

**Oral History Interview of
Robert “Bob” Carr**

**Interviewed by: David Marshall
June 9, 2014
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:
*General Southwest Collection Interviews***

© Southwest Collection/
Special Collections Library



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

**Southwest Collection/
Special Collections Library**

15th and Detroit | 806.742.3749 | <http://swco.ttu.edu>

Copyright and Usage Information:

An oral history release form was signed by Robert Carr on June 9, 2014. This transfers all rights of this interview to the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University.

This oral history transcript is protected by U.S. copyright law. By viewing this document, the researcher agrees to abide by the fair use standards of U.S. Copyright Law (1976) and its amendments. This interview may be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes only. Any reproduction or transmission of this protected item beyond fair use requires the written and explicit permission of the Southwest Collection. Please contact Southwest Collection Reference staff for further information.

Preferred Citation for this Document:

Carr, Robert "Bob" Oral History Interview, June 9, 2014. Interview by David Marshall, Online Transcription, Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library. URL of PDF, date accessed.

The Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library houses almost 6000 oral history interviews dating back to the late 1940s. The historians who conduct these interviews seek to uncover the personal narratives of individuals living on the South Plains and beyond. These interviews should be considered a primary source document that does not implicate the final verified narrative of any event. These are recollections dependent upon an individual's memory and experiences. The views expressed in these interviews are those only of the people speaking and do not reflect the views of the Southwest Collection or Texas Tech University.

Technical Processing Information:

The Audio/Visual Department of the Southwest Collection is the curator of this ever-growing oral history collection and is in the process of digitizing all interviews. While all of our interviews will have an abbreviated abstract available online, we are continually transcribing and adding information for each interview. Audio recordings of these interviews can be listened to in the Reading Room of the Southwest Collection. Please contact our Reference Staff for policies and procedures. Family members may request digitized copies directly from Reference Staff.

Consult the Southwest Collection website for more information.

<http://swco.ttu.edu/Reference/policies.php>

Recording Notes:

Original Format: Born Digital Audio

Digitization Details: N/A

Audio Metadata: 44.1kHz/ 24bit WAV file

Further Access Restrictions: N/A

Related Interviews: David Marshall also interviewed Robert Carr on June 24, 2014 and July 15, 2014

Transcription Notes:

Interviewer: David Marshall

Audio Editor: N/A

Transcription: Paul Doran

Editor(s): Walter Nicolds

Final Editor: David Marshall

Transcript Overview:

This interview features Robert Carr. Carr discusses moving to Lubbock, his interest in the medical field, and becoming a doctor.

Length of Interview: 01:38:57

Subject	Transcript Page	Time Stamp
Biographical information and youth	5	00:00:12
Moving the family from Fairlie to Lubbock, Texas	8	00:04:35
Interest in the medical profession	14	00:16:59
Early years in Lubbock	16	00:21:12
Black Sunday Sandstorm	23	00:32:52
Self-sufficient family	24	00:35:57
Moving to Lubbock and school days	27	00:40:10
Working as a physician in Lubbock	30	00:51:04
Playing French horn in the band	36	01:03:04
Becoming an officer in the Navy	38	01:05:27
Duty in the Philippines	44	01:21:24

Keywords

Fairlie Texas, Lubbock, Electricity, Navy, Dr. Overton, Philippines, Pediatrics

David Marshall (DM):

The date is June 9, 2014, this is David Marshall talking to Dr. Robert Carr at his home in Lubbock, Texas. And Dr. Carr, if we could just begin with a little bit of biographical information, like when and where you were born?

Robert Carr (RC):

Well I was born in a small town named Fairlie, F-a-i-r-l-i-e, Texas, in East Texas about ten, to twelve, fourteen miles northeast of Commerce.

DM:
Okay.

RC:
Fairlie is still there, but just some buildings, very few people live there anymore. When I was born it probably had about, at the most, a hundred, a hundred-fifty people.

DM:
Okay.

RC:
I was born there because my family having living there my father was the town banker, and my mother, her father and mother lived there. He was a retired Methodist circuit rider that did most of his circuit riding up in Arkansas. But he moved down to that area, along with my grandfather, who was a civil war veteran that lived in Commerce, which is a short time away. So I was born August 16, 1925.

DM:
Okay. Didn't you write a paper, or give a talk about your circuit riding grandfather?

RC:
Well I don't think I did so much as maybe my mother did that for Sunday school talk, because they wanted to talk about being a Methodist circuit rider's daughter. But they lived at that time up around Arkadelphia, around that area, and she was born in Coal Hill, Arkansas. And after she got old enough, she would ride with her grandfather on a mule to everywhere he went in Arkansas to talk.

DM:
Okay.

RC:

And he went all over that country, and so she played the piano, she was one of the first graduates of Henderson-Brown College in Arkadelphia in piano that as a female graduate. And so she had her degree in that, and she would then go with my grandfather, with him to all the areas around that area to play for him during Sunday services, and for all the things they had, the gatherings they had for church.

DM:

That would be such a fascinating story.

RC:

Yeah.

DM:

Did she have anything written up then, do you have any notes from her and that?

RC:

Yes, I still have that letter that she wrote, a talk that she talked about. I think it's in the other room there, and I can get it for you if you'd like.

DM:

Well will that eventually be in the Southwest Collection you think, a copy of that?

RC:

Oh I think it'd be a good place to put it.

DM:

Okay, good. I just want to alert whoever's listening to this interview that by the time they listen to it, we might have a copy of this.

RC:

Yeah, that's good I hope you do, and I think I can find it.

DM:

Okay, and can you tell me your parent's names?

RC:

Well my father—neither one—they just had two names. Most people had three, but my mother and daddy did not. My father was named Vincent, V-i-n-c-e-n-t, Carr, and my mother's name was Ruth, R-u-t-h, Carr.

DM:

Okay, and her maiden name was?

RC:

Warlick, W-a-r-l-i-c-k.

DM:

Okay, a name that was probably passed down to one of your older brothers?

RC:

Yes that's right.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

That's true.

DM:

Can you mention their names as well, and the years that all of you were born, we've already mentioned yours?

RC:

Well I'm not very good about telling you the dates they were born.

DM:

Okay, that's okay.

RC:

But Waggoner was the oldest, Waggoner, W-a-g-g-o-n-e-r, Carr, was the oldest brother. And then by about three or four years later came along Warlick, W-a-r-l-i-c-k. Waggoner's full name was Vincent Waggoner Carr, after relatives, and Warlick was Marvin Warlick Carr, after relatives. And then I came along, and then my sister Virginia Campbell Carr.

DM:

Okay. Also, by the way, I have your parent's birth years, I don't know if you recall this off the top of your head, but tell me if this sounds fairly accurate—your father in 1892, and your mother in 1897?

RC:

Yes, I think that's about right.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

Betty's done a lot of genealogy, and so she can fix the dates if it's important or not, can get those from her.

DM:

Okay, that's perfect. Now also in my records I see that when you were maybe about six years old, is that when you moved from Fairley.

RC:

Seven.

DM:

Seven years old.

RC:

Yeah, 1932.

DM:

Can you tell me the circumstances of your move?

RC:

Well that was rather interesting, my father who had just a high school education, he and his brother-in-law decided they would put in a bank in Fairley. So daddy wanted to go find something about—he'd done CPA work, or bookkeeping work before for other small business and for himself, but he knew he needed to have more things to run a bank. So he went to Dallas and spent six weeks there at a college, a community college they had there, to learn about bookkeeping and things like that. So he went after they decided to have the bank started, then he went—and I think his brother-in-law, he actually had some experience in the banking business—but then dad came back from Dallas having had this six weeks of pre-banking work, and he came back to Fairley, and they started the bank.

DM:

Okay.

© Southwest Collection/
Special Collections Library

RC:

And what happened to that is that they started it I think somewhere around the late 1929, or 1930 or something like that, and of course what happened is that within two, three, four years, the Great Depression came along, and President Roosevelt closed all the banks all over, because they didn't have money to continue the operation. And so that's when we decided that we'd have to move some other place, because there's nothing but farms in that area, therefore, and even very few businesses. And so we had some relatives in Lubbock, and we decided to move out here from there.

DM:

I see, and then who were your relatives out here?

RC:

Well my relative was a man—my mother's brother—was named Marvin Carr—Marvin Warlick here, and so when we needed to have some money coming in, my mother wrote to him and say is there any jobs we can get out in Lubbock in that area? And my uncle, he was then the groundskeeper, the first groundskeeper, and the first person involved with the sports team at Texas Tech. So he planted most of the original trees that were on the Texas Tech campus for many, many years. And then he lived within a block or two of the campus, and that was when it first opened, so he was there for several years, and he said, "Yes, if you'll come out, I think we can have some bookkeeping jobs here for you." So they came out—daddy came out, he got a job at a feed store here in Lubbock. Stubbs-Young Feed Store on 14th Street, and he got a hundred and fifty dollars a month, which we thought was great, because we weren't getting anything. And a hundred and fifty dollars a month in was really a pretty good salary considering the Depression and so forth. So we got a little one acre out about 36th Street, 37th Street & Avenue P. And daddy and mother grew their own vegetables, had their two cows, had chickens, and grew everything they could there, and then got whatever meat they needed by buying it. But they lived out there, that was our first home.

DM:

I understand that 36th and 37th, anything past 34th was pretty much the country.

