

**Oral History Interview of
David Murrah**

**Interviewed by: David Marshall
February 15, 2007
Rockport, Texas**

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Preferred Citation for this Document:

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Recording Notes:

Original Format: Born Digital Audio

Digitization Details: N/A

Audio Metadata: 44.1kHz/ 16bit WAV file

Further Access Restrictions: N/A

Related Interviews:

Transcription Notes:

Interviewer: David Marshall

Audio Editor: N/A

Transcription: Elizabeth Groening

Editor(s): Kayci Rush

Transcript Overview:

This interview features David Murrah as he discuss how he got involved with the Southwest Collections/Special Collections Library. In this interview, Murrah describes his journey into the field of history and how a series of events lead him to pursue a graduate degree from Texas Tech. He then goes on to explain how getting a degree at Tech lead to him becoming director of the Southwest Collection.

Length of Interview: 02:11:02

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Keywords

History, Archives, Southwest Collection

David Marshall (DMa):

The date is February 15, 2007. And this is David Marshall interviewing David Murrah, at his home in Rockport, Texas. We can just start by getting your full name, and date and place of birth. We'll work from there.

David J. Murrah (DMu):

All right. Well, it's David, Joe is the middle name, which I rarely use, Murrah, M-u-r-r-a-h. And I was born September 13, 1941, [clears throat] in Shattuck, Oklahoma. And for your transcriber, that's S-h-a-t-t-u-c-k. Shattuck, Oklahoma. [DM laughs] And we—my parents lived at Gruver, at the time. Gruver is up in the north plains of Texas, right up in the top of the Panhandle. Gruver was a brand new community at the time because it wasn't established until 1928, '29, when the railroad built up there. My dad grew up in western Oklahoma, around Sayre and Erick. But in 1925, my grandparents moved to Levelland, on the south plains, where—in 1925, just as Levelland was getting started. And my dad—let's see, he was fifteen when he moved up there. And he got—he started working for an implement dealer there and fell in love with mechanical tractors, you know? You know, at that time, they were still horse and mule stuff. My grandfather sold land. Bought a Yellowhouse Land Company and, you know, was a land agent. But my dad—my dad's sister died. She was a year older, and she died about his junior year, and he decided to layout a year. And he went up to Spearman to work in the harvesting, and ended up staying a year up there, and worked for a hardware as a mechanic. Came back to Levelland, and graduated from high school, I think about 1929, or '30. And then, moved back up there. And then, the fellow that owned the hardware was a fellow named Paul Higgins, was the big Amarillo hardware guy. Owned Amarillo Hardware, in fact. And he moved my dad over to Gruver, which was a new town. And so—so there he was at, you know, nineteen years old, twenty years old, as a young man, living up there. And then, my mother, meanwhile, grew up in Goodlett area, near Quanah? And her parents were, you know, sharecrop farmers and scraping out a living down there in that country. And my mother's older sister, Estelle—Estelle Harmon—had become the first telephone operator at Gruver. Those days, there was just a one-person telephone office. So after my mother finished school—the eleventh grade at Goodlett was as far as they went then. So my mother moved then. Mary—her name was Mary Laila Montgomery—she moved up there about 1930, or so, to live with my aunt. And that's where my mother and dad met, and then married in 1931—December 29, '31. And then, my brother was born Christmas Day, 1936. I was born September of '41. My younger—my sister was born in March of '46. So you talk about planned parenthood—five marriage—five, five, five. That's the way it worked out. We've been kidding around in the family, trying to figure out the reasons we were conceived and I finally did figure out mine. In January of 1941, they had a horrendous snowstorm up there. Left thirty, forty inches of snow on the level and just shut down everything. And that fall, there must've been fifteen babies born, you know, in Gruver because all the kids I went to school with, our birthdays were within about six weeks of each other.

DMA:

The population doubled?

DMu:

Just about, just about. Sort of like the New York blackout. And so we've laughed about that. But that's how I came to be raised at Gruver. My dad owned a farm machine shop. And we also—he farmed on the side, of and on, over the years. We never owned land, but—so when I was—came of age to work a little bit, I—you know, plowed. Ran the tractor some. But most of the time, I ended up in our shop because by that time, he had become an Allis-Chalmers dealer, tractor dealer, an irrigation engine dealer. So I worked in the shop as a bookkeeper, more or less, and sold parts out of the front.

DMA:

What age are you talking?

DMu:

Well, I probably started doing that sixteen, seventeen, eighteen. And my older brother, of course, he was getting out of school about that time. But he did more of the farming. And he and I both did a lot of the farming, too, over the years. We farmed over in Moore County, over near Sunray and Dumas. So we had about a forty mile commute to go over to the farm. But it was just dryland farming until 1958, when we finally got an irrigation well. And so we continued to—you know, my dad farmed, as well as run that business. And he did that up until the early seventies, I guess, and finally retired. And by that time, see, I graduated from high school in 1960. And so then, I headed off to Hardin-Simmons in Abilene to go to school. And while I was in school, I met my first wife and married when I was a sophomore. And then—you know, kind of struggled to finish school, but finished. By that time, when I got out of school, I was working for the city of Abilene full-time as a warehouseman. And then, so I took advantage of the opportunity and took six hours of graduate work. But at the time, I really felt like I was called into the ministry and I just had this need—I needed to go to the seminary. So I went to Southwestern Seminary then. I graduated '64. In '64, '65, I took graduate courses, I guess. Let me get my years straight. In '65, we moved to Fort Worth to go to seminary. And I enrolled in seminary, but—and by that time, too, I had a son. Let's see, my son was born in—let's see. Married '62, and he was born November of '62, and so he was three, I guess. And so while I was in the seminary, well, my wife and I separated and subsequently, divorced. And I ended up with—with the boy, Jerel, J-e-r-e-l. And so it was—it was pretty hard for me to stay in school, and work, and raise him. So I dropped out of the seminary and then—and, you know, as you well know, being divorced and as a Baptist, it was going to be extremely difficult to, you know, stay in a ministry of any kind there, so that kind of close that door—or, at least, so I thought. And so, I'll never forget—at the time, and you know how—the pressure one can feel for something like that. You know, to go through a divorce, be the first one in the family to ever go through a divorce. But I'll never forget

a conversation I had with my dad. My mother and dad came down there and—and so we—my dad was one of these types, he's really quiet and didn't have a lot to say. But he just said—he said, "What are you going to do?" And I said, "I'm going to teach school." And I tell you, I felt like the whole weight of the world just lifted off my shoulders because suddenly, I knew that was the right thing to do. Well, it shows kind of how the Lord works in your life, you know? Here, I was at, really, the end of my rope. But yet, I mean, just one door after another began to open up. See, I was in seminary at the time. This was like, you know, December '65, this conversation. So I drop out of seminary that spring. And then, I run into—I went to—decided I needed to get a teaching certificate. And so, in the summer of 1966, then, I went to—I enrolled at Texas Wesleyan. I looked at North Texas and there was some problem there. But I enrolled in Texas Wesleyan to take some courses to get my teaching certificate. And while I was there, I ran into a guy that I had known in church camps up at Gruver. He was—his dad was pastor at Canadian, and—which is east of Gruver. And he was teaching school at Springtown, which is just outside of Fort Worth. And he said, "We've got a history job open up there and you might can get it," and he recommended me to the principal. And to make a long story short, I went up, and interviewed, and got the job. You know, this is like July of '65. And so come September of '65, I hooked on my trailer—had a trailer house—and hauled it up there, parked it in a horse lot, Jerel and I did, And so we taught a year at Springtown. I got fired from that job because as a young teacher, you know, I was wanting to be kind of popular with the kids and so, you know, I just didn't have a strong discipline thing. I would've—you know, I had great support from the junior high principal, no support from the high school principal, and I was a floating teacher. I taught in both places. And so, there I was, now, in the summer of '60—let's see if I can get my years straight. Seminary, '65,'66. So, '66-'67, I taught at Springtown. Summer of '67—meanwhile, I need to throw this in, I went on to do—continued my working on teaching certificate at North Texas, then, the summer of '67. But I'd already gotten fired. Well, the junior high principal that I had at Springtown, meanwhile, was hired as high school principal at Decatur. And meanwhile, I had started applying for jobs out at in the Lubbock area because—primarily because my grandmother lived at Levelland, I knew the area, and I sort of had, in the back of my mind, maybe going to graduate school at Tech. So anyway, I remember—boy, you know the time passed by. Going July and almost the first of August. And I finally got a call. I applied at every opening out in Lubbock. I still didn't have a teaching certificate. But superintendent at Morton, Ray Linear, called me, and wanted me to come out for an interview. So, I drove out there. And of course, it worked out. I go by my grandmother's in Levelland, and went over and interviewed, and was offered the job. And this was like, you know, three weeks before school starts. Meanwhile, then, my friend and the junior high principal, a fellow named Maurice English, at—back at Springtown, had been hired as high school principal at Decatur, and he offered me a job. Well, you talk about in a rock—between a rock and a hard place. Here, I wanted—what I really wanted, I thought, I wanted to stay in that area. I loved that area. I loved Parker County, and Springtown, and Decatur. That's great country, as you probably know. And here was just the perfect job at a nice high school, Decatur High, and so forth. But I had told the superintendent at

Morton I would take the job. I hadn't signed a contract. So I call Mr. Linear and I said, "Look. I've been offered this other job, but," I said, "I don't want to put you in a bind. Would it—would it mess you up if I don't take that job?" And he said, "Well, it would be difficult to find someone." I said, "Well, I always was taught, you know, you're word is as good as your bond, so I'll be there." And you know, you look back on those times—you know, these are real turning points in your life, you know? But it makes all the difference in the world how the rest of your life goes. You know, had I not done that, I doubt if I'd have ever gotten a PhD. I would've met somebody there, and ended up teaching in Decatur, in the high school, the rest of my life, which would've been all right, you know? But it would not have been as fulfilling as the career that I had. So, I take that job at Morton. And so, I taught out there four years. And meanwhile, then, it took me, still, another summer or two to get my teaching certificate. Maybe one summer. And then I also started back on my master's work and I took a course or two up at West Texas State in the summers, while I was doing—my aunt, the one that my mother moved up to Gruver with, well, she was living in Amarillo at that time. And so, I spent the summers with her. At least one summer, for sure, going to school, and she kept Jerel. You know, having this boy kind of made it difficult. You've been through a little of that. You know what I'm talking of.

DMA:

Where did you finish your teacher's certificate?

DMu:

Well, I finished it—[laughs]. Let me think a minute. I think, I finished it at Canyon, at West Texas, because I remember taking audio-visual, and so forth.

DMA:

But you were taking master's courses up there as well?

DMu:

And then, when I got it pretty well wrapped up, then I went ahead and took a couple of history courses at the same time. And I took Dwayne Guy's Modern U.S. History. That may've been the only one. I can't remember if I took another one up there or not, but.

