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10-28-2011

Interview with Caroline Twist (oral histories transcription)

Geoffrey Waters

David Garcia

Michal Hartman

Liza Soria

Caroline Twist

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This transcription, approved and edited by Caroline Twist, contains minor orthographical changes from the original transcription done at the Border Studies Archive in collaboration with the students that conducted this interview.

This is the interview of Caroline Twist that took place on Friday, October 28, 2011 at 12:00 pm. Caroline Twist is the oldest daughter of Kelly Norquest. This interview took place on the Norquest property at the intersection of Sugar and Chapin streets in Edinburg, Texas. The main interviewer was Geoffrey Waters with additional questions by David Garcia, Michal Hartman and Liza Soria. The interview itself took place in the living room of the center house of the three houses of the Norquest property.

The file used for transcription is Olympus – WS600061.MP3

[setting up and talking about origins of the house]

Kelly Norquest: ...after World War II, and my dad built it for a um, a um – OK, there ya go - [assisting someone set up] built it for refugee family he was sponsoring from Europe.

Michal Hartman: Oh, wow!

Kelly Norquest: They were a German family, ethnic Germans from uh, from Poland the communists had chased out. They did not have anywhere to go. And it was a widow lady with about 3 – uh, about 4 or 5 kids and he guaranteed a job for the oldest son who was about 18, 19 years old to work on the farm here. And after they got here, the lady herself found a job at the hospital since she was a nurse and they raised their family here.

Michal Hartman: Wow.

Kelly Norquest: And the oldest daughter, who was about my age at the time, she ended up, uh, going to Pan-Am and getting an English degree and teaching English in high school all of her career.

Michal Hartman: Wow. That's awesome. Just from getting a place to stay.

Kelly Norquest: So yeah! Then later on we fixed the house up. Years later when I got married and our two kids Caroline Twist and Catherine who were little at the time they lived, we lived here for several years. And then in more recent times Caroline Twist and her husband Patrick have lived here about 8, 8 or 9

Caroline Twist: Yeah, 8 years.

Kelly Norquest: 10 years!

Caroline Twist: 8 years.

Kelly Norquest: 8 years. And they started fixing up the old

Caroline Twist: 9 years...8 years...yeah.

Kelly Norquest: house where my sister had been living - repairing it, and maintaining it, and getting it all fixed up and everything and they moved in over there now. So that's

Caroline Twist: Yeah.

Michal Hartman: Oh, ok.

Caroline Twist: That's the possible Sears house. But my grandpa had, um, what do you say? He...not...did he remodel it? Is that the word?

Kelly Norquest: Yeah, he remodeled it on the inside.

Caroline Twist: Yeah he didn't renovate it, he like completely *remodeled* it.

Geoffrey Waters: Oh, wow.

Caroline Twist: So it doesn't even look like it used to look.

Kelly Norquest: Yeah he remodeled it on the inside. He was only about 30 years old when he remodeled it and it's, it's been in the present configuration now, uh, since 1940, I guess. 70, 80 years.

Geoffrey Waters: Are there pictures of it before?

Kelly Norquest & Caroline Twist: Oh yeah! Yeah.

Geoffrey Waters: Cool, cool.

Kelly Norquest: And they've got a few of 'em over there. Patrick's gonna look at them with her husband this evening and so forth. So I don't know. Are there plans for the...do you know if there are plans for the students to come out here again later or...I don't really know?

Geoffrey Waters: Um, we had talked about possible follow up interviews if we wanted to ask more questions, but I'm not sure.

Kelly Norquest: Yeah.

David Garcia: I think we do have to come back because we have to go over the transcribing with you and make sure everything's correct.

Geoffrey Waters: Yeah we have to go through the transcription with you so you can...

David Garcia: And then if you allow us to do any additional interviews...

