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## Interview no. 719

Rita Faudora

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Mrs. Rita Faudoa (1887 - )  
INTERVIEWER: Sarah E. John  
PROJECT: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF INTERVIEW: November 9 and 10, 1978  
TERMS OF USE: Unrestricted  
TAPE NO.: 719  
TRANSCRIPT NO.: 719

BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Early El Pasoan, granddaughter of Mrs. Francisca Alarcon.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Public schooling, Old Ft. Bliss, childhood entertainment (circuses, dog and pony shows), retail stores and proprietors, Mexican revolution, her 25 years as assistant to obstetricians and pediatricians in El Paso, prohibition and politics.

Length of interview: 2 hours Length of transcript: 52 pages

RITA FAUDOA  
by Sarah E. John  
November 9, 1978

J: To begin the interview, Mrs. Faudoa, can you tell us when and where you were born?

F: I was born May 22, 1887 in El Paso, Texas.

J: Can you tell us about your parents?

F: Well, I can tell you that my mother was of French descent and that my father was of Portuguese descent.

J: How did they come to El Paso, how did they reach here?

F: My grandmother arrived in El Paso in 1857 in a covered wagon from Chihuahua. My grandmother was a native of Chihuahua. She married Luis Faudoa, President of Banco Minero of Chihuahua. At his death, he left her what in those days was a fortune. For some reason she decided to move to the United States and she traveled with her three children to El Paso by oxcart through territory infested by warlike Indians.

J: Do you remember her yourself?

F: Oh my, yes. But I was raised by my great-grandmother. My mother died when I was nine months old, and I was given into custody to my great-grandmother, who died at the age of ninety-four. And I was eight years old. At the time, I went to live with my grandmother.

J: This grandmother that you were talking about.

F: And [ I ] started school in 1895, I think it was, when I was about seven years old.

J: Where did you live? What part of El Paso did you live in?

F: Oh, I lived on West Overland Street, the first Cape Cod brick house built in El Paso. Now the Magoffin home was the first adobe home built, but that was built in...my home was built in 1881, the Magoffin Home was built in 1879. But theirs was adobe, and ours was handmade brick. The brick

was made [ near where the present-day ] Austin High [ School is ]. Anyway, it was way outside of the city of El Paso. My father built that home as a wedding present to my mother and all of us eight children were born there, but all passed away.

J: How did your parents meet? Did anyone ever talk about that to you?

F: Yes. My father was a young man and he worked for, oh, he was just a handy boy around, they didn't know what to do with him, a big store here owned by a man [ named ] Inocente Ochoa. And oh, it was a...they sold everything, groceries and everything else. And my mother, very young, about the age of 15 or 16, was an orphan, and she'd come in with her godmother, I believe, for purchasing, and my father met her there. And it was a small town and they'd all get together for serenades and any festivities. And that's how they met. And eventually they married, but I think it was several years after that. I think they waited about four or five years.

J: What were your parents' names, their full names?

F: My father took his father's name, and I still hold my maiden name, Faudoa.

J: But his first name.

F: Frank.

J: And your mother?

F: My mother's name was Jeannette Ybabe. I was just nine months old [ when she died ]. I had one brother; a set of twins, girls; and the rest girls. But they all died of children's diseases, because there was just one doctor in El Paso and every Spring the children's diseases was very prevalent, and the children just died one after another. Also, since there was no doctors, the midwives delivered the children, and they lost

a lot of children like that. But I don't know why I didn't die. I kept on. I'm still here.

J: Do you remember any interesting events that happened during your childhood-- your first recollections of either funny events, or sad events, or interesting things that happened during your childhood?

F: When I was very little I remember my father taking me to the first puppet show I ever saw.

J: How old were you then?

F: Oh, I must have been a little girl about five years old. And it was a bullfight, I remember it was a bullfight. Then another thing that I remember in my childhood was seeing the Siamese twins. I saw the Siamese twins.

J: Where were they that you saw them?

F: On South El Paso Street they used to rent vacant store rooms, and they had them up on a platform, and they had them dressed. Oh, my, terrible looking things. They were more of a Negroid-African-Indian outfit, and they had grass skirts. I remember they dressed them with the grass skirts. Chang and Ching, wasn't that their names?

J: Something like that.

F: But what I remember most, as we went out, they gave all the children little box of candy, little round pills, pink and blue pills. I remember that more than anything. Oh, I can tell you, I can write a book on entertainments. We had better entertainments than we have here [ now ]. Because we used to have these slight of hand shows, where the woman disappears and they cut her in half. And oh, we used to have carnivals. Well, really, to say nothing of the circus. Whenever we had a circus in El Paso, schools closed, and that was children's day. And we had balloons, and we had

cotton candy, and we had pink lemonade, and we had everything we wanted on that day. Oh, I could write a book on entertainments. That's going to be separate because I've heard Tetrassini for \$1.00 dollar entrance, and afterwards you couldn't buy a seat at \$25.00 dollars. Oh, and I've seen Tito \_\_\_\_\_, I've seen Pavlova dance. You see, there was a break. El Paso was a break between Dallas and Los Angeles. So they had to stop here and they gave us a one night entertainment. And since there were few people, everybody went.

J: You said you started school when you were about seven years old. Where did you start school?

F: I started kindergarten with Miss Eula Jones--the first Kindergarten ever opened in El Paso in the Central School which was on the corner of Campbell and Myrtle. And she had as her assistant Miss Mamie Blacker, the daughter of Judge Blacker.

J: What do you remember about that school in particular?

F: Well, I remember some of the girls there, and I remember we learned. However, when I went to kindergarten, I already knew how to print my name, I knew how to count to a hundred, I knew my ABC's; because my older cousins who were in school, I could learn from them by hearing them recite and then they taught me. I knew the tables, which they don't teach anymore, and I could stand up and recite them. But I remember mostly of my kindergarten days was the colored yarns we used to have, colored yarns. And we used to shape, we'll say, an apple, and punch holes and make a leaf, and we had to work that with a needle back and forth in red and then in green. And then we had to write APPLE down here. Then a pear, then an orange, then a this, then a that. We did things with our hands and at the same time we were learning, which they don't do anymore.

J: Was this an all girls school?

F: Just girls, just girls. I remember so many. Judge Coldwell's sister, Rena Coldwell, was one of my pupils. Names come very easy to me.

Then another thing was that of all the group...we were reciting for a little program for Christmas, and Miss Mamie Blacker used to play the piano for us so we could march and we could sing and clap and all that. And I don't know why, they selected me to play the triangle. Do you know what a triangle is? Well, I'd say to Miss Blacker, "But I don't know how to play it." She said, "That's all right. Every time I bow my head, you strike it." So every time she bowed her head, I'd bang that triangle and I did very good, so I kept on as a musician, and that's the one and only time I've ever touched an instrument. I do not have an ear for music. It takes me a whole year to learn one song. Anyway, I was up on the platform with her in all the little ceremonies that we had.

In those days we never got holidays like George Washington and this, that and the other. They'd say, "Now, you come dressed nicely. Put on your best tomorrow, tomorrow is George Washington's birthday." But we'd have to learn songs, we'd have to learn poetry about George Washington. And then some of the girls would be dressed up like Martha. We used to have a lovely picture of a cousin of mine who was [ dressed ] like George Washington, with a wig and a cue. And [ we'd ] have a little operetta or something like that. But something nice, you know, something that we looked forward to. And we practiced weeks and weeks and weeks just how to say and sing and all that. And that's what I remember of my kindergarten days. It was a joy to go there. We learned so many songs. We learned to sing, "The Swanee River," and all of the Steven Foster's songs like "My Old Kentucky Home" and all that. In other words, we were glad to go

to school. You never heard of anybody playing hooky or anything like that.

J: After kindergarten, where did you attend school?

F: Well after kindergarten I went to Franklin School, which no longer exists, but it used to be on Leon and Overland, close to my school. And my first teacher was Miss Clara Fink. She was my first grade teacher. But I went through the first grade fast. Then the principal was Miss Florence Fitzpatrick. (And I know all my teachers.) And our music teacher later on was Miss Kate Moore, and then Miss Lela Trumble took her place. And in school we used to have an hour for drawing. That was Miss Mary Gates, who later married Charles Morehead, president of the State National Bank. Then we had penmanship, half an hour of penmanship. Then we had singing by Miss Moore, who married the president of the Santa Fe Railroad, I believe. And Miss Lela Trumble afterwards married a minister by the name of Moore. And then he died and she married Bob Holiday, one of our lawyers. And we used to have to know the scales. We had to sing it and we had to draw it. You don't find children to do anything like that. And we didn't have any trouble. Now they tell me that children can't read. But I painted a little after I grew up, and I think I got my idea from the drawing. Then we used to have a Spencerian. I learned to write Spencerian, not Palmer method. I had Spencerian method. We had a special teacher for that.

J: Was this also just an all girl school, or was this a public school?

F: No, no, public, public. I never went to a private school.

J: Well, what kind of social activities did you have within the school itself? You said when you were in kindergarten you'd have those little plays and what have you. Did you have any in the public school?

