

# **Oral History Interview of Mabel Loving Brown**

**Interviewed by: David Marshall  
June 30, 1999  
Crane, Texas**

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### Recording Notes:

*Original Format:* originally recorded on audio cassette and mini-disc

*Digitization Details:* mini-disc digitized in 2009

*Audio Metadata:* 44.1kHz/ 16bit WAV file

*Further Access Restrictions:* N/A

*Related Interviews:*

### Transcription Notes:

*Interviewer:* David Marshall

*Audio Editor:* N/A

*Transcription:* Elissa Stroman

*Editor(s):* Kayci Rush

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## Transcript Overview:

This interview features Mabel Loving Brown. Mabel describes her background and family history, being raised on a ranch, and interacting with the cowboys that worked in the area. Moreover, Mabel discusses her great grandfather Oliver Loving of the Goodnight-Loving Trail. Mabel also discusses her teaching career and retirement.

**Length of Interview:** 02:07:44

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### Keywords

Oliver Loving, Goodnight-Loving Trail, Ranching



**David Marshall (DM):**

Okay the date is June 30, 1999, and this is David Marshall interviewing Mabel Brown at her home in Crane, Texas. Mrs. Brown, if we can just start by getting a little general information like when you were born and where you were born, we'll just go from there.

**Mabel Loving Brown (MB):**

All right. That's fine.

DM:

What year were you born now?

MB:

I was born in 1916.

DM:

Nineteen sixteen. Okay. And whereabouts?

MB:

I was born on the Brazos River—the double mountain branch of the Brazos River, in Stonewall County. And it was ranch land.

DM:

Where would this be from Rotan and Aspermont and Peacock—was the little town of Peacock pretty busy then?

MB:

Well if you go from Rotan to Aspermont, you pass right by the land. And it was—that one was thirteen sections, that ranch over there. And my grandfather and my uncles had land. But it's that highway that goes from Rotan there.

DM:

Highway 610?

MB:

I don't know what it is.

DM:

610? The same one that Sammy Baugh lives on?

MB:  
Yeah.

DM:  
Okay.

MB:  
Yeah. Okay. That's where it was. You used to have to cross Nicholson Creek; that was the little creek there. You'd cross the creek, and the first gate on the right was the one that you turned and went down to the ranch. Years later, I took my younger sister out there because she said, "I can't remember anything about the little ranch." She never had lived there. And so I said, "Well sure, I remember, I'll take you out there." I couldn't find the gate on Nicholson Creek. So I had to ask one of the neighbors that had family that I knew, and they told me how to get in to the place. But they were going to tear the old house down. And it was—they were going to demolish it right away, for another house.

DM:  
Were you born out on the ranch, or were you born in town?

MB:  
I was born on the ranch.

DM:  
Oh really?

MB:  
Yes, because my mother had the twins in Rotan, and they stayed with her mother-in-law, and she didn't like it. And she said from now on, the children will be born at the ranch. And they were.

DM:  
And when you say twins, these are your older brothers?

MB:  
I had two older brothers. Three older brothers—twins and a boy. The twins were born in Rotan, but then Wallace and I and my sister Wilma were all born at the ranch. And then we were in town by the time the others came along.

DM:  
That the others—and there were how many others?

MB:

Three more besides that. My grandmother died and left my—Grandpa had a great big house, and so we moved in kind of just to look after him, and the twins were getting to the age where they should be starting to school, and a better school. They'd been going to the ranch school out there. And I think that's called Cotton Flat. And then anyway, they went to school out there. And its time they got into a bigger school. So that was another reason for going into Rotan and staying with my granddaddy. And that little house is still living there.

DM:

Oh that house is still standing? That's the one that we saw in the photograph, is that right?

MB:

No, I don't think you saw it. You saw me sitting on a post in front of the house there. But—

DM:

Okay. Now when you say your grandmother that died. This is the one that died in 1919, that we were looking at the tombstone—picture of the tombstone, and then that grandfather died a couple of years later?

MB:

Oh it was three or four years later.

DM:

Was it? Okay.

MB:

I think it was. It seemed to me like a long time, but a year is a long time to a child. But I remember all of it. I can remember it all.

DM:

Describe to me again Cotton Flats. That was a little community outside of—

MB:

I don't think so. I think there was just a school house over there.

DM:

Okay. And the school teacher—it was how far out of Rotan then?

MB:

Oh I'd say, I think it's about twenty miles out to the ranch, fifteen or twenty miles, anyway. It's just this side of Sammy Baugh's ranch.

DM:

And is this the one you were telling me earlier, where the teachers would live with the families around there?

MB:

Well yes, they didn't live with our families, but they were all real friendly with ours. And I had other pictures from some of the school teachers there too. Those two pictures that I showed you of the 1902, those were my daddy's teachers.

DM:

Out at Cotton Flats?

MB:

Yeah. See he came out there when he was, oh, six or seven years old, or maybe eight at the most. I have somewhere—I have a picture of him where they're loading the stuff up in front of the lumber company to haul the lumber out to build the ranch, and he was about eight years old.

DM:

I'll be.

MB:

I didn't have that picture to show you.

DM:

Well really by the time you came along, your family had been in that area a long time then.

MB:

Oh yes. Yes. They came out—let's see, there wasn't a town of Rotan. I'm not real sure when they came out to the ranch. But I would say it was sometime in the—oh well, let's see, my daddy was born in 1890. I mean 1889. And he was about six years old. That's when they came out to this country. They came out from the Weatherford area. He had worked for—he had managed a ranch—James C. Loving was Oliver Loving's oldest son, and he was quite a bit older than my grandfather because he was the youngest son.

DM:

And your grandfather's name again was?

MB:

Oliver Loving. Oliver Loving. And so Oliver Loving was—when he came out of the service, and after he had been on the trail and lost his father, he came back and worked for his brother on one of those ranches, managed one of his ranches there in Jack County, or close to somewhere. There was an old fellow that told me, when I went to Milsap, the town of Milsap. I said, “I wonder how the Milsaps—” and my grandmother was a Milsap and my grandfather was a Loving—“I wonder how they ever got together.” This old fellow said, “Well I can tell you how they got together. They used to stand right up there on that hill and watch the Loving cattle and the Milsap cattle. And there was a fence between them, and every once in a while, they’d have to get down there, get the cattle back across the fence.” That’s how. And then Milsap was the place where they got the mail because the stage line went out there to the ranch. So they did that, and then he headed—there were a lot of people about that time that was headed west. And I don’t know why—he had some other relatives that were interested in coming out here that were these [inaudible] Milsaps came out to that area before the Lovings did.

DM:

Well that ranch that you were born on, was that—did they purchase that, or was that a grant?

MB:

That was homesteaded.

DM:

Was homesteaded. Okay.

MB:

I remember that what they used to call a schoolhouse pasture, and then there was a railroad pasture, and then they’d name all the pastures just for different things. And I couldn’t understand that. But they also leased all this government land then and had it there. But that was Stonewall County.

DM:

Did the Double Mountain fork of the Brazos run through that ranch, or was it outside of the ranch?

MB:

Oh yeah!

DM:

Ran right through it.

MB:

I could—it was as close as a block away.

DM:

Is that right? Did you ever play in it as a child?

MB:

Oh yeah, that used to be a real playground. The thing that old red mud, you know, that house [inaudible]. It would get really slick. Well when we were growing up, we'd go across it to my uncle Dom's ranch. He had children all about the same age of ours, and one in our family. Well we'd go to this—visit the country cousins, and they'd take us swimming down in the old river. Well it was quite entertaining to get down there and—well most of the time they'd say, hook up the wagon, we'll all go. So they'd hook up the wagon, one of the older boys, and we'd all go down to the river from there. And we'd get in that old muddy, muddy water, and splash all over that. Then we'd get a back that was sloping down—you know get that thing good and wet and I tell you, these modern water features—it's nothing compared to that. We would just wear out our clothes, just really wear them out. And then there's a lot of quicksand in that area, you know. We'd find those quicksand spots, and we'd play with that and scare ourselves real bad about that. But we had a good time out there.

DM:

Was it quicksand that you could really sink way down in?

MB:

Oh yeah.

DM:

You could possibly get killed in that stuff?

MB:

Oh yeah, yeah.

DM:

Did the parents try to warn you to stay out of that?

MB:

Yeah, well they were always getting an old cow out of the bog, you know. An old cow would get in it, and it took a lot of effort to get them out. But yeah, when the word got out that the cow was in it, they went after it in a hurry. Now those cowboy days, I remember when the cowboys would



get down to the water and take off their hat and take a drink of water. Put that hat back on their head. All of that was really true.

DM:

You told me earlier about how y'all used to take—did you take lunches out to them? Tell me about that.

MB:

Well this was after we lived in town. Daddy still ranched out there, and then later on, he was in the oil business there in Rotan too. But he still owned the ranch out there. And we would go out, and mother would fix up enough for all the cowboys. And we'd go out at noon and take this food to the cowboys. Well you could see the herd coming because the dust was just a'foggin. And they'd be coming down these little dry lanes. And the cowboys all had kerchiefs over their noses, just their eyes showing, you know. And to me they looked like a bunch of bandits, because that's all I could think of. But that was to preserve their skin and keep the dust off them.

Anyway, they were always so tired by the time with the—oh those old cows were bawling, you know, and it was always just a fun time. Because, well, I think one of the reason—I might have been a little spoiled—the cowboys—I was the only little girl on the ranch at one time, for a long time—and I learned to live with those cowboys, you know, and be entertained of them. My sister, younger than I was, I had a very serious case of whooping cough and nearly died. And mother had to spend a lot of time taking care of her. And so, I just kind of got [laughs] kind of [inaudible] as they say, and pretty well spoiled by those boys. So they were all special friends of mine.

DM:

Did they drive the cattle down to Rotan from the ranch?

MB:

Yes.

DM:

Did they cut across country, or did they take them kind of down the road?

MB:

There would be a lane—there was a kind of a lane to take them down.

DM:

A lane alongside the main road, or just a lane across country?

MB:

Just a lane that come down through the country there. Yes, see, when they first went out there, they didn't have any way to get the cattle. They had to drive them all the way into Sweetwater, the hard way. So the MKT [**Missouri-Kansas-Texas**] came out and put that branch out there, and the town of Rotan started. But by this time, they had this big corral to take care of a bunch of cattle in there, and they'd drive them into town from the ranch, they'd get up, start early in the morning, and they'd drive them into town in that heat. And when they got them all in the corral at night, ready to leave them, then they'd come up and roll out their bed rolls and sleep on our screened-in back porch. And, oh, I thought that was the most exciting time, had all that company and all that attention.

