


1-23-1969

Interview no. 25

Anton Berkman

John L. Waller

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.utep.edu/interviews>

 Part of the [Cultural History Commons](#), [Oral History Commons](#), [Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#), and the [Social History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Interview with Anton Berkman and John L. Waller by C. L. Sonnichsen, 1969, "Interview no. 25," Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Institute of Oral History at DigitalCommons@UTEP. It has been accepted for inclusion in Combined Interviews by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UTEP. For more information, please contact lweber@utep.edu.

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Anton H. Berkman and John L. Waller
INTERVIEWER: C. L. Sonnichsen
PROJECT: History of UTEP
DATE OF INTERVIEW: January 23, 1969
TERMS OF USE: Unrestricted

TAPE NO.: _____
TRANSCRIPT NO.: 25
TRANSCRIBER: _____
DATE TRANSCRIBED: _____

BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Former deans of Liberal Arts and Graduate School
at UTEP.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Incidents at the College of Mines, particularly
during the 1930's; pre-medical study; Department of
Social Sciences; personalities of various administrators
and professors; social life at the College.

March 4, 1964

Notes on the Interview of Dr. Anton H. Berkman:

Several students who attended the College of Mines between 1927 and 1937 became doctors. Some graduated here and some did not. Of course the following list is not complete.

Delphin von Briesen
Haskell Hatfield
David Cameron
Bruce Cameron (Brother of David, and exactly ten years later.)
John Peticolas
Joe Galatzan
Philip Prieto
Mario Palafox
J. B. Robbins
Roy Davis (He might have been slightly later than 1937.)
Jean L. Otto (He is now on the faculty of Texas Medical at Galveston.)
Louis Breck
Branch Craige (Son of Dr. Branch Craige, Sr.)
Ernest (Tito) Craige (Brother of Branch. I think he attended two years.)
Grace Beale (She went to Chicago, helped to develop penicillin, etc.)
Rita Don (I think she came later than 1937, however.)
Mary Scott (On second thought, maybe she didn't become a doctor.)

Notes on the Interview of Dr. John L. Waller:

Professor Alvin E. Null, History Department, was a native of Indiana. B.A. Indiana; M.A. Chicago. Dr. Waller confused him with Professor Pearl Whitfield (Peter) Durkee, Physics Department, a Canadian with degrees from Acadia, McGill, and Cornell. He was the first faculty member to retire under the Retirement System (1946). Later taught at U. of Maryland and elsewhere. Died about 1963. His wife, Abbie, taught music in the College, 1927-1933. (She told me that Peter, a tubercular, came to El Paso about 1915(?) on a cot in the baggage car.)

I believe we held a couple of commencements in a large room on northwest side of the second floor of Old Main, there being only a dozen graduates and some thirty faculty members. Dean Kidd insisted on "democratic dress"—meaning no caps and gowns. In 1931 and for several years, we held commencements at Moran's Club, then at Scottish Rite Auditorium, then at our new tennis courts where Science Building is now, then at Kidd Field. On one occasion, in the middle to late '30's, our commencement speaker was Governor Ross Sterling. As Dr. Waller said, the speech wasn't a success.

J.D.M.
Leon Denny Moses
English Department, 1927-1964

Dr. Anton H. Berkman and Dr. John L. Waller
By Dr. C.L. Sonnichsen
Round Rock, Texas
January 23, 1969

S: How did you ever hear about Texas College of Mines?

B: In 1927, during the summer, I had come back from teaching at Texas A&M from October, 1926, through the long session. Then I went back to the University of Texas to teach there in the summer session. This was where I had taken both my degrees, bachelor's and master's. That summer, a telegram arrived from Dean Puckett saying that the position of chairman of the Biological Sciences was open. They were just adding academic work to the engineering school. Prior to that, I had heard of the College of Mines in El Paso. My idea of the school was that it was a frontier school and that it consisted of one or two buildings up on a rocky mound or hill. This attracted my attention. I thought, well, this is a pioneering place and that would be interesting, so I decided to take it. The salary was \$3,000 a year. That was big money in those days. It went down to \$2,200 during the depression.

S: I started at \$1,800.

B: Anyway, that was my beginning with the College of Mines. They didn't call it Texas College of Mines, just the College of Mines. Up to that time, Dean Kidd had been the dean under the University of Texas administration.