F: We didn't have any sororities, we didn't have any personal clubs or



anything like that. Everything was open for anybody that wanted to or had any little talent. Course, lots of them were very shy, and wouldn't take part. We used to take part for all the national holidays. We used to sing. And for Christmas, well, we just had everything around Christmas. I've always wanted to do things. I'm not just satisfied with just sittin', and I like to read. My number one hobby is reading. My second hobby is craftwork. When I was a young woman I always wanted to be an interior decorator or to write--little pieces of poetry and things like that. But I didn't go to college. And then I went to work for the doctors in 1909.

J: Well, did you finish your grade school years, then? You did finish there at Franklin School.

F: Yes.

J: Did you go to high school after that?

F: I went only to the eighth grade because there was an epidemic of diphtheria, and I got diphtheria. And I was so weak in my convalescence that school went by, went by, and I didn't make that year and I missed it, and my friends graduated. And I wouldn't go back.

J: What do you remember about old El Paso when you were growing up? What did it look like, and how big was the city?

F: Well, sandy streets; board sidewalks; gaslights, which were turned off on moonlight nights; the old mule streetcars. We used to go to Juárez for five cents. Only two good stores, the Popular and Calisher's. I don't know whether Liddie Calisher Moyer is living or not, but I knew her parents, they were Jews. And my grandmother became a very...we knew the Schwartzes.

(Interruption)

F: The two big stores that I remember when I was young was the Fair, owned

by Mr. A. Schwartz, and another store across the street called Calisher's, owned by Mr. Calisher (I don't remember his first name), both on El Paso Street. Years after, Mr. Schwartz became a very close friend to my grandmother, on a first name level. Years after, many years after, one day walking into the Popular, Maurice Schwartz, his nephew, called me over to where he and his uncle were sitting and asked me if I had ever met his uncle. So he turned around and he said, "Mr. Schwartz, this is Rita, one of Doña Paca's granddaughters." "Oh yes, yes", he said. "I remember her grandmother." And he turned to me and he said, "Are you like your grandmother?" And I said, "What do you mean, economically? No, I'm sorry, I don't have the capital that she had." He said, "No, it's not that. Her word was her bond." "Well," I said, "I think I'm a little bit like her."

J: That's a nice story.

F: And that is the picture that my grandmother held in El Paso. She never had any charge accounts. Every first of the month she went to the State National Bank, which she was one of the charter customers, and drew out a handful of gold pieces. She carried them in a little leather sack, and she went from store to store and asked for her bill. She said, "Never send me a bill, and never knock at my door with collectors." And in that way I think I am like her, because as soon as a bill comes to my house I pay it immediately. She used to say, "If you want to keep your credit up, pay."

J: When you were in your teenage years, what kinds of social or recreational activities did you participate in?

F: Ms. John, as I said, my first eight years I was with my grandmother and a baby, you might say. And I was the apple of my great-grandmother and

my grand-aunt's eye. I could do anything, had anything I wanted to. But when she passed away I passed on to my grandmother, who was a very stern disciplinarian.

J: This is Doña Paca?

F: Doña Paca. When I came from school I had to change my shoes, polish them, put them away, take off my dress and put on my house dress and pinafore. And I had to sit down if there was any homework to do. If not, I had to sit down and learn to sew. She used to save all the sugar and flour sacks and make me pull threads and do \_\_\_\_\_ work or hem pillow slips. I learned to make buttonholes by the yard just by getting a spool. And every one of those was a buttonhole. And if there was no sewing or mending to do, I had to take out the catechism and I had to learn the catechism. I had very little girlish pleasures like jumping rope and hopscotch and things like that. If I didn't do it at school, I couldn't do it at home.

And they took us to everything for children like circuses, carnivals, and things like that, but very rarely to a party. I remember one birthday party that I went to, and that was during kindergarten days. But I don't remember if we ever went to any things for children. There was nothing for young girls, except on Sunday afternoons and Thursday evenings. I was in my teens then. There was music at the park, at the Alligator Park, what they call serenades. And we used to go and just walk around and walk around, but no boyfriends or anything like that. So for me in those days there wasn't anything for young girls, nothing.

J: So they didn't hold dances on weekends or anything like that?

F: No, nothing like that. But when the movies came around, well... We used

to go to for something for children, but there wasn't very much for children. Catty-corner from where I lived with my grandmother, which is my home my mother left me, was my aunt. And she had two boys and a girl and we'd go over and play jacks or read storybooks. And once in a while my aunt would give this cousin of mine a party, a Valentine party or something like that. But it wasn't anything great, just a few hours, ice cream and cake and go home, and that's all.

J: Was this the same house you were born in, where you were living with your grandmother?

F: Yes. I was born in 1881, the year the railroad arrived. And it was old. It was condemned by the city when they were going to build the Civic Center. They bought all of that district and they spent all of the money on that mostrosity, and there was nothing else to build. They were going to build hotels, they were going to build this and that and the other. There was only enough money to build the Civic Center. So the city afterwards sold it to Frank Ponder, who has a pant company, Levi's, or something like that. Anyway, I had to sell the property and didn't get anything for it hardly, just what it was assessed at the courthouse.

J: I'd like for you to tell us how you recall the relations between Juárez and El Paso in your earlier years.

F: Wonderful. Most warming, most friendly, most encouraging friendship I have yet to find. It is too bad that the generation that followed was mostly, I think, from the...I'd like to use better words...from the lower class Mexicans that didn't realize. You know, you have to have experience, you have to read, you have to travel, because if you don't,

your mind can't grasp. And the people that lived in Juárez were people that had money and had traveled and owned land and lived in a higher standard than the people that followed afterwards. They resent that you have a lovely home. They resent that you dress well. They resent that you have a horse and buggy and all that. They're so narrow minded, they can't realize that you have to work for all those things.

And I remember the balls. I never went, but my cousins did, in the Custom House, the aduana. I remember I used to sit and look at my cousins who were much older than I am, and they'd look like Cinderellas, all of them. They'd dress so beautiful, you know, they had such lovely gowns. And they didn't have any make-up. There was no make-up in those days. But they were young and they were pretty. And the men from old Fort Bliss--not this Fort Bliss, the old Fort Bliss--used to go to the balls, and many of those girls married a lot of those old Fort Bliss soldiers.

J: Where was the fort located?

F: The Blue Fort, my father used to call it, because the men were dressed in blue. That was during this war between the North and the South. It's a school there, and that was the old fort. Highland Park, would it be? No, it's not Highland Park.

J: But it wasn't where this fort is that we know now, it's not located in the same place.

F: Oh, no, no. No, it used to be way out here, and then it went down by the river. That's where my father said he first ate ham and molasses and saw a mule. Never seen a mule before. And there was also a brick factory near the Blue Fort, because those bricks of my home were handmade in that section.

(Interruption)

J: So the fort was more in the central part of town.

F: It was quite a way from where we lived, and my father used to ride horseback and come over here. And another thing, he found out...you know, so many people want to find out why the Americans are called gringos. And my father said that the reason they call them gringos was that he used to come out to the fort and talk with the boys and all that, and they were cleaning their guns, and doing things like that. And it seems that there was a troop here from Kentucky. And they would sing, "Green grows the grass in Kentucky," some kind of song from their home. But the Mexican people would only learn "green grows." So they called them gringos, because they didn't know what else to call 'em. And that's where the name gringos [comes from]. But it doesn't mean anything at all, but it was part of a song, "Green Grows the Grass in Kentucky." And I've seen it in the papers I've read, but I've never answered them or anything, where the word is not a Mexican word, it's not in the dictionary.

Now, when Mr. Pulley was Editor of the Times, I wrote a great deal about El Paso. But I wrote to Bill because I was a good friend of his and of Grace, too. I did write on the Chinese restaurants in El Paso. My grandmother owned a lot of property on El Paso Street, starting with the Fisher Hotel. In those times it was [on] San Antonio [Street], over to past the del Norte. The Del Norte was property of my grandmother. And there were storerooms. And her first home is where the Paso del Norte is today. And she rented one of the storerooms to two Chinese brothers, and they ran a very fine restaurant called the Silver Grill. And then there was another one on San Antonio Street next to the old State

National Bank called the English Kitchen. The Chinese brothers were Mar Chew and Mar Ben. And the San Antonio boy was called Fat Sing, I believe. And they were very fine eating places. They were the only two eating places in El Paso in those days. But only bachelors went, or Sunday dinner, because in those days people ate at home. We didn't have greasy spoons all over like El Paso, or quick meals.

J: I wanted to ask you some more about Juárez and El Paso in those days. What would be the occasion to go to Juárez? I mean, did you shop there, or did you have family friends there?

F: Well, I tell you what. The ladies used to shop there because Mr. Felix Brunswick, the owner of the original White House, first had a beautiful store in Juárez, and his imports were all from Paris. He had beautiful things--the very finest chiffons; the very finest satins; the very finest perfumes, the real McCoy in perfumes. And the ladies used to buy over there because it's very cheap and they were good. They were a hundred percent. You don't see those things anymore. I remember those beautiful white parasols with chiffon ruffles and ribbons. People in those days dressed, not like they dress now. Fine shoes with the French heels, beautiful brocades, beautiful satins, beautiful velvets from Lyons, France. And he had the best of everything. Then I don't know why he got it into his head to come over to this side. I don't think he had immigration papers or something. Then he opened a place here and brought two of his nephews, Maurice and Arthur. And then he brought another Jew boy by the name of Klein.

