

**Oral History Interview of  
Betty Carr**

**Interviewed by: David Marshall  
January 26, 2017  
Lubbock, Texas**

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## Transcript Overview:

This interview features Betty Carr. Carr talks about growing up in West Texas, marrying her husband, and returning to Texas Tech to complete her degree later in her life.

**Length of Interview:** 01:12:31

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Transcript Page</b>	<b>Time Stamp</b>
Background	5	00:00:00
High school years and Texas Tech	6	00:04:44
Meeting husband	9	00:08:44
Husband in medical school	11	00:14:54
Women's auxiliary	15	00:23:23
Genealogy and travel	17	00:30:23
Women's organizations	21	00:39:55
Going back to school	25	00:45:32
Social opportunities at Raider Ranch	33	01:04:45
Family	35	01:04:45

### Keywords

Lubbock Texas, social groups, Texas Tech University

**David Marshall (DM):**

The date is January 26 of 2017, and this is David Marshall interviewing Betty Carr at her home at Raider Ranch, Lubbock, Texas. Is that what you call this portion of it as well?

**Betty Carr (BC):**

Well, we're in the bridge.

DM:

In the bridge okay, okay, Well I just wanted to talk to you a little bit today about, especially about some of your work in service and social organizations over the years. But before we start that, can you just give me a little bit of biographical information, like your full name including your maiden name and then your date and place of birth?

BC:

Right okay. Well my full name is Betty Jean Sullivan Carr and Carr is C-a-r-r and I was born in Amarillo, Texas, and December 21 of 1927. So I've just had my eighty-ninth birthday, but my husband is ninety-one so we make a pair (laughs).

DM:

Did you grow up in Amarillo or come to Lubbock?

BC:

No, I grew up in Amarillo. Mother and dad were married in Oklahoma, and they moved to Amarillo in the early twenties. My dad had a job with my uncle who had a Mann Bakery in Amarillo, which was really the main bakery in Amarillo...

DM:

The name of it was what?

BC:

Mann, M-a-n-n mother's name was Mann, Gladys Mann, and I knew him, but I didn't know my grandfather, so Uncle Jim was my grandfather, my great uncle Jim, and then I came along there. My sister was eight years older and born in Oklahoma, so we were living in Amarillo when I was born at the Northwest Texas Hospital, and Daddy had a café, not a restaurant but a café because it has stools, and they didn't have a lot of things that we have now, like I'd fold napkins because they didn't have napkin dispensers. But it was just one aisle, truck drivers liked to eat there, all the bus drivers ate with them, and they were between two big hotels in Amarillo, the Herring Hotel was behind them and then The Anthony, I think it was—The Capital was a block away and then the train station was two or three blocks away. So I got to see the circus when it came to town and when the Pabst Blue Ribbon horses came.

DM:  
Horses?

BC:  
Yeah they always came down our street.

DM:  
Oh the Clydesdales, is that it? Yeah.

BC:  
Uh-huh, and they were next door to a grade three movie, so I saw probably every cowboy movie made in Hollywood in the thirties because I could just go over there sit, it was my babysitter sort of, and Mother was going to be a cashier, but Daddy had stomach troubles so he kept looking for other ways to earn money, and he had two brothers in Oklahoma that one of them wound up making bleach in the garage and it turned out to be very successful, so they talked my Dad into coming over and financing them because he was always the one who knew how to handle money and he made a very big success of it. But that took us—we were in Oklahoma then they decided they needed a place in Texas, so Mother suggested Lubbock because my Dad was of the age that didn't believe in women going to college, and so I wasn't going to get to go to college, and I had good grades and all my friends were going to OU, and I assumed I was going but Daddy had no plans. But then when he was looking for a place to move, my mother said, "How about Lubbock?" and he said, "Well you know that might be a good place to go," and then after all the plans were going and we were moving to Lubbock, Mother said, "Well you know there's a college in Lubbock, how about Betty Jean going to Texas Tech?" and Daddy said, "Well sure, It's there" so otherwise I got to college, you know. But—

DM:  
Oh okay, what year was it that you started to college?

BC:  
Well I graduated from high school in 1946.

DM:  
Was that Amarillo High School, one high school?

BC:  
I didn't go—no I didn't go to, see I was in Bristow, Oklahoma, which is between Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

DM:

Oklahoma, so yeah so it was—

BC:

I was one of the cheerleaders there. But it wasn't one of those where the class chose them, it's just that the two top fellas that kind of led our class, of the debate team, they decided they wanted to be a cheerleader, so they picked two girls and I was one of the girls they picked, and I knew nothing of football, I mean nothing, absolutely. I was not very good—I was okay on the cheers, but on what they were doing I had no idea (laughs).

DM:

Someone just prompted you when to cheer, is that it?

BC:

Yeah, well there were four of us you know and then the boys knew. I was chosen to speak at graduation, there were four of us and I was the lead speaker for graduation. We had seventy-six that graduated. We were a town of six thousand people.

DM:

Okay, okay.

BC:

I liked a small town.

DM:

Oh yeah.

BC:

My children always said, "Oh mother how could you like a small town?" But compared to Amarillo, it was much smaller, but I very much enjoyed it then, and high school I'd really, I think I had, in some cases, better teachers than I had in college. For some reason that's where they had lived for that time period.

DM:

Okay, were there interests of certain studies that interested you in high school?

BC:

Well, English and history always did. I am no good at math. We had geometry and algebra, and I've never understood—algebra I loved, it was a puzzle, and I love puzzles, so I had no problem with it. I had to take it again in college. I did not do as well in college as I did in high school. I

had a foreign teacher taught algebra. I passed, I mean I was okay, but it never had the charm that it had in high school.

DM:

You know so much depends on the teacher you have.

BC:

Oh it does.

DM:

In every discipline really, in history as well.

BC:

Oh you know I had such excellent teachers, and we weren't a big class, there were probably maybe forty of us. Well no, there were seventy that graduated, but it's a farm, peanut country, so there're a lot of farms around it, and we had a football team, we were the Purple Pirates, was the name of our football team.

DM:

The Purple Pirates.

BC:

The Purple Pirates, if you can imagine. But then we moved to Amarillo, and I started college in 1946, and I met my husband, Bob, I met Bob Carr before school actually started.

