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Interview no. 58

Jane B. Perrenot

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Jane Burges Perrenot
INTERVIEWER: Jo Ann Hovious
PROJECT: El Paso History
DATE OF INTERVIEW: February and March, 1973
TERMS OF USE: Unrestricted

TAPE NO.: 58
TRANSCRIPT NO.: 58
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BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Niece of W. H. Burges, prominent El Pasoan.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Biography; El Paso society in the early part of the 20th century;
recreational activities.

4 hours (3 3/4 tape speed), 51 pages.

Tapes 1 and 2 transcribed, tapes 3 and 4 indexed.

H: Mrs. Perrenot, could you give me a brief biographical sketch of yourself --when you were born, when you were married? I would specifically like to know when your two grandfathers and your father came to El Paso.

P: I was born in El Paso in 1900. My mother's family (her father and mother and her four sisters and herself) came in 1886. My father came as a young man in 1893.

H: Where did they come from?

P: The Sheltons, my mother's family, came from Brandon, Mississippi. My father's brother had come to live here before; and before that, their uncle (Doctor and Mrs. Yandell) had come to El Paso in the 1880s. They all came from Seguin, Texas, where their family had come /to/, some from Tennessee and some from Virginia.

H: Do you know why the two families came to El Paso? Have you heard this in family lore?

P: Well, the Sheltons came to seek opportunity. They were plantation people, and as I've often said, I think that people who were accustomed to plantation life and having slaves were very uncomfortable when their slaves were hungry or poor. Now, Dr. Yandell came because he has asthma, and Mr. W. H. Burges had asthma, so he came for that reason. Then Dr. Yandell's only child died, and /he/ suggested to my father, who was reading law in New Braunfels, Texas, to come out here to read law, because /it would/ be a comfort to his aunt who had raised him. So he came out there and read law (he never went to law school) and passed the Bar examination here.

H: How old was he when he came to El Paso?

P: He was twenty.

H: How old was he when he married your mother? Was that several years later?

P: Hewas twenty-six. She was twenty.

H: Do you know where they lived after they were married?

P: Well, all brides and grooms lived at the Gist House.

H: They did? Where was the Gist House, do you have any idea? I've read about that.

P: It was either on Mesa or Oregon at about Missouri. It was before my day. But /it was/ somewhere near the Public Library. I think maybe it was on Mesa.

H: Was it a boardinghouse?

P: Yes, it was a boardinghouse. Then after Dr. Yandell died, why, they moved into the Yandell's house on Kansas and Boulevard. It's exactly where you're exiting from the freeway from Mesa Street. /It/ crosses our back yard.

H: So your parents moved in that house afterward, and then you were born at that house in 1900. Well, then, how much longer did the family live in that house?

P: Till 1912.

H: Where did you go to grade school?

P: At the Sunset School on North El Paso Street. It's the Education Center now. I went there through the fifth grade, and then I went to the El Paso School for Girls.

H: Had it just been established?

P: The year before.

H: Where was it located?

P: It was located in Sunset Heights on Terrace Street. It was two two-story houses and a little cottage in back; and then some vacant property across

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 The Rev. H. Eugene Myrick
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the street, which was the playground.

h, they took two residences then, and converted it into a school. Was

at close to you? Did you walk to school?

I, yes.

H: That's just, what, two blocks from here?

P: A little more. If you'd go through the backyard and run across the street,
it isn't far.

H: Well, did it include high school?

P: Yes, there were some older girls there.

H: Is that where you went to high school?

P: Part of the time I went away to the Shipley School in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania
in 1916, for my last two years.

H: Was it customary for people in El Paso to send their daughters and sons
to school?

P: I think it was fairly customary, much more than it is now.

H: Did a lot of your friends go away?

P: Yes, all my best friends.

H: Did most of them go to the East?

P: Yes. The teachers at the El Paso School for Girls were all from the East,
as I remember it. Some, let's see, maybe from Missouri. Miss Slater and
Miss Toffley were the principals; they were both from the East--Pennsylvania,
maybe Washington.

H: Would you say then that the quality of the education was probably quite
good, probably much better than the public schools? Could you say
anything about the public schools? You say you went there from the first
to the fifth grade.

P: They were good. The school for girls...you see, my mother died when I was 11, just after I started in the school, and I've always thought that it was a help to my father, because the school encouraged you to stay in the afternoon, to study or to play after school. It sort of took care of me for the full day. They did inspire people to go on to college, which wasn't so usual.

H: Were there very many people going to college during these early years, before the '20s?

P: As I say, most of my friends did.

H: Do you remember girls that were older than you /who went to college/?

P: Well, my young aunts all went to the University of Texas, at least some. But I don't know that too many went East to college.

H: Well in the school itself, let's say going back to your five years in the public schools, do you remember any teachers, any particular incidents? Do you think that there were any particular discipline problems? I realize before the fifth grade it's not as easy to remember.

P: No, I don't remember any particular discipline problems.

H: Do you remember games that you all played at recess?

P: Crack the whip--which somebody got hurt at. There must have been some organized sports, though. I'm not sports minded myself, but I remember when I was in the first or second grade we all learned to cheer our basketball team. I just remember:

One, two, three, four, five, six, seven,
All good children go to Heaven.
When they get there, they will yell,
"Sunset! Sunset!" Well, well, well!

/Chuckles/.

H: Were there any boys' schools in El Paso?

P: Well, the military academy must have started about that time. It's where the College of Mines started, out near Fort Bliss. But I think that the military academy didn't last too many years.

H: Do you remember going to any games out there?

P: No. I don't even remember watching a game. Maybe I was supposed to come home after school in those days.

H: You said that you would stay after school and study. Did a lot of the other girls stay also?

P: Yes, just playing around and ordering Baseballs up from the Elite. Have you ever heard of Baseballs?

H: No, what is that?

P: Well, before the days of milk nickels or anything like that, the Elite, from El Paso, Texas, invented a ball--half chocolate and half vanilla ice cream, coated with chocolate. It was the size of a baseball, and it was called a Baseball. I think that it was unique because I have heard that they were shipped as far as Denver in ice, from El Paso.

H: Now, the Elite was a confectionery, wasn't it?

P: Yes, it was a confectionery on the corner where Grant's is now--Mesa and Texas streets. It was very fancy and it was customary to go there after the matinee and meet people at the Elite.

H: What was the matinee?

P: There were quite a number of plays that came to El Paso, I suppose because it was a place to make money between Denver and the East. You see, El Paso was a railroad center in those days, and we often had good plays and good musicians.

H: And everyone did go to plays? Was this, I suppose, one of the main forms of amusement?

P: /Yes./

H: And they were during the afternoon hours?

P: Well, sometimes afternoons. In those days, I never went to the Elite at night, so I'm not sure that it was open.

H: But the girls then, the young set went during the afternoon?

P: /Yes./

H: Well now, did you all go just what, in a group, alone, no adults?

P: /Yes./

H: You were allowed to go alone?

P: I think I was allowed to go to town alone from about 1912, maybe even before that, because the YWCA opened on Franklin Street and we were allowed to go down /there/. We were enrolled in the first classes and we went down there ourselves.

H: What kinds of things did you do down there?

P: Just gym. See, El Paso was actually so small. I think this is true, that when the Vilas School was built, I know all the children from the Sunset School walked over for the dedication. I think every school child in town walked to the Vilas School for the dedication.

H: So, walking was the main form of transportation, for the kids anyway.

P: Oh, yes. Not too many people in El Paso had carriages. In 1907, my uncle had a car and its license number was 207. I've understood /that/ they were given the license number not by year, but by order, so it must have been the 207th car in 1907 or '08.

H: So there was a combination of carriages and automobiles. Well, when you

and your friends walked to town, did you shop? And you say you did meet boys down at the confectionary.

P: Yes, I believe I told you, we met the boys.

H: You did. Well, now was this approved or was this slightly...?

P: No.

H: Your parents knew that you met the boys?

P: /Yes./ Well, I suppose that when we met boys we were 15 or 16, and by that time a few of us could drive cars. We used to deliberately go down there and park. /Laughter/. It's indicative of the size of El Paso that you could angle park at 5 o'clock in the afternoon on the corner of Mesa and Texas, and generally find a parking space.

/PAUSE/

H: Well, can you think of what types of things you all read? You know, we were talking about reading and learning to read as you were growing up. Did you read novels in school as they do now, as part of the English curriculum?

