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Eugene Thurston

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Eugene Thurston
INTERVIEWER: John H. McNeely
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Autobiography; El Paso Tech; Chris P. Fox.

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Eugene Thurston
by John H. McNeely
March 22, 1973

M: Where were you born?

T: I was born in Memphis, Tennessee.

M: Is that right?

T: We came here in 1906. My father at that time had a brother there who was a mining engineer, and he had staked out a claim up there in Hachita, New Mexico. He wanted Dad to come out and help him work it; he did. He went up there and just started digging a hole when the 1907 Depression hit them and copper went down so low that they couldn't make a living, so that was the end of that. Then Dad came and opened this accounting office. He'd been trained as a bookkeeper and auditor. First it was Thurston and Longnecker, then Longnecker got out and then he took in Grider. Thurston and Grider lasted until just a few years ago.

M: What was your father's first name?

T: Thomas.

M: You came in 1906. How old were you then?

T: I was nine going on ten. I was born in 1896, November the 5th. In school here, I was put in the third grade.

M: Had you already gone to school in Memphis?

T: Yeah, I'd gone from kindergarten to third grade. Then they put me in the third grade here, at the old Lamar School. I had a brother three years younger and they put him in the first grade.

M: At Lamar? Did you live down near Lamar in those days?

T: No. We lived in Highland Park on Lebanon Street in the old days. It was pretty sparsely populated out there then--lots of tent houses where the people came for their health in those days. A lot of them lived in

tent houses.

M: For tuberculosis? Was that considered healthier to live in a tent?

T: The more open air they could get, they figured they'd breathe the clear air, that that was the thing that helped the most. But, where we lived there was nice brick houses already--small, but nice. So we grew up with the kids out there in that area.

M: You went to Lamar School through the eighth grade?

T: Yeah, through the eighth grade at Lamar, and then four grades in the high school.

M: Was El Paso High in the present building when you started to go?

T: No.

M: It was in the old one?

T: Yeah, the old one. Was it Morehead or was it Bailey? Bailey was on Montana, it was one of the other elementary schools.

M: Where the YMCA is?

T: Yeah.

M: You never went there?

T: No.

M: But you did go to what was the Morehead School later? That was called El Paso High School.

T: That was the El Paso High School. We went there three years and the last year in the new high school. That's a good old building. It still stands up there, and it stands up as well as the rest of them. There was a little bit more climbing than you have nowadays--three stories and the basement, isn't it, or two stories and the basement?

M: Well, do you remember anything much about your high school years? You

say Chris Fox was in the same class you were in?

T: Yeah. There's lots of people here that were in that class. We graduated 82, I think 82 people. Some of them've gone, some of them are here. Well, this Bailey, Fred Bailey who lives down on Baltimore, and his wife were both in the class. Johnny Schaeffer worked for the gas company... Oh, there's lots of them. I ought to have my book, but I don't. I lost the records on all those kids. Chris Fox had them all together one time, in 1957. It was forty years after our graduation anniversary; we had quite a group that came. We had a big time.

M: You haven't had any class reunions since then?

T: Well, no, we were working to have one on the fiftieth anniversary. Hilliard Bryan was supposed to take it over and get it going, but somehow or other, it never materialized into a meeting.

M: That would have been in 1967?

T: Yeah, '67 would be fifty years. So I guess it was '57 when we had the fortieth.

M: You had officers in the class, and you were President.

T: Yeah, I remember that. They had an open house over at the high school, it must have been ten years ago. There were different classes of the early days. They put out a book telling about the different classes. It says in there that I was President, so I guess I was. Laughter. I was beginning to get interested in art there in high school. We had, of course, the paper, The Tattler, which was going pretty good even in those days. Our editor was Gene Smith. The first year that I was there, I submitted some drawings to him. It had a little backwoods story going about some of the people in Sleepy Hollow, and I illustrated the thing.

That was the first thing that I did. Then I took a course in cartooning, /and/ I got to draw different cartoons.

M: These were published in The Tattler?

T: Yeah.

M: The school paper. Do you remember any of the teachers that taught those classes?

T: Yeah. Miss Jennie Frank from the English /department/ was one of the most popular teachers.

M: She taught English?

T: Yeah. Miss Rebecca Goldstein taught the mathematics--she flunked me every time. /Laughter/. I had to take every class with her twice, because I didn't study it very good. I didn't like mathematics then. Miss Oldham, I think, was in history or something. Miss Kelly taught Spanish.

M: Which Miss Kelly is that?

T: That's not of the girls... Elizabeth Kelly was in my class, so there was another Miss Kelly. I don't know just what her connection was with the others, if any, but she was a good Spanish teacher.

M: Did you have regular art classes at El Paso High?

T: Yeah, they had art classes. I don't remember that woman's name that was teaching that, but we didn't get a great deal out of the classes.

M: Manuel Acosta told us...of course, he's younger than you, but when he was going to Bowie, Miss Octavia Glasgow taught art there. Do you know who I mean?

T: Yeah.

M: I don't think he was too inspired either.

T: I don't know what it was, it was just hard to get interested in it.

M: Then, when you graduated there, what did you do?

T: Well, I had taken a commercial course when I was not... I didn't have the proper credits to go into college. My dad thought it was better to go to work and learn to earn money than to go to college. So, I didn't go to college then. Later I took courses in accounting from La Salle Extension University in Chicago. I took a two year course in accounting. Then, after I got married, why, I decided that I was going to study art. There was a Federal School course in Minneapolis that was a good correspondence course, one that's still represented now by the... /They've/ changed the name, but it's still the same school I think. I learned a lot from that--I studied that at night when we were married. That was along in the early '20s. I began to notice the fine arts that were going on around here. At that time, Fremont Ellis was just starting out here, and he was doing art at home like the rest of us. He was learning to be an optician down at Segal's Optical Company, but after a little while, why, Mr. Segal fired him and told him that he couldn't serve two masters, he'd better go on with this art, and that's what he did. He moved to Santa Fe, soon after that. He built him a home up there.

M: He wasn't born here, was he?

T: No.

M: He just lived here for a while.

T: They were here. His folks, I understand, had been show people, and he had traveled around with them a lot.

M: You mean his father was like a play actor?

T: Vaudeville-type thing. I don't know exactly what they did. His mother

and father, I think, were both on the stage.

Then, Audrey D. Nichols was at his height here then, painting his desert pictures. I began to try to imitate him and paint 'em. I got pretty good, so I showed them to the art gallery here. Mr. Harry Wagner had a fine arts shop on Mills Street, right where the Harris Drug Store is now. I was doing these small pictures, and Nichols was getting all the big ones. Business began to slow down, and he decided that they'd move on to California. He closed the shop and moved out to...I don't know just where, around Pasadena. They were both tubercular; they'd met in a sanitarium up in Albuquerque, I believe. So when she thought he was working too hard, I guess, that's why they moved to California and lived very quietly--though he started to paint then. He had connections in Chicago, and he did quite well selling his pictures.

