

2-24-1966

## Interview no. 56

Mrs. C. C. Chase

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### Recommended Citation

Interview with Mrs. C. C. Chase by Leon C. Metz, 1966, "Interview no. 56," Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso.

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO  
INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Mrs. C. C. Chase  
INTERVIEWER: Leon C. Metz  
PROJECT: El Paso Area History  
DATE OF INTERVIEW: February 24, 1966  
TERMS OF USE: Unrestricted  
  
TAPE NO.: 56  
TRANSCRIPT NO.: 56  
TRANSCRIBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE TRANSCRIBED: \_\_\_\_\_

BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Daughter of Albert Bacon Fall.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Incidents and personalities of early 20th Century El Paso and Las Cruces, including Pat Garrett, Billy the Kid, Captain Greet; and the career and personality of her father, recollections of her mother.

1 hour (1 7/8 tape speed); 31 pages

Mrs. C. C. Chase  
by Leon C. Metz  
February 24, 1966

C: Well, what were we talking about last?

M: Well, we talked mainly about some of your experiences in the Southwest and New Mexico and down into Old Mexico, and your father and so on.

C: Just a little bit of everything.

M: Almost.

C: What I'd like to talk about more is my mother.

M: Well, let's hear some about your mother.

C: All the writers of history in the wild and wooly West have neglected entirely to mention the fact that women were out here, too, and that there were plenty of lovely, refined homes. We weren't all wearing two guns, riding horseback through the desert and the mountains hunting somebody to shoot at. One of the oldest characters that I have known out here was Mrs. Frank Coe.

M: Was she the wife of one of the Coe brothers?

C: Yes. She was one of the most refined, lovely women I ever knew. And the first thing she did when she married and came out here was to gather people together for a Sunday school. There was no church, no religious possibility for any of them to get to, so she had them come and sing songs in the open.

M: Where was this at, Mrs. Chase?

C: Over at Glencoe. She and her children built a lovely little chapel in Glencoe, a rock chapel, and they had services there every week.

M: Is it still standing?

C: Still standing, yes. And when she got the people together to sing songs when there was practically nothing here at home--it was bare--the cowboys would drift in from different parts so that she had a whole gang around on Sundays. Later on her husband had picked up quite a bit of money with his cattle and

so on. He was making a trip to El Paso to bring back some of the things that they needed, and he asked her what she wanted. He said, "I have enough now to buy some furniture. Just what would you like to have?" And she said, "Well, children could grow up with a piano and the furniture wouldn't do them any good." So he brought a grand piano out to her--one of those great big things. It sat in the bare parlor with a tarpaulin over it except when she'd have her singers come in. And always she was a dignified, lovely woman; you couldn't be with her that you didn't feel better. Now that was one of the original Western women that I knew--that is, women that happened to be in the West.

M: About when was that, Mrs. Chase?

C: Oh, well, it was before the time of Billy the Kid. Of course, they thought Billy the Kid was just all right, as everybody else did here. And Pat Garrett made himself very unwelcome in Lincoln County by his killing Billy the Kid, particularly as he did--his silhouette in the window with the moonlight shining on it and Garrett came to the door and just shot through it. So he had to leave and go over to Las Cruces. And in Las Cruces there were some of the loveliest homes and people. They don't stop to consider that New Mexico as a territory was governed more or less by Washington and the officers of the law and everything else that we had out here, the people were appointed by the President through the United States and they were usually of the upper crust of society. They were sons and daughters of some prominent senator or somebody that had made a name for himself in the East. Now those are the people that really amounted to something. Of course, you got a desert spot, and it was also a very good place for men who committed crimes in the eastern part of the United States to come and

hide, because we had plenty of hiding places in the mountains. And since I talked to you the other day, Mr. McGaw sent, by my son, a book that he had just gotten from Mr. W. W. Hutchinson, Dean Rhodes editor executor, that was the man who wrote it. The title of it was Another Verdict for Oliver Lee.

M: Oh, I saw that. I have a copy of it.

C: You have? Well, I couldn't go on with it very well. I couldn't quite catch who was saying what.

M: I couldn't either, to tell you the truth.

C: Well, I guess he's got his style. Well, that's where Mr. Rhodes... Somebody was telling my father... Charlie Bassett in El Paso told Daddy once, he said, "You know, I read all of Mr. Rhodes' works, but I can't keep up with him. He's hard to follow." And Daddy remarked that he wrote as he rode. He'd go along a certain path and see something move across the way and he'd run to investigate, and he'd ride right on off, and he'd bring in that when it wasn't really kin to the rest of his story at all. And that /is what/ I thought when I read that book. "Oh, he's gotten Mr. Rhodes' style--meandering a whole /lot/."

I knew Eugene Cunningham very well, and I couldn't follow the quotations. I didn't know whether it was Eugene Cunningham talking or who. But /Hutchinson/ referred to the statement in the book about W.W. Cox. I told that Eugene Cunningham a little of the story of Mr. Cox, and I could see that it was written in this book, but not substantially. Mr. Cox was one of the characters of the West. He was very quiet in his talk and manner, and I don't think I ever heard him laugh; but he had more humor than anyone I ever knew. One thing that tickled me very much was when my father bought

his first car out here and it was one of the very few. It was only the 47th car in Texas when he got it out here. And he went by and picked up Mr. Cox at the ranch. You know where the Cox ranch was; it's where the missile ground is now, right up against the Organ Mountains.

M: What was Mr. Cox's first name?

C: Well, it was just W. W., Bill Cox. And he had a bunch of children that are around here now. There's one that is named for my father, Albert Cox, and Hal, and he had a whole bunch of them. Mr. Cox had a governess or a teacher on the place all the time and a regular school for his children. I attended it when I was a youngster. People didn't know anything much about him except someone like my father, who took care of his business. And he didn't have very much business, he just ran everything around him, with no killings on his hands. He'd been accused of harboring, and he did--Oliver Lee became his brother-in-law.