DM:

Now you said you moved to Amarillo, you meant Lubbock?

BC:

I meant Lubbock, yeah, when we moved to Lubbock. That's one thing about moving to a resident home as we're in now, I've noticed I don't remember quite as well, and I say things sometimes that I'm not thinking.

DM:

Well, I said the same thing a little while ago, I said Amarillo instead of Oklahoma.

BC:

No, David I hate to tell you, but as you get older your memory does something.



DM:

(Laughs) I'm already there, Betty.

BC:

It kind of slips.

DM:

I'm already there with you.

BC:

It takes both Bob and I to remember something, we try to remember everything, and he does so well for being ninety-one. But I met him before school began; he was just out of the Navy.

DM:

Well I'll be how did you meet him?

BC:

There's a story, do you want this on the tape?

DM:

Yeah if you don't mind saying.

BC:

Well, I don't mind saying at all because we laughed about it. I went to a meeting held for people coming in as entering freshman, and it was in the agriculture building out at Tech in their auditorium, and I'd met two girls that day, somehow we were all new freshman, and I could drive a car, but they were in a dorm, and I said, "Well let me come by and pick you up, and we'll go." So we went to the meeting and heard whatever they had to say and school, and class had not started, and we came out and the girl said, "Well why don't we go get a Coke or something?" We were all agreeable, so then one of the girls went, "I've lost my purse I must've left it inside the auditorium." So we thought well we'll go run back up right quick. Well we went up and the building was locked, and we didn't know what we were going to do, it had her tuition money in it, and so she really was hurting, she was afraid, and about that time a car drove up, and three boys got out and started putting up signs about a party over at the Methodist student center, and we decided that they were putting up a sign for a church party, it was all right to ask them to help us. So we ask them, and sure enough one of them went around to the back of the building, found an open window, climbed in the window and came in the auditorium and her purse was in the aisle. So she had her money back, so he came back out and about that time—but first I should say that of the three of us, one of them was a strikingly attractive blonde, very well built, and very pretty. But as the one came back, and she had her money, the boys said, "Let's go get a

Coke,” and we said, “Oh fine we’ll go out and get in the car.” Well, we went out and I got in the front seat because I just usually was in the front seat, and the attractive girl got in the backseat, and all three boys got in the backseat with her, then Bob remembered that he was driving (laughter). We’ve used this story with our children, our grandchildren, our great grandchildren because it was so funny, you know, and so he drove and we had an evening together. I remained friends with the pretty girl, and I haven’t seen her for years, she was from a farming community just about thirty miles from Lubbock, and I used to spend the night with her some. But that’s how I met Bob, and he would walk me to class sometimes, and our romance grew and by Christmas we were pinned, so we knew things were moving along that direction, and that’s when we dressed up to go to football games. You wouldn’t believe it because we wore hats, we wore heels and hose when we went to the game, and now of course they wear whatever they’re comfortable in, and that can amount to anything. Of course they’re cutting down on what you can carry in because we had no problem with drinking, it just wasn’t a problem. If it was, I didn’t know about it. What I’m saying is a lot of the stuff could’ve been going on. Bob’s brother was county attorney then, and I used to tease Wagner that if he’d ever go through the men’s dorm and look out the window, we thought they just hung it out the window, their booze they hung out, and he’d say, “Oh no they wouldn’t do anything like that.” Well, of course they did, but college has changed. So I had the two years then in college, freshman and sophomore year, and I did make whatever it is you make for the junior class. [phone rings] Now I hope Bob’s getting that. Yeah.

DM:

I’ll pause it if I need to.

BC:

Pause it, pause it.

DM:

Do you need to get it?

BC:

—answer outside our range, but if somebody called last night, and like a dummy I raced—

DM:

Okay so—

BC:

So we married in the summer of 1948.

DM:

Your sophomore year?

BC:

The end of my sophomore year, my father-in-law was the only one that really fussed about me leaving school. Today that was fine, but I'd gotten two years he didn't plan for me to have anyway, so he's a good man but that's just—but we got married, and so we've been married sixty-eight years.

DM:

Is that right? Yeah.

BC:

I'm hoping we'll make it to seventy. Bob had a grandfather that they celebrated—they didn't celebrate—but they had their seventy-sixth. He was a Civil War hero, both of them in their late nineties, but they did have their seventy-sixth—that I'm not aiming for, that's just too old (laughter).

DM:

I don't think I've ever heard of a seventy-sixth.

BC:

Well, and that's why I say that the newspaper article about it—he was in Commerce, Texas—was that they didn't celebrate but they had it because they probably were as old as they were. He had been in the—sixteen, he was in the Civil War, and both he was a prisoner of war and my grandfather was a prisoner of war in the Civil War. That's some of the things you find out when you do genealogy.

DM:

And you have done a lot of that?

BC:

I've done a lot of genealogy and traced it back to American Revolutionary War, and then supposedly to the ones that crossed in the water. I haven't done that really too much. I always liked the genealogy, the hobby of genealogy, because you're never going to find it all, and whatever you find is interesting, and then a lot of people will find something and take it on as theirs, you can't always do that. Because there may be two, three Tom Johnsons, and you don't know which one you belong to.

DM:

Right, some people seem to fashion it the way they want it you know.

BC:

Uh-huh, and they say, “Oh I’m kin to so and so.” Well we are kin to Dolly Parton through—is when the blood tests have started coming out, and the kids have laughed because we were kin to Dolly Parton on the wrong side of the marriage bed, if that’s as good as any. They thought this, “Does that give us tickets to Dollywood?” And I said, “No it doesn’t.”

DM:

Or maybe a job at Dollywood because she hired a bunch of her own relatives to work at Dollywood.

BC:

Well she probably—oh the Partons are big in, is it Alabama or Tennessee? One of them.

DM:

Or what she said was, “I offer jobs to my relatives, but most of them didn’t want a job.” (Laughs)

BC:

They probably had the liquor thing going, you know, still in the woods. But that was fun. But I worked for an insurance company at first in A. Harris building in Dallas because Bob was in medical school, he’d had his freshman year, and he was in his second year. Whether that’s good or bad, he often said he should’ve waited until at the end of his second year because those two years were so hard. But we got by, and of course they were there only in the school in the winter, regular school time, so he always had to get a job during the summer, and that first summer he worked in a grocery store, and I was still with the insurance company, but then I found out that the VA paid better, the VA Clinic.