S: Did you have any facilities?

B: Yes, we did have one room in what is now Kelly Hall. It was a laboratory and lecture room together when I first arrived. It was very limited quarters, really the frontier.

S: What did you do with the cats?

B: We didn't start the cats until 1928. Then we started pre-medic work.

Dr. B.F. Jenness was taken on in the department and then there were two of us. He had been the school physician and a lecturer to the engineering students in hygiene and sanitation. They had to have that as part of their degree requirement. He continued in that capacity for nearly fifty years.

S: I saw him the other day; he was fine. He must be about ninety now. He was very glad to be visited and happy to see people. Where did you live when you came here?

B: I lived on Nevada Street in a boarding house owned by a woman named Mrs. Hawkins. There were people who had business interests in town who took their meals there. We had quite a big table. I don't know how many we had.

S: What did you do about expanding the department?

B: In 1930, we moved into what is now the Education Building. We had half of the top floor. We had two labs then and I had an office. This continued until 1936. Then they gave another third of that floor to my department. Then we had two offices and three labs. We stayed there until they built the new science building.

S: Were you always crowded?

B: Always. The interesting thing about when they gave the extra third to us, Dean Kidd said, "Now you have space." I never had enough space until the new building. It wasn't a year until we scarcely had room to move in. That's how rapidly the students were coming.

S: And all the other departments were trying to horn in on you. I taught 1800 Century in his cat lab one time. In those days, we did make use of the night; we had evening labs. That added to the daily schedule.

B: Some days, I taught all day and then taught three labs at night; that added

up to about 22 or 23 contact hours a week.

S: If you told that to some of our new PhD's, they'd die of shock.

B: I understand now that, somebody wrote me a letter and said that now we are working six hours a day.

S: And complaining.

B: Well, I had an office over in that building when I first got here.

S: Yes.

W: I did, too.

S: I was right next to that playground bell that Dean Kidd installed because Mrs. Fineau said that she couldn't hear the bell and couldn't dismiss her classes on time, and he put in a huge great big bell.

B: Didn't you take the office on the third floor?

S: No, I was on the second floor.

B: Right under what used to be our bathroom when it was a dorm.

S: I have happy memories of that. I lived in that dorm.

B: That's right.

S: I spent my first night in El Paso just down the hall from him.

B: Should we tell about that big animal that you ran into the first time you came up there?

S: Well, it was a bed bug.

B: You know, those vinegarroons.

S: Did I find one of those?

B: Yes. You had never seen one before, and you got quite excited about it.

S: He had more fun with that tenderfoot. He had me picking prickly pears; and he made me hold a handkerchief the first time we went over Scenic Drive

because he told me that I might have a nosebleed. You wouldn't think that a man would be like that. How did you get started on the pre-med work?

B: Well, since the institution, to start with, was really a technical institution, therefore our courses were largely zoology. We added, then, the vertebrate anatomy, when Dr. Janness came in. This was because the dominant work in the department was zoology and the other was botany, which was simply to satisfy the requirements for the bachelors degree so people could take that. Now, the enrollment was heavy in the botany, but you see at the same time to have expanded that work required more space and different kind of space than the zoology. And in zoology, we could go ahead and work with the animals that we had. There was this demand, these young people in the El Paso region wanted to prepare for schools of medicine--advanced work.

Now, there was no particular demand for advanced work in botany, although we actually tried. We opened up one sophomore course in botany, but there was just one student; we operated that one year and that was it. That was what we called Taxonomy, the classification of plants. They weren't interested in the botanical, so we got these people who were interested in preparing for medical school. And of course, most of them thought that they were qualified to prepare for medical school so therefore they got these people. Many of them, after they got in, found out that they could not make the grade, but this still remained the dominant course. In 1931 or 1932, we added the third course, Histology and later Embryology. These were the principle courses for the pre-medical preparation in the biological sciences.

S: Did we have any difficulty in getting them accepted by the medical schools?

B: None at all. These boys went right on to medical school. There was no

problem at all.

S: Do you remember who some of the early boys were?

B: Well, Dr. VonBriesen was one of them.

S: I remember boys like Ralph Hanna, Gus Eckhart.

B: Yes!

S: Gus didn't become a doctor though, did he?

