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Interview no. 789

Anita Whelen

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Cheri Frye Spier
INTERVIEWER: Barbara Dent
PROJECT: El Paso Medical Community
DATE OF INTERVIEW: January 19, 1989
TERMS OF USE: Unrestricted
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BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Married Dr. Werner Spier in 1955, moved to El Paso in early 1960s. Member of medical auxiliary since day she arrived in El Paso and served as President in 1972.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Discusses medical artifacts, paintings, memorabilia found in the Turner Home, the museum of the medical auxiliary. Discusses also the history of the Turner home and changes in the auxiliary from its founding in 1928.

Length of Interview: 1 hour Length of Transcript 26 pages

This is Barbara Dent on Thursday, January the 19th, 1989. I am interviewing Mrs. Cheri Frye Spier, Mrs. Warner Spier at the Turner Home at 1301 Montana in El Paso, Texas.

Q Cheri, can you tell me something about your courtship and marriage to Werner and is this when you came to El Paso?

A Werner and I dated during his junior and senior year in medical school. I -- and were married at the end of his senior year in 1955. I was working -- when we first met, I was working at the V.A. Hospital in Dallas, Texas at the radioisotope unit doing medical research on early blood volume studies. The next year, I was in charge of Dr. Don Seldon's metabolic lab at the University of Texas Medical School and we were married at the end of that year just before Werner left for an internship in Seattle, Washington.

Q Is Werner, or are Werner's parents from here in El Paso or his family from here originally?

A Werner's family has been in El Paso since 1933. Werner was three years old when he came to El Paso. He was born in Berlin, Germany and he lived in El Paso all of his life. He went to -- what's that early grade school?

Q Duddly?

A He went to Duddly Grade School, graduated from El Paso High School and attended Texas Western College.

Q Was Werner's dad also a physician?

A Werner's dad was also a physician. He was the pioneer obstetrician and gynecologist in El Paso.

Q When did you all start getting interested in medical artifacts?

A We really became interested in medical artifacts when, one day, we were in the basement of the Turner Home and found a lot of Dr. Turner's notebooks, diplomas and pieces of equipment that were strewn across the basement floor. Werner has always been interested in antiques and has collected old automobiles and many other "collectible items" which are in our house.

Q Can you tell us something ant the Turner Home? Since then, you've done a lot of research on the Turner Home and the different artifacts you've collected. Can you tell us something about that?

A Oh, we have collected things. Most -- we have had very little funding for this and most of this has been through donations and word-of-mouth from retired physicians and their widows. And, since then, we have collected an early pharmacy from early El Paso. We have one room that is devoted strictly to turn-of-the-century doctor's office. And the other room contains a number of artifacts that really date up to the beginning of World War II. We have not actively perused things since that time. So many changes were made in medicine at that time. However, we do feel, at this time, that we should start collecting other items because they, too, will soon become artifacts for future historians.

Q Can you tell us something about the Turner Home, itself, and when you decided to have a museum here?

A The Turner Home was built by Dr. S.T. Turner in 1910. We think it was designed by Henry Trost, and it was built by the Ponsford brothers. It was built at the same time as the Museum of Art, which is across the street that was -- belonged to an early legislator, Turney, W.T. Turney. I'm not sure about -- Dr. Turner lived here with his wife until 1938, and at that time they had two sons that died in infancy. And after Mrs. Turner died, Dr. Turner did marry again, a Mrs. Lucy Turner, and they lived here until Dr. Turner passed away in 1945. And Mrs. Turner then -- Dr. Turner's will (said) Mrs. Lucy Turner could live here as long as she desired. But since there were no children, the house was given to the County Medical Society. The following year, Mrs. Lucy Turner did sell the home and some of the furnishings to the El Paso County Medical Society. Werner and I started the museum in 1965 and we have been collecting artifacts since that time. And the museum now consists of three rooms, as I described earlier.

Q You, at some time during this period, had the house declared a historical monument, and museum into a Foundation, the Medical Foundation?

