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Virginia Deter

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Virginia Deter
INTERVIEWER: Barbara Dent
PROJECT: El Paso Medical Community
DATE OF INTERVIEW: June 10, 1988
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BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Born in Henrietta, Oklahoma, on December 12, 1912. Educated in Texas schools and moved to El Paso in 1946. Wife of Dr. Russell Deter, El Paso physician.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Discusses family background and husband's medical education; husband's duty stations during WWII; medical auxiliary from 1943 to present; differences in medical auxiliary from the 1940s to today; work on state and national levels; problems of the organization today; polio epidemics; daughter as Sun Queen and effect on her and her husband; the Turner Home.

Length of Interview: 1 hour Length of Transcript 20 pages

INTERVIEW WITH: Virginia Deter (Mrs. Russell)

DATE: June 10, 1988

PLACE: El Paso, Texas

INTERVIEWER: Barbara Dent

BD: Virginia, would you be kind enough to tell us how old you are? When you were born and where you were born?

D: I was born in Oklahoma, December the 17th, 1912; Henrietta, Oklahoma.

I was educated in TEXAS from high school and college level. The Army took us all over the United States and I came to El Paso in 1942

BD: What was your maiden name?

D: Peden, P-E-D-E-N.

BD: And how did you meet your husband, Russell?

D: Russell's parents were missionaries, Southern missionaries, to Brazil and, of course, that's a very fine Baptist stronghold, down there. And Dr. Deter and his wife and their six children lived down there for.. the parents were there 40 years. The children did not come back to the States for years to stay 'til they were college age. ^R So the depression was on, that was 1928, and I was getting.. we came out to Abilene because we couldn't afford to send two daughters to board at the University. So my family moved out to Simmons.. it was Hardin Simmons University at that time. And we stayed there for two and a half years and lived at home and went to school.

So Russell's sister, Doris, was a fine musician. She sang beautifully and she played the violin beautifully and I was also a music major. I sang beautifully and played the violin very well.. And my sister was a fine pianist. So the three of us got together and organized The Brazilian String Trio. And all during the time at college, we represented Simmons University. We played for teas and for luncheons. We were early performers on the radio. And it was all very exciting.

And Russell, being Doris's younger brother, loaned me his shirt

Deter

D: before he ever saw me. (laughter) Of course, I was going in and out of the house with Doris. So he just decided that he really didn't mind having to have three of us all the time. So he started out waiting 'til after rehearsals to date. If we ever went to the drug store, we got three of everything. So we started out very avant-garde, I would say.

He was a freshman and so was I.

BD: And then did you get married when you were still in graduate school?

D: Yes. Because I didn't graduate from the University of Texas until we had been married about eleven years.

BD: Well, how about him? He was in medical school by that time.

D: No. He had to get three years college and then at two years, he took at the University of Arizona because his older brother was out there and then he had to go one year at Baylor University so they would automatically admit him to Baylor Medical School. And he was enrolled in 1934.

We didn't get married 'til 1933. So I was teaching; he was fiddling around trying to get all of that college behind him and I was teaching. I was teaching music, first at Perrytown, Texas way out in the panhandle. And then, when the depression came, I taught only violin and I taught full time with my time divided between Colorado City, Texas and Big Spring, Texas.

BD: How did you get between the two places and where did you live?

D: By bus. I lived in a doctor's home, never dreaming that I ever really would be a doctor's wife. In Colorado City, I was teaching with a very fine piano teacher that was an avant-garde pupil and one that helped establish the Piano Guild that your children, if they took piano, still do. That is at the end of the year you perform..your memorized pieces and you are judged by yourself against perfection. My sister, who is a pianist..they were all involved in that. And so we started there at college level when some very interesting things were developing all over the country.

BD: How was life, being a teacher during the depression? Did you make very much money?

D: Heavens no!

BD: You said you lived in a doctor's house. Were you governess or or... teacher to the doctor's children or ?

D: Yes. Usually that was the way. The parent would be very anxious for their child to have music so sometimes we would trade off different things. And Dr. Ratliff had a little grandson. And so..the teachers at that time were only gettin \$75.00 a month...to teach in the schools.

