

**Oral History Interview of  
Josephine Falcon**

**Interviewed by: Andy Wilkinson  
January 12, 2016  
Fort Stockton, Texas**

**Part of the:  
*Fort Stockton Interviews***

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## Transcript Overview:

This interview features Josephine Falcon. Falcon reflects upon her time growing up in Fort Stockton, including living on ranch as child and becoming a teacher in the Fort Stockton public schools. Falcon also discusses her involvement in local clubs and organizations.

**Length of Interview:** 01:01:10

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## Keywords

Chamber of Commerce, Fort Stockton, Texas, ranching, teaching

**Andy Wilkinson (AW):**

Let me real quickly say before we get started that this is the twelfth of January. We're in Fort Stockton at the library, Andy Wilkinson, Molly Yeager, and Jody Day, getting a chance to visit with Josephine Falcon for our oral history interview project. And I don't know—are you familiar with oral history interviews and the process?

**Josephine Falcon (JF):**

No, I've never done one.

**AW:**

Well, let me—if I could, let me just give you kind of an idea of why we do it and what we'll do with it once we've done it. The idea is to capture what is called in the history business first source information, meaning it comes from the event or from the people directly without intervening analysis or summary or encapsulation or whatever else. So we like to be able to get interviews with people, talking about their life, the place they live, the things they've done, and so forth. And then we archive them at the university, at Texas Tech. And the historical association here is going to archive Jody's recording at the same time we are. And then we make those interviews available to scholars, with scholars being pretty widely defined, people who are interested in the history, for them to listen to and take notes on, and that sort of thing, so that's what we do. Not any real rules about it; I don't come with a list of questions. I just want to hear—I want you to talk a lot more than I do, although it doesn't sound like it now, but that's the general idea. About the only thing that we are pretty stickler about is that we don't edit these. Whatever we record is what we do, so if you come to something you don't want to talk about, just tell me, and I'll pause the recording, and then we'll go back to it after we talk about that. Other than that, that's kind of the nuts and bolts. I do have a form I'll ask you to sign later that allows—you giving us permission to let people listen to the interview, including to the point that if we ever get wealthy enough to put all these online, we'll do that so the people around the world can do their research, which you may be surprised to learn happens pretty often. So in any case, that's it. Have you got a question or two before we get started?

**JF:**

No, I don't think so.

**AW:**

Well, let me go ahead and get started at I like to at the beginning. When and where were you born?

**JF:**

I was born here in Fort Stockton.

AW:

Okay. What's your birthday?

JF:

February 19, 1933.

AW:

So you're getting ready to have a birthday?

JF:

Oh yes. Another one. (laughter)

AW:

Well, as we like to say, the alternative is not particularly good. What's your maiden name?

JF:

Scott.

AW:

S-c-o-t-t? And what did your folks do?

JF:

Well, my dad was a ranch hand, and he worked at a ranch here, close to Fort Stockton, about maybe twenty miles from Fort Stockton.

AW:

What direction from—?

JF:

East. And we lived there for about nineteen years. We were young when we went there; I think I must've been about maybe five. And my sister was four, something like that.

AW:

So you lived into your early adulthood there?

JF:

Yes, because I—well we didn't live there all the time, because when we were going to school, we lived with our grandparents, my aunt and I.

AW:

Oh, here in town?

JF:

Here in town, and on Fridays we would—they would bring us on Sundays, and then we would stay all week long, and then on Friday Mrs. Cunningham would pick us up and take us to the ranch. And that's where we lived for those nineteen years.

AW:

What was the name of the ranch?

JF:

Well, it's a property of the University of Texas.

AW:

Oh, the university lands?

JF:

But the Cunninghams were, at the time, the ones that were living there, J. C. Cunningham.

Molly Yeager (MY):

Were they any relation to Cunningham's Furniture, when that came in?

JF:

No, I don't think so.

MY:

I just remember that furniture store.

JF:

They had one son and one daughter.

MY:

Okay.

JF:

—the Cunninghams that my parents worked with.

MY:

Did you love living out in the country?



JF:

Yes, I enjoyed it. You know we would, whenever it rained, we would—well we didn't have too many choices at the time, there's no money at that time. And so we would get around where there were little puddles and make like, we called them little ranches or little farms, where we could play and things like that.

AW:

So was it just the two of you siblings and your parents?

JF:

Mhmm.

AW:

So you graduated from high school here?

JF:

Yes. Gosh I don't even remember the date.

AW:

Well we could probably add it up and figure that out. So when you moved from the ranch, did the whole family move, or did you just move?

JF:

Well, we moved because then they retired, and they moved to San Angelo—the Cunninghams moved to San Angelo—and so my parents came over here. At that time I was already married. I married in '56. And I graduated from high school in '52. But I married in '56, and then they came—they had a house here next to our house at the present time, and so they later on, since my dad always worked at ranches, he went to work for the Pollards. Is it C. C. Pollards, I think? I don't remember the correct—

MY:

I know the name Pollards.

JF:

You don't remember?