A Yes. In 1982, the house was declared a Texas Historical site. And also, in 1982 or 1983, we established the El Paso Medical Heritage Foundation and received a 501C3 status, so that our donations would be tax deductible.

Q Can you tell us some of the favorite -- your favorite artifacts that you've collected in the museum?

A Oh, one of the most interesting things is our early pharmacy, which belonged to -- was of Mr. Schaffer in 1895 in downtown El Paso. And this is complete with three wooden -- a number of old medicines and early herbs that were used by the pioneers and we have prescription pads dating from 1889 up to the present. Oh, up until -- I'm not sure of the exact dates, but this is really a medical and social history of El Paso.

Q Is this pharmacy on permanent loan? Did they give it to you or is it on temporary loan or what?

A It's on permanent loan from a pharmacist, Mr. Ramirez, Mike Ramirez. And he got it from one of the Schaffer boys. And it was in the Schaffer's garage, and Schaffer said he did not want it. Mike Ramirez had it and he gave it to the Medical Society, to the Museum and he and his Boy Scouts put it together in this particular room.

Q Are the perfume bottles also from the pharmacy?

A The perfume bottles are, I think, from Ramirez.

Q Did he have a pharmacy somewhere or does it --

A He has worked as a pharmacist.

Q The center room of the museum is a turn-of-the-century doctor's office, and you have a lot of real interesting artifacts in there, especially that blood letting machine.

A You're talking about the scarifier. The scarifier is really -- came after leeches. For many early years, when

physicians did -- in the days before antibiotics and things of that sort, when physicians had to depend a lot on tender loving care and hands-on medicine, they didn't really know what to do. And they seemed to think that something was wrong with the blood and, frequently, they performed blood-letting. This went from leeches up to the -- the next thing which was a scarifier. And the scarifier is a little square item which is about four inches square that has multiple blades. This goes from eight blades to sixteen blades. And there's a little trigger that will determine the depth of the cut. And the physician would put this on a fatty portion of the patient's body and flick a little switch, which would make instant cuts. And then they would apply a heated bell jar over this to withdraw the blood. We only received a bell jar recently because the bell jars were made of glass and are fragile. However, when I visited the Saint Louis Museum two years ago, the curator there had a collection of bell jars, and she traded me an assortment of bell jars for some of our herbs that we have from the border.

Q What about the wooden stethoscope? That carries an interesting story, also.

A Well, the stethoscope, the wooden stethoscopes were used in the early days when the early Victorians -- when the doctors did want to listen to the heart and lungs, and the young ladies did not really want the doctor to put his ear on their chest. So, they found by rolling up a piece of paper, that this would amplify the tones. And then someone made a wooden stethoscope

and this was used, oh, up through the early 1900s. And we have two examples in there. One even belonged to my father-in-law, he brought over from Germany.

Q And about what about the feeding cups? Those two are --

A The feeding cups are a particular interest of mine. I have a collection of those. Also some called them -- they're usually called pap dishes, and they're used -- sometimes they also called them sick dishes. And this is when people were lying down or in bed. It has a little spout similar to what the present-day mustache cup looks like. And the people could drink or take their medicines or their broth in them. In the early days, they also put a nipple on this and they could give infants their cereal called pap. Hence, I think, this is the name of the pap dish -- their cereal or their gruel in these dishes.

Q Did this pre-date straws? Is that why --

A Yes. Definitely pre-dated straws.

Q There's also a collection of the stereo-optic anatomy studies in there.

A Yeah. These are a collection from Dr. -- I should have done my homework -- Dr. Ridley, who practiced until he was 84 years old. And this is a very valuable collection from the Edinburgh Laboratories in Scotland, and I don't -- I have not seen a series like this anywhere. We visited the Wilson Museum and we have also been in Edinburgh, and I have not seen a collection similar to this. It is very rare.