M: Wagner was his name?

T: Yeah.

M: What was his first name?

T: Harry Wagner.

M: He called it the Fine Arts Shop? About how long do you think he had that here?

T: Well, he had it....probably started in 1918 or '19, and he was here until about 1925.

M: He sold art supplies?

T: Art supplies and framing. He brought a man here, first decent framer we ever had, from Chicago, I guess. The old man stayed here after Wagner left, and he worked for Schumann and made frames for him. He finally retired and passed on.

M: You don't remember his name?

T: His name was Payne, but I don't know his initials.

M: Oh, yes.

T: He taught me a lot about framing. I used to go and watch him, talk to him, and visit with him, you know.

M: That was about the only art store here, then, this one that Wagner had?

T: Yes. It was a nice shop and a little ahead of the times, I guess. When he closed up, the Gandara of the Desert Art Shop, he called it an art shop, he opened it. He was a photographer. He sold pictures and frames, and he had my pictures in there at that time, too.

M: Yours and Dean Audrey Nichols' pictures were shown?

T: Audrey Dean Nichols.

M: There were others, /can/ you remember other artists that showed there? How about Boone?

T: Well, no. Boone hadn't come at that time. Wagner would go up to Santa Fe and he'd look these artists' work over. He'd offer them a price for five or six pictures--a very low price. But he got a lot of them, and he would bring them down here and sell them.

M: Were they some of the very famous ones?

T: Let's see, he didn't get any Sharp or Burningham or any of those fellows. He got a...it was a fellow illustrator, I can't think of his name right now. He bought a whole set from one book of good western pictures... I can't think of his name... He bought some from Mexico, he had quite an assortment; some he bought from the east. He pushed Nichols', and they sold. I've seen pictures with numbers up to 102 or 103 /that/ he sold. Nichols had a way of marking his pictures--he'd number them on

the inside of the stretches on the back, right on the edge so it could be seen.

M: Did you get to know Nichols very well, personally?

T: Well, some. I didn't like to bother him when he was working, so I never went out to his house. My mother bought a picture from him, and he saw me on the street and thanked me for it one day. And we began to talk and occasionally get together at the art shop and visit a little. He was tubercular and he had a bad hip; he limped when he walked. He painted some beautiful pictures. I cleaned some of them a few times, fixed them, restored a few of them.

M: Didn't he put a very heavy varnish on all of his pictures?

T: Yes. They were selling them pretty fast and he would turn out one or two a week and take them down to the Art Shop. The Art Shop would varnish them before they were dry sometimes (not dry underneath), so they would crack later, some of them would crack all over the canvas. I didn't restore any of those /because/ I didn't have the know-how. But this fella, Joe Flores, who later opened the shop, I guess he took over the Desert Art Shop. That's what he called it, Desert Something. He had photography also. He showed me one of these Nichols' pictures before it was restored and then he had a Mexican friend who did this kind of work /restore it/. He was capable of doing it. I guess he sent it to Juárez or something. But, anyhow, I saw it after it came back and you couldn't tell there had been a crack in it.

M: There's a huge picture by Nichols in the library at El Paso High. Do you remember that picture?

T: Yes, that was...it was hung in a club in the Cortez Hotel for several

years, and then when that changed hands, why, it was taken down. And I don't know where it was stored up at the school or where it was. I'm pretty sure that's the same one. Then whoever had it gave it to the high school, as I understand.

M: Oh, yes.

T: Nichols' son and daughter went to El Paso High School--it may have been that he gave them this one direct.

M: Nichols had a house out there, was it on Piedras?

T: Piedras and Fort Boulevard, almost on the corner. It may have been on the corner--nice little rock house.

M: Do you think it still stands?

T: Yes, I think it's still there on the northwest corner.

M: There are some filling stations there.

T: Yeah, I'm not sure if they are on that corner or not, I don't go out there often.

M: His children don't live around here anymore do they, if they're still alive.

T: I don't know where his daughter is if she's here and married. The son, as I understand, worked at the State National Bank for a long time. What he's doing now, I'm not sure, whether he's there or somewhere else, but I think he's still here. Last time I heard about him he had bought a couple of his father's pictures from Mr. Hackett at the Art Center. He bought them back for a very large price.

M: Of all the local painters we ever had here, especially in those days, Nichols was the most successful, wasn't he?

T: Yeah.

M: But I guess while he was still alive his paintings would never sell for

more than three or four hundred dollars would they? Now, they've gotten to be worth three or four thousand [dollars], if not more.

T: Yeah. There are not many of them offered for sale.

M: But still, his reputation is more local. He's never had a national reputation, would you say?

T: No. He had an exhibit in San Antonio--Wildflowers of Texas--and he submitted in that. It was pretty national, pretty statewide anyway. He won third place in that. I saw an encyclopedia that had one of his pictures there as an illustration. But as far as getting a reputation nationally, he didn't try to. He came here from Philadelphia, I believe, back East somewhere. Bill Hanley of The State National Bank had an exhibit of his early works down at the bank there one time. They were all eastern type of landscapes, people doing things, and women sitting there sewing and things like that--that kind of painting. It is entirely different from his work that he developed out here.

M: Oh, yes. But he died here, now didn't he?

T: Yeah. He was having kind of tragic situation. He had a stroke, and after that, he couldn't control his hands, he couldn't paint. He tried to paint a few times, but his work was very pitiful. I understand that one night he got mad and he took the picture and he busted it all up. Then, I don't think he painted much after that or tried at all.

M: You spoke of another place called the Desert Art Shop.

T: Yeah. Joe Gandara ran that first. Joe liked to go out and take pictures of the desert. He had a good collection of photographs that he'd taken around the southwest. He never tried to paint.

M: Where was that shop located?

T: San Antonio Street, next to the Wigwam Theatre.

M: Later that theatre had another name, didn't it?

T: State.

M: State, yes. Was that place opened later, after the other one you spoke of was closed?

T: Yes. I think Gandara had a little photograph business--finishing Kodak pictures, making enlargements and stuff like that. But he had never branched in- to frame making, art supplies and paintings until after the art shop closed up. He was there for maybe ten years. Joe went into Mexico and got into travel agencies.

M: Okay, Joe Gandara sold Nichols' pictures?

T: Yes, he sold them for a while. One thing he did for Nichols, he sold a painting to the Texas Pacific Railroad of which they made a large number of prints. It was a picture of the Signal Peak for the railroad. I had one for a long time. They were very good and much in demand--they had them in all of the railroad offices. He was getting out another one which I saw the proofs on, but the work on the proofs was not close enough to the painting and he just finally dropped the whole thing. He didn't get that one out, I don't know what he was going to do with that one, if he was going to sell it as prints or not.