RC:

Oh yeah, the last brick house was on 34th & Avenue P.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

And any houses along the road there stopped around on 31st, 32nd Street, something like that.

DM:

Okay. Well I'm sorry to digress, but this interesting that Marvin I believe you said was instrumental in planting some of the first trees at Tech.

RC:

Yes, he was.

DM:

Did he ever talk about, why he chose what we'd call Siberian or Chinese Elm, or any of that?

RC:

No, I really don't know.

DM:

It would be an interesting story.

RC:

Yeah, he was on the city council here too. In fact out by the park where they have the carnival rides and so forth, there's a house right over to the right as you're going to the fairgrounds out there that has his name and a plaque there that he was on the city council at the time they had developed that area.

DM:

Okay. Well I would love to know that story, because personally I think he made a good choice, because it's a tree that grows here.

RC:

Yeah, I have no idea why he did that though, I really don't.

DM:

Okay. You were seven years old. Old enough maybe to notice the difference in Commerce and Lubbock, do you remember?

RC:

Oh yeah, Commerce was—of course it was more diversified, it had a mill there, and it had some other things there that Lubbock wouldn't have for many years—but anyway, it was a center of commerce, and for railroads, and really was a big marketing place. My grandfather was a justice of the peace there in Commerce for many years, and got a nice reputation. They lived up on a hill that was on the north side of Commerce that was sort of like—it wasn't a rich person's hill, but it

was people that were well-to-do lived up there, because he then started, along with having being the justice of the peace, he started a little grocery store. And so they had enough money to get along pretty well.

DM:

Okay. What about the vegetation, I mean Commerce is a lush part of the state, Lubbock is not, or was not especially green.

RC:

Well we particularly missed about it, came out here and looked like a dust bowl, which it was.

DM:

That's true.

RC:

But we had black land there, and we had a lot of cotton, and we had a lot of farmers planting all sorts of crops. We had cattle, and we had prairies, and we had level land, and we had creeks. And the thing that I remember about it was the fact that humidity, the humidity was just terrible down there in the summertime, and we would go back to visit and I would just die when I went back down there, because even though you had a little bit of breeze, it was nothing but just water in the air. And then not only that, but I remember cicadas, the little bugs that rubbed their wings together and made a noise—June bugs I think they called them too. And then they had mosquitos all over the place, and chiggers, and you couldn't walk through the countryside without just being full of chiggers. Come home, mother would put—only thing they knew to do at that time to do was put bluing on it, like you put in clothes to blue out, to make your clothes look good. Anyway, she would take this bluing, and put on every one of the spots that we had as far as mosquitos. Supposedly it helped, probably psychologically it helped, and maybe it did, but that was the only thing we had to use.

DM:

Okay, very interesting. What else can you remember about your childhood in Fairley?

RC:

Well it was a lot of fun, I enjoyed it. It was a little small town and had two or three people that had kids my age, and we enjoyed it so much. Little small school, two-story school, which was at that time was just at the frontier of education. It was a nice little school, had outdoor toilets, I remember that. And then my dad's bank was right on the corner, was the Bain [?] Building downtown, there were about two or three other stores, and a filling station across the street from us. And then there were two cotton gins, and then there was two or three churches. We had a Methodist church there, we had a Church of Christ, we had a Baptist Church, and maybe a

Church of God or some other types of church. But we had a small church, and we knew everybody, because daddy was the banker. In fact, I kind of started to tell you a story a while ago, was that when the banks were told to close up by Roosevelt, the reason that some of the people got upset with my father, is that they thought they had no more smarts about what a bank did, except they would have to go to it to get money. But they figured that you just took the money that they gave, and they put their name on it, and put it in a box in the back, and whenever you'd want it back, they'd give it back to you, you'd get it back. And so when they found out that the money had really been put into other savings, and dad didn't have it in the box in the back anymore, some of them got awfully mad at him, and that was another reason for our moving away. I must say that my father was the most honest man I ever saw, I don't know whether he repaid all the people as he got older and had some money come in, but he paid a number of those people back that lost their money in his bank.

DM:

Really, golly.

RC:

He just felt like he had a moral obligation to do so, and so he gave a lot of them back their money.

DM:

Wow, that would be a dilemma, I had not really thought of that.

RC:

An honest person.

DM:

And poor guy, what a time to go into banking without knowing what on earth was about to happen.

RC:

Yeah.

DM:

It's just bad timing, but not of his fault.

RC:

Not of his fault at all.

DM:

Oh my. Tell me about some of these early influences—did you attend Methodist church for example?

RC:

Oh yeah, we always went every Sunday. We went morning and night, and then they had a Wednesday service, we always attended all those. My grandfather, after he moved from Ladonia over to Fairley after a time, and he had this home right close to the church. So his being an old preacher, he would often fill in for preachers when they weren't there. I don't ever think they could afford a regular preacher, so he did a lot of the preaching. But we would always go for his sermons, and then anytime anybody else came we'd go, and of course the community was centered around the church. It was just a little one-room church, maybe with a little out shed or something like that too as I recall, but—in fact we had a reunion there many years later of the Carr family, which was really fun. But anyway, it was close enough and small enough you walk over there half a block away from our house, or a block. And so the church was the center of the community, along with the little town, which all the little buildings for businesses were right along a little short road there down by the railroad.

DM:

Okay. Was cotton the main crop in that area?

RC:

Oh cotton was the main crop, yeah.

DM:

Kind of interesting, it followed you out to West Texas, didn't it?

RC:

Yeah, it did, it did, it did. And I think that's why dad did so good out in this area, because he knew about farmers and their problems and so forth like that, and he eventually bought in as he had been here after several years, he was just a hired bookkeeper at first, but eventually he became partners with Mr. Stubbs and Mr. Young.

DM:

Okay, interesting. What about medical services in Fairley, did you pay attention to things like that at the time?

RC:

I didn't pay much attention to it. I know we didn't have a doctor as far as I know in Fairley, but you could go to Ladonia or Commerce, and that's where the doctors went when you got ill. But

we couldn't afford to go anyway, so mother usually became our doctor, and anything unless we really got sick, and I don't remember if we ever did or not, but I'm sure that probably she would have taken care of us from the very beginning.

DM:

Did a doctor deliver you boys and your—

RC:

Yes, came to the house, and delivered each one of us there at the house.

DM:

Do you know who it was?

RC:

No, he came from Ladonia, I remember that.

DM:

Okay. When did you develop an interest in medical? That young, or was it later in life after you were in Lubbock?

RC:

Well, it probably wasn't by the time we moved here to Lubbock, but it was very, very early, and I don't remember anytime that I wanted to be anything else except a doctor.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

I can remember when I was in grade school, or maybe a little bit older that I drew a picture of a hospital that I was going to build for my patients, and I put trees, and places sitting out in the yard and things like that for the patients to come out and sit at that time. And I remember showing it to my mother, and she was so proud because I was going to be a doctor. But I didn't want to be a fireman, or policeman, anything like that—I always wanted to be a doctor.

DM:

Oh, you don't still happen to have that picture do you?

RC:

Oh I imagine probably mother saved it, she's like my wife, she saves everything. But it'd be in her papers I guess.

DM:

It would be an incredible thing to have.

RC:

Yeah, it would. I remember looking at it and trying to draw it and everything. I was a little kid and I couldn't draw very good, but I remember putting in the trees, and the park bench and things like that you know.

DM:

Well that's interesting, that's always an interesting story when you come across somebody who knew what they wanted to be from a very young age, younger than they can even remember, and became that, and continued in that throughout their life.

RC:

Yes, well and I really did want only to be that, and ultimately when I became a pediatrician, before I knew I was going to be a pediatrician. When I got accepted to medical school, I decided I wanted to go into psychiatry. I thought I would enjoy that. But as I've laughed about so many times, every time I'd get to medical school and go to a psychiatric lecture or something like that, it seemed that most of these people that were psychiatrists were a little bit over in left field. They were just not entirely normal. I laugh about that, because my son Brian is a psychologist. But they were all a little odd, and so I decided that I didn't want to be a pediatrician, a decided—and this is getting ahead of the story I guess, but I didn't want to be a surgeon because I didn't like standing up for four, five, six hours doing surgery, and not being able to get away and drink a cup of—well, didn't drink coffee then, but get some water to drink or something like that. And but anyway, and then I didn't want to be some of the other dermatologist, skin doctor didn't encourage me very much. I didn't want to deliver people, OB/GYN-type thing. I almost started after I started my schoolwork, I thought about going into anesthesiology, because that was so interesting, but as I was talking to some people, they said, "Well, anesthesiology is especially that is accompanied by hours of just sitting there being bored, and then a minute or two of sheer terror every once in a while, when something happens to the patient."

DM:

I imagine, I imagine.

RC:

So I said, "Well I don't want that." And I got along with kids real well, I enjoyed children. So I don't know why, I could have made a lot more money doing other things, but I really did enjoy being a pediatrician.

DM:

But this is all something you sorted out during your training?

RC:

Yeah, that's right, that's right.

DM:

Oh, okay.

RC:

I was influenced to pediatrics by a woman doctor—and there were very few women medial doctors at the time I started medical school. There were two or three in our class of forty-five. I found that there was a lady I admired extremely much, Dr. Gladys Fashena. F-a-s-h-e-n-a, and she was a lady that I just hung the moon by me as far as what I was concerned. And she appointed me to be chief resident of all the students, all the residents at Southwestern Medical School, going through pediatrics. So we really helped each other an awful lot, and there was little doubt after I met her, and admired her so much, that I wanted to go into pediatrics.