Kelly Norquest: Yeah. Well y'all have got, ya know, with all the five disciplines during a one semester time period, you know, that's *really* a lot of stuff! And to gather of all kinds of things it's really just a brief snapshot. There's no really in-depth interviews with any single person it's, it's an overview. And I guess that what Dr. Skowronek has told me. I've known him for - since he came here. And he's trying

to develop a history of the region, the area here that, uh, is...people like I was telling you that historians they've – they just haven't focused on this really. And it's all going under concrete and asphalt and everything and that history is being lost everywhere. So he's trying to get snap shots with this CHAPS program.

Interviewer: Mhmm.

Kelly Norquest: Snapshots everywhere they can as the growth continues and not lose everything. And it's just so...but...more in depth is what your graduate studies, theses, and papers and so forth that you're studying more *in-depth* will come in if they'll get more students to do that too so...Anyway those are just some thoughts for you. Now I'm chairman of the advisory council for the historical collection here at the university I have been, I've been working with that for many years along with George Gause. So, and we're still working on it. In fact, we have a meeting coming up next month. Ok well I'm gonna go. Caroline, is there anything you wanta ask before I leave or what? I'm gonna leave 'em with you. I'm not gonna -

Caroline Twist: Ok. [laughs]
[04:48]

Kelly Norquest: Tell 'em whatever they ask the way you see it.

Caroline Twist: Ok.

Kelly Norquest: You wanta tell 'em your dads an old fool well you can do that too.

[laughter]

Caroline Twist: Well...Yeah, I better not say too much or he might not come back and get me.

Kelly Norquest: Yeah well, let, let me know when you're done then and whatever.

Caroline Twist: Ok. Yeah, I'll give you a call.

Kelly Norquest: I'll be over at the house. Ok nice meeting you all!

Michal Hartman: Bye sir.

Eloise Montemayor: Bye!

Kelly Norquest: and Eloise nice seeing you again.

Eloise: Ok. You too! Thank you.

Michal Hartman: Nice meeting you.

Kelly Norquest: Ok, take care.

Michal Hartman: Have a good day sir.

[setting up recording equipment from 05:19 – 7:51]

[07:51]

Geoffrey Waters: I'm Geoffrey Waters and this is

Caroline Twist: Caroline Twist

Geoffrey Waters: And today is October 28th. And it's what? 12...

Eloise Montemayor: Almost 12:15.

Geoffrey Waters: 12:15. Um, I guess I'll just start. The first question is, um, if you remember any extreme weather occurrences that happened during your life time?

Caroline Twist: Yes. Um, two hurricanes and snow. [laughs] The ...hurricane Allen was 1980 and then hurricane Dolly in 2008. And it snowed here! We had about 3 inches on the ground and that was December 24th, 2004. And with hurricane Allen, um, it flooded badly enough that the house next door, which is where we were living at the time, um, started taking on water and we had to evacuate over to the house on the corner, which is up on, it's up higher anyway. And I was about oh 6 or 7 at that time. So I basically remember just the hurricane and the rain and stuff. It was real grey outside. Then we went out, my dad took us outside at one point when the sun came out then we went back in the house. And sometime during the night my mom was like, [laughs] "Okay girls! We need to leave! There's water coming in the house." So, um, that's what we did. We put on the - we put on the little clothes we had and some boots and we walked down the street and went to my grandma and grandpas house. Um, I don't know how long we stayed there. I just remember going on the porch and, like, watching the water go by. And I think we ended up with, like, six inches of water in the house. And I remember after that the earth worms crawling all over the floor thinking that was really disgusting. [laughs] And so that was - there were frogs all over the street. You couldn't drive. I mean you could but you'd just squash 'em and slip and slide. And, um, yeah...But since I was like 6 or 7 I just thought, "ooh there's a lot of water where there shouldn't be and that was like really exciting stuff. And hurricane Dolly the water didn't get as high which was a good in my opinion. It did come up to the, like, the porch step out there and since this house is on septic tank that was flooded. So we had to go to my parents house about once or twice a day to take care of business over there; wading through 7 or 8 inches of water that began to stink after awhile. And, I think the snow was a lot more fun. But yeah I should mention that it just doesn't snow here. I think it had been 109 years since it had showed before. So yeah, we got like 3 inches that was really cool [laughs]. So, those are major weather occurrences that I can remember since I've lived here. Well ones of note anyway.