M: Well, when Wagner moved away, this Desert Art Shop of Joe Gandara was the only one where you could buy art supplies in town?

T: Well, by that time the White House had put in pictures and framing. In fact, I think they bought the framing materials from the Fine Arts Shop; that seemed to start it out.

M: They don't have anything like that now, do they?

T: No, they closed out. They couldn't make it go so they closed out.

M: Well, when you finished high school, you worked in your father's accounting

office for sometime, was that it, and did some painting on the side?

T: Yes. I didn't work for Thurston and Grider for very long. I got a chance to get more money and I went to work for one of these wildcat oil companies that was opening up. That's when the oil boom was on in Breckenridge and Eastland, and up in there. The whole country was buying stock in these fly-by-night companies and most of them, well, all of them went busted, around here anyway. They had a stock exchange down in the basement of the First National Bank Building. They would trade that stock off. I went to work for this company because I had learned how to keep the records on stock certificates. I did that for Thurston and Grider for some other company called the Pullman Oil Company. It was owned by and operated by some Army officers and they sold stock to the Army /Laughs/ all over the world, I guess. It lasted a few years. Finally, they went out of business--the oil petered out, if they had any. I never did know if they had any real oil or not. But, they kept going by selling stock to these Army people.

M: Where were those places you mentioned, Breckenridge and Eastland?

T: Eastland, and over in East Texas, where they first hit oil. _____ it brought in a new area of gushers and oil in Texas. Of course, all the people that made money out of it live around Dallas and Fort Worth. A lot of them made a lot of money. We just had the tail end of it down here.

M: Lots of suckers buying this stock that...

T: Yeah, I bought a little myself. /Chuckles/.

M: What kind of work did you do for them? You say you went to work for this Pullman Oil Company.

T: Yeah. I kept the stock certificate records.

M: Oh, I see.

T: I kept track of who bought what and all that. I worked in a couple of other places during that time. Then I got connected up with an insurance and real estate firm here. I was with them a long time, seven years. I kept their records on insurance, wrote the insurance policies, kept the books, wrote the boss's letters and everything. I was a one man office horse.

M: Meanwhile, you got married during those years, didn't you?

T: Yeah, I was married in 1919. We got married right after I came back from the service. I worked for the railroad...the old E.P.&S.W. right after I got out of school.

M: What does that stand for?

T: El Paso and Southwestern. It was an old Phelps Dodge railroad; they owned it. I worked in an office up there, the accounting office. I worked long enough to get a pass, so I went to visit my uncle and aunt in New York City, though the pass didn't cover all of it, I'm sure--I forget now. Up there, I was trying to get into the Army. The war was going on and all the boys were getting in. I didn't belong to any of the local national guard units or anything like that. I decided I'd go East and try to get into the camouflage outfit. They were just beginning to use camouflage to cover the ships. But I didn't get any encouragement up there out of that, so I tried the Navy. And the Navy said I had a weak stomach and they turned me down. So I went over to the draft board; I had to register for the draft up there. I told them that I would go anytime--"I'd like to go." If they just wanted me, I was ready. So in about a week they sent me a notice to come down there. I went to South Carolina, Camp Jackson, /an/ artillery replacement depot, but I never got any further. They found out I could use a typewriter, and they put me in the office. I'd type off the other guys' orders, payroll, /and/

things like that. As soon as it was all over, I was ready to come home. So I came on back in January of 1919. I met Ann here and in October we got married.

M: What was Ann's family name?

T: Ann Lind.

M: She's from Albuquerque, isn't she?

T: Yes, she was raised in Albuquerque. She came down here with her sister and another girl. Her older married sister was already here; her husband was out at Fort Bliss in the cavalry. So, we got acquainted; liked to go together, and /soon/ we got married. She was telling me about Albuquerque in the early days. She had been there since she was two years old. /She told me/ how the Indians are colorful and always on the streets. And they went down to the depot, you know, /to/ Fred Hervey's house. He encouraged them, brought the Indians in to sit around the depot and be there when the trains came and sell stuff.

M: Who's this that encouraged them?

T: Fred Hervey. You know, Fred had Hervey Houses, a chain of eating houses all along the Santa Fe Railroad. In Albuquerque, they built a beautiful station and hotel called The Alvarado. The Indians would be there in bright colors. They had a place for them to live about two blocks down from the depot. They built I guess their own or somebody built them a house, pueblo style, two or three houses. That was one of the first houses that I drew, my Indian houses.

M: You went with your wife, Ann, /to/ Albuquerque and saw all this?

T: Yes. She tells about... They had a house close into town. It had a fence around /it/ and a big apple tree /with branches/ hanging over the front

part of the fence. And the Indians would come into town /and/ a lot of 'em would stop there in the shade and she'd see 'em, talk to 'em. They were... all of them were very trustworthy /and there was/ no trouble with any of them. Sometimes they'd come and want something in the house and they'd go and walk right in. /They would/ never knock, just walk in until they found somebody, then they would ask them what they wanted. Ann said /that/ she enjoyed all this Indian color and stuff.

They could see the Sandia Mountains from their place, right above Albuquerque. She said, she told some of the girls that she was going to marry an artist. /Chuckle/. I never told her I was working at painting or trying to paint when we got married, till afterwards. /When/ we got settled down, I told her I was going to take this /art/ course. Then she _____ see that I started on being an artist. She said she didn't know I was an artist when she married me--but she was going to marry an artist.

M: Well, then you went back up there and began painting some of those scenes in Albuquerque, or drawing.

T: Yeah. They had a lot of interesting things there. Down at the valley there was a lot of Spanish and Mexican style homes and Indian style adobes. And we went from there, of course, to Santa Fe. It was a pretty good trip in those days, there was a hill there that the Fords couldn't hardly handle, the old Model T's.

M: The roads were pretty poor.

T: They were just dirt roads, you know, but they were all passable except that that high hill was quite a test on a car. Then you get up on the mesa and go right, slide on into Santa Fe. Santa Fe and Taos were then going

good as art centers. New Mexico had built a museum in Santa Fe for the artists and they showed mostly their local work from Santa Fe and Taos at that time. I talked to them and they said I could show there if I wanted to. I sent a few pictures at one time, for a short time. I don't remember much about it. I didn't set the world on fire, but they did show them.

M: Did you get to know any of those artists up there?

T: Yes. I met Sharp, Burningham. I never met Walter Ufford.

M: That one named Couse.

T: I've got one of his pictures, but I never met him. He was given a contract to paint the pictures for the Santa Fe calendars--one good picture every year.