DMA:

At the same time you were working on your degree to teach in high school, you were—junior high or high school?

DMu:

This was high school in Morton, yeah.

DMA:

You were also looking ahead to getting your graduate degree to teach on the university level?

DMu:

Actually, my goal, at the time, was kind of teach at the junior high lev—junior college level. I wanted to go back to—to the Springtown area and teach at Weatherford College. And so, let's see. I had another one of those kind of life-changing moments, I guess. It was in 1969. By that time, I had finished—I had finished my teaching certification and was trying to decide what I was going to do about the rest of my master's. And clearly, it just seemed the easy thing to do was to continue at Canyon. But on a—on a hunt, I went over to Tech, and I kind of looked around a little bit, and talked about, you know, graduate support. Found out that they didn't basically give it to anybody, except PhD candidates. So I wrote Dr. Wallace, who was a graduate advisor at the time, and asked him, "Would the department accept Greek as my language requirement for the master's degree?"

DMA:

You had to have this up at seminary at Hardin-Simmions.

DMu:

At seminary—at Hardin-Simmons, and then at seminary. I had nine hours—

DMA:

This is Biblical Greek?

DMu:

Yeah, Biblical Greek. But I had nine hours of it. And let me turn this heater down, David. And so—well, again, I will never forget the day that letter arrived. It was a Friday afternoon and it was the last day of registration for the end of spring of 1969. Dr. Wallace had taken my letter—this is the kind of guy he was—Ernest Wallace, we're talking about. He went around and polled members of the department on that question, "Would they accept Greek?" I mean, here, Dr. Wallace was nearing retirement, nearly retired, you know, but he would take the time to do that. And so I got a letter that Friday afternoon out of the mail and he said, "Yes, we'll accept Greek and you can do your master's here." And man, I grabbed that letter and I went in and told the principal, I said, "I'm going to Lubbock to register at Tech." And so I went over and registered. And so, see, that was in—so I took courses—just commuted from Morton, you know, at night, '69. and then, all that summer, I commuted over there. And then, 1970, the fall. And I guess, by the fall of '69, I was really ready to write my thesis because I had—I transferred some hours in from West Texas. So I got all my hours in pretty quickly. And so, there, at Morton, was the headquarters of the old Slaughter Ranch, the Lazy S Ranch. And when I was kind of fishing around, I really thought I wanted write on World War II because one of the history professors at

Tech—oh, gosh. I wish I could remember his name. He moved on to Arkansas, and has since died. But I took World War II course under him. That was the best course I think I ever had. He was—Donovan. And—he just brought World War II to life, and so that was what I was going to do. But he—he moved before I really got to that point. And so then, kind of the—of course, Wallace and Vigness were still there. But Elvis Fleming, who had taught at Morton, prior to my coming there, and he and I had taught a year or two together. Actually, I taught English at Morton for the first two years. And then, Elvis left. Went to Roswell to teach at Eastern New Mexico's Roswell campus. And so I took Elvis's history courses then, over and taught at Morton. Also, let me just get this in while we're talking about it. I also taught—I taught—I taught English One, English Three, Speech, Sociology—maybe a Texas History course, and it seemed like there was some else of-the-wall thing I taught there. And I guess, the sociology was really off the wall for me. U.S. History, World History. Now, I didn't do all this once, but over my four-year span there, these are the courses that I taught, you know, because—

DMA:

High school enrollment was about what?

DMu:

It was a—at that time, it was a two or three A school, I guess, by today's standard. It was about 160, 180, maybe. I moved there just as Morton peaked in its population. The town was about three thousand at the time. And you know, it had just started declining and it still continues to decline to this day. But the school is half the size today as it was then. It was a great place to teach, though. It had great administration. A fellow named Bobby Travis was the superintendent and Fred Weaver was the principal. They were just wonderful people to work for. And—

DMA:

But at that size, you would be called upon to teach—

DMu:

Yeah, yeah. You know, you—there was two of us that taught English and—but there was only one history teacher, I guess, in the place. So that first year, well, I taught, you know, different sections of freshman English and junior English. And then, then got to move over. But I also picked up speech in there because nobody—they didn't have anybody to teach it. I never—I took speech in college. So in that capacity, I directed the junior play and got involved in the choir's annual Indian capers programs, you know? We just—we had a great time at Morton. I really got endeared to Morton, and that's why my ties are so close out there to this day. And of course, then, I met my wife there as well, which is a whole other story. But let me kind of finish this graduate work and fill in the gap. So anyway, I—Elvis Fleming had suggested maybe doing something on the Slaughter Ranch because, he said, he had understood that the Southwest Collection had just gotten in some fresh materials on the slaughters. So I went over. I guess I

made my first visit then to the Southwest Collection and this would've been in the—in the summer or the fall of 19—69. Probably, the fall of '69. And I looked at these papers and what it was, was one box of stuff that Don Slaughter—who lived, at that time, down in the Fort Worth area, and now, lives at Roswell—had given and these were the papers of his grandfather, George Morgan Slaughter, who was C.C. Slaughter's oldest son. And they—it was primarily the correspondence between George and his father, C.C. Slaughter. And from—starting about the 1890's through George's death in 1950. And so it's a—a lot of material there. So I decided it was enough to work with, and so that's what introduced me to the Southwest Collection, and—in more ways than one. You know, not only those holdings, but then, Sylvan Dunn, who was the director, kind of took up with me at the time. And—

DMa:

Southwest Collection was in the math building.

DMu:

It was in the math building at the time. And David Gracie was the archivist when I first started. Jimmy Skaggs was there as associate archivist at the time that I started and when I was doing most of my research, those were the guys that helped me. David left shortly thereafter, after he got his PhD. You know who David Gracie is, I'm talking about, whose chair professor now at UT, and so forth. Former state archivist. Jimmy Skaggs got his degree, went on to teach at Wichita State. And well, I finished my degree. I finished up in December of 1970, getting my thesis done and accepted on the Slaughter Ranch. And enrolled then that spring, deciding, well, I might as well start work on a doctorate. And so I signed up for Blakely's course in English history, and went over and sat in his first class. And he handed out his syllabus, and it just suddenly hit me how tired I was. You know, I had been going to school. I'm still—I'm still—I'm single, at the time. Still have a boy, you know, to take care of. And I'm still commuting because I'm still in Morton in the spring of '71. So I dropped that course. It's the only time I think I've ever dropped a course. And I hated to tell Brian. I said, "But I just—I need to take some time off," and so I did. But that summer, I finished. By the end of the school year, I pretty well knew what I wanted to do. I had—Doctor Vigness had directed my thesis, and he was chairman of the department. And they—they offered me a part-time instructorship. Well, independent of that, Sylvan Dunn wanted me to do interviews—see, the tornado hit Lubbock—talking about the way facts fall together. Tornado hits in May 11, 1970. And by the summer of—well, in fact, I forgot this. In the summer—Sylvan hired me in the summer of 1970 to do interviews on the tornado. Me and Harry Krennek, who is the guy that now lives out here on Copano Bay, that I mentioned. Harry and I were doing interviews for the Southwest Collection that summer. And so I did that and Sylvan liked my work. I'd forgotten all about that little—spending about a month, you know, commuting over there and doing interviews on the tornado. And I guess I must've been twenty-five, thirty of them. I don't know. It may have been less than that. But that was in summer of '70,

but he liked my work. And so, he wanted me to go to work right then for the Southwest Collection because David Gracie and Jimmy Skaggs were leaving. He had these gaps.

DMA:

Were these full-time positions?

DMu:

This would really have been a part-time position. They were half-time, basically. And I told him I still had a year of commitment at Morton that I needed to make, so I put him off. So summer of '71 came, well I went over there and went to work then, part-time, for the Southwest Collection. Then, in the fall, took on the teaching assistantship. And I had a deal there, the left hand didn't know what the right was doing.

DMA:

You weren't still teaching in Morton at that time?

DMu:

No, no. No, by now, I've moved to Lubbock full-time. I was working half-time for the Southwest Collection, and then teaching, basically half-time, which is—technically, was illegal by university rules at the time. But it was one of those deals that—you know, the two. If you don't mix them up, one was hourly. One was salary. And they felt sorry for me, I know, because I had this boy to raise. And so that's how I really got my foot in the door and over to the Southwest Collection, then. And let me back up just a tad. When I was teaching at Morton, I had to leave one day and my substitute teacher was my current wife. [DM laughs] She was married to the schoolboard president at the time. And so, you know, that's how we got acquainted. One day, my son was on the phone, and he was five and in kindergarten. He was talking to this little girl and he asked her to marry him. Well, come to find out that it was Anne's daughter, Elaine, and they were boyfriend-girlfriend in kindergarten.

DMA:

[Laughs] That's funny.

DMu:

Now, his step-sister. And but anyway, after—you know, as I said, I left there in '71. Came back for a basketball game in the spring of '72, because Morton had great basketball teams then. And ran into Anne, and she and her husband had separated. And so she was telling me she was going to go back to school. She hadn't finished her degree. And she was going to Tech, and I said, "Well, come by the office and I'll advise you on who to take for history courses." Well, one thing led to another and a couple of years later, we got married then, in '73. So anyway, that's kind of how all that ties together. But it goes back to that decision. See? The move to Morton, to

accept that job, which in turn, put me in touch with the Slaughter Ranch, which put me in touch with graduate work at Tech, and then of course, once I got to Tech working on a doctorate, boy, the wide open field for me to work on was on a biography of C.C. Slaughter, which, you know, established my credentials in ranching history, I guess, which led to the *Pitchfork* book, and et cetera. You see how it just builds, you know?

DMA:

Before we get into that doctoral work, let's go back and weave in a little bit about your interest in history. How did you develop those interests? And I'm wondering if at Hardin-Simmons and Southwest Theological, if you had interest in Biblical history? Or what did you want to do with a degree from those?

DMu:

Well, that's a good question. I'd always had kind of an interest in history, I guess. You know, you never know when it really hits you. But in high school, our high school history teacher was one of the coaches. A fellow named Cato Matthews. And Cato was a typical history teacher-coach. You know, you read the chapter and answer the questions at the back of the book. But Cato had something that nobody else ever had. And during World War II, was a body guard for Chester Nimitz. And so he saw the Pacific War right up front, you know, from that standpoint. And he would tell the stories about being with Nimitz. And he was on the deck of the Battleship Missouri when the—when the Japanese surrendered. Well, that—I look back upon that—that probably turned me on to history as much as any single thing.

DMA:

And you said you were in World War II.

