Oral History Interview of
Betsy Dempsey

Interviewed by: David Marshall
October 9, 2017
Amarillo, Texas

Part of the:
Lubbock History Series

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Interview Series Background:

The Lubbock History Series interviews document general life histories and other topical stories that chronicle the history of Lubbock.

Transcript Overview:

This interview features Betsy Dempsey as she discusses Lubbock and other towns around the hub city that she lived in over the years. In this interview, Betsy recalls an array of topics ranging from severe weather to World War II era Lubbock.

Length of Interview: 01:50:08

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David Marshall (DM):
The date is October 9th of 2017. This is David Marshall interviewing Betsy Dempsey at the Continental Retirement Center in Amarillo, Texas, and along with us are Bob and Lana Dempsey and y'all feel free to ask any questions as we go along here. But Mrs. Dempsey, could you start by telling me your date of birth?

Betsy Dempsey (BD):
I was born December 14th, 1917.

DM:
Okay. So you're about to celebrate a birthday.

BD:
I'm about to, yes.

DM:
Okay. Very good. Where were you born?

BD:
Colorado City.

DM:
Oh, were you? Okay, yeah.

BD:
It's in Mitchell County.

DM:
And you always know a real Colorado City native when they say Colorado instead of Colorado.

BD:
It's Colorado to me.

DM:
That's right. Can you give me your full name, including your maiden name?

BD:
Well, I have a history to my name. It's Betsy Ross Dempsey. Watson Dempsey. I was a Watson before I married.

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DM:
Okay. Betsy Ross Watson Dempsey. That's a very historical kind of name. Betsy Ross. Were you named after the Betsy Ross that sewed the American flag?

BD:
No. I don't know whether you'd be interested in my name, but I had real time getting it. I was born in home, and my father went down to register it in the courthouse, I guess, and they had planned and talked about it. It was to be Virginia Elizabeth. So he went down and put my name on the register. Nobody ever said anything about it. Well I don't know when people began to want to get birth certificates. I bet I was probably thirty years old. I don't remember exactly. So I wrote to Colorado City and asked them for a birth certificate for Virginia Elizabeth Watson born on this day. I got it back and that was fine. Well later, I decided—well they never called me that. I was Betsy from the very first.

DM:
Oh okay.

BD:
So then, a funny thing, my mother – it was four of us girls. And she had told them when they graduated from high school, they could add a name so I added Ross.

DM:
Okay.

BD:
That's how I got that. Well anyway, I decided my everything—clause, marriage license, everything was Betsy, so I decided I better change that and get it right. So we had a friend lawyer that wrote to the state to get it changed from Virginia Elizabeth to Betsy Ross. Came back, said there was nobody with that name. There was a Maddie Virginia.

DM:
Golly.

BD:
Well we made the trip down to Colorado City and there was an old, old fellow still in the office and the lady said he'd done that before. He just—when I wrote and asked for Virginia Elizabeth—he just marked out Maddie. Maddie Elizabeth is what was there. He just changed it to Virginia, which I didn't care. Didn't matter. Didn't know at the time. My mother, though, she said, "Oh, I wouldn't name a dog Maddie." My daddy had died by that time, but his mother was named Maddie. On the way to the courthouse, he decided he'd name me Maddie.

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DM:
I'll be.

BD:
And so, but anyway, I did get it changed to Betsy Ross.

DM:
It's all straightened out.

BD:
Finally.

DM:
Did it ever give you any trouble later on?

BD:
No, never.

DM:
Never crept into a different record that's the wrong name?

BD:
But I had many names there for a while.

DM:
Now, let's see. Where—you were born at home.

BD:
Yes.

DM:
And this was where?

BD:
Colorado City.

DM:
In Colorado City. Whereabouts? Do you know the address?

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BD:
Well, I don't know the address, but it's not—just a few years ago, it had been turned into a bed and breakfast so it was a nice old house.

DM:
Do you think the house is still there?

BD:
Do you know the address?

Bob Dempsey (BD):
Yes. We saw it. We drove by it. It's been maybe ten years ago, but it's nice.

BD:
I haven't been there in several years, but it was a nice place.

Bob Dempsey:
I couldn't tell you the address, but it's something straightforward like 6024 or whatever.

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DM:
So nice house. Can you describe it?

BD:
I wish I had time to find the pictures. I have pictures. It's just an old-timey house. I know it had a little steel or wire picket fence around it.

DM:
Okay.

BD:
Gables and things. Just typical. I have a great big picture of it somewhere.

DM:
How many rooms in it? Do you know?

BD:
Oh my goodness.

DM:
Was a big house? Huh?

BD:
I have no idea.

DM:
Well, if it's a bed and breakfast later on, it's a—

BD:
It's a bed and breakfast now.

DM:
Yeah, it is so it's a big house.

BD:
There was a big bunch of us.

Bob Dempsey:
She was the youngest of seven.

DM:
What's that?

Bob Dempsey:
She was the youngest of seven.

DM:
Okay.

BD:
So it was a big house. I should have, but I never did go back and look at it. Just the outside.

DM:
Yeah. Well, tell me about your parents a little bit and their names.

BD:
My mother's name was Jenny Virginia—That's where Virginia came in—McCarley. My mother and dad married-- hey came from the backwoods of Alabama and they just knew each other in the little community of McCarley and they got married at sixteen and nineteen. Well of course, there was a baby soon, but they got on the train at Birmingham and they had never been to Birmingham. I think they lived about thirty miles. They had never been there before, but they took that baby and got on a train in Birmingham and came to Texas. Now that's pioneering.

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DM:
Now, why did they do that? Why did they come to Texas?

BD:
Well there wasn't anything there for them. They were just going to have to work the fields of his mother and his dad—and also we decided—I don't know, because she had been—we knew about all that came to Texas were criminals, you know, fleeing to Texas, but they came to Texas and landed at Bowie.

DM:
Oh, they did? Okay. Yeah.

BD:
And never looked back.

DM:
Well, did they live there a while at Bowie?

BD:
I don't know how long they lived there because they moved to Colorado City where I was born.

DM:
Oh okay. Were most of your other brothers and sisters born at—?

BD:
They were born here in Texas, yes.

DM:
At Colorado City? Or at Bowie?

BD:
Around Bowie.

DM:
You said they headed out with one child, the oldest child I guess.

BD:
Uh-huh.

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DM:
They headed out of Alabama with one child?

BD:
Yes, just an infant.

DM:
Yes, okay.

BD:
I just can't imagine. She was seventeen by then and he was twenty. They got on a train and came to Texas.

DM:
That's pretty daring.

BD:
It wasn't long until the whole family started coming.

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DM:
Oh. Relatives, huh?

BD:
Yes. They all came.

DM:
Okay. Did they end up in Colorado City?

BD:
Most of them did, yes.

DM:
I know Colorado City was an important place on the railroad.

BD:
It was pretty—well I suspect it's bigger than it is now. I don't know, but it was, I think, bigger than it is now.

DM:
I know that when these towns like Lubbock and South Plains towns were developing, they got their supplies from Colorado City.

BD:
Yeah. Colorado City has been there a long time.

DM:
Yeah, yeah. Now, how old were you when you moved from Colorado City?

BD:
Well, when we were older, just two years old, we moved to Lamesa.

DM:
Okay. Well then no wonder you don't remember that house so well.

BD:
I was just two years old when I left.

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DM:
Yeah, to Lamesa.

BD:
I think just four years. When they put Tech in, I think that was about '24. My parents—there was three of us still at home. My older sisters and brothers were all teenagers when I was born. But anyway, three of us were left and when they put Tech in, my dad decided we needed to move to Lubbock so we could all go to Tech. So we moved up there. Was there when it opened.

DM:
What did your daddy do?

BD:
He was a grain dealer.

DM:
A grain dealer?

BD:
He sold grain.

DM:
And that was—was that the case in Colorado City also?

BD:
No, he owned a grocery store in Colorado City.

DM:
Really? Okay.

BD:
I remember him telling about during the war how stuff was rationed. They'd buy something, they would just get plenty of it.

DM:
Right, right. Yeah, he was a grocer during World War I, wasn't he?

BD:
Yeah.

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DM:
Okay.

BD:
The rationing in the grocery store.

DM:
And then the grain dealership took him to Lamesa?

BD:
I think he started—actually, he went to Lamesa. In fact, he was on a farm there for a while.

DM:
Okay.

BD:
But we moved into town and I never did live in the farm anymore, but he bought and sold grain.

DM:
Okay.

BD:
And if you made money, you could lose money.

DM:
Yeah, yeah.

BD:
I think he made quite—did pretty well there for years, but by the time the Depression came, he got ahead of them, I think, with all this money before.

DM:
Yeah. Well at least the twenties was kind of a prosperous period. What—when did—how old were you when you moved to Lubbock?

BD:
I was seven.

DM:
You were seven? Okay.

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BD:
Well, I say I was seven. I started school in Lubbock at seven.

DM:
Oh, you did? Okay.

BD:
And I started in the third grade. Now, that's the mystery of my life. I have no idea why they started me in the third grade.

DM:
Okay. Do you remember them testing you or anything to see what grade you should start?

BD:
I don't remember them ever testing me. I don't remember mother talking about—questioning anything about it. I just knew I started in the third grade.

DM:
Okay. Do you remember—

BD:
It was an old Kay Carter School.

DM:
Kay Carter?

BD:
Kay Carter was on 4th and Avenue Q.

DM:
Okay.

BD:
It's—I've forgotten what it is now. Not a Sonic, but some organization I think. It's a building.

DM:
Okay. Yeah. 4th and Avenue Q, you said.

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BD:
But that's where I started school.

DM:
Okay. Remember who your teacher was?

BD:
No, have no idea. I think I was just there one year. We moved over another part of town and I went to Dupre. I went there a long time.

DM:
Okay. Now, where were you living at that time? Do you happen to know the address?

BD:
The first house we lived in in Lubbock was 1904 Main. It's still there, or it was the last—I don't know. It's been a couple of years, I guess, since I've been there. I had three residencies on Main Street. First was that 1904. Then we moved to out on 18th. I was way out on 18th Street.

DM:
Kind of on the edge of town, huh?

