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Interview no. 1640

Thomas Edward Dent

Mary Helen Dent Trammell

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

Interviewee: Thomas Edward Dent/Mary Helen Dent Trammell

Interviewer: Barbara Dent

Project: World War II Home front

Location: Wharton, TX

Date of Interview: April 9, 2010

Terms of Use: Unrestricted

Transcript No.: 1640

Transcriber / Summary: Jose Miguel Leyva

Mary Helen Dent Trammell was born in Lubbock, TX, on April 3, 1930. Her parents were Robert Walter Dent and Lilly Myrtle McFarland. Mrs. Trammell describes her childhood, and going to school in Littlefield, TX. The family moved to Stephenville, TX in 1942. Her father had been previously married, and had three living children from his first wife. One of her half-brothers served in World War I. Mrs. Trammell's brother, Thomas Edward Dent was also born in the 1930s. He describes the schools growing up, and how they were all named after famous Texans, such as Davey Crocket and James Bowie. Mrs. Trammell describes how her mother was forced to work because of her father's age and failing health. Her father had asthma and eventually suffered a stroke. The family lived in a rural area, where they kept chickens, cows, and other animals. Mr. Dent describes the fear that existed when WWII broke out, as he was still in elementary school. Both siblings describe the process of making phone calls at this time, and dealing with operators. There were no motels in the area, and families would often stay with them, some for long periods of time. Mr. Dent describes efforts by the German government to call back German immigrants. He discusses how the pressure to enlist during WWII was not as great as it had been in WWI, but that it was still a major source of pride to enlist. Mrs. Trammell describes how her mother would give the children Ex-Lax whenever they were sick. The siblings recalled enemas being popular at the time, but not receiving any. Mr. Dent remembers trucks filled with POWs driving through the area. He also recalled that children who wished to continue school after elementary would be bussed to Fort Worth, TX. Mrs. Trammell and Mr. Dent also discuss attending high school, including going to prom.

Length of interview 80 minutes

Length of Transcript n/a