MY:

I do remember the name, but I don't know the first name.



JF:

But they were the Pollards, and then my parents moved over there; it's a ranch between Alpine and Fort Davis, a beautiful place.

AW:

Oh, that's great country.

JF:

And we would go to visit them like every other weekend. At that time, my daughter was already born. She was a small, maybe about a year, year-and-a-half at the time. And I think that they worked there for about fifteen years. And my mother passed away in 1972, no '74, I'm sorry, '74. And then after a while, my dad still continued to work for the Pollards, but after a while he moved to Fort Stockton. And then he remarried four years later after my mother passed away.

AW:

What was your father's name?

JF:

Tom.

AW:

Tom Scott. And your mother's name and her maiden name?

JF:

Her name was Margarita Nieto.

AW:

N-i-e-t-o?

JF:

Mhmm.

AW:

And where were each of them from?

JF:

Well, my dad was born here, but my mother was born in Mexico, but I can't recall exactly where in Mexico. But they came from Mexico when she was about, maybe twelve years old.

AW:

Did she have a lot of kin still in Mexico, or did everybody come at—?

JF:

No, they had kins that didn't move at the same time they did.

AW:

So did you ever get to go back down and visit?

JF:

No, we didn't.

AW:

Molly mentioned that the two of you were teachers. How did you get into teaching?

JF:

Well, I had always said that I wanted to be a teacher, and one time I was talking to Mr. Cunningham, and I said, "You know what, Mr. Cunningham, I want to work at the bank," and he said, "Oh no, no, bankers don't make any money." That's what he told me, now I don't know if they do or not, but that's what he told me. (laughter) But then also, at that time, I decided—I was seven when I told him that—I clearly remember, and I said, "I want to be a teacher." And that's how come I became a teacher. And I enjoyed my profession. I worked for thirty-seven years.

AW:

Where did you get your education to—?

JF:

At Sul Ross. And then I attended one class at UTPB. And I got my master's at Sul Ross also.

AW:

And what teaching level did you do for your career? Several, or did you—?

JF:

No, just one level. I always worked for first graders. Well, I take that back, one time I taught one year in the old, old school building—the first school building there that's in front of the, what is it the name of that, the newest building there that's—?

MY:

The Butz? Not the Butz?

JF:

No.

MY:

Alamo?

JF:

No, I'm not talking about the school building. I'm talking about the—where they have the—is it the district—?

MY:

Oh, the courthouse at—

JF:

Well, it was at the—that was the I think Gonzales Building I think it is. I taught at the building in front—in front of that old school building. I think right now it's a place for little children, you know they take care of children.

MY (Molly Yeager):

That Manias Finos [?] helped with?

JD:

New Horizons. It's that one that says, "The First School Building."

JF:

I think that's the name of it, yes.

MY:

I forgot about that school.

JF:

Yes, and I taught there one year, and the reason that I taught there one year is because when I got pregnant, Mr. Huckaby said that teachers were not allowed to teach when they were pregnant, so I was out for one year, and that's where Mr. Bagas put me there.

MY:

I had to do the same thing.

JF:

Oh, you did?

MY:

Yeah, we were—I got pregnant—I was living in Pecos with number two child, and they wouldn't let me teach, so Paul had gotten back from the service, and so we moved to Balmorhea, and I could substitute, but I couldn't teach. Isn't that crazy? (laughter)

AW:

Like kids—if you didn't teach, they might not ever see a pregnant woman.

MY:

Yeah, right. (laughter)

AW:

Josephine, why did you pick the first grade? It strikes me—I'm a musician also besides this, and one time I was doing nothing but music, I was so broke that I agreed to be a substitute teacher, and I found out it was—I thought they were—it terrified me to go into a class of first graders.

JF:

I think that every year that I started I was afraid what kind of students am I going to have and am I going to be able to teach them something? But that's where I was placed, and I was never moved to another grade, except that in kindergarten that one year.

AW:

So whether you liked it or not that's what you did?

JF:

But I really enjoyed it. I loved to teach my children how to read—that was my main thing. And I taught my grandson how to read before he started school. I don't think teachers like that, though.

AW:

I know my son learned to read on his own before he started school, and it didn't make him very popular.

JF:

Yeah, because they're always popping up saying, "I know that," or "I know this." It doesn't go well with some of the teachers.

MY:

Those are fun, challenging kids.

AW:

Yeah, they are real fun. That describes my son pretty well. I think before we turned on the recorder, I heard you mention that you had been retired now for twenty-three years.

JF:

Well, I retired in '52. Is that correct? Yeah, that's correct, twenty-three years.

AW:

In '92?

JF:

In '92. This coming May will be twenty-three years.

AW:

Yeah. So what kind of changes did you see in teaching over your time period, your thirty-seven years teaching?