P: I don't think we read novels, no. By the time we were in high school, we read Julius Ceasar, McBeth, and Lorna Doone. Yes, Lorna Doone is a novel, we did /read novels/.

H: The classics then, mainly.

P: /Yes./ And at the girls' school they used to issue a reading list, a summer reading list. It was mostly novels, Harold Bell Wright, Zane Grey, besides Dickens and Thackeray. Of course, we were devoted to the Little Coronel books until we'd grown, /chuckle/ practically. You see, they were being issued at that time. People would say, "Do you know that a new Little Coronel book was coming out?" /Laughter/. Everybody hoped they'd get it for Christmas or for their birthday. I suppose there were always book shops,

but when I was little there were no toy stores, except there was one toy store called Keefer's. But I don't think there was any other place that you got toys, or that carried toys. And we didn't get presents like that except at Christmas time.

H: Right at Christmas.

P: But Keefer's I know had dolls for instance, 'cause /as/ I say, I didn't get any. /Laughter/.

H: Do you think that most of the people in El Paso or at least, let's say, your parents and your friends' parents bought most of the things from the stores here in El Paso or was there a good deal of _____?

P: Well, they sometimes sent to Bess. My mother sent to Bess for little girl's underclothes, it seems to me.

H: What is Bess?

P: Bess was a store, Bess and Company in New York. It specialized in children. I'm not sure whether they're still /in business/. I don't think New York has it anymore, so I don't know. But, I don't know how much there was in ready-made clothes. If there were many, they were fairly new, because my mother's clothes--now, her good clothes--were made by Mrs. Hevily(?) who was a...

H: Seamstress?

P: Well, I don't know if you'd call her seamstress, she /was/ a dressmaker, and I think she sometimes designed. When I was 15, why she made me a dress, and I felt that it was very elegant that Mrs. Hevily(?) was making my summer best dress.

H: The nicer things then were. And what about hats, now?

P: Oh, hats were sold here. But my aunt Anna, Anna Shelton, had taught at

the Sunset school with Miss Small. I don't know what Miss Small's first name was, but I think maybe she was the principal. She went to New York and she was a buyer. I don't know for how many years this went on, but for several, she bought hats for the four Shelton girls. And the excitement was in the days of the Merry Widow hat. And the excitement in our house when the box would arrive--it was so wonderful! The unmarried sisters only lived two blocks from us. They would all congregate to open the box and the children of course would be there. And I remember one year when all of them were black, except sort of a soft shade of green--they were all velvet, some had feathers, some had roses. And I can remember praying that the green one would be my mother's daughter, and it was.

H: Was it? Well, was black then the most popular color? You see the pictures and there's so much black and brown. Did they use a lot of bright colors?

P: Well, people went into mourning in those days. Our family went into mourning, I suppose there were two successive years. Mrs. Howe's little girl died and then my mother's sister died. And so I remember two years our family being dressed in black.

H: For the entire two years?

P: Well, it seems to me.

H: It seems like it to you?

P: It seems like it to me.

H: Goodness!

P: It's strange to me that it took people so long to give up mourning, because even in those days they would not allow teachers to wear mourning. They knew that mourning had a bad effect, so, my aunt Anna Shelton wore black at home, but she did not wear it at school. It seems that if they knew it

then they would've given up mourning, doesn't it?

H: Yes, it certainly does, because there were a lot of them. Do you remember a lot of deaths among friends and family as you were growing up?

P: Well, certainly more than now. As I say, I remember those two. I was about four and five when those two occurred.

H: Do you remember what the causes of death were?

P: Well, my aunt died of cancer and my cousin died of scarlet fever. Scarlet fever, I imagine, was the cause of most deaths of children in those days. It was fairly common; it was a childhood disease.

H: Do you think that the problem of pneumonia, for example by the time you were growing up, was better taken care of than it was back in the 1880s? Do you remember anyone having pneumonia and coming through it?

P: I don't remember pneumonia. Typhoid fever you still had. I don't remember anybody with diphtheria, but I have heard them talk about it. I think that about that time that I began to remember, they were conquering diphtheria.

H: What about smallpox?

P: They were already vaccinating against smallpox, but people still had it. Yes, our cook got it once and she was taken to the pesthouse.

H: They even had a pesthouse in the early part of the century?

P: I would say that it was about 1908 or something like that. The pesthouse was at Providence Hospital, I think; old Providence. But I do remember as a child that it was unusual to see a Mexican who was not pock marked.

H: When you all got sick, was the doctor called to the home?

P: Yes, and he came.

H: Did you all have the flu and various types of things we have now?

P: I suppose we did, except that we all did have scarlet fever.

H: What did they do for high fever? Do you remember?

P: You were quarantined for six weeks, and I mean quarantined! And then when you came out, everything that you had which was capable of being fumigated was fumigated, and everything else was destroyed. They fumigated my best doll and ruined it.

H: How did they fumigate?

P: Well, I think it was a pot. I don't know what they used for fumigation, but they would light it and close the room, and the fumes... They also must have washed clothes in whatever this /was/, or /something similar/.

H: Do you remember any medication that you took for the scarlet fever?

P: /No./

H: Then you just pretty much fought the disease out yourself?

P: I guess you did, because I don't remember any medicine. But /the cure of sorts/ for scarlet fever, Dr. Homan told me, was sulfur. No, I guess it was Dr. Lee who told me this maybe 30 years ago, that he didn't know of a death from scarlet fever since they discovered sulfur.

H: Well, would you say then that the children were sick as much then as they are now? Do you remember being sick quite a bit?

P: Well, they were probably sick more. Well, I had tonsilitis always. I was sick all of winter. I never went to but one Elk's dance. That was the big social event for children, and I never went but once because I always had tonsilitis.

H: Was it an annual affair?

P: Yes. Mrs. Hammett gave a dance to which she invited children, and there were favors.

H: What was the age group of the children, more or less?

P: Well, they must have been quite young. I don't imagine they were over twelve. It was a children's party, but it was called a dance.

Of course, we all went, most people I knew went to dancing school. A Professor Moller came from St. Louis in the winter and held dancing classes down at, I think it was the IWOF. It was down on Myrtle Avenue. We went there on the streetcar and we carried our dancing slippers in black satin bags. I only threw mine away about two years ago. /Laughter/.

H: Were there a lot of children in El Paso that took the dancing lessons then, would you say?

P: I have no way of measuring how many. But a good many of the people I knew maybe didn't go every year, but they went a year or two and learned to two-step and to waltz, and how to act at a dance, and how for a boy to ask you to dance with him. And at the end we had a Cotillion.

H: What about music lessons, did you take any piano, violin?

P: Yes, most little girls took piano lessons.

H: Were there many teachers? Was there only one dancing teacher then and were there more music teachers?

P: No, there were other dancing teachers, because I said to one of my friends not very long ago, "Did you take dancing lessons with Professor Moller?" She said, "No, I took from somebody else." She mentioned another name. Well, it was essential to learn to dance, because you just didn't get up and shuffle around, you had to know the step.

H: Did the adults have a lot of dances? I noticed in the 1912 newspaper, constant balls.

P: Oh, yes, I think so. You know, there was the Toltec Club and the Social Club and /the/ Jewish Club. And then by that time there was the El Paso

Country Club, and I think they had a dance every Saturday night.

H: Every Saturday night? What else did people do at the Country Club? Did they have golf at that time?

P: They had golf and they had tennis.

H: Did they have any eating facilities at the time?

P: Yes. I went /there/ sometimes when I was about 13 or 14, and we could get a sandwich.

H: Well, now, at that time, they did not serve liquor in places like that, did they?

P: Yes they did.

H: They did serve liquor at the Country Club? But, did women drink? Women did not drink then, right?

P: Well, I have no idea whether women drank then or not. But, I always say when I'm talking about Prohibition--which was a mistake--I went to the Country Club dances from the time I was about 16. Not all of them, you understand. /Laughter/. Nobody ever offered me a drink, nobody ever suggested that I go in the bar. Then in the summer of 1920 or '21, when Prohibition was really established, I went to a dance at the El Paso Country Club, and the first thing that my escort asked me was would I like some punch. It was spiked. /Laughter/.

H: Then would you say that Prohibition was recognized very much in El Paso? I suppose /that/ the liquor must have been easy to get being here on the /border/.

P: Well, it made people drink who never had drunk before.

