

**INTERVIEW OF J. DUDLEY OTTLEY, SR.
MARCH 7, 2010**

JO: J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.

KO: Kay Ottley

AO: Alex Ottley

WM: Wright Mitchell

JMO: James M. Ottley

CW: This is an interview with June Dudley Ottley, Sr. of Atlanta, Georgia on March 7, 2010. Mr. Ottley is former head of Ottley Properties and a member of a multi-generational Buckhead family. We are at his residence at 39 Palisades in Atlanta. Interviewers are Chad Wright, Wright Mitchell, his son Alex Ottley, his nephew James Ottley and his wife Kay Ottley.

JO: Put her at the front. She's the editor.

CW: That's right, and the arms you see poking off the screen, that's Kay. Well, Dudley, can you tell us just a little bit about just your background with Buckhead, your family. Where were you born? How was your family tied into Buckhead? And from there I know we'll get into the house over where Lenox Square is now.

JO: Okay, where was I born, on Penn Avenue or some place like that?

KO: I think you were born at St. Joseph's.

JO: Yeah, okay. But where were we living at that – and Daddy went to Oglethorpe University. Well, he went to Cornell and that didn't work out too well. He went there for a year and the wine, women and song got him –

AO: But what about you growing up? How did you become –

JO: Well, I don't remember anything, but we lived on Rivers Road. I went started off at E Rivers School, walked to school. Then World War II broke out and Daddy joined the Army, in the Army Air Force. His first stop was Columbus, Mississippi, which is kind of interesting because that's where the great-grandfather, that's where our grandfather came from is Columbus.

CW: In what year did he come from Columbus, do you know roughly? Your great-granddad, when did they come to Atlanta and what brought them here?

JO: He went to Rhodes University in Memphis and I can't think of what it is now. I think it's Memphis State or something like that.

CW: It's still Rhodes.

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

JO: Well, he went there and then he got a job in Greenwood, Mississippi. The cotton capital of the world is what the sign says when you drive up to Greenwood now. Then he got a chance to come to Atlanta and work for, well it started out the Fourth National Bank. Then they merged and started the First National Bank.

CW: And what was his name?

JO: John K. Ottley, Sr., or John K. Ottley at that time.

Q: And that would've been in the early 1900s at that point, do you think?

JO: Yes. I ought to know the date, but I –

Q: How many years were you at E Rivers?

JO: I was there for like two years and then we went to -- Bryan, Texas is where he was stationed, and I went to Bryan Grammar School. That was a cultural shock. There was a little old kid back there. It was freezing cold, he had on a pair of knickers and was barefooted, sitting in the very back of the room. Everybody had to write a little theme and then you had to read it. And say, all right, Jesse, what's yours? He got up there and said, "I had a pig. His name was Porky, and Porky liked to run around." She said, whatever his name was, "Rusty, bring your thesis up here." And I mean he just started shaking. I said, well, wonder why. Then he brought it up there and she snatched it out of his hand. It was a blank piece of paper, and she bent him over the table and beat him with a paddle [inaudible]

WM: They had corporal punishment then?

JO: Had corporal punishment. I mean, at least they didn't pull his pants down, but anyway he went crying back there and I said, I'm here for the rest of time. But anyway, that didn't work out so good, so we lived on Midway Road which was halfway between College Station and Bryan, and so I went to – Mother switched me over to Consolidated. I forgot the full name of it, but they called it Consolidated. It was on the campus of Texas A&M. I'd ride my bicycle three miles and not ride the bus so that I could stay and play with all the people that lived in and around College Station. We watched the Aggies practice football and went over to the Ag Department and watched them work the cows and dip them, and big old bulls would break through and everything. That was a lot of fun. Columbus was kind of – here I'm digressing a little bit – living in Columbus was kind of interesting. We could not find any housing and found an old pre-Civil War house that nobody'd lived in, with a 20-foot ceiling. We were sitting there one night having supper and I looked up and where the walls come together, 18 feet up, there was something sticking out like that, so John said, "well, let's go get that and see what it is." And so we got a chair like this, John stood in it and I climbed up on his shoulders and pulled out about 10 Confederate bills that somebody had stuck up there.

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

AO: Daddy, when did you move from Columbus to Bryan, Texas, from Columbus, Mississippi?

JO: Columbus was the first place he was stationed at and then we went to Bryan. There wasn't any housing available in Bryan and so we had to live in Calvert, Texas, which was like a 22-mile drive, but there wasn't any traffic. So we went to Consolidated – what was the name of that? Whatever it was, but anyway it was about two-thirds Mexicans. That wasn't –

AO: How long were you there?

JO: That's in Calvert now. We were there for a year. That's where they beat the guy. No, they beat the guy at Bryan.

JMO: When did you move back to Atlanta?

CW: So you gave up your valedictorian status and moved back to Atlanta?

JO: 1945 and went back to Rivers Road, and in the meantime --

CW: Same house? Was it the same house?

JO: Yes.

CW: So y'all kept the house in Atlanta? Do you remember the address on Rivers Road roughly?

JMO: 2616, 17.

JO: It's still there. The back yard went all the way up to the old apartments that they used to have on Peachtree Road. The house was on one level and the garage and the turnaround and the fish pond, and then up on the terrace which was almost equal with Peachtree Road, somebody had had a stable, had horses. We had a big victory garden during – everybody, that was – the pasture. We used to play football up there and everybody would show up and the center of the field was the walkway going up to the – and then on Saturdays we'd go to the Garden Hills Theater and just cut through. Instead of walking all the way around to West Wesley, we'd just go through the apartments and that was always an adventure, and walk to the Garden Hills to the movie.

CW: Typically who were living in those apartments? Were they families or –

JO: I'll tell you one person that lived there was Asa Candler, Jr. [. . .] That's one of the people who lived in there, so it wasn't low rent, although the person that stoked the furnace and cut the grass and everything, his son was low rent, but he'd always come down and play with us.

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

That was part of the deal. And we walked to E Rivers. Then my father's father died and he got hold of some money and we went out to 250 Blackland Road and bought a house out there and sold the house on Rivers Road.

CW: At the time, moving out to Blackland, what was kind of the mental perception? I mean obviously now, Peachtree, Blackland, it's all Buckhead. Was that still going even further a little bit to the country?

JO: Well, there were five house, if I remember correctly, between Roswell Road and Northside Drive. I used to work with a guy that could never pronounce it – Rosswell. I'd say, no, it's Roswell. There were five houses between –

CW: Habersham?

JO: Well, no, between Northside Drive and –

CW: Yes, Roswell, on that side.

JO: I went to Morris Brandon and that was the first year that they were opened. I was in the first graduating class of Morris Brandon.

AO: What grade do they go to?

JO: They went from first grade to the seventh grade, and I was in the seventh grade.

AO: One year you went there, you were in seventh grade then you –

JO: One year. We had five different teachers. It was not exactly the most academic atmosphere.

CW: Interesting. Just from the turnover, teachers coming and going?

JO: Yes, and they did it for different reasons. Some of them couldn't take the people misbehaving.

AO: *I.e.*, J. Dudley Ottley.

JO: I'll tell you what, with that crowd I was in the back of the line, bad as I was. One thing I did do is I started reading *Gone With the Wind*. Instead of doing my homework, I read that book. I'd carry it to the lunchroom in my lunchbox. I had a little metal thing and I'd read as much as I could instead of working on my homework or anything like that. Because Blackland Road, there wasn't anybody to play with out there.

JMO: Was the Ivan Allen property, was that their residence up there on Northside Drive? Was that in place?

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

JO: Oh, yes. As a matter of fact, in the summertime when I was in high school, I helped build Ivan Allen, Jr.'s house. Of course Senior had the big house up on the thing.

KO: [inaudible] Mrs. Allen's name. The Richardsons, Mrs. Allen's family.

AO: That's whose house you helped build; is that what you're saying?

KO: No. It was the big one that's still on the hill.

JO: Okay. Who owns it now? We went to a party there. Anyway, I'd work on construction jobs because Daddy, he didn't believe – you had 20 cents for allowance. Maybe John got more than I did, maybe Mary Fenton did, but I – so I'd get on my bicycle and when they started building all those houses on Blackland and Northside, I'd just ride my bicycle over there and ask for a job and they'd say, "okay, 50 cents an hour." I'd pick up blocks. They'd dig a ditch to put a water line in and it wasn't right and then they'd say, fill it up. I mean, I did it where they said to do it. Then I said, "I'm getting tired of this." He said, "well, you want to quit? They're not going to pay you for the day." I said, "no. I think I'll dig." But you know, you were stuck out there and so I rode my bicycle. I bet I put 200 miles on it that summer.

CW: One of the big selling points out there was the equestrian aspect of it. There was the Saddle and Sirloin Club. Do you ever remember anything about that? A bunch of gentlemen, I think Ivan Allen was a part of it, wasn't he, Wright?

WM: Probably a little before – 20s, 30s.

JO: I'll bet you it was a long way before my time.

CW: I didn't know if they were still riding.

WM: Were the horse stables there, right there on the corner of Northside and, what road would that be?

KO: Broadland

JMO: West Conway maybe?

KO: Broadland.

WM: It's now, or was the Buckhead Horse Barn?

JO: Broadland.

WM: Were the stables there?

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

JO: No, but whoever had it was doing something, either had cows on it, but the horse thing wasn't – it's still there. They're trying to get rid of that guy and you know they can't.

CW: Would the bus pick you up to take you to Morris Brandon?

JO: No, I had to go in the driving group. The driving group, of course, left right at 3:00 o'clock and everybody else was staying around there playing football or baseball or whatever and so I'd come home. Mary Lee Nunnally, she lived in that big old white house over there, but she didn't like playing football and Belle Willingham on Tuxedo. There wasn't any boys out there, so I'd stay after school and ride my bicycle.

WM: I was going to ask if Morris Brandon was the same building it is now.

JO: Absolutely. I don't think they've changed it at all. I've got a picture up there of graduation day at Morris Brandon. There's Ben Smith and Pete Moore and myself. You talk about three geeks. My pants were this far from coming down. You ought to get that case and show them. I do not want it published, though. Talk about not knowing what was going on. I mean, I might as well have been on Mars. And Daddy decided that maybe he could turn the Queen Mary if he sent me off to Darlington because brother John had gone there and had excelled in academia and everything. So they said, well, they did such a good job with John. Incidentally, George Ottley McCarty, they were having a lot of problems with him and he went there and just really did great and went to Georgia Tech.