Q And, then, the extra one that -- that partial collection at

Texas Tech --

A And Texas Tech then gave us an added collection to this group.

Q What about the examining table? I mean, that's almost a throwback to modern times, now. It's --

A Well, believe it or not, there has been a recent discovery. When people -- no. Let me tell you about the examining table. The examining -- many people think this is a dentist's chair because it is an old examining chair that has the back lie down and the feet pop up. And the doctor -- the patient could sit in the chair and the doctor could take the history and discuss the ailments with the patients. And then he would just move a couple of levers and the patient would be lying down. And this didn't take up nearly as much space in the office. Recently, my husband received a brochure in the mail telling about this brand-new invention that was just the greatest thing for a doctor's office, and it is an exact replica of this, but it is covered in plastic, but does exactly the same thing.

Q You have --

A And, this examining table is probably from about 1900.

Q You have some doctor's house call kits in there that have a very interesting compartment at the bottom.

A Yes. When the doctors went out on their horse and buggy or their horses to deliver babies in the Sacramento Mountains -- this particular case was from Dr. Gaddis, W.R. Gaddis's father, who delivered babies in the Sacramento Mountains in the 1900s,

early 1900s. And they carried all of their upper instruments in the top, their stethoscope and medicine in the bottom. They had all of their various instruments and forceps they might need for this particular case. Frequently, these were usually sterilized from the doctor's office and taken to the home for the delivery. We also think that frequently, when the husband got in the way of the physician during the delivery, he would send the father out to the kitchen to start boiling water just to get the father out of the way. So, you frequently hear the expression of boiling water. But I think that was more to get the family occupied while the doctor could go ahead and take care of his delivery.

Q There's a little statue in the doctor's office of a horse and buggy. I think it came from Dr. Gady, also.

A No. I can't remember that. I should remember because --

Q This was in his office?

A This was in his office. This was from an early physician's office. I cannot remember the name at the moment.

Q Now, your father-in-law had some interesting stories to tell, also, about delivery. Some crossing the railroad tracks in time to get to a delivery on the other side of the tracks in south El Paso, didn't he?

A Yes. In early days, when he first came here, he came here in 1933. He really was a product of Hitler's Nazi Germany. He had served in the German Army during World War I, and worked as a physician in the German Army. And then he came back and completed medical training, and he studied, first in surgery, and

then he did an OB/GYN residency. And he came here, and he did join Dr. Rawlins and the practice. And joined him in his office, and, at that time, the railroad track was not underground, as it is today. And frequently it was -- he would be on one side of the tracks where he'd been out to dinner or something of that sort, and then would have a call to go to the hospital immediately. Frequently, this would be a 10 or 15 or more minute wait downtown while the trains moved back and forth before they progressed.

Q Did he do most of his deliveries at home or in the Masonic Hospital, or at Hotel Dieu, or where?

A At first, when he first came to El Paso, he did a number in the home and many in south El Paso were in the home because the people could not afford hospital care. Later, he did a number in Masonic Hospital. And in later years, he did most of his work in Hotel Dieu. He did Saint Joseph's Maternity Hospital.

Q Down in south El Paso?

A That was in conjunction with Hotel Dieu. And he was later chief of staff of Hotel Dieu, and also president of the El Paso County Medical Society.

Q Now, Masonic Hospital, that was at Five Points or Piedras? Isn't that there where the old Sears Building which is now the police station --

A That's right. We have all the early delivery room and hospital records from the Masonic Hospital, and these are dating from about 1913 up through the late 1920s. And this is of much

interest to a lot of people who tour the museum because many can actually see where they were born. This also is a good insight into early medicine diagnosis, because we have pellagra, we have gun fights and we have a number of diseases that have been outlawed at that particular -- in our later years, that were permanent at that time.

Q Now, the other room of the museum, this one where all the artifacts are, where there is that beautiful beveled-glass instrument cabinet. Can you tell us some of the things that are in this room?