DMu:

And I was interested in World War II. You know, that's where that came from. Well, when I went to Hardin-Simmons, then, I really struggled over a major. You know, whether to major in Bible or history. My—my heart said to major in history and my head said to major in Bible. And so what I did was kind of—I kind of played both games. I ended up with a history major, and a minor in Bible, and a minor in English, or something. Some—I believe. I've forgotten exactly how that worked. But I had enough that I could, you know, go on to seminary with a pretty good foundation. Well when I got to seminary, what I found the courses I really wanted were the church history courses, you know? So I just—you know, it was history that was what I was really and truly interested in. Now, granted—and when—you know, the Biblical courses that you take, they're still basically history courses—even the study of ax, or the Gospels, or the Pentateuch, covet—you're still looking at history. But in seminary, the most fascinating course was the course on church history and Christian history. So I—

DMA:

You remember some of the faculty there?

DMu:

Well, I know I had a fellow named Gideon from Greek. And I had—I have the textbook for the church history course. He was the only guy that taught it and he wrote the book on it. Gosh, what is his name?

DMA:

Was William Estep there at that time?

DMu:

Estep was there, but I didn't have him. But he was still there.

DMA:

His son, Merl took some graduate courses at Tech years later and was in some of my courses—classes.

DMu:

Really? Yeah. I want to say—this guy. His name was not Roberts. It'll come to me and maybe I'll find it later. But he taught—he taught church history there forever. And I also had a fellow named Bell for Christian Psychology. And later, at Tech, I got acquainted with a young man named Murray Arrowsmith, and his fiancé was Judy Bell, who was Dr. Bell's wife—I mean, daughter. So I kind of made a circle like that.

DMA:

Who were some of the history faculty at Hardin-Simmons? Did you have Rupert Richardson?

DMu:

Rupert Richardson was my senior professor. I had twenty-four hours of history under him. I took every course that he taught, including the undergraduate and graduate courses. In fact, I forgot to mention that sixty—after I graduated in '64, I took history courses in '64,'65, under Dr. Richardson. I took his—he had taught a course on Woodrow Wilson, and I took it. And it seems like one other graduate course. So I picked up six hours there had three hours from West Texas State. That's how I had nine hours by the time I got to Tech. I forgot about—about that. But yeah, I took everything Dr. Richardson taught. I taught—he taught the survey courses, I took both of those. I took—I forget the others. As I said, it totaled for twenty-four hours. Eighteen of it was undergraduate. And then, I became his grader, too. I graded the freshman exams for him and—

DMA:

Can you paint a profile for us, here?

DMu:

Of Dr. Richardson? Well, Dr. Rupert Richardson was one of—one of the finest men I ever knew. He was in his seventies at this time. You know, he had—he had been president of Hardin-Simmons from 1940 to '50. But he loved that school. You know, most people would've long retired, but he was still teaching. And basically, I think he was only teaching, you know, maybe six hours a semester, which would be part-time at Hardin-Simmons then because most people teach twelve to fifteen hours, full-time. But you know, he just—he—he just commanded respect. You know, he had the—kind of the honors classes, I guess, for the most part. But he would do these lectures and, you know, he taught. Did you ever know—did—around him?

DMA:

I went there in '80, and he was still there.

DMu:

Okay, okay. You know how majestically—he was the—you know, the old-time, old school orator. Well, one of the neat things I did—I think it was like 1962. He took me to the first meeting of the West Texas Historical Association I ever went to. And it met over at Philip Fort in Belknap [?]. And at that time, they were having two meetings a year. But I went to one of those meetings. That was my introduction to the West Texas Historical Association. Just he and I, drove over there, and that was a treat, you know, as I look back on it.

DMA:

Was Barbara Leadbetter there in those days?

DMu:

Barbara was there, yeah. She was kind of running stuff at that time. I didn't know her very well and never had much use for Barbara. She was—she was pretty—oh—

DMA:

Possessive?

DMu:

Possessive. Yeah, that's the term of everything, you know? And pretty myopic in her vision. And so, we—I'd forgotten about—boy, you're right how these things prop things that come back to you. And I have to relate a story about Dr. Richardson and his influence. My senior year, I went to talk to him about what to do about whether to go onto graduate school. And told him I was—might be interested in going to getting a doctorate, you know. And but I knew that PhDs, even

then, were a dime a dozen, and jobs were hard to find. He said, "Well." He said, "Good people get good jobs." That's all he said about it. He didn't say, "You're good." He didn't—but what he—in that one statement, he said, "You've got what it takes to do it, if you'll just do it," you know? Well, you know, it's five or six years later before I ever get there. But I never, never forgot that bit of advice. And so I guess I had more of a goal than I ever really realized. You know, it seemed to me I was just kind of riding the waves of life at the time. But apparently, I had some goals moving toward that possible PhD. And you know, at the time, I just didn't have the maturity to recognize that—you know, that I possibly could do it. And I did it on a wing and a prayer, as it were, and things just fell into place for me, but.

DMa:

Speaking of these early history influences, did you ever know, until later in graduate school, that you grew up right near Adobe Walls? I mean, Gruver is really close. Did you realize how historic an area that was then?

DMu:

I really did, partly because of my dad. And I knew descendants of Billy Dixon.

DMa:

Did you?

DMu:

And had been out to the sight. And so, yeah, I knew about Adobe Walls. I knew about Zulu, the caterer's brother's place down on the creek, and some other places. So I was cognizant of them. I probably didn't appreciate them like I should have. But I was cognizant of those places and their role in history. As time went on, I learned more about it, you know, clearly, but.

DMa:

I just wonder how influential that was because a lot of people say that, "Dad took me to this place and that," and that somehow, that stuck. I guess it's hard to gage.

DMu:

Yeah, it is. And I don't think that—I was never so intrigued so much about place as I was about the story of history, you know? The World War II thing, for example. I do know this old—the Tyler place, which was an old house down on the creek near Morris, built in 1885. A mansion, for its day. And I remember going out there as a kid. It was the haunted house, you know? And having some appreciation for it, but not enough to go out there and try to preserve it or anything. But I do remember how grieved I was years later. Treasure hunters got in their mind that there was money hidden in the walls and they tore that thing down stone by stone. It was made out of quarried limestone. And a tragic loss because it was a wonderful, wonderful house. Anyway,

there's another house on the creek there just above that still standing of the same quarry, headquarters of Turkey Track Ranch. It's still standing, however, and it's, I think, carries a historical marker and so forth. But most of that country, they—to this day, they don't appreciate their history up there around Gruver and Spearman like they really should, I think.

DMa:

Well, I drew you off, but—

DMu:

I wanted to mention Zayn Mason, I had at Hardin-Simmons as well. And Zayn was a—you probably had him.

DMa:

I remember Mason.

DMu:

Yeah. He was quite a teacher, an intellectual teacher. He was a challenging teacher that I had at Hardin-Simmons, but he was a good influence.

DMa:

Was Lawrence Clayton there?

DMu:

Lawrence? No, Lawrence wasn't there at the time, but Lawrence and I were in graduate school at Tech together and went to church together. Lawrence was an English major. And I knew Lawrence and Sonya at Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church in Lubbock. And Lawrence used the Southwest Collection, too, so that's how I got acquainted with them, but he—

DMa:

Where does B.W. Aston fit into this picture? Were you at grad school?

DMu:

B.W. was already out of graduate school. I didn't get to know him until I got active in the West Texas Historical Association, I guess, in the seventies, was where I got acquainted with B.W. But at that time, he was already teaching at Hardin-Simmons. And then, Ken Jacobs and I were in graduate school together, and he went on to teach at Hardin-Simmons as well.

DMa:

Such an interesting connection between Hardin-Simmons and—

DMu:

And Tech.

DMA:

Texas Tech.

DMu:

There's quite an interlock there. Just, not only Hardin-Simmons, but the Abilene schools. Dr. Holden taught at McMurry before he went to Tech. And then, you know, a lot of Tech graduate students have taught at Hardin-Simmons. Jodella Kite, and B.W., and Ken Jacobs. You know, it's been a good place to place Tech graduates. Let me see. I was just thinking about—I wanted to mention, in my master's level, as I said, I worked under—David Vigness was my—directed my thesis. Dr. Wallace was the second reader on it. So had a great combination there. And but when it came time to choose my dissertation—you know, I took all the courses, then, Dr. Wallace taught at Tech: Plains Indians, Trans-Mississippi West. When I decided to do my dissertation on C.C. Slaughter, well Dr. Wallace had retired, or was about to. But he agreed—I think Dr. Vigness suggested that I use Wallace to direct it. And it's kind of political, and I'm not sure what all, but it was the right thing to do, you know? And so, Dr. Vigness served on my committee, but it was a good move on my part, I think, to have Wallace. And on his part, he agreed—I was his last student—and he agreed to finish me up basically without pay. But it made—you know, gave him an office and something to do. And so it was a nice, nice arrangement. It took me eight years to get through once I moved over there in '71. But you know, I was still raising this son. Then, I got married and was working at the Southwest Collection. I taught four years, part-time instructor, until they finally kicked me out because four years was the absolute maximum they would do. And then, so that's '70. I taught '71 to '75. Well, Sylvan Dunn retired in '77, I believe, as Director of the Southwest Collection, and recommended me to take his place. And so I got that job and I still hadn't finished. But so, I finally knuckled under. I was beginning—I'd finished most of my course work by '75, but I just couldn't, you know, get everything in line to finish. But once I became director, it really gave me a little more freedom, and so I knuckled under, and knocked out the dissertation then, and finished it in—

DMA:

What were the biggest challenged on that dissertation? Was it the looming project? Was it a psychological barrier to writing the thing? Or was it a real, tangible barrier? For example, tens of thousands of leads of material to wave through.

DMu:

No. It primarily was just a matter of finding the time, and creating, and setting it aside to do it. What it really came down to, I got down into the fall of '78, and I had written a couple or three

chapters, I think, and they had kind of languished. And I finally just—I just cleared everything out as best I could. I would go to work and work until—at the office—until about two or three o'clock, and then I would start, you know, writing and so forth. And I guess, got into—finally got into a groove. And I guess, from about October through March, I wrote about seven chapters. And you know—I know you've been through it. You have to—you have to work on it every day. And I learned to start work, and tie up every loose end you can at the end of that day's work, and then go over the material for the next day so that that can work on you during the night. And then you get up the next day and it flows. I've never been able to achieve that quite again, in terms of discipline of writing. But it really flowed there over the next few weeks. Part of it was just sheer desperation and deadline because I was going to start losing credits if I didn't finish by spring of '79. And so, so I knocked it out, and finished, and graduated in spring of '79, and I was so glad I did. Two reasons: Dr. Vigness died that summer and my dad died that summer. And I was so grateful that I had finished, you know, before those two men passed, so.

DMa:

Let's look at some more profiles here, if you don't mind. Can you give me a picture of Ernest Wallace? Physically, as well as a scholar, and just as an individual.

