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Elizabeth Kelly

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Elizabeth Kelly
INTERVIEWER: David Salazar
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BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Daughter of C. E. Kelly, El Paso Mayor 1910-1915.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

History of the El Paso Public Library.

1 hour (3 3/4 tape speed); 21 pages.

Elizabeth Hooks Kelly

Interviewed by David Salazar

K: I was born here in El Paso on June 10, 1898; I'm not a newcomer here. I went to El Paso High School, and before that, in grade school, I went to Loretto Academy. I've done extra work at the Texas College of Mines (University of Texas at El Paso) and Columbia University in New York.

S: Could you tell me what type of work you did at the universities?

K: In New York, it was storytelling, and at the university up here, it was Botany. Just general things; no library work /was/ involved there. But the storytelling /at/ Columbia, of course, was library work. Then I went to Platt Institute of Library Science. I went there when you got in by a competitive examination, and you had to have two foreign languages. I had French and Spanish. The Spanish was easy, because I had to translate Chicken Little. Remember that story?

S: Yes.

K: And the only thing that struck me was, I couldn't remember the Spanish word for turkey. I remember the word we use here, but I can't remember the Spanish word. I've never been quite sure what the French /story/ was about, but evidently it was close enough to get over. Then you also had to show your typing.

I graduated in '21. At that time, it was still under the influence of old Mr. Platt, who founded it. He believed in anybody learning a trade; he counted librarianship as a trade. And they didn't give a degree. Now, you have to have four years of college to get your master's in library science, but I still don't think that they teach any more than they used to. I went to library school because I had typhoid fever. I was going to Wellesley with my sister Mary /to become/ a teacher, but by the time I got back, I couldn't do anything for the year. So, I went down and apprenticed with the

library /instead/. Then, I went on to library school. I've been truly thankful, /because/ I don't think that I would have been a good teacher. The only teaching I've ever done was when I /taught/ the course in Children's Literature at Texas Western. When the class formed, the woman that was going to teach it joined the WAVE's and left. She left it with a lot of students and nobody to teach it. So they came down and talked to Mrs. Sullivan, and Mrs. Sullivan talked me into doing it. It was lots of fun.

S: When did you start in library administration?

K: The first of September, 1921. I started in as a general assistant in the Reference Department. I don't think that I'm the worst reference librarian, but I'm mighty close to it! (Laughter) And the only person that was more relieved than I, when I was made Children's Librarian, was Mrs. McWright, who was the head of the Reference Department. She was glad to get rid of me, and I was glad to go.

S: How did you happen to be hired?

K: I apprenticed down there, and I knew that a job would be waiting for me when I came back /here/. So, I came back, instead of going to Seattle or /to/ the Brownsville Children's Library in Brooklyn. In those days, librarians were so scarce that you had a choice between three or four offers. The head of the library school was most annoyed because I /accepted a job/ for \$90 a month. She said that no Platt graduate should go for less than \$100 a month. (When I was librarian here, I tried to get a Platt graduate, /but/ I couldn't get her for anything that we could begin to afford.)

When I came back, as I say, I was in the Reference Department until I got the Children's Room. The first thing I did was to change it from the Children's Room to the Boys' and Girls' Department; because, you know, if you're in the sixth grade, you're no child. The children didn't mind me

being the Children's Librarian, but they didn't want to be called children. So, it's the Boys' and Girls' Department.

S: At first appearance, what did the library look like?

K: It was small, of course. And they had just enlarged it--the two wings and the second story were added. While they were doing that, part of the library was housed in Liberty Hall and in the big corridor behind it. I missed that; I wasn't here then. They said it was very nice when they had the concerts, but when they had boxing, basketball, and chicken shows, it was noisy. (Laughter) But the library had just been finished being enlarged when I started. It was located behind the new library. It's been torn down in the last two years.