JF:

Well, you know, when we started I thought that—actually I didn't like the books that we had to teach the children; I thought that they were extra simple, really they didn't challenge them. And I remember we had a person that came into sell books one time, and we were about six first grade teachers at the time, so we all got together and decided that we didn't want the Dick and Jane book. And so, we voted for—gosh, I don't remember the name of the book—but anyway, it was more challenging a program for the children to learn to read, and she was so upset with us—I think we almost got fired because of the fact that we didn't want to have the Dick and Jane. You know Dick and Jane was “Dick and Jane went to School,” “Dick and Jane did this,” “Dick and Jane,” it's very monotonous too.

AW:

Yeah, I remember as a little kid reading Dick and Jane books, and we thought they were the absolute dumbest things we'd ever seen. We were just little bitty kids, but they were just—yeah. Well you were on the right track. What did you find to replace it? Did you—?

JF:

Well I can't remember the name of the company, but gosh I wish I had thought about that.

MY:

Probably like a Houghton Mifflin, or Macmillan?

JF:

I think, yes, Houghton Mifflin. I think that's the one that it was, and that really improved in our reading.

AW:

You know there was a good side to it, as I recall, the Dick and Jane books, it drove us away from textbooks and into the library. As soon as we could we would check out books because—to have something that was worth reading. What about—now you retired before all this emphasis on testing really developed.

JF:

We had to—it just started I think because we did do some testing, but not the way it is now. It seems to me that they spend too much time teaching to the test, and that's what I hear. I mean, I'm not criticizing the teachers now, but that's what I hear that they have to do.

AW:

Well I teach at the university. I teach a class in songwriting, but I've, over the years, the more testing that being done in this program, the worse my students are at writing. It's obvious—

MY:

Kills the creativity?

AW:

Well they just don't spend any time writing; they spend time learning about tests. They're just as smart as any of the other kids, but they don't come equipped. Well, so when you married in '56, whom did you marry?

JF:

Ray Falcon from Sanderson.

AW:

From Sanderson? And what was his family background because I know that's a railroad town as well as ranching.

JF:

Yes, and I don't think that his—I think his dad worked at ranches too, and or at a farm, because I remember that he told me they would sell milk, actually delivered, they didn't have the cattle to process all the milk and that, but that's what they did. And when they came to—and they would go even to California to pick whatever was in season at sometimes.

AW:

Oh so they would go—

JF:

He lived in California for a while, and he came to Fort Stockton in 1948.

AW:

How did you meet him?

JF:

We met at the drugstore. (laughter)

AW:

Sounds like Lana Turner. Did you have children?

JF:

I have one daughter.

AW:

Is she a teacher, too?

JF:

Oh no, she would never make a good teacher.

MY:

She's a hardworking busy girl.

JF:

Oh she is, but not as a teacher.

AW:

So what was Fort Stockton like when you were growing up here going to school? Describe it for me.

JF:

Well, like—in as far as school was concerned, we used to have what we called play night, or something like that, and they would have dances; they had a record player, and we would have dances and little things like that. That was one of the activities that we had to mix with the other students, and we would have that once a week. And we lived over here in the same place—I live very close from here, and we would walk to school, and we would come back at noon and have



lunch at school—I mean at the house. But then, when we went onto high school, then we would eat sometimes at the cafeteria, and sometimes we would come home because my grandmother was a very good cook, and she would have delicious meals for us.

AW:

Better than the cafeteria? (laughter)

JF:

Yes, most of the time we would come home and eat and then go right back, and that would be about maybe about fifteen blocks from the house.

MY:

To Butz? At Butz?

JF:

Well, we went to school at Butz, but when we were already going to high school.

MY:

Oh yeah, oh yeah.

JF:

That would be—maybe

MY:

It's on the north side of town.

JF:

Mhmm.

AW:

Yeah that's a good hike from here. Is that high school in the same spot that it is now?

JF:

Well see we have a newer high school, but that was the first one where— isn't that intermediate?

MY:

Oh okay. It was—there were three buildings there, intermediate. There was the old, old high school, and then the other three-story building was a high school later, and one faced east—that first one faced to the east, and the second one faced to the south, and then the other part of the

school—the one long building—was built later. So you went to high school at one of the three-story buildings.

JF:

Yes at the old, old—the one that I guess it's intermediate now. They remodeled that.

MY:

Yes, yes. It is. It is intermediate.

JF:

I think it's intermediate now.

MY:

Yeah, I taught in that first—the old, old building that they finally took down. It took them a long time to take that building down, and I was so glad because it was a neat place to teach. And then I was in the next three-story building. That was when it was intermediate, fourth and fifth grade.

AW:

So, was this a—you walked back and forth to school. I guess Fort Stockton was a safe place to walk.

JF:

Yes, at that time, and even at night, because we would go—we had a cousin that lived with my grandmother also, and he would take care of us. He would see that the boys wouldn't bother us, and sometimes if we wanted to walk home with a boy, he wouldn't let us.

AW:

So you couldn't be bothered even if you wanted to be bothered.