During that time, I studied typing at night school because I could not get any kind of an office job or do any kind of work unless I knew how to type. So I learned very proficiently there. And ~~that~~ took care of us all during the years that Russell was studying and I was spelling for him (laughter) and typing up....We always had a fun time; it really was just we didn't feel deprived because we didn't have money.

BD: No one else did.

D: No one else did. You had to learn to keep a civil tongue because if you were smart alec or non cooperative, they just fired you right then and there was no way to get a job.

BD: Where did you work while he was in school? In medical school?

ED: I worked for the hospital most of the time and then, I was not a nurse of any kind, (long haired musicians do not prepare you too well for hospital work) but I worked in the diet kitchen and helped order the supplies and see to it they all got on the trays and that sort of thing.

And I worked for a very difficult man for extra money by the name of DR. Duns — . And one reason that he wanted to help us was because his father was a Southern Baptist missionary in Brazil and so he was 15 or 20 years older than we were. Oh, but the worst nit-picker! I was paid 25 cents a page to cut stencils for the 8th Service Command and Edgar was like this:

I'd go in and I'd hand it to him and he always found one mistake.

DeterD:

D: And he talked with a little ^{bit of an} accent and he said,, " Vell, Virginia, I always find a mistake even if I can only change an a to a d." And so I had to learn to be ery precise in my typing.

BD: Those were ^{gelatin type} stencils.

D: Right. And then with the military you have so many numbers. I'm one girl that can do all of the numbers without mistakes and without looking at my fingers. (laughter)

Then another job I had there was transcribing all of the charts from Baylor University gonorrhea and syphilis clinic to the centralized place. This was all brand new, which was over at Parkland City-County. And that was just thousands of charts that had to be transcribed and put over there. Once again, I was working with numbers.

Then another job I did while I was there was to catalog all of the diseases that went through Baylor hospital with the numbers, international nmbers, so so it's like ^{if it's 10 it's} say, gastritis, or if it's 5 it's-in an international code. Verything that I did was very interesting. I worked on the outside ob book. And that was when the Baylor medical students their ob in the homes. And it was working over the telephone , getting directions so that we could send the students out. If there was a professor or a student that was either well liked or hated, then when the well baby clinic would start coming in , why you'd have, "send [?] Jones" (laughter)

So by that time, Russell did male nursing.

BD: While he was in school.

D: Yes. But the last year he just could not do that at all. During that time, my father had died so my mother came to live with me; with us. So she was able to stay home with our two children. I went to work as a staff secretary for the Visiting Nurse Association in Dallas. And I was working for them when they came up with this marvelous name "Planned Parenthood". I knew Margaret Sanger in later years through Betty Mary Getting here in town,

D: in El Paso, who was a big planned parenthoodsupporter. And they thought that was pussy-footing around.. They felt like they just ought to call it a birth control clinic.

D: Did Russell go from medical school to a military internship or did he go...?

D: No, he went to a regular medical internship right there at Parkland and then at the end of that time, end of his first year of intership, the war was declared as of December the 7th. The doctors that were ahead of us said that he absolutely could not be left alone to do all of the training tht he wanted to do so he was called in six months ahead of all his buddies instead of going half through his second year of internship, his residency being pulled, so then all during the war, we had that 6 months edge on 'em. We'd get our promotions six months before.

BD: And where were you stationed during the war?

D: Always in the States. We were at Fort Bliss, Camp Swift. We were 3½ years there, ^{he was never out here, his brother was}

BD: Where is that?

D: Out of Austin, BAstrop. And we were there with a half a dozen doctors and two dentists. John D. Kelly and Truitt Maddox were the dentists there that were all in our car pool.

And then he was assigned as commanding officer for the REpublic which was a troop ship made in to a hospital ship. And then we were six months in Charleston, South Carolina. And then he was six months aboard ship but they got dry-docked so we didn't have to go to war. Of course, they wouldn't let us go. So then I drove across country and met him in California, when he came through.

BD: That was where he was in dry dock?

D: No. Panama. The best part of it was he had 700 nurses on his ship that were being assigned to the Pacific theater. And so when he got off the ship, having spent all that time in dry dock with these nurses

Deter

D:ashore, he got off the ship and said he never wanted to see another one
(laughter)

BD:Well, then did you live in Panama for six months while his ship was in dry dock?