DMu:

Well, Ernest Wallace, physically, was—he was kind of a short and not quite stocky man. Ernest grew up in East Texas, you may know, in—oh, golly—not Grand Saline, but one of those little towns. I'm sorry, but it'll be in his biography somewhere.

DMa:

Between Tyler and Longview?

DMu:

Yeah, yeah. Somewhere in there. And he worked as a highway engineer some, you know, and so forth. Ended up getting his PhD in history at University of Texas. And I can't remember when he landed out at Tech—thirties or forties, I guess—and spent a long career at Tech. And caught him at the—you know, at the tail end. But he—he had—I guess his *Comanche* book is kind of what put him in the forefront of western scholars. Ernest was pretty dogmatic in his history. As a, you know, old school East Texan, he had his prejudices and so forth. But he was a good disciplinarian, he was a good writer, and as I've mentioned earlier, he really paid attention. If you—if you liked him and listened to him, he liked you, you know? But if you crossed him, you know, Jimmy—Jim Smallwood, for example, got crossways with him on his work, and I think quit Ernest, you know? And that was one of the things that—interesting in graduate school. But Ernest would support you if you were sort of on his side, so to speak. And so in that sense, I really appreciated him because he took an interest. He didn't have this—you know, aloofness that so many history people seem to have sometimes.

DMA:

You would say it was a real mentorship?

DMu:

Yeah, very much so. Very much so. He and I got to be good friends. After I finished and he had retired, well, he and I came down here fishing one year. My in-laws would rent a condominium down here for winter. We came down together and fished one year. Went all over the bay in a boat. And so, yeah, Ernest was a good fellow. He—let's see. You said physically and—

DMA:

His personality.

DMu:

Personality. I always thought he was very likeable. He was pretty much all business, you know? And had a pretty good ego about him. But he was sincere, sincere man, and genuinely interested. I guess the first time I visited with him, I was in—still in Hardin-Simmons. I must've gone—I know I went out to Tech and talked to him. I remember sitting in his office talking to him. This was like '65, I guess. And visited with him at that time. And maybe even David Vigness, I think. And you know, they never forgot me. And so—but Ernest was a good man. I was—got closer to him over the years, as I say. And after he died, well, his wife, Ernestine—Ernestine's the daughter. Oh, what was Mrs. Wallace's name? Anyway, we kind of took interest in her. Bought a car from her. We bought Ernest's old car from her. So, she was a great lady, too.

DMA:

How about David Vigness?

DMu:

David Vigness, also—David was a—David was a Gentile man. He was from the valley, you know, down in Borger, or somewhere in that area. McAllen, maybe. And he just brought a real gentleness. He was soft-spoken and made a great department chair. He was very diplomatic, pragmatic, great advisor. I took courses under him. His courses were—I taught his—I took history of Mexico under him. That's when I was dating Anne. I'd fall asleep in his class because he was so soft-spoken. And but David and Winifred, his wife, they took personal interest in me, partly because of my situation of trying to be a single father. And we became good friends. And I just regret that David died. He died of an aneurism just suddenly, summer of '79, and you know, so I never had those years afterwards to really get to be good friends. Winifred became a good friend through those times. And so, I just think the world of those people. They were—took great interest in me professionally and personally.

DMA:

I've heard a couple of people say that they learned to write only after they had had a paper edited by Ernest Wallace. [Laughs]

DMu:

Um-hm, yeah.

DMA:

Was ____ [0:53:23] very stringent, as far as writing is concerned?

DMu:

Very, very much so. Ernest—now, sometimes, Ernest would contradict himself in his writings. You'd put it his way and then he'd change it back, but he did—he was an excellent teacher of writing just by example, as much as anything. You know, I wish I had taken courses in writing, though, to learn some of kind of the tricks of description and so forth. But I didn't, and I don't claim to be a good writer. Ernest was a good writer, and I know he took great pride in one of his paragraphs out of his *Mackenzie* book, I think was used as an example of good historical writing in some textbook somewhere.

DMA:

What about Seymour Connor?

DMu:

Seymour Ike Connor. Ike—you know, I had a relationship with Ike. I never took a course with him. But he had been director of Southwest Collection and so I had that tie because I went to work there and Sylvan told Ike about me. And so Ike and I got along pretty well until I was—David Vigness invited me, in about 1976, to teach a Texas History course at Tech. They were short somebody. Well, Ike had just written a textbook on Texas History and the textbook choices, primarily, was Richardson and Wallace Texas History. Richardson, Wallace, and Anderson, and Ike Connor. [DM laughs] And I'll never forget: on those steps in there in the math building, meeting Ike on those steps, and I said, "Ike, I'm going to get to teach Texas History—" Or "Dr. Connor," I guess, I called him. He said, "Great." He said, "You are going to use my textbook aren't you?" And I hem and hawed around. And he said, "Murrah, you are on my," I don't remember what word he used, but it was "shit," or "fuck," or something "blacklist."

DMA:

And he was serious?

DMu:

And he was serious.

DMA:

Oh my.

DMu:

And he did not speak to me for two years after that. But you know, I didn't have much choice. I had to use Wallace because I hadn't taken a course with Connor, and so he was offended. And so, he just wrote me off. Well, again, I look back and probably, Sylvan Dunn, probably smoothed that over. And Ike kind of, you know, warmed back up to me. And then when I became director of the Southwest Collection, and Sylvan had taught the archives course, which I had assisted him with, well, it came time to teach it. And Sylvan wasn't there, and I wasn't a member of the graduate faculty, so the department asked Ike to teach the archives course, but he couldn't teach it. He didn't know the structure of it, so he depended on me and Mike Hooks to do it. Well, it was in that experience, then, and work—and that was in about 1980, I guess, of working through that year with Ike, or that semester, on the archives course that I won Ike back over then, as a friend. But Ike was—there was no grey with Ike Connor. He was—it was black or white. You know, you either believed it his way, or you hit the highway.

DMA:

Presumably, this would've happened to other people, then, because you have these two textbooks.

DMu:

That's right.

DMA:

Both teaching Texas History. I don't know how many were teaching Texas History. But do you know of any other incidents?

DMu:

You know, I don't. But I know that—you know, there was a Connor following of graduate students and there was a Wallace and Vigness. So there was—there were those camps. You know, the Dwight Pitcaithley was a Connor student and there were several more, whose names don't come to mind. But never the twain would meet. Now, Ike and Ernest had a healthy respect for each other, but I wouldn't say they were ever friends either. You know, Ike—Ike was kind of—I think he was jealous of Ernest. And Ike kind of wore his feelings on his sleeve, too, and [laughs] I'll never forget. Someone told me a story. They were in some graduate faculty meeting. Harry Jefferson was the urban historian and he made some remark that was kind of—you know, said something like, "We really don't have anybody to name that teaches in, you know, western U.S. history," or something. And Ike [laughs]—and Ike said, "And Jefferson, you're fat, too." [Laughter] So—

DMA:

Not much restraint.

DMu:

Right. That was Ike. He just said what he thought and so forth. [DM laughs] So, but as I say, Ike took up with me after that and then, I guess, the next time the course came around, I had been admitted to the graduate faculty, so I taught it myself, but. But then, Ike retired along in there somewhere, as well. But he and I remained friends right up until he died. I tried to get him to speak for the groundbreaking of our new building in '95, '94. And he first said he wouldn't, then he backed out. Ike was one of these—boy, when he retired, he quit history. I mean, he quit it lock, stock, and barrel. Totally did other things. He got off on doing the stock market. He got interested in P.B. Woodhouse, the mystery writer. He did a lot of things, but he just did not touch history. But that was sort of Ike, you know? His undergraduate degree was in engineering and it was only at the graduate level that he got interested in history. Ike was a near genius. He could do almost anything. But he had some other problems that kind of limited him early on, I think. He had to work through those. He went through ugly divorce, and rearing kids, and all that as people do. But he left a pretty good body of literature and his—oh, what's his book on the Mexican War? You know, that's—boy, that's kind of the other side of the story, but it's a pretty good—pretty good account. I don't think he was the historian that Ernest was, but he was a good historian.

DMA:

Where does Curry Holden fit into all of this? He was retired.

DMu:

Curry was retired, but I got to know Curry pretty well. While I was doing my graduate work, I guess I was already employed at the Southwest Collection. And for that reason, I hadn't had interaction with Curry. You see, I think he retired about '65, but then he got interested in starting the Ranching Heritage Center. And so he spent a lot of time in the Southwest Collection, which was one of his babies as well. And we got well acquainted and I ended up doing most of the interviews with him. And then, you know, got kind of within—you know, Fran. You know, Fran Holden, his wife, is a great a manipulator and she would, kind of, use me. And then, vice versa, you know? I was trying to posture with them relative to their papers, you know, for the Southwest Collection. So, I remember going over to Curry and Fran's once and they—Fran wanted something out of me and she—Curry made these margaritas that would knock you off your feet. And I remember having one of those over there. And I don't remember what it was Fran wanted, but she was wanting something out of me. This was probably after I had become director of the Southwest Collection. And I forgot when Curry died. But as I said, I had a great privilege of interviewing him and helping him. You know, he and—after Judge Hamlin died—well, he and Evetts Haley knocked out that biography of Hamlin. And so, you know, I got to

know Curry and Fran pretty well, you know? And it was Curry's later years, but doing the interviews with him was a big help. And then—and Fran, too. I interviewed Fran. And then, of course, mentioned J. Evetts Haley. I also had the great privilege to get to know him—a couple of ways. I knew of him politically, but then, spending time at the Haley Library, working on my dissertation, trying to—also, trying to get his papers from him. And I can't remember if I interviewed Evetts Haley. I did. No, no, no. No, I don't know that I did either. I don't think I interviewed Evetts Haley. I'm thinking of Ian Jones, the president that Haley got fired, at the time. So, anyway. But boy, that was one of the great privileges of being up there at that time was to know Holden, and Haley, and Wallace, and Vigness, and Connor.

DMa:

You brought—you alluded to something—

DMu:

Let me tie all this together. In 1970—1980, we celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Southwest Collection, and we did it with a symposium. And you know who I invited to be the speakers? Richardson, Holden, Haley, Wallace, Connor, Billy Mac Jones. There were seven of them. Seven historical viewpoints. Haley, Holden, Wallace, Richardson, Jones, Connor, and maybe Sylvan might've been the other one. But that was a—that was a landmark program. And J. Evetts Haley spoke at the luncheon. We had four hundred people for the luncheon. And that was a momentous event. And that's where I showed that slide presentation I talked about on the Southwest—history of the Southwest—what the Southwest Collection does. Yeah.

DMa:

Well you alluded to something that I was going to ask about. You were pretty young and now, in charge of the Southwest Collection. And all of these guys who might tap upon the resources of the Southwest Collection were your professors. That doesn't sound like a very enviable position because it seems like they could impose upon you because of their position.