BD:
2117 18th Street. And I went to Dupre school for several—

DM:
Okay, 18th. How close were you to the Tech campus?

BD:
Now that wasn't very close at the time.

DM:
Oh. It wasn't close?

BD:
No. Then I went to—I had an old central ward and that's where it's just on Old Caliche Hill. I remember playing—kids got up and played baseball and I just kept bloody knees on that old Caliche. The building there where Kay Carter was—well it was Sears-Roebuck way back and then I think its Lubbock schools or what is it?

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DM:
Is it Lubbock High School?

BD:
No, this was on 13th and Avenue Q.

DM:
Okay. 13th and Q.

BD:
Right in there and I can't think—somebody went to—it was maybe school buildings, but I've forgotten now. But I know it was Sears-Roebuck way back there.

DM:
Oh, it was?

BD:
Where central ward—

DM:
Really? Sears-Roebuck? Huh?

BD:
I went to every school in Lubbock, except Guadalupe and Dunbar.

DM:
Okay. When you were there, you lived on 18th Street, but how far did Lubbock extend to the south?

BD:
Oh. I'd say 19th was way out.

DM:
Right.

BD:
That was a big street and then it went to 34th and then to 50th and 98th. I don't know. I've lost it now. I don't know.

DM:
Do you—yeah. I have too. Just keeps going and going, 114th and on and on, 128th or something like that.

BD:
Yeah, but 34th was the big street a long time.

DM:
You remember there being a dairy around 34th Street?

BD:
Being what?

DM:
There was a dairy out there on 34th Street at one time. Remember that?

BD:
I don't remember.

DM:
Okay. Okay. Do you remember any of your teachers?

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BD:
The one that I really remember is in high school. My Latin teacher. Mrs. R.P. Johnson. That's the only one I remember seeing. I had took Latin for four years under her, I think, because I liked her. I was trying to think of the one I liked so well in Dupre. I once could tell you, but I can't think.

DM:
It might come to you in a little bit.

BD:
My mind's not what it used to be.

DM:
What were some of your favorite subjects in school?

BD:
Well, I always liked math. I can't prove it now. I always liked it.

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DM:
Probably had a good math teacher then.

BD:
Yeah. I don't know. I used to really remember all my high school teachers, but I don't even remember.

DM:
Where was the high school located, at that time?

BD:
Well, it's the Lubbock High School now. They built it—I believe it was opened in 1931.

DM:
Oh okay. I didn't remember.

BD:
Yeah, I went there and graduated from it in 1934.

DM:
So you went to the building that exists now?

BD:
Um-hm. And old junior high was on 13th and Avenue U or V. It's no longer there. I went there in junior high.

DM:
Okay. We call all that area now Overton. From 4th to 19th.

BD:
My home at one time, well when I married, my family lived at 2109 Main and that was just—it got swooped out. Cleaned out. I hated to see it go.

DM:
Yeah. Have you been back?

BD:
Took out all that, and we had sold it. My mother had passed away and some of us wanted to keep it. I don't know why, but I just didn't want to turn loose of it, but we did sell it and then of course, it went.

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DM:
Yeah. Are you talking about what they did maybe ten years ago, when they came in and just took half of Overton and rebuilt it?

BD:
Yeah.

Bob Dempsey:
Apartment complexes.

DM:
Right, right.

BD:
But from high school, we moved up. We lived on Main Street. Third time, I lived on—that was at 24th and Boston. That's just this side of Tech. We were just a half a block off campus.

DM:
Wow. That's prime real estate now.

BD:
Oh yeah.

DM:
Everybody wants to be close to Tech.

BD:
Yeah. Well then it was—times were hard at that time and my mother took in roomers. We had that big house and took roomers. All boys. I'll tell this because it seems funny to me. I was just sixteen when I moved up there. Right from high school, we moved up there, and right across the street was little Fonda. That was a dormitory. The football boys stayed over there and there were apartments. Anyway, living with us was a couple of cousins, sisters that went to Tech. Well, they had girlfriends and all and the boys. We just had a ball. I don't know how my mother and dad put up with it. They were just hanging out. We had a big front porch, a swing, and all. They were just—it was just fun. Nobody had a dime to buy, but they were fun. We were just hanging out. We'd walk to town and stuff like that. But anyway, of the ones there, nobody seemed to pair up. But when May came, they all went home but this one boy. It was Dennis, my husband. He had to work. He was the one that had to work his way through school.

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DM:
What did he do for a job?

BD:
Well he worked a textile building for a long—

DM:
Oh did he?

BD:
He was a janitor over there a long time, but he worked at Miss Neatherly's for his room and board—for his board.

DM:
Okay. Worked for Miss—?

BD:
Neatherly.

DM:
Neatherly?

BD:
Neatherly.

DM:
Okay. For his room and board?

BD:
No, not board. Room.

DM:
Oh, for his room. Okay.

BD:
No, his board. He served tables twice a week.

DM:
Right, right.

BD:
I think she was on about—renting a 2400 block on—I think it's 13th Street.

DM:
Okay. I don't think I've come across that name. You know how to spell that name? Neatherly?

BD:
It's N-e-a-t-h-e-r-l-y, I believe.

DM:
Okay. All right. I'll see if I can find it.

BD:
Could be wrong. But anyway, he worked all years for—but he lived in an old apartment over there. He didn't live in that La Fonda, but he lived out there. Anyway, it left him and me and we just continued to sit on the porch and swing. That's how it started. And then he was in the National Guard so in August, I think it is, they go to national camp. This was at [inaudible] [00:20:20] and so he was gone a couple of weeks and when he came back, it was different. We were—about two years later we married. Still in Tech.

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DM:
Oh okay. What year did you marry?

BD:
Thirty-seven.

DM:
Thirty-seven.

BD:
July the 4th.

DM:
Okay, so you met in about '35 or so?

BD:
Yes, that's when I met him.

DM:
Okay. What was his major at Tech?

BD:
Well, he was a textile engineer major, but it got to where he had to drop it because he had to work. He had no time. It was all at the labs and he changed to business ad. He wanted to be a textile engineer. I don't know why, but that was what he wanted.

DM:
Back at that time, was textile engineering—was it way out there by itself on the north side?

BD:
I guess so, but that's what he wanted. He went two full years as that until he got to just all labs. And he quit.

Bob Dempsey:
He said he couldn't afford a slide row, so he was struggling.

BD:
Huh?

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Bob Dempsey:
He couldn't afford a slide row.

DM:
Couldn't afford a slide row.

Bob Dempsey:
In engineering, pretty quickly, you need a slide row and wide spreads.

BD:
And that's why he had the textile job because he was a textile engineer.

DM:
Before we talk about you entering Tech, let's go back just a little bit and talk a bit more about Overton. As far back as you remember, was there any kind of water system in town? Or did people still have wind mills in their yards?

BD:
Oh no, we had water.

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DM:
It was a water system? Okay. Did people still keep livestock in their yards?

BD:
We used to have a cow out on this 18th Street. We had a cow. I remember my brother just over—he hated the milk. He just hated that cow. He had to milk him. Chickens, I guess we didn't have, but we had that cow for a long time.

DM:
That was pretty normal, was it? In the Overton area? In that neighborhood area? People having their own livestock?

BD:
I don't know when they quit that, but that's the last time we ever had any.

DM:
Did y'all get any? Did any of your neighbors? You had your own milk cow, but any of your neighbors get milk from the Tech dairy barn?

BD:
Not that I know of.

DM:
Okay, because they used to go out in wagons and sell bottles of milk and ice cream.

BD:
No, I don't remember that we did.

DM:
Okay. You remember when they started paving those roads or was that already done? Broadway?

BD:
Oh, no. No. They were just always paving and digging ditches and stuff. We did play in the ditches. There was always ditches. Played cops and robbers. We did well and have that lead running down, that was the gold.

DM:
That was gold?

BD:
And we'd play until night. Mother would make me so mad. My mother. If it got a little dark, she made me come in and the rest of them got to play out.

DM:
Now it's hard to get some kids to go outside.

BD:
Yeah, we stayed until bedtime. We didn't have a bunch of stuff inside like they do. Didn't have these cellphones.

DM:
Right, right. Tell me about some of the things you played. You played cops and robbers.

BD:
Yeah, that was the big thing. I never was much on dolls. I always had a—mother used to tell about how I'd get a cat and grab it for my baby. I didn't care any about dolls. [inaudible] Just grab a cat—it really kept her busy, getting rid of cats. Every cat that came in the neighborhood, I, of course, got it and fed it. It stayed. It kept her busy, getting rid of cats.

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DM:
Can you remember any specific games y'all played in that neighborhood?

BD:
Oh, me.

DM:
You said you played up on the Caliche Hill.

BD:
We didn't play many board games or anything like that.

DM:
How about hide and seek and games like that?

BD:
What?

DM:
Did you play hide and seek?

BD:
Oh yeah. Hide and seek. Red rover. That kind of physical stuff. Yeah, we played those.

DM:
Right. How about baseball or any kind of ball game?

BD:
Baseball, I don't remember too much about. I know in school we played baseball. There wasn't any team. I never was on any team. Even in high school, we had an old fashioned superintendant. M.H. Duncan. I never will forget his name. Good guy, I'm sure, but he was so—even little girls could not wear shorts in gym or anything like that. No way. You need to be fully dressed. All you could play, we played volleyball in school. That's it. We had no basketball. I think he went out pretty quick after we graduated.

DM:
Did he? Was this in high school now?

BD:
Yes, was high school.

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DM:
Okay. His name was Duncan?

BD:
M.H. Duncan.

DM:
M.H. Duncan. Okay.

BD:
He was a fine man, but was very strict. I guess it was good, but it just got to a point. Times changed and they didn't—people didn't like it. He just kept them down.

DM:
Yeah. Can you tell me—

BD:
Little girls had to wear clothes. Could not wear shorts.

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DM:
Like they wore dresses?

BD:
Yes.

DM:
Okay.

BD:
Skirts and dresses.

DM:
And what length of dress would they wear? Was it down to here?

BD:
Well, around the knee I think. They weren't too long. My mother had to make mine. She sewed. Times were hard. All the time I was in high school was pretty much hard times. Thirties.

