

**Oral History Interview of
Mary O. Anderson**

**Interviewed by: David Marshall
August 25, 2001
Near Wimberley, Texas**

**Part of the:
*Women's History Initiative***

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The Women's History Initiative began formally in June 2015 with a concentrated effort to record the stories of prominent women from across the South Plains. The interviews target doctors, civic leaders, teachers, secretaries, and others whose stories would otherwise be lost.

Transcript Overview:

This oral history interview features Mary Anderson. Anderson talks about her career directing camps in Texas, working for the Girl Scouts, and her time in the Navy.

Length of Interview: 01:30:55

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David Marshall (DM):

The date is August 25, 2001, and this is David Marshall interviewing Mary Anderson at her home near Wimberley, Texas, on the Rocky River Ranch. And Mrs. Anderson, I just want to get some information about the Rocky River Ranch but also the Rio Blanco Camp. Is it Rio Blanco Girl Scout Camp?

Mary Anderson (MA):

Yes, it's Rio Blanco Girl Scout Camp.

DM:

But before we start all that, let me get some general biographical information. Can you tell us when and where you were born, and maybe a little bit about your parents and siblings?

MA:

I was born in Lamesa, in West Texas. And my father was a farmer, and many things during the years we lived in Lamesa. I lived there until I was about in the sixth or seventh grade. And then we moved to Lubbock, and lived there two or three years, and then my father traded the farm west of Lubbock for an implement house and a Farmall dealership in McAdoo, Texas. So I lived there until I was a senior in high school. And I don't know if very many people know where McAdoo is.

DM:

It's on the maps, but I don't think a lot of people know where it is.

MA:

It's east of Crosbyton, after you cross the Blanco River, I mean after you cross the canyon, east of Crosbyton. You come back up on a little thumb of the plains, and then you drop back down to Dickens, Texas. And McAdoo is about three miles off of the main highway, between Crosbyton and Dickens, north. And you don't—it's kind of like Wimberley—you don't ever go through McAdoo, you go to it. But you don't go through it. But we lived there until I was a senior in high school and my father died, just prior to my senior year.

DM:

What year was that?

MA:

1952—no, I'm sorry not '52. 1943.

DM:

And did you graduate from McAdoo, too?

MA:

No, after my father died, my mother sold the implement house and moved to Lubbock. And she bought a house on Tenth Street, just a half a block from Texas Tech, on Main Street. So I went into Lubbock High School for my senior year and graduated there. And then naturally I went to Texas Tech because we lived half a block. And she had three daughters to put through college—so it was a good move for us.

DM:

Now what were your parents' names?

MA:

My father was Palmer Anderson, and my mother was Alma Anderson.

DM:

And what about your brothers and sisters?

MA:

My oldest brother was J. W.—James William Anderson. He was—he sold Southwest life insurance for forty, fifty years in Lubbock. And he graduated from West Texas State. And then my second brother was Don Anderson, Lee Don Anderson, who was a farmer at Crosbyton for many, many years.

DM:

And I should mention that we have an interview with Don Anderson too, for researchers who listen to this tape.

MA:

And he was a farmer there at Crosbyton for many years, and then he became a cotton broker later in life in Lubbock. And then I have a sister Alma, Morgan is her married name now. Alma Ruth Morgan, and she is married to Jim Morgan, and he graduated from Texas Tech in petroleum engineering, and they live in Bartlesville, Oklahoma now. And then, and she's younger than I am. And then my baby sister is June Wallace, and she lives in Clear Lake, out of Houston.

DM:

Okay. Scattered everywhere.

MA:

Yeah, yeah. My brother Don and I graduated from Texas Tech in 1948. He went to West Texas State, I think, for a couple of years. And then he went into the navy, and then when he came out, he went to Texas Tech and graduated.

DM:

Oh the G.I. bill then, I guess.

MA:

Yeah, yeah. And then my sister Alma had two years at Tech, and married Jim Morgan who graduated from Tech. and then their daughter, their two daughters, went to Texas Tech. Jamie Green, who is married to a petroleum engineer in Borger, and Rue Hatfield, who graduated from Tech, I don't know what year, but she has a degree in family life or something like that.

DM:

And she works here at the Rocky River Ranch.

MA:

And she's the director of the camp now. That's my semi-retirement.

DM:

Well when you were living in McAdoo, I guess y'all went back and forth to Lubbock a little bit, did you? Or did you do your shopping there?

MA:

Oh yeah. Uh huh.

DM:

I'm curious to know how you developed an interest in the, I guess the Silver Falls area, the white river area. Did y'all go to Silver Falls for recreation?

MA:

Oh yeah, that was the picnic spot for everybody.

DM:

A lot of people—

MA:

The Silver Falls area and also Roaring Springs had a big swimming area. So our school had their school picnics there, and one time we'd have it at Silver Falls, and one time at Roaring Springs.

DM:

Oh okay. How nice. Had they improved Silver Falls at that point—I mean by building all of the rock work. Or was that earlier—was that WPA or do you know?

MA:

I don't know—I don't know who did that.

DM:

It's all been there as long as you remember, though?

MA:

Yeah, they did the improvements later, after we moved from McAdoo. But I spent, actually it was my junior year—let's see we moved to McAdoo, I must have been in about the freshman in high school. Something like that. I don't remember dates. I don't pay a lot of attention to the years.

DM:

Were you a Girl Scout when you were little?

MA:

No, actually when we were living in Lamesa, I thought I would join a Girl Scout—that cat's going to jump on your—

DM:

Oh well, won't hurt a thing. (laughs)

MA:

When we were living in Lamesa, I wanted to join the Girl Scouts, and we lived a mile and a half out east of Lamesa, and we walked to school and walked home. And I would have to walk home by myself if I joined the Girl Scouts. And if I didn't, then I could walk home with my brothers. But I didn't—I really didn't get to join the Girl Scouts, I don't know if that was the reason or just why it was. But I remember when I was a kid, my dad used to take my two brothers to Walsenburg, Colorado, on fishing trips, and they'd go camping up there, and I wanted to go with them so bad, and they wouldn't let me go. And I kept asking momma why they wouldn't let me go. And they said, "Well they don't want girls along with them when they go on their fishing trips." So I said, "Well why? Girls like to do that too—they like to fish and they like to go camping and all like that." But I never got to go with them. I remember one time I ran down the road crying behind their car saying, "Take me with you. Take me with you." So when I was a senior at Tech, Peggy Sugarek, one of the field directors with the Girl Scouts of Lubbock came to the Baptist student union to interview for camp counselors. And so I decided that would be a good thing to do. So I signed up to be a camp counselor at camp Las Leonitas, which was at Buffalo Lake.

DM:

What was the name again?

MA:

Las Leonitas.

DM:

Leonitas.

MA:

It was built by the Lion's Club.