He'd ride in at night when Pat Garrett was... Well, he and Gilliland knew that they'd never come into the town of Las Cruces alive if they surrendered to Pat Garrett and his noose. So they played it safe and went around for two years hiding out or stopping in a place like ours. They'd come in at night, go to bed, and go on and attend to their business. And the Cox's place, it was a very big place and there was nobody anywhere near it. He owned one place that I think Hal Cox lives in now, that they call the \_\_\_\_\_ Pump. Then down at the point of the mountains was Globe Springs that some of the Rhodes family had.

And the history of Cox as he told it to my father was that he came starting West from Tennessee with his family or part of his family and another covered wagon, a load of people. And they got to feuding along the way,

the two outfits. By the time they got to San Antonio they'd killed off one or two. And when they got to San Antonio, they camped outside of the town before going in, the last remaining members of both the families, and they had their last fight there. Mr. Cox was a boy of about seventeen at the time and he was one of the only remaining persons in that feud. They arrested him, the San Antonio officers; he was tried and found guilty of murder and sentenced to be hung. And the word "statute" or whatever it is...

M: Statute of limitations?

C: Well, that word in his indictment or something about the case was not crossed and that held them up. They had to have another trial and cross that "t". They let it drift and drift and he stayed on in jail and was a trustee. He worked and saved his money. And one of the men in jail with him--they got to be rather chummy... At one time the authorities came to San Antonio--the whole state group to inspect buildings--they went down to inspect the jail. This boy and Mr. Cox locked them in a cell; they were free to roam around. And they locked them up in a cell, went to town and had a big time, came back and released the officers and let them go. Finally it had gone on until he'd been in jail for seven years. He studied all the time that he was there--read what he could. He wrote to a lawyer that he knew was a good one, and they filed suit for the jail itself--for the ownership of the jail. He had been there for seven years without being molested, or no one trying to drive him out, and according to the Texas laws, the jail was his. That upset the civilians very much. They let him out on a bond while waiting for the trial to come up for him to possess the jail. He skipped his bond and came West, started in and accumulated this ranch. The home is a great big place built around the patio. It was built by an English couple that

had one small boy; the boy was bitten by a rattlesnake and died. The people didn't want to stay here any longer. They went back to England, but they sold their ranch home to Mr. Cox. He got it for almost nothing, and of course, he built up a tremendous ranch. He and Oliver Lee wound up just owning /almost everything/ from the Organ Mountains up to these mountains.

M: Up to the Sacramento Mountains?

C: Yes. Their cattle ran through the whole outfit.

M: Where was the ranch house located?

C: Well, that ranch house is now occupied by the army. It's a missile range right against the Organ Mountains. One of those peaks is called The Needle because it has a slope, just a plain slope up to a certain point and then it goes up to where it sticks out like a needle. And of course, he owned the Globe Springs and all those watering places around there.

The one thing that always struck me as being the funniest thing that happened with Mr. Cox and my father, Daddy took his new car, he had a chauffeur from New York, /and/ they went down the San Agustín Ranch /what Cox's ranch/ was called, and picked up Mr. Cox. /They/ came across over here to La Luz for some reason. Mr. Cox's description of that trip was one of the funniest that you could have heard him /tell/, with his solemn face--about /how/ they were going so fast that his hat flew off and when they came back two days later it was still spinning in the air. The old flats down there were full of gophers; it was called Gopher Town part of the time. He said, "One old grandpa gopher that I've known for years tried to get in his hole and he got stuck. He was still wagging his tail trying to get out when we came back."

Everything he said had some point of humor. He was telling my mother



one that he had completed building a fireplace in their bedroom. Mama said, "Well, the point is, does it draw?" And he said, "Draw? Why the old lady had a set of eggs under the bed and it just drew the nest, the hen, and the eggs all up the chimney and she never say them again." Then he had a cold and a sore throat /ōnce/, and he asked the old woman, as he called his wife, what it was that Mrs. Fall said was good for a cold. She said, "Well, it was bromo pellets or tablets." And he said, "Well, maybe we've got some." They went into the safe, the old fashioned kitchen safe, and looking through it he found a package marked "BB"--it was full of round tablet-looking things. He told his wife, he said, "This must be it. It's Bromo Buttons." That's what she told us." He swallowed one, or tried to swallow it, and it got stuck in his throat. He whistled for a week. Finally, he discovered that /what he had tried to swallow/ was bone buttons to replace his overall buttons, /which/ had gotten lost. And that was just in line with /him/. Yet he was a tenderhearted thing. He sounded fierce at times, but he was just as tenderhearted as he could be. He rode fourteen miles to take a baby crow into Las Cruces to give it to a Mrs. Roberts who was a pet of everybody there, a widow that had a millinery shop. She just took care of everybody that came by. He found this nest that was deserted--well, the mother was dead. Somebody had shot her, but this one little crow was left. He brought that crow into Mrs. Roberts.

He broke his arm, Mr. Cox. And the stories he told about how he broke that arm you couldn't conceive of. And when Gene Rhodes broke his leg and was missing for a day, his horse went back to the ranch. And they all set out to look for Mr. Rhodes. And they came to the San Agustín Ranch to Mr. Cox to get him to help hunt for him. Mr. Cox said, "Well, take your boys."

Wayen Brassel was one of them -- Wayne Brassel, who killed Garrett. He said, "You'll find him under a mesquite bush reading a novel." And that's exactly what they did--they found him finally under a mesquite bush--Gene Rhodes. The cowboys and everybody was very much concerned because they couldn't find him, and of course, that's a great open stretch in there. That's where they found him two days after his horse went in. He was reading; he'd read and re-read. He rode always with a book in front of him.

