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Interview no. 686

Fay W. Nelson

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Fay W. Nelson
INTERVIEWER: Rebecca Craver
PROJECT: History of the University
DATE OF INTERVIEW: January 16, 1984
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BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Widow of Lloyd A. "Speedy" Nelson, one of the first three graduates of the Texas School of Mines, and later a professor at the College of Mines.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

The first graduating class of the Texas School of Mines, of which Mr. Nelson was one of three; administrators and professors; how Mr. Nelson began teaching at the College of Mines; the first girls on campus; the APO engineering fraternity and St. Patrick's Day activities; the co-op (bookstore) in Main Building, run by Prof. Nelson; faculty parties; how she and Prof. Nelson met.

Length of interview: 50 minutes Length of transcript: 22 pages

Fay W. Nelson
by Rebecca Craver
January 16, 1984

N: We were connected with the university so long and for so many years and saw it come from such a little school to what it is now. And it's very dear to my heart. Of course, Lloyd was there 44 years. Isn't that something?

C: Yes. He was in the first graduating class?

N: Yes, I had jotted down as I was thinking, you know, some of the things, because it's hard to remember everything.

C: Well, good.

N: And they're disconnected and all that, you know. Of course, you can get the history of it.

But as I was saying, Lloyd, Vere Leisure and Clyde May 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, which was in 1914, they came here. They are the three first graduates, and of course they were very close friends because it was just the three of them. So Lloyd was in the first graduating class, which consisted of three.

They called it the Texas School of Mines--not College of Mines, Texas School of Mines. And then later, maybe two years or so, it became Texas School of Mines and Metallurgy, they added that. And then from that it went to College of Mines, then Texas Western, and then The University of Texas at El Paso. Of course the town people had wanted to change its name for many years because they thought it would make a university out of it. And of course the boys fought it, you know, because they didn't want any girls, that was just out of the question. I don't know what year Grace O'Dell

and Ruth Brown [attended], you can find that.

C: I talked to Mrs. McCluney (Ruth Brown) and she started...I believe it was 1916 when it was still at Ft. Bliss.

N: Yes. You know, at first there were two buildings and they were over on the other side of Ft. Bliss (chuckles). (These are just little funny things that happened.) And the boys had to be sure to catch that last streetcar out to Ft. Bliss, because if they didn't, then they'd have to walk home, which of course [was very far]. So when Lloyd would come to see me, we had to watch the clock because he had to catch that 12 o'clock streetcar. It left town at 12. So he has missed it. (Laughter) But anyway as I said, it has grown from such a little thing, you know, to such a huge school as it is now, and a wonderful school.

Anyway, the first administrator was Dean Worrell, and of course all of that's in history over at the University. You can get that.

C: Well, tell me, did you know them?

N: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

C: Did they have any children?

N: I don't believe so. No, they didn't. He was a very distinguished looking man with a goatee and perfectly groomed, you know, never a hair out of place, very austere. But the boys liked him very much. And 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 to make the buildings in the shape that they are.

C: Bhutanese.

N: Yes, Bhutanese. And I understand they're getting away from it, though, some of the later buildings.

C: Well, actually they're coming back to it.

N: Because I think they're so beautiful. And they called him Dean, you know, because this was really from the University [of Texas]. See, it was the mining school, and it was put here because there were so many boys from Mexico and all in this area who wanted to come to a mining school, and at that time mining was very important, you know. Of course it's gone down now.

C: Where did the Worrells come from?

N: I don't know. He was appointed here and I don't know. They were nice people.

C: And their house was over here on the campus?

N: Yes. I don't remember how many years he was here, not too many. Then after that Dean Kidd, John W. Kidd [came here], and of course he was instrumental really in making the school. He was very popular with the boys, very. Short fat man with a tummy. And Nina Kidd was a great person. They built a grey house. I don't know whether that little house is still there. It was the dean's home.

C: I think it is.

N: And that was the home of the Kidds. They were very nice to the faculty. That was before we became part of the faculty.