DM:

About how many cowboys would typically participate in those drives, or would work around the ranch at any given time? Did it vary a lot?

MB:

Well it would vary. If it was roundup time, what they would do would use all of the cowboys from the three brothers' ranches, and Daddy's cowboys would all go up to wherever they were working, or they would come to ours and help with ours. But they didn't drive the cattle. Neither one of them drove the cattle into town. I think all of Daddy's cowboys would drive them. And there was—by this time, there was somebody else living in the house, you know, kind of to see—a family of people would be living out there on the ranch. And they had—well, they had a long way to go, and it was hot and tired—they were hot and tired. And when that train pulled out, they were all happy about it. Of course, Daddy would have to go to market, even before they had that train there. Well, no, the train was there when—shortly after—mother and daddy married in 1910. And it was—the railroad, that MKT line went in there, pretty soon, a little sooner than that because the town of Rotan was started, I think, about 1907 or '08, something like that. Anyway, my grandparents moved into town then and left Daddy to ranch out there on the ranch by himself. That's when he found him a wife. [Laughs]

DM:

And your grandparents' other couple of sons were ranching out there in the same area.

MB:

Yes, uh-huh. Yes. They all went out. And the oldest one homesteaded when he was there. Robert E. Lee had been in and cleared the Indians out of that territory. And what he says about Texas out there, it is quoted quite often.

DM:

He camped right at the foot of the double mountains, I believe, if I recall.

MB:

Yeah. Uh-huh. Anyway, they all ranch pretty close, they had different—one of them got to homestead his own, of course he was—he's eighteen years older than my daddy. So he was twenty-three years old, I guess.

DM:

When they first came out there, before they built permanent houses, did they live in dugouts or anything like that?

MB:

Yes. They had lived in a half dugout. And you know, you let history go by and you don't know anything about it. I said to one of the very good friend of the family, he was the only child in the family, and he was really a nice fellow, and I said, "Do you have any idea where my grandpa and grandma lived before they built the house out there?" And he said, "Yeah, they lived in the half dugouts. Haven't you ever been there?" And I said, "No, I don't think so." And he said, "Well I don't think it's there." I said, "You know that old double mountain changes course right there. And it's closer to the house now than it used to be." But he said, "I don't guess it's there, I haven't looked for it." But he ranched next to—up on the other side. He was friends of my cousins, you know, real well.

DM:

So you never really saw the sight of the dugouts?

MB:

No. I never saw it. I have seen other places, and I know what they look like because they would dig, not so far, but they'd have this covered up, you know, on side two. They dug into the side of the hill.

DM:

I was down in Kent County, not too long ago, just west of Clairemont, came across maybe as many as ten or twelve dugouts and even a little cemetery there. It looked like a community had been there. I don't know when, and the people around there didn't know. They couldn't really date it, but late nineteenth century I guess. Do you remember ever hearing of anything out that far?

MB:

Oh yeah.

DM:

I mean, any specific community.

MB:

Well I don't know. But we used to—on Sunday, we would get in the car, and my dad would always go for a ride. And we'd drive up to Clairemont or we'd drive to Jayton or we'd drive to Spur. And those were little rough country roads. But that was Sunday afternoon's entertainment. We always did that. And of course, Daddy was a talker, and he'd tell things about, "You remember so-and-so this," and they'd talk about all of those things. But it was—I don't know which place you're talking about, but there—

DM:

Well it'd be just south of 380 now, and on west of Clairemont maybe five miles or so. It's pretty far. It's just almost on the western edge of Kent County. But there were enough little dugouts there, it appeared to be an early community, and it was right by a spring. But it was a real good side of McKenzie Mountain and Cooper Mountain and Flattop Mountain, some of those mesas down in that area. But I don't know what it is, and it might be really pretty early. It might have been gone long before you were born.

MB:

Well if there was—see, there was a lot of little communities. You know the oil business got started out there a long time ago. Really, it was a long time ago. But I can't remember any particular community. There was a little town of Moran, but that was the other way. Out from Albany, there's little villages out there where they had oil, you know, starting on that.

DM:

When you were little, do you remember ever seeing anyone who still lived in dugouts or half dugouts? Did anyone still live in them in the 1920s?

MB:

No.

DM:

There was enough lumber pulled in; most people were living a little higher—

MB:

Well see, they had the train out there about that time, and we had a lumber company. There was Graves Lumberyard—well in fact we had two lumber company. There was Haliburton, and then there was one that—the Graves had a lumber company. I guess they came, and when they brought the train in, they brought in a doctor and a druggist, and I don't know whether the newspaper man came in with them on that, but they all came. And those were the people I knew when I lived there in Rotan.

DM:

You wouldn't happen to remember any of their names, would you?

MB:

Yeah.

DM:

What was the doctor's name?

MB:

Dr. Callan.

DM:

Okay. Did he deliver you?

MB:

No, no he didn't deliver me. There was a Dr. Reeve [?].

DM:

Dr. Reeve.

MB:

Uh-huh. He lived out there in Rotan, but he had to drive all the way out like that. And I don't know whether Mr. Shelton came out on the newspaper on that, or whether he bought the newspaper from somewhere else. But there's a story on Fisher County in that, and then Hooper [?] tells about that date, I know, of his son [?]. His daughter lived in Lubbock, I think, here in Lubbock. Can't think of what her name was right now. And the Phillips—Harold [?] Phillips—and they spelled it different. I guess he was from some other—his family came from some other part of the country because they called him HAW-RAL instead of Harold. They called him HARAL, and then after Harold Phillips died, the family later on moved up to Lubbock. There was a bunch of them around there. And they had four girls that lived with them. Didn't have a married name. Could be old maids, I don't know. I kind of lost track of people like that.

DM:

Can't help but do that.

MB:

I'm only eighty-three. So I kind of lost track of some of my playmates. [Laughter]

DM:

Do you remember living on that ranch before, when you were young enough you weren't even in school yet?

MB:

Oh yeah.

DM:

Did you have any chores around the ranch as a little girl?

MB:

Oh my job was entertaining. Since I was the only little girl that was able to get around and do very much. But I remember my little brother that—he used to pull me in his wagon. That wagon picture was there.

DM:

Now that's Wallace?

MB:

Some of those pictures? Wallace would pull me in that wagon. See the twins were so close.

DM:

Now what were their names, by the way, the twins?

MB:

It's Joe and Roe.

DM:

Joe and Roe.

MB:

Uh-huh. Joe and Roe. When they were born, they didn't know what to do with those twins. They weren't expecting twins. And so—they wanted to name Joe after his granddaddy, Joe Loving. And they didn't know what to do. And they wanted to name the other one from the Dennis side of the family because my mother's name was Dennis. So they wanted to do that. So they had the Joe and the Dennis. And so Grandpa went to town to watch a ballgame one day. And he said that one of the ball players was named Roe, and there was one named Prentice on there. So Grandpa got this figured out by the time he got home. He said, Roe Dennis and Joe Prentice. So every way you took it, even their initials rhymed. But they laughed and told that story about Grandpa



coming in, and said, "First thing he said was Joe Prentice and Roe Dennis." [Laughs] And he got them from the ball game, the players on the ball game out there at Rotan.

DM:

He went down to watch a ballgame in Rotan?

MB:

Oh yeah. Yeah.

DM:

I'll be.

MB:

Oh yeah. Rotan Yellowhammers.

DM:

Oh really?

MB:

No this. They had a—it was kind of a semi-professional or something.

DM:

They had a ball club down there. That would have been—what year were your twin—your brothers born? Your older brothers?

MB:

They were born 1911.

DM:

Okay. Well that's interesting that they had a ballgame down there, a ball team.

MB:

Oh yes.

DM:

They were the Rotan—

MB:

They weren't the Yellowhammers—they were the high school. But Grandpa, when they were born, I don't know what ball team that would be playing. But they were grown men. And

anyway, [inaudible]. When the railroad thing—it was quite a thing for the town, because not only did we have the boarding house down there for the railroad men to live in, see, but we had hotels for the salesmen that had to go from—they couldn't call in their orders, you know. They had to go. They called them drummers. And the drummers would come to stay at the hotel and get the orders around for their part of the country. It was a different world altogether with no television and well not even really—not even radio. I was a pretty good size girl before they put those crystal things on my ears and I could hear a little noise. But when I was little—that's why we had such good musicians in those days, because everybody had to make their own. And there was an old phonograph that—I don't know how old that thing was. But we had that old phonograph with those big thick records on it. And I don't know where that wound up.

DM:

Did any of those cowboys on the ranch play instruments?

MB:

Well, I can remember one of them played the Jew's harp. One of them played the harmonica. But I don't think there was—they weren't really musical cowboys. But I can tell you what some of their favorite songs were.

DM:

Oh? What were they?

MB:

Now, this Swede that was on the ranch, and the one that came over to stay with my mother when the little boy found the child dead—

DM:

When you say the Swede, he was from Sweden?

MB:

He came from Sweden, and he'd heard about cowboys. And he came down from New York and went to work for a brick laying company, and he built the old school house there at Rotan, the one that they tore down a number of years ago. Well he built that, and then he went out. He wanted to still be a cowboy. He'd heard about that. So he rolled out with a mailman, you know, you used to could do that. And he rode out to the mailman, who was coming across the pasture. And Daddy said, there was that big strong man walking. And when he asked him who he was and what he wanted and so on. And he said, "I'm looking for a job. I want to be a cowboy."

DM:

I guess he said this in a Swedish accent? [Laughs]

MB:

Oh yes, very much a Swedish accent. And so he took—he said it was about roundup time then. And he said, “Yes I can use some help. Can you ride a horse?” He said, “No, I can learn.” And he started cowboying out there at that roundup. Well they had a lot of fun out of that Swede, you know, and teaching him. He learned a whole lot about horses and so on and that. But later on then, he went west, after he came back from service. He went on west and did some homesteading, and stayed out and then had Pecos Saddle Shop, which was a very famous place. And made those spurs, while they was homesteading out there for a while. But they have them at the museum. I guess I remember a lot of things from—see I remember when my little brother died.

DM:

Oh yeah. Do you mind talking about that a little bit? You told me about it off the record.

