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Interview no. 831

Louise Schuessler

W.W. Schuessler

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Willard Warren Schuessler, M.D. and
Louise Schuessler

INTERVIEWER: Barbara K. Dent

PROJECT: El Paso Medical Community

DATE OF INTERVIEW: July 27, 1989

TERMS OF USE: Unrestricted

TAPE NO: 831

TRANSCRIPT NO: 831

TRANSCRIBER: Amy Bene

BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE: Louise Schuessler
Founding officer, board member, and charter member of El Paso County Historical Society; wife of Willard Warren Schuessler, M.D.; prominent plastic and maxillo-facial surgeon; born December 22, 1918, Greenville, Texas; attended Southern Methodist University; married, 1940; cited for outstanding service by Woman's Auxiliary of El Paso County Medical Society, Delta Gamma Alumnae at Texas Western College, Yuong Matrons Auxiliary to Woman's Club, El Paso Community Concert Campaign, Woman's Auxiliary to Texas Western College, Crockett School PTA, Woman's Good Government Committee, Providence Hospital Auxiliary, and Mother's March on Polio; Chairman, Sun Queen Court of Sun Carnival; Chairman, Founders Day Luncheon for Aniversario del Paso; Chairman-Director, Pan American Round Table and Woman's Department, El Paso Chamber of Commerce; served on boards of YWCA, Hotel Dieu Auxiliary, El Paso Symphony Association, and El Paso Woman's Club; named by El Paso County Historical Society as Paseña Valerosa, "Valiant Woman of the Pass," 1971, and Hall of Honor honoree, 1979.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Recalls meeting Dr. Schuessler; discrimination against military personnel in El Paso; volunteer work for "Grey Ladies"; role played in organizing El Paso County Historical Society; projects of Woman's Auxiliary of El Paso County Medical Society; purchase of ranch by family near Sierra Blanca, Texas; construction of Interstate 10 through El Paso.

Length of Interview: 1 hour Length of Transcript 29 pages

This is Barbara Dent interviewing Dr. Willard W. Schuessler and Mrs. Louise J. Schuessler in their home at 3007 Copper Street, El Paso, Texas, on Thursday July 27, 1989.

Q Dr. Schuessler, can you tell me where you were born?

W I was born November the first, 1908, in Cinnia Park, Illinois, which is close to Chicago while my daddy was going to Northwestern to get his M.A. degree. Then we moved to Hanover, Michigan, where he got his Ph.D. degree. And when he got that, he went to Dallas and helped organize, helped open the S.M.U. in 1913. But S.M.U. opened in 1915. I received my education -- grade school in Dallas and at S.M.U. and I graduated S.M.U. in 1930, and I went to Baylor Medical School and graduated in 1934. I was an intern at Baylor Hospital and also a resident surgeon at Baylor Hospital, and then went with Dr. Niel, a plastic surgeon, in a preceptorship, and I was with him from 1936 to 1940. I was called into military service in December the fifth, 1940.

Q Mrs. Schuessler, where were you born?

L I was born in Greenville, Texas December the 22nd, 1908, and my father died when I was two years old my mother moved to Dallas so I was -- I really -- I went to school and really

was raised in Dallas. Willard and I met in Dallas and we married in Dallas.

Q How did you meet?

L Well, I was his favorite patient. I was in an automobile accident and cut my nose -- broke it. And so they took me to the hospital. And mother was waiting for him to come out and take care of it. And she was arguing with him in the hall that he didn't look old enough to know what he was doing. Saw he was an intern, wasn't real sure we was a doctor. Finally, she consented.

W They wanted a plastic surgeon, and I was it.

L And he was taking all the calls for Dr. Niel, and, so, Dr. Niel had a little night cold. So anyway, that's how we met. And then we married November the ninth, 1940. November the ninth this year will be 49 years.

Q Are you making any big plans for the big five-0 next year?

L Oh, yes. We will.

Q And then after you got married was when you -- right after you came to here in the service?

W No.

L Well, we got married November the ninth, went on our honeymoon and came back December the first. And he had orders to report December the fifth at Fort Sam Houston. He was in the reserves as a captain. So, we hadn't planned on that and he went into service a year. And after he'd served his year was December the fifth, why, it was December the

seventh before all the papers were completed, so it took him six years.