After we moved out, it was taken over by the City-County Health Department. (Chuckle) Now, this is nasty. A Mrs. Farrington, who was the Librarian at that time, kept on saying that the building was not safe. Everybody said, "She just wants a new building." The City-County Health Department moved in, and the roof fell /in/ on the dental building. (Laughter) There was nobody in it, but we felt really and truly /that/ the Lord was surely on the library's side that time. Then, of course, in '54 we had the new building. We hired a van line to move us. We had very carefully worked out exactly where each group of books was to go, and we moved in very easily. Now, after I /became/ Librarian, we shifted some of the collections. A library is like a house: You put things where you think you want them for ever and ever, and then you find a better place somewhere else. So, we did it on Sunday and Labor Day. Everybody came down and worked like dogs. Mr. Ralph Seitsinger was Mayor, so we invited /him and his wife/ to come by for lunch. They went to church first, and all the Mayor got was some turkey stuffing; Mrs. Seitsinger got a few scraps of turkey with it. The rest of /the food/

we had eaten up.

S: They showed up late?

K: They went to church first, and we didn't count on them really coming. So we didn't wait for them, and we ate everything. You know, if you have a crowd of people working hard it's amazing how much they can eat.

S: How many people did you have working for you at that time?

K: When I started, there were fifteen on the staff. When I stopped, I had 93, I think, working for me.

S: Were these all full-time?

K: We had some half-time students. We would have one job /with/ two /students/. As a rule, /they were/ UTEP students. One would come in in the morning, and one would come in the afternoon. It worked out very nicely. We had awfully nice people working for us, and most of them have been very successful afterwards. Then, of course, we had some crumbs. You always do if you have that many people. (Laughter) The problems in facilities... /Before/ they remodeled the old building, there was a fireplace in the Children's Room. When they remodeled it, they put the floor over the fireplace and the chimney ended up under the Reference Librarian's desk. So, of course, we couldn't use it. Eventually, we got a little money, shelved the fireplace, and put the easy books there.

S: You had no big problems like the University does now? They don't have enough room to put up the books.

K: Yes, because when they remodeled the building, they figured that it would last for 50 years. And it didn't, you see.

S: Do you happen to know how much the remodeling cost?

K: Andrew Carnegie gave the money for the new building, which is the old library /that's/ been torn down. After it was started, they didn't have quite enough

money, so he gave another ten thousand dollars. But he gave the money for the building, he didn't endow it. You see, Carnegie did things two ways: He gave money for the building, and he gave money for the endowment. Since we have had a public library, it has been supported by city taxes. At one time it was \$450 a month, which wasn't quite enough funding. The City gave us a charter... You see, the library is not legally part of the City, it is run by a library board with a charter registered in the state of Texas. According to that, the City is obliged to pay the librarian a certain sum for each half a million, I think it is, of the city taxes. If that was all we got, we'd be sunk, because the City really has been very generous. The library has never had to pay for the land that the building is on. You see, the old building and the new building are both on a city park; the Memorial Branch is in Memorial Park; the Burges Branch was given to us by the people that set up the district, that shopping center; Josephine Clardy Fox gave us land for the Clardy Fox Branch; and the City gave us the place for the Lower Valley Branch also. Mr. Schwartz, who is President of the Board, and I went down to see what land was available from the city. Mr. Schwartz looks at the man and says, "That would be fine." Mr. Cunningham said, "I'm sorry, that's already dedicated." It was dedicated for a garbage storage place. The trucks would be taken down there and cleaned. The mayor, the City Council, and the Health Department all assured the people down there that the cleaning would be done by steam, that there would be no fires, no odor. Two days before election, it was given to us.

S: Who made up the Library Board?