DM:

Okay. Well let's go back to first years in Lubbock,

RC:

Okay.

DM:

We're talking about 1932.

RC:

That's right, first thing we did when we got here was to join the First Methodist Church.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

Yeah.

DM:

Was it in the location it's in now?

RC:

Yeah, well it was on Broadway, but it was the old church on Broadway.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

And we joined there.

DM:

Okay. So that influence is always continued.

RC:

Yeah.

DM:

And long before you were born, generations back in fact were Methodist.

RC:

Oh yeah, the Methodist church.

DM:

What about other early influences—politics, social thoughts?

RC:

Well I just enjoyed a smaller town. Of course Fairley was the smallest you could be in, but I really didn't want to go even to a town as big as Commerce—it was too big. And I wanted to have sort of a farm away from home, or farm at home. And when we came out here of course, we went into a little small plot out on Avenue P as I mentioned. Mother and daddy put in a little well, a little small pond out there to water the garden. Mother could make anything grow, so she grewed. Waggoner was assigned to taking care of the cows—milking them, along with the rest of us at times. And then Warlick ran all the chickens—he was a chicken man. And funny story about that is that Warlick was a most soft-hearted, honest person I saw in my life, and Warlick would go out and we always had chicken on Sunday. And Warlick would be the appointed one to go out and get us the chicken to eat. And dad said that he often times had to do without chicken on Sunday, had to substitute something else because Warlick would not kill his chicken.

DM:

Aw, that is a good story, aw. Well what did that leave for little Bob Carr to do then?

RC:

Just make a mess. I had assigned to help them as much as I could at my age and so forth. But no I just helped mother. And then when Virginia came along, my sister, I helped her with Virginia.

DM:

Were your parents disciplinarians? I mean did they give you chores, I mean specific chores to do besides—

RC:

Well, Warlick and Waggoner did, I didn't really have ones that I had to do. I had to help mother in the garden, things like that of course. And when you mowed the lawn, which you didn't have to do very much because we didn't have any water to put on the lawn. So, it was mostly dead grass, because we used the water to put into the garden.

DM:

Had a windmill.

RC:

Had a windmill out there. The windmill was right outside our—we lived on the back porch, our bed for the kids, all three in one bed on the back porch, had a screened-in porch.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

And right outside that, probably about eight to ten feet was the windmill.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

And windmill would have this cold, clear water coming out of it, one of the best water in the world. And later on of course they piped it into the house, but at first it went out into a big pool out there, a big tank.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

But yeah it was right there. It made such a comforting noise, the going around at night and everything, you could just go to sleep very easily out there with that.

DM:

Do you have any idea how deep that well was, did you ever hear?

RC:

No I really don't.

DM:

Okay..

RC:

I have an idea, it was probably less than a hundred feet, maybe less than that. I know at the time they told us they got a well out here at Shallowater, and one of the reasons they decided to name it Shallowater is because the water was so shallow, that a guy was digging a post hole with a digger, and ran into the water, water coming up in that thing, and he said, "Man, that's shallow water", and that's what it was named. That's maybe just a legend, but no we never put it down any deeper than it was when I it was dug.

DM:

Okay. How much acreage did you have out there?

RC:

We just had one acre.

DM:

One acre.

RC:

Yeah.

DM:

So you had a little bit of livestock, enough to milk cows—

RC:

Chicken, and eggs, and we had—was there anything else—we didn't have any horses or anything like that, just the chicken. We had a little hand plow that a person in the front of it could pull it like with a harness, and then there was enough of a blade to go down, kind of disturb the first six inches or something like that, turn it over, and so that's the way we did the garden.

DM:

Okay, okay. And what all did you grow in the garden that you recall?

RC:

Everything, mother could grow everything. She could grow I know radishes—radishes, even today, herald to me that it's summertime. Because usually when it turned summer, you began to get fresh radishes in the grocery stores now, and it's always sort of a thought of mind to go down and get a radish, and eat. So radishes, and carrots, and black-eyed peas, and corn, little bit of corn she could grow, things like that, green beans—I can remember black-eyed peas, shucking those things a lot. Corn you'd have to shuck for mother and daddy. So she just grew everything.

DM:

Okay. What did y'all do for recreation as kids?

RC:

Well I had a bicycle, and mother and daddy were very trusting of me, when I got a little older they would let me go ahead and go anyplace I wanted to in Lubbock, because it was kind of a trip to get down to Lubbock, because we lived on about, as I say, about a half or mile or so past thirty-fourth there, so it took you a long time. But we had one car and dad would take that to work, or maybe would leave it for some reason at home. But so I drove my bicycle to church—well not to church so much, because we all went to church, but to school, when I went to college, I had a bicycle the first two or three years. I'd began to use the family car a little bit when I got to college. And Waggoner had a bicycle that he and Warlick shared. Waggoner took his and was hired on as a deliverer of plucked chickens. Chickens then would be delivered if you'd call a store, they'd pluck all the feathers off the chicken that you'd buy from them, or your own. And then the boy would come out to bring it to the mother to cut up and everything.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

And so he got a job doing that.

DM:

Oh, okay.

RC:

And then Warlick and he later on worked at Furr Foods on 19th Street, and then I worked at Furr Foods as a stocker and so forth, on Broadway, and then again on 19th Street too.

DM:

Okay. Now you were a bit younger than Waggoner and Warlick.

RC:

Yeah, Waggoner and Warlick were about three years apart, and I was about five years, and then Virginia my sister was about four or five years.

DM:

Okay. So did you hang around with Waggoner and Warlick much as a child, or were they just a little too much older and involved in other things?

RC:

Well I always called Warlick my mother hen, because he took care of the whole family.

DM:

I see.

RC:

And so he and I were pretty good buddies. Waggoner was several years older, and had to take on lots of responsibility for the family, so it was kind of hard to get as close to him as I did with Warlick. But I admired Waggoner so much, and then same with Warlick. And then Virginia came along, and I became her protector.

DM:

I see, well that's good. Well I want to pick up a little more information on this place outside of town. It's just intriguing to me, that time period, and so can you tell me a little bit about the house that you lived in, how it was heeded, few things like that?

RC:

Well, there's a picture here on the wall, of course you can't see it on your tape but the picture on the wall of our house as it was back then. And it at first was just nothing but a straight, went back just straight and had a little front room that had a coal stove in it with this tin thing underneath it so it wouldn't catch the floor on fire if the embers popped out. But Warlick and Waggoner's job was to get up in the morning in the wintertime, and start the fire. And I was able to snuggle in bed until they got it warm for me. But anyway had that room, and then we had another side room where mother and daddy slept. And then back behind that was the enclosed screen porch. Now later on after we got Gina, they decided they needed another room. So they built another room on the side of the house, which mother was so proud of because it had a nice kitchen, a lot like we have now, but had a kitchen, and where we'd bring the number two tub in and we'd bathe in this hot water that mother made up on the thing, put it in there, and then all of us would get in, not all at once, but get into the tub. And usually the dirtiest one got in last, and but so if anybody had been doing a lot of work in the garden, they didn't get in the tub. Unless it got so dirty you couldn't even think you were cleaning yourself, or until they were the last ones. But it was

Saturday night tub, we didn't bathe every day, or shower even, because we had no shower. But our utility room, our convention room, was the kitchen, because it was bigger, had the heat in it too and so forth.

DM:
Okay.

RC:
So it was really nice.

DM:
Well what was the fuel for the kitchen stove?

RC:
Well it was wood and coal, and then later on we got gas. We were out in the country, we didn't have electricity at first. We had a battery radio that worked part of the time. There was an old soldier that lived up about oh, two, or three, or four houses over, there weren't any houses there, but that length of space that had a large battery radio. And we would go up there when we wanted to hear something on the radio, he'd let us come up. When I got interested in prize fighting, and Max Baer, and Primo Carnera, and some of these others, Louis, Joe Louis, and all the others were fighting, I'd ask him if I could come up and listen. So all the kids would go up and listen to the fights that were on. Or if President Roosevelt was having a fireside chat, we'd all go up to listen to it, to be sure we could hear it, because our battery could run down during the whole thing you see? But we had that, and then no telephone, and no electricity. It was just a matter that you read, and entertained yourselves, and helped around the house—that was the main thing that you did.

DM:
Do you remember what year electricity came in?

RC:
No, I really don't.

DM:
Okay.

RC:
It seemed like it was two or three years after we moved in.

DM:

I guess it was rural electrification that came out to you.

RC:

Yeah.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

And it was wonderful, I'll tell you what, it really was.

DM:

Do you remember if the walls were double walls, or if you just had one outside wall and something like paper or?

RC:

Well I know they leaked a lot from the air. When we had a dust storm, and I was there when they had that Black Sunday, that first one, but when that came in, there was dust inside the house just like you wouldn't believe. And mother was putting wet sheets over all the windows trying to keep the dust down, and we had to sweep out the dust from all the floor after it was over with. But it was rather porous, and but in this, unless it got real wintertime, you could stay warm under two or three blankets, and the three boys cuddled up in the back bed to keep warm too, so that was fine.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

And mother daddy were in a better area, better room, so they were alright too.

DM:

Okay. I believe that was April 14, 1935.

RC:

Yeah, on a Sunday, I remember.

