

**Oral History Interview of  
Barbara Davis**

**Interviewed by: Lynn Whitfield  
November 5, 2014  
Lubbock, Texas**

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## Transcript Overview:

This interview features Barbara Davis, who discusses her early life, upbringing, and experiences as a home economics student and resident in the Home Management House at Texas Tech University.

**Length of Interview:** 00:57:16

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Ancestry and birth	5	00:00:20
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### Keywords

Home Economics, ranching, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, West Texas

**Lynn Whitfield (LW):**

This is Lynn Whitfield, it is November 5, 2014, and I am interviewing Barbara Davis. Barbara, can you tell me—let's do some background information on you. What are the names of your parents?

**Barbara Davis (BD):**

My mother was Cornelia Evelyn Ratliff, and she spent most of her growing up time here in Lubbock. My dad was James Robert Hext, and he was from Canadian, Texas, which is up in the Panhandle north of Amarillo.

LW:

And you said your mother came to Texas Tech?

BD:

Yes, she grew up here in Lubbock, but she had—my mother's parents came to Lubbock in 1907 and they came from down south somewhere, I can't even remember now Santa Anna or somewhere off down there and came to Hale Center. My mother was born in Hale Center in 1906. I have an aunt that was born in Lubbock in 1908 so they moved here in 1907 I think. My grandfather died in 1910 after they had just gotten here, they came in a covered wagon. They had four children. My mother had two older brothers and a younger sister and she was four years old when her daddy passed away and my grandmother had an eighth grade graduation I think and I think that's about all that women got back then because Bubby was born in 1906. And she had to make living for those four children and she was determined they were all going to go to college and they did.

LW:

How did she make a living?

BD:

Everything imaginable I think. They lived on a farm and I know where it was, it was on Avenue T and 21<sup>st</sup> street here in Lubbock now, that's where the tennis courts are for Lubbock High School because I remember as a small child going to the house that was still there.

LW:

And where were you born?

BD:

I was born in Lubbock Memorial Hospital on July 1, 1930. So if you can subtract—(laughs)

LW:

And could you say what your full name is?

BD:

Barbara Anne Hext was my maiden name, Davis now.

LW:

And where did you go to school at?

BD:

I went to school in a small town in New Mexico, Reserve, New Mexico. It's on the far west side of New Mexico and I lived on a ranch forty miles from there. The last two years I was in high school we had a bus. We had three different modes of transportation, actually. My sister and I had a Jeep that we drove the first five miles and we got on a van, I guess you would call it now, but it was a small bus and rode about fifteen miles, I think, and then we finally got to a school bus and rode it the rest of the way to school.

LW:

And what did your family raise on the ranch?

BD:

We raised Hereford cattle. My daddy had gone to New Mexico in 1919, he was born in 1900, and grew up on a ranch in Canadian, Texas and went to New Mexico in 1919 and started ranching.

LW:

And where did you go after high school?

BD:

Came to Lubbock, Texas to go to school and majored in Home Economics, because that's what most girls did back then, educationally, and I majored in Home Economics education. And when I came in 1949, the teachers that were here when my mother was here, some of them were still here. I had her same math teacher and the women that were the dean of Home Economics and several other home economics teachers had been here since the beginning of Tech.

LW:

Was that Margaret Weeks?

BD:

Yes and my math teacher was Dr. Mickey, and his wife was a home economics teacher, Mrs. Mickey.

LW:

Was her name Sarah, was that Mrs. Mickey?

BD:

You know, I don't think I knew what her first name was just Mrs. Mickey was all I—and he was my math algebra teacher.

LW:

Now why did your mother decide to go to Texas Tech?

BD:

Because she grew up here. I mean, she lived her almost all her life. After my grandfather died my mother's father—my grandmother remarried. My mother was four when he passed away, and I think she remarried when my mother was twelve or thirteen, and he had been married to one of my grandmother's cousins and they had visited. My grandmother was an only child; and she was close to these cousins and they had visited quite often, I think, and my grandmother's cousin passed away, which was why the man kept coming to visit them. My mother said, "Cousin Jim came to see them and they would always come and they didn't think about it." She didn't think her mother even realized that he was coming to see her, but they married then and he was from—they lived at White Deer I believe, which is in the Panhandle, but then they moved to Clarendon and then they broke up and my grandmother moved back here to Lubbock.

LW:

And what did she major in?

BD:

History.

LW:

History, okay, interesting.

BD:

Education; I guess in history, because she taught school.



LW:

And where did she go to teach after Tech?

BD:

To Reserve, New Mexico—she and three of her friends from Tech went to Reserve, New Mexico to teach, and when they were there they would say, “See this lady over here with her two or three kids? She came here to teach school and married a cowboy,” and my mother said, “Well, you just mark it down in your book, I’ll be one that’s not going to stay.” She didn’t think that she liked it and she was the only one of the four that went and married my dad and stayed there.

LW:

So, Texas Tech, was that the only school that you looked at going to?

BD:

We didn’t know there was any other school. In our part of the country not very many people went to college. Most of the kids got married when they graduated from high school, and well, I don’t know—we probably would have gone to New Mexico State at Las Cruces. We had relatives in Albuquerque at the university but we really didn’t—but mother talked about Texas Tech, and we came here all the time to visit my grandmother and my uncle and my mother had a sister here.

LW:

Did you enjoy your time at Tech?

