

Heritage Program Project Director Evaluation Report – Kinsley Library

1. Did the project meet your goals and expectations? What were your biggest successes?

Patterns of Change: Edwards County, 1950-1970 met and surpassed all of our goals and expectations. Our grant was to collect 20 oral histories and we actually did 23.

Within those we were able to add another Hispanic interview. This was important to help us understand the role this minority group played in the county. Carmen Rodriguez lived in three Santa Fe Railroad communities within the county. She was able to shed light on those communities. Keith King also was able to describe a 40 person Hispanic migrant worker crew and Virginia Gleason talked of the use of illegal aliens as ranch hands which showed another aspect of race within our county.

We were very pleased to collect two African-American interviews to represent a very small community in Kinsley which became smaller as the young people dispersed after World War II. Norma Kennedy and her son Kenneth Gaines came back for an all school reunion and graciously spent time being interviewed. They showed the difference of growing up in Kinsley pre and post World War II shedding light on how attitudes about race had changed in that time period.

An unexpected interview with Wesley (Elwood) Agnew was gained when he came to town on a one-day visit. He lives in another state, and we managed to sit him down for one hour to not only gain information for *Patterns of Change*, but also for another community interest in carnival history. His family traveled with the local carnivals and as a boy he worked with his parents. After he returned to his home, he sent back photographs for both projects.

We were able to gather many photographs from family albums which added to the story of the person's life and also our collection of images of the county which we make available on our website.

The oral histories are all catalogued with multiple subjects into our collection and available on the internet which makes them very accessible and searchable.

We had some procedural successes which made carrying out the grant easier. One was to have our interviews transcribed in a timely manner shortly after they were conducted. This allowed me to keep up with all of the proofreading, CD burning, etc. as we went along. I also kept running notes as I proofed the transcripts so I would have research at hand for this evaluation and also quotes and pictures for the planned open house display at the end.

Another success was the professional appearance of our *Patterns of Change* display. At a SWKLS workshop I learned how to design posters on the computer, so I created six 14" X 22" posters, one 36" X 40" poster, and one 40" by 8' poster for the foyer display cabinet. We had these professionally printed with the *Kansans Tell Their Stories* grant funds. These used the same design elements as the *Kansans Tell Their Stories* exhibit which created a unified display for the library.

2. How many of the activities in your work plan were you able to complete during the grant period? If additional work remains, how do you plan to complete the project?

We completed everything in our plan.

3. Were you satisfied with the role of the humanities consultant in the project? What kinds of specific ideas, training, and/or guidance did he offer?

We were very satisfied. We appreciated the flexibility shown by the KHC to allow Virgil Dean to oversee our grant from a distance. We sent the grant proposal to Dr. Dean for his input. He thought that our significance sentence “raised the right questions and focuses on a (perhaps the) seminal theme for post WWII rural areas: demographic change (i.e. population decline) resulting from the transformation of agriculture and various pull factors that also contribute to rural flight in the 1950’s and 1960’s.”

He also gave us feedback on our interview questions opening up ideas which we had not included, i.e. inquiring about the types of crops, the concentration of one cash crop with less emphasis on livestock, off-farm employment to subsidize the farm, and rural electrification and telephone service. These topics were added to our interview questions and definitely enhanced our investigation.

As we completed our interviews and put them on the library website, Dr. Dean was able to go on-line and monitor our progress and indicated to us that he thought everything was progressing well.

4. What format (newspaper publicity, publications, displays, etc.) did you use to share the project with the community? Were any public meetings held, and if so, how many people attended?

The grant award was announced in our local papers.

The grant was featured on the library webpage. As interviews, and shortly after, transcripts were completed they were added to the *Patterns of Change* webpage.

Articles in KHC mag.

Posters were distributed around the county and to all member libraries of Southwest Kansas Library System

100 invitations were sent out for the open house to the following: interview participants; KHC Board and Staff, Kansas Historical Society staff; local, county, state, and federal government representatives; Southwest Kansas Library System and State Library staff

We were fortunate enough to host the Kansans Tells Their Stories in November, 2011. We decided to move our completion deadline up so that *Patterns of Change* could be the companion exhibit required in that grant. The 8 posters displayed family photographs and quotations from the interviews. A large foyer poster featured farm and town life, school unification, and minority culture. The 4’ poster featured the county as a good place to live and showed joy and celebration. The six small posters topics were: *Sports, Making the World a Better Place, Korean War Era, Weather, Country Doctors and Healthcare, and Changing Communities.*

(Unfortunately, I was not up to following through on more regional media coverage due to the sudden death of my husband on October 27. I could only manage to finish the posters, mount the exhibits and get through the open house.)

An open house was hosted on November 5, 2011 for the exhibit. Seventy people attended the open house. The exhibit remained in place for a month with approximately 300 more people visiting.

A video of the open house was produced and is still accessible on the library webpage.

5. Which statewide repository has been notified of your project?

Kansas State Historical Society
Kansas Folklore Society
(Local) Edwards County Historical Society Museum

Is the repository interested in making copies of and/or storing the results of your project?

All three of the above entities have copies of the complete oral histories.

6. Describe any kinds of follow up activities that you anticipate (exhibits, public programs, additional research, etc. in your community?)

We conducted our open house on November 5, 2011. The printed poster exhibit is in storage and can easily be mounted again at a later date.

The project will be featured in a KHC anniversary film this fall.

We plan on continuing interviews as the opportunities and interest arise. We have a piggy bank on our checkout counter which patrons drop their change into. This money is designated for the cost of transcribing future interviews. We would like to do a smaller project which focuses exclusively on the March 15, 1978 American Agriculture Movement march on Washington, DC. There was an contingent of Edwards County farmers who drove their tractors to DC and participated.

7. Summary of Project Findings

Describe the Contents of the Collection

The *Patterns of Change* collection contains 23 Oral Histories, each with a complete audio recording and transcript, a photographic portrait on the day of the interview, and a short video clip. All 23 participants also shared photographs from their family albums which illustrated their lives. The collection is preserved both digitally and on paper/CD.

The 23 participants included 10 men and 13 women; 21 Caucasian, 2 Black, and 1 Hispanic; they were born in 1919, 1920, 1925, 1928, 1929(2), 1930(5), 1931, 1932, 1935(2), 1936, 1937(2), 1939(2), 1940, 1941, and 1947; 16 were born in Edwards County, 4 came as children, and 3 came as adults; 3 participants moved away from Edwards County and do not live here today, 1 spent significant time away from the county, but now live here, and the other 19 only lived outside Edwards County to go to college, into the service, or for a brief time as young adults; ten participants (or their families) were involved in farming; 4 were professionals, and 12 were involved in the business community.

Tell what you learned and how it adds to our understanding of local history and culture

Much of what we learned is summarized in the display posters that are included in this packet. With a project of this size it is very easy to lose track of what is being learned. The following is more than the KHC expects, but I feel necessary for us to really review, synthesize, and understand the scope of this grant.

World War II

Some of the *Patterns of Change* participants remembered World War II. They had fathers, uncles and brothers who served. Kenny Bartman's brother lost his life. Several remembered seeing people off on the train or watching the troop trains go through town. One of our oldest participants came to Kinsley when her husband, a veteran army doctor, sought a place for a private practice right after the war. Another was an English war bride

There were memories of rationing sugar, gas, and tires. Mary Fox's mother traded sugar stamps for gasoline stamps because it was important to her to be able to go places. Jack Kersting recalled "We had to haul our drinking water from the old Springcreek School (Parsons, KS) which was a mile and a quarter away, and we used milk cans. We needed one milk can, and I remember Mother going into the office who controlled all this, and she begged them for a milk can. They said, 'You're not producing milk. We can't give you one.' I remember Mother saying, 'You give me a milk can, and I'll put milk in it!' We got the milk can. I don't know if they felt sorry for her or whatever, but she got the milk can. We would put on the floor of the back seat three ten gallon cans and go up to the school and fill those cans. Pump it by hand. That would last us until it was gone, then we'd go back again. We had to do that during the war, so that took gas."

"During the war years," said Virginia Gleason, "the pharmacy usually stayed open until 1 a.m. on Saturday nights. Daddy made his own ice cream all through the war. We made our own simple syrup, so because of that, we had a good sugar base when the war came along and sugar was rationed. We never were low on it, because we had plenty for the drug store, and we could sneak some home."

Right before the war, rural electricity was about to be strung. Several interviewees reported having to wait until 1947 and 1948 before they got electricity. Bobby Kallaus did remark that black-outs were easy; you "just had to blow out the lamp." Mary Fox remembered that the lights on the car were hooded in California where she had gone to visit relatives working in the airplane plants.

Some participants remembered the war newsreels at the theater, seeds for Victory Gardens, and collecting metal, rubber tires, and grease. Every family kept grease, mainly bacon fat. It was used in making gun explosives. Norma Kennedy collected paper in a wagon with three or four other girls. Her older sister took the bus to go to the dances at the USO at the base in Dodge City.

Virginia Gleason's parent had to wait until after the war to build a little house because materials were not available. Maribel Carlson never learned to swim because the Red Cross was too busy to give swimming lessons during the war.