DM:
Right, right. Where would you—tell me about—

BD:
Everybody was the same shape so we didn't know.

DM:
Right.

BD:
And when we went to Tech—I always think about it a long time—I started in '34. I bet you there weren't six automobiles among all the students.

DM:
Really?

BD:
No way had Cars. Everybody walked.

DM:
Were most of the shops in Lubbock right around downtown? Were they all in downtown?

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BD:
Yeah, it was good downtown. We walked to town nearly every night. Look at the windows and Hemphill-Wells and Dunlap's. Had several jewelry stores, and window watching.

DM:
Clothing stores?

BD:
That was for the whole [inaudible] [00:27:40] community thing started in. I don't know. My mother lived a long time after that and she would go after these shopping malls. She said she wanted to go in town.

DM:
Um-hm. Were there clothing stores down there also?

BD:
Huh?

DM:
Were there clothing stores downtown?

BD:
Oh. There was. Yeah. Dunlap's was a nice store.

DM:
Oh, that's right.

BD:
And Hemphill-Wells and they had Levine's. It wasn't tops, but they had lots of things. It was a good center, but boy, everybody left. I can see why. If I lived out on 98th Street, I wouldn't want to drive up to town to get something I can get. But it sure did ruin them.

DM:
Well back then it was a lot tighter community. Do you remember the theaters? The movie theaters?

BD:
Huh?

DM:
Movie theaters in Lubbock? The movies? Going to see the movies?

BD:
Oh going—when Dennis and I were going together then for those three years, we walked to town. I bet we walked a hundred miles we walked. We'd usually go to movies for a quarter, but we didn't go. They didn't have it. Once in a while, we'd think about going. We'd put our money in a little quarter jar and when we married, it doesn't sound like anything. Now, you couldn't even go to the grocery store one time, but we had sixty something dollars in it.

DM:
Really?

BD:
And that was pretty good. We bought many a [inaudible] [00:29:29] from that stuff. But you could go for a quarter.

DM:
Do you remember if those were—? Let's see. Preston Smith owned some of those eventually. I don't know if he owned them at that time, though.

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BD:
The movies?

DM:
Yeah. The movie theater.

BD:
It was the Lindsey Theater.

DM:
Lindsey, yeah.

BD:
And a Palace Theater. It was right across the street from – and an old Lyric across—just from the west side of the square.

DM:
Tell me that again.

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BD:
Lyric.

DM:
The Lyric. Okay.

Bob Dempsey:
Wasn't the Arcadia one of them?

BD:
Huh?

Bob Dempsey:
Arcadia. I think it was.

BD:
There was a Plains. Seemed like that was up on Broadway.

DM:
Lubbock was theater rich wasn't it?

BD:
Yeah. They had lots. Quite a few theaters.

DM:
Tell me about those dust storms that came through.

BD:
Well, the one I remember the most is one Sunday—I think it was Sunday afternoon if I'm not mistaken, and I know I had been asleep and the ones there about—we watched that thing roll in. Scary. I had a lot of pictures of it. You've seen those pictures. I think people took them. I had several, but I think I still have one. A really old black roll—and it was a black dust. It wasn't sand. It was dark. It came from somewhere.

DM:
Did it come in fast or slow?

BD:
Well, it didn't come too fast. It was rolling in there. Didn't know what to do. You just didn't see through it. It was scary. A lot of people thought it was the end of the world. They were really scared.

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DM:
So you woke up and there it was?

BD:
I woke up before it got there. Somebody woke me up. Of course, they thought it was—and I never will forget it.

Lana Dempsey (LD):
Did you put towels and things on the windows?

BD:
Huh?

LD:
Did you put towels and things on the windows?

BD:
Yeah. Not for that one, I don't guess, but we had lots of bad—and I had a sister, Lila, lived out in the country out in Ropesville, and it is—their plates, everything, was just so covered. They did—

they put towels. It think everybody did. You couldn't leave anything out. You had to cover it up. Even it got in your cabinets. It was so fine. It was tough.

Bob Dempsey:
One day it was—I'm sure it was April 1935, Sunday.

DM:
April 14th.

Bob Dempsey:
Fourteenth, okay. You were seventeen. That's what you told me, isn't it?

BD:
No.

Bob Dempsey:
That would make you four—seventeen.

BD:
It was in 19—

Bob Dempsey:
Yep, so you would've been seventeen years old.

BD:
thirty-five, I believe. Yeah.

Bob Dempsey:
Seventeen years old. That's when it was. That was Black Sunday. Ken Burns talked about it some.

DM:
That was it. That was one of them. That was one that was unusual.

BD:
That one big one. I don't know whether they introduced us or not, but anyway, it's the one I remember the most. We had a lot of them. You didn't have a house that it wouldn't go into. Where there's air there.

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DM:
Did your house have any kind of interior wall or at least some cheesecloth and wallpaper? Anything on the inside or was it just an outside boards?

BD:
I don't—I think they all had kind of a galled paper behind the paper. All that I remember ever seeing.

DM:
Do you remember Electricity coming into Lubbock? Being put in?

BD:
We always had it, for all that I knew.

DM:
You always had it? Okay.

BD:
Oh yeah. It was—we had that. Well the Lamesa one I know we had. I don't know where it is. I know we lived on—we moved from Colorado City to a farm and it had—wasn't butane. What's something else?

DM:
Well there's carbide gas.

BD:
Carbide. We had carbide. I remember the old tank outside.

DM:
You did?

BD:
So we had carbide.

DM:
You had the pellets that went into the water and it created the gas?

BD:
I don't remember too much about it, but I do remember the tank out there beside the house and we had carbide.

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DM:
I'll be. And that's Lamesa? That was in Lamesa?

BD:
That is Lamesa and that was—let's see. It must've been in the early twenties.

DM:
But you also had electricity, you said?

BD:
I—what did carbide do?

DM:
It would create a gas that people would use for lamps or lots of things.

BD:
That's all we had. I think, as far as I can remember, that's all we had.

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DM:
Okay, because that would be pretty early for electricity in that area.

BD:
But then when we moved into town, we had it.

DM:
You had it? Okay. Do you remember what all you had? You had lightbulbs of course, but did you have certain appliances? Do you remember the appliances that you had plugged into an outlet?

BD:
We didn't have electric—we had to—icebox that you put ice in the top. We didn't have electric. I don't know when we got those. The first ones had old big round things. GE [**General Electric**] had a big old round thing on top. That was the motor.

DM:
Um-hm. The ice boxes?

BD:
Ice for refrigerator.

DM:
You remember the ice man bringing the block of ice, though?

BD:
Yes. I kind of remember that. I know we had ice out on the back porch.

DM:
Did you have a washing machine? Like a—

BD:
We did after a while. I don't know when they first got them. I wasn't, of course, interested in it. But we had one. No dryer. We had washing machines. The ringer.

DM:
Right. Well they once they put those outlets in, they start inventing all kinds of things to plug into them so it kind of came directly.

BD:
Oh, but I was—that didn't mean near as much to me then as it—I remember when that came on, of course, it meant a lot to my mother, but they had an old rower. Yeah, it seemed to me like you had to do it like this.

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DM:
You're talking about through the ringer?

BD:
The ringer. Yeah.

DM:
A lot of them were round, about this big and they had a ringer right on top. Was that what you remember?

BD:
Yeah, I think we had one of those when I was about eight or nine just in there. It seemed like we had, yeah.

DM:
Okay. Let's talk a little bit more about –

BD:
But no radios.

DM:
No radios.

BD:
I don't think we had a radio. I know I used to go to bed. I guess I had a little old one of my own. I don't know. But I listened to—oh, it was orchestras and stuff. Jan Garber was one. I don't know. Some of those old ones.

Bob Dempsey:
Guy Lombardo?

BD:
Yeah, Guy Lombardo. Wayne—oh, Waltkey.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah. Wayne King the waltz king.

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BD:
Wayne King. But I would listen to those at night. Now, that was when I was in high school.

DM:
Okay. Okay. So by the time you were in high school, y'all had a radio?

BD:
Yeah.

DM:
Okay.

BD:
Didn't get a TV though until we was married about—I don't know. We didn't get one of those until right about 1950, I imagine'51. Something like that. And I know everybody didn't get them. We didn't get a fine one, I don't guess, but anyway, Hershel Amos and his wife, they came every night and watched TV. I think it went off about ten anyway. They stayed until it went off. I hated that TV.

DM:
You had a community TV, huh?

BD:
Finally, at Christmas, I think his mother gave them a set. Oh, I was so happy. They were nice, but you don't want somebody that came every night and watched that TV.

DM:
Speaking of those appliances early on, did y'all have a fan?

BD:
Huh?

DM:
Did you have a small fan that plugged into the outlet?

BD:
Yeah. We had one. I don't remember when we got it.

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DM:
Okay. Well I was just thinking, you know, air conditioning came in a little after the TV so, but that was in the fifties.

BD:
We had one of these and it sat in the window for a long time.

DM:
Evaporative cooler? Oh yeah.

BD:
You know, in the old house, we had one.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah, I remember it.

BD:
We had a big one and it was from the window down, it was just about level here, and I know we had two old cats that laid on that little den all the time and wants to pink and blue.

DM:
Trying to stay cool.

BD:
They stayed on that old air conditioner all the time.

DM:
Let's talk a little bit more about the weather. Do you remember any big blizzards coming into Lubbock or Lamesa?

BD:
I don't remember. Outside of sand storms, I don't remember severe weather.

DM:
Okay. I know that the twenties were a wetter time. There was a lot more rain involved.

BD:
I don't remember ever. We weren't tornado conscious. We didn't have a cellar. We never thought about a cellar. Now, in Amarillo, it was down at Colorado City, we left. They had—they rent a cellar every time a cloud came over, but we never did. We just weren't—the weather wasn't bad or my family just weren't scared of them.

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DM:
Do you remember hearing of any in that area? Any tornadoes coming through?

BD:
I don't remember ever hearing one.

DM:
Okay. By the time the 1971 came along, you were probably in Floydada, weren't you?