BD:

Oh yeah, we had a great time. We were pretty country kids coming from Apache Creek, [that] is where we got our mail in New Mexico, anyway they called us “the chickens” because we went to bed early every night. (laughs) We never had walked anywhere, we’d ridden horses, and we had to walk from the dormitories that are named now, they were just [named] “Three” and “Four” when we lived there. We lived in Dorm Four, but had to walk all the way to the Old Barn where we had P. E., and it was quite a long walk. My sister majored in drama and she didn’t go to class if the wind was blowing so she missed a lot of classes.

LW:

So I think Four is Weeks Hall now, right?

BD:

Yes.



LW:

Yeah, because Doak would be Three.

BD:

Well, let's see. Yeah, they were back-to-back, those two that are built together. And my sister and I were very lucky when we came. One of my dad's best friends from Canadian [Texas] was president of the university, Dr. Dossie Wiggins.

LW:

Oh, okay! And, you know, I didn't even ask you about your sister. What is your sister's name?

BD:

My sister's name is Aurelia Evelyn, and she went by Evelyn, and she lives in Tulia now, which is not very far, so we see each other pretty often.

LW:

And how far apart were you by age?

BD:

Nineteen months. And I'm the oldest.

LW:

Okay, so you came first and then she came almost two years later.

BD:

She was born in Silver City, New Mexico, which was the closest doctor to where we lived, which was a hundred miles away, so we didn't go to the doctor very often. If you got sick you died or lived, I guess, on your own. So that's why I'm tough.

LW:

So on the early days of the school when you were here you lived in Weeks, and you talked about walking all the way to the barn, did both the men and the women have their physical education in the barn?

BD:

Yes.

LW:

And that's the building they call the "Old Horse Barn," right? Well, the New Barn?

BD:

Yeah probably; it was that one that was over on the north side of campus, and there wasn't anything in between much. Somebody recently was saying, "Oh, I was here before the campus had grass," and they looked at me and I said, "Well, you laughed, but it's true; we really didn't have grass, just sand in those days."

LW:

So you didn't really have sidewalks either?

BD:

You know, I think maybe we did, I think we did have sidewalks. Not all the way over there, I don't think though, but I mean all the way though Dorm Four or Weeks it is, it was on this west side next to the Music building, it was just a little ways there to the Home Economics building.

LW:

So when you were going to school, I guess you went to classes in Home Economics, you went to the Barn for physical education, and then the Chemistry building, is that where you had your math classes and things?

BD:

No, let's see, I had one class in the Ag building. I had an Ag Economics class that I took, and it was in the Ag building. Let's see, Leonard was the man's last name, I started to say, "Johnny," but that was a boy that was here at Tech, I can't think of his first name, but anyway, it was in the Ag building. And we had a little cottage that was for the child development, it was there where that parking lot is there now I think. It was just a little white frame building.

LW:

Where did the students go to have a rec hall? Was there a little rec hall thing?

BD:

There were two of them, and they were old army barracks, they were two army barracks put together, but we had a lot of fun in there.

LW:

What kind of activities did you do in there?

BD:

Oh, well they had ping-pong, and I guess just stuff like they do now. I don't know if they—I don't know, we sat and chatted if we had time between classes.

LW:

And the bookstore, did it still have a little soda shop in there when you were in school?

BD:

I don't believe it did, but I know the man that owned it was Connor Cole, and he was a friend of my uncle's. And I remember my dad didn't have much sense, I guess; he got us a credit card, I mean, got us a charge account at the bookstore because they were so far away and everything, and of course we didn't really need it. My sister bought all of her Christmas presents and everything at the Tech bookstore because we had a charge account there and my dad had to pay the bill, so Connor just sent the bill to my dad. But anyway, it all worked out.

LW:

So in Home Economics what was the area you were studying?

BD:

Well, education, I majored in home economics education. I liked clothing best and took clothing, and foods and nutrition with Dr. Mina Lamb<sup>1</sup> was here, she was head of the nutrition department, and child development and applied arts. And Marti Poindexter was the head of the applied arts department, and the Rawls started a store here, let's see, what the name of it, it's still here, Quitha [?] Rawls, I believe, was her name; she was the assistant of the fine arts department. So just everything that they had us take. And they didn't even have chemistry for home economics majors at that time; you had to take it with engineers, and I mean, it was in the engineering department, I think, and it wasn't much fun.

LW:

I can understand that too.

BD:

I enrolled in it, I guess when I was a junior, I had to have it and I mean we didn't have chemistry in Reserve, New Mexico, can you imagine. I didn't know a beaker from a test tube, so I dropped it, and then I had to take it—I took it in the summer, that's what I did, in between my junior and senior year, barely passed it. I think the dean wrote me a congratulatory letter on making a D in chemistry. (laughs) From Dean Weeks.

LW:

What kind of social activities were you involved with?

BD:

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<sup>1</sup> Mina Marie Wolf Lamb, Margaret W. Weeks Professor of Food and Nutrition, 1940-1975.

Well, we never had done anything. I know when we first came, we had never seen the circus and, of course, that had been the thing that when my mother was growing up, she talked about when the circus came to town that was the most important thing that happened, really, so she said, "The first time the circus comes to Lubbock, you all go to the circus." Well, they were pretty strict back then, you know, like, we didn't pants on campus—well, yes, we could on campus, we couldn't wear them in the dormitory; we could if we were in our rooms, but if we were going to go into the lounge or anything we couldn't wear pants, so you see how things have changed in sixty years.