A This instrument cabinet is really gorgeous. This is -- belonged to Dr. Leo Vileral's father, who was a surgeon in Juarez, and this thing must weigh a ton.

Q It has an interesting story on how we got it upstairs, too.

A An interesting story there, because this was given to us and we had to move it that day, if we were to move it. And we called Ramon's Storage. And they said the man who was handling Dr. Bill Vileral's affairs said that Ramon's had moved it before, and they did it with no trouble. And we told Ramon's and we -- and they Romon's went out to pick it up, and the doors were locked, and they had lost the key. So we could not open the doors to take the shelves out. And so, I appealed to the macho (laughter) Mexican men who were doing the moving. And I kept assuring them that they, indeed, could move this cabinet into the Turner Home. We do not have an elevator, and we just had an incline. And we finally got into the back stairs haul with much,

much sweating and yelling and so forth. I did call a locksmith, who came out and made keys so we could open it. Then, we found out that the quarter inch shelves were really quarter inch marble, which weighed a ton. And, at a later date, we took the shelves out, and we also took the steel and several glass doors off. And we had about eight men that tried to move it up the stairs into the museum. Needless to say, it will never be moved again.

Q There's a machine in there. You call it a quack machine. Can you say something about that one?

A Oh, there are a number of those. This also dates back to the early 1900s, when people believed that you could cure all sorts of things or if -- with x-ray or electricity. And they would -- these little devices would shoot out electrical sparks and they would put them on various parts of the body, whether it was kidneys or the heart or the lungs or anything. And the people who used these -- and also would tell the people that these could be used for high blood pressure, for anything that ails you, from gout and so forth. You would get an electrical shock from it, which was probably the only thing that would really help. The quack doctor, like those that sold medicine oil and snake oil, would collect their fee, and, perhaps, it helped a little bit. Maybe psychologically it helped.

Q We also have the first x-ray, too, from Hotel Dieu Hospital in there, don't we?

A Oh, yes. We have a collection of the early cathode ray

tubes from Hotel Dieu. These are also very valuable and they probably date back to when Hotel Dieu was first built in 1892.

Q And, now Hotel Dieu is no longer. It seems --

A It's really tragic. Hotel Dieu was the first hospital in El Paso. It was built by the Daughters of Charity. Before that time, El Paso had an early pest house, but they really -- people -- ladies of the church would try to take care of the -- try to help the families that were ill or things of that sort. But the Daughters of Charity did come down and, first, they were in a small house. And within six months, they were so busy that they moved to another house. And they built this hospital in 1892. Incidentally, they also had the first graduate nurses in the state of Texas.

Q Humm.

A And also, the first operation in El Paso, an apendectomy -- a -- Dr. Gallagher -- was performed in Hotel Dieu. It really makes me sad to see Hotel Dieu leave the Sisters. The Daughters of Charity did a lot for the community and they took care of a lot of -- they were our oldest hospital.

Q It was a lot of fun working with the Sisters in having the habbit of the Sisters of Charity, when they had the old habbit?

A Yeah. We still have one of those in the museum that Barbara Dent collects for us. And I think everyone misses seeing the old flying bonnets that they used to wear.

Q There are many other artifacts that I know you have some stories about, but there's one story that you tell me about

cleaning out the basement of the Turner Home, the downstairs room where you discovered the door to the outside, and the other room and basement.

Q Oh, golly. Well, there really were people over the years who had just thrown things about. There were all of these various instruments. There were a lot of books there. No one had really -- all the records from Masonic and for many years all of the doctors -- when a doctor retired, he would bring all of his records to the Turner Home. And we really -- there was just an accumulation of junk. There was an accumulation of debris. A lot of it was very valuable and a lot of it was, was the things that had just accumulated over a period of years, that had never been sorted. We did go through it periodically, check everything. And some things we put upstairs. Some of the things -- we have stopped letting doctors bring their records here, because we do not have that much storage space. We did find some rooms -- a room to the outdoors. There was a bathroom, and, since this is the basement, everything had to be pumped out, and this bathroom really did need to be sealed off.