Q Did you go with him immediately when he got his orders on December the fifth?

L No.

Q You stayed home?

L I had to stay in Dallas until we could find a place to live. Well, we had planned to live in Dallas. And so he went on to San Antonio, and I went down on the weekends. And that was about six months.

Q How did you go down to San Antonio?

L Drive.

Q And what kind of car did you have?

W Cadillac.

L Cadillac convertible.

Q Wow! That was great.

W Well, I was stationed at San Antonio at Fort Sam Houston General Hospital, which has now been changed to Brooks General Hospital, but at that time, it was Fort Sam Houston General Hospital, and I had charge of plastic surgery. And in 1942 I was transferred Walter Reed in Washington, D.C. to teach a course in plastic surgery and maxofacial surgery, and also take care of the patients. We had one hundred beds at Walter Reed, and in 1944. They had 2500 overseas, so they sent all 2500 overseas to William Beaumont General Hospital which combined with Fort Bliss Station Hospital.

So we had a big hospital. All along Fort Fred Wilson Road was Fort Bliss Station Hospital. That was an orthopedic center. The William Beaumont Hospital was a plastic center. So, we came down here, and I was chief of plastic surgery to take care of the 2500 that they sent here. Also, while I was stationed here, I went every month to San Antonio for the flight surgeon's school and gave a lecture on maxofacial surgery. I was discharged as a colonel, and I received a Legion of Merit in 1946, in July, 1946. And I started back in plastic surgery in El Paso in 1946. At that time there wasn't a plastic surgeon from Dallas to California, or from Denver to Mexico City. In fact, there were only 68 plastic surgeons in the United States at that time.

Q Now, when you came down to El Paso, did you come with him directly?

L Yes.

Q And where did you live, then?

L Well, I had one friend who I knew in El Paso I'd known in Dallas, and I called her because they said no housing, don't bring your family, and so forth in 1944. So, anyway, I called her and she said, "Oh, I'll find you a place to live. Don't worry. Come on down." And we had our son, he was nine months old, and I had a dog. So, we came on the last day of March in a dust storm. Couldn't see your hand in front of your face. And went to the apartment that our friend had gotten for us, and the landlady came out and

said, "Oh, your in the military. We don't rent to the military," and then she said, "Oh, you have a child. We don't take children." So we just said, "Well, he's just nine months old and he's in a playpen." And she said, "When are you going to get quarters on the post?" And we said we didn't know. Maybe never. And this is what we laugh about when they talk about discrimination nowadays. We didn't think anything of it. They just said, "That's the rules," and, so, we went by the rules. But she did let us move in and said if we would try to get quarters, why, she'd let us stay. So, anyway, we did, and we finally did get quarters out there and lived at, on the post until he got out and moved off of the post. *(Unintelligible) We moved out here in 1951. Been here ever since.

Q And how many children do you have?

L We have three. We have two daughters and a son. Our son's the oldest, and he lives on our ranch at Sierra Blanca, Texas. And he has a wife and two teen-age daughters. And our middle daughter is a microbiologist, and she has her own business and lives in Austin. And our younger daughter, Barbara, lives in Tucson.

Q Dr. Schuessler, you were just telling me a story about your landlord, your first landlord. Would you like to tell that to me again?

W Well, we -- we moved to -- bordered on Beaumont. We moved on a Saturday, and I paid him for half a month. And he had

somebody coming in on Monday. So, I got a bill while I was out at Beaumont for three dollars for being vacant on Sunday. So, when I started practicing here, I thought, "Well, I'm gonna get even with him if I get a chance." So, one night about 12:00, I got a call to come and sew up his maid, who'd been beat up. So, I sewed her up, and I sent him a bill for about twice as much as I'd charge ordinarily, so he'd call me, and I could tell him what I thought about that three dollar charge. But I got the nicest letter back from him saying that it was nice to come out at 12:00 o'clock, and also how reasonable the fee was. So, I didn't get to get him.

Q And that was, that was in 19 -- you got out of the service when?

W 1946.

Q 1946?