JF:

Right. But we three—we were three living with my grandparents at that time, and we enjoyed it. And two of my older aunts were also living at that house. At that time, we the Hispanic people, we always congregated, a lot of them really lived together. But they were not married at the time, and then one of them decided that—well her boyfriend was in the service, and he was going to come home, so he had asked her to marry, and so when we found out, my sister Olivia—that was her name—she would say, “You know what, let's pray that Aunt Mary doesn't get married. Let's pray that Cora gets married,” because Cora was a very strict—did you know Cora?

MY:

I did not know Cora. I don't think.

JF:

No?—was very strict. You know if anything was served at meals, we had to eat everything, so we made sure we didn't serve too much because we had to eat it if we didn't like it.

AW:

So if you had to have one marry and move out, you wanted it to be Cora?

JF:

Yes.

AW:

Well now, you say Hispanic people—your father's name was Scott, right? Now he was not Hispanic, right?

JF:

No, he was not Hispanic.

AW:

No was that fairly unusual in the time?

JF:

Uh-huh.

AW:

What was that like? Nobody would think anything about it today.

JF:

No, not really. But at that time, I felt—I don't know if I should even say this but—but I felt like when we started school, my sister and I, we started at Butz School, that was what they called the Mexican school at the time. And so I thought that because of our last name, we were treated a little bit different, even though we didn't know too much English at the time because my father spoke English, but my mother didn't. My mother actually taught herself how to read the newspaper because when she came from Mexico, she couldn't read. But she taught herself.

AW:

Did your father speak Spanish?

JF:

Yes, he spoke Spanish, too. Yes, he would deal a lot at the ranch with wetbacks.

AW:

So he had to, and plus he's married to your mother so he had to. When you say you were treated differently, do you mean that they expected you to understand English? Because your last name was Scott.

JF:

Yes, they did, they did. And so, we didn't, we didn't. At times we were embarrassed because we didn't know how to respond, because we hadn't had any. And the Cunninghams would speak in English to us because they didn't speak Spanish, but at the same time, they were not around, and we were not around them that much, so that we could learn the English right away.

AW:

So did you experience—other than being expected to be able to speak English because your name was Scott—were you treated differently by the Anglo community or the Hispanic community because you had one parent one and the other parent the other? Was that an issue growing up?

JF:

No, not really. I didn't find that to be an issue, and then maybe it was because my parents were not around too much in Fort Stockton since they were mostly at the ranch all the time.

AW:

So you were at Butz for a couple years, and how come you moved away from that school?

JF:

Well let's see, I went to school up to the eighth grade at Butz, and then when I graduated from the eighth grade, then we went on to high school, and then when I got my degree, I applied here in Fort Stockton, and so I got the job at Butz, and I taught there fifteen years. And when they opened the new school, which at the time was Apache Elementary, then in Mr. Bagas told me—well he asked me if I would like to go to the new school, and I said, "Well, yes, a new school." So that's where I taught about twenty-seven years. I told him—anyway it has to be a total of thirty-seven, but I think it was twenty-seven or twenty-eight years at Apache.

AW:

Yeah. You were talking about enjoying teaching your students to read. Did you get to teach them to read both Spanish and English?

JF:

No.

AW:

Just English?

JF:

Just English.

AW:

That's too bad. How did you get involved in the Chamber?

JF:

Well, see I belonged to the Delta Kappa Gamma Society, and then one year Mrs. Alexander was the president, and she decided that we should have other areas of—I guess bring something to the group, and so she said that she was going to appoint me to go to the Chamber's meetings and get their information and then bring it back to the club. And that's how I got started there; it wasn't because I joined. Well, later I did of course, but that's how come that I was there.

AW:

What sort of things did that Chamber do? I know you typically think of the Chamber of Commerce as a booster outfit for business—you know how do we make business better?

JF:

Well, see this was like the women's division only, and we would have speakers, all kinds of speakers, like speakers from the city or the county, all kind of speakers or types of speakers. And they would give us information of what was going on at that time in the city, or just anywhere, wherever they were going to speak to us about.

AW:

That's really interesting. So you didn't have like a certain goal, other than to provide these speakers. Well I think Molly mentioned that you were involved in the water carnivals, is that right?

JF:

Well the reason that that was through the Chamber also—the women's division—they appointed us to—when they had the ones that select the queens and all that, what are they called?

AW:

Like a jury or a—

JF:

Well anyway, the ones that pick the ones that have won for Miss Fort Stockton or Junior Miss Fort Stockton. And we—the only thing we did with them and through the chamber was we took them to eat, you know to have a meal before they were going to go judge, and that's about all that we did there. And we, the women's division, provided the meals for them; we took them to some restaurant. But that's about all that we did there. We weren't like involved in getting ready like props or anything like that.

AW:

Sounds like you had a more fun job to get to. So you've been involved with Fort Stockton both teaching and living here and then also working with the different people in business and the Chamber for a long time. How has Fort Stockton changed? Or has it changed over that period of time?

JF:

Well I think that it has changed in some ways. For example, like when the—what is that—you know where they had the tires and all that. What was the name of that?

AW:

Firestone?

