

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

WITH MARY DUNN

MAY 7, 2015

BRACHFIELD, TEXAS

INTERVIEWED BY DR. PERKY BEISEL

ORAL HISTORY #927

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ABSTRACT

Mary Dunn, a native of Brachfield, Texas, discusses her experiences growing up on a farm in rural East Texas, memories of the New London School explosion, marriage to a husband in the Air Force and their postings across America, and her career as a Home Economics schoolteacher.

Persons Mentioned: Abby Rushton Deason, Margaret Deason, Franklin Bruce Deason, Andrew Nelson, Billy Jones, Uncle Loyd, Douglas Grady Dunn, Martha, Murray Watkins, Skipper Dunn, Hattie Maxwell, Andrew Woods, General John J. Pershing, Uncle Johnny, Joseph Rushton, James McAvoy, Lottie Thomas, Frank Reddy, Jesse Deason, Ezra Welch, Dorothy Jean Pinkerton, Clyde Burke, Parker McComick, Richard Jones, Mollie Hunt, Robert Welch, Amanda Welch, and Etta Rodman Medlock.

Places Mentioned: Brachfield, Texas; Denton, Texas; Henderson, Texas; Stephen F. Austin State University; Texas Women's University; College of Industrial Arts; Denton, Texas; Good Hope, Texas; Welch Springs, Texas; Zion Hill, Texas; Rockmore, Texas; Neches River, New London School; Mount Hill, Texas; Carrizo Springs, Texas; San Antonio, Texas; Port Arthur, Texas; The Alamo; Carthage, Texas; Pirtle, Texas; Texas; Lafayette, Louisiana; Leesville, Louisiana; Charlotte, North Carolina; Tampa, Florida; Marshall Field, Kansas; Manhattan, Kansas; Panola County, Fort Riley, Kansas; Crow Cemetery, Watts Spring, Galveston, Texas; Baylor University; Wood Glenn, Texas; Linden, Texas; Minden, Texas; Medina, Texas; Pinehill, Texas; Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; Walter Cemetery; Kilgore College; Waskom, Texas; North Texas State University; Orange, Texas; Tyler County; Pike County, Georgia; Citizen's Cemetery; and Morrisfield, North Carolina.

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH

MARY DUNN

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MARY DUNN: ...A story of them [unintelligible] again

PERKY BEISEL: Ready to start?

DUNN: I love to quilt, these quilts, but when my mother was in the shape that I'm in, and I'd come up here to visit her, [coughs] and uh, just sitting here and talking to her, and I realized I could be piecing on a little square while she was talking.

BEISEL: Uh huh.

DUNN: And uh, so most of those were done while I was--

BEISEL: While you were visiting with your mother.

DUNN: [chuckles]

BEISEL: Wonderful.

LINDA REYNOLDS: That's a lot of quilting pieces.

DUNN: But all of those are not mine, my granddaughter took all my quilts down to her house, and then she brought some of them back and I think she has some of her mother's quilts mixed in with them. [chuckles]



BEISEL: Uh huh, uh huh, uh huh. Well, we're, I'm going to say a couple of things, a couple of things for the recorder and then we'll get started.

DUNN: Okay.

BEISEL: Today is May 7, we are in Brach--no, it is May 7th yeah it is May 7. I'm double checking.

REYNOLDS: 2015.

BEISEL: 2015. We are in Brachfield, Texas. In the room, I'm Perky Beisel, we have Linda Reynolds, Jake Keeling, and Mrs. Dunn, who is going to be our interviewee today and to tell us about this area, and her family, and hopefully some good stories about living here in East Texas. So when we get started, could you tell us a little bit about you, when you were born, who your parents were, that type of thing?

DUNN: Okay. I was born right here. That house—

BEISEL: Oh, in the picture?



DUNN: There was right here, and I was born in the room with a fireplace, and this fire—this chimney was built on the same base as that chimney. It's not the same house, but it's the same place, and I was born April 18, 1920. I had my ninety-fifth birthday the other day.

BEISEL: Ahh.

DUNN: And uh, my son, has already asked me to remember some things when I was real young. I think it was when my Granny Deason died, is what I remember the most. And she lived up on the hill where my sister lives now and we went up there. And I—I-I remember that more than anything because that was just something unusual.

BEISEL: Right.

DUNN: But uh, Daddy worked in the field. We had cotton, and uh, before that they had had peanuts, they raised peanuts. But they, he had uh, some kind of a sheller or something that he had used but they didn't—evidently it didn't work very good and it stayed in the old house over there until it rotted down, but we'd go over there and play on it.

BEISEL: Mmm hmm.

DUNN: And then, after he started raising cotton, we helped with that. We'd chop cotton, and hoe cotton— [chuckles]

BEISEL: Right.

DUNN: —and pick cotton, and uh, my sister, uh... was slow. [laughs] She never did, could keep up with Mother and me while we was picking, and we'd get to the end of the row, and she'd be way back up there. And we'd go help, help her catch up. Then, next year would be the same thing. [chuckles]

BEISEL: Uh huh.

DUNN: But we'd tease her about it, and uh, that's about all I remember. But after that, is uh, raising cotton, the oil boom came on, up at uh, around Henderson, and people came in from everywhere, and uh, so what Daddy started raising food uh, peas and potatoes and anything, any kind of crops he could raise, and uh, Mother made, uh, churned, and made butter, and uh, so they sold groceries up at town. I mean, Daddy about twice a week would take it up there and sell them.

BEISEL: Ahh.

DUNN: That's the way he sent us to college.

BEISEL: Ahh.

DUNN: Margaret went to SFA [Stephen F. Austin State University] to college and I went to, well when I first went there it was called CIA, but it was later called College of Industrial Arts, it was changed to Texas Women's Univer—well that's what it's called now, I think it's called, Denton, so I was gone for a good while up there but I did come home regularly.

BEISEL: Mmm hmm.

DUNN: And uh, my mother was Abby Rushton, and she was raised up the road in a little community called Good Hope, and she was a school teacher.

BEISEL: Ahh.

DUNN: Before she married. She never did teach after she married.

BEISEL: Okay. What was your father's name?

DUNN: Franklin Bruce Deason.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: And he was, let me see. No, he wasn't born here. There was another road that went back up on to the hill, Zion Hill, that's where there's a church up now. Daddy was born in the house that later became the Hutchins's place. I think he said he was four years old when they moved from there down to here, and I don't know—I think he was two or three years old, but he said he could remember when they moved, they moved on with a wagon with everything on a wagon, and when they crossed the creek, up here at Welch Springs, they crossed the creek and a barrel of flour was on the wagon and it rolled off down in the creek, and he said he sat there and watched them get

that out, and—this is the funny thing about it—he said he was wearing a little dress that was blue-check gingham. [laughs]

BEISEL: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

DUNN: Just that one sister.

BEISEL: Okay. And she's still living?

DUNN: No. She was oh, uh, sixteen months older than I was, but she was always a little tiny pretty thing [chuckles] and I was always a great big gawky thing. [laughs]

BEISEL: Your grandparents, your family, how long have they been in this area?

DUNN: All their lives.

BEISEL: Mmm hmm. When were your, did your grandparents, were they the first to move here, to Texas?

DUNN: Well, uh, Zion Hill, where my Grandpa Deason lived, was just up the hill here. I mean it was two miles, three miles maybe, but uhm, they walked, and went to church at Zion Hill, and the way they found their way through the woods was following the fence line, because the fence line was on the survey line, and it went right up to the place. And uhm, but my mother's people they were also farmers but they lived up at well, it's five or six miles up the road from here. But they were also farmers.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: Well, let's see, seems like he—oh, he was a potter. No, his daddy was a potter, made pottery, and now, and now, his pottery is collector's items. He

always put his initials on it. The name was Joseph Rushton, and I think they had this, an exhibit of some of it on it down at Nacogdoches one time.

REYNOLDS: So this was your mother's father?

DUNN: That was my mother's daddy, granddaddy.

BEISEL: Granddaddy.

DUNN: And uh, the pottery place was up, two or three, oh, well, close to Rockmore I don't know how far up that would be.

BEISEL: The kiln was in this area? Neat, neat. How many acres did your father have that he farmed?

DUNN: Uh, well,... about sixty or seventy acres, I think. From, that was grandpa's down there, and his joined onto it, and it went back nearly to Welch Springs, and that was where the Grandpa Welch lives, and uh... That was the main part though, but we uh, we helped with, down at Grandpa's, too. Not this grandpa. We, Margaret and I would go down and chop their garden, clean it, and keep their garden clean, and help him, and he'd usually give us a little something for doing it.

BEISEL: Right, right. When your father took the, the food up to, when your father took the food up to town during the oil boom, did you he use a truck or a wagon?

DUNN: He used an old Model T Ford. [clears throat] That's what I was going to tell about when Granny Deason died. The family that lived around here close all went down there that night, and uh, the cousins and all that was our age, they put us to bed in a bed that was out on the front porch, but we didn't go

to sleep because of the cars was coming in all the night and making shadows on the wall, from the shrubbery that was out in the yard. And we'd lay on the bed and watch the shadows. But anyhow, I had the oldest aunt couldn't come to the funeral. She lived in Carrizo Springs down in south Texas, and her husband was in bad health, too, and she couldn't come. So, real soon after Granny Deason died, why they, the whole family, and there was about fourteen children, but I mean a big portion of them, decided to go down to visit her, and Daddy had just sold his cotton. And uh, I think he had \$500 dollars, and he bought an old Model T, well, it wasn't old then, but he bought a Model T Ford and we went in it. And uh, we called it "Old Lizzy," ... and we, so we rode in "Old Lizzy" down and we, we, stopped in San Antonio, and uh, we had a great-uncle, Andrew Nelson, who had died at the Alamo, so we went to the Alamo and to found his name on the marker there, and uh, just went a lot of places.

BEISEL: Mmm hmm.

DUNN: And uh, there was just a whole caravan of us. Uncle Billy Jones and all his children, and *he'd* bought a new *Buick*. [laughs] And uh, Uncle Andrew had gone to Port Arthur, and he had a new car, and uh, well anyhow, there was about six or seven cars of all of us that went down to Aunt Veda's house after her, after the funeral.

BEISEL: What, what year would that have been about? What year--

DUNN: 1925.

BEISEL: About 1925.

DUNN: I was five years old.

BEISEL: Do you remember what the roads were like?

DUNN: Oh, I do remember, that, we crossed the Neches River on a ferry.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: Mmm hmm.

BEISEL: Were there bridges for the rest of the highways as you went down? Were the roads paved?