H: You mentioned to me once something about your father's reaction to Prohibition.

P: Well, he was bitter about it, because he was overseas /at the time/. He

didn't drink, but he felt that he wasn't for Prohibition 'cause he didn't think it would be a success. And he felt that it was very unfair to pass the Amendment when so many men were overseas. He returned from France in March of 1919, and Prohibition was to go in, I guess, the first of July that year. He was so angry that when he got here, he bought every kind of liquor that was still for sale. /Laughter/. We had Jewish sacramental wine running out of our /eas/!

H: Then you started having liquor in the home at that time?

P: Well, sometimes.

H: Had you had wine with meals before that?

/Pause/

P: Well, the family may have had /some/ for company, because I remember once when I was a little girl at Thanksgiving dinner they suggested that I take my iron tonic with a little sherry. Of course, I read the menus of the Toltec dinners and the bar banquets, and they always served wine or champagne at those, and at private homes I'm sure.

H: But there were no stronger spirits served, do you think then, as far as you remember any of that time before Prohibition? Alcohol was strictly reserved, then, for the Country Club?

P: Oh, I don't know, I'm sure plenty of families had... I don't know whether they had whiskey, but they must have had some. There were saloons all over El Paso. I don't mean all over, they were all concentrated, but there were a good many saloons.

H: Speaking of the saloons in El Paso, do you as a child remember having the impression that El Paso was a wide open, wild, violent town?

P: Goodness, no, because gambling was stopped. My father was one of the

leaders when he was city attorney, and I don't remember thinking of it as a wide open town.

H: As far as you know, then, after that time, gambling, if it went on, was not obvious, not open?

P: No. As I said about the saloons, we were not allowed to walk...when I could go to town, we didn't walk in front of a saloon. I never walked on the south side of Texas Street, between Oregon and Mesa, till I was grown.

H: You didn't? Most of the saloons were below Texas Street, then?

P: Well, they were on there, and there was one saloon at the corner of Sheldon Street and Oregon--I guess that must have been rather hard to avoid. But there were several, evidently, on Texas, 'cause we were always told to walk on the other side of Texas Street. And there was one saloon north of the tracks. You see, in those days north of the tracks and south of the tracks was a descriptive /term/. The town was sort of cut in two by the tracks.

H: At that time, then, were there many prominent families living down on Magoffin Street?

P: Yes.

H: They were still down there? The move to Montana and Sunset Heights had not begun?

P: Well, most of those people never moved. The Magoffins stayed there, the Stewarts stayed there, the Miles, the Kems, the Barrions, the Rollins lived down there, Dr. Rollins' family. But they began to move up because the Niffs(?), and the Williams, and the Happers moved up /to/ Sunset Heights fairly early. But a great many of them stayed. The Goggins lived there.

H: So, it was definitely considered, even though it was below the tracks, it was still considered a nice section. I wonder when the exodus occurred, then?

P: Well, I don't know there was an exodus; I suppose the people died. The Stewarts' parents died and they left town. The Magoffins never did.

H: What about the Kems? Did they stay?

P: Yes.

H: So that section of town remained fairly stable, then.

P: Yes, because I'd been at parties at the Kems' house when I was 15 or sixteen. Mrs. Ann White was living there in the '30s.

H: Was she? I didn't realize that. So you were not afraid to be on the street. What about prostitution then? You know, in the newspapers, of course, you see so much, and you wonder, just, were they exaggerating? Do you feel, just as an ordinary citizen, that it was possibly as bad as they said it was?

P: Well, I imagine that it was bad. I've been asked to speak on this subject before, and I said that I'm not exactly the one to speak on the subject. But, I think they closed Mesa, at least attempted to, during the First World War. Then people would point out to me certain houses--"This was Mae, whatever her name was," or, "This was Gypsy Davenport's house." I remember that the first maid I ever had after I married lived in one of those houses. I knew her address and I went down to tell her that we were going to California and not to come for the next two weeks. I was entranced when I went inside, it was so fancy. I don't know if there was more prostitution, but it was quite open. I mean, the houses were elegant. Then when they broke it up, why, they had the crib system or something. And they also moved around to different parts of town.

H: But it didn't really, then, interfere with your lives.

P: When I was a little girl, no.

H: You mentioned your maid after you were married. Was there a great deal of domestic help in El Paso when you were a child? Did you all have one or more maids?

P: Yes. Even in the Depression I didn't know anyone without a maid. [Laughter].

H: Were most of them from Juárez? Now, you say yours lived on this side, after you were married. Do you think that most of them were El Paso citizens rather than citizens of Juárez?

P: I don't know. The first one that we ever had, that I remember, was Jesús, and she must have lived in Juárez, because she invited all the family to her wedding. The wedding I guess was at 6:30 or 7:00 [in the morning]. I remember it was in the dawn that we got up and took the streetcar to Juárez. Then after the wedding Jesús asked for Miriam and me to be left there and have our pictures taken with the bride and groom. So, we did.

H: Well, then you would say that's certainly a different relationship than people have with their maids now. Did everyone, or did most everyone have a fairly close relationship?

P: Well, I imagine any maid that was with the children for years [would be like part of the family.] When my cousin Ethel Howe was elected, I guess she was the football sweetheart, this was probably about '24 or '25, the maid that we had when she was a little girl came to the house. She cut out of the paper the picture of her. She wanted to see "her baby".

H: Oh, my goodness, isn't that wonderful. Did you have a gardener then, too?

P: We had a cook and we had a yard man, I suppose, once a week.

H: Now, did any of them live with you, the maid of the cook, or did they go home? Was this strictly day help?

P: I think it was day help. Of course, I can't remember.

H: Well, I imagine houses were not equipped at that time for any.

P: I don't /know/. It was just part of life, you didn't give it any thought, I guess.

H: Did you change maids quite often? You say this one particular one practically raised you all.

P: Oh, I think we had them quite a long while. And the way we got the cook that was with us the longest...we had a cook named Elsie. She was black and she was addicted to liquor. And when she had too much to drink she would send her friend Grace in her place. And one day she never came back, and that's how we got Grace; and she was with us for 37 years.

H: Goodness sakes! Well now, was Grace black also?

P: She was black. And by the time Elsie left us, we had moved up here to this house. And Grace wanted to stay, so my father had the little house out in the back built for Grace.

H: Was there much colored help then here in El Paso?

P: Yes, there was. There was more Mexican, and several people I knew had Chinese cooks.

H: Did you ever have any Chinese help?

P: No, no, but the W. H. Burges had a Chinese cook, the Dyers had a Chinese cook, the Hoffmans had a Chinese cook, the Joe Willimas had a Chinese cook.

H: What was the cooking like then? I guess, there were the wood stoves. Did you have, oh, fairly exotic foods, or was the type of thing that you ate fairly plain? Can you remember some of your favorite dishes?

P: My favorite dessert was the biscuits, hot buttered biscuits with molasses. I don't think that was shared by everyone, but it was my favorite. I guess our families always just had kind of southern cooking--ham, and

fried chicken, and roasts and biscuits. We had hot biscuits for lunch and dinner every day, all my life, until my father went overseas.

H: And then when he came back?

P: Well, he didn't come home for lunch after that. We always had them for dinner, as long as he lived?

H: Did he come home for lunch every day, then, during your early childhood?

P: Yes. I think most men did.

H: You do? They did not stay in town, then, and eat at the restaurants?

P: I wouldn't really know. I wouldn't be in many people's houses at noon, and I don't really know whether their fathers came home for lunch or not. But mine did.

H: Did you eat in restaurants very much?

P: Yes, well, in Chinese restaurants. See, my father and my uncle W. H. Burges, and my uncle Walter Howe, some of their first cases were defending Chinese accused of being illegally in the U.S. The ones that they successfully defended were eternally grateful and we used to patronize their restaurants. I think most of them did own restaurants, and they also brought gifts. Every Christmas and every Thanksgiving, they brought us a turkey and a ham. On Christmas they generally brought a present for our mothers and fathers and Chinese candy and nuts for us.

H: There was a fairly good-sized Chinese colony here in El Paso, then, I guess?

P: Oh, yes.

H: Do you feel like there was much prejudice in the community against the Chinese? I know there was in the '80s.

P: I wouldn't be aware of it. As I say, several people I knew had Chinese

cooks. And Wong, the one who worked with the Williams, had been with the Bell family from the time he was a fairly young man. And you know, the first year of the Sun Carnival Parade, I remember practically the prettiest float as being the float of the Chinese colony. There was a definite Chinese colony.

