

Part I:
*Texas College of Mines and
Metallurgy*
1914-1949

Fred W. Bailey

The event that really rocked the school was the fire that . . . completely destroyed the Main Building.

Fred W. Bailey

[1897-1989]

Student, 1915-1920

I was born in Coventry, England, on January 1, 1897, and came to the United States in 1904. We lived in Philadelphia until 1909, when my father accepted work at the Panama Canal Zone during the building and construction of the Panama Canal. He worked on many phases of the canal construction. I graduated from the Canal Zone High School at Balboa in 1915. Incidentally, my senior year at high school coincided with the first year of the opening of the Panama Canal to through traffic.

After conversations with my brother and after having seen many phases of the excavation of the Panama Canal, I became convinced that mining should be my field of endeavor. I was entranced and thrilled with the idea of the extraction of minerals from the earth and with the apparent glamour and adventure that appeared to be closely associated with such an occupation. I have never regretted the decision.

Another decision made at that time was the selection of the school I would attend. A real estate salesman had been traveling all over the Canal Zone, trying to sell to the Canal Zone employees an area that has become a large residential section of Houston. My parents had purchased some lots with the intention of settling in Texas when they left the Zone. It

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was therefore almost a natural conclusion that I should go to The University of Texas at Austin. I applied for admission and was informed that instruction in mining was being discontinued, and I was directed to the State School of Mines and Metallurgy at El Paso. Admission was granted, and I started preparing for my first trip away from home. It was indeed a long one, from the Panama Canal Zone to El Paso.

My high school graduation present from my parents was a gold, seventeen-jewel Hamilton pocket watch and a trip from the Panama Canal Zone to Pennsylvania and Ohio to visit relatives, then continue to El Paso. The train stopped at Texarkana early one morning. At last I was in Texas and would soon be in El Paso. Although I had traveled long distances on the ocean by steamship and had passed through several states on this train trip, I apparently had no concept of geographical distances. I had heard many times and know now that Texas is big, but somehow that bigness was a new dimension I had not [fully] realized. I traveled over such a vast expanse of wide-open, apparently unoccupied and unused land that I could not help but wonder what I would find at the end of the journey. However, eventually I arrived.

El Paso in 1915 had a population of about 60,000. San Jacinto Plaza, with its alligator pond in the middle, was just about the center of the downtown section. After arriving in El Paso, I followed the transportation instructions as outlined in the school catalog. I took the electric street-car marked "Fort Bliss" and told the conductor to let me off at the School of Mines. Fort Bliss was at the end of the line. [There were] a lot of residences on one side of an enormous parade ground and on the other side a long line of red brick two-story barracks buildings. The conductor told me to walk across the parade ground, pass beyond the barracks and the stables, and I would then see the school in the distance. So with a violin and a suitcase, I began the last leg of my journey from the Panama Canal Zone to the Texas School of Mines. It was only about five-eighths of a mile, but walking on a sandy desert road loaded with luggage was not easy.

I could see some people moving around, and when I arrived, three people met me. They were students doing some work for the college, preparatory to opening the fall term. They were Lloyd Nelson, Vere Leasure, and Clyde Ney, who comprised the first graduating class from the school. They greeted me enthusiastically and made me feel like I would really be a member of a mining student group. There were three buildings that

had previously been used by the El Paso Military Institute: the Main Building, the dormitory, and another small, one-story building that was used for assaying and ore milling instruction. The school had opened the previous year, the 1914-1915 academic year, with twenty-seven students and three members of the faculty. I enrolled for the second year of the school operation, the academic year of 1915-1916. There were forty-one students, five faculty members, and two advanced student assistants teaching chemistry and Spanish. We were few in number, but this enabled us to be a closely united group. Our instruction was direct and personal. I think our small number was an advantage to the students, and I think we were very well taught the basics of an engineering profession.

There was a lot of interest in football, baseball, and basketball; however, we were so few that it was necessary for almost the entire student body to participate. Financially we were not able to travel, and from an athletic point of view we were still unknown. Our main activity was football, and we played only local teams, El Paso High School and teams representing various units of the army. There were a great number of army teams, and we had all the competition we could handle. However, sometimes we had no substitutes, and our coach, Tom Dwyer*, quite often played with us when we played the big bruiser army teams. All our games were played at the Rio Grande Baseball Park, located at Wyoming and North Walnut streets, just four or five blocks east of Cotton Avenue.

Towards the end of the 1915-1916 school year, the School of Mines, along with other southwestern schools, received an invitation to send some students to a field day event to take place at the University of Arizona at Tucson. Tommy Dwyer, the coach, told us about the invitation and told us all to line up at one end of the football field. At a signal from him, we were to test our running ability by running the length of the field. I won that running event, and with no more practice than that, a few of us were selected to represent our school and were sent to Tucson. I was the only person from our team to win a medal. I came in third in the 100-yard dash.

The third academic year [1916-1917] was an eventful one in many respects. Earlier in 1916, during the unsettled political and revolutionary activities in Mexico, Pancho Villa had raided Columbus, New Mexico, and Brig. Gen. [John J.] Pershing, then commander at Fort Bliss, was sent into Mexico with several brigades of cavalry and a few battalions

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of field artillery to get Villa and his gang. Pancho Villa was not captured, but the large massing of troops here was perhaps the beginning of Fort Bliss' becoming a large training center in preparation for World War I. A city of tents adjoined Fort Bliss, through which the students and others had to pass going to and from the school. The school enrollment this year was thirty-nine, lower than the preceding year, but it included two girls, our first coeds. They were Ruth Brown and Grace Odell, who entered to take a two-year academic course with the privilege of taking the full mining course if so desired.

The event that really rocked the school was the fire that occurred early one Sunday morning in October, 1916, and completely destroyed the Main Building. I was awakened from sleep and saw the fire. Many of the soldiers were also awakened and came over to help put it out. They joined the students in forming a bucket brigade but could not save the building. However, the dormitory was saved, and the bucket brigade received credit for this. It was quite a shock and a terrible loss. The Main Building was really the school. Gone were the classrooms, all the laboratory equipment, the surveying instruments, the mineral collection, and all the school records. There was some demoralization among the students. Some left for home, some to look for work in the Arizona and New Mexico mines, but most of them remained. They were encouraged by the good intentions and statements of the faculty that we would be back on course within a few days. The fire could easily have become the swan song and death of the School of Mines. However, we survived.

After the fire, the first floor [of the dormitory] was turned into classrooms. A framed corrugated iron building was quickly built in front of the dormitory to be used as the chemistry laboratory. Classroom instruction had only a slight interruption, [since] the assay and mill building was not affected by the fire. The school activities were soon in full swing again, and the academic school year was completed on time.

While the fire was not the swan song of the school, it afforded the opportunity to look for a new location more strategically situated, so the academic year 1916-1917 was the last year the school operated east of Fort Bliss. The city of El Paso, the Chamber of Commerce, and the citizens had now become accustomed to having a college and once again showed plenty of interest. They offered help, land, and money. The present location became the new school site and the nucleus of the wonderful school we have today.

The building of the new school started in June, 1917. The buildings were not ready for occupancy for the fall semester of 1917-1918, so an arrangement was made to hold classes at Temple Mt. Sinai, located at Oregon and Montana streets. The Main Building and the Chemistry Building were ready a few weeks later, as was the Power House, but the dormitory was not ready until close to the end of the year. There were sixty-one students enrolled for the year 1917-1918. Probably about eight or ten of them were girls taking an academic course.

After we moved to the new school location, we started to enter into annual competition in all athletic events with the New Mexico Aggies, the University of New Mexico, Roswell [New Mexico] Military Institute, and the University of Arizona. We won a few football games, but I think we lost most of them. However, we were able to hold our own in baseball and basketball.

My recollections of the faculty are all pleasant. [S.H.] "Doc" Worrell*, with his trim goatee, was always immaculately dressed and very distinguished looking. He and his wife always tried to make the students feel like a united group and succeeded very well. The Seamons, F.H.* and W.H.*, had a lot of experience and were able to impart such practical knowledge to the students. Their homes were always open, and the students were made welcome on many occasions.

I consider [John W.] "Cap" Kidd* and Tommy Dwyer as builders of character [and] educators of men. I think they made the longest lasting and most favorable impressions on me. This was probably because I seem to have been with them a lot. While Dean Worrell was head of the school and naturally handled all the legal and financial matters, it was always Cap Kidd who appeared to be, at least physically, the "kingpin" in charge. It was Cap Kidd who took over the surveying, layout, and supervision of the building of the new school. It was Cap Kidd who had charge of the hundreds of activities around the school: operation and maintenance, heating and lighting, the building of pipelines, power lines, machinery installations, as well as being the general overseer of athletes. I worked with Cap earning extra money and learned plenty. Tommy Dwyer also remains bright in my memories, because in addition to being my college instructor, he was also the chief engineer of the company for which I worked on my first job after graduation. He was also best man at my wedding a few years later. I learned plenty from him.

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The faculty joined with us in all our social events, which usually consisted of dances. At the old school before the fire, they were held in the large assembly room or auditorium of the Main Building. After we moved to the new school location, they were held at the University Club on the top floor of the Roberts-Banner Building at Stanton and Mills streets, or in the main ballroom of the Paso del Norte Hotel. Other gathering places in those days were the Sheldon Hotel dining room on the first floor and the ballroom on the mezzanine floor, the Modern Cafe in the basement of the Mills Building, and the Elite Confectionery at Mesa and Texas streets.

The United States entered World War I in April, 1917. Some students joined the military service before school opened, and when it did open, the war was one of the main topics of conversation. It seems that the students went through periods of military preference. Sometimes we all favored the navy, other times the army. It must have been navy month when the urge to go was too strong for me to resist. I joined the United States Navy in April, 1918. My father had also joined the navy, and I suppose he helped me in my decision.

I returned to El Paso for the opening of the 1919-1920 school year and with four other students graduated in May, 1920, with a degree of Mining Engineer. Just before graduation I was offered two jobs, one at the iron mines in Minnesota and the other in the silver and gold mines close to Parral, Chihuahua, Mexico. I did not have enough money to pay the transportation to Minnesota, where I really desired to go, so since transportation into Mexico was paid for me, I accepted the Mexico job.

As I have already mentioned, before coming to El Paso I lived in the Panama Canal Zone. The canal employees came from many parts of the United States and, in fact, from many parts of the world. I was accustomed to living with more than one culture. I found a similar state of affairs in El Paso, a new, fast-growing city with many peoples from different parts of our country and the world, with two prominent cultures, the Anglo and the Mexican, and a delightful blending of both of them. This resulted in what I considered a very friendly atmosphere, a mutual feeling of working and living together. I think this same atmosphere has continued to the present day. I like the people and the climate, even with the wind and sandstorms. [El Paso] would be hard to beat.

Interviewed by Robert H. Novak, January 24, 1974, El Paso.

The biggest objection most of the students had to the new location was the fumes from the smelter. They were pretty bad sometimes.

Ruth Brown McCluney

Student, 1916-1919

I was sixteen years old when I graduated from El Paso High School. At that time, of course, there was just one high school, and I was one of forty-nine graduates in 1916. That's how small El Paso was. My parents didn't want me to go away to school because I was so young. My father read in the paper along in the summer that the Texas Legislature had decided that this school would be open to women. He contacted Dean [S.H.] Worrell* at the College of Mines, and he said as far as he knew there was no objection to girls going. There was another girl [Grace Odell] in my high school graduating class who didn't have any way to go away to school, and so she decided she'd go, too. We enrolled the first of September. But she didn't like it, and I think she dropped out at the end of the first semester.

The way I got to school was by streetcar. We lived in Alta Vista, on Hueco Street, and the streetcar went to Fort Bliss. That's where it ended, so I had to walk. It was over half a mile, past all the stables! It was a cavalry post, 7th Cavalry. Very odoriferous. Someone asked me if I was ever in trouble going through the military post, because I walked the whole distance. A lot of the time there were other students on the streetcar

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who went with me. And you may know Fred Bailey; he's one of the Exes. Well, he was a good friend of ours and went to the same church. We were all in a bunch together. My mother took him aside and told him that her daughter was too young and would he look after her out there when I started to go to school, because I wouldn't have other girls around. I guess Fred did a good job, because nothing ever happened to me.

At any rate, my first semester out there on the campus, which was just east of Fort Bliss, was pretty difficult because they enrolled me in all of these engineering subjects. They did have an English teacher. They hadn't had one until that year, so I did take English from a man who was not an engineer. But I had physics from [John W.] "Cap" Kidd*, who is a legend in this school. Since I had not had it in high school, I had a rough time.

Cap Kidd was an institution around here. He was a fine engineer — that was his profession, a civil engineer. I don't think he disliked me, but I had the feeling all the time that he probably wished I wasn't there because I was a girl! And I would've just died before I would've asked him to explain anything to me, because I was really afraid of him. And I passed the physics course, and then the next year I took advanced math from him. His personality was so unusual, and I couldn't imagine anybody ever opposing him on anything. And yet he loved those boys; he loved the school; he'd do anything to promote the school!

But along the first of April war was declared in Europe, and we lost some of our students. They just couldn't wait to go down and enlist. Now, Tom Clements was one of the students that enlisted in the navy. I knew him in high school, and I'll never forget a date I had with him. He wanted to go see one of the D.W. Griffith films downtown; I think it was "Birth of a Nation." Anyway, when he came to get me and we got on a streetcar to ride to town, he brought a box of candy. We sat there and ate almost all that box of candy that afternoon. Then they brought a whole lot of recruits in for the war, to train them at Fort Bliss. I found me a soldier, so I wasn't interested in any of the college boys anymore. He was a preacher's son from Illinois and was lonesome. And my mother took everybody under her wing. I went with him quite a while, but finally we went different paths.

[There was a fire at the school that year, but] I don't think they discovered who set it. As I remember it happened on a weekend. When we

came back to school on Monday morning, there was nothing left except a lot of rocks and pillars of the Main Building. Well, they patched up the building that they were using for a boys' dormitory. Of course, they didn't have any girls, so they didn't need anything else. They had it switched around and put classrooms in some of the rooms. And our chemistry lab was in a temporary building that they erected; it was just mostly sheet iron. We continued there the rest of the year under those conditions, which were rough. But I was so involved in my classes that it didn't bother me.

There were more girl students in the second year I was at school. [That's when] they were building the new campus. There were three buildings. They hurt my feelings [now] by saying "Old" Main. It was the Main Building! They would finish up one floor of a building, and then they'd let you come out for the classes in that building. Otherwise during my second year, we met in an old Jewish synagogue. It was the rabbi who instigated this college idea, community college I think they called it. And then's when the girls came in. What he wanted and what Mr. [A.H.] Hughey*, who had been my high school principal wanted, was to make a teachers' college out of this whole business. There was quite a hassle over that, I think. But at any rate, they opened up this section for education courses. In fact, I got my certificate while it was still the School of Mines. Everything aimed toward the new campus, toward getting some buildings, getting things started. And then of course, when all these people came in for the combination junior college and the School of Mines, then's when they hired the women teachers, and more men teachers, too.

The reason I stayed a third year was because Mr. Frank Seamon* wanted me to take a job as the freshman lab instructor and lab assistant. He had more work than he could do, so they offered me thirty dollars a month, and that was too good to pass up. I ended up taking a harum-scarum course [load] of most everything that I could find, in order to get more hours. I took assaying as a chemistry course. I took a lot of geology courses because it was allied with the science field, and my professor was Mr. [H.D.] Pallister*. Another university sent bushels of fossils, unclassified. Mr. Pallister told me that if I would classify those fossils, he'd give me an hour's credit. And you talk about getting into work! I practically lived in that place, because every fossil had to be checked according to pictures

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and descriptions. I didn't know there were so many kinds of gastropods in the world!

The biggest objection most of the students had to the new location was the fumes from the smelter. They were pretty bad sometimes; I don't think they've conquered that yet. And at that time they were doing a land office business. Mr. Seamon always went to the smelter and got samples that their chemists had tested. We had to run the tests and get the same results, or we didn't pass the work. That was good training, but it was hard.

[I would ride the streetcar] up Mesa Avenue. I still had about the same distance to walk as I did at Fort Bliss. It was very rocky, and I remember I'd get so tired climbing the hill up to the streetcar in the afternoons. It was a long pull! I'd watch and see if Cap Kidd was ready to leave. He had an old Hupmobile, and he'd always pick up anybody who was walking and take them up to the streetcar. Of course, I had to transfer when I got downtown. But everybody did it; you didn't think too much about it.

I wore middies and pleated skirts. And every Sunday I had to iron those pleated skirts, starch them, and then wet them real wet and pin them to the ironing board with pins to hold the pleats down and iron those pleats until they got dry. That's a job! But that was the uniform, and if you were really stylish you got them tailor-made.

I think I had a little something I carried my lunch in, like a thermos kit or something. We didn't brown-bag it like we do now. They served food to the boys in the dorms, but not one time did they ever ask me to eat over there. I think that was their territory. And I didn't mind. Miss Ruth Augur was the registrar, and she was sweet to me, so we used to stay together. We ate together.

I remember I went to school every day, especially in [my] third year. I worked all afternoon. Of course, I had all that lab work to do in both geology and chemistry, and I had no free time in the morning. A lot of my classes were getting pretty hard. But all of my classmates were serious about getting an education. They didn't fool around.

I made all A's in those three math courses my freshman year. That helped my feelings, and I think I must have done pretty well in chemistry, or Mr. Seamon wouldn't have put up with me. He had the reputation of being very strict and very hard, but it was a blessing. Unless you learn it right and do it right, it's no good. When I look back on it, I think Mr. Seamon's influence on me was the thing. In fact, twenty years later when

Ruth Brown McCluney

World War III started, I went to work at General Dynamics at Fort Worth in the chemistry lab, using the techniques that Mr. Seamon had taught me.

Interviewed by Rebecca Craverr and Vicki L. Ruiz, October 21, 1983, El Paso.

No freshman was allowed to sit on that bench. That was the holy of holies.

Fay Wynn Nelson

Student, 1929-1935; 1954-1956

We were connected with [the University] so long and for so many years and saw it [grow] from such a little school to what it is now. It's very dear to my heart. Of course, [my husband] Lloyd* was there forty-four years. Isn't that something? Lloyd, Vere Leasure, and Clyde Ney had been to the New Mexico School of Mines, which was in Socorro, New Mexico. They had been there two years. When this school opened in 1914, they came here. They are the first three graduates. They called it the Texas School of Mines, and then later it became Texas School of Mines and Metallurgy. It was put here because there were so many boys from Mexico in this area who wanted to come to a mining school. At that time mining was very important.