The war affected the childhood of several interviewees. Dennis Kindsvater's father was drafted in WWII. "I remember my mother crying the night he left. He got down on his knees and handed me a dollar bill and told me to take care of Mom and the kids. We moved after Dad left for the war to be nearer my Grandfather Stinson." His father served in Germany, the Battle of the Bulge, until the war ended. Dennis vividly recalls his father's return home. "He came in on a train with a bunch of other soldiers. I remember there were so many people in the home. I remember here comes this man in, and I saw him, very red faced and very big. He was 6'2", and I thought a giant of a man then, but of course everybody was very happy to see him. There was a lot of crying."

Bobby Kallaus remembered a promotion to buy war bonds in Parsons, Kansas. "They had this submarine. It wasn't, I'd say what, 30 foot long. There was this railroad underpass,

and they got hung up in it. They took all the kids from school so they could see it. And there sat this Jap (a *stuffed figure*) in there, and they couldn't move the sub. It was pretty scary to see that guy sitting in there. I think it was just to show what the boys were doing." Norma Kennedy also told of bond drives where you could pay to ride in a jeep on Kinsley's main street.

Many participants recalled the bombing of Pearl Harbor and sitting in front of the radio with the adults to listen to the news. Leona Butler was 16 and in Sunday School when she heard. Keith King was "down to my Aunt Rosa Brown's having a family dinner about 2:00. After lunch, my cousin Vernon Brown, said we would go out and see (*the men*) putting one of the gas pipe lines through the country back. But we went out there and they wasn't doing anything. My dad called out to ask if they were broke down or something. The foreman said, 'No, we just got word to shut everything down. That the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor.' So they said, 'We don't know what we will do until we get word.' So that's the first we heard about it. They were shut down for about a week. I guess the government went ahead and let them complete that. They were ready to put in electricity but it got delayed until after the war."

Bobby Kallaus spent his early childhood in Parsons, Kansas where there was an ordinance plant just a mile from his Dad's land. "Everybody was scared to death of the bomb-making material. Thousands of them came, and there was no place to live. Every little place that we could keep warm in the wintertime, he rented out to people for living quarters. Dad bought a boxcar, split it in half and made two apartments. He had a washhouse, he changed that over. He even put a bachelor in the backroom of the house. People were just glad to get it." Everything was rationed and so his dad sold milk and cream and eggs to the people there on the farm. He also sold black-market meat.

Elwood Agnew parents had a café in Kinsley. About 25 GIs from the bombing range ate there and lived above the Safeway store where there was a hotel. "Nobody got to go on the bombing range, 10 miles south of Kinsley. They practiced both day (dropping flour usually) and did some practice with lighted targets at night – every other night or so."

Agnew's uncle was in Darby's Rangers. They were dropped in on Hitler's summer house and missed him by 30 minutes. Then they had to get back across the enemy lines. At the end of the war he sent home a radio from Germany with instructions not to open it. It turned out he had sent home in the box his Thompson machine gun that he carried during the war.

Dorothy Airgood grew up in England and spent the war years just 10 miles from London. She remembered the war beginning on September 3, 1939, a beautiful Sunday morning. Everyone was listening to the radio to hear Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain declare war. When they started to eat their Sunday meal, the sirens went off because there were German planes over the channel. That time they turned back without bombing, so the All-clear siren sounded. By December they were being bombed. They had air raid wardens who patrolled the streets to make sure all the lights were off during the Black Outs. People were not allowed to smoke in the streets. Her family had their own shelter in the backyard. It was made for 2, but there were 4 in family (and a cat) so they had to sit up and spent nearly every night there. Her house was never hit, but the school was. Everything was rationed—all meat (4 oz a week), eggs (1 per week), tea (2 oz. a week) sugar, jam, and everything else that had sugar in it. There were no "fresh" eggs but they used an egg substitute. They grew vegetables and had an apple and plum tree.

Dorothy was drafted. Women took physicals just like the men, and if their health was good, they were drafted into one branch of the service. She did clerical work. She met Stewart Airgood, an army baker, stationed in England during the war. They dated for a year going to the movies and taking walks along river. Her parents liked him, but she knew nothing of his family.

They wanted to get married before D-Day fearing he would not be back or maybe would not live through it. They had to wait for a 3-month cooling off period. Then they had trouble getting the paper work done and posing the bans in church. Finally they got a special license and just in time. She made a blue dress out of one yard of 54" material. They were married, and she only saw him one more time before he left a few days after D-day. Then the war was over and he was shipped home without them being together. The next time she would see him was in the states when she sailed into New York harbor on a little Greek vessel full of war brides and children. They came back to Iowa on the train where she met his parents.

Sally Frame's father joined the navy even though he was 42 when he went in. He enlisted because he thought he ought to go, so he went. He was stationed at Honolulu right after Pearl Harbor." I can remember Rex Strate, and I know there were two or three other young 18 or 19 year olds from here were at the hospital there. I get emotional remembering because Daddy just kind of befriended them. So Rex from then on would do anything for Daddy. I took my Daddy in his uniform to show and tell. I thought that was so cool!

There were also memories of the end of the war. Bill Olsen said they were haying in the field when the news came. Mary Fox's dad worked in the Naval Shipyard by the end of the war. She was in Long Beach CA, downtown with her little sister, the day Japan surrendered. They had gone by themselves across Los Angeles to go skating.

Sally Frame remembers when Roosevelt died that they cried. "And I remember when the war was over; we marched around the old Methodist Church with little flags. I also remember right after the war my cousin came back from the east, and he had bubblegum! I thought that was so cool because we didn't have bubblegum during the war. I chewed that until it was black, I'm afraid. I saved it at night and went on chewing it."

There had been prejudice against the Germans and Japanese during the war. Bobby Kallaus said there was animosity towards the German communities during WWI, so people had stopped using German in church and school then. But during WWII there was still some and the county attorney would investigate any allegations of German sympathies.

Sometime after the war Sally Frame asked her very liberal mother about the Japanese internment camp in Colorado. Her mother answered, "Sally, honestly at the time I didn't think about it. I was worried about your daddy, and I was taking care of you kids. I just wasn't aware." Sally also remembers the first time she saw a holocaust picture on TV. "I remember just being stunned with that. It must have been in the early fifties. That's the first time I became aware of the horror of things going on. I just didn't know."

(NOTE: One aspect of county life before the war were the rabbit drives. Keith King said "They turned my stomach. I didn't mind driving them, but when they got them in the pens and started clubbing them, it was too much for me. But they had to do it as they were eating everything green in the dirty thirties. They started down at the Parallel and ended up at my Uncle Warren Duggar's pasture there. They shipped them all back to around New York and Boston and back in there. And then of course, a lot of them were skinned for the fur, mostly. That only lasted about 2 years, I think.

Robert Kallaus also talked about the rabbit drives becoming smaller than what had gone on during the Depression. They got 10 cents a rabbit. They were sold to mink farms. People didn't eat rabbit because of rabbit fever. Sometimes they fed them to the dogs.)

The Business Community

The overriding theme when talking about the business communities was how they were thriving in the 1940's and steadily declined through the 1950's and 1960's and on until today.

Sally Frame recalled that "Kinsley had everything. We had three clothing stores. We had Al's Clothing Store, M&M's and Ehler's. Then we had a shoe store, and they sold shoes in Ehler's. Then three grocery stores: a little one and then we had Mammel's and Weidenheimer's. Of course, we had two drug stores, Rexall's and Copp's. It seemed like we had everything. We had a lumberyard, a paint store. . . . all the business men had their offices upstairs over the things downstairs, all the lawyers and the doctors. My Grandpa's (*law*) office was upstairs...."

Carmen Rodriguez added Ed Taylor's Insurance, Gamble's store, True Value, maybe two little restaurants, the theater, car dealer, and Buford's Dry Cleaning. She said that on Saturday night Kinsley would just be thriving. There wasn't a parking space left. Dennis Kindsvater also described Saturday night when all the farmers came to town and everybody else did too. People would park on both sides of main street as it was a two-way street then. "I got the first ticket in my life coming back from college going down the wrong side of main street. I didn't know that it was changed. So it was the summer or fall of '57 when the main street became one way, not two way. . . . The cop, McBride, he didn't care. He was mad at me, said I should have known. There was no excuse when you go to college, and I should have known better."

Dorothy Airgood added Firestone another lumberyard, Giffords Jewelry, a bank, an appliance store (Harnish), and Lloyds Bakery. LeRoy Sparke mentioned that you could get "any kind of implement you wanted to buy. There was a dealer here, and cars and trucks. You could get anything you wanted here."

Participants all remarked that the decline of businesses began in the 1950's and has continued. Mary Fox describes the last years of her ownership of a department store (formerly Ehler's) which she bought in 1964. "We kept decreasing the size. We closed off the front where the old bank vault still is and where we had the baby department. We moved the baby department to a different area and made it smaller....Then we lowered the ceiling. Then eventually we put a wall across the back. Let's see that was 75' wide and 100' deep. So there was a lot of floor space there. We just kind of decreased it as business declined. Wal-Mart really took the heart out of everybody. That is what happened. I guess it was progress, but I don't know. When it got so bad, we closed."