KO: That was John Ottley McCarty.

JO: John Ottley McCarty--majored in Electrical Engineering.

AO: What grade was that that you went up there? Was that eighth grade?

JO: Eighth grade. So I went up there – by the way, he got out of Tech, went in the Navy, came back and didn't have a job and got a job working for somebody as a favor to his father. He invented – the first thing that he worked on, invented the way you call up to find out what time it was. You guys don't remember that.

CW: No, I do. The time number.

JO: That's the only phone number I knew. We'd call – but he invented that machine. You know, "hi, Fulton National Bank, we can handle all your needs. The time is 9:16 and a half."

CW: I remember calling that quite a few time.

JO: Well, he invented it. He was a brilliant guy and he died in an airplane crash landing at Peachtree DeKalb and was on his final approach and made that turn with a twin engine airplane and the fuel, the little thing that runs off the motor that pumps the fuel in, it

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

snapped, the steel, that wasn't supposed to happen. And it happened just as he was making his turn to come in and he had a chance of landing in a – well, nobody knows what happened because he and the passenger that worked for the time thing, they died. But eye witnesses say that he was turning like this and the motor quit and the plane started falling down, and he could've landed where they were having a Little League softball field and he missed that and went into a warehouse or something like that and they were both killed instantly.

AO: So you were at Darlington from eighth grade until –

JO: 'Til a senior, and excelled in athletics and decelled in academia.

AO: So what were you, all state? How many years?

JO: Just my last year up there. I started when I went from the B team to the varsity my sophomore year, I was a starting right guard. My senior year I made all Mid-South on offense and defense. That's the first time that they'd done that and out of – that was McCauley, Baylor, Notre Dame, Riverside Academy, TMI, the Mid-South conference. They can take postgraduates. It was a training school for a lot of people that couldn't get into Tech, they'd send them to McCauley or Baylor and get them squared away where they could get in. But anyway, I made, out of the 22 people, I was the only one to make offense and defense. They had an offensive team and a defensive team.

JMO: Did you play at Fritz Orr's camp?

JO: Oh, yes, yes. I was the only person in the history of Fritz Orr that – the only lineman that was elected captain. Everybody else was a quarterback or a running back.

WM: Did camps play each other? Did they? I mean, y'all played games, right?

JO: Oh, yes, we played like the Athens Y. That was the big rivalry every year and we played on Sanford Stadium.

CW: Did you really?

JO: Against the Athens Y and they had people, they had a bunch of ringers in there and everything, but we beat them and I played up there. Had about maybe 25 people watching it. It was about the same size it is now, but we dressed in the Georgia room. That was kind of pretty interesting.

CW: So the camp was in the summertime?

JO: Well, I didn't go to the camp in the summertime. I don't know what I did, but they did have a camp in the summertime. They had football, basketball and then baseball. Your

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

daddy came out and they were trying to get him, get some talent in there. That was the best blocker award.

WM: Tell about that for the camera. [referring to the trophy cup]

CW: Hold it up to his face because I've got it zoomed close to your face if you want to show it.

JO: J. Douglas Outlaw, 1952, Best Blocker, the Billy Watt Memorial Trophy. There's a picture in the annual with – who was the quarterback coach at Tech and went to Arkansas as the coach and it was –

Q: Broyles.

JO: Frank Broyles got his arm around me and he's holding up this trophy like this and I think I got one [unintelligible] there. And he was a member of North Avenue Presbyterian Church. We'll go backwards a little bit. My grandfather lived at the corner of North Avenue and Peachtree Road. He had four acres there, and he gave one acre for the founding of North Avenue Presbyterian Church. He donated it to them, sold the three acres, and then went out to Lenox Road. When we were growing up, that's where we went to church and he had the second row on the left-hand side had the John K. Ottley row and a little brass thing. We had a cushion. Nobody else had a cushion. So they would drag us in –

WM: Donate the land and get you a cushion, huh?

CW: And salvation, right?

WM: Right.

JO: We would go up there, Mother and Daddy trying to get us dressed and get us all up there on time. We'd go up there and sit on that cushion. But anyway, Frank Broyles was a member of North Avenue and he knew Daddy and knew – I didn't know all that at the time. I didn't know where he went to church. But anyway, he said, son, we want you to come to Georgia Tech. I'd never thought about going anywhere. I didn't know I could get in anywhere. So I said, I didn't ask, I said, yes, sir. And he said, we'll be in touch with you and tell you when to report. I said, yes, sir. End of story. I didn't get wined and dined. I did get an offer from Chapel, North Carolina and one from Davidson. My brother went to Davidson. I wasn't going to go there for anything. It was Presbyterian and Chapel Hill was too far away.

KO: Wasn't there an article in the paper with a picture of you as June Ottley plays football for Georgia Tech?

JO: Yeah, well, I mean somebody, when I was over there as a freshman, somebody – and that was the first year, 1953, that women were allowed to come to Tech. There were seven of

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

them I think. Yes, seven. So some smart "A" got the idea that that'd be a good story, that June Ottley was one of the seven and she's also playing football, too, and had a picture of me.

WM: How did you get the name June as a first name?

CW: Family name?

JO: Yes.

KO: Your mother's mother was June Dudley. Mary Harvey Ottley's mother was June Dudley Harvey.

JO: So that would be my grandmother. So that's how I got it and that's what Dudley, Jr.'s name is and that's what his son is. Needless to say, every chance I got, I put J period Dudley Ottley. And in the Army, I was in the ROTC and then I got Reserves. They said, "well, why don't you join the Reserves? You're going to be drafted or either go in through ROTC at Tech. Why don't you just join this Reserves and you [unintelligible]." And I said, "well, what do you do? Said, oh, we meet a couple of nights a month. I mean, it's nothing to it. You go down there, you know," and I said, "well, that's – okay, I'll join that." You talk about every time we'd go to summer camp and there'd be 300 idiots in there, including myself, and they'd start calling the roll at 6:00 o'clock in the morning in Fort Jackson, South Carolina, which is, as you know, nothing but sand. They'd call out and they'd say, "Ottley, June D." And everybody'd, "oh, somebody got a girl [unintelligible]." "Shut up or cut it out or I'm going to have every one of you son of bitches running." And you know, the people in that – we had the Georgia Tech people and then we had just regular people that they drafted. And the mentality, I mean that went on every summer. So I started going by J period –

CW: You could relate to Johnny Cash's song, A Boy Named Sue pretty well.

JO: Yes, but anyway that's my name and that's what they call me.

CW: What did you major in at Tech?

JO: Industrial Management. [. . .]

CW: How did you meet your wife?

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

JO: I was at a – they were having -- a bunch of girls were over. I don't know. Was it –

KO: Ann Lee's birthday.

JO: Ann Lee's birthday on Peachtree Battle.

KO: She was out on Ridgewood Road.

JO: And I walked in there and there were about 30 beautiful girls, and I looked over there and I said, boy, now that's a foxy looking little girl.

CW: How old were you? Were you at Tech at the time?

JO: Yes, I was at Tech.

KO: And I was 15.

JO: You don't have to tell everybody.

AO: Were you a freshman at Tech?

JO: Yes, and I really enjoyed –

AO: How'd you get invited to this party? Who?

JO: With some fraternity brothers that had gone to Northside High School and they knew these bunch of girls that were going to be over there, so we went by. I just saw Kay and I said that is one foxy looking – and so I said, well, I think I'll – they said, "why don't you ask her for a date?" I said, "I think I will." So one of her friends found out about it before I could get around to ask her and she said, "well, I don't even remember him." Fortunately, she didn't tell me that until ten years later.

KO: On our first date we went to the Fox Theater.

CW: Did you? What did y'all see?

JO: I don't know, but let me tell you what happened is, so I went over. And Kay said, well, I don't remember who he is, but everybody says he's pretty nice looking so she was getting dressed and everything like that. And when you went to pick up a girl at that time, no matter if they'd been working on their makeup and everything for two hours, you still had to come in and wait. And then at the proper time they would come in, and oh, hi, get up. So I drove up to the house and they'd had a bad storm and the electricity was out. So I got up to the house and it was pitch black dark. I said, well, maybe this is like Halloween or something. We go up there and I knock on the door and as soon as I do that, the lights come on. So I come in. And Kay had been dating this low rent guy from over on Bolton Road or something, McKee Scoggins and [unintelligible] that I didn't like him at all.

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

They'd had him over for supper and he smoked a cigarette and put it out in the gravy and left the cigarette sticking in there.

AO: Where'd you find this guy?

KO: He was a really good dancer.

JO: So anyway, Miss Tyson said, now, that was a sign.

KO: My mother said, "well, how would you like to sit across the table from that for the rest of your life?" That was enough said.

JO: But she didn't tell me that. I didn't find out about that until after I'd already got the ring on.

AO: So why were the lights out when you came up to the house?

JO: Oh, they were pitch black dark. Oh, because they'd had a terrible storm.

CW: Just coincidental the lights came on right when you go there?

JO: Coincidental, soon as I knocked on the door.

CW: Where was the house, Kay?

KO: Peachtree Battle.

CW: It was on Peachtree Battle?

KO: There was a cornfield across the street. We used to go play in the creek and –

CW: What address?

KO: It was 1507, toward the new part.

CW: Out towards Peachtree Creek?

KO: Yes, right across the street from Peachtree Creek. It was beyond where Ellis lives on Peachtree Battle Circle.

CW: Cornfield, huh?