DM:

Okay.

BC:

And so I was able to get a job with them and that increased my—so I was earning \$212 month, and we paid forty dollars for our apartment, it was under OPA which at that time meant they couldn’t raise the rent, and we had a murphy bed that came down in the living room, that was our guest room, and we had a bedroom. The window panes were not too strong, and we used to stuff Kleenex in all of the holes to keep the apartment so it wasn’t so cold because we had no money, we got government money for Bob, they paid his tuition and bought his books, and then I worked so that we ate. But we never ate out unless we had members of the family who came to

Dallas, and I loved—Bob had one brother, and his wife always wanted to try the new places, and so we knew when they were coming to see us we were going to get to go eat at some really nice restaurant. So we got through that in Dallas and really always thought that we'd be there because we were fond of the town, but then when he filed for different places and went for interviews in a number of places, he was accepted in Florida, in Denver, and in Parkland. They usually were accepted to Parkland, most everybody, but we decided to take the one in Denver, so that we could have gone outside of the state. So we went to Denver to Colorado General out in a nice area of town, and I worked across the street in the VA Hospital, and he worked at the Colorado General. I could look down and watch him playing tennis, you know it worked out.

DM:

Isn't that great? Okay.

BC:

He got \$30 a month was his pay, and he's on thirty-six and off twelve, so life was kind of different, and I worked on a neurology, psychiatry ward. I was a ward secretary, so I typed all of the minutes and everything that the doctors dictated between the two. We had been at Fort—I think it was Fort Collins, outside of Denver and they built a new hospital across the street from Colorado General. and that's where I transferred to, and then we had an apartment right there, half a block away.

DM:

Oh nice.

BC:

So we were okay, it was cold. But the funny thing on living there is that I got tired of the mountains.

DM:

Really?

BC:

I was so used to being in Amarillo and Lubbock where you could see forever. Well, you can't do that in Colorado, and I just wished they'd get out of the way, so I could see. But we enjoyed our year there, and were having our first baby, which created a problem, it was due the week that Bob was to leave Denver and go to back to Dallas to be a resident at Texas Children's, so I had a choice of going ahead to Dallas by myself, stay in Denver by myself, or coming home and having the baby in Lubbock. So I chose to come home and had our first child, Robert Vincent, in Lubbock, and that worked out best for us. So then we lived in Dallas for a couple of years while he was the chief resident, we got \$76 a month.

DM:

Quite an increase.

BC:

It was quite an increase, and we enjoyed Dallas very much, but he did some of the doctors house calls, that's when they did house calls, and that plus the hospital visits was just too much, he didn't like that, in Dallas it was too big. So he thought it be best if he came back home, and that's when Dr. Donaldson here in Lubbock was asking for somebody to come back to help him. So we came back with him, and next to West Texas Hospital had a children's clinic there. From there they built a clinic on Avenue Q and that was the first time that anybody had left a hospital area and moved out. That was the thing going, and everybody was at one hospital or the other hospital, which was Methodist, and women didn't mix much either. So that's kind of where my community work began because by then we had one child and had another one along about the same time. We had an auxiliary that became active here in Lubbock which was the Women's Auxiliary to the Crosby County, Crosby, Lubbock, one more county, Lubbock, Crosby—

DM:

Hockley?

BC:

No.

DM:

Lynn?

BC:

No, Hale? No it wouldn't be Hale.

DM:

Hale to the north Lynn to the south.

BC:

Maybe it was just Crosby? Yeah, but anyway, this was a medical society and the Southwest Collection has the first minutes of those many meetings that the society had. Dr. Hunt and Dr. English were behind that.

DM:

Okay so you were in the auxiliary to the—?

BC:

To the Crosby County medical society, Crosby-Lubbock, yeah, and that became really the place that the women got to know each other. Otherwise we wouldn't have known them.

DM:

Well what did you do as part of this auxiliary. What were your activities?

BC:

Well I was every office I think except treasurer, but I was president, along towards the first. We really weren't doing anything, and then they took on the eye problem, we used to go into kindergartens and test the children's eyes for, we had teams, and got credit for doing that for our auxiliary, and we did that for probably five or six years to determine eye deficiencies among the young children, and then we also had—we went out to rest homes, or nursing homes, which we then had those, we didn't have retirement centers, and we visited out there, and then we also went to the daycare that was established, and I'm trying to think of the name of the lady that established that daycare. But you all probably have much on her, and she's long gone, it was down on Third or Fourth Street in an old house that they kept children very inexpensively for working mothers which was good. Before that they didn't have any form of care for the children, so we were looking at eye problems and the children that were left and women that were, kind of, had nobody calling on them in the nursing homes.

DM:

Were the members of this auxiliary all wives of physicians?

BC:

Yeah, they were all wives. When the medical school came to town, we had a problem there and made the decision—and I don't know why they made that decision—that the doctors of the physicians employed at the medical school were not invited to our auxiliary, I still don't understand that, now they are.

DM:

That the wives of the physicians at Health Sciences?

BC:

Yeah, the ones who went to the hospital and house calls, the private physicians, were all belonged to the Crosby-Lubbock Medical Society, but the teachers' wives at the medical school were not part of it. They formed their own, so it came out all right, they formed their own. I don't know whether it was somebody in charge of everything thought perhaps theirs was just education, whereas our husbands were in practice. Looking back I wonder, but it's just what happened. Because before when we were in the two hospitals, really our friends were in the same

hospital, we really had a division—those who went to Methodist and those who went to West Texas. It probably happened everywhere, but they promised when they brought the medical school here, and that was really, I'm trying to think, Elizabeth—see when you get to be eighty-nine, you can't think of people's names.

DM:

Would that have been in the early seventies?

BC:

I can't remember. Bob's brother, Wagner, came here to help the opening, they all promised that they would—none of their physicians would go to a private practice and be competition for—maybe that's what the problem was, was competition—and go out and practice. Well, they stopped that a number of years ago because a lot of the physicians that taught here went out into private practice. So it changed. Medicine has always changed.