DM:

Can you describe it.

RC:

Oh yeah, I remember it was kind of a hot day, I remember that. And still wasn't any sand, or wind, or anything, just it was a Sunday morning. It seemed like we had just gotten back from church, it was early afternoon or something like that. But anyway I looked over—we were playing outside, and we had a grape arbor over on this side, because mother grew grapes, and we were playing underneath that to get out of the sun a little bit, and we looked over there and we saw this thing that looked like it was just rolling, it just boiling over there, coming in from the northwest. And I ran and got mother and daddy, and they looked at it, and they had never seen anything like it before, but they knew it was probably sand, so they told us to all get inside, close the windows, get underneath some sheets and blankets if we could, and so forth. So it just hit like a shot, just came through, had a front, and came on through. Now we've always talked about northerners having northern fronts would come in, and they'd come in blue. You could look over here to the north and just see blue, turning blue and dark over there coming, and you knew it was going to get cold as everything pretty soon. But this was just coming from the northwest and was just rolling. And when it hit to you it didn't take but about a minute or two, it just got dark. I mean not just sandy dark, it was dark. There was no sun at all, it was just as dark. Mother put on a lamp and we tried not to get too scared, because mother and daddy would tell after everything would be okay, and the whole house rattled and everything you know. But it didn't last too long, we thought it lasted three hours, but it probably lasted, the worst of it fifteen or twenty minutes, and then it began to blow out.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

And after it blew out, it was like it was any other time we have a sandstorm, it was just as clear as a bell afterwards, just like the sand had scrubbed the sky. And it was just beautiful, but it took a long time to get that dirt out of the house.

DM:

Besides the terrible sand that came in during that period, which was worse—that drought period of the thirties, or early fifties, or more recently—do you have a take on that?

RC:

Well, my mother and daddy of course were wonderful parents, and I'm not saying this just because they were my parents, or probably I am. But anyway they never let us suspect that they were having a hard time.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

We knew daddy had to get a job because there wasn't any work elsewhere, but they made due with everything. They got an old secondhand car. They traded that car later in on something else, they would grow good as we've talked about. They would get us housing and keep us warm. They had the chickens, and they had the milk cows, and so I really was never—as far as I was concerned—knew there was a depression. I mean I was never real, real hungry. Sure I'd like to have more candy and stuff like that. But I was never hungry and never wanting for anything as far as I could tell. I just knew we didn't have some of the things that other people had, but that was alright. That's just the way it was. But mother and daddy just took care of us, and did the best they could, and I'm sure did without on their own part in order to give to the kids.

DM:

But self-sufficiency, like y'all had a fair degree of self-sufficiency.

RC:

Oh yeah.

DM:

That really makes a difference in a time like that.

RC:

Yeah, absolutely.

DM:

Can you tell me about your early education, first days in school?

RC:

Yeah, well I started in school being seven years old, moved out here. I started in school in Fairley. And I don't remember much about that, except that the thing that mother has teased me about so many times, I've a picture back there where I'd gone to school that day, and mother had been in a hurry, and she hadn't dressed for anything, and there I am, I had ears that stood out just like this on the side of my head, and my ears were out, my hair wasn't combed, it was tussled up and everything up here, and I put on a little old coat, and I'd buttoned the buttons wrong, and so they were wrong. And it was the day they happened to be taking school pictures. So I went up there and they took my school picture. They said, "Well you can't go home to do anything, you just got to get your picture like this." So I took it, and mother almost died when she saw me like that. But that's been my favorite picture ever since Betty, my wife, says that if she'd known me when I was that old and I looked like that, she'd have never even dated me. But anyway, the school, that was also important because Waggoner and Warlick had a two or three difference in there as I mentioned. But while they were there, they were I in a school that was so small, that

they had two or three classes in the same schoolroom. And so the teacher would teach to Warlick's level, or age first, and then after she finished all this, she'd teach to Waggoner's age and so forth. And so Warlick would listen to Waggoner's lessons, and Waggoner already knew Warlick's, but Warlick would listen to Waggoner's. And finally, he did so good, that they called him double promoted—they put him in the class with Waggoner.

DM:

Wow.

RC:

And so therefore by doing that, then from that point on, they were the same grade all the way through high school until they got to college and so forth too. But all the way through high school, and people thought many times they were twins, because they were in the same grade, and about the same height and build and so forth you know. But there was two or three years difference between them.

DM:

Well that's interesting you mentioned that, and it happened that early, because I had that question later on when I was talking about asking you about your brothers.

RC:

Yeah.

DM:

Because they did, they graduated at the same time.

RC:

Yeah.

DM:

But, we'll expand more on that later on.

RC:

Yeah that's good, that's alright.

DM:

But what about when you came to Lubbock—do you remember which school you went to, the names of some of your teachers, your favorite subjects?

RC:

Well I remember getting to Lubbock. We came out first to—Uncle Marvin said he would get us a place to stay, and there was a house over there—we didn't have any money to be very much for anything—so there was a house with a room in the back that the family was not using. So he rented that for us, this one room on the back of the house, for the family to move to when the first time we came out. We hired a truck, an old oil pan truck to bring us out here, and I don't remember much about the trip except two things—one, daddy had a twenty-two gun, a rifle. I was scared of guns, but I always loved that rifle we had, because we'd shoot rabbits and so forth with it. And the way out here, probably the fellow that moved us stoled it, because it never arrived in Lubbock after we put it on the thing. And of course we couldn't accuse him of doing that, so anyway we lost that. That was one thing I remember about it—the other thing is I remember it took about two and a half days to get here from Dallas, because we loaded up, it had sort of a cloth top on the car, and windshield went up that you could let down, or let up so the air could come through if you wanted to. And we had things camped on the sides, we had side boards, stepping boards that you'd get in the car. So we put things on that, put things on the back. It was just completely—it looked like a Okie—coming in, going to California, that's what we looked like. And it wouldn't go very fast, and every once in a while the front wheels were not good and so they would go like this, and daddy would have to jerk around to get them to going straight again. So anyway, that's the way we arrived in Lubbock, but it took us two and a half days to get here. The first day, after all the packing and everything had to be done, we got as far as Dallas, which is probably a hundred miles I guess. And then the next day daddy said we're going to go as far as we can, so we got up in the dark and started driving. We all would sleep in the back seat, and we drove, and drove, and drove, and at that time, the only road was the road that came through Dickens, came through that area up there in Dickens and so forth, up to Caprock. And so we came up and started driving, and we had had nothing but—I don't remember any paved road anywhere—we had caliche road. And if there had been what little rain they had out here, dug a lot of holes in them, and there were rocks all over them and everything, and it was a terrible ride to get out here. Daddy couldn't drive very fast, because every time he'd hit a rock, then the wheels would begin to go like this again. And so anyway we decided we'd get as far as Dickens, and dad told us to turn around, he said "Boys, we're going to stop here and camp out by the side of the road", which he'd planned on doing. So just this side of Dickens there was an old tree, huge tree out by a little creek bed out there, probably two or three miles this side of Dickens. And we pulled in there and everybody got out and took out our bedrolls and things like that. Slept on the ground that first night, and I thought boy you could see the stars, it was a nice cool breeze, it was nice out there, and I was kind of scared of the critters, and snakes and so forth, but nothing happened. We got up the next morning, and came into Lubbock after that, but took us that long to get here. And then we stayed in that little one room for several weeks until we could get a larger place to stay.

DM:

Okay, now what about school?

RC:

Schools, so then we had several schools—Central Ward was the high school, it was over there on Avenue Q and right in that area where the banks are now. And then Carroll Thompson was the one where the swimming pool area is now for the schools. It was the junior high when I went to school.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

So I went to Dupree, and that was my alma matter, and then I went over to Carroll Thompson, and graduated from there, and then came over to—we had the black Dunbar junior high and high school, and then we had Lubbock High. So I went to Carroll Thompson, then came over to Lubbock High, and then after I got out of there I joined the Navy—well I'll tell you about that later then.

DM:

Okay. Do any of your teachers stand out, either in a positive way or a negative way?

RC:

Well I remember Mrs. Tolbert, Mrs. Frances Tolbert.

DM:

How do you spell that?

RC:

T-o-l-b-e-r-t.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

And her son was an author, he wrote several books, he started the chili contest down at Terlingua. And he wrote several books, and she was my English teacher. And she was a big lady, but she inspired me as far as reading, and as far as writing and so forth. Short stories, I wrote several short stories that I still have, in junior high, but she inspired me. And then I had Mrs. Marie Miles, I think she had a doctorate, but she taught in junior high, and followed me over to

high school. But she was the hardest teacher that I think I ever had. I didn't like her at first, but it turned out later I found out she was a good teacher, and I really did admire her. And I thought boy, she's following me to high school, I had her in junior high, and she's going to get me in high school, and she did. But she was real nice, and then Mr. Carroll Thompson was the principal. The only thing that ever happened to me that I remember—I enjoyed junior high, although I was little, I didn't partake in the sports except running. I was a fast runner, and so I did do lots of track, but other than that I didn't do anything. Mr. Carroll Thompson and I had dealings only one time, and I was glad we didn't—he was the sweetest, nicest man. But during the noon recess, the boys were supposed to stay, and the girls were supposed to stay on the school grounds. You couldn't go across the street. Well that was when they were rebuilding the houses over there on Broadway, so they were just building things over there. So some of the kids at recess time decided we would go over in the backyard, and look where they're building. And we got over there and a couple of the girls came over, and we started chasing them, and they started screaming and hollering, and the teachers saw them screaming and hollering, and they came after the two or three guys that were with me. And they took us up to Mr. Carroll Thompson's office. And he had a big paddle in his office. I never saw him use it, I heard once or twice the effects of his using it, but he got this paddle down, he put it on his desk, and he said "Now boys, you know you're not supposed to go across the street, and why did you do that, and can you give me a reason why you should not be punished?" And the three of us, or four of us, just started telling all sorts of stories, why we should be there and everything—that we chased the girls trying to get them back over to the school room and everything. But anyway, he didn't take any of it, and he said, "Well I'll tell you what—you might have had a fairly good reason to go on over there, but I don't want to ever hear that you ever do it again, and I'll put the board back up."