The first administrator was Dean [S.H.] Worrell*. He was a very distinguished looking man with a goatee and was perfectly groomed, never a hair out of place. The boys liked him very much. Mrs. Worrell was very nice. She did a lot of traveling. It was through her travels and her desire, when they started the School of Mines over here on this side [of the mountain], to make the buildings in the Bhutanese [style]. After that, John W. Kidd* came here, and of course he was instrumental in really making

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the school. He was *very* popular with the boys. He was a short, fat man with a tummy. And Nina Kidd was a great person.

Dean Kidd asked Lloyd if he would fill a two months' position, and he did. Then Lloyd had an opportunity to go to Santa Rita, [New Mexico], to the Kennecott [Copper Company] and to work in the office. So we were there for ten months, I think. Then one night he came home from the office, and he said, "Honey, I had a call from Dean Kidd today. He asked me if I'd like to come and take a place in the Engineering Department. I'd like to try it." And we were there forty-four years. He came to stay just a little while and stayed forty-four years.

The school was placed on this side [in its current location]. They had [several] buildings, but they didn't have a bookstore. They'd have to get their books at a bookstore downtown. But they had a little room down on the first floor [of Old Main]. The students I guess were running it, and they'd just have books once in a while. Somebody came to Lloyd and said, "Prof, how about buying the bookstore?" Well, it was debts, that's what it was. Anyway, Lloyd and Gideon Fisher, an older student, decided they'd buy the Co-op. They put in books which were necessary for the students, and they only opened it between classes. Well, then it outgrew that little room, so they decided to put the Co-op in a [larger] room on the left-hand side of Old Main on the first floor.

By that time it was progressing to where it was open all the time. Not only did they have books, they had Cokes and sodas. The students had no Student Union, no place to meet. So along this side, I can see that old bench. My brother A.O. Wynn, the manager of the Co-op for several years, [can't recall] where that old bench came from. It was just an old wooden bench, splintery and everything. And it was all the length of that south wall. And I want you to know that was the meeting place between classes for all the school. If there was an election going on, that's where the candidates met. Many love affairs [began there]. They'd sit and giggle at each other. No freshman was allowed to sit on that bench. That was the holy of holies.

The first faculty were all good friends of the boys. They had a Professor [H.D.] Pallister* that the boys were very fond of, and then they had two Seamons. W.H. Seamon*, the elder man, and his wife were very popular with the student body. Every Sunday evening they had open house for the boys and the faculty. Of course, the faculty wasn't very big. And

the boys could come and bring their girl friends, and they had something to eat and music and dance. They had that great big veranda. Then there was a [relative], and his name was Frank Seamon*. He was in the Science Department, and he was popular, too.

Howard Quinn* came two years after Lloyd. He and Lloyd had the Geology Department for many years, and they shared the same office. Mary Quinn and I used to have a tradition that every time a new faculty member came she and I would take the wife — sometimes we'd include the men, but not often — and we'd go to lunch at El Minuto, which was a Mexican restaurant down on Second Street. It was considered the best place in town to get Mexican food. That was their initiation into the faculty.

Lloyd was the sponsor of the APOs [Alpha Phi Omega*], which is the engineering fraternity. And in those days they had St. Pat's Day. Of course St. Pat is the patron saint [of engineers]. And Lloyd and I were always asked to chaperone the picnic. We always looked forward to it on the seventeenth of March. I often think of the fun we used to have. Dean and Mrs. Kidd were usually there with us. They would go out to the tin mine up near Oro Grande. They would take those freshmen, and they'd line them up just like a herd [and] blindfold them. They'd make them crawl on their hands and knees through that tunnel. St. Pat was inside the tunnel. When they got there, some person would take a stick that had cotton on the end of it, and they'd jab it in their mouths. [On the stick] was the vilest [mixture]. I'm sure it must have been horrible from the expressions on these boys' faces! Then, they would take the blindfold off, and they met St. Pat. They were initiated then. After all the boys had gone through, then they'd have a big picnic. They'd have barbecue, beans, potato salad, and lots of things to drink. I don't mean hard liquor, but probably beer. Anyway, they had lots of fun.

I got my B.A. in Education in '35. I taught here in the city schools for many years, and I got my master's in 1956. When I was getting my master's I would take courses after school or at night or in the summer. They didn't have the quick registration by machine. We lined up and went through. I remember Dr. [Anton] Berkman*. He was a real good friend of ours. Tony was always on the registration line, and he'd say, "Oh, no, not [you] again!" I had the responsibilities of my home and my two children and husband, but I had the encouragement. Lloyd encouraged me and helped me out so much.

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I took a course in trigonometry from Lloyd one summer. During class he wouldn't say "Mrs. Nelson" or "Fay." He'd say, "You." I never worked as hard in my life as I did on that course, and I made a B. One of the other professors said to me, "Fay, do you mean to tell me you let him get away with that, that he only gave you a B?" And I said, "My goodness, I was so grateful to get it." So they were talking to Lloyd, and Lloyd said, "Oh, my! That was some summer. I had trigonometry for breakfast, I had it for lunch, and I had it for supper, and then after I went to bed!"

Lloyd loved the school. He and the boys were very close, and there was a feeling amongst them that was very fraternal. He was very popular with the Mexican engineers because he spoke their language. He was born in Santa Rita, New Mexico, in a mining town, and he spoke Spanish, but it was down to earth, what the kids talked. Where you would say, "*Como está Ud.?*" he'd say, "*Qué tal?*" out of the corner of his mouth. Well, that of course used to sway them. And then he'd say something to them in Spanish which sometimes I don't think was too [proper]!

I was greatly touched by the chair that they [established] in honor of Lloyd. [The development office] always sends me notice whenever anybody has donated to the Lloyd A. Nelson Chair, and I always sit down and write a note to these boys. And I am really amazed, because these men are successful businessmen. Some of them live in New York; some of them live in Mexico; they live all over. And it wrings your heart to think that they remember. They loved Lloyd, and Lloyd loved them.

Interviewed by Rebecca Craver, January 16, 1984, El Paso.

*My, it was fun! We had an awfully good time. . . .
I was always a little afraid my paycheck would come
with an amusement tax on it.*

Mary Kelly Quinn

[1900-1989]

Faculty, 1925-1945; 1947-1965

I never went to the College as a student, but my sisters, Anne and Charlee, were students out there in the days when it was a ripsnorting mining school. Anne was there in 1921 and 1922, I guess, and Charlee must have been there in '22. I graduated from Wellesley, and then I came in '25. When I [started] teaching, there were something like seventy-eight students. Howard [Quinn*] was at the College a year before I was.

Well, I tell you, you've heard about these people in the colleges that have a chair? Well, I had a sofa. Originally what I had intended to teach was English, but Mr. [E.A.] Drake* wanted to teach English. So he taught English, and I taught history. I taught American history, I taught ancient history, I taught psychology, and when the school got big enough, then I taught sociology. Let's put it this way: I don't know what I taught, but those were the classes I held. Sociology [became] a separate department only one year before I retired. Originally it was history, government, and sociology all in one group.

There are two courses I taught out there that I loved better than any. One of them was "Comparative Cultures, The United States and Mexico."

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Now are the days when there are people starving for Mexican courses; I think of the days when I used to have to go around and invite them in. I thought it was a disgrace for people to grow up on the border and not know the two countries. The other thing was: I thought it was a disgrace that a number of Americans of Mexican descent had no pride in their background. I don't mean get out there and demonstrate; that's not my idea of pride. But they didn't know their background. And so I just adored that course. That was my love.

The other one was a course in marriage and family living. It was open originally to sophomores without any prerequisite, but it was not the juicy course that you think. It was intended to teach people to act like human beings in a marriage. I enjoyed it, and the students found it very practical. I always think of two boys that came up at the end of the first semester I taught it, and they said, "We enjoyed your course." I always distrust people who tell me that. And I said, "You did?" One of them said, "Mrs. Quinn, I think we ought to tell you the truth. We took that course because we found a woman teaching a course in marriage and family living, and we thought we could give you a hard time. It wasn't that kind of course at all; it was a practical course."

Before we were married, Howard and I were both on the staff. We had permission in writing from the Regents to continue to teach after the marriage. But the Texas Legislature, many years later, when I was a much better teacher and had better training, passed a [Texas Employment] law* that a man and his wife could not both draw pay from the state [if they taught at the same institution]. The law was aimed at a man at [Texas] A&M. It was slipped through when the legislature was away one weekend, and then when the bill came out, here this was, that a man and his wife couldn't both work. Dr. [D.M.] Wiggins* was president at the time, and I always thought he didn't play quite fair there. He didn't say, "Are you or Howard going to stay?" He made it very plain he was keeping Howard, and I could do anything I pleased. Well, I decided I didn't want to teach in the city schools; they wouldn't pay me enough. So I sold life insurance.

I think there's a person who should be mentioned in any history of the College, and that is Mrs. W.H. Seamon. Mrs. Seamon was a Campbell from Virginia. They traced her line down from George Washington and Martha Washington. She was the most perfect lady I have ever known,

in a sweet, gentle way. Her father was killed during the War Between the States, when she was about three years old. She told me one time that she remembered the sadness of the time. Anyhow, she married W.H. Seamon*. With the background of all the Virginia gentility that could possibly be, Mrs. Seamon came down here with him, and she camped all over Mexico. At one time her husband was Villa's chief geologist and engineer in Mexico, when Villa was in charge of northern Mexico.

W.H. Seamon became head of the Geology Department. We had no recreation rooms or anything of that kind up there, so Mrs. Seamon opened her home every Sunday night to every student of the College and his girl or her date. She had a buffet for us. As Mickey McGee Goodwin said, "If you didn't get taken to Mrs. Seamon's on Sunday night, you weren't anybody." For years she had that Sunday night open house. She asked all the students, and she was perfectly charming to them. She taught a lot of us the first manners that we had ever been exposed to. She was just perfectly adorable to everybody.

We had no medical facilities at the College at all. You have no idea of the bare bones of the College. Well, Dr. Dale was one of the students, and he had the flu. She took him to her house, and he stayed there, and she nursed him until he was well. Seamon Hall is named for W.H. Seamon, but I don't think any history of the College should ever be written without including Mrs. Seamon.

Ruth Augur* was the registrar, and she was one of the most colorful mortals we ever had. She was quite a character. I can still remember there was a phone in her office, and Cap — that's Dean [John W.] Kidd* — Cap's office was down here on the other side of the stairwell, in the Main Building. Ruth Augur would step out here and scream, "Cap, Cap, someone wants you on the phone!" Cap would take down his extension and talk on the phone. It apparently never occurred to anybody to invest the money to have a buzzer from place to place, or two phones.

The other thing I remember about Ruth was when I was in her office one day, and this boy came in and put down ten dollars. She said, "Now just a minute," and she got out a little index card and marked it off. He was paying his tuition, piecemeal, as the semester went along. The school was small enough, and she knew at the end of the year his tuition would be paid.

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It's a different age. My, it was fun! We had an awfully good time. At least I did. You know, I was always a little afraid my paycheck would come with an amusement tax on it. It never did, but I always thought someday it might.

Interviewed by David Salazar and Mildred Torok, March 8 and 15, 1973, El Paso.

You'd tackle someone, and your hands would slide on the ground, and you'd pick up the gravel. . . . I played center, so when I'd get over the ball, why there was always blood on the ball!

Thad A. Steele

[1907-1990]

Student, 1928-1932

I came [to the College of Mines] from a junior college up in Oklahoma, looking for a place to finish school. And being an athlete, why, I was naturally looking for a place where I could go and play. I could come to the College of Mines and be eligible immediately, so I came out here on an athletic scholarship.

We had a group of people in El Paso that were trying to build up the athletic part of the school, so [they provided jobs to athletes] all over town, like in the courthouse, where there'd be one in the tax collector's office and one in the Sheriff's Department, several people in the fire stations, some at the smelter, some at the cement company. All over town you had a job, and you had to work. You worked, and you got room and board [and] fifty dollars a month.

The first year I worked at the tax collector's office and in the [city] engineer's office. The last two years I worked for El Paso Natural Gas Company. The first year I lived in a home, with a family, and they provided just a place to sleep. After that, we had a dormitory, and I lived there.

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The coach when I came here was a fellow named B.J. "Doc" Stewart. He had coached at The University of Texas, and he brought out his captain of the football team, a fellow named Mack Saxon, as his assistant. So the first year that I was here, it was Doc Stewart and Saxon, and then the rest of the time it was Mack Saxon and Harry Phillips. We had two coaches in those days. Big staff!

We had a practice field right back of the dormitory, and there was very little grass on it. It was mostly gravel and just a few little concrete steps out where people could sit. But you couldn't play a football game there. We played our games at the El Paso High School stadium. They had very little grass there, I can assure you. You'd tackle someone, and your hands would slide on the ground, and you'd pick up the gravel. The fact is, I still have scars on my hands. I played center, so when I'd get over the ball, why there was always blood on the ball!

We played Arizona, the New Mexico Military Institute, Hardin-Simmons University, New Mexico School of Mines, Arizona State, and The University of Texas. The last three years that I played football, we only lost one game a year, which was a whale of a record in those days. I'd have to get my schedule so I'd have the afternoon to practice football and basketball and baseball, whatever sport I was involved in. I played all of them. I was the "Outstanding Athlete" two years in a row.

The freshmen in those days had to wear green beanies. Usually right at the beginning of school [in the fall] they had what they called "M" Day. You would enlist the freshmen to do all the hard work. They had a lot of overseers. The "M" was up on the side of the mountain [above Scenic Drive]. They'd carry the lime up there and the water, and they'd mix it and paint the "M." It was a big day. The kids would be just covered with that lime. At Homecoming they'd light the "M" at night. They'd go up there with some kind of an oil, and they would outline the "M" with fire. They'd keep it burning all night.

We did some of the meanest pranks. We had a fellow that we all liked, and somebody told him that his feet smelled. They took some Limburger cheese, and they smeared it in his shoes. He had a little throw rug in his dormitory room, so they lifted up the throw rug and rubbed this Limburger cheese [there]. He didn't have a car, but we put some on the exhaust pipe of another car. And this guy that had the car told him, "I don't want you riding in my car anymore. You smelled up my car!" So everybody

was complaining about his feet smelling. He would wash them; he would douse them with talcum powder; he would do all of that.

We didn't have many cars in those days. There were only four people in the dormitory with cars most of the time that I was going to school there. They had touring cars, and you could get six, seven, eight [in them]. We belonged to the nickel beer group, and they'd come through the dorm and holler out, "Today is nickel beer day!" Boy, we'd load up that car, and we'd all go to Juarez. For a nickel you could get a beer and a free lunch — a taco or a bowl of chili. You could go to four bars, and for twenty cents you would have all of this.

You could go to Juarez and buy a keg of beer and take it to "the Rocks" down on the river and have your beer bust down there. "The Rocks" were below the Hacienda [Restaurant] going around the curve down there off to the right. What happened was that the [Rio Grande] made a curve, and washed-out rocks were exposed on a high rise. That was what we called "the Rocks."

I used to promote dances. J.B. Andrews was my very good friend, and he conceived the idea that we ought to promote dances. So we went into partnership. They'd be at the Woman's Club or maybe at one of the hotels or at the Toltec Club, which used to be the Elks Club. The Lillian Jackson Band would always play. Sometimes we'd make more money off selling the soft drinks than we'd make off the entry fee to get in.

They always had the Hard Luck Dance. What I did once, I'll explain. I put on a pair of blue jeans and wrapped them around, and I put strings around them so they would fit tight, and I used a shirt and a sweat shirt. Then I had a big pair of long john underwear, [which] had the trap door on the back. When the dance was going on real fine, and everybody was out on the dance floor, I went in. I had on a hat and a long overcoat. I just walked in and shot my hat off and took the coat off. I stepped out on the dance floor and tagged a girl. I'll tell you, when they saw me in my underwear, why, the dance stopped! Everyone just backed off, and they left the two of us on the floor. Then finally whoever the [chaperone was] told us, "Thad, I think your joke has gone far enough. You'd better get decent." Then I just started undressing. I peeled it off right there in front of them. We had fun in those days.

I was in Dr. [Howard] Quinn's* geology class [where] you have to identify rocks and all of that. Well, it was a tough course, and I was barely getting

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by. I came back home from Christmas vacation with chicken pox, and they quarantined me in my room. I was living in a room downtown in a rooming house. And since I had chicken pox I couldn't take my exams, so they postponed them to the next term. I was going to take this make-up test. Dr. Quinn told me there wasn't any use in me taking it, that I wouldn't pass. I said, "Well, I need that credit." And he said, "Well, no use for me to give you a test, because you're going to flunk it."

I went to Dr. [Lloyd A.] Speedy Nelson*, and I told him my problem. He said, "Well, I'll help you pass that course." So he got the last six exams that had been given by Dr. Quinn, and he told me if I would study those six quizzes, he thought I could pass the course. And by golly I studied on it for about six weeks. Then I told Dr. Quinn I wanted to take the test, and he reluctantly scheduled it for me. I'm sure he just went through the test papers and pulled out one and said, "Here's your test." I know that I must have made a 90 or above on the test, but he told me that I got a D double minus, D being passing. I told him I wanted to review that with him. I said, "Dr Quinn, I thought I had prepared myself real well for this test, and I'd like to have you go over that paper once more." He didn't volunteer that he would do it, but I got it changed to a D. He erased the double minuses!

I'll tell you another story about that Speedy Nelson. We were going on a geology [field] trip, and Speedy and Berte Haigh* were heads of the trip. There were sixteen of us in the group, and we went maybe 100 miles east of here up in the mountains. We plotted and surveyed the levels, the grades, and we got samples of rocks and fossils. We classified everything. We were there two months. They had several big tents, and we had our cots.

Anyhow, the first night we were there, we got in a poker game, and I won about twenty-five dollars. I gave Speedy Nelson twenty dollars the next morning, and I said, "Now, I want you to keep this until the camp is over, and I'll get it back in El Paso." About three nights later we were in a poker game, and I went broke. I went to Speedy for some money. And Speedy said, "No. I keep my promise. You asked me if I would keep this for you until you got back to El Paso. So I'm keeping my promise. I will give it to you in El Paso." I didn't get my twenty dollars until I got back home. But I thought that was a good lesson he was trying to teach me. He was quite a guy.