DM:

Rapidly.

BC:

Yeah, rapidly because so many things—we have one granddaughter who's finished college and she's now—it's a two year education too—she will run the sonar equipment, they're using sonar so much now in surgery that they need somebody there to handle the machinery, and she's been told she'll be able to find a job wherever she wants to go. However, she's thinking of getting married, and that's going to get her to settle down, so—she's looking to marry a young man that is the oldest of nine children and—

DM:

That sounds like instant family (laughter).

BC:

Yeah, it does, and I've always said that Jenny loves babies. When her sister had babies she just loved those babies, and I said, well that's the one that's going to have the most children (laughter) and she probably will. But Bob being in practice with Dr. Donaldson and Dr. Ellis, as I say built their clinic, and were there for many years until Dr. Donaldson, the oldest, died, and then Noah moved out on Eighty-Second I think, and Bob was by himself, and then eventually he gave it up, and we did that Locum Tenens. Now Locum Tenens which is L-o-c-u-m and then T-e-n-e-n-s was where you worked for an agency that a doctor calls in, and he's going to be gone for a couple of weeks, and he needs somebody to take his practice, or he's swamped, and he needs help and he calls in, and he pays them for finding somebody and furnishing it, and then they go for an interview, and the agency decides who they'll carry, and I went with him when he



interviewed, and we enjoyed it, and saw lots of country. Then it was something that he thought—he had always thought he'd like to do that. It turned out it was something because Bob and I were both kind of sociable people, that we enjoyed it and wherever we went I was kind of the recreation. I found things that we did. We went to county fairs and to a revolutionary war battle.

DM:

Oh I'd figured you would see some historic sights.

BC:

Oh we just went everywhere! And then when we were in Virginia I went to a course on genealogy. They had a small university in this town, and they had a Saturday meeting. Well, I got hooked, so from then on, Bob would choose places that I wanted to go, and then I could use their library and their resources and meet some of the people, and it was just great.

DM:

That is wonderful. What years were y'all involved in that, was he involved in that program?

BC:

Well, he left private practice, I want to say 1980, and we did that for oh probably two years. He would go wherever he didn't have to take the state exam, that they'd recognize Texas, and so we went to Ohio fairs, which was interesting because Ohio is dark, always, it's just a dark—

DM:

Because it's so far north or—?

BC:

I don't know, (laughs) but of all of our days were really kind of gray and everything, it wasn't like we expected. But there we learned about the Amish and went to places that—they have restaurants with great food, and we enjoyed that, they had a large genealogy section that I didn't go to because I didn't have anybody from Ohio. So from then, we went to primarily North Carolina to Virginia, Texas, I think that's the ones that most—because we went so many times to North Carolina, both of our people were from North Carolina.

DM:

Mine too, yeah.

BC:

Yeah and so I could just find it wherever I would go, where we'd go.

DM:

Sure how wonderful. Were you down in the coastal area or back in the Appalachian?

BC:

Wherever, wherever. But it was funny, one time he went to Fayetteville, and Fayetteville has an army post right there, I don't know what it is, but this doctor was a black doctor, and all of his patients were quite surprised when they came in, and here was this white man that was the doctor, but they liked him, and they got along with him, and it was great because it was just about twenty miles from where one of my Sullivan families were.

DM:

Oh really?

BC:

So it was interesting, I had thought that I would somehow meet doctor wives that lived in the town, but we didn't. The only time that we really had contact with one family, we were in Waco, and the man had, a very nice doctor pediatrician, was of the Jewish faith, and he had married a gentile, and his family had disowned him. So they went out of town on a trip, and his father died, and they called me trying to find out where he was, but I had not been told where he was and the office had been told not to tell them, and so he did not come back for his father's funeral, and I said that was so sad because it wouldn't have happened that way if they'd recognized that the marriage was fine.

DM:

Right, exactly.

BC:

But Waco was interesting, as I say, Charlotte was my favorite of all the places that we went to and—

DM:

Charlotte, North Carolina.

BC:

And Virginia was. We were just outside of Norfolk, and I had gone down in that area near the shipyard to a history house, and the people when I went in, they said, "Where'd you park your car?" And I said, "Well, it's just out front," and she said, "Well now the shift changes in fifteen minutes at the shipyard, and you're going to see more people you ever thought existed coming down the street, and when that whatever it was, buzzer or something, signaled that work was over, I mean there were four streets full of people, full of people."

DM:

You couldn't drive (laughs). It's like Texas Tech during a passing period.

BC:

Yeah, you know, I just couldn't get over where all those people came from because they had me move the car around to the back of this building, so it was safe. Lots of places when we flew, they furnished us a car—

DM:

Very nice.

BC:

—so they were always—in Ohio, I had a maid that came in to do the cleaning, so we enjoyed it, we didn't meet the people which I had anticipated. I'd meet some of the people that worked at the office but—oh like, we went down to a border town, it wasn't Laredo, it was some little town right up on the border. Well, I can't think of—there was a fella there that was accused of fraud or something, there was a big deal about him, but that may be before your time.

DM:

On down there's McAllen, there's Brownsville and then on up—

BC:

A little further the other way.

DM:

There's Eagle Pass, and they—

BC:

Well, this is just outside of Odessa you have to go through Odessa to get—

DM:

Presidio, way up there?

BC:

No.

DM:

It's on down, okay, Eagle Pass—

BC:

Not too far—Pecos is up here, and it's down here, whatever it was, that's where we learned that truck drivers leave their motors on all night long. I didn't know that. But they had us in a motel, and the truckers stayed there.

DM:

And you heard the (imitates noise of truck motor).

BC:

All night long! I thought why don't they just cut them off? (Laughs) Which shows that I learned some of the things on this.

DM:

Well, what a wonderful experience to bounce around and see different people and different places and—

BC:

Oh it was! It was.

DM:

Did you have trouble with uprooting and moving so often?

BC:

No, because we didn't really move, we just took what we carried, and we got snowed in a couple of times in Ohio. The lights in our car were on the whole time that the snow storm was going on, we didn't know about that. But we discovered stores that we didn't know existed, heard music in Charlotte from when we went to the symphony. We went to the zoo, down this place along the border down south where I can't think of it, and a tree frog won first place in the unusual pet contest.