M: The Santa Fe Railroad?

T: Yes, the Santa Fe Railroad. They bought a lot of those Santa Fe and Taos artist's pictures. I found out later that Couse had a contract to make this picture for \$4,000 a year, which was not bad in those days. He could live on it very nicely. What he did do, he'd paint and send work back East, lots of those fellows did. And I met...what was his name? That's where my memory fails me in remembering names. I did know quite a few of them casually, not very close. One that I got real close to was a man in Albuquerque who was out there for his health named Carl Reden. He was a Swede, and he had Swedish friends there. Ann's mother was Swedish, so she got acquainted with him. I got to talk to him, meet him, and we'd discuss the work. He'd help me criticize sometimes and I enjoyed his pictures very much.

M: That's R-e-d-e-n?

T: Yes. I have several of his pictures back there. The way I got those, I helped him have an exhibit here. Then, I was making greeting cards, and I

had quite a good business on greeting cards for many years as a sideline. He wanted to get out some of his pictures and he sent me down four little ones for the cards. Why, I got the original paintings.

M: He gave them to you?

T: I had to give Carl Hertzog one. He was at the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company, then, in charge of the place. I got him to print 'em--make the plates, sent 'em in to make the plates and print 'em for one of the pictures. Carl has the one of the Enchanted Mesa. I always thought that the best one was the mission picture up in here somewhere in one of these Indian villages. His wife didn't want a mission. I don't know why, she just didn't want it; so he got the one /of the Enchanted Mesa/.

M: Last, you told us that you worked for seven years for this real estate and insurance company and then...

T: I got tired of that and I decided to try my luck at art on my own.

M: That's when you did this greeting card?

T: I started making greeting cards and working commercial art for the International Engraving Company--I did a little, not much. First I'd get them made through International Engraving. They did the cuts and I'd get some of the printers to print them. They'd print very cheap in those days, I would have them print up several hundred.

M: This International Engraving was a company here?

T: That was one of the first and only engraving companies for a long time. /It was/ run by the Wilson Brothers.

M: Where were they located?

T: They were located around on South El Paso near the old Bijou Theatre. Then they moved over to the building where the Times was. They were there until

they went out of business, sometime in the '30s, somewhere around there, maybe '40s. I learned a lot about engraving, etching, and making all that kind of stuff, /by/ watching /and/ hanging around there.

M: These Wilson Brothers did the engraving themselves?

T: Yeah. They were both pretty active in making the cuts. They did work for the newspapers; that was their main thing.

M: Do you remember their firstnames?

T: Yes. Buford and Floyd Wilson.

M: You had other little printers do the printing of the greeting cards for you?

T: Yeah. George Cairns used to do some for me in the early days. Then I got acquainted with the Rocky Mountain Bank Note Company, which is a lithograph house. The manager in those days was Nelson Davidson. He was interested in drawing and interested in trying to reproduce some color work on the big presses that they had. So we made some Christmas cards and also some 9" by 12" prints. I sold one to the El Paso Laundry. They put them out one year. It was a big picture and a little calender on the bottom.

M: That same firm was the one that Carl Hertzog was working for.

T: Yeah. Carl went in there after Davidson. Something happened that caused Davidson to lose his job there. His secretary, stenographer and office girl was asphyxiated by the gas in her room one night just about Christmas time. Rocky Mountain was owned by some Denver people; they had the same kind of firm up there. They came down and talked to Nelson, and I guess they decided that they needed to have a new manager. They didn't like the color work. They're strictly printing, their specialty was bank checks and things like that. And they print those in those big presses by the tens of thousands, you know. It was a money-making deal.

- M: Rocky Mountian Bank Note Company, where was it located?
- T: It was out on East Missouri Street around the 1400 block. They later moved down to South Kansas Street. As far as I know, they are still operating. In fact, they make, they're making my checks. They print my name on my checks every time I run out.
- M: Which bank is that?
- T: State National.
- M: You were able to make a pretty comfortable living just doing those greeting cards in your home?
- T: Well, around Christmas time we would make a lot of extra money and spend it on Christmas, of course. I had outlets from San Antonio clear up to Santa Fe, and in the Popular, the White House, and Norton Brothers, here in town. I was pretty good at it, but it got to be too much for a one-man business. So I just finally quit making them except for a few people. D. C. Crowell had been one of my special customers for special cards way back when Mr. Crowell was living, somewhere between 1928 or '29. I got those until a few years ago when I just couldn't do it anymore--I'm getting old now. I did some very...the largest I did were for a man that worked in the Popular. Let's see...I can't tell you his name right now. I did some quite unusual cards for him. I got to where it cost me so much to get them out, I just got ashamed to ask him to put up any more money. So I kind of quit on that high cost of living deal.
- M: Well, you did save some of the example of these cards that you made over the years?
- T: Yeah. I got a scrapbook with a lot of them in there, and there are a lot of them that are not in the book. I've just never taken the time to keep it

up. I don't know whether it has anymore empty pages either.

M: When you gave up the card business, what did you go into then? Into the public schools?

T: Yeah. That was about the time I was offered a job teaching at the Technical High School--Institute, in those days. I got pretty well acquainted with the printing department.

M: That was when Mr. Hughey was still the superintendent?

T: Yeah.

M: It was in the building that is now the central office?

T: Yeah, Oregon and West Yandell.

M: You taught classes in drawing?

T: Yeah, it was supposed to be commercial, mostly commercial design. I was supposed to teach commercial art. But there's such a similarity between the fine arts and the commercial arts in teaching, that I got into a lot of fine arts work. And with the print shop, we printed some etchings and we printed some of the silk screen work. We made some nice big pieces of silk screen work.

M: You didn't run the print shop?

T: No. I was just teaching art. The print shop man was William Van _____. I'm sorry, but those names I'll have to look them up and tell you about them later. Van was a very fine teacher and printer, very exact in his work. He wanted to learn all this silk screen and engraving and all that. So we did a lot of work together and turned out some nice things.

M: Then when they built the new Technical High School, you moved out there?

T: Yeah.

M: On Alabama?

T: Between Cotton and Alabama.

M: What sort of students would you have in Tech?

T: Well, when I started, we had mostly adults and some high school kids.

I enjoyed teaching the adults a lot more than the kids that came. When the first returning veterans were given education allotments, we got a lot of them to come to Tech.

M: From the Second World War?

T: Yeah. I had some good artists in the bunch. All of them were interested in learning and trying.

M: Gene has some notes prepared that he is going to give us.

T: The last year that I was in El Paso High School, I was editor of the monthly magazine called The Tattler and the annual, also called The Tattler. I don't have a copy of any of that stuff, I wish I did.

M: Do you think a copy exists anywhere?