BD:
Yes, I was, but I had a daughter and her husband hadn't been married very long. Pattie and Mac. They lived in one of Tech's dorms. Village? Tech Village? Tech Village. And we went over that night and we sat. We had a concrete cellar at our house. We were down in there. We were listening and first thing it told was that everybody was safe at Tech Village. They were in—had gone to the—that's where mine lived. But we went over there, of course, trying to see what we could and we couldn't—they wouldn't let us in on the east side of town. We had to go around and come in from Levelland to get into town. They were standing out on the porch of this Tech Village. The roof had gone up and come down. It just drowned them. Ruined everything they

had. But the Tech Village Jan and Mac lived in and Fred lived in, runs south. It was torn completely up. This one wasn't damaged other than the roof.

DM:
But nothing like that—no tornadoes like that in the twenties and thirties, forties?

BD:
That I knew, that was the first time I'd ever had any experience with a tornado.

Bob Dempsey:
Her mother lived at 2109 Main and that ended up, as I recall, about two blocks away from that stuff was torn up and shredded. Her mother never woke up that night.

BD:
Mother slept through it.

DM:
Golly. Really? Yes, because it really hit downtown pretty hard.

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Bob Dempsey:
Yeah.

BD:
Yeah, there was a lady on 10th Street, on just about—you said about a block that was killed in it. Mother had—did she have something to her fence or was it? Some little tiny damage.

DM:
Isn't that amazing? Tornados are so unusual.

BD:
I had a brother that lived out in the southwest part of town. Of course, he made it over there because he just knew it sounded like she was right in the middle of it.

DM:
Well she kind of was, really.

BD:
Yeah, she was.

DM:
She just kind of dodged around it.

BD:
When we got there, she didn't need nobody's help.

DM:
Well that's the way to get through a tornado, isn't it?

BD:
It aggravated him. He had really fought it to get over there.

DM:
You still see signs of that tornado around Lubbock. That—one of those buildings is slightly twisted and those big hills they have the ranching heritage center on Tech campus, they're debris from that tornado. They just piled it up and put dirt over it and made it into hills.

BD:
That was something else.

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DM:
Well Floydada. We'll talk about Floydada here in a little bit, but it gets its fair ware—it's fair numbers of bad storms.

BD:
Well, the day we moved there, in 1951, June. Wasn't happy about moving there in the first place and Bob was sick. He was my host when he was running a fever and when the movers sent us down at this, we couldn't find a house to live Not a rent house in that town and Dennis had been up there several months driving back and forth and he didn't have much time, but he had never found us a house. Well we finally got this dump. It was just—and the kitchen, they had pulled up the little—it was just old bare floor. Well we moved into that. We didn't unpack. I don't think we lived there a month. It seemed like a long time. We found us something, but anyway, I never will forget. They were going up and down the highway there with bullhorns announcing about the tornado, and you could see it. Dennis came up. He was already there at work, but he came up and we drove out and watched this tale down. I think it got some barns and things, it didn't come to town, but I saw that.

Bob Dempsey:
Welcome to Floydada.

DM:
Yeah, that's right. [Laughter] Well let's go back to Lubbock. Let's talk a little bit about you starting at Tech. You said 1934 is when you went to Tech. Did you have a major? Did you declare a major when you started?

BD:
Just a business ad.

DM:
Business ad? Okay.

BD:
Business ad. I'd already had typing and everything in high school, but I had it again. When I was a junior, and of course, I was wanting to get married, I had a chance at a job and I quit my junior year. All I wanted to be was a secretary. I felt like I was already—I regretted it. I wish I would've gotten my degree. And my other son, youngest son, when my husband passed away, Tim just begged me to go back to Tech. Well, if I lived in Lubbock, but I just didn't want to drive that, and I had a job at school and I just didn't want—I didn't want it bad enough then. I was in my late fifties.

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DM:
So you started Tech in '34?

BD:
Um-hm.

DM:
You were there a couple of years. Two or three years?

BD:
Oh—

DM:
You got married in '37, I think you said.

BD:
Yeah, in '37.

DM:
Thirty-seven, okay. By the way, where was Dennis from?

BD:
Huh?

DM:
Where was Dennis from?

BD:
From Santa Anna.

DM:
From Santa Anna?

BD:
Santa Anna, Texas.

DM:
Oh yeah.

BD:
He was born in Coleman. That's an old town, but he lived on a farm in between the towns and he went to Santa Anna to school, so that's where he really was from.

DM:
Okay. Yeah.

BD:
We were talking about this the other day. When he was in Tech, he didn't have a penny and to go home there, everybody, all the kids, hitchhiked, but everybody picked him up. They had not a problem in the world getting a ride. I'd take him out to that Slaton cut off and let him out and oh, there would be a dozen out there and they all got rides. He never failed to get a ride.

DM:
It'd be a little harder to get a ride these days.

BD:
Oh my goodness. I hated for him to get it. I was kind of worried even then, but he never had any problems. He caught one ride with a drunk one time and he was anxious to get out of that because the guy was drunk, but anyway, he could always—

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DM:
Santa Anna's a pretty little town. That's nice. That was—I think that was—was it cotton country at the time he came out? That's why he went into textile engineering, I guess?

BD:
I don't know if that was the reason, but that's when he—I never did know exactly why he chose that.

DM:
Did he end up graduating?

BD:
No.

DM:
Okay.

BD:
No, he finally—he had more than I. How many hours did I tell you he had? He had surplus hours, but those engineering courses. No, he didn't. I'm sorry I didn't make him.

DM:
Well, he probably had to work and you know.

BD:
He was working all that time. He worked at Santa Fe Railroad. I don't know why he ever—he had more ambition than I ever would've had. He worked at unloading freight. Many of times, an eight o'clock class, he'd miss because he was afraid he would be late. And he worked Montgomery Ward and he stayed with Ward, and when we were married a couple of years, we were transferred out to Gallup, New Mexico, in a furniture—yeah, a furniture department.

DM:
Okay. Let's talk a little bit more about your Texas Tech experience. So you were there a couple of years and you were in business administration. Do you remember any of your faculty members? Your professors?

BD:
I remember Dr. Thompson.

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DM:
Dr. Thompson.

BD:
Was my math teacher. He taught me mathematics of insurance.

DM:
Okay.

BD:
Wayne hated the man, and I had an economics teacher. What was his name? He was a poor – that guy—I think he just lasted a year or two. He was a—economics is the driest thing in the world anyway. But and he could tell the most fabulous stories and things in class.

DM:
Really?

BD:
Interesting. I mean, he just—and then he could ask the hardest test about stuff I hadn't even thought of. That's the poorest grade I ever made was in his economics class. What was his name?

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DM:
By the way, when you decided—

BD:
He was a northerner. I've forgotten his name. Anyway, I don't remember.

DM:
When you decided to go to Tech, was it a hard decision or did you just grow up knowing you would go to Tech?

BD:
No, it was just—we just knew you were supposed to go to college.

DM:
Okay. You said your daddy wanted you to go to college.

BD:
Yes, it's the reason we moved to Lubbock.

DM:
Okay. Right.

BD:
And the same with my kids. Just like going from junior high to high school, there was never any question about whether they were going to college. Did you ever doubt you was going to college? It was just that way.

DM:
When you went to Tech, were there as many girls on campus as there were guys on campus?

BD:
Seems to me like there was. There was only two dorms. Boys and girls. I just—oh, I loved—I missed—I felt like I didn't even go to college because I didn't get to live in the dorms. I stayed out there a lot the first year.

DM:
Was that Horn or Knapp or one of those?

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BD:
Yes.

DM:
Okay.

BD:
And the old economics—home economics building was in there in the Ag building. And I think the chemistry building was there, seems like. The old textile building was there.

DM:
Way down there on the north side.

BD:
And that's just about—that old gym.

DM:
Mule barn. Mule barn.

BD:
Oh no.

DM:
Did y'all call that the mule barn?

BD:
Yeah, mule barn.

DM:
Did you go to basketball games?

BD:
Yeah. We enjoyed the basketball and football. We went. I enjoyed all of it.

DM:
Tech was getting pretty good at football during that time. Probably a little after you left.

BD:
Well, so Dale Morgan was there.

DM:
Dale Morgan, okay.

BD:
Dale Morgan was the coach and Burl Huffman and his wife—what was her name? Anyway, she—my gym teacher, P.E. teacher, was married to Burl Huffman at the time. I can't think of her name now.

DM:
You went to the football games also?

BD:
Yeah.

DM:
Can you tell me a little bit about that? What that was like? Was there a band performing? I know it was the old stadium before they pulled it back.

BD:
Oh yeah. The old stadium. No, I don't remember the band and that's strange. The band's the main thing, as far as I'm concerned now.

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DM:
I just don't know when it—well they had a band early on. I don't know if it was marching or not.

BD:
They had a band. I just didn't know anybody in it, I guess. They had a band. But my youngest son, now he and Jim, all—they played trumpet in high school. He went to air force academy and they didn't have a student band, but Gil went onto Tech and was in the band.

DM:
Was he? Okay.

BD:
Oh, we enjoyed that more than anything. He got to senior year, he said he better pay more attention to his grades because band takes a lot of time.

DM:
Yes, it does. Sure does.

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BD:
He decided he'd better—so he was just out there three years. We had enjoyed the band so much that I didn't want him to quit, but he was right. He needed to pay attention.

DM:
Can you recall any other activities on campus? Besides the band and the sports?

BD:
I didn't—we didn't socialize much with Tech because Dennis had to work all the time, and he couldn't go and I wouldn't—I mean, I didn't go. So we didn't do much socially. We did go to football games and basketball games, but any other kind, fraternities, sororities or anything like that, we couldn't—he had no time at all.

DM:
I know some of those organizations had dances, like Ko Shari's or some of those groups had dances. Did y'all ever—were you ever able to?

BD:
No, we weren't in anything like that.

DM:
It was just work and studies?

BD:
It was work. He was one that really worked his way through.

DM:
You mentioned some of the buildings. The administration building, chemistry, textile engineering. You remember the livestock pavilion?

BD:
Oh yeah.

DM:
And the dairy barn?

BD:
Dairy barn. Yeah, those old things were there.

DM:
Yeah, and then the dorms. A couple of dorms.