Thad A. Steele

I was trying to major in geology. The last two years that I was in school, it was during the depression, and people were out of jobs. Even people with degrees that had been working for a mining company were back home without a job and taking a refresher course. So I changed my major the last year, and I qualified for teaching and coaching. After coaching for four years, I looked at all the businesses around here that I thought I would like to work for, because I couldn't see any future in high school coaching as a lifetime job. I started working for Southwestern Portland Cement Company, and I was with them thirty-nine years.

Interviewed by Rebecca Craver, December 6, 1983, El Paso.

Those people down there . . . could never think of us as anything but a little cow college out in the sticks, where we probably went barefoot across the campus on cowtrails.

C.L. Sonnichsen

[1901-1991]

Faculty, 1930-1972

I belonged to the Harvard Glee Club, and I went out on the spring trip in 1927. That was the year I took my master's degree. When the spring trip was over I came back, and all the good university jobs had been picked over. The best thing I could get was a job at Carnegie Tech, where I stayed for two years. Then I went back to Harvard and finished my doctorate. Naturally I was pretty nearly out of money.

I needed a summer job, and one came up at the Texas School of Mines. It hadn't become really a college yet. It wasn't a four-year college until the fall after I got there. There were eight applicants, and I got the job. I am perfectly sure that I got it because I'd had experience in a technical school teaching English. That means that since I had to go to a technical school because I got back late after being out with the Harvard Glee Club, my tonsils are responsible for the whole thing.

I came in the summer [of 1930]. Summer school was just getting started. It was a very bleak and barren place. You know what it must have looked like up there on the hill with hardly anything. Those junipers in front

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of Old Main had just been planted by a janitor named Gabriel. But that was about the only greenery we had around there. We had tennis courts down where the [Psychology Building] is now, and the engineers used to play tennis in their high boots. It was really a wretched place.

I didn't want to stay. In fact, I thought that I would go home as soon as this summer was over. I wanted to go back to the green East, but that was the year that the bottom dropped out. The depression was on, and there were no jobs back in the East. So I thought, "Well, maybe I better stay here. I will stay if they ask me." They didn't ask me, though. It got halfway through the summer, and I had no job for the fall, so I had to do something. Our first president had been appointed. His name was John G. Barry*. He was a consulting geologist and had an office in the Mills Building. I thought, "Well, I'll go see him. It can't hurt." I went down to see Barry, and there was a barrier — his wife [Alice]. She was his secretary, and one had to go through her. I thought, "Well, I'll do the best I can." I told her who I was and what I needed, and then I found out that she had been Miss Pierce of Boston, who had run Miss Pierce's School for Girls. She knew all the places where I hung out in Cambridge and Boston. We had the best time, and I was hired without a bit of trouble.

I caused a good deal of discontent. You see, I [was one of] four Ph.D.'s brought in that fall for the beginning of the school as a four-year college. The faculty who were there already resented us very badly. They had M.A.'s, but there were no Ph.D.'s on the faculty. So they went down to see Barry to try to tell him that they thought the present staff was adequate and they didn't need all these people with advanced degrees.

The dormitory was right next door to old Keno Hall*. That was where all the boys lived, and that's where I stayed the first summer I was there. They had their all-night poker games; they had all kinds of goings-on over there. They'd just pop over [to class] without bothering to put on a shirt and tie. They'd sit there and listen to their lectures, and the profs didn't seem to mind. It was a disorderly, male environment. When the women came in, I think they were a little bit resentful because they had to spruce up.

There were lots of pranks in the dorm. It was a prankish place. We had a club [the Purity Squad] — I wasn't a member — that was devoted to the observations of life in what you might call the raw. There was a little hill over where the old stadium is now. It was a favorite place for

people to park for romantic reasons. So the members of this club used to climb up on top of that little hill where nobody could see them, or they thought nobody could see them, and see what went on. You know, they say you can learn more about life outside the classroom than in, and they were putting that to the test. I can remember when the club broke up. We had a boy from Buffalo named Rudolph Koukal, who was an enthusiastic member. Somebody saw him up there. They were carrying a shotgun, and they took a shot at him! I saw him come over the hill with his shirttail flying out behind him and his face as white as a sheet. That was the breakup of the observers' club.

At the beginning, of course, it was an engineering school, and the engineers thought that it was something that was reserved for them. They didn't like the academic side. They realized that you had to have some academic courses, but they didn't like very much to have the tail wag the dog. I remember the first sign of that came when we had our first graduation class. We had had graduations in which the kids didn't get degrees [but instead received] certificates for mining specialist. But now we're going to have degrees, and the graduating seniors wanted caps and gowns and all the academic regalia. It came up at a big faculty meeting. Dean [John W.] Kidd*, the engineering dean, said he was not in favor of it, that it did not fit in with the purposes of this school. He said he voted for democratic dress. But they outvoted him. I think [the ceremony] that we have now is a result of that. I think old Cap Kidd probably turns over in his grave when the mace bearer comes in and the banners follow [with] all those medieval trappings. I don't think he likes that a bit.

The term "Peedoggie"* originated with Dean Kidd. It comes as a corruption of pedagogues. Of course, we had education majors, which would be the opposite, the complete antithesis, of the ideal of the engineer. So Dean Kidd called them Peedoggies with great contempt. He and his students would prove their manhood by sitting on the steps of Old Main chewing tobacco and seeing who could spit the farthest. That was supposed to put the Peedoggies in their place, I guess.

The real fireworks came when we changed our name and became Texas Western College [in] '49. That's when they painted the green line. I was out of town when they painted it, and I didn't know about all this. I'd spent the summer on a research trip, so when I came in I stopped to telephone my wife from a bar out near the airport. Dean [Eugene M.]

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Thomas* was there with a bunch of faculty members and students with their heads all over the table, obviously making medicine. They were going to do something about this name change.

They did. They drew the green line. It was just to the northwest of the Main Building, and they drew it across to the other side of the campus. On one side it said TCM, and on the other side it said TWC. There was an unspoken rule that TWC was not supposed to cross the line. The idea was: Let's keep this thing separate. The feeling got so spiteful that the president had to call Dean Thomas in and tell him to get that [line] off of there and stop this foolishness, which he did.

Mexican students were with us from the beginning. They tell me a fourth of the mining engineers in Mexico were trained at our university, so we had particularly strong representation from good Mexican boys who came up and took our courses. There was one named Trespalacios that I remember, and Emilio Peinado, who became a builder. There was a problem about social life. For instance, for a while they didn't get into sororities. Then several people who were of mixed blood got in. I was the sponsor of the first Mexican social group. We had considerable debate about what to call it, so we called it Mu Epsilon Chi — MEX. Eventually they got rid of the name because they felt that there was an implication of condescension. I was out of it by then, but they just naturally disappeared after a while. But I was happy that I could do what I could to further the cause with respect to the first Latin American fraternity, and it makes me happy that things are better now.

I felt that the University's main reason for being was that we had a chance to work with these two cultures and that our situation demanded it. I think they have done it more and more, and that's what they ought to do. We don't take advantage of that opportunity. If we try to be "Harvard on the Border," if we try to be a medieval university with chains of office and so on, we are far astray.

I've served under a lot of different administrations, from the beginning as a four-year college right up to 1972, when I retired. The first president, Barry, was a shift boss. He was a mining engineer, and he commanded the faculty; that's what he did. He didn't make [quite] all the decisions himself. He called faculty meetings whenever he was in doubt, so we had innumerable meetings on the top floor of Old Main. I can remember Mr. [E.A.] Drake* and me going up the stairs together to another

one. Mr. Drake would stomp on the stairs and say, "Damn, (stomp), damn, (stomp), damn, (stomp)," like that, because he didn't like them.

Dr. [Dossie M.] Wiggins* came in as president [in 1935]. He was a businessman; he stood in very well with the people downtown. He didn't have the same ideas that most academically trained presidents have. He was a specialist in education from Hardin-Simmons. He was the one who called a faculty meeting one time and said that there was some dissatisfaction about the way the faculty was being treated. He said he wanted us to know that he took the same attitude towards the faculty that he would have if he was buying mules. [He] said it was his business to get as much mule for his money as he could.

What was bringing this on was that there was beginning to be a demand for research, and he didn't think that we could ever be a research institution. He said we were a teaching institution. "If you want to do research, you can do it on your own time," he said. "And if that isn't the way you like it, I will be glad to write you a recommendation for any school you want to go to." That was when Dr. [Frederick W.] Bachmann* invited us to his home to see a new faculty picture be unveiled, a picture of the twenty-mule borax team. After that he always called us "Dossie's mules." So we had our growing up to do about relations between the faculty and the administration. It was a long time before we had faculty representation [on] any kind of body which could at least recommend a course of action to the administration, but finally that happened.

I remember we did waste a lot of time. When Dr. [Joseph R.] Smiley* was elected for his second administration [1969-1972], we had a selection committee the way we always do. We were told by these people in Austin that Smiley was not to be considered as a candidate, so we considered everybody else. We brought them in from as far away as Indonesia and wined them and dined them. Then we got a message [from the chancellor of The University of Texas System] that Dr. Smiley was the preferred candidate. I do not know what machinations went on backstage. Of course, Smiley had been at the University [of Texas in Austin] and did a good job down there, so after all our deliberations we were practically instructed which man to choose. Since we all liked Smiley, we were glad to do it, but you have to till the soil and plant the seeds before the faculty is regarded as anything more than hired help. After a while we became professors that had some dignity, but it took a little while.

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My Southwest Literature class was the course that I was the most enthusiastic about. I think it was good for these kids to learn about their own background. I went at it pretty hard, and we had fun in the class. We talked about a lot of things that were not strictly academic. I remember I used to always have a folk song session. I'd bring the guitar, and sometimes I brought some other musicians. I had this old folk song sheet, and we would sing folk songs. I can remember that Dr. Wiggins saw me going across the campus one time with my guitar, and he says, "Where you going with that?" I said, "I'm going to teach my class." And he said, "You be careful."

When I was dean of the Graduate School, I kept two courses. I taught half-time while I was a full-time dean. That was a good idea, because if you give up those classes you don't get them back; they get somebody else in to teach them. I taught two classes and was able to rotate them, and I kept pretty nearly my full repertory of courses. When I had to go back to full-time teaching, then I had something to teach.

It was awfully hard for us to justify graduate work. The big hassle came when we set up a system-wide graduate school. That was while I was dean, in the early 1960s. I made innumerable trips to Austin to the graduate school meeting. All the deans from all the graduate schools came in, and we hoped that maybe we would have an interchange of courses. That was where we went aground with The University of Texas. They were not about to admit that the graduate courses we taught were on a par with theirs. So when we tried to get that implemented, the whole thing just collapsed.

But you see, the big trouble was [that] all those people down there, many of them from the East, could never think of us as anything but a little cow college out in the sticks where we probably went barefoot across the campus on cow trails. They still have that image. So when Dr. [Joseph M.] Ray* was president, he got around to changing that image. He made sure that they saw what we had. He would ask for a departmental evaluation, and he'd have somebody from Austin come out and look us over. They always went back with a much better impression that they'd had before, because they had never seen us. They didn't know anything about us, and you always feel that anything you don't know about must be inferior. That's human nature. He managed to change that image a good deal by just bringing them out there and letting them look.

I got a lift out of teaching, and I always felt better after I had been in class. I loved to teach these kids. The funny thing was that when it was time for me to stop teaching, I left my last class without any great regret — no ceremony or tears or anything. I just taught it, and that was the end. I had been approached by the Arizona Historical Society about a job. They needed an editor. I thought I could do it, so I accepted. That was probably healthy for me. At seventy you don't always have a new life. I had a new one, and it was a pretty good one. I don't understand anybody who retires and finds himself bored to death. It seems to me that you should prepare for your retirement just as you've prepared for life.

Interviewed by Rebecca Craver and Vicki L. Ruiz, January 13, 1984, Tucson, Arizona.

He wasn't too patient with the Peedoggies . . . He enjoyed setting off dynamite where they were because it made them nervous!*

Berte R. Haigh

[1890-1986]

Student, 1921-1925

Faculty, 1928-1934

Frankly, when I first entered here, I wasn't exactly sure what geology was. I wanted to be a mining engineer. I was sent here by the Veterans' Division of the Public Health Service as a World War I veteran. I came here for disability rehabilitation [in] October, 1921. The College was already here on the mesa, and there were five buildings: Old Main, the Power Building, Seamon Hall, two dormitories, and [John W.] Cap Kidd's* residence. At the time I came here, it was not Cap Kidd's [home]; it was S.H. Worrell's*, who was the dean. He called me in for an interview to find out why I was here. We got along all right, but he was rather aloof.

The first class I walked into after I got through registering was a class in algebra. [Lloyd A.] Speedy Nelson* was the teacher. I had W.H. Seamon* in geology, F.A. Seamon* in chemistry, Cap Kidd in mathematics, Arthur Pearson in physics. E.A. Drake* was one of my professors, and [so was] Mary Quinn, who was Mary Kelly then. I took a course in history under her my senior year. She was the only woman on the faculty

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at that time. My modern language teacher was Manuel Enriquez. We called him Henry. I think he left about '27, because he wasn't here when I came back in '28. It was a small staff, but very, very efficient. We had five girls when I was here. None of them completed the course. They went off to somewhere or another, and of course the other degrees were not available at that time.

Cap Kidd got along with his students very well. There were a few of them that took quite a while to understand him, but Cap was very helpful. He wasn't too patient with the Peedoggies*. No, he was not, there's no question. He enjoyed setting off dynamite where they were because it made them nervous! I think he was little rougher on them than he was on the engineers.

He could be awful rough if you went contrary to him, and he was a master of sarcasm. He could flay you unmercifully, but there was always something behind it. He didn't use sarcasm just for the sake of showing that he was the prof. There was a meaning behind it. He taught me a lesson one day in a class in calculus. When Cap was teaching lecture classes, he would always start off and give us a thirty-minute dissertation on the politics of the subject at hand. This particular time he had assigned five problems, and for some unknown reason I had actually tried to work them. I got stuck on one. I worked that thing back and forth, went through it three or four times, and I got stuck in that same mud hole every time. I finally gave up and went to bed. After about four hours' sleep, I walked out here. I was living at the American Legion. We all had to walk to school then; [we] didn't have buses and cars. I got in calculus class, and Cap gave his usual dissertation. Then he said, "Well, gentlemen, I think it probably would be presumptuous on my part to assume that anybody worked these problems that I assigned, but in the event that some of you did and had a little trouble, tell us about it."

Well, I popped off and told him about my trouble. He said, "All right, come up here and put it on the board." I guess I worked from memory, and I went up there. I put that thing back and forth across the board, and I got down to that same mud hole. I say, "Well, here we are, Cap, wheels are spinning." That may sound a little familiar, but we called him Cap. He liked it. Cap was sitting on the front row with a yardstick in his hand, rocking it back and forth across his knees, and I could see his eyes going back and forth across the blackboard. Finally he said, "Haigh, I've

been waitin' for this a long time. Sit down, and I'll show you how big a damn fool you are." He walked over to the blackboard and picked up the eraser and made one swap. I had an $(a+b)$ and an $(a-b)$ and forgot to cancel them out. But he taught me right then to triple check. That's the way Cap was.

Cap knew all the mining men here in town. He was a very active member of the AIME [American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers], and I think he was a charter member of the El Paso engineers' association. He had a very wide acquaintance. Everybody that knew him, knew his efficiency. They also knew that he was absolutely honest and wouldn't recommend a man that he didn't think could do the job. He sent boys to Mexico; he sent boys to South America. We had a large group of graduates working in Bolivia in the tin mines, and there was a great number of graduates who went to the Philippines to work in mines over there.

I arrived here when I was thirty-one years old. That made me about ten years older than anybody else in class. The sophomores were carrying on their regular exercises with the freshmen, and they didn't know what to do with that old man. Finally somebody developed the idea that they might take the old man on a snipe hunt. They approached me on the subject, and I was agreeable. I was a little bit familiar with the southern end of the Franklin Mountains and knew a couple of trails over there, and I also knew about where the location of the snipe was going to be. In fact, I had been on a snipe hunt long before I ever came here. But I went with the boys.

The night I was going to the snipe hunt, I borrowed a car down at the American Legion, an old Model T Ford. I parked it down there by the foot of Mt. Franklin on this side, down below where that beacon light was. The boys took me over to just about the same place, a large flat rock, parked me on that rock with a big gunny sack and a Coleman lantern, and then they took off down the hill. The instant that I could not hear the habrails on the rocks anymore, I took off. I had my trail picked. I came over this way on the mountain, right down to my car. I knew where they were going. And when they walked into the Big Kid Bar in Juarez, I was standing there with my foot on the rail and a schooner of beer. That was the last hazing that happened to me.

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I believe this happened in Kelly Hall. It was at that time a dormitory, and some of the boys came back from Juarez one Saturday night and proceeded to set up garbage cans down at the end of the hall and have target practice. Cap was living right there in his residence, and he was up there right quick. I can't remember all the details, but it was quite a commotion. I do remember those boys had to replace the garbage cans, and they had to hire a contractor to patch the holes in the wall.

I graduated in 1925. They only had seven of us that graduated, all in mining engineering. I reported to San Angelo for the Dixie Oil Company, which became the Pan American, and I stayed with them until 1928, when Cap Kidd invited me to come over there and join the faculty to pinch hit for one year for Speedy Nelson, who was going to Colorado to get his master's degree. And then as soon as he returned, Howard Quinn* was going to Harvard to get his doctor's degree. I came here on a three-year leave of absence from the Dixie Oil Company, and all I was teaching was geology.

At the end of three years, Cap Kidd called me down to his office. [He] told me to get on the telephone and call the people in San Angelo and tell them that I wasn't coming back. And I was then assigned to part-time engineering and part-time geology. I stayed three more years, until '34, at which time they transferred me over to [the University of Texas land management system]. I enjoyed every bit of [my years at Mines]. Probably extracurricular activities were more enjoyable than the teaching was, because I never was cut out for a teacher.

When I graduated in '25, the total enrollment was 127, and when I came back it was 750, because in the meantime, in 1927, they had absorbed the El Paso Junior College. There was quite a division between the Peedoggies, as they called them, and the engineering group. And the engineers I think dressed a little off just on purpose to accentuate their independence. They chewed a little tobacco, but I don't think we had a snuff user in the whole group.

When I came [back to teach] they certainly needed more space, but the acquisition of the space was pretty slow. It was like they just couldn't realize in Austin what was going on out here. I don't think there's any question but that for a good many years we were treated pretty much as a stepchild. There were times that I was convinced that if it hadn't been for friends in the legislature, they would have gotten rid of us.