DM:

Is it where the—let's see—Buffalo Springs has changed a lot in recent years, but there is a Boy Scout and Girl Scout camp—I guess they use it alternating weeks or something. But there's a camp area designated for Girl Scouts now at Buffalo Springs, I wonder if it's the same.

MA:

I don't know.

DM:

I'll have to ask around about Las Leonitas.

MA:

Yeah, that was before Ransom Canyon was built.

DM:

Was it L-a-s—

MA:

L-a-s—

DM:

L-e-o-n-i-t-a-s?

MA:

Yes.

DM:

Okay.

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MA:

The Johnson family owned the area which is now Ransom Canyon. And the first summer I was at Las Leonitas, as a camp counselor, I felt—you know I've been waiting for this all my life. This is where I belong. So I worked there that summer, and since I had graduated, the Girl Scouts had mentioned that they were looking for a field director to work with the Girl Scouts. So I went in and applied for the Girl Scout work, and at that time they had to do background investigations and all that sort of thing before I could be hired. So it didn't—the approval from the national organization didn't come through until January.

DM:

January of what year now?

MA:

Of forty—the beginning of '45. And in January, a friend of mine from Idalou was teaching first grade, and they had passed the Gilmer Aiken Bill which said that teachers had to complete their degree in order to continue teaching, and she lacked, I think, six hours getting her degree. So she asked me if I would come and teach her first grade, and my major was elementary education. And she asked me if I would teacher her first grade that semester while she commuted to Tech and get her degree. So I lived in their home and taught her class that spring. And then I went back to the Girl Scout camp as a camp counselor, and then was hired by the Girl Scouts by the fall of '45.

DM:

How long were you at Las Leonitas?

MA:

Well, two summers as a counselor, and then let's see—well, actually it was longer than that because after I started working for the Girl Scouts as a field director, I went back every summer, until 1952. In 1952 I joined the Navy and was on active duty for two years.

DM:

This was during Korea?

MA:

Yeah, yeah. But I had my officers training in Newport, Rhode Island, and then I was assigned to Great Lakes, Illinois as a communications security specialist.

DM:

How long then were you in the navy?

MA:

I was on active duty for two years, and then I was in the navy reserve for fifteen years.

DM:

Oh is that right? Okay. So pretty much from 1952 to '69, somewhere in there—

MA:

Yeah.

DM:

Okay. I want to back up a little bit and get a little bit more on Las Leonitas.

MA:

Okay.

DM:

Sounds like you got involved in this right at the end of World War II, pretty much, mid-forties, '45, early '45. I know that, seems like, you can tell me—some opportunities for women were improving towards the end of the war. And I'm wondering, did Girl Scouting get a boost from the fact that the war was going on—that they started, you know, people started opening up more to the idea of girls being involved in organized camping programs. Or did it change—had it changed? Had it been that way all along?

MA:

I don't know. That's an interesting thought. It could have been that the Girl Scouts were looking at different vocations that they could encourage the girls in at that time. I know when I started to Tech, either a home economics major or a teacher or a physical education major were about the only majors that I knew of—and that's what most of my friends were involved in, so I guess maybe, that might have been—

DM:

I just wonder if it was a growth period for Girl Scouting, or if it steadily grew all along. Maybe I can look at some national statistics and see what happened with that.

MA:

Yeah, that's an interesting thought. I know there was a lot of—well I guess you might say badge work and things like that were offered to the girls, to encourage them to go into other fields.

DM:

Did your interest in camps for girls or Girl Scouting in particular continue without interruption, well I guess your naval career might have interrupted that a bit. You worked with the Girl Scout camp in the forties, but then '52 you went on active duty for a couple of years, so you weren't even in this part of the country for a while.

MA:

No, but I—when I was at great lakes, I got acquainted with the Girl Scouts in Waukegan, Illinois, which is the town right next to Great Lakes. And I took two weeks leave and spent two weeks at the Girl Scout camp for Waukegan, Illinois. And that was interesting. It was really interesting. I met some really nice people, and it was interesting to see the difference in camping from the Texas camping and Illinois.

DM:

After you were off active duty, did you continue your interest with—

MA:

I came back to Lubbock because my mother had had spinal surgery, and the family and I didn't know how much help she was going to need—since she lived alone. So I got—having the GI bill, I went back to Tech and worked on my master's for a year. And during that time, the camp director that the Girl Scouts had hired decided to leave, and the president of the council came to me and said, "Would you be interested in coming back and directing the camp?" which was Las Leonitas. So they rehired me as a field director and the camp director. So I went back to Las Leonitas and directed the camp there for I think a couple of years, I'm not sure.

DM:

This was then mid-fifties or so?

MA:

Yeah. And that was interesting.

DM:

Tell me about the physical layout of Las Leonitas and how it operated.

MA:

Las Leonitas was in a sort of draw, part of the canyon. Some of our—we had tents, tent platforms, and we had to put the tents up every spring.

DM:

Had the large canvas wall tents?

MA:

Yeah, so we had to put those up. We had one unit up on the top of the rim of the canyon, and then one unit down below. I think there was one, maybe two units. I can't remember for sure.

DM:

One caught the wind, and one had a little bit of windbreak.

MA:

And then we had one cabin for the younger girls. It was the Dupree—I think the name was—cabin. Yeah, we had a tent unit on the north side of the canyon, this little draw, blind canyon back where we were located, and then went on the south side, and then the little cabin was down in the bottom and then ended up on top.

DM:

Was that on the north side of the canyon or the south side?

MA:

It was on the north side.

DM:

Away from Slaton, the other direction.

MA:

Yeah. Yeah.

DM:

Was it near the marina?

MA:

Now the marina—you're talking about where they did the swimming and everything.

DM:

Did they have that big cement swimming pool. Now the spillway wasn't there at that time—the current spillway, I suppose. There's a big spillway that raised the water level quite a bit.

MA:

I think that's why we had to move. (laughs) I think they were going to raise the water level.

DM:

But there was an old marina before that—now that marina is underwater. And they had a large cement swimming pool.

MA:

We were halfway between the marina and the gate, on the north side.

DM:

Did the girls get to make use of the swimming pool down there at the marina?

MA:

Oh yeah, oh yeah. That was our swimming area. We would walk down there every day and went swimming.

DM:

What other activities did they have? Was there any horseback riding?

MA:

No. we didn't have any horses. We taught camp craft and we had some international counselors who came, and we had a lot of folk dancing and arts and crafts and interesting campfires and things like that—storytelling. That's where I started storytelling.

DM:

You have some perfect hiking trails in that area too.

MA:

Yes. And we found a lot of Indian artifacts.

DM:

Oh did you?

MA:

Yeah, yeah. The first couple of years I was there, they kept telling me that there was arrowheads in the area, but I never found one. And when I went back as a camp director, I found one arrowhead, and from that day forward, I found one every day.

DM:

Is that right?

MA:

And I think it's a matter of educating your eye to see them.

DM:

I've heard the same thing.