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BD:
Yeah.

DM:
Horn and Knapp.

BD:
But it was sparse in the buildings out there.

DM:
Do you remember getting any ice cream over there at the—

BD:
I don't remember that.

DM:
They used to process ice cream there.

BD:
No.

DM:
And how about livestock on campus? Do you remember any of that?

BD:
I didn't have dealings with that at all.

DM:
It was really on the other side of where you lived. You lived on the east side and that was way over on the west side so it might not have been anything. Well, where was business administration? What building was it in?

BD:
It was in the ad building.

DM:
It was in the Ag building? Okay. The library, was the library there too?

BD:
Um-hm.

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DM:
Okay.

BD:
Until they built the library.

DM:
Right, right.

BD:
The Ag building was about it, as far as classes. I had most of my classes there.

DM:
Okay.

BD:
Oh, economics had their—they had their building.

DM:
Okay. The library must've moved to its new building sometime when you were in school or a

little before?

BD:
No. The library building?

DM:
Yeah, the library building.

BD:
It wasn't built while I was there.

DM:
Oh, it wasn't built yet?

BD:
No.

DM:
Okay, okay.

BD:
I'm pretty sure.

DM:
It was still in the administration building?

BD:
Yeah.

DM:
That's the president's office now.

BD:
Yeah.

DM:
What about the West Texas Museum? You remember that on Memorial Circle?

BD:
Well, it didn't come in while I was there.

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DM:
Okay.

BD:
I used to go to it a lot, but I don't think it was built while I was at school at all. It was probably four buildings going on then.

DM:
Do you remember who was president?

BD:
Yes. He had a daughter my age.

DM:
Oh okay. Bradford Knapp?

BD:
Knapp.

DM:
And Virginia was his daughter. Did you know her?

BD:
Yeah.

DM:
Oh really? Yeah. I've interviewed her.

BD:
I hadn't thought of that name in so long.

DM:
Yeah. I've interviewed her before. So yeah, she became a school teacher and was down in East Texas.

BD:
Well, a lot of people—I'm sure she had a full life there, but—

DM:
Well she lived—yeah, she lived in that president's home.

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BD:
As far as I'm concerned, since my boss ran—couldn't go to these—anything, I didn't go to anything.

DM:
Sure, right. I know somewhere along that time, they started a campus beautification. They started having arbor days and all that. Remember it?

BD:
They had mums. You know, mums. It was so pretty there for years. I thought they had one of the prettiest campuses. But anyway, somebody, some smart aleck sports writer wrote one time about Tech. He didn't know he was—I don't know where it was, about Tech having the ugliest college campus.

DM:
Golly. You never know where that influence comes from.

BD:
Because they really, I always thought they had a pretty campus.

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DM:
They already had those big elm trees. Didn't they? On campus. Around campus when you came along.

BD:
Yeah. They had a disease or something?

DM:
Yeah.

BD:
But I know for several years they specialized in chrysanthemums. They had the prettiest chrysanthemums.

DM:
Well, I know it was Bradford Knapp that kicked off that beautification project so—

BD:
I've forgotten.

DM:
So that's when you were there.

BD:
Lots of things I, you know, forgot.

DM:
Um-hm. You remember any other faculty members on campus besides those that you had? Some that you might've heard of?

BD:
Oh my goodness.

DM:
Like William Curry Holden, maybe? Holden?

BD:
I knew of him.

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DM:
History, yeah. Okay. All right. Y'all are—Jim married an Urbanovsky, didn't he? Zelo Urbanovsky?

BD:
Who?

DM:
Urbanovsky? Was Zelo Urbanovsky there when you were there?

BD:
I've never heard of him.

DM:
Okay. He was a landscape architecture professor.

BD:
His granddaughter is my daughter-in-law.

DM:
Okay.

BD:
But I never heard of him

DM:
Never had heard of him?

BD:
I know he has a little park.

DM:
Yeah. Sounds like you've been on campus fairly recently. When's the last time you were on campus?

BD:
I haven't been even driven through there in several years.

DM:
Yeah. I guess. Yeah. Urbanovsky's park has been there a little while.

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BD:
Oh yeah. I've been there since it's been there. I've seen it. Well, during there, because I've been out to the arena. I've been there.

DM:
Oh, you went out to the livestock arena?

BD:
No, the basketball.

DM:
Basketball. Oh, the United Spirit Arena.

BD:
Yeah, I've been there.

DM:
Yeah.

BD:
I haven't just really gone through the campus. I just go down that street. What street's it on?

DM:
Well if you—if you did—

BD:
You miss the other campus.

DM:
If you went on now, you'd probably be might like me and get lost. It's just changing all the time. It's pretty amazing. Well okay. So y'all got married in '37, and but you didn't move to Floydada until '51? Is that—?

BD:
No, as I said, not long after—a couple of years after I got married, Dennis was—we were transferred to Gallup, New Mexico.

DM:
That's right. That's right.

BD:
That's where he came along.

DM:
Okay. Bob's the oldest.

BD:
And we lived there – we moved there in '39, and we were transferred to Roswell. All this war was ruining Dennis's—he signed a draft in Gallup. Well the Lord took up everything. He was a furniture man, but the little stores just didn't get any furniture. What little was made went to the big stores. Everything was war. So in 1940, we decided we better go. His number had come up. Dennis's—he hadn't even have his physical—passed his physical and he was ready to go to service so we decided he'd better get me back to Lubbock, where my family was. We moved back to Lubbock. He left Wards.

DM:
Okay. Did that happen? Was he called up? Was Dennis called up into the army?

BD:
Well, I was going to tell you. I interfered. That's when I got the Penicillin. I had got hurt. Got my foot hurt and I had a tremendous—I had Gangrene.

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DM:
Oh my goodness.

BD:
I was in the hospital the first time three and a half months.

DM:
Oh my.

BD:
They wouldn't let you stay in a hospital now like that. But I stayed three and a half months at the West Texas Hospital. Of course, they gave him a deferment. His time—yes, his number came up. He would've gone, but the doctor—there I was, completely out of it.

DM:
Well yeah.

BD:
And while I was in that shape, they got to where people men thirty with a family, were not called anymore. So I kept him from going and he hated it. It was me and friends always. After that, telling where they went and all that, he couldn't help. He didn't go.

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DM:
You might've saved his life.

BD:
I was responsible for him not going.

DM:
Not intentionally.

BD:
I didn't mind that, but he felt bad.

Bob Dempsey:
She never gives me credit. I was running up and down a ladder, laying on the ground sideways in my grandmother's backyard and I remember so vividly—

BD:
He fell.

Bob Dempsey:
She came out to get me this day and she got me on that ladder and pulled me off of it and when she did, I resisted so the ladder fell forward and hit her on the shin right here.

BD:
No, hit right across my—

Bob Dempsey:
And tore—okay, somewhere there—tore the nylons and I remember the chairs she was sitting in. My grandmother's house in the dining room with pure patent leather shoes, high heels with the strap around them and I was leaning. I had done this and that's what lead to the infection that eventually—

BD:
I went to the doctor and he thought I was just an aching woman, I think. He x-rayed it. It wasn't broken and he gave me some pain pills and sent me home, and that was on Saturday. By Monday, I was out of my head with poison.

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DM:
Who was the doctor?

BD:
Dr. O.W. English.

DM:
Yeah.

BD:
English and Hunt. They were together. But English was the actual. But then Monday,I don't know what I'd done. Mom and dad had lived there. She—a blood blister right from here to my knee.

DM:
On the back of your leg?

BD:
On the back, here. And she called him and he came out and says, "Oh, she's got Gangrene. Let's get her to the hospital." But he came in saying, "Well, I think I already amputated today." My mother despised that man.

DM:
This was English again?

BD:
That's another English.

DM:
Golly.

BD:
He didn't mean no harm, but it didn't go well with my mother. Anyway, I was out of it quite a while. By now, he had—I don't know whether this had anything to do with it. He had just come home for service, but he had applied for this Penicillin for another patient and he used it on me and saved my neck, and the nurses told me that he nearly got in trouble about that because he didn't use it for the person. I don't know what the—I have a feeling she had cancer, but I don't know because they pointed her out to me. I could look out my window and see the people going in and out and they pointed her out, so she was still up and around. But anyway, I got her Penicillin.

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DM:
Yeah, well it was an emergency situation. So this was probably the first Lubbock County—

BD:
First. I read it in the paper.

DM:
Penicillin. Golly.

BD:
I was the first.

DM:
That's something.

BD:
I've had very little of it since. I've had a few. I don't even know if they use it much anymore. Do they?

Bob Dempsey:
Well, I think Amoxicillin has kind of taken its place.

BD:
I think maybe people used it until they got a little bit immune to it. I don't know. But anyway, I haven't had to have it. That was it. Oh, I'll tell you another experience I had. It's not funny. When I was ten months old, my mother's mother had lived with them—with us—and she had severe asthma and heart. She took a lot of medicine. Anyway, she passed away, and the family was there and they were cleaning out and I got her medicine.

DM:
You what?

BD:
I got her medicine.

DM:
You got her medicine.

BD:
I ate it all.

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DM:
Oh no.

BD:
Anyway, the took some out of my mouth, somebody. I was ten months old, but I was walking. Anyway, I went into fits. It had three strychnine, arsenic and belladonna were in those pills. I've also thought I'd ask a doctor—I never have thought of it. They told mother and dad that I had too much it counteracted itself.

DM:
Really? Okay.

BD:
Have you ever heard that?

DM:
I've heard about Arsenic, that a smaller amount is worse, so yeah.

BD:
But I took a bunch. They took several of them. I took all of them.

DM:
Golly.

BD:
So that may have—I figured that changed my life.

DM:
Maybe so.

BD:
I don't know what I'd have been. I feel like that changed me somehow.

DM:
This Penicillin. Did they start using it for civilians later on in the war or was it after the war before they?

BD:
Oh.

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DM:
Or did you hear of anyone else getting it in the forties?

BD:
This was in seventy—wait a minute. '44. It was in '44. The year Jane was born. Forty—see, I'd just had a baby and in fact, she was—I went—I got her the day was going back for my six week checkup. I don't know. I don't even know what we did. Just experimental. It wasn't on the market. That was in '44.

