

(Urbana, Texas reporter)

In February of 1997 i had an unexpected meeting with a gentleman by the name of Travis Bauldree. I recognized the resemblance he had to his brother Volley.

When i asked if he was related he acknowledged and added some new information to the ongoing history of Urbana. It seems that the father Joe Bauldree was drawn to Union County during the oil boom. His son Volley found work in the Urbana oil field. Later his brother Travis arrived in the early part of 1940 and lived with Volley and Frances and their baby daughter Charlene. At that time they were living in a house near the loading rack. Travis found work at the Anthony mill which was relatively new. His job was on the cut off saw in the planer mill. His brother-in-law, Thomas Caldwell, operated the planer mill. So at one time three Bauldrees lived and worked in Urbana. Caldwell was married to Volley and Travis' sister, Velma.

Travis was a single 18 year old. He left Urbana in 1942 to serve in the Navy during WWII. He served 38 months in the south pacific. He returned to marry Camilla Tinsley of the Homer, La. area and has called that area home ever since.

He enjoyed telling of his Urbana days. He told of the good times he had while living with Volley. "i bounced Charlene on my knee many an evening. She was just a little tiny girl." The outstanding memory he had of his Urbana days went like this.

"Me and Volley was out coon hunting with carbide lights and our dogs this particular night. You probably don't know much about carbide lights, but we had been out a pretty good while and was making our way back toward the house. We were coming down the railroad tracks with pretty dim lights. We could see some, but not too good. All of a sudden the dogs started barking and rearing, at something ahead.

Then they came running back to us and got behind us no longer barking. Scared to death! Well our lights were dim but we could make out some real big eyes moving moving around on the track. Finally We got enough nerve to go closer. Well, it was an elephant. A real elephant on the tracks! A circus train had passed through and the elephant and some monkeys fell out. We tried to catch the monkeys later on but there was no way you could get near them. Anyway, we went and woke up Pagan the depot man and really had a hard time convincing him that our story was true. But way after midnight we drove him down and let him see for himself. Well he telegraphed ahead, because a train was due shortly. They sent out a section crew that shot the elephant. It had broken it's legs and could only thrash about. They also telegraphed the circus train to report the loss of animals. The elephant was buried near the track. They had to jack it off the tracks. So if anybody ever excavates the bones you'll know how it came to be."

Thanks Travis, I've heard a lot of Urbana stories but this is the first elephant one.