LW:

Yeah, one of my former co-workers went to school here in the sixties, and she said that she couldn't go into the cafeteria in pants, she had to wear a skirt or a dress.

BD:

If we were going to wear pants out somewhere, we couldn't go through the lounge, I mean, go through the lobby and get out, but you couldn't stay in the dormitory unless you were in your room.

LW:

Well, what if you were riding? You could wear pants then right?

BD:

If you went out to ride your horse. I used to ride some, of course, we didn't have a horse here, I was in the rodeo club but I know when we first came, because of the people that were in the rodeo club and the girls rode barrels and everything, and then they found out we were from a ranch and they said, "Oh, you ride barrels?" My sister said, "No, we rode horses." (laughs) So, anyway.

LW:

So you were involved with the rodeo.

BD:

Well, because that's what we had grown up with. That's the thing with ranch kids.

LW:

Do you remember when the rodeo was here on campus?

BD:

Oh yes, I used to help with it. And my husband is a rodeo person, and he was an organizer of the

first rodeo club here on campus, I think, at Tech, because he's a couple of years—well, he graduated in mid-term '51, '52.

LW:

So did they used to still ride in the center of campus, or had they moved the rodeo towards the outside?

BD:

Yeah, it was kind of on the outside. The Parks Arena, Welda Parks was in my class, I guess, but they built that in later years. I can remember where they kept the horses. I used to ride the Dean of Agriculture's horse, he was a little bitty short man, and I rode his saddle, and we used to move cattle from here on campus out to some pasture land. And there was a culvert going under the highway, it was a big one, and we would drove the cattle through there I remember.

LW:

But they didn't house the cattle on campus then?

BD:

No.

LW:

But just more on the outskirts.

BD:

[inaudible]

LW:

Were you involved in any of the other social clubs or other organizations?

BD:

Well, when we were coming we had a cousin, I had a boy cousin that was the same age I was but he had—Texas just had eleven grades in high school, so he graduated a couple years—he was my same age or maybe just a few months younger than me, but he graduated a couple of years before I did. And he started at Tech, and he had a girlfriend that was in a—they didn't have sororities then, it was just clubs, in a club and my Home Economics teacher was from Petersburg, I think, and she had gone to Tech and had taught out at Reserve and she had a niece that came out and visited her in the summertime and she belonged to a club. So they started writing us, inviting us to come to their whatever they had at the beginning of school. Well, we went, to maybe a couple of them and that's when—my sister and I roomed together, and when we got home from one party, she said, "I don't know about you, but I think this is just a rat race

for boys and clothes, and I don't think I want in it." So we didn't join a club, but they changed to sororities the year we graduated, and I roomed with some girls that belonged to the clubs but we didn't. Well, there was the Home Economics Club that I belonged to, that we met and my sister was in drama and she was in all the dramas they had at Tech, she was quite good.

LW:

And were you involved in the Association of Women Students?

BD:

No, I don't think so; well, we were dorm supervisors, something in our dorm, but it was an elected thing, it wasn't a paid thing like some are now. And we had quit rooming together, because we were both on the same hall and we just kind of checked on one hall, so she moved to a different hall.

LW:

Well, let's talk a little bit about the Home Management House, I've got a couple of questions here but the first one is: why do you think the Home Management House was part of the required curriculum for home economics?

BD:

I sometimes wondered, but I think it was just a—I don't know, Dr., I guess she was Doctor, Miss Drew, who was our teacher, and she was quite strict on—she had all kinds of things. She taught you table manners, I mean, you had to do everything her way, of course. And we had all kinds of rules we had to follow, but I think that was just a—I don't really know, I think it helped us, and it was just six that lived there.

LW:

So there was six living there and do you remember how long you stayed, was it like six weeks?

BD:

A semester, I think we stayed—maybe we did stay six—I think we stayed a whole semester. I was thinking we did.

LW:

It changes throughout the years—

BD:

When you say six weeks, maybe we did—and I roomed with a girl from Tulia, her name was Henry Vaughan, and we had a baby, we had to have a baby to take care of. There was a young



couple here that had a baby and we kept it during the week, and they took it home on the weekends, so we didn't have to have it on the weekends.

LW:

You kept the baby all night too during the weekdays?

BD:

Oh yes, the mother, I think, came sometime during the day, probably when we were in class, because I don't remember her being there when I was there.

LW:

But the parents were able to come and visit whenever they needed to?

BD:

Yes, but we kept the baby at night, because I remember getting in trouble with the little baby.  
(laughs)

LW:

And that was probably the first baby you really dealt with right?

BD:

Yes, because we were—our closest neighbor was eight miles from us I think where we grew up and they were mostly older people and, in fact, I didn't know much about babies. Baby woke up and was crying one night, and I got up and got her a bottle and it wasn't time for her to have a bottle. And Miss Drew came in and said, "What are you doing giving this baby this bottle she will want one every night at this time, you don't do that." Well, I didn't know anything to do but give her the bottle, and she hushed crying.

LW:

Oh so everything was regimented on a schedule?