K: The Library Board changes, but Irving Schwartz was the President at that time. It's a self-perpetuating board. The original board, I think, is interesting. (Now, this little book gives the original board.) In 1900 Mary

Stanton was president, Grace Townsend was the vice-president, Marie Allen was the secretary, Fanny Clark was the treasurer, Margaret Bell, Alba Kolberg, Mary Ramsey, Agnes Stewart, Dr. Paul Gallagher, Mr. Moorhead, Richard Burges, Felix Martínez, and Mr. Courchesne made up the Board. I can't tell you off-hand who the new board is, because it had some recent additions to it. The whole time that I was Librarian, Irving Schwartz was the president. Jane Burges Perrenot had been president. I don't know who the new president of the board is. I'm sorry; but when I retired, I... No point in running something for somebody else.

S: Who usually selects the Board?

K: The Board is selected from the membership of the El Paso Library Association. Anybody who wants to join pays two dollars a year, but you have to belong /to it/ two years before you can vote. Mayor Burges put that in the charter-- he was a smart man. He wanted the library out of politics. /He felt that/ anybody that was interested enough to belong for two years was interested /enough to vote/. That way you couldn't just bring in a crowd of people who wanted to take over the library.

Now, censorship... The library has fought shy of censorship ever since it was first organized, because you are not supposed to tell people what they have to read or what they should read. Now, I know a man came in once when I was at the desk, and he was sure we didn't have anything by Karl Marx--and we did. It took the wind out of his sails, which I enjoyed. Then, The Americanization of Emily was one of the books that we got and were circulating. We found it was banned out at the Post Library, but they would come down here and get it. But, censorship doesn't mean that you have to have a terribly dirty book. Now, what was it that they were asking about once? It was The Tropic of Cancer. We didn't have it. We hadn't any requests

for it. After it was all in the paper and so on and so forth, we had two requests. But we didn't buy it, 'cause you don't buy a book for just two people; but you don't try to censor it. You try to have as wide a collection of books as you can possibly have. For instance, when the refineries came in we got more books on refining; before that, we had a wonderful collection of mining books and geology books because this area was interested in that. After the Garden Club started good, we got more books on flower arrangement. When they put in the racetrack up here, we got some books on horses. You try to get your collection to reflect what the town wants to read. Of course, you have a lot of fiction and a lot of biography--light things. But you try to balance it so that you don't have all the light things. Then we have as many business books as we can get. All of them cost like sin, and you can't afford everything you want.

The library has always had, starting with Mrs. Sullivan, a wonderful collection of books in Spanish and about México and the Southwest. When Mrs. Sullivan's monthly budget was only \$450, she bought the Kingsbury, which is a collection of the Aztec Codex. And I think there are still only two other copies in Texas. She spent \$600 for them. But she was a smart woman, she could see that it was more important for the library to have that rather than a lot of fiction or light reading. Then the Mexican government gave us books, also. Different people have given us collections of books on Spanish, on the Southwest. We were so thrilled, because a man came in once and found what he wanted, and he hadn't been able to find it at the Library of Congress. That's one thing to remember. I imagine that the Library of Congress tried to buy it immediately.

S: Out of the people that donated things, did you have anyone who donated a great deal?

K: Yes. You know Sugar Goodman lost a brother when he was quite young; the Goodmans have given several thousand dollars. Then Irving Schwartz had a child who died when he was about seven and they gave. The Popular Dry Goods Company employees gave...I've forgotten exactly how much money. But instead of sending flowers or something like that, they gave the money to the library and we established the gift for that child--getting books suitable for that age group. Georgia Kraukauer has been giving money on Christmas and on the boy's birthday, things like that. Then, the Carnegie Corporation have a very lovely collection of pictures, photographs of architecture, paintings, and so forth and so on, and books to go with it. Dr. Vandenberg's mother-in-law gave us the Shipman Collection. Now, Mr. and Mrs. Shipman had collected a great many very interesting things. It includes, for instance, this one letter written by one of the Rangers. Somebody had written in complaining about the money he had asked for a funeral. He explains very graphically that this Ranger had been killed, was lying in the desert, and that between the animals and the ants, it was a problem to fix him up suitably. Then, they also have a list of this troop of Rangers. It gives the names, ages, heights, and color of their eyes. And it says that one of them had bought an extra pair of boots. But it's that type of thing.