DMu:

Well, yeah. But keep in mind that most of the guys I've mentioned are almost past their time. And you know, to my knowledge it was never a problem. You know, we—Olin Barr would come over and Olin loved to browse the stacks, you know? In those days, we just—we had no restrictions to speak of. We'd page things down, but if you wanted to go back and prow through the stacks, that's what people did. And I don't—

DMa:

But as far as—how about as far as keeping your—the facility open for extra hours? And this kind of thing? Did you—were you ever imposed upon for that type of favor?

DMu:

Well, I know that there's probably times that we would—it'd be really people more from out of town that were on limited time that we would make some exceptions, particularly on a Saturday, to stay longer just for them. That happened a few times. But—

DMa:

Had that flexibility built-in to allow for those certain circumstances?

DMu:

Yeah. And my philosophy always was, you do whatever you can to make it easy for that visiting scholar. That's why—that's what you're there for. And a world of difference today up there. You go in with all those rules and regulations, you don't feel welcome in that place at all. And you know, I know there's reasons for it, but my philosophy was—that's where the rubber meets the road is when that scholar walks in and wants to use that place, you're whole existence is for that very purpose, and it is your duty to make sure they get the very best service they can. It's the old business philosophy: the customer is always right and that's who you please. And you know, that's—I think that's how we—you know, we've maintained the reputation of the Southwest Collection through those years. It was something I inherited both from Connor and Sylvan Dunn. Sylvan was much more low-key about it. But I was much more open about it. And of course, the way we were arranged in that old building, a scholar comes in, and all of us had an office right there together, almost in the open, and everybody's business was everybody's. Boy, that was by far the best service you could ever give somebody because if whoever that was on duty at the time didn't know, everybody else was right there that could supply an answer. It was really an ideal situation and somewhat was lost in moving to the new building.

DMa:

Is this a good stopping point?

DMu:

Yes, it is for me.

DMa:

Just make sure this is still—

[Pause in recording]

DMa:

Okay. I want to pick up talking a little bit about the Southwest Collection. Can we start from the first time you used the Collection? Your first recollections? What the collection was like? How many staff it had? What the facility itself was like?

DMu:

Okay. Well, as I mentioned earlier, my first contact was to go there to look at the Slaughter papers from which I wrote my master's thesis. So that would've been in '69. At the time, the staffing was—the director was Sylvan Dunn. And then, David Gracie was the archivist. Jimmy Skaggs was assistant archivist. And then, there was two or three other support staff people. Doris Blaisdell might've even been there at the time. I can't remember. There was a secretary. I know Beth Snyder, who was later married—was married to Jack Snyder, who was working on his doctorate in English—was working there about that time, as well. And so, it only had a full-time of about five or six. And so it was situated, of course, there in the old library portion of the present-day math building. And very, in a really nice configuration. For some reason, I remember I did all my work in that backroom. That was the reading room. We got to use the one, you know, on the south—north—northeast corner of that suite, there adjacent to what we later had as a breakroom, and so forth. And you know, it was a very amicable place to work, and do research, and you know, just got the best of—best of service. And so that was what it was like. That was my first memory. And as I said earlier, I took up pretty quickly with Sylvan Dunn, and as well as Gracie, and Skaggs, and—I don't know. It just seemed like I was kind of destined to end up there.

DMA:

Are you talking about the—this is where you were doing your research, right next to the old breakroom?

DMu:

Yes, um-hm.

DMA:

Isn't that what later became your office?

DMu:

No, no. This was in that area that—to the west—to the east of the breakroom. At that time, we used—they used it then as an additional reading room. In fact, all of those rooms on the eastside were reading rooms. The front, the middle one, where the microfilm cameras were, and then that one as well. In later years, we—I think we closed that off for processing because we just got out—ran out of room. You know, just had no place to work. So that's what we had to start with. And at the time, the place was probably just beginning to be comfortably full. But when I started in '71—well, I know when we started in '71, we still had empty shelves in the stacks. But—

DMA:

There were four stack levels.

DMu:

Four stack levels. Plus, a basement. Yeah. And yeah, there was—there was still room to grow then. But by the time, I became director in '79, we had pretty well filled—filled up and then had started scrambling for space. In fact, Sylvan and I, when I first came there, I mean, one of the first things we did was start talking about, you know, a new building and this or that. While Sylvan was still there, I know I worked a long time on a scheme to build on, I think it was a sixty-by-forty stack area behind the stacks and go up—you know, just mimic the stacks, I guess. And you know, we just couldn't get anywhere with that. And so, Sylvan was such a low-key director, in a sense. He didn't—he didn't make a lot of waves on campus. He had his own way of dealing with the administration. He had a technique he called, 'curb stoning.' He wouldn't make an appointment to go over and see an administrative official. He'd hang out on the parking lot, and catch them coming to their car, and would feign as though he had just run into them there. [DM laughs] And so he'd carry on his conversation like that.

DMA:

In a more casual setting then, not an appointment.

DMu:

Yes. Right, yeah. And I wasn't that way. You know, I kind of went through channels and everything else. I don't know where you want me to go with this.

DMA:

Well, that's okay. I know that somewhere—somewhere back there, you started thinking about another building and actually, a building design. And I've heard the story, I don't know if from you, or someone else, that the building design that we have today originated on a napkin.

DMu:

That's true. That's a true story. Southwest Airlines and our Southwest Collection building both originated on napkins. [DM laughs] I don't know if you know the Southwest Airlines story. But well what—as I said, I kicked around for years trying to figure out a way to just add on there and then never got anywhere with that. So, let me go ahead and tell this story as a prelude to the napkin story. When—you know, I tried everything on a building. I would—every president would come in, and I'd get them over there, and plead our case. Cecil Mackey, when he became president, took him on the tour. We almost got shut down. He saw no reason, need, for the place, recommended it be closed. If it happened been for one of the regent's wives, Bob Snyder's wife, we might've happened to—[laughs]. I guess I need to tell you that story. They were having a regent's meeting and unbeknownst to me or anyone, one of the things they were discussing was—was expansion or closing the Southwest Collection. And well, meanwhile, I think it was Bob Snyder from Baird. His wife—he was on the board and his wife came over to the Southwest Collection while he was in the board meeting to look up something and she was just—she was

just so enthralled with the place. And she goes back at the end of the board meeting and just kind of says—you know, while they're both there—she says, “Oh, I've been over to the Southwest Collection. That's the most wonderful place in the world.” [Laughter] And there was just kind of this silence, you know? But whoever told me this, and I think it was Bob Snyder, he said, “You know,” he said, “That may have made a difference, you know, that Mackey kind of saw that there was more people interested in that place than what he realized.” So nothing ever came of that. Then, Lauro Cavazos came and I brought him over. I remember him going into the building, he commented on the caliche hill out front. He said—you know, it was barren—he said, “Why isn't there any grass here?” And I said, “I don't know,” you know? So six weeks later, we had landscaping and grass, but we still didn't get a—get a building. [DM laughs] Robert Lawless went through the same thing. But it really was—it turned—Bill Weiner, who was the develop modeler, and I went to see John Montford one day to ask about—see if we could get a quarter of a million dollars to do feasibility grants, architects for—from, maybe, the Plum Foundation that Montford ran. And Montford said—he said, “You don't need to build money for the Southwest Collection.” He said, “I told him that if I signed off on this last round of the tax bond money,” what do they call that? The higher education—HEAF funds, I believe. Higher Education Assistant Funds. “That there should be money in there for a new building for the Southwest Collection.” And he said, “Do I need to call somebody?” [Laughs] Bill Weiner and I turned, and looked at each other, and I said, “Well, maybe so.” And I mean, within three weeks, Bob Lawless, the president, was announcing the funding for a new building for the Southwest Collection.

DMA:

The whole nine million?

DMu:

The whole amount, 8.8 million dollars. And so—

DMA:

That was a good couple of weeks.

DMu:

Yes, it was. And so once we had the money committed like that, well, I began to think about programming, and getting ready to select an architect, and so forth. But one of the things that—that I was trying to do was to incorporate all those special collections under one roof and maintain their identity, but—and at the same time, not slack one or the other. And I don't know I was—I remember I had some kind of idea that you had a central reading room and then the repositories. Each office would open onto that reading room. Kind of an octagonal thing. Well, I was visiting at, maybe TSHA [**Texas Speech-Language Hearing Association**], which Bill Griggs. The late Dr. Bill Griggs, who later became my boss and who did the exhibits in the new

building. And I told him what I had in mind and Bill sketched out on a napkin there, this octagonal plan to have this central, kind of, exhibit place, what is now the rotunda there with the globe. And I bid on that and so when—you know, when the site was finally selected, and the architect was finally selected, and I explained to Karl Komatsu, the architect, kind of what we had in mind—well, that's the response that he came back with. So yes, the story is true. It kind of began with that sketch on a napkin, and then Bob, myself, and Dr. Bill Griggs. And for better or worse, you know, that's what the—what the place became.

DMa:

Started as an octagonal design and that octagon kind of shrunk and branches off in every direction. To what extent was that due to the fact that it was going to be placed somehow between the main library and the—

DMu:

That's—see, the site dictated, then, the shape of the building. It really precluded us. You know, had we had a site where we could've laid it out in the fashion we wanted, it would've never been designed like that, but that's all in order to get the bulk of the building and storage in one place in order to get the reading room appropriately settled. It had to lay like it did.

DMa:

On the other hand, that's a layout for a great gallery all the way across the front.

DMu:

Yes, it did. It had its advantage. You know, what was neat about it, that it respected the integrity of the old livestock pavilion there. In fact, drew its inspiration from it, as much as anything. And it also drew inspiration from the library itself. And yet, you know, people—I'm sure the average person passing by, they don't have any idea of the size of that building. You know, if you pass by there where the little pavilion—the little announcement kiosk thing is, you know, you see the tower there, but you have no idea what's really behind it, unless you just happen to be passing. If you're coming from the other side, it's just the back of the building. And so—so it's kind of hidden. And you know, I would've preferred it to have been somewhere else. We wanted—I wanted to put it at any number of places, 19th and Indiana. I wanted to put it even there in the middle of Boston Avenue, just south of the library. But there was always some answer for not using those sites. And then, this site was—Cluff kind of intervened, Dale Cluff, the director of libraries, came down on that site because he wanted the place close to the library. And so that ended up carrying the day. I didn't—you know, I should've fallen on a sword over it because parking is limited there and we knew it would be. It was always going to be problematic and still is, I'm sure. It's even worse now, of course, then it was then.

DMA:

It's also a prestigious site toward the center of campus. You know, there are some advantages to that as well.

DMu:

Yeah. Well, it has worked in that right. It's brought a lot of administrators in to use that Formby Room.