BD:

Very much so. Everything we cooked, and we had to cook our own meals, so that gave us—and she had a lot of rules about that too. Well, at that time frozen foods came in little boxes, little square, little rectangle boxes, but they didn't have enough food for six people; yeah, it was mostly for four, and I guess we had seven because she ate there with us also. And told us how to sit up straight and how to eat and everything else. So we had to use one box and cut another box in two and leave it frozen and put it back in the freezer and use those. Well, one time I remember I forgot and I cooked both boxes. Oh no, what's going to happen when she finds out there's not a half a box of green beans or whatever it was? So I went to the grocery store and bought a new

box. Well, I was just supposed to have half of it so there I had another. So I took it out of the carton and flushed it down the commode. (laughs) So she wouldn't know, because she would eat me up alive.

LW:

How did they assign the different household roles in the house? Did you draw straws?

BD:

No, she assigned us, and we had to cook for like a week, and then we had to do the laundry for a week and clean; and on Friday, I tried to remember after you told me you wanted me to do this, and I think maybe on Friday we could have guests, maybe we just had maybe one girl could invite two people I think, or maybe we just had one, I can't remember, but we were supposed to kind of cook a special meal on Friday and Friday evening we could have a guest.

LW:

So how did she keep track of what the girls did? Did she have to write down your duties and things like that?

BD:

She did. She kept us really in strict—I mean she was really strict about it. She taught here for a number of years and that's what she did, she just lived in that Home Management House herself you see. I think she stayed there all year probably and the girls just moved in and out for however long we were supposed to be there.

LW:

Was she the one who assigned you a grade then?

BD:

Yes.

LW:

So it was just a regular kind of grade then?

BD:

It was a class, it was just like a regular class. I guess we just got three-hour credit for it which it should have been ten, probably. Yes, that was her job and she told you how to cut your egg—I mean, one girl wanted to cut her egg up in the center, you know, we had fried eggs later on and, no, you couldn't do that, you don't touch your egg on the side, and she would get so aggravated at her. But she watched every move we made so we just decided we would do something that we didn't know how to do, and somebody came up with the idea of let's all dye our hair black, so

we did that and we kind of got some black dye on the towels—the towels were white. So we didn't know what in the world we were going to do if she came in and found those towels with that black dye on them. My hair is just kind of light brown and for some reason it didn't take to the dye too much for some reason I think we had to put more on mine than anybody's because several of them had darker hair, I think my roommate had hair as dark as yours, but anyway, we all dyed it black.

LW:

So what did you do about the towels?

BD:

We put them in a bucket of Clorox and that kind of made it green and I don't remember, I can't even remember for sure whether she found out, she found them I think. We hid the bucket, we were going to let them soak for a while in the water and I can't remember for sure. It wasn't a good situation. (laughs) And I remember I think she saw me first and I can remember I was in front of the refrigerator getting something out of the refrigerator, and she came along and I was down and she said, "What in the world have you done to your hair?" And I said, "I dyed it black," and then everybody else: "We had all dyed our hair black." Anyway, that was just one bad thing that we did that didn't take over too well.

LW:

Thinking back on your experience living in the house, can you describe what a typical week was in the house?

BD:

A day at a time? I don't know, on Sunday—we ate there on Sunday I'm sure, but we all went to church, nearly no one didn't go to church, I know one girl went to the First Baptist Church and she called it the First Church. Well, Miss Drew said that was *not* the first church and for her to please quit saying. She would say, "Why don't y'all go to First Church with me?" I went to a Presbyterian church and maybe, I think, several of them went to the Methodist church, I can't remember for sure, I think we nearly all went to different churches.

LW:

And then Monday through Friday you went to classes like regular?

BD:

Just regular classes.

LW:

But you still had to do all the chores?

BD:

We had to do the chores and we had to have our beds made and everything when we left and bathrooms cleaned—

LW:

So you had to do that before you went to class?

BD:

And we had to get the house clean. We had to do all the vacuuming. Our rooms were all upstairs and there were six of us that lived there, and then Mrs. Drew had a room, so that was just four bedrooms because she had a bedroom and then—and now they have got these offices in there and it just looks so different to me, it's been a long time since I had been in that house.

LW:

So it was two girls per bedroom?

BD:

Two girls per room. We had twin beds and not much else that I remember being in there.

LW:

Yeah, because those rooms are really small.

BD:

They are, they are small.

LW:

And you had one bathroom upstairs?

BD:

I don't know, I think there must have been two.. Surely there were, because if Miss Drew was up there—which I'm pretty sure her room was upstairs, I'm nearly positive—so I'm sure she had a bathroom, but maybe we had, I don't remember because I remember using a little bathroom so I guess the other girls had—we got along okay, I mean, not that any of us had any trouble or anything—and one of the girls was married. That just dawned on me—Louise—and she had to come in that Home Management House all week but she went back to her husband's apartment on weekends, she didn't have to spend the weekend there. And on Saturday we had chores we had to do and maybe that's when we vacuumed and dusted and things like that on Saturday, because I don't know if any of us had classes on Saturday.

LW:

But Friday was the social evening where you would have a guest?

BD:

Yes on Friday evening we could have a guest.

LW:

And so the person that was inviting, was it the person that was actually cooking or did all the girls get to invite one?

BD:

I think the whole time we were there we just had, I think maybe we could invite two people as well as I can remember, but I think it was just one time for each of us, because by the time we got around— maybe we were only there six weeks because maybe—

LW:

That makes sense.