Q There, when you were also working in the basement, you found the original sinks. When did, and who remodeled the kitchen after the Medical Society took over?

A I don't think the kitchen has been remodeled. It's exactly -- it has white tile and everything.

Q I mean, as far as the sinks and the stoves go?

A I'm not sure about that. The Auxiliary, I think, in early -

- the County Medical Society got the building in 1946. And I think in the early 1960s a group did redo the floors downstairs and redid the woodwork downstairs and did some painting.

Q Is that when they did the auditorium up here?

A I'm not sure. I do not know when they did this. This probably was done in, oh, from 1946 up to 1950. I do know that they also -- the second group of Turners did take all of the furniture. They did sell a little bit to the Auxiliary or the doctors' families. I understand there was a Tiffany lamp over the dining room table, and that was sold, or they did not keep it because it was difficult to decorate around. We do have the original dining room furniture that belonged to the Turners here. We also have some dishes that originally belonged to the Turners, and we have some early mission-style furniture that belonged to the Turners. Two pieces of furniture that have not been acknowledged over the years were not the Turners. They were given to us by another physician, Dr. and Mrs. Jordan. And those are the beautiful old chairs that you see with the -- the empire-style chairs.

Q Oh, yeah. What about Mrs. Turner's dress that you have here on display in the auditorium?

A This dress -- we do have some of Mrs. Turner's early dresses and part of those were in the Museum of Art, and they were loaned to us when we started the Museum. And we do have a picture of Mrs. Turner in this one particular lace dress that was taken in New York. Mrs. Turner went to New York to buy most of her

furniture. And she was also known for her hats. We have a collection of hats here. We have the early family Bible. We have a fan that belonged to Mrs. Turner, and a feather fan that belonged to Mrs. Turner, and we have a family Bible of the family, and this is all in a case in the auditorium.

Q Cheri, there's a large machine in the hall. It looks like the old type of iron lung. Can you tell us something about that?

A Yes. This iron lung was being discarded by Hotel Dieu, and, and you know, there was a great polio epidemic -- what the early --

(end of side one)

A Really was the great scourge of the 1900s and many, many -- before the invention of the Sault vaccine, many people were really doomed to spend their lives in an iron lung or something of this sort. Now, we do have the polio vaccine, and polio has been practically eliminated from the world. However we find now, there is some resistance to the people taking the vaccine because they don't think it's necessary, and they're not aware of what a devastating disease this is. If if this machine were not so heavy, we should take it to every health fair, so today's people could see what a crippling effect this would have on their family members if they did not take their little vaccine, also youngsters.

Q You remember a few years ago, we were cleaning out one of our closets here in the Home, and discovered a case of sugar

cubes that was probably left over from the distribution of the polio vaccine at one time, that the Auxiliary carried on?

A That's right. We really did carry on a mass immunization program. The County Medical Society was in charge of that, and they really did see that they got to all of the people in the city. It was really extremely successful and we finally threw those cubes away 40 or 50 years later. (Laughter).

Q There's some other artifacts and posters here. Would you like to tell us about that?

A I think one of the most interesting posters we have is a grand -- a poster dated Saturday evening, 1845, and they are going to have a grand exhibition of laughing gas. And the entertainment is due to begin at 7:00. The tickets are twelve-and-a-half cents. And they say the 30 gallons of gas will be prepared and administered to all in the audience who desire to inhale it. Men will be invited from the audience to protect those under the influence of the gas from injuring themselves or others. This course is adopted that no apprehension or danger to man entertained. Probably, no one will attempt to fight. Another interesting thing is the gas will be administered to gentlemen of the first respectability. The object is to make a entertainment in every respect a genteel affair.

Q Where was this exhibition going to take place?

A Oh, it doesn't have a date on it, Barbara.

Q Or what town?

A It doesn't even have a town. It just says for sale at the

principle book stores and at the door, and I'm not sure.

