

# REVEREND ALLEN THREATT THREATT SERVICE STATION

Arcadia, Oklahoma  
January 7th, 2019 11:30am

*I'm in Arcadia, Oklahoma and it's about 11:30 am. I'm sitting with a member of the Threatt family. It's pronounced "Threet," is that correct? I would like for you to start out stating your name and your relationship to the original owners to the gas station that was running on Route 66.*

My name is Allen Threatt and I am the grandson of the original owners of the Threat Service Station which was built in 1915. When I was a little boy summertime and sometime during the school season when we had school breaks, I would be out to Luther Threatt Service Station as a little boy. And I pumped gas when the tourists...black people in general and also some Caucasian/white would travel and I would clean windshields, pump gas.

*Were you in the photos that David sent me? Is that a photo of you, next to the car?*

No, that was probably my uncle, my two uncles, and my grandfather.

*So what age do you remember helping out?*

It goes back, I guess about, probably about twelve, twelve years old, thirteen. That's when I remember some of the things pumping gas and cleaning windshields because at that age you had to be tall enough to get to the windshield. And I enjoyed it because I was very courteous to the people that drive up. You have to be polite and courteous because it all depends on how you treat people when they drive up, that you get a tip or not. So we did all that and at Threatt Service it was something that varied because it was a service station and also was a kind of like a convenience store, like our modern day 7-11's. It was a modern day 7-11 back in the early age because you could buy your bread, canned goods, my grandfather, we also stocked up with that and so for the people, generally in the neighborhood that couldn't go all the way to Oklahoma City to buy food would stock up. It was very convenient to go to Threatt Service Station and go get gas.

*Tell me more about your grandparents. They had a farm, right? On the land?*

Yes.

*And did they sell some of their crop as part of the convenient store, or did the farm act separately? Was this their major source of income?*

You know I can't remember too much about the farm, but it was 160 acres and we still have the land around the Threatt Service Station. I can't remember the things that...not only was it a service station that traveled from east coast to west coast and because the *Green Book* didn't come out until 1936 or something like that, there wasn't any *Green Book* but blacks had a way about communicating with one another from the east coast to the west coast as they traveled and they knew that they could stop at the Threatt Service Station. And feel comfortable. They could get gas, hamburger, hot dogs, whatever, and they could get out and walk around if they were not in a big hurry, they could park their cars because we had kind of like a campground in the back of the service station. You had little tables there where you could sit down and eat and during the weekend my grandfather was very business-minded. On the weekend people from Oklahoma City and all the way, some of them came from Tulsa and other surrounding towns. On the weekends that had what you called a "dance platform" made out of wood and it was so high it was about three feet off the ground and they had a jukebox. And my mind goes back to when I was little boy. They had a jukebox sitting in the corner of the dance platform and people would come on a Friday and a Saturday night and they would just dance and drink beer, pop, and eat and just have fun. My cousin and I we would get up early that next morning and just go down to the dance platform because they would be dancing and we'd call it Jitterbug...whatever and the money would fall out of their pockets and we'd just pick up the coins, and the change from the ground.

*That was a good strategy.*

You know it was on a Saturday and a Sunday. My grandfather and his they son had what you'd call "Negro" and black baseball teams. And they would play ball up the street from the Threatt Service Station. And that was another tourist event that was going on. People would come from Oklahoma City to see the "Negro Baseball" games.

*Wow, you would never know it today because when I go to the property now, it's mostly farmland. Was the place, the club, I don't know if you could call it a nightclub, was that...*

The nightclub was called the "County Line."

*"The County Line," right. And so that ran simultaneously. How do you think people found out. I know it was word of mouth but you know the Chicago Defender was around then, correct? Yeah I think it was 1905 when it started or maybe around that time. So it was word of mouth, but do you know if you were ever written up in any of the black magazines or newspapers?*

I can't remember seeing it any black magazines, but by word of mouth, the club, we called it, it was just, "The County Line." But it had a name and the name of the club was the "Brown Bomber."

*Bomber?*

The Brown Bomber. It was named after Joe Louis, the black heavyweight boxing champ. So it was named after Joe Louis, it was called the Brown Bomber. And on a Saturday night, even when I got up as a young man, 21, 22, 23, I used to go out there on the weekend and on the weekend, cars would be lined up on both sides of the road two miles and during that time I thought the County

Line was a huge place but after growing up and going back inside again, it's so small. And I don't know how all those people forced their way inside that place. That was something that people really enjoyed coming up in Luther. They come to the "County Line." And the service station was very convenient for people. So there was lot of history there.

