

2-20-1984

Interview no. 663

John Phelan

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.utep.edu/interviews>



Part of the [Oral History Commons](#), and the [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Interview with John Phelan by Rebecca Craver, 1984, "Interview no. 663," Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Institute of Oral History at ScholarWorks@UTEP. It has been accepted for inclusion in Combined Interviews by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UTEP. For more information, please contact lweber@utep.edu.

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: John Phelan
INTERVIEWER: Rebecca Craver
PROJECT: History of the University
DATE OF INTERVIEW: February 20, 1984
TERMS OF USE: Unrestricted
TAPE NO.: 633
TRANSCRIPT NO.: 633

BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Former student at the College of Mines; occupant of Vet's Village on campus; former KTSM radio newsman; currently Vice President--General Sales Manager for KTSM AM/FM/TV.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Student life; life in Vet's Village; recollections of professors and students.

Length of interview: 40 minutes Length of transcript: 20 pages

John Phelan
by Rebecca Craver
February 20, 1984

C: We can begin, Mr. Phelan, by telling me what years you were a student at Texas Western.

P: 1946-47 and I graduated in '48.

C: And where did you live?

P: Well, we didn't live at Vet Village because Vet Village wasn't built yet. If I might go back a little, I had taken a course, a creative writing course out there under Dr. Burgess Johnson while I was a patient at Beaumont Hospital, and I wasn't real sure what I wanted to do. I had been a newspaper reporter on the San Angelo Standard Times before I went to war, and I had really planned to go the University of Missouri and get my degree. I had two years at John Tarleton College. I took the creative writing course with Dr. Johnson and this was in the summer I think of '45, something like that, maybe fall of '45. Anyway, he was a visiting professor. I was taking him home one afternoon after class, and he pointed at the mountain and he said, "You see that mountain?" I said, "Yes." And he said, "That's a beautiful mountain." And I said, "You know, I guess you're right. I never really thought about that." And maybe that was the beginning because it was a beautiful mountain and somehow that mountain attracted not only me and my family but so many other people here, Mt. Franklin. Anyway, I was getting rather restless at the hospital because they were operating on me about every six weeks, and I had nothing to do and so I thought well, I would like to go back and take another course, a few courses, anything to transfer to Missouri. My doctor, Willard Schuessler, encouraged it, and I and some of my friends in the burn ward went out and got in line, and Dr. Sonnich-

sen got ahold of me, and I told him what I wanted to do, and he said, "Well, why don't you take fifteen hours? You can transfer all of them and no need to waste your time." So I said, "Fine." And we sat down together and looked at the curriculum and I saw there was a course in radio, so I thought that a newspaper reporter ought to really know something about his competition, so I took radio more or less as an elective and journalism was my major and English was my minor. Anyway, that was the beginning: the mountain and Dr. Johnson and my doctor and Dr. Sonnichsen. I hadn't been in class too many weeks, and KTSM needed somebody as a night man in the news department and they had heard about me, so I came down here and was interviewed by Roy Chapman and Roy hired me for a dollar an hour, working at night in the news department, and again Dr. Schuessler thought that was great. So that was really the beginning of the whole thing. Of course, I've been here ever since now, 38 years. It was February 9, 1946 I came to work, 38 years ago. But I wound up getting a degree in--I had two majors. I had a major of journalism and radio broadcasting, [and I] could take a lot of catch-up courses in freshman and sophomore years because of my experience in the newspaper business. [Pause]

C: You were telling me you had a double major.

P: Um Hm and a minor in English. But the school was great for me, really. You know, here I am someone who's not planning to go there and winding up with an entire career because of the school, quite honestly. Not only me but a lot of my friends also got their degrees there. I became a fraternity man. As an ex-G.I. going back to school, and we weren't really ex yet, we were still in uniform, going to school and patients of Beaumont, and bandaged up

a lot of the time because of operations and various things and it was a little difficult sometimes for us to get out in public but the school just eliminated all of that and took us in and really helped us to rehabilitate ourselves in a rapid manner.

C: I've heard a lot of people, some of the professors have told me that the students, the returning vets, were some of the more serious students they've ever taught.

P: Exactly, exactly. Elouise and I were married February 9, 1941. Well, we started going together [on] March 18, 1939, and school, John Tarleton was fine and all that, but I wasn't serious enough about it. I knew I wanted to be a newspaper reporter, we wanted to get married, so that was all that really mattered. But, in 1940 a lot of things didn't matter because they were different times. But when the war was over and I was back in school, I realized that I really wanted to do something for myself and my family. We all felt the same way. We were quite different and I don't mean to say different, but we had grown up a lot faster than some of the other people. 1945, I was all of 24 years old, but I was a very old 24, but I never gave another thought to the newspaper business.