DUNN: Most of them were in pretty good shape, I mean that's was the only trouble we had. [laughs] They teased me when we crossed it I was scared, and they said that my face was white and my nose was red. [chuckles]

BEISEL: Was this in the winter time? Did you all go down in winter or summer?

DUNN: Well, it was in June. I guess it was summertime, and uh, but I know the reason my nose was red, it was probably blistered because I had been out in the sun.

BEISEL: Mmm. Well now which school did you attend here in town?

DUNN: Over about a mile and a half, it was the Patrick School. It was just a country school, but I went there until uh, through the eighth grade and then a bus came from Minden School and picked up children up the road here up at Wood Glen and then came down by here and we went to Linden. When I was in ninth grade. And then uh, Uncle Lloyd, one of my Daddy's brothers, was a doctor and he'd graduated Baylor, and he told Dad, he said, "If you want them to go to college, you better get them in a affiliated school, if not, you have to take an entrance examination and they're pretty hard." And so

he and Uncle Lloyd had started practicing medicine at Henderson, and he told us to come up and live with him and go to school up there, so the last tenth and eleventh—and we graduated from the eleventh at that time, not, we didn't go through the twelfth grade.

BEISEL: Mmm hmm. So you lived, did you stay up during the week with your uncle and then go home on the weekend?

DUNN: No. Daddy's usually came after us on Fridays because that was the day that he took his food up there to sell and we came home and then usually Uncle Lloyd would come down here on late Sunday afternoon and take us back over there.

BEISEL: What was Henderson like when you were living up there?

DUNN: Oh! You could hardly walk through the streets it was so crowded from all the people that was up there. Coming from school, we just had to kind of—the people were just all out in the...

BEISEL: And was this because of the oil boom going on?

DUNN: The oil boom, uh huh.

BEISEL: Do you remember lots of construction going on? Do you remember lots of new buildings going up that time?

DUNN: Yes, uh huh, uh huh. And I can remember the New London explosion, too.

BEISEL: Oh! Really?

DUNN: We were out here, the garden was right here [to side of house], and uh, we were, Margaret and I were planting uh, onions in the spring, and that, we heard that blast and we couldn't imagine what it was, it was just so loud. We

knew something awful had happened, but we didn't know what. Well, we didn't have telephones, and we didn't know why, but Daddy went to the store, cause there's a little store down there that was kind of the place to get the news, and anyhow, he learned that it was the New London School explosion. Well mother's sister's daughter, my cousin, was in school at New London so of course mother just started having a fit nearly because she was wondering if Martha was all right, and uh so she wanted to go up there to Aunt Vera's house, so we got in "Old Lizzy" and started up there [chuckles], and uh, anyhow, the cars were coming from New London to Henderson. Trucks, and cars, and ambulances, just, the roads were just full of them. And you couldn't go past. And we had to drive down in the ditch beside the road, but we got to Aunt Vera's house, she lived at that little community called Pirtle, before you get there.

BEISEL: Uh huh.

DUNN: They brought Martha back with a school bus brought them back, and we were standing out by the road waiting for them with Aunt Vera and Uncle Horace. And ohhh! When she came, she was the dirtiest thing you ever saw.

BEISEL: Really?

DUNN: You know, from that stuff, from dirt in her hair, in her face, she'd been crying, and dirt on her face, and uh, but she wasn't hurt.

BEISEL: Oh. That was very—

DUNN: But she made it.

BEISEL: —lucky, wow, wow. Uhm, was there a, um, railroad that went through nearby here at all any point?

DUNN: Well, uh, there was a uh, one that came through Pine Hill, I didn't hear much about it, I think that was before my time.

BEISEL: Mmm hmm.

DUNN: Uh huh. But I had seen the track. I know about where the track was.

BEISEL: Okay, and so when your father went to go get the news, was it coming in through telegraph? About, you know, when the explosion happened, and he went down to the corner? Was it coming in through telegraph? How was he getting the news? If you wanted to get news here?

DUNN: Well usually somebody would come through and tell, but somebody down there had a telephone.

BEISEL: Okay, they had a telephone down at the corner. Was there a store, a couple stores down at the corner?

DUNN: Yes. Well, I guess Grandpa's house—that one up on the hill—was probably about the earliest one around here, however, if you go back even more, real early, why this is on a, Watkins headright, and the [James McAvoy] Watkins house was down below there. That was Mrs. Murray Watkins, you ever heard of her?

BEISEL: No.

DUNN: She was my high school history teacher, and she just made it so interesting, that's the reason I guess I still like history. She could just tell it like, you, you could just almost imagine you was there.

BEISEL: Right. And her family was the first to move into this area?

DUNN: Uh huh, uh huh, this was the headright of land that he settled on. Uh huh.

BEISEL: Huh. And now your father, did he use horses or mules before he got a tractor?

DUNN: [chuckles] I was writing that for my sister the other day. He had a hor—a pretty old horse called Old Tipp and he had ridden Old Tipp when he was courting mother up the road, and it was a good long road, but, anyhow, Old Tipp was a gentle old horse, but the Old John was an old, cranky mule, and had to have a horse whipping nearly every time to put a harness on him.

[laughs]

BEISEL: That—

JAKE KEELING: Did he work the horse and a mule together?

DUNN: Uh huh. On his wagon. Some of his plows he had to have them on together, but Old John never did want to do a thing. [laughs]

BEISEL: When did he switch over to a tractor? When did he—

DUNN: Oh, he didn't get a tractor until my son was, uh, uh, my son is seventy-two I think, and uh, my husband died when he was two years old, old and uh that—what year that would be—anyhow, that's when daddy got a tractor or he might have had it a little while before that, but that was the way he entertained my son. He loved to work on cars, and tractors and things, and anytime. See, I started teaching after my husband died, but anyhow... Uh, if mother couldn't find him, a little two-year-old running around, if Daddy was around anywhere, Skipper would be sitting on the fender, —

BEISEL: Mmm hmm.

DUNN: —watching him, he grew up to be, he can work on anything now.

BEISEL: Ahh. He learned it all from your father. [Dunn chuckles] Well, uhm, where did you first start teaching school?

DUNN: It was at Minden, right down here. That's another story. After my husband died and Skipper was just two, and I didn't plan to teach, but I had finished, already finished college, and uh, Margaret, though, had heard that there was an opening at Minden for a history teacher—she'd majored in History—and so she was going to go down there to apply for it. And uh, when my husband died, he had a pretty good car, uh, you know, you couldn't buy cars then, during the war, but he had a cousin over at Carthage that had a dealership, and he let him have it because he was in service and was doing a good bit of traveling, and uh. So uh, I offered to take Margaret down to apply for the job and uh, cause then she wouldn't have to go in "Old Lizzy." [chuckles] And uh, anyhow, when they got down there the history place had already been given to another person, but Mr. Moon, he said, "But, we need a homemaking teacher." And so...

BEISEL: And that was your major in college?

DUNN: Uh huh.

BEISEL: Was home economics?

DUNN: They gave me the job with me, I didn't know whether, I didn't want to, but I thought well, mother and daddy were just tickled to death to get to keep Skipper and why not?

BEISEL: Right.

DUNN: So I took it and I stayed there ten years or until the schools consolidated and they didn't have school down there anymore.

KEELING: Skipper was there with you at the interview wasn't he?

DUNN: Yes. I'd take him to school with me sometimes. [laughs]

REYNOLDS: Where did you teach when you were done with Minden?

DUNN: Huh?

REYNOLDS: Where did you teach when you were done with Minden? When you got—

DUNN: After Minden I went to Medina. I wasn't going to teach that year, I was going to just stay at home. But when September came, after going to school in September for ten years, why, I couldn't hardly stand it. [chuckles] So I called to Denton, where I had graduated, and asked if they need, if they would give me, you know recommend me a place if there was any openings. So they said, "Well, there's an opening at Medina," which was down close to, well, west of San Antonio, so I went down there and Skipper went with me.

BEISEL: Mmm hmm.

DUNN: And he enjoyed it down there, too, but we both wanted to come back home. [chuckles]

BEISEL: How long were you down there?

DUNN: Huh?

BEISEL: How long were you down there?

DUNN: I just stayed that one year. But uh Hattie Maxwell sent me word that they needed a home making teacher at Carlisle—

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: —so I came back and started teaching in Carlisle.

BEISEL: Ahh. And how long were you at Carlisle then?

DUNN: [chuckles] Uh, not long enough. I loved it at Carlisle, but one of my friends said, “Why don’t you go, they need a teacher at Leverett’s Chapel, why don’t you go over there, they pay better.” [chuckles] So I went over there and they gave me that job. I never did like Leverett’s Chapel as much as I did the other.

BEISEL: Hmm. Hmm. Well, uh, what was your husband doing in the service when he passed away?

DUNN: Oh, uh, he wasn’t killed, uh he had asthma attacks.

BEISEL: Mmm hmm.

DUNN: And uh, he moved—we moved from Kansas down here. Well it was, he was in Louisiana. I don’t know whether it was Leesville or, somewhere in there, he was in the Air Force, but anyhow, we couldn’t get quarters there at that place, and uh, so we had an apartment in Lafayette. And uh, so he had to get up early and drive to, anyhow, it was several miles to where he had to drive to. And uh he had a flat tire, and uh, several things happened to the, that car, and uh... and he had bad asthma attack and uh, they never did tell me that but in the telegram they sent, they just said that he had a heart attack, but

uh... He'd wrote a letter that they were going to do surgery on his nose that morning, and I think that had to do...

BEISEL: Hmm. So, uh, what did he do in the military?

DUNN: Hmm?

BEISEL: When—what did he do in the military, in the Air Force?

DUNN: Uh, what was he? He was a Master Sergeant.

BEISEL: Okay, and when did he join the military?

DUNN: Nineteen and well, it was while the war, World War II was going on.

BEISEL: Right, right. Did he enlist after the war began?

DUNN: Uh huh.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: No, no. I-I don't, I think it, the war, they bombed Pearl Harbor when I was teaching at... Chapman when we heard that they bombed Pearl Harbor, though.

BEISEL: Mmm hmm. And then, and then he joined up? Okay. When had you all gotten married?

DUNN: No, he was already in there.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: No, no, that's been so long ago I've already forgotten... Anyhow, I tell you a funny thing, when we got married cause he was fixing to go overseas—and he sent me a telegram. And we didn't have—it was on Sunday, and they didn't deliver telegrams on Sunday, and uh, Margaret and I had gone to church over at Patrick—it was about a mile and a half over here—so he sent

the telegram that he wanted us to get married before he went overseas and if I would come up there—he couldn't get off to come home—so I sent him word back that I'd come.