DM:

That's how he handled this?

RC:

As you get older, you tear up quite a bit more often.

DM:

That's very understandable, and it's a very nice type of discipline, isn't it?

RC:

And then the other person I remember now was a fellow that taught me band. In the family we had a viola, and a cornet, and old German cornet. And I think Waggoner played the cornet, and Warlick played the viola in the orchestra in junior high. So when they got over to high school, they lent the instruments to play, because we didn't have enough money to buy them ourselves, so but over there they left the instruments there. When I came in they asked me which one I

wanted to play, and I said well I'd like to play that cornet. So we had a cornet, but every time you blew on it after a period of time, it got out of tune, the valves in it were so old. So finally the guy that was leading the band at that time—I remember his name most of the time—but anyway he said, "I'll tell you what Bob, we're going to change you over to French horn. Because we got a French horn now that's a good French horn, and you won't have any trouble playing it because it's fingers are similar to the cornet, and so we're going to let you play that." So it was good, I got a fairly new horn to play over that old cornet. My son still has that cornet by the way, that German cornet. And then the other thing that he did for me was that I wasn't oldest enough to smoke, and really had no intention of smoking. But he—his name was Joe something—but anyway, Joe smoked a lot. And one time we were round there and he was talking to everybody like a father for example, telling us not to do this, and that, and the other, and to be nice and everything. And he said, "I want to tell you boys why you should never smoke." And I don't know how he did that, maybe he had something in his mouth, but he took this cigarette and took a big drag off of it, and then he took a white handkerchief out of his pocket, and blew into it, and black carbon got on this handkerchief. And he said "Now that's what you get in your lung every time you smoke a cigarette. I don't want you to ever smoke a cigarette." And I didn't.

DM:

Okay. Was this well known at the time, the health hazards of smoking cigarettes?

RC:

No, but he at least must have known about it, because he maybe had some shortness of breath, or when he was trying to blow his instrument, and so you'd get out of breath pretty easily, and I imagine he probably knew it. But I thought that was very good for him to have that word of advice to us.

DM:

Can you think back to your school years, and see any instances of your future medical skills coming into play?

RC:

No, not particularly.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

I remember that Dr. Dunn, Sam Dunn was my doctor. Sam Dunn was our general physician and surgeon, and then Dr. Overton—I'm sorry I had a name block on him. Dr. Overton was my person I really admired the most, because Dr. Overton was just so kind, and so sweet, and took

me of my with my sore throats and things like that you know. And mother and daddy thought so much of him. And anyway, so Dr. Overton influenced me a lot too, thinking back on that too. But he was an old-time doctor, and he took my sister's tonsils out—never took mine out—but everybody else, anytime you had tonsils, “Well, time now to get your tonsils out” whether you were sick or not, didn't make a difference, you had to get them out so you won't get sick. But he never did take my tonsils out, thank goodness. And then I got to know them both as a doctor, because Dr. Overton was still alive when I came out to practice. In fact I came over to talk to Dr. Overton about going in with him, and he was fixing to retire at the time, he said, “Bob, you don't want to go with me, I'm going to retire in a short period of time. You need to get in with a young doctor that I admire very much,” and he sent me to Dr. Donaldson.

DM:
Okay.

RC:
So that's how I got with Dr. Donaldson.

DM:
Okay.

RC:
But Dr. Overton was there, and then Dr. Sam Dunn was one of those fellows that just worked twenty-four hours a day. He gave everybody shots, didn't make a difference if you needed a shot or not, he gave them to you. But he was a very conscientious doctor, looked after you very well, he had an office down there, and I worked there in the reception area for the whole clinic—they had several doctors in the clinic. Got to know all the doctors over a period of time, but Dr. Dunn was a fellow that I admired.

DM:
Can you tell me a little bit about his personality, was he mild-mannered, was he sharp?

RC:
No Dr. Dunn did direct acting-type person.

DM:
Okay.

RC:
I don't know whether the rooms were softened by asbestos or something like that to keep the sound down, but you could hear Dr. Dunn all over the clinic telling his patient what to do, and as

he went down the hall telling them. He didn't just in the room, as he left them he'd be talking all the way down the hall to them what else to do. And but he always gave shots, he was quick, he was punctual, he would see anybody that came in to see him, he was very conscientious I think, and of course he had a lot of outside businesses too.

DM:

Okay. I guess, so confidentiality was not so much of an issue back then, huh?

RC:

No, it wasn't, it wasn't, no.

DM:

Now how would you compare Dr. Overton to Dr. Dunn?

RC:

Dr. Overton had a sweet, soft voice, because he was used to talking to children. And he would just charm the mothers, take the baby in his arms, and, "Oh this is the sweetest baby." And they would often times, the mothers loved him better than they did—then they would otherwise—and so he was a grand doctor, he really was.

DM:

He was gentle spoken, and also gentle in holding and handling the children?

RC:

Oh yeah, soft spoken and yeah, handling them. He had a rapport with them, that I always tried to have too. But not to come in as someone that's going to hurt them or anything like that, but come in—I'll show you the toy I have up here. I had a big old teddy bear over his examining table, and he said, "Lay down, you can look at the teddy bear." And he usually gave them a little gift of some sort, and they just loved him.

DM:

Do you think you picked up any tips, or habits from observing these people.

RC:

Oh I think so, yeah.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

You couldn't help but do that. See there were other really good doctors there in that town there—Dr. Baugh, who was one of the real early— B-a-u-g-h. The doctor with him, I can't think of his name at the moment, but and then over in the ear, nose, and throat section was Dr. Cannon, and some of the others. Dr. Cannon was President Roosevelt's ear, nose, and throat doctor—

DM:

Really?

RC:

During the war.

DM:

Hmm.

RC:

Came back then and went into practice there again. And Dr. Dunn of course—Dr. Overton had his time as far as being rough, or standing his ground, because Dr. Baugh was just the exact opposite of Dr. Overton. Dr. Baugh was rough, and uncouth, and rough, and so forth. And he and Overton didn't get along all the time. One time when Dr. Baugh and Dr. Overton were about the only doctors in town, Dr. Baugh caught smallpox, and at that time you had to isolate them so they would give it to everybody else [inaudible]. So there was two doctors, and Dr. Baugh says, "I'm a doctor, I'm not going to let you quarantine me." Because they had a camp, you had to go outside town here in order to stay there until you got un-contagious. And Dr. Overton said, "You're going to go out to camp, because we're not going to let you give it to anybody else." Well Dr. Baugh didn't like that, so he tried to leave after Dr. Overton had put him out there, and Dr. Overton posted a policeman over him, told him he was going to stay there.

DM:

He could be tough then?

RC:

Yeah. So he could stand his ground pretty good. Dr. Baugh was a rough, loud type of person. As far as I'm concerned there was another doctor with him—I hope I'm not getting the two mixed up.

DM:

No this is great, this is great.

RC:

But there was another doctor that was with him, one of them exactly the opposite. They both had

little one room offices when I was working the clinic, and he was very quiet, sort of like on the stage of Dr. Overton. And Dr. Baugh was with him, so I'm almost sure it's Dr. Baugh, but I hope I'm not blaspheming Dr. Baugh when it was the other one that was kind of rough. But anyway, the two of them went pretty good together.

DM:

Okay. These doctors, did you ever have a chance to visit with any of them later about the influenza epidemic of 1918. It was well before your time, but I remember if any of these were old enough to have been involved in that.

RC:

Yes they were, according to the histories I've read. Yes they were.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

One of the things that you asked me earlier too, I remember than when I worked in the clinic, that influenced me a lot there, because I got to know the doctors, and I had my favorites and so forth. And Dr. Hunt and Dr. English were the surgeons there at the clinic, and they were both very nice people, they really were, and so they invited me up one time, there was a friend of mine named Ray Cox, and Ray and I were at Tech, and he was thinking about becoming a doctor too, and I said you know, I think I can talk to Dr. English or Dr. Hunt into letting us come up and watching them operate someday if you'd like to do that. And Ray my friend said, "Yes, I'd love to do that." Said, "Okay, come on up, we've got it arranged," and they had then a little observation area that you could stand up on a couple of little steps, and they had a thing on the front to hold onto, and you could look almost over because it was a small operating room, almost over on the operating table. We got up there, and they brought the fellow, he was having an appendectomy, and he had agreed to us being there, so it wasn't anything we were sneaking in to do. And Dr. English, as they made the incision, "Here's what I'm doing, here's where I'm going to go, here's what I'm looking for". And so I was just enthralled by that, and I looked over there and Ray had fainted. Fell on the floor, and of course the nurses couldn't come help him, because they were sterilized, and the doctors couldn't, and I didn't know what to do. I just kind of got him so he didn't look like he killed himself laying there, and in a minute he began to stir around. But after we came out I got him outside, and got a wind to him by getting his face blown, and I said, "Ray, what you going to do, you're going to go ahead and become a doctor?" He said "No, this makes me decide I'm not going to be a doctor." And he became a preacher.