And because some of our young blacks do not know some of the history of the County Line because we have been kind of selfish by passing by communicating to our next, our younger generation —how our ancestors lived, how we made it through and what we had to do to make it through and how we enjoyed ourselves. And yet today, when it comes out, like the Threatt newspaper all the information now that the younger generation, when it reads the things that the Threatt service station was all about, now they are amazed.

*Well it's one of those things that you didn't know how special it was, until it's too late, almost. What's the beautiful part of this story is that you still have, at least a tangible, you have a building that's still there that you're trying to preserve. It's on the National Register, is that correct?*

[10:30]

Yes. Yes.

*So that's incredible. And the fact that we get to capture your story here and archive it so that hopefully that in another 100 years people will understand that it wasn't just the struggle there was also this ingenious time for our people to thrive in the midst of segregation despite of all the obstacles...that we did have fun.*

*I would love to know more about Edmond. Was he the son of your grandparents?*

Edmond was the son of my grandfather which was my father's brother. Edmond was the owner of the Brown Bomber, which was next door to the Threatt Service Station. So Edmond was very involved because Edmond, all his life that he lived out there, it was probably about 2-3 blocks down from the Threatt Service Station. And he was the owner of the Brown Bomber. My other uncle which was Ulis Threatt.

*Is that U-l-i-s?*

Yes. And he was...after my grandfather passed away, then Ulis kept the Threatt Service Station going along with the Negro Baseball League. Also, Ulis was a farmer...Ulis' grandfather, which was Allen the first, my grandad was Allan the second, I am Allen the third. My grandfather was very business-minded. All of his boys was business- minded and so two of my uncles, to just illustrate how business-minded, two of my uncles had the club which you called the Brown Bomber. One of my uncle's named Landers Threatt in Oklahoma City, he opened up a club. It was Brown Bomber #1 at the County Line, his brother, which was Edmond, he owned Brown Bomber #2.

*They had an eye for branding early on.*

Yes. And Ulis on the other side, he was the regular owner of the service station after grandfather passed away. And Ulis was mostly the former, yes.

*So tell me about your grandfather's story and how did he obtain this much land. It was 160 acres, was that how much was originally....*

160.

*And his wife, Elizabeth...was that her name?*

Roberta. I'm sorry Alberta.

*Alberta. So tell me about how they obtained this land and how that had the capital to get this business going.*

You know, that is the question that that I ask myself, I never did ask grandfather, "How did you obtain..." Someone said that somehow he...they earned some of this from the Land Run in 1907. That is a question mark in my mind. I don't know how he obtained the 160 acres, but somehow the Lord blessed him with enough money and to pick the very special location which ended up being right there on 66 highway. And that he could be a help for the other blacks couldn't stop at a white service station. And so it was just...I said, the Lord, God, moved upon that black man to be a Moses, for those who were traveling and needed some help as they traveled from one destination to another.

*It was very serious, because if they started the gas station in 1915, that's about a decade before Route 66 started. With the research that I've done nearly half the counties along Route 66 were Sundown Towns.*

Yes.

*So it was very serious.*

Very serious. Of course you know, as segregation was very strong. Blacks had it so rough, but somehow God was concerned for the black negro race. He made things possible for the blacks to take care of one another. And because blacks stick close to God, and because they stick so close to God, God looked after the black Negro race. He made provisions for them. I think though the amazing thing was how did blacks know...it was called...the word-of-mouth, as blacks escaped from their slave masters, by the word-of-mouth they'd know where they could put up a residence stay for a while. But I think God still moved up on the black race even when grandfather built that place, just like you said, 66 highway wasn't coming through at that particular time. But God so fixed it that it was the right place, so when they did build 66 highway, it was right there for the need.

*It's amazing.*

It's so amazing that even the whites, they would stop and it wasn't no partiality. My grandfather, my uncles, they were treated just as well as blacks when they stopped. They felt comfortable.