BEISEL: Uh huh.

DUNN: But anyhow, that was the funny thing about it, they called the telephone, you know, they later, Roadie called Grandpa's telephone because Grandpa was the only one down here that had one cause he was a doctor. And so they called his number and read Douglas's telegram on. And, and the girl that was down there visiting wrote it off, and there we were in church and the preacher preaching and this little boy came down the aisle—my cousin!—and what in the world is he doing here? He doesn't go to church here—[Beisel chuckles]—and handed me a little note. Well, everybody in the thing wanted to know what it was to, so I read it and then that little note went all around. [someone claps hands; others laugh]

REYNOLDS: Who was your husband's name?

DUNN: Douglas Grady Dunn.

BEISEL: Okay. And was he from around here? Did you know him?

DUNN: He lived in, just over on the edge of Panola County in a little community called Brook's Chapel.

BEISEL: Okay. How did you two meet?

DUNN: How did I meet him?

BEISEL: Mmm hmm.

DUNN: Well, in that community there was a man named Andrew Woods who taught at Patrick, and that Christmas, while he was here, I don't remember how many years he taught over there, but he had a—they lived in a house down here in at Brachfield—but he gave this party and invited all the Brook's Chapel kids to come to his party and all the kids around here to come to his party, well that's when uh—

BEISEL: Ahh.

DUNN: —I met Douglas, but the uh, when, Margaret and I had just walked down there, but he had an old car—his daddy's old car—which is a little bit more modern than “Old Lizzy” cause it was a Model A.

BEISEL: Ohh.

DUNN: And he came and stopped and offered to bring us home. So we rode home with him.

BEISEL: Ahh, ahh. So where did you get married?

DUNN: Well, I went up there, and he was, at that time in Charlotte, North Carolina.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: Oh, I think the boys that he was in with him must have helped him pay for it cause he got a taxi and ah, well, when we went to get the license, why they said uh, we've got a law here that you've got a three-day waiting thing, get your license and wait three days. Well, he said we don't want to wait three days, and see I was there. Margaret went with me up there for the wedding. So uh, they told him, says, “However, the next county over, about thirty-

miles, if you go down there to York you can get married today.” So that’s what we did.

BEISEL: Did you and Margaret take the train to North Carolina?

DUNN: No, we went on the bus.

BEISEL: Oh! The bus? Where, did you leave from Henderson?

DUNN: From Henderson.

BEISEL: Okay. Do you remember much about that bus ride across the country?

DUNN: Oh, not much. I can’t remember too much about it.

BEISEL: You were probably just thinking about getting to North Carolina. Uh huh.

DUNN: And uh, but anyhow, the reason I say he, the boys must have helped him pay for it is cause when we got back we went to a restaurant to eat, and that was the fanciest restaurant I have ever been in. You know, even the waiters were dressed up. That was in Charlotte.

BEISEL: Okay. Uh huh. And where did he—where, did you live there after a while after you got married?

DUNN: Yes, we lived there for a while. On Elm Street. It was an apartment in one of these old gingerbread-type houses, up-upstairs.

BEISEL: Mmm hmm.

DUNN: And the people that we rented from, course it just happened that they was named Dunn. [all laugh] And they just took us in like we were their kinfolks, though.

BEISEL: Neat.

DUNN: And we enjoyed it there, but then from there he was transferred to Tampa, Florida. And then it was still the same thing, he was supposed to go in, go overseas.

BEISEL: But he never went overseas? Hmm. Okay. All right, huh. And so, did you stay with him? You just kept moving around each time?

DUNN: Uh huh.

BEISEL: Okay. So you lived all over the country for a while.

DUNN: Uh huh, uh huh. Well, after... after that, we lived in Kansas for uh, three years.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: Uh, I think it was three years, that we lived in, uh...

BEISEL: Where were you in Kansas?

DUNN: Uh, Marshall Field.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: It was part of Fort Riley.

BEISEL: Right, right. Out there near Manhattan. I know that area very well.

DUNN: We lived in Manhattan about six weeks until we got quarters at uh—

BEISEL: Oh! So you were at Marshall Field there. Did—I have to ask her—did you ever go over and see the cavalry over there at Fort Riley? Any of their...

DUNN: Yes, we went to—

BEISEL: Uh uh, yes.

DUNN: And we passed the house where, ohhhh what was that man in history's name? Those houses, old houses at, in Fort Riley. You had to go through Fort Riley to get to Marshall Field.

BEISEL: Mmm hmm.

DUNN: And we crossed Marshall Field on a one-way bridge, iron bridge, that they had brought from Europe after World War...

BEISEL: After World War I, they brought that back. Those old stones—

DUNN: And I was just learning to drive, and I was always scared that they'd catch me right in the middle of the bridge. [chuckles]

BEISEL: All those, those stone buildings they're on that base.

DUNN: Uh huh, yeah. Anyhow, they have these historical markers out in front of them, and I think about this old man in history that's his house was one of them that we passed, and I can't even think of his name.

BEISEL: Pershing? General Pershing. He, I don't know. General Pershing, Black Jack Pershing, who, who was the commander.

DUNN: I can't think now.

BEISEL: That's all right. That's okay. Did you enjoy it out there? You were out there for a while.

DUNN: Oh, yes. Uh huh, we had a lot of good friends there that we wrote to for a long time afterwards.

BEISEL: Huh.

REYNOLDS: When did you move back to Brachfield?

BEISEL: When did you come back to Brachfield?

DUNN: After... after Douglas died.

BEISEL: After he, and then you moved here.

DUNN: He, see, his home was over there and he's buried at, in Panola County.

BEISEL: Okay. Where, which cemetery is he buried in?

DUNN: Walter.

BEISEL: Okay, all right. Where are your parents buried?

DUNN: At Zion Hill.

BEISEL: Okay, and that's where your grandparents and the rest of your family?

DUNN: On the, on the Deason side they're all at Zion Hill.

BEISEL: Okay. What about the other side?

DUNN: On Mother's side of the family, they're buried up, close to Henderson, at a place called Crow Cemetery.

BEISEL: Hmm. Okay. Ahh.

REYNOLDS: I'm just curious what kind of things you did for entertainment when you were here? What did you do for fun?

BEISEL: What did you do for fun when you were a kid living here, in Brachfield, or after you started working and living here? For fun? Entertainment? What games did you play?

DUNN: What games? Oh, uh... well, we jumped the rope. [laughs]

BEISEL: Were there a lot of other children that lived around here, when you were growing up?

DUNN: No, not real close.

BEISEL: Okay, mmm hmm. Now did you all have an outhouse behind this house?

DUNN: Oh yes, uh huh.

BEISEL: Where was it located?

DUNN: It was back this a way.

KEELING: Not this house.

BEISEL: Right, I know. Did you have a well, was there a well attached to the... A well for your water or did you go to a spring?

DUNN: We had a well, but it was hard water.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: I still have a well.

BEISEL: Okay. Is it a new well that you had put in?

DUNN: Daddy, my Daddy had it dug. It's, it's a deep water well, though.

BEISEL: So most people had wells and not going to springs around here.

DUNN: Yes, I mean uh, the closest spring is Welch Spring back this way, and it was named for my great-grandpa.

BEISEL: Mmm hmm, mmm hmm. Did you ever, were there dances at any of the—

DUNN: Oh, no! I mean, that was a sin. [chuckles]

REYNOLDS: Were there a lot of parties, where you met your husband, were there a lot of parties?

DUNN: Oh yes, he danced, and they danced over in that community without them turning them out of the church.

BEISEL: Okay, okay, so you had to go on over there.

KEELING: Tell us a little more about Dr. Deason. Your grandpa.

DUNN: Oh, a wonderful man. About all I can tell, he was my favorite.

BEISEL: Your favorite grandfather?

DUNN: My favorite grandfather. Margaret was named for Granny Deason.

BEISEL: Mmm hmm.

DUNN: And Granny Deason always petted her and gave her things, and every time she'd give Margaret something I'd go and say, "Grandpa," "Granny Deason gave Margaret this, what can I have?"

BEISEL: Now did he go to ah, medical school? You said your Uncle went to Baylor. Did your Grandfather go to a medical school?

DUNN: Well, he wasn't a real MD—

BEISEL: Right.

DUNN: —but he had attended this Texas thing in Galveston,

BEISEL: Okay, he went to that one, all right, and he got his certificate.

DUNN: But, like a lot of the older doctors, he had a lot of the home remedies.

BEISEL: Right.

DUNN: I can remember I sprained my ankle one time, and I went down there and he got some red clay out of the driveway down there at the house and packed it around my knee.

BEISEL: Mmm hmm. He made a poultice and put it on there. Did he do, uhm, nighttime calls and house calls?

DUNN: Oh, yes, uh huh. If anybody was dying well he spent the night with them.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: Uh huh.

BEISEL: Did they lay out most people in the parlor if somebody passed away?

DUNN: Yes, uh uh.

BEISEL: If someone passed in the parlor here?

DUNN: Even as late as when Skipper was a baby they did that. Because after Douglas died, we went to a man's house up there, well mother and daddy, it was mother's cousin, and his body was there in the house and they had open house, it was Mr.—[chuckling] I can't even think of his name now. And uh, I was holding Skipper in my arms and went up to the casket, and uh, Skipper looked over and said "Daddy?"

BEISEL: Aww.

DUNN: He remembered his daddy.

BEISEL: Mmm hmm, mmm hmm.

DUNN: He was just a tiny thing.

BEISEL: Right, right. And how long did you grandfather practice? Did he practice until he was old?

DUNN: Until he died.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: Even after he was in bed, people would come there and go in, and even, I was thinking, when we were little, just a tiny cut on my finger, "I'm going to show it to Grandpa." [laughs]

BEISEL: Had he always worked here or did he work elsewhere? Do you know? Did he come back home after he got his degree and he always worked here in the area?

DUNN: Oh, yes. He, the, Grandpa was always here.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: Uh huh.

BEISEL: Now your uncle who was a doctor, did he always stay around here?

DUNN: Yes, both of them—

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: Well, Uncle Giley—there was two of them that made doctor—Uncle Giley, worked in a thing at Shreveport, uh, whatever is the...

KEELING: Barksdale.

DUNN: Barksdale, I guess. Anyhow, over there.

BEISEL: The air force base?

DUNN: That's where he was working when he died.

BEISEL: Oh, okay. Hmm.