H: They were very much a part of the community.

P: It seemed so to me. When Mah-Jongg became popular in the early '20s, there was a Chinese, a Chinaman, had a shop down on Franklin. He had beautiful things besides Mah-Jongg sets. He had brass and beautiful things from China. These Chinese who were friends of our family, the men that were defended, they sometimes sent back to China for something special. When Mr. W. H. Burges moved into his house on Montana, I think Mar-Chew-- one of them was Mar-Ben and one was Mar-Chew that I remember the best-- came to look at his house. And Mr. Burges had wallpaper on the wall-- dark red with sort of gold dragons in it--where there weren't books. And when Christmas came, Mar-Chew arrived with... You know in those days we had what we called here in El Paso portieres. They were curtains at the doorways if there was no door; we had them between our dining room and our hall. And he had an open doorway from the hall to his library. It was not a closed door, it was open. And this Chinaman arrived with the most beautiful silk portieres which he had embroidered like the wallpaper.

H: My goodness! Without being asked or anything.

P: It was a gift. I've got them; I'll show them to you sometime.

H: I'd like to see them. Well, do you think that in the houses, in people's homes the furniture was imported generally or do you think it was bought

here in El Paso?

P: I think it was bought here in El Paso.

H: There were, I guess, a number of furniture stores.

P: Yes, there was Hoyt's and Rodgers', and I don't know what others, but I think it was mostly from here.

H: And the type of furniture was...?

P: Well, by the time I can begin to remember, Victorian furniture was going out and Golden Oak, and Morris(?) chairs were coming in.

H: Was that slightly more modernistic then I guess?

P: /Yes./

H: Were the houses quite ornate and crowded inside, or had they begun to change?

P: I guess, most of them. Well, when I was little, I remember one house that had portieres of sea shells, strings and strings of shells. And I guess the older people had the, you know, those kind of crowded and Victorian, but little by little they /changed/.

H: Were there rugs on most of the floors?

P: There were carpets. Hardwood floors must have come in...I don't know. For instance, they were in when this house was built in 1912. And everybody thought it was so marvelous, because carpets had a way of wearing out, they still do have a way of wearing out, /chuckle/ at certain spots. And with hardwood floors and rugs, we could change around some. But I'd say that in most of the houses /it was/ in /the/ 1900s they had carpets.

H: Do you remember your houses being comfortably warm or fairly drafty?

P: Well, we wore union suits in the winter, prepared for cold weather. And our house had fireplaces in the bedrooms, and a fireplace in the dining

room, and a fireplace in the library. And then we had a base burner down in the front, I guess it was to the left of the parlor, which did send some heat upstairs; it warmed some. And I guess people had various stoves and fireplaces.

H: Do you remember what you burned in the fireplaces? Was it wood or do you think you used coal?

P: I think most of it was coal. It was nice though to go to bed with a little cozy fire. Then, as I remember, in the real cold weather, my father would build fires for us to dress by in the morning. Somebody asked me about the heat in the schools, and perhaps by the time I entered school they did have furnaces, because I don't seem to remember a stove in the rooms.

H: So, were they comfortable then?

P: Yes. When I went to kindergarten, when I was three or four, we did have a stove but I don't remember a stove at the Sunset School. I may be wrong.

H: Did you all take your lunches or did you come home to lunch?

P: We came home for lunch.

H: And there were no gyms or anything like that, it was just schoolrooms.

P: There were no auditoriums, either. I don't suppose that the whole school ever got together at one time. Sometimes if one class would put on something, they would invite grade by grade. I do remember when I first started going up to the fifth or sixth grade room, they put on The Courtship of Miles Standish. Perhaps you might be able to crowd two classes in, but there were no larger places to meet.

H: Do you think attendance was good?

P: Yes. Children were very used to discipline in those days. Class didn't

begin until everyone had two feet under the desk and their hands clasped on top of the desk. There was no wandering around. Everyone remained silent, I'm sure. One thing I remember is that the year I started was the year that /there were/ individual drinking cups. Whether it was an ordinance or a law, I don't know what, but we each had to bring our tin cup and it had to have a ribbon on it. And we hung it on the peg where our hats were. I suppose before that they used a bucket and a dipper.

H: Did they have a bucket in the room?

P: No, I guess it was in the hall. I guess probably there was a hydrant by /the time I went/, and we took our cup. It was pointed out to us that we were the first people with individual drinking cups.

H: And there was indoor plumbing in the schools at that time?

P: Oh, yes; oh, yes. I don't remember El Paso without indoor plumbing.

H: You mentioned, you started to tell me a minute ago about the effect of the Balkan War.

P: The Balkan War which was, I suppose, around 1912--a style came from it called the Balkan Blouse, a long waisted blouse. It was very popular with, for instance, children's clothes. Sometime just before that, the hobble skirt came in, which was a tight skirt at the bottom. We thought it was pretty funny to see ladies walking down the street /in those skirts/.

Up until the '20s, the length of skirts indicated your age, absolutely. Your dress went down by inches. It started below your knee, I guess always; I don't remember any pictures of little girls with dresses above their knees, unless they'd outgrown them. But by the time you were 14 it could be about 14 inches above the ground. And when your dress was to your ankles, you had it made.

- H: Do you think the girls were very, you know they're so style conscious today. Do you remember worrying about what you were going to wear to school?
- P: Well, yes.
- H: Trying to out-do someone else or...
- P: Well, we didn't...it was not an affluent society. If there were any wealthy people in El Paso, I didn't know it. I don't think we had enough to worry about. Sashes and hair ribbons were how you dressed up your dress. Every little girl had a white dress made with batiste or something, and maybe with lace. I remember the year that I got a yellow sash. I'd never had a yellow sash and hair ribbon before, only pink or blue, and that was nice.
- H: Do you remember having very many clothes?
- P: I was very clothes conscious, but I don't guess I had too many clothes. I know I was clothes conscious because I wanted a dress with mutton leg sleeves, when mutton leg sleeves came in. But, naturally, I didn't get one and I was furious.
- H: Did you not get one, do you think, because...?
- P: Well, I was only about four years old, and I would have looked kind of silly in mutton leg sleeves.
- H: You were just too young. /Laughter/.
- P: But I was determined to make myself one, so out of the scrap bag I started a dress. I was making my sleeves out of dark green taffeta, and every time that I'd go back to it, I knew that I couldn't make it, but I would try.
- H: Did your mother do any sewing at all?
- P: She did fancy embroidery and stuff like that, but we always had a sewing woman. We had one named Octavia, I guess, for 15 or 20 years.
- H: Did she come into your home and do the sewing?

P: /Yes./

H: Did you all have a sewing maching then?

P: Yes.

H: Do you remember having a washing machine?

P: Oh, no!

H: I guess that would have been, well not, I don't mean when you were real young, but, when you were a child.

P: I don't remember seeing a washing machine until I was married.

H: You don't?

P: No, I don't think so. When I think of the /difficulty/, I don't remember that we had any built-in washtubs. I think that the wash woman washed out on the back porch on the scrub board and tubs. I may be wrong, but I can't seem to remember laundry tubs.

H: What about the bath tubs?

P: We had a bathroom upstairs with a tub, and then we had a toilet and washroom downstairs.

H: What about the icebox situation? I know the Ainsa home has that grand built-in icebox that you can open from the outside and put the ice in. Did you all have one of /those/? Was this pretty standard?

P: No. The Krupp's house over on Los Angeles Street had that. We had a little back entrance for the iceman to come in. It was a little entrance for him to walk in.

H: It was a room.

P: Well, it's part of my bathroom now, I could show it to you. But, he came in and put the ice in the /icebox/. And of course you had to put the pans underneath because it dripped all the time.

H: So it was a regular free-standing icebox?

P: Oh, yes. I don't imagine too many people /had one/. The house had to be deliberately built to have that. I remember that the Krupp's besides the Ainsa's had a door from the outside. Must've been nice.

/Pause/

H: Was there much traveling across to Juárez? Did you all go to Juárez much? I know I remember reading that women bought their gloves and what not /over there/. And did you all take in any entertainment of any kind over there?

P: Not that I know of. Beside going to Jesús' wedding, I just remember once riding over to Juárez in somebody's carriage.

H: You did not do any shopping over there then?

P: No, I don't think so, none at all.