W As a matter of fact, we were in El Paso in 1946.

Q And had you joined the County Medical Society while you were in the army?

W No. We didn't do that. We -- the fact is, we weren't allowed to come to town in any hospital unless some doctor called us for a consultation. I joined the County Medical Society as soon as I got out of the army, and that was in July of 1946.

Q What about the wives? Did they have any cross-connection during the War between the people in town and the people on

the base?

L Oh, yes. Well, you could if you volunteered. I did a lot of Grey Lady work, and they had what they called "Buddles for Britain" at the art museum.

W The ladies from town were Grey Ladies.

L Yeah. And a lot of ladies from town, and that's the way I met a lot of the town women, because they did Grey Lady work, too. Every day. And so --

Q Did you save your uniform?

L No. I've been -- because I was in -- I taught arts and crafts, and, so, I had a sportcoat on most of the time, because I taught leather tooling, and copper tooling and things like that. So, I more or less stayed on the wards. But they -- El Paso's always been so nice to me, and we met so many people, and they invited us to things in town, and the clubs invite us, and they still do invite the planning officers' wives to complimentary meals, and we'd have meetings that we'd invite them to.

Q Now, when you were president of the Chamber of Commerce, you mentioned that you had a favorite project. What was that?

L Organizing the El Paso County Historical Society. That was our civic project for the year. So, I had a committee, and they organized it in 1954, and had it going full in 1955. It took the whole year, you know, to put it together.

Q Who were some of the charter members that were there?

L Well, I'll tell you, one that gave us our first hundred-dollar life membership was Mrs. W. W. Curney, who owned the museum. And she was living in that home, then, which is now El Paso Museum.

Q When was that house turned over to the museum? Did the city buy it, or what?

L No. She left it to the city, and I'll have to look the date up on that. And they built the wing onto the first floor, but the rest of it is her original home. And they had to build that wing on because of temperature control, but she (unintelligible) in turn we had given her our first life membership card. El Paso was a small town. It had lots of good publicity all the time about everything that went on in town. Everybody knew everyone, and what was going on. So, it was quite different than today.

Q And then, right after you finished your year as head of the chamber of commerce, you became president of the medical -- County Medical Auxiliary?

L Yes. Uh-huh.

Q And what --

L And went down the list on all the presidents of -- all the organizations I belonged to including PTA. So, I thoroughly enjoyed it. We met so many wonderful people.

Q What was your pet project for the Medical Auxiliary?

L Well, we were working on nurses' scholarships, and for nurses and tried to build that up, and also our public

relations. So, we organized several things. We had a coat party to raise money for the nurses' scholarships. Then we had a party twice a year, and invited other organizations, and the press, and the radio and so forth to come to participate. Both the County Medical Society and auxiliary, but mostly working to promote the County Medical Society and all their good deeds.

Q And Dr. Schuessler, you kind of followed your wife in being president of the Society. When were you president of the Society?

W I was president of the County Medical Society in 1967. I'd been president of the Chamber of Commerce, and, so, I noticed that they had pictures of all of the presidents from the time the Chamber of Commerce started. So, I thought it'd be nice to start pictures of all the presidents of the County Medical Society. So, we got all the pictures, except one or two, and put them all around the wall at the County Medical Society. I'd like to tell you a little interesting story. While I was in the army, we used to have a lot of gunshot wounds to the face and a lot of deformity. We didn't have any books or any magazines to go by. We just had to use our imagination. And I had a patient that had his upper lip all shot off. And I used to like to send all my patients to town, because, if they went to town, then they broke their inhibitions as far as trying to get out in public because they look so terrible. So, this one I

decided I'd make a pedicel from his forehead -- I mean from his head down, and put it across his lip. I'd shaved his head, and I put this pedicel on, and I thought maybe we could make a mustache, and, that way, it wouldn't show that he had lost his lip. So, he went to town with this pedicel attached to his lip up here, and he went to a bar. And people asked him what he had there. And he said, well, I grafted a cat's tail on his lip to form his lip. And about two days or three days later I get a call from the newspaper wanting to know about this new operation we had grafting the cat's tail to fix the lip.