DM:

At the zoo?

BC:

No, they had a fair, had a tri-county fair, and they had a competition of the pets they had, and the tree frog won. So you know it was interesting to do all these things because I'm a reader, and I work jigsaw puzzles, so I'd get—I even worked a puzzle that didn't have a picture. I didn't think I could do it, but it wasn't that hard after I got started, and I still work them. That's one thing that they have in retirement places, they play cards like Skip-Bo and other card games and chicken foot which is played with dominos.

DM:

I know that game.

BC:

Oh you know? They play every day, there's two days a week they play chicken foot, and they play the Wii bowling, you know, where you're bowling into the television set.

DM:

No, I don't know that.

BC:

We had competition on that, and one time the aisle won and this last time our side won because we—in retirement living they occupy things, but they have a really nice library over at the club, which is independent living. But they didn't have one over here, and I can't really walk that easily over there, so I kept after them until they finally got me some bookcases, and we now have a library of mysteries primarily.

DM:

Okay, good for you. Well how wonderful, I love all of the opportunities here for social events, for example.

BC:

Well now, I was a cub scout mother and a camp fire bluebirds, and our sons were in Boy Scouts, and my grandson got his Eagle Scout this summer, and he has been hired at Tech by the Tech Alumni Association to work that area out in there, and the one thing that got him, that the wife knew him, the woman hiring knew the Boy Scouts in her sons' troop, and she knew Matthew. She said she was going through the papers she saw, "Matthew Coffard [?] Well I know Matt, and she just hired him (laughter). So for being an Eagle Scout and somebody she knew, he got hired working out there. He's a freshman at Tech.

DM:

Okay. You were involved in all of those organizations.

BC:

Yes Women's Club I was a treasurer there twice, I enjoyed that. At the church, I was a secretary to elementary—

DM:

Is this First—?

BC:

First Methodist Church, I was secretary for forty years to the elementary, and then twenty years I was archivist, chair of the archives, because they didn't have one, they had everything on two shelves, and I was chair of the hundredth anniversary at our church, and so when I found that that's all they had, which our church was going to be—well, they were a hundred years old, we had to have an archive. So we started the archives and got it started, and it's going great guns now with two people to replace me (laughs). They're getting ready to have their a hundred and twenty-fifth.

DM:

Oh is that right?

BC:

Yeah.

DM:

And Covenant is having its hundredth?

BC:

Yeah hundredth.

DM:

And they've interviewed Bob.

BC:

Yeah, they interviewed he and Barbara Arrington because of Joe Arrington Cancer Center. I think it was probably her money that started—is it all right to say that? I guess it is. I think so.

DM:

Yeah, yeah.

BC:

But through life, I guess, I took speech in high school, and I liked people. I can't do a lot of things, I mean you have to have some talents to do some things. I don't know what my talent is, I don't think you have to know, you just have to do what you like to do.

DM:

Have a good mix of talents.

BC:

Yeah, yeah and I got that library. I mean I thought for a while I wasn't going to get it, but about eight months later—

DM:

You mean the one here?

BC:

Uh-huh.

DM:

Good for you.

BC:

I had two shelves, but it was full immediately and I'm already bargaining with him for a second one.

DM:

All right. Keep working on it.

BC:

He gave me two, and I've got all of the mysteries and men Cussler, [Clive] C-u-s-s-l-e-r, I have more Cussler books. Here we have the problem of macular degeneration and eye problems, and so some can't read, some can read only the big print, but I've got one lady that's reading seven books a week.

DM:

Really?

BC:

Yeah, she lives above me.

DM:

Golly, you sure needed a library.

BC:

We really did, she knew about that one over there, but she just never went over there.

DM:

Right, right.

BC:

So it was something because I curl up with a book if time allows me.

DM:

You started the archives at First Methodist, you've started the library here. You had—wasn't your genealogy collection at Mahon for a while or was that, was it part of that?

BC:

No, no.

DM:

Okay, it's a pretty good—pretty big collection.

BC:

No, it hadn't been on show or anything. I do have a battle, the Kings Mountain battle in Georgia, both my people and Bob's people fought in it. His fought for the king because the king had given them the land, and mine were Scotch-Irish, and they'd fight anybody, but they fought for America, and so they had this big, big fight, and Bob's people were killed, and mine got a promotion for their bravery and Warlick, Bob's brother, used to say, "Your people killed our people!" And I said, "Well, you were fighting on the wrong side!" (Laughter)

DM:

Starting the revolution all over again, huh?

BC:

Yeah, so you know it's just kind of worked out at that—

DM:

It's so intriguing though, to dig that up.

BC:

There's always something to do I'm not going to—I don't watch TV much, we've watched more FOX than we have ever for this election, you know, that I'm glad we're through with that except I'm not sure we're through with it. They're still—they're in a big mess today about that wall with all of that. But Bob and I are so glad that the two of us are here, that we're fortunate.

DM:

Yes, yes, absolutely, and have had good life.



BC:

Yeah, a good life and compatible, it worked out. Since we're both here, it's good that we get along with each other (laughs).

DM:

When y'all, and I know this moving around, I think it solidifies a relationship as well, it's just so many shared experiences. But somewhere, when did that Locum Tenens, when did that end?

BC:

That ended—well he was working, all of a sudden, all he was doing was working downtown at the children's clinic downtown.

DM:

Oh here in Lubbock?

BC:

For the community. And he was working there, and then he retired from there when he turned eighty, and he was doing ADHD, and I told him I said, "Nobody's going to spend an hour with a patient like you were." He said, "No, at eighty I'm old enough that it's time to retire" because a lot of doctors work on, and he didn't think that was right.

DM:

Right, okay. Well I know that you came to Tech because that's when I met you back in about '84 or so in grad school.