MB:

Yes. I think now that is an example of what pioneer women, and that was really—my mother really was a pioneer woman, I guess. Of course, my grandmother was the pioneer of the whole—but my grandmother was in a coma in Rotan, and had been in a coma for several days. And it was my dad’s turn to sit up with the boys—one of the boys would sit up with their mother. Every night they’d go in and stay with her. But it was roundup time. And all of the cowboys from our ranch was over at Uncle Don’s ranch for the roundup. And mother wasn’t afraid of anything. And so she insisted she stayed there at the ranch by herself. There wasn’t even a cooker or anything with her, you know. Just, you know, three—four children. And the little brother had had some problem with his—stomach problem when he was born. I didn’t realize that until later. But he ate something that was not too good for him, for supper, and ran a little temperature. About midnight, Mother went in to see if he was all right, and he was dead. Well, she tried to ring across into town. And it was raining so hard. And that old double mountain river was just running bank to bank and it really gets on a roll. And now, we’re not damned up anymore in those days. Anyway, she couldn’t get town, and she finally got across the river to Uncle Don’s place and told them what had happened. So they got in, called into town with that. But Swede couldn’t swim. But he swam his horse across that river like that to get over there to be with mother, so she wouldn’t be there—[DM flips tape]

DM:

Let me flip this over real quick. [Shuffle audio tape] Give it about five seconds of lead here. Okay. What was that Swede’s name, by the way?

MB:

His name was Harrold Strong, really. Strong.

DM:

Harold Strong.

MB:

Uh-huh. And you have the spurs up there at Tech. And I don't know how much credit they gave him for the—he wasn't the only one that made the [inaudible] spurs, but he was the one that put the mother of pearl in them. That's what he—

DM:

But anyway, he swam a horse over that river?

MB:

He swam a horse across that river. It was really, really—when it—it's the kind of a river that rolls down a dry bed. Have you ever seen that?

DM:

A flash flood?

MB:

Yeah, well, it rolls down. Just a dry—if a dry bed is there, it's not just raising up, it rolls down. And I used to hear instances of where it rolled down to the [inaudible]. People that would start across it would think they could beat it, and the water would catch up like that. There was a doctor from Spur that was going to go—he thought he could beat it. He was over on the Rotan side, and thought he could beat it, and he got caught in it. And my dad and one of his friends happened to be close, and they saved that man. It was quite a deal, getting him out of there. Well, that was another strange thing. A fellow was telling me about this—that after I moved out of West Texas and was a grown woman, he was telling me about his uncle that was a doctor in Spur and how he got caught in the river bed, in that river, the flash flood. So I was telling my dad about it, and I said, "Did you ever know anything about that?" He said, "Yeah we sure had a hard time getting him out. He didn't have any reason to be driving that buggy in that water like that. That was dangerous." He said, "We got him out." And I didn't know my dad had anything to do with it.

DM:

Was it horse and buggy that he was stuck down there?

MB:

Yeah, the doctor was in a horse and buggy. See my dad didn't have a car. My uncle George had the first car.

DM:

Oh really? What year?

MB:

And there was a judge in that area. But in 1913, Uncle George had a car. And I have a picture of him with his hat over his chest, sitting in that car like he is really important. But at that time he was quite wealthy too. He had quite the ranch, and banking interests and so on.

DM:

What year did y'all get your first car—did your parents get their first car?

MB:

Well, it must have been pretty soon after that, because we have pictures of—I know it was before 1918. And we have pictures of a trip that we went to Wyoming to visit my mother's people and to vacation, and I wasn't very big. So I think that must have been the first car we had. Then, so that would be—see I was born 1916.

DM:

That had to be some undertaking to go to Wyoming. It had to be dirt roads all the way.

MB:

I can remember that you went up there and the sign when you go through—around—the mountain, and it said "Sound your claxon." You ever hear—

DM:

Oh okay.

MB:

"Sound your claxon" because you had to let somebody know you were coming, it was one way. And I can remember one time, we backed up, had to back up and let somebody get by. And it would just scare you to death in those old cars, you know. Yeah. When I was up at the devil's tower, oh, a number of years ago, I said, "You know, I was over here pretty soon after they made this a park." And they said, "Oh no, this was not made until—" [laughs]. But we did—we were there, all right. And I have pictures also. I don't know where all of those pictures are, but I have some goodies. If I run across them, I'll keep you in mind, let you know what I found.

DM:

What did your mother think about living out in that ranch country? Did she like that all right?



MB:

Well see, all of these were her cousins. Uncle Jim Dennis, where Sammy Baugh lives you know, that was his ranch house. That was a ranch house.

DM:

Did he sell that directly to Sammy Baugh? Sammy Baugh bought it from him, or did he buy it from someone else first?

MB:

He bought it from—well, Uncle Jim died, and it went through the estate thing. But Uncle Jim had twelve children. And one of them, Raymond Dennis, lived out there on the ranch for a long time. But Mother was quite happy there because her Aunt Molly taught her to sew. She didn't know how, and Aunt Molly taught her to sew. And not too many years ago, I got the idea that it would be kind of a fun thing to write up my life story for my grandson. So I started, and I didn't get very far with it. But I told them, something like this, "It was a pretty April day, and my daddy took the boys over to Aunt Molly's, took the three boys over there to spend the day. And when they came back, later in the afternoon, I was born then. They already had me there. Daddy had told them they had a surprise. They had been over there most of the day with Aunt Molly and Uncle Jim. And when we got back, they got close enough that they could hear a little noise, and the boys were so excited they said, 'Oh, the surprise was a kitten.' And it was only a sister! That was all." Of course, they had three boys, they weren't looking forward to a sister. [Laughs] But anyhow, they told that story on me, "Oh we got us a new kitten. That was the surprise they had for us." But I kind of expanded on it a little bit and told them about what kind of a country life was like. And I'm sorry I didn't go on with it, because I thought it would be kind of fun. I may get back to it one of these days.

DM:

Do you remember some of the wildlife that you might see out there in those days? Out on the ranch? Pretty much the same as today, or has it changed any I wonder? Coyotes?

MB:

Oh, it's changed. So many of it went into farms. See it was all ranch land. You didn't get into farms until you got right close into town. They raised the feed a little bit. Because I remember mother saying that the twins were following Daddy along. He was plowing—with, I guess, with a walking plow or something—plowing the land to plant his feed, and the boys were following along, the twins were following along behind him. And when they came in, their eyelashes had sand on them though they could hardly close their eyes. There's was—just caked over just a little bit, and Mother laughed about that. And Daddy should've—of course she blamed Daddy—he should have been watching those boys better than that. But they were just walking along behind



that to let that dirt kick up [laughs]. They were having a good time helping Daddy. But they had just enough to feed their own stock.

DM:

Did y'all have any kind of a little garden around the house, vegetable garden?

MB:

My mother wasn't much of a gardener, but my grandmother used to have—my grandmother used to have fabulous gardens. And she was—flowers—and she was really interested in that sort of thing.

DM:

Did she grow anything for canning? Vegetables for canning?

MB:

We didn't can anything.

DM:

Just got goods from Rotan?

MB:

But when we—one of the questions that they asked me about on a tape one time was—what kind of food did you eat when you were a little girl? And I said, "Well it's certainly different from what I eat now."

DM:

Oh really?

MB:

Oh yes. I never knew what asparagus was—so I didn't—cauliflower, that would have been junk stuff. I don't even remember we had lettuce. I remember that we had tomatoes, and one of my girlfriends said to me one time, "Eat this slice of tomato, and I'm going to put some of this good stuff in it we found down at the grocery store." And I didn't know whether to put that stuff on my tomato and eat it or not. Turned out, that was mayonnaise. And I had never heard of it. But at the ranch, Daddy would go to town, and he'd get a whole carton of tomatoes or—I mean he'd get canned tomatoes and canned corn and big sacks of flour and sugar. And all of the cabinets in those days would have a drawer that you pull out and you put your sack of flour in there.

DM:

Okay. Have a sifter?

MB:

And it—yeah, and it would sift it on out. And it was—I can remember using that. I used that a lot.

DM:

Did you have any trouble with the weevils in the flour?

MB:

Oh it went too fast for us. I don't think Mother would've stood for a weevil to get into anything. She was one of those extra clean people. She would wash the clothes and boil them. Long after we had—Daddy had to put gas under the wash pots out there so Momma could boil the linens and the towels and that sort of thing. She still boiled clothes.

DM:

She use a scrub board too?

MB:

Well, when they used a scrub board, I don't—Daddy never let Mother do anything like that. But he had quite a bit of help around the house. Girls that would want to come into the school, to go to school, or some black people we boarded, jobs. We had a little house, and there in Rotan we had a little house out in the back. And too, it used to have a lot of entertainment going out there.

DM:

Did y'all have a smokehouse out on the ranch?

MB:

Yeah.

DM:

Did you slaughter your own cattle out there?

MB:

We had a smokehouse out there, and that was kind of a good place to hide. I remember one time I was playing hide and seek and I slipped and a hen's nest was up there. And I slipped some way and fell in that nest of eggs and had to come down and let all of those kids, rest of the kids, see me with all that egg all over me. That was terrible. Yeah, there was always ham and bacons and stuff. And it was a good smell. And then, right close to that was the milk house, and the windmill was right adjacent to the milk house. So it would—the water from the windmill would furnish the cool water that would go right on down through the milk house, and there was a big vat there

that kept the water nice and cool. And then it would go on down to the tank where the animals would come in and get a drink of water and so on.

DM:

And we're going to get some pictures of that milk house you're talking about. Copies of pictures.

MB:

Yeah, yeah. It was a kind of a busy life out there. And the boys—one of the—the twins were very interesting people to have. They really put the—they were characters. Anyway, one of them came in one day, and came running real fast to mother and said—whoa. She called—he called Roe, woah. He said, “Woah followed the ducks in the water.” And she said, “What?” “Woah followed the ducks in the water.” That little kid was not very big, they were just—he could just barely talk. And he had gone out there, and Mother had to go down there and get him. He was almost drowned.

DM:

Oh no. he was in the tank, chasing ducks.

MB:

Yeah, he was in the tank. He had followed the ducks in there.

DM:

Was it a concrete cattle tank, or was it a tank in the ground?

MB:

No, it was just a dirt tank.

DM:

Dirt tank.

MB:

Yeah, just a dirt tank. Hadn't thought of those fancy ones by that time. And—

DM:

You also told earlier about dipping the cream, going in the milk house.