BD:

Now that I said when I got to that point—well, I do think we were there only six weeks.

LW:

Imagine all that many people fitting in that space.

BD:

Well, it was a nice large table, but that room is really nice now the way they did that, it's nice. Don did a good job but he does a good job with everything he does. He's from my husband's home town of Post.

LW:

And the house, didn't it used to have a side patio or a courtyard that was around it?

BD:

I think it did. Of course, see, it's been a lot of years. No telling what they did between then and now but I don't remember that. There was another house right next to it and it was a, I can't even remember what they called it, but it was girls that could go there that couldn't afford their—I mean—

LW:

Was it Casa Linda?

BD:

Casa Linda, it was.

LW:

So that was next to it.

BD:

Yes, and it was where they each just paid so much and they did their own—I mean they had to take care of themselves. It wasn't a class though, it was just where you could live there.

LW:

A cooperative house, yeah.

BD:

Casa Linda, it was pink stucco kind of I remember and it was next—but when I go there now I have a hard time—there's so much around it. There didn't used to be all those things.

LW:

Yeah I actually don't have a good picture that shows Casa Linda next to the other house. I didn't realize they were that close.

BD:

It was just to the north of it, just not very far there. And I had some friends that lived there that had lived in the dormitory and then moved there because it was cheaper.

LW:

It was cheaper on the pay. And so what was the difference? Because the girls there they did their own cooking and cleaning and everything?

BD:

Well, we did our own cleaning in our own rooms in the dormitory of course, but—

LW:

And I did mention about the dormitories, the dining halls when you ate there. Women ate separately from the men?



BD:

No, no, but they were in different dormitories.

LW:

Okay so there was different dining halls?

BD:

Each dormitory had a dining room.

LW:

But women and men could eat in either one of them?

BD:

I don't remember any boys eating in ours. They could have or not, I mean, I remember parents coming down, they could eat there but most of the time they didn't want to. When the parents came that was the chance for all of us to go out and eat if we knew anybody and their parents were there. And I roomed with a ranch girl from Garden City, which is down by Big Spring just about, and she still lives on the ranch and still lives in the home her parents lived in. And her name was Barbara also, Barbara Lou Curry was her name, she is still there ranching, drilling oil now, it's all over the place and stuff.

LW:

So you kept in touch with her?

BD:

Oh yeah, we talk periodically.

LW:

And you had mentioned there was a baby present during—in the house. Do you remember what the babies name was?

BD:

No I don't. It was a little girl and we had a bed, baby bed. And I remember it being a metal bed and it was on wheels, and if you were taking care of the baby it slept in your room.

LW:

Oh okay, so there wasn't a separate room for the baby?

BD:

No separate room for the baby, if it was my turn to be in charge of the baby, well, then, she stayed in there with me and my roommate, and then we rolled the bed down the hall.

LW:

So you got the baby for a week and you played—?

BD:

Well, it was really just because we didn't keep her on the weekends but we split her five days so that's probably—I remember it was nice thinking we had that baby the whole time, and we did in the house but I think we didn't have to take care of it more than a week at a time.

LW:

Because when you were in class then the house mother took care of the baby?

BD:

We had a schedule. Some of us didn't have classes at the same time and I think if it was—because she stayed there, I think she stayed there all day, of course, Momma Drew had classes all day because she had so many labs, that's why my sister, before she left, wasn't really that excited about going to college and she really studied the book to see which classes and she chose drama because there weren't any labs for drama. Of course, she didn't realize she was going to be in all these plays and have to go every night to practice, she didn't luck out that much better than I did. I had a lab for clothing, foods and nutrition, child development, and everything. And when I was in the child development class, Dr. Lamb's son, Archie Carl Lamb, was two years or three years old I guess and he was in the child development, he was in our lab. We had children there that we kept.

LW:

So you got a lot of dealing with the children?

BD:

We did, which was good.

LW:

But if you guys were all in class then the house mother would take care of the baby?

BD:

Well, I don't know. I can't remember. Somebody did and I think we did—maybe you wouldn't have a class, you would have an off period or something, there were six of us, and we managed

some way, and the teacher. I mean she was a real good little baby, and I think she was six months old when we first started with her, she was little bitty. And I just couldn't imagine that parents would let us keep her but they were as young as we were and didn't know much more than we did I guess.

LW:

But they weren't Tech students?

BD:

Yes, they were Tech students.

LW:

Oh, they were students, okay.

BD:

They were Tech students.

LW:

So I guess it's a different form of day care.

BD:

Yes it was. Day and night care.

LW:

You basically had to do everything, you had to change the baby and bathe the baby?

BD:

Yes, we had to do everything. I don't remember doing any laundry for her, maybe we sent the laundry home with her mother or something, I'm sure we did though because we did our own laundry. And all those white towels. (laughs)

LW:

How did living in the house affect your social life? Were you able to go on dates? Were you able to have friends come over?

BD:

I guess if we behaved we could go on dates, I don't remember. I was trying to think of that and I remember having a date to go somewhere that was a special thing and I guess I hadn't told Esther about it. And I was getting ready to go and she said, "Oh, you can't go tonight, we're going to do something." And I said, "Oh, I have to, I made this date now two or three weeks ago

to go,” I can’t remember what it was, it seems like it was maybe—because they had things for the Army and that, and I think it was one of their balls or something, I can’t remember what it was. But anyway, I don’t know. I don’t think I got to go. I was trying to remember, I remember me and Shannon were around and around about it, but if she said no, then I could not go.