MA:

Of course, after every rain, I'd go back out and look and it would wash them. But one of the old timers told me that in that particular draw—that they had found a lot of Indian artifacts and I think they may have even found an Indian grave or two. Now while I was camp director we also discovered an Indian burial on the Johnson ranch. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were—I became close friends with the Johnsons. And eventually they let us set up our outpost unit, which was for our counselor and training program. We set up an outpost unit on the Johnson ranch where we could go down and put up our pup tents and build fires.

DM:

Oh good. This was on down the river.

MA:

That's where Ransom Canyon is now.

DM:

Would you camp near the river down in there?

MA:

Actually, we were back up in a draw there. When you go down into Ransom Canyon, get down to the bottom, close to lake level and look back up to your right, there's a draw that goes back up in there—we had our unit set back up in there, and we discovered an Indian burial where the—it was right up against the cliff where the rainwater came off of the fields and came over the cliff, and it eventually washed away the dirt and left this Indian burial. He had evidently been put into a sort of a little cave back in there. And the rain had washed that away, and left it exposed. And there was a forearm I believe that was missing bone, and we could see the elbow bones and then some of the feet bones sticking on the side of the canyon. And we went to Tech, and Dr. Holden was the museum director then. And they were doing some work out at—I think New Mexico, so they directed us to Yellow House Canyon, where the University of Texas was doing some excavation. They were excavating a saber tooth tiger or something up there. Anyway, this doctor from the University of Texas came out, Mr. Watts was the science teacher at Lubbock High School, and we went to him first. And actually we found some buffalo bones down in the creek, in the—well it's a dry creek bed. And we went to Mr. Watts and asked him if he would come and help us dig out those buffalo bones. So we were digging on those, and we had too many girls—

we couldn't all get in there to dig at the same time. So he sent [constant cat meowing] (laughs)
We're going to have to do something about that cat.

DM:

Oh he's fine.

MA:

We sent some of the girls up to explore around the rim of the canyon because he said that the Indians would build their campfires right around the edge of the canyon, and if we found any burned rocks, that would be an indication of an Indian camp fire. So our girls, with one of the counselors was out exploring, and they found these bones protruding out of the side of the canyon. So we went up and he took a couple of the feet bones and went over to the museum then to see if they would help us. And the reason we knew it was Indian because along the—we saw the outline of the foot, the foot bones there, and along the top of it were Indian beads, like the moccasins had had Indian beading on them. And so we took those over to the museum—to the museum and then to where the University of Texas people were working. So then they came out—the doctor, I can't think of his name, from the university of Texas, came out and helped us to excavate that, and wrapped it all in newspaper, and took it all. I was carrying the skull in my hand like that, and two of his teeth fell between my fingers, and we never did find them. But now he's on display at the University of Texas Natural Museum.

DM:

I wonder how old it is.

MA:

They said it was between seventy-five and one hundred years old. In fact there's a book called *The Skeleton of Yellowhouse Canyon* that's on sale at the University of Texas museum, and I've got a copy of it here.

DM:

I wonder if Holden was sorry he passed that opportunity up.

MA:

I don't know. The reason the University of Texas was interested, the doctor told me that they had several burial sites of Indians in the West Texas area, but they were group burials, and they didn't have an individual burial. And it was really interesting—he was wrapped in a leather cloak or some kind of leather robes with medallions about two inches around, with some sort of Spanish design, copper, I think they were copper designs on this blanket. And then he had these—I think they're called turkey bone necklaces—one that came all the way down to the

waste, and then one that went from the right shoulder across to the left shoulder, which was quite a bit of ornamentation.

DM:

Must have been someone important.

MA:

And they said that he must have been a chief or a chieftan's son to have that much decorations. He had wire in his ears with a tiny little Christmas bell—looked like a Christmas bell on his ear. He had brass buttons, of course they were along the vertebra, but he said that came from a—it was U.S. cavalry buttons. And that said, he could've gotten it—he could've been a scout for the cavalry, or he could have gotten it from the corpse of somebody he shot. And then he was—underneath the burial was a handmade knife about the size of a butcher knife.

DM:

A metal knife?

MA:

A metal knife, uh huh. And I can't remember if it was a wooden handle or a deer horn handle, but also an antique pistol—that was a flint lock pistol. And they said that was usually issued to Indian scouts. So there's a possibility he was an Indian scout. There was a hole behind his right ear, and they didn't know whether that was the cause of death or whether it had happened after the burial. It was—it really was an interesting thing to be a part of that.

DM:

Quite a find. You have to wonder if he was involved in some of the trade around that area. There was a big trade area at Ransom Canyon.

MA:

We wondered if he had been part of the—was it Cortez that came through that area?

DM:

Well Coronado, but that would have been quite a bit earlier than this guy, it sounds like. If he had cavalry buttons on. I think it would have been way too early. How interesting.

MA:

I have been to the University of Texas several years ago, when they had him on display. Then they did some remodeling, and I haven't been back since then to know whether they put him back on display.

DM:

I wonder. It's kind of a touchy subject now, putting an Indian corpse on display.

MA:

(laughs) Yeah, I guess it is.

DM:

There are legal issues involved with that. But I've got to find that book. I wonder—I'll look and see if we have it.

MA:

It's a little pamphlet. And it has my name in it.

DM:

Oh is that right? *The Skeleton*—

MA:

—of *Yellowhouse Canyon*.

DM:

—of *Yellowhouse Canyon*. And it mentions your name. Does it mention the Girl Scouts?

MA:

Yes. Uh huh.

DM:

Perfect.

MA:

And the counselor that was with the girls when they actually found it. She was a girl from Oklahoma, counselor.

DM:

It must have been a UT Press Publication.

MA:

Yeah, and they had it on sale in the little gift area there for a long time. I don't know if it's still there.

[DM switching audio tapes around]

MA:

But I have a copy, and if you can't find one, you know through the University Press, I'll let you have that one.

DM:

Do you have an extra copy?

MA:

I don't have an extra copy but you can have that one.

DM:

Golly. I'd appreciate that. Let me see what I can find.

MA:

You can put it in the archives.

DM:

Okay. That's good.

MA:

Beause I don't know if any of my family would be interested in it or not, but that was interesting.

DM:

What a nice sidelight for the Girl Scouts.

MA:

Yeah, that was fun.

DM:

Goes a little beyond the craft making and some of the other activities—something extra there. So you were at—you were the director at Las Leonitas for a few years there. Was it during this time that you—did you start thinking about maybe beginning your own camp, or was this later?

MA:

Well, I don't know, it's always every camp director's dream is to own their own camp sometime. But I never dreamed that I would be able to do that. When we got word that we were going to have to move our camp because they were going to redo the dam and flood that area, my brother Don had mentioned that we might be able to get something in the Yellow House—not the Yellow House—but the White River area.

DM:

Oh I see, okay.