H: Do you think that the men went over to Juárez much? I know, now, the racetrack opened sometime in the teens, I believe.

P: About 1912 or 1913.

H: Yes, I believe it was.

P: But the racing, of course, was on only for a short period. And I imagine that a good many people came to town because while the racing was on, I was not allowed to go to town.

H: You were not. So it must have had an impact on the... I read /about/ the riff-raff that came because of the races. And there were complaints in the newspaper that El Pasoans were attending the races and gambling, that women were gambling.

P: Well, I think I led a sheltered life. I didn't know anything about that. You know, my son brought me a book about the Depression and the stock market, and he can't believe that I don't /remember/. I remember the Depression,

but I had nothing to do with the stock market. I didn't know any, I just was not mixed up /in that./ And I don't think our family /had stocks/.

H: You don't think then that your father had any?

P: Stocks? No!

H: I know I was reading a letter of his to a man in England that did some genealogical research for him. And he said that it had effected El Paso and that he felt the wolf was not at his door, but that times were tight. You didn't feel any... Now, you would have been in college at the time.

P: Oh, for the Depression? No, I was married. It affected El Paso, and by that time lots of people had stocks, I'm sure, but I just never heard of our family having stocks.

H: There was a great deal of poverty in El Paso then do you say?

P: /Yes./

H: I would like to get back to that point on where people did live in El Paso. I'd like to get that before we forget it. Could you repeat what you said about, you don't think that there was a right or a wrong place to live in El Paso?

P: Well, when a new district would be developed, such as Sunset Heights, a lot of people built houses up here. But the next thing you know, Manhattan Heights was developed and other people started there, and sometimes the Sunset Heighters moved over there. Then when Austin Terrace...well, then next came Kern Place, I guess. And because there was plenty of room, that's why no particular district ever retained its supremacy, because another one would be developed.

H: Would you say then that there were a number of income groups living in each one of these areas?

P: /Yes/, I would say so.

H: I thought that perhaps the Magoffin area started to go downhill when people from lower income groups moved in, but maybe that wasn't necessarily so, then.

P: Well, the Stewarts lived there until about '22 or '23, until the family died or moved away. I told you the other day the Goggins and the Magoffins /lived there/. /Bill Elliot/ said it was the only city he'd ever known where your address made no difference. He said, "Just think of it. The President of the biggest bank in town lives in a small bungalow." He was talking about Bob McAfee up on Cincinnati Street.

H: People just more or less moved where they chose to.

P: Yes, I don't think that... Now, the signs for Chaparral Place /read/-- it's a place /for/ people on their way up. But that is /an/ entirely

different concept in El Paso. At least that's what I'm aware of, because my friends lived everywhere.

H: Did you have any friends that lived in the Lower Valley? Was there much communication with the people that lived, say, in Fabens, down around there?

P: The Turners, Dr. Turner had a farm down the Valley, and occasionally, very occasionally, we'd see them. And I never rode on the inter-urban; people talk about the inter-urban that went down the Valley.

H: That was the streetcar then that went on down?

P: Yes. We have pictures in the, oh, '80s and '90s. I don't know whose place it is, maybe it is the Webbs' place. I know the Webbs had a place in the valley.

H: You said you didn't have a carriage, is that right? So I guess you got a car eventually?

P: My father gave me a car in 1918. He never learned to drive.

H: Were there very many automobiles in El Paso?

P: In 1918? Oh, yes.

H: Were there many carriages in El Paso before the automobile?

P: Well, I don't know, there were enough. The first Osapel* parades were carriages or buggies. I don't know how many years they lasted. But somebody called me up about them. I said, well, what I remember, I couldn't tell you whether it was the first one or the second one that was that everybody was in carriages. And of course, the fire engines were all drawn by horses. But, one lady with an electric automobile was in it, and she had it decorated with fresh flowers (most of them were paper flowers) and little electric lightbulbs all around. I never forgot that. But most of our parades were either military parades or carriages. Of course, the

* El Paso spelled backwards

military parade was beautiful in those days with so many horses. Then in every parade there was at least one fire engine, maybe four or five, with, you know, they were matched horses. In place of a sport, that was something that we used to do when we were little--try to figure out what street the fire horses would be exercised on that day so we could go watch them. Every day the firemen had to take the horses out, and that was part of our schedule, /to/ see the fire horses.

H: What about the Fourth of July celebrations?

P: They were, some of them, at Washington Park.

H: Did the whole town go down there?

P: Well, I guess I wasn't looking whether there was the whole town or not.

/Chuckles/. /But/ it seemed like a great crowd, and there were beautiful fireworks.

H: Could you describe a Fourth of July down there?

P: Well, you wouldn't go till just about dark; you see, it would be at night. They're really like the fireworks now. They probably /weren't/ as spectacular, but they looked more spectacular to me.

H: So there was not an all day picnic or something like that, that you see pictures of.

P: No, no. And then we didn't always go to Washington Park, often we just had our own fireworks at night.

H: Where did you get the fireworks? Do you remember?

P: Oh, from the Chinamen.

H: Oh, I see.

P: I'm sure all fireworks came from /them/.

H: From the Chinese?

P: Yes.

/Pause/

H: Did you all ever go up to the Upper Valley, as a child?

P: Well, about the time that I started the girl's school, one or two of the families I knew had cars. The Stewarts had a car, and the Stewarts had a farm up the valley--the U. S. Stewarts. I used to go some Sundays with them, but I think they were the only people I knew that had a /farm/.

H: Did you go on many picnics then, or was this not a popular form of recreation?

P: Well, it couldn't have been too popular, because there wasn't anyplace to go. In 1913, I think, we must have had a good deal of rain, because a lake of water formed someplace up in this part of town. I have a picture of it. I asked my father where he thought it was, and he thought it was about where Providence Hospital is now. But we had quite a picnic up there once. We took the streetcar that went up Mesa Avenue to the top of the hill. We went on the streetcar with our lunch packages and walked to the lake. I'm sure it wouldn't look like a lake to anybody who'd ever seen a lake /chuckle/, but it did to us. And occasionally, at least once, we went to Washington Park. We used to have picnics right up here in the Mesa Garden.

H: By that time it was what, just a grove of trees?

P: No, there were trees.

H: Was the little pavilion still there?

P: There was an old shack and a few Spanish Daggers, that's all. Some of my friends who come from other parts of the world feel so sorry for their children growing up here and never having a pretty place for a picnic. I

said, "Well, if you won't talk about it, they won't know what they are missing. It never occurred to me that we didn't have a pretty place for a picnic, because I was just used to whatever picnic we had."

H: Do you think that people did much in the way of beautifying their yards or planting very many trees? Was El Paso pretty much a treeless town?

P: Well, I think everybody did what they could. One of my earliest recollections was of my grandmother. She always took the dishwater out and watered. And she always took out the eggshells and the coffee grounds--I used to take them out for her. She had ivies, she had a pear tree. She told me that when they came in 1886 that there wasn't a blade of grass in El Paso, and that she used to occasionally dress her five little girls and take the streetcar to Juárez so she could show them grass on the patio of the Juárez railroad station. You see, the water came from the river, didn't it? And we didn't have much and it was supposed to be very alkaline. You know, they used to sell drinking water. But sometime before I was big enough to remember (I read it) the water company was developed to a point where people did get water. We had three or four big trees in our yard and my grandmother did too.

H: Did you have vegetable gardens and flower gardens?

P: Well, I think a few people did. Mrs. Dyer out on Montana Street had beautiful roses.

H: What type of vegetables did you have?

P: I didn't ever eat them, if you have to know.

H: Laughter. Shame on you!

P: I think that Mrs. Yandell, who you know came in the '80s, she put in a fig tree. We have a cutting, our fig tree is a cutting from that tree. She

evidently grew something as soon as she came.

H: It's amazing a fig tree would grow, and then the pear tree. Can you remember any others?

P: Chinaberry trees were quite usual in those days. Nobody plants them anymore, I understand, because they break in the wind so badly and other trees have proved sturdier. Both mulberry trees and chinaberry trees.

H: On the subject of recreation and free time and what not, can you reminisce on anytime before you went away to East?

P: Well, the popular sport was to go to the Elite and have some ice cream.

H: That reminds me, you said something about ordering Baseballs that last time. Did someone go to get them?