JF:

When Firestone was here in Fort Stockton, they had a lot of people working, but mostly Anglos. Well, then the American GI Forum, which is a veterans family organization, they took it upon themselves to start talking to the ones that worked there and the ones that operated the business, and they finally got like Hispanic men to join and start working over there, and that really helped the city in the sense that we had people making a little bit more money for themselves and their families. So that was one good thing that came to Fort Stockton, and they worked—I think some of them worked up to maybe twenty-five years because I think it was a long time, wasn't it? I can't remember, I'm not very good at remembering dates, but I know it lasted for a long time. And I know my husband was involved in that organization.

AW:

In the veterans organization? What service did your husband provide in the military?

JF:

He was in the army.

AW:

Was he in the Korean War?



JF:

In the Korean War.

AW:

And he didn't stay in the army after that, but—

JF:

No, he didn't.

AW:

—but was active as a veteran. What did he do?

JF:

He was a barber.

AW:

A barber.

JF:

But when we got started, he was one of those that delivered milk like I was telling you that his parents did. He delivered milk, and he worked at the Chevrolet place, and then he—he already had his barber's license, but there was no place to get a job in Fort Stockton, so then he decided to get his own place, and his first barber shop was over there next to Edward Jones. And then we bought this little place where he was last there, when the man—I think he was a man that repaired boots, that was kind of a boot shop, the place that we got—

AW:

Oh, I think I have a—a young man?

JF:

At the time, yes.

AW:

Yeah.

JF:

I can't remember his name.

AW:

How long ago was that?



JF:

Oh, maybe fifty years.

AW:

Oh, fifty years, okay. That's not the same fellow that built my boots that was here in Fort Stockton.

MY:

Well, let's see, Ray cut my kids' hair, and he cut Paul's hair, and—

JF:

He almost worked sixty years as a barber.

AW:

Gosh, that's a lot of standing up.

JF:

It is. Well, we were married for fifty-nine years. Well, almost fifty-nine because actually he passed away November 18—

AW:

Of this last year?

JF:

Uh-huh. And then in December 22, that would have been our fifty-ninth year anniversary.

AW:

Wow, that's quite an achievement. What about relationships between Anglos and Hispanics in Fort Stockton? You're in a unique position to look at that. How would you describe that over the period of time from when you were young to right today? Has it changed?

JF:

Well, yeah, I think it has changed because I think that there was some discrimination like when we started high school.

AW:

Well, the Butz School for one thing.

JF:

Yes, uh-huh, yeah for sure.

AW:

And I remember people telling me that in those years that if you went to the movie you had to sit in the balcony, and you couldn't—

JF:

Yes, that's true, too. But you know what? After we were allowed to sit on the bottom place, we didn't like it because you could see better if you sit in the balcony. (laughter)

AW:

So you'd had the good seats.

JF:

You know people couldn't understand that, but that was true. But you know those were some of the things that—but I felt like not really directly I was discriminated, no, because I had some—well not close friends with Mr. Huckaby, but he and I used to talk about things in school. Mr. Huckaby used to say, "You know what? You Hispanics are always sitting by yourselves, you need to get around everybody else." But you know, I myself, I'm not that kind of person; I don't make friends easily.

AW:

That doesn't have anything to do with you being Hispanic or not, does it?

JF:

No, it doesn't because I'm just that kind of person. Now Ray, he would make friends with anybody. It doesn't matter where we were. Sometimes I would tell him—like you know he was a barber for such a long time that we would meet some of his customers when we went out to eat or at different places, and they would come and say hello and this and that, talk to him for a while, and I would say, "Who was that?" "I don't know." "How do you mean you don't know?" "Well, he's my customer, but I don't know his name."

AW:

Right. It would be hard to be an introvert barber, wouldn't it?

MY:

And well, I don't know if he did this with everyone, but every time he'd see me, I always got a big hug.

JF:

Yes, that's true. He really—I think that if I would've been a jealous woman that I—

MY:

It might have been bad. He liked to hug.

JF:

He was always hugging women.

JF:

He was always hugging women, and they are always hugging him. I had one—I know one here in Fort Stockton that I thought, Well—for a while—why is she getting so close to my husband?

AW:

Well, maybe he was good at haircutting. What does your daughter do?

JF:

She works at the hospital in the finance department; she used to work for—well she used to work with Ori White and also for Laurie English. Laurie English is the—she's was the—she's the one that's the—

MY:

The DA? District attorney?

JF:

Yes. And she worked—

MY:

Out of Ozona.

JF:

Yes. She worked I guess maybe about four years or maybe more, I don't know, I don't remember, but she used to have to drive out of town to different places. And she—when Ori won his county attorney, then he offered her a job, so she went to work with Ori White, and then, that made Laurie very mad because she really missed Rebecca she said, and she wanted Rebecca to continue working with her, but Ori was over there smiling because he know that Rebecca was a good worker, not because she's my daughter, but I've heard a lot of people that—she is a hard worker, maybe not perfect, but she is a hard worker. And then this lady that was working at the hospital retired, so she found out that there was a job opening there, and so she applied and got the job. And then Ori was sorry because, and Laurie was laughing because she said, "Well you did that to me, now she did that to you."