It was a funny thing, Lloyd was asked by Dean Kidd to fill a two months' position [for someone]. I do not remember who the man was except that I think he was half coach and half engineering math, and he had to leave in the middle of the term. So Dean Kidd asked Lloyd if he would fill in, and he did, and that was all there was to it. Lloyd had an opportunity...we were married then, and he had an opportunity to go to the Engineering Department in Santa Rita to the Kennicott [company] and to work in the office. So we were

there for ten months, I think, because our son was born there. Then I shall never forget, one night he came home from the office and he said, "Honey, I had a call from Dean Kidd today." I said, "You did?" They called him Cap, you know, Cap Kidd. And I said, "What did he want?" He said, "He asked me if I'd like to come and take a place in the Engineering Department." And I said, "Well, what did you say?" He said, "Well, I didn't give him an answer." So he said, "I thought I'd see what you thought." Well, of course, it was my home, El Paso was my home, and I was real young, you know, and all. And so I said, "Well, of course I'd like to be in El Paso, but we'll have to take a cut." And he said, "Yes, we have to take a cut." So I said, "Well, it's all right with me whatever you decide." "Well, I'd like to try it," said he. And we were there 44 years. He came to stay just a little while and stayed 44 years.

Lloyd got his Master's by going in the summer. He had an E.M. degree, which is higher than a B.S., and then got his Master's. And then we took off two years and went to the University of Colorado and he got his Ph.D. in Geology. He changed from Engineering to Geology. But he loved the school. It was really his love. And with the boys, you know, they were very close and there was a feeling amongst them that was very, well, fraternal.

These are some of the funny things that happened afterwards, after the girls came. I don't know just how well the girls were received because they didn't want them, you know. But of course state institution--they could come. (Chuckles) And I shall never forget those two girls. One of them was a very good friend of mine. But anyway, in years later, Lloyd was the sponsor of the APOs, which

I believe's still over there, I'm not sure.

C: That's the engineering fraternity?

N: Yes. And in those days they had St. Pat's Day. Of course St. Pat's the patron saint. And Lloyd and I were always asked to chaperone the picnic in the spring where they painted the M. It was a big day, and my daughter was talking to me the other day and she said, "Mother, don't forget to tell the lady that the girls would trudge up the side of the mountain carrying the lime." And they weren't supposed to be there because it was a ditch day but they allowed the engineers to do it, but nobody ever did anything about the others who went and they painted the M.

But I started to tell you about this picnic. Dean and Mrs. Kidd were usually there with us, and we were always invited to chaperone. They would go out to the tin mine which is off Dyer, and in those days of course it was just dirt out there, you know, just sand and wildflowers and all. Anyway, it was up near Oro Grande. They would take those freshmen and they'd line them up just like a herd (laughs), blindfold them. And St. Pat was inside the tunnel. They didn't know who St. Pat was, you know, the freshmen; but anyway, and here the members, the upper classmen, would come along spanking them. I don't suppose they hurt them; I don't know, they might have. Anyway, they'd make them crawl on their hands and knees. I can see those boys now, crawling on their hands and knees through that tunnel. (Laughs) It was awful. And if they'd stop, somebody'd come along and give them a "swat". Anyway, they'd get to St. Pat, and when they got there some person would take a stick

that had cotton on the end of it. It was the vilest... I'm sure it must have been horrible from the expressions on those boys' faces, and they'd jab it in their mouths. (Laughter) Then, they would take the blindfold off and they met St. Pat, you know. Well, they were initiated then.

Well, after all the boys had gone through, then they'd have a big picnic. They'd have barbecue and beans and potato salad, and everything in the world, and lots of things to drink. I don't mean hard liquor, but probably beer. I don't know whether they did or not. But anyway, they had lots and lots of fun. And every year, why we were invited to do that. We always looked forward to it because it was on the 17th of March; you know, that would be St. Pat's Day. I often think of the fun we used to have.