Lewis was a little smaller community in Edwards County. Donna Newsom described Lewis in the 1950's. "The two blocks in Lewis! Baird's and Schnoebelen had a Ford dealership and Carney had a garage there. Little café where ultimately Nick Castenada had a pub. But at that time it was the...B&H. Brumfield's Grocery Store, Lewis Press, drugstore, the post office was on the corner for a long time. It has since been torn down. On the north side of what's the pub now was a round building that used to be the post office. The bank was across the street over here, you know, where the senior center is now. Mabel Metling did laundry in the little grey building across here. Hiram Butler was a lawyer. We had Dr. Meckfessel; on the east side of the street....Dr. Crawford was a dentist.... Carney's had a Jewelry Store there. We had a bank. Pop Barnes had a big drug store across the street. We had a hardware store there.... In two blocks, there were a lot of businesses."

Boyd Mundhenke also remembers two grocery stores, and two barber shops for the men, and one beauty shop, and "a pool hall, which was a pretty popular source of

entertainment. And we had a skating rink on the north end of Main Street where the Lewis Co-op shop is today. Then we had a huge shoe repair shop, and of course, the telephone office.”

Carmen Rodriguez added a laundry mat, and a confectionary and an automotive business, both run by the Schnoebelen family. Marcile King reported that by the 1960’s there were no restaurants, one bank went out, the drug store was gone and there was only one grocery store.

By the 1950’s the little communities of Centerview, Trousdale, and Fellsburg had already declined and it continued. When Keith King was a child, Centerview had two elevators, a bank, the lumberyard, and a big building that was going to be a hardware store. It had two stories, but it never did materialize into anything except the Woodmen’s Lodge met upstairs. There was a grocery store and the garage with a gas station the school, the railroad, and the Methodist (Quaker) Church, but no restaurant. Keith said “By that time I graduated (1946) all there was was a garage, a store (and the post office was in the store), the church and the school. It had gone way down. The railroad was gone.”

LeRoy Sparke lived in Fellsburg and he reports there was a grocery store, a garage, and a post office. The bank had closed and the lumberyard was gone and there was not a restaurant. Trousdale was a little larger than Fellsburg. The Aunt Nancy (*Anthony Northern Railroad*) was there. “The railroad, it’s what settled all those little towns down through there, clear into Pratt. When the railroad went out (1941), the communities couldn’t survive. Mary Fox lived in Trousdale later when she was very small. She only remembers a restaurant.

Robert Kallaus reported that the Sts. Peter and Paul community had only the church, the little store, the priest’s house, and the sisters’ house, and the school.

Donna Newsom grew up in the Belpre community and reports that there was a Catholic Church, a Baptist Church, and a Methodist Church, a grocery store, and the post office.

Leona Butler describes Offerle as quite self-sufficient before the war, but a fire burned down many of the stores in 1961, and it did not rebuild.

Before World War II most participants’ families could trade in their little communities. Then Kinsley, Lewis, and Offerle were the main business center of the county in the early 1950s. By 1970, people were driving to the larger cities of Dodge City, Pratt, Larned, and Great Bend, and businesses continued to close in the communities.

The interviewees and their fathers worked for a variety of businesses in the county. LeRoy Sparke worked for Cross Manufacturing in Lewis and later the post office in Kinsley. Kenneth Bartman was a meat cutter for Mammals. He describes many changes in preparing meat and displaying meat during his time especially with the open refrigerated display cases.

Mary Kallaus’ father worked for Kansas Power and Light. She talks about one bad snow storm and him being gone for days trying to get the electricity back on for people. She also recounts how KPL did not take electricity to the people at Sts. Peter & Paul and lived to regret it. At the time, it would have cost individuals \$500 to hookup.

Virginia and her father were both pharmacists. He owned the pharmacy and Virginia went to work there when her first husband died. They employed several to work the soda fountain, mainly girls, and Virginia also worked there growing up. Boys or men were hired to check out and stock orders. The business was moved from downtown to Niles St. in 1964. At that time, they did away with soda fountain.

Maribel Carlson’s father ran the Home Oil gas station and the iconic brick building still stands in Kinsley. He later decided to dig a sand pit. “Daddy had already made arrangements with John Mix to go in and dig this sand pit. John Mix was an old bachelor that didn’t like women at all. When Daddy died unexpectedly, Mr. Mix thought, ‘Oh, oh.’ He didn’t want to

deal with my mother....but he decided he could deal with Mother even though he didn't like to deal with women. So they went ahead and finished the plans to dig it... in '52. Of course it served as a sand pit for many, many years."

Elwood Agnew's mother and father were involved with the Brodbeck/Schrader carnival, living in a trailer and playing towns in Kansas, Oklahoma, and Nebraska. About 150 carneys traveled to the big fairs and 75 for small. While many carneys worked in the south during the winter to have a full year of carnival employment, his parent's owned and ran Ann's Café in the off-season. The cafe held about 25 people with booths, tables, a counter, and jukebox. They hired a dish washer and waitress to serve the regular customers. The Café was open every day except Sunday when his dad worked on carnival repairs.

The Agnews had some carnival games and also took pictures which were developed, printed and given right back to people. (We collected several portraits from interviewees photo albums.) The carnival set up on Monday, played until Wednesday, moved on Thursday and stayed thru Saturday, moving again on Sunday. Elwood began at age six polishing the brass on the merry-go round. Later he helped set up and take down the top of merry-go-round. He also learned to drive in the carnival.

The Airgoods bought the Western Auto store in 1949. The building had been Popp's meat market. They lived upstairs. The businessmen said, "They'll never last," but Dorothy is still operating the business today.) Stewart opened the store at 8:30 a.m., and she came down at 9 a.m. after doing her housework. They never closed at noon but took turns having lunch. They closed at 6 p.m. except Saturday night when they stayed open until 10 p.m. They were not partners; Dorothy insisted it was always Stewart's store. Stewart repaired all the kids' bikes. The only help they had was an occasional teenager after school and when they went back to England every 5 years for 3 weeks.

Mary Fox lived with her grandparents who owned Bear Produce Co. Her grandfather bought eggs and chickens and shipped them to Chicago by train. In cold weather they had a stove on the train to keep the chickens warm. Someone also had to ride with them to feed and water them. Eggs were shipped in refrigerated railroad cars that were parked on the tracks beside the store. He had several employees including ladies who candled the eggs. He also had cats to take care of mice, and a lice dip vat for chickens. He died suddenly in 1942 at age 62 leaving her grandmother and aunt to try to run business. They found they could not.

Mary's father-in-law had I. Case Agency and a machine shop. Later he sold Oldsmobile cars and also farmed. Mary and her husband Tom had a Case dealership for 1 ½ years in Dodge, but sold it and came back to Kinsley. Mary did bookwork for the farm and machine business while hiring babysitters for the four children.

Mary bought Ehler's Department Store in 1964. Tom's dad and Tom had to sign a note for her to get a loan at the bank. "At the start, we sold everything. We sold ladies', children's and babies' shoes and clothes; yard goods... patterns...buttons and notions; coats from Betty Rose Coat Factory in Kansas City, Missouri. We sold everything except men's wear. And we didn't, at that time, sell any gifts because Vern and Rosemary had put in a gift shop at the back of the store. It was connected. We had a walk through area there. And we had a children's play area in there, close to the register, so we could keep an eye on them. It was a good store; it was a good, sound store."

"We sold Fieldcrest blankets. Everything was made in the United States. It was fantastic. If you had anything in our software line or clothing line or home things (that are called software or were then), it was all made in the United States. I can remember when the first sweaters came on the market that were made in China. We use to go to Kansas City to

market four times a year. And the salesman said, 'Have I got a deal for you.' I can still see that. He rolled out these really gorgeous, at that time, sweaters. And then the price. Wow! We got it made."

"In those days people dressed differently. In the fifties we had girdles. We had corsets when we first started. We had slips, nylon lingerie. We had everything: high-heeled shoes and low-heeled shoes, and Dr. Scholl's were not made in China. They were made in the United States. And they were a big deal for the nurses and all of the ladies that cooked at the school. They were a good shoe. We even carried some of those really old lace-up oxfords that the ladies use to wear."

"I can remember when the first ladies jean line came on the market. That was a big deal. They didn't have to have a zipper in the front. They made them in all sizes. We just sold those like crazy.... It was in the sixties when hats and gloves were going out. Being able to charge was really kind of a big backbone of a small business person, whether it was a grocery store or other type of business. I remember I charged my groceries, and we paid after harvest.... We hoped to goodness that the harvest was a good one, so we could pay the grocery bill. Every place had charge accounts. You wrote out the ticket, and you signed the ticket, at that time. I remember we were one of the first businesses, and maybe the only one in Kinsley, to accept Bank America or MasterCard, whichever one it was then. But not very many people used it and it was a big cost."