Q Do you --

A I think this was probably in Alabama. It was somewhere in the South, but I'm not sure.

Q Do you remember where you got the poster?

A This was found in a closet. We have no earthly idea.

Q Oh. Downstairs?

A Downstairs. We have no eitherly idea. It's just one of those things that appears, and some, we have found in closets. And then some, people donate things and really do not tell us. We just walk up and find something like --

Q Yeah. Like this. There are many pictures in the hall, in the upstairs hall, in the Turner Home. Can you describe some of them?

A Well, some of them -- one is a picture that was taken at the old Saint Joseph's Hospital, and this is a copy from the Altmon Collection from the El Paso Public Library. And much of El Paso's early medical history is related to the days of typhoid.

Q Tuberculosis.

A No. Tuberculosis. Excuse me. Tuberculosis, when the only cure was rest and sunshine. And people came here, and they had them out on open porches where they would lie and rest in the sun. And this treatment lasted -- would extend for several months or, also for years. And so, one of the pictures we have is from one of the porches at Saint Joseph Hospital. We also

have a picture of Dr. Arab Bush administering a vaccination in Mexico. We have a picture of an early horse and buggy ambulance in front of Providence Hospital.

Q Is this ambulance in front of that 1903 hospital?

A Yes. It is and -- no. I think that is a later hospital. I'm not sure.

Q That almost looks like a house.

A Yeah. That -- and as a matter of fact, if you look in the very background of this picture of Providence Hospital in 1903, you'll see the Dieter House, which is where the Daughters of Charity had the first hospital for Hotel and, incidentally, Hotel Dieu means, "house of God," and the early Hotel Dieu Hospital was patterned after the Hotel Dieu Hospital in Paris. We were fortunate enough to see the Hotel Dieu Hospital in Paris a number of years ago, and it is still standing, and looks very similar to the early Hotel Dieu Hospital, the picture that we have here. We have a picture of the masonic Hospital. We have a picture in 1927 of Southwestern Hospital and, incidentally, Southwestern Hospital is the first, or perhaps the only hospital that has received a Texas Historical Medallion, because it is the first hospital that was built primarily for tuberculosis treatment, and is still operating as a hospital. We also have a picture of the early Saint Joseph Hospital and the Albert Baldwin Sanatorium.

Q How many hospitals in the 1920s were here in El Paso, do you know?

A I have no idea. We also have, in one of the rooms, we have

an early eye examining case. And now, you can sit down when you go to your ophthalmologist, you sit down in a little chair, and he flecked various letters and numbers on the screen, and you tell him which case, which lens is really better. In the old days, they sat down in the chair and the doctor places actual lenses in the pair of glasses, and you decided which were better. We also have a letter on file from Dr. Gallagher, in the 1890s, describing one of these cases. And he wrote to his wife, and he said, "If I could only learn how to use this case, I feel, perhaps, I could make a little extra money." It must have been very time-consuming for those early practitioners, who really had not had any particular training in the use of eyes and the specialty items.

Q You have another letter which Dr. Turner wrote to an insurance company, don't you?

A Barbara, this is a very interesting letter that was written. As you know, Dr. Turner came to El Paso as a contract physician for the Southern Pacific Railroad and, evidently, they had questioned his excessive bill, and they were questioning the charges for a Dr. A. B. Puttman, who was in Hotel Dieu. They questioned his assistant, and also the fact that he had to have an anesthesiologist. And this is what Dr. Turner wrote, "I have attached a note to the hospital bill stating that I put the patient in the cheapest room I could find because I did not think it safe to put a patient with a crushed skull in a public ward. And I felt this was necessary for the patient to have a room, but