D: Oh no.It was while they were there in dry-dock, VJ was declared. So they didn't have to go and man all those outposts in the Pacific. So we had, when I say our whole time was spent in the States, what I meant was the family because he was gone that time.

BD:Now after VJ day was declared, where was he stationed then?

D:Well, we came back here because it was time for him to be discharged.

BD: And then what did he do in graduate school? his residency?

D:He did...the residency that he had^{was}for 3½ or 4 years at Camp Swift.

It was in the hospital and his commanding officer all that time was Dr. Higginbotham that was one of the finest general surgeons in the United States,from New York City. So he didn't have, like you would say a surgical residency but that was all they did. So under this very fine surgeon and they were our friends 'til he died not too long ago.

BD:What made you choose El Paso?

D: Well, first of all, we loved El Paso because his brother was a doctor who was stationed out at Ft. Bliss and his wife, Wanda , that you knew because she came here and lived all those years after the war. We had been out here to visit. And then we were going back to Dallas. But by that time,the time he was through, the doctors he was so interested in, were either or retiring or were gone.

And his best medical friends were from El Paso: Dr.Newt Walker,,DR. Wycliffe Curtis,, Dr. J.B. Robbins, who died a long time ago;his son's here,and two or three others. And then Russell had some personal friends here,Dr. Von Breeson, Mary , they were here. And so when it came time to make the decision why all of these that were our best friends

Deter

D: all through the service all said, "Well, if you're not going back to Dallas why don't you come and look El Paso over? " So we did and when he visited with Dr. Lee Wilcox he found out that his wife Roberta was a Pi Phi just like P^{ty} Renick was a Pi Phi and Russell had been a hasher at the Pi Phi house. So we really had a nice nucleus of friends.

BD: Then you moved here and you still had just the two children.

D: Yes.

BD: And where did you live then?

D: WE lived on Cumberland Street. in the 4200 block. And then Russell didn't even know he was looking for a house. He came home one day and I said, "Well, I found a house that we can spend the rest of our life in. Would you like to go see it?" He sure would so I brought him over here and I said, "RADford is the dividing line for Colwell school and we are on the ^{correct} side so we can go to Coldwell school and Austin high school"

I showed him what it was and it was a friend, of the that was a real estate agent that knew what I was looking for that told me this house was for sale and it hadn't even been put on the market. We didn't even hesitate. Russell just, he said ¹ you're sure this is what you want, we'll make the change."

BD: How old ^{was} ~~is~~ the house ^{then} ~~now~~?

D: Twenty-five years old.

BD: And this was around 1945, 46?

D: No, we came in '46. We moved here in '49. We moved here in August of '49 and Phyllis was born in November of '49. so PHyllis ^{and Dwight} were born in this house and it's always been one house. The other two got moved from pillar to post.

BD: What hospitals were here in town when you came to town?

D: Well, there was Hotel Dieu,

BD: In its present location?

Deter

D: Yes, it's always been in its present location.

Providence was over on one of those old streets in Sunset Heights. And we'd been here quite a while when they made the big move to build this new Community hospital, Providence. And Southwestern was here because Southwestern was originally a tuberculosis sanatorium and was run by the Holman family. And then Dr. Long and Emma were here and they had the sanatorium that was Kentucky, still in this part of town. It was —

BD: Did Russell go in with anyone when he came here or was he — ?

D: With Dr. Wilcox. And they remained partners until Dr. Wilcox died.

Just on a handshake. It lasted longer than most of 'em.

BD: When your children started school, and they went to Coldwell and then they went to Austin. When did you become involved in the Medical Auxiliary?

D: From the very first day I was here.

BD: Have you been involved in the wives group in the military?

D: I was..we were always moving around. See, that was when they were getting new troops in. Of course, we were always hospital people. But I worked with wives all the time there because I was a lot more accustomed to seeing what was a necessity and what was a frill and just sticking with the necessities and many of them came into the service just really unprepared for the different creative type of thing you had to do in order to survive.

BD: Did you have to, when your husband reported to a new base, did you have put on your white gloves and your hat and your calling card and go to the commanding officer's office and leave your card?