JO: I'll tell you something that's interesting and happened at Tech. First of all, I dug a hole so deep that I thought the lights had gone out on me, academically that is. I just barely got out of Tech because I did real good the last two years because I was interested in what we were doing. I wasn't interested in analytical geometry and mechanical drawing and all

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

that other stuff. Plus, getting to go to the Chi Phi house, if something's going on. Like I say, we'd stay up there all night every night, I think. But over at the dormitory, I was living at home at that time and I went over to the dormitory to try to find out what was – get the word on a test that we were going to have. Not the word, but just what to study, and went to somebody really smart and that was your daddy on the pay telephone in the dormitory. And I stopped to say hello to him and he was saying, "I want a hundred shares of AT&T, and I want 50 shares of General Motors." And I said, "what is it? Is he playing a game or something like that?" I mean he bought two or three thousand – I don't know how many, but at that time, let's say \$1,000 worth of stock. And he hung up the phone and I said, "well, Wade I'm impressed. Is that what you were trying to do?" And he said, "no, I just –" at Tech, they would, if you were first string, you got so many tickets and you could sell them if you wanted to or you could give them to your friends, and what Tech would do is – and the captain got five tickets and his daddy never spent a dime of that, took every penny and put it in a savings account at 2% interest.

WM: He's still very frugal. It'd be an NCAA violation nowadays.

JO: Everybody else was – they can't spend it fast enough. I mean Carl Vereen, you know, live for the day.

[. . .]

AO: Were you the same class as Wade Mitchell?

JO: Yes, we –

AO: Did you block for him during practice or anything?

JO: No, no. He went by the freshman team so fast, and Pepper Rodgers got hurt, and Wade Mitchell is the starting quarterback three games into the freshman year. I went up to see Notre Dame, they played Notre Dame, and Pepper Rodgers got hurt up there and your daddy gets in there. I mean, he never missed a beat.

WM: It was funny, of all the games he played in at Tech, that's the one game that people mention to me the most was a game they lost against Notre Dame, but he was a freshman.

JO: Yes, and Notre Dame was ranked number one in the country. The truth of the matter is, I went to that game, is that Georgia Tech was on the 15th yard line and they could kick an extra point and – not an extra point, but a field goal, and win the game. Notre Dame was number one in the country. But they didn't have any more timeouts and Art Hunter who was an all American tackle for Notre Dame, they ran a play trying to get centered right, and Art Hunter fell down and started screaming at the top of his lungs and holding his leg and rolling around. And the referees, they couldn't play with a guy with a broken leg, and so they went there and all of a sudden the horn went [makes horn noise] and the game is

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

over with. Tech's 12 and Notre Dame is 14. And Art Hunter gets up and he doesn't run off the field, he leaps off the field. He was 6'4", 230 pound guy doing leaps. He was faking the whole thing. And they changed the rule that year and it's called the Art Hunter rule that you couldn't end the game if somebody got hurt and that was an automatic timeout. They'd stop the clock until you could get the guy off the field whether it was on a stretcher or whatever.

WM: I never heard that story.

JO: Well, I mean, ask your daddy about it. That was a heartbreaker and also illegal, immoral and not right.

WM: Especially for Notre Dame.

JO: That was an interesting thing about your daddy. Everybody back then, if you had a dollar, you tried to spend it as fast as you could, and he's sitting up there buying all this stock. I didn't even know what AT&T was.

CW: Probably still owns it all, too. Tell us a little bit about dating in Buckhead when you guys first started dating. You went to the Fox Theater. Would you guys go out anywhere in Buckhead or the Garden Hills Theater?

JO: We went to the Fox Theater and I guess I was so nervous, I left the keys in the car. One of the fraternity brothers recognized us, that it was my car. Daddy at that time had bought a black red cross two door, cheapest car they made. You know how you put arm rests? It didn't have any arm rests. I'm serious. No air conditioning. Anyways, I picked up Kay and I took her to the Fox Theater and we had to park behind it and one of the fraternity brothers recognized that it was my car and saw the keys in it and thought that'd be – Bobby Shivers thought that'd be funny, took the keys out. I don't know where they are. That didn't work out so good. I think, didn't Daddy or Mother come, maybe John came and picked us – Daddy. And I was mortified.

KO: But usually after the movies we would go to Rusty's.

CW: What was Rusty's?

KO: Rusty's was a drive-in on Peachtree Road right where Eugene's – next door to where Eugene's Restaurant.

JO: Holeman and Finch, Eugene's, and that was the – now your daddy never went there, but that's where all North Fulton and all Northside people went.

WM: I never heard of Rusty's. I'm surprised.

KO: Oh, gosh, it was the place.

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

JO: It was the place, and all the girls went there, all the boys, all the boys and the girls. That was the official hangout.

CW: High school and college.

KO: We also went to the Varsity a lot.

AO: So was Rusty's like the Varsity, but did they have like roller skates?

KO: Rusty's was very small.

AO: Did the waitresses come out with the roller skates and all that?

KO: No, no.

WM: Was it burgers and fries?

KO: Yes, yes.

JO: And beer. They didn't ask for your driver's license. They'd just bring it out to you.

CW: So any good stories from back then, like any accounts, any fights, anything good? Tell us something good.

JO: I saw Gordon Malloy, who was a guy from North Fulton, I saw somebody arguing with him about something. The next thing I heard a crack and saw this guy flying through the air and then I saw two or three guys leaning over looking at him. He came over and looked at me and I said, "yes, sir," and I went – He said, "why'd you say yes, sir to me?" By that time I was already in my car and had locked the door. There were a lot of fights up there. The Pig-N-Whistle was another place that a lot of different high schools went to.

JMO: Where was that located?

JO: Where the Japanese –

CW: Benihana's.

JO: Benihana, yes.

WM: I've heard a lot about the Pig-N-Whistle.

JO: And the guys from Bass High School and Murphy, but Rusty's was just Northside and North Fulton.

KO: And Rusty's was just a little bit north of the Pig-N-Whistle.

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

JO: It's where Holeman & Finch and Eugene's is.

CW: Right just south of Peachtree Creek across from Peachtree Battle; is that right?

JO: Yes, but it was up the hill and –

KO: The same side of Peachtree Creek.

JO: On the same side as the Pig-N-Whistle.

AO: Chad, I don't know if you know this but my father is a huge duck hunter. I don't know if I can ask this question, if you guys mind or not. Where did you get into duck hunting? Who got you into duck hunting? Because I know Papa would play golf. He didn't--

JO: When Christmas came around and said, what do you want for Christmas? I said, "well, I want a shotgun." And they said, "well, what are you going to do with it?" I said, "well, I'm going to go hunting with it. I've been invited to go out hunting but I don't –"

AO: Who invited you the first time?

JO: Oh, I don't know, a bunch of guys from North Fulton and maybe Northside. There wasn't any fighting too much between, and we went up, everybody, up to Roswell. On the river there, somebody had a farm and everybody was shooting their shotguns and everything. I said, "well, I'd like to go hunting." So they said, "what do you want for Christmas?" I said, "well, I'd like a shotgun." And you know back then you could buy a shotgun for \$75 or maybe \$100. So Christmas morning, I can't get down the steps fast enough and there hanging on a hook is a tuxedo.

WM: They were trying to steer you out of –

JO: Why does this happen to me? So I wound up buying my own. I have to take this back. When my grandfather died, he had probably 12 or 15 really fine English shotguns. So because he never took my father hunting and then when my father rebelled and said, "I want to go hunting. You didn't take me when I wanted to," and he said, "well, I don't have time with it. I'm 50 years old." So when they divided up the estate, he had all these fine English shotguns and so big George McCarty said, "well, John, why don't we just divide the shotguns up? I'll go first and you go second and we'll" – he said. "The hell with it. I don't want any of them." And he said, "you're going to have to take one." Of course, he took them and sold them, which Daddy could've done. So they got one. It was a W.W. Greener made in England and he got it in Columbus, Mississippi, and somebody had put John K. Ottley on a silver plaque, I mean sterling silver, and John K. Ottley, and whenever he was born, 1888 or whatever, and then dash to put when he died on it. Big George McCarty said, "you've got to take one gun and this had his name on it, now you take this one." And somehow I wound up with that. I shot that thing at everything. That was really my first gun.

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

AO: And what gauge was it?

JO: Twelve gauge.

KO: You and Bob Beacham used to walk down Blackland Road and to Northside Drive and go quail hunting.

JO: Yes, there was a guy that had championship bird dogs at Mount Paran and Northside Drive at the southeast corner. He was getting old, and he wanted somebody to work those bird dogs so that when he could get out, they'd be in shape. They were already trained. There wasn't blowing a whistle or anything like that, they'd just go. So I would go borrow the bird dogs, take them over to 250 Blackland Road, that house belonged to Rankin Smith, Sr., and Ms. Smith was still--

KO: Miss McEachern.

JO: Miss McEachern, okay, was still there when we bought the house. Okay. We're getting the cut sign. They don't want to get into the Smith family.

AO: So how old were you when you went and shot quail?

JO: This is when I was at Tech. I had figured out a way to get an early time card so that I could go to school from 8:00 o'clock to 12:00 o'clock. The way they did that is if you were an A student like your daddy, and even if he wasn't playing football, and they would get an 8:00 o'clock time card so they could get into the gymnasium and go get 8:00 o'clock, 9:00 o'clock, 10:00 o'clock, 11:00 o'clock, 12:00 o'clock classes and be out of school in half a day and plus get the best teachers and so on like that. But the way my grades were, I mean I got in there at 1:00 o'clock and I mean I'd go to school and have a 8:00 o'clock class and a 6:00 o'clock class, just ruin the [unintelligible]

WM: You said this guy that had the bird dogs was at the corner of Northside and Mount Paran?

JO: Yes.

WM: You know that general store that's there?

JO: Well, now this was the -- I'm sorry. When I said Northside, I meant 41. I said that store was at Mount Paran but I meant 41.

WM: Do you remember anything about that store? I've always wondered about that store.

KO: That was Shay Cates' store. He was a county commissioner.

CW: Shay Cates? C-a-t-e-s?

WM: It's been there since --

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

KO: A long –

JO: And he bought it from somebody else. I mean that thing's been there. I'd ride my bicycle out to Mount Paran so I could play with Pete Moore and that store was there.

WM: It looks just the same now as it did then for the most part?

JO: Well, they tell me that they make the best sandwiches in the city of Atlanta.

WM: I've heard that.

KO: It looks a little more spiffed up now.

JO: A guy I shoot sporting clays with, he brings us a sausage biscuit with bacon.

CW: That's their specialty.

JO: Every morning. Holy moley, everybody can't wait for that.

CW: Good hamburgers, too.

JO: And he lives out there and so he stops there all the time.

CW: What did they sell back in the day? Was it a convenience store?