And then the first faculty, they had a Prof. Pallister that the boys were very fond of. He was a very nice-appearing man and, well, all of those professors, and there weren't very many of them in those days when [the school] was so little, but they were all good friends of the boys and the boys liked them and all. And I heard afterwards that he died, I don't know of what. And then they had two Seamons. W. H. Seamon, the elder man, built that home. Do you happen to know where that old Knapp home is, that old grey building up on the top of [Stanton Street], the seventeen hundreds? Well, I think the Seamons built that house.

He and his wife were very popular with the student body, and 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 girlfriends and they had something to eat and music and could dance. They had that great big veranda. In those days it was a...of course it's quite an old house now, but I don't mean that it isn't nice. And those people were so nice to the boys. Can't think of that man's name. And then there was a nephew, I think he was, and his name was Frank Seamon. He was in the Science Department, Chemistry I believe, and he was popular, too. But this W. H.--W. H., that's what they called him, Professor W. H. Seamon. Mrs. Seamon was a lovely little person. I can see her now. She was just kind of short and little, but she was very popular with the faculty.

Then after the school was placed on this side and they had the two buildings, Old Main and then this other building. They didn't have a bookstore, you know. But they had a little room down on the first floor [of Old Main] as you walked in. I'm sure it's changed many times now, but you walked in that way and right over here on this side was a little room. And after they, well, got big enough to have any books to sell, you know (course they'd have to get their books at the bookstore downtown), they needed a bookstore. So then this little place, the students I guess were running it, I don't even know who was running it, and they'd just have books once in a while, you know. And so somebody, I don't know who it was, came to Lloyd and said, "Prof., how about buying the bookstore?" Well, it was debts, that's what it was. (Laughter) So he said, "Well, what about it?" And so anyway, there was a young man who was then...I think Gideon Fisher was a junior by then. Of course the

school had grown by then. I don't know what year, but anyway, he and Gid were very good friends, and Gid was an older student, see? Anyway, they decided they'd buy the co-op, the debts (chuckles), and they put in books which are necessary for the students. And they only opened it between classes, you know. That's when the co-op was open, between classes sometimes, if they had time.

Well, then it grew, and then it grew enough that they had it open all the time and boys would work an hour or two hours and like that. Well, then it grew to where it outgrew that little one room so--I remember it so well--on the left hand side of Old Main there was a long room there that I don't know what they had used it for, but they decided to put the Co-op in there on the first floor. And you had to go around the building like that, and the opening was on the east side. Then by that time it was progressing to where it was open all the time, you know. And not only did they have books, they had cokes and sodas, you know.

C: So it became sort of a hangout for students.

N: Yes, that's what I was going to say. They had no Student Union building, they had no place to meet. So along this side...I can see that old bench. My brother, A. O. Wynn, was the manager for the Co-op for several years. Part of the time he was a student at Texas Western, which was the college's name. Then after graduation, he became the sole manager. It was through his efforts that the Co-op became a successful bookstore. He was great! I was talking to my brother yesterday. But anyway, there was old bench. He said, "Honey, I don't know where that old bench

came from," but it was just an old wooden bench--you know, splintery and everything. And it was all the length of that wall on the south wall. And I want you to know that that was the meeting place between classes for all the school. And if there was an election going on, that's where the candidates met, and many love affairs, you know. They'd sit and goggle at each other. (Chuckles) Well, anyway, the funny part about it was my daughter said, "Don't forget to tell her that no freshman was allowed to sit on that bench." (Laughter) That was the holy of holies. A freshman didn't dare sit on the bench. Our son, Lloyd Jr., and daughter, Jonell, both worked in the bookstore, the co-op, while students in the college. They, too, loved it! They took great pride in it. They both tell funny incidents that happened.

C: What else did they do to the freshmen besides make them paint the M and tell them not to sit on the bench?

N: Well, they just didn't let them sit on the bench, that was it. And they were, oh, they were slimes, they were lowly.

C: Did they have to wear freshman beanies?

N: Yes. They had little beanies, little green beanies. Of course they don't do that anymore, but they used to.