D: We didn't leave cards at that time, because it was expanding too rapidly. But we always made a formal call. And we had..the men in the hospital, it's a smaller group and you have a lot more contact with your commanding officer. When in Beaumont, just like out here, although this is large for an army hospital it is still a small specialized group that see each other, do things together, and they don't have very much to do with the line officers.

DEter

D: Of course, I was always interested in music so when we moved to a new town, the first thing I did was to go and check the music opportunities and fortunately, I sang well enough and played ^{well} enough that they always liked me to come.

D: When you became involved with the Medical Auxiliary in El Paso is a part the time the Medilarks started? You were one of the founders of the Medilarks.

D: Well, I was one of the supporters but I never did sing with the group. That didn't start really as early as some of the others. When I came here and became a member in the spring of '46, you had two years where your husband was a provisional so '46 and '47, those two years I just sat on the sidelines and clapped my hands. But then in '48, I was a regular active member and really from that time on, I more or less stayed active in the areas I was most interested in.

D: What all did the Auxiliary do in those days? How does differ now?

D: Well, in those days you thought about the amount of money that you, yourself could raise in your own locality; how you could raise it. So you had, in other words you didn't have any of your grants or your petitions or anything like that or have business say "I will give you \$5,000 to work on seat belts" for instance. Or work on seat belts for children.

You see that came along not more than 15 years ago. And so when we started out, we were limited to nurse recruit; not health man power, but nurse recruit. And then you were limited to, you didn't give any like we had a health careers all these years, you didn't do anything on a big scale like that. It was more individual and if the school or the town was receptive,, you got to do a lot and if it wasn't, why you had to do what you could.

BD: What sort of projects did they have in the 50s?

DEter

D: I'll tell you what, I've got it right here.

In 1946, Mrs. Turner was installed president of the state convention in Galveston . And that was the first convention that we attended. So during her year, she worked on nurse recruitment, scholarship assistance among high school students, and assisted nursing schools.

When the convention was held in 1947, auxiliaries were given awards for memberships, sale of Hygeia (that's before..that was the national magazine that was called Hygeia) surgical examinations, subscription to the Bulletin. The Bulletin was like our Transactions, legislative programs health talks and films. Public relations programs, journal readers, publicity and journal reports, doctor's day. scholarship, memorial and library fund, exhibits, projects and philanthropy. So basically, those are the same general areas we have now only they are so elaborate that you would never ^{think} that could be developed that much when you were sitting there and listening to all of this and this was so much more than they had done before.

Now Mrs. George Turner really should be our center piece for our El Paso Medical auxiliary because she is the only one that not only was county president, state president but national president.

BD: And you say 1946, when she was state president...

D: That's right. They also started...

End of TApe I, side 1, about 30 minutes

TApe I, side 2

BD: You say you started the leadership program?

When Mrs. Turner was state president, Virginia Thompson was president. And you started your auxiliary training in 1946 and missed your first meeting this year, in 1988.

D: Well, one reason it was very easy to do. First of all, they had the most fascinating people that were working actively in the Medical Auxiliary. They were excellent leaders; they were creative thinkers; they were looking ahead and it was very stimulating to be around them .

Deter

BD: Were there more energy or enthusiasm toward the Auxiliary then than there is now?

DD: Oh my yes. I can not think of less energy be exerted than there has been in the past 10 or 15 years than there has been toward the Auxiliary. Especially in El Paso.

BD: I think that's pretty the norm of all organizations throughout the country.

D: But at that time everybody thought that your first commitment to the Auxiliary ^{was} to promote your husband's business and his welfare and to help create the image of a helper to the community instead of being a money grabber. And it was very disheartening to see the women put everything in the world ahead of Medical Auxiliary active work.

They read half of what was written, nearly all of our Auxiliary members read half of what was written and listened to half of what was said and they came up with the wrong conclusions. And that was as long as they paid their Auxiliary dues, they did not have to participate because said one of them to me, "They said that we were to go out in to the community and work in the community." I felt like Alice in Wonderland, I felt like 'Oh no, no, in the community after you have done what you're supposed to do in Auxiliary,

But they're getting back now to Auxiliary and I'm glad to see it. Maybe I'll live long enough. (laughter)

D: Now the Korean war broke out right after you all went in to practice. Was there any thought of ^{Russell} going back in the service at that time?