Geoffrey Waters: I guess in the same line, do you remember any periods of drought that were significant?

Caroline Twist: Um...I just remember it being hot and everything would be brown. But I don't remember, like, how it affected people much or animals or anything like that. I just thought, well, it's always hot here. I'm just trying to think if there was a pattern or anything. I don't remember...like, I

don't remember if it was wetter when I was younger or if there was a period when it was, like, really dry. I just remember "oh, well it's hot" or "oh, it didn't rain for a few months." Yeah I guess it was pretty dry this past year.

Geoffrey Waters: Um, so in response to the hurricanes and snow were there any significance responses by the land? Like you said there was a septic tank. But were there any other responses? Were there maybe trees that fell down?

Caroline Twist: Uh, oh yeah well there was a Hackberry that fell down next door during Hurricane Dolly. It was a sizable tree. It didn't damage anything. It sort of fell on a shack and the shack held it up [laughs]. So I guess the shack was pretty well built and there was just a random storm we had, like I don't know, 5 or 6 years ago and one of the, I think it was an elm tree on the side of the house next door twisted and it fell over and someone who came to look at it said it almost looked like tornado damage, but we don't know if there was or not. And that was unrelated to the hurricane. It was just a random storm. And yeah, I don't know, I think...those are the trees I can remember. And, like, the houses have been pretty...pretty well built so they hardly suffer much.

Geoffrey Waters: Do you remember anything specific about canal systems around here and the crop irrigation system?

Caroline Twist: Well, I remember. Just not like specifics about canals or whatever, but I remember when they watered the crops out here. My Dad...my uncle had a herd of cattle. They - that's what I remember when I was little. That there was cattle out there in the pasture. And then after my grandpa died, I believe, they sold them off to help with some bills and stuff. Then they started farming it the way you see it now. But I think they had a farmer come in and rent it. He rents - the farmer rents the field. So he's the one who would do all the irrigation. But I remember... just... seeing how - thinking it was interesting how they would have to make the big ditches. And then sometimes there would be fish swimming in the ditches [laughs] that they were using to irrigate. Um, and of course well then they do just regular yard irrigation too. And we'd go out and play in that. But um, yeah other than that I don't know much about it except just that I was kind of fascinated with the fish [laughs] coming from the canal water out there. And that they would make the big ditches to store the main water and it would go out in furrows. And I guess that's how they're still doing it. I mean, just a couple weeks ago they irrigated the corn out there. So...

Geoffrey Waters: Do you know anything specific about how the farmer's maintain the irrigation canals? Did they bring workers in?

Caroline Twist: Um, I guess they must. I don't know that the farmer *himself* does everything. I don't know who it is. I mean sometimes you see a man working out there, with a shovel. That was like a couple of weeks ago I saw one working. I guess they make the break in the big ditch that they dig and then it flows out the furrows. But I don't know who specifically they hire or anything like that.

Geoffrey Waters: Are there any wells on the property that you remember that might still be there or aren't there anymore?

Caroline Twist: Mmm...as far as I know they had a cistern- like a water collection. I don't know that they had wells. I could be wrong. My dad would know more about that. But he told me about the water collection cistern that they had over there at the old house. And... I guess that was just like rain water

maybe and they just let it collect there. And there is one, there is another cistern that's not in use over there that's still there but, I mean we don't use it, obviously, 'cause now its connected to city water and stuff. [laughs] So...

Geoffrey Waters: Have you always had city water connected here since you've lived here?