Many, many boys went to school through the co-op; I mean, you know, got their education by working in the co-op. And really it was kind of nice because, well I guess, it was the length of this living room and then of course down at that end was the office part, you know. And it really was nice. Anyway, they had lots of fun in there, all of those things that took place. (Laughter)

And then after my brother graduated, we got a Mrs. Ramsey, Mrs.

Josie Ramsey. She was my aunt and lived in another town and was alone, and she had been in business. And so she came and was the manager of the co-op for a long time. Afterwards when the co-op was taken over by the state, she became the housemother of one of the boys' dormitories.

C: Well, when did the state take it over, the co-op?

N: I don't know what year it was. I'm not sure. It seems to me that it was in '56, but it may have been before that. You could find out because all of that's in history over there.

Of course Dean Puckett, Mrs. Puckett still lives here, you know, up on Robinson, and he was the head of the school after... I believe he was a professor, and then after Dean Kidd died (Dean Kidd died of a heart attack), he became the dean then. He and Miss Gregory, Miss Egg and Bill Lake, I don't know who else, came from the city of El Paso Jr. College that met over at El Paso High. When that closed they came over to the College of Mines. Miss Gregory was in the History Department. And Howard Quinn came two years after Lloyd was there, and he and Howard had the Geology Department, oh, for many years, and they shared the same office. And the office wasn't very big over in Old Main. And Mary Quinn, do you know Mary?

C: I have heard so much about her and I've never met her.

N: Oh, she's a love. She's one of my dear, dear friends. Well, about a year ago, maybe not quite a year, she moved out to White Acres, and she is a doll.

C: Does she like it out there?

N: Oh, yes. She and her sisters have apartments next door. Anyway,

Mary and I used to go to meet the boys at 5 o'clock. We'd drive over to meet them. That was before she was teaching there. She finally became a professor herself and taught many, many years in the Sociology Department. Anyway, we laugh about it now. Those two never quit talking. They talked all day long, they were in the same office. And then we'd sit there and wait, and they'd stand, they'd come out of the building and stand. I can see them now, standing at the top of those stairs in Old Main, and we'd be waiting. And we used to say, "What in the world were you talking about? You had all day long." "Well, we didn't finish." And we laugh about it now because they were very close friends. And then later Bill Strain came, Dr. Strain, and then they had others in there, too, but those three were all very amiable, and very good friends. And it was real nice.

C: Tell me about when the faculty would get together. Did you have parties?

N: Oh, yes, we used to have parties very often because we weren't so big. And we'd have luncheons and we'd have parties in the evening at the different houses, you know, because of course they didn't have a regular Student Union then. Dean Kidd and his wife used to entertain the faculty a lot and everything was very nice. And then after Dr. Wiggins came, of course the school was a big school then, they really had lots of big parties. Of course then we were a unit. Now it's so big they have to have several units. And everybody was for the school and everybody loved the school and everyone was a friend. There was no bickering. If there was we didn't know anything about it. I'm sure there were things that

went on, but what I mean is nothing too important. And they used to go to the Del Norte Hotel for parties. They'd have big parties up there and it was always long dress and the tuxedos. Everybody tried to make it, well, just lovely, and they did. And as I said, the college to me is very dear.

And of course Margie Neeley was the secretary to the presidents all the way down for many years, and everybody loved Margie Neeley, who is Mrs. Margie Brown now, and she lives on Mesita Avenue. I saw her not too long ago and I said, "Good gracious, Margie, it brings back old times to see you."

C: How's her health?

N: Well, I think pretty good. She was quite ill for a while I think, but I saw her over at the drug store a couple months ago. She said she was fine.

C: Well, I'd like to talk to her. Maybe I could give her a call.

N: She's great. Of course Gene Thomas was one of the graduates, and he became a dean of the Engine School after the school was big. He wasn't the dean of the school but the Engine School. They were my very good friends, he and Inez. That was his first wife. They were just great. Then of course Dr. Rex Strickland and Marylee, and they are personal friends of mine.