Mr. Cox was very much interested in the Lee-Gilliland trial. Did I tell you when you were here before of Mr. Gilliland telling us what they did the two years that they were outlaws?

M: I don't think so.

C: Well, my sister and I were at the ranch with my father; he was sick. It was just three or four years before he died. Jim Gilliland and his younger brother, Dick, rode across from Gilliland's ranch on horseback to see Dad.

M: Gilliland's ranch was about where?

C: It was in the San Andrés Mountains. They had come just to call on Daddy and were going to ride horseback all that way back; but we insisted that they spend the night. And I thought it was very fine of them to ride all that way across to see Daddy. Mr Gilliland remarked, "It" wasn't very far for us to ride to see a fellow that kept a noose from around our necks." He was not a very talkative man ordinarily. Tremendous man--he was at least six feet six. After dinner that night, Daddy was in bed, we gathered in his room and Gilliland would be reminded of some little something, and finally Daddy got him wound up and bade him along so that he would tell the things that my sister and I would like to hear. There had been a bank robbery in Tularosa. This was in the '30s, I guess, the latter part of '29. And they knew pretty

well who did the bank robbery. It was a cowboy that was known as kind of a rough fellow, and they say he was recognized but people were afraid to go after him right away. Finally, they worked up a posse and followed him and practically caught up with him. When they got to the gate of the Gilliland ranch, the road from this side of the mountain over to Socorro...well, Gilliland's ranch was right on that road. And his description of events was, "They all knew who that fellow was and they chased him close enough to catch him. And when he got out and opened the gate," he said, "that gate is made of two by eights." My sister and I didn't know what in the world he meant by two by eights. Daddy said, "Why, two by eight planks, two by eight." He said the man got off his horse, unlatched the gate, went through and chained it up again with the posse shooting at him. He said, "You know, the two by eights had a few shots on the other side of them while the fellow was locking the gate, up this way. Do you know what would happen if Old Tom Tucker had been there?" Tucker was one of the friends of Lee and Gilliland. He had a bullet hole, just a nice round hole through the flap of his ear where somebody had taken a shot at him. He said, "Old Tom would have put that gun up, he'd have swayed back and forth about two times and then it would go off and this man would go down." He said, "This fellow wasn't touched and he didn't hurry." He had evidently seen him, and he may possibly have been in on the thing. "When they tried to get through the fence they couldn't do it; the posse couldn't unlatch the gate. They lost the man again and never did find him."

Then he told of their wandering around from place to place and what they did to occupy their time. He said, "We took care of our beards and we bought us a bottle of Vigaro." He turned to my sister and I and he said, "Did you

girls ever use Vigaro on your hair? It sure is great stuff. It grows hair any way." He said, "Of course, I was tall and hardy so I let my beard grow down." And he said, "I clipped it up, V-shape in the middle--we only had our knives to work with when we shaved ourselves," and of course that wasn't so. He said Hogar, he was kind of puny and pale faced so he parted his beard in the middle. Gilliland's beard was red and Lee's was black and he brushed it out on the sides--he looked like one of these gentlemen that you see in pictures.

He told them of them giving up. Daddy had arranged with Governor Otero that they would give themselves up to a judge, to a lawyer or a lawman. If they could do that... They would not give up to the posse that was chasing them all the time and that they'd had a disastrous meeting with at Willie Wells and....

M: Well, they were going to give themselves up to somebody.

C: Oh, yes, he described that. They went into Engle, New Mexico--it's just a station, you might say--and they were joined there by Gene Rhodes. And Rhodes said, "Well, boys, I'm going with you." They were on their way then to give themselves up. It was arranged that Judge Parker would meet them at the station on this certain day. And he said, "The funniest part of the whole thing was Hogar didn't want to go in with the hat he had on. It was pretty dilapidated and he borrowed a derby hat from the station man." They got on the train--Hogar was ahead. He looked in the mirror, or the glass to the smoking room (you know those old smoking rooms used to have an oval glass on the side) and he turned around and said, "Ah, ah, no room in there for us." He let them know that Garrett and Captain Hughes were both in there. And he said, "We sat ourselves down in different seats about the thing and

looked as innocent as possible." He said there was a newsboy on /board/ and, "We all got newspapers and held them up before our face when we saw or heard anybody coming down the aisle." He said, "Twice I peeked out of the corner of my paper as Garrett stopped at the newsstand and surveyed the rest of the car from there. I was just expecting every minute he'd stick a gun in my stomach..." Well, he didn't say stomach.

When they got to Las Cruces they got off. The Judge was not there to meet them. They started uptown. On the train at one little stop another cowboy got on, apparently not recognized /by/ anybody, but he was a friend of Lee's and Gilliland's, and was as Gilliland said, "the fastest shot in the country," and a dangerous fellow if he got into a fight. He took his seat somewhere so he had a good eye on the smoking room. When the train got to Las Cruces, Mr. Garrett and Captain Hughes didn't get off. He said, "We got off and looked around and there wasn't anybody to meet us, so we started uptown." Garrett and Hughes went on to Mesilla Park where they got off and came back. And Lee and his party met Judge Parker halfway downhill... Of course, everybody walked in those days. They met him halfway up and surrendered to him, told him they were there to give themselves up. He told them where to go--to go to this \_\_\_\_\_ Hotel. He appointed Rhodes and this other man as guards to take care of Lee and Gilliland. And he asked Rhodes /how he was fixed for a gun/, and Rhodes lisped a little at times and he said, "Oh, yes, sir, yes sir, I'm all right," and he pulled out his 45 and showed it to the judge, who turned his eyes away. (Laughs) They took the prisoners up and kept them until the trial and so on.