JO: I think they had one pump and you could buy Coca-Cola and maybe a can of oil or something like that. It wasn't like it is now.

AO: What kind of bike did you have? You rode that thing all over the place.

JO: Maybe it was a Schwinn. Back then they had the great big tires.

AO: Did you have a basket on it?

JO: Had a basket, you could sit on the back. It was like something you see in the comic strip.

CW: Where would you hunt? Would you hunt on Blackland?

JO: Well, I would borrow these bird dogs from Mr. McClure.

JMO: How would you get the bird dogs back? I guess you were driving.

JO: Yes, we dropped the bicycle. So I'd go by and after while, we'd just go by and just pick them up. We kind of eased on in. I'd take them back to the house and then we had a – Rankin Smith, Sr. had a big dog run and a great big old dog house. It was like three times

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

as big as this room. So I'd pick up the dogs and keep them for two or three days. Mother had a bridge party over there and the damn bird dogs started barking and went crazy. "Mary, it sounds like there's some trouble out there with some animals." "Oh, well, it's the next door neighbor." "Oh, Miss Parrish is doing that?" "Well, next door to her."

KO: We also hunted on the Chattahoochee River.

JO: So I'd take these bird dogs and keep them for two or three days and by this time I was getting an 8:00 o'clock time card and I was out of school at 12:00. I'd come home and, instead of studying, get those dogs and put them on a rope, walk down Blackland Road past the Nunnally house, and it was a vacant lot. Somebody had cleared it all but never got around to building a house. And go up the driveway and then down, and that creek that goes under Powers Ferry and goes through North Fulton Park, somebody was planting corn down there on maybe an acre and a half or two acres. There were two or three coveys of quail down there and I would find at least one every time I went back there, maybe two, and shoot the singles of course. I couldn't hit anything, but I'd bring back three quail and give them to the maid. That was the best part; she'd clean them.

WM: Your grandfather ran bird dogs, didn't he?

JO: Oh, yes. Well, look at those.

CW: Have to hold it up again. Let's swap trophies.

WM: Ghost, was that the name? Was the bird dog Ghost? You had a bird dog named Ghost that won a bunch of trials.

JO: Here is the Georgia Field Trial Association Derby, and he won it three times. Nobody's ever done that before or since and they retired the trophy.

WM: There are all sorts of articles, in the course of doing research, on the kidnapping. I've just been searching generally for John K. Ottley. There are a lot of articles in the Atlanta Constitution about his running bird dogs in trials and winning field trials.

JO: He won that three times and he won this Georgia Field Trial Association 1925 and won it with Joyeuse [unintelligible] Bob Seely, which means that he must've owned Lenox Square in 1926. Does anybody know when he bought it?

WM: Bought the property there?

JO: Yes.

AO: It was long before 1926. Because this is 1918, Pearl of Joyeuse.

JO: And there's a picture of him with Bob Woodruff.

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

JMO: Right. We've got that. Your son was sharing it with us.

WM: They had a house there, a cottage, in 1903.

JO: Wow. You're telling me something now.

Q: There's a picture if you want to hold that up to the camera.

WM: I think they built the cottage. I don't know when they bought Bob's property.

JO: If they built the cottage, that means they owned the property. They just didn't move from North Avenue.

WM: And they were living downtown and that was their summer house. The cottage was called Joyeuse.

KO: It's French for joyous.

CW: How do you pronounce it, Kay?

KO: Joyeuse.

JO: Which is French for happy place.

WM: But this article here, which is from August 2nd, 1903, is about a cottage and then in 1913, they had completed the more grand house and they moved into it.

JO: What year was that?

WM: 1913.

JO: Wow. Because that was sure enough out in the country then.

WM: They, according to this article here, had different rooms that were called, let's see here. It had little outbuildings that they called different things.

CW: Do you remember going out there?

JO: Oh, yes, yes.

CW: Tell us what you remember and some good stories.

JO: I'm going to tell you another thing that he was really into besides bird dogs was Tennessee walking horses, you know the kind that, they don't even make you – and he won the Grand National at Shelbyville, Tennessee one year. He had a riding ring back where the rail station, the MARTA station is on the back of the place. So he was training

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

bird dogs and doing the Tennessee walker. You know the horses go right in with quail hunting. Now people ride in Jeeps or ride in something, but back then you rode horseback and you needed a good horse that wouldn't beat you to death, so he was into that. He had a lease on 8,300 acres in Roba, Alabama, which is in Tuskegee County. Of course the county seat is called Tuskegee and everybody's heard of the Tuskegee Airmen, but anyway. And this guy had 8,300 acres, and back then they didn't have the great big \$50,000 John Deere tractors. I mean, most of it was done with a mule and there were five- and ten-acre fields, and they had them fenced off and there were hedgerows, and it was just perfect for quail hunting. He leased that property down there and built a cabin. There were three people in the lease and I used to have a picture. Hudson that started Highlands, and then one other person. But they would leave the First National Bank Friday afternoon at like 3:00 o'clock and drive down to Roba. Of course they could make it there, because there wasn't any traffic. Part of the deal he worked out with the farmer is that he built a three-bedroom cabin with a big fireplace and everything on the farmer's property and the farmer would let them have breakfast and supper and they had to fix lunch. That was the arrangement in the lease, so they would eat with the family. The guy had like four or five kids or something like that and he kept a couple of black people that he would take down there and they'd stay there all during quail season to work the horses and the dogs. They'd leave Friday afternoon and they'd hunt Friday afternoon, all day Saturday, all day Sunday and drive back Sunday night. Like I say, there wasn't any traffic. One of the deals is they were trying to get – they only had one Federal Reserve in America and that was in Philadelphia I think. They were thinking about, well, we probably need to have another Federal Reserve and we're going to put it in the Southeast because that seemed to be the growing place. Of course Birmingham wanted it real bad and Jacksonville, Florida said, oh, this is the only place you can put it. We're the fastest growing. And everybody, because it would be a real help because in the old days, somebody gives you a check, you have to give them the money and then you bundle it up and you send it to the Federal Reserve and two days later the train gets it, unloads it because they didn't have air mail back then, and then they'd credit your account with the money. But, anyway, the person who had it within a 200-mile radius, they could take those checks over there at night and have the money back in their account where they could be earning interest on it, and so it was very important. And so everybody – Birmingham had a ticker tape parade for the Federal Reserve guy, and Charlotte did everything. Granddaddy had heard that he was a big bird hunter, so he got Scott Hudson, that's who started Highlands, Scott Hudson and one other person. And the guy got off the train Friday and they got in the car and drove straight to Roba, Alabama. No ticker tape parades, no taking out to Joyeuse and so on. They hunted quail Friday afternoon, all day Saturday, all day Sunday and then they came back and Sunday night. They put him on the train in the morning at like 10:00 o'clock and Daddy said, "well, how do you think Atlanta stacks up?" And he said, "you know, I think y'all got a pretty good chance."

CW: This was the guy from the Federal Reserve Bank?

JO: We got the first Federal Reserve Bank by doing a little homework and finding out this guy was nuts about quail hunting.

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

WM: He came down from where, D.C.?

JO: Philadelphia. That's where the first one was I think. And everybody said, why'd you pick them? Yeah, well, we studied the economics.

WM: How much interaction did you have with your grandfather?

JO: This is a bad part. I probably saw him maybe ten times and had – sitting at a table with all the McCarty's and all the Ottley's and we were to be seen and not heard.

WM: So when you moved back to Atlanta in 1945, he was still alive?

JMO: He died very shortly thereafter, right? He died in '45, '46.

JO: Yes.

WM: So you left Atlanta when you were how old?

JO: Let's see, 1941. I'm 75, and holding --

KO: He was born in '34.

JO: I was six or seven years old.

CW: You said you went to E Rivers for two years. That'd be about right, second grade, seven or eight years old.

WM: I can't remember anything that I did when I was six, seven years old. Do you really have any recollection of going out to the house on Lenox when you were a young boy?

JO: Yes, and it was a happening. We'd go out there and have a seated dinner for 15 people, two or three people coming in and serving and we were to be seen, not heard. The second that John and I could get up from the table instead of sitting around there afterwards and they were smoking their pipes and cigars and talk, we hightailed it out of there. It was like being at a museum. We'd go down there, he had two milk cows and the stables where he kept his horses were the part where the – it's enclosed and there's a stall. It goes like this, and the stalls were made up of the teller windows of the old Fourth National Bank. In other words, instead of having hog wire or whatever, they had those teller windows. To let the horse out, they had them welded together, and that was really neat to see that. Another thing that he had was called a Black Mariah and they must've weighed a thousand pounds, a steel circular box with a steel door on it and it kind of went up like this and then the top had an opening around it, but if it rained it wouldn't rain in. In the old timey days, what they'd do is the police would go around with a horse and walking around, and the drunks, they'd take them and put them in this Black Mariah and lock them up and there might be seven or eight people in there, and at 12:30, the horse would come by with the jail buggy and they'd get them out and put them in there. That was

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

better than having that thing going back and forth, back and forth. He had that, and we loved getting in that thing, and John would lock it up, "oh, you got to let me out of here," and beat on it. Then I'd lock him in it.

WM: This was on Sundays when you would go out there?

JO: On Sundays. And then he had a complete blacksmith's shop and the coals were still going so we'd pump that thing and get it going and stick stuff in there, have a piece of steel just [unintelligible] like that, and that was a lot of fun. And then he had prize chickens. I can't think of – Rhode Island Reds or something like that that were real famous chickens, purebred chickens. So he sold chickens as well as getting the eggs out of them. And somewhere around here there's a newspaper ad where he put in there where he had the chickens for sale and chicks, championship Rhode Island Red or whatever they called them.

WM: Cock fighting was big in Buckhead back in the '30s and '40s.

JO: He didn't do that. These were for eating, for laying eggs and eating. But it would take us maybe two or three hours to make all the rounds. The house was kind of up on the hill and then it dropped off where the stables. This is kind of interesting, when they were building Lenox Square, Chess Log Messina, who was the PR man and of course Daddy being in the newspaper business they knew each other. He called up and he says, "John, I think you need to get out here." He was doing the PR for Lenox Square. They had dug up a couple of those cups like that that help had stolen and dug a hole and was going to come back and get them and probably got fired. But anyway he gave them to Daddy, and I don't know what happened to them. But anyway, that was kind of –

WM: This is when they were developing –

JO: Lenox Square. Chess Log Messina was the PR guy for it.