D: Yes. I lost the last of my prejudice, if I had any, when a fine Negro doctor who was an officer out at Fort Bliss examined Russell and told him not to worry about being recalled, that he ^{was} disability enough. (laughter)

D: What did the Auxiliary do during the Korean war. Did they roll bandages and..

D: No. That was all for the first World War.

Deter

BD: How did the Auxiliary participate during the polio crises? That was during . . .

D: That was during Mary Emma Von Breeson, Dr. Delton Von Breesen's wife, her year as county president. And that was organized with the Medical Society and the Medical Auxiliary and it was head-quartered right there in the Turner home in the living room. And the people came in and got their polio on the little sugar cube and went out. They didn't have to pay. There was a container if you wanted to pay something but it was not required at all.. And that was very successful.

And that was, I suppose, the biggest combined effort that the Auxiliary and the Medical Society had done up to that time. We were very proud of it.

BD: Then when did you become county president?

D: In '59, '60.

BD: And what were your main projects? at that time? Do you remember?

D: Just more of the same thing.

BD: And then you went on to be a committee chairman on the state level.

D: Yes. I have it all written down. I know that comes as a surprise but I can't remember those things. In the county, in the Auxiliary, are you interested in the dates that I did these things?

BD: No. Just..basic

D: I was a new member in 1946. I was program chairman, I was year book chairman, I was treasurer, social chairman and county president in 1959, 1960. And then in 1967, they made me an honorary member of the county society. And I had it over here ten years, that's the past ten years, as AMEREF as chairman and Auxiliary page editor for the El Paso magazine.

BD: Now you were state president in 1966..

D: '65 and '66 the jobs that I held at state were district council woman then I was treasurer for two years, state treasurer; I was western regional vice president; and I was president-elect in '64, '65 and president in

DEter

D: 1965.'66.

(I'm sorry)
Then I never did quit, poor dears. But from '66 to '71 at that time, the past presidents stayed on the advisory committee five years and then went

six your name was deleted. Then for two years I was Texas Counsellor^{Counsellor?} of the Woman's Auxiliary to the Southern Medical Association. And that was the time that we did an unusual presentation for Southern for Dr. Medford Rouse. WE did a life history of Dr. Owens They didn't fit in any proper categories with research formats so they had to think up new categories so that we could have our first place.

Since then I've been reading the directions very carefully.

Let's see, I was state parliamentarian^{er}, '68, '69; and I was a charter member of the committee for the Physician's Benevolent Fund that is still going strong. And in '70, I was on the ad hoc committee to study publications and in 1980, '81, I was the presidential advisor to Ann Pitchford, Mrs. W.R. Pitchford.

S: Now you were AMA ..chairman of the Health Careers for a couple of years, also.

D: I wasn't the chairman..I always worked on that because that was one of Russell's interests.

BD: Russell and Frank Geary..and there was a dentist, too wasn't there ; a veterinarian^{ian}..They started the Health Careers back in '66.

D: I finally became inactive in that and so all of that stuff I just had to discard. But as long as we are on my jobs are you interested in what I did at national?

BD: Yes.

D: O.K. you're not eligible to serve at national until you have been a county and a state president. So when I got through with my year in 1966, they asked me to serve on the resolution committee. Then, in 1967, I was elected to the national nominating committee and that was a liberal education. But the best part was that I got to call Mrs. R.C.L. Roebertson

D: of Houston and ask her if she would be vice president of the Southern Regional of the United States. And this was a big thrill. Marjorie Robertson had been alone up there I would say ten or twelve years, being the only one from Texas that came. And so when I started going up there, well then there were actually three of us because Hamilton Ford's wife worked up there at national level and Marjorie Robinson. So then there were the three of us for quite a long while.

And after I was on that committee, then I served as chairman of the Southern Regional committee for rural health. Then I was Southern Regional chairman for Health Man Power and the last job I had as the director, I was elected to the Board of Directors, was I was put on the program development committee.