J: Did they move into where the White House used to be downtown?

F: Yes, next to the Mills Building. No, the first place where they settled was on San Antonio Street across the street from the State National Bank,

about the corner next to where used to be the Union Clothing Store. Because a cousin of mine was a stenographer there. Then they moved from there to the building next to the Mills Building.

And they brought two girls from Chicago out here for their health. One of them married Walter Kohlberg, and I wonder if she's still living. Her name was Genevieve. They were Americans, gentiles; they married Jews. Then the other was named Grace. I think she's dead. But she married Klein. But let me tell you about Mr. Brunswick. He married a beautiful Jewish girl here and they had one son. Paula Cohn, I remember her name was Paula Cohn. Genevieve married Walter Kohlberg. And Grace Darling, her name was Grace Darling, she was in millinery and Genevieve was in corsets, I believe. But they came out here for their health. And they married their bosses. I know Genevieve passed away, I'm not sure about Grace.

And the Miller boys, they were twins, they afterwards inherited the White House. They were not sons of Jake Miller--Jake Miller was the other one that took over--they were adopted. Their mother died and their father, too, of...you remember we had an epidemic of flu here in 1910 or something like that. And they died. And the Millers went over there to be with her people, and they adopted Dickie and Bob. But only under these conditions, Mr. Miller said, that they would be adopted as sons. And they did. So they took the name of Miller, Jake Miller. Now they sold the White House afterwards, and now they're in building up in the mountains like this Dickie Knapp, who was one of our babies when I worked for Dr. Craig. They are now in the building-construction business. And I understand that one of the Miller boys is building a home, would be highest



home in El Paso, way up at the top of the mountain. I don't know how they're gonna get there.

J: Do you recall the days of the Mexican Revolution?

F: Wasn't that in 1910?

J: Yes. Do you remember any of that?

F: After Mr. Taft and President Díaz.

J: Do you remember the meeting here?

F: Oh, yes. I just went to see, I was not invited to anything. My father was, and I even kept the invitation and the badge. I went to see them and I just got a glimpse of them when they were taking pictures, standing in front of the old Chamber of Commerce--which, when I go back, that's where my mother lived as a young girl. She was educated in French and Italian convents. I think she was an orphan, too. And she came to live with her godmother, I believe, and that was her godmother's property. Afterwards, years afterwards, it was sold and they built the Chamber of Commerce. And I had the invitation and I had the badge, and I don't know [what happened to them]. When I moved, I threw away and I burnt, and I remember Elizabeth Kelly just having fits when she found out I had burnt my memory book. I had invitations stuck on there, lots of pictures and things.

When my grandmother bought this property on El Paso Street, it was a long row of adobes with pillars up in front, I'm sure you've seen it, if you've been in the airport Tom Lee painted a big mural as you come down the steps. And then the State National Bank had an engraving, a pen and ink sketch. Well, that was my grandmother's property. There's where my father, behind a curtain, regardless [that] his mother had tried to get him away, saw the killing of Stoudenmire, a feud there on

El Paso Street. Stoudenmire was the Sheriff, and they shot one another on a street. My father was a witness to that. My father was a boy when Luis Cardiz was shot, and I got a little story that Dr. Sonnichsen gave me [about] the Salt War. My father went out as a water boy with the Salt War, and Bala Coldwell's father, Judge Coldwell, was shot through the hand, and my father brought him in a pick-up wagon, and brought him to the government hospital to have his hand treated. He said he was just a young boy at the time. But he stayed with...Judge Coldwell was not married at that time--the old fellow, not Ballard, the old fellow.

And see, there were no doctors in those days. The first doctor was Dr. Alexander, but he came with the American troops. He was the first doctor that was [in] El Paso. And in Juárez, Dr. Ramón Samaniego was the only doctor over there. They were pediatricians, they were obstetricians, they were everything you can think of. And although neither city was very large, there was more people than they could handle. But in those days an obstetrician was only called in at the last minute because all the others were midwives, colored midwives and Mexican midwives.

J: Well, I was asking you about the Mexican Revolution, what you remember about that.

F: Oh, I remember lots of things, because I had an aunt and uncle that lived over there. And we hadn't heard from them for several days. And one of my cousins worked at the Popular. And she was staying with other members of the family, and she came over to my house crying one day telling me that she hadn't heard from her mother and her uncle, and she said, "What am I going to do?" Well, I was working for the doctors then, and I asked them if they could give me a day off, when the shooting was back and forth. But they called a halt to the shooting. I had a

permit given to me signed by Colonel Stegar. He was at the old Sheldon Hotel, which is now the Plaza. But they moved him from there to the bridge. So we went to the hotel and they said, "No, he isn't here, he's over at the bridge." So we walked from the Plaza Hotel, the Sheldon, to the Santa Fe bridge, I guess it was.

And my cousin was crying, so I went up and I asked, "Who is Colonel Stegar?" A little white-haired woman said, "Sitting at that little card table." So I went over there and I told him our story. And I said, "All we want is a permit--we are American citizens--a permit to go in and rescue our relatives." He said, "All right, but at your own risk." I said to him, "Oh, I'm not afraid, I'm bilingual and I'll get by."

So we crossed the bridge. And at the end of the Mexican bridge, about four huge houses and Mexican soldiers with these great big hats, you know it, and all of their belts and ammunition, said "Halt!" So we stopped. And one of them came out of that line and said in Spanish, "What are you ladies doing over here?" And I answered him in Spanish, I said, "I have our aunt and our uncle, and we haven't heard from them for days." And he said, "Where do they live?" "Well, not too far from here, at such and such a street. And we want to go and see if they're alive." And he said, "Pasen." So we went. And I remember it was the days we wore hobble skirts. That was before your time, but you've heard of the hobble skirts? They were little bitty narrow skirts and you had to take /little/ steps. Well, we were so excited and we were so happy that we got through without any trouble, that we couldn't walk. And I said to my cousin, who her name was Delfina (we called her Dee), I said "Well, heck, I'm going to raise my skirts up and walk in my petticoat and run."

And so we ran all down the railroad track and down to where our relatives were, and they were all closed. And we knocked at the door and they wouldn't answer, and we had to call through the window to tell them who we were. Then they opened the door. And oh, they were so happy, because they were taken by surprise. They were elderly. And all they had was one pitcher of water in the house. And they had killed their horse and they had killed a pet goat of my uncle's.

And that night before, Pancho Villa and his men had knocked at their door at 12:00 o'clock at night and they wouldn't open it. And Pancho Villa said, "Open, this is Pancho Villa." So my uncle got up and opened the door, and he said, "We are alone. This is my sister and we're all alone." "Well," he said, "have you got any weapons?" And my uncle said, "No, we don't have any weapons." "Well, we'll have to look through your house." So he said "Come on in." They didn't have electric lights, they had lamps, so they lit up their lamps and they came in. They didn't find anything. He had about four soldiers with him, the others were out in front. And he picked up my uncle's pair of new shoes that he had just bought a few days before, and a belt and a flashlight. That's all they took. And then Pancho Villa said, "That's all right. We didn't find anything, and I'm going to mark your door that I have inspected." So he with a chalk marked the door, put his initials on, and they didn't bother him.

In the afternoon, we told my aunt , "You have to go over with us. Get whatever you have to go and we are going to take you over." She said, "But before I go, I want to fix something. They have come over to charge me again for my taxes, and I paid them." I said, "Have you got your papers?" "Yes." I said, "Well, come on, give me the

papers, let's go to the courthouse." So we went to the Mexican courthouse, which is different from ours, and I asked to see the presidente. Well, what to my surprise, when they told us where to enter, the door was opened by a mozo, and standing in the middle of the room ready to see me was a friend of ours who used to work at the Santa Fe Railroads and had to pass our house every day. His name was Manuel. So we got to know each other, just by going back and forth. And when he saw me he said, "Rita!" And I said, "Manuel! What are you doing here?" He said he had joined the Revolution. And I said, "Well, this is my aunt, and she's in trouble. And this is her taxes, she's paid them. And they're charging [her] again." And he said, "Well, I'll fix that." So he just signed something on there, and he said, "Señora, don't worry." I said, "I'm taking her to El Paso." He said, "Well let her go," and he said, "and I'll send a guard to watch [her] home." "Well," I said, "Villa has been there, and they haven't found anything." He said, "Well, that's all right, you go on and don't worry."

So we brought my aunt back and she stayed a few days. And by that time there was an armistice or something, and everything was all right. So she went back to her house. They didn't confiscate her property.

J: What was this year more or less?

F: 1910. And I had Colonel Stegar's permission. Going from my aunt's house to the jefatura, which is the City Hall, there was a boy up on the steeple of the old church and he was throwing down cartridges. And I crossed the street and went over and grabbed some, and my cousin said to me, "What are you doing picking up those things? You're going to be shot." I said, "No, I'm great for souvenirs." So I picked up several of them. I don't even have one, I gave them away for souvenirs. Now

that's what I remember about the Revolution. I don't remember anything else because I was working there for my doctors, I couldn't get away. But I did get away that time.

J: When did you start working for the doctors and what kind of work did you do?