MA:

And that he knew the Bridwells and he knew the foreman of the Bridwell ranch. And so he took me over to visit with them. And they took me down to the creek where the present Rio Blanco camp is, and then I started corresponding with Mr. Bridwell. He lived in Wichita Falls, and I started corresponding with him. And I corresponded with him, I guess, maybe a year or so. And then he indicated that he might be interested in letting us have land. And so at that time then, I got Dr. Young, who was, I guess he taught at Tech. He was chairman of the development committee on the Girl Scout Board, and through the recommendation of our executive director, who was Irene Beck [?] at that time, Dr. Young went with me and my brother Don and went down to the canyon and kind of walked off the area, and Mr. Bridwell seemed to be interested in letting us have some land. He said that in that particular area that they had had a lot of people that wanted to—they'd park on the road and then get back on his ranch, and then come back up that way, and he said we'd be sort of a buffer between us—him and the road. And—

DM:

Being at Silver Falls, people would naturally want to go up that creek, I suppose.

MA:

Well, we were a little bit too far from Silver Falls, but you had to go up the road, and there was—the creek ran down to Silver Falls from there, and a lot of people would park there on the road, it was just a dirt road then, and go through the fence and go back up on the creek to picnic, and drink their beer and whatever. But he gave us the forty acres, I don't know, I guess I could have asked for more than that. But—

DM:

He gave it, though. He didn't sell it. He donated it?

MA:

No, he donated it. And we kind of walked it off, and then Dr. Young and his committee did the final things. And so I was in on the planning of the layout.

DM:

Wow, how nice.

MA:

And that was good.

DM:

What year was it all brought together?

MA:

Nineteen—gosh I don't know, let's see—'63, '64, somewhere in there. It might have been earlier. I know the year I moved here was the year they built the main lodge at Rio Blanco. And when they had the dedication, my brother Don had a little Piper Cub, and he flew down and picked me up and flew me up there for the dedication.

DM:

Oh is that right? For the new lodge?

MA:

Yeah, and we flew over the lodge, and I looked down and I could see my mother waving in the crowd there for that dedication. He landed his plane in—one of his friends had a landing strip where he did cotton dusting, crop dusting, and he landed his plain. And that's where he kept his plane. And when he came down here, there's a ridge back over here that has a landing strip right in the top of the ridge. And he said that to land on that ridge is kind of exciting because when you come in to land, the updraft kept his plane up in the air, and he kept trying to make it go down, and after he passed the edge—[commentary on a sound, checking recorder] That was a strange sound. But he said after he got past that draft, he just went down like an elevator. It was kind of scary, but he said that on taking off, it made it nice because when he got to the edge of the runway, it just picked you up and threw you up in the sky.

DM:

Oh, that's pretty good, someone planned it for the takeoff, then, I suppose.

MA and DM: [commentary on recorder and sound heard]

DM:

Okay, so you were at Rio Blanco for about what years?

MA:

Up to—

DM:

You said it began here in about '63, or '64.

MA:

The last summer that I was there was '65.

DM:

Were you the owner/operator/director during that time?

MA:

I was the camp director. And I can't remember if it was two years or three years that I directed the camp.

DM:

And then you came straight out here.

MA:

Yeah, I moved here in March '66. I met Mrs. Carol Knolk was the owner of Rocky River Ranch here in Wimberley, and I met her at a Girl Scout—I mean, I'm sorry. American Camping Association conference in Waco. And a lady had approached me at that conference from the King's Ranch for Girls, which is no longer in operation. She asked me if I'd be interested in changing jobs—that she needed a program director for her camp, down, I think it's close to Bandera. And I said, no, that I liked my job and that I was happy where I was. Then I got to thinking, Well maybe you better look into it, it might be something that you might like. So I went to the district director, out of Dallas that was at the conference, and I said, "Do you know anything about the King's Ranch for Girls?" and she said, "No, I don't. I know the lady, but I don't know anything about the camp. Carol Knolk know all the camps in the Hill Country, and she could tell you more than I can." So I went over and sat down by Carol Knolk, and I said, "I hear you know everything about the camps in Central Texas, what can you tell me about the King's Ranch for Girls?" So she started to tell me a little bit about it, and I said, "Well the lady had asked me if I was interested in changing jobs." And she said, "Oh if you're interested in changing jobs, I've got a job in my camp. And I need somebody to help me with program directing." So she invited me to come down at Easter. And so I drove down Easter and spent the Easter holiday—and when I first came to Wimberley, I saw this big tree in the middle of the road over by the cemetery, big huge oak tree. And I thought, You know a community that loves a big old oak tree enough to drive around it, that's the kind of people I like. And being from West Texas, where you love every tree that ever happens, I appreciated that. So when I came out and saw the camp, I fell in love with it. But it took me about three years for us to come to some sort of agreement, and she was having to operate the camp herself. Her business partner had passed away about 1963, I think. And so it took us about three years to come to some understanding where I would come and work for her for two years, and she'd furnish me a place to live and utilities and a small salary, and then she'd pay me a normal salary during the summer, when camp was in operation. And I figure that was good enough for a learning process of learning the business. And so we had a contract before I ever turned in my resignation with the Girls Scouts, we had a contract that I would work for her for two years, and then lease the camp from her for three years with an option to buy. And so when I moved down, they had a horseback riding

program which I knew very little about. I had done some horseback riding when we lived on the farm, but I didn't know a whole lot about the operation. So my camp nurse at the Girl Scout camp was Sandra Bateman who was a school nurse at Lorenzo. And she was a horse woman, and so I invited her to come down at the same time and we'd work at the camp and then purchase the camp together which we did. And it worked out really well because she built a very fine horseback riding program.

DM:

I notice a lot of horse trophies in the house.

MA:

Yes, she started showing registered paint horses, and showed for many years. She probably has over a hundred horse trophies.

DM:

So she was an expert in the field, it looks like.

MA:

Yes, uh huh, very good program. She, at about the same time that we moved down here, she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. And so now she's totally handicapped, and lives in the nursing home, which fortunately is across the road from us.

DM:

Oh really?

MA:

And so, during the summer, I'd go over there—she has an electric wheel chair. And I'd go over there and walk back over here with her so she can come and visit the girls—

DM:

Well good, that's good for her too to see this operation going on—

MA:

Yeah.

DM:

Well you mention the horses as one unique or different thing about this came from Rio Blanco, can you talk about some other differences between Rocky River and Rio Blanco. For example, Rio Blanco was specifically Girl Scout, right? But is Rocky River?

MA:

No, Rocky River is a private camp for girls.

DM:

But Girl Scouts can use it?

MA:

Yes, yes. During the off season, we have different groups use—we have family reunions and church retreats. In fact, tomorrow afternoon, the local church, Trinity Church, non-denominational, will be coming out for their picnic, annual picnic and baptism.

DM:

Oh really?

MA:

They baptize down at the river.

DM:

Oh do they really?