There were opportunities for entertainment within Edwards County. When Leona Butler was young her grandfather had a movie house connected to his store in Offerle. But the main movie house was the Palace Theater in Kinsley which was patronized by all the participants. Some also drove to Larned to the drive in movie.

When Sally Frame was a little girl, she went to the Palace for the Saturday matinee which was often a cowboy film. At that time there were two movies in the afternoon, and a different movie that night, and another movie on Sunday night. "I can remember, I hit 12 and the guy that ran the theater (*Husted Sterrett*) knew when everybody's birthday was, so when you were 12 you paid 25 cents. You did not pay a dime. I went to the movie with a little boyfriend, George Tew, and when he paid for the movie, he had to pay full price for me!" As a teen, Sally went to the movies every Saturday night and after attending Methodist Youth Fellowship on Sunday night, they would again go to the movie. It was a different movie both nights.

Some went roller skating in Lewis and Kinsley. Mary Kallaus talked about the guys coming back from WWII and making a rink in the Pink Building in South Park in Kinsley. "The Feldman Brothers, Chet and Marvin Feldman, had a skating rink," said Donna Newsome. "It was out there toward the VFW in Kinsley. Kay and I went skating every Saturday night."

There were community picnics, the Kinsley swimming pool, and summer baseball games. The school provided sports, bands, singing, and plays. There were lots of dances all over the county. The dances had live music played by bands. Bobby Kallaus reported that Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church had an outdoors cement slab to dance on and lots of dances were held there including many wedding dances.

Many remembered that as children they make up their own toys and entertainment whether playing in the hay mow, running with a hoop and stick, or making houses under lilac bushes. Keith King said "I can remember my toys that I got was all made up out of the junk pile. They had sprockets and what I call lugs on them, and that was my tractor. I made my own implements out of lath and nails.... I finally got a bicycle when I was about 10 years old and ran it on oiled roads."

Getting their first TV, usually in 1950's was memorable. Early on there was only one station from Great Bend and it was not very clear. Donna Newsom told a particularly funny story about her grandfather getting the shotgun to scare the birds off from the antenna to try to improve the picture. In the process of loading the gun, it discharged through the kitchen floor into the basement where it blew up a lot of jars of home-canned fruit and vegetables. There was a big clean up job before grandma got home.

As teenagers, entertainment often centered around the freedom of having a car and just cruising. Sally Frame said, "I remember my dad had a little fishing car that we called the 'Whoopie.' It was like a little '47 Ford Coupe. It was a tiny car. I hit 18 before anybody else in my class because I was born in January, so I could drive. So one or two of us would get in the front with me, and then the rest would sit...well, the trunk lid would open up and they would sit in the back. Terribly unsafe! But we'd go all over town. There were no rules, no seatbelts. Oh Lord, and nobody got hurt."

Norma Kennedy said that her cousin and brother had cars. Her future husband, Dorsey Gaines had a Model T and they played "ditch 'em" at night without the car lights. They would try to lose each other or the police on the streets of Kinsley.

Many Kinsley boys had motor cycles. According to them, they did a lot of dangerous and foolish things. The police were a bit easier on kids who did pranks or cut up back then. Bobby Kallaus said "I just got a wild hair and backed my motorcycle into the picture show (*Palace Theater*), and "vroom, VROOM!" His wife Mary added, "He just backed in there and let her rip and roar, and then he took out of there." Robert continued, "I thought I was safe, until Sterret, the man that had the picture show, caught me later on. "If you ever do that again, I'm going to..."

Agricultural Changes:

The agriculture-related interviewees have had their farms and land in the family for generations, handing it down within the family. Several now worry about not having a son or grandson interested in farming. Because many children left the area and pursued non-agriculture careers, the grandchildren have not been raised as farmers. It has also become more and more difficult to sustain a farm without a supplemental income.

For the most part, the participants' family members worked the farm. This included the women especially at harvest time. Sometimes there was one hired man and high school kids were hired for the summer. One reported her mother had help when she fed the harvest crews. Keith King told of hiring Hispanic migrant workers to hoe soy beans. Virginia Gleason husband had help all year and more so at harvest. She enjoyed cooking for the harvest crew. For several years they also had Mexicans as hired hands.

Before World War II most of the farms grew crops and raised a variety of animals and had gardens. This diversity allowed families to survive even through the Depression and bad years. Keith King's father had dairy cows and a few hogs, and then started raising chickens. "What he done was early in the spring when they first started hatching chickens at the hatchery, he picked them up and built a chicken house. It had three rooms in it. Two rooms were for the chickens and the other one was for feed. They put in a kerosene stove. It was a round-like stove. He put in some tanks off of some old tractors and run a pipe out of the feed room into that converted stove. He put little vents around it so the chickens could get up to it. He raised about 500 chickens for the eggs. He made a deal with Ed Fletcher, who had a hatchery at Lewis. Late in the spring, he'd start delivering eggs up to the hatchery. Part of that

process was that he had to have what they called “candling the egg”. He had scales and all that stuff, and they had to be weighed and put up to a light to see if there were any bad spots in them. Fletcher hatched the eggs out, and we’d bring the chickens back out when they were little. So we had chickens around the farm all the time.”

“Then, when I was growing up too,” continued Keith, “we always had some hogs around. In the wintertime, the neighbors would all get together and butcher together. My dad had what they called an old scalding vat and a sled. They pulled that around to whoever wanted to butcher. After they shot the hogs, they dipped them in this hot water and then they’d change, roll them on one side and then roll them back. And then they’d roll them out on this sled and they’d scrape the hair off of the hog. At times I would come home from school and there’d be about half a dozen hog carcasses hanging up in the granary. Mother rendered the fat for soap. All I can think about when election time came around, we were rendering lard, and making soap and wrapping the hams and bacon. We had a little place on the side of the garage that we called the meat house. Dad cured his own meat. We’d wrap them in paper, newspaper, and then wrap them in gunny sacks and hang them up there in that meat house. By spring it would be gone, but some of that he would give to my aunts and uncles. In winter we had a big family dinner and get together, and he would generally give somebody a ham and a slab of bacon.”

The first tractor Keith King ever ran at the age 12 was new 2236 International on steel purchased from Shaffer’s Implements in Kinsley. He describes how they delivered it in a big, old halfback truck which they backed in the ditch and then ran the tractor off.

After the war, there were many changes in farming. Farm implements got bigger and self-propelled. They had cabs which protected from the sun and dust. Lights on the tractors and irrigation made farming more of a full-time job.

Using fertilizer began in the 1950’s and 1960’s. Keith King said “We used a lot of dry fertilizer. When it first came out, it was in 50 lb. bags.... We’d put fertilizer hoppers on the rain barrels. We finally got a planter that you could run with the cans on the back with a tube that ran the fertilizer down right behind where you planted it. That was dry. Anyhow, I didn’t get liquid fertilizer until ... the 60’s.”

Using pesticides also began in the 1960’s. Keith King didn’t use too much insecticide until he started planting corn in 1978.

LeRoy Sparke dryland farmed around Fellsburg. They didn’t use fertilizer other than manure, and they also did not use herbicides. “The weeds would be so high sometimes we’d put a log chain between the lister deals to drag the weeds down so the dirt would cover them over and have a chance to start rotting before we had to slide it back.”

The Sparke ground was sandy and blew badly in the Dirty Thirties. “And then we went back to leaving strip farming, or we even would hook behind the tractor three of these little old horse drawn deals that went between the rows of corn or planted feed that you listed. At that time, we had these planters that turned and maybe it made a good plant and maybe it didn’t, but that’s the way it was back in them days. You didn’t have these good planters like they have now. Anyhow, we would drill wheat in between that, so that helped prevent the wind erosion. And you know it changed the ground and everything. It made it difficult. The little eight foot tandem disc, that one you just went every third row. It would go down in between those and you’d get the ground raised for the wheat then that way. But after that was down, you just planted over the top of everything. There were just different ways they were trying to take care of the erosion that happened back in the thirties then.... They’ve got it changed now to no-till farming. It’s much better. Keith King also remembers planting wheat in third row corn.

Irrigation began in the 1960's and it increased yields. Tom Fox was one of the first to use circle irrigation, but the Newsoms did not begin irrigating until 1975. Because Edwards County is located above the Ogallala Aquifer, Boyd Mundhenke said "We have a Garden of Eden." But he, LeRoy Sparke, Virginia Gleason and others worry about the overuse of water today.

Keith King put in an irrigation well in 1964. "There was an old well, and we hooked it up. I guess you'd call it a drag line. We put that in and hooked the well up to a tractor with a belt pulley on it. We tried to irrigate with that thing. It wasn't very successful. The well wasn't all that good, and in fact I think it collapsed a few years after that."

In the quest to make a living, crops changed with irrigation, pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers. Newsoms grew wheat and milo and had a few cattle. Mundhenkes had livestock and farmed. The Olsens raised cows and then lots of sheep and pigs and chickens. He also grew wheat, milo, and alfalfa. The Whites raised cattle from spring to fall (not calves) and grew wheat. Robert Kallaus' father didn't like row crops so they moved here to grow wheat and milo because it was easier.