Then the Rusk Edwards papers were given to us by Mrs. Peyton Edwards and her daughters. That includes original letters and the only existing signed copy of the Treaty of Velásquez, which was the only treaty between the Republic of Texas and the Republic of México. It was not ratified by either government. But its written pages are divided--it's written on paper belonging to the Mexican Army--one side is in English and one side is in Spanish. General Santa Ana signed the Spanish side and the President of Texas signed the English side.

S: Houston?

K: No, it was Jones, I think. But now, you're going to have to look that up because my mind sometimes has gaps in it, and I'd hate to put something down and say this is absolutely right. The people that bought the Mills Building gave us a very wonderful collection of maps of early El Paso. It includes a map with illustrations of Overland Street with the Overland Stage going down it and things like that. Those are invaluable.

S: These types of collections, then, are more like archives.

K: Yes. Now those are strictly archives, you can look at them. And I don't think they make you wash your hands before you do, but they certainly don't turn you loose with them; but they are available.

Then, when Mr. Wilmark died, there was a gift for him. And when Mrs. Sullivan died, there was a good many _____. The last one of those that we have is when Pat Bryson, Conrey Bryson's wife who was the librarian out at Memorial, died. The gifts for her are just being bought. Conrey wanted children's books for her. They all go to the Memorial Branch, 'cause that's where she was. Then, the Mexican government, as I said, has given us some. And the French government. Now, why?--I don't know. But they sent us 250 books in French. This was just after World War I. Then, of course, there have been innumerable small gifts. And the small gifts sometimes amounted to several hundred dollars. But these just about cover the big ones. Staff associates, most of those... Now, I think I mentioned Mrs. McWright. I'm still scared to death of her. If she'd come in this room now, I would stand up and shiver in my boots. She was one of the most competent people I have ever known. She could look at you, and you would sink straight through the floor. When I worked in the Reference Department with her, I went through the floor most of the time.

Mrs. Sullivan was Librarian there for most of the time I was working there. She was a peach. She was a gentlewoman and a scholar. One year there was an art teacher from one of the eastern colleges. Mrs. Sullivan had the staff come hear her. See, there were just fifteen of us. The woman gave us a little art talk before we opened. Mrs. Sullivan worked awfully hard, as I say, on the Spanish collection. Most of us on the staff couldn't read Spanish very well, so she typed little blurbs about each book and pasted them in the book. So if somebody asked, "What is this about?"-- we could tell them. She was really very wonderful. She started cataloguing the government documents herself because she didn't have any money to pay someone to do it and we used the government documents as reference. She talked on her system of cataloguing to the American Library Association. She was sent to the International Library Meeting in Madrid. She could speak Spanish; she worked at it. Her Spanish was not library Spanish, but it was really and truly Spanish. Shortly thereafter, one of the Carnegie associations sent her to Cuba to see what they were doing in their libraries. She spent two months in México City. Mrs. Muñeca de Lara was one of the librarians down in México City and between them they translated the library tools that were not available in Spanish so that the Mexican libraries could use them.

When I was made Children's Librarian, I had three good storytellers; they married, one, two, three. So I decided, well, I better take advantage of that myself. I told stories for a million years, and it didn't work! (Laughter) But, I think one of the most entertaining things was the story hour and being children's librarian. I liked that lots better than being head of the library. During the war when Russia was our ally, we had a story hour, and that's one of the times we charged admission. To come, you had to bring a gift of clothes for the Russian refugees. Then, one year we celebrated

birthdays. We celebrated Mickey's birthday, we celebrated Peter Rabbit's birthday, we celebrated Hans Christian's birthday, we celebrated Virgil's birthday. We had proper cakes for everybody, except Virgil. And for Virgil, _____ Dean, who taught dancing here for a great many years, gave us a program of Grecian dances on the library lawn. See, when you're a small library, you can do lots of things like that.