Of course you've heard the story about how Holliday Hall* was built. Bob Holliday* was a member of the Board of Regents, and Bob Holliday was the strongest supporter among the Board of Regents that the College of Mines ever had. He also had something to do with the local Public Works Administration [in the 1930s]. They were building Scenic Drive, and a great deal of the material that was placed up on Scenic Drive would mysteriously get transferred over here to the campus and was used in the building of that field house. So for a long time — well, all the time I was out here — it was spelled Hauliday, h-a-u-l.

Interviewed by C.L. Sonnichsen, Bud Newman, and Leon Metz, June 3, 1969, El Paso.

*We always had to wear old shoes on campus
because every place you went, there were rocks.*

Lurline Hughes Coltharp

Student, 1929-1931

Faculty, 1954-1981

In 1929 I came out to the Texas College of Mines. When I graduated from high school at fifteen, my parents thought I was too young to go away to school to the big, wicked University [of Texas in Austin]. They kept me at home, and I came out here. I remember that I was allowed to have a car to come up here, but I think it was the family car, and my family had to do without it when I had classes.

The best parking place was the one right in front of what is now known as Old Main. It was just known as Main Building then, and we parked right there. The reason we liked that location is because there were steps there, and you didn't have to get your shoes so scuffed up on the rocks. We always had to wear old shoes on the campus because every place you went, there were rocks. The gathering place was the bookstore. You went inside Old Main and the first room to the right was the bookstore, and we had a lot of fun going in there. There were not only books, but you could buy Cokes, and you could stand around and visit with the boys.

It was the fall or spring of my first year that I took geology. This was lots of fun because I was the only girl in the class. Dr. [Berte] Haigh*

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had an extra class meeting which I was not told about, and he gathered all the boys together and laid down the rules of conduct. One day we were doing plane table work out in back of Kelly Hall. Between Kelly Hall and Old Main was all just rocky terrain then. We had the plane table, and we got it all set up, got it all leveled, and everything was fine. But, I went around to do something and kicked the plane table leg and unlevelled it. And I said, "Oh damn!" The boys just shrieked! They said, "Dr. Haigh told us that he would skin us alive if we said one cuss word in front of you, and here you're the one who said damn."

In the spring the engineers had their initiation up in Oro Grande, and that was jillions of fun, because the boys smeared the initiates with paint and goo and catsup and made them crawl through one of the old mines. You left the highway at Oro Grande and went around some of those mountains to where there were abandoned mine shafts. We thought it was exciting. I think the boy I had a date with had a Model T, and we went up to Oro Grande, spent the whole day, and came back.

I'm just remembering some of the real fun things that happened. In 1930 I was going with one of the football players. That year we had brought in a bunch of ringers. They had played for other colleges, and they were way beyond the age of college people and big and strong. We brought them all in, and we won every game that year. I thought, "Oh, look how manly, look how wonderful." I was enchanted with one of these professional football players who was supposed to be a college student.

One morning I got there a little early and parked my car in front of Old Main and had the perfect parking place. I remember that he came up to the window to speak to me, and I said, "Oh, how are you?" I was so thrilled to be talking to him that I was leaning out of the car visiting with him. In a little while he had to say, "Excuse me, I gotta go." The next day I learned that he had been chewing tobacco when he'd come up and seen me, and he didn't want me to know that he chewed tobacco, so he couldn't spit. He had swallowed [it] instead. And this great big, husky football player was laid out for twenty-four hours up in the dormitory. He was laid out for twenty-four hours because he wouldn't spit in front of Lurline.

That fall, the fall of 1930, a bunch of us said, "There's not enough pep for all these football games." We thought we were so lucky to have all these fine football players. Of course, it was only later that I found

out that they had all been purchased. But anyway, we said, "We've got to have more P-E-P," so a group of us got up a little pep squad. My mother, Mrs. Frank A. Hughes, dreamed up the name "Golddiggers." We thought this was very funny, because we would never dream of being a golddigger. We were the kind of little girls that when a boy took us on a date, and we stopped at a drive-in for a drink, and he said, "What will you have?" we'd say, "I'll take a small Coke, please," because we weren't going to spend more than five cents of the boy's money. Money was too scarce a commodity. So we thought the name "Golddiggers" was funny.

I remember that we all wore orange tops and white skirts. We marched in the Homecoming parade. To this day I can still see us marching past the Cortez (it was the Orndorff then), lined up about three or four abreast. The Homecoming parade went through [downtown] El Paso in those days. We all sat together at football games and yelled extra hard because we were the Golddiggers.

My sophomore year — I just can't tell you how many good things happened that year. I just remember my sophomore year as having stars all around it, because it was fun every day. You know, the world was your oyster. I was elected president of my sorority, and I was elected one of the three school beauties both years I was here. Oh, it was heaven!

When the boys had their initiation at Oro Grande that spring, we got together and said, "We are going to initiate the new girls." We took them over in back of where the English Department is. It was a canyon, and we made everybody walk down this little path. We initiated all the new girls. I was St. Patricia. I had long, flowing hair and a long, green robe. All the girls had to come up and kiss the Blarney Stone. And I think we daubed them with something for initiation. I think we put a little "x" on them, but we didn't treat them badly.

I was thrilled to death to be coming to Mines, because I wanted to be an engineer. My father was an engineer, and I wanted to be an engineer. That's why I was taking geology. So I was talking about being an engineer, and [John W.] Cap Kidd* took me aside. He said, "Lurline, in order to be an engineer you have to have calculus. I am the only one on the faculty who teaches calculus, and I do not want you to be an engineer. I do not want a woman bothering my Engineering Department." He said, "I don't care if every paper you turn in to me in calculus is 100 percent, I'll still give you an F, and I will fail you in calculus, so that you can never be

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an engineer." And he meant it. So I became a history major. Then my parents said, "Look, you've got to have something besides history." So I took an extra major in education; I had two majors when I graduated. But in my junior year I went down to the big, wicked university at Austin!

Interviewed by Rebecca Craver, January 27, 1984, El Paso.

The boys had been allowed to smoke and chew tobacco in class and spit out the window.

Bulah Liles Patterson

[1890-1986]

Faculty, 1927-1967

I had graduated from the University of Chicago and had started teaching in a Dallas high school in the fall of 1927. I had a call saying that the College of Mines and Metallurgy needed a math teacher. The College had grown suddenly due to the fact that El Paso Junior College, which was located on the fourth floor of El Paso High School, had not opened due to lack of funds. I had wanted a college teaching position in Texas, so I said, "Yes." I got ready right quick and took a train out there.

My mother was very much disturbed when she found out that I was coming to El Paso. A bunch of Mexicans and drunken cowboys — that was her idea of El Paso! Well, I wasn't really too surprised at the campus. There wasn't a paved street out there on that hill. It was all rock. I didn't have a car. I walked across from North Mesa, and there was just a little trail about two feet wide, uphill and downhill and across the mountains. Well, the buildings were a surprise — that [Bhutanese] architecture! There were only four buildings and a little mill that had to do with metallurgy.

I started the Monday after Thanksgiving in 1927. And at that time there were only two women teachers out there — Mary Kelly Quinn and Anita Lorenz. I was assigned five three-hour classes a week, which every faculty

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member had at that time. I walked into those classes, and the vast majority of the students were boys, or men. Now, I had a few girls because they had come over from the junior college, but not very many. When I first came out there, I taught algebra, trigonometry, and analytical geometry. They didn't have the academic and the engineering math courses separated at all. Later on, when there were so many academic students and they required six hours of math, they separated it and gave the academic students a general survey of the math. It wasn't the intensive course in mathematics that the engineers had.

The dean of engineering was Dean John W. Kidd*. He was a very outstanding character and objected to me — 'I'm not going to have women teaching my engineers!' But I wasn't there very long until he was very glad to get my students, because I soon had a reputation of being rather "hard-boiled," because I worked very hard myself, and I expected my students to do likewise. I graded homework papers, and it was really quite a job. You think about how many students you have turning in a paper. I had three classes a day, [so] that was 120 papers a day. I worked almost day and night to keep up with them, because I didn't know how else to teach. Of course, I was accused sometimes of teaching just like high school, but it was the only way that I could put my subject across.

I had a routine like this: We'd go into class, and I would take up their homework papers. Then I would say, "Are there any particular problems or questions you want to ask?" There would always be some. We would go over those. Then, I would take up the new work. Now, some teachers never did take up the new work. But I did. I took up the new work, and I went over it. Then I sent them to the board, and we practiced on that. I always sent my students to the board. They said that was high-schoolish. I didn't care whether it was high school or not, I was interested in them learning. It irritated me no end to get a classroom with one little ole board, because I wanted to see my students working, and I sent them to the board.

In the early years, the graduation ceremonies were held on the tennis courts. And every once in a while there'd be a sandstorm or a shower. More likely a sandstorm would come up and ruin the graduation, but on the whole we were pretty lucky. There weren't too many of them that were ruined like that. All the faculty members were expected to go to the graduation. But you realize then the faculty was small, and they wanted to make a big showing. In fact, I had bought my cap and gown at the

University of Chicago when I graduated. It was a good thing, because a lot of the faculty members would have to rent them every year, and that was a nuisance.

Faculty members also had to chaperone the dances that the students had. They were *chaperoned*, too; it wasn't just in name only. Their dances were held in the gymnasium [Holliday Hall*], close to Kidd Field. They usually had a local band. It wasn't many years after that until the Miners had a band, and they would play for the dances, too. I remember [at] one dance they had a little disturbance. One of the boys took a swing at a faculty member, because the faculty member was half drunk; [he] knocked him down. He was dancing with this boy's date, and he put his hand down the back of her dress. The faculty member didn't retaliate; I think it sobered him up. I was one of the chaperones, and I went to see, and by that time the faculty member had gone [out the door].

I'll have to tell you one story, just to let you know what a hard-boiled teacher I was. One president came in with an idea: to build up the enrollment of the college regardless of who we got. Before he came here, we would have a whole bunch of failures each semester because our standards were high. If they didn't pass, they didn't stay in college. When this president came, he didn't want any teacher to fail anyone. I remember the president saying one time in a faculty meeting that he was not concerned about teachers. He said, "I hire teachers just like I'd buy mules, as cheap as I can get them, and I'll watch their records to see how many failures they have." It wasn't very long before he found out that I didn't pass a student who didn't make the grade, though I was willing to give a student any help I could.

The previous president had put Gladys Gregory* and me on the athletics committee. We and a few others on the committee lived up to the rules, and unless a student earned sufficient grade points, he was bumped off the team. A football player had failed his math course. A D would give him enough points to stay on the team. He went to the president, asking him to get me to change his grade from F to D. The president called me in and said the boy said he had learned more math in my course than he'd ever learned in any math course — "and she still failed me." The president asked if I'd change his grade. I said, "No, that was what he made. If you want it changed, go to the registrar's office and put your initial on the change." [That] was the procedure to change a grade after

it was recorded. I never followed up to see what happened. Needless to say, I was not a favorite with that president, and Gladys and I were soon off the athletics committee.

I was strict! I didn't put up with much. When I first went out there, the boys had been allowed to smoke and chew tobacco in class and spit out the window. And I said, "No more smoking!" There was a guy named Pennington. He came in one day smoking a cigarette and went and took his seat. I kept waiting and gave him a hard look, but he didn't pay any attention. He just kept on smoking the cigarette. So, I said, "Pennington, throw out your cigarette." He said, "I will, when I finish this." I said, "Well, you just go out now and finish it and [don't] come back to this class until you do." When the teacher did anything like that, the deans would stand behind us then. Boy, Dean Kidd or Dean [Eugene] Thomas* and Dean [C.A.] Puckett* all stood back of the teachers. So Pennington came back to class and never did smoke again.

The last year I was up there — it was in the mid-sixties — some students had begun to go just as far as they could. One guy came to a class one day with sandals on and no socks. I didn't say anything much. I just said, "I think you better wear socks." The next class, he came barefooted. I sent him out of class. I called Dean Thomas, who told the student, "Well, you can go to that class properly dressed, or I'm dropping you right now. You can take your choice." The student dropped out. Times were changing. He was one of those "hippies."

One student told me one time, "You know, Mrs. Patterson, freshmen hated you with a vengeance. When they get up in calculus, they begin to say, well, maybe she was right about that. And they begin to like you a little better. When they get on up into junior and senior math courses and their engineering courses, they love you." Because they found out I was demanding, they appreciated me.

I really like teaching. I don't admit at all to being a soft teacher; you can't be soft in a course like mathematics. To my way of thinking, in mathematics people need a teacher. Now, in history, and maybe in English literature, they can read it and get it themselves if they want to. But that's not true with mathematics. When people tell you, "Well, I never had to study mathematics," they're lying.

Do you remember the Russian Sputnik? It was the year of the Sputnik, and they got all stirred up, and math courses were very popular. One

day, I had sent them to the board, and they were kind of dragging that day. I said, "Now let me tell you, if you guys don't get busy and get to doing something in here, the Sputnik will sure get us." One of the boys said, "If it does, Mrs. Patterson, it sure won't be your fault."

Interviewed by Rebecca Craver, October 6, 1983, El Paso.

The legislature got a bill introduced to kill the College of Mines, just abandon it. Vamoose.

Leon Denny Moses

[1897-1979]

Faculty, 1927-1962

I came west to grow up with the College of Mines. It had been a mining school which admitted a few women and others who wanted to take just a course or two of academic work, and the rest of it was engineering, especially mining engineering, under the direction of Dean John W. Kidd*. There was a junior college on the top floor of El Paso High School. The city fathers of El Paso decided that they didn't want to keep up that extra expense, so they decided to dump it. The state very graciously offered to let the College of Mines expand the academic department and give two years of credit work in academic subjects.

So about 1927, instructors from the junior college came over to Mines, and a professor in the junior college became the actual head of the school. He was C.A. Puckett*, who had a B.A. from Texas and a master's from Harvard. He did the hiring and firing. Of course Dean Kidd, as dean of engineering, was consulted on all matters pertaining to the engineering school. So when I came out here we had the old mining faculty and then about twice as many academic faculty, most of them being new and from the junior college.

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The roads [on campus] were unpaved; you "rock-a-bye babied" as you drove a Model T along those roads. I had a son about two years old, and we lived out on Yandell at that time. He said, "I know how to go to Daddy's school. You go up a big hill and across the bridge, and you go out to the rocks." You parked at the "Magic Circle" there in front of the Main Building. They'd just drive up there and stop. Then when they got ready to go home, they'd just take off, right down through the sagebrush.

I parked there one day. I had a Model T, like practically everybody else that had anything at all, and came out to go to lunch at about one o'clock. The car was gone. I found it on top of a turtle-back knoll down just below where the flagpole is now, between the flagpole and town. My students had pushed it up there to tease me. I had no idea who it was, and I wasn't even interested in finding out. I wanted to enjoy the joke. And a whole line of buzzards [students and spectators] sat up there on the wall in front of Old Main and watched me go down and get it.

The first president was John G. Barry*, who had his degree from MIT in geology. After [World War I], Barry became a geology consultant and had his offices here when they elected him president. He came in 1931 and stayed until the spring of 1934. I was very fond of President Barry. I felt that he meant exactly what he said, and I felt he said the right thing. I had utmost respect for the man.

Now here's an interesting chapter that I've never seen written up. In about 1932 the legislature got a bill introduced to kill the College of Mines, just abandon it. Vamoose. The bill would cut about four or five of the teachers' colleges to junior college standing. In that way, the legislators hoped to cut down a great deal of tax money. Well, the bill failed to pass, but the next year a bill did pass to this effect: all state-supported colleges must get rid of 25 percent of their faculty. And those who remained, presidents on down, got a 25 percent cut in salary. That was an excuse on the part of a great many college presidents to get rid of some of the dead wood. They fired with a clearer conscience. If they wanted to abandon a department, why that would count toward their 25 percent reduction, you see. But then there was also the cut in salary; we all suffered a 25 percent reduction. Two or three years later they began to restore some [of the cut], \$100 here, \$200 there. It took me about six years to get my salary back to where it had been.

We lost about eight faculty members in the reductions. I was glad to stay. I thanked President Barry after he resigned. I went to him and said, "I appreciate the fact that I got to stay on at a 25 percent reduction in salary." He said, "You were doing a good job, hell's bells." Hell's bells was a popular cuss word in those days after a certain play that had been on Broadway.

Now President [Wilson H.] Elkins*, who came in 1949, was a four-star athlete and Phi Beta Kappa. He was a Rhodes scholar and got his Ph.D. at Oxford. He was probably the most sensational personality that ever hit the campus. No wonder he went to the University of Maryland and proceeded to make it one of the big universities. A pretty good golfer, too. I played golf with three heads of this school. Elkins was the best golfer of the bunch. Puckett couldn't play worth anything. And Wiggins was a little better than I was, but he wasn't as good as Elkins. The rest of them didn't play golf, as far as I know.

Dean Kidd was as gruff as an old grizzly, but I never did feel that he had a hard streak anywhere in him. It was just his way of talking. He had tuberculosis years before, and it had given him a kind of high-pitched voice that didn't sound quite natural. His students just worshiped him. They'd spit their tobacco and say, "Yes sir, Dean Kidd." He was the hero of the engineers, if they ever had a hero. When Dean Kidd dropped dead on the campus in Christmas vacation of 1941 and was taken to the mortuary to be funeralized, there were more handkerchiefs there than any other funeral I was ever in. They were those tobacco-spittin' engineers, too. They felt that a friend had gone.

Interviewed by David Salazar and Mildred Torok, February 27, 1973,
El Paso.

*"What is she going to serve her husband? Algebra?
Chemistry?"*

Maria Elena Garcia Connolly

Student, 1929-1936

I was born in Aguascalientes, Mexico, on August 18, 1914. I was two years old, and my brother was six months old, when we had to come all of a sudden to the United States. My father was superintendent of railroads in Aguascalientes, and one evening one of the workers came in and said, "Don Felix, Don Felix! Villa is sending men to kill you!" My father said, "Well, why would he want to kill me?" And then the man said, "There is a very wealthy miner and rancher in Zacatecas also named Felix Garcia, and he heard that you were here, and he is sending some men to shoot you immediately." So we got our things as quickly as we could. All the way from Aguascalientes to Juarez, I cried. Now, my parents did not have transportation, so they came in the cattle car.