Keith King starting growing soybeans in the 1970's. He never grew a lot of corn. "I stuck to milo and soybean, and then we had alfalfa. They can tell me that alfalfa takes a lot of water, but it don't take as much as corn does by a third. Because I got to figuring up one time, you cut the hay about every three to four weeks. You can wait a week or ten days to water. Or if it rains, you could be down to two weeks and not have to water. So I came to the conclusion that it doesn't take as much water as people think, at least that's my theory."

Robert Kallaus told of a bad drought from 1951-1955. The government brought in potatoes to feed cattle. He believed that was the beginning of crop management by government. (This drought is why he decided to go into the service as they couldn't farm.)

Keith King ran cattle in the sandhills early on. They would round them up in the fall to sell them. Robert Kallaus always raised cattle, some alfalfa and milo. He bought calves from Wisconsin and fed them out to 800 pounds. They didn't make ensilage but tied the milo up in shocks. He sold cattle in sale barns in Kinsley, Dodge, Pratt or LaCrosse.

At this time horses were no longer used to farm, but Gleasons had horses for pleasure.

Keith King raised sheep starting in about 1958 with 300 head. Everybody did lambing. They had them in the house, barns, everywhere. "It was a pretty good money maker. If I'd had some more grassland, I would probably have stayed in it. But it got to where it was awfully hard to sell your fat lambs. Finally got down to where you had to take them, a lot of times, down to Wichita. That's too far." He didn't use protective dogs and the sheep were just free range. He found that "Coyotes were a problem. They weren't too bad around home, but I always shut mine up at night. We'd just go out and hammer on the side of the building and they'd come running. We had two guys that came in and sheared them in the spring. We shipped by railroad from Lewis at one time. When the depot went out, that shut that off. And then they had to haul the wool clear to Hutchinson. (The depot closed in 1967 affected shipping of sheep, milk and cream.)

Farming could also be dangerous. Robert Kallaus' father had three farm accidents. He cut off four fingers cutting wood; he was burned starting a tractor; and he was run over by a one-way.

Several interviewees spoke of the financial difficulties of farming. There was a need to go into debt to buy costly machinery. Also Keith King explained that after World War II many men did not come back to farm. "It was about that time that farming started going downhill because the interest rates were so high. We operated on borrowed money of 16% and 18% for

irrigation. A lot of the kids' parents farmed, but there wasn't enough when the interest rates were so high. They were lucky if one could survive; a farm couldn't support two or more families. A lot of land changed hands back then. In the 60's, when we put in the irrigation wells, a lot of them were a bunch of young kids that came back to the farm. But in five year's time, they'd all left. They'd bought equipment. Everybody wanted to get into irrigation, and a lot of big money came in out of Wichita and Kansas City. Buying up or renting land, of course, that was when interest rates was high too. A lot of guys invested in land. They said that after they put in the irrigation wells and had the parts and money to manage it and everything, it turned out to be a no-paying proposition. And a doctor and lawyer, they don't like to lose money. So in a few years all that went out. The price of crops was cheap. I remember selling milo for 80 cents a bushel. Wheat about \$1.10. Of course there wasn't any corn left at that time. And the only thing that helped was hay. Hay was pretty good. We had about 100 acres of dryland alfalfa.

The American Agriculture Movement occurred in March, 1978 to protest farm prices. This is an area the library would like to do some research on in the near future as Edwards County farmers were active in it and ran their tractors all the way to Washington, D.C.

Education

The interviewees attended most of the schools in the county including: Lewis, Nettleton, Kinsley, Offerle, Fellsburg, Trousdale, Centerview, and Sts. Peter and Paul Parochial School. Except for Lewis and Kinsley, many of their classes were small and consolidation began before the war and continued until 1966 when Kinsley and Offerle consolidated. The participants were in graduating classes from 1942 to 1965.

Public kindergarten was not always the norm. Maribel Carlson explained, "My brother that died went to kindergarten clear back then. He was two years ahead of me. Mother always said, 'When Jimmy went, we had to pay for it. When you went, we didn't.'"

Robert Kallaus attended Sts. Peter and Paul parochial school which was taught by two Sisters. There were about 45 kids from 1st thru 8th grade. Then he went to Kinsley High School. Even though he had grown up not far from Kinsley, he said he had never been in the high school building until the day he started.

Norma Kennedy went to Northside School in Kinsley. She was a shy child, but she does recall being a bluebell in an operetta in elementary school. In high school she was in Kays and pep club, chorus, and band.

Her son, Kenny Gaines attended kindergarten and first grade in Kinsley, and then moved to Portland, Oregon for the second, third and fourth grade. In Portland he attended an inner-city school segregated because of housing. Kenny said, "The school ... had lots of problems in terms of discipline. We didn't learn much of any substance in terms of subject matter. I can recall that in terms of what I had experienced up through the first grade in Kinsley, the students there were very, very far behind. I kind of drifted and got behind.... I remember my second grade teacher, especially. I really liked her, but I really felt sorry for her. She was a white teacher, and I remember that I always felt sorry for her because she had such a hard time trying to teach anything because she always had to discipline somebody."

For the third grade, they integrated a white neighborhood. He could remember a lot of controversy surrounding that move. "I went to the third and fourth grade at Vernon Elementary School. Discipline was not anywhere near as much of a problem, but I... wasn't paying attention and actually doing the work. Then also, going home I didn't get a lot of

reinforcement because I ended up having to help take care of my siblings.... until my mom got home from work... So I wasn't showing much improvement, and that's when my mom decided that maybe it was best to come back to Kinsley."

Kenny came back here and lived with grandparents. "It was like night and day the first day you went into the school. I remember students sitting with their feet together and hands on their desks. Everything was sparkling, you know, hardwood floors were shiny. So it had an immediate impact.... I remember they tested me.... They found that I was behind, and they worked with me to help bring me up to par and get me on the right track. That was part of the positive part of coming back here. I was the only black student. I had good friends and had a few friends that were not so good, friends that taunted you racially. But the fortunate thing was that I had good white friends and also the administration of the school helped deal with the situation. It was like you weren't battling this by yourself."

It was during the fifth grade that Kenny started to shine in sports and that helped him socially and academically because it encouraged him to do better. "Once I caught up, I was a good student. I made steady progress. I think probably when I got in junior high and beyond, I started getting above average, and then became a pretty strong student. By the time I got out of high school, I was probably a pretty solid B+ student.... (*Living here*) made you work hard and try to do your best. Because you didn't have as many students, so the pressure to stay 'in line' was greater.... people knew you. Everybody knows everybody. You're not anonymous."

Another unusual school experience was told by Mary Fox, also being raised by her grandparents. She tells of starting high school and getting into a lot of trouble. Her grandmother sent her to Mount Carmel Catholic Girls School in Wichita. At first she was furious, but it was a good thing and she soon realized it. They were strict; the girls were required to wear a "horrible uniform" to school. She wasn't Catholic but she was requested to go to Mass on Sunday. Sometimes they had 3-day retreats in silence. She enjoyed being in plays and traveled to St. Louis and Washington, D.C. On these trips they always wore hats, gloves and suits. Two nuns were especially influential in her life. She graduated in 1950 and soon after got married.

An interesting discovery and side note which surprised us were nearly one-fifth of the interviewees were not raised by/lived with their parents. Donna Newsom, Kenny Gaines, and Mary Fox were all raised by their grandparents and felt it to be a positive. Also when Elwood Agnew's parents moved to Wichita, at age 15 he boarded with a woman in Kinsley in order to attend Kinsley High School and participate in sports.

Only five of the participants had a parent who attended college. Fourteen participants went on to at least one year of college and five of those pursued degrees in education. Twenty had children who went on to attend some college.

With the loss of population, communities were forced to close schools and consolidate. Fellsburg consolidated with Lewis in 1946; Centerview consolidated with Lewis in 1954; Trousdale consolidated with Belpre in 1959; Belpre closed in 1964 with most students going to Macksville. Eastern Edwards County was all consolidated by 1964.

Donna Newsom did not think there was much controversy over the consolidations with Centerview and Belpre because the communities had gotten so small.

Keith King said that "Centerview had high school one more year after I graduated. There were just two in the senior class. They had the kids come up then to Lewis. They had grade school at Centerview for three years or four years more, and then they closed it down.... When the school closed, then you might say there was nothing there. The county commissioners kind of decided (and the superintendent and the State of Kansas) to combine

those schools. It had gotten so small, there wasn't anything coming up to speculate on really. My three children graduated from Lewis in classes that were 15-20."

The last consolidation to date was between Offerle and Kinsley in 1966. Leona Butler of Offerle did not remember any real conflict. Because the elementary school was kept in Offerle the people accepted the consolidation. The parochial school in offerle closed in 1968.

Emily White and Mary Kallaus remember some hard feelings. Mary was an elementary teacher and she recalls that the young children were upset going to a bigger school. Leona Butler didn't like sending Doris, her daughter, to Kinsley. "Kinsley was a rough town, and I didn't like her having to go." Doris was a 7th grader that year, and she remembers that "There were just so many kids! My class was 12 (*in Offerle*), and then we were almost 60 or 70."