REYNOLDS: And your other uncle stayed in Henderson?

DUNN: Uh huh

BEISEL: And worked in Henderson, that's where his...

DUNN: Both of them, worked in Henderson most of the time.

BEISEL: Most of the time. And they lived up there most of the time. Neat, neat.

KEELING: You told them that Dr. Deason's house was kind of a gathering place when you were growing up. You said that Grandpa Deason's house was kind of gathering place.

DUNN: Yes, uh huh. Everybody sat out on the porch, and nobody, I mean there was a store down at Brachfield, and people would come there and shop. But they always, before they went back home, came up to see Grandpa. And the

porch there was just chairs sitting all around—and anytime you went there why the porch would be full of people—

BEISEL: Hmm.

DUNN: —that’s where they could get the news and find out who was sick.

BEISEL: And he had a telephone?

DUNN: He had a telephone.

BEISEL: What kind of house did he have?

DUNN: It was the same old house with a hall through the middle and a fireplace on one end, and the kitchen, at one time, had been separate I’m sure, but it was a space about that wide between the kitchen and the fireplace room.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: And uh, they called it “The Place.” [chuckles] Everything, you know, like an old closet, everything you didn’t want you put it in the place. [laughs]

KEELING: He made calls by horse and buggy, didn’t he, for a long time? He made his house calls by horse and buggy, didn’t he?

DUNN: Yes, he did. And somebody here not too long ago said that he would stay up with somebody, and start home and go to sleep, and the horse would bring him home.

BEISEL: Uh huh, you hear that a lot. Do you know, did he got paid in food, animals, or chickens, or did he get paid in cash?

DUNN: Well, he didn’t get paid a whole lot because the uh, people was poor, but he never turned anybody down.

BEISEL: Right.

DUNN: Yeah.

REYNOLDS: Did you have a midwife here or did he deliver babies?

DUNN: Whether they were black or white. He just as soon spend the night in a black house as much as a white one cause they were all friends. See, he was born in 1854, and uh, some of these older black men, had grown up with him, and they'd gone fishing together—

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: —and hunting together, and he just felt like, you know that wasn't too long, after the war.

BEISEL: Right. Well, were there many black families here in town? In this area?

DUNN: Not too many right around, but there was, down towards where the Keelings live, uh, there was one. When, when I was born, there was a black woman— we called her “Aunt Nigger Mary”—

BEISEL: Mmm hmm.

DUNN: —she stayed, came and stayed with mother when I was a born. For years after that, she lived to be 107 and hadn't been dead too many years. She would come and bring a piece of cloth that her son had given her and mother would make her a dress. And uh, she would, while mother was making her a dress she would wash or cook dinner. And we just loved for her to come. And uh, course there wasn't a highway then, but uhm we'd see her coming, walking over the hill, and down here, and we'd run to meet her, and she always had a long stick in her hand, uh, but she'd tell everybody, “Now this is not my walking stick, I don't need this to walk with, it's to hit the dogs,

keep the dogs off.” [chuckles] Cause everybody had a dog then and come out and bark.

BEISEL: Mmm hmm. Now, did she work as a midwife? Was she a, was she a midwife? Was that her job? Did she help—

DUNN: No.

BEISEL: No?

DUNN: She’d just do anything you wanted her to do.

BEISEL: Okay, all right. Was there, did you grandpa work with a midwife or did he deliver babies?

DUNN: Most everybody, they just had family.

BEISEL: Family, okay. So you didn’t have—there wasn’t one, a midwife in the area.

KEELING: Dr. Deason delivered a lot of them babies around.

DUNN: Yes, he delivered me.

BEISEL: Okay, all right. Huh, huh. Well, when you went to school, was, were there black children at your school or did they have a school nearby?

DUNN: They had a school nearby.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: There weren’t any here.

BEISEL: And, and when you went up to Henderson, did you have black children or were they at a different school at that point still...

DUNN: No, it wasn’t until after, a long time, that they started—blacks and whites—started going. I can’t remember the exact date. But uh, they, I don’t think they ever went to Minden when I was teaching there, and the only place that

I taught after, after they did, I-I was up at Byer's, near Wichita Falls, and I had one little black girl, and uh, that was the only one I ever taught there. But then, after Daddy had his stroke, I came back, and I taught two years before he died, and then I quit, but I taught at Waskom, and that's a black community, and I had a lot of black students over there.

BEISEL: Mmm hmm. So that was the first time that you had a lot of black students.

DUNN: But, it wasn't bad at all. In fact, there's some of them that I'd rather teach than some of the girls, than some of the white girls. [chuckles] They were, some of them were just as sweet as they could be.

BEISEL: Now when you went to the CIA [College of Industrial Arts], was that all white when you went there?

DUNN: Uh huh.

BEISEL: And how long did you go to school up there in Denton?

DUNN: Well, I went two years I guess, cause I had gone to Kilgore College two years and then I graduated there, but when I was teaching at Minden, I went in the summertime and got a Masters.

BEISEL: And the Masters was from the, where did you get the Masters from? Which school?

DUNN: Denton.

BEISEL: Denton, okay. Was that a big town at that point or was it still fairly small?

DUNN: Denton?

BEISEL: Denton.

DUNN: Well, it was a pretty good size. See, there was two schools there, besides TSAW, there was uh, North Texas State there, and that made up the biggest part of the thing.

BEISEL: Mmm hmm. How did you get up there? Did you drive or take the train?

DUNN: Uh—

BEISEL: Or a bus?

DUNN: Daddy usually carried me and came back and got me. That's the reason I didn't come back to Grandpa's funeral, is because I was up there and Daddy would have had to have come after me, and he needed to be here because—uh huh.

BEISEL: Was your father unusual in supporting you and your daughter to go to coll—I mean your sister in going to college? Did many other girls you know go to college?

DUNN: I guess Daddy was a real character. He was different, he didn't—see, his brothers had gone and made doctors but he didn't, he didn't finish over the sixth grade, I don't think, but he was smart.

BEISEL: Mmm hmm. So he, he supported you to go to school.

DUNN: Uh huh, uh huh.

KEELING: Was it unusual at that time for young ladies to go to college? Was it unusual at that time for girls—

DUNN: No, uh-huh. There was a lot of—even when we went to Kilgore College there was a school bus that was driven by the students. There was three different boys that would drive at different times. They would pick us up at

Henderson, well, they had some from Carlisle before they got to Henderson and then they'd drive onto Kilgore. And uh, since it was just those boys driving the bus, they didn't make us behave. We could sing or we could shout or do anything we wanted to, [Beisel chuckles] I mean we just had a big time riding the bus.

BEISEL: Was it a regular school bus?

DUNN: Uh huh.

BEISEL: And so then you all went to Kilgore and they took you back in the afternoon after classes?

DUNN: Oh, they all kept the bus up there, and we all rode back on the bus.

BEISEL: Okay. I'll be darn.

REYNOLDS: Now did your sister go to Kilgore College?

DUNN: Uh huh.

REYNOLDS: Then she went to SFA [Stephen F. Austin State University]?

DUNN: Uh huh, after Kilgore.

BEISEL: And she, and she was a history major at SFA. Did she talk about any of her professors or experience at SFA?

DUNN: Not much. In fact, I think I was more interested in history than she was.
[chuckles]

BEISEL: Did she live in Nacogdoches when she went to school there?

DUNN: Yes, she stayed down there. They had, not, not dormitories, but there were places where they could cook, you know, I mean they'd take their food down there and they could cook, and just have a room in, in houses.

BEISEL: Right, okay. And so she, did she enjoy that part of it?

DUNN: She seemed to, uh-huh.

BEISEL: Well, that's, that's good.

REYNOLDS: Why did you choose to go to TWU [Texas Women's University], instead of SFA?

DUNN: When I—

REYNOLDS: Yeah. Why didn't you go to SFA?

DUNN: Oh, because they had a better home making thing, at Denton—

BEISEL: Right.

DUNN: —than they did at SFA.

BEISEL: It was better known. What...

DUNN: Uh huh. I think it was our home demonstration agent is that what made me want to do that kind of work, because Mrs. Lottie Thomas—she used to be our home demonstration agent in Henderson. And mother would come to all the meetings and usually I would go with her, the kids would all be there but I would listen and it just kind of fascinated me, and uh, so that was the reason I wanted to major in it. I guess I thought I might be a home demonstration agent, but it turned out I just taught home making.

BEISEL: Did, was there a specific club that your mother belonged to? Did she have a—

DUNN: Home demonstration club.

BEISEL: Out of Henderson? It was—

DUNN: It was a Brachfield one for a while.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: Just the people around here.

BEISEL: And but then they would go up to Henderson, as a group go up there.

DUNN: Uh uh.

BEISEL: Was there a ladies' restroom, up there in Henderson, a place for the women to have those meetings?

DUNN: There in the courthouse.

BEISEL: They had it in the courthouse?

DUNN: Uh huh.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: And uh, they could sell their fruits and vegetables and things up there, too.

BEISEL: Okay. Well over in Center, they actually built, next the courthouse, a building for women's demonstrations called "A Ladies Restroom," and I didn't know if they had one in Henderson. Elsewhere in the country.

REYNOLDS: I know.

BEISEL: She's laughing at me.

REYNOLDS: No, it's interesting.

BEISEL: Yeah. Where did you get your, do you remember where your father got his cotton ginned?

DUNN: The cotton gin was right down here. Uh. It's still, part of it is still there, but before that, this—I think I told you, it's Watkins survey, I found in my history things that Watkins had a gin—

BEISEL: Gin.

DUNN: And it was behind Skipper's house back there. And then later, uh, Mr. Frank Reddy, had a gin at the same place, and this house was built by Mr. Frank Reddy.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: And they were, the Reddy's were from Minden, and they were, but they were a German family or Swiss or something like that.

KEELING: Wasn't he one of the original, wasn't he one of the original owners of this gin down here as well?

DUNN: Uh uh.

KEELING: No? No.

BEISEL: Now did your father have any sharecroppers, who helped him with the cotton?

DUNN: No, he did his own work.

BEISEL: Did his own work.

DUNN: It wasn't a big thing.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: It's just what he could do.

BEISEL: Uhm, uhm. Were there many sharecroppers in the area? Or tenant farmers in the area?

DUNN: Uh huh. Most of them did their own work, but they usually if they had somebody to help them it was a black family.

BEISEL: Okay. That lived in the area?

DUNN: Uh uh.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: There was some few white people that moved around from time to time and sharecropped with them. I can remember kids at school that would be there just a short time and then the next year they'd be somewhere else and they either was, their daddies were sharecropping or they were working at a sawmill.