I don't know, Becky, there's such a close feeling. As I said, it was because it was small. And of course after Rex came... Rex came in 1936. Mary Quinn and I used to have a tradition that every time a new faculty member came she and I would take the wife (and 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 2nd Street. (Laughs) And it was considered the best place in town to get Mexican food. Mary and I were laughing not long ago. But we always took them and that was their initiation into the faculty. And even though it was down on 2nd Street, people from all over town went there. I've forgotten who owned it, but it was a Mexican family. But it was the best Mexican food in El Paso. And people with fur coats and beautiful jewels would stand in line to get into that place. But that was what we always did.

/PAUSE/

C: Where'd you go when you took the new people sight-seeing?

N: Oh, just all over, you know, showing them this, that and the other place. But we had a good time.

C: Did they have Scenic Drive at that time?

N: Yes, they did. They had Scenic Drive when the school was beginning to get big.

C: How did the Depression affect things at the school?

N: It affected them, of course, badly, just like everything else. And they would have to discount their checks, you know, and that was kind of bad, but everybody was in the same condition. The salaries were cut, but my word, we were grateful for a job. The Depression was kind of bad, and of course there were not too many students because they couldn't afford it. But I don't know how, but they made it and came out victorious, so. But it's a great school now. I was greatly touched by the chair that they put in honor of Lloyd. You know, they have a chair there.

C: /Yes./

N: I'll tell you something funny about his office. These are in the later days, you know. He had his office in the Geology building, and his old chair, I think I have that picture and I'll show it to you. But his office, his desk was piled high, you know. I remember saying to him one day, "Honey, wouldn't you like for me to come over and to straighten your desk up?" And he turned white. (Laughter) "No," he said, "don't touch my desk. I wouldn't know where anything was." And so when he died, they took a picture of the office. The children went over, I have a daughter and a son, and they went over and went through the books and all. And we gave his personal library to the college, which of course is what we wanted to do. I know I have that picture. Let me show it to you.

C: Okay. I'd like to see that.

N: And the old chair, his old chair, the cushion was worn up here.

C: /Looks at picture/ Oh, look at that.

N: (Laughter) And that looks just exactly like it. And look how worn out it is across there. And that's just the way the desk looked, too.

C: Piled pretty high, isn't it?

N: And that was about the chair that was established, which I think was great.

C: How did you meet him?

N: At church. You know, the boys were on the other side of town here. And my mother when she passed away in 1971 was the last charter member of Asbury /Methodist Church/. And we used to have church in a little cottage out there on Hueco Street. It's still

there now, but it's a regular home now. But just the walls, and then it had a little kitchen. They had built it with the idea of turning it into a parsonage someday, and then building a church by the side, which they never did. They sold it and built Asbury, you know, that big church out there.

Anyway, we had what we called an Epworth League, and it was the young people. We had about 20 young people.

C: That's how you met Ruth Brown?

N: Yes! Yes. Anyway, Lloyd and these two boys, Clyde and Vere, 7 were friends 7. We used to have parties every Friday night. We had a couple who were very interested in young people, a Mr. and Mrs. Lark. She was the teacher of this group. And as I said, we had about 20 young people. And so these boys would come, you know. They had heard about this group that had such a good time and had parties on Friday night, and these Larks, Mr. and Mrs. Lark, would have parties for us on Friday night. They lived out there near the little church. And so that's where I met him, at church.

C: What years were you a student?

N: Well, I got my B.A. in '35, and then in '56 I received an M.A. I taught here in the city schools for many years, and I would take courses at night and then in the summer. I got my Master's in '56.

C: What was your B.A. in?

N: In Education.

C: And you had children when you went back to school?

N: Oh, sure.

C: How did you manage that?

