was a stay-at-home mom, and, uh, all the other parents of the cheerleaders worked, and so they never went to anything, and then every—the cheerleaders needed to go to cheerleading camp. I drove 'em over there, picked 'em up. I made their uniforms, and—and I took the black girls too, you know, and somebody would say, "Are[?]-are you gonna do that?" I'd say, "Yes," and I can remember that, and then I remember when my oldest daughter—the one that was a yearbook editor—went to Miami, she trained at, uh, Jackson Borough School for Nursing, and she had to watch a[sic], uh, autopsy. They had this group[?]. they watched up looking down from this glass to watch it, and that was part of her nurses training, and it was a black girl they were an autopsy on, and she said, "You know, Mom, when you open up somebody, they're the same on the inside as you are," and she said, "A lot of people need to think about that," and, you know—and that was just wha—what she figured out on her own, and I said, "That's[?]-that's right," and right now, two or three doors down here, my best friend is a black girl who's 50 years old, who was married to a white man, who just passed away, and she and I walk every—two days a week, and we have a ball. She is more fun than—anyway, uh, that is certainly not a problem today, but I remember when it was a very big problem.

I can remember when the guy who was the—the de—the she—the, uh, constable or the police chief of Oviedo—the only—only one policeman—I can remember how he mistreated black people that he put in jail. He hit 'em. He had a billy stick and I remember hearing how he hit 'em in the head with that, and, you know—I mean, they were mistreated. They were bad. It was bad. I can remember some bad things that happened. I'm certainly glad that part is over. Uh, hopefully, it's over.

0:47:30

Graduation

Schwandt

What year did you graduate at Oviedo High School, and what was the graduation ceremony like?

Reagan

Uh, I—1951. Nine people in my graduatin' class. In those days, you always had a—a baccalaureate service. I don't know if they still—don't still do that, but they always had a, uh—a, uh—and they had it at the school. It was just like a graduation thing, but They had it like a—on a—two or three days before graduation, you had baccalaureate, and they would, like, preach a sermon, or

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they would do a – it would be a talk on how you – to live your life and all that sort of thing, but it was a different, and every year, they'd have a different pa – we had a Methodist and a Baptist and a Lutheran ch – church. Those were the three main churches, and they would take turns, uh, doin' the baccalaureate service.

So you always had that first, and then you had graduation, and at the same time as grad – graduation night, you also – they gave out any awards that – now – now today, my kids – they have an award night for different things, but in the – they did all the awards the night of graduation, and, uh, I got – I'll never forget this, because my older sister got a bunch. S when I came along, I did too, except...

[clock chimes]

Reagan One. She got one that I didn't get, and my mother said – as soon as she walked out of that thing, the first thing she said was, "How come you didn't the" – I forgot what it was – "American Legion Award" or somethin'. I said, "That's alright. I got best all-around athlete award. My sister didn't that," [laughs] but I got the history award and, uh – and the, uh, leadership award. I forgot what – it's another name for it, but, uh, I'll never forget that. She didn't know how come I didn't get that one, so – but that – we had award's night the same night, as we did that [taps on table]. That was about it.

0:49:41

College education and first job

Schwandt And where did your life take you after high school?

Reagan Uh, not very far. My whole thing was to leave Oviedo. Both of my sisters had left and went to work at a bank in Orlando. uh, my older sister went first and she got – she worked at Florida State – it was called Florida State Bank in Downtown Orlando, right down the middle of town, and then when my sister graduated, my ol – other sister had talked to 'em and got her in the[?] – she worked in the bookkeeping department. So they both went to Orlando to work in the bank.

Well, I didn't want to work in the bank. What I wanted to do was to go to college, and I did not get to go, and Mr. [Thomas Willington] Lawton – T.W. Lawton – you've heard of the Lawtons? Uh, he was a cousin of ours, and, uh, he knew how much I wanted to go, and[?], uh, so I was supposed to go over to – with him, right? 'Cause he – he drove to Sanford every, uh, day to work at the – down at the courthouse – was where his office was, and, uh, they were gonna have a test for scholarships. You could take these tests to try to get a scholarship to go to co – FSU.¹⁰ In those days it was a women's college,¹¹ and, uh, so I was all

¹⁰ Florida State University

¹¹ Florida Female College, later Florida State College for Women.