F: Well, I started to work for the doctors on January 1. I know they sent me home--well, I saw the parade. And that's 1909, and I left in October of 1944.

J: What kind of work did you do, and who did you work for?

F: Well, at first I didn't know anything about medicine. All I did was, you might say, receptionist. I just greeted the people and was bilingual. When I speak of Dr. Craig, Jr., I'm not speaking of the young one that just passed away a year or two ago. I carried him in my arm and answered the phone with my other hand, because his mother used to leave him there and go off to shop at the Popular while I took care of little Branche, gave him his bottle and all that. And then there was Tito, the second one.

Well, anyway, I went to work in January and they said, "What are you doing here?" "Well," I said, "You told me to come to work January the 1st." "Well, we forgot about New Year's." But I stayed and watched the parade. Then I went home and came back on the second. And Dr. Craig died in March of '43. Anyway, I didn't last very long after that. I didn't want to work anymore.

J: Well, what kind of job was it?

F: Well, afterwards honey, I was chief cook and bottle washer. I took up shorthand and they would dictate to me. Some of them had to read at the

monthly meetings of the County Medical Society, papers on something--some disease, some operation. See, Dr. Craig was a pediatrician. Well, my first boss, I mean the head boss--all of the were my bosses--was Dr. J. Rawlings. You've heard of Ruth Rawlings Mott, who married the millionaire. Well, that was his daughter. I knew her as a little girl in pigtails. He was the senior member, Dr. Julius Rawlings. The next one was Dr. Huthecker, who was a gynecologist. The third one was Dr. Calrence Klutz, who was a brother-in-law to Dr. Craig, instrumental to bringing Dr. Craig to El Paso. Well, he was a general practitioner. Afterwards he became the city physician. Then Dr. Rawlings decided after some years to go back to Germany and take a post-graduate course. Well, when he did, Dr. Craig came and took his office. Then we got another one, he didn't last long, Dr. Darnell. He was from Indiana. But he joined the forces, so we never heard from him anymore. Maybe the doctors did, but I didn't. Then the last one was who is still living, I buried all the others, is Dr. Travis Bennett. He's still living, but he's retired, and he was a pediatrician. Dr. Craig was an obstetrician. But he had a nervous breakdown and he lost the right finger. So he stayed in Baltimore and took a pediatrician course. And when he came back he just had babies, that's all.

So maybe toward the last, I would turn out to be the pediatrician nurse, 'cause afterwards I did everything. If an accident came, they would do the first dressing. I would help. And then they would turn him over to me. And they were to come to the office before 10:30. After 10:30 they wouldn't take anybody. They were physicians for Darbyshire and Harvey, for the Popular, for different concerns.

J: Where was their office located?

F: 214 Roberts Browning Building. There, looking over to Alligator Park. I spent 25 years of my life there. Afterwards we had a very small laboratory, about the size of my bathroom. And they taught me how to make urinalysis, mother's milk. All the little things that had to be done by microscope. They taught me. Well, I took a little short course at Hotel Dieu, but while I was there, Dr. Rawlings asked me if I didn't want to go work for him. And I thought that was better to be in an office than to be in that big hospital and things like that. So I took the job.

J: Do you remember interesting experiences from working there, any specific things that stand out in your mind about that job? Interesting cases that you had?

F: Well, I remember about the second or third day that I went to work there, and they showed me where everything was. They told me, "At five o'clock when you leave, you leave behind in this office your eyes, your ears and your mouth. Because anything we hear outside of this office, there is only one person could have known it besides us. And that was you. Until that day you don't have a job." So I stuck to my promise and I lasted 25 years.

I remember we had a very exciting time when one of the doctors gave a shot to a child and broke the needle. And there was no way to get it out but to rush him to the hospital and open it up. And I remember another time a very beautiful baby came from...well, he was a little fellow, about two years old, from México; Torreón, I believe. And the parents had said they had gone to doctors in México City they'd had all kinds of doctors. That child was a beautiful child. He looked like a Christ-child to me. He was a Spaniard, blond, with curly, curly hair.



He was a beautiful child. And this doctor tried and tried and tried everything he knew medically, and that child's fever was up and up and up and they couldn't get it down.

So one noon, I remember very well, the mother had been there with the child, the doctor had examined him, and sent him back to her hotel, and the other doctor came out of his office. [There were] four offices. And the woman came out of this door and the other one met. They were going to lunch. And one said to the other, "I've got a problem, doctor. And I've tried, I've read books, I've done everything in the world. This child has a temperature of a hundred and something and I can't get it down. And I've tried everything you could think of." I can see the other one putting on his coat saying, "Well, doctor..." They never called themselves by their first name. "Doctor, if he was my patient I would send him down to X-Ray, to X-Ray him from top to toe, and see if it isn't Myelitis." So the other doctor said to me, "Rita, call up Dr. Waite," who was the laboratory upstairs. And he said, "Rita, call up Dr. Waite and make a date with him, tell him I'm sending him a patient. Call up Mrs. So and So at her hotel and tell her to be here at whatever hour Dr. Waite gives you, and take her up there. And tell Dr. Waite I said to give him a complete X-Ray from head to feet."

Well, those things, the reason I don't eat today is because I taught myself not to eat. I didn't have any hours to eat. It was during the war.

Well, anyway, I called the lady, and she came and I took her up to Dr. Waite's.

[PAUSE]

So in no time, Dr. Waite called and said, "Rita, is Dr. Craig back?"

And I said, "No." "Well, as soon as he gets back, tell him I said to come up here right away." So it was lunchtime, and in an hour Dr. Craig came. I said, "Dr. Craig, Dr. Waite said for you to go up right away." So he went up. In a little while he came down, he came in. And when Dr. Craig slammed the door, I learned that something's gone wrong. He slammed the door. Pretty soon he opened it and he said, "Rita, don't leave before I do." I said, "I never do." "Well," he said, "I'm warning you because I want you to go with me to see Mrs. So and So at her motel. I have to tell her something." And he was white as a sheet. And I said, "What?" He said, "Her baby has multiple Myelitis and one in a hundred can be saved." I said, "Doctor, must you tell her?" He said, "It's my duty, and you have to translate."

So he could hardly wait. And at 4:30--I used to leave at 5:00-- he said, "Come on, let's go." So I went and told her. First he said, "Ask her where the father is." Well, he was in Chihuahua. "Can she get hold of him?" She said, "Yes, we have a telephone." Well, it was a Thursday. "You tell him to come right away. Tell her that her child has Myelitis, which in our common language is tuberculosis, inherited. Ask her which of the family had tuberculosis." And she said, "Well, I had a kidney removed because it was tubercular." And she became pregnant after that, I guess, because doctors don't operate when you're pregnant. And they found they had to operate her, remove the kidney, and she became pregnant I guess, and the child, of course, got the disease.

So well, she had another little girl, about a year older than this one, or two years. She was a doll, she was a doll. I remember. The Popular people used to go crazy when that girl went in there, because she was just like a doll. They were Spaniards, blond Spaniards; they

were from the North of Spain. And she cried and cried. So my heart was broken, I said, "Well, I already told her, doctor, and I'm going to take her home with me." I was living with my father then. And I told her, "Now, pack up your things. When you call your husband tell him you're at my house and give him the address." Anyway, I took her home with me, I had an extra room, and they stayed with me. And he took the child, and the doctor said to take him to the mountains. But he went on a Thursday and the child died on a Sunday.

That was another thing that's outstanding, because one doctor didn't probe a hundred percent and the other said, "If it was my patient I'd have him X-rayed." And that got me to thinking, how many times people have died because...that's why it's good to have consultations. I remember in my day consultations were very common. But doctors are too proud to let another doctor know that they don't have sense enough to know. But two heads are better than one, even if one is a sheep's head, like the saying says. And if it hadn't been for Dr. Number Two, that child would have died in Number One's hands, which would have been a shock to him. Those are the two outstanding this, that and that little child that the needle broke.

After that, you want me to say what I did. I used to take care of, first, of all the accidents. I used to be the extra for that. I used to take child to the shots because the children wouldn't cry with me. I'd talk to them, play with them, always gave them a lollipop or some little thing. And another thing that they left to me was replace all supplies. Anything running out, if the alcohol was running out, I'd have to make a list everytime everything was out, and ordered it. And during the war when there were no janitors I had to dust the furniture

and change the beds on the examination tables and do those things, because they took all the men. And we didn't have hardly any janitors to clean up at night. But there was one other thing I had to do. Oh, I used to do collections, if I ever got a chance--take care of the bills, deposit the money. Well to be honest with you, that when I quit, Dr. Bennett had to hire a nurse for the shots, a bookkeeper, a receptionist. And he had four. And in those days, I'm sorry to say, we girls earned peanuts.

J: What were you getting paid at that time for that job?

F: \$12.50 a week.

J: That's when you started?

F: [Yes.] Of course when I started I didn't know all those things. I didn't know a probe from any of the things that they used. But I learned. And they all had very good libraries. Dr. Craig had one on psychology which I just [loved]. I used to ask him if I could take the books home. Oh, I kept a count. We used to have a good library there. Other doctors didn't, and they used to come and borrow books. Now I was in charge of those libraries, and I had a book where I put "Out" and "In". And I made every doctor sign and put the date that the book was returned. And I was responsible. If I ever lost any, I had to buy it. I never lost any. I used to hound them until they brought them back again. In other words, Miss John, I took full charge.