MB:

Yeah, yeah. Well when you'd go in that milk house, it was cool, you know. You didn't have air conditioners in those days. And so it would be real cool, and we'd put our bathing suits on, and go down in that dirty tank, you'd be ankle deep in that silch by the time you got out there a little

bit farther out. But we thought that was great fun; that was good entertainment. Usually we'd go out there, and if we didn't go just for a ride around to see the country, they would have a calf roping there—I mean a goat roping there. And they'd rope those goats and we would watch that, and then we'd go swimming in that dirty creek. Well it was just red dirt, it was a type of just red dirt. You've seen that. Have you ever seen that river up at Wichita Falls, when that red water's coming down?

DM:

No. ou talking about the Red River?

MB:

Yeah, when that river—the river that comes through the park there.

DM:

Oh no, I haven't.

MB:

It is red, you just can't imagine. All of a sudden, you're coming down the road, and you look over there and see that great big water fall. They've made a park out of it.

DM:

Okay. I haven't seen that. I need to. But it was like that out there too? The water was real red because of the soil.

MB:

It's red, red like that. The water's red, uh-huh. The water's red in Canada too. Over on the eastern shore of Canada, the water looks very much like that all out in that area. Anyway, I was telling you just about the boys and some of the things they'd get into. They did all kinds of things that little cowboys do. One of them was out—they all rode horses and did whatever they could when they were little. And I remember they brought the first brother in, and one of his cousins, his girl cousin was there, and her hat blew off. And spooked the horse and it threw Roe off. And so, it just knocked him cool for a while. They brought him into town. I thought, Oh that's just really, really something—all those adventures at the ranch. Because Daddy would go out, even after he got into the other business in town—he'd go to the ranch and stay a lot of the time. And the boys would always get to go with him. But sometimes I'd get to go. But those boys and Daddy, both visited with Colonel Goodnight. He always looked forward to it. And I remember, oh, Joe coming back one time and he said, "Well guess what? I went by to see the Colonel. And he has a new bride." [Laughs]

DM:

The young bride.

MB:

That's [inaudible]

DM:

Where was he living at that time when they were going to visit him?

MB:

He was living up there somewhere—Clarendon or somewhere up in there. I guess. Because I think Joe was living in Tech until Roe went up to Tech to go to school.

DM:

Oh did they?

MB:

Yeah. Daddy took them and they all but signed up. And they got their little caps and all that stuff that freshmen did in that time. And that was the 1929, I guess it was.

DM:

They got their caps, is that what you said? Those beanie caps?

MB:

Yeah, those freshman got those little—and anyway, they decided that—somebody just decided that they'd go down to the Hilton Hotel and bellhop, and they were making good money. Those twins, there was just something about being twins, you know, looking so much alike, that they'd give them tips bigger than you could. So they didn't tell Daddy for about three or four weeks that they'd decided they'd get rich hopping bells instead of going to college. [Laughs]

DM:

What year would that've been about?

MB:

That was in maybe—I think that was in 1929 or '30.

DM:

Okay. Tech was pretty new by that time.

MB:

Yes it was. Because I remember when we'd go through there, when the Tech Dairy was the last thing out of town, and we'd go by that way. We'd go through Lubbock going to Colorado, see, and Wyoming. We'd go from Rotan; that was the way to go. So I remember the barns and everything. Well, I went up there several years later to a music teacher's meeting, and I rode around and tried to think, Where would that be. Of course, I was way on out there where the museum and everything is now, you know. Looking, wondering, what in the world happened with that? And so I mentioned it to my husband, and he said, "I don't remember seeing that." And I said, "Well it was there. It was there. Because it was—" And I kept riding around on the Tech campus, and I spotted it. [Laughs] Way in the—but that's where it was. So I told Hal, I said, "I told your daddy about this, and he didn't believe that all that was out there. But I found it today." And I made him go out there with me. And he said, "I don't think it'd be here long though." Did they take it out?

DM:

The dairy barn?

MB:

Yeah.

DM:

It's not down, but they're talking about moving it. They're not using it anymore, but it's right next door to us. We're at the Southwest Collection, and it's just right next door.

MB:

Well that was the edge of town when—that was the edge of town. And it was—one of the Milsaps lived out at Ropes. And we'd go by and see them [inaudible]. But anyhow, Colonel Goodnight lived somewhere up close to that then.

DM:

Well he's buried up there in the—right outside the town of Goodnight, which is pretty near Clarendon.

MB:

No, he's buried at Weatherford.

DM:

What's that?



MB:

Charles Goodnight is buried at Weatherford.

DM:

Oh, I thought he was buried out there near Clarendon.

MB:

He's in that Greenwood Cemetery at Weatherford. And—

DM:

What was your brothers' and father's impression of Goodnight? Charles Goodnight?

MB:

Well, my brothers just treated him like he was an old man that had a lot of nice things to always say about their grandfather. And I don't know that I ever heard my grandfather say an unkind thing about him. But I found out a lot since then. [Laughs] He's just not—well he was kind of a blowhard. The boys did kind of confess that he had some tales that didn't sound quite right, you know. But then he was getting older, and he did say this to my brother Joe when he was up there, and that was when he married, when he told them he had that new wife. He said, "You know, they come out and ask me questions about things, and I think, Yeah that's right, and then after they're gone, I think, no that wasn't the way that was." But there's no way of tracking them down to tell them different. But he said, "Sometimes I realize that that wasn't the way it was." Well I don't know whether he was sharp enough that he knew that he got caught, or whether he really did make a mistake. But then, he was way up, way up in his years. I think he was about ninety-one, wasn't he? When he—

DM:

He was pretty old when he married that girl.

MB:

Molly. Her name was Molly, wasn't it? Molly Goodnight?<sup>1</sup>

DM:

Now he was how much younger than Oliver Loving?

MB:

About thirty years.

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<sup>1</sup> Goodnight's first wife was Mary Ann "Molly" Dyer, from Weatherford. His second wife, whom he married late in life, was Corinne.

DM:

About thirty years. Okay. Well anyway, I'm getting off track. I wanted to ask you, too, when y'all were kids playing down there in Stonewall County, did y'all ever come across any Indian artifacts? Arrowheads?

MB:

Oh yeah. We weren't really looking for old junk like that, you know. That's just old stuff. But I know when—well it was my daddy's funeral, he died before my mother did. And we were up at Rotan, the whole family is buried there at Rotan. In fact, both sets of my grandparents—my Dennis side and my Loving side is both there. This old fellow said he remembered the Indians fighting all around there. And he remembered Mother, and said she was a—well we wondered how Jimmy was so lucky to find such a pretty little bride, you know, [laughs] because he was quite an interesting fellow, and a lot of girls would come after him, I think. But she came down to visit her cousins there and met Daddy. And she cried because they were going to go home, and she cried, and Daddy said, "Honey you can stay with me if you want to. We'll just get married and you can stay with me." And they did. And that was it. [Laughs] And she had had—one of her sisters had eloped about that time, and it was kind of hard on the family, and they didn't know whether they was going to let Momma marry Daddy or not. But anyway, it was—my grandfather then just liked my dad real well.

DM:

What year did they get married?

MB:

Nineteen ten.

DM:

Ten. You told me that earlier.

MB:

The write up for the article was very interesting in the way it was written up. It's certainly not modern, the way they write the thing. But they lived out there, and they used to go to dances, and they would take all the kids, of course—everybody from the ranch—they'd just—somebody would roll up the rug, if they had a rug, and dance. Somebody would play the fiddle and the guitar and that was about the music then.

DM:

Scoot the furniture back to the walls and roll up the rug.

MB:

And so that was the kind of entertainment that they had. And so they would take them—dance until way into the wee hours, and the kids all would be sleeping. They'd either take them back to the buggies or take them out and put them to sleep or so on. But they'd have a good time dancing. And one time—so they had a colored girl named Pinky, and so Joe, the talkative one said, "Daddy said he didn't know why they named her Pinky." And this in one of the dances when Pinky's sitting there, and all the other people around too, of course she's sitting behind the white folk. But he said, I don't know why he called her Pinky, when they should've called her Blacky. Well it embarrassed Mother, and Mother was embarrassed every time she thought about that boy saying that, I think, for the rest of her life. [Laughs]

DM:

Joe was a little more talkative, and Roe was a little quieter, huh?

MB:

Yeah. They looked exactly alike, but they were—one of them was left handed, and one of them was right handed. Typical of identical twins. But when they identified him, they identified the wrong man that got killed. He rolled his car over. He was a pharmacist salesman, Roe was, and he rolled his car over there close to—between Garden City and Midland. And one of them was Joe's papers, and they called for Roe Loving, and Joe answered the phone. And so at McCamey, my sister, when she was over there, waiting for Roe to come in. and somehow, they couldn't understand, and they said, "No, you couldn't be. We have the papers here." And told him that he'd been killed. That's how he found out his identical twin had been killed. He was supposed to have met him in San Angelo and come out with him for Thanksgiving, but he didn't—

DM:

What year was that about?

MB:

Oh that was while I was working in Washington, D.C. that was 1940—about 1944 or '45. He'd just come back from—

DM:

He'd just been back from the war. Oh my.

MB:

They had both come back from the war.

DM:

Wow, wow.

MB:

But then, I talk a lot about them because they're older, and I think we talk about these older ones rather than the younger ones.

DM:

Well it is a little bit earlier era.

MB:

Well see, I have a sister in Snyder that is nine years younger than I am, and she doesn't remember any of these things. And my brother, my little baby brother—the one that was the artist—he's eleven years younger, and he doesn't know anything about that. He was born in Rotan; both of them were.

DM:

Well, you were really born in a different world. It was a little before the automobile, before the radio, for example, and these are some of the things that you've mentioned—before Rotan.

MB:

And the kids had all of that. The little kids had all of that. But my dad, see, he went to school out on that—at the ranch.

DM:

Out at Cotton Flats?

MB:

Yeah.

DM:

He went to school out there?

MB:

I think it was Cotton Flats was the name of the school. It was in Stonewall County. And the teacher had to go to Aspermont to pick up his check. And so my dad and his friend and the teacher and his friend all rode over horseback, from Cotton Flat over to Aspermont. They went to through twenty-two gates, and the sand was blowing terrible. And when they got the check, they were right up on the town before they could see it because the sand was so bad. They got his check, and it must have been about thirty dollars or something, you know, in those days, teaching out there. But he had experiences teaching out there on that place. In those days, the boys all rode horseback to school or something, you know, and tied the horse out to the—until they got

ready to come home and so on. Or else, walked. And if I know my daddy, he rode the horse.  
[Laughs] I don't remember

DM:

Did he talk much about his school days out there? Do you remember anything about what he might have said?