Of course, that's been written up so many times no use in repeating it all, but after that trial they were allowed to choose the jail that they had

to go to next, because there were other ones out for cattle stealing and things like that. And Mr. Lee said, "Socorro, the jail in Socorro." Gil-  
liland asked him, "Why did you pick Socorro? Don't you know that Sheriff Cook is the toughest man in the country? He never lets anybody get away and he rules with an iron hand." Lee said, "That's just why I chose him-- cause he wouldn't let us get away, but he wouldn't let anybody else get to us either. We'd be safe in his jail." The sheriff in Hillsboro wanted to take them to Socorro. This Sheriff Cook had been told that they had selected that jail, and he was going after them, but the Hillsboro sheriff wanted the honor of taking them over there himself. So they started out and they had to stop in El Paso for the trains. They sat in the station to wait for the train to take them on to Cook County. When they got there, this Hillsboro sheriff (I don't know his name, but it can easily be found in some of the articles), he remarked to Lee that there was a man in Juárez that he wanted to get, some criminal. And he asked Lee, "Will you come and go with me to get this man?" Lee said, "Not on your life. If anybody caught us crossing that river, they'd shoot us before we got to the other side." So he left them sitting in the station house and went to Juárez, and he didn't come back right away. The train that would take them to Socorro came and left, and they were there not knowing exactly what to do. They knew that they were out of the jurisdiction of New Mexico; they were in Texas and they could go on where they pleased, but they sat and waited for this sheriff to come back. Finally, they got in touch with Daddy who was in Las Cruces. Telephones were hard to find. He told them that he would get the Cook County sheriff, who was Cook, and have him come for them. So these two desperate murderers sat free in the station for eight hours.

M: This was a station where?

C: In El Paso, for eight hours waiting for the sheriff to come and get them. (Laughs) That's just a regular joke that not many people knew, but the gentleman told it all to us. At two o'clock that night we broke up. They had talked themselves out; Mr. Gilliland had. We all went our different ways. Daddy said to my sister and I before we left him, he said, "You girls have had an opportunity that any man in the country would have given their eyes for--hearing first hand from Jim Gilliland all their story." And, of course, he told everything. He told all about this fight at Willie Wells with Garrett and his posse -- how this Copley (?) went up over the walls of the house, went up above the roof, and they were lying on the roof asleep when /they/ attacked them. Mr. Lee finally found that Gilliland was standing on top of this thing and he was so tall anyhow, and Lee told him, he said, "For God's sake, Jim, get down here, you're a perfect mark." He said, "Well, if somebody were behind that mud tank, I want to get /him/." And it was one of those bad characters of that outfit, José Espalín. And Gilliland did spatter the mud pretty badly and Espalín finally came out with hands up, shouting, "Oh, don't shoot me; me your friend," and everything like that.

M: This was at Willie Wells?

C: Uh huh. When they started off, they had one of their men, Kearny, I think that was his name, had been shot. And Garrett and his outfit started off and Lee called them back. He said, "Come and get your man." Of course, they surrendered to Lee, you know, and he told them, "Come back and get your man." They said they couldn't take him on horseback, he was too badly injured. So Lee let them harness up a buckboard and take the man into Cruces. Of course, he died, I think before they got him to Cruces. But that experience

was something that I'd like to write about myself. I can write a good deal better than I can talk.

M: Well, you can write pretty good, then.

C: Well, my son-in-law came down to see me one night on Christmas Eve, he and a young man, a friend of all the family. And they had evidently been making the rounds. (Laughs) When they got there, they came in to see me. My son-in-law, Tom, always was very serious when he got a little too much to drink. He told this friend, he said, "Go on out of here, I want to talk to Grandmother." The fellow went out and visited around with some of the other young people in the hospital, while Tom was walking up and down the floor with his hands in his pockets, profoundly thinking. He said, "You know, as soon as you're able, we're going to take you out of this hospital and back up to your trailer"--I had my trailer in the yard--"and set you down at a typewriter and make you write. If your typewriter is not good enough, we'll get you another one. I read a letter that you had written..." And I started to tell him that that wasn't very polite. /I'd/ left on the desk a letter that I had written to the author that wrote the story about Captain \_\_\_\_\_. I had left this /Letter out/. He had written me something about liking to write on the holy side of Daddy's life and a pioneer mother. I had written in answer to that letter and he said he would not be free to do it for some time but wanted to know what the prospects were. I don't know what I wrote him, but anyhow Tom had read that letter. And he said, "Woman, that was a magnificent piece of literature. There isn't anything in those fine books you've got over at the house that's better than that was." He said, "You are a writer! You write magnificently, but when you talk, you talk too damn much!" (Laughter) I always think of that when I



get started to talking. But I've been self-conscious here, knowing that thing was going.

M: The tape recorder?

C: Un huh.

M: Mrs. Chase, do you recall Captain Bill Greet of El Paso?

C: Oh, Greet. Yes.

M: What did you think of him, from what you can recall?

C: Well, I think that he was considered a pretty good man. I was particularly interested in him, my family was, because my mother and I had been in New York for quite a while--six weeks--visiting Colonel Greet and his family back there. They had one whole floor of the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, and we were visiting them. On our way home, Daddy couldn't go with us, Mama and I went ahead because we wanted to get ready for Christmas. I had seen an amethyst cross at Tiffany's. Mr. Greet introduced us there and took us all through the valuable things that they had. Tiffany made a specialty of amethysts, they had the largest piece of amethyst, supposedly known, as one of their prized possessions and always showed it to people as something great. In one of the counters there was a single piece of jewelry, an amethyst cross; it was on white velvet, there was nothing else around it. And it was to me the most beautiful thing I ever saw. I was about seventeen at the time. When we started home, my mother said to me, "We've gotten about everything we wanted in New York, didn't we?" I said, "Yes, except that cross. And if I ever get money enough, I'm going to send back and buy it." And I didn't know that my mother had it then, as a Christmas present for me.