if you're not willing to pay for it, the family will." As for help, he could not get Dr. Worlsey, who was an employee of the company, and he had never been advised of the fact. And also, he said, "He could not have helped me in this instance if he were an employee. I asked Dr. Justice to assist in what you call a 'little operation,' though surgeons generally consider opening the skull a capitol operation. It was necessary to have someone else give the anesthesia, and five dollars is the cost, a fair price for such work." You might tell your husband, Tom, about this. "My objective was to save the patient's life, which I did, with the least possible expense to the company, and to have lessened the expense in any way would have deminished the patient's chances of recovery. If, to save life, limb, and sufferring is not the fist consideration, of course, as cheaply as possible, then I do not understand. I'm sending you my account itemized, as per your request." And I might add that a house call was one dollar at that stage, and they charged five dollars for anesthesia, and I'm not sure what he charged for opening the skull. Another thing that we have of Dr. Turner's that is very interesting is that after he graduated from medical school, he had an early practice in east Texas. And we have an early practice book of his from the 1880s, listing his patients, their ailments, and what he charged. Many of these things were medications for fifty cents, some were a dollar, and many were house calls. And the end he also had an account book of how they paid him. Some was in so many bushels of corn. Some was a cord

of wood. Some was hauling hay and various sundry, different means of payment. Some he just marked off as a, "so-and-so was a deadbeat," and he could not collect. Evidently, it was very hard for him to make a living at that particular time, when a nickel truly was a nickel and a dime was a dime. And he must have joined the Southern Pacific Railroad as a contract physician, who brought him to El Paso.

Q And then he received a salary?

A He received a salary.

Q Did he make his own medication? Is that the capsule and pill makers in the pharmacy? Is that what they were used for?

A I'm not sure exactly what the pharmacological history of El Paso is. We do have a couple of pill boxes that the early practitioners used on their rounds when they went out to, into the country, either on horse back or in their horse and buggy to visit the patient. They did take their own medications also. Then they have these little boxes that they use which is similar to a doctor's bag that contained vials of all the different medications. And they would mix those up and they had capsules and they'd mix them up and leave them with the patients.

Q I grew up in New Orleans, and we lived next door to Dr. Tischner, who was the son of Dr. Tischner, who patented Dr. Tischner's antiseptic, and Dr. Tischner was a young doctor who always made his own medication. He would have yellow pills, blue pills, brown pills, and you could always tell, you know, what color pills, what the patient had when he came out with

those color pills.

A We also have, Barbara -- have one of the most interesting things we have is really defining early medical history, is a collection of books from the County Clerk's office, which lists all the early physicians and the early entries are from the 1860s. And, this lists some homeopathic physicians. Some physicians also come dentists and I think there's even a veterinarian or two. This is a fabulous collection that was given to us by the County clerk's office about four or five years ago under your presidency, and that was a real coupe.

Q I think that is just great. And that was before the medical malpractice act was even passed. They had the doctors register. They had the doctors register so they could collect a \$35 fee from them.

A Oh. That is the reason.

Q Yeah.

A Another thing I'd like to say. We do have a collection. We have an interesting Civil War instrument case in our turn-of-the-century's doctor's office that was used during the Civil War, and, of course, most of the things that they could do at that time was amputations and, due to a lack of antiseptics, there were a lot of people who died. They said more people died after they were injured than were actually ill, actually killed during battle. And we do have this Civil War instrument case, which is very interesting.

Q Do you know where that came from?

A The Civil War instrument case was given to the Museum of Art and, when we set up the museum, the Museum of Art did loan us a number of artifacts that they had received over a period of time. And this was used by Dr. Staten, who was in the forest brigade of the Civil War. We also have a collection of antique forceps in the same room that is most interesting. And I might add just a little bit more about the house. As we said earlier, the house was built in 1910. It does include all of the original light fixtures, including Sine Stuben fixtures in the hallways, both upstairs and downstairs. And we have, also have, an early Tiffany-type lamp that belonged to the Turners.

Q That's the one in the front closet?

A Uh-huh.

Q Well Cheri, do you have anything else about the Museum that you'd like to tell us?