First we lived in Juarez in a little boarding house [while] my father was gathering money enough to come across. We came across on the street-car, and at the end of Myrtle Avenue one of my aunts and the cousins met us. They took us to their house on Magoffin, and we lived there for a while. We came to the United States on Halloween, 1916. And my mother thought that this place was crazy — all these kids dressed in black like witches, running back and forth on the street. My mother said, "What

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in the world is happening?" So one of my aunts told her, "Oh, this is *la noche libre*. It's Halloween."

When I was six years old, my father and mother decided that I was going to St. Mary's. My mother decided to take me on the first day of school. She dressed very pretty in a black taffeta dress and a black hat with a black feather. She looked very handsome. I think I learned English in a month. It was a case of necessity. I was the only Mexican child in the whole school.

When I graduated from St. Mary's, I received a scholarship for Loretto, but I went to Loretto [only] one year. It was during the depression, and my mother and father both told me, "Elena, it costs a lot of money to go to Loretto, even on a scholarship. So, I'm sorry, we can't send you to Loretto next year." I cried and cried. I had to go to El Paso High, which in a way wasn't so bad after all. Anyway, I graduated not with any unusually high honors, I just graduated, and I went on to college.

We must have been a very advanced family ideologically, because I went to college. In those days, Mexican girls, a lot of them, didn't go to high school. I remember when my mother sent me to high school that these friends of mine told Mama, "That's wasted money. What is she going to serve her husband? Algebra? Chemistry? Is that what she's going to serve her husband? How is she going to iron his shirts?" And then my mother said, "Well, who said she's going to get married? She may not get married." My mother's relatives would say, "Hah, I guess you think she's a very studious girl. She's lazy. She doesn't want to help you. That's why she goes to school." And my father would say, "She's going to school as long as she's interested in it. When she isn't interested in it, she can quit."

I was sixteen when I was admitted to the College of Mines. In those days, college was not as expensive [as today]. My father gave me \$100 and said, "Go register." I registered, paid my student activity fees, bought all my books for chemistry, math, Spanish, English — and had money to take home, about forty dollars. So, I went to school that year, and I did all right. I made A's and B's. I made an A in trigonometry, made A's in Spanish, and I made an A in English the first semester. I also took the first year of education. In those days you did your practice teaching the first year, and I did my student teaching at Beall School.

Mrs. [Isabelle K.] Fineau, who taught French and Spanish, was my favorite teacher. She was a darling. You see, there weren't many Mexican girls

in those days in school. But she seemed to take quite a lot of interest in me, especially since my mother and father would take me to school every morning and wait there in the car until I finished, because by that time my father didn't work anymore. So my father and mother would go there and wait, and they would read the newspaper and read their favorite books while I was in school. So, even though I was not very brilliant, I was not pretty, I was not the best-dressed girl on campus, people noticed me because there was this girl, nothing unusual, who had her father and mother waiting for her every day.

When I would be invited to the school-sponsored dances, my mother insisted on going. Some were sponsored by the Newman Club, which is the Catholic club. There were some sponsored by Sigma Delta Pi, the honorary [Spanish] society. There was one at the Country Club. I remember that my mother wouldn't let me go [by myself], so she took me. Now my mother was a very nice person, very gracious, and she and Mrs. Fineau would sit together. The boys like Adolfo Trespalacios thought my mother was the greatest. In fact, I remember once I was dancing with Adolfo, and he asked me, "Is that your mother?" I replied, "Yes." He said, "I thought she was an American lady." I told him, "No, she's my mother. She doesn't speak English." And he said, "I've seen her driving a car!" I said, "I know, she brings me to school every day and waits for me." He [couldn't believe it]. "You mean she's a Mexican, and she drives a car?" I said, "Yeah, she drives her car." Then he went over and congratulated her and told her how wonderful, "That's the way more Mexican women should be."

That was my only year that I went to school [fulltime], that I was a "college girl." My father lost his job around May, and so we had no mode of income except the savings we had. And we were praying and praying that somehow somebody would get a job. My father was over fifty, so there was no chance of his getting a job. Anyway, all of a sudden I remembered, "I already took student teaching. I'm going to apply for a job." At that time, after student teaching, you could work. They didn't require a degree.

So I went and made my application, and they told me, "Sorry," they couldn't employ me because there was no place for me. But I was going to get a job regardless. I was there for two weeks every morning and every afternoon. I just sat there and waited for Mr. A.H. Hughey*. Now there

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is an elementary school here in El Paso named for him. He was a precious person, a very nice man. So Hughey would come in and say "Hello," and he would leave and say, "Good-bye." Finally, he must have said, "Get that girl out of my sight. Give her a job." So I went to Aoy School. And when I signed the contract, I was seventeen, so my mother had to come. I wasn't even a citizen yet.

When I had to go to work and support the family, that hurt my father very much. I used to tell him, "Don't worry, Daddy. Supposing instead of sending us to school you had put away all that money. Now, you'd be living off the interest. Imagine, you're living off the interest now." And then we'd laugh, and he'd say, "*Ay, hijita, ay, hijita.*" And he'd pat me. It was a lot of fun. Don't think my life was sad. It was fun.

My brother says that there was a lot of anti-Mexican thought in those days. But I got a job when a lot of people didn't have it. Somebody said, "You must have denied you were a Catholic." I said, "Nobody asked me if I was a Catholic or not." In fact, one of my best friends that had been at Loretto, I noticed her mother didn't speak to me anymore. One day we were sitting down after Mass, and she came to me and says, "Elena, why did you denounce your religion?" I said, "I did not. Nobody asked me if I was a Catholic or not." She says, "Well, somebody told me you had become a Baptist." But I didn't have sense enough to know that anybody could be saying anything against me. I just never thought of it.

While I was teaching at Aoy, I went back to school. I would go to classes from 4:30 to 6:00, then take another one from 7:30 to 9:00. Now, my mother didn't come for me or anything, and I really didn't have any money to eat supper, but I didn't care. I just stayed there and studied. And in those days I couldn't buy books because they were so expensive, so we would borrow books at the library.

I used to borrow money from Gene Thomas*, who was an engineering professor. For instance, I would borrow twenty-five dollars in September to be able to register for my two classes, and then I would pay him my first payment at the end of September. This wasn't done through the office or anything. This was done through him and me. He would give me a check.

But I kept going, and then I graduated. My principal went to my graduation, and all my friends went, and they hugged me, and they hugged my mother. They said, "Mrs. Garcia, we know Elena couldn't have done

this by herself. It was you that pushed her and that encouraged her." So they all hugged my mother and kissed her, because they all thought she was such a wonderful person, which she was. I tell you, our Lord must have been right there guiding me. I got my degree in 1936, which was not much later than the rest of the kids that I had gone to school with.

I always thought that one year of education courses was quite sufficient. When I was in college, I had an education teacher [who] insisted you could only teach a child one language at a time. Well, I argued with her and argued with her. And I think she finally gave me a C when I could have made an A or a B, but that was beside the point. She said it was a shame to teach a child two languages, because they became fluent in neither and they would always have an accent. [But] I knew better. After I got married and had my daughter, Patricia, by the time she was about three years old, she knew both languages. My mother spoke no English; my husband, her father, spoke no Spanish. So she learned both languages, and she didn't mix them up. A lot of my friends never taught their children Spanish because they said that would ruin their pronunciation. But I did. All my children are bilingual.

Interviewed by Debra Garcia, September 9, 1984, El Paso.

*There was some consternation in that building after
that rattlesnake had escaped.*

Anton H. Berkman

[1897-1973]

Faculty 1927-1966

In 1927 I went to Austin to The University of Texas to teach. That summer, a telegram arrived from Dean [C.A.] Puckett* at Texas College of Mines, saying that the position of chairman of Biological Sciences was open. They were just adding academic work to the engineering school. Prior to that, I had heard of the College of Mines in El Paso. My idea of the school was that it was a frontier school and that it consisted of one or two buildings up on a rocky mound or hill. This attracted my attention. I thought, well, this is a pioneering place and that would be interesting, so I decided to take it. The salary was \$3,000 a year. That was big money in those days. It went down to \$2,000 during the depression.

As for facilities, we had one room in what is now Kelly Hall. It was a laboratory and lecture room together when I first arrived. It was very limited quarters, really the frontier. In 1930 we moved into another building, and we had half of the top floor. We had two labs then, and I had an office. This continued until 1936, when they gave another third of that floor to my department. Then we had two offices and three labs. We stayed there until they built the new Science Building. We were always

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crowded. The interesting thing about when they gave the extra third to us, Dean [John W.] Kidd* said, "Now you have space." I never had enough space. It wasn't a year until we scarcely had room to move. That's how rapidly the students were coming.

To start with, the institution was really a technical school; therefore, our courses were largely zoology. We added the vertebrate anatomy when Dr. B.F. Jenness* was taken on in the department. He had been the school physician and a lecturer to the engineering students in hygiene and sanitation. They had to have that as part of their degree requirement. He continued in that capacity for nearly fifty years. The dominant work in the department was zoology, and botany was offered simply to satisfy the requirements for the bachelor's degree. Students weren't interested in the botanical; young people in the El Paso region wanted to prepare for schools of medicine. In 1931 or 1932 we added the third course, histology, and later embryology. These were the principal courses for the pre-medical preparation in the biological sciences. Eventually we started bacteriology, and after we got another laboratory, the students crowded in. So instead of having one section of lab, we had two sections, and this is where quite a bit of evening labs came in. Some days, I taught all day and then taught three labs at night; that added up to about twenty-three contact hours a week.

I would say that those who really wanted to go to medical school and were serious students succeeded in going. There wasn't much failure at all after they reached the second year. The place where we eliminated them was in the freshman year. The grades would tell, and they would know themselves if they should go on into the other course. I would say that 95 percent of the ones we recommended went to medical school and are practicing now.

The Pre-Med Club was a pretty good promoter of esprit de corps. Dr. Jenness and I started it. The first meetings we had were downtown in a restaurant on the second floor of a building now owned by the University. There were a few girls in that Pre-Med Club. One of them went up to the Chicago Medical College. Three went down to Galveston to take the medical technician's courses, and another got her M.D. degree at Southwestern Medical School in Dallas.

We always needed equipment. We benefited from contributions and donations. The main things we needed were microscopes. By keeping

on the alert, we could find secondhand microscopes, sometimes from doctors who turned their lab work over to the laboratory in town and didn't need them anymore. So we got quite a number of very good microscopes that way for very little money.

We went out and collected rattlesnakes and brought them in. We experimented with them in reference to milking them to show the students how that was done and show them the venom that you get out of them. Once upon a time, one of them got away and turned up in Isabella McKinney's bookcase. It really didn't show up in her bookcase, but she thought it did! We did go through all of her books and everything. After that was all done, we settled down to the assumption that the snake had gone down the stairs and out.

It was about three weeks later that I was sitting in my office, leaning back in my chair at my desk. I had been reading, and I just happened to glance down into the lower shelf of my bookcase, and there lay the rattlesnake. So, I just got a stick and a jar and raked him out of the shelf and put him back in the jar. He didn't fight much; he seemed adjusted to his environment. He seemed glad to be home. I tickled him a little more to be sure he wouldn't get away again. But I tell you, though, there was some consternation in that building after that rattlesnake had escaped.

Interviewed by C.L. Sonnichsen, January 23, 1969, Round Rock, Texas.

There were not any girls in the engineering section before I bulldozed my way in. Nobody else was fool enough to try it.

Zora Zong Gaines

Student, 1931-1938

From the third grade on, I grew up in El Paso in Manhattan Heights. My father was with a construction company. I always wanted to go to college, but during the depression times, the only college accessible to me was the College of Mines. I graduated from El Paso High School in 1930, and all my friends were going off to college. They didn't have parents in the construction business. The bottom fell out for construction, so I had to stay out of school to work and make enough money to get back into school. But I won a bank night of seventy-five dollars. For seventy-five dollars I could pay my tuition and buy my books and go to college!

My family moved to Fabens, so I had to drive in. I had an old car that my father wouldn't let me drive past thirty-five miles an hour. I got up before sunrise, drove into Mines, [had an] eight o'clock class every morning, [had] labs every afternoon, and got home after sunset. That was the story of my first year, 1931-1932. I had taken botany and biology in high school, so when I came to college I thought, "I want something new." [I took] physics and geology. I got into that geology class, and all my

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thoughts of majoring in mathematics went by the board. One year of geology put me on the road, and I wasn't going to study anything else. [Dr. Lloyd A.] Speedy Nelson* was teaching the class. Speedy didn't mind having me in his classes, so he let me go on. At that time you had to take geology to be a mining engineer. By the time I finished my sophomore year, why there weren't any girls [left] in my classes. My junior year, there just weren't any girls taking topography, pathology, and mineralogy.

I have a story about Captain [John W.] Kidd*. I can't remember what course it was, but I registered for it, and the professor was not gung-ho on having me. He reported to Captain Kidd that he had a female in his class, and he wasn't really interested in having her. I went to Captain Kidd, and he couldn't see any reason why a girl should be in that class. I went to the president, Dossie Wiggins*, and I said, "I want to take that course. It's a geology course, and I'm going to take every [geology] course you've got." He looked up at me, and he said, "Well, Z.Z., I can't think of any reason why a girl can't register for that class; there's no rule against it." So I got into the class. I never did hear any more from Captain Kidd, but I got dirty looks. He wasn't too fond of the women coming into the College of Mines, but as long as they stayed over in the history, English, and social studies end of it, that was fine. But when they wound up on the engineering campus. . . .

I had a little trouble with Norma [Egg*], who was the dean of women, for wearing pants on campus. She ate me out but good. Ladies didn't wear pants [in those days]. In fact, they didn't even make pants for women. I had to take the buttons off the front and put them on the side to get by with it. She complained about it. I said, "Look, what can I do? I cannot go on these field trips in a skirt." I couldn't climb mountains [or] get [lab] specimens on the top level off a tall ladder [in a dress]. You just couldn't do it, so I wore pants to school. I wore a brand new wool suit to school once. [I] went into the chemistry lab, sat down, started working, got up, and felt something funny where I had sat on the chair. Somebody had put sodium hydroxide in the seat, [which] ate right through my brand new wool skirt. I never wore a dress to school after that.

[The engineering students] were great about playing pranks on me. I was the butt of all their harassment. They'd take up for me against the academics, but among themselves they worked me over. They would open a window [in the classroom] in the Centennial Museum and set me out

on the ledge, close the window, and lock it. Speedy would walk in and look up and say, "All right, let Z.Z. in." They locked me in the broom closet. He'd come in and say, "Where have you put Z.Z. today?" We had a concrete-lined pit on the campus, where they'd had some mining machinery at one time. Their big deal was to take me by the hands and drop me down in the pit, which was about ten feet deep, and leave me there until one of my professors asked where they'd put me today. If they weren't pulling one thing they were pulling another. It was fun. I lived through it. They gave me an education.

My sophomore year, 1932-1933, [I went through] the St. Patrick's Day [initiation] at Oro Grande. I crawled on a plank through the mine at Oro Grande. I got my butt paddled, just like everybody else. They only gave me one swat, but I got it. They had a nice gentle, separate thing for the girls, their dates. There were not any girls in the engineering section before I bulldozed my way in. Nobody else was fool enough to try it. It took somebody that was completely ditsy to do it. I was one of the boys, so I had to take [the full treatment]. They put me through all of it, except that they didn't get too rough. They let me live. I could sit down the next day.

Mining engineers were as ornery as they come. What they couldn't think of to do couldn't be thought of. [They wore] blue jeans, and their habits were beer busts. They liked to take me to beer busts. I didn't drink, and when you went to a beer bust they'd come around and fill your glass. Two of them would choose who was going to get me that night. The one on the right got the first beer I didn't drink. The one on the left got the second beer I didn't drink. So when it was time to go home, I had to drive. According to everybody that was sitting around and seeing my beer disappear, I had drunk everybody under the table.

At my senior prom in high school my date offered me a cigarette. By golly I liked it, so I started smoking, and I had tailor-made cigarettes. After about two months on campus with my geology field trips, the boys would come around and [say], "Hey, Z.Z., how about one of your tailor-mades?" None of them took snuff or chewed tobacco, but they did love to smoke my tailor-mades. It was breaking me, so I finally started smoking Bull Durham. I got even with them; I just gave them my Bull Durham sack. I didn't bring any more tailor-mades to class after that.

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[Norma Egg] got to me my senior year. You went on a field trip in Colorado for your senior thesis in geology at that time. My parents gave the okay. After all, there were only about fifteen boys going, and they'd take good care of me. Well, Norma Egg heard of it. "Do you mean you're going up there for two weeks and take a woman with you?" Speedy said, "Well, why not?" She says, "Well, just think what those boys could do." Speedy said, "I'm not worried about what the boys will do to her. I'm worried about what she'll do to the boys." But she held sway. They wouldn't let the girl go on the field trip. I had to stay here and write a thesis.

I joined the College Players. Myrtle Ball* directed all the plays. My only contact with any girls was outside of classes, through the College Players. Johnell Crimen was one of them, and also Nell Travis and Louise Maxon. I didn't have any girls in my classes. There were fifteen to twenty boys and me.

I finally graduated with a degree in geology in 1938. Graduation didn't mean a thing to me. My parents had to fight me to get me into that cap and gown. I didn't see the use of parading down the aisle in a cap and gown, but I had to go. Speedy told me that there was an opening for a geologist at a mining company downtown. He made an appointment for me. I went down and walked in. I said, "Professor Nelson sent me down. He said you needed a geologist." And he said, "Yes, we do, but it's in Mexico." And I said, "Well, I do speak Spanish." He said, "Well, it's isolated. You can only get there on horseback or muleback." And I said, "Well, I ride out at the post, exercising the polo ponies, and horseback riding doesn't bother me." And he looked at me again, and he said, "Well, it's awfully isolated." And I said, "Well, I've been on many a mountain. That doesn't mean a thing to me." He finally looked up at me and said, "We just can't use a young woman." That told the story. I didn't try anymore. There just weren't any openings for women geologists in 1938. You were a man, or you didn't make it in geology then.

I had two uncles who were politicians over in Louisiana, and they got me a job teaching mathematics. I couldn't get one here in El Paso. The depression was still holding sway, and there just were no jobs. I met the man I married there. When we came back to Texas, I didn't start teaching again until we moved to Houston in 1950. I started out in an elementary school, and then I taught in junior high and finally at Bellaire High School. I was delighted to get there. It was the top school. [I taught] there

seventeen years. It was a delightful experience, until students' rights hit the campus. It got to the point where it was all students' rights, and they expected to absorb [knowledge] by osmosis. They didn't have to do any work. They didn't retire me; I quit really. Now they are learning that I was right.