And those years were very inspiring. All kinds of new ideas, AMA, ERS, was created to help on a national scale the medical students that needed financial aid.. So that's one reason why that has always been dear to my heart. Because I was right there and watched it being born.. And all of these different things... the Health Man Power program we broadened it to Health Careers. I mean Health^{Man} Power was also called Health Careers. And it involved every single health-related job. And we had them all listed according to your educational level. We really gave that national exposure.

I wrote Health Man Power, beat the drum, every quarter for three, four years that went out on a national news sheet. Another thing that was developed up there and one reason why I was so interested in it, was to develop this for ^{position} programs. And it was a need and it was brand new. And our son Dwight was a member of that physician's assistant program at Baylor Health Center at Houston. And he was graduated in the third or fourth class.

And so he has been instrumental in putting down on paper the guide lines, to give it continuity no matter where it is used, served in this capacity.

D: It was all very interesting, very stimulating.

BD: In the community, also, Virginia, you were very active with Russell in this war on drugs way back before it was war on drugs. What was it called?

D: That 's what it was called. Now it's called drug awareness..(laughter)

BD: You all had a special name..

D: Well, SOS ..

BD: SOS club, that's what it was.

D: Russell is my favorite unguided missile. When he is interested in these things there's nothing too hard, too big, there's no effort too great, he is gung ho for it and he is true blue to the bitter end. So I didn't have to be active in that except to hold his hand.

BD: Another thing I think he's still active in, the internship or externship program down at Houston.

D: Yes. Yes. Dr. deBa⁷key. Well you see, not only was he so interested in that, in the drugs, problem but he was so interested in the Boy Scout movement and it was through him that the SENior Scouts, the high schoolers, were one group sponsored by the county society. But he was the one that got the cars, got the mothers to go and made all the arrangements. Then he just beamed at everyone of them, You know he was just as crazy about the athletic program. I just sort of laughed at him and I'd say, "It's a little surprising to be the mother of all these boys." While he is working with them, he is just absolutely mad about them. And so because he always had that enthusiasm, we always had ^{several} really whizz bang projects going on all the time. Mine, his and the kids.

BD: You're still very interestd in music? You're still very active——

D: The early years, when I came, I used to help Quisenberry down at the office and I used to help her book in, they called it the El Paso Symphony Cultural Series. and it was an independent, outside shows that were brought in.

DEter

D: That was very interesting to me. I decided to sing and not play the violin because you could do it ⁱⁿ a shorter time. So I did solo work all over town. I was a member of the McDowell club. I gave a recital at Lubbock for the Woman's Club there. Gosh, I've been out of school twelve or fifteen years. I had great courage but it was a lot of fun.

BD: Do you still sing?

D: No. Some singers sing on and on. But high sopranos should quit when they're about 48.

BD: You told me another story one time when we were talking about putting people up in your house and you said you and Russell made a deal.

D: Well, Russell's background in South America gave him the Latin Americans that we know so well across the border. The generosity is unbelievable and so when we got here to El Paso and found out that we were not going to be called back in the service, Ft. Bliss is the cross-roads for all military personnel going north, south, east or west. And Russell was always so popular with all of these men that they always would call and come by and we'd go out.

And so when we first moved here and then he was so crazy about some of the west Texas doctors. And like when they would come to District 1, he would just insist that whoever it was come and stay at our house. So our house is really a working ranch. It never was meant to be a dude ranch where all the people from the great outside could come in. So I thought a long time to see how I could figure this out. So one day I told him, after we had had one of these military officers that he knew, well, a long time ago, rather casually. I said, "Now look Russell, I have a proposal to make. I won't nag you at all if you will just go by the new rules that I'm setting out. I said, you know we ^u jst have one bath room. And there's 7 or 8 of us always here. I just don't like to share my house with casual friends.

So if you want to put up any of these friends or, all of them, at the

Deter

D: motel and pay all the bills, that' all O,K.with me. And I will serve them all their meals, I'll serve them three times a day, I just don't want 'em to sleep here.. And we'll just have one simple rule about sleeping in my house. And that is unless they are blood kin, they have to stay at the motel." So we didn't have any more trouble and he wasnt a bit mad. Hethought that was a marvelous idea.