B: Yes, yes, he's out at San Angelo as a pathologist; he and several others are out at a clinic thing and he's the chief pathologist there.

S: I heard that his boy is at the college now.

B: Yes, I think that one of his boys is at the college.

S: Is Gus' health pretty good?

B: Oh yes, he's in good health now.

S: What was the mortality rate for medical school? Two or three years?

B: I would say that those who really wanted to go to medical school and were serious students, most of them succeeded in going. There wasn't much failure at all after they reached the second year. If we had 10 or 12 in that class working with the cats, as a rule, eight or nine went on to medical school--they were the right material and they qualified. So the place where we eliminated them was in the freshman year. The grades would tell and they would know themselves if they should go on into the other course.

S: Did you ever have to reason with some of them to tell them not to go on?

B: We just wouldn't recommend them. We tried to stop them at the early stage. This was to their advantage, to let them know what the road was ahead.

S: What was the percentage of the ones you recommended to go to Galveston?

B: About 95 per cent.

S: You had some like A.O. Wynn, whose health just wouldn't let them go on.

B: Yes, he was accepted but his health wouldn't permit it. Now, we had one young man who went down and had failed. They finally told him if he would go up to the University of Texas and take a course in Bacteriology and pass it with a 'B', they would let him come back. Well, he worked on it, but he didn't make it. So, he took the entrance exam at the University of Mexico, got his degree, served his time by practicing medicine for the government for a year or two, and he set up his office in Juárez. I think he's still there. There were about four who did the same thing. There was one who wanted to go to Galveston so bad he just about turned over everything in the state of Texas; he even went to the attorney general. He was not a citizen of the state; he was from Matamoros. He finally moved over to Brownsville. He grew up there and went to the public schools and the junior college and got a good education there. He came out to El Paso to do his pre-med work and he made good grades. He tried everything under the sun to get into Galveston and he couldn't. He then applied at Monterrey and went to medical school there. The last I heard he was in his junior year and doing well.

Several went down there to medical school and came back here but they couldn't get a license. One guy at Hotel Dieu, worked as an intern under one of our leading physicians there, and this man said he was excellent but he couldn't get a license in a hospital in Minnesota. He couldn't practice but he could serve his internship. I don't know if he ever went to an institution here or not.

S: Maybe, he's running a filling station now.

- B: I would say that 95 per cent [of the ones] we recommended went to medical school and are practicing now.
- S: Was Dave Cameron one of your boys?
- B: Yes, both of them, David and Bruce. Bruce is in Houston as an orthopedic surgeon. He founded the journal which is called the Journal of Orthopedics. It is the only journal in the U.S. about orthopedics, and he was editor of it. I think he deserves special recognition.
- S: How much influence would you say the Pre-Med Club had? Was that a pretty good promoter of esprit de corps?
- B: It was. Dr. Jenness and I started it. The first meetings we had were down in town in a restaurant in the second floor of a building now owned by the University. It was the old Stevens property.
- S: Were there any girls in that Pre-Med Club?
- B: Yes, one of them went up to the Chicago Medical College. Rita Don was one. She graduated with a Chemistry degree, together with some of the other girls took positions with a company in Carlsbad. They didn't like that and came back. Three went down to Galveston to take the medical technician's courses, and then she came back and went to work for Dr. Dutton. Finally, she decided to look into going to medical school. She had all the courses; all she needed was a recommendation. She was recommended to Southwestern Medical School in Dallas. She went down there and got her M.D. degree, served her internship and came back to work with Dr. Dutton.
- S: Tell me how you got along with the various administrations, did you find them encouraging or did you have to fight for your life?
- B: I never did have to fight with any of the administration. I never had any problems or difficulties that I can recall.

S: They didn't give you everything you asked for?

B: Well, no, they couldn't. That could be well understood. I knew their budgets and I knew what the others had. And we did try by all the departments, contributing a little money to buy expensive instruments to raise the quality of the department. Like Dr. Knapp wanted to buy an instrument that cost \$700. That was a lot of money. So we all chipped in to buy it. We never did go to the other departments for such help because we really didn't need it as far as an emergency was concerned, and we benefited from contributions and donations from people. The main thing we needed was microscopes. Well, by keeping on the alert, we could find second hand microscopes sometimes from doctors who turned their lab work over to the laboratory in town and they didn't need them anymore. So we got quite a number of very good microscopes that way for very little money. [We were] always on the alert about that. This was the important thing, the advanced courses.