When I started here [at the College of Mines], there were only five buildings. And now I look, and the big crater where they dug gravel out and took us on our first field trip in geology has been leveled. And half the hills I used to walk over to get to class are gone. And they've changed the rock wall in front of Old Main where I used to sit and get into a bull session. I'm sure if I had to take classes out here again, I'd be a lost soul. Mines just fit me fine.

Interviewed by Charles H. Martin, October 14, 1989, El Paso.

Ross Moore threw the ball at one of the players. He ducked, and it hit the governor right in the stomach.

Cesar Arroyo

Student, 1935-1939

I was born in Parral, Mexico. My father was an accountant. He came from Spain when he was fifteen years old. He was a Spaniard from Bilbao. He studied and worked in Parral. My mother was half German and half Mexican, and [they] had thirteen children. While he was studying, [my father] worked in a merchandise store. A few years later he quit and put up a shoe factory. That prospered quite a bit, and he had a ranch near Parral.

[Pancho] Villa was after him all the time to get money from him [during the Mexican Revolution]. Finally, that's why he had to leave — our whole family had to leave — during the Revolution. I was about three years old when we left. That must have been 1914. He left alone from Parral to Ojinaga on a horse; he sent for the family later on. There was no trouble with immigration. There were a lot of people going into El Paso at that time; they just let them in. They took your name and a little information, and you were a resident. The Schaefers stayed behind. My grandfather, Felipe Schaefer, got along well with Villa and never had any trouble. My dad never did want to go back because Villa destroyed his home. I'm the only one who came back to Mexico.

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[We lived] in Sunset Heights on Mundy Avenue. I went to grammar school at Vilas. I didn't speak any English; I learned it there. I picked it up fast. Then I went to [old] Morehead Junior High and El Paso High School. We had very good teachers, and they were very kind to us from Mexico. There wasn't any discrimination among the teachers. Some of the lower class people working in El Paso, they were discriminated [against] a little bit. A little discrimination is a big loss.

I took ROTC at El Paso High, but I didn't drill much. I was on the rifle team, and we spent our time shooting. I didn't go out much for sports there [because] I was working a delivery route. I had to go on a bus toward the smelter to pick up two big five-gallon cans of milk. I'd go on the bus and leave the empties and pick up the full ones. I had to do that about six o'clock in the morning, and then I'd deliver my route. I had to be at school at eight o'clock.

After I graduated, I worked for a year and a half before going to college. Bob McKee got me a scholarship with the New Mexico Aggies. I went there my first year and was captain of the [freshman] team, captain and quarterback. They had a good engineering school. I started to take mechanical engineering, but then the coach at Texas College of Mines offered me a better scholarship. I'd be at home, so that's when I changed schools. I went out [for football] a week or two, but then I was getting way behind on the labs, so I had to quit. I had too many labs. But I took part in basketball, track, and tennis.

[Pulls out 1938 *Flowsheet*.] When I was on the varsity basketball team, we had a lot of good athletes from Louisiana, back in the bayou country. They always had Copenhagen [snuff] in their mouths. Ross Moore* played. This boy [Salvador] Mora was a very good player, and [Riley] Matheson was too. He turned pro. I only made 43 points in the [1937-1938] season. Holliday Hall* is where we played. We traveled by bus, a college bus. We never did fly around the Southwest; it was either by bus or by car. We played Socorro and lost 33-24. New Mexico University — we lost that game too. We beat Tempe 42-35; Tempe beat us in another game. We lost to the University of Arizona. The Aggies beat us. Texas Mines — last place in the [Border] Conference! We didn't have a very good team.

We played in Chihuahua one year in a tournament for local teams. We won one and lost one here in Chihuahua. One of the games was awfully rough. The score was tied 50-50. Ross Moore went dribbling down the sidelines. The gym was packed, and [someone] stuck out his foot, and

he tripped Ross Moore. That started a riot. The governor was there. Ross Moore threw the ball at one of the players. He ducked, and it hit the governor right in the stomach, the governor of Chihuahua. [It] hit him right on the stomach, so we had to leave. The coach asked me, "What'll we do, Cesar?" I said, "We'd better go."

When I was in track, I used to run the 100, the 200, and broad jump. Harry Phillips was the coach. And I played tennis. There were two boys from Monterrey [Rodolfo and Federico Villarreal] on the team. They were twins, but they didn't look alike. At one of the matches that we played against Arizona, this fellow [John] Beaty stuffed himself with sandies and a bunch of junk before the game. Boy, he was puking all over. We lost that match quickly.

[Pulls out a faded clipping from *The Prospector*, which reads:]

Feeling in a good humor we decided to pay tribute to someone this week in our sports column. After a bit of a search we selected Cesar Arroyo. . . . Cesar is that short, stocky, quiet individual who has all year managed to bear up under an engineering course on one hand and big athletic program on the other. He has worked hard at each one and has done well in both.

Overcoming the handicap of small size, a real handicap in this day of sports, Cesar has played basketball for the Miners and lettered. . . . Cesar was one of the hardest working men on the team, and he was hard to stop when shooting for the basket.

But if you think that Cesar was busy then, listen to this: track season came on and so did tennis. . . . He was a shark at tennis and was the leading man of an all-too small squad of dash men out for track. . . . Track and tennis meets often came on the same day, and Cesar would take part in both of them. He would run his hundred yard dash and then slip out of his spiked shoes into his best pair of tennis kicks and then meander on down to the courts to play his matches. Then it was back to the track to see if he was needed on a relay squad or in any other capacity.

Cesar kept that up for three years, and his grades are still average. For any athlete his grades are unusually good.

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Mining [was my major], with a minor in geology. Dr. [John F.] Graham taught us metallurgy, and Prof. [F.H.] Seamon* taught chemistry. Lots of engineers were from Mexico, since it was cheaper to go to [TCM]. The Mexican mining schools were too far away. Tuition wasn't very high. In engineering we were pretty close together, the Anglos and the Mexicans, the Hispanics. We got along pretty well. We called the other [students] "Peedoggies."* John Holguin graduated six months before I did. He was a very good student, and he turned out to be one of the best mining engineers in Mexico. He lives in Torreon now.

My social life stayed usually on the weekends. In the evening they'd have a dance at school. On Oregon Street [was] a casino; it used to be the old Army "Y." They sold it to a group of Mexicans who converted it to a casino for dances. [John Holguin was president of] Phi Beta Mex. That was a Mexican fraternity. I was [a member]. Most of our dances were at the casino. That was where most of the Mexican people went to dances. Probably [there was] more drinking on the campus. You used to go outside Holliday Hall, take a swig, and go back in. They had their liquor in the car. It was the students that were taking other courses who had a better time at the dances. The engineers were more serious.

I remember one time I parked my brother's car, a great big ole Plymouth, right in front of the office of Dean [John W.] Kidd*. He came into class, and he says, "Who's got that big moose out there in front of my office?" I raised my hand. He said, "Get it out of there!"

At the time I got out of school there were quite a few jobs available. Very few of the Latin/Hispanic engineers stayed in the state, very few of them. Most came to Mexico. They were scattered all over Mexico. They started getting top jobs when [the mining companies] Mexicanized. That's when a lot of the Americans started moving out.

[I finished] in '39. Very few engineers finished in January of '39. When I changed from mechanical engineering to mining [engineering], I lost a few credits, so I actually was in college five years. [Graduation] was in May of '39. They only had commencement exercises once a year, so I had to come back for my diploma. [It was] at the Scottish Rite Temple, near the El Paso Public Library. [I changed majors because] I wanted to come back to Mexico. The best career was mining, and my dad had a few mining properties. They were originally sold to his aunt.

I wrote out three applications, and I got all three accepted. But I took the one up there in Santa Eulalia [above Chihuahua] because it was close to home. I worked there three years, and then I went to Santa Barbara with AS&R — American Smelting and Refining Company. I worked there until I got to be a mine foreman. I quit to go on my own. I started a small mine in about 1947 and worked about twenty years, small scale. I was cofounder and president of the equivalent to AIME in Mexico — Asociación de Ingenieros Metrologistas y Ecológicos en México.

After I quit mining on my own, I went back to Industrial Minera México, which was partly AS&R. I used to go out in the hills quite a bit to look at prospects that the company might take over. I was traveling a lot, riding a mule a lot, walking a lot. The last time I went out in the sierra, I was perspiring all the time. I was on a mule. I got soaking wet and caught a bad cold; it turned into a drunken pneumonia. That's when I quit. I was getting too old anyway to go down mines. These old abandoned mines, they're not safe. So I figured I should stop.

Interviewed in English by Charles H. Martin and Cheryl E. Martin, June 25, 1989, Chihuahua, Chihuahua, Mexico.

The deal was to grow a beard, but boy, the day after the dance, everybody took it off.

Pollard Rodgers

Student, 1936-1941

I went to high school at Barstow, Texas, near Pecos, about 200 miles from here. When I got out of high school — of course [it was] the depression — I worked three years on construction and saved enough to come to school. I lived in the dorm my first year. The dining hall was in the girls' dorm, so we'd walk across this rough ground. The pavement wasn't in.

[The student body] was so small that everybody knew everybody else. The profs knew you; you knew the profs. In fact the profs knew everything about you, which was fortunate in some ways, because we needed help. I mean, not on the school work, but financial help. It was still depression days, and sometimes these profs helped you out of their own pocket [with] a loan. I graduated as a mining engineer. At that time, what they tried to do in mining engineering was prepare you to go out to a mining district, an isolated mining district. So, my gosh, we had a first-aid course that was practically like a premed course. What Cap [John W. Kidd]* was so good on was teaching us practical things. I didn't realize it at the time. I realize it now. He instilled in us high standards.

I think one of my favorite Cap stories was: He had an eight o'clock class in surveying, and there were two students called the Mitcham twins,

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who lived up the valley. Of course, they had a hard time getting to school for an eight o'clock class because they caught a ride. So they were usually late. Well, Cap didn't like anybody being late for his class, so one day he gave us this talk about that. "Now, boys, when you get out of here and you go to work in a mine, the cage to go down into the mine will leave at a certain time. If that cage goes down and you're not there, you've just lost a day's work." So, okay. A couple of days go by and the next eight o'clock class of Cap's, we were there, and the Mitcham boys weren't there. So old Cap got up and marched over to the door and slammed the door closed and locked it, and then he looked at the back of the door, and we'd printed this big sign, "The cage has gone down!"

Now, at that time there were lots of students here from Mexico. My gosh, nearly all the mining engineers in Mexico were graduates of the Texas College of Mines. A few years ago we had a little convention of our own down in Mexico City. Oh, that Salvador Treviño, that's the best friend I ever had. We've kept close contact through the years. Sal rounded up these Mexican graduates, and we had a real reunion. One night we got together for a banquet, and there must have been twenty-five people.

These Mexican engineers, they had a lot of stories, too, about Cap. And one of them was: There was this fellow Morales that Cap used most of the time to help him dynamite, and you've heard about all the dynamiting on the campus. Once in a while he'd need some help, so Morales would get two or three people. Now this is the way the Mexicans tell it. One day Cap called him in and said, "Morales, I've been looking over the list of these people that you have helping you, and I see Garcia, Valdez, so forth. I have to turn in this list. We're going to have to get an O'Reilly and a Jones and a Smith in here." But see, the Mexican engineers, they loved him, like we all did.

Dr. [Howard] Quinn* and [Lloyd A.] Speedy Nelson* were the Geology Department, just the two of them. They got such small allotments to carry on their work. One year Dr. Quinn had \$700 available, and he was trying to hoard it so he could buy a couple of microscopes that he needed. You need lots of samples of minerals for mineralogy class, so when anybody graduated and went to work in a mine, Doc Quinn told them, "Well, send me a sack of every type of ore they're mining." And, of course, postpaid! Doc Quinn had some great big shelves that he'd found down in another building that were about ten feet high and twenty feet

long. The students moved them from that building up to the third floor of Main. They were so long, to get one around the stairwells, you had to lift them up over. And we always said that moving those damn shelves was the hardest part of Doc Quinn's mineralogy course. But he was a great fellow and such a gentleman. I'd say Doc Quinn kind of smoothed off some of our rough edges and tried to get us to act more like gentlemen.

When I first was here, the library* was on the third floor of Kelly Hall. As I remember, it was just half of the floor. It wasn't much. Baxter Polk was the librarian, and one day when the new library was finished, he needed to move the books over to the [new building]. As soon as we heard about it, various ones of us started helping him. He had an old flatbed truck that he loaded some books on, but then a lot of it was just carried by hand. And anybody that came by the building, we hollered out the window to come up and get a load of books to take over there. My gosh, when I think about that new library they're getting now! There was practically nothing in that old Kelly. On the mining research, down at the Public Library, there were some good files. Engineers in the Southwest and Mexico had turned over their files to the Public Library. And, boy, they were real valuable. They were sure a big help to us.

Nearly everybody had some kind of a nickname at that time. There was a John who was a great big, heavy-set guy — not fat, just big. He worked up in Alaska a couple of years before he came to Mines. So somebody referred to him one time as "that Alaskan moose." Well, [the name] stuck, and to this day, any of us who know him call him "the Moose." Now Bill was a nickname for me, but this is how I wound up with the "Barstow Bill" nickname. When I first went [to Mines], there was another Bill Rodgers there. My gosh, with only those few students, there were still two of us! People were always getting us mixed up. But this fellow Trevino started calling me "Barstow Bill" Rodgers and the other one "Wink Bill" Rodgers.

Both of us were living in the dorm that first year. The phone rang one Sunday morning, and somebody hollered, "Hey, Bill, there's a phone call for you." So I went down and answered the phone. And this girl says, "Is that you, Bill?" I said, "Yes." And then, boy, she started chewing me out. Well, what had happened was that this other Bill Rodgers had a date with her to take her to a dance the night before, but he'd gone over to Juarez with some of his friends, and he missed picking her up. I think

by the time he got to her house, she had given up and gone somewhere else. At any rate, she missed the dance. And I kept trying to tell her, "I'm not that Bill Rodgers." And boy, she never let up. She kept going. I don't know how they ever solved that, but later on they got married.

Oh, that poor Holliday Hall*. It was everything! We registered in the gym, and there was plenty of room for everybody, all 700 students. And, of course, the regular basketball was in there and all the physical education classes. It was [also] the only place, really, to have dances in. Seemed like nearly every Saturday night there was a dance in Holliday Hall. They had a school band that played dance music — the Varsitonians, they called them.

The student activities fee was ten dollars, [and for that amount] I think they listed twenty dances, thirty-two issues of *The Prospector*, *The Flowsheet*, six football games, and I don't know how many basketball games. It was optional, but nearly all the engineers paid that activity fee, because you had to pay that to vote in the student elections. At that time the academic students were already outnumbering the mining students, but the engineers still liked to hold the offices. So there was really a lot of politics.

There were a lot of girls that backed the engineers, and they called themselves engineers. There weren't any [girls] taking engineering at that time, but when some girl said, "Well, I'm an engineer," she meant she voted for the engineering ticket. Then it was turnabout [during contests for] the most popular girl or this or that. We backed them to the hilt.

Nobody had any money then. Gosh, it was unbelievable how poor everybody was. But we were all in the same boat, and we still had a great time. Now that Scientific Club was the student chapter of AIME, the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers. They handled politics, the painting of the "M" on the mountain, and the Hard Luck Dance. Nearly anything to come along, well, they'd push it for the school.

We held the freshmen responsible for painting the "M" on the mountain, but, by gosh, everybody went there. Everybody. Right at the top of Scenic Drive where the lookout is, there's a path that goes right up to the mountain. And that's where we painted the "M." We usually got a water truck from the city, which the city never admitted loaning to the college students, but that's where it came from. To carry sacks of lime and barrels of water was a real job. You expected every freshman to be

there, but actually everybody helped out, even including the girls. The Coed Association saw that there was some food and drink and so forth up there, and we'd have the picnic and all.

We used to have St. Patrick's up at Oro Grande at the old mines there. St. Pat's Day was to initiate the freshman engineers, but of course the girls went along. Each year we'd have the Hard Luck Dance. This was something that went way back with the early engineering days, and it was put on by the Scientific Club. And the deal was to grow a beard, but boy, the day after the dance, everybody took it off.

When my wife Pat was a student, the year '47-'48, we tried to take movie reels of activities through that year. At that time the stables were still up north of the Kidd Field, and the swimming pool wasn't covered, and they had the beauty contests. The students rode horseback on these little trails around the hills. Some of these movies showed where they had horseback musical chairs, where they'd ride the horses around in a circle. When the music stopped, well, they jumped off the horse to sit in a chair. And then they had the sombrero races, where they'd put these big Mexican hats on, and you raced your horse down to the line, but you had to get there wearing your hat. And at that time, too, there was a little golf course right where the Special Events Center is. It was kind of a draw there; it couldn't have had nine holes, but there were certainly five or six holes.

What I've always thought about so much is the closeness of everybody. All the students knew each other. Even after we graduated from there, we always tried to keep the old profs informed of what we were doing, and they had a real interest. If you came to Homecoming a few years after, well, these profs knew your wife's name. If you had some children, they wanted to hear about it, and the next time you saw them, they remembered the names of the children. Just unbelievable.

Interviewed by Rebecca Craver, February 14, 1984, El Paso.

I'd just go through the campus yelling "book return day!"

Baxter Polk

Librarian, 1936-1973

During the depression I graduated from high school in Abilene, Texas, in 1932. I wanted to go on to college, so I went to Hardin-Simmons University, which I thought was the best of the three colleges in Abilene. And I got a job as secretary to the librarian on the NYA [National Youth Administration] program, which is comparable to the Work-Study Program we have now. That's where I got interested in becoming a librarian.

At that time, Dr. D.M. Wiggins* was dean of Hardin-Simmons and a professor of education. Although I had not had a course with him, he used to come to the library to get books, and he always asked me to wait on him. In my senior year, he applied for and got the position as president of the then College of Mines. Before he left he said, "Baxter, what do you plan to do for your future? You have been so wonderful here in the library, and [I've been told that] you have such a potential for this profession. I really think that you ought to go on to library school." And I said, "Well, Dr. Wiggins, I just simply can't afford it. I don't have any money. I've got to get a job as soon as I graduate."