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set to go. My principal had fixed it for me to go, 'cause – 'cause I was valedictorian, and – and I was kinda' smart, and I[?] thought I could pass – get maybe – maybe get a scholarship, and I was gonna go, and Mr. Lawton – and I was – and I already made arrangements with him. I didn't tell my mother anything about it, 'cause she had said, "We can't afford to send you to college," you know, "We don't have the money," uh, and – but so I thought, *If I can get a scholarship, you know I can do this*, and, uh, so doggonnit, if, uh, Mr. – somebody from sch – one of the teachers called and my mother answered the phone, and she said, "Well, tell Bettye when she goes tomorrow to take the scholarship test" – she didn't know I was goin'. I didn't tell her, and, uh – but Mr. Lawton knew, 'cause I had already contacted him. He was goin' take me, and so she says, "What is this all about?" And I told her. She said, "We can't do that." So she called Mr. Lawton and told him not to come – not to pick me up, 'cause I couldn't – even if I got it, it was just – they couldn't afford all the stuff they still have to do for me to go, and he called back, and he said, "Listen. I will help her go. I will help her financially [inaudible]," but my mother would never take any money from anybody.

So that, I did not get to do, but – so then, I get on the bus, after I get out of school and I [inaudible] – my senior year, I worked for – Mr. Teague, who was the principal, I worked in the office half a day every day, 'cause I had all the subjects they had. I took [inaudible] instead of st – study hall, I took a subject. So there wasn't[sic] any subjects left for me to take. So he asked me to be the school secretary, work in the office half – half a day, and I did that all that senior year, and tough – and then after I graduate, I'm – I'm goin' to Orlando riding the bus, trying to walk around, find a job, which I hadn't found. I come home one day, and my mother says, "Well, you got a job. I got you a job. Mr. Teague called and wanted to know if you wanted a full-time job being a school secretary." *Oh, jeeze*. I wanted to leave. I wanted to get out of Oviedo, and go do somethin' different.

0:53:26

Husbands

Reagan

So I was home for a year, and then I got married and moved to Sanford, and then, uh, I was married for three years. I had – we built a house. City of Sanford would give you a lot – give you a lot, but you had to build a house within a year. We built the house. We cleared the lot. I can show you that house today. We built the house – I mean, laid the blocks, poured the floor, did the whole thing in one year. He¹² worked for the railroad and we did this when he wasn't working. We built the house. We laid blocks – all that stuff – and we were able to move in within a year. it wasn't finished, but we moved in, and, uh, anyway, he was, uh – I had two kids, and when I had a year-old baby¹³ and a three-year-old son,¹⁴ and he was killed, uh, in a train accident, working – he was a railroader – train

¹² Joel Edwin McGill.

¹³ Kathleen Ann McGill, now Kathleen Ann Reagan.

¹⁴ Daniel Lee McGill, now Daniel Lee Reagan.

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accident, uh, and then, I met my husband¹⁵—I have today, uh—eight months later, which everybody thought was too soon [*laughs*], at church, and, uh, we've been married—we—we just celebrated, uh, Monday, our 58th wedding anniversary. So [*taps on table*] it worked [*laughs*], and we had four more kids.¹⁶ That's six.

Schwandt After your first husband died, for those eight months, before you met your—how did you survive?

Reagan Uh, well, uh, Social Security [*Insurance*], uh, and he had some insurance and, uh—the other thing though we had done—we had bought—borrowed money and bought, uh, I think it was 4,000 dollars—bought 80 acres—now, 80 acres in Osteen, uh, found a road that if you took it—took you all the way to Oak Hill. It was a back road. It goes through there. We bought 80 acres, and we got these cows from the dairy, and we were—we were raising cows out there. We were doin' that too. So when he died, I had that 80 acres and about seven or eight cow, uh—calves. I had to go feed 'em on a nipple bucket, and I was goin' out there every day doing—in fact, that's where I was when they came out and found me to tell me what had happened, and, uh, so anyway, uh, I had that when I married Don—he was in, uh, TV business—and, uh, so we—he went out there and got some more cows and played cowboy [*laughs*], and we had that, and we were eventually able to sell it for [\$]16,000, which when—in those—that was a long time ago, back in the—we're talkin' about the [19]60s, and, uh—and we bought another five—bought 10 acres out here near the airport, and put our cows out there and we had that.

Then we had a chance to buy this place, and, uh—we lived in town, and he had a really nice, big house. I mov—sold my house out there and moved into his house, and, uh—but we had a pool we added on to the house by the time we had a bunch of kids. We had to keep addin' onto the house, and we had a pool, which was—new at those time[sic]. Not too many people had 'em. So every day, I had not just my kids. I had everybody's in the neighborhood's kids at my house, and it got to be a zoo. I said, "We gotta move." So he was out here fixin' these people's tel—television set, and he saw this place. He said—and they wanted—there was an old couple—they wanted to move into town. Well, we owned another house across the street that was a rental, and, uh, so they—we almost swapped 'em, and Of course, we had to work on this one for a year to make it so we could—this—this, uh—this was outside the house. This wall was the outside, and that brick in that fireplace—there was a—fireplace right here. We chipped all the brick out of that. that's the same brick that were[sic] in the fireplace, and we added this room, and we added another bathroom and put—what was a porch, we made that into bigger bedrooms, and we moved out here with six kids, and,

¹⁵ Donald Thomas Reagan.