And the reason I left, I'd have been there today, but my father was in his 90s and he was senile. Oh, I used to change service every week. He'd run them away. He didn't want them. He didn't know why I wouldn't stay home. See, he was senile, he didn't remember anymore. And things were getting very bad. I had lost Dr. Craig; if I hadn't

lost Dr. Craig, I don't know what I'd have done with my father. But I told Dr. Bennett that I had to leave him. And he said, "Why?" And I told him. He said, "No, I'll pay a trained nurse, an R.N., to take care of your father." I said, "My father doesn't want an R.N. I had young ones, middle aged ones, old ones, I had neighbors, I have done everything. He wants me, Doctor. And he is a deed of trust to me. And it's the last I can do for him to just sit, and let him know that I'm there. I hate to, because 25 years of my life, I have spent it here. And I love the work, I love children." I love them to this day.

And I don't know if it's my patience or what, but children come to me. Mothers are angry, they're nagging, they're nervous, they've had a fight with their husband, and the children react to that, especially if she's nursing him. He cries all night, he's fidgety, he doesn't know what to do. They'd come and ask me what to do instead of asking the doctors. They'd call, "I want Miss Rita." And then I was getting home very late at night, especially the nights I made the bills. I either made them by hand and by typewriter. It'd be 11:00 o'clock at night. Many a Christmas, Miss John, I'd look out my window and see the Christmas tree all lit up. And my father, just didn't like it at all.

So I left and I told them, "It's the least that I can do for my father." "Well," he said, "try to get someone, break them in." Well, they'd come in one day, they'd come in three days, they'd come in for a week, and say, "Oh, we can't stand it." This is not exaggeration. This sounds terrible. But there were days that we had 50 babies and 50 mothers, nervous, excited, worn out, cranky, cross. The mother gave me more trouble than the children. And I remember Dr. Bennett taking me out to a Mrs. Smith--I don't even remember where she lived--who had a sick

baby. And he said, "Come on, Rita, and go with me." And he said to me, "I'll take care of the babies, you take care of the mother, 'cause the mothers are the ones that drive me crazy." And I said, "Well, all right. I'll take Mrs. Smith in the kitchen and tell her to brew me a cup of coffee and we'll talk about something else."

And it's true. Sometimes there was nothing wrong with the children. I know Dr. Craig would tell me time and again, "I'm sicker than that child is." "Well," I said, "you're not treating the child, Doctor, you're treating the mother." And unless it's Dr. Craig that \_\_\_\_\_ the mother, she will not settle for less. Doctors have some pills that they call [placebos]--a colored pill made out of bread and sugar. And when the doctor thinks there's nothing wrong with you, he'll prescribe [placebos]. I remember the Mexican people used to be so funny. They're pink, blue and white. And he'll give you three and he'll tell you, "Take the pink one in the morning, take the white one at noon, take the blue one at night." But they're nothing but bread and sugar. Well, that's what they would prescribe for the children. And they would think that was wonderful. It's all in their mind. And Doctor said, "Tell them to keep the children quite."

So for a time, I never took a vacation. I went and worked for other doctors whose girls were on their vacation. And I remember once dealing out these [placebos] for a certain doctor who said, "Well, you take care of the children; and give these to the mothers when I'm not here. You tell them that I left that recipe." And I worked for the city county on a vacation, and they had a little laboratory. And the nurse that ran the laboratory, she was old (she's gone now), and she would let

me fill the prescriptions. And I'd give them [placebos].

But lots of times, I feel sorry for the little children at this time. They don't nurse them anymore. They give them a bottle. And a child...if mothers only knew what nursing meant. In the first place, nursing helps the child to shape its mouth. Everything is so tender that it'll grow. Then another thing, it helps her, for her placenta to get back in place. If she nurses it, you should nurse a child at least a year. It'll take that time for all a woman's organs to get back in proper shape for her next pregnancy. And another thing--if you nurse a child, he smells you, he knows who his mother is. And you holding him in [your arms], he feels safe. But now they stick a bottle in his mouth and put him in a cold crib. I have a friend who had so many nurses, but she had a reason. Her husband developed leukemia, and he was a very sick man. And they had him in and she has to go back and forth. And I bet that child must have had eight or 10 nursemaids. So he never recognized anyone but the cook. The cook was his mother. She used to take him in the kitchen. But he never did have any feeling for other women. A child has to know its mother by smell. He can smell her. And he has to have nourished to shape its mouth, to shape its gums. And she has to have that lactation so that all her organs will go back.

But people nowadays are not instructed. They're not instructed. They don't read. I used to take books home on skin diseases. We didn't treat skin diseases, we'd give them to the skin doctor. We'd give the bones and things like that to the orthopedics. But I don't know, people all they want now is the almighty dollar. You don't get any service. I could go back tomorrow and work in a doctor's office. And one time, one of the doctors told Dr. Craig that, "I think we ought to get a registered

nurse here." Dr. Craig said, "Well, Doctor, if you want a registered nurse you can get her anytime you want to. But Rita, I've trained her, and I don't want a registered nurse. I don't want a registered nurse to tell me what to do. I know what to do. You can have her. But I trust Rita." I used to do the vaccinations early in the mornings before they came. Anybody who's got any sense or wants to learn could do [it]. Giving a vaccination is nothing. All you have to do is sterilize your instruments, by hygenic, wear rubber gloves that are boiled, and things like that. Infection is the thing that you have to watch. And in 25 years I must have learned something.

J: I'm sure!

[Continuation of Interview  
November 10, 1978]

J: All right, go ahead Mrs. Faudoa.

F: [Reading] I was raised amidst a political family, all Democrats. My uncle by marriage was Alderman of the First Ward for over 30 years.

J: Can you give us his name?

F: George Look. I try to leave names out if possible. And his nephew, Park Pitman, was County Clerk for about the same period. See, they used to run the town in those days. My father was more or less a First Ward boss, and so was my grandmother, long before woman's suffrage. She and the late Joe Escajeda--he was County Auditor, for many, many years during the county elections would hire a surrey with a fringe on top, fill a flour sack with silver dollars, and take off down the valley to buy votes from the working men at three dollars a head, and brief them as to how vote. But what they did not know was that right behind them, probably the next day or so, came members of the opposite ticket



and gave four dollars, and they also told them how to vote. We all nowadays talk about dirty politics, but you should have been around in them there days.

My most vivid recollection of a city election was the year Captain Jim White, James White, was running for Mayor. Captain White was the grandfather of our Congressman Richard White. Some enterprising ladies thought that the two parties should have some kind of an emblem besides the elephant and the donkey, so they worked on white paper roses for the Democrats and red roses for the Republicans. At that time I was in the same class with his son Jim White, the father of Richard White, and I felt I could not let my classmate down. Party or no party, my folks had me ringing doorbells and giving out red roses and asking people to vote Republican. I got the bright idea to con another girl who was giving out white roses to exchange bouquets, and I started giving out white roses. Needless to say, the Democrats soon won, roses and all. So you gentlemen in the audience, recall how I switched parties. So never trust a woman, especially in politics. That is the only time I voted my party. Since my perfidy was discovered, I returned to the fold and am still a full-fledged Democrat. Besides, Jim was so good looking in his blue and white cadet uniform that I must have fallen for the uniform.

J: That's a very, very interesting story.

F: Oh, I had them all laughing in the aisle. And I told them the fire. I wished I could get commander to let me have his tape about the big five. I spoke about the big fires that we had in El Paso in those days. We didn't have much of a fire department. The opera house, the Myers Opera house, and then the Sheldon Hotel, which is now the Plaza Hotel.

We had some burned to the ground. They didn't save anything. We didn't have any fire equipment to amount to anything.

J: Can you tell us about entertainment in El Paso?

F: So many people think that old El Paso didn't have any entertainments. Many local El Pasoans wonder what we had in the line of entertainment. I seem to think that we had better entertainments of a finer quality than we have nowadays. My first remembrance of entertaining children, and grownups, too, was the puppets. I was about six or seven years old when my father took me to my first puppet show, and it turned out to be something about bullfights. That's about all I can remember. Then along came the Siamese Twins, Yang and Ying--I think that was their name. They were horrible to look at--they had rings in their nose and rings in their ears. The better part was that as we left the show, all children were handed a small box of candy.

Then we had the minstrels. They were white men all painted up as minstrels, and they had jokes and their big banjoes, and they sang.

J: Do you remember what years more or less this would be?

F: Well, I was old, because they didn't take little ones. I must have been about 12 or 14 [years of] age when I went to the minstrels. And they had all kinds of jokes and they wore top hats and they played tambourines and bajoes. I remember this distinctly, 'cause we don't hear those anymore. Then we had carnivals. Oh, we loved the carnivals 'cause it was all games of chance and snakes and things like that. And then we had the hula-hula dance, which was equivalent to the belly dances nowadays.