Caroline Twist: Um...water – yes. This house still has the cistern out over there in that corner. Um, and I think they had it since they built their house in 1976. And of course they got hooked up to the city at that time as far as I – no wait they had a cistern there too! They filled it up. I don't know when they got connected to the sewage though. But yeah we've always had like the tap water, of course. But then the septic tanks took care of the sewage for a long time. This house obviously still has it. That house I don't know when they put in city water either. Um, but I remember my grandma having to drink, like, the big bottled water from H-E-B because she didn't want to drink out of the taps. So, I don't know what that had to do with - if it had, like, lead pipes or something that you wouldn't want to drink out of it. Or if there was something wrong with the water itself. But, yeah, she always told us to drink out of the bottled water.

Geoffrey Waters: Um, what is, what was done with garbage since you've lived here?

Caroline Twist: The city picks it up.

Geoffrey Waters: it's just been picked up?

Caroline Twist: They gave us - we used to have the regular aluminum trash cans, whatever you want, but now they gave these big gray things. But yeah, uh, that's all I known living here. Um, yeah, my parents and my grandma used to have this, those silver aluminum things and then, like, plastic stuff that you would buy at Wal-Mart or whatever. Um, all I know - my dad had told me sometimes they would burn stuff, but I guess that was before we were in the city limits. Um, because you can't do that anymore. But that was like *years* and *years* ago. And I'm trying to think if there was anything else I can remember. But, yeah, ever since I've lived here the city gave us all those grey, uniform trash cans.

Geoffrey Waters: Are there any structures that were once on the property that aren't there anymore?

Caroline Twist: Um, there was a barn. There's a barn now but there used to be a barn that was facing or it was, yeah, it was facing west I believe and it was running north to south. Now the barn that's over there is facing south and it goes east to west but um...I'm not sure why my grandpa pulled that down. But that's what used to be over there and I don't remember it at all. Um, so I know *that* building used to be there. And other than that, my uncle built his house so there was a building *put* there that wasn't there. And then my dad had built his house like 10 years before that so that was another building that *wasn't* there before. Um, I'm trying to think if there was like some, there was probably like little outhouses or something that I think my dad said they would move those around, they wouldn't keep it in the same spot. You have to move it around. Yeah I can't think of any other buildings that used to be there except that old barn.

[10 second pause]

Geoffrey Waters: [inaudible] Are we supposed to stick with those two questions?

David Garcia: I think the majority was supposed...

Michal Hartman: I wrote a lot of questions. They weren't asked.

David Garcia: Do you remember anything about those outhouses that you mentioned? Like where they were... or was that before?

Caroline Twist: No. Yeah I don't think, personally no. but I could tell you stories [laughs] but it would be like... [inaudible]

Michal Hartman: How many times a week did the trash get picked up? And like, was it the men? 'Cause I remember men, [inaudible] now it's just automatic.

Caroline Twist: Right, yeah. It used to be the men would get out of the truck. It was just once a week as far as I know. And, yeah, they didn't used to run on holiday

Michal Hartman: Oh.

Caroline Twist: So like, [laughs] so like if your trash was supposed to get picked up on the fourth of July that year, it like was you just wait 'til the next week.

Michal Hartman: Oh wow!

Caroline Twist: Yeah so it was like a big thrill when they started paying 'em overtime to work on holidays to [laughing] to get the garbage picked up. But yeah, um, I *do* remember the men now that you mention it. They used to get out of the truck and throw it in the back of the thing and now it's that little arm that comes out. Yeah.

Geoffrey Waters: Also in reference to the garbage, I know these are like farm places so there's probably like large pieces of garbage also? Did the city always come by to pick up big things or, like, brush piles and stuff like that?

Caroline Twist: I think...I think, like, big stuff they would take to the dump. I remember going once. Um, my parents had a friend that lived like way, sorry, way northeast of town and, um, she had them, I don't know if like the dump was on the way to her house or something but I remember going out there to, with a trailer load of stuff to take to the dump and we stopped at her house. But yeah, I know that the big stuff they used to take to the dump. And probably since they haven't really been doing farming, they're kinda retired from that um, it's more like just regular stuff...but yeah.

Michal Hartman: And where's the dump?