JMO: Was there ever any discussion – they sold the property in '55, '56, right? Was there any discussion of –

JO: It was earlier than that, I think.

JMO: Was it? Okay. Was there any discussion of holding on to a piece of it or subdividing it, selling all of it or doing a land lease? Could you tell us anything about that.

JO: Being in the real estate business, it hurts me to even talk about that. The First National Bank was the trustee and when he died in 1945, they – of course Daddy attended the meetings. They said, "well, John, the first thing we've got to do is get rid of that white elephant out there." He said, "what do you mean?" They said, "well, you know, that's a tremendous liability for the bank. Somebody could set the house on fire and we're the trustees." He said, "listen, we can hire somebody." "No, that doesn't work and we need to get

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

rid of that as quick as we could." Because banks at that time, they felt that way about real estate. It was –

JMO: Probably feel that way now.

JO: No, they like it. They want to foreclose on and – so Daddy said, "listen" – I have to say this about it. He did recognize that. He said, "we can't sell that property in 1945. It's not right yet but it will be."

CW: Was there talk of him moving into it?

JO: He suggested, he said, "listen, I'll sell the house." This is before we bought Blackland Road. He said, "I'll sell the house on Rivers and we'll move out there and we'll take care of it." Oh, "John, you just don't understand what the liability is and so on like that." So they put it up for bid and Draper Owens, Adams Cates, Sharp Boylston, they all made a bid on it because it's a heck of a piece of property.

KO: And James' grandfather Meriwether handled it.

JO: But they didn't get it.

CW: Some insurance company bought it, didn't they?

JO: No, it was a real estate company.

JMO: Haas & Dodd.

JO: Haas & Dodd bought it for 125,000. 80 acres. I mean the house was worth more than 125,000. And Daddy, I have to say this, he laid down and cried when they did that. I mean, he did recognize that that was a horrible thing. Wonder what got into the bank to do that. But it was a hot potato. They said, we're putting it out for bid and whoever bids the highest on it, they got it. And the reason it worked out so well is they got it rezoned for apartments on the front and those little tiny houses like on Darlington Circle and East Wesley, they got it zoned for those little houses and apartments on the front and then Sherwood Forest came up for sale, the Collier estate. That was right over here. That was much closer in so they were the high bidder on that and so they had to put Lenox Square on hold and so they developed that. Then they went back and started over again and, Kay, what's that other subdivision that came up that they bought? It's Northside Drive and where that wreck up on top of the hill. What's that street goes through there?

KO: Argonne? I mean Arden.

JO: Arden. And there was an estate if you're –

CW: Castlewood?

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

JO: going north on Northside Drive.

KO: Castlewood area.

JO: Castlewood, and that was in the high rent district. And by the time they got back to Lenox Square, Ed Nobles and John Smith had already stepped into the picture and they paid a little bit more than \$125,000.

CW: Now, were they going to put a mall – they were doing apartments and homes, but the concept of malls didn't exist back then.

JO: That never entered their minds that there was any kind of retail possibilities with Lenox Square.

WM: When you would go out there, if you could, describe kind of as you're driving out Peachtree to the house. It's on the right, correct? Describe to us if you can and just into your memory banks of what you would see as you drove in to the house, what was there, what the house looked like. You've already talked about some of the out buildings and whatnot, but if you wouldn't mind describing for us the house in the best detail as you can recall.

JO: Well, when you turned in off of Peachtree, they had built a little house, just a little shed but it was done very ornamental. Kay, where is the – didn't I get the marker that they had -- maybe I didn't – on the mailbox?

KO: Yes. I don't know where it is.

JO: Or I think it's at the Millennium, but somehow I kept the original Joyeuse marker on top of the mailbox. Then I kept the 250 Blackland Road. So they had the little shed where the people could wait to catch the bus or whatever that they wouldn't get wet [unintelligible]. Back then we didn't know about Delensky. And then the driveway came in and was a big, I'll bet it was--of course this is from a seven-, eight-year-old –

WM: This is a picture of the driveway. It's not a very good picture, but –

JO: My memory, it was like half a mile. It wasn't maybe an eighth of a mile coming up, going by the house and then coming back from Peachtree Road 100, 200 yards down.

WM: Was the house visible from Peachtree Road?

JO: Yes. It was so far back, it really wasn't, it wouldn't –

WM: Do you know if any pictures exist of the house?

JO: Yes.

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

CW: What was the architecture? Do you remember? Could you describe it to a period? Was it Tudor or was it –

KO: I'd say it was probably Victorian.

WM: They describe it in the paper as English architecture. There's a pretty decent description of it in this article here.

JO: There's a picture of it, an aerial photograph down at the Millennium Gate that I donated that. It was taken probably between when Haas & Dodd was still in lala land as to what to do with it, or maybe the Noble people, Ed Noble might've taken it, but it's just with all the out buildings and everything just like it was.

WM: Tell us about these two pictures if you don't mind, please.

JO: That's my daddy at Lenox Square with two bird dog puppies that are guaranteed to be field trial champions. I don't know whether I ought to say this or not, but the reason that Daddy hated hunting and gave away all those shotguns was because his father never had time to take him, because he'd been there and done that. He was Chairman of the Board and the bank was running itself real good, and he wanted to go hunting, and he never took Daddy.

WM: Did George have a different relationship with your grandfather than your dad did?

JO: Big George?

WM: Because he was 24 years older, right?

JO: Oh, oh, well, of course George McCarty married Daddy's older sister, but they were 23 years apart, or 22 years apart, and George McCarty never had – he was not a hunter and –

WM: So there was John K. Ottley, your dad.

JO: Yes.

WM: And then there was a sister, is that right, an older sister?

JMO: Passie Fenton. Who was 22, 23 --

JO: My daddy had an older sister.

WM: She married George –

JO: McCarty, Sr.

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

WM: So those are the only two children that he had, and so the son, your dad, was 23 years younger than the daughter?

JO: Or 21 or whatever. It was a big age gap and they had a couple of children that died at childbirth in between. They wanted to have more children than just two, and then finally when Daddy was born – and like I say, my grandfather was been there, done that, and he wanted to get on with the bird hunting and the horse training and the championship dogs, and so his older sister raised him until she got married. I don't think she got married until she was like 23 years old or something like that.

WM: It sounded, from reading the newspaper accounts of the kidnapping, like your dad and your grandfather had a pretty good relationship. Your dad was very active, as you know, in the hunt for Delensky, and he went out to San Antonio and he was in, it sounds like, pretty constant communication with your grandfather. It's just interesting, I think, that men of that era probably, I think when it came to grandchildren certainly, they were meant to be seen and not heard.

JO: No question about that.

WM: And I'm just curious. I'm trying to get a sense of what – I don't think you can take how someone acts toward their grandchildren and draw any conclusions on what kind of person they were. What kind of person – how would you describe your grandfather? How do you think your dad or his business colleagues would describe him as a person?

JO: Well, for his business colleagues, he was the greatest thing since sliced bread. The mayor and the governor and everybody thought he was all – the Federal Reserve guy thought he was a pretty good fellow. He was a great salesman and a great businessman. And I don't have any reason to say this, it's just a perception. I kind of feel like that my father felt kind of left out and he got in all kind of trouble. When I say he went to Cornell, Yale or someplace like that, that lasted –

KO: Cornell.

JO: Cornell. And he said he wanted to buy a motorcycle and my grandfather said, "you're not going to buy a motorcycle. I'm not going to buy you a motorcycle and you're not, because I'm not going to give you the money." So he went over and got into the mafia and would go over to – the golf ball mafia – and they would go to Brookhaven at night and take off and go in their shorts and walk around and –

WM: In Capital City?

JO: Capital City and get golf balls and then clean them up and sell them. He did that and got enough –and of course they got hid in there. I don't play golf, thank goodness. That's the only vice I don't have. But they got hid in there that morning and they'd sell them that night. It was almost a new ball. And he made enough money to buy a used motorcycle and that infuriated my grandfather because they were dangerous and all this stuff like

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

that. And so he drove it anyway and finally got, one wet night at the streetcar tracks and the tires got stuck and he slid for about 300 yards and tore the motorcycle all to hell and back.

KO: Your grandfather Harvey told me long, long ago, maybe even before we were married that he felt like things skip generations and that Dudley was exactly like his grandfather.

JO: Well, I'll take the good part and deny the bad part.

KO: Well, he meant that you were interested in outdoors and hunting and all that and that you were a good businessman.

JO: I had the first field trial champion Labrador retriever from the State of Georgia, and had the second all time high Labrador bitch, retriever bitch rather, Chesapeake, Golden or Labrador in the history, and it's still that way. I mean, I had a little touch of field trial fever that must've come from him.

AO: And hunting as well. Nobody else, your father didn't take you hunting; you just had it in your blood to go hunting.

JO: Yes, Daddy was real good friends with Neal Basin in Madison, Georgia. Big Neal hunted all the time and had some real good bird dogs and everything, and Mother said, you've got to take that boy hunting. I just happened to overhear behind closed doors, "all right, if you'll just shut up, I'll take him." And so he said, "all right, we're going quail hunting and we're going with Mr. Basin and you cannot say a word, you cannot interrupt."

AO: Did he take John, too, your brother?

JO: No, just me. We went and we walked and walked. Daddy was holding that W.W. Greener by the barrel and dragging the stock along. I'm right up there all the time, you know, "Point, okay get your gun." Daddy's about 20, 10 yards behind and I'd run get it from him and then that was it. He told Mary, he said, Mary, "I've done it. I've taken him hunting. I don't think he likes it --"

AO: How old were you then?

JO: -- and I damn sure don't. I think I was like 17 or something, maybe 18.

AO: So you loved it, right?