*Tell me about Edmond, the Sundown Town that was right next door [to Luther, OK where the Threatt Gas Station was located]. Did you have any experience or knowledge as a child that that was a place that was off limits?*

No, no, no, no. Edmond...after the sun go down. I always was told that blacks couldn't even be in town after the sun go down. It was so segregated.

[18:10]

*Who told you that?*

My mother, some of my uncles and yet today, you can ask some of the older blacks that lived here in Arcadia [where Allen's church is located], they knew that after a certain time when the sun go down you couldn't be caught in town of Edmond.

20:10

*So do you remember that conversation with your mother? How old were you? Did you understand racism or what that meant?*

We understood racism, but it was just a normal thing to us because we got used to it. You can get used going, even in Oklahoma City, when I was a little boy, Mom would take us downtown to the bus station, she wanted to catch a bus somewhere and there'd be a big sign that said "Colored water fountain" and you'd know, it was something that you had seen so much that it didn't bother you because you got used to it.

*Is it true that Edmond was named after the Sundown Town of Edmond?*

Yes it is.

*Now tell me why. What do you know about that story?*

Now that story, I do not know. I do not know why he was named Edmond. Maybe they were searching for names [laughing]. I do not know that story about why my uncle was named Edmond. My grandmother, what I hear from my aunties before they passed away, grandmother had 16 children, I think, four died in childbirth, so it was a big family. So I guess when you have a big family, a lot of boys, a lot of girls, you have to search for names [laughing].

*And it was right next door [laughing].*

Yes.

*And you never remember seeing a Sundown Town sign in Edmond?*

No, I don't and the reason why is because my mom, dad and mother lived in Arcadia, so my grandfather and my grandmother on my mother's side was here in Arcadia, and my dad's side was in Luther, which Luther and Arcadia was about 12 miles apart. So I had a choice in the summertime to spend time with my grandmother in Arcadia and my grandmother in Luther. In the summertime before my grandmother passed away. I remember, I was five years old when she passed away on my dad's side. And that was a special love. I remember the funeral, I remember...

*That's so young to lose your grandmother.*

Yes. That's right. And she was...I was a special child to her, see, and during the summer at five years old, from what I remember, mamma would leave me out to my grandmother's on my dad's side

during the summertime. So I remember her. The memory was so great, when someone is nice to you and do great things for you, your brain records on those certain things for memories, see. I remember at the funeral, the crowd was so great. You had this old-timey church, you had the windows raised up in the air, people were leaning on the inside, trying to see. I was a little boy at that particular time. I still remember the song that the choir sung.

*Well she was a special woman. Is it true...was this Alberta that passed away?*

Yes, yes.

[23:20]

I think I read that she received the first degree at Oklahoma College?

*Oh that was my uncle Uli's wife and her name was Elizabeth.*

*Ok, that was Elizabeth. Ok. So tell me about that. Just state for the record, was it Oklahoma College?*

Yes. During that particular time, it was Central State, not UCO. She was the first black to receive an education. She was the first black to graduate from Central State College in Edmond.

*Wow.*

And in Luther. Matter of fact...

*Do you know roughly what year that was?*

I sure don't. I was a boy. She taught school about 63 years. And she was the first black to graduate from a white college which was known at that particular time as Central State, now UCO. And Luther, they have a street named after her, and they have a library in Luther named after her – Elizabeth Threatt.

*That's fantastic. Can you talk about the kind of people that came to the Threatt gas station. I heard that Pearl Bailey made an appearance. Do you know anything about the clientele? I heard it was a mixture. I'm assuming it was primarily black, but if you could talk about the clientele.*

Since [Route] 66 was from the East Coast to the West Coast, not only Pearl Bailey. I imagine, of course I don't remember all, if my grandfather was still living, or my uncle was still living, they probably could tell you more. Stars, movie stars, more famous named people that stopped, but just for the sake of the ancestors and some of the stars and they passed, no doubt that every black star during that particular time driving from East Coast to West Coast, they had to stop at Threatt Service Station to fuel up, to get gas, to get us something to eat, and rest a while.

[26:30]

*Especially if you were living [during that time]. Route 66 goes from Chicago to Los Angeles, and once you hit Oklahoma, the wide west, so if you see a gas station, you do have to stop because it was so unusual, especially if you were black.*

Yes. Yes. And because the communication at that particular time, they didn't have CB Radios, you know "Breaker, Breaker." [laughing]

*No internet.*

No cell phones, you know. [laughing] The only phones they had at that particular time you know was to put a quarter in, a dime or something like that to make a phone call.

