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Interview no. 669

Gladys J. Stratton

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Gladys J. Stratton
INTERVIEWER: Rebecca Craver
PROJECT: History of the University
DATE OF INTERVIEW: January 20, 1984
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BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

College of Mines student, 1919-1920.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Reminiscences of students, faculty, and activities while at the
College of Mines, 1919-1920.

Length of interview: 25 minutes Length of transcript: 11 pages

Gladys J. Stratton
by Rebecca Craver
January 20, 1984

S: I don't know why you want it. He developed tuberculosis, and so when he graduated he went to Boulder, Colorado to finish. He was going to Galveston. And when he finished he came to El Paso to Homan Sanitarium to intern because of his health, and that's the way the family started to El Paso. You know, a great many people then had tuberculosis. My grandmother had it and I'm sure that's the way they contracted it; and also...I had a sister, my oldest sister also. So she came out here for the same reason because the doctor brother was here. Then in time, after I had finished high school I came out here to visit.

C: How did you come, on the train?

S: On the train, with another sister and her son. Incidentally, he's a retired architect here. Davis and Foster was his firm, and his wife is a genealogist. They are going to publish a book in the next month, about the next month, on her family, and she's done a great deal of genealogical work.

And I came out and it was during the flu, the time of the flu. Well, so many schools were closed, the only way they could afford to send me to college was to live with one of my family. So the sister whom I came with, her husband developed pneumonia, and because of the doctor and the family connections they stayed here and I lived with them. So in order to go to college I had to go to the College of Mines.

C: Where was their house?

S: They lived up on Crosby at that time in an apartment. They lived on Arizona for a while and then they had house. I was trying to think of the number of that house. Seemed like to me it was 1701,

but I'm not sure about that. So I lived with them and went to school here until it came the time they could no longer take me and I didn't have anything else to do, so I got married when I was nineteen.

At that time when I went to school here, seems to me, I think it was either the first or the second year that they allowed girls to go. So being a natural from a mathematical-tending family, and we were--as I said, there's a lot of engineers and doctors and that sort of thing--I, too, had that bent. So I took all the courses in Math--and they didn't offer much else, actually. There wasn't much else to be offered. Language, Spanish, I was exposed to that. I didn't learn much but I was exposed. We had a Mr. Henry, I told you about him, who was the professor. He was a strange individual, bearded, which was unusual for those times. Had this big old collie dog that always came to class with him. I don't know whether he was a collie, but he was a breed of collie or German police, and he lay under the desk. He was a rugged individual, a bachelor. [Worrell] at that time was the Dean.

Then, of course, I took several classes under Cap Kidd-- Analytical Geometry, Trigonometry, college Alegbra. And he never did like me.

C: Why?

S: He told me one day. I was going with a boy named Albert Mallard, who later became [a mining] official. Most of the boys I knew went into mining engineering, you know, because that was a mining engineering school, and they were transfered here, there and yonder--Mexico, Arizona. Bert and I went together, among

others, and he was an "A" student. We always compared our answers after it was over, after the exams were over. So Bert passed with an "A" and I got a "D", and we compared our answers and there just wasn't that much difference after the decimal point. If you know anything about it, it can vary.

So it made me mad, and I went up and I said, "Cap Kidd, this is a dirty trick." I said, "You didn't pass me, you passed Bert, and we compared our answers and there's not that much difference. And I resent it." He says, "Johnson, to begin with, I don't like girls in my class. It is no place for mining engineering students. I don't like girls in my class and you just might as well accept that." I said, "I'm not going to accept it. I'm going to pass, and if you want me out of your class, the best way for you to get rid of me is to pass me." He said, "You are atubborn." I said, "Yes, I am. I'm just as stubborn as you are." And he said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. You can cram for three weeks and I'll give you the exam over." So I said, "Very well." So, Bert and I studied for three weeks. I took the exam. He passed me with a "C", old tight wad. (Chuckles) But I passed, I got my grade. But he just told me frankly, he said, "I don't like girls in my class. It is no place for a woman." I guess I could have been equally dirty with him, but I wasn't.

Three of us, and I can't be sure, seemed like to me one was Dick Tie(?), I'm not sure it was Dick. Dick Tie's father was the superintendent of the high school here, and I think maybe Dick was a senior, I'm not sure.

This is the first Prospector. Let me see what Dick was.