JO: Oh, yes. And this guy, Bob Beacham, we used to go down to the Chattahoochee River, where I-75 goes across, it may be Long Island, and Thornton and Alfred Kennedy had bought all of that land out there. Georgia Power Company had bought it up because they were afraid somebody else was going to come in and put a dam. At that time, it wasn't regulated, it was kind of whoever did what when. And so they bought all the land below Morgan Falls. Well, they built the Morgan Falls thing where nobody else would come in

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

and put in and go in competition. Back then they wouldn't just sell you the damn site; you buy the 100 hundred acres or the 200 acres, so Thornton and Alfred Kennedy owned all that land out there where I-75 – and the timber had never been cut. So they went in there and cut all the timber. There were ten coveys of quail out there where that – Long Island. So we'd take the bird dogs down there.

WM: Those bird dogs came in handy.

JO: And we hunted on Robinson's Tropical Gardens where the – that was a cornfield from all the way back to 41. 41 was a cornfield on the Cobb County side and there were four or five coveys there. So we'd get those bird dogs –

AO: When did you go duck hunting the first time?

JO: We were quail hunting down there and right there where Long Island is, and the covey flew across the river. We shot at them but they'd already gone. So we were sitting there, just standing there, and two wood ducks were right up underneath the bank and they took off flying and I shot one of them and then Bob Beacham shot about ten minutes later and so it was a Drake wood duck, which is just the most beautiful thing that you've ever seen. It took us about 20 minutes because we didn't have any waders or anything like that, just going downstream and getting sticks, trying to pull them in. It was really archaic. So we got the duck and Bob says, "well, I think I shot that with you." I said, "the hell you did. You were ten minutes after me." "No, I'm pretty sure." We finally got in a big argument and I said, "okay, you take the duck" and he took it home and got his maid to clean it and they cooked it. So I said, well, I like this duck hunting. That sounds like a good idea. Somebody said, you've got to have some decoys, and I didn't know how to blow a duck call at that time. Some people say I still don't. So I went to Reeder & McGaughey, which was a sporting goods store at the corner of Auburn Avenue and Pryor Street, and went in there and Lyin' John Martin was the –

WM: Lyin' John, huh?

JO: Well, he had a sports show on black and white TV an he'd come in there and if somebody had killed ten crows, he'd say they shot 50 crows and this is how you do it. So Reeder and McGaughey was a sporting goods store and he was a salesman. I walked in there and he said, "what do you want, son?" I said, "well, I want to buy some decoys." He said, "how many do you want?" I said, "well, maybe two." He said, "you can't bring any ducks in with two; you've got to have at least a dozen or half dozen." I said, "well, I'll take a half dozen," and he said "okay." He said, "well, this is this new kind of decoy." I was thinking about the old kind, you know, that you're supposed to get that's made out of plastic or wood. He said, "these are called Deeks and they're rubber and they have a ring in the bottom of them and an open hole like that, and you can put them in your hunting coat and then when you get where you're going, you take them out and you hold the head and the tail and just drop them, and as it goes down, the air comes in and blows it up and it floats, and see, you don't have to worry about" -- So I said, well, that – Bob, I said, "it's a pretty good idea," so I bought them. We took them out there to the river and we dropped them in

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

and then we got our shotguns and we were hiding behind a bush and all of a sudden, they start swimming away. We didn't know you had to have an anchor. So we put the guns down and we're running with sticks again trying to – and I think I lost two of them anyway. And I went back and I said, "these damn things, they're no good." He said, "you idiot, you're supposed to get a lock or a ten penny nail and tie it to a string. You've got to have some sort of weight on it." So we started actually getting on Long Island at the very top of it and getting out. Kay went with me one morning against my better judgment. I probably ruined her for any hunting adventures. But we got on the end of the island and first thing in the morning the ducks will fly down the river and they'd fly either to the right or the left to the top of Long Island and we'd blaze away at them because we didn't have any waders back then. We were still jumping rocks, getting sticks trying to pick up the ducks. So I started hunting out there. I got some decoys, I got a string, got a weight, and built a blind and the whole thing.

CW: They had seasons, though, right? You'd have wardens. Did the warden ever come by?

JO: Back then –

KO: It was way out in the country.

JO: There was nothing out there. I tell you how it happened. We were sitting there one time, John and I in this blind, and we saw something moving on the Cobb County side and it was a doggone black bear.

CW: Come on.

JO: And we couldn't believe it. John said, "what do you think that is?" I said, "maybe it's a Great Dane." He said, "no, it's –" he said, "maybe it's a Pyrenees or something," because it was a huge thing. It was a black bear, and we just watched him walk. Thornton Kennedy actually owned that property and had a little house, a little cabin up there for years. Of course now you know what it is. On the other side it's White Water I think is the name of the subdivision.

AO: How many duck hunters were in Buckhead at the time, or Atlanta? How many friends did you meet duck hunting?

JO: Five. I mean that's something that nobody did, and when they did it, they maybe had two decoys. Nobody knew how to blow a duck call. I still don't.

WM: That's because you had to get up too early and it's too cold. No wonder nobody hunted ducks.

JMO: Unless they had a dad that forced you into it.

WM: How you weren't born when your granddad was kidnapped, were you? He was kidnapped in '33.

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

JO: You mean my grandfather?

WM: Yes, I'm sorry, your grandfather.

JO: No, I was born in 1934 so I went wah wah when I heard about it.

WM: Of course you never really had an opportunity I guess to talk about the kidnapping with your granddad.

JO: That was something that – I mean, nobody talked about it. That was –

WM: And your dad wrote up some memoirs that I've seen and he talks about the kidnapping in his memoirs. Did you ever talk with him about the kidnapping at all? What you know of the kidnapping you read in his memoirs more or less?

JO: In the newspaper accounts and this, that and the other. That Georgian magazine, I found more about it out of that thing. Did you ever hear how I got that?

KO: The article, the newspaper article?

JO: Yes. A Chi Phi from Georgia, he went to Grady High School and I knew him through Rusty's and then going up to – I thought Tech was wild until I went up. Some of the guys at Darlington said, "man, you ought to come up to Georgia" and I said, "that ain't nothing compared to Fowler Street, the Chi Phi House." He said, "I don't know, you ought to come." And we came up there and I said, "holy moley. We're little angels compared." But anyway, his aunt died and she left the house to him and it was just a little old house off of Juniper Street maybe. I don't know where it was, but she had saved every newspaper that she got and she stacked them chronologically on her side porch. There was like a ton of newspapers. The real estate agent said, "you've got to get rid of these papers. Nobody's going to buy the house." So we said, "how do you do that?" She said, "well, I think you can call up the City and you tell them what you're going to do. As soon as you get ready, they'll come pick them up as long as you put them on the street." So they said, "okay, call the City," and they said, "yes, we'll send a special within two or three days." So you could only pick up so many. These newspapers were stacked seven feet high, and he'd take them out and put them down very neatly. After about an hour and a half of doing this, he came back to get it, and the newspaper that was there, the headline was John K. Ottley Kidnapped. It was the full paper, and it was perfectly preserved because it had a ton of other newspapers on top of it, even though it was out on the porch. Well, it was a covered porch. So he called up and he said, "hey, I think I've got something that you'd be interested in," and I said, "yes, what is it?" He said, "when your grandfather got kidnapped. It's the newspaper." I said, "yes, I'd like to do it" and so I met him for lunch and he gave it to me. I took the original and framed it and I took it over to the Millennium Gate and they've got it hanging up over there.

WM: What else do they have down there at the Millennium Gate that you gave them?

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

JO: They've got a five dollar bill and a ten dollar bill and a twenty dollar bill that he signed before – when the Federal Reserve, the banks used to print up their own money. They had to do it, of course, to regulation. They couldn't just go wild with it. So it's signed by the Treasurer and John K. Ottley. I thought that was pretty neat so I gave them. We've got some upstairs, Kay and I, but Kay and I don't know where they are.

KO: They're in the safe.

JO: Did you find them?

KO: No, I haven't.

JO: That's pretty neat and I gave them a couple. And Granddaddy had, after the kidnapping, he got somebody, he had a .32 Smith and Wesson.

WM: Thirty-two.

JO: Yes, not a .38. Maybe it was a .38. I think it was a .32. And he got somebody to make him a leather holster and sew it to the leather seat so he could quick draw on the left hand side.

WM: In his car?

JO: In his car, and I got that. What else, Kay? Well, those trophies. The silver on those things is worth –

AO: Daddy, what about this? I've heard you talk about it before, for Dixieland I'll take my stand, Mr. Covington Ottley, Private, 14th Regiment Infantry soldier?

JO: We had two Ottleys from Columbus that fought in the Civil War. I think they were with a North Carolina regiment.

CW: It says 14th Regiment, Infantry. North Carolina Battalion, 32 Regiment, North Carolina Infantry. Covington Ottley and John K. Ottley.

JO: Does that say John K?

CW: Yes, it says John K.

JO: My grandfather's father and mother died – I'm not real sure about that – the house in Columbus that he was raised in, there's a picture of it in here somewhere, was on the main street. At that time, Columbus, they just had one Peachtree Road and that was it. So it was put on the National Register of houses because there's a bunch of them built before the Civil War. The bank, a bank in Columbus, wanted to buy that piece of property. It was like on Peachtree Road, and no other place would do unless they had it on the main street, so whoever owned it, they got the price and they said, all said, all done. They went

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

to apply for a building permit and the Preservation Society of Columbus said that's a historic house and that was built and you cannot tear it down. So the bank sued the Preservation Society and it was a big mess between people that know each other and so they finally said, okay, if you move the house in toto and put it on another lot, restore it just like it was, then we'll give you the permission to move it off of Peachtree Street or the main street there. So the Preservation people said, well, that's fair enough. Well, they took the house and moved it over to the middle of a black area with like 8,000 and \$10,000 houses on either side of it and here's this great big mansion. John and I, we took Mother over there and flew over to Columbus because she wanted to visit one more time because she had a lot of friends there and she didn't want to see any of them because she was embarrassed about her health. They found out, somebody with the ticket counter or something called up and her best friend met her over there and made her. So John and I went, we couldn't find the doggone house. It's gone. We know it's supposed to be right here, and so we were in the library, the Columbus library trying to look it up, and you know, I don't understand it. It's supposed to be – flipping the – and this lady said, "are you looking for the Ottley house?" And he said, "yes, yes, we are." And she said, "well, try 119 Blackmore Street." And we said, "how do you get there?" They told us and we went over there, and here people have got laundry hanging out in the yard on either side of it, and the new treasurer for the State of Mississippi is in this great big house with a new Jaguar and a Mercedes Benz and on either side they have wash. And you know, you can understand in Mississippi, a black person has got a good chance of being elected to anything. They all block vote. He was a Democrat, too. But that was pretty – and the lady at the library obviously was very disappointed that they had done that to the house.