Mary Fox said, "People in Offerle, as I recall, didn't really think they wanted to consolidate. What were they going to do? Like when Lavern (*Wetzel*) graduated there were 3 in the graduating class over there. It's just a sign of those times, and the only reason we don't have that sign now is because we have schools consolidated, I guess."

Virginia Gleason's first husband, Jim Gillett, was on the board at the time. His kids were some of the first ones that went over to Offerle. At that time they tried to get a consolidated school between Kinsley and Lewis also. It would have been more of a county school. Lewis didn't want to give up their school as the community loses so much when that happens. But Offerle just couldn't sustain a school, and they got to keep their grade school. Virginia couldn't really remember many problems, and she didn't think anything about driving to Offerle for school functions.

Because Edwards County is a rural county, we inquired about Ag classes, FFA, and 4-H. during the interviews. Leona Butler said that FFA was only for boys, so Doris could only go to 4H. By the time her son Scott was in high school, FFA was not offered. There was 4-H but he did not do it. Donna Newsom said there were no Ag classes in Lewis but there was 4-H and she and her sister raised sheep for that. Robert Kallaus was president of FFA in Kinsley. The school built an Ag building when he was in school. He attended 4-H a couple years but quit when they wanted him to be president.

Sally Frame was in 4-H, the *Live-Wires* group. "I was a city girl, but they let city girls in there for cooking and sewing. I ended up being a pretty good sewer. Geneva Copp taught us sewing, and my mother taught cooking. I was a much better sewer than I was a cook. But I remember just loving it.... Then we'd have these model meetings.... Boring. You had to have them, and you had to have Robert's *Rules of Order*. And you had to have a meeting, and then you presented it at the county fair and then you did it at the state fair if you won.... So you had to practice these. Well, you know how much fun meetings are anyway, and then to do this! I remember that was dreadful.

School sports including football, basketball and track, were important to the community just as they are today. Games were played on Friday nights and Boyd Mundhenke said that practice at Lewis was done during the school day in order for the kids to ride the busses home.

Several of the male interviewees enjoyed and were good at sports. The small student bodies gave them the opportunity to participate. Leroy Sparke played all sports in high school and one year of track and football at Dodge City Community College. He said sports were the only reason he went to school. Elwood Agnew was good in football and basketball and track; Dennis Kindsvater excelled in basketball; Keith King liked playing all sports. The most talented athlete was Kenny Gaines. "I started track in the fifth and sixth grade. That's when I found out

I could really high jump. That's when Mr. Metling got excited, 'cause I was able to jump almost his height because he was kind of short, 5'6" or something like that."

Kenny set lots of records in the high jump, long jump, high hurdles, and relays. Some still stand today. He played basketball and liked football but thought the coach really tried to protect him for track. "I have good memories of sports. If it hadn't been for sports, I wouldn't have gotten to go to college because I won a (4-year) scholarship ...to KU."

Lewis and Kinsley did not offer girls' sports either when Virginia Gleason or her daughters were in school. Several female interviewees regretted not being able to play sports. Sally frame commented on this: "They didn't care if girls were in sports. They were not interested in girls. I can remember, we had gym, and we had to wear these stupid little bloomer things. Our coach... could care less about the girls' sports, so it was a study hall for us unless we wanted to bounce a ball around ... it was a free hour as far as we were concerned."

But Marilyn Kersting was proud that she played on Offerle's highly successful competitive girls basketball team against other schools outside of the county. The rules were very different then; girls were only allowed to dribble twice and played half-court as either a forward or a guard.

Mary Kallaus enjoyed tumbling and acrobatics and was a twirler in band. She employed her acrobatic talents later as a young elementary teacher in Dodge City where she participated in an acrobatic fitness program for the children which received praise from President Kennedy.

Churches

The participants attended a variety of churches in the county. Kinsley had a Methodist, Congregational, Christian, Baptist, Catholic, Lutheran, Assembly of God, Nazarene and early on two segregated black churches: Baptist and Free Methodist. Lewis had a Methodist, Baptist, Christian, and Episcopal Church. Offerle had a United Evangelical Brethren (which became the Methodist Church) and a Catholic Church. Belpre had a Catholic, Methodist, and Church of Christ. Centerview had a Methodist Church with many Quaker members. It closed in the 1960's. Red Mound had a Quaker Church in the 1960's

Most remarked that the congregations used to be a lot bigger with children and active programming. The United Evangelical Brethren in Offerle had church 3 times a week. Churches had active Sunday Schools, youth groups and women's circles. The Christian Church burned and was rebuilt in 1975. The Congregational and Methodist Churches rebuilt in the 1970's. The congregational demographics have gotten to be older as the young people have left. Some churches now share a minister with another congregation or have a parttime minister, or have closed.

Bobbie Kallaus attended Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic church northwest of Kinsley. It was big when he was growing up because there were big Catholic families. It had a full-time priest and 3 nuns who taught in the Catholic school. There were lots of activities. Then families did not have as many children and there were divorces. Soon the priest had to serve more than one church. Sts. Peter and Paul was the first church to close in the Diocese in 1993.

Margarete Schnoebelen said the Kinsley Catholic Church was bigger because people had big families. There was also a parochial school in Kinsley which closed in 2007. She thought the size had stayed in proportion to the population due to country churches closing and people comin into town to go to church.

Healthcare

Healthcare was also changing in Edwards County. Kinsley and Lewis both had doctors and dentists into the 1950's. There was no healthcare in Offerle or the other small communities in Edwards County. There were two drugstores in Kinsley and one in Lewis.

Sally Frame talked about the doctors' offices being on the second floor of the downtown stores. "I honestly don't know how people got up those stairs, to get to the doctor especially when they were sick, which I wasn't very often. Dr. Unruh (who was a sweet old guy) came to the house lots of times."

Leroy Sparke of Lewis had polio as a teen and was treated in Grace Hospital, Hutchinson. Polio was a concern until the development of the Salk vaccine. Quite a few people in the Lewis area contracted polio, seven in the 4-H Club. Charles Cross from Lewis died from polio in 1958 and there were cases in Offerle and Kinsley. Margaret Schnoebelen remembered letting on of her husband's patients into the house to wait for him, and then being told by Doc that the child had polio. She was very afraid she might have exposed her children.

Both Norma Kennedy and Elwood Agnes were born at home. Women had to stay in bed after childbirth for 10 days before 1940. For women having children from approximately 1940-1970, the confinement had become 5-7 days. Norma Kennedy had her first 2 children at home and the third child in the hospital in 1949. With the birth of her first child (Kenny Gaines) Dr. Stoltenberg came to the home and was there all night. Leona Butler of Offerle had her first two children in Spearville and the last two in Kinsley where a hospital had been built. The Kallaus children were born in the Kinsley hospital.

Kenny Bartman tells about building the hospital on 5th St. in 1949. It was administered by the Lutheran Church. Jack Kersting served on the hospital board at one time. There was some mismanagement and the county took over the administration. Virginia Gleason relates how government regulations required the building of a new hospital in 1960. There was a lot of controversy over building as by the time it was built, the community was getting smaller.

There were incidents where doctors and the healthcare system took a paternal attitude with the female participants. Mary Kallaus tells about how Dr. Schnoebelen told her that she needed to stay home and not work for 5 years in order to raise her children. Mary Fox was scolded by Dr. Unruh for allowing her baby to swallow a bottle of baby aspirin which required pumping the stomach. In the years to come, he never let her forget her "negligence."

"I can remember when I had Sena," related Sally Frame, "I was going to breast feed. It wasn't the 'in' thing yet, but I was going to breast feed. And it was, 'Are you sure you want to?' But I was going to breast feed; they'd been doing it for hundreds and thousands of years, so I was going to breast feed. I can remember all the nurses would come in because they hadn't seen anybody breast feed before. I was all on my own, I didn't have any of these classes or anything, but I thought, 'Everybody else can, so I can do it.' My mother had said she wished she could have been in a time when they did, but they just didn't do it.... She said she wished she'd had the guts like I did. Because I said, 'I'm going to figure it out if you guys can't figure it out because I am going to breast feed.' So I did, but I can remember all the nurses and everybody came in and they thought that was wonderful."

Sally goes on to talk about when her last child was born, "He was an RH factor baby, so I stayed in the hospital for a week with him... I can remember thinking if I could just get him home he'd be fine. The nurses didn't want to wake me up, so they'd give him a little stuff in the nursery. Of course, you didn't have the baby in your room like they do now, and I can

remember thinking if I could just get my kid home we'd be fine. And when I got him home, we were fine."

A heart defect was discovered in Jill, Mary Fox's 6th grade daughter. She was the third one to have a hole in her heart repaired in Wichita. She tells of the huge machine and the 43 pints of AB+ blood that was needed. They took her rib and heart out of her body to work on it. It cost \$1800, but they had insurance.

Margaret Schnoebelen discussed how her doctor husband really enjoyed being a rural family doctor. His practice was so varied and he often had to get creative to treat people. Elwood Agnew told a story of breaking nose in basketball practice. He went to see Dr. Schnoebelen and was told he was at the Palace Movie Theatre. He found him there and Doc put his fingers up his nose and popped it back in place. Then Doc went back to the movie.