*And that didn't make a long distance phone call.*

Blacks had to have their map. Where are you going to stop? Where are you going to fuel up? Where are you going to get gas? And where you could feel comfortable using restrooms. And so the Threatt Service Station it was there for them to stop for all their convivences. So no doubt, Pearl Bailey was one that we know of that did stop, as our generation, that what we was told that no doubt there was more than Pearl Bailey.

*You know she ends up buying a Green Book site later. It was a dude ranch in Victorville, California. It's called Murray's Dude Ranch. So she appears in a lot of Green Book-related stories and historic travel. Do you remember if it was just a family run operation, or did they hire other staff that weren't family members?*

My uncle, Ulis, he hired other people to run the service station. Edmond, which was my uncle. He worked at that particular time...David Threatt was a school teacher. Edmond was working at the Air Base, that I could remember when I was a small child. And my uncle Ulis, the one that had the Threatt Service Station, he was a farmer. He was the biggest black farmer I believe in Oklahoma. He had more farm equipment than some of the white farmers.

*So how do you think this happened?*

I guess because he learned how to save and he learned how to put his money to work as he took over the Threatt Service Station.

*It's still remarkable that white farmers would have allowed it too, that there was no sabotage.*

Well, Ulis was, I think he inherited a lot of that from his dad. He had white...I remember, he had white farmers working for him, driving his tractors, in his fields. He had fields all over Luther. Of course this was during the time, when I could remember, I'd say the late '50s, early '60s, that I could really remember how big of a farmer he was at this time. He had once son named Richard Threatt. You ever heard of FFA farmers?

*No. FFA?*

Yes.

*No.*

Once a year, all the farmers, I guess at the high school, people would put on a show and if their livestock wins they put on a blue ribbon.

Ok.

Yes. And I remember my uncle Ulis that when he bought a show bull during this particular time, I thought that was a lot of money, and this was in the late '50s. [He paid] \$2,000 for a show bull. I remember that. That bull was names Lojo [assumed spelling] and he was a little short bull and my cousin which was his son, named Richard, would just wash him up and put a water hose and comb him down and that bull was so tame he would just stand there.

*Wow. That's incredible. Do you know if it was a livestock farm? Did he grow anything? Any vegetables?*

Yeah, yeah. Wheat and oats and hay. He was the biggest black farmer in Luther. He had all the equipment, big heavy equipment. He was very successful. Like I said all my uncles were very business minded. Ulis had the service station, Edmond had the Brown Bomber #2, which people from Oklahoma City would say, "Let's go out to the County Line on the weekend." And Landers Threatt, he had the County Line, Brown Bomber #1 in Oklahoma City. And two brothers, they had their own Negro Baseball team and they would compete against Oklahoma City Negro Baseball Team at [inaudible] Oklahoma...different towns, and they would meet on the weekends and play against each other.

[33:35]

*Was it true that Edmond became the Mayor of Luther at one point, or did a family member become the Mayor?*

Now Edward my other cousin that was talking with you, now that's Edmond's son. Now he was the Mayor of Luther, for awhile [laughing].

*I also read that in Edmond's life that he was a Navy veteran.*

Hmmm mmm.

*But he still had trouble finding a burial plot in Oklahoma cemeteries because they were segregated, well into the 1980s apparently. I don't know if you know any stories about whether or not that is true?*

Now that, I believe that Edward can share more about his dad than I can. But Edward. He's kind of named after his dad.

*Oh, the Royce Café was in Edmond, Oklahoma. They had a postcard. Had you ever heard of the Royce Café?*

No.

*They had a postcard that said, "A Good Place To Live. 6,000 Live Citizens. No Negroes.", right on the postcard. I just wanted to know if it ever got to a point to where your family could actually go in there?*

No. No. I'm pretty sure that mom and my dad, I'm pretty sure that once word was received from Edmond, Oklahoma what blacks couldn't do...they knew their limit, where they couldn't go and where they were not wanted. But blacks did work in Edmond.

*But they had to be out by 6pm.*

They had to be out by 6pm. Before I started pastored in Boley, Oklahoma, a black town. Just amazing how blacks called themselves...blacks wanted to get even with white towns and Boley, Oklahoma had a town right as you entered the town, just as Edmond that says, "White Man Don't Be Caught After The Sun Goes Down In My Town."