The night that we left New York, we couldn't get a drawingroom and we had two berths outside. My mother went to sleep and I was sitting in mine;

I hadn't had the bed made down. And this man kept walking up and down the aisle and he smiled at me. He made me so nervous that I decided I'd better go to bed, and I know I put my shoes up in the bed so I would have a weapon if I needed it. The man got more mysterious as we went along, and in the same Pullman that we were in was a very sweet old lady that my mother immediately became acquainted with. She was traveling with her companion to California. This old man kept walking back and forth and hesitating about there where they were. The next morning after I had first noticed him he asked if he had disturbed anybody, any of the people during the night. He asked this of my mother and three other ladies that were sitting in the berth with her. And she was very nice to him, she said, "No, you haven't. You haven't bothered anybody at all." Well, he kept walking up and down the aisle with his hands in his pockets.

We were to reach El Paso at four o'clock in the morning, and the night before, Mama went back to say goodbye to this old lady. As she approached, this man was coming the other way and he began to run backwards and jumped up in the vacant seat in front of this old lady, crouched down, put his hands up, said, "Don't come any nearer. Don't come any nearer." And, of course, scared my mother and everybody else on the train. But on board was Mr. Harry Alexander, one of the officials of the Southern Pacific, and Mr. Wingle, who had a bank there in El Paso at the time. And we had been friends a long time and of course we visited each other. But when this old man acted like he did the conductor and the berthman and so on took him in the \_\_\_\_\_ car where the porter was supposed to watch him and not let him get back in this Pullman. And when we arrived in El Paso, the four of us had a carriage together--Mr. Wingle and Mr. Alexander saw Mama and I home first. And about

eight o'clock the next morning Mr. Wingle called on the telephone and I answered and he said, "Ellie, tell your mother to hold on to her hair. Her friend, this old man, followed her off the train at Las Cruces." And it was, of course, not the union station, just the lone station. There was a row of buildings across and one of them was a restaurant where the train men usually are when they passed through, and they had booths with curtains. And the story then was that this fellow had followed us off the train and gone across to this restaurant and got in one of the booths, and the restaurant people didn't know what to do with him--he wouldn't come out. And they called the officers and Captain Greet went down to take this man. He fought with a knife in his hand.

M: This was here in El Paso?

C: Yeah. And Captain Greet was bleeding. They attempted to get him out without damage to him, and he lunged at Greet and struck him with his knife in the stomach. Greet was laid up for eight months in the hospital with that wound. And the man's story was that this tall woman dressed in black was a spy.

M: That was your mother?

C: Uh huh, that was after him because he'd given away some Masonic secrets. Now that was his story.

/Pause/

M: Did you ever talk to Captain Greet after that?

C: Well, no. I didn't after that. We had known him before and known his wife quite well. They were very nice people.

M: I was talking to Mrs. Greet just the other day.

C: Oh, is that so?

M: Very spry lady, very nice.

C: How long has he been gone?

M: I think 1934 or '37, somewhere along in there.

C: Well, this fellow, the strange part of it was that they'd found his address. They had to shoot him to take him, they shot him through the shoulder. And Greet, well, his stomach was just practically cut to pieces. And they searched the man to find out anything they could about him, and he was a veterinarian from Canada. They wired to this town in Canada, and the brother of this fellow wired to El Paso that it was his brother. And he wired my father and his partners, wired the firm of Fall, Hawkins and Franklin, to take care of the man and to see that everything was done for him that could be until one of them got there to take him. They were leaving for El Paso right away. The poor fellow's story was that this woman dressed in black had been following him and spying on him because he'd given away these Masonic secrets.

M: Had he given away any Masonic secrets?

C: No.

M: Was he planning on threatening your mother or did he plan on some harm to her?

C: No. He never admitted that he was in danger. He thought he would be jailed. But he wasn't vicious about it at all. His brother, when he came, said that he had been in failing health, and they thought that if he'd go to California that he would be benefitted. He was getting a little hazy in his thinking, but they thought he was perfectly all right to make the trip alone.

The part that hurt Greet so was that this was a rusty knife, some instrument that the fellow used in his veterinarian work. And, of course, he had a pretty tough time--for months they didn't think they could save him, but he came out of it after this eight months in the hospital and seemed to be all right. But he must have died pretty soon after that. No, I guess it

was quite a while, because it was around 1916 or something like that that it happened.

M: You were going to talk about your mother, and we never did get to your mother.

C: Well, she recovered from her galloping consumption, as they called it, very promptly in the air of Las Cruces. They had a fine bunch of women that organized themselves into a club.

M: This was about when, Mrs. Chase?

C: Oh, gosh, about 1890. They called themselves the Woman's Improvement Club, and the club is still in existence in Las Cruces. My mother, I know, went to the 50th Anniversary celebration of the club. They even busied themselves doing things on the side but my mother was always deeply interested in any case that my father had. The neighbors used to say she tried more cases hanging over the front gate than Daddy did in the courtroom. Well, he was associate supreme court judge.

On one occasion I know, a woman came to her for help. Her son had been caught stealing a cow, or some small animal theft. Like two or three cows, that would be a small theft then. Daddy, of course, he couldn't hear or didn't know anything about it, but Mama got her whole story. And when Daddy came to lunch why she told him something about it. He did know something of the arrest of this boy, and he told Mama, "The best thing they can do is for that boy to admit it and throw himself on the mercy of the court because he's guilty. And if he doesn't come through and make a confession, it'll go pretty hard with him. But if he gives any kind of reasonable statement, the court won't be too hard on him." So Mama repeated this to the mother of the boy and advised her what to do and what lawyer to go to to help her out. A year later that woman came back, and this well-dressed,

happy-looking woman came to see my mother and had to introduce herself as the woman who had poured out her story on Mama. And the boy had carried out /her/ suggestion and he had served a short time in jail and was out and doing very well--probably robbing somebody else. (Chuckles) But she was constantly... Did I tell you the other day about her trying to give the guns to Tom Tucker?