Q And what school did your children go to? The little one right here in the neighborhood?

L Yes. Went to Crockett, and went to Austin, and Bassett was then a Jr. high school. I think they call them middle schools.

Q Middle schools. Changed all the terminology.

L Yes, they have. So Barbara had an October birthday. So, she couldn't go into first grade. And there were neighbors in the back going Radford, so I put her in Radford. She went there for a couple years, and then went to Crockett. They all -- Bobby, my son, went up to New Mexico Military Institute, but he wanted to come back and graduate from Austin, so he did.

Q Who delivered your babies here in town?

L ~~S~~elso Stapp.

W Bobby was born at Walter Reed.

L Yeah. And Betty was born out at Beaumont.

W Beaumont.

L And Barbara was born --

W -- At Southwestern.

Q What was Southwestern like then?

L Oh, it was great! It was such a nice family hospital, and everybody knew everybody, and they took such good care of you. Everybody went to Southwestern. They had -- of course, Hotel Dieu, and they built a new Providence. The old Providence wasn't that great. They built a new one. They really needed it. So, Southwestern was "the" hospital of choice.

Q Was Dr. Schuessler, a stockholder at Southwestern?

L No. Only at medical center. They built the medical center in the 1950s. But no, Southwestern, that was the -- it was a family, you know, the --

Q Homans?

L Yeah. They treated everybody like they were family, too. And Bill Burton ran it that way.

Q I don't think I've heard that name before.

L All right. Dr. Crimmon, Dr. Homan. I don't know if Dr. Turner was in with them or not -- anyway started Southwestern, and he had one daughter, Bobbie, that married Bill Burton. He was the manager of Southwestern. I don't know how many years. And then it was sold in the early

1970s.

(tape stops)

W We moved on Copper Street, and that used to be a smelter, and it was up on the hill. And the smelter was called the Federal Smelter. So it was -- Federal Street was called from the Federal Smelter. And it was silver, copper, and gold, was what they refined. In Memorial Park, you'll notice there's a big dip, and there's a bridge there. And, at that time, it was a lake. And the lake was used for the smelter. But now, there's no water in it, or anything else.

L This house was built in 1922 by J. Ormshee, postmaster. And he was an engineer, also member of St. Cements.

Q And he lived here?

L He built the house and lived here with his family, and built it in 1922. His study in the back of the living room has four stained glass windows with the four orders of the Masonic order.

Q Well, when this was a smelter, there was some talk about they had a railroad track, or their own railroad that took the slag, or the ore, and built it over the tennis club.

L The railroad's still there. It was right by Memorial Park.

Q And that's the same one?

W Yep.

Q Well, how did it get to the tennis club, in the arroyo around the tennis club?

L Well, this used to go downtown. And then, when they

depressed the track, I know. When we first moved here, we always had to sit and wait for the train, like, ten minutes -- something like that -- for the train to cross the track. And it finally had the bond to depress the tracks. It took them forever. So, I was glad when they changed it, made it easier going.

Q Is that when the smelter went out of business?

L Oh, no. It went out of business long ago.

Q You weren't living here when it ended?

L No, no. They had made it Memorial Park.

Q So, that's the park in front, and this was the smelter load. This was taken in 1922?

W No.

Q Before that?

W Well, we used to have an organization here called the Southwestern Medical Association. And, in 1948, I was the general chairman for the convention center, and this organization consisted of west Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and northern New Mexico. And we kept up, and we had real nice meetings -- real nice associations. And, then, gradually, New Mexico got their own doctors and specialists. And then Arizona did. So, Arizona gradually dropped out. And then New Mexico dropped out. And then northern Mexico dropped out. So they just disbanded. But it was a very nice organization.

Q Were you a member of the Sheriff's Posse?

W Yes.

L Yeah.

W Get the picture (looking at picture) back there. That's where the old Sheriff's Posse used to be down in the lower valley.

L Down and about --

Q Oh. Down in the Lower Valley?

W Yeah.

Q When did you move up to Anapia?

W That was about ten years ago. More than that, 15 or so.

Q That looks -- the look of the land -- just what is the Sheriff's Posse?