Seamon, Taylor, Drake, Kidd, Seamon, Pearson, Dyer, Dwyer, Morris and Auger, Ruth Auger. Let's see, the seniors were Fred Bailey, John...it might have been John Schaeffer, Oscar Reinheimer, Tipton Roland, Dick Tie, John O'Keefe, Ramon Concha. That was the senior class. The junior class was Ray Gilbert, John Savage, Ernest Kennedy (I don't remember him), Ralston Cooper, Leopold Maldonado, James E. Crenshaw. That's the junior class. The sophomore class had that many, and the freshman class had that many. [Shows pictures in book.]

C: The freshman class was a good size, wasn't it?

S: And you see, there were five, there were a good many girls in the freshman class. The sophomore class, there were eight girls in the sophomore class. Lydia Happer, do you know anything [about her]?

C: No.

S: Lydia Happer is General Maxwell Taylor's wife. She and I were two of the eight. She lived up here on Hawthorne and she had been going to Sweetbriar, I believe. And oh, how bad I wanted to go to Sweetbriar, but they just didn't have the money to send me. Another one of them was Charlotte Ormsby.

C: Well, did you and this girl that lived on Hawthorne walk to school together in the mornings, do you remember?

S: Oh, no. No, we didn't. But we were good friends and I've kept up with Diddie. She lives in Washington. I usually get a Christmas card, but I didn't send her one the year before last and I didn't this year. And I was thinking about Diddie the other day. They were Diddie and Mary, and Mary taught at a girls' school in Washington, that big girls' school there in

Washington, and she lived with this particular woman. And I was living in Mexico City and Diddie's husband, General Taylor, was head of the power and light company there when it belonged to Canada and Belgium, I believe; and he was head of it. So Diddie and I, we went together to have our ears pierced (laughter), that long ago. We went to a doctor there and had our ears pierced.

And Mary, her sister, came down there to visit with this woman, and I know the Ambassador's wife gave a big party for them. I don't remember her name. And, you know, honey, I've been all over the world so much and known so many people, I attributed it to old age that I can't remember, but that's not altogether it. My mind is just so chock full of names and people I have met and different places all over the world. But anyhow, later, this Payne(?) woman who lived with her killed her, and I don't know what happened in that trial. I don't know. But that's Diddie's sister, and Mary was a teacher. And as I said, Diddie still lives in Washington and I haven't heard from her in I don't know when. I think maybe this might motivate me to write her, I don't know.

But to get back to the naming of the Kidd Field. I can't remember, they had their first football team. Looks through Prospector Here, the football lettermen. I had one of these sweaters. I was going with a boy, another one,--makes me think of lots of funny things,--who gave me his football sweater when they wore them, and his name was George McClure--Happy.

C: Happy McClure.

S: Happy McClure. He signed it here. And here's one of Preston Perrenot. Preston Perrenot married Jane Burges. I don't know

whether you knew Preston. One day soon after I moved here I was going down the street and I saw Jane. I didn't know Jane, Jane was a little older than I was and I didn't know her. I saw her out in the front yard and I walked up there and I said...you know where she lives, don't you? It's that great, great big house [on West Yandell Street in Sunset Heights]. I said, "Are you Jane Perrenot?" And she said, "Yes, I am." So I said, "Well, you know, I went with your husband before he ever knew you." And I did, I went with Preston. I went with all the boys, so I never went with one, hardly. I always went with three or four of them, you know.

C: Well, when you wore the guy's letter jacket, did that mean you all were going together?

S: No, that didn't mean it. Oh, no. They didn't do that then. They didn't just stick to one person then, like you were pinned or something. No, that wasn't the same thing. And _____ Magruder got to be the president of the bank here. Wasn't it the president of the bank?

C: I don't know.

S: I think so.

C: Which bank?

S: State National, I believe it was, I believe that's right. See, most of them are El Paso boys. Well, let's see, lettermen, there's fifteen. Have you ever talked to Fred Bailey?

C: We have a long interview recorded with him.

S: Here's a picture of Fred. [This is] Grady Weeks. Grady Weeks was killed. He was Judge Weeks' son. They went into a water-melon patch just to, you know, kids, young boys, stealing

watermelons. And the guard killed him.

C: Oh, my goodness.

S: Ed Love, my goodness. I went with him too. Well, I think that's the reason I went to school there. I had so much fun.

C: Tell me about your dates. Where would you go? What would you do on a date?

S: Well, let's see. What did we do on dates? Course we danced a lot. We had a lot of dances. We had picnics. There were a few picture shows. I don't remember playing cards.

I started to tell you about the football field. We took the amphitheater there and we sat on rocks around it, we didn't have any seats. And I believe Cap Kidd coached it. I'm not sure about that. Probably Fred Bailey could tell you who the coach was 7. Oh, here it is right here.

