

**Notes from Interview with Mary Evelyn Cozby Mobley
June 19, 1989**

**Interview and Notes prepared by Wheelice Wilson, Jr.
(recording made in her home at 709 S. Coppel Road, Coppel)**

Her family and background:

Born in 1911. Lived one year in Lewisville. Moved to Coppel when she was one year old, in 1912.

Her parents were J. R. and Patty Mae Howell Cozby.

Their house in Coppel was on Belt Line Road, east of Coppel, where the present Shake and Shingle business is located. That house was probably built by Jim Harrison; torn down about one year ago by Bill Thompson.

Mary Evelyn lived there until she was about 23 years old, until 1934, when she moved to Dallas, then to Los Angeles. She lived in Los Angeles for 25 years, then returned to Coppel in 1963.

Her best memories of early Coppel would be from the late 1920s to the early 1930s.

Businesses in town:

Movie on Saturday nights (on Wilson corner). It was not there very long. She was about 10 years old when she attended movies there.

There were also Medicine Shows there – salesmen would make pitches from the back of wagons, selling items such as liniment.

Cotton gin.

Bank that closed in the 20s.

Drugstore with a soda fountain run by Minnie McGee (Tom Bullock's daughter) and her husband. She previously taught school, but when she married, she started to work in the drugstore. Her husband was killed in the drugstore and is buried in Bullock Cemetery. After he died, the post office was located in the drugstore. Before that, the post office was located in the general store that was on the north side of Bethel Road. Minnie McGee built and lived in Mary Evelyn's house.

The "original" Harrison general store was located where such a store has always been located, now the Napa store. When Harrison closed that store, in about 1926, he turned it into a gymnasium with gas lights. Basketball teams could practice there at night.

Blacksmith's located "behind the little grocery store" (Wilson's note: behind the present Coppel Deli.) There was another blacksmith's somewhere.

The McGee house was "out in the wilderness" – trees all around. The wooded area behind the house was scary. Mary Evelyn would visit there when she was young. Minnie was her cousin.

On the corner (southwest corner of W. Bethel and S. S. Coppel Roads) was a 2-story boxy building.

The Woodmen of the World lodge hall was probably upstairs.

Across the street (on the Wilson corner) was a service station and, before that, a drugstore.

Coppel people were very much aware of being in the center of Lewisville, Grapevine, Irving, and Carrollton, but it wasn't considered very significant that they were in the very corner of Dallas County.

Mary Evelyn and her friends often went to Grapevine to the movies and the shop. They went to Grapevine on Bethel Road, going to Isca (sp?) Plumlee's house west of town, turning south, going on to the railroad and Cotton Road.

They sometimes bought clothes in Lewisville, but more often, they bought clothes in Dallas.

Schools:

Mary Evelyn would walk to town or ride in a buggy. She walked to school in old Coppell. She began school when she was 6 years old in the 2-story school building in the downtown area of Coppell. Minnie Bullock (to become Minnie McGee) was her teacher. Minnie, who rode her own horse side-saddle, stopped at Mary Evelyn's house and said that if Mary Evelyn was ready to start school, she could begin at Coppell. Mary Evelyn's brothers attended Bethel School, but neither Mary Evelyn nor her mother wanted her to attend there, so she started at Coppell. Shortly after that, her brothers transferred to Coppell. Their house was about half way between Coppell and Bethel Schools.

In those days, children usually attended the school that was closest to them, but it was apparently their choice where they attended.

Coppell School had two classrooms downstairs – called the little room and the large room; the older kids were taught in the large room, and the younger kids in the little room.

Upstairs, accessible by two staircases on either side of the main entrance, was one big room with a stage. It was used for entertainment – kids doing skits, such as at Christmas. Eventually, that room was dangerous to use and kids were forbidden from going up there.

There were two teachers; one was Minnie Bullock McGee.

When Mary Evelyn started school, the other schools in session were Bethel, Gentry, and Hackberry. Sally Brooks taught at Hackberry. The four schools consolidated to become the new Coppell School. (Wilson's note: I think this is wrong. Only Bethel and Gentry consolidated with Coppell School, in 1928).