C: Okay, how did Vet Village enter into all this, tell me?

P: Well, Elouise and I, our oldest son was born during the war in 1943 out in San Diego and our second son, Jim, was born in Beaumont Hospital in July of '46, and we had been living, first we shared a house with another family. We had one bedroom and we shared the bath, they only had one bath, and we lived in half of a screened back porch, that was the kitchen. Then we had a chance to get a larger apartment at 810 Noble, or something like that, and we thought that was really something else, you know. Today

it's a bar, but then it was an apartment and then we heard about Vet Village being constructed and we applied, and we moved in in I guess it was September of '47. Maybe Fall of '46.

C: So you were in the . . .

P: Apartment 17-A, two bedrooms.

C: Could you describe what the vet...

P: Sure. Elouise and I had a bedroom. The two boys had a bedroom with bunk beds. Had a bath and a living room-dining room if you want to call it that. It wasn't [a] big room, you know, in front, and a kitchen. That was it. I think there were three apartments in the building if I remember correctly.

C: Had wood floors?

P: Yeah. During one heavy snowstorm one winter, I remember the snow came through the cracks in the windows 'cause it wasn't scientifically constructed. But you know, it was a lot better than most of us had been living in while travelling around the country because housing was acutely short and you took what you could get. I had friends who lived in garages and things here. Tom Rush and Jane lived in a garage. It's hard for you to understand and believe but it's true.

C: What did you pay for rent?

P: Not very much. I don't know, it was I think 25 or 30 dollars a month, something like that.

C: Did you have to be married to be eligible to live there?

P: Yes. Sure did. As I remember it, you most certainly did. It was for married G.I.'s, but it was heaven. We had a beautiful view of the cement plant and ASARCO and it was a beautiful sight to see that slag when they'd pour it, and to see the trains come

by, and I'm not being facetious, you know. We had a view of something. We could see the mountains. We never dreamed of smoke or anything like that. We never complained about anything. We were just grateful to have it. I know our apartment, I had an old replica of a bomb I hung out, draped down over the front porch with the address on it, and we'd all get together and help one another and we'd put yards in for each other and grass. We'd go down to the river, we'd all load up a truck, we'd borrow a truck and borrow shovels, we'd go down and dig up the river bed and bring it back and we'd build yards with grass. We'd go get stones and make stepping stones, put up a picket fence and a gate and paint it. This was fun for us. This was our first real, honest to goodness home since getting out of the service. We were one big happy family.

C: Do you remember parties?

P: Oh yeah. It was all neighborhood stuff. Everybody got together and it'd shift from one house to the next, you know, only on Saturday. We had to study on the week nights and Sunday, but on Saturday that was our night to really have a good time together and somehow we'd manage a case of Mitchell's beer and the girls would bring covered dishes and that was our party. Sometimes we'd go up to the old gym, I can't remember . . .

C: Holliday Hall, was it Holliday Hall?

P: Yeah, Holliday Hall. I think the fun thing really was the building of the yards and everything. We built a nursery.

C: You did?

P: Yeah. The girls thought we ought to have a nursery, so we went out and begged and borrowed material and some of us had certain skills

that others didn't have and vice versa and we built a nursery and we were donated the material and we built it and then we'd hire a babysitter to take care of all the little kids and I'd say that was a kind of a cooperative effort. We had a washeteria and the girls used that. It was a very happy existence, believe me. Yeah. It was Fun.

C: I bet you were sad to have to move out.

P: I was, particularly because the rent was so low. (Chuckles) We moved out in the fall of '48. I graduated in spring, was going to summer school, and we were able to buy a home over on Jackson Street, 3727 Jackson. I had \$250 cash and a G.I. loan and I was able to get it for nothing down and the \$250 cash paid some back taxes on it and we moved in our first home and I paid \$7800 for it. That was a step up, you see. Everything from Vet Village, for most of us, was a step up.

C: What about politics on campus as far as the veterans were concerned?