DM:

Okay, well by the same token, this allowed you to know you could handle it just fine.

RC:

Yeah, that's right, that's right. I appreciated that very much for me to do that.

DM:

While you were in Lubbock High School, was there anything gnawing at you at that time to saying I want to be a doctor, I want to be a doctor, or did you make all these decisions later?

RC:

No, I made all those decisions before.

DM:

Before.

RC:

I didn't want to be anything else except a doctor even in high school even.

DM:

Okay, so by the time you were in high school, you were saying I'm going to be a doctor?

RC:

Yeah.

DM:

Okay. What about coursework in high school—was there any courses that you much preferred over the others, any discipline?

RC:

Well I liked speech. I liked that very much, had a good speech teacher. I liked English. In high school I liked plain geometry, because I had a real pretty teacher, but when I got in college I didn't like math so much anymore. And then Mr. Orr, O-double-r, was my science teacher.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

And I enjoyed being in his class, because he was a very nice teacher, very sweet, very nice.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

And so I enjoyed that. I don't know, I enjoyed high school, I'd ran around with three or four people regularly. We had sort of a gang type thing, but we were a nice gang. People that attended the First Methodist Church on a regular basis, and had offices at the church. I did do some work on the paper, daily paper there. There was a lady that later became an author, that was editor of the paper at the time. She wrote several books that I thought were real interesting on the theme of what if you were a different person? And she took some medicine that turned her skin rather dark, and she wrote it as if she were a slave. And she presented herself for housework to people, not necessarily here in Lubbock, but other places, and then wrote her stories about how she was treated. Which I've got them all back there, the stories, they were real, real good.

DM:

That's very interesting, and very enlightened for that time.

RC:

And she was an honors student, and much smarter than I was, but I enjoyed working with her some. But high school was a lot of fun, I enjoyed it. I didn't play sports, but I played in the band, and got to go to all the football games.

DM:

Were you still playing the French horn?

RC:

Yeah, still playing the French horn, yeah. But we enjoyed it very much. That's when we would either play at Tech if it was a big game, the old Texas Tech football game, or we had a thing that was over on 22nd and oh, just about two or three blocks, east of University, where there still is a football field there, and that's where we played our games, because we didn't have a big stadium or anything like that at all. Went to Amarillo one time, which is our main person to try to win against, and the band got to go to two or three places, but we always got—they had a special train that ran from here to Amarillo, and you could buy tickets for practically nothing. And they took the band on the train, along with all the rooters that wanted to go up there, came back the same day. So it wasn't very expensive. But we got to go to trips like that too, so a lot of fun.

DM:

Okay, besides Amarillo, what were some other long trips, other rivalries?

RC:

Well we went to Waco, that was about the longest one—went to Waco for a band contest down there. But other than that, I don't know that we went too far out of town. Ones we played were usually like some of the towns up here west of Wichita Falls, some areas up in there, and then

Amarillo was the big one of course, and then I don't know of any others that we played really and truly.

DM:

Waco was quite a trip though.

RC:

Oh it was a trip, yeah.

DM:

How exciting.

RC:

We went on buses down there, school buses. Just regular old school buses. Went down there, we went—

DM:

Was it held at Baylor?

RC:

Well yeah, it was held at the school there, yeah. Seemed like they were McMurry [College]—well, Waco wouldn't have been McMurry.

DM:

McMurry's Abilene, so it might have been—

RC:

Yeah.

DM:

Okay. What year did you graduate?

RC:

I graduated in 1942.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

Yeah.

DM:

That's a very interesting graduation date, being at the beginning of World War II.

RC:

Yeah, '41 is when it started, and of course that was in the fall, wintertime. And I remember, of course patriotic fever was very, very high. Everybody wanted to join as soon as they could, and that included even those that weren't old enough to join. Because we had one or two out of high school that joined before they legally could, but their parents signed it and they went.

DM:

Really?

RC:

And but anyway, we had two or three that died—Bill Kennedy died, he died after—well, let's see, it was Kennedy—one out of my class died during the war, another one died immediately thereafter, and so we had two or three people that died that were in my class.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

But it was one of those things that it was very exciting, and fearful-type thing, because it was all the things that were going on, and then the Pacific war came along too and everything. Actually I joined in 1942, '43, that area in there. I joined because I decided I wanted to go, and I started then to Tech, and they said, "Well, we'll accept your application now, but we want you to go ahead, you haven't had enough math, you need to get some more math. So we're going to have you go into V-5, because you wanted to join the Naval Air Corps, that's what you wanted to join," and I said, "Okay." "And we have a place for you," Say's, "Okay," so they sent me on the old Santa Fe railroad, the one that starts at the Buddy Holly Center, used to start there, and they gave me a ticket and sent me to Dallas to have my physical examination, because it was for the Air Corps.

DM:

The Navy Air Corps.

RC:

Naval Air Corps, yeah.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

They must have a station here too, but it was I guess because I was joining more than just the regular Navy, they did a lot of tests on me and so forth.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

And anyway, that was fun to ride on the train. I'd never been on the train before, except until that. So anyway, came back and then they took me—well, I'll tell you this much and then I'll stop and we'll start whatever you want to start—but they sent me then to get my math to SMU for a year, so.

DM:

Is that right? Okay, and that was as part of—

RC:

That was V-12.

DM:

That was V-12

RC:

Yeah except that what happened is when I got to—it was a year later that I got to SMU—and when I got there, the fellow says well we've got you down for V-5—that's what it was, V-5 was Naval Intelligence, Naval Air Force.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

And said, "I know you told me you're going into V-5, but we've got you down for V-12." And V-12 was a little different, it wasn't just the Air Force, it was to get some more training for something else. So he said, "Now in V-12 you can stay as a pre-med, and get some more pre-med work off if you wanted to, where a V-5 wouldn't help you at all in what you need for pre-med."

DM:

Okay.

© Southwest Collection/
Special Collections Library

RC:

He said "Now I'd advise you to go ahead and stay in V-12, unless you're just absolutely wanting to fly." And I said, "Well I think I will stay in V-12, because the funny part was that I joined V-5, not so much because of any one reason, but several reasons—one I thought their uniforms were beautiful. I really liked their uniforms, and their officer's hats and things like that—much prettier than wearing that old uniform that the Navy put you in, that white and blue uniform. But anyway, so I decided because of that, and because I really didn't have that much interest in flying, I wasn't one of these gung-ho guys that likes to kill themselves easy. So decided because of that, that I'd just go and stay in V-12.

DM:

V-12, okay.

RC:

So I stayed in that, and then got my year, but the bad thing about that, and again I'm getting time intervals mixed up here, but the bad thing about V-12, staying in that—again, I went to organic chemistry, which has a lot of math and everything in it too, and organic chemistry I had had out at Tech, but I'd made a D in it, and I was real lucky to get that. All my other grades were pretty good, B's and C's and A's, but I made a D in organic chemistry. Well anyway, they said, "You've got to take organic chemistry again, because you'll never get to medical school with a D in your record." So I said, "Okay," so I got here and I took the record and I was having so much fun at SMU, and it was such a nice school, but I made a C taking it a second time. So I didn't make an A or a B. They said, "Well, we still don't think you can get into medical school with that, because everybody's trying to get medical school. We're going to send you to be in the amphibious forces, to become an officer, a line officer in the Navy," which later became I went into the amphibious forces.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

But anyway, a bunch of happenstance had happened in my life, and I'm sure everybody has that in their lives too but.

DM:

Do we have time for you to continue with the World War II experience, now the Navy experience? Just continue on then and tell me about this training for amphibious.

RC:

Well it was very interesting, I stayed at SMU and then they had two of us where they were sending up to New York area.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

And because I was going to officer's training school because of the training I'd had in college, they were going to send me to officer's training school, and that was in Asbury Park, New Jersey. I had a fellow named Eddie Gratz, who later became a dentist and went back to Dallas and practiced there for many years.

DM:

G-r-a-t-z?