A I -- it has been a fascinating -- it has been most interesting to work this through all the years. And I sometimes feel like I'm a museum relic, myself. There is much that needs to be done, but there is -- I do feel it's very important for these things to be saved in one spot for future historians. This does tell us a lot about early El Paso medicine. there's a lot more to be learned and there is much more to do than I'll ever be able to do in many lifetime.

Q You were president of the Medical Auxiliary a number of years ago. Can you tell us something about the Auxiliary, itself during your term and how it has progressed since you've been in

El Paso?

A The Auxiliary -- I was president of the Auxiliary in 1972, and it had always been an important part of the medical community. I think perhaps more so in the early years. It was formed in El Paso in 1928, and we do contribute to many, many things in the community in medical health and particularly in medical education. I think that some of our new projects molded around the changing world of medicine. We have more women that are working mothers and I think that we have done a lot in health education in the community.

Q Your husband, Werner, was a pilot and, a few years ago, you decided to take pilot training. Can you tell us something about your association with the other female pilots in town and across the country?

A Barbara, my pilot training is not a few years ago. My pilot training dates back to 1957, when I "soloed." (laughter) My husband learned to fly in high school. He always wanted to fly. He always liked anything with wheels. But, at the time that the Mueller brothers, who owned Southwest Air Rangers were having many, many babies, his father was delivering most of these babies. And they probably had more air plain debits than they had doctor's debits. So Dr. Eric Spier worked a payment in kind with the Mueller brothers so that Werner could learn to fly. When he did his military cometment in in the 1950s, mid-1950s. Shortly after we were married, he wanted to finish his flying license and, at that time, we were at Park's Air Force Base, and

the base Arrow club had two Piper cubs that was only about five blocks from our house. And so Werner started flying the Piper cubs. And I taught I would take a few lessons to learn how to land the plain. I might add, before that, I had worked during the war for those U.S. Weather Bureau, so I did have a good wheather history. So, I started flying while I was pregnant with our daughter, Sharon, and I -- in Livermore, California. And I completed everything on my license except a hundred-mile cross country. And the fogs in the San Jocquin Valley and Sharon's impending arrival prevented me from getting my license. And so, I didn't get my license until 1967. And since that time Werner and I have continued to fly, first renting air planes. And we have owned our little Cherokee Piper Arrow 2895 Tango since 1973.

Q And you belong to the Female Pilot's Association?

A Yes, yes. I have belonged and have been active in them. And we go to a lot of flying meetings. And we have flown from the Bahamas, to Canada, to Baha, to the East Coast. And we have taken many family trips in it, and have a lot of fun with it. It's a great relaxation for Werner.

Q Your other hobby is photography and you've done many of the photographs here in the Turner Home. And also, you just completed your husband's family history, copying the photographs for that. Can you -- you were the guest artist for the Kermizar this year. Can you tell us something about that exhibit?

A The keynote exhibit for Kermazar this year was sculpture, and a local family has a beautiful collection of African

artifacts, and also, so beautiful whale pictures. Werner and I were fortunate to be able to visit a friend of ours, who's a doctor in the State Department in Kenya in 1976. So I had a great collection of Massi, pictures, photographs of the Massi, the native people Africa. So, I did the background photography for that. And then, after we saw the whale exhibit, I did do the -- we had made a trip to Alaska in 1986. So I provided the background, Alaska background photographs for the whale sculpture.

Q You're talking about your trip to Kenya. You brought back a number of souvenirs from there. Were these some of the souvenirs that were stolen when your house was broken into that time?

A No. Really, we have some -- we do collect a number of artifacts. Mostly they collect --

Q Collect each other (laughter)?

A They stole -- I guess the most valuable artifact they stole was my father's breast microscope from Germany and a mother and daughter -- a nursing mother pot from Mexico, that is irreplaceable.

Q Well, I guess we've taken up a lot of your time today. I certainly appreciate your giving us this interview.

This concludes the interview of Mrs. Cheri Spier.

Thank you.