DMA:

That's exactly it. You know, that kind of—there's something about the actual location of it that seems to attract the attention of administrators on campus.

DMu:

Yeah. Well, from my sense, boy, it did raise the identity considerably and that's a good point.

DMA:

Did you ever consider the possibility of getting that livestock pavilion as part of the complex?

DMu:

Yes, I did. Karl Komatsu and I talked about that quite a bit. In fact, what I wanted—would like to have done, was taken the pavilion as a—for the reading room, itself. But it kind of came down to this. I'll never forget the conversation with Karl. He said, "How could I, who am a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, how could you as a chairman of the State Review Board of the National Register come down on the side of tying onto that building and destroying the integrity of that stand alone building?"

DMA:

Are you talking about adding on to it?

DMu:

Adding on to it, yeah. He said the only way you could do that and maintain the integrity of the building is to have a basement, you know, underground. Well, you know, that's the purist in Karl and to a certain extent, in myself, I guess, that we couldn't do it. Logically, we could have. But you know, there were a lot of variables that we had no control over. Agriculture, or whoever controlled it, would've had to have given it up. And it would've created more problems, in some respects, because if we got that space, then their space is going to have to be replaced somewhere else. And so, it just became easier to mimic the building and do it—do it right, so that's the reason they just folded around the livestock pavilion. But it created a nice little—that little space between the two buildings.

DMA:

It's kind of a courtyard fashion.

DMu:

Yeah. And as you say, the gallery was a—you know, that was a real plus to come out of it. And then, of course, then you've got a reading room that I think is just—I thought that reading room captured the sense of what the place is really about. Tell you this story. Dale Cluff, I guess—there's some question about the—the bars that go across the top of the reading room, about not putting those in. Cluff was all for not doing that, boy, I just insisted they stay because the architect put them in there for a reason. They don't serve a functional purpose other than they—they are what old reading rooms had in them. You know, they were bars to hold the roof together in the old days. But you know, that's just that extra touch that makes that a difference between a—just a room and something that has an association with the past in it.

DMA:

I suspect that our acquisitions program has so much easier a time now because of that showcase building than what you had in the math building.

DMu:

Oh, without a doubt.

DMA:

Because we bring people in [snaps] and it's a done deal. Especially, when they see the reading room. The clerestory windows and it's just—the whole thing is fabulous. It's the clincher.

DMu:

Well, you know, I know it happened as we predicted that once that building went up and was open, that we would—stuff would start coming out of the woodwork. And that, I know, clearly, has happened. And then, of course, the place has just grown staff wise and otherwise, too, during—since that time.

DMA:

There have been little spaces here and there, lots of space here and there that have been very much filled and overfilled at this point. [Laughs]

DMu:

Yeah. You know, and that's the big surprise to me. You know, we projected a twenty-year growth, but we never—you know, I never took account a Vietnam archive coming in and just—you know, just growing in great leaps like that. You know, really, built that primarily for the Southwest Collection and its growth projection [coughs] and not another major collection like

that, so. But once they vacate, which will happen eventually, then it'll kind of get back of track, to a certain extent, I guess.

DMA:

What's the story behind the Dairy Barn? You have a plaque, a historical marker, on the Dairy Barn. There's some controversy in the past—not now—but in the past, over that structure. Can you give me the story on that?

DMu:

Well, here's what I know about it. The Dairy Barn would've been bulldozed down a long time ago, had it not been primarily for Arch Lamb. And maybe, I may have even played some role in saving it at once upon a time. I don't know. You know, the Dairy Barn—when I was—when I was in high school, I judged dairy cattle out behind that barn. And I'll never forget, in 1969, when I came back to Tech—came to Tech—I was walking across campus to go to a Spanish class, came around a corner of a building and there was the Dairy Barn in front of me. And my first thought was, Why in the world did they move this barn to the middle of the campus? And then, it just hit me. No, you idiot, in the last fifteen years, you know, or whatever it'd been—it'd been twenty years, I guess—the campus has just grown out around it. But what a déjà vu deal that was. For that reason alone, I guess I've always been sympathetic to that Dairy Barn. You know, the Dairy Barn, to me, was a symbol of Tech's past and it has that prominent position there. I think Tech has made a serious error in not finding a way to adapt—make adaptive reuse of that building for something or other.

DMA:

They've talked about that, but nothing has ever come about.

DMu:

Nothing has ever—you know, they've come close. They finally came up with some funds to encapsulate the building a number of years ago. But as long as Arch Lamb was alive, Arch would not let them take that building down. [Clears throat] Since Arch is gone, I don't know what's—what all is going on. There's been some real encroachment on that mall. One of the—see, one of the things people always argued was that that building sat right in the middle of that vista going west from the library. And they wanted it out of there to clear the vista. But then, low and behold, they come in and they plunk the education building, or something, right down in the middle of it. So, you know, the philosophy changes with every change in administration over what goes where. You know, they wouldn't let me build a Southwest Collection building in the middle of Boston Avenue because they said the water flow in all through there has to drain. And then, low and behold, they expand the university center into it. And so, on and on you go, you know, with that kind of stuff. But that's about all I know about the Dairy Barn, really, is particularly, Arch Lamb's role in saving it. Somehow, I got involved in that once and I'm not

sure whether I helped save it or not. But I've forgotten the particulars of it. If I did, I'll take credit for it, if I did. [Laughs]

DMA:

I think in John Montford's original masterplan, that was going to be a real garden area back behind the Southwest Collection. At first, there was some talk about removing that barn. But then, the talk was about incorporating it into that garden spot. But it's not, by any means, a garden spot at this point. They have yet to develop that into a—hopefully, a lush park type area sometime.

DMu:

Well, I had heard once that it was going to be made into student government offices, and so forth, and I don't know.

DMA:

The barn itself?

DMu:

The barn itself.

DMA:

I heard something about little cafes, and things like that, at one point.

DMu:

Yeah. Well somebody will finally catch on. If the building can just hang on, you know, somebody'll catch on. You know, Tech's going to be coming up its centennial in fifteen years. You know, the closer they get to that, then buildings like it and the livestock pavilion will carry their own weight, but from—just because the original campus buildings, not many of them—well, they're—I guess, most of them are still there. The permanent buildings are still there, but they don't necessarily resemble what they looked like originally to you. I think that would be a great victory if, going into the centennial, that those buildings are still there. The pavilion, I think, will always stay. It's got enough support.

DMA:

It's also heavily used for classrooms, landscape architecture. There was some talk in '98, or '99, that Southwest Collection might be able to get that building if we could find a place for landscape architecture. Well, how does the Southwest Collection do that? You know? [Laughs] They never found another spot in the landscape architecture, so we're still there. But there might still be a potential.

DMu:

Well, ultimately, just by sheer proximity, that may well—may well happen. Yeah, that would be great.

DMa:

What about the relationship between the Southwest Collection and the main library? Can you tell me about how that was developed over the years?

DMu:

Yeah. I can kind of give you the overall history of that very quickly. You know, the Southwest Collection—and I'll refer to the article that I did in some little book years ago. It's on Texas archival resources, or something. And I go into all of that, but when the Southwest Collection originally started in 19—actually, it really goes back to 1952, and it started in the library as part of the library. And Carl Coke Reister, in fact, was brought in to run it and then he died. But the library just didn't do anything with it. They treated it like it was just a special collection. And so it took—1955, Holden—Dr. Holden through J. Evetts Haley, got the board to really create the modern Southwest Collection. And they went outside and hired Ike Connor to come in and be the archivist. And so that's where it took shape. And it was, you know, buried over in the museum. But finally, when the new library was built, then the Southwest Collection got to move into the old library, at least the portion of the stacks and the one—the reading room. In 1959, though, for budgetary reasons, the Southwest Collection was placed under the library because library monies was formally funded. And it was a better source of funding than museum funding, which is line-item funding. So that's how it got placed onto the library. But fortunately, during that time, Ray Janeway was the director of library. And Janeway was a—he was a laissez faire, kind of, administrator. He just left you alone, as long as you didn't make waves and do your own thing. And I think Janeway had a pretty good understanding of the difference between library functions and archival functions. And then, when Sylvan Dunn became director, he—Sylvan knew how to work under a librarian because he had worked for the state library and then state archives. Sylvan was state archivist once upon a time. And so he knew their mentality and how to work with them. And so basically, he just kept a low-key approach, and Janeway let him do what he wanted to do, and so, while there was a nominal relationship, it was more of a—you know, it was just a strictly a line reporting thing and our portion of the budget was kind of formally funded. But when Sylvan left, Janeway, in naming me director, did a couple of things. He wanted to kind of reign us in a little bit. And so, first, he made me change the title of my—I wasn't the director, but I was going to be something else. He said they couldn't have a Director of Library and a Director of Southwest Collection. So I had to—so I have got to pick the name. I could've been the—you know, the Big Mugwump if I wanted to be, but I chose University Archivist and Head of the Southwest Collection, or something like that. And then, Janeway required me to attend the staff meetings of the library. But otherwise, things pretty well stayed about the same. He still—he was hands off, let us do our own thing, and that worked until he

retired. Janeway was there a total of thirty-three years, I think.

DMa:

Now, you were getting student use library fees to the Southwest Collection through the libraries at this point?

DMu:

Well, I guess so. I mean, we had a budget and the budget, more or less, had become a historically of certain percentage of the overall library budget. And I forgot what it was, but it was like, you know, 7, 8, 9 percent. Whatever the library got, we got X percent of it.

DMa:

So it probably was some student use money.

DMu:

Yeah, yeah. And then from there, we divvied that up however we wanted to use it. You know, we had—I was pretty—pretty good control of that budget. And but when Janeway retired and Cluff came in, Cluff was so much more of a hands-on type of guy and more by the book. And so, the more and more, we had to codify, we had to justify, and so forth. But still, I had a great working relationship with Cluff. Now, what he did, he—he supposedly gave me a promotion to associate director of libraries to take over—he wanted me to take responsibility for all the special collections and so I did that, more or less, against my will.

DMa:

You took in rare books at this time?