- N: Well, my mother and father lived with us, and we just managed.
- C: Did you go full time?
- N: Oh, sure. But when I was getting my Master's, I would take a course here and a course there, and like that, see. That's why it took so long. And I remember Dr. Berkman, Prof. Berkman. He was a real good friend of ours. I was telling my brother yesterday, I said, "I could see Tony now." I would take a course, you know, or two courses in the summer, or I'd take two courses after school or something. And at registration they didn't have the real quick registration by machine. We lined up, you know, and went through. And Tony was always on the receiving line to take people, and he'd say, "Oh, no! Not again!" (Laughter)
- C: Were there any other faculty wives in school when you were?
- N: Oh, yes. Different ones were taking special courses, you know. I don't remember of anybody, but there were older students because it was great to have the opportunity. Catherine O'Malley was a teacher here at the city schools. She and I took all of our B.A. work, our undergraduate work, together, and then she went to the University of California and got her Master's and came back here and taught. But I just went on and took mine out here because I had my home and my two children and husband. But I had the encouragement-- Lloyd encouraged me, you know, and helped me out so much.

This is funny. I took a course in Trigonometry from Lloyd in the summer. I never worked as hard in my life as I did on that course and I made a B. And one of the professors said to me, I think it was Dean Puckett that said, "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." He said, "I had Trigonometry for breakfast, I had it for lunch, and I had it for supper, and then after I went to bed." (Laughs)

C: Oh, that is cute.

N: Oh, we had lots of good times, though.

C: My husband teaches over here, and I don't think I'd want to take a course under him.

N: (Laughter) I told him, I said, "Now, I'm going to take this course and I will be a student." And he said, "Okay." And that's the way it was. He wouldn't say "Miss Nelson" or "Fay," he'd say, "You."

(Laughter) We'd laugh about it. I said, "Miss You."

C: What other teachers do you remember?

N: I had a course under Mary Quinn. I had several courses under her. She was good in History and in Sociology. And I had a course in Botany under Prof. Berkman. Oh, and I had forgotten that Mrs. Isabelle Zimmerman taught Shakespeare, and I took that course from her one year and it was wonderful. I could see that woman now. She was a very, very distinguished looking woman, had red, red hair, and very intelligent. And she really could teach Shakespeare. She, well, you didn't get very close to her, do you understand what I mean?

C: Yes, yes.

N: She wasn't warm, but a wonderful person. And teach? Woo, she could teach! And Miss Egg, I took some English from Miss Egg. She was good, Norma Egg. And then I took some of my work, undergraduate work, from the University of Colorado when we were there, you know, because we were there two years.

- C: Well, I heard that Miss Gregory and Miss Egg ofttimes would entertain the women students in their homes.
- F: They did, and they were very nice to open their home. They had a beautiful home. And Gladys was the sponsor of the Zetas. She was very popular with the girls and did a lot for them. When they organized the Chi Omegas, the school asked me and asked two of the other wives if we would become...they had to have an alum organization, and /they asked/ if we would become members, in other words candidates, and be the first alums. So we were, and that's how I happened to be a Chi Omega, because I had not had my college work until after I was married and had two children.
- C: So what year did they organize the sororities down here?
- N: Now, that I can't tell you.
- C: Well, was it in the thirties?
- N: I think so, but you could find out because that's in the records over at the college. But I got my degree in '35, so it was in the thirties, it's bound to have been. And there were the three of them, the Tri Delts and the Zetas and the Chi Os.
- C: And did they have houses on the campus at that time?
- N: Well, no, they didn't have houses. I've forgotten where the Chi Os used to meet. I think in one of the buildings over there, you know. But then afterwards they got houses. They rented first and then they got houses on the campus. Are the Zetas still active over there?
- C: Yes, they still have a chapter.
- N: And are the Chi Os? Yes, they are. They are over on Hawthorne because I get notices from them all the time. I don't ever go but I

do like to keep in touch. And the Tri Deltas had a kind of a sad ending over there. I don't know what happened, but they owned that beautiful home over there on Robinson that now is a Catholic organization I think, I'm not sure. But anyway, I don't know what happened. My daughter is a Tri Delt. And she lived in the house at the University of Colorado and she does work in the alum organization now down in Odessa with them, you know, helping out.

C: Tell me about what was going on during World War II over here on campus.

N: Well, they had the ROTC, and then they had the...oh, I don't know whether there was a cavalry unit here or what. It was kind of bad because so many of the boys were called in, you know. But we lived through that, too.