M: As he was getting on a train?

C: Yes.

M: Yes.

C: Well, that was one of her stunts. But most of her work was legal work.

There was another case that came up of this Mexican man in Cruces being sent to the penitentiary for life for killing this man who had violated his home. I think that was the word they used. He had ruined one of the man's doors and the old fellow had shot him. He was tried and sent for life. Mama heard Daddy and his partners say, "That fellow should never have been sent to the pen. He was fighting for the honor of his home and he had every right to kill that fellow." Well, Mama took that up, that was her... She didn't know the man, never heard of any of his family. But they were in Santa Fe at this time attending one of the sessions of the legislature, so Mama went to the governor, who was Governor Otero at the time, and told him about it.

M: This was about when?

C: Well, it was before I can remember. It was in the early nineties. She told the Governor, she said, "You should pardon that man." She nagged at him until finally after she returned home she had a telegram from /his/ secretary, Miss Arnson, who had been in the office of the governors of New Mexico for thirty-six years. This telegram /said/: "Governor Otero wants

you to know that your man is free as the wind blows today." So Mama didn't let it go at that. She never saw the man afterwards, but she found his family in El Paso, and she hired one of the youngsters, a boy about fourteen, to kind of look after the yard and things of that kind at home. Sometimes she worked in a very odd way to do her good work. She knew that the family had practically nothing to go on, so she hired this boy to take care of the yard and do little errands of that kind. She was telling someone who had come to the house for something, she said, "Oh, I was busy in the kitchen but I got away so Carlos could get his coffee." They asked her what she meant by that and she said, "Well, every afternoon when he leaves, he takes some coffee home to his family, and I know they need it." And they said, "Why don't you just give it to him?" She said, "Because I wouldn't know how much he needed." So she got out of the kitchen so Carlos could help himself to the coffee.

She was with him all the time, with Daddy. When she went to Washington before any time at all had passed, she'd begun to make herself known as a figure, and she did some of the most unusual things. But they say there was never a more popular woman in Washington than my mother was. I have here now the letters that she got from Calvin Coolidge saying how much she and Daddy were going to be missed when they left Washington. Of course, that letter was spoken of in some of this information that I've got here as a most unusual thing, that Coolidge was such a taciturn man. But Mama, she never met a stranger. She was, well, anybody would loosen up and talk to her, and Mr. Coolidge grew very fond of her. They were often placed together at dinner parties and things like that. They say that she's the only woman that ever made him laugh. These letters that I have here are from Mrs. Coolidge,

Mrs. Hoover, and Mrs. Harding, of course.

M: Mrs. Chase, I was under the impression that the Fall family papers were at the University of New Mexico.

C: Well, part of them are and all this bunch over there is going to them, all that stuff piled up. My son is going to take it over to his office and get it out of my way. I haven't hurried with it because I didn't want it to be where it could be seen too much too long before Dr. Stratten's biography comes out.

M: That's the biography of Albert Bacon Fall?

C: Uh huh. Huntington Library asked for it at one time.

M: Asked for the information you have?

C: /Yes./ My nephew sent them quite a lot. I was talking to Dr. Stratten and said something about they were sending this stuff with my permission, I told him he could go ahead and send it out to Huntington Library. They can pay for things like that--Stratten couldn't; he got them the hard way, but he had four or five grants. He just wrote me a few days ago that he had another grant to carry on his research work. I don't think there's a person that ever knew my father that Stratten hasn't interviewed. It's taken him ten years to do it but he's done it; the most thorough job. It's so thorough that he has every important or really noticeable article about any of the family. They're all in there--clippings about, well, one of my nieces winning a beauty prize and her picture was in all the papers. And of course on account of her being a senator's granddaughter, why, her picture went everywhere.

You know Hoover was directly indebted to Daddy for his position on the Cabinet which led to his being president. He's the only one of the Cabinet members that didn't come to Washington to offer their assistance to Daddy



when this thing broke. Daddy didn't know it, but they were lined up to go on the witness stand after the regular witnesses had been called. Each one was lined up to go before the jury and tell what they thought of Daddy and what they knew about him--the character witness.

Let me see that book. That's part of the gang from out here that had gone back. And Daddy didn't know any of this until I told him /that/ at the summation of the trial they called the first character witness. He was not supposed to have been called until the next morning, but the court had let up earlier than usual and so they called Senator Newberry, who became Postmaster General for a while. Daddy was startled and rather shocked when Newberry got on the stand. I was going out to a dinner that night with Evelyn McLain, and I went in and told Daddy /that/ the man who had planned this was Davis, the Secretary of Labor in the Harding cabinet. He had planned the whole thing for getting the Cabinet officers over to testify to Daddy. And even Charles Evans Hughes was there waiting to go on the stand to testify. I told Daddy that night before I went out, I said, "Secretary Davis and his wife are coming down to spend the evening with you, and I think you should know that Mr. Davis is the man who instigated this character witness business." Daddy didn't reply to me at all. The next morning when the court convened, Daddy wouldn't allow his friends, these Cabinet officers, to be sworn in as a witness as to his character. He didn't want them to have to be named in any way in the case, and so they dropped out.

Hoover was the only man that wasn't in that bunch. He told Wilson his own story. /In his/ autobiography, he said that he had never been a friend of Fall's. This I found last night. /Looks for some papers/. Well, I had here a letter that Hoover had written my father. It's been published, but

quite a long time ago. I had that thing last night.