T: I never really talked to anybody about getting them back. I think maybe if I went through all of my stuff in the basement I would find that I have some of them. During the '30s we had an artists' guild with a room on the top floor of the building adjoining the Paso del Norte Hotel. I remember that Lewis Teel and I painted up there. Other members were Kate Ball, Carl Hatfield, Camille Craig, Gerry Perry, Harry Kidd, Robert Genuine, my mother (Mrs. Fern Thurston), Lois Denton, Gladys Hinkle, Floyd Crews, John Curd, and some others that I can't remember.

M: Did this artists' guild have officers and did you pay dues?

T: Yes, we must have, but I don't remember any of who's who. The top floor really was a studio, it had a skylight, and we could hold classes up there. I had some students at the time, up there. Lewis Teel came up there to paint more than anything else. During this time when the guild was organized and operating, we decided to hold the Beaux Artes Ball. Along with it, to advertise it, we held a poster contest. Tom Lea won the first place and Floyd Crews second. Charlie Waterhouse, Russell Waterhouse's father, and I were the judges. I had the winning poster for a long time here and I finally gave it to Larry Davis. Mr. Davis was putting on another art show in the Coliseum--I forget now when that was. I remember Manny Acosta was helping to decorate it. I gave them some large paintings that I had

painted on paper from school /Tech/. The reason I remember Manny is because after we got through working /decorating the Coliseum/, we would go over to his place /and/ had a couple of refreshing drinks. John Curd built the scenery and the decorations. He was interested in art but he didn't follow it up completely.

M: This is Beaux Artes Ball you're talking about?

T: Beaux Artes Ball, yes. It was held in the old Liberty Hall, before it was remodeled. In those days the floor was flat for dancing and parties of that kind. So we decorated the stage, and /we/ had a very nice looking place.

M: You only did that one year though /1929/?

T: Yeah, and a lot of work went into it, a lot of people worked on it. But we never held another one until this one they held about 1955 or somewhere along there in the Coliseum. The Woman's Club was very active then and held an annual exhibit in the club building. Mrs. Wehman(?) was in charge of exhibits. Lewis Teel and I helped with the hanging. She was very particular about how things should be hung and which ones went where and here and there. It was getting late in the day and I was tired of fooling around waiting for her to decide, you know, so finally, I showed her how to hang the wire so that it wouldn't give her any trouble. I told her if she put the hook up there and the wire on it and carried it on around and put it on the hook to the other side, she could adjust it very easily. So after that we got through with the job.

M: Was she sort of the custodian there?

T: No. Mrs. Wehman was Bill Wehman's /wife/, the architect's wife. She had studied art in Chicago, same as he. She was quite an artist, but she wasn't painting or exhibiting after she got down here. She was just interested in

holding exhibits and helping out and things like that.

M: She was just a member of the Woman's Club, then, who supervised these?

T: Yeah, she was on the committee to do this.

M: You held them in the auditorium of the Woman's Club?

T: Well, some in the auditorium and some in the front two rooms. We filled that place up a couple of times. They were very nice exhibits, too. We had some good men here, I don't remember the names, from Ft. Bliss, and some of the local professional artist were all entering. After that, we decided to hold the outdoor shows. They held the first few in the library park where now the new library building is. They were well attended. Then we decided to hold some down in the San Jacinto Plaza when they were going to tear up the parking in front and put in the new Library building. So we held a few down there in the San Jacinto Plaza, but the problem there was parking space--nobody could get close to the place to stop and see them. So as soon as the new library was completed they allowed us to use the Maud Sullivan Gallery, which was built for exhibits and the use of the artists. Then after the new wings were put on the museum, when they opened them, the artists moved over there. They held their meetings there, but only once a year did they have a chance to exhibit. That's the run up on the progress of the places where they artists could exhibit. They didn't have any galleries like they do now. At that time, the others had closed down. So, the Woman's Club was really the most progressive group that backed the artists in any way.

M: Do you think that El Paso was particularly weak in appreciation of artists and galleries? It seems like it was, compared to other places like Santa Fe.

T: Yes, we weren't as progressive as Santa Fe and Taos. Nobody said that El Paso was an art center for a long time. The people...some came to see and buy

but there were not many sales in those days. Pictures were hard to sell. Then Mr. R. E. McKee began to collect pictures and he and his wife would come down to the open air shows and walk around on a nice evening, you know, and they would buy two or three. I sold my first picture to him down there at the library park. But now, there's been lots of sales in pictures the quiet way. I was looking at the catalog on Pablo Fisher's pictures, and in there they had a list of the owners that had loaned their pictures for that exhibit at the museum recently. I was surprised at the people that had bought them...local people.

The first Sun Carnival Show...the group that later formed the Art Association, mostly got together and decided that we would hold a Sun Carnival Exhibit. We asked the Sun Carnival if they wanted to back us, and they said they would. So with the help of the director of the Technical Institute, Mr. J. T. Reynolds, who got in there and worked and helped us fix things up, we got a pretty good show going. We sent notices, of course, to round all the people that we knew in El Paso and surrounding area. We got about 300 paintings for the exhibit. But the feature, and the thing that brought the crowd, I believe, was the exhibit of about five or six old masters from the Dutch School which we borrowed from the Metropolitan Museum in New York. They got there just barely in time to put them up for the show. But they were very popular with the people. We got lots of nice comments on it.

M: Now, in that first show, did you have any prizes for the 300 pictures that were entered? Were there judges or anything?

T: No. No judges, no prizes that I remember. But, of course, later we talked to Vera Wise of the college and she said she would go in with us and try to give us a better place to exhibit in the Cotton Memorial Building. But her

condition was that the pictures were to be juried. She would furnish the judge. The first judge we got was Professor Anderson, I believe, from Arizona University. We had a large group of paintings submitted. And I don't think the word was put out in time that they were going to be juried, because a great many of the local artists who had a pretty good reputation were turned down for this exhibit. They were all mad and mad at me; they were going to drop out. In fact, Lewis Teel did drop out of the Association. He later came back. After that, we held several there at the Cottom Memorial /for/ several years. Each one was judged, and we got along fine after that. We held a few exhibits, one in the Elk's Lodge Building one year.

M: That was the one down on Cleveland Square, when it was _____ or the Toltec Building?

T: No, it wasn't either one of those. It was the one that the Shriners bought from them on North Campbell. The telephone company, I believe, bought 'em /out/ and took it over. And they moved out there near the high school. Then we took the Sun Carnival show up to the museum as soon as they were ready. We held it there each time. We had prizes up to as high as \$2,000 for first prize, \$1,000 for second, and several other small prizes. Five or six thousand dollars was raised every year for prizes, for about ten years.

M: But, by then, you were getting entries from all over the country.