DM:
Forty-four. Okay.

BD:
About—let's see. I got home in February. It was in March. It was in March of '44.

DM:
What else can you tell me about the war years? The war years in Lubbock. You remember rationing pretty well?

BD:
Oh yeah. I still got a bunch of cards.

DM:
Do you?

BD:
Sugar. Now, coffee, we needed because my husband loved coffee. I didn't. We weren't too badly affected. Gasoline, tires, and things were.

DM:
But you got all the groceries you needed. No problem on groceries?

BD:
No. We didn't have any problems. I don't—that wasn't bad for me. Didn't bother us too much. We were used to not having too much, I guess. I don't know what it was.

DM:
Do you know of any companies in Lubbock that contracted with the government to produce any kind of war materials? Not necessarily weapons, but other kinds of war materials?

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BD:
I don't know. We weren't connected with it in any way. Ivan was—he worked for the government. He worked the post office at that time.

DM:
Okay.

BD:
He did that up until he—we decided to go to—he went in the grain business like my dad.

DM:
Okay. This is—you stayed in Lubbock until 1951, when you moved to Floydada?

BD:
Fifty-one.

DM:
Okay, okay. You know, that was a dry time of—that was a drought period.

BD:
Oh, we've had droughts.

DM:
The early fifties, though, was supposed to be a really bad drought. Some people say that it was worse than the thirties. I don't know.

BD:
I don't remember that.

Bob Dempsey:
Well Elmer Kelton's book, "The Time it Never Rains" is early fifties. Its main character, Charlie, mirrors her brother, my uncle.

DM:
Oh really?

Bob Dempsey:
And he lived 47 miles out of San Angelo. Had a heart attack on that ranch and drove himself to San Angelo. It's a fact.

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DM:
Golly.

Bob Dempsey:
And that's in that book.

DM:
Oh really?

Bob Dempsey:
It killed him. He died. I was looking forward to asking him where he got that idea because it's just such a coincidence.

DM:
It has to be patterned after him.

Bob Dempsey:
Amazing, yeah. It was so dry. There were big ranchers well to do –

BD:
What year did—

Bob Dempsey:
I remember them driving up in a used Chevrolet after their Cadillacs.

BD:
They had such a drought down on his ranch. I remember Dennis taking hay and stuff to him.

Bob Dempsey:
My dad and I took a full load of hay down there and he was in the hospital. We took it and gave him the bill and said, "Merry Christmas," when we gave my uncle the bill for this truckload of hay. My dad took it.

BD:
I remember that.

DM:
Was this in the early fifties that you're talking about?

Bob Dempsey:
Fifty-five, probably. Fifty-four.

BD:
I didn't know that one time that they took some hay down there to him.

DM:
I know that irrigation alleviated that quite a bit for farmers. You know, they had—they were starting irrigation pretty heavily.

BD:
Before they had the irrigation deal. Of course, I guess it's gone down because of water levels.

DM:
Around Floydada, you know, there are some interesting canyons right there. Were there any recreational areas?

BD:
Oh yeah. We had a great golf course out in canyon. About nine miles south of Floydada.

Bob Dempsey:
The Baptist Encampment is on the highway.

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BD:
The canyon that went through there.

DM:
So were there places that people from the town would go? Kind of like Crosbyton had Silver Falls right off the Cap Rock. I wonder if Floydada had a place where town people would go have picnics and all of this.

BD:
Not really.

Bob Dempsey:
Not really. The canyon wasn't—

BD:
Baptist Encampment. They could go out there and they did.

Bob Dempsey:
A place we did go further was Roaring Springs. That was a neat old place.

BD:
Silver Falls. I mean, the golf course. A lot of people went out there. Members go out there.

DM:
Right. Okay. Now, Roaring Springs, though, was what? Maybe thirty miles away?

Bob Dempsey:
Thirty-five.

BD:
We went down there a lot though.

Bob Dempsey:
Because we went—I remember family coming out and we'd go to Roaring Springs. I mean, that was the place to go.

DM:
It was a great place, yeah.

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Bob Dempsey:
As long as you didn't mind driving thirty-five miles. Really nice.

DM:
Well, tell me what Floydada was like in 1951. Has it changed much?

BD:
Dried up.

DM:
Dried up?

BD:
I think it was. When we went there, there was five thousand people. Now, there's three. Or that's what the state sign says.

DM:
It's kind of off the beaten path now.

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BD:
Well yeah. It's off the beaten—it's nothing but cotton and I don't know whether we didn't have good management or what, but a lot of those towns got penitentiaries or something. We never did get anything like that.

Bob Dempsey:
My brother in law is kind of a stickler for just information. In fact, he said—I believe he said 1965. I think that's the year. He said in Floydada in 1965, thirty-five churches and twenty-one gas stations.

DM:
Oh really?

Bob Dempsey:
And some of my buddies, we get together. We do a lot of reminiscing and we've come up with an amazing number of gas stations when we were little. They were all over that town when you think about it, and churches, you can't keep track of them. Any house could be a church, but gas stations. Twenty-one.

DM:
It sounds amazing.

BD:
It's so poor it doesn't have a department store. It has one drugstore. Has a couple of hardware stores, but it's got three banks and nothing else. Does any of that seem funny to you?

Bob Dempsey:
Right, but our branch is like, Happy State's kind of branch, but the bank is First National of Floydada. It's been there for—

BD:
But three banks and just nothing else. One big grocery store.

DM:
You know, that's the way it is in some other towns. I live kind of near Lorenzo and it's the bank and the little grocery store and that's all. The bank.

BD:
Well, people who are kind of friends of mine, they drove to Lubbock for everything and we had a pretty good grocery store. Jan, my daughter, was one of them. They went to Lubbock and bought all their groceries. Once and while, they'd drive—gallon of milk or something. I said, "You ought to trade here. You're going to lose a grocery store if you don't quit."

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DM:
That's a pretty good distance from Floydada to Lubbock to go shopping. Did any people—?

Bob Dempsey:
There's an awful lot of people that it's a daily drive.

DM:
Just used to it.

BD:
Don't think anything about it at all.

DM:
Yeah. I guess some people probably commute now, but did any people commute to Lubbock back in the fifties to work?

BD:
I knew quite a few for several years that drive over there.

LD:
I think, I believe Maddie, but I don't know when she started her nurses training.

BD:
Holcomb Doctor—she went up. When Dr. Hale went to Lubbock, she drives back and forth still. There's lots of people. I'd hate to do that every day.

DM:
When you first moved out there, were there a lot of schools in Floyd County? You know, scattered around? Most of the schools have consolidated now, but you remember any outlying schools?

Bob Dempsey:
Oh yeah. A bunch.

BD:
Yeah. Matador schools. I don't know. I thought, and I still think that Floydada isn't Lockney. Now, they're just nine miles apart. I've wondered why they didn't consolidate. I don't think they ever would.

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DM:
They're still separate.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah. There at Cedar Hill. Sand Hill.

LD:
Is there a school at Barwise?

Bob Dempsey:
McCamey. What?

LD:
Is there a school at Barwise?

Bob Dempsey:
I don't know. Barwise—an intersection. I think Sand Hill and Barwise are about the same. Doughtery. I mean, there were a bunch of schools all out in the country.

DM:
Well, often there are as many as about thirty old schools that are scattered around that are consolidated now into one or two towns in a county. Pretty amazing. Kind of the same with the gas stations.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah. Same thing.

DM:
Bigger companies move in. Well, you mentioned something about Floydada's mostly all cotton now. What was it like when y'all first went out there? Was it mostly cotton or were they growing other things?

BD:
Well of course, my husband was interested in milo.

DM:
Right.

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BD:
Because he had a grain elevator. There was a lot, but it's still mostly cotton.

DM:
Back then too?

BD:
Milo.

Bob Dempsey:
And wheat.

BD:
And wheat, but I started to say cotton takes more—what takes more water? Milo? It seems like they said Milo takes more water than cotton.

Bob Dempsey:
I don't remember which takes more.

BD:
Well, the reason they went to cotton.

DM:
Yeah. Yeah. Okay.

BD:
I don't know how it is now, but—

DM:
But there was a lot of irrigation around Floyd Town.

BD:
Yeah, there was a lot of irrigation.

DM:
Can you remember some of the larger businesses in Floydada in the early fifties?

BD:
Well we had a Hale's Department Store.

DM:
Hale's?

BD:
Hales.

DM:
H-a-l-e-s?

BD:
H-a-l-e. Hale. It was pretty nice.

Bob Dempsey:
Well her son-in-law is Jimmy—no, Mac Wilson. J.M. Wilson the Fourth. And his dad was Jimmy and the old man was J.M. Wilson and he's in charge of Wilson Lumberyards and now, 84 Lumber. There are still some of those, one in Plainview, and his headquarters is right there in Floydada just east of the square and so that's his lumberyard. His son had one called—what was Jimmy's place called there? It's now the—behind Billy's—Johnny Bill Sue's Auto. It was Builder's Mart. The son. And that was the father – or son-in-law had that and then like I said, J.M. Willson, if you go to SMU, you'll see J.M. Willson with two L's with a lot of buildings because they were big, big Methodists. His was the most prominent business like that in

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Floydada, ever. Just my guess. Of course, Oden Chevrolet, it's still people in—even though now its Reagor-Dykes—it was pretty well known.

BD:
Buick dealership went out.

Bob Dempsey:
Oden?

BD:
No, Buick.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah, City Auto came on strong with the Buick GMC, but once the Burns family—Leroy Burns, I think, once he died then that came back down, but it used to be really big—dealing with anybody anywhere. So and then two auto dealerships that got people from all over the family.

BD:
It's just light up.

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DM:
What about Higginbotham? Wasn't—didn't Higginbotham have a big thing there?

BD:
We haven't had a lumberyard there.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah, but a guy in my class high school, Holland, his dad, managed the Higginbotham department right there. And of course, there were a bunch of them around. You know, it kind of went down earlier. It slipped and then ___ Martin [1:23:51] probably aced it out I'm guessing.

DM:
When did you start noticing a decline? Decline in population? A decline in businesses in Floydada? About what year would you have started noticing that?