M: Well, it's probably lying around here somewhere. What happened then, Mrs. Chase? I saw a copy of the letter; you showed it to me once before.

C: Well, he became furious when he saw that letter in print.

M: Your father did?

C: Hoover did. See, Daddy gave this long interview which was published by the Bell Syndicate and written by a man named Wyatt. I know Will Burgess in El Paso told me, "I was awfully glad he let that letter go out." But he said, "I knew it would make Hoover furious and he'd do anything." And of course he did. I found in this bunch of stuff a telegram that I had written to Mr. Mitchell, who was the Attorney General in the cabinet of Hoover, and who had refused parole for Daddy, and Mitchell gave the statement that parole could not be granted save in unusual cases. It made me so darn mad I fired an open telegram back to him--to Mitchell--and asked him what more unusual case could he quote, and then who was convicted of accepting a bribe that no man had given. And one or two other things--I don't know just what I said in the thing. But I got over two hundred letters and telegrams for that open letter and Mitchell never acknowledged it in any way--it was dead silence. The first telegram I had was from the woman's club, the national order meeting in New York at the time. And they wired me this long telegram saying that they were thoroughly in accord with me and wishing us good luck and all that kind of stuff, signed by the president and the secretary of the Federated Women's Clubs of America.

That was the first one and then one after another followed; even Penrose in France wired his indignation. Just before the verdict somebody in New York sent a telegram to Mr. Davis' lawyers who made the greatest mistake in the

world by not allowing Daddy to go on the witness stand and tell his own story. This New York man, who no one knew, wired that the most pitying summary that they could give before a jury would be the quotation of Kipling's "If," and he quoted the thing in this telegram. Nobody knew who he was. Of course, they tried to answer him but he gave no address; he was just from New York. He had that emphasized--"If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you"--he had that part quoted.

But when Mama took up her residence in Washington she went about it in her usual friendly way; and before she left Washington she had done the most remarkable things, making her a power there. When the Hoovers came, Mrs. Hoover wanted Mama's attention. They all \_\_\_\_\_ because she had been in Washington for nearly ten years and made herself well-known and, of course, these new ladies coming in there wanted her association and help. She did things like this old German cook on a naval vessel, a United States naval vessel, who had been on his job for thirty-five years wrote her from this ship off the Florida coast on pieces of scratch pad paper with a pencil, saying that he had been in service that long and he was getting old and wanted to retire and spend the rest of his life with his family in New York. He'd been told that if anyone could help him get out of the Navy, my mother could. She immediately went to Secretary Denby, showed him this letter and told him that she thought the man deserved to be turned loose to spend the rest of his life with his family. A few days later she got another pencil note from this fellow saying that he had been notified he was out.

Major Fewel, of course--you know the other Fewel family--the old man was getting very feeble toward the last days of his life. Mamã was a great friend

of the Fewel family, and she ran into Chris Fewel and his wife on one of her trips home to El Paso. Chris was a commander in the Navy, and he wanted to buy his way out, as they seemed to be allowed to do if they had a longer term to serve. He wanted to be able to go back and take care of the Fewel property. Of course, the old man had property all over El Paso. But he couldn't get away. And Mama took it upon herself to go to Mr. Denby again and put the facts of Chris Fewel and his father and what kind of a man the father was. Of course, he was a stingy old fellow, but Mom spoke of his making so much of El Paso, which he did, and she left. The officers back there, she would tackle on anybody's account, but they always recieved her beautifully and quickly. They said she never wasted their time. She came and told them what she wanted and got out and left them to think for themselves and accomplish what they wanted. So she went again to the Navy Department and put the story of Chris Fewel and his father before them and left. Some little time later, of course, Chris Fewel was /allowed/ to buy his way out and was home. The disarmament conference was going on and Mama was sitting upstairs on the balcony space that was saved for the Cabinet members, when they had the Senate division /there/. She was attending one of the meetings of the disarmament conference. Secretary Denby was sitting just below her, and she leaned over and thanked him for letting Chris Fewel go. And he said, "I didn't do that, Miz Fall. You let him off yourself." And things of that kind were going on constantly.

When Will Hayes, one of the Cabinet officers, left, after about six months in the Cabinet to take up a \$50,000 a year job as censor for the movies in California, there was a shuffle going around about who should be made postmaster general, and how they would fill the spot. And my mother

said to Daddy and some of his friends, "Why there's no question about that. Senator Worth should have that job. He's a man from the West, and he wants it, and he should have it." So, that was it. Daddy appointed the man.

I have a long memorandum written by this National Chief of the National Parks, and he tells of the story /when/ Mama went with my father to Yellowstone or Yosemite, one of the two. She went with him for all of /those trips/. But on one occasion they were up in the mountains as far as she could go. Daddy was riding horseback on a tour of the rest of the places, and Mama was talking to these boys and they said they got hungry for something sweet besides canned peaches and things like that up in their camp. One fellow said he just would give anything for a doughnut. And Mama said, "Well, I can make some doughnuts for you." But they didn't have all the materials she needed. I don't know what was missing. Eggs, that was it-- they didn't have any eggs. She went on to another one of the camps the next day with Daddy. They had a lot of eggs, and so she got some of their eggs and when she stopped back by this place she went in and made these boys some doughnuts. We have pictures of her with a cup towel fastened around her waist and a big frying pan in her hand. That picture has turned up time after time. (Chuckles) I picked up one of those magazines that the Safeway stores usually has by their check-out /counter/. I was reading that when I went home and saw this picture of Mama and the story from some man /whose/ wife had died and he had just this one son. He had a hard time knowing what to cook or how to cook it. He had written to Mama to get her recipe and she had sent it to him. The picture of her with this cup towel tied around her was in that magazine and telling what she did for /those/ boys.