But what we liked most was the dog and pony shows, which we do not have anymore. They were just like a circus, except there were no

animals. No sideshows, except trained dogs and trained ponies. And there is an incident in that that came very close to us. The owner of one of those dog and pony shows went broke here in El Paso. And since my uncle was Alderman and ran this posh saloon, the owner came to him to borrow some money from him. And my uncle, not knowing who the man was, said, "No, but I'll make a bargain with you. I'll get you out of town, but I have children, and I'd like to buy a pair of ponies." So the man sold him a pair of black ponies named Tom and Jerry. Jerry was very smart. He could count with his paws, he could say yes and no, he could laugh, he could stand on his hind legs; he could do all kinds of tricks. Tom was kinda lazy, he was kinda fat and lazy. He didn't do very much but shake his head and things like that. And my uncle immediately bought two buggies, a one seater, and a two seater, to go with the ponies, and they were the talk of the town. And when they had parades, the ponies were always in the parades, all decorated with red, white and blue if it was the Fourth of July, or things like that. And he always filled it full of children. The children would be dressed all alike, maybe like clowns or maybe just girls. I remember there was a family here that had five blond girls. I remember there was a family here that had five blond girls, different ages, and they always used to dress them alike. I remember one parade they were all dressed in wine colored velvet with white collar and cuffs. They made a pretty sight.

And those ponies were our delight. We used to ride them, they were very gentle. Tom died because he broke out one night and went into the feed room and broke up a bag of oats and ate so much that the next

day he died. Jerry, after we grew up we didn't care for ponies any more, was sold to the El Paso Times, and they put him up as a prize for the child that would bring in the most subscriptions. And I remember a girl won it, and the girl was one of the Ponders. She won the pony, and I believe when she grew up she went into a noviciate and she became a nun.

And let alone the Ringling Brothers. First came the Ringling Brothers, or Barnum and Bailey. I don't know which one came first. But that was a free day. No schools on that day. And that was children's day. All the children, we were taken to the grounds, and we all got balloons, candy, cotton candy, pink lemonade--we just had a ball.

And the first thing we went into, instead of going into the big tent, we had to go into a small tent where all the freaks were. And all the animals, we had to see those first. And of course I've seen the original Fat Woman, and the Fat Man, and the Tatooed Man; and the boy, which is very remarkable, you wouldn't believe it, he had three legs. The third leg came from his coccyx, the end of his spine. And was a shorter leg than the other, and it was very flexible. And I remember that the man that was showing him off would throw him a football, and he would kick it back. And he was a boy about 12 or 14 years old, very young, nice looking. Then there was a little girl, they called her the hairy girl. She had very fine hair, and she had hair all on her face, just like a bearded man, which I've never seen before or since. What other people? Oh, we saw an albino who had very white, white hair, and he had pink eyes. Very fine looking gentleman. He looked like Buffalo Bill. He looked like Buffalo Bill, but he had white hair. Very nice looking man. He used to play the drums. And of course, there

was all kinds of animals. Then we went into the big top. Now those were the circuses.

El Paso had parades at the drop of a hat. We had a parade for New Years, we had a parade for Christmas, we had a parade for Easter, we had a parade for the Fourth of July, we had one for Labor Day. I remember Labor Day, nobody worked on that day. And there were no unions in those days, but everybody that worked--we'll say railroads or something, always wore engineer suits with the little stripes and engineer's caps. Always a band, they always had some kind of a band. And then there was the painters. They were all dressed in white with a paintbrush in the back pocket and a can of paint in their hand. That is so people could know who they were. And always the Mayor and the Alderman and everybody came out in open hacks. We didn't have taxis, we'd have hacks that were closed, and in good times they opened them up. And everybody would line the streets. They'd close up the house and go out to the parade.

Fourth of July, Fort Bliss always sent a band, wherever they were. And this Fort Bliss I was telling you about, was over here at Alta Vista School, around in there. Also there was that brick factory that I told you about. That was near Concordia Cemetery, where they made bricks by hand. They were rose colored. They were beautiful.

And another thing, we always had some of the best high-class artists. For instance--I was already a young lady by that time--I saw Pavlova. I remember her dance was "The Swan" to the music of the "Blue Danube." El Paso High was already built, and there's where she performed. We didn't have a very good opera house at that time. See, that one had burnt, and they hadn't made another one to amount to anything. And I heard Tito Scippa there, who was a wonderful tenor.

There were several of them that came there. Afterwards at the Liberty Hall, when it was built, I saw Al Jolson, and I saw a play by Shakespeare. The Barrymores came to El Paso.

J: Do you recall the years that they were here?

F: No, I'm sorry. Several years ago I gave a Mr. Brady that was at UTEP there for a long time, but it wasn't UTEP then, it was Mines. Well, someone sent him to my house and he was collecting programs and things like that from musicals, from shows and things like that. And I had some I gave him. And I also had dedicated to me in Braille something from Helen Keller. I met Helen Keller through a very dear friend of mine which was a daughter of Billy the Kid, whose family and my family were very friendly. And when Miss Garrett was in New York, she wrote and told me that Miss Keller was going to be in El Paso and for me to be sure and meet her and to bring her sister from Las Cruces to meet Helen, and we did. And she gave me her picture, and she punched it, and I don't know what all she said. Well, I even gave that to Mr. Brady. And I gave him other programs and things, I don't remember now what they were. I think if I'd have kept all those things I could have written a book.

Now, that's the artists. Now let me see, you said something about Prohibition. Well of course Prohibition, in my estimation, was a farce. 'Cause I think there was more liquor flowing, and poor liquor at that, at the time. Because people made gin in the bathtub. Many people got very wealthy bringing through Ysleta liquor from Juárez. And liquor-- you had to pay for it, it was very expensive. Whiskey was \$3.00 a bottle in those days when it was about a dollar if it hadn't been Prohibition. And they got very wealthy. But they would pay and they'd had a place

called Hole in the Wall and things like that, where they stocked the whiskey, the liquor, and you'd go down and buy it. But the law didn't pay any attention.

J: Did you see any fights between federal men and smugglers?

F: No, no, no fights. It wasn't in my category at all.

Now in the recession, no problem. We all did our shopping in Juárez. We got food stamps, I remember the family got food stamps around a certain age, and we had to buy so much, a little sugar and all that. But we'd go to Juárez and buy 100 lb. sacks; nothing was said about it. Bring it over in the car trunk and not a word was said about it. So we really didn't suffer, we didn't suffer at all. What we couldn't get here with stamps, we'd get over there.

Now I'll tell you where we did suffer. We couldn't get any good wool underwear or anything like that. I remember my father would wear longjohns in winter, and they had to be wool. Well I went to Sol I. Berg's, which was then the largest men's store here, and they told me that their factories were turned into ammunition and things like that for the war, and that there would be no more absolutely. So he said, "You're gonna have to patch your father's underwear," which I did.

Now when I talked about stores, that the best stores were The Fair, which is now the Popular, and the White House, the White House originated in Juárez. Because Mr. Brunswick had not had his American citizenship. So he had to live in México. And that was a very elegant Parisian store--the finest of linens, the finest of chiffons, of satins, velvets and all the night ladies on the bright light streets used to go over there and do their buying.

J: Was there a large red light district at that time?

F: It started on Mesa and San Antonio. It used to be Kress' years ago when I worked at the doctors'. Well, from that corner to the bridge was the red light district.

J: It was quite large then at that time.

F: It used to be Utah Street, and then somebody objected to it after many years, and then they got it to South Mesa. And there were beautiful homes there. I used to know them. How I knew them was because one of the doctors that I worked for was named City Physician and he had to check on those girls. Of course they all used to come in with other names, but I soon found out who they were, of course. They were ladies, they were just as lady as anybody that had ever come in there, and I treated them as such. But afterwards [it] got so after 25 years I got to know them.

And one funny thing happened. I at one time used to take china painting, and there was a large, fine looking woman used to come in at noon hour. And I used to go at the noon hour, which was my lunch hour, to take a little painting. And one day I went in--this was all alone, all the others had gone to lunch--and I went over to see what she was painting. And she gave me two little vases. I don't have them anymore. And I said to her, "What is your name?" And she said, "Mrs. Sanderson." And she asked me my name, and I gave her my name. And she gave me those two [vases]. But she was the A Number One Madam on Utah Street. And they said when she died she had barrels and barrels of hand painted china. She loved to hand paint china.

J: Apparently they did get out in the community, they weren't always segregated.

F: Well, there was a Mayor. I don't remember who the Mayor was that they



elected, because he promised that he would get rid of the red light district. You see, El Paso was growing so fast, and San Antonio Street was growing so fast, and all of that, people said they were too close, especially at night. The cribs, they used to call the cribs, those were the cheaper girls. And they were in rows, houses in rows with doors. And they used to stand at the doors and solicit. And they had to get rid of that. So they pushed them back from Seventh Street to the river. The houses are still standing there. They're brick homes amongst junk homes with the red brick tiles, California style. But they didn't last there very long, they finally put them out. Worst thing in the world they could do, because they had money and they scattered all over the city. And if you had a house and you wanted to rent it at a good price, you didn't care who they were. And that was the worst thing they could have done. If they'd put a red light district to vote, I would vote for it. Of course now, they're in the center of town. But I think that's a good place for young boys and good place for men that are going around raping women and all that. But they should not have been there, they should have been putt off someplace else.