¹⁶ Debbie Lynn Reagan, Julie Karin Reagan, Andrew Schott Reagan, and Patrick Kelley Reagan.

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uh, it's been a great, great place to live, and then we got a lot o—I'll show you my studio, before you go. It's outside.

Schwandt And how did you meet your—how did you meet Don, your second husband?

Reagan My husband now? At, uh—it was a put-up job [*laughs*]. It really was. Um, he—he came here in the Navy, and, uh, he was—he got married and he was married. He was divorced, when I met him, um, and he was at the church. Anyway, One day, after my husband had passed away, I called. I had the two little kids, and I was still—I was going to church down there, but—and I had gone to church all my life, but I was so, you know—I was totally—I was just kinda' down, and I called the—the church, and they said—the assistant pastor came out, and I told him—I said, "I'm goin' to church, but I'm not gettin' anything out of it." I said, "I'm just not"—I was miserable, and he said, "You know what? You need to be—you don't need to be sittin' in a class, uh, with you kids anymore[?]. You need to be teaching class," So he said, "We have seven year olds. We need a teacher for seven year olds. Would you"—and so I said, "Okay." So I go—first Sunday, I go in this—we had 30-somethin' seven year olds and there were four or five teachers. He was a teacher, and I was a teacher of Sunday school of seven year olds. They put us both in the same room with a little thing in between, and it didn't take very long, and, uh, so we got—that's where I met him—was there. We been together ever since [*taps on table*].

Schwandt What are some fond memories you have raising your children?

Reagan Oh [*taps on table*], great memories, and the good part about it was we had a movie camera. Took movies of everything we did—every Christmas, every Thanksgiving, every birthday, all events. Oh, you should see our kids, going to Lake Eola, lined up where the flowers are, where all the little kids with—all the little girls had white gloves on, hats, frilly dresses. Boys had on ties and coats and—and, uh—gettin' out of the car, going to church, [*inaudible*] watchin' 'em tryin' to get in and out of the cars and all that, and, uh—and then going on vacations, camping. That was the only way you could go—take that many kids on vacation is to go camping, and that's what we did. We went camping. We started up[?] in Florida, ended up in the mountains, and they still go camping to this day, but, uh—and then, I—I enjoyed my kids.

Uh, I never missed a—any program that they were in, and, uh, of course when you got that many, they're in different things, you know, uh, and that—and this one daughter—she tickled me, because if I was gonna have to go to school for, uh—drive a car for, uh, you know—take the kids somewhere—trip, or something—she would tell me—pick out what she wanted me to wear. She wanted you to look good, you know? [*laughs*] She would come in there and say, "Mom, this is what I want you to wear," but, um, I really—and I never missed a

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PTA¹⁷ meeting, and I remember going, and I have two or three kids in one school, and you went to each one of 'em's class, and I'm trying to go to all of 'em's class, and change classes and do this, but I always did – kept up with what was going on, and, uh – and they all did good in school – pretty good in school, and never really had any major problems with 'em. Uh, all did school, all – all graduated good[sic], and, uh, have great memories, and then I have all these – and used to be the movies were on film, and then – 'till now. You know, now, it's entirely different, but my daughter that – the one that you went to her house – she took those, and I dunno how long it took her, she's finally – still got something to do, and put 'em all on DVDs, and, uh – and we have 'em all today. A lot of nice ones. We don't have anything on TV we want to watch, we sit and watch the kids all growin', when they were little all the way up. So that – we have those, and I – I tell 'em today – I said, "Y'all have all these things on camera"

[*phone rings*]

Reagan "Now you need to be makin' sure you – you have these things. Don't just let it get taken off of there, 'cause we have a record of everything. Y'all aren't going to have that." I'm just gonna let that go.

[*answering machine*]

1:02:35 **History of the Aulin family**

Schwandt I understand that your great-grandfather Andrew Aulin[, Sr.] founded Oviedo.

Reagan Right.

Schwandt What are some stories about him or other founding families, like the Lawtons or Wheelers that you...

Reagan Uh...

Schwandt Remember being told?