DMu:

Took in rare books and Turkish archive at that point. And even officed over there, part-time, at the—and that didn't work, you know, for me, personally, professionally, very well. It was just too difficult to do. But you know, I did what I had to do, you know? But that whole process meant that, you know, we were just—we, the Southwest Collection, were just slowly being kind of sucked into the library's world. And then, of course, there was another thing going on at the time, this whole professionalism development, within the library, and a move toward trying to establish professional status, and so forth, and the library trying to do that. Well, the Southwest Collection already had—we already had our tiers of assistant, and associate, and archivist, and some of kind ranking. And so the library ended up, you know, structuring that. And then, you know, before I left, well we just—you know, we'd gotten into this whole faculty status issues and all of that. All of that, then, had the process of just drawing the Southwest Collection into the—into the library administrative stuff. But as long as I was in that position and Cluff was there, it didn't seriously affect the independence of the Southwest Collection. And really, it was

when—then, I was fired and—or resigned. Officially, I resigned, but I would've been fired. And left in '96. You know, that created such a vacuum there and gave Cluff, you know, just free liberty to just move in. Of course, he appointed Preston Lewis as the interim director. And Preston—you know, Preston didn't know—you know, Preston had no appreciation, I guess, of this independence or any of this stories. And so, the continuity was lost from Connor, Dunn, and me to maintain as much of that independence as possible. And thus, really, to a certain extent, created the problems that y'all have gone through today. I laughingly told the guys up there, I said, "I know it's all my fault. You wouldn't be in this mess had I still been up here." [Laughs] And I don't—I have no idea whether that's true or not. But I will take some of the blame for allowing—you know, that situation, where suddenly, there's just this huge vacuum and the break in the continuity because a place like the Southwest Collection, continuity is everything. You don't—it's not a process. It is the subject. And the place has this great depth, and it has great depth for a reason, and it is just critically important that that continuity—you know, that new director should've been someone from within the organization, or who was so imminently familiar with it, like a faculty member, or something, that you could've maintained that continuity. Nothing against Bill Tydeman. You know, Bill came in—you know, he knew—you know, he was director of a similar place at University of New Mexico. I'm not castigating anything like that. I'm just saying that the better way would've been to have grown from within and maintain that continuity. But that's nobody's fault but mine because I had—

DMA:

It sounds like just circumstances to me.

DMu:

Well, you know, it's just unfortunate the mess that I got myself into and had that not happened and I would've—you know, I would've probably stayed four or five more years and retired. I would not have exited that place without pretty well handpicking who was going to take my place. And that way—it's just like Connor picked Dunn, and Dunn picked me, and I would've gotten to pick my own successor. And so I have nobody to blame but myself, and so.

DMA:

What about the building of endowments for the Southwest Collection? Were they—were a lot of those already in place when you came along?

DMu:

They were supposed to be there. And I can't—the biggest endowment we had was Clifford B. Jones' fund. And I had kind of shepherd that thing. I was trying to keep it seemingly at around 150 thousand dollars for the principal, which in turn, then, was providing—no. Let me back off of that. It was a lot higher than that because we were getting—oh man. I don't know. It's been a while now. But I want to say we were getting somewhere between twenty to twenty-five

thousand dollars a year off of whatever that amount was. My principal—you never spent the principal at all and you—you know, you spent the endowment and I was having to spend all of it. So anyway, but it was—in fact, I want to say now, it was closer to a half million dollars. And then, then, we had another little endowment fund that had accumulated up to some thousands of dollars. I want to say, about fifty. But that's probably about what we had. You know, in that—with the new building, I had gotten Sharleen Formby to—Rhoads—Sharleen Formby Rhoads to commit to a hundred thousand. I don't know that she ever did that or not, but that was in exchange for naming the Formby Room. And that's about as far as I got with endowments.

DMA:

Well, my information is a little fuzzy, but it seems like there are maybe two dozen endowments. Am I off? And I just remember looking through the files and seeing name after name of endowment for small—mostly smaller amounts, like—like Curry Holden fund, Olive Holden, and Fran Holden.

DMu:

Yeah. There are. And I'm sure the Curry Holden fund has come along since I left. And I think the Olive Holden fund was already there. Yeah, there were some small ones in there, yeah.

DMA:

Small ones? You're talking about the major ones.

DMu:

I'm talk—yeah. Yeah, and I don't remember there being very many of those others, but there were—there were a few.

DMA:

But you're funding concerns were mostly taken care of by a line-item budget?

DMu:

Line-item budget.

DMA:

Budget from the main library?

DMu:

Yeah.

DMA:

Okay.

DMu:

Yeah. We were getting—I don't know—two hundred and fifty, three hundred thousand a year, something like that, through there, which covered salaries traveled, and student help, and acquisitions. And you know, of course, we were just working with a staff of—full-time staff of about just only six or seven, you know, through that time period. Myself, and Cindy Martin, and Janet Neugebauer, and—oh gosh, we had a secretary, of course.

DMa:

Doris Blaisdell was—

DMu:

And Doris Blaisdell was there part-time. She was always part-time. And we had a full-time librarian, Tommy Whitely. Later, Fredonia. But we relied, primarily, on student help for the bulk of our labor. You know, that was always a good—it worked well, I thought, to use students. You know, you could get them at a good price and you could—you know, you could afford to hire good ones.

DMa:

And students learn the trade at the same time.

DMu:

Right. Yeah, yeah.

DMa:

Something to put on their resume.

DMu:

Um-hm. Yeah. You know, I made friends with a lot of those kids that came through there. Still stay close to three or four of them that worked for us in those days. You know, from back in the seventies and eighties. And just—we had some great kids. For a while, we had to use work study students, back in the—seemed like in the eighties. Money got really tight, and we had to go to work study, which you didn't get as good a quality of student, but we got some pretty good students. But it was better—the best students we got were those that we could hire without any conditions. And we had some really, really good ones that worked for us.

DMa:

And as an administrator, though, you didn't have to spend an inordinate amount of time looking for funding. You were pretty well established. You weren't spending 50 percent of your time digging around for funds.

DMu:

Oh heavens, no.

DMA:

Because that's often the case now.

DMu:

Yeah, I hear that. In fact, the thing was that—in fact, somebody quoted this back to me that, said, “Well, when David was there, well, he'd go out and raise the money for—relative to getting a collection.” That's just not so. If the opportunity was there, I did. We got one collection from some guy. He left the collection at University of Texas and they turned it down. In his will, the guy provided funds to process the collection. I remember I went to court as—I testified at the behest of the—somebody. In relative to what it was going to cost to process that collection because I think the boy scouts was to get what was left of that state over and above the—what we got. And you know, I think I asked for a hundred thousand dollars. You know, we got that money to process that collection, whatever it was. But those are the exceptions. I never—I never went after any collection because it was just money attached to it. Sometimes, there would be. But man, if that's the way you collect—if you're only going to collect moneyed collections, then you've distorted your whole purpose. You know, you collect whatever—yeah.

DMA:

Collections can have a certain angle.

DMu:

That's right, yeah.

DMA:

Well, that often pokes up its ugly head. Every now and then, someone will push for that type of collection development.

DMu:

That's what I hear.

DMA:

It's [crosstalk, 1:47:54] than that.

DMu:

It's—yeah. No, I just think that's just a great injustice to society is to tie money to whatever it is you collect. It's not to say that—you know, what the natural process is you collect the collection and if there's wealth there, then you use the opportunity to go back and, you know, develop your

resource. Let's say, Marshall Formby is an example of that. You know, when we collected his papers, we didn't ask for any money. We just collected them, and interviewed Marshall, got the papers. It was only after Marshall died and we were planning this new building, they knew that Sharleen had the resources that we—we talked to her about that. And—

DMa:

Something separate from the collection itself.

DMu:

That's right, yeah. Yeah. [Clears throat] So I was trying to think of other collections that we might've had some money come in the—associated with it. But typically, what would happen is that, you know, the donor might give us a gift, but often, it was just totally unsolicited. You know, we got the Frank Reeves, those photograph collections. And you know, the Dow Jones Foundation sought us out. Actually, Phil Guitar tracked down, found out we had the Frank Reeves papers and photos because he had been looking for them. And low and behold, next thing I know, he's dragging in the director of the Dow Jones Foundation and they're basically saying, "What is it going to take to process this?" I popped off, "A hundred thousand dollars," and I think two weeks later, we had a hundred thousand dollars, process that collection. Well, that's an exception again, too. But I still, if I had to do it all over again, that's the way I would do it. Boy, I would not put—price tag anything like that. That's just not—that's not right.

DMa:

You came in as director in '77, left in '96.

DMu:

Right, um-hm.

DMa:

What were the staff changes in that time period, if you look at '77 compared to '96?

DMu:

Well, let me see. There was—I'm trying to remember the staff. I guess Tommy Whitely was there, and Mike Hooks was assistant director. And I don't know if Cindy Martin was there by then, or not. We had a full-time secretary. And had a full-time field rep. And as I say—I want to say there weren't more than five or six of us that were full-time. And then I had—you know, Doris Blaisdell was part-time. But most, then—but we had a pretty sizeable, like a fifty thousand dollar student assistant budget, and that was the bulk of our staff. You know, we might have twenty or twenty-five employees, but great majority would be students or graduate students.

DMA:

Ever a large body of volunteers?

DMu:

No. We just weren't ready for volunteers because we didn't have the space for them, and just didn't have the staffing to handle either.

DMA:

Did you ever try that at all? Any like small group of volunteers follow the headaches—potential headaches to come along?

DMu:

Never—never did. Never did.

DMA:

Occasionally, that happens.

DMu:

Yeah, yeah.

DMA:

And it's so often the case that they just don't stay long. Sometimes, they do. Sometimes, they'll stay for years. Sometimes, there's a lot of training involved and then they're gone.

DMu:

Yeah. I don't even know that we ever considered it, primarily due to space constraints and staff constraints.

DMA:

Tell me about friends of the library and that close tie with the Southwest Collection.

DMu:

Okay. I wanted a support group as a move toward trying to develop this building. Cluff—when Cluff came in, he wanted to develop a support group for the library. And so, the friends of the library/Southwest Collection was a compromise between Cluff and I to instead of creating two support groups, we would create one. That was something he and I worked out. He relied heavily on me, and I, basically, recruited the first board. First president was the eye doctor, optometrist. Oh, golly. I can't believe I can't remember these names. Basically, the people that were friends of mine, that were supportive of the Southwest Collection. And we formed that group, and kicked it off, and had—you know, I don't even know if it's even existing anymore or not, but we

worked to develop it. Had an annual meeting. We had a library sale to benefit it and you know, had a few social things. One of my last functions up there was to lead a hardhat tour of the new building, you know, as part of that group in March of '96. And you know, the organization—you know, groups like that, they're [clears throat]—they take a lot of time and it takes years to really see it pay off, but it pays off in ways you just don't know because, you know, you recruit a board, and your board has friends, and they serve as your, kind of, conduit and end roads to the powers that be. And I don't know that that ever particularly paid off. It may well have paid off for Sharleen Formby, if we raise some money there, because that's how she was kind of brought into it, was through the friends group. And so, but that's kind of how it started in its tie with the library and the Southwest Collection.

DMA:

I didn't know it was something that came out of the early seventies? But it more originated toward this new building, then?

DMu:

Yeah. It was. This was—I don't even remember what year Cluff came. Let's see.

DMA:

Eighty-four, or five, maybe?

DMu:

Okay. It evolved after that in the late eighties, then. When Cluff came onboard, that's when we really kind of got started.