*I had someone email me that story. It was a white woman who had grown up in Oklahoma and remembers seeing a sign. She was in a car with her family and her father was afraid when he went through that town. I don't know...she didn't remember the name of the town but it may have been Boley. It was telling the white man, "Don't get caught here after sundown." And she saw a black boy. She tells this story. That's rare. I've read about sundown towns, but never a black sundown town.*

Yeah. Boley was the only black town that I knew, that didn't allow the white man in town after the sun goes down. We had other black towns like Taft, Tatum, Winnwood, so we have other black towns but Boley was the only black town that I knew of since I pastored there for 22 years and had a sign on the edge of town [laughing].

*A dose of their own medicine. So please talk about why the gas station closed, and when, and what was the process of that.*

Well, when my uncle Ulis passed away, his wife, she tried to keep it open as long as she could. And she did for two to three years she said it was too much for her.

*About what year was this?*

Uhhh, I'm going to say, I want to say, Uncle Ulis passed away in...I want to say 1956. 1956 when he passed away and she kept it open as long as she could. It was too much for her, I guess. She was a school teacher. She was still teaching school. Like I said, she taught school about 65 years. And after he passed away, it was too much for her so she just closed it down.

*And then did it just sit for a while?*

Umm hmmm. She lived there. She added on a little room in the back. I'm glad you asked that. Because as I go back there now. Just the other day we were out there looking because some more people wanted to interview the Threatt Service Station. There was an upstairs and it's amazing how we lived up there with no heater.

*It gets cold in Oklahoma.*

Cold in Oklahoma and I can't understand how come we didn't freeze up there. My uncle Ulis and his wife, Elizabeth, they lived on one side of the upstairs and had a curtain separate us from them and my cousin and I, Richard and I, we lived up there also. Yeah.

*That building doesn't look so big!*

No! It don't, it don't. But when you'd upstairs. The stairs is kind of winding, in the back, you go upstairs. You can see the rafters now as you go up there. It's amazing how...because when Uncle

Ulis passed away, she decided, I guess she was too old to climb them stairwells and [inaudible] so she built a little room on the back. Had a little restroom and a kitchen back there, so.

*Everything she needed. Is it true that the building was built from stone that was quarried from the land?*

Yes.

*Can you tell me more about that?*

Now that, I do not know, but I do know that it was built off what they called the red rocks. I guess the red rocks, they go and carved them out, carved rocks off, set aside and cemented [them] in and get it fit. But yes, you can go out, I can still go out and see the sides of where it was built out of the red rocks. And no doubt, some of the stories that I received that day they got their wagons and mules and go down to this road and get rocks and come back haul them and built this.

*Incredible. Do you know what happened the County Line? That was a separate building, I'm assuming.*

The County Line is still there.

*Oh it is!*

And the reason why they called it the County Line was because it separated Oklahoma County and I think Lincoln County, or Ottawa, yeah Lincoln County I believe. Because the line from the service station is right there on the county line and when you cross the road you are in Lincoln County and when you stay on this side of the road you're still in Oklahoma County.

*But the bar, "The County Line."*

Yeah the County Line, the bar, is still there.

*So if I'm in front of the old gas station and I keep going, I'll see...*

Right next door. It's right next door. When you was out there the other day, they got it painted kind of green on the side.

*I was there about two years ago.*

Yeah, two years ago, it was still there. It's still there.

*I'll go and look at it again while I'm here. I don't think I knew about the County Line when I first went out there, so that's amazing that it's still there. I'm going to ask you to talk briefly about, because even though the Threatt Service Station wasn't in the Green Book. When was the first time you learned about the Green Book, or your experience with it, if you have any at all.*

My experience about the *Green Book*...to be truthful about it, a year ago [laughing].

*That's true for most people.*

Yes, yes, and I was amazed to hear that there was such a book, called *Green Book*. After I was informed about all the information that went into that *Green Book*, I was amazed. But I do know that since it was...somehow, I have heard that some of the black towns and some of the black businesses on [Route] 66, or whatever, they are not recorded into that *Green Book* so by word of mouth, I think that we...and sometime by communication, it reaches further than a *Green Book*. Because a lot of people didn't know how to go about even receiving a *Green Book*.