Then, we had our story hour in Spanish. My Spanish doesn't cover a story hour, so we got two people to tell stories in Spanish. One of them was a grandmother, and the stories she told were distinctly with a moral attached. The other girl didn't tell stories with a moral, and the children liked her better. I always think of the time I was watching them. She was talking about the old witch, and she said, "Y sus tripas se caen así!" The children just loved it! They've had story hours in Spanish every once in a while since then, but it's hard to get a story teller in Spanish. It's hard for a volunteer to come every time. But the story hour was Mary Wheel Tackings' baby; that must have been in 1918 or '17. Anyway, they were afraid that the movies would kill the story hour, but it didn't. Children like story hours.

S: Can you outline briefly what your positions were in the library?

K: Well, it was reference library assistant; then I was Children's Librarian for a great many years; and then I was Librarian.

S: What years were these When were you Librarian?

K: I was Librarian for about ten years. I didn't have the nerve to turn the job down, but it wasn't half as much fun as being the Children's Librarian. As Head Librarian you get all the complaints. Among the offices that I have held, I was treasurer of the Children's and Young People's section of the American Library Association and also for the Texas Library Association. And if you know how my math is, you'd realize that was a joke.

- S: Did you have any other outstanding personalities that you've met?
- K: Yes, there were lots of them. Because, as a rule, anybody who works in a library has something, they have to. We had two who had nervous breakdowns. We had a bookmobile librarian...they were out near Burleson School, she turned to the driver and said, "I'm going to leave." She left, and we had a terrible time finding her. Then we had this very, very good reference librarian, the one who knew the Southwestern things hand over fist. One day she came up scared to death--a man had drawn a pistol on her. He had an old pistol and he wanted to find out about it. She didn't wait to find out what he wanted--he just took the pistol out and she left. She also got caught in an elevator. You know, anytime anybody is a little bit nervous, everything happens to them. But, she could tell you the page and chapter for anything you wanted to know about the Southwest. She was good.

Then, Margaret Acloid was the Assistant Librarian while Mrs. Farrington was the Librarian, and she was awfully good. She was also head of the Catalogue Department. And Erin Humphrey was head of the Reference Department, so was Dorothy Ormsby. Then, she left us to go to the college library. Mrs. Humphrey left and went to California.

As side two begins, the conversation has already started.

S: ...'Cause he told me about someone who went down there and took the book to him and told him, "Well, this shouldn't be here. It's corrupted my son."

So, Baxter /Pɒlk/ just looked him in the eye and told him, "You sure it was the book that corrupted your son?" (Laughter)

K: I'd bet on Baxter. I have the greatest admiration for him, because before he came over as Librarian... You see, my brother-in-law /Howard Quinn/ was teaching /geology/ out there. He was showing an English professor through the library, and the Librarian was sitting on the lap of one of the students. After they were gone she asked Howard, "Do you think the man got the wrong impression?" Baxter had that to build on.

Can I tell you about the branches?

S: Oh, yes.

K: I think the branches are fun. They started out with a bundle of books, a librarian, Betty Mary Smith (she is now Mrs. Charles Goetting), and a taxi with a card table. They would go to the grocery stores and things like that. Betty Mary always said that at one grocery store /they/ were always very cooperative and everything else, but she hated to go there 'cause they always put the table over the box of onions.