P: That's my favorite subject. I was in SAE, and many of my G.I. friends were SAEs. We were not accustomed to politics at the collegiate level and at one fraternity meeting the eminent archons of our fraternity announced who we were going to support for student body president. They didn't ask us who we'd like to support. They just told us who the fraternity was going to support and those of us who were active, and I would say we were the activists of our time in some ways, we didn't think that was the democratic way to do it so we got together and we decided we'd put our own candidate up against our own fraternity candidate who happened to be Ed Smith, the star fullback on the football team and we put up our own candidate, Raymond "Sugar" Evans, who was the star tackle on the

football team and of course the engineers had their candidate and it became a three-way race and that's when it really heated up and I was the campaign manager. This was my one political contribution. But we went after it with the intent to win, quite honestly. The women would make cakes and various things, you know, and we'd have rallies and we'd make our signs at home. Once we conned a dance band to come down and play and had a big rally, and came election day, they tried numerous ways to disqualify Sug, but we managed to beat them all down. Come election day we lined up the entire football team at the polls and they all voted one way. Well, to make a long story short, our candidate pulled more votes than the other two put together, and he won, and he was an independent and it was the first time, I think, that had happened at Texas College of Mines and we were proud of that because the students rallied around us. I remember Wally Lowenfield who was a student, Wally offered his car to drive people to the polls. We really did it like the politicians did it. Then again, they made an attempt to disqualify Evans on the basis of a handbook. I'm a little hazy about this, but a college handbook with all the type scattered where it was misprint all through the book and could be interpreted in a such a manner that Sug was not eligible. Well I went to the library and got the original manuscript and I went downtown and saw Bill Hardie, Sr. He was Bill Hardie, Jr. then, the older Hardie, and he was an SAE, and I told him what the problem was and that I needed some legal help, so he gave me some things to go on legally, and I went before the special faculty committee and I presented our case and the Faculty Committee upheld the election. It was just this last football season I saw Ron Coleman's dad and

he reminded me of that and I had not realized that he had been on that Faculty Committee.

C: Is that right?

P: Yeah. He said, "You know, you should've been a lawyer." I told him, "You know, I thought about that a lot, I really did." But I didn't do it, but I really thought about it because I enjoyed doing what I did. But we put it to bed to rest and Sug went on and had a very successful term and that was the end of that, but again it was an effort involving the entire student body. We didn't care who they voted for as long as [they voted]. We wanted them to vote for our candidate. The main thing was that they all got involved in the process. When it was over there were some hard feelings, not many.

C: But they hadn't built the Union then? Had they built the library?

P: It was Speedy Nelson's Bookstore.

C: In Old Main?

P: About as big as this office, right. He sold cokes and anything else in there and as many as ten people could probably gather at one time. That was it.

C: Did you do some politicking in there, then?

P: Oh yeah. All over the campus.

C: That sounds fascinating. You know I've interviewed Ralph Coleman. He has had a heart attack and a quadruple bypass lately, in the last two months.

P: Really now?

C: Yes, he's home, he's okay. Right after Christmas.

P: Really? 'Cause I saw him in September.

C: He's doing pretty good though.

P: You know, I'll tell you a couple of other interesting things about that school, and I probably couldn't confess to them now. I took Spanish and I wasn't very good at it but I tried. The first day I walked in my Spanish class I looked over and this guy says, "I think I know you." I said, "Yes sir," and then I said "You're Mr. Webb, you're Billy Webb." He said, "That's right." I told him who I was and I said, "You know, I knew you when you were the tennis coach in the San Angelo High School in 1940 and '41 when I was a sports writer on the Standard Times and I wrote a story about one of your players that you were coaching by the name of Tut Bartson, and I predicted big things for him and he went on to do big things." And from that day forward Professor Webb and I had renewed friendships and needless to say, I was able to pass his Spanish course and that's as far as I'll take it. It was kind of like a doctor-patient relationship. The same way with Speedy Nelson, God bless him. I took Geology 'cause I had to. I loved the first semester but the second semester identifying the rocks and the minerals drove me out of my mind. On the final examination I knew I hadn't done too well. Speedy saw me on the campus about a day or two after the examination. He said, "John, you didn't do too well on that exam. Why don't you come up to the office." He took me up to the office and asked me some general questions about what I'd been studying and I was able to give satisfactory answers. Well, he said, "That's fine." And I passed and I graduated. Now those are the things that you don't forget, and I remember Dr. Sonnichson allowing me to experiment in some writing techniques and things that I very much appreciated. I credit him, and Dr. Willard Schuessler, for me going to that school because Dr. Sonnichson talked me into

literally taking fifteen hours that I hadn't intended to do, you know? But he was a great man. He is a great man, I should say, and I'll never forget him. There were some others too, Dr. ... Rabbi Roth was my philosophy teacher and I got an awful lot out of his philosophy classes and another person that probably has as much influence at that school to me would, being in the radio business and being an on-air person for many years was Clarice Jones, in Speech. I had a real burning desire to be an announcer. One day in radio class Art Liebson and I recorded a script for the Red Cross and they played it back in front of the whole class and it was terrible. I had grown up in Galveston and I had an accent that you could cut with a knife.