S: So, you really began to spread out when we got the new science building.

B: Yes, that's when we started into develop a little more. We had already started Bacteriology up in the other building, but that was quite limited; I didn't expect so many people in there. We really started this Bacteriology before we got this added laboratory. After we got that, they crowded in. So instead of having one section of lab, we had two sections, and this is where quite a bit of evening labs came in.

S: Did you ever have anything that didn't go? It seems to me that once upon a time you had a greenhouse or a conservatory put up there. What happened to that?

B: Oh, that was outside, on the east side.

S: You had somebody named Dr. Wilde, isn't that right, who wanted that thing?

B: Wait a mintue, we didn't have a greenhouse until we came down to the new building. There was a pond there which we used for aquatic material. Now, the other greenhouse, one reason why that didn't work out was that the glass fitter was more knowledgeable, according to his views, than the rest of us about the glass that was to go in it. The glass put in was not suitable for greenhouse use, this was partly for the sun.

S: It didn't get any ultraviolet rays through there did it?

B: Yes, this was part of the difficulties there. After it had been put up and we had use of it, some of them had their cacti, and we did grow material for the lab; we could do that all right, so there was a use for it.

S: What kind of material for the lab, algae?

B: Algae, and seedlings that you use for the botanical courses. One fellow used it for his snakes.

S: I wanted to ask you about those snakes. You collected rattlesnakes didn't you?

B: Yes, we went out and collected rattlesnakes and brought them in. And [we] experimented with them in reference to milking them to show the students how that was done and show them the venom that you get out of them.

S: Once upon a time, one of them got away and turned up in Isobella McKinney's bookcase.

B: That's correct.

S: How did you explain that?

B: It really didn't show up in her bookcase, but she thought it did. We did go through all of her books and everything. After that was all done, we settled

down to the assumption that the snake had gone down the stairs and out. And it was not until about three weeks later that I was sitting in my office leaning back in my chair at my desk, I had been reading, and I just happened to glance down into the lower shelf of my bookcase and there laid the rattlesnake.

S: He hadn't eaten for three weeks?

B: He didn't need to eat. Sometimes they feed but once a year or once every six months or something like that.

S: You say you had been reading?

B: Oh, yes.

S: Not drinking?

B: No. So, I just got a stick and a jar and raked him out of the shelf and put him back in the jar. He didn't fight much; he seemed adjusted to his environment. He seemed glad to be home. I tickled him a little more to be sure he wouldn't get away again. But I tell you, though, there was some consternation in that building after that rattlesnake had escaped.

S: You think somebody let him out?

B: Well, my door was open and I was in lecture and the only way was for someone to come in and unscrew that top off the lid. Could be that rattlesnake sounded off and whoever it was, took off. That happened to me the other day. We were getting ready to move, and it had been raining. I went over to the hydrant to clean my boots off and I picked up a rag that was laying there; I picked it up two times and the third time I picked it up there was a snake there and he bit me. I got into the car and drove to the house and got a razor blade and made an "X" and my nephew was there and he applied the suction apparatus. In the meantime, we had called the clinic and the

doctor happened to be there. The whole thing did not take fifteen minutes.

S: Did you have any bad effects?

B: No, he gave me a shot, and then later at the hospital he gave me another. Maybe you're like Col. Crimmons. They say that he was bitten so many times that when a rattlesnake bit him, it was the snake who died, not him. I used to go with Col. Crimmons on his expeditions out to Hueco Tanks.

S: Didn't he have a prong to catch them before he touched them?

B: Oh yea. In my case, I always had my boots and I'd step on their heads and then pick them up. The bones of their heads come out and so you can get a very good grasp behind the head. I know that in Oklahoma they use prongs to pick them up and then put them in a sack. Of course, it's not always safe; you've got to be extremely cautious. The best man in the business over near the Brazos made a mistake somehow and the snake got his fangs in a vein, and he didn't last six hours.

S: Let me ask you one more question and then I'll let you off the hook. Have you been happy in your retirement?