C: Tommy Dwyer.

S: Tommy Dwyer. Tommy Dwyer did it. Here's a picture of him. Assistant coach, Doc Wells. I haven't looked at this thing in years. But that's the first staff, the first football field. Here's Bert, Charles Ormsley. I think Ewald Kipp stayed around here, I'm not sure, but it seems like to me he did. Great many of the boys, though, did go to South America. I know that Bert did. He went to South America and stayed a long, long time, and then I think he came back to Arizona and died there. And great many of them went to Mexico also. I was just trying to think if I could think of any other that might interest you at all.

I walked to school, I know that, from up on Crosby. We had only four buildings, you know, at that time.

C: There was a boys' dorm, Main building.

- S: Main building, the Science building. There were four buildings. I don't know if they had a gym or not. Of course, if they'd have had a gym I wouldn't know anything about it 'cause we wouldn't have been allowed in there anyway.
- C: Do you remember what you'd wear to school?
- S: Oh, at that time, it seems to me I had pleated skirts, midi blouses, sweaters.
- C: Let me see the pictures.
- S: Midi blouses and skirts. This'll give you a better idea. See, and we had things from the Navy--midis, that was a fashionable thing. And we wore flats, flat shoes. Skirts were long and droopy. Seems to me we wore hose, though, we didn't wear socks then. They came on later.
- C: Which one are you?
- S: Little fat round-faced one over there.
- C: My goodness! You were rounder then.
- S: Oh, I had a very round face. When I graduated from high school I weighed the most I've ever weighed in my life. I weighed 128. That's almost the same I weigh now.
- C: You look great! My goodness.
- S: But I was just a round-faced person, that's all. We had round faces, my family.
- C: Do you remember any pranks you played on other students or professors?
- S: We were a little sophisticated for pranks. I remember one time, my brother-in-law was a very straight-laced sort of a man, and I came rushing home one day to leave my books. And I was going somewhere on a picnic or something with five boys. And we had

an old Ford touring car, I don't remember whose it was--no top, you know, just a touring car. And my brother-in-law nearly had a hissy about it. He said a girl that went out with five boys was not the kind of a girl that he wanted in his family. He was furious with me. Well, I always thought, and it never occurred to me, I was just one of the boys, you know, and it just never occurred to me that they would...(chuckles)

C: Where'd you go on the picnics?

S: I don't remember, up in the mountain somewhere. You know the "M", the big "M"? I helped paint that. We painted that "M". That "M" has been there for many, many, many years. We painted that "M" on the side of the mountain.

C: What did you use?

S: I can't remember. I was wondering what we used for that. I can't remember. As I said, honey, I've been so many places and done so many things.

C: Well, when did you leave El Paso?

S: I left El Paso in 1920. I married in East Texas, and then I came back to El Paso, I started to say, because I still had family here. I went to Arkansas as a bride.

PAUSE

...one for each of us. And when I moved from Memphis to Knoxville, the movers stole a bag of jewelry at that time and I lost mine. So I don't know which two boys have the other, but there are two of them. There were three of them made, three small gold shield and shovels made.

C: Was it a little charm?

S: Yes. As I remember it, this is it. Looking at picture.

There's a lot of Kodak pictures in here. This is one time we went to Hueco Tanks and Hance McKinney's mother chaperoned us. We couldn't go without a chaperone. And here's Fred, that's Fred. This is of me. This is another one of me and Fred, and that's Josephine. And let me see, this is Worrell. Worrell was killed in the military.

C: Now, Cap Kidd's house was right there on campus?

S: Dean Worrell's was, but I don't remember about Cap Kidd's. That's Ruth Auger, I remember. These are students. I guess this is Ewald Kipp. This is me and Hance McKinney. Hance McKinney is McKinney Wrecking Company. There's the sweaters.

C: "M" for Mines.

S: [Yes.] I had one. I don't know what became of it. I remember when we went to Hueco Tanks that day and spent the day.

C: Well, when you were in school over here at the School of Mines, was there a streetcar that went up Mesa?

S: Yes, we had streetcars then, and it may have been streetcars that we rode rather than... Yes we had streetcars then. We had streetcars that went to Juarez. We also went to Juarez every now and then, you know. Course Juarez was a little town then. El Paso was a little town.

C: What is this Bunkhouse Bones? I guess that's the boys' dorm group?

S: [Yes.] (laughs) Now, I tell you what. I'm going to let you take that if you want to and look at it, see if you can dig out anything.

C: No, I can get this out of the library. I don't want to take your copy.

S: Have they got one like it?

C: I'm going to go look.