MA:

Yes, Sunday afternoon. And they've been doing that for several years now, I don't know how many years they've been doing that. But I offered—with my association with the Girl Scouts, I continued working with the Girl Scouts after I moved down here, I worked with the Lone Star Council out of Austin, and I taught outdoor education, outdoor skills, which was a part of the American Camping Association, but we taught it to the Girl Scout leaders going with their troops to teach them how to be comfortable in the out of doors. And so I continued that for several years, and then we offered to the Girl Scouts a place where they could come and camp, and we'd charge half of the normal fee for the girls and the troops that come out. We set aside one weekend a month from September to April, for individual Girl Scout troops, and we have troops from Houston and Corpus Christi and Port Lavaca and Pflugerville and Austin and San Antonio.

DM:

Good chance for them to get down to the Hill Country.

MA:

Yeah, yeah. And so we try to book all of our cabins with a Girl Scout troop for that weekend, and now we have whole neighborhoods or service units, like Pflugerville, that bring all their girls from their service unit and book the whole camp for the weekend. So we're getting—that's

what's coming in today is a unit from Austin, service unit from Austin that's coming in, and they're bringing their own life guards.

DM:

Oh really? Okay. Are there swimming areas out in the Blanco River, is what they call it here.

MA:

Blanco River. Yeah, I went from Rio Blanco to Blanco. [pronunciation] Yes. It's only about waist deep. So it's real good for canoeing, because I tell them if they turn their canoes over, they can always walk home. But we have about four hundred feet on the river, and part of it is the rapids where there's just rock, and part of it is deeper, where you can do canoeing, and fishing, and playing on the river.

DM:

Okay, so you can teach things like that out here. But now what about, what are some of the other differences in operating a program like this here, as opposed to out on the plains?

MA:

Well, having the Girl Scouts camp, we had, of course they took care of most of the paperwork like insurance, and they—I had a camp committee that helped direct the camp as well as the camp development committee and so on, and then we had service organizations like in the spring, there was a fraternity at Texas Tech that was a fraternity of Boy Scouts, and they would come out and help us put up all the tents.

DM:

Alpha Phi Omega, by any chance? Do you remember if that's who it was?

MA:

Uh, sounds familiar, I don't remember all those Greek.

DM:

That's the Boy Scout one.

MA:

And they would come out. I remember one time we had a group of the Boy Scouts out, and I had—we have what I call driftwood, lots of cottonwood tree. Of course they're fast going and they're soft wood, so they don't last forever. And these big cottonwood trees would fall over and we would leave them because the kids loved to climb on them and all like that. But we had one that—a stump that was—not a stump but a trunk of one of the cottonwoods that was pretty close to the road coming into the camp. So I took a couple of the boys down close to the gate, and I

said, "Would you help me move this trunk back over?" Well it was hollow, and so it wasn't too heavy. So the two boys lifted it up and put it on their shoulder and was going to move it over where I wanted it. Well a little bitty snake, about eighteen inches long fell out of that hollow trunk, and fell across this Boy Scout's shoulder. And, of course, both of them just disappeared from that trunk and it just stayed suspended in air because they went out from under it so quick. And I walked over, and it was a little baby rattlesnake. So I picked up a switch, and I just started switching that little snake's head, just switching it like that, until it was so befuddled that it didn't know where it was going. And then I reached over and grabbed it behind the head and picked it up, and I said, "Is this what you guys are afraid of?" and that guy says, "Oh my god, she picked up a rattlesnake." And for the rest of the day, they really respected me (laughs). The word got around real quick that I'd picked up that rattlesnake. Well it was a baby rattlesnake at that, and it wasn't going to—I just took it and threw it out into the woods. But they were real helpful, and there were a lot of the service people that would help with the Girl Scouts that I don't have here because I'm a private—what they call a profit organization as opposed to a non-profit organization.

DM:

What about differences in wildlife—did you have wildlife encounters out there at Rio Blanco?

MA:

Oh yeah, we saw a rattlesnake every day. (laughs)

DM:

Is that right? So you would have someone running in saying, "I saw a rattlesnake."

MA:

Yeah, well, I could usually tell from the sound of people's voices when they hollered for me that there was an emergency. Yeah, and the snakes weren't really that bad. I learned real quick to hear, I could hear a snake in the grass, as opposed to a lizard.

DM:

Without it rattling, you could just hear it moving.

MA:

Yeah, and we taught the girls too that when you're walking down a trail, it's usually not the first or second person that a snake—that if you bothered a rattlesnake, if you startled him or anything like that, it's usually not the first or second person, but somebody else along the back of the line that if he were irritated enough to strike that he'd go after them, because the first or second person startled him and then he wouldn't get mad enough until a few more foot paths had gone on. But I learned, and I taught the girls to be aware of snakes. They were there before we got

there, and they'll be there after they're gone. So, and I was surprised when I got down here that I think I've only seen, in the thirty eight years I've been here, I've only seen two rattlesnakes. I've seen one copperhead, and I've seen more coral snakes, but they're few and far between and they're not as aggressive, and they're pretty small.

DM:

What about other wildlife out there at Rio Blanco? [55:27, minidisc recording]

MA:

Oh we had coyotes, we could hear the coyotes singing every night. And one morning at breakfast, in the little lodge that we used until the big lodge was built, I was up making announcements at breakfast—right after breakfast, and I looked out, and up from, there was a little sandy dry creek bed that ran alongside the lodge, and coming up from that creek bed, there was an old mangy coyote. And it was unusual because they're usually not out in the daytime.

DM:

Oh, it wasn't rabid, was it?

MA:

I don't know. I stood there with my mouth open, looking, and of course the girls all jumped up and looked too, so they got a chance to see it, and it ambled across, in front of the lodge and on up towards the tents where we had a tent for infirmary and a tent that I lived in and a tent that the nurses lived in, and then the cooks lived in a tent. And he ambled up past those tents and went on over the hill. And by the time I could call the sheriff and have him come out to see if he could find him to see if he was rabid, because I realized that having him out that time of the day, he could possibly be—but they never did find him. But that was interesting, and then one night we had—our counselor in training unit was across the creek, south of us, and the counselor, one of the counselors down there had an important phone call, so I sent somebody down to get her to come up to the phone. And so after the phone, she started back to her unit, and in a minute she came running back up to the lodge and she said, "I just came face to face with a bobcat." And I said, "Oh you're kidding. You wouldn't come face to face with a bobcat." She said, "I swear, he looked at me, and I looked at him, and we took off in opposite directions." So I took my flashlight and followed her tracks, and sure enough there were bobcat tracks up to a certain point and her tracks up to a certain point, in the sand. And sure enough, she had come face to face with a bobcat, and he took off, but I knew they were there.

DM:

Did you ever see any antelope or deer in that area?

MA:

No, I didn't. we had a—for a couple of years, we had a wagon and we borrowed some mules from one of the farmers there in Crosbyton to hitch up to that wagon, and the girls would put their bedding and their camping gear in the wagon, and Mr. Bridwell would let them go back up in the canyon on his ranch and camp out up there, and they'd spend a couple of nights up there, and they'd walk beside the wagon like the early pioneers did. And that was fun.