Military Service

Of the participants only Norma Kennedy's, Maribel Carlson's, Margaret Schnoebelen's and Dorothy Atgood's husbands served in World War II. Dr. Schnoebelen served as a Navy doctor. Margaret stayed with him until he was sent overseas. When he returned, they settled in Edwards County and began his practice. Dorothy Airgood met her husband in England and came to the states as a war bride. Both Norma and Maribel's husbands served before they married them. Several other interviewees did have brothers, uncles, and fathers who served.

The *Patterns* participants and their husbands serve in the military during the 1950's. Kenny Bartman was drafted into army (1951-52) and served in the front lines of Korea where he earned the Bronze Star. When he returned he had nightmares and until recently he did not talk about the war. Today he feels that the war was a mistake, nothing was gained, and it was a waste of money and lives.

During the 1950's and 1960's the draft was still in place. Some participants were drafted and others enlisted in the Navy or Air Force to avoid being drafted into the Army. LeRoy Sparke (Air Force, 1951-1953) was training with the 82 Airborne when he broke his back in a practice mass parachute jump. After recovering, he served in the mailroom. Robert Kallaus (Army, 1956-1957) was a tank mechanic and did a tour in Europe. Elwood Agnew joined the Air Force (1955-1960) and when he reported to Kansas City it was his first train ride. Bill Olson was a Army cook (1951-1953). Virginia Gleason's first husband, Jim Gillete (Navy, 1952-1955) joined ROTC to pay for college. He spent a lot of time in the Pacific on ships and later used the GI Bill to pay for pharmacy school. Virginia found his absence hard on the family and raising kids. He did not see his daughter born or meet her until she was 6 months old. Sally Frame's husband, Al also served in the Army (1956-58). Jack Kersting was in communications in the Navy (1951-55) but never boarded a ship.

Keith King was not able to pass the physical. Kenny Gaines drew a very high draft number. Boyd Mundhenke served in the Peace Corp, but at the time it would not have exempted him from military service. That would come later. Being in college and later getting married did exempt him from service. He thought that if he had been drafted to fight in Vietnam that he would have gone to Canada to avoid it. He was in the first year of the Peace Corp and helped the people of Pakistan learn how to better raise chickens. He met Sergeant Shriver and Jacqueline Kennedy. He also got to travel in the Middle East and Asia before coming home after his 2 years of service.

Donna Newsom talked about the Cold War with the U.S.S.R. during the 1950's. At the time she was in Birmingham, Alabama, and she worried about a nuclear attack because of the

iron plants being a prime target. The students had to wear dog tags so their bodies could be identified if that ever happened. Of course, they exchanged the tags with boyfriends making them useless for that purpose. She remembers practicing bomb drills by crouching down in the hall and cover their heads with their arms. She laughs when she thinks of that absurdity.

Discrimination and Prejudice

As has been already noted there was discrimination against women. The FFA was not available for girls. Everywhere, except Lewis, there were no girls' sports. Doctors were condescending. Dorothy Airgood did not feel she was a partner in the store. Mr. Mix did not want to go into the sand pit business with a woman. Mary Fox could not get a loan without her husband and father-in-law signing the note. Additionally Kenny Gaines reported that there were only two women in the KU law school. Virginia Gleason said that only 4 women were in the KU pharmacy school.

In regard to racial prejudice, some white participants did not feel that there was much in Kinsley. A few lived close to the Hispanics and Blacks and associated with them. Kenny Bartman thought there was no difference. The Black and Hispanic families were old families in the community and good people. Emily White lived next door to a black man, Major Martin. They played with the crates that he brought vegetables home to his goats in. She said she never heard any prejudice from her parents. It was not allowed in the house. Leona Butler's best friend in Offerle was Lupe Roche.

Elwood Agnew had not known prejudice in Kinsley. The Winchesters (Black) ate in the Café. Skeet Winchester was highly respected and cleaned buildings all over town. The Hispanic railroad workers in his time slept and ate on train cars on a siding, so he hardly saw them. He did see prejudice when he went into the air force and served in the south. In 1966 when working in Dallas, the bathrooms had blue doors for whites and Ochre doors for colored. They also had separate water fountains. There were very few Blacks in the air force.

Dorothy Airgood did not understand American prejudice. She had never experienced that in England. Boyd Mundhenke had no experience with minorities and other cultures until he went into the Peace Corp. Then he ended up teaching in Kansas City during the time Martin Luther King was assassinated. He experienced a real culture difference then. Donna Newsom thought the Hispanics in Lewis were wonderful people, and she mentions the Castaneda and Martinez families that lived in the yellow railroad houses. She thought they were treated like everybody else.

Margaret Schnoebelen also had no experience with minorities having grown up in Wisconsin. She did not even understand what a "colored" bathroom was and thought it had to do with the paint on the wall. Minorities were treated the same in her husband's doctor office. But she did know there were people who had prejudices with both Hispanics and Blacks. There were comments made when her daughter sang duets with Kenny Gaines. There was also prejudice over Catholics, so Dr. Schnoebelen thought he could gain a practice here with just his willingness to serve Hispanic and Catholic patients.

Like Margaret, other interviewees did see prejudice. Mary and Robert Kallaus said the Whites couldn't date Hispanics or Blacks. Hispanics and Blacks had to sit in the balcony of the Palace Theater. Hispanics were buried on the edge of Catholic Cemetery in Kinsley, and they never saw an Hispanic altar boy. Hispanics went to public school not St. Nicholas Parochial School (perhaps because of tuition). Catholics were also discriminated against. When Robert was in school at Sts. Peter and Paul, the bus would not pick up Catholics. They said that Kinsley

was the “Ku Kluxingest town” and the main target for the Klan in western Kansas was the Catholics. They described the “Mexican shanties” across the tracks for the railroad workers. Mary said that the Mexican women did not shop in town.

Maribel Carlson said that Hispanics couldn’t live or buy a house on the south side. “They had those shacks to live in, and they’d better live in them. They couldn’t get out of them.... It was bad. It wasn’t fair in any way.”

Virginia Gleason spoke of the policy in her father’s drug store. Skeet (*John Winchester who was Black*) would come over when Daddy was making ice-cream, but he wouldn’t sit out in front, he would sit out behind where the magazines were, in back on a stool there. It just wasn’t done.... He just didn’t sit at the counter until the seismograph crews came in. Some of those after the war were big black fellows, and you didn’t argue with them. If they wanted to sit there that was where they were going to sit. From then on, we served the Blacks.”

She also talked about having Pedro Ramirez, an illegal alien, as a hired hand. He had a family in Mexico which he sent money too. This was in the seventies and early eighties. It was common for farmers to have Hispanic workers.

King King remembers growing soybeans and having their first migrant workers hoeing in the 70s. “It must have been three or four years that they came out in the summer. Stayed in an old vacant farm house, three miles away belonging to Don and Lester Derley. They stayed in that farm house, at least 40 of them. Were not paid enough but I do not know how much. They cost me about \$10 or \$12 an acre to have it hoed. It took a day for a circle (*about 140 acres*). They had to feed themselves. The foreman of the crew was a professor of agriculture at San Bernardino College in California. He came out every summer. He just enjoyed coming out and doing that. The guy that had the crew was his brother. The crew only spoke Spanish, and those two guys spoke English.... They worked seven days a week.”

Sally Frame went to school with Rosalie Perez who married Pete Castaneda. “We always said hi to them, but we didn’t really socialize.... I had my own little clique, like everybody does. It would be interesting to know how they perceived me.”

We were fortunate enough to have Carmen Rodrigues, Norma Kennedy, and Kenny Gaines to ask, realizing they may still be guarded with what they say.

Carmen Rodriguez did not feel there was prejudice in Belpre, but noted the bad conditions of the Santa Fe Railroad housing. The town of Belpre had electricity, but not in the railroad housing. There was no indoor water or plumbing. “When we first moved to Kinsley, all Hispanics... and Black Americans had to sit in the balcony of the Palace Theater. Of course, we wanted to go to movies, so we didn’t take it to heart. We just said, if that’s the way it is, that’s the way it is.”

Norma Kennedy felt quite isolated because there were only a few black families that lived in Kinsley. She tells how all of the town had electricity for years except their section and they did not get it until after the war. She said Blacks had to sit in the balcony of the Palace. Even on a class trip, she had to sit alone in the balcony. She describes segregation in all the restaurants and the confectionary and drugstore. In the later two, Blacks couldn’t sit at the counter, but had to sit in a booth. Some restaurants they had to eat in kitchen. However, they could buy in the clothing stores and grocery store. They could not swim in the city pool.

She felt the teachers treated them equally but in her kids’ class pictures she notes that the black kids are always placed in the back. Kennedy played with white neighbor children. “I remember when we went to gradeschool, we didn’t play together other than at school. I remember one girl who was going to come to my house and stopped by. She asked her mother, and yes she could come to my house. My grandmother was staying with us by that

time, and she saw my grandmother and she went right back home. (No one else ever asked to come.) So I never had anybody else to come.... Prejudice was just the way it was, never talked about or protested.”