RC:

G-r-a-t-z, uh-huh.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

Eddie was his first name, and Eddie and I decided we obviously are going to New York together, so we had tickets and let's just go together so we can look after each other. We'd never been in a town anywhere near as big as New York, getting on the trains and things like that you know. So we said, okay we'd go up there together, well took us—your little train that was carrying the people along, you had to, every time a troop train came through, you had to get over on the side, to let them through because they were going to places that they knew they were going, and they had a lot of people on them. So they took us, oh four, five, six days to get between Dallas and New York. We got to New York and I got out in the main station, Central Station there and I never saw such a big building in my entire life. There were trains all over the place, people all over the place, and Eddie and I in our little uniforms you know. And we were going to go to the USO. We were going to get a place to stay that night, because we were going to stay that night, and then we were going to go out the next day to the places where we're supposed to report to. Well Eddie and I got down into the subway system, and we said, "Well hey, we've got enough time, it's noontime, let's go ahead and we'll go out to see some of the sights, let's go to the Statue of Liberty and see that," because they showed us how to get out there. "Let's go there first, and then we'll do another one or two things maybe, and then come on back and catch the train out to where we're supposed to be going." So, "Okay, that'd be fine," so we got down in

the train system, and of course there were trains, and people, and noise, and all sorts of signs and everything—I never had seen anything like that at all. So Eddie and I were looking around this side, well this gets us over to here, do that, and this says over here this is the way to such and such, well where do we go? And I said, “I don’t know, but here’s a train, let’s get on right now.” And of course they were just going like mad, they’d come in, open the doors and soon as everybody, or most people got on they shut the doors. Well I went ahead and I said come on Eddie, and I got on the train, and he was looking at some more signs, and the door closed. And there he was, I went out of that station waving at him goodbye. I got off the next station and came back, but in the meantime, he’d picked another one to go, and so even though we’d taken back many days to get there, and had been at SMU, we lost each other within an hour of getting to New York. And I never saw him again, we talked once or twice on the telephone, but never saw him again. And anyway, so I went out to Asbury Park, New Jersey, and there they had all these young guys and they put us through this training and we got navigation, and we got how to be an officer, how to lead troops, we got a lot of physical ed. We had big tussles, they’d take us out to the beach and they’d divide us maybe two hundred people, a hundred of them on each side, and say, “Okay now this big ball’s out here in the middle, y’all got to get this ball and get it over here, and they’ve got to get it over here, and you’ve got to prevent it.” Boy it was just a free-for-all, people slugging, and hitting you, and kicking you, and throwing dirt at you and everything. But it was fun, it really was fun, and we would go out there and then we’d made some smaller trips around Asbury Park. But they wanted you to stay and not get in trouble, so anyway we did that. Then we stayed there about six weeks, and then they sent me from there to Chicago to take up the Midshipmen’s School that I’d put in.

DM:

Now how long did that last?

RC:

That lasted about three months, and they told us at graduation “You’ve now become a gentleman and a scholar,” and handed us a thing that said we were. So and from that they sent us from there—and it was wintertime and they would take us out to do these exercises at six o’clock in the morning, or five o’clock in the morning, before we had breakfast. And they’d take us out, and it was sleeting and raining, Chicago right there on the lake, it was terrible weather. But it didn’t make a difference, it’s toughening you up I guess, but we had that. Then we’d go back up and it was a lot of fun. You got your uniform the last week or so, with beautiful Navy uniforms, Navy blue, and your gold hat and things like that. And it was right next door, so they’d come over and measure you so you got measured material and everything. And it was really a high part of my whole career was putting on the uniform, and then after that we went to—and I did get to see Chicago quite a lot. The USOs in all the areas were really very nice, and met some girls over at the USO and went for dances over there and everything. My mother and my daddy entertained a fellow at Reese Air Force Base that was from Chicago, and so when they found out I was going

to Chicago they wrote them and told them I'd be there. So they had me come over and we went out for lunch. That was a funny thing too, kind of a racist-type thing I'm going to say in just a minute but they were the nicest Jewish couple you could possibly hope to meet, and they were just so nice and they obviously had a lot of money. And they took me up into one of the skyscrapers there in Chicago to eat supper, or lunch or something, and I didn't know anything about mores as far as people are concerned and different races. So they got us up there and we sat down at the table, and they said, "What would you like to eat?" And I loved ham, and I said, "Well I'd like to have a ham sandwich." And the wife kind of looked a little shocked and she said, "Well, we don't serve ham here," being Jewish as they were. And I said, "Oh, okay," and then I realized what I'd done, and then I ordered something else. But they were just so nice to me, contacted me two or three times while I was there. Then from there they sent us over down to Miami. They had another finishing school down there for all of us that were going to amphibious forces. And they took us down there and took us out into little small destroyer escorts and small ships out to the ocean, which I'd never seen before. So they took us out to get us acquainted with that. Gave us a bunch more things, and Morse code, how to operate signal flags and things like that, which I never learned—they gave us all these things. They had at the same time a mixing of Russians—Russia had their Navy down there, the English had their Navy down there, and they wouldn't let us mix with them because there was really a lot of discomfort between the Russians and the American sailors. And we didn't like the English too much, although they talked our language, but we didn't like them too much either, because they were so coarse, and their ships were unclean, they didn't keep them painted and everything, and we didn't think they had a very good Navy, and they didn't think we had a very good Navy. So you were kind of kept apart from the other bunches that were down there, just a big bunch. And then from there they decided that I'd be in the amphibs for sure after I'd finished the thing there, and they sent us over to San Diego to decide where we would be going from there. And they had a big amphibious thing out in San Diego, big finishing school with all the actual ships there. And we went there, and then from there, took us a little while to get an escort, a big ship to take us over to the Philippines, but while I was there they had us on detached duty. I was in charge of a plane, here I was nineteen or twenty years old—by the way if we went in town with anybody else, most time were older and you couldn't buy beer unless you were twenty-one, and I didn't like beer anyway but that's the thing that everybody wanted to drink, so I usually got some beer and nursed it along. But anyway, they'd have to buy my beer and bring it out to me, because I was not old enough—I was an officer, but I was not old enough to go into the bar. So anyway, and then on this train it was about twelve, fifteen cars full of new recruits going to Chicago, and they needed to have an officer on board to sign all the things. The boatswain's mates and old-time Navy people were in charge, I didn't do anything. But anyway, we had a dining car and everything on it that the kids ate in. And I was in charge of that, and I took that train as the only officer all the way to Chicago, and after that sent me back to San Diego, and I caught a transport then to the Philippines.

DM:

Already? This has been an amazing experience for you.

RC:

Oh yeah, it was terrific.

DM:

I assume you hadn't been much out of Texas before all of this?

RC:

No.

DM:

Now New York, Chicago, Miami, San Diego, meeting a Jewish family, seeing the international—

RC:

It was fabulous, it made me grow up, matured.

DM:

Quickly.

RC:

Oh yeah, it was really, really something. When I got overseas in my LCT [Landing Craft Tanks], it was immediately after the Philippines had been invaded and surrendered, so there was still a lot of people still over there that were fixing to go home. And a lot of ships were still operating to do that. But anyway, when I got over there on the LCT, we normally had about twelve to fifteen enlisted men, and then two officers in charge in this little boat that I was in.

DM:

Is this it by the way?

RC:

Yeah, this is it right here, just like this. And it was after I got over there, they sent the other officer home, because really we didn't have much to do except to bring things in from—that's the way it is.

DM:

Wow.

RC:

But anyway, they had a bunch of enlisted men still there, most of them had been there long enough, just waiting for a ride home, and they had two officers for a time, and then later on just me. But there I was in charge of that thing, had never seen an ocean before, had done all this stuff, learned a lot. And every one of the guys except maybe two or three out of that, perhaps ten or twelve that were there, were older than me. And there I was the young kid with the sparkling gold up here, had never been out to sea, because usually it tarnishes up here after it gets out to sea for a while. So they knew that I'd just come over, I was a ninety-day wonder, and it was really funny, but they were all very nice, we got along just real good. I had a guy later on we got back over after we all came home from the boat, and they went all to their homes. He lived in Alabama, and we went through Alabama one time, Montgomery, Alabama, and I called him and he talked with him for a while, and he said, "You know, you were the only officer that I really did enjoy being under." So I thought that was quite a compliment, but I really was so young that I really was a member, I wasn't an officer. I just signed all the orders and everything.

DM:

When did you arrive at the Philippines, and how long were you there?

RC:

I was there a year.

DM:

Was it Manila?

RC:

Yeah—well, they sent us—first of all, the receiving ship that was in charge of the flotilla was in Subic Bay.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

And Subic Bay was a main place there for all the ships to be in, large and small, but the amphibians mostly, because it was protected harbor. It had a little opening out here to the sea and then this was all protected, land-protected and so forth. So the smaller ships were all kept in this area. But I got there, and they took me on out. I'd had terrible time getting over there. When I first started, we'd start out for San Francisco, and wave goodbye to the Golden Gate as we went out. And I noticed that the ship was sort of going like this with the waves coming up to shore, and after, oh I'd been out there thirty minutes, and I began to feel a little queasy. But here I was an officer, I was in charge of a hundred guys going over to the Philippines, and I thought well I

don't want to be seasick in front of them, I was supposed to be an old salt here. And anyway, didn't help, because by the time the second day came along, I was as sick as a dog. And I went to bed, I couldn't even give them orders. They were telling them what to do of course, I didn't have much to do. But I would check the roster each day to be sure nobody had fallen overboard and stuff like that. But anyway, about the second or third day, I'd been vomiting, and just terribly upset, and I just wished I'd die. Just really one of those things, it'd be better to be dead than like this. But I decided on the second or third day, I just got to get something in my stomach, said, "I'm going to go down to chow no matter what, maybe I'd eat something they got." And so went down and they had liver and onions, and I said, "I can't eat liver and onions my first meal and I'm still so sick and I can hardly swallow water." And so I asked if there was anything else, they said "Well, we got some lettuce over here," so they gave me crackers and lettuce, and put a lot of salt on that. And that stayed down if I ate it slowly and so forth. And by the next day I was feeling better, and then I got alright after that.

DM:

So how long in all did it take you to get over the seasickness?

RC:

Over the seasickness? Probably about two or three days, yeah.

DM:

Coming back after having been in shore, did you have the same problem?

RC:

No.