LW:

Okay, so you had to ask in advance to be able to go out?

BD:

You had to let her know that you were going to be gone.

LW:

Did you have to sign in and out too?

BD:

Yes, we had to be there most of the time, I don’t think she let us sign out much, but yes, we did. She had to know where we were at all times. She was really strict, I mean, and she really liked what she was doing and she was really going to make us do right.

LW:

So it was actually more strict living in the practice house than living in the dorms?

BD:

Oh yes, because she was right there in our rooms, and in the dorm, of course, there were a lot of girls that did what they wanted to, not really, they were pretty strict. Oh, when we were freshman we had to be in at 8:30 for six weeks I think it was. Of course, they don’t have anything like that now.

LW:

So there was a curfew in the house too?

BD:

Yes, I mean, after you had been there and gotten everything signed up from your parents and everything, you could sign out and stay out until, I think, it was eleven o’ clock maybe—maybe just ten on weeknights and eleven on weekends.

LW:

What happened if you broke a curfew?

BD:

I never did do that. I don't know. (laughs) What are you trying to do, get me in more trouble?

LW:

I was just curious since you had to sign in and out.

BD:

If you weren't signed in by the time that door locked you were in trouble, I guess.

LW:

Oh, so they locked the doors?

BD:

Because they locked the doors, the front door anyway. But there were some people that lived in the first floor, and all the rooms had windows, and I think you could raise some of those windows up, I think I heard some people that went around on the north side of the dormitory and knew somebody that lived on the first floor and got in probably. But see, we had to check in when you got in, you had to get there before, and if you weren't there then you were in trouble and it was probably on a clipboard I remember, and I think that she put it in the office and you couldn't get to it to sign it if you got in there but if you did crawl in the window you were in trouble.

LW:

And in the practice house she also locked the door?

BD:

As far as I know, I always an early bird to go in anyway and not get into trouble.

LW:

So you said that the friends could come over if it was scheduled, certain times they were allowed to come—

BD:

And dates could come there, and I guess you could have invited your date to eat as far as someone approved.

LW:

Yes, but they couldn't go upstairs?

BD:

Oh, just in the dining where we had the evening meal. Well, we had a lounge, so now that's all one big room there so I don't remember exactly how that was divided up because it looks so different to me. I couldn't believe how nice it looked and how different it was. And even when I went upstairs—because, just wait for sixty-one years and see what you remember.

LW:

I already have that problem now.

BD:

Well, I'll tell you it won't get any better.

LW:

So her name was Miss. Drew?

BD:

Miss. Drew, Lola Drew.

LW:

Lola Drew, okay.

BD:

Miss Lola Drew. I think they probably closed the Home Management House when she left I don't know if they ever had anybody else there or not. That was her thing.

LW:

So her responsibility was to assign the girls what to do, to actually give them a grade—

BD:

And to be sure they did it and did it right.

LW:

Did you have to do a special activity? It seemed like each of the group of girls that went through they had to do a special project of some kind.

BD:

You know, I don't remember, and I was thinking like, when you said that, I thought "Desserts." I can't remember like, when you cooked a meal maybe someone was assigned to do a dessert every week, or make a cake that lasted as dessert, but I can't remember for sure. I remember one



[student] that was in charge of the evening meal, to do that. And we ate our lunch there too, I think we just had a sandwich, probably, but we cooked an evening meal.

LW:

Did you have to pay to live in the house? Was that a special fee?

BD:

I don't know. I don't think you paid any more than more than your dorm fee, as far as I know.

LW:

So they just charged you—but they did charge you to live in there or was it free?

BD:

No, it wasn't free. I, mean you had to pay your tuition for that class, and I guess you moved out of the dorms because you weren't there to eat in the cafeteria, so I guess that that money went to—I don't really know for sure how that worked.

LW:

So when you were living in the house you didn't eat in the dorm cafeterias?

BD:

No we had to go to the Home Management House for everything, for our breath and life.

LW:

And the budgeting wasn't part of the deal, that they set a budget for each of the meals and you had to stay within that budget?

BD:

We had to plan the meals and give her the menu so she would know what we were going to fix.

LW:

Did she do the shopping or did you guys do the shopping?

BD:

Well, I remember buying that one box of green beans. You know, I don't remember going to the grocery store. She must have done the shopping for us or somebody did, I guess she probably did. Because I don't think she taught any other classes than that, I don't remember. I mean, I wasn't in any of her class other than being in the Home Management House.

LW:

Reflecting back on your time in the house do you think it was worthwhile?

BD:

Oh, I'm sure it was. At the time we thought, "Oh this is the rinky-dinks to have to move out of your dormitory and move over there and—"

LW:

So you weren't excited about doing it?

BD:

Not really that I remember. Maybe that's why I don't remember much about it. I'm sure it was really worthwhile, I mean, you learned a lot of things that you would have had to learn the hard way but we kind of learned it the hard way there anyway, but—

LW:

And I forgot to ask you, did you do it your junior year or your senior year?