AW:

What kind of future has Fort Stockton got?

JF:

Well I think it has a good future, and I think that—I know that the—oh I can't think of the word that I want to use—the people that make a little bit more money around here, I think that that has been good to them because you know, when we were young, everybody was poor. I mean I'm not saying that I'm rich, but I mean at least now I can say that I have what I need. And at that time, sometimes we didn't. So, in that sense, I think that that has improved. There've been more jobs, especially when the oil business was here. I think that's kind of slowed down a little, but then you keep hearing that it's coming back.

AW:

We're all still driving cars.

JF:

Yes.

AW:

It'll be back.

JF:

So I really think that. And I think our schools are good schools.

AW:

Still. Even though you retired. (laughter)

JF:

Mhmm.

AW:

They don't have you anymore.

MY:

Well, not as good as when we were there, right?

JF:

Well, but there have been a lot of improvements, right? We have more teachers than when I was there. And now they have to deal with all that testing. Now that I don't think that I would have liked to have done at the time.

AW:

What should I have asked you that I haven't?

JF:

Well, I don't know, I can say that I have one grandson.

AW:

And how old is your grandson?

JF:

He's twenty-four. He graduated from Texas Tech, year before last.

AW:

Oh good. What did he study?

JF:

He studied—you shouldn't have asked me that because now I can't remember—but anyway, he's a district—oh what do they call that? His dad does that.

AW:

Are they in agriculture?

JF:

No, he worked with the people, unreliable I guess you would say because they were always getting into trouble.

AW:

Oh like probation or parole?

JF:

Yes, probation.

AW:

What's your grandson's name?

JF:

Andrew.

AW:

Andrew. What's his last name?

JF:

Odeta.

AW:

Well, good.

JF:

He's works at Monahans. He's working for Monahans, but from there, he has to go to work sometimes in Andrews.

AW:

Yeah, so at least he's close to you.

JF:

Yes.

JD:

How many years did you head up the arts and crafts show in the fall? How long has that been going on?

JF:

I think that this past year would've been my eighth year.

AW:

Oh the arts and crafts show.

MY:

It's really nice.

AW:

Where do you have that?

JF:

At the exhibit building. Civic Center.

MY:

Civic Center.

JF:

We have that once a year, and that's our only moneymaking. And I really enjoy working with that. You meet so many people, and friendly people, I've never had anybody that had disagreed with me or I had to disagree with them, so far.

MY:

Everybody has a good time, too. They just really enjoy being there, and selling their wares. But the people that go, it's like a—well it's just at the right time, too. And everybody gets out there and gathers in, just it's really nice.

JF:

Yes. And we use that money that we make to give scholarships. We give two scholarships every year to high school students.

AW:

Going to college?

JF:

Mhmm. But it's funny, like last year, two students were picked, a girl and a boy, and these were excellent students, so I guess they got other scholarships—and I understand, I didn't know this before—that when you get a big scholarship I guess I should say, that if you get others, they'll deduct from that amount. See I didn't know that, so they didn't apply for our scholarships, that they had already received from us.

AW:

Because they didn't want to lower the other one?

JF:

Uh-huh.

AW:

Well that means you've got to give more money to other people, right?

MY:

The next year? Do you hold it to the next year? We kind of do that with Literary Club.

JF:

No, you mean—



MY:

The scholarship money, if the student doesn't take it, do you roll it over to the next year?

JF:

Yes, and give it to somebody else.

MY:

Yeah, that's what we do.

AW:

You mentioned really quickly in passing that you're still living—you live still in the house that your grandmother lived in?

JF:

No, but that's the house next to our house. We built our own house in— let's see it took us four years to build it, in 1960. We started raising our—holding onto some money instead of spending it, so that we could have some. And the reason it took us four years is because we would have so much money, and we did the concrete floors. And then so much money, and then we did something else. And that's how we got our home done.

AW:

So when you moved into it, you didn't owe a big pile of money.

JF:

Not very much.

AW:

That's great. That's very good. I wish I was that smart. Molly, what else should we ask Josephine?

MY:

Do you have any special stories? You know Joanna's told me stories about going and visiting at the ranch.

JF:

Well, you know it was funny because we were the only ones at that time, and we had a lot of cousins, and they always liked to come to the ranch, and my sister for some reason she didn't want them to go, she would say, "No, no, you can't go today." And my mother would be listening, and she would get after her. She says, "Why are you doing that? Let them come if they want to." But she was funny like that. So one thing, ranchers always had guns, so we had a rifle

that my dad used to kill snakes with, so one time, we had invited a group of friends to come to the house, and I was holding the rifle, you know down like that, and I accidentally popped the trigger, and so it barely missed my foot for about maybe an inch or an inch and a half. You know something else that we used to do at the ranch; they had a tank, a dirt tank, where the horses would bathe, and so when we invited our friends to go over there, they wanted to go swimming. So my dad would say, "Well, if you want to. Take care of yourselves. You can do it." So we would let them go in there or push them in there, and sometimes it was muddy or you know that green mold that—then they would sometimes have it on their heads, say, "Why didn't you tell me?" But we enjoyed that so much because we had lots of school friends that they always wanted to go.