MB:

I remember what some other people said about his school days. I don't remember so much Daddy talking about his school, but his teacher that used to live in Fisher County taught him. Well, he's C. J. Dalton, and he lived a long time after my dad did. But he told this—I asked people to tell some things about things that—and he told me this. He said, “I didn't tell this part.” But said, “When Jimmy—we had started school. We'd been riding horseback and everything together and been staying out there at the Hales. And he knew me real well, but he called me professor the very first day that he was in school, and said, ‘I don't know whether you know Professor Dalton or not, but the other teacher always let me sit over here by this window so I could spit tobacco juice out the window.’” And he said it was true. He did chew tobacco. But he was older by that time, because that's when this teacher that they went with to collect the—

DM:

Well did Professor Dalton let him sit by the window and spit out his tobacco out? [Laughs]

MB:

I guess he did. I don't know. Knowing Mr. Dalton—see Mr. Dalton was also my teacher there in Rotan.

DM:

Okay. Oops. Let's get stick another one [switches tapes]. Do you need to stop for a little bit, or can we go on?

MB:

No. Let's go on.

DM:

Okay let's give it about five second here. [Pause] Did you also go to school out at Cotton Flats?

MB:

No, no.

DM:

You were in Rotan by that time.

MB:

The twins went to school out there. And they were in, oh, second or third grade when my grandmother died, and we moved into town then to stay with my grandfather, and so the family could be going to a better school. And there wasn't very many people that—well I don't know how many students they had, but it wasn't very many, anyway. It was good thing to move into town.

DM:

It was out at Cotton Flats? It was pretty much one teacher teaching all the grades in a one room schoolhouse?

MB:

Yeah. And that teacher that taught the boys at the ranch was a very good friend of ours. And as long as my mother lived, she wrote me and sent me a Christmas card for my mother. And she was a postmistress in Winters, Texas. She went from there to be a postmistress at Winters Texas. That was a long friendship, not only—of course Mother, in her last days, she knew people, but she didn't know much about that. But I would write and talk to Ms. Kittrell and so on. But it was because of their friendship.

DM:

Was your mother and the teacher—were they about the same age?

MB:

Oh I presume so. I don't know.

DM:

Now she travelled with y'all on vacation, or something like that?

MB:

Well, I don't think that was the same teacher. I don't think that was Ms. Kittrell.

DM:

Okay. So anyway, your mother was able to have a social life with some of the other women in the area.



MB:

Yeah, she really wasn't very much out for society. She wanted to be at home, and see that we played in our own yard. She wouldn't let us go to other people's yards to play. Anybody could come to our house and play, but we weren't going to be going in all directions. She wanted to be there. She was there at meal time. Now Daddy always provided her with plenty of help. And so she could sew and she could embroidery and take care of the baby because there was always another baby coming along, you know.

DM:

For her, was sewing and embroidery was that an individual thing, or was there a quilting bee or anything like that?

MB:

Oh no, no, it was strictly her own, and she didn't want anybody to bother her. If she was counting crochet stitches or something. [Laughs] It was for her own enjoyment. But after she learned to sew, then from Aunt Molly, of course, you couldn't buy little boy clothes and things. You had to make things in those days. And you had to get a dressmaker to make your hat. I remember Mother had to go out to a milliner and the hat designed for that. That was a big deal in those days. But shoes were a problem. I don't know if they were very expensive or not. I really don't know. I know Mother had a real small shoe—foot—and I wasn't big until I could fit into her shoe—because she wore a size three. She weighed about seventy-five pounds. And then to get those twins—[inaudible]. [Laughter]. No, we had a good ranch life, and I feel a closeness to the ranch life, and I get real excited when I visit on a ranch or something. Now the younger children couldn't be interested—not at all interested in any of that. Now the twins—of course I inherited that saddle shop over there from the Swede. And I had to get my brother to come down and help me to take the inventory because I couldn't remember what everything was. Of course, I never did saddle my own horse anyhow.

DM:

Now you were mentioning the floods out there in the double mountain. I was also going to ask you a little bit about the weather out there. Do you remember any really, especially bad hail storms or tornados even?

MB:

No, but I remember lightning coming down the telephone line—big ball of fire that came down from down there. And I had heard about it, and I had seen it one time. And about five years ago, we were coming out from Mission along the railroad track and out to the place where we had our RV, and there's this ball of fire was going down. I said, "Look Brownie, that's what they used to have out at the ranch every once in a while." It would just go down that wire, bounce off on the ground.

DM:

You don't remember any tornados out there?

MB:

No.

DM:

How about real bad hail storms?

MB:

I don't remember anything like that at that time. I don't remember any problems that they had with the cattle. I guess Daddy was a pretty good cattle man. Well, they all were.

DM:

What kind of cattle did they raise anyhow?

MB:

They raised—

DM:

Hereford cattle?

MB:

Yeah.

DM:

Hereford. The red, white faced cattle.

MB:

Uh-huh. They brought them out with us, and they improved the herd, all along. See Oliver Loving improved a lot. A lot of people think of Oliver Loving as driving those longhorns. Well they were thrown in with some of the others, but they got the—he got the breed started, and then Charles Goodnight got interested in that. And that's how he got in with Adair, the Scotsman and so on. You know about that story.

DM:

Uh-huh.

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MB:

The thing is that people up in Colorado know all these stories about Goodnight, and they laugh real [laughs] some times because he lived up there for a long time in Pueblo, you see. He lived there. And they knew him, and they also told me stuff. But anyway.

DM:

Well, let's talk a little bit about Oliver Loving. You've done a fair amount of work there. But let me trace back and make sure I get this right, first of all. Your father's name was—what was your father's name?

MB:

James C. Loving.

DM:

James C. Loving. And your mother's name was?

MB:

Hazel Dennis.

DM:

Hazel Dennis. And your father's, father's name? Your grandfather's name?

MB:

Joseph Bourland Loving.

DM:

Joseph Bourland Loving, and his father was Oliver Loving.

MB:

Right.

DM:

Okay. And I kind of wanted to start here, at the—after Oliver Loving had died, you were telling me earlier off the tape about when they were bringing his body back. Can you tell me a little bit about that? They were bringing it back to Weatherford.

MB:

Well, see, it was true that he didn't want to be buried in a foreign country.

DM:

And he had died in Fort Sumner, is that right?

MB:

Yeah. See the Indians had shot him, and they had to take that arm off. And the surgeon was not the main surgeon—he was off on somewhere else and couldn't wait. And so the arm had to go. Now Charles Goodnight did come up there and stayed at the hospital and so on, when all this was taking place. But when—they buried him, they buried him there at Fort Sumner, and military furnished the casket. Well, you know, that body had begun to turn to charcoal. It was something about the metal that they'd used in it. But they had to bury him and keep him there until—well they got it straightened out, I guess, with—the oldest son, Oliver Loving's oldest son, had cattle up there with his dad. See they had the ranch on up the line. Goodnight had one down south of us, and Loving had one up north. So when the herds—well when Loving when he went—he came out and took over, and got things kind of straightened out, and it was quite a deal. But Goodnight did not bring the body home. Goodnight started out—he saw them off—he saw them leave, but he didn't bring that body home.

DM:

It was the son that brought it back.

MB:

My grandfather was on the trail too, see. This was the time when—he and Charles Goodnight was about the same age I guess, because both of them had been in the service.

DM:

Your grandfather and Charles Goodnight.

MB:

Uh-huh. And as far as I know, they showed no favoritism whatsoever, but he could—I've heard him talk to friends about different things that happened, and he used to keep up with a lot of people that were there. Anyway, he brought the body back, and the strange thing was—on the afternoon that they brought him home, Oliver Loving's wife said to her daughter, when they saw dust coming up and somebody coming in, they said, "There's Joe bringing his daddy home."

DM:

And it had been months and months.

MB:

And it was just a kind of a—we couldn't quite figure that out. We tried there at Weatherford to get that all figured out—how—because she couldn't have known.

DM:

She just had a feeling, you think?

MB:

It was just a feeling she had, because she didn't know he was dead. And then our—well she knew he was dead, I think. But she didn't know he was bringing him home.

DM:

There's no way she could've known, I guess, that he was approaching town—

MB:

There was no—I don't know that they even had a telegraph. I don't know whether they had a—anyway—

DM:

Well this was 1867.

MB:

They didn't know at that time. Because there was quite a group that came along. See, they were so afraid they would get robbed, some of that stuff that they had. It was a real pioneer story. But in fact, there were a lot of people that threw their cattle in together. On that trail, the times were so hard—

DM:

This was right after the Civil War—

MB:

Yes.

DM:

The Civil War had ended in 1865.

MB:

Right after the Civil War. See when Oliver Loving—the Loving Trail went up, it went to Denver and it went down the old Arkansas River. Then he retired because the Indians were so bad. And he had to get some help to get his money out of—when the war was on—and they didn't want him to come back, you know. He was in a foreign country. There was a little problem there, but finally they got it through. And that's where Kit Carson helped him a lot.

DM:

Kit Carson helped him get back down to Texas, didn't he?

MB:

Back into Texas. That was a part of that. Anyway, it was—well I forgot what I was going to say.

DM:

Well I had read where Oliver Loving, during the Civil War, shipped some cattle over to the Mississippi River for the Confederacy, but he never got paid because the Confederate government crumbled. Did you ever hear anything about that?

MB:

No, you're going in the wrong direction. This is when he went up there, see. He got paid in Confederate money for taking the cattle. But when they let him out and let him come back, there was quite a bit of money. Quite a bit of money. And it was Confederacy money—no good. So that was one of the reasons that he was ready to take that other herd up. And they needed—but the people around in Parker County, their cattle were starving. They didn't have any rain, it was a real drouth, and they didn't know what to do with that cattle. They were just—and so they asked him to come out of retirement and take the herd up. He said, "What I will do—I will let you go, and take care of your herd. You and your cowboys will take care of your herd, and you can—I'll throw in, go with you." Well Goodnight had a few cattle, and he had also been a scout for Sul Ross, Captain Sul Ross, so he could scout the country. He knew how to do it. So he went along as a scout. That's how it happened.

DM:

He was one of several really.

MB:

What?

DM:

He was one of several that accompanied Loving on this trail?