Then when I became Children's Librarian, we had four big boxes /of books/. We packed them up the night before we went, and the delivery people picked them up and took them to the branch. We got out there the next morning, unpacked them, and circulated them. We had a... You know those tenement buildings with two rooms? Well, Mrs. Sullivan let us take out the partition between the two rooms. It was right across from Beall School. We were there until the Depression made us move. We never gave out 1000 books, but I think

if we would have been there two months longer, we would have done it, because we had already broken the 900 mark. One of the Beall School teachers made her children wash their hands before they came over to the library. We would stand them in line and put their number on their hand. They left their books with us before school started so that we could get them ready. We would give them their cards, and then they would come in. The woman who lived in the apartment next door was a darling, and made the best enchiladas. She used to bring us our lunch every once in a while. Then, we had a corner grocery store--the building was vacant, of course--down on Pera Street. It was heated by a wood-burning stove, and we bought the wood from a man who brought it by horse and wagon. Then one day the chief of police himself came to see Mrs. Sullivan. He was most apologetic, but would she please stop renting the place for dances Saturday nights. "There have been too many fights up here." It turned out that the janitor who came in and cleaned once a week was renting it out on Saturday nights. (Laughter)

Then we had a place across from the cemetery. We never could be sure whose place we were going to, because it was a motor trailer court. The man would put us in the space that was empty. Then, for a long time we had one in Dr. Brage's office. We would go down a narrow passageway. That was ideal, because the children had to come in one at a time. When the building got too full, we had to stop them. One day a car came by dragging a huge, dead, black snake at the end of a cord. The cord broke, and, well, you know small boys. When we heard the screams outside, I went out, got the snake, and brought it in. Mrs. Marcos was with me and she wouldn't let me put it on her side of the table. And every kid that came in could not only look at it, but if they wanted to they could touch it.

There are all kinds of things in branch work. But now, you see, we have

the Memorial Branch, which was built when Mrs. Farrington was the Librarian. When the Alameda housing project was built, they offered Mrs. Sullivan a little room. She didn't have any money for books, so we washed the books we took down there in vinegar and water--the library smelled like a pickle factory. But she didn't want to lose the opportunity. Then when Telles [housing] was opened, we got a place in Telles. There also we were given a small room. Then, when the clinic down there folded up, we moved into the clinic room. It's the only library I've ever known with six bathrooms. They had [them] for the clinic, the examination rooms.

When I was Librarian, we built the Fox, Lower Valley, and Burges. Now they have two bookmobiles, and the Spanish speaking bookmobile, and the place in Ysleta, which is sort of a house trailer affair. It's fastened down; it doesn't travel. You try to get your branches as close to the people as you can. Branch work is fun.

S: I've heard rumors that the land behind the library on Oregon, or the land that it is on now, used to be a cemetery.

K: Yes. And when they built the old building, it was before they had all these big earth-moving machines, and they got a lot of bones out of there. It was a cemetery and everything was supposed to have been moved. It was an old, old, government cemetery. When they built the library and the Y across the street, they found a good many remains. But, it's not haunted.

S: I heard some stories that it was.

K: No, I don't think it is, though we had a Negro janitor once upon a time who was a little bit [uneasy] about it. I guess their people weren't readers because they didn't come to us.

Mr. Schwartz was president of the board when we built the last of the branches. The Rotary Club in a little town in New England paid for a story-

book wall for the library there, and it was written in the Rotary Magazine. It was made up of tiles painted by school children about different stories. So, the Rotary Club here gave us one for the Lower Valley [Branch]. We [also] have one at Burges and one at Fox. And we had no trouble with any of them except the one at Fox. You see, the children sent in paper things and Tom Lea and Carl Hertzog helped pick out ones that made good tiles; because sometimes they were lovely, but they wouldn't have made very good tiles. And the last one we fixed, we went and took down the ones we wanted, and put them on the floor. That room hadn't been cleaned up since the library had been built. Ok, when we got there [the next day], all of them were in the garbage. We went through the garbage, and I think we got them all.

S: I remember that. When I was a little boy, I remember sending one in, but mine didn't make it.

K: It's very popular, because that was a long time ago. Some of them were very good, but they wouldn't have made good tiles. 'Cause you see, a tile has to be very simple--yours was probably too good.