Reagan Well, he passed away before I was – was born, and, uh, the, uh – the way that, uh – he came down here – a lot of those people who were Swe – he was Swedish – came over here from Sweden, and he didn't come the way so many people in this area did. The Sanford area is all – a lot of Swedes over here, and they came over, uh, to work the citrus groves, and the – and the people who owned the groves here would pay their way on the ship, if they'd come and work a year. That's how a lot of them came, but he didn't come that way. He came up at, um – on the East Coast in New York or somewhere like that, and he came down through Georgia, and then eventually, into down here, and, um, he,

¹⁷ Parent-Teacher Association.

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uh, uh – at first, Oviedo – the settlement was out on, uh, Lake Jessup, and they called it White’s Warf – was the name of it – little settlement, and then they sort – sort of moved into O – into what is Oviedo today, and, uh, he was one of ‘em that moved in there, and he became – he was the first postmaster, and they had to come up with a name, and, uh, he was – when they named it, and he was also a schoolteacher...

[clock chimes]

Reagan And he spoke ‘bout four or five languages. He was very smart, and the reason he named it O – it should be pronounced *Oh-vee-ay-do* – was he traveled, uh, before he came over here, and then he even went back over to Europe several times, and he had been to Oviedo, Spain, and he thought since Florida was a Spanish word, he thought we’d name it Oviedo, and he called it *Oh-vee-ay-do*, and at, uh, one time, it – it was – it was in Orange County. You know, that used to be all Orange County all this part of it, plus this was too, and – and it was, uh, uh...

[train whistles]

Reagan So then, he – and he opened a store. He had a store there also, and they – and I heard a, uh – different things people have written about him and said that they’d go in their store, and he’d be so intent on reading something. he was very intellectual, and he liked to read all the time – that they’d have to ma – make him quit reading to wait on him, ‘cause he was into that, and [inaudible] when he passed away, he didn’t have a lot of money, but what he had, he gave to Rollins College. It was just starting, and he was one of the people that gave what he had to Rollins College, because he wanted to see that college be there. So he was – I wish I had known him. He was – I was – he gone before I came along, and his wife¹⁸ was a Lawton.

So that’s how we got involved with that, and, uh, then, it’s – it’s crazy, because when we started going through different history things, I found out that [inaudible] the Lees in Oviedo, which are – that’s all involved – the Lawtons, Lees, and the Wheelers – all [Lee] sisters all married those people. They were sisters and one married a Lawton,¹⁹ one married a Lee[sic], and a Wheeler,²⁰ and all that, and, uh, so when – my – on my mother’s side, who came from Sanford, there were some Lees. Her sisters married the Lees, and – and I al – al – I asked a couple times – I said, “Ya’ll kin to the[?] Lees in Oviedo?” Said, “No, no.” Well, they are, uh – they got this book on the Jacobs family and I started reading it, and the Jacobs family, involved with both Lees there, Lee’s here. So way back, if you wanted to go by marriage things, my mother was actually – her people were

¹⁸ Emma “Lona” Leonora Lawton Aulin.

¹⁹ Charlotte “Lottie” Lee Lawton married Thomas Willington Lawton and Lillian Della Lee Lawton married Winborn Joseph Lawton, Sr.

²⁰ George Lee Wheeler married Benjamin Franklin Wheeler.

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ancestors with my father's people, way back and by marriage, and I thought—I just found that out not too long ago, and I bet that they—I'll tell 'em. They don't know it [*laughs*], but that was, uh—and, uh, another thing—when—when my husband—my first husband—he was Catholic, and, uh, when we—when he went and talked to my daddy about us getting married, and he said, "Well, there's one thing I want you to do. I don't care which church you go to, but both of you go to the same one," because—and Oviedo's known for that. The Lawtons and the Wheelers and the Lees—the Whe—Frank Wheeler—big in the Baptist church—his wife was big in the Methodist church. Same things with the Lawtons. One went—husband went to one church and the wife we—and my daddy said, "I don't want to see any more of that." You—but that was—was one of the things that they did out there too, but they were all related. Yup.

Schwandt Do you have any family heirlooms that were passed down that you held on to?

Reagan Uh, no, uh, I don't. I have some pictures, but I don't have any—anything else that—I wish I did, and that is why I[sic] makin' a point to save everything that I have [*laughs*], and—Like that bell that's—there's a big bell hanging outside. That's my husband's family. His father had that bell on the farm in Mississippi, and we were able to get that, and he re—redid it and painted it and all and put it up there, but—but that's one of the few things we have from his family, and, um, we—so our kids are—that's the one thing—you don't get rid of that. that stays in the family, you know, and it's very, very—it's made in 1800-somethin' is what—the date is in it, but, um, no, uh, I don't think there's—there's much left, uh, physical things, you know, um, just some pictures, which I try to keep up with, and I have pictures of my father and his father together, and, uh, things like that, but, uh, no, uh, I don't—can't think of any—any artifacts, really, that I have.