DMA:

Were there any major collection development changes between '77 and '96?

DMu:

Well, let me see. We went through two or three collecting phases. Sylvan started collecting sports history about the time that I came, and we did quite a bit of sports history stuff.

DMA:

Mostly Texas Tech, or somewhere—

DMu:

Well, it was pri—it was—it was all. It was Texas athletes, primarily. And it was primarily oral history. We did a bunch of all the old coaches. One of the guys I interviewed was down at—not New Braunfels, but where's Texas State? At—

DMA:

It's at San Marcos.

DMu:

San Marcos. Os—Stranahan—or Strahan¹, who was the old coach there. Sylvan Dunn put me onto him. And then, Sylvan also hired a guy—Perry, I think was his name. Perry McWilliams, who was an ex-UT jock. And he did a lot of those interviews. And Steve Gamble, I hired later to do some of the interviews. So we collected quite a bit of sports history. Then, another thing that had kind of started on Sylvan that I continued big time was the newspaper filming project that we aggressively sought. And then, of course, we had some major acquisitions in there. The Fort Worth and Denver Railroad microfilming project that we did, that was a huge, huge—that was the biggest single project I believe we ever did. I forget how many—you know, that's two or three million leaves that we hauled from Fort Worth, microfilmed it, took it back over a period of years. Let me see. You know, I'm not sure that I have particularly instigated—well, the Texas Pacific Coal Company. Of course, these are just single collections there.

DMA:

Right, um-hm. These are major collections.

DMu:

Yeah. You know, we had—by the time I got there, you know, ranching was our great strength and we continued to collect some ranching, but I really tried to fill in some gaps with some business collections and otherwise from a standpoint of rounding out the place and not just make it ranching.

DMA:

Oil and gas.

DMu:

Oil and gas was one, yes.

DMA:

Richard Mason did a lot—

DMu:

Yes, yeah. That's one that we started while I was there.

DMA:

Water resources?

¹ Oscar W. Strahan coached the Texas State Bobcats from 1919 to 1934.

DMu:

Water. We did quite a bit of work on water. Cattle feedlot industry. We did systematic interviews on cattle feeding. Yeah. I'm glad you thought of those. There's some other things in there that I had forgotten.

DMA:

How would you go about doing a systematic interview series in an area like feedlot—

DMu:

Well, you—of course, kind of, then, you need to identify both of your leaders in the industry, and persons knowledgeable about the industry, and you kind of start with that and find out who the movers and shakers were. Feedlot industry is a good example. I think we went to the—you know, the national cattle feeding people and asked them, Charlie Ball. And then, you know, we knew the names of some people. Of course, one name leads to another and we just—I remember I interviewed three or four of those guys myself on cattle feeding. I guess that's something Sylvan Dunn started. Oh, another one Sylvan started that we carried on was Bob Wills and this whole kind of West Texas music stuff, too. We carried—kind of carried that through a certain extent. But I have to give—Sylvan was really good at identifying these collecting areas and going after them. He was much better than I was, to a certain extent.

DMA:

Now, Ike Connor was there about eight years, I believe.

DMu:

Connor, from '55 to '62, or '-3. Yeah, um-hm.

DMA:

Did he go beyond ranching, agriculture settlement, into any other areas?

DMu:

Well, that's—I'll find that article for citation purposes. I'm sure he did. Although, I'll tell you, nothing particularly comes to mind. I kind of jumped on what was there and ranching was the great strength. You know, they had the matador records. And Ike, if nothing else, he was instrumental in getting the rest of the matador records to Tech. We had—you know, the library had collected matador records as early as the thirties. But Ike really worked with R.H. Fulton to—is that the right name?

DMA:

Sounds right.

DMu:

Yeah. The guy, his son, later, is the Masked—

DMa:

Joe Kirk Fulton.

DMu:

Joe Kirk Fulton, yeah. They bought one of the old matador ranches up on the Canadian River, and he had a pipeline into the old company.

DMa:

We have a very colorful interview with him.

DMu:

Really?

DMa:

You might've conducted it. I can't remember.

DMu:

Yeah, I don't know. But anyway, I got that whole matador collection shipped over here—you couldn't do that again—from Scotland. You couldn't do that now in a million years to get a collection like that out of—out of Great Britain. And you know, that—that—[clears throat]—that's probably overlooked as one of the premiere ranch collections in this country because it's so unique and so complete. And so if Ike didn't do anything else but that, that was enough. That was a real—that was a real coup. And you have to give him credit for it. We did a lot of follow-up to that. We interviewed a lot of matador cowboys. That was one of the first things I did when I came home was go round up and interview those old matador cowboys, I guess. I did that for the first two or three years, I guess, I worked there. Really worked well for me because it gave me a basic understanding of ranching over in that country and so forth.

DMa:

It's really interesting to hear this because so much of what we do today is based upon those early decisions. Our collection development, to such a large extent, goes that same direction. And we'll still go back and pick up on information from ranches, and oil and gas, and then, a lot of sports history, is real big right now. And then, you know, we have things like natural history, but they're so closely tied into ranching and agriculture. You know, they really grow directly out of that. So it's an interesting thing to see the same trends continuing on. I guess we ought to pull this to a close. I just—I know that we're going to have to sit down at least another time or two and get more information, if you're game for that.

DMu:

Oh, I certainly am. There's a lot of things I need to think about that I would like to get as a matter of record. Let me get this—see if I can pull this book right quick.

DMa:

This is still running. Is there anything that you would like to add today before I shut this off?

DMu:

Well, let me talk for a minute so I can go ahead and get this on tape. And that is the start of the National Cowboy Symposium. I just want to get my version of this record. The article that I want to refer to, I keep referring to, that I just referred to—whoever hears this—is in a book, *A Guide to the History of Texas*, edited by Light Cummins and Alvin Bailey. And there is an article on the Southwest Collection that I wrote in here many years ago that—that kind of gives the early history of the Southwest Collection. It's called, "Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University," and it's—it gives that early history under Connor, Holden, and all of that. The National Cowboy Symposium is kind of a Lubbock thing now, but that thing—that was born in the Southwest Collection, to a certain extent. And I don't know—I'm sure if Alvin Davis tells the story, well, he independently started that. But he did not. It really was—it really grew out of a young lady who showed up in Lubbock, who was a writer. She's got one little book and I've been trying to think of her name for two days so I could tell this story and I still haven't come up with the name. But she approached me about doing a cowboy poetry thing. And I sent her over to talk to Alvin. She talked to Alvin. She'd come talk to me. And then, somehow, Kenneth Davis got involved. I was interested—I think I had already thought of—I wanted to do something on the phenomena of cowboy poetry because at that particular time, all these little cowboy poetry things were popping up all over the country and I was just intrigued by why and so forth. And so I wanted to do a one-time shot on the phenomena of cowboy poetry, to do—basically, do a cowboy poetry session and have scholars talk about it. And so, Cindy was this girl's name. Cindy something or other. And so she kind of kept pestering me. So finally, she, and I, and Alvin Davis, and I think, Kenneth, Ken Davis, got together. And we came up with the idea of having—just gathering of—kind of semi-academic type of thing. And I was the one that gave it the name of the symposium, Cowboy Symposium. But our intent was to be a—kind of a one-time affair. Well, Alvin jumped on it, of course, and he ran with it because he had the contacts. And so, we had this committee. And I remember Cindy Martin was on the committee. In fact, several on our staff was on the committee. And we hashed out what became the basis of the National Cowboy Symposium. And it was a pretty good success, considering. But you know, it was our intent was to, as I say, to kind of be a one-time shot. Well, Alvin, oh no. He was ready. You know, he wanted to do it again. And so, I pulled back. Cindy, I think, stayed involved. But Alvin, ultimately, just took the thing over, you know? And he—I don't know what the right term is. Not cheapened it, but he took the academic side out of it. It—

DMA:

Popularized?

DMu:

He popularized it. And while he retained some of the format, it just lacked the—you know, the integrity, I think, of it and became a big trade show, too. And so, you know, and I can't denigrate what's happened because it's a big event, I guess, in Lubbock, and attracts a lot of people and so forth. But I just wanted to kind of tell the story of what really happened and particularly, to give credit to this young lady, who wanted something like that to happen in Lubbock. And I'm sure Alvin has never, ever mentioned her name as a key player in that. And for the life of me, I wish I could tell you her name. I read—I've got her book somewhere here.

DMA:

Next time it pops into your head, jot it down, and we'll add it to the next edition of this.

DMu:

Okay. I'll do that.

DMA:

Speaking of related organizations, what about the West Texas Historical Association? And we were talking about the link between Hardin-Simmons and Texas Tech. Can you give me a brief one on that?

DMu:

I can give you a very brief—you know, Ernest Wallace and myself, and later, Paul Carlson, we were primarily the Texas Tech links to that organization. And you know, as B.W. and Ken Jacobs moved near retirement—well, because of our involvement. You know, I was president one year and was on the board for years and years, we just—Texas Tech brought to that organization so much that they needed and so it was just a natural thing. I think the change, the shift, to moving it to Texas Tech occurred just about the time that I left. But there was a—you know, for all of those years—particularly, Ernest Wallace—just total faithful commitment to the West Texas Historical, and then, coupled with mine, and Paul's, and others who came along. It was just a natural thing that when Hardin-Simmons decided that they really couldn't support it, or didn't want to, whatever, that Tech just reached out and grabbed it. And so, and that's been for the—the organization is so much bigger and better now than it was. So I played some role in that, all right, but it really—I left about the time that the critical things were happening. But the transition was made and has worked out very well.

DMA:

The Southwest Collection is more than willing to just pull a lot of resources to throw in to help

the West Texas Historical, including staff resources. When something needs to happen, there's just a flood of people on hand to make things happen, so it works out well.

DMu:

Yeah. Yeah, there's a close interlock there. But it's—it serves both, you know, very well. Next time, we ought to talk about the Texas Archival Network that I founded and nothing ever came of it, but it became the forerunner of whatever this program is that now catalogs all of the manuscript collections online. You know, we—I was involved in that. I'm sure there's some other topics there I need to identify that we ought to talk about.

DMA:

The _____ [2:10:11] program, I think you're talking about.

DMu:

Yeah. And—oh, there's—I know there's some other things in the Southwest Collection I need to remember and—

DMA:

I've got some more topics in mind for you, too. And maybe I'll shoot you an outline of some more things.

DMu:

Well, that would be helpful if you could, yeah.

DMA:

And I also want to talk more about your publications, your own career.

DMu:

Okay. Yeah, we haven't even touched on that, but that's all pretty much a record—matter of record.

DMA:

Well, we have a lot to talk about. [Laughter]

DMu:

Well, that'll be fine. We can do that on one of my trips up there, or you can come back down here.

DMA:

Sounds good. I'll go ahead and turn this off.

[End of recording]