B: Oh, yes, I enjoy it; I stay busy. I have diabetes. I've been working with insecticides and herbicides over on my brother's farm. Last fall I got very ill; they put me in the hospital for two weeks and all they could find was inflammation of the pancreas. Of course, this developed a diabetic condition. They put me on the treatment, the diet and the medication, but they didn't put me on the insulin. I have found that now that I'm over the physical pain hard work is the best thing for me. I feel just fine. Working burns up the sugar. I got out there and busted rocks and dug fence holes. In the summer time, I help harvest the crops, clean the cotton. And I work for free.

- S: I heard that you turned down an offer to go to South America with the Arid Lands Expedition.
- B: I did. I felt that with this condition, it would be advisable to stay. I didn't know the kind of medical attention I could get if I needed it. I had offers to go almost any place I wanted to with the foundation interested in the selected plants, going to the tropics. If they had said Alaska, I might have gone.
- S: What's wrong with the tropics?
- B: It's too hot.
- S: I thought you would have gotten interested in this water conservation business; you've done so much of it.
- B: That's so long. We've pushed it. The president has asked congress to appropriate money to study that--carrying water from the Mississippi to West Texas.
- S: We have a new Benedict professor in the Sociology department who seems to know a lot about that; he came down from Montana.
- B: He, undoubtedly, would be interested in that coming from Montana.
- S: Why don't we turn on Dr. Waller and ask him a few things? How did you get your offer and how did you come to Texas Western?
- W: Well, I was teaching down at the University of Oklahoma in the summer of 1931. I had heard of the school but I had never been to West Texas. I got an airmail letter from my friend, Dr. Eckhart at the University of Colorado, telling me that he had been approached by Dean Lester, who had been asked by John G. Barry at El Paso to find a Ph.D. to head the Social Science Department. Dr. Benedict was a good friend of mine. He knew I was teaching at the University of Oklahoma and that I was a older person, (I was forty-two years old then) and this might appeal to me, the head of the department. Well,

I sat down and wrote John G. Barry about how it had come to my attention and gave him my experience, but I didn't hear from him. So, I went on with my business there.

One day I was up in the Archives room and Winnie Allen was there and sort of smiled at me and said, "I hear you're going to the College of Mines as head of the Sociology Department." Well, I hadn't said anything to anybody but my wife. So, I decided I better look into this. I went down to talk to Dr. Benedict. He told me about how the school had come into existence, the background, and the possibilities, and how it was a nice place and the school might grow; they might have 1200 or 1300 people. I said that I had never heard of this fellow, and Dr. Benedict said he would be down in the next few days and I could meet him. Sure enough, he did. I happened to go over to the drug store to get a red pencil to grade papers--it was right at the end of the term. I saw Dr. Benedict drive up and he parked right beside me. He called me over and introduced me to Barry and he said, "I'll see you tomorrow at 8:00." Anyway, he hemmed and hawed around and asked me some questions about English History and all he ever said to me was, "That's o.k. with me," or something like that. I started driving home and got to thinking about it--here I was didn't have a written word to show the man, and so I sent him a telegram. He answered with a postal telegram and told me it was o.k. And that's how I got to El Paso.

S: How big was the department then?

W: When I got here, there was Mr. Null, Miss Gregory and Mrs. Quinn. We had History, Government and Sociology in one department. I remember a very unhappy experience I had with Mr. Null. He was a remarkable man, a genius in many ways. When I got here, I tried to find somebody in the department.

I had never seen him or heard of him, but I tried to find him. He was off with Boyd Boyce, this dermatologist type kid, do you remember him? When he finally got there in the afternoon, they had a meeting. I remember that they had the meeting over in the basement of Kelly. I ran into Mr. Null going over to the meeting; he had never been told about me being selected as head of the department. I thought that it was very strange. He didn't know until Barry announced it in that meeting, when he announced that you were head of the department and I was head of the college and so on. What was that old man's name in Languages? He just stayed in one year.

S: Elias. I wasn't head of the department then, Mr. Drake was.

W: Anyhow, he mentioned about the four new heads coming: Knapp was one and Rith was one. Mr. Null was very shocked.

S: He had hoped to be the head, had he?

W: Well, he just assumed he was; he was there and nobody had told him that they were getting a head of the department.

S: Did you ever hear that he and a couple of the others had gone down to see Barry and told him that they thought that the present staff was adequate to handle the situation?

W: No, but I wouldn't be surprised.

S: I think that that did happen.