Now the Revolution in México, all I know is what I've told you about my cousin and myself. I was working for the doctors at that time so I couldn't get out, I couldn't do very much of anything. And then I told you about Díaz and Taft.

Another thing that I want to tell you is that I collect presidents. My first president was William McKinley. I was standing at the corner where the Oasis is now, San Francisco and El Paso. School was out that day, and we all had little American flags and we had to go and stand on El Paso Street and the Alligator Park. But we were standing right

at the corner when Mr. and Mrs. McKinley passed us in an open hack. I remember she was a very sweet person. And it happened that there were very few children at that corner. And they drove close to us and they waved and we waved our flag to them. That's one, McKinley.

I became a Republican when I met Teddy Roosevelt. And I was astonished, you know; he was a little bitty short fellow. I expected him with that big mustache and that voice and all those gestures that he was a big man like my father. No, he was a short, fat man. And he spoke in Cleveland Square, where they used to have a bandstand, and he was up on the bandstand. And he spoke very early because I opened the office and then ran over there and shook hands with him as he was coming down. There was very few people 'cause it was about 8:00, 8:30 in the morning. He had to catch a train.

J: How old were you then?

F: Well, I went to work for the doctors when I was 20, so I must have been 20, 21 something like that.

J: I never knew that he had come here.

F: We've had several. Now that was McKinley and then Taft, and then there was Roosevelt. And then one passed through, and it was at night. They couldn't get him up, he wouldn't come out. I have Mexican presidents too, López Mateos for one.

Then Jack Kennedy. I was up on North Oregon Street, but bought my groceries and came out when they said, "Here he comes, here he comes!" And I said, "Who?" And they said, "Oh, the President." So I put my groceries down and I sat there on the bench and he was just coming and looking right where I was sittin'. And all of a sudden, we were close to the Cortez Hotel, and up on the top floor were some men. I think

they were waiters or chefs, because they had white caps. And as he fronted me, when I wanted him to look at me, he looked up and waved at them. And he passed by and he didn't look at me, and I looked at him, but that's all.

J: There is something that just occurred to me. Yesterday we talked a little bit about the relations between Juárez and El Paso. But one thing that I was thinking about is, how you recall the relations between the Anglo population here in El Paso and the population of people of Mexican descent that also lived here in El Paso?

F: Disastrous. I've asked René Mascareñas, but he said, "Rita, it won't do any good." Have you ever heard him speak?

J: No.

F: Oh, he has a wonderful command of the English language and he has so much experience. He has traveled, he reads. Oh, has you spellbound. He sends me copies of his speeches. He talks before the Pan American and the Lions and the Kiwanis and all that. But he said, "Rita, the Mexican Americans we have now, they don't seem to understand either the English or the Spanish language. I can talk myself blue in the face and tell them how I have handled it."

He doesn't tell everybody he was born in Los Angeles, but he was born during the Revolution. And his mother had to leave. They had a big cattle ranch in Hermosillo, Sonora, and they had to leave on account of the Revolution. See, his father was a government minister, and the family had to leave. And his mother was pregnant, he was the last child. So they moved into Los Angeles which was close by. And he was born there, and they stayed there until the Revolution was all over and he could get his property back, 'cause they confiscated all his property and everything

he had. He said, "It's not supposed to be known because if I run for office," which he did, "they will not elect me." And he ran for office and was elected because he said he was born in Hermosillo, but he was not. Of course everybody knows it now. His father was Minister of Finance or minister of something. He had a high job.

And I said how in the Revolution in México they confiscated my uncle's ranch, didn't I? His ranch was connected with Mr. Hearst, with Randolph Hearst. And I've read that Randolph Hearst was the first man to bring in black angus cattle, but it wasn't true. My uncle already had angus cattle in his ranch. And when the Revolution was over and Díaz was exiled to France, the President was one of the Quevedos. He confiscated my uncle's property. But my uncle being an American, he immediately put in a bill in Washington, and for years and years that Mexican government paid the value of the ranch. My uncle died and everything else, but his three heirs got the money till they paid to the last dime.

J: This is George Look?

F: [Yes], George Look.

J: Do you recall if there was a lot of intermarriage at that time also?

F: With the Mexicans?

J: Yes.

F: Well, not among the better class people or anything like that, no.

Generally all the men that used to come here came from elsewhere, and they already had their... Now Park Pitman, I remember one of my cousins was deadly in love with him, and she thought they were going to get married. Well, after so many years he went back to Kentucky, I think it was, and married, and he had been betrothed since they were children to

one of his cousins. And he never came back again anymore. No, they had their connections in the East.

People came out here mostly for their health. Arizona beat El Paso because El Paso didn't take care of it, we didn't have enough doctors. But that lung sanitorium that is now at Southwestern Hospital was THE tuberculosis hospital. But they didn't work at it. Why, you could go uptown to the Alligator Park and they'd be sitting around there, were spittin' all over until there was a law that they couldn't spit on the sidewalk or something. And they slept out in tents in the backyard. And do you know doctors came out here for tuberculosis. My doctors came out here because they were all from the different places in the East, from the South, and they got here because of the climate. You see this was warm. There was no rain, there was no dampness and everything like that. It's the dampness that gives you tuberculosis. You inhale a lot of dampness in your lungs. But the sunshine.

Now another thing that would help, especially children, was the mountain air. That's why Dr. Craig opened up a baby sanitorium in Cloudcroft, because babies used to die like flies, especially in South El Paso, their first and second summer. Those were the bad ones. If they passed the second summer, they lived. But lots of times, diarrhea... milk soured, we didn't have refrigeration. They sold ice by the pounds from door to door. Well, poor people couldn't buy it. And they'd feed them, those that couldn't nurse them; and the heat, the heat was very hard on them.

J: So most of the poor people lived in South El Paso at that time?

F: Yes, they all lived on South El Paso. The flu, we spoke about the flu. That hit South El Paso hardest of any place. And I was offered

Supervisor of Aoy School that was turned into a hospital, but my bosses refused to let me go.

J: During the epidemic, Aoy School was a hospital?

F: Yes, and this officer came to me from Austin, Texas, because I was bilingual and I had experience in many ways, medical like that. They couldn't get anybody that knew anything. They could get people down there and pay them well, but they didn't know how to take temperatures or did anything like that. But no one in my family, none of us ever had the flu.

J: Well, is there anything else you'd like to add to the interview?

F: Well, what about you? What do you have to ask? You're the one that'll have to prompt me, I got a jillion things I can tell you. Now about my schools, well I already wrote you about the schools and the teachers that I knew. The mother of the Kelly girls was my English teacher, Miss Hooks her name was. Miss Mamie I think was what we called her 7.

J: Would you repeat the story that Mr. Mascareñas told you about the battle of Chapultepec? I think that's interesting.

F: All I know that the resentment has never died of those young cadets. Many were shot, and others wrapped themselves around the Mexican flag and jumped from the very top. You've never been to México City.

J: No.

F: Well, Chapultepec is on a hill where these boys were all together when Scott came in through Veracruz and all his troops. It was just like you slaughtering little children. And they've never forgotten that. And they don't like the Americans. Now René has a very wide, very popular friendship here with the Americans and the Jews.

Now I wish I knew what year the smallpox epidemic broke in South El Paso, because my grandmother and Mrs. Olga Kohlberg used to wear masks and go down and take them. They'd tear up sheets and make bandages. The Kelly and Pollard was a big drugstore here and they had a wholesale. And they'd buy vaseline and all that by the carton and take it and give it all to help all the poor people in the smallpox epidemic. They'd take them food, they'd take them chicken broth and things like that. My grandmother was the most charitable woman you ever knew. And she used to say that that was Christ's religion. She was a Catholic, but after years she met a...I think he was English, by the name of Conklin, and she married him. But he was a Mason, so she was excommunicated from the Catholic Church. Yet, the priests accepted her contribution every first of the year. She gave I don't know how much money to support the candles and the oil in the Sacred Heart Church and the church in Juarez. But they would never let her baptize a child or go to church because she had married a Mason, and you know Masons and Catholics don't... Gee, I don't know about now, but they didn't then. I don't know what their reason was, I never asked. But she was excommunicated. But she said that in the eyes of God she was not excommunicated.

And I remember oh, years ago, in my house they had saints--Saint this, Saint the other, Saint the other, and each one had a reason why. There was a saint for the cook and a saint for the rain. Saint Anthony was for special favors and I don't know what all. And they always Rosary every evening in our home and we kids would attend. One of the beautiful things that my grandmother used to do was, on the 14th of December, she had a room made just for an altar with a Nativity. And she'd buy it from...I used to laugh. For the Nativity, she'd buy from a Jewish place in Chicago all the paraphernalia for an altar. And

on the 14th, this is a very pretty thing for Christmas.

[PAUSE]

F: I don't know what age I was, but I must have been about four or five, and I had a doll that I liked very much. And she disappeared a few days before Christmas. And I cried and I cried, and they said, "Well, you've put it away, go look for it, go look for it." Well I'd look for it every day but I didn't find it. Well, I hung up my stocking Christmas Eve. Well, Christmas morning when I went into the parlor (there were parlors in those days), there my stocking was hanging with candy and an orange and what have you, and down by the fireplace was my doll, all dressed up as a bride. I recognized her right away; but no, they said that was not my doll, that Santy Claus brought it. So I had to believe that. She was sitting on a high chair, they had bought the doll a high chair, but I remember that I cried for my doll. And they said, "I wouldn't cry. If you don't cry maybe Santa Claus will bring you..." "I don't want that one, I want my own." Well, I got it back, but I got it dressed as a bride.