Her son Kenny Gaines had a different experience in Kinsley. “When I was in junior high, I already had a pretty strong reputation in sports. I kind of had a little celebrity status. So I didn’t feel discrimination. I was unique in a positive way. Because I’d hear my grandparents talk about segregation and things they experienced when they grew up. It always fascinated me that these things could happen. I always wondered. I was always kind of alert to whether these things could happen to me. My grandmother was very fearful. I can remember she was always very fearful of me being out, especially in the evening with my friends and stuff. She just thought that was so unusual. I remember her always saying, ‘What is it that they like about you?’ She was afraid they might do something. You know, ‘You can’t be out there where those white people are all of the time.’ They knew the rules”

“ I didn’t experience discrimination in sports. I don’t really remember the team leaving a restaurant because they would not serve me. It seems like there was a time when they may have told the coach something like that, and the coach didn’t hesitate. We went somewhere else. It wasn’t even discussed; it was just decided to take the team somewhere else. So my teammates always kind of protected me in that way because we were very close. They knew I was good in sports, and they wanted to see me perform. They didn’t want anything to interfere with that. There were no slurs from opposing teams. The only time I ever heard any slurs were when I played summer recreation baseball in some of the little towns we played.”

Kenny’s teacher had him do readings for the speech festival. “Miss Losey had me do a lot of these James Weldon Johnson things. I still have the score sheet with the comments from the judge. They gave me a ‘One’, and he wrote in red on that sheet, ‘This contestant is a credit to his race.’ He thought he gave me this really glowing complement! ‘He is really a credit to his race.’ I was laughing and showed my mom; my grandparents read that and just laughed because he thought he was really giving me this compliment.”

When Kenny got to the University of Kansas he was still tremendously in the minority on campus , but not on the track team. “Although.... sometimes the coaches did not understand the culture of minority athletes. Sometimes there were some clashes there. For example: mustaches, goatees or beards were something that kind of goes over in black culture, but our coach always wanted everybody clean shaven.”

Having grown up in a very white community, he did have to adjust to the black community when he first got to KU. He remembered one incident with his “penny loafers.” “I actually had pennies in the loafers. I can remember my roommate was from Kansas City. When he and some of his buddies saw these shoes...you know, I’d moved in and hadn’t really met them yet. They’d already been in the room and kind of looking things over when they saw these shoes. They used to tease me about those shoes! They would always say, ‘Kenny’s got pennies in his shoes! Kenny’s cool because he had pennies in his shoes.’”

After college, Kenny worked with the State Commission on Civil Rights as a field investigator over complaints of discrimination, all over the state. Working with black judges and lawyers is when he got the idea of going to law school. When he was an undergrad, there were no more than one or two black students in the whole law school. “When I went there, my entering class only had seven Blacks out of about 180. There were only seven of us, and believe me, we stuck together and tried to help each other. Fortunately, our classmates, our white classmates, really tried to help us and make sure we stayed in. They shared everything with us; I mean they really tried to improve us.”

After 1970 and the Future:

The population has continued to decrease since 1970. All of the cities in the county have lost businesses. Kinsley remains the most viable city because it is the county seat, is the location of the hospital, and has several small businesses.

Carmen Rodriguez summarized Kinsley's decline since Mary Fox closed her store. "It seemed like one store or building would close up, and then we just kind of wondered what happened to everybody? It was kind of disappointing to see a real thriving community like Kinsley where several of the buildings were closing because nobody was adding a new business or anything there. I remember that the True Value stayed open about as long as it could possibly stay open. Gambles stayed open quite a bit. And then after that, they were gone.... We had IGA, and Mammals and Safeway and Hearn's Jack and Jill (*grocery stores*). What's happened to them? Slowly but surely, they were closing up. What used to be Mammals is now Circle K (*Automotive Parts*). What used to be Safeway is now Ryan's Appliance. Of course, IGA became Food Pride after that. What used to be Jack and Jill.... later it became Duckwall's (*Variety Store which recently closed*). But it just seemed like one thing after another was closing. Maybe, it could be that so many of the young people that are graduating are leaving town. They're not settling down in Kinsley. They're going someplace else where they can make a living...."

Dorothy Airgood noted that her business changed. It got too small to be a Western Auto Affiliate, and she doesn't sell as much now because she cannot compete with Wal-Mart. She does see that many businesses have left downtown, but notes that some others have come in, just not in the downtown area.

Similarly Jack Kersting described what happened to Offerle over the years. "The business community left. Where the restaurant is now, used to be a hardware store.... They sold out. Then the grocery on the south end, Basgall, he died, and she ran it. They sold out. The Offerle Co-op sold their lumberyard, to Victor Kerth and Don Strong. Then in time, they moved to Kinsley. Abner Offerle Store closed, and we used that for several years for consignment auctions. After Abner quit, Jerry Konrade ran the grocery store there for a while in the '80's then they closed, and that was the last grocery store. A fellow in Dodge bought the building and he had an antique store in there for a while.... Anne and Vincent Brace had a real good restaurant with wonderful pies....It was closed off and on, and then these people that have it now, this Mexican family came from California and bought it... Just real wonderful people. Offerle is lucky to have people like that in their community."

When Kenny Gaines came back for an All-School reunion, he saw the effects of the declining population and said, "I think the main thing is that you don't have as many young people staying in the community. I didn't stay because of my career because your opportunities for employment are in Topeka, for example, or Wichita.... So, the opportunities just would not be in Kinsley.... If there was opportunity, besides farming or agriculture, probably some more would stay."

Dennis Kindsvater echoed Gaines. "Most of the kids that were here because their parents had farming interests were still here, but those of us who didn't have that were largely out of it because there were no jobs to be had outside of agriculture.... It's understandable, there weren't any job opportunities. That's the first thing that kept you away. If you lived here, you had to drive to your work in Dodge or Larned. And that's still the same today. Kinsley became a bedroom community except for the farmers... and attorneys and teachers, the infrastructure people."

Donna Newsom also found that “The younger people do not stay around. Farming is a very expensive venture. If you are not fortunate enough to have inherited some land or you have help to get some land, it’s very expensive for people to just get into. They have found that there is life outside of rural Kansas that appeals to so many. It’s just so much more difficult for kids to come back home to the farm unless there’s an established family farm, and a real desire for them to do it. And to knuckle down, it is hard work, and when you don’t have a monthly paycheck coming in, you have to learn to live from crop to crop, season to season. And that’s a hard adjustment to make.”

The participants feel that the loss of population has leveled out and the economy has hopefully reached its economic low. The county is blessed with a good water source, but some worry about depleting it. They cite the fortuitous presence of Cross Manufacturing, Midway Manufacturing, and other small businesses. Mary Fox said, “I see a kind of a leveling off. I don’t see any ups; I don’t see any real downs. We have a lot of progressive farmers around. We are fortunate to have what we have. We have a manufacturing plant here that has been very successful. And Lewis has a manufacturing plant. A lot of small towns don’t have those. We have oil work. But farming, you know, doesn’t employ that many people any more. It employs two or three specialists for a big farm, and that is all.”

Keith King thinks it is “pretty well settled, as far as farming is concerned because of all the irrigation.... If they had to go back to dryland farming, I would say that you would see a bunch more pack up and leave. A lot of these older people are in my generation, they’re up to retirement age and a lot of them don’t have anybody coming back to take their place.”

Donna Newsom hopes “the pendulum starts swinging back the other way. I truly do. You know it’s a great place to be, a great place to live. I can’t imagine any place that has any more diverse elements to live in, weather-wise. You know, it makes you strong, forms good character. I hope to see the pendulum swing back, I truly do, with young people coming in and businesses coming in.”

The interviewees have had good lives. Most chose to build their homes and raise their families in Edwards County influenced by the demands, advantages, and limitations of a small, rural area. Their service and experiences have contributed to the community and made life better. Many have served the townships, cities, and the county as elected officials and on boards. They have been leaders in building the healthcare system, school system, and library. They have sustained churches and farm and electric cooperatives. Some have served our country in the military while others worked on the national and international scene to improve society. They have supported each other in good times and bad.

Mary Fox reflected on her life in Edwards County: “It’s been as good a place to live as any, I suppose. I have been able to do the kind of things I’ve wanted to....It’s been very good to us. It was hard work too, but it was very good to us.”

Keith King reflected on his life by saying, “My grandfather and grandmother came out here, and they established the farm. They survived. My dad and mom survived, and we have. I think it’s a pretty good place to live. We’ve always had wonderful neighbors. It’s been a good place to raise children. All of ours have spread their wings and went other places, but two of them have come back.”

When asked if she ever regretted coming here, Dorothy Airgood, a transplanted citizen, responded “Oh no, no, no, never.”

Perhaps Donna Newsom sums up their reflections on the past. “I’ve had a good life, would not have changed anything. The life experiences that I have had, good and bad, have made me who I am and I wouldn’t change anything. I wouldn’t change a thing.”