W: Mr. Null was a very, very remarkable man. I told him once that I felt very bad about it, and that I never came out here to take his job away from him, that I had never heard of him. I didn't even know that the man existed. I just got this offer as the head of the department. It was just really embarrassing.

S: Well, you became good friends though, didn't you?

W: Well, no. We never did. We got along together fine, but Mr. Null was hurt to the bone. He just could not forget a thing like that. He was so different, you know? When his boy died, why, his life just ended right there.

S: He didn't live too long after that, did he?

W: He got sick and he didn't want to get well. I tried to tell him about the good he was doing around here and that he was talked about by everyone. I told him that there was a lot of things that he could do in this town. His brother was so different than that. Did you meet his brother when he came down to Tom's house? He's a fine gentleman, just as friendly and open as he could be. Just a fine person, what a sharp contrast between two people!

S: Was this man from Canada?

W: Minnesota, I think.

S: I think that Null went to McGill University, didn't he?

W: I don't know. He went to Chicago. He was one of Dodd's students, and he imitated Dodd in his lectures and everything. Brilliant.

B: He was deeply interested in the Archives in Juárez.

W: I don't remember him ever talking about that. He had to be made to go to get his Master's degree. He didn't want to go.

B: Somehow or another, at that time, it wasn't so easy. But, he told me what was there, what he had gone through. It was, of course, extremely interesting material.

W: I think they moved it down to Torreón, didn't they?

S: No, I don't think so; they already had a big archives in Torreón, which has now been microfilmed.

W: Well, he was gifted, really remarkable.

B: I didn't know much about it at that time. I did visit the Mexican's school in Ysleta for training Jesuit priests. They had a vast amount of material stored there, right out of México. I went down there several times. One of them was a biologist and he liked for someone to come down there to talk to him. He showed me a bunch of this stuff, some books with wooden bindings tied with chains. He said that they were going back there. I didn't follow up my visits and the college closed down, and I guess they took it back to México. They were limited in the textbooks they could use, so he took pages out of magazines like National Geographic and biological journals and made these into textbooks.

W: He was trying to be a modern teacher.

S: Too bad this was pre-xerox.

B: They had a course in Metallurgy.

S: Was it a good course?

B: They had the equipment for it. It wasn't advanced, it was the fundamentals. He said that that was part of their training.

W: I guess the Jesuits are just about the best educated priests anywhere. Don't they have sixteen years of training before they are ordained ?

S: So you had a small department when you came here?

W: Coming up the valley, I was looking for the college, and off to the side I saw Loretto Academy and I thought that was the college. I stopped at a filling station and asked them and they said that they had heard of it but they hadn't seen it. It took me some time to find it. Finally, someone told me it was on the other side of town.

I remember my impression: I had just come off the University of Oklahoma campus that was so beautiful with trees and flowers, and here all I saw was

old cedars filled with dust. When I went into the building, I was met with a blast of black powder. Blast, blast, blast!!!! It seemed like we never started a semester without that Captain Kidd blasting with black powder. He always got started too late in the summer to get it done. If he wasn't blasting with black powder, he had a jackhammer going. I felt like turning around right then, going down to the Western Union and sending a telegram telling them to hold everything, I was coming back.

S: But you didn't.

W: Nope, and I'm glad. It's been a wonderful experience. I think growing up with the country was wonderful.

B: One thing you forgot to mention a while ago and I think we ought to call attention to is that the first year I was there, they authorized a degree. Barry was elected president. The city and county put about \$50,000 and they authorized and granted a degree. Our first graduating class of Arts and Sciences was in 1932. I remember we had it in the Women's Club Building with about 21 or 22. One of the graduates was Mrs. Branch Craige. She was a lovely lady.

S: That must have had an effect on your department, too--expanding. That brought more people in.

W: They had all the graduations in the Women's Club until we got the gymnasium. Well, they had some in the Scottish Rite Temple. We had it at El Paso High School one time when Elkins was there. We had commencement there. Governor Shivers came out for the commencement address.

B: I had forgotten that.

W: We had no place to hold anything. School dances were held in the Women's Club.