[44:45]

*Yeah normally they would get them at Esso gas stations, but that was a word of mouth thing too, that the Green Book would be there. But what's so wonderful about it now is that we have this tangible record, we can get stories like this one, from your family. We never would have known...this is what led me to your gas station, this history.*

Let me share with you, one of my members. He was raised up in Luther. His dad and mom [were] raised up in Luther, so the article that they put in the paper, it's in my office, he bought a *Green Book*, and pasted all that, made kind a billboard off of it.

*You mean he bought one of the facsimiles?*

Yes, yes, he bought one and put the article the Oklahoma newspaper put when they interviewed me and my cousin Edmond out at the Threatt Service Station. So he cut that article out of the paper and then he glued the *Green Book* right alongside of it.

*Yeah, you know the originals are very hard to find and they are very expensive. Once sold to the Smithsonian for \$22,500 and that was years ago, so who knows what they are worth now. Speaking of which, I'm working with the Smithsonian, I've been named as a curator to produce an exhibit that will travel the US for three years. It's based on my Green Book project so I'm wondering if there are any three-dimensional objects or ephemera that you have access to, not today, but in the next year, when we're putting this together. You know, any marketing materials, anything...*

[46:50]

You know, if you could...have you seen the inside of the service station?

*No, I've only been able to photograph the outside.*

My cousin, if he's still here, Edward, I can fix it so you can go out and look at it. We still the original old-timey cash register. Sitting in the bar where people would come in there and pay. It's old-timey, antique. It's still sitting in there.

*If you would consider loaning that to us, I will have people contact you about that. If it's possible to have that on loan while the exhibit goes on tour, that would be incredible. The cash register is such an iconic...*

It's icon...it's got the little key that pops up. It's old, yeah.

*Thank God you saved it! They just disappear.*

When they came to shoot pictures inside, that cash register got their attention, just like that.

*Wow. Well at some point, even if I can't see it today...we're just getting an idea of what might be available that we might want to bring on tour. There would be security and paperwork involved if you wanted to.*

I wish you had time to see it today. I'm pretty sure, I'm hoping he's still over next door. It's amazing when you walk in there. If you can let your mind just play tricks on you and visualize how people would walk in there, Threatt's Service Station, they have some little booths that you sit on one side, table on another and sit on the other side and some of the old booths are still in there. They had chairs, barstools. They had counters. You go up the counter, sit on the barstool and you could order your hamburger, hotdogs, chips, beer, pop. You'd sit there and they had an old TV, had it built up in the corner over there, had an old black and white TV. Of course, color TV wasn't out then, it was an old black and white...I remember, I was a little boy, that when the first color TV came out and it was just amazing boy to see a color TV. So yes, some of the things in that old service station are still there. But the one that I know that is still antique goes way back when the service station first opened up and it's back in Al Capone days. It's an old cash register.

*That's amazing. Can you talk about, or what you know about the plans are for the future because I know the family has ideas of what they want to do with it.*

Most of all to restore the service station. We seeking a lot of different historic firms, they've come in and we're trying to restore the service station. We tossed around a lot of ideas. [inaudible] talked to some of my relatives that they were interested to restore it as an old service station. And then we considered after we restore it could become like a tourist spot, kind of like a little café, restaurant. That the memories and everything would still be there. But we haven't really come to the conclusion, what we have, the final ....of what it would be. The main thing is to restore it.

*Do you know if there's any real funding to do that yet?*

We have a couple of small grants, \$5,000 grants have come in, but so far, that's about...we have some more promises that grants may be available for us. And so we're seeking after some different grants.

*And who put it on the National Register? Do you know how that process went? Was that in 1995? I'm not sure how that happened. Was it in the '90s?*

Edward, my cousin, he's still living in Luther. Now he's more familiar with that than I am because I'm older than he his. That's why he asked me to do the interview. But Edward is more...he's the one dealing with how to get the grants and different things like this.