P: No! We could telephone down, and if we ordered as many as six or eight, they would deliver them. Delivery service was marvelous in those days. I remember when I was about 20 years old, some of us were sitting over here one afternoon talking about clothes. And somebody said, "Oh, I saw such a pretty dress at the Popular; I would like to try it on." And we said, "Well, why don't you call down and ask them to send it up." So, she went to the phone and she said that she was over here at Jane Burges' house and if there were any other dresses sort of like that that the rest of us might like, would they send them. And in 15 minutes the Popular boy was here with the package of dresses.

H: Do you think your groceries too were delivered?

P: Oh, yes. I told you the groceries, Mr. Watson's grocery... I don't remember when we didn't have groceries delivered. Watson's Grocery sent a man around--I think I was telling you this--sent Mr. Haldeman around in a wagon with a white horse, and he took the orders.

H: Your mother didn't have to go to the grocery store at all, then?

P: No. And whether Mr. Haldeman himself brought them back /or not/, I'm not sure. But I just remember Mr. Haldeman hitching his white horse and coming into the kitchen and telling all the news along the way and taking your order. He could tell you if anybody was sick, or left town.

H: Did you eat much meat, Mrs. Perrenot?

P: Yes, we always ate meat.

H: You did. Would you say more than anything else, chicken? You mentioned southern cooking.

P: A lot of chicken, and steak.

H: Steak. You did eat plenty of steak, then.

P: I'm sure other people ate vegetables, but I was very _____ about vegetables. The only thing I liked was stewed tomatoes.

H: Oh, I know what I wanted to ask you. We were talking about the El Paso Girls' School. Were there other private schools at that time that you might have had friends that went to them?

P: /The/ Catholic /School/ was St. Joseph's, wasn't that the girls' school? I don't remember any others, there might have been. In fact, I have heard people mention them but I don't really remember them. But a lot of children I knew went to St. Joseph's, it was up on North El Paso Street.

H: Did you have friends that went there?

P: /Yes./

H: Among the girls, were there cliques the way there are today? The little groups of, say, five or six?

P: Oh, yes. Up through the time that my children grew up, I think that girls' clubs and boys' clubs were probably the nucleus of social life. The girls

that I went to the girl's school /with/, about six of us, we called ourselves the Dutch Treaters. And over at high school there was another group with Frances Earl and Ethel Crawford, and Bernice Brick, /that/ some of them belonged to. And I remember that they sent word, well, by the grapevine, that they were going to ask us to come play Bridge with them. Well, we's never played Bridge, so we went into a panic! /Laughter/ And /we/ asked one of the older girls at school if she could teach us Bridge. So every day at lunch time we'd take a few minutes, and after about four or five days we felt equipped to go play Bridge.

H: This was when you were in high school? You were the same age as these girls more or less?

P: Oh, we were about 13 or 14 years old. And then there were lots of teas, afternoon teas. And of course there was always a Saturday afternoon movie which most people went to. Sometimes it was a serial of Perils of Pauline. That's one of the things I regret most about now. You can't just suggest that your children or grandchildren go to a movie 'cause there's nothing there for them to see. But, if we weren't going to a tea, which, as I say, we often would--we used to dress up in our best clothes and go to teas--why, we generally went to a movie and then went to the Elite, where we met everybody else and we did that for years.

H: Do you remember how old you were when you had your first date?

P: I don't know. A boy took me to a movie once, maybe that was it. But I was about 15, I guess. And I did go to that dance I told you about when I was 14. The boy's mother took us out. In fact, I belonged to a club, I guess it started around 1914 or '15, the girls at the girls' school and boys at high school. We used to meet every other week, I guess it was

Saturday night. We'd meet at different members' houses. One night we'd just dance to the victrola and then on the odd night we'd have some kind of stunt--maybe somebody had learned to play something good on the piano or /the/ ukele. And then we gave a big party, and that, as I say, was the nucleus of social life. Each of these groups, every year or so, had a big party and asked all the others. We had a boy whose father was a captain out at Fort Bliss in the cavalry, so we got the cavalry band for our dance.

H: Were there many musical groups available for this kind of thing?

P: I imagine there were about one or two, I cannot remember. But you wouldn't necessarily have a group; a piano was considered adequate--not for a big party, but /for a group of our size/. This year when one of my grand-daughters came home she had to go hunt up her friends and /see what they were doing/. We were so sure that life would be one round of gaiety when we got home for Christmas, and it was--constant social parties. You got to see everybody.

H: You mentioned that you think there was no particular social status connected with where you lived in El Paso. What about the economic barriers that there might have been within this younger group? For example, did you have friends whose fathers were in fairly low economic category, can you remember? Or would you say that generally speaking you all were pretty much /the same/, economically?

P: Well, by the time I went to the girls' school--as I told you, when I was 11--I suppose nobody who went there was very...well, they could've hardly been what's called poor. But as a little girl playing around, I remember the people whose house was about a block from us, their father was a night-watchman.

H: What about the friends you had that went to the public high school?

P: Not all of my friends went to the school for girls. Frances and Catherine Earl, who were two of my earliest acquaintances, they didn't; they went to a public school. Ann Magoffin went to the public school. Ethel Crawford. I think most people went to the public school.

H: What did most of their fathers do?

P: Well, some of them were in business, some of them were bankers, some were lawyers, some of them had stores. You see, before high school was compulsory, a lot of children dropped out. If their fathers were working or something, they probably went to work. I don't know when compulsory high school came in, but certainly not in 1908 or '09 or '10. In fact, I noticed one time when I was looking up something in the old Spurs El Paso High Yearbook, the graduating class of El Paso High School in 1908 was exactly the same size as the graduating class of 1898--eight or nine graduates. I don't think that there were any greater number of graduates to speak of till around 1915, and that may have been when compulsory education began. But, in those ten years--and El Paso grew between 1898 and 1908, and there was only one high school--the graduating class was the same size.

H: Well, then you might say perhaps that it was those who were financially able to stay in high school?

P: I guess so. And there was no talk about a college education. I guess many a man, workmen, would say, "Well, my boy might as well start to work." Boys drove grocery wagons. There were lots of things that boys could do, of course, besides be paper boys--probably, mostly delivery boys and paper boys. You didn't have to give up school to be a paper boy or a delivery boy.

H: You mentioned /playing/ Bridge. Were there other /games you played?/

P: Oh, yes. We played Hearts, and we played...I can't remember the name of it, but that was one of our Saturday afternoon entertainments. It was a dice game and you progressed the way you do at Bridge--you got around, and there were tally cards. I cannot remember the name of that game, but that was one of the things we did. We always had ice cream and cake. As I say, we dressed up.

H: Even for these Saturday afternoons?

P: Yes, ma'am, we dressed up. That's the thing that is the strangest to me, is how nobody wants to dress up /today/. All my grandchildren always say, "May we come informal?" None of us wanted to come informal.

H: You looked forward to getting into your best. Was that, I suppose, a party dress?

P: Yes. But I guess one, two party dresses at the most I imagine you had would be just fine--one for Sunday school, and a party dress.

H: And then just what, simple dresses for school?

P: And then see, middy blouses came in. They must have come in around 1912, or something like that. And the middy blouse was the costume for school. I told Milton Leech one time when I went to see a play up there, and I said, "You all should have called me in on the costuming." I said, "No girl in 1915 would have dressed like Alice in Wonderland." He said, "What did she dress like?" I said, "She wore a middy blouse. She wouldn't have been caught dead in anything else," /and with a navy blue skirt.

H: White middy blouse and a navy blue skirt.

P: Every now and then somebody had a blue middy blouse which gave them special class. Then we'd braid our ties. We had red ties, blue ties, black ties.

H: So you were definitely style conscious?

P: Oh, yes.

H: Do you think that this was the type of thing that was being worn in the East at that time /and/ all over the country?

P: Yes, as far as I know. Maybe not...well, I think so, because some people ordered their middy blouses from Hoffman's. I think that was in Norfolk, Virginia. They were real middy blouses, I mean they were sailor /blouses/. But that was the gym costume at the girls school--middies and bloomers.

H: Did you order those do you think?

P: No, no.

H: You had them made?

P: No, I bought them.

H: Did you buy them here in El Paso?

P: /Yes./

H: What did you wear on your feet? Did you have many pairs of shoes?

P: No, you've asked me that, I don't think so but I do know that they were mostly high buttoned shoes in black and white. I told you I had blue boots once, I had blue high lace-up boots. I can't remember that they were a big success. I don't remember wearing them too often.