BD:

Well see, it seemed 1953 is when I lived there. But after I got to thinking about it I thought maybe I lived in that last part of my junior [year], the last semester or the last six weeks or whatever, maybe the next to the last six weeks, because I don't remember moving back to the dormitory. But, like I say, I hadn't thought about that in years and I just don't remember for sure, but I think maybe instead of it being my senior year I might have lived there my junior year. But I'm not positive about that, because when somebody will ask me I will say I lived there in 1953; well, that was the year I graduated so it would have been January to May, and I think I must have lived there the last part of my junior year probably, and then moved back into the dormitory.

LW:

So you think you went to the fall '52?

BD:

I'm thinking the spring of '52 probably, '52, '53. So it would have been in '53 and then fall of '53, that might be right—well, one or the other, it's a long time ago. Sixty years, sixty-one years.

LW:

So you think the girls that lived in the house with you, they didn't really want to move into the practice house, but they had to.

BD:

I don't remember, but yes, that was a requirement and you knew from the beginning, that you were going to have to live there. And everybody that had lived there would tell you these hilarious things about what had happened and "Don't let that happen." Apparently we let some of it happen accidentally, not really trying to.

LW:

What kind of things, like the beans?

BD:

Well let's see, when you say beans, I don't know, I think we had a Presto cooker and it seems like it kind of blew up on somebody one time or something, something went all up on the stove. See, just one of us had to cook, we didn't even have a partner when it was our cooking time, so I remember we each had to do it ourselves and plan our own menu for the time that we were in charge of the kitchen, and wash the dishes and put them up and everything. So it took them a lot of time. It wasn't that bad. We all survived, I suppose. And I was trying to think of the girls that lived—Patty Pipkin, I think, was in there and I think, I don't know for sure where she lives now. She has a brother that lives here that I could check and find out I guess. And there was one girl that lived in the dormitory where I did, Wanda Ramsay, and her brother played football, she was from Plainview, and she lives in my block here in town but she never comes to anything—you know, the Homecoming and everything she just doesn't ever come, I don't know why.

LW:

Did you keep in contact with the girls? Did you develop any good friendships with the ones that lived in there with you? Did you keep in touch with them?

BD:

Well, the girl I roomed with, I kept in touch with her and I think she has Alzheimer's now. She's from Tulia and like—I'm just trying to think. I think maybe our whole group went to Tulia one weekend for a weekend, I believe we did. Miss Drew didn't go with us but I think all the girls maybe, and there was five of us that went because the girl that was married didn't want to go, and we went up to Tulia and spent the weekend and went to Palo Duro Canyon and did some things up there. Yes I kept up with the girl that I roomed with, the others I really haven't that much. Francis Ford, she was kind of a crippled girl, I remember she limped, and I don't even know where she is now.

LW:

Oh and I meant to ask you about the baby, did you grow attached to the baby?

BD:

Well yes, it was a precious little baby, I didn't want her to cry and that's why I got in trouble for giving her a bottle in the middle of the night. I picked her up and patted her and talked to her and she was still just squalling her eyes out. I don't know what was wrong with her, maybe she had a stomachache, but I just went down stairs and get her a bottle and heated it and gave it to her and I don't know what woke Miss Drew up but she came in there while I was doing it and she grabbed that baby and the bottle and she said, "You can't give this to the baby. It's not a scheduled time for the bottle." Because we had to do everything some certain how and, "She'll be waking up this time of night every night if you give her a bottle at this time."

LW:

So what did she do?

BD:

She took the baby and took the bottle and the baby went back to sleep. I don't remember hearing any more out of her that night anyhow. She was a good little baby. and I guess she wondered what in the world are all these different people taking care of me doing?

LW:

I always wondered about that—

BD:

They didn't always have one. Every semester didn't have one, a baby, I think it just had to be if they could—because I mean who would want to keep their baby with a bunch of girls that didn't know anything.

LW:

There were actually quite a few of them.

BD:

But this couple was a young couple, I mean they had married and had the baby, and they were still going to school and it worked out for us to keep the baby, but it was free for them. I don't know if they paid them something for letting us keep her or what, I don't know about that.

LW:

I don't think they did. I think it was more free day care.

BD:

And night.

LW:

Is there anything else you would want to say about living in the house or any memories that we haven't covered?

BD:

Well, I remember being quite comfortable and we had plenty to eat. We didn't have anything fancy I don't guess but we had enough, plenty of food.

LW:

Did you have to do any social events that showed off your etiquette?

BD:

Well, I guess when we invited somebody, maybe Miss. Drew invited somebody, but we had her and she was the one that checked on our etiquette.

LW:

Yeah, because I think they used to participate in open house events around campus, so I didn't know if you guys had to have a dinner or a tea or something?

BD:

I don't think we did, I don't remember that we did. I don't much believe we did. Of course, like I said, Dossie Wiggins was president when my sister and I came and he had been at the university in El Paso and then Dr. Jones was the last year that I was here. Dossie—I don't think I remember where he went after here, I don't think he retired, I can't remember. You know when you're in college you don't care about those people much except they were kind to us, he and his wife would invite me and my sister over for dinner on Sundays sometimes, and we were in the dormitory right there next to the president's home.

LW:

So they were living in the president's home?

BD:

Yes, it was just right there, but it was really nice. It had been there I guess for every first President, things have changed since then. Some of the houses—well, or Dr. Kent Hance—

LW:

Well, maybe the follow-up on this one is, did you meet Alvin here at Texas Tech?