DM:

That fixed it?

RC:

Yeah, that fixed it, after I had it one time, I was okay.

DM:

Is that typical?

RC:

Yeah, yeah.

DM:

Is that typical?

RC:

Well I don't know, I think it was because nobody else ever got sick that I was around either after that. I didn't get on the open ocean except one time, because Subic Bay is way up—on Philippine Islands, Subic Bay is up here, and they told me to take my—Lingayen Gulf is up here—Subic Bay, I went to Lingayen Gulf. And they said, "Well, we want you to go ahead and take your LCT down along the coast, and go into Manila Harbor." So I said, "Okay, I can do that," because it doesn't have to map, you just went along the shoreline. Well the only thing that I hadn't done was that I didn't realize that there was a typhoon that was many miles away, but it was creating the waves being pretty high. And this little old ship, you're going up a wave like that, and then it was just like going on a raft, you just went down on the next wave like that, just like a roller coaster. And you get down to the bottom and the whole thing just shook, because you hit solid water down there, and you'd go back up the next wave, and man you'd go down that wave. And there I was, I was riding up on the top there trying to be sure we weren't running into logs and things like that that might be floating out that far. Anybody, nobody got sick, and we got on around without any trouble, went into Manila Bay by Corregidor was to my right, and Bataan was to my left, went in between the two there, and then went into Manila Bay. They gave us a berthing base right over near the old Manila Hotel, which was MacArthur's headquarters, and it was still shelled out and bombed, but they tried to fix it up pretty much. And there was still a bunch of ships—I imagine oh two or three dozen freighters and things like that, sunk out in the harbor, just sitting down maybe just the mast up, or maybe just the top part of the ship sitting up. They hadn't had time to clear out as of yet. But they put us right up there by what we call the old city, the ancient city, where they had a lot of the last fighting was right in there, put us there. And we would go out from there to pick up supplies from the ships, and take them to shore to other ships, which I never could have done, except I had people on board that knew how to do it. Some of these guys had been there before, so it was a piece of cake as far as I was concerned.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

But it was a lot of fun, it really was.

DM:

Can you tell about getting stuck somewhere?

RC:

Oh yeah, yeah, two or three things happened to me that I wonder how in the world I was dumb enough to have been there in the first place. One was that the bottom on this you see it just like a bathtub. And what you do is when you go up on the beach, you go so far and before you get to the beach up there, you drop an anchor way back here.

DM:

I see.

RC:

And the anchor, as you see on the back sides there, would actually dig into the bottom back here, and then you'd let it just trail out until you got up to the beach.

DM:

That's kind of like a brake I would guess.

RC:

Yeah, just kind of a brake. Well the main reason for doing, not only was a brake, but also you could go ahead and use it to pull yourself back out.

DM:

Right.

RC:

Because you were on the ground up there, and you had to have something to pull yourself back out. So you tried to go in low tide to get as far as you could—I'm sorry, tried to go in high tide, get as far up as you could, because you wanted to be not dumping things you had into the water, you wanted to actually be able to drive up to the shore. Might be a little bit of water in there, but not very much. So anyway, if I'd known what I was doing, I would have tried to find out what kind of beach they had up there, but I didn't know to do that. So when they built the beach, they put up a lot of rocks up there. And they were not big boulders, they were little rolling stones-type things, probably a big as this or something like that. So the big ships couldn't get up there, but the smaller ships with that kind of keel on it, the flat bottom, could get up there.

DM:

I see.

RC:

So we would go up and we'd go as far as we could, so we could get everything off, and get people off, and if we had cars or trucks on or something, we'd get them off. And then so we went up on the high tide and I didn't realize that it would take them so long at the post office. They were going up to get the mail, as well as take things up on the shore. But they went up to there and they had to wait, because a lot of the people were looking for their mail too from one of the ships. So when they got back, I looked back and there wasn't any water around us. And it was about the middle of the ship I could see just dry land up there, dry beach, and I thought my gosh, we're going to have a hard time getting off this thing by pulling the anchor. Well it happens to be

that the bottom of that inlet there was a sandy bottom, and it didn't have a lot of stuff to catch, and your anchor often times would just drag along if it had pressure against it. So when I got them to pull on the anchor, it started coming towards me, the anchor towards us instead of us to the anchor because we were up so far. And it thought well if we do this, we're going to drag the anchor so far we'll never get off even at high tide. So I said we'll just cut down the engines, stop everything, we'll just wait until high tide. High tide is about every twelve hours or so. So while we were there, we got further and further out so that actually, probably the nearest water was from here to across the street. And our boat was up here, and the water was way out yonder.

DM:

Maybe fifty feet or so.

RC:

Oh yeah, at least that long. And we couldn't therefore flush the toilets, we didn't have any water to do that. We didn't have any water to cool our diesel engines. So we just cut out everything, and just sat there. And the bad thing about it, was all the Marines and people like there up on shore, every time they'd come to the post office, would just hang over the side, laugh at us and point at us, deride us because we were up that far out of the water. And so we got to where we would even look over the side, we stayed inside the decks, so the people couldn't see us. And so finally we knew the tide was highest, and we were able to pull ourselves off. But that was—

DM:

Well that could have happened to anyone.

RC:

Oh yeah.

DM:

And there's so many factors—how much weight you have on the LCT, and the type of beach, and how frequently the tide comes in, and how high it comes in—goodness.

RC:

That's right, and the other thing I remember, another thing an idiotic person I was, was that they told us that we needed to call them over there to the side to the water tower, and tell them we needed to pick up some fresh water. And so they, okay they'd let us know when to come in. Well our signalman had left, he was one of those he had enough points, he left early. And so I had written down in Morse code, the dot, dashes, and so I was able to get that to them through my flags, I remember that much about it. So anyway, when they called us, the guy up there was just doing this, he did it all day long, and he could send a message, three books in ten minutes. Well he was flashing and everything, and I didn't know what he was saying, I just saw him flashing

his thing. And I tried to stop him, and tried to get him to slow down—well he wouldn't do it. So anyway I said, "Okay, fellows we got to go. I don't know whether they told us to come in or wait, but we got to go." So we went over, you had to pull up to their pier to get the water into our tanks. So we pulled on in, and made in there alright, which was the first concern to me. But the fellows that were guiding it down there took us in there pretty easily. We got over to fill up the tank, and then went back out again, and nobody said anything to us, bad or anything. I guess they figured we figured out their message and told them to come in. But that was another thing that I think—how in the world could I have been an officer and not have anybody on board—well that was because they transferred them—but anybody even know how to get a signal.

DM:

But you can't think of everything. So much of it sounds like it just would take experience.

RC:

Yeah, it does, it does, it really does.

DM:

What date did you arrive and what date did you leave there? I'm trying to get an idea of the year that you were there.

RC:

Okay, I went overseas in October of '45, and I came back in—it must have been—well there's something to look at for a minute—

[shuffling papers]

DM:

October of '45, and then about a year later?

RC:

About a year later.

DM:

Okay. Well so all this was happening after V-J Day, after the war.

RC:

Yeah.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

It was right after the war that we got there, because everybody was real anxious to get home.

DM:

Were they still finding entrenched Japanese in that area anywhere?

RC:

Oh yeah, they did. Yeah up the rivers they had some, and they told us never to go up that way. Although I think one guy came in close enough to ping a rifle shot of our boat.

DM:

Is that right? Golly.

RC:

Yeah I was over there until—I was on LCT 734 initially, and then 909 secondly, and then LCT 1167, and it was decommissioned in Subic Bay in June of '46.

DM:

Okay. LCT by the way is what? Landing—

RC:

Landing craft tank.

DM:

Tank.

RC:

Yeah.

DM:

Okay, yeah.

RC:

Yeah.

DM:

Okay. And then—

RC:

I'll let you have these, the dates and everything later on when we finish with this if you'd like that.

[Shuffling papers]

DM:

And so you return to the states after that I guess, were you still in the Navy for a while?

RC:

Yes, they said that they would get me out as soon as they could, because they were trying to do that, and they asked me where I wanted to go to be discharged. Well, I decided that it'd be a lot of fun to go back to Chicago.

DM:

Okay.

RC:

They said you can go to Dallas and get discharged, you can go to Chicago and get discharged. If you go to Chicago, we'll pay your train ticket back to Lubbock. Or if you go to Dallas, we'll give you a train ticket from there. But I thought well that was a lot of fun, I met some nice people in Chicago, I decided I'd go back there. So I went back there, and that's where I was discharged from there. And then they sent me back on leave, and then discharged me while I was on leave to Lubbock. And I was discharged—well, again you can look at some of these things and see, but this is the map there of all the places, I think I wrote a map there.

DM:

I saw a lot of your notes on there.

RC:

Yeah.

DM:

But you were discharged in '46 then.

RC:

Yeah.

DM:

Okay. Well why don't we go ahead and stop for today at this point?

RC:
Okay.

DM:
I know you have a schedule coming up ?

RC:
Yeah.

DM:
And it's a good stopping place.

RC:
Yeah okay.

DM:
When we get back, we'll talk about your education, I think you went back to Texas Tech, got your degree in zoology I believe, and then into medical.

RC:
Yeah.

DM:
So this will be a logical place to stop.

RC:
Okay, that's good, that's fine with me.

DM:
Do you want to add anything before I stop for today?

RC:
I don't think so, I've enjoyed this.

DM:
Okay, me too.

End of interview