BD:
What year did Hale's—That seems when Hale's went out when it really boomed.

Bob Dempsey:
Hale's Department Store?

BD:
Garden Store.

Bob Dempsey:
I wasn't there. Of course, the first ten days out of driving school, I was gone forever.

BD:
They had a J.C. Penney. They had a Ben Franklin.

DM:
Really?

BD:
All on one side.

LD:
Sears.

DM:
Had a Sears?

Bob Dempsey:
Seriously, there is a full Sears here for an order. I'm not sure about that. A bunch of grocery stores. That's another thing we used to count. You started counting every—I bet there were fifteen or twenty grocery stores all over the place, but there was a Piggly Wiggly that was prominent when nick closed out Lowe's.

LD:
Palace Theater.

Bob Dempsey:
Well yeah. Palace Theater.

LD:
And the Capada[01:24:56] drive in.

Bob Dempsey:
Oh yeah. Whites Auto. Western Auto. I think those were scattered around quite a bit.

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DM:
What about tractor dealerships? Was it John Deer country? Or Allis Chalmers?

Bob Dempsey:
Oh yeah, both.

DM:
Both?

Bob Dempsey:
The father of a classmate of mine, McDonald. Allis Chalmers. There was an Oliver Tractor right over by where the Piggly Wiggly is just across the street. The reason I know a lot of this—and I ought to get you a copy if you don't have it. In 1948 The Chamber Commerce had a movie made to push the town, and I've got a copy of it somewhere. If you want, I'll get you one. I might even had it made into DVD, but it shows all—a lot of the local businesses and the women at the washer—the wash interior, of which there were about four or five of those. Purina seed dealer. He was big. Anyway, this is a forty-five minute drive. It shows downtown Floydada in front of the Palace Theater and there is not a parking place in any direction. Saturdays were big.

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DM:
That sounds like a great film. I'll see if we have it. I'll ask around. See if we have it. If not—

Bob Dempsey:
Ask if you have it. If you don't, I'll get you one. We made a bunch of them

DM:
Oh that's great. That's great.

BD:
They told me that the landowner, the ones that owned that land originally, Massey, he was responsible possibly for Tech coming to Lubbock and not coming to Floydada. He held the strings. He didn't want to turn loosely.

Bob Dempsey:
But there have been some indications that maybe others in addition to him, but Massey was the big name then. They were—they kind of held off development in way.

DM:
Huh. He was in Floydada, but he held on.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah. His house is still sitting there. Everybody knew him. He had two identical '56 Fords. We knew that. Identical. Yeah, he was a quirky guy in some ways. But he wouldn't let people build west and you can see it today.

BD:
Well just personally, for years, we tried to get a lot to build the house on. There weren't any houses to sell. Nobody was selling. We wanted to build. He—oh, about two weeks I'm going to open some. He just strung everybody along.

DM:
What was his purpose? Was he trying to get the prices to go up? I wonder before he—

BD:
I don't know. I think he just wanted to be in control.

Bob Dempsey:
Even in modern times, as we speak, I don't know. Maybe not today, but the past couple of years. Sonic Drive In wanted to come into Floydada, and they never could come up with a land arrangement. Of all places. I mean, it's amazing.

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DM:
That is amazing.

Bob Dempsey:
That's what I've heard and there isn't one there.

BD:
So we finally just were living in an old house. Finally, had to move it off and build on the lot. When we had friends, the same way. Stancils (1:27:59) wanted to come in.

Bob Dempsey:
There's something funny about Floydada. The families, maybe more than one. In addition to Massey, I think the Carthel family, there's some—and they're big in Lockney too. These are just names that used to—I can't tell you anybody specific, but there was some kind of, almost a collusion among these families to keep Floydada just about what it was and you know, it doesn't work that way. You're either getting better or getting worse.

DM:
Right. So they would remain the dominant families in that area.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah. They stunted growth. They withheld, and so people would go elsewhere. I think that's true if you looked at all the records in Floydada.

DM:
Floydada does have a pretty strong interest in its history. I mean, they have a really good museum. I know we have a lot of—several contacts with people who are interested in local history there. Has that museum always been there? A big museum right on the square?

Bob Dempsey:
Right on the square. The museum. It's been there. I don't know how long it's been there. It's been there thirty-forty years.

BD:
I don't know how long it's been there. It seems like ever since I can remember.

Bob Dempsey:
I mean, it may have been there before, but I think they got some people that really energized it. Marble, Milam.

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DM:
Nancy Marble.

Bob Dempsey:
Some ladies that really—and a guy named—two classes under me. Frank Potts, brilliant guy. Went to Tech. He's in the record books there and so is his younger brother, Phil. They were aces in math and engineering. He does the computer work for that library—I mean, that museum. It's done a lot for them.

DM:
Okay. Well it's a big thing.

Bob Dempsey:
It is.

DM:
It's very nice.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah, it's very nice.

BD:
And if it wasn't for the courthouse, the public offices, I don't know whether there'd be anything there or not.

DM:
It's a beautiful square area too. You know, the courthouse square. It's a big spacious area. You can tell it was a thriving town.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah. Oh yeah. It was.

DM:
When did they start their pumpkin festival? Is that an old thing or is that pretty new?

Bob Dempsey:
Thirty years. I think. Twenty-five. It's in the Amarillo Paper today, if you didn't see it.

DM:
Oh no.

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Bob Dempsey:
Front of the Amarillo Paper. It's front page. Floydada. Talk about woes of the weather this year on the pumpkins. In the third page, it says the pumpkin festival—pumpkin days—and it's far out overshadowed, outpaced, old settlers, which is the last weekend in May. Last Saturday in May.

BD:
And when is that pumpkin day? Next week? This weekend?

Bob Dempsey:
This coming weekend, I believe.

BD:
Megan, my granddaughter—

Bob Dempsey:
One hundred visitors.

BD:
They're going down to pumpkin day.

DM:
Well, people flock from Lubbock to go up there. I used to take my kids up there too. It's a big deal. It's something that brings people back to Floydada.

Bob Dempsey:
It sure does. Yeah, it really does. It's much, much bigger than it—oh, summers, like I said, it was always—when I was there, pumpkin day didn't exist and it's come along the last twenty-five or some years. Of course, she got the pioneer woman of the year in '07. If she'd gone back, she wouldn't go, but she could've gotten the oldest old settler five years running. She wouldn't go back though. But anyway, it's kind of—the old settlers are gone and so pumpkin day has taken over.

DM:
Was this a Floydada old setters? Floydada or Floyd County?

Bob Dempsey:
Floyd County. Yeah, Floyd County old settlers right there.

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DM:
I know some of the ladies that are involved with the museum actually came in from Lockney. Someone from Lockney.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah, because Lockney's got a lot of—in some ways, it's a more thriving—it's half the size, but in some ways, it's more thriving. It's got a hospital. Floydada has next to nothing. It's got a nursing room. Floydada, finally, it's got something, but it's amazing. Lockney's got stuff Floydada doesn't and shouldn't.

BD:
We lost our hospital. A nice building sitting out there.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah, the building's out there, but the cargo clinic, the whole thing closed. So again, Floydada, there's something in the water there.

DM:
Yes, unusual.

Bob Dempsey:
Somebody's—doesn't make sense.

DM:
Have you ever heard of any contention between—any rivalry between Lockney and Floydada over where the courthouse should be?

BD:
Oh yes. Oh yeah. It's still—

Bob Dempsey:
Oh yeah.

DM:
Is it still going like that?

BD:
They still think it ought to be up there.

DM:
When you moved into Floydada in '51, was it like that?

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BD:
Yeah, it was then.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah, I think it was settled when we got there, but that rivalry is—

BD:
Still there.

Bob Dempsey:
There are people that hate and they talk about hate and they get that in high school so the kids hate each other and that's totally out of hand and it's crazy.

DM:
Yeah. So maybe this is what the schools haven't consolidated.

BD:
Possibly. I wouldn't think they could ever really—

DM:
So, for example, in sports—for example, in football, Lockney would be the big rival.

Bob Dempsey:
Pretty well being half the size. We probably, I'm sure we got to got an edge on them. But we're twice as big, we ought to have an edge.

BD:
Floydada hasn't had a football team in a long time. I think, my theory is, I think Floydada must be 70 percent Latin America.

DM:
By now.

BD:
They're small people. They just don't have any big old boys.

DM:
Big old two hundred and fifty pounders.

BD:
I just believe that's part of the reason Floydada can't get a good ball.

DM:
Tech had some good football players from Floydada back when, though.

Bob Dempsey:
Don Barber and Jack Henry.

DM:
Jack Henry, yeah.

Bob Dempsey:
Of course, he's still there in Lubbock and famous. Retired. Big surgeon.

DM:
Jack. Yeah. He worked on my wife's leg one time. Yeah, he's kind of doing this visiting. Travels around a little bit. I think he goes to New Mexico and all.

Bob Dempsey:
In 2000, somebody started, in fact, it was Denise Holcomb, she mentioned a while ago. She and her guy's came together at a high school reunion and started a hall of fame and Jack Henry was the first they put in there.

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DM:
Oh good. Okay.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah, so I talked to him. The last few years with him I had some dealings.

DM:
Anything else y'all ought to tell us about Floydada?

BD:
I don't know. There's just so little to tell. It was a wonderful place to raise kids. I mean, we didn't have the problems they had in the big cities. I worried about him drinking a can of beer, but I didn't worry about drugs.

DM:
Yeah, right. Is Floyd County—did it have little stucco farmhouses on every quarter section like so many counties in this area?

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Bob Dempsey:
Sure.

BD:
Did it?

Bob Dempsey:
Well I mean, it did. Back in the day, [inaudible]. We talked about the Canyon. The Betsey Canyon [01:35:27]. That road that goes down. At the top of that, Lana grew up. Their family's house is right there within a quarter mile, half a mile, and they were on maybe a half of section. I don't know what they were, but yeah. My friend, Herby, they were—and the asbestos. We talked about that. The asbestos society. That's what our first house had. It was everywhere and that kind of house was out there and they had a quarter section, I think Herby did.

DM:
So very common at one time.