W Well, the Sheriff's Posse was organized in 1938 by Sheriff Balfit -- I mean Chris Fox. And what he wanted to do is, he wanted have sort of a police reserve at that time to help with all -- any kind of thing we needed help with. Then it got to be more of a social organization. And now it has very little to do with the sheriff, except the sheriff is an honorary member. And the sheriff reserve in their four-wheel Jeeps take the little (unintelligible) that they used to. And I joined it in 1949.

Q Do you still have any horses?

W Still don't have any horses there at the Sheriff's Posse. We have some horses at the ranch, but not at the Sheriff's Posse.

Q Tell me about your ranch.

L We bought it in 1960, and it is 33 miles north-east of Sierra Blanca, Texas. And on the back of our ranch, we look down, and look across the land. And we --

W 45,000 acres.

L We raise Brangus cattle. And our son and his wife and two daughters live out there in the summer, and they lived there year-round until the girls had to go to school. So, then, they bought a house in Sierra Blanca, and moved -- come in the winter, and then live in town Monday through Friday, and Bob goes back and forth every day 13 miles. So, then they go out to the ranch on Friday, and come back on Monday, so the girls can go to school.

Q This is toward Makattrick Canyon, is it?

L Well, no. That's out at Carlsbad Road. That's -- and on the back of our ranch you can see El Capitan and the Guadalupe Mountains. But we are south of the Carlsbad Highway, so you can see Diablo Mountains. And we have a lookout on the back of the ranch that looks out and has -- how deep is the drop-off?

W 1500 feet.

L 1500 feet. And we can drive right up to the edge. And it's really a fright. And we had a friend one time we showed it to, and he said, "Well, whenever you want to get rid of anybody, just tell them to gun it when they get to that hill, and that would be the end of them.

W Can you cut that off?

Q Uh-huh.

(tape is turned off)

Q I want you to tell me all about the bridges in the port of entry in Cordoba.

W Well, when I was president of the Chamber of Commerce, the mayor was Mayor Rene Mascareñas. They decided we'd like to have another port of entry. At that time we wrote "Slick" Rutherford, who was our representative, and he said we probably wouldn't be able to because of the fact that the Rio Grande was classified as a navigable river, and it would have to go to the Department of the Interior, and the Navigation Association, and so forth and so on. Well, we found out that Mayor Villarreal a long time ago had built a bridge across the Rio Grande to ship cattle across to a particular feed lot. So, about that time, there was two officials from Immigration and Naturalization, and also Customs, were at the Del Norte Hotel. We went to talk to them. They said that if we would build a road --

(end of side one)

W They had just gotten from back from Tijuana where Tijuana had just built 16 bridges, and they had just told them to do it. So, after they had to command it. So, they said, "You do it. We'll have to command it." We got Judge Woodroe Bean to build a road to the fence on Hayes Street, and we made Rene Mascareñas to build a road to that fence, and we opened it up. They brought in mobile homes for the Customs

and Immigration.

Q Did they declassify the Rio Grande as a --

W Now, the Rio Grande has been reclassified as a non-navigable river. And, so, the bridges at Zaragosa are now going to be flat, like they used to be.

Q So, we won't have to worry about opening it when vessels come through. Well, now that you're retired, are you getting in your wife's hair every day?

W I do a lot of "honey-do" stuff. And I still belong to a lot of committees. I've been -- just got off being director of the El Paso County Historical Society. I was vice president and director of the Crime Stoppers. I'm still the director of Crime Stoppers. I'm also a member of the OOPS which is an Old Obsolete Pilots Association, which meets every Friday at 9:30. I'm -- I was president, or executive, of the West Texas Counsel Government. I'm still on the West Texas Counsel Government. I'm the director of the El Paso Aviation Hall of Fame. I'm now co-chairman of the Justice Advisory Committee. Also, I'm the director of the Memorial Court Improvement Association. And I was on the selection committee for the El Paso Opportunity, and served as president in professional category in which got Dr. Gordan Black in as my mentor this year. So, I keep busy, and I do things around the house -- keep up with my Medical Journal. I try to go -- I go to staff meetings. I've been invited to Providence staff meetings, Sierra staff

meetings and also Southwestern staff meetings, and I try to make the staff meetings. And I try to keep interested and see all of my old friends.