BEISEL: Okay. Were there many sawmills around here?

DUNN: Real early, there were sawmills all over the place. I mean, that was just, I guess they cleared the land around here.

BEISEL: Did your family ever clear and use that timber for your own use? Or was that all gone by the time your father was working?

DUNN: Well, I can remember Uncle, one of my great uncles—Uncle Jesse Deason owned sawmills and after I started working on history and looking through the records at the courthouse, I found Uncle Jesse's name on where he'd bought land, bought land, bought land, and I asked Daddy about it one time, I said, "Why did Uncle Jesse buy so much land?" and he said "Well, he could buy the land for fifty cents an acre, cut the timber off it and sell it."

BEISEL: Uh uh. Okay.

DUNN: I thought that was... [chuckles]

BEISEL: He was making money.

KEELING: Didn't you had an uncle that was killed in a sawmill accident?

DUNN: Oh yeah, well, uncle—daddy's oldest brother—was killed in a sawmill. It was over by, Mr. Welch.

KEELING: Ezra Welch.

DUNN: The saw came loose and hit him.

BEISEL: Mmm. Oh. Now did your parents talk about the flu? I know it, the flu came through before you were born, did they talk about the influenza coming through this area at all?

DUNN: Well, they just said it was bad, but I can't remember any particular person dying from it.

BEISEL: What about the smallpox or the yellow fever?

DUNN: We all got smallpox vaccinations, I've got scars on my legs from that.

KEELING: Did Dr. Deason give those?

DUNN: I think Uncle Giley gave me the, my vaccination for that.

BEISEL: So there weren't lots of epidemics that came through when you were a child? You don't remember many of those? Well, that's good.

DUNN: Well, they had a lot of flu, but I can't remember any particular person dying with it.

KEELING: What do you remember about the stores here at Brachfield? How many stores were there?

DUNN: Well, all, uh I think it was in, they told me that it was in about the 1920s a whole bunch of people from Tennessee moved into this area and uh, the Orrs and the Taylors... and I don't remember who all, but they, but they, well it was Dorothy Jean Pinkerton that was telling me about that. The Pinkertons were with them and they had, Mr. Taylor had worked on a train, a railroad, and they, I guess took the whole train and loaded their cattle and

everything they had on these trains and came to Texas, and so a lot of these people was in that, the Rich family, you know they lived over on that road, they were all kinfolks, the Cochrans at Minden, they were in that group.

BEISEL: And their entire families, and their animals and everything came on out. Why did they pick this area?

DUNN: I don't know.

KEELING: The Orrs had a store and no one [unintelligible] ...

DUNN: Yes, the Orr's is the oldest one I know of that was in Brachfield, that was about 1920, I think when that started.

BEISEL: So there wasn't much there before they set that up, no. Interesting.

KEELING: Do you remember...

DUNN: There was a post office down there though a long time ago, across the road in front of the Orr's store.

BEISEL: Okay.

KEELING: Do you remember when Mr. Burkes opened his store, or was it already here? Clyde Burkes's...

DUNN: Oh, Clyde Burke's store, it was Parker McConick.

KEELING: That originally opened it?

DUNN: Uh uh.

KEELING: Do you remember about what year that was or was it already here when you were born?

DUNN: I was six or seven years old when Mr. Parker moved his, well, he lived in a house right out here, and uh, then he built a house there behind where that store was. A little brown house with a bungalow roof.

KEELING: Yes ma'am. Right.

DUNN: And uh, [coughs]

KEELING: At one time there was—

DUNN: And Clyde Burkes had a barber shop down there.

BEISEL: Was that filled with all sorts of tall tales?

REYNOLDS: Was there ever a diner or anything or a place to have dinner here?

BEISEL: A restaurant?

REYNOLDS: Was there ever a restaurant?

DUNN: Well, the only restaurant was Joann's. My daughter-in-law put in one down here, uh.

KEELING: In later years?

DUNN: When was that?

KEELING: Oh, it hasn't been, was when, maybe about six or eight years ago.

BEISEL: Oh, okay.

KEELING: And uh, in later years there were two or three. The Cowboy Kitchen was a down there...

DUNN: Oh, yes! I forgot about The Cowboy Kitchen. Uh uh.

BEISEL: Some more recent things.

KEELING: Most people ate at home...

DUNN: And I think there's a place down there now that has sandwiches or something.

KEELING: I don't know, there was for a while, they kind of come and go, you know how...

REYNOLDS: Did you ever have a gas station here?

DUNN: Richard Jones's gas station. That's where Daddy went every day. That's, that's where he got the news. [chuckles]

BEISEL: Ah. Now were there any oil, oil rigs, coming in when they struck the oil in the '30s, were there oil...

DUNN: Not in the '30s. I can't think of any around in the '30s, real close.

BEISEL: Okay.

KEELING: Mostly all that was up towards Henderson, on the—

DUNN: Most of it that was out on the other side of Henderson.

BEISEL: Did many of the men leave to go down to the coast during World War II? To go work down in Orange? Or the different plants?

DUNN: Oh yes, a lot of people left then and some of them never did come back.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: Dorothy Jean and William's children are down there now. They grew up down there, married, and stayed.

BEISEL: And stayed?

DUNN: But Dorothy Jean and William are back over here. And they're about in the shape I'm in.

BEISEL: Uh, I think Linda would like to get your name again on the record, and your birthdate again on the record, if you could give us that again.

DUNN: Okay.

BEISEL: Your full name.

DUNN: My full name, Mary Franklin Deason Dunn.

BEISEL: There you go. All right.

REYNOLDS: And when were you born? What's your birthdate?

DUNN: April 18, 1920.

BEISEL: Right, okay, all right. Well, do you have anything else you think we should know about this area? What makes it special to you?

DUNN: It's special because it's home I guess.

BEISEL: Well.

DUNN: I don't know, just being home. See, I stayed up in the rest home for a year, and I didn't think I needed to go when they took me, but uh, I think I've gotten better since I came back home.

BEISEL: So you are glad to be back here in the same place where you started?

DUNN: That's what I told them up there, I said that I want to die right where I was born.

BEISEL: Well, I, I understand that. My grandfather, my grandfather who's a year older than you, he lives right across the creek from where he was born. He can see that house, well what used to be the house, so that's what he says, and I know what you mean.

DUNN: And my daddy was born right up there. No, no, I take it back. He was born back that a way.

BEISEL: Well.

KEELING: Ah, when did the Deasons first come to Texas? When did the Deason family first come to Texas?

DUNN: To Texas? Well, I joined the Daughters of the Republic of Texas on Grandpa's Daddy and he was here in 1850, maybe '49, but it wasn't right here, he settled down in uh, Tyler County.

BEISEL: Uh uhm.

DUNN: And then when his brothers and brother-in-law and his mother came from Georgia, they settled up at Zion Hill. Then John, my great-grandpa from down in Tyler County moved up here and joined them. But uh...

BEISEL: Ah. Where had they come from? What state did they come from?

DUNN: Pike County, Georgia.

BEISEL: Pike County, Georgia. Okay.

DUNN: And several years ago my mother, daddy, and I went to see what it looked like in Pike County, Georgia and we [chuckles] enjoyed it. It looked much like this place here.

BEISEL: Well, we really appreciate you taking the time out of your day to, to speak with us, we've enjoyed this.

DUNN: Well, I enjoyed it. I enjoy talking.

The following is a transcription of conversations which occurred between Perky Beisel, Linda Reynolds, Jake Keeling, and Mary Dunn as they examined materials stored in a trunk.

BEISEL: Hold it. All right...

DUNN: I believe it, this was an old leather bound trunk and the man that restored them, he, it had cracked and was torn up and he, he took that off, that's the way I've been wanting that turned around.

BEISEL: Oh, well. Good. [Reynolds laughing] We're glad to help you. [Dunn chuckling]

REYNOLDS: Wow.

DUNN: Well, I, I don't, I, I didn't know all this was in here.

BEISEL: Well, I'll pick that up.

DUNN: I've got another uh, my other grandmother's, now this one is probably the oldest one, that's the Welch one [Family bibles].



REYNOLDS: Should we close this?

DUNN: No, this is Hunt.

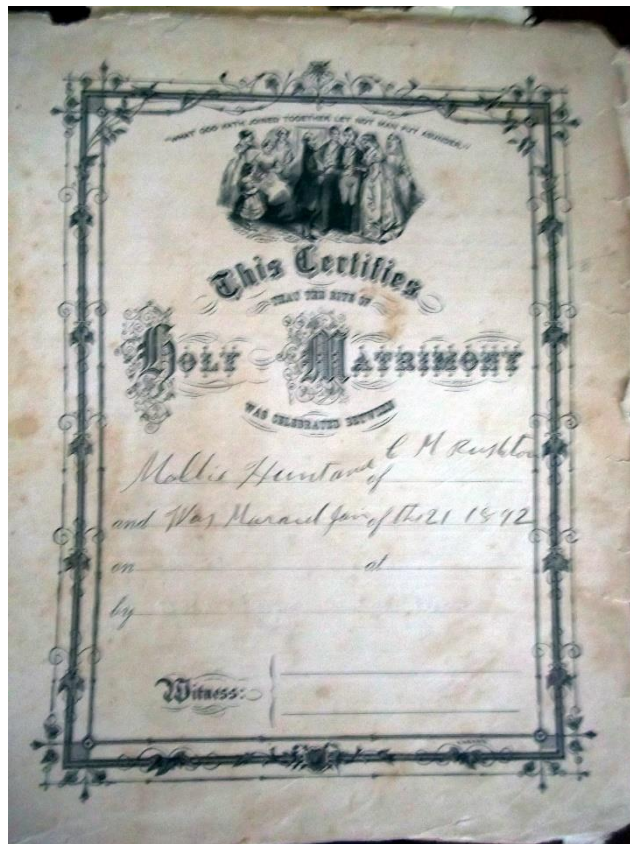
KEELING: And people would bring you some of these bibles. People would want you to keep, because they knew you were interested in it. [Dunn coughing]

DUNN: That picture, most people don't want these old things.

REYNOLDS: They've got great information.

DUNN: Well, I, you know I joined several organizations, that require proof like DAR and United Daughters of the Confederacy, and Daughters of the Republic of Texas. I joined most all of them so I do have.

REYNOLDS: Who's Mollie Hunt? Mollie Hunt?



DUNN: Mollie Hunt.

REYNOLDS: Who is she? Oh...

DUNN: Her picture's right up there, I think.