CW: Tell me, speaking of houses, at the corner of Rivers and West Wesley, there's a house that is gray. There's a rumor I guess, it was a barn at one point that was converted to a house. Is that true? It's that gray one that kind of sits on the southeastern corner.

JO: That'd be the southeast corner of –

CW: Or northeast corner maybe, northeast corner.

JO: Well, of course, Rivers dead ends so it's either southwest or southeast. If it's southeast, it belonged to Clarkwood [phonetic] Carter who was a very prominent doctor. They still own a big place up there at Carter's Lake, Carter's Dam. The daughter lives up there now and supposedly when they got ready to build the dam for Carter's Lake, they dug up a shield from where Hernando DeSoto came up there and stole everything he could from the Indians and so on like that on his march through Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee and Mississippi where he met his maker, actually Arkansas. I don't know about it being a stable.

CW: It may not be that. What is the name of the street that cuts down –

WM: The house you're talking about is at the corner of Vernon and West Wesley. So you take a left out of Rivers, right, and then a right onto Vernon. It's right up on that hill there. Was that a house at the time, do you remember, when you were younger?

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

JO: I believe it was a house. John had a paper route and we would get a little red wagon and throw the papers, all over where Peachtree Battle is and everything. That was –

CW: Describe Buckhead a little bit back in the day, the places you shopped, the places you ate, restaurants you liked, churches you went to, clubs you joined.

JO: The era that you're talking about, we went to Garden Hills movies and that was it. And Fred's Fruit Emporium was right across the street from E Rivers and we'd go over there and get bubble gum.

JMO: Was that right at the street level? Was it kind of down where the shopping center is?

JO: The back end of it was built – they had like telephone poles with – because that dropped off.

KO: In fact, they used to call it the hole.

JO: What else? Ask another question.

WM: I was curious how your grandmother got involved with the Tallulah Falls School.

JO: Oh, now, you're opening up a whole new can of worms. I mean, you talk about somebody that was a whirling dervish. [unintelligible] I'm going to make this a better place to live, and you know she was a suffragette. I mean women weren't allowed to vote and so she was behind that when women got to vote. Tallulah Falls, that area up there was, probably still is, but that was a depressing place and there was no education. Rabun County, I think they had one school and anybody that was 10 or 15 miles away didn't bother going to it.

WM: Did they have a place in Rabun? How did she get interested in what was going on up there?

JO: I think because it was probably the poorest damn place in the State of Georgia and so she got up there and said, we've got to have a school, because the State didn't have a school. So she was one of the founders of that Tallulah Falls – and it was to get those people in Rabun County and whatever the other county is – I mean there wasn't any school up there. Rabun County was so damn poor, they might've had a log cabin that you'd go through the fifth grade on, so she started that. The Women's Club on Peachtree Street down there, she was a founding member of that thing. And you'd go in there and there's all kind of stuff written about her, which I didn't even know it; somebody told me. And this is a good story, and John probably told you about it, but when Georgia Power Company built Lake Seed, Lake Rabun, Lake Burton for power, they cut off the school, the Tallulah Falls School. They had to go 30 miles to go around the lakes because Tallulah Gorge, that's – James, you've heard all this stuff before. I'm surprised you stayed as long as you did.

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

CW: So go ahead and finish that thought.

JO: So these people just stopped going to school. So my grandmother went nuts and they said, well, it takes us three hours to go horse and buggy around, a horse and a wagon. And she said, well, we've got to get a road across. They said, "well, we've talked about it, but the State of Georgia doesn't have any money." Ed Rivers was the governor at that time, from Lakeland, Georgia, and she went to him personally and said, "we've got to have a bridge over Tallulah Gorge to get there." And he said, "well, lady, there's not enough people up there to make any difference." And she said "everybody" – anyway, she raised so much hell with him and called in everybody and said she was going to make sure he didn't get re-elected and this, that and the other. Finally, my grandfather, there's a story he tells about it. He's sitting in an office and a secretary says, "Mr. Ottley, you've got a call from somebody that says he's the governor." And he said, "what's his name?" Said, "Governor Ed Rivers." "Oh, yeah, well put him on." He said, "hey, John, how you doing?" "Just fine." He said, "I want to ask you one question, John." And he said, "what's that?" "If I build that damn bridge over the Tallulah Gorge, will you promise me that your wife will never call me again?" He said, "oh, my God, that's easy to answer. I'll tell you right now I will guarantee it because she's on my case all the time, too." He said, "please build that bridge." What's kind of sad is that picture of the dedication – well, there's another one.

KO: You might've left that one.

JO: No, I didn't either. I brought it. I brought them all out here.

CW: Hold that up to the camera there so we can see it.

JO: What's kind of sad is, I don't know who this is right here, but that's my brother right here. That's Preston Arkwright, president of the Georgia Power Company. That's the lady that's head of the Tallulah Falls, and that's my grandfather and that's another lady with Tallulah Falls, and that is Governor Ed Rivers. And this is the dedication of that bridge across there, and what's sad is that she died like three months before this, four months I think it was, and she worked so hard.

CW: So she never got to cross it?

JO: Never got to cross it. She probably saw it getting started, and so they put a – it was such a tremendous thing for the county, they put a brass plaque on this side of the bridge and another brass plaque on the other side dedicating the bridge to her. Of course this is another picture. Like I say, I don't know who these people are, but that's Preston Arkwright giving the speech and that's the cheerleaders from Clayton County High School. They're not much to look at.

CW: Where's one cute one back there.

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

JO: And what they've done is they've built another bridge on top.

CW: Okay. So it's not the original bridge.

JO: It's not the original bridge, and it's four lane now or something like that. They've got one brass plaque down here, but nobody ever sees that, and so they've got an interpretive center, it's called the Jane Yarn Interpretive Center, when you cross the bridge going up there, you go in and drive around. They've got a museum about Clayton County and Rabun County and everything. I called them up and I said, you know, there wouldn't be any museum up there and nobody walks under that bridge because they don't know how to go under there and there's two plaques. I said, why don't you take one of those plaques and take it off and put it in that museum, and I sent him copies of all the pictures that pertained to the thing. He called me back and he said, I took it up with everybody and I have called the Department of Transportation and we're going to take the plaque that's furthest away and put it in the museum and we've already framed the pictures you sent us to tell the story about it. I thought that was pretty – I hadn't been up there. I didn't think too much about it. [unintelligible] but I just hadn't been up there.

CW: Tell me a little bit about Ottley Properties, too, just about your real estate and how that affected Buckhead and interactions in Buckhead or outside Atlanta.

JO: I'm not sure how I shaped the growth of Atlanta, but –

KO: Well, you did a few things around the state when the expressways were being built.

JO: Oh, yes. I graduated from Tech and Daddy said, "well, what are you going to do? Have you got a job?" I said, "no, I don't have one right now." "Well, we need to get you working." I said, "Dad, I just got out of school three days ago," and he said, "well, what are you going to do tomorrow?" I said, "I'm going duck hunting up at Morgan Falls and Bull Sluice there." And he said, "you've got to get a job." So I came home for supper and he said, "I think I've got you a job with Ford Motor Company in the district sales office," and I said, "well, what am I going to be doing?" He said, "well, you'll be in a training program and I think you'll go out and see." So I went out there and interviewed, and of course I already had the job because he was friends and in the same church with Daddy. He said, "okay, we're starting you at \$400 a month." I mean, I didn't know to negotiate. I mean, that's it. So it was the worst job I ever had. I was on the Ford training program and we were not at the Ford plant, we were on Sylvan Road. They had a warehouse for the whole Southeast for all the parts and the district sales office was in the front. I thought that was pretty neat, wearing a coat and tie and going to work. Boy, that's what it's all about. After about a couple of months, this is a bunch of damn rednecks out here. I was one of the few people that had a college education. Everybody else was [unintelligible] and it was part of that was processing claims. When somebody bought a new Ford in Sylacauga, Alabama and the alternator went out, he'd take it back to the dealer and the dealer would replace it and then he'd fill out a very complicated form and send it in and I was supposed to read it and then look in the book to make sure he charged the amount for changing an alternator and charge what the wholesale price it was to Ford. And then it was 1.2 hours at, at that time,

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

\$3 an hour to replace it and add all that up and make sure he hadn't overcharged. And the room I worked in, it didn't even have a window. I would sit there all day long. One day, we said, nobody even knows we're alive. Nobody calls up, nobody complains, they don't – and he said, "I'll tell you what let's do," is Mack Ratchford and he had graduated from Auburn. He said, "let's just approve every damn thing that comes through here and see what happens." And I said, "well, I'm game." So we got this approval stamp and we'd get these things, take it out, approved, approved, approved. And we did that 320 I think, and normally you couldn't check all that. We probably did maybe 125 or something and we'd go like that, waiting for – nobody ever said anything. So we said, "okay, let's deny every one of them and get a rise." And at that time, I didn't – and so we went disapproved, disapproved, disapproved and like a dog that's done something he knows he's --- with an electric collar he's going to get it. We were like that waiting for two or three days. Nobody ever said anything. I said, what kind of job is this? And we couldn't see daylight until lunchtime, and they had a couple of ping pong tables and that's the only way I survived is playing ping pong at lunch. Lunch was supposed to be 45 minutes, but it stretched into an hour and two hours. I was playing ping pong. What's that movie where the –

AO: Get to the Ottley Properties.

JO: Okay. Well, I am very unhappy so I started fooling around with some guys that their daddy owned Sharp Boylston, owned 50% of it, well, owned it, and they said, oh, man, you ought to get into real estate business. I mean, we stay up all night and come in at 10:00, 10:30, make a deal and then leave at 3:00 and go do what we want to do. And I said, what kind of money do you make? They said, oh, well, if you don't make \$20,000 they let you go. I'm making \$400 a month. I said, boy, that's the life for me and it sounded like these guys – so I had \$600 in the bank and I told Daddy that I was quitting and he went nuts. "I mean that's a commission job, you've got a family to support, blah, blah, blah," and I just put the ear muffs on. I went down there to Sharp Boylston. Of course, I said, "well, I'm ready to start the training program and they said okay."