C: You mean it's worse than mine?

P: I said "dese" and "dose" and "Toity Toid" street. I didn't know how to say, "I," I said, "Ah." And I didn't know how to say running. I said "runnin'." I didn't know how to say "room." I said "rum." Everything that was bad I said, 'cause it was a combination of Brooklyn, New Orleans, deep South.

C: Oh my!

P: That's what it was, and they sent me to Clarice and Clarice got a hold of me in a Phonetics class and I probably worked harder on that than anything. I managed to correct it to the point where I could continue a career as an audio person in radio and T.V. But that's a contribution of that school, you understand? That's what it did for me, and then Virgil Hicks in allowing me to go over and practice play by play football with a wire recorder. Then coming back on Sunday mornings I'd get my football player friends up there with me. We'd listen to it and they'd critique it.

That's how I learned to do that. I was doing that in 1946.

C: Was UTEP winning any games in '46?

P: Yeah, they were pretty good.

C: Who was coaching out there then?

P: Jack Curtice. I began doing play by play football in 1948.

But I'd have never gotten that shot if I hadn't have had the facilities and the encouragement to do it. That's helped tremendously in my career. I owe that school a lot, believe me. You know, you don't really think about those things until someone like you comes along and makes you sit down and think about it.

C: Let's talk a minute about student life. The engineers were a real force on campus, would you say?

P: Yeah, because it was a mining engineering school by concept. But that didn't seem to bother anybody. We did our thing; they did theirs. That was fine.

C: Did you feel that division though?

P: That's kind of hard to say. Texas Ward, as I remember, was the leader for the engineers in politics. He's a lawyer running for state Supreme Court or something now. We might have but it wasn't a big deal to us because we had our friends and our things to do and they had theirs. We were the beginning of changing the nature of the school. I graduated in '48 and it was 1949, wasn't it [when]... they changed the name to Texas Western College. So I got one of the last diplomas that says Texas College of Mines and Metallurgy. And I have a son who got the last one that said Texas Western College, my oldest son.

C: Is that right?

P: All three of my sons are graduates of UTEP. My daughter is a

Baylor graduate, but all three of my boys went to school out there.

C: How would say it was different for them?

P: My boys?

C: Going to school there.

P: Larger. More hectic. Confined to small social groups. We had the small ones, but the small ones were the big ones because we didn't have a lot of students. I think we must have had 1500 students when I was going to school there, and they were all working. I was working for that matter and all three of my sons worked too, the whole time they went to school.

C: Did you have any contact with the president of the administration when you were a student?

P: I most certainly did, Dr. Wiggins.

C: Tell me about that.

P: Prince of a guy. As mayor of that village, my most immediate contact was with Gene Thomas of the engineering department. Now, everybody was scared of Gene.

C: Why?

P: Well, he was a little rough on the outside. He was crusty and growled a lot, and many people were afraid of him, and it was my job. . . I was kind of the go-between between the administration (being Gene Thomas) and Vet Village. But Gene and I hit it off just great and in later years he and I became very close friends. And when I went in the Lions Club he told me, "I voted against admitting you but I told them you'd do a good job if you came in." Later when he died I was one of his pallbearers. But Gene and I were very good friends and he too was encouraging. Gene just wanted to be talked to and be honest with and be friendly, that's

all. And Gene got us a lot of things down there that we probably couldn't have gotten from somebody else.

C: What? You mean in the way of facilities?

P: Yeah, and maybe some material that we might need that the University didn't need or wasted or something like that, that we could make use of down there.

C: Sure. Well, how did you get to be mayor? I mean whose idea was there to have . . .

P: I have no idea. And I can't tell you.

C: Was there an election?

P: I don't know how it all came about, but the mayor was the go-between. That's what he was and later they elected my friend Sug Evans and he became the mayor. But we had a common organization. We had a Vet Set and I have an article that I brought down to give you that might be helpful to you.

C: Oh good.

P: From the Herald-Post back in 1947 I think.

C: Oh wonderful.