REYNOLDS: Okay. [muffled talking]

DUNN: She's my, let's see, Mollie married a Russian, well...

REYNOLDS: Okay, okay, oh, those are tintypes in the, in the frame up there.



DUNN: You'll maybe want to make a picture of that too.

BEISEL: No, actually... [muffled talking] [Reynolds laughs]

REYNOLDS: Okay, we're good. I like unrolling things, maps. [muffled talking] That's something...

BEISEL: Actually, we have no glare. That's awesome. [muffled talking]

DUNN: Now this has uh, the Leopard family in it. They're my Granny, Granny Hunt's sister's children. And uh, she, the sister, burned to death, she was out working in the yard and wearing a long dress and her, burning trash, and her skirt caught on fire and she burned to death so my Granny Hunt raised her

children so all of these Leopards that are listed in there are her sister's children.

BEISEL: Mmmm. [muffled talking]

REYNOLDS: These will just go back in the front. Out of curiosity, what does that say?

DUNN: And it, that has Emma Leopard on it. [muffled talking] I thought this was Grandpa Hunt's Russ, I mean Grandpa Welch's—it looks about like this, I don't guess my granddaughter's got any... [unintelligible]

BEISEL: Well, that's another...

DUNN: That's it, right there. [muffled talking]

BEISEL: Let's put this on top of that.

REYNOLDS: There we go, I'll take that one.

BEISEL: That one?

REYNOLDS: I'll trade you. I'll let you hold, look at that one. [muffled talking]

BEISEL: Ah, they're in the middle.

DUNN: Oh well, uh, this page is, was, if it's dated, that they usually ask for too, I don't know whether you got it out of that other one or not.

REYNOLDS: Citizen's Cemetery?

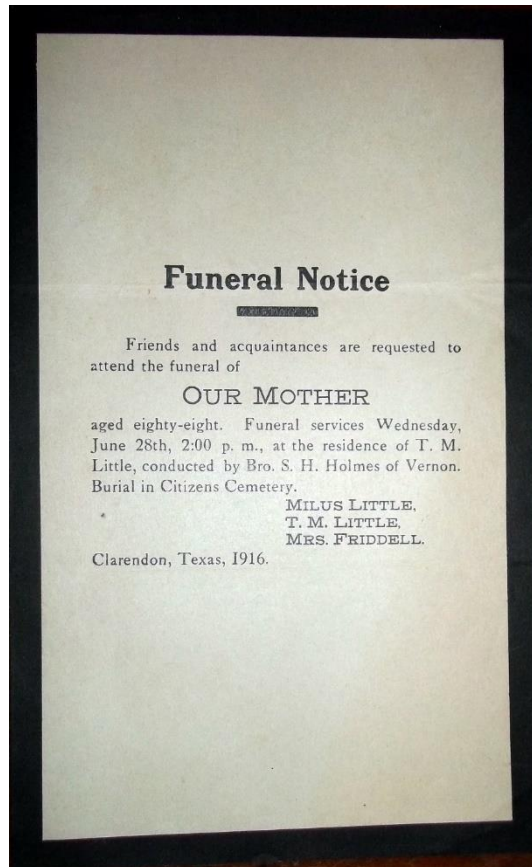
DUNN: It was amazing to me, this one is the first one I got how, how used it had been so many of them had never been used, but there was nine little girls they had, they didn't have any boys. They were all girls and so I guess they were looking at the pictures.

REYNOLDS: Robert Welch?

BEISEL: Uhm, uhm.

REYNOLDS: Is he a relative?

DUNN: That's my Granny Deason's daddy.



REYNOLDS: I love these funeral notices.

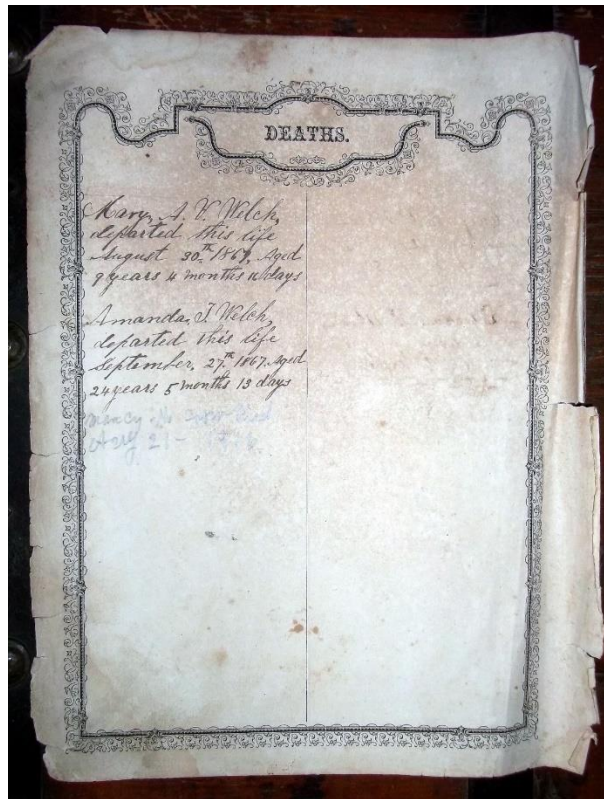
DUNN: Now do you want this with it or not?

BEISEL: Yes, please.

REYNOLDS: [laughing] You're falling behind. Yeah, bibles? I love these bibles, because there's always great information in them. [muffled talking] I'll trade you.

BEISEL: All righty, okay. [muffled talking] There's always so much information.

REYNOLDS: Yeah, because, Amanda T. Welch departed this life September 27, 1867, age 24, five months, thirteen days. [unintelligible] 1817 birth of Mary, 1841 birth of Sarah. Oohh, lotta girls.

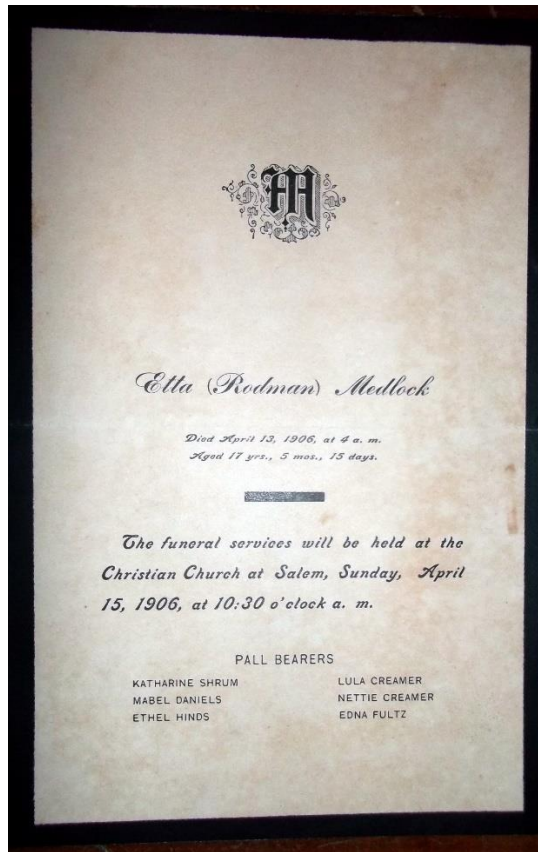


DUNN: I had forgotten about this, but that came from Indiana. Uh.

REYNOLDS: Oh, that one?

DUNN: Uh, uh. One of, my Grandpa Deason's mother was from Indiana.

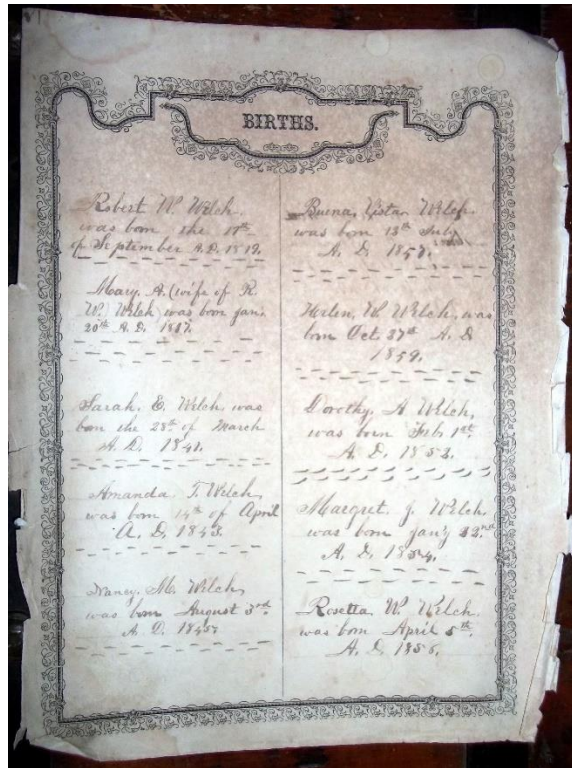
REYNOLDS: Oh, so Etta Rodman Medlock was the Indiana one, cause I wasn't sure, it didn't list where it was from. [muffled talking] Trade you. Who've you got first? Mary and Rebecca?



BEISEL: I'll flip back here.

REYNOLDS: Oh yeah, here's her mother. [muffled talking]

BEISEL: [unintelligible] Deaths, deaths, deaths, marriages, marriages, marriages.
Birth, yeah.



REYNOLDS: Mary and Rebecca? Okay, I wasn't paying attention.

BEISEL: Yep, no, that's why we have the scroll back through and check function.

DUNN: I have been telling my granddaughter that I wanted her to take these somewhere and get them copied.

REYNOLDS: Oh yeah, yeah. That's, that's...

DUNN: I'm glad you're getting them. [Reynolds laughs]

REYNOLDS: Let's make copies of this. That one, I'll trade you. [muffled talking]

BEISEL: Hers goes in first.

REYNOLDS: First.

BEISEL: So.

DUNN: Now those, I mean they...

REYNOLDS: I'll take that one, put that one back.

BEISEL: That one went in first.

REYNOLDS: Then you've got...

DUNN: That's my mother's.

BEISEL: Ah hah.

REYNOLDS: Your mom's bible? The one she read? Nope, nope, not one she read.
Actually got information in it.

DUNN: I've got another one in yonder that my sister had. Well, I'll let her go get it.

REYNOLDS: We got it.

DUNN: The room that's right here.

REYNOLDS: Uh uh.

DUNN: Just as you're get inside the door, there's a, a bible laying on the table there.

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: That's my, my grandmother's bible.

REYNOLDS: This one right here? By the door? Oh, that one! Okay.