T: Yes. It was beginning to be known nationally. We did. We got a lot of exhibits from out of town.

M: You spoke of something there that you judged.

T: That was the Beaux Artes Ball poster contest. We had a nice collection of posters submitted for that. Tom Lea, at that time, was living in Santa Fe and he sent his down by mail. Then he later moved back to El Paso.

M: His /won/ first prize. Do you remember the subject of it?

- T: Yes, I had the poster. I should have kept it. It was standard size, about 22 by 28 inches. It was a picture of a Spanish girl and a Spanish boy dressed up for a party, painted in bright colors. He very uniquely used, at that time, colored pencils. He put in an area with red and put in an area with another color. It was really a very nice piece of work. I foolishly donated it to the other group, but I didn't have a place to really take care of it. I got tired of putting it around in the basement different places and keeping the dust off of it and things like that. He is getting so famous and I would have like to have kept it. Another thought that came to me...when we were in grade school we had a baseball team in Highland Park. We were the Highland Parkers. We played a team that was in the _____ near where you live, around Cotton Avenue. _____ Gillette was the manager of that bunch. It was my job to always arrange these games. We had on our team...I can remember most of them. We had Harry Kidd, his brother John, Paul Downs, Douglas Downs, George McClure, Clair Ruley, my brother Charley, and me, and a couple more I guess--I can't remember. We used to play them every now and then. Then we would play a group across the tracks at the San Jacinto School area. Al Adkins was one...
- M: These names you mentioned seem to be mostly Anglo-Americans. They hadn't moved in so many...
- T: No, at that time there wasn't many Mexican boys going to high school or grade school on this side. Of course, they had their own _____ San Jacinto and Beall School and several _____ in there. Well, they seemed to stay more or less... They hadn't moved into the upper part of El Paso at the time to any great extent.
- M: Did you, _____ Gene, participate in any of the art groups or teaching like they have had at Ruidoso and Cloudcroft or the Black Range?

T: I taught in Ruidoso for a couple of summers in 1937. They had a summer camp for wealthy girls. Greggerson owns it now. At that time, it was run by two women from Roswell. Mrs. Denton was one and the other lady I've forgotten /her name/. I didn't get any money out of it, but I had two daughters, Margie and Peggy, who got to go up to camp there for the season. Ann and I both went, and Holly, who was then just about five years old, something like that, she went with us. I had classes there for two weeks each--two seasons for sure. I gave the girls painting lessons. Soon after that I got into the public schools. They couldn't make the camp pay enough so they closed it down anyway. The building belonged at that time to the Roswell Military Institute; they sold it to Greggerson.

M: What sort of building was this? For school?

T: Yes, they used it for a summer school affair. They had one nice large building with the basement mostly above ground. In the area above, some of it was dormitories. The dinner hall and the kitchen were downstairs. The center room was kind of a meeting room; /it was/ a nice large room with a fireplace. Then they had some buildings behind there which were used for, oh, help--teachers and help and all to live in. They had horses, and somebody to take care of the horses every season. It was just a nice summer outing, really. But after that, I didn't teach any, at least I don't think I did; I don't remember.

M: Well, how about the Black Range group? Didn't you go over there once or twice?

T: I went over there and judged one exhibit for them but I never have...

M: Kingston, New Mexico?

T: Yeah, up in the Black Range, Kingston. That's an interesting little leftover village from the mining days. I think they had the use of the old bank

building for their exhibits. It was a typical old fashioned bank--bars on the windows, raised up about three or four steps from the ground, you know--stone building.

M: This has been going on several years now. It's just an art colony in the summer?

T: Yeah, some of them live up there. Mrs. Barret, she moved up there, and some others from New Mexico have homes there or summer homes. They kind of keep the place alive. It's interesting up there; it's pretty, green; the mountains cool.

M: Then they have some prominent painters who come and teach in the summer?

T: Yes. I think...what's that man's name?

M: Taubus?

T: No, they never had Taubus, he taught in Ruidoso. I'm thinking of a local man.

M: Kolliker?

T: No, Kolliker taught in Ruidoso.

M: Krupp.

T: Krupp, Louis Krupp taught up there. He was one of the first they had. He'd come in the summer and hold classes. I don't know how they are doing now, but they're still going. They brought an exhibit down here once, not long ago. Now, Cloudcroft has a colony. That's run by some people from Dallas, teachers from Dallas.

M: I think Frank Gervasi maybe goes there, or has, the one from Marfa.

T: Yeah, I saw something about him. I met a man from Carlsbad, Micky Lavy, who is very active in that area. I sold him all of Boone's paintings that Boone's wife had left here a few years ago. Then later he decided to get out a little book telling all about Southern New Mexico. He asked for help

from different artists that he knows around here. He got me to draw three or four sketches; he got one or two from Peter Hurd. In fact, they are all from right in this area. Bob Hammond submitted some.

M: These were to be published in a book?

T: It turned out I have one out there, I'll show you. It was about a 50-page book that he was selling for a dollar on a newstand, you know, where tourists go. Then in the back he's got a picture of each artist and a little article about him. I found out I was in pretty good company. /Chuckle/.

M: What was the author's name?

T: Micky Lavy. He was later appointed to the Art Commission in New Mexico. He has exhibited over here a time or two. A funny thing about Boone's pictures...Lavy had been over there looking for one of Boone's pictures...

M: What is the full name of Boone?

T: Elmer Boone. Lavy wanted a picture of the Capitan Mountain -- Signal Peak, by Boone. He talked to everybody around here, except me, it seemed like, and he didn't find anything. So, when Mrs. Boone...she had some pictures that were stored out here with a neighbor. So, she said, "I would like to sell them. The lady is getting very old and feeble and she wants to get rid of them." /She asked if/ I would take them and try to sell them. So I wrote him a letter, and said, "I have a list of Boone's pictures I'd like to sell." Would he like to see them? So he came over. But first, he looked at the list and he bought a few of them just from the list, I guess, the best. I sent them over to him, and I said, "Come over here and look at the rest of them. I'll sell them to you at a pretty good price." So he did. It turned out he bought them all.

PAUSE

M: Well, we were speaking about the Micky Lavy sketch book about Southwest New Mexico.

T: You see, I painted a lot in New Mexico. We went to Albuquerque 'cause Ann's folks lived there. We would go to Santa Fe to keep up with what these artists were putting out and showing, Taos, and around Roswell. We had a close friend that lived in Roswell, not an artist, but he introduced me to some of the artists and museum people there in Roswell.

M: Well, this book has a series of sketches by a group of artists. It's a sort of guide to El Paso and the area here for tourists, I'd say.

T: Yes, it was put out for tourist information.

M: 1968 it says.