P: About the women and what they do. 1948, I think in the spring, Parade magazine wrote an article on us as young married couples living in Vet Village and how we looked upon our marriage and how it affected our marriage by working and going to school and all this sort of thing. Elouise and I were one of the couples, and I'm trying to think of the others. The others are still around. I think some are not still married to the same partner but Elouise and I are. But that was a very interesting article. I think it is about 50-50 married and not still married. Well, you know when you're that young you can do a lot of things. I'd shut

this place (KTSM) down at 11:30 at night and then get home by midnight. and usually I didn't try to study at midnight. I'd go right to bed. Get up at six o'clock in the morning when I was fresh and clear and I'd do my studying. I did that for all exams and just prepare for your examination and go in and take the exam and walk out and usually you'd forget the whole thing within thirty minutes, but you didn't forget it. But you know what I'm trying to tell you. But at least you were ready for the test when it came. That's the way I operated. A lot of the guys who had different hours than I did would stay up until the wee hours of the morning studying, and they studied hard, very hard. We all studied hard. Thor Gade, who is now a very successful attorney, lived right behind us. And Tom and Jane Rush lived down at the other end of the barracks apartment. Andy Everest, who's a very successful football coach, and his family lived out there. Oh, a lot of them I can't recall just from sitting here at the moment but they all did well, did very well.

- C: Where were the trailers? Didn't they have some trailers?
- P: Yes they did. The trailers were north of where Vet Village was built.
- C: Did they bring the trailers in before they brought these barracks?
- P: Oh yeah, yeah. That was the first thing.
- C: The first thing were the trailers?
- P: You bet, you bet. Now, we couldn't get our family in a trailer, plus the fact they didn't have any available to us. And back in 1945 and '46 a trailer was really a trailer. A mobile home today is a mobile home. That was a trailer, believe me it was a trailer. So we just waited until the . . . [they] built the apartments.
- C: Okay, now, when you lived in the apartments, were the trailers

still there or had they moved those out?

P: I think they were in the process of moving out, as I remember it, because all the ones from trailers moved into the apartments.

C: I see.

P: And there weren't very many of them.

C: There weren't?

P: Not a lot.

C: Now, were these apartments, you talked about houses and putting in yards and everything, were there several apartments to a building?

P: Yeah, I think they had three in ours.

C: Three. But it varied? Sometimes there were four?

P: I don't remember. [Pause] I've forgotten where they got them from, but they refurbished them, I think there was linoleum on the floors. Another thing, the people in town used to give furniture to the young couples out there. They didn't give it to Goodwill Industries or the Salvation Army. They gave it to us. Boy, it was great. I remember I bought a refrigerator, my first major appliance. No it was second, because I had bought, when I went in the radio business, we lived on Noble Street, 710 Noble I think it was, I think Brownie's Bar is there now, I bought a big Magnavox radio with a record player because I told my wife, I said, "You know if I'm going to be in the radio broadcasting business, I got to have a good radio," and that stayed with us for many years. Next came the refrigerator.

C: Refrigerator.

P: That's right, and that lasted forever. I mean forever.

C: And you remember your first television, too, don't you?

P: Um Hm. Motorola. I sure do. I used to come home at night and

sit there and I'd watch snow, hoping for something to happen. Now, that sounds dumb, doesn't it?

C: No. (Laughs)

P: But it's true.

C: No.

P: But sometime there would be a skipped signal where you could pick up maybe New Orleans or Salt Lake or something like that.

C: That would really be exciting.

P: Really.

C: Well you know, it's funny, I remember first watching T.V. My neighbor had a lot of money, this family that lived next door and they got a T.V. right in the beginning. It had a screen about that big and on Wednesday nights they would invite my sister and me over and me over and you know what was on the television? Wrestling.

Wrestling and we would sit there, I remember in their upstairs and look at that little old screen and the wrestlers and just love it!

P: Sure! Because what did you have to compare it to, you had nothing to compare it to, you see. You know, next to what, how good is it? You know our first Motorola exploded. It wasn't serious but it did. It blew up and they gave us a new one. I had bought it from Harold Wiggs.

C: Did you really?

P: Yeah, and it was a good set, really a very good set. We had purchased an 8 mm moving picture camera for Christmas and we went on the air in January of 1953, January 4, but I had bought the camera in December of '52, and my wife took 8 mm movies of the

first pictures on Channel 9.

C: No kidding?