Q How does it feel having him home a few hours a day, and not being on call?

L Oh, not being on call is the best part of it because, of course, they didn't have the emergency set up like they have now. So, we had calls every night, and had them sort of classified from about 6:00 to 9:00. It was kids falling and cutting themselves, and hitting the coffee table and all this. And 9:00 to 12:00 were automobile accidents. And from 12:00 on, it was fights and drunks. Like 2:00 in the morning, 3:00 in the morning. He made them all. And the phone rang all day Saturday afternoon.

W We didn't have pagers then. We had to leave -- we didn't have pagers at that time, so we had to leave a phone number where we were. If you went to a picture show, well, we had to tell the usher what row we were in, and they'd come and get us. It wasn't nearly as nice as they have it now with the phone and pagers.

L And you'd leave your phone number if you went to a party. I went to lots of parties by myself, and he met me. We were ready to leave and the phone would ring. There'd be an emergency. So, I'd just go on and go to the party, and he'd come later. Came home lots of --

Q Lots of two-car parties.

L Yeah.

Q You were talking about picture shows. Remember, you were talking about when they made an auditorium in the Turner home, and they put those chairs upstairs. Do you think that was the Crawford Theater?

L I do think it was a Crawford, because that was about the first theater that they tore down, and did the parking lot and all that. And that was a real nice theater. So, I -- unless, you know, it was out of town or something, I'm sure it probably the Crawford.

Q No it was local. You've seen a lot of changes, not only in town and in medicine, but -- tell me about I-10 coming to town, since you were both involved in the Chamber of Commerce.

W The -- Highway 80 was with all the cottonwood trees.

L Yes. They had Highway 80 which came in on Alameda, and still does. And they had all these cottonwood trees that made an arch of great big trees that you drove through. When you got to Alameda Avenue, with all the chuckholes and the filthy houses on each side, they improved that. But never give any thought about a freeway coming through I-10 construction. Now we're going through all that again. By the time they get it finished, it'll probably be inadequate. But... Oh! Let me tell you about Mesa Street. We lived in this apartment, Imperial Arms, which is on the corner of Stanton and Rim Road. And it just had a little patio. So,

where Coronado Bank, the Coronado Towers are, and across the way, is the shopping center. That was a road-side park. And, so, we would take Bobby and our dog, and drive out there like on Sunday, and have a picnic, and have a place to play and for the dog to run around. And none of Mesa Street was there. It was just wide open spaces.

Q Was it paved?

L Yes. It was just two lanes; one going and one coming.

W Coronado was a sort of hill, and there was sort of a bluff there. And there wasn't anything up there except one little trailer home. And this little man lived up there by himself. And the reason he lived there is because he as had asthma so bad most everywhere. It was the one place in town where he didn't have asthma, was up there where nobody would smoke around him.

Q Where Coronado Country Club is now?

W Uh-huh. And this place had a reputation of being very healthy, and very good for respiratory diseases until they had all this pollution in there. But it was very clean and very dry, very good for those kind of causes. That's the way the was Southwest was started in Santa Fe in 1946, I believe it was.

Q When the old Saint Joe's was originally Baldwin Clinic. And then Dr. Homan bought Badlwin Clinic. And then it became Saint Joe's. Do you know how the Catholic church got a hold of Saint Joe's? Did Dr. Homan give it to them, or what?

W I don't know, but Dr. Homan was the one that started Southwestern.

Q Yeah.

W But I don't know about that. And then Masonic Hospital, that was where Sears and Roebuck used to be.

Q Now, did you practice there at all?

W I just went there once. And Dr. Wilcox called me to see to a burn case. And I went over to see it, and right after that they tore it down.

L You went to Providence, too.

W When Providence was downtown. There's an old house in downtown by the railroad tracks, and it had a basement. And that's where they had the staff meetings. It was a very large old house. And then built the new Providence on Oregon Street.

L The Schusters owned it.

W The Schusters owned the old Providence Hospital.

Q What about when they built Sun Towers? Were you involved in that at all?

W No.

Q Were you involved in Sierra? Were you involved in building Sierra?