The other day a young man phoned. It seems that one summer I told a lot of stories about the Alhambra in Spain. He had a friend who had just come back [from there] and was very enthused [], and he wanted to know who wrote [the books]. Well, it was Washington Irving's Tales of Alhambra. I remembered; when I told him, he remembered.

Then, one of the nicest stories that I know has nothing to do really with the library except as a by-product. [One time] this little kid came in--his teacher had read him a story--and his eyes were sticking out a mile. All he could remember about it was the part when it said that "her blood was so bad that when he cut her head off, it melted the sword." How long has it been since you read Beowulf?

S: Quite a while.

K: That little kid read Beowulf and all the Norse and Greek and Roman myths, and all of the King Arthur stories. That one teacher opened all those doors to him.

S: You received some awards, didn't you?

K: Yes. I think one of those that I value most is the "E" that El Paso High School gave me in 1957. That was really the first thing that gave me a real thrill. Then, Mr. Greenfield was running an art shop, and he had a great many exhibits at the library. They gave me a certificate of appreciation. Then, when I retired in 1963 the City gave me a plaque. And in 1966 they made me Librarian Emeritus, which is an empty honor, but it was nice of them. Then, I was Librarian of the Year. And the Girl Scouts gave me an award.

S: Did you have any other outside activities besides the library?

K: Yes, I gardened, and I belonged to garden clubs and other different clubs. But I didn't have much time because, you see, when I started we worked a 48-hour week. Well, nobody thought anything about it, that's what you worked. Then it went down to 44 and 40, and that gave us more time. As I said, I belonged to the Texas Library Association, and I belonged to the American Library Association. At the American Library Association, the problem came up of collections of books for young people. (You see, all libraries have them now.) I came back from the meeting and Mrs. Logan and I went into a huddle. I had about \$300 a month to spend for children's books. She sneaked \$50 out of the adult department and \$50 out of the children's department, and we started the Young People's Collection. And you can see where it is now, but that's the way it started.

Also, the vacation reading club was something that I picked up at a library meeting. That was a long time ago. But the first time that we gave

these awards, we gave them on the steps of the old library. One time we had it in the park in back of us where the bandstand is, it's where the Golden Age Home is now, and at that time the postmen were having a meeting there with a band. Mrs. Sullivan got the postmen's band to come and play for us. The bandleader began to have fits because he said they had to go and meet the mayor. Well, the mayor was there, because the mayor had always given the awards, so he felt better about it--'cause he knew that when the mayor left, they could leave.

Then once we had it in the Scottish Rite's auditorium. Now we have it in the new building. But you see, the town has grown so that the Telles, the Lower Valley, and the Burges, those children can't come in, so they have their awards out there. But when we first started, it was the main library and Alameda. The Alameda children couldn't come up, so we had a theatre park for them. It took a little arguing to get the man to let us come to the movie theatre down there, but we assured him they'd behave themselves and they wouldn't tear the place up--and they didn't. Two of the girls left early without telling us, and we had agreed with everybody's parents that we'd see that they got home all right. So two of the librarians that were helping me went to the family. They got there before the girls did. And the girls came home and told them we'd told them to go on home by themselves. The parents knew better.

Mrs. Escajeda and I took some children out near Concordia Cemetery. It was a bright moonlit night and we got stuck in the sand. The only thing that came by to help us was a cow. (Laughter) But we dug ourselves out. But you see, the library's too big now, it can't do that anymore... Oh, yes, I told you that, didn't I?

S: Do you have anything else you'd like to comment on?