T: Yeah. He had me draw the White Sands, the Cloudcroft Railroad trussle, the Ft. Bliss Missile Range, and the racetrack over there in Ruidoso-- I drew that with horses running. I don't know if anybody noticed how crude the horses were or not, but I suppose the artists did.

M: Do you remember anything about the Mexican Revolution, or were you too young when things were really poppin' over here in Juarez?

T: Well, I was a little young. I heard lots of tales about Villa buying a lot of stuff in El Paso from Hamon Krupp and men like that.

M: What would he buy?

T: Clothing and supplies for the troops. Then I remember one time there were different revolutionary groups fighting at different times. One time we went up the river, up by the smelter, to see. There was a group of revolutionary soldiers right across the river. They were not fighting then, they would come down and talk to the people standing on the American side. The river was about 25 feet wide or less, and they'd stand over there. We kids followed down there, and we'd stand there and watch them talk to them.

Then one time we were downtown one evening at the Sheldon Hotel, which is now the Hilton, Plaza. We were down at a dance there and somebody came in and said, "They're attacking Juárez!" So, of course, everybody got out there and ran down to the bridge to see what was going on. We were standing around there, bullets flying around every once in a while.

M: But you can't remember what year that would be?

T: Well, that was somewhere around 1921, I think. 1919 we got married. It may have been 1919.

M: During 1919, Villa made a final attack on Juárez, and the troops from Ft. Bliss were supposed to have crossed over and helped run him off. Maybe it was that one that you remember.

T: Well, I remember that the bridge was crowded with refugees, with all their, all that they could carry, and coming over to this side. They put them all in the stockade out there for a while, at Ft. Bliss.

M: That Krupp that you spoke of, what sort of business did he have that you thought he sold things to Villa?

T: Well, Hamond Krupp...

M: He's not the one that's still alive?

T: No, no. Bernard Krupp is still alive, and Ely I believe is still alive.

Hamon ran a mercantile business down in south El Paso at Overland and Santa Fe, I believe it was. It's the building that the Malooly's had been using for selling _____. But Krupp and Frank Pickerell, who used to run the Elite Confectionery back in the days when it was the spot where everybody would go to get sodas and things, at the corner of...where Grant's is now, the corner of Texas and Mesa. They had it there, and they had a nice business for a long time. But Krupp and Pickerell went down to Big Lake in Texas, and dug a wild cat oil well and it came in--it came in a big gusher.

So they, well, _____ had plenty of money from then on. Krupp is dead, I'm sure. Frank lives here in El Paso with his sister and sister-in-law.

M: He ran that confectionery thing?

T: Yeah. While they had it, they put out the first frozen ice cream things called a "baseball." It was in the shape of a baseball and darn near as big. They sold, but I guess they never caught on nationally. That was the first of those kind of things that I know of. Except, I can remember we had these little slices of neopolitan ice cream--strawberry, vanilla, and chocolate--that the hokeypokey man would sell you for a nickel in those days.

M: There is one painter I'm thinking of that must have done that painting right there that you have told me about.

T: Yeah, Dey de Rivcowsky. I have a book on him. He was an artist who started... He was raised in Russia, probably, and then drifted over to Europe, selling pictures, sketching, selling 'em to tourists on the waterfront in Venice and places like that. He first went to South America and held some exhibits down there and got himself some prizes, first prize. He did that here. He comes into a place and he gets in with the artists. His specialty was ocean scenes, Venice scenes, and seascapes. They were good, very good. But he would organize a big exhibit. The one here was the one in 1924 when he got the Chamber of Commerce to back him, women of the Chamber of Commerce. He had a picture about 6 feet square or 6 feet by 8 feet, or something like that...enormous thing. Of course, naturally, he overshadowed everything else and he got himself a prize. He gave me a prize for the best in the, at that time, the amateurs, which I have here.

M: Oh, yes, "First Prize, International Fair and Exposition of the Southwest, El Paso, Texas, September, 18-28, 1924, auspices of the Chamber of Commerce."

That's not this one, is it?

T: No. This is a picture I painted when we were experimenting with, making prints out at the Rocky Mountain Bank Note. That's one that was later put on the calendar for the El Paso Laundry.

M: Well, this is a scrap book.

T: This is the first scrap book. The other one is still in this clipping stage. I've got about three folders full of clippings and things. I thought I'd put the little book in here about Rivcowsky.

M: How long did he stay here?

T: Well, he stayed here, I guess, six months the first time, and then he came back and stayed again. He sold a lot of paintings around El Paso. I observed his salesmanship and learned a great deal about selling and painting pictures. I remember one case. He had an order for a picture...oh, it was a marine scene, ocean scene of some kind that somebody else had bought, and this party wanted one like it. So, he said, "Well, I've got one in my studio in Los Angeles, I'll send over there and get it." So, instead of sending for it--he didn't have any over there anyway--he just sits down and he paints the thing in two days, two sittings. There it was, ready to sell on the next day. He had frames here that he put them in, that he kept on hand, you know. But I learned a lot from him about painting. He was the first one that I took any lessons from in oil painting. I watched my mother paint a little bit, but that didn't interest me; she was painting flowers. And I believe about that time they were painting on China. She had a good collection of China paintings that she did, which I have in the dining room there. But I learned the basic buildup of, picking canvas, raw canvas, preparing the canvas, putting on two or three coats of under paint and then painting on it. I learned the use of the colors, how to

mix the colors up, instead of raw colors like they use so much nowadays. It was soft blended color.

M: You actually took lessons from him?

T: Yeah, I took lessons from him. He had a class of four, five people, I believe. After [I] got so that I might make something out of it, I could go up there and work anytime. He had a two-room suite in the Paso del Norte. To finally pay all he owed down there, he painted them a great big picture which has hung in the mezzanine there for many years -- the marine scene.

M: At the Paso del Norte? Well, this says he's Dey de Rivcowsky, born in 1880, the son of a Russian count. His father was killed in the Russo-Japanese War. He was here, then, during the twenties?

T: Yes. Yeah, the early part of the twenties, he was here.

M: You all developed here almost a little school of desert painters, it seems like--Nichols, Teel, Boone, and you.

T: Yeah. Floyd Crews painted some...not too much. He was more of a portrait painter. A big fella, he had lived in New York and came down here after his wife died. While they were in New York (his wife was an artist), they were very successful commercial artists. He had a sister who owned a ranch up in Alamogordo. He'd stay down here most of the time and go and see her some, I guess. He started painting portraits and some landscapes. But he had a hard time making ends meet because that's all he'd do--paint. He would exhibit with us. He liked to get these young girls... He'd see a pretty girl at some of these gatherings, you know, and he'd say, "Would you come to my studio? I'd just love to paint your portrait." He painted a lot of them.

M: I guess it didn't cost much back in those days.