He said, "Baxter, how much money would you need to go to library school? Where would you go?" So I said, "Well, the closest one is the

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University of Oklahoma." And he said, "Well, find out much it would cost to go there and let me know." I thought, "What is he up to?" It all sounded very encouraging. I looked into it, and I called Dr. Wiggins to tell him I had all the information that I needed about Oklahoma. So he came up to the library, and we decided I needed about \$1,200. Well, he didn't really have the money himself, but he borrowed it from somebody on his own name and loaned me the money and promised me the job as librarian here when I got my degree. And all of that came true, just like a Horatio Alger story.

I came here in September, 1936, and took over the job as librarian at the College of Mines. Everything was rocks, greasewood, and cactus. It was *much* prettier than it is now, simply because they had left it in its natural state. We had blooming ocotillo, and we had blooming yucca and devil's crowns and all these beautiful things. They were all over the campus, on the hills. We just had trails; we didn't have sidewalks or paved streets. [There was] just the little mass of buildings up here on the hill, plus the president's home, which was on College Avenue. I believe College was paved. In between, there were just hills and rocks and stones and rattlesnakes. There really were snakes on campus at that time.

The lady whom I had replaced was pregnant. And in those days pregnant ladies were considered . . . well, you just didn't stay in a job until your *accouchement* was upon you. And this lady *did*. She stayed until the very last day and then had her baby the next. Well, in those days, when a lady went around with a swollen belly, people were embarrassed by it. It wasn't like it is today. We all accept the fact that children do indeed come out of their mothers. But this disgusted everybody, so she had to go. So when I came, I met Dr. [C.L.] Sonnichsen* on the campus. I guess he just realized that I was probably the new librarian, because they referred to me as "that kid running the library." Although I was twenty-two, I appeared to be about fourteen. So Sonnichsen came up to me and thumped me on the belly and said, "I hope you're not pregnant!" It just shocked me! That was my introduction to Sonnichsen.

At this time the library was on the top floor of what was then Kelly Hall, which became the Mass Communications Building [and today is Old Kelly]. The outside staircase on the west was the entrance to the library. And the reading room was on one end and the bookstacks on the other. I had a sliding panel between me and the kids. When we started getting

things, we had no room to shelve them, so I'd pile things up by the wall in the reading room. And I'd go out there and say, "You roughnecks, keep your paddy paws off those things — they're valuable!" We were so *small* that that's the way we ran things. "Okay, Polk," they'd scream.

But they were very nice when it came to bringing their books back to the library, because I'd go through the dormitory on my way to work saying, "All books are due today!" I'd even call the names. "Albert, you have fifteen books overdue!" At that time the fine was a penny a day. And I'd just go through the campus yelling "book return day!" People would apologize, "Hey, Baxter, can I bring them back this afternoon? Will that be okay?" I'd say, "Get them in there before five o'clock." And we got our books back; everybody was friendly and nice. If we ever did have a problem, the kids were reasonable about it. I could call them in and say, "Now, look, you're keeping somebody else from these books," because we had so few.

Of course, the kids used to call me up from the dorm, where they were lying around drinking beer and smoking, to bring them a book. They'd call and say, "Hey, Bax, bring me so and so; I need it for a theme." They'd give me the title, and frequently I'd do it. Lazy so-and-so's! Then later on they'd take me out and buy me a beer or a sandwich. But it was fun, and I really had a good time. I was close to the students and close to the faculty.

When I first came to the campus, one of my favorite people was Captain John W. Kidd*. The poor man had this bad throat, and he kind of whispered. He came over one day and he said [in a hoarse whisper], "Baxter, are they treatin' ya right?" I said, "Cap Kidd, I don't know. Everybody's mad at me because I can't get any money for the library*, and I can't get the place straightened out. I don't have any help." The job was not considered a full-time job when I first came here. They made me teach four classes plus run the library with four student assistants. Yet people wanted the library to stay open more hours, because they had been closing at noon. I extended the hours until five o'clock in the afternoon. I had to teach these classes, grade papers, run the library. Oh, I was going out of my mind! So Cap Kidd went to bat for me, went over to Wiggins and said, "That young fellow over there is trying to do a good job; why don't you let him do it? Relieve him of all that teaching; give him some help!" He was just marvelous, and I was finally relieved of

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teaching. Everybody respected the man because he would say anything he felt like saying. The engineers absolutely adored him. They really did.

When we started to build this new building [now the new geology building] in 1936 and 1937, Cap Kidd was working with the engineers and the architects on the physical design of the building, because he was in charge of buildings and grounds. So he came over to ask me what I wanted. It was to be a combined Administration-Library Building. We had a WPA grant from the federal government to build the building. Do you know how much that old building cost? One hundred thousand dollars! We would go through the building when it was being constructed, and he'd get mad about something. He chewed tobacco, and he would spit on the walls to mark where he'd want something changed. And the workmen would say, "Well, Cap, what do we have to do now?" He'd say, "Go up there, and where I've spit tobacco juice, do it all over." And they'd look for the tobacco juice stains on the wall to put more plaster on some damn thing.

He was just a marvelous person. He lived in this little house up here on campus, because he was so honored and revered. And he used to give parties, and he'd roll up the rug and want to dance. He was just a short, pudgy, bald-headed man. Well, the four student assistants that I had were very pretty girls, and he had quite an eye for pretty girls. So he would invite me and tell me to bring my four pretty girls. And I'd say, "Now, girls, dance with him." His dancing consisted of getting up on the floor and just shuffling, flatfooted, back and forth from one end to the other. But these girls would all dance with him.

When I came here, we had 13,000 or 14,000 volumes. I recommended that for a college this size a basic collection of 100,000 volumes would be a good [start]. We *never* got it! We're still struggling. But you see, everything took priority over the library. Space and facilities were absolutely *lousy*. If he had gotten the volumes, we wouldn't have had any space to put them. We occupied the new building in '38, I believe. It was a combined Administration-Library, which was ridiculous because those two things are not compatible; they have *nothing* to do with one another. We had the top floor in the back annex. I called it a little carbuncle on the back of our neck. So we put up with that until 1956, when the administration built themselves a new building. It should have been the other way around.

People got very hysterical, particularly just before [World War II], because there was a great deal of Communist propaganda in this country. The Martin Dies Committee sent a group of people down here to check the curricula of all the public institutions and all the libraries for their holdings on pro-Communist literature. So the head of the school at that time, an acting president, came up in great panic and said, "Baxter, you better hide all these things you've got," because we were getting at that time the *Daily Worker*. I was not paying for it out of state funds. As a matter of fact, we weren't paying for it at all — the Communist Party was sending it free to libraries all over the country. I kept it because it was representative of that group of people. I thought everyone had a right to read. Well, he asked me to hide these things while that committee was here. I wouldn't do it, so he did it. He just gathered up all the publications, the current ones, and took them down to his office and locked them up, which I thought was ridiculous. But when the committee came and went, he brought them back.

But I didn't get into any kind of trouble at all. They looked at some of the faculty check-out files. I told them that this was confidential information. But this committee primarily wanted to see what certain people here were reading, particularly if they were in the classroom teaching, and whether or not they were promoting any of this propaganda in their classrooms. I protested very strongly, but these people said they had every right because they were federal agents and appointed by the federal government to do this. So I just sat there and let them do it. I don't know what they came up with; nobody got in trouble. But I was branded later by the community as a "pink."

We had other things come up. When the John Birch Society came into existence, I accepted all their publications from a lady here in town who would bring them to me. She just brought the packages of publications and dumped them and said, "Baxter, I'm just amazed that you would accept these things, because you're such a liberal, such a pink." I said, "I'm taking this stuff, and I'm going to put it on the shelf, but I assure you I'm not going to read it. I'm taking this stuff because it represents a bunch of *nuts* in this country and what they think." Of course the McCarthy era was *very* bad because there were people who were self-appointed censors, and they would come around, talk to you, and try to find things.

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Censorship takes all kinds of forms. There were lots of people who objected to miniskirts, pantsuits, and particularly hot pants, which I never liked either. I was told that I should absolutely make it a rule that the people working here should wear dresses at least down to their knees, or just above the knees, and no pants. And I said, "Good heavens, I can't dictate to these people what they wear. I don't allow them to come to work in bathing suits or barefoot, and that's as far as I can go on restricting this."

I have enjoyed what I've done here. It's been rewarding for me. People have been extremely good to me and extremely tolerant of me. I have liked El Paso. I liked the Spanish-Mexican-Indian elements here. I felt that I melted into the community. And I feel that I am as equally loved among the minorities as I am among the majorities, whoever they are. I don't know which is which anymore. [Incidentally] I employed the first full-time black on the staff at UTEP. The personnel section at the time was very upset. Quite a number of people were. Some of the faculty were horrified. One faculty member came over to ask this girl if she were French. She was quite dark, and she said, "No, I'm Negro." And of course that just [really] upset that person.

This school was not terribly friendly toward people with what they called Spanish surnames at that time. You didn't find many of them on the faculty. Texas was still coming from the Revolution. There's still a problem. But it would have remained the way it was if a few people like myself and others had not been bold enough to sound off about it, and just simply say, "It's grossly unfair, and you're letting a lot of talent go to waste." Well, I think I am loved by those groups. I have some good enemies, too, and I intend to keep them!

Interviewed by David Salazar and Mildred Torok, April 27, May 4, 1973,
El Paso.

He jumped back! So did the rest of us! And the alligator then started trying to get under his desk.

William S. Strain

[1909-1986]

Faculty, 1937-1974

In August, 1937, I came here as director of the museum and an instructor in geology. I taught geology laboratories and ran the museum as a combined sort of thing. I had the museum job until 1946 and [eventually became full-time in] the Geology Department, and I remained there until I retired in '74.

When we came here we knew all the faculty, and I knew most of the students. I see students now that tell me they were on the campus at such and such a time. Maybe they majored in English, but I remember them, though I didn't have them in class, [because] the school was so small. The Co-op was a bookstore up in the east end of the ground floor of Old Main. Everybody met in the Co-op. You got your mail in there, and so everybody sooner or later went into the Co-op almost every day. You saw everybody on the campus. That's one of the reasons you got to know them so well.

The kids pulled a lot of pranks in those days. They engineered quite a few things around campus, and their initiations were always a bit colorful. They'd dress up the boys in all sorts of outlandish getups, and they'd

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send 'em downtown to beg [or] to try to catch a carp in a pond down there that they had with the alligators. Some of the APOs [Alpha Phi Omega*] were mixed up in the stunt. They had one member who was a geology student, Herbert Tune. Herbert could play the guitar a little bit. So, when they initiated him, they gave him his guitar, put some dark glasses on him, and put him downtown with a tin cup. They had him walking up and down the streets singing songs. Anyway, he collected quite a bit of money. Every time he'd get a little money in his cup, half full or something, why the upper classmen would go take the money out and duck into the nearest beer joint and have a beer. Somebody saw this and turned them in to the police, and they arrested them for robbing a blind man! That sort of thing was pretty common.

I was standing behind Dr. [Howard E.] Quinn* the morning he opened the door, and the alligator was in his office. The kids were always playing jokes on Dr. Quinn. He carried a running banter with them, and of course they'd do their best to get even with him somewhere. So they went down to the Plaza and got an alligator about six feet long and put him in his office overnight. When Dr. Quinn came in the next morning, I had a question I wanted to ask him. I met him at his door, and he opened the door, and here was this big ole alligator's mouth going "krssshhh." He jumped back! So did the rest of us! And the alligator then started trying to get under his desk. Dr. Quinn had a very expensive microscope sitting out on the corner of the desk, and he was afraid the alligator would knock it off and break it. So he slammed the door and called the authorities, and they sent the [city] park people out. The park people tied the alligator up [and] hauled him back to the park.

On St. Patrick's Day the students used to go up to Oro Grande and have their initiations in the old abandoned mines there. They would always set off dynamite on the hills around the campus, about five o'clock in the morning, to start St. Pat's. And they got a lot of complaints about that after they built [Providence] Hospital. They frightened the patients over there.

I think what maybe finally capped it for us was they got off a pretty good shot in behind Old Main, over on that hill, and it was a little overdone and knocked out a bunch of their windows. I think that's the last time we ever shot the dynamite. Well, the police caught them a time or two with dynamite in the cars, and they thought it was pretty dangerous,

which it was. On the other hand, they forgot that these students took courses in explosives. They knew what they were doing. And a number of them helped [Dr. John W.] Cap Kidd*. Cap Kidd was an explosives expert, to the extent that he blasted out rocks under Old Main while they continued to have classes in there. And nobody, as far as I know, ever stopped a class. Cap was a real good "powder monkey," as they called them in the mining business. I never heard of anything getting away from Cap to the point that it did any damage.

Cap Kidd had tuberculosis. He had a funny, peculiar little high-pitched voice. As I understand it, the disease affected his voice, and he came here for his health. Dr. [B.F.] Jenness* was another person who came to El Paso with tuberculosis. Mrs. Jenness brought him to Alpine, Texas, on a stretcher, and they lived in a tent. He regained his health, and they came to El Paso. They hired him at the College of Mines as a school doctor. The interesting thing about it is he lived to be ninety-six. Dr. Jenness is a shining example of someone who came out here expecting to die, was near death, and lived to be way up in his nineties.

Dr. [D.M.] Wiggins* interviewed me for the job out here. One of my professors at the University of Oklahoma had told him that he thought I would make a good research man. Dr. Wiggins said, "Now, I want you to know that we don't want you to do any research. We want you to teach." And so what research we did in those days, we would just get on our own time and bootleg, so to speak. But it is certainly vastly different now. Research is an extremely important thing in the university system. This worked a hardship on some of us, too, because later on they wanted to see what you published. Well, in a lot of those years you didn't publish anything. You couldn't! And they didn't want you to, but people didn't understand that.

We had heavy loads in those days. I had as many as twenty-five contact hours a week. That's just the way everybody did it in those days. We went up there at eight o'clock and we stayed until five o'clock every darn day. And we went until noon on Saturdays. They wanted you to devote your full time to teaching, which I think was all right in those days. I think the energy should have been strictly on teaching. I'm not too sure [but] that we put too much emphasis on research now and we ought to put more emphasis on teaching.

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[In] the earlier days, our mining engineers and geologists were practically all from out of town. As a matter of fact, we trained nearly all the mining engineers in Mexico for a good many years. And up until about now, most of the mining engineers in Mexico were trained here. Salvador Trevino is a good example of that. So our numbers from El Paso were relatively small in those days. But then the town grew, and the school grew with it, especially on the academic side. It burgeoned because the city was growing so rapidly.

Dr. Wiggins didn't want the school to be large. He said one time in fact that he didn't want to see this school ever get to be more than 2,500. Well, that would be a controllable unit, I'm sure. So in those days they weren't very farsighted, as far as campus expansion. At that time they could have bought a lot of that property which is between the University and North Mesa now for very cheap prices, but they didn't buy it. They didn't think we were going to expand that much. To get it now would be terribly expensive.

When I came, the museum was just really the bare walls. I was the first curator they had. For a long time the museum had a tough time, because it wasn't one of these things that developed from funds at the University. It was forced on the College in a way. When the State of Texas gave the money — \$50,000 — to El Paso for a museum for the Texas Centennial, there was a great squabble about how to spend the money. The city wouldn't take it, wouldn't agree to perpetuate. The county wouldn't take it, wouldn't agree to perpetuate. The Pioneer Association had a collection; they'd like to have it, but they couldn't agree to perpetuate.

So the College of Mines agreed to perpetuate, and that's how it got out there. Some of the administrators had said they wished to goodness we didn't have it, because we didn't want to spend the money on it. It was hard to try to convince them that the new museum had teaching value. And every time we got a new president, why, we had to go into another campaign to try to convince him of the value of the museum. We didn't have much money to run the museum when I was over there. My maximum annual budget was a little over \$2,000, and I had to hire students for janitors.

[During] the days when I was running the museum, upstairs in the right wing, that would be the northeast wing, Miss [Vera] Wise* of the Art Department was in one room, and in the opposite wing, upstairs on the

left side, which would be northwest, Jackie Williams was the voice teacher. And I had a terrible time with those women in the wintertime. Jackie would go up there, and she wanted to sing and keep singing. They wanted fresh air, so they'd open all the windows. Miss Wise would come downstairs [and say that] her kids were up there with their hands wet, and they were freezing to death. Oh boy, did I ever have a hard time! I couldn't keep both satisfied to save my soul. Miss Wise wanted it warm, and Jackie wanted it cold. The poor ole boiler wasn't big enough to handle it.

During World War II, troops were over there at Mt. Cristo Rey guarding those railroad bridges. Because we were so close to Mexico, they feared planes might fly in from the West Coast or down in Mexico and bomb those bridges. If they did that, they would destroy all the east-west traffic across the southern United States. With Fort Bliss being a very important military base, there was a tremendous amount of rail traffic in and out, moving troops and bringing in equipment. So these bridges really were important targets.

They had machine-gun nests all around and observation posts, so that if any plane flew over, it would be identified. Any person who went out there had to identify himself. I found some little coral [fossils] out there before the war, and I wanted to go back to find some more. They had a command post down across the street from the cement plant, right on the road there. I went down there and talked to the corporal, and he called the officer of the guard. They finally told me I could go up to the place I wanted to go, which was around Cristo Rey Road. There was another machine-gun nest up there, and I reported to those fellows and told them what I wanted to do. I went down about 200 yards or so to reach the locality I wanted to go to. All the time I felt like I was looking right down the barrel of a machine gun.

After the war was over, oh, my stars! We were swamped with people going to school on the GI Bill. And it was the best group of students we ever had. Those people had been out in the world, and they'd come back to school, and they knew why they were here and what they wanted. They got in there and got after it. We had some awfully fine students. Some of these people now are prominent; they're presidents and vice presidents of oil companies and mining companies. They were a fine group of people. They had the intelligence to start with, but they had motivation

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when they came back. It was the best group of students we ever had at this university.

The vets and their village were down there where the multi-story dormitories are. They had a bunch of old barracks, and they transported them over to the campus and made housing apartments for married students. They also brought some old two-story, barracks-type buildings and put them on the campus where the present Fine Arts Center is. They were wooden structures. Everybody was scared to death they'd burn down. Fortunately, they didn't. But a lot of the people going to school on the GI Bill lived down there in those old apartments, and they served us very well for a number of years.