MB:

He was the scout for the Loving—and what is now known as the Loving-Goodnight Trail. But he was just a scout on it when it started. But as he talked, years later on, his version kept growing, see, and so on. And so it was—a lot of—

DM:

He was doing a little self-promoting. [Laughs]



MB:

Yes, uh-huh. He was always good at that. That's the reason he couldn't get a herd started on his own, he and his step-brother. See he had a pretty hard life. When he came down from Amarillo, his mother had married and had hard times and so on and so forth. And he didn't have a very good start. But Oliver Loving seemed to take him in hand and help. Well in one census page I was looking at, and I guess it was Palo Pinto I was looking at. Anyway, there's Oliver Loving and Charles Goodnight on the same page of the census.

DM:

Oh.

MB:

Yeah, right. I have a copy of it somewhere. I [inaudible], so I better find out, hadn't I?

DM:

Oh wait, you know we have these black and white photographs of Oliver Loving, but can you give me a physical description based on what you've heard. Like, do you know the color of his hair? Do you know about how tall he is?

MB:

Yeah. He was—I'm not real sure how tall he was. The Loving boys were not very tall. They weren't very tall people, but I think he was taller than the sons were. He had red hair. He had kind of a titian red hair. And in the book, *The Lovings in Texas*, it has an asterisk by everybody that had the red hair. And now, my dad was—it's strange, my dad's hair was red when he was young. And then later on, his hair turned black. But when he began to get older, he would have red whiskers and white whisker and black whiskers. He doesn't clean [?] when he shaved. So my son has red hair, and I thought it was going on down. But there's several generations—this goes on up, but he had red hair. His reputation was that he was a kind man, but always very thoughtful about then [?]. He belonged to the Masonic Lodge. He was buried with the first rites there. And some of the things that had gone on in that country, you know it was good thing that they could kind of band together and do things. They have—as far as I know—now when he came from Denver, he brought enough—five gold rings for his five daughters. And they didn't have the ring at Weatherford when they had that trail driver's thing. But they had the pictures of him.

DM:

Oh really?

MB:

Uh-huh, and of course, those people can tell a lot of stories. There is one there called—a cousin called Smith, and when we had that trail driver's thing, she was already ninety-two years old, I

guess. Anyway, she's getting along. I said, "I'm just about the oldest one here," and they said, "No, she's older." So they had us—took pictures of us and so on. Anyway, they took quite a few pictures at that time. You can go back in some of your old Fort Worth papers about that time. Find out some statements that I made to them. Anyway, he was not a heavy-set man. He was not a heavy-set man. My grandfather, I presume, looked a lot like him. And because they rode the horses and everything, they never did get a big pot belly on them, you know.

DM:

Worked hard, and kept that off, I guess.

MB:

Uh-huh. Well riding you know does that for you.

DM:

I guess so.

MB:

But my grandfather, I can remember that most of the time, when summer came, he went into his summer suit. And he wore white seersucker suit with a panama hat with a band around it and walked to town every day and got a quarter's worth of candy. And it was a big sack of jaw breakers. All the kids would see Grandpa walking home, and they'd all come to our house right quick because he's going to have that candy for them. But he'd go down and get the mail, and that was part of it. But he always dressed just like a gentleman, the way they dressed at the time. And that's the way Grandpa always dressed.

DM:

Let's see, you had given me some general history on Oliver Loving's family too. You said that as far as you can tell from the genealogical records that he had a father who fought in the Revolution, possibly with Light Horse Harry Lee.

MB:

Uh-huh.

DM:

That was the father of Oliver Loving. Now Oliver Loving was born in 1812 and came to Texas—and that was in Kentucky, Right?

MB:

Right. Hopkins County, Kansas.

DM:

Came to Texas in 1843—is that somewhere around there?

MB:

He came to Texas. He and his cousin were kind of in the same boat. They weren't going to inherit any land. They were living on land that they had—was given to the army people, military people.

DM:

Okay. Oliver Loving's father had gotten a land grant for time served in the American Revolution.

MB:

Yeah, and the other one—they had had the grant for the other one too. Anyway, Oliver Loving couldn't see much future in what that was, and there was no land for him. And so he married this girl. They lived in the next county to him, and her father was a representative—first representative out of Kentucky. And anyway, Oliver Loving's father Brendan, surveyed the land from there. And the surveys of that land in Kentucky is very amusing because they would say so many feet to the oak tree, so and so. There's no way of telling where all that is. But it was on a place called Pond Creek. And I said to the lady in that genealogy business in Kentucky, I said, "How did he ever get from Pond Creek, down the river. How did they get a riverboat to do that?" Because he came on the riverboat when he brought his family. But he and this cousin came down to see what was going on down in Texas. So they came down here, and got bought into the Edwards—

DM:

Peter's Colony?

MB:

Uh-huh colony. They bought into it, and got set up. Well, he then, it would get too crowded down there, and so that's when he went up to that area. And the other cousin went east, and that branch lives over there. And the Lovings in Texas have the two families, the two sections.

DM:

Where in East Texas did the cousin end up?

MB:

Well, I think it's somewhere around Washington on the Brazos, you know in the capital, in that area because they were all handling all that stuff from there.

DM:

But Oliver Loving ended up in Parker County and then Palo Pinto area?

MB:

Well, he was down there, and he put in for the grant down in—for the colony down there. And then, he went on—he went back home, they decided this is what they were going to do. They also visited an uncle up in the territory across, you know. And they decided that they'd come back. So Oliver Loving had five children at the time. So they got on this riverboat, with some stock. I think there were five slaves. Her father had given her the slaves. Oliver Loving was not in favor of slavery as such. And he was always a very kind, and we used to hear from those blacks. Even back—my grandfather would tell about them—some of them come to check on him and so on. So anyway, they had them on there, stock, five children, one of the children fell off of that flat boat into the river, had to get—it was worth an interesting story. But they settled then—

DM:

Did they save that child that fell off?

MB:

Oh yeah, yeah.

DM:

Must have been scary.

MB:

But somewhere I saw a picture, I don't know whether it was special or not—of one of those old river boats coming—those flat boats. And that's the first time I really realized—I'd always wondered how they got all that down there. But I didn't realize it's just like a big van or something like riding on. [Laughs]

DM:

Do you know which way they came? If they came down where the Red comes in and came up the Red, maybe to Jefferson or somewhere in there? Or how they—

MB:

Yeah, they came to Jefferson.

DM:

They came to Jefferson. Okay.

MB:

They came to Jefferson.

DM:

Because that was a big port back then.

MB:

Yeah. They came to Jefferson. And I asked the fellow down in Jefferson, I said, "Why was my grandfather born in"—my grandfather was born the year they came in here, you see. In 1945.<sup>2</sup> And when Texas joined the United States [inaudible], that's when my grandfather was born. He was born in Texas. That makes me a real Texan. Anyway, this fellow said, "Well this—Jefferson was on—everybody that had cotton and everything, up in that part of the country, had to bring it down through Jefferson," because the big lake was there at that time—hadn't broken up the big lake. He said, "That's why then they went on." They went from Jefferson on up there to that—to get away from the crowd and to get on up there. And gave up this right to this colony down here. And then he went—let's see, where did he stop first? Anyway, that's where he got the idea of the dray line. Because he had to have—they had to have material brought in, couldn't run to the store and get anything. So to feed his family, he built a store out there. He got this dray line to the coast, and he took cattle to Shreveport, and materials, whatever they could trade you know, and that was just the main truck line.

DM:

So it was a freight line.

MB:

Yeah, yeah. They call it a dray line.

DM:

Dray line. Okay.

MB:

And then his son got old enough to help, see. So he was taking care of the business. They had a pretty good store. They had a good living.

DM:

Where was that store exactly?

MB:

Well it was out there toward Belknap.

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<sup>2</sup> Likely here 1845.



DM:

It was pretty near the Overland. What would later be—well Belknap—

MB:

I don't know exactly where that store was. Oliver Loving's house was Jacksboro, out south of Jacksboro. I'll have to see. I've got a book on Belknap, a little pamphlet that they put out there. It may tell something about that. But it's mostly about the history of Belknap. But anyway, he had to feed his own family. And this was a good way to get rid of the stock, because they needed the cattle back east for the meat. And so, to drive the cattle down there. Now that wasn't the trail. But then he hit on this idea—I'll send it right straight up to Chicago. So he sent this bunch of herd of cattle to Chicago, and left his son Will in charge of it.

DM:

Now this was the 1857 run, I think. Just a little before the Civil War, just a few years before the Civil War.

MB:

Yeah. Somewhere, I forgot when that—exactly when.

DM:

So he really started these cattle drives to Shreveport, then he did this one up to Chicago.

MB:

Yeah, see he had his own cattle. See he went into the ranching business and got the store because they had—the army had to have—he had to get the supplies for the army. He brought all of that stuff, contracted by the government with that. And Kit Carson was there at that time. That's why he knew how honest Oliver Loving was [inaudible]. So while he was doing that, he'd just furnish his own store.

DM:

Well it's really smart. Because he was sending cattle back—initially sending them back to Shreveport, but rather than coming back empty handed, he was bringing goods back from Shreveport. So it was making it work both ways.

MB:

Yeah, yeah. That's exactly. Yeah. And he was a pretty smart fellow, I guess. He had a big family. But they all, all of his sons were either bankers or lawyers or something, it was all old—and his daughters married well, some of the people out at the fort, and one of them did. And they all married well. It was a well-thought of family. And it was—something to kind of be proud of. But so many people think you know, just a dumb cowboy got on that horse, took those cattle out.



DM:

The successful ones were good businessmen, though, weren't they?

MB:

And there was a lot of good—there had to be a lot of good business in that to provide for that many people going and so on. Well Ikard, see, was still a slave.

DM:

Now tell me about Ikard. Can you explain to us what—tell me who Ikard is?

MB:

Well, Ikard was the black slave that went along.

DM:

Now you're talking about in the 1866 or so cattle drive.

MB:

Uh-huh. Yeah. Yeah. And he was—he somehow—Dr. Ikard brought them the slave in to—I don't know whether there was a trade in with Oliver Loving or something. Oliver Loving didn't trade in slaves. But somehow they accumulated. And he was one of those somehow. I forgot just exactly what that was. But the slave took the master's name. Well he took the name Ikard of course. And this lawyer in Wichita Falls is white, and it was his grandfather. He got to digging in his history, then, when that story of Larry McMurtry came out. He got to digging in his history and found out some things and wrote this paper on it. But anyhow, he was the black man, and he— [tape clicks]

DM:

Whoops, let me switch this over, real quick. [Shuffles tapes] Give it about five second here. So Ikard was a black man involved in the cattle—

MB:

So Ikard went along to help with the cattle, and he wasn't the cook—I don't know who the cook was, but he handled Goodnight's affairs for him. They could trust him, and he would see that Goodnight got things done like he's supposed to. And he was well-trained before he got together on the cattle trail. But he has a—his children, and great-grandchildren and so on, still live in East Texas around there, somewhere around Corsicana or somewhere, I believe is what it was. Anyway, they were at the trail drivers' thing there at Weatherford.