W No.

Q So, most of your practice has involved Southwestern?

W Most of my practice was at Southwestern and Providence, the old Providence and the new Providence. And then, later

on, Sierra came on, and I practiced down there, too. And, so, I finally -- the last couple of years I just did lumps and bumps. I didn't do any real hard surgery. And did most of that at Southwestern, because I could do it as an outpatient. And, at that time, I had an agreement with them that they would charge \$35 for the first 15 minutes, and \$1.00 thereafter. With the lumps and bumps, I could do about four in an hour. When I was had a full practice and was going to Southwestern, Providence and Hotel Dieu, why, Dr. Elvalt was with me, and he worked with me for 16 years. And he liked to do cosmetic surgery, and I didn't like to do cosmetic surgery. I liked reconstructive surgery. So, he started cosmetic surgery, and I sent him all the cosmetic surgery, and he referred me all the reconstructive surgery.

Q And you said he retired at the same time you did?

W No. He retired about three years after I did.

Q Have you been retired that long?

W I practiced 50 years, and I retired six years ago.

L Time goes by pretty fast. We had -- of course, El Paso has been our home, so we thought Dallas was so big that we'd rather live in a small town. And it had about 350,000?

W 480,000.

L And they were -- about what?

W 90,000, 100,000 people.

W You know, we had about 90 doctors when I first started.

L And, so, anyway, that's why we decided to live in a small

town. El Paso is bigger than Dallas when we lived there.

Q Yeah. But look at Dallas now.

L 1.5 million, I think they say now. And Juarez was the same deal. It was so small. It wasn't as big as El Paso. Now they've got 1.5 million, too.

Q You said that next year you're going to celebrate your 50th wedding anniversary. Can you tell me something about your wedding?

L Well, we were married at Highland Park Methodist Church in Dallas. And it was November the ninth. And went on our honeymoon and drove south.

Q Where'd you go to?

L Well, we drove to Florida, because we went to Cuba on our honeymoon. We drove south and across to the South over to Florida, and on went to Havana on a boat, and came back and drove back to El Paso when he got word that he should report to Fort Sam Houston December the fifth. And he can tell you about how cheap it used to be at Miami Beach.

W Well, we drove through the Tamiami Trail, and there was so many bugs that got all over the windshield. So, I stopped at a filling station. We had them wash the windshield off, and he asked me where I was going. So, we told him we were going Miami Beach. And he said, "Well, let me tell you. Go to the north part of the beach, and don't pay more than two dollars a day." So, we went to this hotel -- real nice hotel. And I've never done this before, but we went up

there, and he showed us the room, and my wife didn't like the room. She wanted a corner room.

L To see the beach.

W So -- and she wanted to see the ocean. And, so, we asked him how much it would be. And he said it would be five dollars a day. And we said that was too much. We had gotten information that said you could get it for two dollars a day. And he said, "Well, I'll have to call the manager." So, he called the manager, and the manager came up. He said, "Well, how long are you going to stay?" I said, "Well, we're going to stay about four days." He said, "If you stay a week, we'll let you have it for two dollars." I said, "well, we're going to Havana, Cuba." So, he said that well, y'all look like nice people. We'll tear it up, and let y'all have it for two dollars a day.

L Real expensive. Wouldn't you like to go to Miami Beach for two dollars a day?

Q Could you imagine what you'd get now for two dollars a day?

L Couldn't get anything at all on that. So, this -- when all the kids talk about -- people talking about the "olden days," that's really part of the "olden days."

Q Yeah. My kids -- one of them is just at the point of buying houses. And she said, "how much did you all pay for yours?" We got ours just before big real estate boom, and that completely blows their mind.

L That's like buying this house in 1959.

Q Yeah.

L They just can't believe the prices

W The walls in this house are 18 inches thick.

L And we had to build that. I really have (unintelligible) because all this side the plywood over in here, and that five (unintelligible) and the kids climbed in(unintelligible).