Bob Dempsey:
And they were doing—living pretty well on a hundred and sixty acres. Now, you got ten sections.

DM:
Right. Exactly. I'm just wondering if that trend happened in the time that you were out there. Do you remember in '51, whether there were a lot of people living out in the country on smaller farms? Half or quarter section farms? Or was it mostly owned by larger landowners by then?

Bob Dempsey:
When we were there, I think there were an awful lot of small farms.

DM:
Still operating.

Bob Dempsey:
But you can see the transition and we talk about it. Kids would graduate and then almost none of them would come back because there's just so little for a college graduate or whoever to do in Floydada so very few. Unless you had owned land there and came back into the farming world, almost nobody came back. You went elsewhere and that started it and then friends—I remember friends talking about they'd start leasing and so a guy, he might have a farm here, but meanwhile, he's farming two sections here and farming six sections, even though he may still live on only a quarter and then just build up that the farmers went away. They couldn't handle the departures.

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DM:
I'd be curious to know if the large landowners in that area live in Floydada or if they live in Lubbock because that's often the case too now. They move into the city and they kind of manage their farms from a distance.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah and schools have a bearing. I know in Floydada, the one that we talked about is Idalou. We've got some people who have—even though they're very prominent in Floydada, they move and get an apartment and their kids go to Idalou and they end up on the state championship team. Sports drive a lot of juveniles, and the Bushland in Amarillo out here has kind of got that reputation at that level. They've grown up to 4A I think now. The little bedroom communities that come and attract people from around can generate a disproportionate share of the athletes. It's kind of a Texas, I guess, tradition. We used to use Andrews. The oil. Used to that. Allen, now, is the poster child there in Dallas. Number one 6A. They're huge. Sixty five hundred in their school. All to play football. Anyway, sports have a lot to say about Texas.

DM:
What else about Floydada? Anything else come to mind?

BD:
As I said, it was just a good place to live. Nothing—lot of close friends. Just played cards and stuff like that.

DM:
Nice. Yeah. What about those severe storms that ripped through there though? You saw that tornado right after you moved out there, but you know, I said—

BD:
It didn't hit anything.

DM:
Really? Okay?

BD:
We didn't have any severe—

Bob Dempsey:
In 1958. I remember that year specifically. I was a sophomore.

BD:
Yes, one in Silverton. I remember it because we were going to go up there to see him and getting ready to go up to see the damage, I got a finger mashed in the car. Not slanted, but in the—where the screws are. We didn't go. I couldn't go up. I remember that. I couldn't go.

Bob Dempsey:
What did you see?

DM:
Well Silverton seems to be one of those towns that attract storms.

Bob Dempsey:
You're thinking right. Even today, how many times Silverton. Just over at Floydada up here.

BD:
That's the only one I can remember. We just didn't have any hit there in Floydada.

DM:
By the way, did y'all ever go over? Was that a recreational spot for y'all there at Caprock Canyons? What's now Caprock Canyons State Park?

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Bob Dempsey:
Quitaque.

DM:
Yeah, Quitaque. Was that recreation?

Bob Dempsey:
Not to me.

BD:
Isn't it close to Silverton? I've been up there.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah. North of Silverton.

DM:
Just wondering if that's a place where Floydada people went on a regular.

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BD:
I didn't ever go but once. I didn't find much up there.

DM:
Okay.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah. If it was a day—just a picnicky thing, I think you'd find Roaring Springs. I'm serious. We'd go to Roaring Springs all the time. Every high school football party, Roaring Springs.

DM:
That's really interesting. I wouldn't have guessed that because of the thirty-five mile distance, but it is a great spot.

Bob Dempsey:
It is so nice. That spring and that pool. We were there before. That creek bed out there, it was like a beach in Southern California. I mean, literally. Sand for two or three hundred yards. Amazing. I went back about first time five years ago, there's no sand. It's all grown up. Apparently, it has to do with—I think like the ranchers and farmers upstream go and catch basins all over the place and so you don't have those thunderstorm floods roaring through there and cleaning it up, it doesn't happen anymore. Spring's still running pretty well.

DM:
I see. Maybe some invasive plants in there too.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah. It's such a neat place for Indian lore. I'm sure you know. Those corn holes where they ground their corn up with those rocks.

DM:
It would've been an ideal Native American spot for sure. What else can you tell me about Lubbock? Have we covered things pretty well for your stay in Lubbock? Growing up in Lubbock and going to Tech?

BD:
When I was about twelve years old I guess, I got my first bicycle and my mother would've had a fit. She said I was just riding on the sidewalk around the block, they were building the underpasses out there on Broadway and Avenue H. I rolled out there. Man, I just—every day I went out there. The men were just nice and I think of that. How many nights I was out riding. Just a different time.

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DM:
Was it—were there a lot of kids on bicycles back then?

BD:
Not many. I mean, I don't remember riding with many and I was on my own when I was down there going down Broadway, was building that underpass. So I think I was about twelve.

DM:
I was just wondering because later on, that became a big deal, you know? It was still an outdoor—kids still played in the outdoors and a lot of times, they were on bikes in later generations.

BD:
I had wanted a bike quite a while, seemed like, before I got it. And about at the time I got it, I had a spurt growing and my legs were dragging the ground on that bicycle. I was so angry. I grew my height all in the year I was twelve. I didn't remember. I was outgrowing that bicycle in no time.

DM:
When did your husband—when did Dennis die?

BD:
He died in 1976.

DM:
Seventy-six.

BD:
October. A long time ago.

DM:
In Floydada? Or while y'all were living in Floydada? Okay.

BD:
We'd been to a ballgame—now, we knew he had heart trouble. It was an enlarged heart, and he went all the time, but we didn't have any idea it was serious like that. Or at least I didn't. I don't think he did.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah. I'm kind of betting he kind of had an idea.

BD:
You think he did? Well he'd had too many plans and we liked them. But anyway, I didn't have any idea. We went to this ballgame and then went on to friends for coffee, and we walked in and he sat down and never said a word, never made a sound.

DM:
Okay. You stayed in Floydada?

BD:
Huh?

DM:
You stayed in Floydada? You continued to live in Floydada?

BD:
Yes. I was working.

DM:
That's where your friends were?

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BD:
Yeah. That was home. We'd been there a long time.

DM:
What were you doing for a job? What was your job? You were working.

BD:
I was secretary of a junior high school.

DM:
Yeah. Okay. In Floydada. Okay.

BD:
That was the last fifteen years. Before that I worked for the government.

Bob Dempsey:
ASC [**Agricultural stabilization and Conservation**].

DM:
Agricultural. Okay.

BD:
I didn't go back to work. I worked about three years after when I married. A year before marrying a couple years later. I didn't work anymore and I had all my kids. This—the manager of the government office, his wife was my friend, and he called me one time and said, "We're just so busy down here. Could you come down and help us for about six weeks?" I hadn't worked in thirty—I don't know. I thought, Oh, that'll be fun for Christmas. It was turned into fifteen years.

DM:
That's something. They must've liked your work.

BD:
From then, the super intendent of the schools was my son-in-law's father. I got through there and he was looking up a job at the high school. Secretary jobs.

DM:
Okay. Was that a pretty good job?

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BD:
I loved it.

DM:
Good.

BD:
It wasn't the stress that it was in the government. Hate to say, I loved it. Everyday would be a stack of mail come in. We had these big old notebook things of instruction. Every day we got stuck. Revision zones and revisions. It just kept you busy. You never knew what you were doing.

DM:
It's only gotten worse.

BD:
It was bad. I didn't like that. It was a lot of tension. But that school, I liked the kids. There wasn't any stress to it.

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DM:
Good. That's great.

BD:
I finally retired at seventy-two and I could've gone on. They didn't care. They said, "As long as you do your job," but I kept hearing, "Well, when are you going to retire, well, when are you going to retire?" Dennis was gone. I didn't have anything to go back to. I stayed at home longer than they do now. Most people.

DM:
Right. That's right. Well, I don't have any more questions. Do y'all? Can y'all think of anything? Any gaps that we've left in the record?

Bob Dempsey:
One thing that probably falls in politically correct, but it's fact. When I was in high school, I remember one Hispanic kid at class behind me out of four high school classes and last year, of course, my sister that we lost a year or so ago, and her husband both were teachers there and they were saying like 75 percent Hispanic, so that's part of the change. I don't know how that ties into the small farm big farm and kids not coming back necessarily, but it's part of a huge change in the—

DM:
That whole area.

Bob Dempsey:
--Area on certain towns. Certain towns much more than others, I think. I don't know why the Hispanics tend to love Floydada and not if it's true, maybe not—say, Canadian. I think Canadians end up very low percentage. It's always been a mystery. It is a beautiful town.

DM:
That's the case in Crosby County too. A larger Hispanic—it's a majority population. It's probably a majority population in Floyd County.

Bob Dempsey:
Yeah. It probably is. Maybe with obviously the agricultural climate and what there is to do there, but it doesn't seem like it'd be that much different from this whole area. It seemed like Floydada had a bigger change than others had. Who knows?

DM:
Yeah. Anything else? Lana, you think of anything?

BD:
I don't know anything. I didn't get nowhere much.

DM:
You gave me a lot of good information.

BD:
I've probably forgotten.

LD:
I was curious as to what was the name of the pharmacies in Lubbock at the time? What was the main drug store?

Bob Dempsey:
Halsey. Halsey.

DM:
Good question. There was one right across the street from Tech wasn't there?

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Bob Dempsey:
Mark Halsey. I went there with my dad and mom. I remember that place. Mark Halsey.

BD:
Mark Halsey. Downtown. It's a good one out on Broadway.

Bob Dempsey:
had a counter with standard set. And there was another drugstore down there at the corner of Q and Broadway, Clark.

BD:
Clark. They made the best sandwiches. Forgotten that. It's changed so and people—I'm so old nobody remembers. They're the only ones that would've known what I wanted to know.

DM:
Well, I'm so glad to hear you knew Virginia Knapp. I enjoyed visiting with her a number of times. Any other questions?

BD:
Don't think I have any.

DM:
I'll go ahead and shut this off. I sure do appreciate it.

[End of Recording]

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