DM:

Oh yes, you said his granddaughter was there.

MB:

And there is a picture, and somewhere I have it, and it came out in the Fort Worth paper, or the Weatherford paper, about that time. And it had my picture and Ikard's granddaughter, great-granddaughter, and so on. And Ikard was there—the white Ikard. We were all standing there, talking about what they would have thought—wouldn't it—isn't it strange that we're all here talking about it. Our folks would never believe that we'd be getting together like this, and talking about something like this. And I was talking real big, with my mouth open, you know. Just a terrible picture of me. But it's got those picture of all three of us in there. And I think that was pretty neat.

DM:

That was in the Fort Worth papers, the Weatherford papers, about ten years ago? Is that right?

MB:

I guess it was. When did we say—where did we get a '94?

DM:

Ninety-four, was the thing up in Denver. Colorado Springs.

MB:

Yeah. Colorado Springs.

DM:

But this is the thing in Weatherford you're talking about. The trail drivers.

MB:

I guess it would've been about '90.

DM:

It was the trail drivers' reunion—

MB:

They were honoring the trail drivers. It wasn't a reunion.

DM:

Well, yeah, that's what I meant.

MB:

It was honoring Goodnight and Loving. It was honoring Goodnight and Loving. And they sent out the word to all the people, and all the newspapers around the country, if you know

anything—so they had quite a few articles there to show. And Ikard read about it in the Wichita papers, I think. The reason he got interested in it and wondering if it was his—anyway he made quite a collection of things. And they asked me if they could keep what I had, and I said, “Yes, you can go ahead and keep it.” And so it’ll be there on file, at the heritage center in Weatherford. And they’ll know who I am. They took pictures of me as kind of the historian of the group. And the time breaking the ribbon for it, you know, for that [inaudible]. And other older cousins were there too—we’re standing right side by side.

DM:

Well, Larry McMurtry wasn’t there, was he?

MB:

No, he wouldn’t dare show up.

DM:

Would he had been tarred and feathered if he’d showed up?

MB:

Yes, he certainly would’ve been. Because the whole town—in the Fort Worth paper, there’s a whole page of what people thought about Larry McMurtry and what he did. They thought he had really, really done them dirty to write that sort of thing. And insinuate that it was those people. He never ever called them by name in that book.

DM:

But he patterned his characters after their careers.

MB:

Yeah, he did that. He took them. But everybody knew who they were talking about, see. And that was the bad part. But shortly after, when he found out how he stood with the Lovings, he wrote *The Streets of Laredo*. Have you ever read that?

DM:

No, sure haven’t.

MB:

Read *The Streets of Laredo* after you go home.

DM:

Okay.

MB:

He tells in there—and this is Charles Goodnight's story, taking from some of the trail drivers. And he mentions my old partner. Actually they were never partners. He was my old partner, Oliver Loving.

DM:

And then he puts him in a good night—Oliver Loving in a good light in *The Streets of Laredo* then?

MB:

He was dead by that time, when *Streets of Laredo* came. Charles Goodnight was recalling. But he calls him by name.

DM:

Yeah, well how does Charles Goodnight refer to him in *Streets of Laredo*? As a—

MB:

Oh as a very good, honorable man. Everything he had, he's giving Oliver Loving credit for.

DM:

But the main problem with *Lonesome Dove* and all that was that McMurtry was not portraying Loving's character like Loving was.

MB:

That's true.

DM:

That's it. Okay.

MB:

Yeah. But they called him by another name, but he still—the people could see—because he did a good job of the story. He did a good job of the story. And it was—I kind of like the lady in the gas office, she wasn't going to read that trash. [Laughs]

DM:

Did you ever think of her name, by the way?

MB:

Kemp.

DM:  
Kemp.

MB:  
K-e-m-p.

DM:  
I know the name. I've heard that name from around—

MB:  
What they do—she belongs to this association that goes out and finds these old graves that maybe nobody knows. They look up the history on them and mark them and so on. And they had been out there, and the Milsap cemetery had been—the sand had drifted over it, and they had been out there and cleaned that all off.

DM:  
By the way, what is your Milsap ancestor's name out there?

MB:  
Fuller Milsap.

DM:  
Fuller Milsap.

MB:  
Uh-huh. That was my grandmother's daddy.

DM:  
Okay. And he was probably related to the Milsap's that was the defender of the Alamo somehow.

MB:  
Yeah, some way in there through there. They came from Mississippi. My grandmother was about ten years old. That time, she was their only child. And I don't know whether they lost the children or what. But they came to Milsap without that—but his father-in-law was—I think he was the first judge in Palo Pinto. Named Pollard. Named Pollard.

DM:  
Also, you mentioned another ancestor maybe back down another line that was a Texas Ranger. Was it John Williams?

MB:  
Yeah.

DM:  
Big John Williams?

MB:  
That one called him Big John Williams. They established that station at San Saba area.

DM:  
Oh okay. Fort Concho down there?

MB:  
No. San Saba.

DM:  
Oh San Saba, down in Menard.

MB:  
San Saba's on—well it's at San Saba. But the river—you're talking about river, the San Saba River. But that's where these people went on up to Sweetwater. The families did. Of course, Big John was killed. What he was doing—he went back to—and that was bad Indian country. And he went out—they went out—his close friend, and the Indians shot him. And John Williams went back to get the friend, and the Indians shot the horses out from under the other fellow. And Big John Williams went back to get him, and they shot him. So he was—shot the other man's horse and shot him. He had come from up in Arkansas somewhere.

DM:  
How is he related to you? Have you traced it exactly?

MB:  
Well my mother was a Dennis, and her mother was a Williams.

DM:  
Well you've got a lot of interesting family history.

MB:  
I've got it from every direction.



DM:

Isn't that something?

MB:

And my brothers and sisters don't care. [Laughs] I've got all this junk about—it gets kind of depressing, they won't even go help me, you know, to find things. I've found a lot of stuff over at Sweetwater. And you know, my little sister at Snyder never had been over there looked at all of that stuff.

DM:

It seems like there's maybe one out of every twenty family members that's really interested in the history of the family.

MB:

Well it gets in your blood. You just get so curious. And the things you find out are so surprising some time. You know, there's good and bad.

DM:

Well, some people feel a closer link with their ancestors than other people do. There's a lot of people just don't ever think of their ancestors too much.

MB:

Yeah, that's the difference in us and the Mexicans. [Laughs] The Mexicans can tell you all about the way on back. They can go family generations—any of them down there can do that. But the future is something else. [Laughs]

DM:

You didn't ever teach any history, did you?

MB:

No, I didn't.

DM:

Always music?

MB:

I taught—anything that I know about history, I learned from somewhere else. From an art course, or some kind of—history was not my thing. That was pretty boring stuff.

DM:

I should have gotten on tape, too, when we were talking about you earlier. You went down to Sul Ross, is that right? Went to Sul Ross University.

MB:

Uh-huh.

DM:

And then you taught. Where did you teach first?

MB:

I taught at a little place that there's a gin and a little store—out at a little place called Vancourt. And it's ranch community. I had five students. First year I was out there, we had two teachers. And we had—but some of those kids moved away and so they kept me and let the other one go. Because I was the one—it was the first year they required a music teacher in schools.

DM:

Nineteen thirty-seven, right?

MB:

Uh-huh. And I was the music teacher. And so anyway, I taught the other classes too, but I taught them music. I had one little first grade boy, and I've tried to find out what happened to that child. He was a lawyer in Lubbock, and his name was Adrian Anderson. And when I was up there, I was looking. I couldn't find an Adrian Anderson, but he was a lawyer up there for a long time. I taught him in the first grade, and he graduated from the University of Texas magnum cum laude. [Laughs]

DM:

And you never found him?

MB:

And I never have found him. I guess, he would probably still be alive. He'd be an old man and retired, but then I have a bunch of students that are all retired. But I would love to walk in on him someday—someday, and say, "Do you remember me? I was your first grade teacher." I think they said his son may be a lawyer up there.

DM:

Yeah, the name is real familiar. That's interesting. And then you went from—well Vancourt, what's that near?

MB:

Well I taught out there the three years, and then in 1940, I finished getting my degree. See I went to San Angelo first.

DM:

So Vancourt's near Alpine somewhere?

MB:

No, Vancourt's just south of San Angelo.

DM:

Oh, it's just south of San Angelo.

MB:

I went to San Angelo to junior college—when it was San Angelo Junior College. That's where they came to me and asked me to come out there and teach. And I—well I needed to teach because I was on a scholarship from going there to the college. It was a pretty hard times you know. We had been through some hard times. Anyway, I went to—when I got my degree then, they came to me again, and I said I didn't want to teach, go to Eola to teach, which was the next little town down there. And I wasn't going to try to take those kids take those kids into junior high. I had five kids that were all little fifth graders, fifth, sixth, and—let's see, fifth, sixth, and seventh. And then I had this little first grader and a little third grader. That's what I taught. And so I said, "No, it wouldn't be fair to the kids to teach out there." And then they asked me to come into San Angelo to teach out at McGill School, which is out on the west side of town. And that was the year, 1940s, when I got my degree from Sul Ross. I could have still been teaching, but they were requiring, hoping you know. The law was—we had a lot of teachers, in fact, still going to school to get their degree when they'd been teaching for twenty years [laughs] and never had gotten anything. Then I taught out there a year and a half, and the teacher that was teaching music in San Angelo died. And you want to flip that light on for me?

DM:

Oh, it's okay. I can see it just fine.

MB:

Well it's going to be pretty bright on you.

DM:

Okay. Oh, that does help, thanks. So you went on in to San Angelo then?

MB:

Went on in to San Angelo, and taught at the old Fort Concho school. It was quite an interesting experience there with all of that. I teach music half a day, and then I'd teach sixth grade [inaudible]. And it was quite an experience. You have to take your record player downstairs to the basement, upstairs to the third floor for that. You know I went to that—my husband's squadron was having a meeting in San Angelo, and I said, "I'm going over to see what that old school house is" because I had heard they were thinking about tearing it down. And I went over and asked. And they said, "Oh yes. Well go ahead and look around." So I did. The secretary had told me that. I went around, looked around. You know that old school still had the pictures of George Washington in the same places and everything. I went up to my classroom, and there was the fire escape. And physically it would look exactly the same. But I made some history there. I was the first teacher that ever—married teacher that taught there in San Angelo.