C: Can you compare for me the difference you felt maybe in the students or the professors or the school between the thirties when you got your B.A. and the fifties when you got your M.A.?

N: Well, of course by the fifties it had grown, you see, and it was no longer a little school, and they were beginning to have to break into groups, you know. Of course, before that it had been one group. But still, I imagine there's still a good feeling over there, I don't know. I don't know whether it is or not because I'm not connected with them anymore. But no, I still think that it was a warm feeling. My brother and I both got Master's Degrees.

C: When you got your B.A., where was the graduation ceremony?

N: The graduation, I'm not sure, but I think they used to have them, if it was a good night they'd have it out in the tennis courts or something like that. But if it wasn't I've forgotten where we had them. It seems to me that it was in one of the auditoriums, I think it was, before that, you know. Of course there

weren't very many of us. But then when we got our Master's, when I got my Master's, I was going to say I guess it was over in Magoffin.

C: They had built that by then.

N: Yes.

C: Did you ever have Doc Sonnichsen?

N: Oh, yes. Leland was great. Yes, he came here from Harvard. And we were talking about that yesterday, he did not impress people that he was from Harvard, and people really were crazy about him and he was a good English teacher. And he would lecture away and maybe you'd think, "Well, I'll take two or three little minutes of sleep," you know, you'd get tired of hearing that. And then he'd spring something at you that was just out of the blue sky, and it'd really wake you up. He was a good lecturer and a very smart man.

C: Did most of the faculty live in the Kern area?

N: Yes. In Kern and in, course Western Hills wasn't yet, you know, it was just sparsely settled. But up in that area and then down in this area, down on Montana. Now, this building, part of the building was the Dr. Wiggins' home for the University.

C: Right here.

N: Right here. And it was a great big brown two-story house and we've had lots of parties there. The property that at least this big building is built on, part of it was the Wiggins' house and it belonged to the state, you know. I think the state owned it. Whether they rented it for the home, I don't know that. It isn't clear in my mind, I don't know.

C: Do you know when the University bought Hoover House where the President now lives?

N: No, I do not know, not too many years ago. I would say ten.

C: Do you know who used to live in that house?

N: Yes, the Hoovers.

C: Well, tell me about them.

N: Well, the Hoovers were very wealthy farmers down in the valley, cotton farmers. And the parents, the Bob Hoovers, seniors, owned this beautiful big house. In later years...now I don't want this quoted because I don't know. But I think they gave it to the state. Now I'm not sure about that so don't quote me. But it was given for the home of the President.

C: You don't know who was in it before the Hoovers, way back?

N: No, because I thought the Hoovers were.

C: Built it maybe.

N: I thought. I don't know, I don't know of anybody. It's a very beautiful home.

C: Yes, I've been in it. It's gorgeous.

N: But there's an awful good feeling. And do you know yet I get letters. Of course Mr. Peak always sends me notice whenever any of the boys or anybody has donated to the chair, 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 rings your heart to think that they remember, you know, and they loved Lloyd and Lloyd loved them. 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 Mexican, he spoke Spanish, but it was down to the earth, what the kids talked, you know. And he would, you know, come across them sitting around. In those days they used to sit around the trees in the summer, and he would say, "¿Qué tal?" Well, where you would say, "¿Cómo 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 good. (Laughter)
But he was very popular with them.

Of course his very good friend [was] Fred Bailey, who was his roommate in college, and Lloyd loved him very much. In fact, Fred and Josephine... I had gone to school with Josephine when we were just little girls. I said I'd gone to school with everybody in El Paso. (Laughter) And during the war Fred went away to the Navy, you know, and when he came back he was delayed in graduation for that reason. But you think of all those people, and time goes by. But it has grown to be a huge school and a very good school. I think it's very good. Tom Barnes was the last one I think that I knew, and I believe Tom has retired now.

C: Yes, he has.

N: So I don't think there's anybody out there now whom I know. I have met them, you know, but not to know them. Time goes by.

C: Well, you've been so nice to let me come and visit with you.

N: Oh, it's been fun to visit with you.