KEELING: That's ah, Grandma Welch's?

REYNOLDS: This bible.

DUNN: Uhm, that's it.

REYNOLDS: Okay. Lots of information.

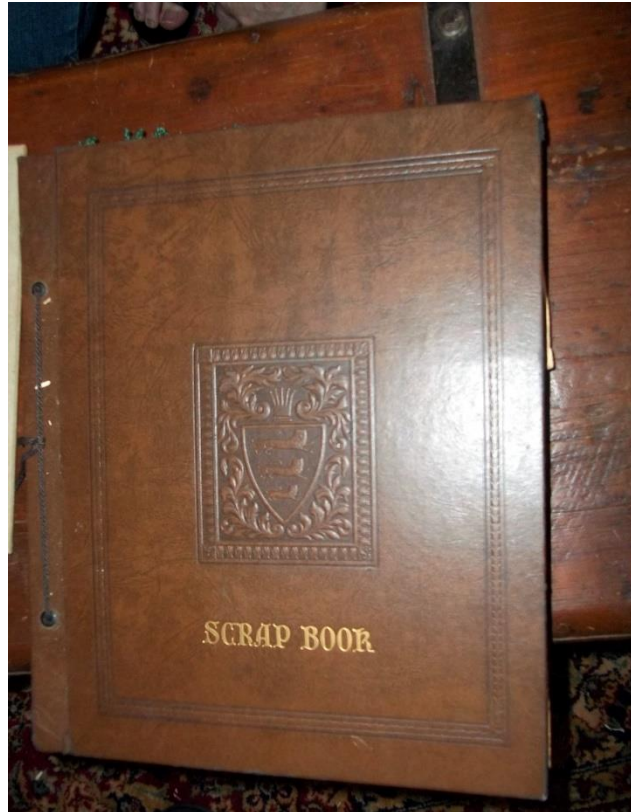
DUNN: My sister had it and uh, they brought it back to me. She hadn't been dead,
well, little over a year and uh, so...

REYNOLDS: Claude and...

DUNN: Some of them maybe have the same information in them.

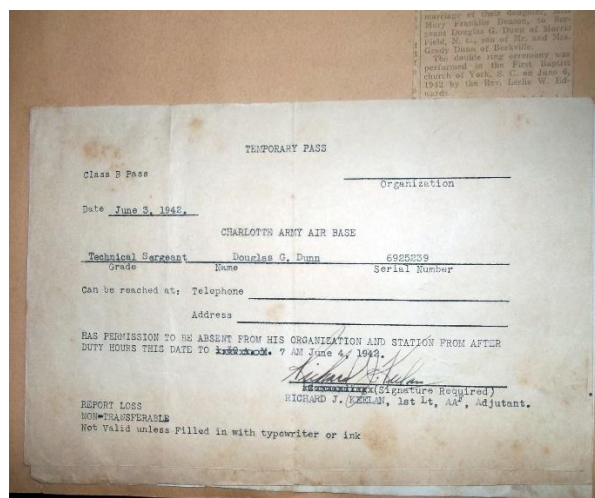
BEISEL: Right. What, or others might have different ones, different information.
Okay.

REYNOLDS: Give me that one. Oh yeah, scrapbook. Scrapbook, I stop, I look.



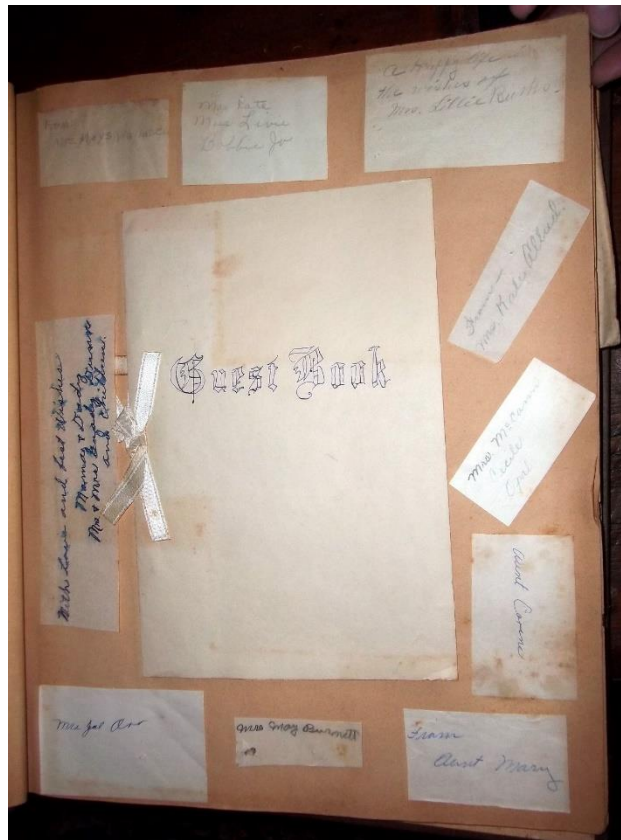
BEISEL: Yes.

REYNOLDS: Oh, this is, okay, this is yours. It has your marriage, a temporary pass, a technical sergeant... This is cool.



BEISEL: She's, she's enjoying your scrapbook.

REYNOLDS: Scrapbook! [Dunn laughs] Guest books? Did you have a reception here after you got married? Did you have a party here after you got married?



DUNN: Yeah, uh uh.

REYNOLDS: Looks like a wedding album.

BEISEL: Huh.

REYNOLDS: Brooks Shower. No picture. It was, I presume it was your husband? F.D., F. B. Deason.

KEELING: That would have been her daddy.

BEISEL: Her father.

REYNOLDS: Deason. Wrong name, Linda. Keeping up.

BEISEL: All right, Linda, time out.

REYNOLDS: Sergeant 18, 1944...

BEISEL: Take that one back and we'll put the bibles in and then we can look at the scrapbook. [muffled talking]

REYNOLDS: Okay, I can multitask today, and open, first bible, next bible, okay. Squish in there. [unintelligible] You allow me to dig in things, I will dig in things.

DUNN: That was something of Granny Deason's. I don't know what it is. Old letters ago and...

REYNOLDS: Oh, a book, okay, and it's got [unintelligible] interesting, oaky.

DUNN: Let me, I think that's got a, uh, page of a birth... [muffled talking]

REYNOLDS: Oh, published by the students of Minden High School, 1950.

BEISEL: Ah hah. Cool.

REYNOLDS: Interesting.

DUNN: Oh, here it is.

REYNOLDS: Hmm, so we missed that one. This is like a treasure trove.

BEISEL: Mmm. Ah, there we go. Here, oh yeah. Close this, oh yeah.

DUNN: Apples of gold and pitchers of silver. It has, it's just like, it's a bible thing.

REYNOLDS: Oh, okay. I wasn't sure what it was. So it's ah, more inspirational like bible stories and things like that?

DUNN: Uh uh.

KEELING: Did that belong to Granny Deason? That belonged to Granny Deason?

DUNN: Yes, and I suppose it's her handwriting, but she was paralyzed and when she got older, so...

REYNOLDS: We're sitting here looking at it.

BEISEL: All right.

REYNOLDS: D.F. Deason.

BEISEL: That's it. [muffled talking]

REYNOLDS: Yeah, I like looking through things.

BEISEL: It's a good thing she's an archivist. [muffled talking]

REYNOLDS: I could sit here all day. [muffled talking] There's that one. That box is on top of that.

BEISEL: Now we need scrapbook.

REYNOLDS: Scrapbook! [road sounds] Okay, climbing over again. [muffled talking] It's really neat.

DUNN: I've forgotten what those are, but I think they're maps.

BEISEL: They look like maps. They, they're from, maps, yes.

REYNOLDS: So this is your scrapbook? This thing?

BEISEL: That way we know of which we are taking back photographs. All right.

REYNOLDS: Because this is, you know what this is? [muffled talking]

DUNN: That, Douglas gave that to me when we were courting. [Reynolds laughs]

REYNOLDS: That's kind of fun. It's in good shape.

BEISEL: Well that's, that's pretty, was he stationed at, was he stationed at Moffett Field at some point?



DUNN: Uhm, uhm.

BEISEL: Okay.

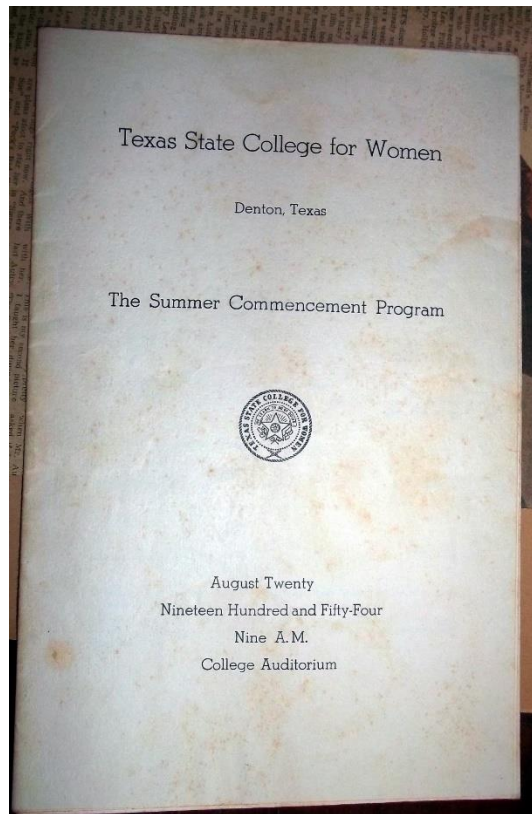
DUNN: I don't remember where that came from even. [muffled talking]

REYNOLDS: This is something that we can scan the whole thing.

BEISEL: Mmm, mmm. Ah ha.

REYNOLDS: Texas State College for Women Summer Commencement Program, 1944.

BEISEL: That your graduation?



REYNOLDS: Master's?

BEISEL: That's when you got your master's, in 1944?

DUNN: Was that the master's?