BC:

Well, the kids had always told me, "Mother are you going to go back to school?" Because I had left after my sophomore year, and I loved school, loved school, which I'd like to put a plug in there. My birthday's in December. That meant that I couldn't start school when I was six because I was almost seven, and so mother put me in a Catholic school, and I loved it, I loved the first grade, I loved my teacher—and she didn't remain a nun, she went back to having a family. But then Mother—after that first year at the Catholic school—she put me in the second grade, and I was in that second grade for about a month, maybe two months, and the teacher called Mother in, and she said, "Now Betty's not failing, but she is trying so hard to keep up. Why don't you let her go back to the first grade and just be back there with them?" And mother said, "Okay." Best thing she ever did because I loved school from then on and it was easy.

DM:

Oh good, good.

BC:

And it was easy, you know, I enjoyed all of it, wasn't any good at math, but (laughs) and I was fussed at for talking too much sometimes in class, you know. But anyway, the kids kept saying, "When are you going to go back to school?" And Bobby went into the registrar and he said, "My mother's thinking about coming back to school, and I think her records are in the dead files." And they looked them up, and they said, "No they're out here, and they're ready for her." So I went back to school just as Bryan went back to school, he was already there, and I went back, and I took six hours each semester and got through that. Was meeting with one of the counselors, I don't know what they call that department, those counselors that meet with different students—

DM:

Admissions maybe or—

BC:

Well somebody must've given them my name and you know, so they were—I was on television, trying to show that you could come back to school and they had three or four people come back and talk about it. Several people saw that and came back to school. So I really was enjoying it, particularly folklore, and I even thought about getting a master's in folklore, but they didn't have that program and then I got hooked into history.

DM:

Were you working with Warren Walker on folklore?

BC:

Yeah, he was so excited. He thought maybe I was going to do that, but there just wasn't enough to build on.

DM:

Right, right.

BC:

So I didn't—I decided that history was the safest thing to do it, and of course about that time I had Horizon Girls which was your Campfire Girls, and one of the girls says, "Ms. Carr you're going back to school, won't you be older than the students?" And I ran into her mother after I'd started class, and I said, "Would you tell your daughter that I'm not only older than the students, I'm older than the teachers!" (laughter) And they like to have those older students in class.

DM:

Oh they're always good students, always good students.

BC:

And my kid says, "Mother, don't loan your notes!" And I said—I had done that a couple of times because they had jobs they had to get to or something and I fell for their sad story, you know, and I loaned them my notes, but I got them all back. But that was, we laugh because we said we didn't know where people were going to park before too long because I was parking at the coliseum to come to class, and it's probably full now, I don't know where they're parking.

DM:

Oh well they've built commuter lots way out.

BC:

Oh yeah.

DM:

Oh golly. Almost to health sciences center, well actually yeah way out that direction, way west.

BC:

Well, I would advise anybody that's thinking about going back, because I so enjoyed being with young people. Well, I thought it would be different, I thought the boys were going to open my door for me, they didn't.

DM:

Things had changed since the first time?

BC:

And then I thought well, they'll watch their language around me. Well they didn't, (laughs) and so the world does—it grows along. But some of the students liked having me there, actually some didn't like me there. They wondered why I didn't just stay home. I don't know why. I think it was just the idea of older women I guess, I don't know because I enjoyed it and I was quiet, fairly quiet. I went to Assassinations, I went to that class, they only had it one year.

DM:

Who taught that, in history?

BC:

I can't think of his name but he was so afraid that he wouldn't look at his register because that was when Reagan was shot, and that John had gone to Tech.

DM:

John Hinckley.

BC:

And he was scared to death, he says, "What if that man was in that class?" Well, unless he had taught it the year before; I knew he wasn't in the class that I was in.

DM:

They came in and interviewed Otto Nelson because John Hinckley Jr. was in his class on Nazi Germany, and then after the assassination attempt, yeah, I don't know who showed up CIA, FBI, I'm not sure. But yeah he was interviewed.

BC:

It was scary there for a while. I kept up with him too; as I say, I got along with the teachers great. I had to take Spanish again; I'm not a Spanish person, and I had taken it in high school, and here I was taking it again in college, and we had a teacher who never told us his name (laughs) and so finally I said, "We need to know what our teacher's name is." So I knew where his office was, so I went down to his office and asked a question or something about, but found out his name, so we could address him in class, you know. He taught Portuguese and they had gotten him to teach Spanish, and I still don't speak Spanish. I can speak the minimum of that, but even when we went to Mexico, you know.

DM:

What year did you get your bachelor's?

BC:

Got my Bachelors in '80.

DM:

'80 okay, well you took grad courses. Did you get a master's?

BC:

I got my masters in history, and I got that in '88 and enjoyed that. Of course, you had to park at night, you know, now a question, I probably wouldn't do it. But it was okay I parked by the music building and then walked through. The very last class I took before I got married I have to laugh about because it's trigonometry, and we were having, we had the teacher that was so forgetful of everything, but we were having the final in trigonometry, I never understood trigonometry. I have no idea what that was. And I remember how we were looking out the window you know, everybody was celebrating, it was the end of school, that's the very last—and I thought I'll just take this test and bygone I don't care what I make, but I'm through with it. And I think I made a B because the only C I made in college was I went, in PE, in the first semester you had to run around the bases in the baseball field, and I ran around it the first time. Then at

the close of the class, when you're through with the class, you run around it again and you show that you're faster, I didn't show that I was faster.

DM:

Oh. And you got a C for that.

BC:

So I got a C, yeah, which was dumb I thought. But you know just, if I'd known that I would've gone a little faster.

DM:

Or slower the first time.

BC:

Or something! Because that was my only C.

DM:

Oh my!

BC:

You know because I really liked school. Shakespeare I took with Dr. Berry, and his classes were such fun because he was so knowledgeable, but he may have been gone when you came.

DM:

I don't remember him. Did you have any folklore, with your folklore interest, did you have any courses with Ken Davis? Kenneth Davis?

BC:

I had a Kenneth Davis I had for history.

DM:

You had Kenneth Davis for history?

BC:

Uh-huh.

DM:

He might've taught history, but he was mostly an English professor.

BC:

Well, the class that we—well his was psychology in a way, I mean it was real odd in that you had to read the book and then explain the personality of who wrote it, and I liked him very much, but it wasn't really history either, I don't know what it was.

DM:

Did you have—what about Warren Walker did you have a number of courses with him?

BC:

Well, I had the folklore class.

DM:

What did you think about him? What was he like?