DM:

Oh how great. And these were older Girl Scouts?

MA:

These were the older girls—counselors in training—thirteen, fourteen, fifteen year olds.

DM:

Oh how wonderful.

MA:

We built a tree house there across the creek, and it was about, I guess maybe, fourteen or fifteen feet from the air. And the girls could go down and sleep—spread their bedrolls on this platform that had the railing around it. They had to climb up a ladder and sleep up in the tree. And—

DM:

Did you have the similar set up out there as you did at Las Leonitas—did you have the platforms with the wall tents—canvas wall tents—

MA:

Yes, uh huh.

DM:

—that kind of set up, standard.

MA:

Yeah, except for one unit—one unit was the wagon unit—

DM:

Okay that's the one that you were talking about that went up the canyon then?

MA:

No, this was built stationary. But they were built—you saw the wagons when you came in here?

DM:

Oh wait, let's see—

MA:

There's a red and green and yellow wagon.

DM:

Oh, I think I saw one.

MA:

When I visited the Girl Scout camp in Fort Worth, they had a wagon unit. They were stationary, but they were living areas for the girls. So we built five, I believe, of those wagons, down on the creek. And the older girls could sleep down there. There were four beds, four bunks—five bunks. Four girls and a counselor in each wagon. And so that was the oldest group. And I sent a postcard to Mrs. Knolk with the—had the wagon unit post card, and she took that postcard over to a builder here in Wimberley and said build me three of these. So she built the wagons here fashioned after those we had at Rio Blanco. And—

DM: [1:01:15]

And this was down at the creek, so this was a little farther away from the main camp.

MA:

Uh-huh, yeah. We had a—there was a dry creek bed called Big Sandy that went—that was between the units and the headquarters. And they built a swinging bridge across from the headquarters over to the units. But before that, we had to go across the creek, and when it rained, all this rain would come down through—off the sides of the canyons and down into this creek bed. So it would be maybe three or four feet deep before it ran into the White River Creek. So that was pretty interesting. We had one incident that happened—we had a lot of rain during the night and the creek was up real high and the girls were on one side and their breakfast was on the other side (laughs). So I decided that we could get, maybe we could get some cereal and some fruit over to them, if I could get somebody to go across that creek. So we strung a rope across, and I decided I would be the one to do it. And it was still raining at that time. So I had a backpack with the food in it. And I put a rain coat on over that and started across the creek holding onto that rope. Well, I didn't realize that the raincoat would catch the pressure of the water against my knees, so it knocked my feet out from under me, and I was just hanging onto this rope, and I looked up and hanging on for dear life and looked up and these girls were lined across the top of the creek hollering, "Come on Skeet, come on Skeet." (laughs) So we got it across, and they had their breakfast.

DM:

What were they yelling?

MA:

Skeet. That was my camp name.

DM:

Oh Skeet was your camp name.

MA:

Yeah, in Girl Scout camping, at that time when I started in '48, they didn't want the girls to be formal enough to call us Miss Anderson, and they didn't want us to be informal enough to call us by our first name. So we had to adopt nature names. So my name was Mesquite. So then they shortened it to Skeet. And I've been known as Skeet ever since then.

DM:

Is that right?

MA:

Yeah. And when somebody says, "Hi Skeet," I know it has something to do with camping. If they call me Mary, I have to stop and think, Where did I know them. Was it church or family or what?

DM:

So you made it across, got back across?

MA:

Made it across, got their breakfast to them. Yeah. That was fun.

DM:

They were rooting for you and their breakfast at the same time. (laughs) Oh how interesting. How about—you know I know the weather gets pretty bad along the caprock. We sit there in Lubbock and watch it out there with envy usually, but sometimes it builds up and gets pretty bad. Have you had any real tough situations out there?

MA:

Well, we often wondered—we had never heard of tornadoes coming down into the canyon and such, but the most substantial buildings at the camp was the latrines. And so we decided if we ever had any tornado alerts, we'd all gather in the latrines. But fortunately, we didn't have any problems. After they built the swinging bridge then, if the storm—you know if we got word the

storm that the storm was pretty bad, we'd gather all the girls in the lodge and sing songs, and tell stories, and things like that.

DM:

Did you have any bad hailstorms come through during camp?

MA:

We didn't have any bad enough to destroy the tents or anything. The tents had flies, which is an extra tarp on the top, on the roof, and so that helped. But we didn't have any that destroyed any of the tents.

DM:

Do you remember any other memorable moments out at Rio Blanco. You've mentioned several that pertained to wildlife and weather.

MA:

Well, we had a few boys that decided they would invade the girl's camp.

DM:

Were they local boys?

MA:

Yeah, yeah just local boys. That was the time when they were pulling panty raids at Texas Tech, so they decided they'd do some panty raids at the Girl Scout Camp.

DM:

Were they college or high school, you think?

MA:

I don't know. I don't know. We had—I know one group of boys, I don't know, two or three of them, got into the camp, and I had alerted the counselors that if we had any intruders that they were to get word to me immediately. So it was kind of a—same thing happened at Las Leonitas, and we had some boys that'd get into the camp that came up the creek and then camp up that sandy draw that brought them right into the middle of camp. So the counselors had spotted somebody that was unauthorized, and so we started looking for them, and sure enough they'd gotten—as soon as they alerted me that there was somebody in the camp, I knew they had parked on the road. So I went, I jumped into this old suburban that we had, and started out to the gate to see if I could locate the car. And I didn't realize that they had closed the gate. We had big rod iron gate with spears sticking up at the top of it. Well, I hit that gate with that old suburban, and

lifted it up off of the hinges, and it laid on the hood of the suburban and came back towards the windshield.

DM:

Spikes pointing towards you, huh?

MA:

Towards me, yeah. But we also—and the suburban had a post that went up the middle of the windshield, and that thing hit that post and glanced up and went up over the hood of the—I mean over the top of the suburban.

DM:

My goodness. Otherwise it might have come through the windshield.

MA:

Yeah, that scared me pretty bad. But anyway I found their car parked about a quarter of a mile up the road. And I took all the cores out of their tires, let all the airs out of all four of their tires, so that they couldn't get away. So then we started hunting for them, and I called the sheriff of course, and that happened. And the sheriff came out and arrested the guys. And the next morning, well the sheriff found them, they had found a maintainer that the road people had left on the highway, and they tried to take the cores out of their tires to put in their car, and that's where the sheriff found them.

DM:

Oh boy, so they were also damaging state property down there.

MA:

And so he arrested them, and I don't know what happened to them. Anyway, the next morning the sheriff came to me and he said, "Miss Anderson, next time you catch any guy like that, don't let the air out of their tires, just take their distributor cap off." And I said, "Well you show me where the distributor cap is, and I'll do that." So—but that was kind of an adventure. And I've always said that in the life of a camp director, everyday there is an adventure or a—something's going to happen. So—it was interesting.