K: Oh, withdrawing books. You know, books have always been expensive even when they were 75¢ apiece. And when our books wore out the schools came and got them. They were city property, we couldn't give them away, so we gave them to the schools for an indefinite period of time. We also gave them to the Indian School in New Mexico. I found out very recently that a Negro settler took some withdrawn adult books to Truth or Consequences, and that's what started the library there. The library of Columbus got a lot of our withdrawn books. That was the only library that I've ever heard of that was open 24 hours a day. If you wanted to get a book, you went to the railroad station, got the key, unlocked the door, got your book, and turned in the key. Marfa got a lot of our withdrawn books. Sometimes they were gift duplicates and things like that. But the schools used a great many of our withdrawn books because at one time they had no money for books for the school library. Then, they got 50¢ a child, which was a big help. Of course, now they don't need them.

But really and truly, the library ties in with the town more than people realize. The thing that used to please Mrs. Sullivan more than anything else was when she would get a letter asking, "How many Negro or colored borrowers do you have?" (You see, it was a long time ago.) She'd write back, "I have no idea. I can't tell you how many colored borrowers I have. I can't tell you how many borrowers I have with blue eyes. I can't tell you anything about it." Because, you see, this library was never segregated. Anybody who wanted to come, came and got their books. Mrs. Sullivan used to love to write back to them, because it's rather nice to be nasty when people are like that.

S: Yes, exactly. That's what Baxter Polk told us, too. It turns the tables around on them.

- K: It turns the tables around on them. And we have only had one unfortunate thing. The Negro officer from Ft. Bliss came in and got the regular kind of service. Then a week /later/ he brought in his wife and this man jumped him. It was awfully bad, as far as we're concerned. But, we felt better because the next day the man was arrested for jumping some people on a street-car and causing a riot. He just happened to be one of these people that... troublemaker.
- S: In closing, how about some comments on the library? What do you think of the future of the library?
- K: I think that in spite of TV and all the educational aids that don't involve books, that books are here to stay. One reason is that the library is an education that costs nothing. It's a source of amusement that costs nothing. It is an enrichment of life that people don't realize, because kids, in particular, read something, and it sticks in their minds. Then, 25 or 30 or 40 years /later/, it hits them again. Libraries are spreading out. They have films, they have records, they have movies--everything in addition to books. They are trying awfully hard to keep up with modern times, and I think they will. I think that books will always be an important thing in our culture.
- S: So overall you think the libraries will go on forever and ever?
- K: I hope so.
- S: What about putting books on microfilm?
- K: That means that people have to use them in the library. But... For instance, take newspapers. They take up too much room, /so/ you put them on microfilm. You can have more and keep more. Lots of books are on microfilm and are on inter-library loan. Now, for instance, if you wanted to borrow a book that we didn't have, /there would/ be a good chance that you'd get it on microfilm. Because, you know, you can borrow from any library in the United States. I

know we had to borrow a book that this man wanted, from the League of Nations Library, the Library of Congress didn't have it.

S: The University here has quite an extensive inter-library loan system also.

K: The inter-library loan systems are becoming more widespread, and, of course, they are used by people who are studying. But, I think if you start with the children... Of course, some people are never going to read--just like some people don't like music, and some people don't like painting, don't like dancing. But, you have to be able to read a little bit in our civilization, and you have got to know your alphabet to use the phone book. Amazing how many people don't know the alphabet. But I think libraries are a part of our culture now. You see libraries have been going on a long time; they still grieve over Caesar's soldiers burning the library of Alexandria, because things would have gone better. Of course, Hitler didn't do so much damage because most of the things that he had burned were paper books that were in other places, too. For instance, if this library was burned, there would be some things that could not be replaced.

S: Especially the archives.

K: Especially the archives. The same is true about the UTEP library. And the archeological library and the geneological library in Salt Lake City.

S: There's one here in El Paso, too.

K: Yes, the Mormons have done an awful lot of good work on that. And they're not limiting it to Mormons, you know. You can put your geneology in if you want to. In fact, they would welcome it. But I think libraries are here to stay. They are going to change, like everything else. They are always going to be crowded, and they are never going to have enough money.

S: Thank you very much, Miss Kelly.

K: Well, I enjoyed doing it, and I hope I gave you what you wanted.

S: I'm sure you did.