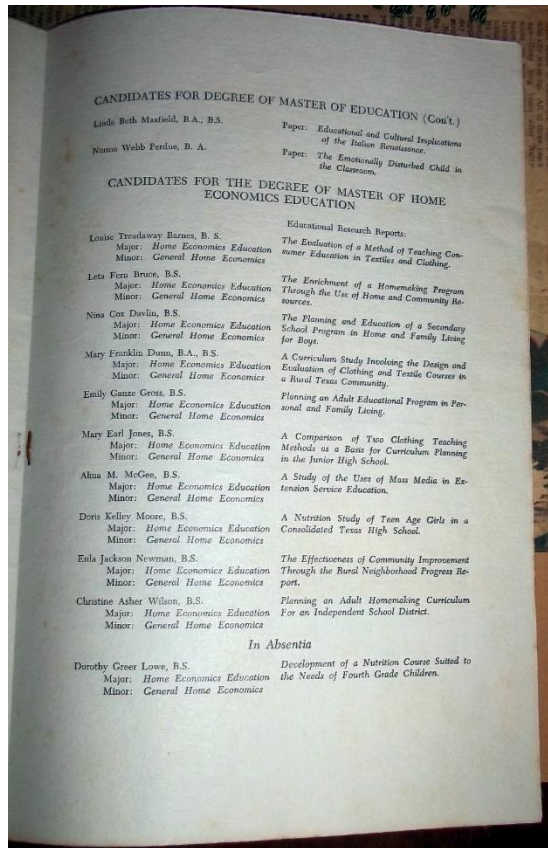
REYNOLDS: The master's. [muffled talking] Oh gees, okay, I'm looking left
[unintelligible] MA or ME?

BEISEL: Master's in home ec. There we go.

REYNOLDS: There we go.

BEISEL: Mary Franklin Dunn.

REYNOLDS: "Curriculum study involving the design and evaluation of clothing and
textile portions in a rural Texas community." That is fun.

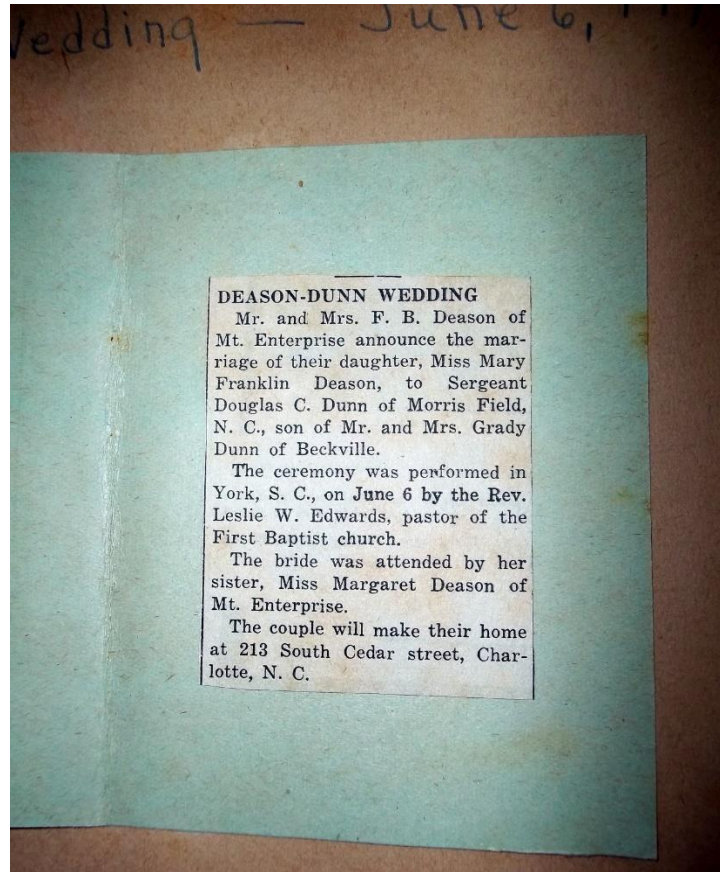


KEELING: You wrote, you wrote a master's thesis? What did you write on?

DUNN: It was about the home economics department at Minden. I guess I've got a copy of it here somewhere. [muffled talking]

REYNOLDS: Neat stuff, wedding, June 6, 1942.

REYNOLDS: A Deason – Dunn Wedding. Mr. and Mrs. F.B. Deason of Mt. Enterprise announces the marriage of their daughter, it's hard to read upside down, Miss Mary Franklin Deason...



- BEISEL: To Sargent Douglas B. Dunn of Morrisfield, North Carolina. All right.
- REYNOLDS: How many, you had a couple of different showers. This looks like it says, it's a Brachfield shower.
- DUNN: I guess so. [muffled talking]
- REYNOLDS: And then I saw one, this one says Brooks Shower.
- DUNN: That's where the Douglasses lived and this was Brachfield. These are Panola County people.
- REYNOLDS: Okay.
- BEISEL: Ah hah.
- REYNOLDS: So it's kind a, a lot of,
- BEISEL: Yeah, a lot of... [muffled talking]

REYNOLDS: It's like a who's who in the community.

DUNN: Truthfully, I, I've forgotten all those places we lived in.

BEISEL: Ah, mmm, mmm. [muffled talking] Well this will be wonderful stuff to, to scan sometime. [muffled talking]

REYNOLDS: The paper's in really good shape. [muffled talking]

BEISEL: From your time down in Florida.

DUNN: Uhm, uhm. [muffled talking]

REYNOLDS: Oh, certificate of vaccination, canine rabies vaccination.

Ft. Riley, Kans., 7-14-43-394-500.

Certificate of Vaccination With Canine Rabies Vaccine

VETERINARY STATION HOSPITAL
FORT RILEY, KANSAS

..... 4 February 1944
(Date)

THIS IS TO CERTIFY that I have this day vaccinated a Mixed Breed dog
(Breed)

for M. Sgt. D.G. Dunn of 360 Marshal Field, Fort Riley, Kansas
(Quarters)

Description: Male. Yes Female. Tag identification number. 18 Weight. 40 lbs.

Method: 1. Injection. Single Remarks:

Markings { Name. Laddie
Color. Black & Tan Signed. James R. Sperry
Colonel, V.C.
Station Veterinarian

NOTE—DOG SHOULD BE REVACCINATED EACH YEAR

DUNN: Laddie. We brought Laddie back here and he lived, well, he helped raise Skipper. Skipper was two years old and uh, and after he started walking he'd walk towards the road, Laddie would get in front of him and walk back and forth and wouldn't let him go to the road and mother would hear him holler he'd be mad because Laddie wouldn't let him go.

REYNOLDS: What kind of dog was he?

DUNN: He was a black lab.

REYNOLDS: Okay.

BEISEL: Well, wonderful.

DUNN: Douglas had just picked him on the base. Somebody had moved off and left him.

BEISEL: Aww, mmm hmm, mmm hmm.

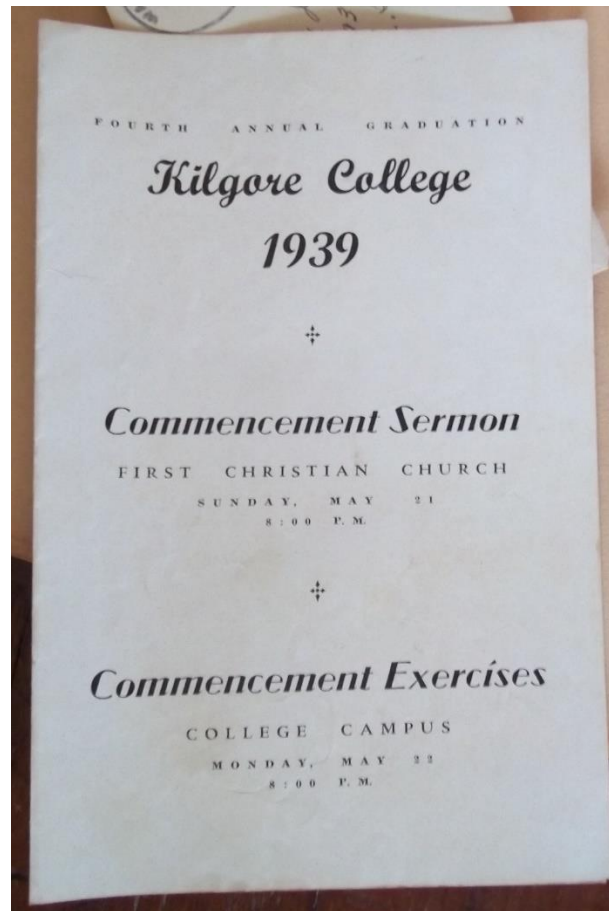
DUNN: He was just a puppy then.

BEISEL: Mmm, mmm.

DUNN: And for the longest after Douglas died if I went anywhere in the car and came back, Laddie would get up there and smell all over the seat. He was looking for Douglas.

BEISEL: Mmm, hmm. Mmm, hmm.

REYNOLDS: He was looking for [laughing]. Good luck on that. It's interesting that you have, you still have your commencement, 1939.



KEELING: Was it from high school?

BEISEL: No, Kilgore College.

DUNN: I guess, I saved everything.

REYNOLDS: It's the fourth annual. It's their fourth annual commencement, graduation.

DUNN: I imagine my daughter-in-law will have a big time throwing all that out.

REYNOLDS: No! [Dunn laughing] I need to talk to your daughter-in-law.

DUNN: She's one of these good housekeepers.

REYNOLDS: No, no, no, no!

DUNN: I tell Skipper, good housekeepers have ruined, destroyed, more records than fires and tornados.

REYNOLDS: Yes, they do.

BEISEL: Well, you can just send it over to her.

REYNOLDS: Yes, yes, definitely. This is the kind of stuff that we collect for the archives and make available to people doing research on an area or...

BEISEL: Families, and on the history of the area.

REYNOLDS: So when your great-great-grandchildren want to know more about you, they'd be able to look at this book and say, "Wow, that's cool!" [muffled talking]

DUNN: Well, I'm glad somebody likes things like that.

REYNOLDS: Oh yes, love it.

DUNN: I do too. Those are maps I think.

BEISEL: Yeah, they, we're looking at them.

KEELING: Are they county, local maps?

REYNOLDS: Some of them are topo maps...

BEISEL: South Carolina and elsewhere, yeah. Yes.

REYNOLDS: Civil War, uh, 1846 militia. This is the kind of really good information. [muffled talking]

BEISEL: All right, now which way would you like this? Would you like it, which way would you like this trunk?

DUNN: I like it with this turned towards the...

BEISEL: Okay.

DUNN: No! The other way. Is that too, too heavy?

BEISEL: No, no.

REYNOLDS: Like that?

DUNN: I think this looks better.

BEISEL: Okay.

REYNOLDS: You want it more this way or right here?

KEELING: Right there, a little further down.

BEISEL: Is this a good spot?

DUNN: That's all right.

REYNOLDS: It's all right, I can keep moving.

BEISEL: All right.

BEISEL and REYNOLDS: Stop.

[END INTERVIEW]