BD:

I did, we were both in the rodeo club but we never dated, he was kind of shy in a way. Anyway, when he graduated midterm—you probably don't want this on the tape, I don't know if you do or not—

LW:

It's fine if you're okay with it.

BD:

Well, I don't know any secrets between you and me so—(laughs) He graduated midterm '51, '52, it was dry like it is now, like it has been now, "Not quite as dry," he said, I don't remember. He majored in animal husbandry and though he was going to go to work for a breed association or something, well, there were no jobs available because it had been so dry and everything. He had already been in the service before he came to Tech. When he graduated from high school in Post when he was fourteen years old, or fifteen years old, and went to A&M when he was sixteen as a freshman at A&M. He only stayed one semester and he came home, and farmed that rest of that year and then he—well no, he was eighteen then, and he enlisted in the service and spent two years in the service, or eighteen months in the service, and then when he got out he came to Tech. So he found a job. He said there weren't any jobs available and he thought somebody would just be waiting at the door to hire him and he kept coming to Lubbock to the dean's office because he got notices of jobs and he said he had been already a couple of times I think. He came back one week and he said, "Have you ever gotten any notice of any jobs?" And he said, "No." And he said, "Oh, by the way, there is one out on the bulletin board. It's a bank in Brownfield." And Alvin said, "Well, I never thought about being a banker." And he said, "Well it wouldn't cost you much to call and it's not far down there you could go check on it." So he called and got an appointment and went down there and interviewed, and they hired him on the spot, and he went to work at the Brownfield State Bank. Well, when my sister and I graduated we had been country girls all our life, and we decided we would just go back home to run the ranch. We didn't want to do anything else so my dad was getting where he needed more help. But I guess the next year I thought, "Well, maybe I better use my education a little bit." So I came over here and checked and there was a position open in the home economics department in the high school at Brownfield and that's where Alvin was at the bank, and so I went there and taught for a couple of years. I taught one year and we dated that year, and married, and then I taught the next year; then I got pregnant and I never did teach again.

LW:

So you actually *did* use your college education.



BD:

I mean, I hear people say they didn't really use it. I think you use it every day with children or what, regardless of what you majored in, it just gives you a little bit of up—or back in my day it probably did.

LW:

Well, here's a thought, I know that during—I think it was around the sixties or so, maybe late fifties, early sixties, they were trying to teach everything in home economics as sort of the scientific method, that was one of the reasons they were writing everything down, they were trying to figure out behaviors and stuff.

BD:

See, like it's changed. Like now I took Clothing 101, and 102, 201 and whatever; and now you don't have any of those classes. It's all those design classes and I don't even know if they have—we had to make garments and I made a coat and a dressy dress I remember. And I didn't even get to take the first class because they had some little things that we had to do, they gave us a little test to see. Because most of the girls had had home economics in high schools and it just happened that my home economics teacher was a Tech graduate and some of the things that they had on there were a few of the little tricks that she had taught us, I can't remember much about what any of that was, we did some fun things. A button to make the button hole; and when you were going to measure how big the button hole had to be, you measured the width of the button, and then you turned it on the side and measured the thickness of it to make the hole thick enough, and this was one of the questions: "How do you find that out?" And I remember the teacher giving us the test saw me doing that; well, I didn't have to take that class because I had—I mean, most of the questions were basic, I just remember that, which seems kind of stupid. But anyway, I didn't have to take that class. I started in the next and I was wishing that I really had because my mother didn't—my mother sewed some, but not a great deal. But I think all of it was probably worthwhile—what did you major in?

LW:

I have a museum degree. I was under Gary Edson.

BD:

And where is Gary now?

*Recording paused.*

LW:

Okay, well thank you, is there anything else you want to do a follow up on, just to say about your time at Tech?

BD:

Not unless you do, but I would be willing if you needed anything that you thought I might have an insight on, which probably I don't. (laughs)

LW:

As far as the practice house, you look back on it, and you don't regret your time staying there?

BD:

Oh, I don't think so, and it was fun even though an old lady like Miss Drew—she was really prim and proper sort of lady, never had married—

LW:

Oh, so she was married, okay?

BD:

She was unmarried and everything had to be just so-and-so. And I don't know how many years she was there. When you go away from college you don't really keep up with so many professors or course. The year that I graduated all the older ladies that had been here from the beginning, Dean Weeks and Miss Erwin and Miss Twiford, and let's see, I think—the child development teacher, I can't remember her name. Anyway. Oh, Miss Kitchens and her husband was one of the professors that they tell us funny stories about, she was a clothing teacher. Most all of them retired that year because they had been here, see, that whole time. That was when the dean of home economics was who after that? I can't think—it was before Bess came—there was one in between and I didn't know her, because it was when I graduated, and I didn't come back, but I have kept up with things. They then started a deal one year, I guess it was Bess Haley probably that did it, an Alumni Association, and I remember I was a charter member of that and we did things like Homecoming, where we took people and showed them around and everything, and had acted as hostesses to some of them. They dropped that thing so I don't know— it lasted for too many years, but anyway.

LW:

Well, thank you so much.

BD:

Well, you're just most welcome, and I hope I didn't take up too much of your time, and I hope I

gave you something that is of a little help, I don't know that I did at all. But anytime, you want to ask me something if you think of something that you need, I might get my brain in gear, I don't know if I have got a brain anymore now.

*End of interview.*



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