- S: I believe it was in 1936 they held commencement there, because after that we started holding it in the gym, after it was ready.
- B: I wasn't there because I was in Chicago again, that was when I got my degree there that spring, summer rather.
- W: It was in the spring and they had this procession. Just about the time, I understand, that you were involved in this, I think it was raining.
- S: It was flooding. Who was the governor who came out and made the address for us one time when there was commencement in the spring? Wasn't it the one that Mrs. Ferguson defeated, what was his name? You would remember his name if you would just stop and think. Anyway, he made the commencement address and it was the lamest thing I ever heard. I think he said that he was glad to be here and goodbye. That was just about his talk, what was his name?
- W: I can't recall it. I'll always remember what Jim Ferguson said about him one time, of course, he made a good deal of money by lucky oil strikes on some of his lands.
- S: It sounds like Moody.
- W: Well anyway, Ferguson said, "So and so, he got rich by accident and poor through ignorance." I think that's pretty good. I guess he was nobody's fool, was he?
- S: Well, we're getting pretty close to the end of our tape and it's about 12:00 and this is just about enough for one session. But I don't think that we have hardly broken the ice, do you? I think that we ought to do this again sometime. We ought to have something about the committee work, because we all worked together so much; and the faculty meetings when we used to

have to get in and listen to John G. Barry for hours at a time. I can remember Mr. Drake stomping up the stairs; he'd say 'damn' on every step. "Damn! Damn!" I'll tell you one thing about John Barry that I remember. Frances was his secretary.

W: I may have said this to you, but I remember when I had come from Oklahoma, they had impeached a governor not many years before, and they impeached him because he had a woman secretary and she had to know your business. It made you feel inferior because you had to tell this woman what you were doing there to see the governor. Mrs. Barry didn't mean that exactly, but it was always that she stood between him and the public. Now, I like Mrs. Barry; I got along fine in there, as you all know. I loved her, but it was not a good situation. She had always been his confidante in the office, but up there that was different. She should have been Frances.

S: Talk about that, and what about the four-hundred people that he put on his advisory committee? I think that was the other mistake, downtown. I think that he had four hundred advisors after he had appointed that committee. Well, he did do a lot of good for the school though. I will have to give him his credit.

B: What he wanted to do of course...

S: He wanted to get the community involved.

B: No, what I was going to say was that he was ahead of his time. They were not ready for his attempts at quality. He was trying to raise the level of the academic work at the institution. As it is, he did do a little bit of that.

S: That's right, but he only had this athletic program.

Notes on the interview of Dr. Anton H. Berkman and Dr. John L. Waller
 Contributed by Leon Denny Moses, English Department, 1927-1964

Several students who attended the College of Mines between 1927 and 1937 became doctors. Some graduated here and some did not. Of course, the following list is not complete.

Delphin von Friesen
 Haskell Hatfield
 David Cameron
 Bruce Cameron (Brother of David, exactly ten years later)
 John Peticolas
 Joe Galatzan
 Philip Prieto
 Mario Palafox
 J.B. Robbins
 Roy Davis (Might be slightly later than 1937)
 John L. Otto (Now on the faculty of Texas Medical at Galveston)
 Louis Breck
 Branch Craige (Son of Dr. Branch Craige, Sr.)
 Ernest (Tito) Craige (Brother of Branch, attended two years)
 Grace Beale (Went to Chicago, helped develop penicillin)
 Rita Don (Later than 1937)
 Mary Scott (On second thought, maybe she didn't become a doctor)

Professor Alvin E. Null, History Department, was a native of Indiana. B.A. Indiana; M.A. Chicago. Dr. Waller confused him with Professor Pearl Whitfield (Peter) Durkee, Physics Department, a Canadian with degrees from Acadia, McGill, and Cornell. He was the first faculty member to retire under the Retirement System (1946). Later taught at University of Maryland and elsewhere. Died about 1963. His wife, Abbie, taught music in the college, 1927-1933. (She told me that Peter, a tubercular, came to El Paso about 1915(?) on a cot in the baggage car.)

I believe we held a couple of commencements in a large room on north-west side of the second floor of Old Main, there being only a dozen graduates and some thirty faculty members. Dean Kidd insisted on 'democratic dress'--meaning no caps and gowns. In 1931 and for several years, we held commencements at the Women's Club, then at Scottish Rite Auditorium, then at our new tennis courts where Science Building is now, then at Kidd Field. On one occasion, in the middle to late '30's, our commencement speaker was Governor Ross Sterling. As Dr. Waller said, the speech was not a success.