And we were so satisfied. I remember one Christmas I got a book. I was old enough to read. I got Ivanhoe, and I kept it and kept it. Then another time I got Grimm's Fairy Tales that I'd give my eye to get another copy, I used to enjoy it so much. You know I read fairy tales? I like them. I like the descriptions. I can understand them better. And I remember when we girls who were about the same age, I think we were 15, by 15 years, you are already supposed to be a young lady. We got rings, but they were signet rings. You know what a signet ring is?

J: No.

F: Well, it was a gold ring, and it could be a square that way, or it could be an oblong like this, and it had your initials. And it was



gold, like a band ring. And I got my first ring, which was a signet ring, and I wrote it so long that it wore out here and I don't know what happened to it. But we never got...they could afford it. But my grandmother used to say she didn't believe in eating chicken today and feathers tomorrow. They gave us things according to our age. When we were older we got dresses and things like purses and handbags and things like that. But when we were children, we got something. There was always something under the tree for us. The tree was always at my Aunt Bell's. But we never got expensive things like they have to have nowadays, perfume and things like that. We didn't use perfume till we were grown young ladies.

J: Well, now, I was wondering, I asked you how the relations between the Anglo populations and the Mexican population in El Paso were.

F: Well, didn't I tell you beautifully? I told you that there was never no class distinction. The balls over there, all the lovely girls like the... Judge Hague had two very beautiful girls. Oh no, he has several. Some went to school with me, but the older ones, Lilly and Katie Hague, they were very beautiful girls. And he was a judge. And a lot of beautiful girls that I knew at that time used to all go to the balls at the old custom house over there. And then when they had the balls here, they always had them at the courthouse. There wasn't anything big enough to hold a ball. They'd have the charity balls on New Years, for charity. The Juarez custom house--I know it's closed down, but I understand they're gonna open it up--has a round ballroom. As you enter, you enter into a foyer, then you get right into the big ballroom. And the offices are all around there. Well, that was a beautiful building at the time. There's where President Diaz entertained President Taft at a dinner. He brought his own gold plated dinner service, everything,

from Mexico City, and brought his chef to cook for Mr. Taft.

Well, no, you didn't have to pay anything to cross the bridge, you just went back and forth. There was no custom inspectors, there was no immigration, there was nothing. They took you at your value. Now they just seem not to care. And it hurts me very much. I told Rene, I said, "I guess I'm going to die, Rene, and I'm not going to see Juarez and El Paso in whatever level, whatever category, to be friendly and warm." They resent each other and I don't know why. I wish someone that knew something would sit down and tell me why is it they hate each other. Is it envy? Is it jealousy? I have wonderful friends, both from Mexico City, all over, in Washington here.

I have visited, I traveled quite a while, I have traveled in South America. South America can't bear an American. In South America, I've been in Panama, I've been in Costa Rica, I've been in Columbia, I've been in Brazil--you speak Spanish. If you speak English they won't wait on you. Or if there's a tag on a piece of merchandise, there's one here for the local people and one here for the Americans. I don't know what it is, I've never been able to understand it. They say that the Americans are superior. They're superior because you let 'em be superior. You have an inferiority complex, the Mexican people have. Not Rene, because like I tell you, Rene is an American.

His wife is a beautiful woman. I wish you'd meet her one of these. She's German, part German. Now she dislikes Americans because of the World Wars, the Germans and Eisenhower. And she can't bear them.

And I don't understand why the two can't get together. I would just love to sit at a round table conference and hear a debate, the pros and cons why. It isn't what you were, it's what you are. You

could be the daughter of a horse thief, you could be the daughter of this that and or the other, but if you /were/ brought up right and educated and met people and traveled, you can forget that. That doesn't belong to you, it's none of your business what happened way back. Like I know a very lovely girl. You should hear her talk. She speaks English. She's from, oh, across from Los Angeles. What is that Mexican place? She says, "You know, Rita, in my house," I can just see her, "there've been thieves, prostitutes, homosexuals, priests, everything! What do I care? I am Alice." Her name is Alice. "I am Alice, and nobody can change me." And I just giggle. Of course this is not true, but she tells you that. And that is the view that I take. If everyone was that same and not have resentment, this would be a better world.

Now, I am a Republican. I have nothing against Mr. Carter. The poor man is trying to do the best he can. To me he's not presidential material, But he wanted to try it, let him see what he can do. And I think that it isn't the laws, I think that our situation right now economically as we are...and that I do blame the Jews. Until we had the Jewish people, we didn't know what credit was. You paid as you went along. But the Jews will open credit, it doesn't make /any difference/ who they help. They'll get their money someday or another, but they'll have to wait for it. But I think that is what has ruined us is credit and these cards. Every card I get through the mail, I break it up as much as I can, and I burn it. I don't want any charge accounts of any kind, if I can't pay for it. I do have a charge account with the Popular, nothing to amount to anything. If I can't pay for it, it's not mine. That's my philosophy. It's not mine. Lay-away, if you want to lay-away, pay on it every month, that's perfectly all right.

But I think that we have ruined...we buy the best of everything, we won't settle. My grandmother, as I told you, was a very wealthy woman. But we had our shoes half-soled. My cousin that was older than I am, I got her coat. The one lower than I got mine. Why? Because it was a good coat. There was no need of throwing away, there was no Goodwill, there was no Salvation Army, there was nothing. We handed down. Many a hand-me-down. I remember that my First Communion dress was a hand-me-down from my older cousin who had already made her First Communion a year or two before. And we didn't think it was demeaning to wear somebody else's clothes. But now they have to have everything new, everything new. And if the Jones family next door has something, this one over here had to have it too.

J: Repeat if you would the story you mentioned a while back about your grandmother teaching you humility.

F: When she would give these midnight feasts to thank the ones that came for 14 nights, it would start at 7:00 at night, a beautiful altar. (And I'll tell you what happened to the altar, it broke our hearts.) The children would be sent home with a promise that tomorrow morning at 7:00 o'clock, they'd come, and they would get their Christmas. But the elders went over to the big house after the children all were tucked in bed to this feast. Oh, they had everything you could think of. But the maid and the cook didn't wait on the tables. They stayed in the kitchen. But we, my cousins--I had no brothers or sisters, Park and a sister Belle and Georgie and Julius, myself, about maybe four of us, we were all already 15 years old, knew how to handle dishes--we would wait on the table. And one or two of the brothers would say, "Well, why do I have to stay up and wait on the tables? Why do I have to.

You've got so and so there?" And my grandmother would say, "No, that isn't the idea. That's to teach you humility." Because the people that came were of a poorer class. The others would go to their church, because all of the churches had posadas. But that was her hobby, her devotion. She prepared all year for it.

Another one was the 17th of March, it's Saint Joseph's Day, which is a Holy Family Day. You see, we were all Catholics. She would go out and look for an old man, and old woman, and a child 12 or 14 years old; and she'd tell them that on that day, they were to come to her house at noon for dinner. And she'd explain that it was the day of the Holy Family. And she would tell them, "I want you to be cleaned and arranged and everything else." And they would come. And we would have to wait on that holy family; to her it was the holy family--Jesus and Mary and the Christ Child--when he went in to debate with the doctors.

You see, we learned, not by books, Miss John; we learned by seeing. Like I tell you at kindergarten, we knew what red, yellow, green was with the yarns. The teacher had a piece of glass that had four or five sides, and she'd put it in the window, and the sun would turn it blue and green and all colors. We didn't stick our nose in a book all the time, we saw things. And people tell me, "Rita, why is it that you remember everything?" I said, "It's nothing extra. That's the way I was taught. I didn't have my [nose] stuck in a book."

For instance, I can knit, crotchet, and embroidery. I can do a little doily, not very fancy. But you know that if you give me a book and say, "Here's the directions," I can't do it. But if I say, "Well, let me see you do it." And when I see you do it, I can pick it up right now. That's how I learned to knit, crotchet, do tatting, do anything

with my hands. But I do that shellwork, but I had to see how they did it. I couldn't figure out how in the world they did shellwork. Well, when I saw this man doing it, I came right home and made those two pieces from shells that I brought from Panama, from the Pacific Ocean. I lived there several years. So I had to go to this man who was doing it, and I asked him if I could sit there and watch him. Well, he got a wad of cotton and wired it, then he got the shells and put glue on the shells and stuck them on there. Afterwards you put on some clear shellac and there are your shells.

J: That's very beautiful.

F: Well, my mother was an artist. She painted velvet, satin, canvas, and china. And I have a little bit of hers. Not much, 'cause I did work at it.

J: That's very beautiful. Well, I seem to have run out of questions myself. Is there anything that you'd like to add yourself that you can think of now? I know there are some things you do want to check on, and when you do get those together, I can come back. Oh if they're typed up or written down I can get them from you.

END OF INTERVIEW