(tape is turned off)

L During my year as president of the Medical Auxiliary we -- the Auxiliary decided that we had some extra money, and we adopted an underprivileged child as far as furnishing clothes and school supplies. We did that, and the Auxiliary carried that off for several years that they -- now they have so many other organizations doing that, Operation School Bell, and so forth. I don't believe we carry that on now. Since they're tearing down the Courthouse again in El Paso now. When they tore it down before, all these walls were Italian marble. So, they sold it to anybody that wanted it. So, I went down and wrote Schuessler on a great big slab. And my fireplace is covered in the marble. The bar tap in the playroom is the marble, and I had a piece cut to make a coffee table. So we have the marble out of the old courthouse which they had varnished, which I couldn't believe that anybody would varnish marble. We cleaned it off, and have it just natural.

Q How did you put it onto your fireplace? Was the fireplace

with the original house?

L Oh, yes. It was there, and it had tile on it. It must have been brick. Somebody put tile over it. I couldn't believe that. So, I had -- the only one I could get was the man that used to have Memorial Art grave stone, and he was a marble cutter. And he came, and cut it, and made it fit, and did all the work and cut the marble for the playroom. And then, later, I had Savagnac Company over in Juarez do the cutting.

Q How did you get the marble here? That must have been very heavy to carry.

L I borrowed a pickup. That's the only way you could do it, was to get a pickup and quite a few helpers, because then I took it down to the Valley, to the Memorial Art place, and he cut it. He came and measured everything, and cut it all. He brought it and put it in.

Q Now, is the brick still underneath there? Is the tile still underneath there, or did he tear it up?

L The tile is off, but the brick is still there. We were pleased with that. It was a historical thing, you see, the legend of the house.

Q You must have written your name on a big slab of rock.

L I sure did. I whole side wall to get all of that -- to get that much marble. I have a few small pieces left. But everybody was down there taking it, and writing it all the way across how much they wanted, because slabs were about

the end of things before the destruction.

Q And when did they tear the courthouse down?

L That must have been about 1950.

W Something along in there.

L 1957 or along in there.

Q Tell me something about the Burges Perrinot Home that the Historical Society has just acquired.

L Well, Jane Dunn was very active in the Historical Society, and she had a fabulous book collection that she gave to the California instead of El Paso. But she left her home to the Historical Society. And if they do not keep it up and use it, it goes back to her children. So, they're really working to get it, you know, in good shape and have other organizations. It's quite an upkeep. So that makes it kind of a hard project. But they've been pretty good at generating money to be able to afford it. But, if they can't, why then they cannot sell it. So, we'll see if they get to keep it.

Q And will the Historical Society take over the history museum?

L Well, they had the history museum -- you mean out on the freeway?

Q Yes.

L That is the historical. The Society runs it. It's the Museum of History, now. They are having a -- oh, lots of conversation about if the Museum of Art moves downtown, then

the History Museum can move there.

W It's also talking about if the city does what it predicts it's going to do downtown, they might move it downtown. They have about three areas that they're looking at.

L So, you never know. There's been all kinds of speculation. I don't know what will come of it.

W The Border Patrol Museum.

L It's the only one in the state.

Q Oh, is it?

W The National Museum.

Q Where you on the planning stage of it?

W No. I was sort of on the planning stage of it. I helped raise money to start it.

Q How did they decide to do it here? I mean, of course, the border was here, but --

W Well Yuma, Arizona, and several other places wanted it, but since the headquarters are here, I guess they agreed to put it here. They had a lady by the name of Sue Curney, who was helping with it, and she was very active. Her husband retired from the Border Patrol, and she contacted all of the people that they were going to put on the museum. So, she was powerful enough to get it here.

L She was really a good starter. Got it for El Paso. And it's quite an asset, of course. It's in the Cortez Hotel. They're going to have to move.

W They have more than 18,000 of them. I don't know where they

are going to put.

L They'd like to put it out on Montana, but it's so expensive there. Nobody can afford to move there. That's a speculation, also.

W Yeah. They're going to have to move it. The electric company's going to sell it.

Q After they just rebuilt it.

W The rest of the incentives.

L Well.

Q Well, they won't have to move real soon, will they?

W I don't think so.

Q They're not going to close the building?

W No. They're going to pay some rent. You can just cut that off.

Q Okay. I'll just end this interview today. Thank you very much.