DM:

You were the first teacher that what?

MB:

Married teacher.

DM:

Oh you were the first married teacher?

MB:

Yeah, I married while I was teaching there. And nobody else—they weren't hiring anybody. So after that, I said, "Well, you can either let me get married and I'll teach, or not. And that's the way it is." So they went to the Superintendent, and he scratched his head, and he said, "We're sure running short of teachers with this war on and everything." And well, we'll let her go ahead and marry. And so I married in 1942, October 1942. And the other incident was, we had Mexican children within two blocks of our school. But they couldn't go to our school. They had to go way out to Ben Ficklin out there to school. And there wasn't a bus running out there either to take them. But anyhow, I had a little girl in my room that was real blonde. And her little sister started to school, turned out it was her half-sister, but they're all the same family. And this little girl wasn't—she was dark-complected and dark hair. And they looked over and see that child and said, "Hmm, they're letting Mexicans go to that school now." And so they—you know how they got upset. No you don't—you people your age can't imagine how things like that went. Anyhow, they decided that they were going to have to let her—since they had the other family there, and they lived in the school district—that they'd let her have to stay. Well, the Mexican people began to come in. The ladies dressed up and came to PTA meetings, and were always very lady-like and everything. And the next thing you knew, there were children coming in. But when I went back this time, I saw one Anglo teacher, and the principal and everybody else was

Hispanic. And so I told him—I went by, I wanted to talk to the principal to tell him what I had done. And he said that he's glad to know that. And when they tore the old building down and built this fancy building right next to it there you know, he asked me to come down for the dedication of the building. So one night I came in, I was down in the valley, and I came in, and my husband said—of course, he stayed home and watched a football game or something—said, “There was a strange call a while ago. They wanted to talk to Miss Loving. ‘Well I think you are talking about my wife. Mabel Loving?’” And they wanted to tell him about the dedication, and they didn't know where to send the address but they wanted to call and tell me that, because they wanted me there when they had the first Mexican child in the school and the first married teacher. [Laughs] So see, I make history everywhere I go. [Laughs]

DM:

When did you come out to Crane?

MB:

I came out to Crane after we'd been working in Washington, D.C. When my husband went overseas in 1944, I went back with him on a delay en-route, as they call it, a twelve day delay en-route. And while I was there, my brother-in-law—his brother-in-law—said, “I made an appointment for you to take the civil service test today.” They were wanting us to come back there to live, see, when my husband got out of service. So he came to—he made that appointment, and I said, “Okay, I'll go down and take one.” Never had taken one. Of course, it was a snap, you know, because I had all these test and measurement courses and all that stuff, you know. And you can just breeze through if you don't have to stop and wonder about anything like that. So they thought they had a young genius. So they wanted me right away to work, and I said, “Well I don't know now about working for the government. I just don't know about that.” Well, they finally persuaded me that there was tremendous difference in the salary from what I was making in San Angelo. And I said, “I'll go home and finish my school year,” and this was in April, “And I'll finish my school year, and I'll come back up then.” I think I had everybody wondering whether I was really going to or not. And of course with Brownie's sister and her husband there, they looked after me and so on. Anyhow, I went to work for General Accounting office, and I had some real interesting jobs. I reconciled state department accounts—was the last thing I did. But I went up there, and I was bonded and signed for the Controller General of the United States. I signed my name Mabel L. Brown right under his. For all of the star route mail carriers, in the States in the procession [? inaudible]. And anyway, while I was up there one time, they were—one of the girls couldn't imagine, you know, someone coming up from Texas. It's kind of a curiosity up there for them. And so, they were selling bonds—and I threw in a lot of extra stuff that you don't want to know. I'm sorry.

DM:

Oh no, no, no. I'm interested in hearing about it.



MB:

Well anyhow, she was real nosy. She had worked up on the hill for a long time for some fellow, and he went out, and she worked up there in his office for years and years. So she—they transferred her down to General Accounting office. But she was curious and a chatter box and a pest. And so they were selling bonds, and it so happened that I had some cattle. My uncle—I had them out at my Uncle Don's place. And he said he needed that pasture land, and he'd like to buy them, and he'd buy them from me. So I said, "Okay. Just send me the check. Whatever you think it is." So he sent me the check, and I put it into savings bonds at one of those drives. Well, she couldn't stand it, and [inaudible] how in the world do you get money to buy bonds with. She said, "How do you do that?" I said, "Well, there's just, you know, ways of doing things." "Well, how did you get that much money." And of course I got twenty-five dollar bonds, see. So there was a few there, and she couldn't count them as fast—but anyway, she's taking all of this in. And I said, "Well I sold some cattle." That was all it took. She visualized me as a big, rich Texas cowgirl—you know, a ranch woman. That was so funny. And she never got that other impression out. But she found out, just a few dollars made a lot of difference. I don't know. I was very fortunate in that every heifer had another heifer. [Laughs]

DM:

Well what year did you finish up your work there?

MB:

In General Accounting office?

DM:

In Washington?

MB:

Umm, Brownie was in China. So when Brownie came back from China in 1946, he went back to work for the government. And he transferred to General Accounting office. He worked in a different section. We walked in the building in the morning together and walked out at night. But it was such a bad place to work. There was such a racial problem there. They had—it was bad.

DM:

So you were determined to get back to Texas?

MB:

And so, he always liked Texas. He didn't want to go to Nebraska. His folks just nearly flipped when he didn't choose to go back to Nebraska, but that was too cold for him. He didn't want any part of that. And he liked Texas. So we came down here. And we went to work then. He went to work for—oh, about a year we travelled around and kind of looked to see what we wanted to



do—have a child or anything. Spend our money. But anyhow, we looked for places to do. And finally he went to work for Gulf Oil Corporation out here.

DM:

Okay. Here at Crane.

MB:

Uh-huh. Out west of town. There were forty-six houses out there, and we lived out there. People would say, “How could you stand to come from Washington D.C. out here in the sand hills to where the [inaudible] was.” But I just—anywhere.

DM:

And did you start teaching right away?

MB:

No I wouldn't. I was determined I was going to have a family. And so I did get one little boy. But I waited then until he was almost ready to go to school. This house sat out there. We lived in this house all this time in that. Hal is forty-nine years old. And he was born after we moved into this house. Then in 1955, the oil companies went out of real estate business. So they bought, sold, practically gave the houses to people, but we had to move. So we moved into Crane. Well then when I moved into Crane, the superintendent was crying a lot on the phone to get me down there to substitute one time because they needed a music teacher and I had said I didn't want to teach music, and I didn't want to substitute, and I didn't want to teach until Hal got in school. Well he wasn't quite in school yet, but he was needing a music teacher real bad, real bad. I said, “Well I've been wondering about whether I wanted to go back to teaching. What I wanted to do.” And of course Hal thought that was just great that Momma was going down to school, you know. But he hadn't gone there yet. Didn't send him to kindergarten. So I wouldn't go down to teach. I did the substitute a few days, and then that girl was—I don't know what—they had been putting up with an alcoholic all year and they didn't know it. Oh they'd had a terrible time with it. They couldn't keep her on the job or anything. So finally—they put her in some kind of—they had a cut here—they a program to get her dried out and so on. And I took the job the rest of the year, and that was 1956. So in 1976, I was sixty years old, and I thought it was time for me to retire and do some other things. So I did.

DM:

Now you also mentioned off record earlier, that in 1937, you were one of the first in on the Teacher Retirement program here in Texas.

MB:

Yeah, when I went in to sign up to teach the first time, Mr. Parker was the county superintendent, and incidentally, the man that was head of Teacher Retirement for a long time, in later years, taught math at the junior high in San Angelo, and lived down the street and I had known him then. But didn't think I could live down the street from where I was going to San Angelo College. No, I take that back, while I was teaching at Gill. Anyway, he said, "They're organizing. I think it's going to be a good thing. You'll have a choice this year whether you want to. But I think next year everybody's going to have to. And if I were you, I believe I'd join, if I could afford it." So I said, "Okay, whatever you think. You should know, Mr. Parker," so he did. I did. And I stayed with it all these years. Except I finally drew my money out, and during this time then, because it cost you five dollars to keep it in there since its just dormant, see. And I thought, well there's no use in that. So I drew it out, and then when I decided I would go back into teaching, they had a stipulation that you had to teach one day in 1951 before you could put your money back in. And I didn't. And I wasn't going to lie about it or sign any affidavits that I did, because I didn't. And so, I went for several years before they took that stipulation out.

DM:

Wasn't that a funny little rule?

MB:

I thought that was real strange, and I was at a teacher's meeting they had over there in Odessa. And they had a booth there. And I said, "Well it really upset me to think that I couldn't pay it back in." And he said, "They're changing the rule. It's going into effect right away. And you can put your money back in." So I did. Good thing I did and all that. But these funny little things like that little rule, and then it's a long time before you find out about it.

DM:

Uh-huh. It's really bad.

MB:

Yeah, I was one of the first ones. I was also—with the year that I taught, that I started teaching at Vancourt, was the year that they required every child in Texas to be exposed to music—supposed to have a music teacher. And since I had done so much work, I had done some piano concerts around the country and so on. And I used to accompany the fellow that came out of Austin to the schools to visit. I believe his name was Murdock—and he was quite a tenor. He loved to sing. And he liked for me to accompany him. And so I've got quite a bit. So when it was time, they said, well we need this test out at Vancourt. They came into the college and said, "We need a teacher that can teach music." They said, "Well we got her for you." I have never asked for a job in my life.

DM:

Well isn't that great?

MB:

I have never asked for a job. Somebody came, gave it to me.

DM:

That's wonderful. [Laughs] That doesn't happen much anymore.

MB:

I tell my son that, and he said, "Mom are you sure that's a fact." I said, "Yes and I'll tell you how it all would happen." [Tape clicked] Did it click off?

DM:

Yes it did. And I think that's probably about—is there anything else you're going to want to add to the interview. I've kept you for quite a long time.

MB:

Oh well, you can see I'm quite a talker.

DM:

The other one is still running [audio recorder].

MB:

I don't know. If you think of something else that you'd like for me to tell you—

DM:

Well I might be giving you a call sometime, if that's all right. Something might occur to me and I think, you know I should have asked about that. I might just give a call down here if it's okay.

MB:

Well I'm going to try to find. I've got a lot of that stuff. But as I said, I've found all that old music that I had—

***End of Recording***