H: How would you describe those clothes? You say they were loose-fitting?

P: Yes. Clothes just didn't reveal the form in any way. I have an idea that was the /idea/, I don't know.

H: You think maybe that was frowned on?

P: Well, I don't think ladies dresses fitted too /closely, either/.

H: No, that's true, I don't think they did in the teens and tens.

P: No, I don't think so. Maybe they were more comfortable /than/ in those

tight things they used to wear.

H: Women wore corsets, I guess, didn't they?

P: Oh, yes! We wore corsets. Sure, yes, 'cause I got a corset when I was about sixteen. I /think/ I got a _____ waist or something, for growing girls.

H: It was not as tight or as heavily stayed?

P: No, it had a kind of a blouse top to it.

H: Well, was that the mark of a young lady, I guess?

P: Well, not exactly, /but/ it was a step up.

H: You were showing me a picture of Cloudcroft. Did you go to Cloudcroft very many times?

P: Well, we didn't have a cottage there, /but/ I did go up about once or twice. It didn't agree with my father, at least he thought it didn't ; later he said, "All right, go." Then after about 1913, the Slaters invited me up to visit them. Then, after that, we rented a cottage in 1914 and in 1916.

H: Did you spend most of the summer up there?

P: No, not /the whole summer/.

H: Did a lot of El Pasoans go up there?

P: Oh, yes, and a lot of people away from El Paso. There were always people from Houston there.

H: That's interesting. It must have been a fairly thriving little community.

P: Yes, lots of El Pasoans went there. And you see, the train, I think the round-trip ticket was only five dollars. All the husbands came up on Saturday. For instance, if girls were up there /for/ the weekend, boys would come /up/. And brides and grooms used to come. We always tried to get to the lodge on Saturday night to see if there were any new brides

and grooms.

H: Well, did you have house parties? Did a lot of members of different families stay at one cabin?

P: Yes. And then girls had house parties. I /remember/ one of the first summers we came up Elizabeth Stevens had a house party next door to us. She was Parr Stevens' daughter. I imagine they were all about 17, 18 years old. Mrs. H. E. Cole used to have house parties. She used to have a fairly big house up there. There was always a masquerade dance for the benefit of the Cloudcroft Baby Sanitarium. They would have a fancy dress ball; I don't believe you wore masks, it was a fancy dress ball. And, really, people would work making crepe paper costumes or things like that. It was a real event in Cloudcroft.

H: Where did they have it?

P: At the pavilion. The pavilion of course since then has been turned into a tourist court or something. It was right next to the bowling alley. I think that old pavilion burned down.

H: Was there any little community at Ruidoso at the time? I know in the '80s it became quite a camping spot.

P: I think that people went to Ruidoso--Margaret Neff's family and some of those. I'd never been; I never went up there till 1930, I guess. It wasn't nearly so big as Cloudcroft.

H: Did people camp much when you were a child?

P: I don't know; not I. The only camping we did was when Mr. Slater took a group of us out to Hueco Tanks /and/ we camped out there.

H: What did the men do for recreation? Did they go on camping trips without their families, or hunting?

- P: Well, golf had come in. I mean, you know, there was the country club at the time. I just grew up in a family where the men didn't go hunting. Men must have gone hunting because I've read /about it/ in the old papers. I think there again Margaret Neff's father went hunting. I just belonged to a family that didn't do anything like that. My father gardened and worked, I guess.
- H: Did they have much leisure time? Do you remember him being away from home at his office a great deal of the time, or did he have a fairly routine schedule?
- P: He had a routine schedule, but I'm sure some nights he went to work extra.
- H: What about weekends? Do you remember him working /then/?
- P: No. He mostly gardened and he used to take me for walks. See, if you don't tell people they're deprived, they don't know it. We used to walk out on these bare hills and look for pretty rocks, or maybe sometimes in spring we would find a little flower.
- H: So you felt that you did get to spend time with him.
- P: Oh, I was with him, a good deal of /the/ time. I take my littlest grandson and we look for aluminum beer cans. And he has far more fun than anybody that... As I say, it's more fun than hunting for Easter eggs. He has to be able to recognize which ones are aluminum, and he does. He's four and a half years old, but he knows which are the cans. And he can, as he says, "smush 'em." He tries to smush 'em with his feet if they haven't been already smashed by a car.
- H: /Laughter/. They really appreciate the simpler things--children all do, I know. Did your father try to, as fathers will, give you a little education along the way, such as perhaps what kind of rocks they might have been or

this type of thing--little nature lessons?

P: I don't know that he did. I should write a book about my father. I think it ought to be fun. He always connected /everything/ with literature. If I said, "That's a beautiful sunset," that would remind him of something in literature, and then he'd read it to me when we'd get back home. I hardly ever remember /that he/ didn't think of something to read to me. He was great for quoting poetry and he had a quotation for everything. It made you...I don't know, it gave life kind of order. When I grew older and I would feel that life was unjust, or some terrible thing /happened/, like a child dying or something like that, my father always said, "All love could die and I would faith conspire to seize the sorry scheme of things entire, would not shatter it to bits and then remold it nearer to the heart's desire." And then you'd think, "Well, I guess other people have felt this way."

H: Where do you think he acquired this tremendous /Literary knowledge/?

P: By reading.

H: Just his reading? Do you remember seeing him reading?

P: Oh, yes; that's what our family did. There was a place for everybody to sit, and we read. Anybody who wanted to read aloud could read aloud. If you wanted privacy, you could go to the dining room. But, if you had something that you felt was interesting, you read it aloud. And then we used to sing around the fire at night, or out in the yard in the summer.

H: What type of things did you do in the summer? /PAUSE/ I would like for you to tell me the type of games and just everyday recreation and entertainment that you all had.

P: Are you talking about when I'm little or about my teens?

H: Well, both.

P: Well, when I was little, we played hide and go seek, we played...I can't think what it is--you get to run as far as you can while they're counting. It was just a simple game. Then in the summertimes if it rained, we all waited breathlessly for the rain to stop and then we waded in the gutters. See, the streets weren't paved until after 1907.

H: What were the streets like in the residential areas? Were they pretty bumpy and full of holes?

P: Just dirt streets. I guess the street sweeper came by after the paving, /but/ what went by before the paving was the street sprinkler.

H: Did it come out even into the residential areas?

P: Oh, yes, all of the residential areas. Tom Lea thinks that the downtown was paved before 1907 and '08 and I said, "Well, I don't know. I don't remember the downtown." But he thinks that it was paved with something.

H: Well, they paved El Paso Street and macadamized it in the '80s. But whether it lasted... It was evidently very unsatisfactory.

P: I don't suppose the town streets were dirty because the sprinklers were in the residents' districts.

H: Do you think they picked up the trash? I noticed this picture and it looked to me like there was an awful lot of debris in the streets. Do you remember them as being fairly clean?

P: Yes, I remember them as being clean.

H: What about the horse droppings and that kind of thing. Was there someone hired to /keep them clean/?

P: Didn't you call him a white wing? A street sweeper. Yes a man... Now downtown, I do remember white wings sweeping, but I don't remember it too

much /in the residential areas/. One of our entertainments was to put pins on the streetcar track where they'd be mashed flat. Shows you how little traffic there was, that we could run out ahead of the streetcar. And if you put two pins like this /in an X shape/, it made a pair of scissors. We used to think up ingenious designs with our pins.

H: What about the construction, you mentioned that.

P: Yes. When they were putting /up/ the electrical lines, we used to go around /and/ pick up any of the little copper wires. Well, we watched them do it, but then they often dropped something interesting for us to play with. We played with the Krupp children across the street. They had a very large barren backyard, where Mr. Krupp--he was in the clothing business--had various kinds of boxes. For some reason he had a box that was shaped like a piano. I guess a piano had come in it. It made a great place /to play./ And in fact, the boxes made a great place to climb and to do things in. The thing that children did (which they can't do now, of course) was to dress up and play Lady. There isn't any way to play Lady now because the lady dresses like the child. But that was a great thing, to get dressed up in your mother's clothes and go calling. You always expected them to mistake you for grown ladies, /but/ somehow they never did. /Laughter./ And then we'd have shows and /the/ entrance was either a penny or 20 pins. What we were going to do with 20 pins, I don't know, but we often got 20 pins instead of a penny. /Chuckles/ When we played with the Earl girls who lived up in Sunset Heights, we used to explore the canyon--it's the canyon that separates Sunset Heights from the College. And we thought we found gold there once. Of course, we played dolls and we played paper dolls. Nobody can play paper dolls now, because no picture is ever drawn

just standing.