BD: YOur daughter was also Sun Queen.Can you tell us about that year.

D: Well, that's the year that was. It was our first time to feel like that we had lived in a town long enough to represent the town.Because she was the last queen to be selected because of the activity of the parents. And so we were just delight^d with the idea.It came out just fine. Our daughter, we thought, made a beautiful queen. The activities were just stupendous. We were just right there in the number one seat. We've never been there since and one time is enough. I guess you know that. don't you Barbara? (laughter())

BD: Virginia, another story you told me was a tradition that you and

Russell began when you were out-going president of the state auxiliary.

D: That was at the time that Mrs. Turner, Nina Turner, was on stage and she had already given me a gift and I had already turnd the gavel to the new president.And she said, Mrs. Turner said, that she would like to call on the president's husband, Dr. Diaz, for comments he might have concerning his wife's term of office,

His review of the year regaled the audience with laughter after which he called for Dr. Hallmark to come to the front to receive a medal as the hunband of the ^{new} president and the Auxiliary.That is called the Ash tray medal that each husband of the president from that time until this gives, takes it from around his neck and puts around the neck of the new president's husband.

D: [tape off...on again] ...Society. There was a lot of discussion and many, especially I'm sure, now the older members, thought it would be a white elephant and they really didn't want to accept it. But whoever talked the loudest was the most convincing and whoever that was convinced them that they should have it. So we...in fact I went down to the Turner home every sun Carnival parade day and you know that used to be in the winter, as one of the activities of the winter. I always liked it. I thought it was centrally located and that it had lots of possibilities. But I was treasurer and I believe that was Frances Hatfield year as county president. that she bought a new stove; the new stove that we had there. Slowly through the untiring efforts of Sherry Speir and her husband and Jean McGee, she had been so interested in making it look like a home that you could live in. And I think they have utilized all of the floor space very well and that everything they have done has been an improvement.

BD: What was the story of the home? Dr. Turner left it in a life estate to his second wife and then after that it was supposed to go to the Medical Society?

D: That's right.

BD: And the second wife, after she had lived in it a year decided that she would, did not want to continue to living there and she relinquished her right to it.

D: Well, I wasn't too close. You have to remember back then I was one of the young ones, like Patty Pelfer (laughter) so none of that really interested me very much. Except that they never did give the house up and we always used it. So I didn't know too much about that. Of course, I had been in other communities where a house was given and the...I knew what could be done. But the main one that was familiar with that sort of thing was a girl from Dallas. And I tell you this house doesn't look anything like the home in Dallas.

BD: That's for sure.

Deter

D: And then the one in SAN Antonio, I don't think is satisfactory at all. I mean to me it's just not what you need. So you had to more or less to consider this as a western frontier type home museum and the way we use it. And I think if you consider it in that light and with the medical museum up there, it's just absolutely unusual and it's a pleasure to those who see it.

BD: I notice, Virginia, that you always wear your past state president's pin with pride.

D: You are right.

BD: And also our new tradition of the other gold emblem of...

D: I have that right here. I bought this 50 year pin. That was when the national auxiliary was 50 years old. While I was up there, I bought that. And I had my national job^s engraved on that side. And I also ..I think this is so beautiful, the hand.

BED: Who designed that? Was it ---?

D: Yeah. I was also given during Joanne's Coldwell's year, little

stick pin with a real diamond in it because at that time, we were
— in and I seemed to sound like the little voice in the wilderness.

At state meetings they have the tables for the past presidents and it's just always —

BD: It's such a small-knit club I wonder what you all talke about there.

D: Well, really, because we see each other every year and we're old friends and you don't...you hold each others hand if they're doing something you don't like too well.

But you see as long as you are a past president,, you have one vote. that is in addition to your delegate vote. And so any time you have any controversial subject, they get the past presidents there and they line 'em up on time. And it is just, really, a wonderful group of women. that are still active not only at the state level but in in their home

Deter

town .

D:I hear tell we both missed an exciting meeting this year...controversial

D: I've been through that before—the last time they raised it.

BD: Virginia , I certainly thank you for this interview *

D: Well I hope I told you what you wanted to hear.

BD: I hope you told me what you wanted to tell me.

End of Side 2, about 20 minutes.