1:09:08 **Closing remarks**

Schwandt Is there anything you like—you'd like to cover that we haven't addressed?

Reagan No, uh, well, one thing I want to say about Oviedo today, is, uh—it must be a great place to live, because here a few years ago—well, quite a few years ago, when I was starting, uh—doing a lot of painting, and, uh, I—I did a whole thing—a lot of pic—paintings, uh, about Oviedo, and, uh, I went out there and just drove around, went down to where the pool used to be, which they covered it up. it's not there anymore, but there's a park down there—children's park and things, and, uh—and I went down there to—just to take some pictures and look around, and there was[sic] some women down there playing with their kids, and, uh, I—I told them—I said, "Do you mind if I take some pictures?" 'Cause I didn't know what I was going to do, but I was going to do some series of paintings on Oviedo, and they said, "Yes." it was okay, and—and I said, "Would you mind telling me"—'cause they—they weren't from there, and I said, "Why did you move here?" And they said, "Well, we researched before we moved"—they came from out of state—"And this just was the best place to move to raise

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your kids." They checked it out. They said, "This is a very family-oriented town. They have a lot of things for kids, and it's – it's, you know – it's just a very – it's the ideal place to raise a family." I thought, *Well, that's great.* So then, I go to another place in Oviedo, another place like that. There's some more families there. I asked the same question, got the same answer. I said, "Now, isn't that amazing?" That – that's sayin' a lot for Oviedo. It is, and another thing – the Townhouse Restaurant – are you familiar with that? Which they're fixin' to move, you know?

Schwandt Yeah.

Reagan But, uh, we go out there every now and then just to eat there, but, uh, I remember when it wasn't the Townhouse, and up above it, there used to be a doctor's office above that place, but, uh, that corner there – the – the red light – the whole time I was re – growin' up, that was the red light. the only one in town for many, many years, and I kinda hate to see 'em do what they're gonna do there, but that's progress, and, uh – but, uh, I have very fond memories of Oviedo, but, you know, when you're growing up, you always think somethin's gonna be better somewhere else, but, uh, my daughter lives out there, and right down the road, you know, comin' from – back to Oviedo from her house, there's a new subdivision that's called Aulin[s] Landing or something they're building. That's got the Aulin name in it. There's just – new. They just started building it. So that's something too, and of course, they got Aulin Avenue, you know, out there by the cemetery. So yeah, it's a – good memories from Oviedo, and I need to get back out there, 'cause I have – still have people out there that I know. Um, how are you – how – how much more are y'all doing? Do you have more people you're going to interview? 'Cause I know somebody would be good to interview [*laughs*].

Schwandt Oh, I'm sure other classes...

Reagan Yeah.

Schwandt Like I said, you know, which – which – every new semester, because we're just...

Reagan Uh huh.

Schwandt To get as much...

Reagan Right.

Schwandt Of Central Florida's history as possible. So...

Reagan Mmhmm.

Schwandt If you wanna...

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Reagan Uh, the Wards, uh – there’s a, uh – Bob Ward. Uh, his brothers passed away, but Bob Ward – Bob and Joanne Ward. I would recommend, uh, talking to – to them. Uh, they live out there close to where I lived, right across the street from the Wheeler House. The – we used to call Mrs. Wheeler – Mrs. B. F. – Frank Wheeler “The Queen,” and, uh – and she was like a queen, you know? She didn’t speak to you. You speak to – I’ll never forget. One time, since I’ve been – when – after I moved to – to, uh, Sanford, we had a drug store downtown called Tusta’s[?] Drugstore. In those days, it had a soda fountain. just like Oviedo had a soda fountain. Had a soda fountain in it, and I was down there one day, sittin’ in a booth, and, uh, Ms. Wheeler came by, and I recognized her and she recognized me, you know, and she walk right on by and didn’t speak, and goes on down and doggone, if every booth wasn’t full, of course, and so she comes back and then all of the sudden, she remembered who I was, ‘cause she needed a place to sit [*laughs*]. I thought that was – that was – that was pretty good. That was the way it was. They were a little bit – little bit that way – a little bit that way. Uh...

Schwandt Well, thank you so much for your time.

Reagan Mmhmm, you’re welcome. I enjoyed it.

End of Interview