AW:

Yeah, get out of town and come to the ranch.

JF:

One time I invited a teacher that was from Weatherford, Texas. She was—I was in high school, and she was the economics teacher, and she came to the ranch, and we had made a cake, and so the daughter of Mr. Cunningham's son—Mr. Cunningham's son had a daughter—and she came in, and my sister says, "Hide the cake. Hide the cake because Jane is coming over here, and she'll want to cut the cake." And we have to wait until the teacher comes in. You know just little things like that. So we wouldn't cut it.

MY:

Oh that's good.

AW:

Is your sister still alive?

MY:

No, she passed away about six years ago.

AW:

She sounds like a corker.

JF:

You know that—there was a tune, "The Golden Slippers"?

MY:

"Golden Slippers"?

JF:

I think it was “The Golden Slippers.” She had this pair of shoes that she would wear every once in a while, and she would be like tapping and singing that song all the time. And you know what she would do because sometimes she didn’t want to go to school, so one day she put this rouge on her face and a little lipstick on her lips, and then my Aunt Cora, who was the strict aunt, she saw, she says, “What’s the matter with you? You can’t go to school like that, you’re sick, you have fever.” No, she didn’t have fever, but she had done that, so that she would get to go to school.

MY:

Oh my goodness. So she was more of the rebel, and you were the one that would try to do what was right?

JF:

You know, sometimes she would do things that I didn’t want her to do. And I would get mad at her, and she would start crying. She was a crybaby; she would always cry. And she would tell my grandmother. My grandmother would say to me, “Why did you do that? You shouldn’t be telling her things like that.” And then she would stop crying, but she was always crying because I would tell her that God was going to punish her.

MY:

I wanted to ask you both—the Literary Club, the Garden Club, the Study Club I guess is the same thing. Do you see that type of thing continuing in the future in Fort Stockton?

JF:

I have a friend that belongs to the Garden Club, and she seems to enjoy it. I don’t know how many members; I don’t know if it’s a big organization or not.

MY:

They have quite a few.

JF:

I know she says that sometimes they go out of town to different places to visit I guess gardens. I know there’s a garden in—what is this little town over here going over there?

MY:

Not Marathon?

JF:

Marathon. Yes, in Marathon. Have you ever been to that park?

AW:

Mhmm. I have, just south of town?

JF:

Yes.

AW:

Oh, it's beautiful. And birds, so many.

JF:

It is, isn't it?

MY:

Oh yeah, it's gorgeous.

JF:

We saw that about three years ago. Every time we had people, especially Ray's family, they mostly live in San Antonio, and so they would come, and they wanted to go to Fort Davis and Alpine and Marfa and all that, so we would take them to those places. And one time we took them there, and they just loved it.

AW:

I think it's one of the prettiest places out here.

JF:

Yes, it is.

AW:

It's just so pleasant. And they have those CCC works, that little dam and—

MY:

It's called the Post.

AW:

Yeah, and that building that you can I guess rent out to have events in, people have weddings and family reunions, but if you like to watch birds, I don't guess there's a time of year when there's not some bird coming through because where else are they going to find water out here? Except that place.

MY:

We're in that flyover zone because we get them too at the ranch, and you'll go look out and see birds from Mexico.

AW:

That's a beautiful park

JF:

Very.

MY:

But I think as long as there's interest, any club or group is going to continue, and there is certainly, from whenever the first ranchers came out, women wanted something, you know, a flower, so that continues. I think that continues even more in the dry desert areas because you work so hard to have gardens, and you want to show off, and you want to learn more about "how did you do this?" and "how did you—?" You know, the different flowers. So I really see, especially, the Garden Club moving on. As far as the Literary Club, it once was called a Study Club because they followed all the procedures, but everybody got tired of the procedures, and so it became the Literary Club. And there's a strong interest in reading and learning, just like book clubs. And I think that will continue as well. We've got more younger people interested, and just kind of spurs them into those understandings. And if you don't finish the whole book, or if you don't want to read it this time, like in the book clubs, well our Literary Club's the same way, if you don't want to do a program, that's just fine. Molly will do it, or somebody. So they have the options too. They don't have to give programs. But it's—I think it's a big calling, and it's a great way, all of these clubs, are ways for people to get together and share. And just like the Cooking Club—there's men in our Cooking Club, too—so.

JF:

That has been very successful, hasn't it?

MY:

I think it has. I'm not a part of it, but man, that thing has really grown.

JF:

I have a friend that she says she wasn't going to belong to it anymore, but anyway, she did for a while and she enjoyed it.

JD:

Randy and I started going. We enjoyed that, but technology just seems to make us so isolated, and I hope that things like that continue, people actually see each other face to face and share.