Mary Evelyn went through the eighth grade at Coppell School. Students usually then went to Carrollton to finish high school, but Mary Evelyn did not go to Carrollton. She went to (?) for four years.

The Coppell School building (after 1928) was made of brick, but it burned while she was in California.

Churches:

Methodist Church

Baptist Church. The Baptists probably met in the Methodist building before the Baptist Church was built.

There was a small church in the Cottonwood area. Sometimes folk from the Coppell Baptist Church would visit at the Cottonwood Church. Mary Evelyn and Clayta Harwell, when they were teenagers, went on "tour" to local churches and sang songs, with Lena Harrison playing for them. One of the churches they sang in was the Cottonwood Church.

She doesn't remember many weddings in Coppell.

Mary Evelyn's Friends:

Louise Kirkland, Jack's younger sister.

Clayta (Plumlee Harwell)

Myrtle Russell

The Browns

The Crows

The Cribbs

Social Life:

On Sundays, after Sunday School, the friends would always have dinner at someone's house, then go "Kodak-ing" – taking photos with their cameras. They would walk or some of the boys would ride horses. There were lots of places to take pictures – lots of farmland, wells, the railroad,

etc. They mailed off the film to be developed. Some of the photos had black and white frames around them.

There were box suppers. The supper baskets were beautifully decorated and were bid on. The bidding would usually start out slow and go up to a few dollars.

Coppell was full of cotton fields.

Grapevine Springs Park:

The park was “built” while Mary Evelyn was in California, so she does not have many memories of the park. However, she remembers that people had picnics, cookouts, and family reunions there.

She clearly remembers that everyone believed the story that Sam Houston camped there to meet with the Indians. James Pinson Howell’s father fought with George Washington in the Revolutionary War, and Mary Evelyn’s grandfather, Burl Howell, said that Houston met with the Indians there. Burl Howell lived “where Theresa Eby lives” (Wilson’s note: on Sandy Lake Road).

Bullock Cemetery:

It was started when Washington C. Bullock’s baby daughter died in 1869 and was buried on Bullock’s 420 acre farm.

There are about 25 graves in the cemetery, clearly marked, undisturbed.

The last person to be buried there, in 1985, was Bill Cozby.

The entrance to the cemetery used to be from the west, over the creek, not like it is now, from Denton Tap Road.

Bill Cozby tended to the cemetery until his death. After that, Mary Evelyn looked after it.

Mary Evelyn’s family are buried in Flower Mound. She doesn’t remember many funerals in Coppell – none in Bethel Cemetery – some in the Parrish Cemetery and some in the Moore Cemetery (Wilson’s note: Probably what we presently call Stringfellow Cemetery).

The railroad:

Before 1930, Mary Evelyn and friends would catch the train to ride to Dallas. They would flag the train to stop, usually by building a small fire beside the tracks or even on the tracks.

She remembers the original large depot, painted drab yellow and, possibly, also brown. It had a large sign on the west side, “Coppell.”

She remembers a house and a section house across the tracks on the south side.

Clayta Harwell carried mail in a wagon from the depot to the post office.

Sandy Lake Road:

Sandy Lake Road, going over the river and into Carrollton, would often flood – maybe majorly every 6 or 7 years. It was “bottomland.” Even before the dam at the river was built, the road was a major thoroughfare to Carrollton.

She doesn’t remember Sandy Lake Road ever being called Denton Road. They went to Lewisville on Denton Tap Road, but they had to jog to the left at Lucky Corners to go to Flower Mound and Denton. Then they got on Ace Road that went to Round Grove Road, Highway 3040. They seldom went to Denton, even though her grandparents lived in Denton County.

There were bars along Sandy Lake Road – Elsie’s was one. The corner at Denton Tap and Sandy Lake, where one bar was located, was still a very wooded area. She doesn’t remember the names of other bars along the road.

King Tut’s store was on Sandy Lake Road, near present MacArthur Blvd.

Deforest Road always ran west and east. That's where the Longs lived.