DM:

Dud you always have a phone down there where you could call in case of emergencies or—

MA:

Yeah, at the main lodge we did.

DM:

So they strung a telephone pole down there when you first opened up then.

MA:

Yeah, yeah. And then we had a caretaker who lived there, right by the front gate, and they had a phone also.

DM:

We may have some visitors, and we're probably to a pretty good stopping place. Are you—is there anything else that you'd like to add before we shut her down? Anything else about your experiences?

MA:

Well, I don't know. They're going to be doing the [inaudible]. I don't know—the vegetation was different—I was a nature specialist, and I learned all the flowers and bushes and trees and things like that—at Rio Blanco, and then when I got down here, it was a whole different—you know it didn't have the West Texas—

DM:

You had to start all over again.

MA:

Had to start all over again, yeah.

DM:

And how did you do with it, have you pretty well mastered the flora and fauna?

MA:

Yeah, yeah pretty much. Of course, it kills me when we have to cut a tree, like that red oak right there was a gorgeous, gorgeous big tree that went out over the pool and everything. And we had—the last couple of years have been a drought, had quite a drought, and I didn't have any grass down there, and I finally figured out that last year the drought was so bad and I didn't have any grass to water, so I quit watering. And evidentially it stressed out that tree to the point where a fungus got in it, and the top of it died, but you see, it's coming out again.

DM:

Uh huh. It sure is. It's trying to make a comeback.

MA:

But this last part of the trunk there, the limbs starting falling, and I was afraid that somebody would get hurt with those limbs falling, and so we went ahead and cut it down. And when that fell, it broke these two cedars here.

DM:

Oh my goodness. You know the first thing you notice when you get out of the car at this camp is the smell of cedar, it's just wonderful. Just wonderful.

MA:

And we have so many trees here that almost anywhere you walk on the campsite, you can walk in the shade. And I didn't realize that until I started taking videos, and when my first video camera—it had to adjust to the light and the dark, and here I was walking around the camp taking pictures, and I'd go into the shade and the video camera would go crazy, and then go back in the sun and it'd go crazy.

DM:

Well that's another big difference here and between Rio Blanco, I guess there was a lot of open sunny area out there.

MA:

Yeah, and also I didn't realize it, but I was allergic to cedar when I moved down here.

DM:

Oh is that right?

MA:

(laughs) That was devastating in the first summer that I was here.

DM:

Oh my, but you adapted after a couple of years?

MA:

Well, after many years of allergy shots and that sort of thing. But I found a good allergy doctor who took care of that. So now I take an antihistamine every morning, and that takes care of it. I found out I was allergic to cottonwood trees too and West Texas dust, sandstorms, and that sort of thing.

DM:

Okay. After you got out here, he did the test and you realized that you had been allergic to these—

MA:

Yeah, I didn't realize it. I knew that when I was at Rio Blanco, every summer I had to carry a Kleenex around with me because of my allergies, I was allergic to wood smoke and that sort of thing.

DM:

All those things related to camping. (laughs)

MA:

Yeah, yeah, and also I had problems with skin cancer, and my doctor told me I'd have to stay out of the sun the rest of my life, my dermatologist. And I said, "I can't do that, I'm a camp director!" and he said, "Well get you a big sombrero, and wear your hat everyday."

DM:

And at least you're in a shady spot now.

MA:

Yeah, but I still wear a hat. Yeah, it's been—

DM:

Has it been worth it?

MA:

Oh yes, I couldn't think of anything else I'd rather do.

DM:

I'm sure it's been a lot of effort, you know, there are a lot of challenges with dealing with children, I know.

MA:

When I was still in Lubbock, after I came back from the Navy and started directing camp, I joined the Naval Reserve—I was in the Naval Reserve there at Texas Tech, and I eventually became the commanding officer of the Naval Reserve unit, and I was the only woman officer at that time of a Naval Reserve Unit in the United States.

DM:

My goodness.

MA:

But they didn't give me command pay because I was a woman. Then I got down here and got into a Naval Reserve in Austin, and for three or four years I went into Austin every week for that Naval Reserve and became commanding officer of the naval reserve unit here.

DM:

Was it the same situation? Did you get less pay?

MA:

Same situation. I didn't get command pay. And there was a—they had a choice between a chaplain and me, and I had the right designator and he didn't, so I got the commanding officer job but I didn't get command pay. Since then they talked about the fact that I could apply for that pay that I didn't get, but I never did follow up on it.

DM:

Is it all equitable now, do you know if they pay the same for women as men?

MA:

I think so. I think so. I haven't really looked into it—but—

DM:

You have to become an activist in that area because of it.

MA:

After we bought the camp, and for a year or so, I continued with the Naval Reserve, but then they moved me into—there was a younger officer that was fresh from active duty, and he had the right designators, so I resigned as commanding officer so he could move in. which meant I had to get out of the unit because I couldn't have a commanding officer that was younger than I was. So I resigned and moved in what I call the old folks unit, which was just people getting their time in.

[dogs barking] Let me stop those dogs. Shut up dogs, shut up dogs.

But I was in what I call the retirement or the old folks unit, and we didn't have to wear uniforms and we didn't have to do a lot of things that I was used to doing in an active reserve unit, and then I had to pay for my own—I had to have two week's training every year, and I had to pay for that out of my own pocket when I went into that unit. So I told my business partner that I felt like I just went ahead and resigned from the navy, and spend that time on the camp—that time with the camp. So that's what I did.

DM:

When did you retire from the navy?

MA:

I don't even remember. I had a total of seventeen years in all, but I only had eleven years credit because I refused to do correspondence courses. I hated correspondence courses. So I didn't get credit for a few years there because I didn't do correspondence courses. But I had some interesting two week's training. I had two years I spent in New Orleans for two weeks with the communications unit, and two years in Washington, D.C. and then two years in California, right out of Napa.

DM:

You had some opportunities to travel and see other parts of the country.

MA:

Yeah, right out of Napa, I had two years with the communications unit. And then one year I went to Hawaii. And it was interesting when I got over there, the commanding officer sent word for me to come into his office. And I walked into his office, all dressed up in my uniform and everything, and he was reading a paper and he didn't even look up when he came in, he was so angry his ears were red. And I stood there in front of his desk for a minute, and I said, "Yes sir?" and he looked up at me and said, "Who do you know in the Pentagon?" I said, "I don't believe I know anybody in the Pentagon, sir." He said, "You have to know somebody in the Pentagon to get two week's training duty in Hawaii, and a woman at that." And I said, "Well sir, I don't believe I know anybody in the Pentagon." He said, "Well how did you get training duty in Hawaii?" I said, "I just wrote them and told them I was going to be in Hawaii, and I would like to have my training while I was there, and I bought my own ticket over here, a round trip ticket over here, and they approved." He said, "You bought your own ticket?" And I said, "Yes sir." He said, "Sit down Miss Anderson; let's have a chat." So he was—and he told me later that a lot of people in the United States request training duty in Hawaii just to get to spend two weeks in Hawaii. And I said, "Well I decided if I could get two weeks in Hawaii, even if I bought my ticket, I probably could get two weeks in Italy or any place else I wanted to go, as long as I bought my own ticket." He said, "Well, that's an unusual idea." And so we had a nice chat after that. So I enjoyed the two weeks there. Some of my friends who were stationed at Great Lakes were also in Hawaii. That was one of the reasons I wanted to go down there.