CW: Where was he? Was that in downtown?

JO: It was downtown on 10 Auburn Avenue which is right there across from where the park is now.

CW: That's Short Boylston?

JO: S-h-a-r-p. We were in a Rose Liquor warehouse, big old narrow building with 20-foot ceilings and had three floors on it. They gave me a desk and a telephone. I said, "okay, what do I do now?" They said, "well, go sell some real estate." I said, "well, how do you do that?" They said, "well, you know" – it was no training program, no nothing. But I scrambled around and wound up making a couple of deals by accident and kind of said, this is pretty good. Most of the deals that I'd make, I started buying it myself. A guy would bring in and say "I've got 100 acres out on Cascade Palmetto Road," which is Fulton Industrial district, "and my wife's cousin has to sell it because it's part of their estate and

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

they want \$300 an acre for it." I said, "that sounds pretty cheap." He said, "yes, but I don't know what you'd do with it." So I'd say, "well, I think I've got somebody to buy it." I'd go out and look at it, just windshield it, and then make up an offer for \$150 an acre and dollar down and then interest only for five years and then a five-year payout, and the guy would take it. He'd say, well, I like getting all that interest. So I'd get a guy to go in with me that had some money and we'd borrow the down payment from the Trust Company. Then somebody would come along and buy it from us, and I started buying and syndicating things with people. Then I found out about the interstate highways and one of our guys sold the first interstate corner to Texaco in the history of America, because interstates, nobody really knew. So I said, "boy, that sounds pretty good." So anyway, I got hold of Standard Oil and I did some with Texaco and would find out where the interstate is going. People, they'd say, well, there's a highway coming through here and I'm not going to sell the good part. Well, they didn't realize that those interstates instead of being a regular crossing, they flared out like that. They wanted to keep the stuff inside the flare or so they thought. So I'd go down to the highway department and look at the plans and I'd get the pin corner outside where – and they said, well, we're keeping the best part. I said, but maybe I can get something on the outside. Of course they took all of their property and I did that all over the state and I'd got in real good with Texaco and Standard Oil. He had one problem. He liked to stay up and drink liquor all night long. I'd say, oh, God, I've got to go. I'm halfway out the motel door down in Savannah and he'd grab me, oh, I tell you one more story. Oh, I think I'm going to throw up. So they'd go throw up and then come back, and I never did [unintelligible]

[. . .]

JO: I did real well on that, and then later on the banks started buying up timberland and syndicating it. With timber, you can pretty much expect a 5% return if it's a good site index, good dirt, and that was better than you could get on a bond or interest, or maybe get two or 3% dividend. So a lot of banks decided they wanted to get into it and First National did and I got with them and went and bought timber tracts all over the State of Georgia, and some of them I kept; most of them I was just the broker on the thing. Then, what other devious thing did I do? Oh, when the Great Depression came in '70 – when was that, Kay?

KO: I think it was '72.

JO: '72 and I owed Trust Company of Georgia I think \$100,000 and I got a call from George Sherrill who was my banker and he said, "Bob Strickland wants to meet with you." Now, Bob lives right over here. His son is in the same driving group with Alec and they played Little League baseball together and so on. So I said, "well, wonder what he wants?" And he said, "well, I don't know. He just said to get you over here." And so Sharp Boyle – I just walked across the street, went over there. And he said, "well, come on" and we walked in there. Bob Strickland, he's sitting there and he's reading something. He looks up and he just keeps reading it and after about five minutes he puts it down. He said, "Dudley, I want you to pay off the \$110,000 that you owe us within a week," and I started to say, "you got any suggestions?" But George did like that, and I said, "okay," and he went like that. Now,

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

he was a guy. [. . .] I mean, he's the president of the bank and he's doing – so I said, "George, you got any suggestions?" He said, "I'm fresh out." Anyway, I paid them every dime and finally I had to report in once a month, the first Monday of every month and tell them how I was doing and all they were interested in and George Sherrill would – the Trust Company of Georgia stock started just going through the roof. I'd be sitting in a meeting and George Sherrill would walk by and I said, "hey, George, what did it close out at?" "Hell, it's up a dollar and 82 cents." "Oh, boy, we've got to do that." He'd say, "okay, Dudley, and just keep going and come back and see me in a month." I finally paid them off and then later on the people in Europe, their economy had just been gangbusters but Russia moved 150 divisions right on the German border and were having exercises every day, and boy, everybody in Europe said, hey, here goes World War III, and we're going to get our assets out, so they started buying everything they could over here and one of the things they liked was farmland because if they owned it, they could get a green card because they were gainfully employed because they owned a farm and they, quote unquote, were going to go down to the farm and run it. And plus the exchange rate, the French franc was – the dollar was like 60 cents on it so they could buy, with a French franc they could buy two acres for what we could buy one acre with, so I got to be a farmer. At one time we had like 20,000 acres in southeast Georgia. Part of the deal is that I had to manage the farms. I said, well, I don't do that, and they said, well, no deal. And I turned around to the lawyer and I said, set me up a management company here. So I was operating out of Louisville, Georgia, in Jefferson County and we were in like seven or eight counties down there. That was a lot of fun, but Mrs. Ottley didn't think it was so much fun.

AO: You operated out of this house and you would drive down to Louisville for a day and sometimes turn around and come back that night, sometimes be down there for a week.

JO: Yes, and I carried a shotgun and a case of -- a .20 gauge shotgun and a case of shells and a green jacket and a hat. We would go in and one of the farm mangers would say, "listen, we're going to shoot doves. They're coming in that water hole and there are 10,000 of them." And I said, "well, can you hold it?" And he said, "well, we're afraid they might go, Mr. Dudley, but we better, you better" – and I said, "okay." I said, "oh, God, Kay is going to kill me." What do I do? And I'm like a person sleepwalking, had to go back –

AO: Go back then –

JO: -- open the trunk and get – and boy, I mean, shot 30 or 35 doves in about 20 minutes, and get in that car and drive 100 miles an hour on those back roads with Kay sitting there with a baseball bat.

AO: Luckily for you, there was no cell phone back then so you didn't have it ringing every five minutes like somebody like Wright or I would.

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

JO: Then the farming business kind of went to hell in a hand basket. I mean, the commodity prices dropped and the people decided that they wanted to rent the farms out or sell them or whatever. Fortunately for me and my marriage, that thing died out.

KO: Well, you sold it.

JO: Yes, in the end, yes, I did sell it.

AO: And then you started Ottley Properties up again in Atlanta, right?

JO: Well, Ottley Properties never – it was the broker for all the farms, buying and selling them.

KO: Then your children came to town from college and you put them to work, except for only one that didn't get into real estate. He's doing fine.

JO: Yes, Dudley, Jr. came back from Middlebury College and after screwing around for a couple of years decided he'd come back and so he went to work for me, which was great because I knew what to do but lacked the energy and I would make him drive down to Louisville or Lithonia or wherever it is and he made a ton of money for himself and me, because he had the energy and I had the know how. Then he decided that he wanted to go to Vail, Colorado. Is that kind of how it worked, Kay?

KO: In the meanwhile Julian stopped sowing his wild oats and he came home and he was so depressed because he didn't have a job and interviewed at the banks and he said, "oh, I don't want to be a banker." And then so Dudley, Jr. said "you've got to put him to work, Daddy. I'll train him in," so he went to work for Ottley Properties.

JO: And I'll tell you, both of them made a ton of money, and I made some money, because they would do what I told them to do the first time in their life.

WM: It was a great reward they could see from doing what they were told.

JO: Yes, because the greenbacks – and Dudley and both Julian are real good at what they did and they did what I suggested they do, and sometimes they'd stay out at 9:00 o'clock at night sitting on somebody's porch getting them to – and then Julian married a girl from Richmond and she moved down here after they got married and she said, "Atlanta three years, Richmond forever." And Julian loved it because he was – we were at Manheim Automobile Auction. Have you ever heard of that?

WM: Sure.

JO: Cox Enterprises owns them and they were expanding and there was a great business, and they bought everybody out. And so we were doing all the work for them. When they needed more space and one thing and another, if they could buy it, they'd buy it. But if it was a little bit of trouble, then they'd call us and we'd do all the dirty work. Julian would go out, and he's a psychology major. He'd sit on that front porch and rock back and forth

Interview of J. Dudley Ottley, Sr.
March 7, 2010

with that black lady owned one acre. She was 93 years old, by herself, one acre and the house was about to fall down. She said, I just don't know where I'll go, and so finally, we got her to agree to sell and she says, "well, I don't have any way to get my furniture from here over to my" – and I called up Manheim and they said, "look, we've got an old \$600 red pickup truck that nobody will buy. We'll give that to her if she'll sign and we'll supply the people to help move her." So they gave her the pickup truck and of course she was a nice lady. She didn't try to hold them up. Anyway, that was pretty good. And I guess I'm retired now. I've lost the killer instinct except for pulling the trigger and deer hunting, dove hunting, quail hunting and especially ducks.

WM: Where do you do most of your hunting now?

JO: I've got a 250-acre farm in the northeast corner of Alabama, Tennessee and Georgia. It's Stevenson, Alabama and it's on the Tennessee River. There's a refuge that adjoins us where there's no hunting. We plant about 60 acres of corn and then flood it where they can come in and swim right up, get them something to eat. Then I belong to a club in Sumner, Mississippi and we do real good over there. This year was kind of slow pickings. Then I get to hunt with some other people from time to time in different places, and I've still got the place up in Jefferson, Georgia.

AO: Wright has been up to a couple of times, I think. You remember going in that swamp up there near the farm? I know you remember going up to the farm.

JO: Do you remember going up there?

WM: Yes, but it's – gosh, how old were we?

JO: I didn't know that you – I might not have approved you going.

WM: No, this was when we were in school. Didn't do anything wrong up there.

JO: It'd be hard to do anything wrong up there.

AO: Bring up the hunting, Chad and Wright, I want to take you guys downstairs and out to my dad's office so you can see what has come from one shotgun to three safes of, four safes of shotguns and no waders to 100 waders going back from the first time they made waders to the newest waders they've got right now.

WM: I'd love to see that.

[end of transcript]