Then, Mr. Mather who had been the head of the forest rangers and the

national parks, particularly, retired from age and ill health. Daddy was talking about it with Senator Worth and somebody else, and said he didn't quite know where to find someone to take his place. And Mama broke in there and she said, "Why, you don't have to look. His place should be taken by this young man named /Albright/. He was one of the rangers that accompanied Daddy about, and Mama saw him. He was quite a young man and she liked him very much. So it was in Harding's company that Mama told Daddy there wasn't anything to do except to make this young man head of the department and she did. His name is Albright. So that's another one of her appointments.

She would undertake the most unusual things as though it were just an everyday event. Her influence in Washington was tremendous. She could do anything that no one else could. For instance, one night about ten o'clock Daddy was in his den working. And she was tired, she'd been on the go pretty much all the time. And she was reading the paper in bed when she saw a notice that the English embassy /was/ having a dinner party and realized that she had accepted the invitation to be there. So she telephoned and got a hold of the ambassador's wife who laughed and said, "Well, don't let it bother you, Mrs. Fall. It doesn't hurt us at all." And things of that kind were constantly occurring. Coolidge went into the White House at one o'clock after Harding's death. Mrs. Harding was out with my mother, at the Friendship Home of Evelyn McLain. And when Mama got back to their apartment she got a bunch of roses that had arrived at three o'clock from Calvin Coolidge at the White House. He spent from one o'clock until three, and got those flowers to Mama at that time.

M: What was the purpose of his sending the flowers to your mother?

C: Nothing--just a friendly act as he went into the White House. He wanted to share the glory of it, I guess. I kept the top of the box that /has/ the

White House address for a long time, but I lost it somewhere. But her life was filled with kindly things that nobody ever heard of.

M: Where did your mother spend her final days, Mrs. Chase?

C: In El Paso.

M: Is she buried in Evergreen?

C: /Yes./ She had quite a bunch of lots there for the family. She and Daddy are both buried there, and my husband and my sister. One sister is buried here.

Going back to my mother again, when I first came over here /to the hospital/, I was down by the desk one day when some friends came in with Dr. Simms. And he is one of the old doctors here now. Someone called my attention to him, or he kind of greeted me as a stranger. I said, "I think I knew you when you were a boy," and told him again who I was. And he patted my hand, held on to it, said, "I'll never in this world forget your mother." They had a homestead; the Simms family had come out here with the father's help, and they had a homestead right against part of the ranch. This boy was only nine years old when he had typhoid fever. He said, "Every so often, twice a week, a wagon would pull up in front of my house and a bottle of ice would be put out that your mother had gotten from El Paso because there was no ice near \_\_\_\_\_. But every two days in the week this wagon would bring that ice up to me and it probably saved my life."

Then the brother of this fellow came in. He's a preacher--had no arms, born without arms--but he's a pretty well known preacher throughout this part of the country. He came in; I don't think he knew who was in here, he was just calling on the different patients. And he looked up and saw that picture of my mother and he just stood there and looked at it. And he turned

around and looked at me and he said, "Your mother." And I said, "Yes." He said, "She was a great woman, and your father was a great man." He said that when their father died on this homestead, Daddy paid for his funeral expenses. /They/ hadn't known each other personally, but /he/ paid for the funeral expenses and for the tombstone. He said, "Later, when we were able..." Daddy finally bought their homestead after the father died and then /they/ became quite well-to-do. He said, "Later when we were able, we brought our father's body down here for burial instead of leaving it up there at Three Rivers. We brought the tombstone along, and it's out here in the cemetery. There isn't anybody else that would have done anything like that. He didn't owe us anything." He \_\_\_\_\_ knowledge of the family, but he took a hand in their affairs and he knew they were down and out.

And I have heard more stories. At separate times, two old Mexican men have come in here. One of them was telling about my mother nursing a member of his family when they were very sick, and curing them. I remember that this particular case, my mother had spent some little time doing things for them--taking them food and things of the kind. The invalid had developed this constant hiccup and had been hiccuping for a couple of weeks, and Mama took him some /medicine/ up there and told him to take that, and it stopped it. They were grateful for it. We were talking to one of the El Paso doctors about it, /and/ he said, "Well, I don't think I'd ever have thought to use it but it stands to reason it would stop it." It didn't make any difference how poor the home was, she'd go and do what she could to cheer them up.

And there in El Paso she's had some great things happen to her. She'd been taken in a number of times; she was gullible about anyone who told her a sad story, she'd always believe them. And I know one particular person who'd come to her and told her that he was in distress. And he knew her



name and knew how kind whe was. /He said/ that he had just brought his wife in town with a small baby and had taken them to the hospital because the wife was quite sick, and he needed some money to get her belongings out of the station. And he didn't know anybody in town and didn't know where to go, but he had known of Mama and he thought he'd ask her if she'd let him have a little money for a few days. So Mama gave him what she had in the house. It was a Sunday, and she had a five dollar bill and one or two other dollar bills. She gave /them/ to him. A couple of days later the police called her and asked her if she had been approached by this man, and she said well, yes, she did give some money to a man whose wife was sick. They asked her to describe the man, and she did. They asked her then if she could come down and identify him. They had him and were going to have a hearing. The next morning she went down and the fellow admitted that he didn't have a wife or a child, but that he made his way around the world and made very good money by studying the telephone book and picking out certain names of people that might possibly be approached and finding out what he could about those people, and then go to them. At the same time that Mama was there, there was a group of school teachers that all lived together in one house, and he said he knew they would not be at work on Sunday afternoon. And he had just touched any number of people /with stories/ like that--he was just a perfect criminal. But a sad story would catch her every time.

M: Mrs. Chase, I certainly want to thank you for all your time. You've been most gracious.