MY:

There's a book I read many years ago called *Megatrends*, and then there's a sequel *Megatrends 2000*. There's a chapter in *Megatrends* that says—that the basis of it is—as technology continues to take away, people will start grasping for more one-on-one, and it was like a prediction of internet doctors and so on, we want to hear it, but we really want hands-on. You know, you can go to the Internet and learn a lot, but it's the hands-on thing that these people are wanting, and so that's what that chapter's about, technology on the rise. And that's how I see this, that's why these clubs are building up again; people want to be with people.

AW:

That's why people still go to the theatre and why they still go to the symphony and still come out and hear live music. It's a big difference. And why teachers are never going to be replaced by a computer screen, I don't think. You can't talk back to the screen and get an answer. Well, thank you so very much. I would like—I'll give you this just here in a second, but I would like for you to sign this release, so we can let other people listen to this wonderful interview with you.

JF:

Well, I hope I was able to answer your questions.

AW:

Oh, you did great.

JF:

But, I'm not that type of person, as I keep saying to myself, because sometimes I know that Ray would have been great at telling you things because—his mind also, he kept it in his mind. I know that the last year we went to the Fourth of July thing that they had over here, and it was hot on that day, so I said, "You know what, Ray, I want to stay in the shade. I don't want to go walking all around the park." And he said, "Just a minute. See that guy over there?" And he says, "I'm going to stop"—and he was using one of those little carts that they use for the—

MY:

Golf carts?

JF:

Golf carts. And I don't even remember the guy's name. And you know, that guy and Ray talked for about an hour and a half. And the guy kept saying, "I didn't know that. I didn't know that." It was amazing to me, you know, that he could remember so many things. But Ray was very active in the community, too.



AW:

I understand that. But it takes a special person to be able to stand up in front of six year olds and talk too.

MY:

Or sit on the floor with them.

AW:

I think you need to give yourself some credit for that.

JF:

Well I can say that I honestly enjoyed my career all the time. I only had one little boy, his name was Carl, and he lived only with his dad, and I always felt sorry for him because of the way he came to school; he came to school not very clean, you know? And he told me one time that they were living in the car, and I don't know if that was true or not. But anyway, he would come in and say, "Mrs. Falcon, today I am going to be good." I can just hear the way he said it, and he would be very good. He would do everything, do all his work because he was smart, but *if* he wanted to do it. And so, the following day, maybe he wasn't in such a good mood, so he would say, "Mrs. Falcon, you know what? Today I'm going to be mean." And then he would. And one day I stepped outside of the classroom, and when I came back, the children told me what he had done. He had done his little arm like this, and everything that was on the desk, he threw it on the floor. And then, you know that same little boy, I got so mad at one of my substitute teachers. I never did tell her because I didn't see her again, but this lady was hired in my place, I had a doctor's appointment, and he misbehaved, and so the principal had to tell the parent that he had spanked him first—the principal spanked him. And when he came after school the following day, he had all these stripes on his back. Oh, I just felt so sorry. I think, Golly, why would you do something like that? You know they're children, and you just have to talk to them and make them understand, and I know it's hard with some of them, but oh, I felt so sorry for the little—and sometimes I wonder what kind of a big man he's been now because he must be—let's see that was over twenty-three years, because he was six when he was in my classroom. But then I would have a big boy, too that would come every day, and he would hug me, and you know you can't even let the children hug you nowadays; I don't like that because the little children—

AW:

They want to hug you.

JF:

They want to hug you all the time. And he would come, sometimes I felt like I wanted to hold myself to the floor because maybe he had caught me in the middle of the room, and there was



nothing to hold onto. I thought he was going to through me, but he also turned out to be pretty good. He lives in Fort Stockton, but I can't remember his name. The names, I don't know. If I see them often, then I remember their names, but if I don't—

AW:

That's a hard job, names.

JF:

You know the other day when Ray passed away, I got this call early one morning, and this was this student that I had had in Butz School, imagine, so that's over fifty years ago. And he—his last name was Carillo. He was a little redheaded guy and tiny, tiny little boy, and he said that he had heard about Ray, and he wanted to offer his condolences. And that made me so happy because for somebody to remember you that long, and from there. Well, when his dad died here in Fort Stockton, he came with his family, and he was so proud I guess of me because he was showing and telling everybody, "Oh this is my first grade teacher. This is my first grade teacher." And that really makes you feel good that people can remember you.

AW:

Well I think first grade teachers have a special place because I think most everyone remembers their first grade teacher. You know it's your first real experience with something outside your home and someone in authority, and they're teaching you such interesting things like reading.

MY:

And it's where it makes the difference on whether they like school for the rest of their lives, or not. First grade makes that difference. I applaud you for all those years. Wow.

AW:

Thank you very much.

JF:

Well, you're welcome.

MY:

You did great, Josephine.

JF:

I hope so.

MY:

Oh, it's wonderful.

AW:

But I'll tell you, this is the kind of test you can't fail at.

MY:

Well, that's good.

AW:

Not to diminish your performance, but all you have to do is tell you story, and that's what we want to hear, so thank you again.

*End of interview*



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