Charlie Steen* is one of our old illustrious graduates of some fame. He discovered uranium up in Utah and developed a national reputation. He was selected Outstanding Ex, and the Outstanding Ex made a speech, which was customary. But his speech was a little off-color, to say the least. He used some rather common, ordinary, mining-type terms, which you don't usually hear in polite society. You see, they had changed the name of the school [from College of Mines to Texas Western]. Charlie and others were terribly upset about it, because they felt that we had a fine reputation as a mining school all over the world and [that] the school had lost its identity when they changed the name. And then when they did away with the mining program, that capped it, and we lost a lot of loyal ex-student support.

The way this thing was written, it was the School of Mines. And then the town grew, and people who couldn't afford to go away would come to school out there, and they wanted a broader program. One thing that brought about the name change is a lot of people who graduated out there wanted their degrees recognized in a different way from that of a mining school. They had liberal arts backgrounds. They felt that with a liberal arts background, a degree with a mining school didn't give them the recognition they should have. So that side of the campus outgrew the mining people. That was the reason the tail got wagging the whole school, and so they changed the name. That precipitated an ill feeling to begin with. Then Dr. [Joseph M.] Ray* did away with mining school entirely, because the number of enrollees dropped to a point where it wasn't economical to keep the program going. The engineers started painting the green line after they changed the name. It went from over by Quinn

Hall right across the campus. It cut off the engineering and geology parts on the west side of the campus from the other side, [whose students] they called Peedoggies*.

When we came here, Dr. Wiggins was living down on Montana Street. The faculty used to go down there for the Sun Carnival. They'd have coffee and doughnuts and stuff, and we'd sit out there and watch the [parade]. Then the University bought the old house just across the street, [to the] south, from the present Student Union. There was a homestead in there. At one time it had been used as a house of ill repute. The University bought it and moved the president up to that house. I guess they tore down that old house to build the present Liberal Arts Building.

I don't know what people in general thought about the architectural style of the first library building*, the "Hay Barn." Nearly everybody I talked to was dissatisfied because they thought it ruined our motif. But I noticed that with all the newer buildings they have gone back to at least some elements that have a hint of the original architecture. The new library building is out-and-out Bhutanese. It really has given our campus a distinction that few campuses have. The type of buildings we have and how they fit nicely into the setting is unique. There's not another one in the country like it.

Interviewed by Rebecca Craver, November 1, 1983, El Paso.

*So what do you do with Goldiggers when there is
no football team?*

Catherine Burnett Kistenmacher

Student, 1944-1948

When I began [in 1944] it was a woman's college for sure, because there were 400 girls and 100 boys. These boys were the seventeen-year-olds who were not yet eligible for the draft, some veterans, and a few 4-F's. That was the era of gasoline rationing, and not many people had a car. That's why we depended on the bus to get us to campus, or we carpooled. If we took the Highland bus, we got off on Arizona Street and Mesa. These were the good old days when the motorists were extra friendly, and if they had a gallon of gasoline they wanted to share it with as many people as they could. Motorists would see a lot of college kids standing around, and they would just stop for us and take us up the hill to college. It was wonderful.

I started majoring in journalism because I planned to go into advertising. That was when Judson Williams* was dean of students at the college. He had the brilliant idea to go around the various businesses in El Paso, including the American Furniture Company, the Popular Dry Goods Company, and KTSM. He asked if they would offer cooperative scholarships to some of the graduating seniors from high school. And they said yes. That gave me a chance to apply for the scholarship in which

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I was interested, and that was advertising. I won a four-year scholarship from the Popular Dry Goods Company. I had labs there to learn advertising all four years that I was in college, and then on the holidays and during the summer I had a job waiting for me if I wanted to work. So it was really great.

When I was a freshman, we didn't have a football team, [because] this was right in the middle of the war. There wasn't anything for the Gold-diggers to pep for. So what do you do with Goldiggers when there is no football team? We went and sang for the soldiers out at Beaumont Hospital. Mainly because we did not have a very good instructor in the Journalism Department, my sophomore year I changed my major to art. Vera Wise* was head of the Art Department. I learned watercolor under her and am still partial to it, and that's what I paint in today, watercolor.

[On campus] the students congregated in front of the Co-op. It was actually just the bookstore, and it was located in the end of Main Building. That was the place where you went to buy your books, and they also had soda pops and sandwiches, which weren't very good. I don't know who supplied them with the sandwiches; they were always wrapped and rather tasteless. But they filled the bill if you hadn't brought your sack lunch from home. You went to the Co-op to socialize, and in our El Paso weather, most of the time we sat out on that wall in front of the Co-op to talk and visit.

We wore what was in style at that time, and that was bobby socks and saddle oxfords and skirts and sweaters. We certainly didn't ever wear blue jeans — that would've been unheard of. Nor would we have considered wearing any type of trousers; the women just didn't wear any kind of slacks of anything to the campus then. That was just not the thing to do.

The sororities were quite active on campus then. We had three: Tri Delta, Zeta [Tau Alpha], and Chi Omega. The Chi Omega and the Tri Delt lodges were next door to each other [where the present Education Building is located], and the Zetas* were on the other side of the campus. We never permitted any boys [inside] the sorority lodge. If they wanted to come to pick up their date or their girlfriend, they would come to the front door, and whoever answered the front door would say, "Well, just a minute, I'll call her." But he could not come into the house or into the foyer or anything. That was one of the rules I best remember about the sorority. I pledged Chi Omega when I was a freshman and went all

through four years with the sorority. This was a good thing, especially [my freshman year] when not too much was happening on the campus, because with [only] 500 students you don't have too much going on.

Our social life centered around the campus. We used to have dances at Holliday Hall*. When I was a high freshman, the Chi Omegas sponsored a dance that had a circus theme, and it was really quite nice. Our colors were yellow and red, so we draped streamers from the very top and brought them out as a giant circus tent. Then we decided that we would have horses like a real merry-go-round, and I drew all of the different horses that were on this merry-go-round. Well, if you can, visualize this giant tent, with the streamers establishing the size of it, and then all of these horses going around as if it were a giant merry-go-round. It was beautiful.

I guess it was the spring of my sophomore year when the war ended. All the men started coming back, which was nice, because then we could have a football team, and the Goldiggers could actually be a pep squad and march as they were supposed to do, instead of singing. The enrollment at the college went up tremendously, and we had many, many veterans on the campus. They brought a note of seriousness to the campus. Some of the students felt that they didn't pay enough attention to campus life as such. Maybe they took some of the fun and joy out of going to college. A few of them were bitter, you might say, but the majority of them seemed to fit in very well.

I was in the pioneer radio class at the college. Never before had they had any radio instruction, and KTSM gave us their old equipment. We had all of these wonderful turntables and consoles that they gave us, plus they gave us our first radio instructor, who was Virgil Hicks*. Well, our mascot is *el burro*, and I guess it was primarily my idea to put this program on the air is if *el burro* was talking. In this day and time they wouldn't like it because *el burro* had a Mexican accent, but it was so funny. He'd interview some of the students, and then we would play music. Once a week we aired it, and it was good experience to teach us copy writing and how to put a program together.

All campuses have their politics, but in those days you were either an academ or an engineer. Even the sororities were lined up accordingly. At first, the Chi Omegas voted with the academics. Then something came about that they didn't like, and they changed their allegiance to the

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engineers, and for the rest of the time the Chi Omegas voted engineer. Whoever the candidates were that the engineering party was running, that's how we voted.

Our classes were on Monday-Wednesday-Friday, or they were on Tuesday-Thursday-Saturday. Now, there weren't any labs scheduled for Saturday afternoon, but we still had classes on Saturday mornings. We went to school six days a week. I was busy. For instance, when I was a freshman, I had a chemistry lab. Then I would go to the Popular the other afternoons and learn layout and copy and things like that. Then during my succeeding years I used to actually prepare ads for the Popular. Besides advertising in the *Times* and *Herald-Post*, they did a lot of advertising in *El Continental* and *El Fronterizo*, which are two [Spanish-language] newspapers. By my junior year I was doing a lot of the actual ad preparation for these papers. I really got, in my labs, what the course itself meant and what I would be doing later on, because I had a job waiting for me as soon as I graduated.

Interviewed by Rebecca Craver, March 20, 1984, El Paso.

*Vet Village was for married GIs, but it was heaven.
We had a beautiful view of the cement plant and
ASARCO.*

John A. Phelan

Student, 1945-1948

*We really had a congenial group out there. Our
friends that we made there are lasting friends.*

Elouise L. Phelan

Student, 1946-1947

John: I had been a newspaper reporter before I went to war, and I really planned to go to the University of Missouri and get my degree. While I was a patient at Beaumont Hospital, and I wasn't real sure what I wanted to do, I took a creative writing course with Dr. Burgess Johnson. This was in 1945. He was a visiting professor. I was taking him home one afternoon after class, and he pointed at Mt. Franklin, and he said, "You see that mountain? That's a beautiful mountain." And I said, "You know, I guess you're right. I never really thought about that." And maybe that was the beginning, because it was a beautiful mountain, and somehow that mountain attracted not only me and my family but so many other people here.

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Anyway, I was getting rather restless at the hospital because they were operating on me about every six weeks, and I had nothing to do. I thought I would like to go back and take another course, a few courses, anything to transfer to Missouri. My doctor, Willard Schuessler, encouraged it, so I and some of my friends in the burn ward went out and got in line [to register]. Dr. [C.L.] Sonnichsen* got ahold of me, and I told him what I wanted to do, and he said, "Well, why don't you take fifteen hours? You can transfer all of them. No need to waste your time." So we sat down together and looked at the curriculum, and I saw there was a course in radio. I thought that a newspaper reporter ought to really know something about his competition, so I took radio more or less as an elective. That was the beginning: the mountain and Dr. Johnson and my doctor and Dr. Sonnichsen.

I hadn't been in class too many weeks [when] KTSM needed somebody as a night man in the news department. So I came down here and worked at night in the news department for a dollar an hour. Of course, I've been here ever since. I wound up getting a degree in journalism and radio broadcasting, and I never gave another thought to the newspaper business.

Here I am — someone who's not planning to go there — and [I wind] up with an entire career because of the school, quite honestly. Not only me but a lot of my friends also got their degrees there. We were still in uniform, going to school [while] patients of Beaumont, and bandaged up a lot of the time because of operations and various things. It was a little difficult sometimes for us to get out in public, but the school just eliminated all of that and took us in and really helped us to rehabilitate ourselves in a rapid manner. When the war was over and I was back in school, I realized that I really wanted to do something for myself and my family. All [the returning veterans] felt the same way. We were quite different [than before the war]. We had grown up a lot faster than some of the other people. In 1945 I was all of twenty-four years old, but I was a very old twenty-four.

Our oldest son was born during the war in 1943 out in San Diego, and our second son was born in Beaumont Hospital in July of '46. Louise and I [and the two boys] had been living in an apartment. We heard about Vet Village being constructed [on the campus], and we applied. The first thing were the trailers. And back in 1945 and 1946 a trailer was really

a trailer. A mobile home today is a mobile home. That was a trailer; believe me, it was a trailer. Now, we couldn't get our family in a trailer, plus the fact they didn't have any available to us. So we just waited until they built the apartments.

We lived in Apartment 17-A, two bedrooms. Elouise and I had a bedroom. The two boys had a bedroom with bunk beds. We had a bath, a living room-dining room in front, and a kitchen. That was it. I had an old replica of a bomb I hung out over the front porch with the address on it. During one heavy snowstorm one winter, the snow came through the cracks in the windows. But it was a lot better than most of us had been living in, because housing was acutely short, and you took what you could get. Another thing, the people in town used to give furniture to the young couples out there. They didn't give it to Goodwill Industries or the Salvation Army. They gave it to us. Boy, it was great!

Elouise: That apartment was a mansion to me, because I had a bedroom for the boys and our bedroom and a kitchen. The kitchens were quite nice. They did put new sinks in for us, and the stoves were new when we moved there, and the iceboxes were adequate. We had iceboxes in the beginning, but the second year we bought a refrigerator.

The buildings were wooden, and the floors were wooden. I do not know who came up with the idea of putting linseed oil on the floors! We didn't have any kind of a rug, no carpeting, or anything at the beginning. I remember this oil was black, and my children's pajamas just would get so dirty. Well, finally we bought linoleum and put it on the living room, and I believe we put some in the children's room.

John: Vet Village was for married GIs, but it was heaven. We had a beautiful view of the cement plant and ASARCO. It was a beautiful sight to see that slag when they'd pour it and to see the trains come by, and I'm not being facetious. We had a view of something. We could see the mountains. We never complained about anything. We were just grateful to have it.

In 1948 *Parade* magazine wrote an article on us as young married couples living in Vet Village and how we looked upon our marriage and how it affected our marriage by working and going to school. Elouise and I were one of the couples. We'd all get together and help one another, and we'd put yards in for each other and grass. We'd borrow a truck and borrow shovels. We'd go down to the river and dig up the riverbed and

bring it back, and we'd build yards with grass. We'd go get stones and make stepping stones, put up a picket fence and a gate and paint it. This was fun for us. This was our first real, honest-to-goodness home since getting out of the service. We were one big, happy family. The girls thought we ought to have a nursery, so we went out and begged and borrowed material and [combined] skills, and we built a nursery. We were donated the material, and we built it. Then we hired a babysitter to take care of all the little kids. I'd say that was a cooperative effort. We had a washeteria, and the girls used that. It was a very happy existence, believe me. It was fun.

Elouise: We had a little grocery store between Vet Village and Paisano, which was [within] walking distance if we needed milk or bread. I think the [owner's] name was Bustamante. We could just run down there and get what we needed, but the last week of the month we probably didn't have the money to go down there and buy what we needed. We had a limited income. The last week of the month many of us would run out of certain staples, but we could always go to our neighbors. We did a lot of borrowing. We'd go to a neighbor and say, "Well, I've got the meat. Do you have spaghetti?" We'd get together, and we'd come up with a pretty good meal.

One thing about us, we were all in the same boat — poor. Most of the husbands worked, and we wives would get together and play bridge or just visit in the evenings. On the weekends we would have covered-dish suppers and have lots of fun. We always took the children, and we'd gather in somebody's yard. We had a yard, and John even put up a picket fence around it. We would sit out on this small, little porch and in the yard. We enjoyed that view of the mountains and the area very much. Frances Humphrey lived across the road. Both our husbands worked at night. We would put her little boy to bed, and because my yard had grass, I can remember sitting there on that grass many an evening just visiting until the husbands would get off from work. My children would be asleep, and she would watch them while I'd run down to the station and pick John up.

John: When you're young you can do a lot of things. We all studied hard. I'd shut this place [KTSM] down at 11:30 at night and then get home by midnight. Usually I didn't try to study at midnight. I'd go right to bed. [I'd] get up at six o'clock in the morning when I was fresh and clear, and I'd do my studying. That's the way I operated. We had to study

on the weeknights and Sunday, but on Saturday, that was our night to really have a good time together. Somehow we'd manage a case of Mitchell's beer, and the girls would bring covered dishes, and that was our party.

I became a fraternity man. I was in SAE, and many of my GI friends were SAEs. We were not accustomed to politics at the collegiate level, and at one fraternity meeting the eminent archons of our fraternity announced who we were going to support for student body president. They didn't ask us who we'd like to support. They just told us who the fraternity was going to support. I would say we were the activists of our time, and we didn't think that was the democratic way to do it. So we got together, and we decided we'd put our own candidate up against our own fraternity candidate. Our own candidate was Raymond "Sugar" Evans, who was the star tackle on the football team.

Of course, the engineers had their candidate, and it became a three-way race, and that's when it really heated up. I was the campaign manager. The women would make cakes and various things, and we'd have rallies. Once we conned a dance band to come down and play at a big rally. Come election day we lined up the entire football team at the polls, and they all voted one way. Well, to make a long story short, our candidate Sug pulled more votes than the other two put together. He was an independent, and it was the first time, I think, at Texas College of Mines [that an independent candidate won the presidency]. We were proud of that because the students rallied around us.

I don't know how it all came about, but [I became mayor of Vet Village]. Later my friend Sug Evans became the mayor. As mayor of that village, my most immediate contact was with Gene Thomas* of the Engineering Department. Now, everybody was scared of Gene. He was a little rough on the outside. He was crusty and growled a lot. I was the go-between between the administration, being Gene Thomas, and Vet Village. But Gene and I hit it off just great, and in later years he and I became very close friends. Gene got us a lot of things down there that we probably wouldn't have gotten from somebody else.

Everybody's life is changed not by one but a series of events and a series of people. I believe that very strongly. You don't get where you are without somebody helping you. Nobody gets there on his own. No such thing as a self-made man. A person that probably had as much influence [on me as anybody] at that school was Clarice Jones in Speech. I had a really

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burning desire to be an announcer, [but] I had grown up in Galveston, and I had an accent that you could cut with a knife. I said "dese" and "dose" and "Toity Toid" street. I didn't know how to say "I." I said "Ah." And I didn't know how to say "running." I said "runnin'." I didn't know how to say "room." I said "rum." Everything that was bad I said, because it was a combination of Brooklyn, New Orleans, and Deep South.

Clarice got ahold of me in a phonetics class, and I probably worked harder on that than anything. I managed to correct it to the point where I could continue a career as an audio person in radio and TV. But that's a contribution of that school, you understand? That's what it did for me. And then Virgil Hicks* [allowed me] to practice play-by-play football with a wire recorder. Then on Sunday mornings I'd get my football player friends up there with me. We'd listen to it, and they'd critique it. That's how I learned to do play-by-play. But I'd have never gotten that shot if I hadn't have had the facilities and the encouragement to do it. That's helped me tremendously in my career. I owe that school a lot, believe me.

Elouise: We really had a congenial group out there. Our friends that we made there are lasting friends. We still keep up with the ones out of town, and when they come to Homecoming we're always so glad to see them. We really try to keep up with each other. I think that this experience has been such a great blessing because we were all so happy. Our husbands had been to war and had come back, and we didn't realize that we were doing without anything. We were just happy people all in the same boat, very thankful that we had a place to live and very thankful that our husbands had the GI Bill to complete their education.

John: We moved out [of Vet Village] in the fall of '48. I was [sorry], particularly because the rent was so low. We were able to buy a home. I had \$200 cash and a GI loan, and I was able to get it for nothing down. The \$250 cash paid some back taxes on it. I paid \$7,800 for our first home. That was a step up, you see. Everything from Vet Village, for most of us, was a step up.

We were the beginning of changing the nature of the school. I graduated in '48, and it was 1949 when they changed the name to Texas Western College. So I got one of the last diplomas that says Texas College of Mines and Metallurgy. And my oldest son got the last one that said Texas Western College.

Interviewed by Rebecca Craver, February 20 and 24, 1984, El Paso.