T: No. And he'd sell lots of pictures by taking them around and showing them to these prominent men like Dorance Roderick of the Times. He'd say, "I'm short on money. Would you take this picture and keep it and loan me about \$50?" Dorance did that a few times. Some of the other newspaper men I know kept his pictures that way. And he'd keep on borrowing till he got in so deep that he couldn't get the picture back 'cause he didn't have any money. Chuckle.

M: I guess there weren't any painters here, particularly though, before the First World War, that anyone ever heard of.

T: No, I don't remember any of them that were here at the time.

M: How about Kate Ball? She was born here, wasn't she?

T: Yeah, Kate was raised here, and she took that Federal School Commercial Course that I took. She did some commercial work, and then she got into the Technical High School, Institute at that time, as the art teacher. I took over after she left. She was there several years. I don't know how long. And the one before her was Lucille Skipworth.

M: Well, this Tech Institute then was, seems it was sort of a vocational school?

T: It was opened as a vocational school I believe around 1925. As soon as the government started putting out money for these schools, they organized. I remember Reynolds used to say in the old days, "You want to have a class?" He says, "Get me twelve people, and I'll give you a class." That's all it would take. I did have a class of women for oil painting. It was a pretty good size class--it was over 12, about twenty. I'd start them out and they'd paint the picture. And when it would get near the end, I'd have to go around and touch them all up, and help them finish them.

M: Well, Mr. McKee bought quite a bit of your pictures, didn't he?

T: Yes, R.E. That was the father, Robert E. McKee, the General Contractor.

M: Well, how many of your pictures do you think he bought?

T: Well, I've never really counted them, but /it's/ somewhere between 10 and 15. I went there one time and I had just bought a new little Plymouth. I was telling him about it. /I/ had some pictures, showing them to him. He says, "How much more do you owe on it?" I said, "Well, about \$900." He said, "Well, I'll try to help you out." He says, "I'll think about it." He said, "I'll take these two over here and leave the rest of them, and I'll see." So, I went back and he bought all of them--cleaned up the whole note.

M: Is there any of your pictures that you consider particularly outstanding? Any special prizes that you have received?

T: Yeah... I started painting pictures of the Organ Mountains--one of my subjects. I painted one for Dave McKee, one of the older boys of R. E. Well, in a short time, he called me and said that a very prominent man... I can't think of his name...anyhow, he wanted a picture for his wife for their 25th wedding anniversary. And the story came out that Dave and his wife had been students up at the New Mexico Agricultural College, and they used to go over there and do their sparking near the Organ Mountains. And it seems that Gilmer--that's the other man's name--Gilmer and his wife had done the same thing. They'd both gone to school there and had pleasant memories of the Organ Mountains, so I painted one for them. Then, a little time later, McKee said to go see Governor Meecham--"He wants to buy one of the Organ Mountains." So I painted another one, but not the same, of course. They were similar, but... For Governor Meecham and his wife, I took that up to Santa Fe. He was in the Governor's Office then. So I took it up there, and Mr. McKee's representative up there met me and took me over to Governor

Meecham's Office /with/ the picture--kind of got me in, you know, without a lot of red tape and stuff. He sat there and talked to us for about an hour, just visiting. At that time, he was using the pictures of the museum in Santa Fe to decorate the administration building of the governor and the offices. He insisted on getting these good pictures by the old men like Sharp, Burningham, Couse, and Cassidy and those fellas. He said, "I have no use for these modern abstract pictures, I want to see the real thing." /Chuckle/. So that's what he was doing with them.

M: Meecham bought one of your pictures then?

T: Yeah. When I went up there, why, I had the picture with me. I had already painted it.

M: Well, would this be in his personal collection?

T: Yeah. Afterwards, when he was appointed Senator of New Mexico /and/ went to Washington, he took the picture with him. Joe Freidkin here (he was also one of the kids we were raised with) of the Boundary Commission saw me one day and he says, "I saw one of your pictures in Washington." I perked up my ears, I didn't know it was out there. He said, "Yeah, I was over in Meecham's office and he's got it hanging up right over his desk." I guess now it's in Las Cruces, you know, where he's retired to.

M: Oh, he was from Las Cruces?

T: Yeah, he was a Las Cruces man.

M: Well, how about here now? /How long/ have you lived /in/ this house? /It's/ 1112 Baltimore isn't it?

T: We've been here since 1923. We've enlarged it, stretched it out...in the kitchen and in the back. It was a five-room house when we built it.

M: Well, then, it must have been one of the first houses up here in Kern Place?

T: Yeah. There were a few houses on Cincinnati, in back of us. That big rock

house was there. This pink house, this Spanish house on the corner was just being finished by a man name of Lockman. /He/ later had an accident--drove off into the river up here by Courchesne. /He/ couldn't get out from behind the wheel and drowned. Well, there was a lawsuit over whether he tried to kill himself or whether it was accidental 'cause he was in financial difficulties. But they won the case, his folks did. Then there was a couple of houses, that house across the street was there and the big house on across over there was owned by Son Orndorf. He had a big family then. All this was desert, and on beyond, there wasn't anything on the other streets in back of us. The park was just being started. There was one or two /houses/ by the park, very few houses up here.

M: Well, you've been here fifty years this year.

T: Yeah, it will be fifty this year.

M: This old stone sort of castle here behind you, is that the first house up here in Kern Place?

T: Yeah, that was the first one. Mrs. Van Neff, I believe, built it. I understand they picked up most of the rocks right off these hills, right here close by.

M: Well, how about the fellow named Kern? He never lived up in these parts?

T: Pete Kern? He didn't have a house up here. In fact, I was trying to think where he did live, I really don't know. But he laid out a beautiful edition here. I think it was the first edition in town that had curved streets, parks and things planned ahead. And it's held up because it is restricted, and kept up because the people had no stores /and nothing/ like that can come in there. No apartments, really, are supposed to, and we have no real apartments; /we/ have some duplexes. But it's been a nice area and that's one reason we didn't move out--it's so handy to town and everything.

- M: How about your church affiliation, Gene? You go to St. Clement's, isn't that right?
- T: Yes, we... When I was a kid, we lived near Highland Park. I went with a group that went to the Highland Park Methodist up there. Then a little later the Baptists built a church on Alabama, I believe it is. They built a tennis court, so, we all changed our affiliation and went to the Baptists' so we could play on their tennis courts. /Laughs/. I learned to play tennis there--got pretty good at it. Then when we got married, Ann was going to the First Christian Church, and I wasn't going to any. My parents were Christian Scientists and they went to Science Church. But as the girls came along, Ann and the girls went to St. Clement's. So, later, I joined in with them and we've been there ever since. I went mainly because of Uncle Bert Williams. I've known him and he knew my father.