P: And we have them and our company now has transferred a lot of them to tape and they're preserved. It was the first picture seen in El Paso on Channel 9. I was news director here then, both for radio and television, and I'd work from early morning to late night. My daughter was born in March of '53, Judy, our last child, and I'd get her out of bed and she and I would sit in the living room and we'd watch T.V. together on Saturday night when the Hit Parade came on.

C: Oh yes, oh I remember the Hit Parade.

P: She sat in my lap and I used mimic the announcer and I'd say, "Now here's Miss Gootsie Phelan to sing, 'Secret Heart.'" That was thirty-one years ago.

C: So you finally got a girl after all those boys.

P: Yeah. Yeah that was a big event in our family.

C: I'll bet.

P: But back to the school, something always changes your life.

Everybody's life is changed by some event or person and not by one but a series of events and a series of people and I believe that very strongly 'cause you don't get where you are without somebody helping you. You didn't get there. I didn't get there. Nobody gets there on his own. No such thing as a self-made man. And all the people that I've mentioned to you are all the people who had a hand in all of this. Marshall Pennington at Mines, Marshall was another one who was a helping hand and I could think, I'm sure, of a lot more. But the ones I've mentioned, and Virgil Hicks, of course, I mentioned him. John Middagh, all of them

stand out in my mind. And of course my boss, Karl Wyler, who took me in the company.

C: Did the SAEs take part in the Homecoming Parade?

P: I don't think we had them then.

C: Didn't?

P: I think it was after I had finished. I was in the charter member graduating class in 1948. That was quite a class, believe me. You know, we used to contribute our money every month, our dues and everything, and we'd say, "Where's it going?" "Well, we're putting it aside for the new fraternity house." Well, that's fine. And we contributed so that others could have.

C: Did they have parties down by the river?

P: I suppose we did, but I don't seem to remember any now. You see, I was always so busy working. On Saturday afternoon, Sunday afternoon. We really didn't have time for that so we had our own. Maybe we did, but I don't remember that, quite honestly.

C: Did you have a car?

P: Sure did. 1941 model Oldsmobile 88, but only one car. Nobody had two cars. It was unheard of. Some were lucky to have one car. We had bought the car while I was in the Army.

C: There weren't any traffic problems on campus yet when you were there?

P: Everybody still wanted to get up next to the front door. Nothing's changed. (Laughter)

C: Nothing new under the sun.

P: No, I used to walk unless I was in a big hurry. If I was late to class I'd drive but otherwise I'd walk. It wasn't too hard a walk.

C: No. Kind of uphill though, wasn't it?

P: Yeah, the downhill was fine.

C: Going home was all right. Well I don't want to take up your whole afternoon.

P: No, you're not. I'm enjoying it. If there's anything else that I could think of to tell you that might help you, I'd probably think of a lot of things.

C: When did they build the Sun Bowl?

P: The first game was December 31, 1963. I remember we used to get together at Christmas when Coach Curtice was the football coach. A lot of the athletes couldn't go home. They'd stay and a lot of us and our wives would fix Christmas dinner for the football players. They would have it up there at Holliday Hall. We did those kinds of things. But I can't remember anybody ever having any hard feelings toward anyone, no two-bit fights, nothing, you know? It was a kind of camaraderie in friendship that still exists today. Jake Rhodes from Odessa was playing on the football team. Jake is very successful in Odessa. He played tackle on the other side of Sug Evans, and Fred Wendt and so many others who were in that class, Ben Collins, a former coach who graduated with me and many, many more, really, that I can't recall offhand. But we seemed to have a close-knit relationship, even today when we get together.

C: And do you get together, a lot of you?

P: Accidentally, if we do. Yeah. We always have a lot of fun, and, "You remember so and so, where is so and so?" You do the same thing, I'm sure.

C: I think it would be fun if the Vet Village group had a reunion.

P: Yeah!

C: Wouldn't that be fun?

P: Yeah, we could probably dig up quite a few of them, quite a few

of them.

C: I bet. I think that would be fun. I want to come. I want to be an honorary villager.

C: I think that would be a blast. We could sure get the names.

P: Oh yeah, that wouldn't be hard.

C: No.

P: It's a good idea. Talk to Dr. Monroe and see what he thinks.

C: Okay, I'll mention it to him. I'll tell him to call you.

ADDENDUM--February 27, 1984

John Phelan requests that several notes and correction be added to his interview transcript:

1. In the portion about campus politics: The SAE candidate was Dave Elliott. Ed Smith was campaign chairman.
2. Phelan's son, Jim, went on to become student body president in the 1960's.
3. Karl O. Wyler gave Phelan his first job at KTSM.