DM:

Well, you've had an interesting career, an interesting life with your navy duties or your career in the navy and then also with the camps.

MA:

Yes, when I was with the Girl Scouts in Lubbock, I had some opportunities—I applied with the national organization for an assignment to the archeological expedition that they offered to Girl Scouts out of Santa Fe, New Mexico. And I was accepted as the nature counselor and a driver of one of the vehicles.

DM:

Where was the project?

MA:

Santa Fe.

DM:

It was the archeological work was in Santa Fe?

MA:

It was a national event offered to senior Girl Scouts, and they brought girls in from all over the United States. And there were twenty-four girls, and I think five or six counselors. And so we gathered at—in Santa Fe the director—one of the directors from the museum was a—on the national board, Girl Scout board. And she had organized it many, many years ago, and the—we would gather at her ranch and practice setting up our tents and getting our food and getting all organized. And spend some time at the museum and the hall of ethnology and at different places in Santa Fe. Then we would pack our vehicles and take off. We went through—west into Arizona and we visited an archeological dig that the University of Chicago was doing. Where they were excavating the ancient pit houses of the Anasazis. And that was interesting to—they gave us, you know all the tours and showed us how they cataloged everything. And then we went up to Canyon de Chelly and spent some time up there.

DM:

Oh, what an opportunity.

MA:

We had—the forest rangers were Indian, Indian forest rangers. And they were showing us—one evening they were showing us a slide show of the canyon and where the Indians had camped and everything. And in the distance we heard this singing—Indian song. And so the forest rangers just stopped and let's say, let's listen a minute. And there was an Indian man riding a horse in the dark, right along the road, and he was singing to himself. And we listened and he sang all the way past us, and on into the far distance. And we asked him what he was singing about, and he said, "He's singing about riding his horse into the trading post and what he was going to do when he got to the trading post."

DM:

(laughs) Just putting it to music.

MA:

Yeah, just put it to music. So—and then they took us on a tour around the canyon. And then we went over the Chuska Mountains to Shiprock and on up to Mesa Verde, and they had another Indian guide up there, forest ranger, and we spent several nights at Mesa Verde and then came down into northern New Mexico to another archeological site where they had just redone a kiva—that's that underground meeting place, and this one was open to the public because it had fallen into ruin and wasn't for use anymore. Women weren't allowed to go into the kivas that were active, and so they had rebuilt this one, and told us how the hole in the bottom of the kiva was sipapu where the mother spirit, earth spirit could come up and join them and different things like that. And so that was interesting.

DM:

What a trip.

MA:

I bought an Indian necklace out of a pawn jewelry at one of the trading posts, and paid \$35 for it—and that was a lot of money back then. And I took it back to the—when I—I took it into Austin to a place where they evaluate Indian jewelry and things like that, and they evaluated it at \$1800.

DM:

Is that right? (laughs) My goodness.

MA:

When I got back to Santa Fe, I was showing Dr. Dutton, Dr. Bertha Dutton, that's the lady that had started the archeological tours, and told her that I had—it had six strands to it, and a set of jack claws [? 1:26:43] on it. It's what they call a wampum necklace, had turquoise all over it. And I said, "Well I really just wanted a couple of strands, and so I thought I'd buy this and then break it up and then sell the rest of it." She said, "Oh no, you can't do that, you'll kill the spirit. Whatever you do, don't break it up. Don't break it up. The Smithsonian institute will want it one of these days." So I've still got it.

DM:

It was a profitable trip too, it sounds like.

MA:

And I haven't worn it in the last couple of years because the cotton string it was strung on is getting real fragile. I was wearing it one time in Santa Fe. We went out to the fiesta in September, in Santa Fe, and we had just gotten back to the hotel, and this Indian man came in with some Indian rugs over his shoulder, and I turned around to look at his rugs and he ran up and grabbed that necklace and he said, "Where you get?" and I thought, Oh my gosh it's his grandfather. I said, "I bought it at the Mazi [?] trading post." He said, "How much?" and I said, "How much did I pay for it, or how much would I sell it for?" and he said, "How much you take?" and I said, "Well I don't really want to sell it." And he took out his billfold and said, "I'll buy it, how much you want?" and I said, "Well, I don't really want to sell it." He talked and talked and tried to get me to sell him that necklace, and I said, "Well how much do you want for your rugs?" Well, he had Two Grey Hills rugs which are very valuable rugs, and he wanted to trade me both those rugs for that necklace. And I said, "No, when those rugs turn to dust, this necklace will still be here." After that I was afraid to wear it in Santa Fe—

DM:

(laughs) Knock you over the head and take it.

MA:

Knock me over the head for my wampum. My brother Don says, "You'd better be careful, some Indian guy will come along and want to marry you for your wampum." But I wore it some of the dances they had at the pueblos, they'd have corn dances and—and I wore it then and got quite a bit of—

DM:

Well maybe you should get it restrung so you can wear it some—

MA:

Well I don't want to kill the spirit.

DM:

Oh that would do it?

MA:

Yeah, if you restrung it. In fact it has—I can show it to you—it has turquoise tied onto it, and Dr. Dutton said that when the owner was paid in turquoise, rather than money, like earrings or anything like that—rather than restrung it to put the—add those to it, he just tied on it with the string, and so it has some of those tied onto it. And—that was a fun trip, and I met some lovely Girl Scout people from all over the United States. They also had included an Indian girl in each

one of those trips. So that the girls from all over the United States would be acquainted with an Indian girl.

DM:

Someone planned this out pretty well it sounds like.

MA:

Yeah, Dr. Dutton—Dr. Bertha Dutton.

DM:

Bertha Dutton.

MA:

Dr. Bertha Dutton was head of the hall of ethnology in the museum in Santa Fe.

DM:

And so she dreamed up this whole project.

MA:

Yeah, yeah. Get girls interested in archeology and the southwest culture and that sort of thing.

DM:

Oh how nice.

MA:

So that was a lot of fun too.

DM:

Lots of good sidelights then.

MA:

I had some real nice opportunities with the Girl Scouts.

DM:

Well, I'm going to go ahead and shut this off, unless you have anything else to put on here. It's starting to get a little active around here.

MA:

Yeah, these are Girl Scouts coming in.

DM:

If I can figure out how to turn this thing off.

End of Recording



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