BC:

Liked it very much you know he had us write notes of sayings. So I wrote him a note and said, "Well I'm hearing some sayings that are really not very nice, do you want me to turn those in too?" And he wrote me back, "Yes because you want to hear what everybody is saying." And I said, "Oh I did, I put in some of those that were not very nice at all." No, we liked him very much; he was one of my favorite teachers. I had an English teacher that I really had who's—oh and by some mistake I took his favorite author to do the semester study of, and that was the wrong thing to do because he knew every side of that author, (laughter) I mean no matter what I did or what I said, it wasn't going to match him, and you know, as I say, you learn by doing with him. He was kind of hard, but then all through school I had teachers that were some that were great and then some that were not, they shouldn't have been there, you know.

DM:

Right, right.

BC:

And I think the children, I never had to make them study, they all studied, they all did well, I think. Bryan, our middle son, he's very opinionated, and so if he has trouble he made it so—I mean, I met with the counselors and said, "Isn't it just a personality conflict? You know between the two of y'all?" And they usually would say, "Yes it probably is." You know, and what it is, is just if he doesn't like a guy, he doesn't try to get along with him, so he never has seen the wisdom of that and he's—let's see he's fifty-nine, he's going to be sixty in February, he's never got that message, he's psychologist (laughter). You have to live with him, with that. But anyway, then when school was out and the kids were gone, we didn't have the empty nest syndrome at all, none, bye-bye.

DM:

But you saw them? Did you seem them?

BC:

We saw them all often, knew where they were. You know Bobby was in medical school and Bryan was in psychology school, and Julie had her horses. We went to a lot of horse things, and I'm afraid of horses, so at the stables when—because she began at nine, she had to have her legs long enough to make the—

DM:

Stirrups, okay.

BC:

And I'd get the older girls to help me put the saddle on, because those horses are big, and I know nothing of horses. I'm a city girl.

DM:

Right, Right. Betty, I've had about four or five broken bones and they've all been from horses.

BC:

They're beautiful creatures.

DM:

Yes, I love them but they turn this way wrong, or you know, there's a lot of things that they can just do without even being mean.

BC:

Yeah, she had one horse that she got us to buy it because she wanted to start jumping, but I didn't like her jumping, and I didn't trust that horse, and I don't think she did either. I was glad when he was gone.

DM:

Right okay. You'd have to feel comfortable to jump a horse.

BC:

Yeah, you'd have to, and then she always had a horse when she worked in Dallas and in California, she always had a horse. But her children do not like horses, so they don't have any horses now.

DM:

Right, right.

BC:

They want to get a farm out of Lubbock somewhere when they both retire and have chickens (laughs). I've got to see this because he—

DM:

How far out of Lubbock are they looking?

BC:

Oh I think you know like just a little town, just one enough to have that, and she talked about putting Bob and I on the back lot.

DM:

Ah.

BC:

But that's not going to happen.

DM:

With some horses.

BC:

Oh it would be, and I'd be afraid they'd come around. No, but moving, I was discombobulated, and it's taken awhile to get used to it because we'd lived fifty years in one house, and the children were grown there. But the kids said, "If one of you falls, you're out of here." And I said, "You find it, we'll move." And they found this.

DM:

Was it hard leaving that house having been there so long, so much having happened there?

BC:

No, because everything was so rapid, I mean you know like they told us in April and we were moving in May and we were—Bryan came in on Monday and said we're moving on Wednesday (laughs).

DM:

Okay, that's probably best then, you know, instead of thinking for a long time, Oh I'm going to be leaving, I'm going to be leaving.



BC:

Yeah, I didn't have time for that, and a lot of those things didn't get moved over here that I kept, but that's all right. Bobby took most of my genealogy stuff, and he thinks he has some of the things that I've missed. But I'm eighty-nine, where would I put it for one thing if I brought anymore stuff? I'm hanging my jewelry on the back of the door, and our cat is very, very interested in that back door, she just can hardly—

DM:

She just wants to slap that jewelry, huh.

BC:

Well, she wants to get up on the bureau beside it and dangle, you know (laughter). So I tried to figure out when I could do it when she would be gone, when she'd be outside, but I didn't. When she saw me laying them all out and figuring out lengths and everything, she came over and watched everything that I was doing, you know if I picked it up, she'd go for it.

DM:

She just figured it's her toys.

BC:

But if I just left it there, she just left it alone.

DM:

I'm glad you have a lot of social opportunities here.

BC:

We do. In fact I got the ladies organized this week, they meet over there, the ladies of the club meet every Monday at three o'clock just to have conversation because the only time you really see people is the people you have lunch and dinner with, and so I sent out a little note to everybody, and I had all but two show up.

DM:

Good for you. So the name of the club is? Do you have a name?

BC:

No, we don't have a name, but we're just the ladies at the bridge. One of the men says, "Oh we think that they're getting ready to strike." (Laughter) I assured him, he doesn't have a wife, his wife is gone, he looked in on us, and I said, "No, no Joe we're here just to have conversation." And that's all it is, it's just really to give us a feeling that we're not alone.

DM:

That's just wonderful.

BC:

It worked out—now they want to meet every Monday, I really felt like every other Monday would be better, but how we'd keep track of it would be the trouble. None of us can remember, we can remember some, but a lot of stuff we can't remember. I'm fortunate in that I remember names, so I remember the names of all the women, but I have some that—and the waiting people and the kitchen people, and they don't remember them, but then that's just—I've always made a habit of trying to do that. I don't know whether that makes me nosy.

DM:

No, just interested in people, sociable, always sociable.

BC:

Well, we were always active because Bob's grandfather was a Methodist circuit rider. I was a Presbyterian, but he was a much more Methodist than I was Presbyterian.

DM:

Okay so that was an okay transition for you?

BC:

It wasn't a problem, I joined his church two weeks before we got married, and we married in a St. Johns, and it was the old St. Johns which is abandoned on X.

DM:

Oh where is it?

BC:

On X.

DM:

X, okay. X and—?

BC:

It's abandoned now, it was a boys club. it's just a big yellow building, just off of—

DM:

Is it in Overton?