H: You cut them out of magazines?

P: Oh, yes. The Dilineator was the best. That was a ladies' magazine. The lady who lived in back of us took the Dilineator, /and/ she used to save them for us.

H: Did your mother take many magazines? Were they very popular?

P: I don't remember much besides the Dilineator /and/ maybe the Ladies' Home Journal. But it's the Dilineator that I remember the best. Ladies did lots of hand work--you know they embroidered, and they painted china. My mother played cards and went to teas, and receptions. She embroidered a dress, it must have been linen. It was rose colored and scalloped, and the scallops were embroidered, and the belt was scalloped. The first day she let me wear it, I climbed the fence and tore the belt to pieces. I felt so sorry for her ever since. I didn't then, but after I've done hand work I've realized that it... Now, I wasn't really a tomboy; that was very unusual. We made mud pies; that was one of our favorites. I can remember decorating the whole front picket fence with mud pies.

H: Was that when you lived down on Kansas?

P: Kansas. I guess things were just simple.

H: Did you say you had a horse?

P: That was after we lived up here. It wasn't as much fun as you'd think because some of the streets were paved by the time I got the horse. We'd ride out as far as the old McNary home, where the Franciscan brothers live now.

H: That was a long way.

P: Oh, yes. Well, you had to. You see, once they started paving streets, they

paved them fast. Then we would ride up by the smelter; there weren't too many roads there. It wasn't as ideal as I thought it was going to be when I was a little girl and used to long for a pony.

H: You did want one?

P: /Yes/, I think because the Little Colonel had one. I told you that the Little Colonel was the guiding star of my life. And she had a pony so I wanted one.

H: Did any of your friends have /ponies/?

P: Ruth Rollins always had a horse; she rode to school. See, she lived on Magoffin, and she rode to the girls' school from Magoffin on this horse.

H: That was evidently considered a luxury. Do you think it was?

P: Sarah Hawkins had a horse; Nancy Williams had a horse at one time, she and I used to ride together. When I was a little girl, some people named Parker lived over on the corner of Upson; it's the alley that goes through. But I look at it now, they kept their horse in their backyard and it is the smallest backyard you ever saw in your life. But I'm sure there were no restrictions, you could keep a horse if you wanted to.

H: Do you think many people had animals around their houses? Do you remember animals in the streets or anything like that, or anything in the backyards, cows or?

P: I think people must have had chickens, because long after I was grown I was in México City and the woman at breakfast said, "Didn't all those roosters wake you this morning?" And I said, "No." She said, "They didn't?" And I said, "You know, come to think about it, I think I've always heard roosters." I think, it seems to me that until a few years ago, that big old house, the Goodman house on North El Paso, I think the people who lived

there kept chickens.

H: Did you get your eggs from a produce man?

P: From the grocer.

H: Now, going back to your riding, what types of things did you wear?

P: Well, I started with a khaki riding skirt--that's what the girls wore in Cloudcroft, a divided skirt. Then I sent to Bess in New York for a riding habit. Clara had a riding habit.

H: Did they have a stable in Cloudcroft?

P: Oh, yes.

H: Even then?

P: Oh, yes, they had good stables. I guess when I was about 15 or 16 you could rent a horse for three dollars a day, which gave you a chance to really explore. In the summer of 1918, I visited the Stewarts up there, and almost every day we'd rent a horse and go take a ride. We had Herbert Colford with us and he could tell mushrooms. So we used to go out with a kettle of water, some butter, and some bread and some tea; and every lunch we had buttered mushrooms on toast, and hot tea.

H: Oh, how grand! And that was one of the chief diversions, then, at Cloudcroft?

P: Oh, yes, riding! You see, there were no paved roads in Cloudcroft, and no motorcycles as there are now, and no automobiles to speak of. The road... when Helen Stewart was taken ill up there and her husband took Dr. Rollins, they made it in five hours and 30 minutes, and that was the record for getting from El Paso to Cloudcroft. So it wasn't a thing that you wanted to do every weekend. Most people took the train.

H: Mrs. Perrenot, which Stewarts are you talking about?

P: The U. S. Stewarts. He was always in the bank. I don't know what bank he

was in when he first came. Mrs. U. S. Stewart was a sister of Mrs. Winchester Cooley. Mrs. Cooley came out here to visit her. They lived down on Magoffin Avenue and Cotton, where the Catholic Sisters [live now]. They did a great deal of entertaining--they had a very pretty house and they did a great deal of entertaining. The two older daughters married Army officers, and I always remember them in their blue suits and their capes--the infantry, you know, wore a cape lined with blue and the cavalry's I guess was lined with yellow. I guess men used to, when they went out, they put on their dress uniforms. They had to, perhaps. They had lots of beaus and parties.

H: Were they older than you?

P: Yes, not much older. The older daughter, Virginia, married General Pershing's aide, and her son was one of the astronauts, Michael Collins.

H: Did the military take a great part in the social life of the town?

P: Oh, yes! I would say for grown people it was as important, as... Well, even when I came back from college, we used to go to the post hops.

H: What about members of the Juárez society? Do you remember?

P: No, I don't. I've read that in the '80s and '90s, but by the time that I remember, they must have had their own. Wasn't it the Customshouse [where] they had the dances before there was any [other] place to have a dance? When my mother was young, the parties were at the Courthouse. There was no ballroom or anything. I've always read that they went to the Customs-house in Juárez.

H: Did your mother tell you much about early El Paso?

P: Well, not so much because, you see, I was 11 when she died, and little children aren't very interested. I remember her telling me that one of the things she remembered best, whe she first came, was that there were Chinamen

from Juárez who used to bring fresh vegetables, and they always carried the baskets on their heads. She says she remembers /buying/ asparagus. Another thing, she told me that there was a bridge near where the Popular is now-- she said over the river, but she must have been quite little, and I think it was over the irrigation ditch. The irrigation ditch was before my day, /I don't remember it/. Then my grandmother told me about taking her little girls over to Juárez to see grass, because there wasn't any grass in El Paso and there was grass growing in the railroad station /in Juárez/.

H: Sounds like it was pretty desolate, I guess.

P: Well, it must have been. Are you the one I told that Mr. B. M. G. Williams told us...he came in '93, the same year that my father came. He spoke to the Comadres one time, he came from England. His uncle was a Methodist minister here, I believe he was. He came; but to prepare himself, he read up about America--he thought. But, he pictured /it/ as being something like South America--the great plains and long sweeps of grass. He said that when the train stopped and let him off at El Paso, Texas, if he'd had the money to go anyplace else in the world, he would have gone! /Laughter/

H: /Laughter./ /It looked/ like the end of the earth, huh? We had been talking about Washington Park. I wonder when they began to develop that?

P: I think there were some houses down at Washington Park from the time I can remember. I didn't know anybody who lived down there until I was about 14 years old. We went to Washington Park sometimes to see the fireworks on the Fourth of July. And then I went out to see the first airplane that ever came into El Paso. It just landed there and took off. There was a long row of one-story buildings. I had no idea what they were there for, but this side of Washington Park, they sort of formed the outer circumference

of it. And one time, they had an exhibit of the school's handwork and that was in the row of little buildings

H: What year was that?

P: I imagine about 1908. And then once when the Chamber of Commerce was built, they had an exhibit of children's work down there when it was brand new. I think the Chamber of commerce opened about the time that the Del Norte did, about 1912; maybe before.

H: Well, didn't they have horse racing, I believe, at Washington Park?

P: Yes, I believe they did.

H: Did you ever go to a horse race or was that strictly a man's sport?

P: No. I have seen horse races. I think that maybe in Seguin, Texas, was where I saw more, but I have an idea I went to one at Washington Park. I'll tell you what they did have at Washington Park in about 1914 or '15, was horse shows, with the military and civilians. Beautiful shows with the girls very fancily dressed. Mr. U.S. Stewart rode sidesaddle one time. She came from Virginia and had ridden a lot before she came here. I'd almost forgotten that, but it was an elegant horse show. All the young ladies were wearing broadcloth riding habits, and they were riding astride. That's why Mrs. Stewart stood out in my mind.

H: Did they have a children's class too?

P: I think they did.