*Ok, I was just curious. I got a grant from the National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program to get Green Book sites, these buildings on the National Register. So you've already done that, thankfully but I'm looking for others that I need to do. I just wanted...it's good to know from the business owners perspective how that process is, whether it's invasive or challenges etc...*

*Well that's all the questions I have, but moving forward, if you do come across think of any objects that you think might be, old ledgers or things like that, you have my card, let me know. In about a year or so, somebody, maybe me, might be coming out to look at some of these things.*

One more thing,

*Yes, tell me anything I haven't asked, I'd love to hear...*

The service station, where the service station sit, on the east side of the service station, grandfather had a pit, a deep pit dug out. It was probably from the ground up to that speaker right there. And no, no, no let me back up, grandfather, he was dead and gone. Uli, since Uli had a service station tourist people started coming through all the time. And but that pit, he had about 25, 30 might have been more, rattlesnakes. They were all in that pit, they couldn't come out, but the tourists when they'd get gas, they would go around there and they'd look at the snakes and throw coins into that pit.

*Why?*

I don't know why...today, because I guess...

*He just collected all these rattlesnakes and put them in a pit?*

Yeah.

*As a tourist attraction?*

I think he must have bought some of the rattlesnakes. Some people that would go and catch rattlesnakes...and they put them in the pit. And people would love to see the snakes and they would walk up there, they wouldn't get too close, afraid they may fall in, but they would look at the rattlesnakes. When I was a boy...I would remember that, and they would just throw coins in there, you know quarters...

*On the snakes?*

Just in the pit.

*To make them move? Or just to pay for the thrill?*

I used to wonder, hey, how my uncle would get them coins out. I guess he had something, a magnet, to pick the coins up on a stick.

*How would he feed the snakes?*

Aw snakes, you can feed snakes, frogs...

*So he'd just throw stuff in there...*

Yeah, frogs, anything snakes eat.

*That's crazy.*

I know there were a lot of those...you know Route 66 was notorious for those... “come and see the...” there would be some animal situation going on but not a pit of rattlesnakes. I never heard of that. The service station is really kind of full service.

*Do you have any pictures or photographs of any of these things?*

Edward has some pictures of the service station.

*I have seen those, but not of the rattlesnake pit.*

No, no...I don't...there's an older lady that I went to see the other day and she said she had...she's...ninety four, ninety five she said that she has a lot of pictures. She only lived a quarter mile from the service station and she was raised up out there. And I asked her about it, she said she had some older pictures about the service station. One of these days I'm going to get a chance and get some of those pictures.

*Well you better. She's not going to be with us much longer. And if you do, let us know, it's just three-dimensional objects it would be lovely to have photographs as part of the exhibit as well.*

Yeah. And like I said the service station...the rattlesnake pit was right over here, on the side of it, and right behind the service station they'd change oil, one of the old-type ramps made out of iron and you could drive the cars on it and you had to crawl up under the ramps. It was big enough, I guess, about...so you could crawl up under the ramps and change the oil.

*I have to get an oil change today too. I'll go to Walmart probably. I've driven 7,000 on this trip since I left, I don't know about a month ago or so, so my car's telling me it's time for an oil change. I wish I could go to the Threatt gas station [laughing].*

Do you live here in Oklahoma?

*No, I'm living in Denver now, but I'm planning moving back to Harlem in the spring.*

So you're from Colorado?

*I've been living there for less than a year, but I was living out in LA for many years. I've lived in California for most of my life.*

See I was born in Colorado Springs. Dad moved to Colorado and from what I hear when I was about three years old we moved back to Oklahoma.

*Yeah, not far. You know Denver had the Five Points District, there were over 80 Green Book sites there. So I did research there and now I'm moving to Harlem because there's over 400 Green Book sites in Harlem because Victor Green who created the Green Book was from there, so. And I'd like to develop a mobile app at some point and if I do, I'd love to put the Threatt gas station on there so I'm going to keep an eye on what you're doing because it would be a great stop for travelers.*

I had a chance to see the movie, the preview of the movie in Tulsa.

*The Green Book movie?*

The *Green Book* movie, Edward, he was told, we were invited up there for the whole day, lunch, breakfast and you could see the movie. But, I asked him if they could reschedule, they had it on a Sunday, to postpone my church service, I couldn't do that. So I missed that.

*Yeab, no, not on a Sunday, not for you!*

Well Saturday would have been a different story.

*Well that's good that they invited the family and that they recognized you. But I think hopefully this energy [of the film] will bring renewed interest of black travel, and segregation, and race is such a factor in our society, again, as it should be and I hope it brings more attention to your preservation efforts and gives you more money to do this. [END]*