BC:

Sixteenth or fifteenth, yeah. But our minister went there, H. I. Robinson. So it was a pretty little—I wanted a little church, so that worked out, and then we always went to the one downtown. Now have I covered a lot?

DM:

I think so. It's been a very active—it's a very active life, especially with your going back to school and all and then—

BC:

I don't know what I would've done if I didn't go back to school. I don't play bridge; I'm not a bridge player. I don't play games; they play games here a lot, I'm not a game player. I work jigsaw puzzles, I work mind puzzles a lot, as much as the fact that they're fun and also to stimulate my brain.

DM:

Right, right. Have we—is there anything else that you have not mentioned as far as activities or concern?

BC:

No, I belong to some clubs. Some women don't like to belong to clubs. No, my mother was in a band in the thirties for Amarillo for the Security Benefit Association, and they played drums, she wore blue satin collates, white satin shirt, white hat, white boots, and they were going to all the parades they had up there and all the little towns around there, and when they would practice during the week, they always practiced in front of a school somewhere in the street or on fairgrounds, and I played in the empty buildings of the fairgrounds of Amarillo. There were no other children, I was the only one that they—that anybody had children, they must've had them, but I was the only one that went to the practice. But I played on the other side the house, but with no light. I mean they fix it so, have you ever been in an upside down house?

DM:

No.

BC:

Okay, at fairs used to they had a house that was upside down, and you paid to go in, and it's all mixed up in the rooms, so you get from one place to another place, and you have to find your way out, and you're walking up, or you're walking down or you're walking sideways.

DM:

There's nothing level?

BC:

Nothing's level, (laughter) and of course I learned the answer to it because I played in it, I knew where I was, and so it was fun when they practiced out at the fairgrounds because I played out there. But mother didn't leave me home, I didn't have many sitters, that was just a means of—and my sister being eight years older, we weren't really good friends until we had a family, each of us had a family, and she married a fellow that came to town to work for the *Amarillo News Globe*, and they began dating and then he was called into the army, and he was sent to the Philippines, and he was on Corregidor, Batan, and a prisoner for four years, and they were not married then. He called her as soon as he was released when he hit San Francisco, he was six-two, and he weighed ninety-two pounds.

DM:

Oh golly.

BC:

And he was a captain, and there's not many of them left now because he's been dead now about five years, and he counted then that there were about five of them left that had gone through all that. But he called my sister from San Francisco and came by, went to see his mother in Kansas, and then came to visit my sister, and then they were married a month later. I always thought theirs was an army life from then on, she enjoyed it.

DM:

I bet he started putting the weight back on then, huh?

BC:

Well, no not much, he really never did.

DM:

Not really? He always stayed lean?

BC:

He was a journalist. When they were in Hawaii, he was the person in charge of anything that happened out in the Pacific, the liaison for the United States and Hawaii, and they enjoyed it, they were there. And of course, they were in those old houses at Fort Sam, and they enjoyed the life. But I always wondered, he'd been gone four years, and she just dated him, you know, for you know six months. How would you know a person? How they were brave enough to get married—

DM:

I know, I know, yeah, but it all worked out.

BC:

It worked out, yeah. They had a few quarrels. Bob and I don't quarrel much, so we just kind of walk off and leave them and—but we'll leave that subject with all things.

DM:

Right.

BC:

And my mother after my dad died, when he was seventy-five, she lived to be ninety-five, but she lived in a mobile home down in the valley and enjoyed that really. She was quite a grandmother, she enjoyed many things. Maybe I got some of that from her because she was very sociable with things, and knowledgeable. She was sort of half engaged to a fellow that was serving in World War I in France, and I kept a letter he's written her, "Why haven't I heard from you? For all I know you may be married." And she was, she eloped, from a sink, they went to get a pail of water, and she told her cousin that they would be back and she says, "We never did get back that pail of water." (Laughter)

DM:

Great story.

BC:

So I don't know, some of that as I say probably came from my mother because my dad was very quiet, he came from a big family and they were a very poor family so—because he only had a fourth grade education, but he did math in his head, he was very good at business.

DM:

What were their names by the way?

BC:

Sullivan.

DM:

Yeah, their full names?

BC:

His name was Alvin Emmett, and Mother was Gladys, she had no middle name, and neither does Bob's dad, have a middle name. I thought they always gave middle names, but those two they didn't.

DM:

Was Gladys Mann, is that right?

BC:

Uh-huh, M-a-n-n. Yeah her mother died when she was ten, and her dad was trying to take care of her and leaving her with different people while he worked, he was kind of a carpenter, and the grandmother, mother's—my grandmother found out where she was with these people, and she sent two sons to kidnap her, bring her back to her parents, to her grandparents, and she lived with them for a while. But she had such a tragic life you know all through that and everything, but she lived through awful things. I wish she'd told me more. By the time I knew all that, we were both busy and never did sit down and talk, but that's life. But I don't want to end that on a sad story—we need a funny story!

DM:

(Laughs) We'd better think of something.

BC:

I think I've told you all my funny stories.

DM:

Oh that's going to be fine.

BC:

Going back to school though was different. I enjoyed it thoroughly. They also said they'd wonder where people will park because if a person were to return from the city, the parking problem makes it really hard for them to come back to school, and they're not going to live in a dorm.

DM:

You know, it's so much more difficult now than it was in the eighties because they take, they build a new building that takes up parking space, and it requires more parking space.

BC:

Well, do the married couples use one of those new dormitories?

DM:

I don't know. I'm not sure.

BC:

I thought they went up, that's what they were for.

DM:

I think there was one that was designed that way. I just don't know if it's still that way or not. There was one I think it was, was it Gaston, or one of those? I'm not sure now. That's another thing, Tech is so big you don't always know what's going on in different parts of the campus so—

BC:

No, no, you don't.

DM:

In fact, I ran into some people in Mexico one time at a conference, I was talking to them and they were real nice, and I finally said, "Well where are y'all from?" And they said, "We're from Texas Tech." (Laughter) I said, "Well, what department are you in?" And as it turns out they were about—their office was about a couple hundred yards, a couple hundred feet from my office across the street in another building. That's kind of the way it is now. Well, I guess I'll turn this off then unless there's anything else you want to—

BC:

No, I think we've covered everything.

DM:

Okay.

***End of Recording***

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