Caroline Twist: I don't remember. I was like 10 or something at the time. [laughs] I was little. I just thought it like "oh look we got a trailer full of stuff and we're taking it to the dump!" I remember thinking the dump was pretty cool. [laughs] But when your 10, yeah, that's a highlight.

Michal Hartman: Was the jail house still here? Like the jail house that's there, like the architecture and stuff of it? Like, does it still look the same as it was now? As it is now?

Caroline Twist: Um...

Michal Hartman: The museum. The South Texas Museum.

Caroline Twist: Oh! Well it was just that one little building, that little - the original jail I guess. The white building and then they added all that other stuff, all the new buildings, the big buildings. But, yeah there used to be a jail out that way. That was like the “new” jail. That was over by, yeah it used to be K-Mart. It’s not K-Mart anymore and I don't think it’s even a jail anymore. [laughs] I think they moved that one too.

Geoffrey Waters: So the canals that they used to irrigate the crops are all in the same place that they were? Or have they changed or have they gotten smaller or bigger?

Caroline Twist: Uh, I guess they’d be in the same place. I haven't heard of them making any new ones.

Geoffrey Waters: Mhmm.

Caroline Twist: I think there’s one out to the east and then there’s the one that way and there’s, far as I know, like the stand pipes and everything are in the same place. Um, I don't think they've done, I mean don't think they've made any new ones.

Geoffrey Waters: So they are all still in use and everything?

Caroline Twist: As far as I know.

Michal Hartman: How big was Pan-Am? Like, is it the size now? Like, were all those buildings there?

Caroline Twist: No. It was smaller. It was a lot smaller. Yeah, and then they started building stuff, like, I think even after I graduated. I graduated in ‘96 and they started putting even *more* buildings there that weren't there before. It was kind of smaller. [laughs] But I still thought it was real big.

Geoffrey Waters: Like, which parts of campus do you remember being bigger?

Caroline Twist: Uh, well everything, like, to the northeast corner that - what is it? That, um, that ITT building wasn't there and there’s a lot of the science, uh, I think they have a new science complex that it was like a lot smaller. Um. I think they even did like the nursing and education buildings too. They used to be like just two stories, like they're bigger now and they probably modernized everything. It seemed kind of - It was like scaled down before and then they just expanded it [laughs] and added new buildings like that ITT building or whatever it is. I noticed a bunch of houses aren't there anymore that used to be there around the campus. Those little houses in that little neighborhood. There used to be a lot more houses. Like, little small cute houses and now they're kind of gone.

Geoffrey Waters: Maybe where the parking lots are now, right?

Caroline Twist: Probably. [laughs] Yeah.

Michal Hartman: Was it as, like, the ratio or the size of the school that it is now with all the people with, like, no parking. Was it like that back then?

Caroline Twist: Um, I don't think it was as bad back then. I mean I remember having, like, to circle the parking lot sometimes. But a lot of times you could just go in or you would go, like um, to the fine arts parking lot and you could always find a space there and I think it might be different now. I think it might be a lot harder now [laughs]. Yeah, and there was, like um, across the street where the little police thingy is, you could always find a parking space there. And I think yeah, they expanded it and now you can't find anything. So, oh yeah! They put a gym there too. That wasn't there before. It's like you could go run on a track. [laughs] So, yeah.

Geoffrey Waters: Um, how did most people get to pan am? Did people live in the area or did people commute?

Caroline Twist: Yeah I think a lot of people lived in the area. And... well like when I went there was a few people like maybe that came in from Harlingen. But I mean since UT Brownsville was down there they also had that option. Um, yeah it was a lot of people from Edinburg, McAllen, Mission, um, Pharr that were kind of closer I think. And then they had the dormitories but they were smaller. I don't know what the dormitory situation is like now I think they have different ones now. Yeah, but, that was mostly, like, athletics and stuff, those people that had to come from out of state would stay there pretty much. And yeah I think, I think the just the student body was probably a lot smaller back then. It had just, um, it had just gone from being Pan-Am College, Pan American College to being with the UT system and so, it was still small when I went there at that time. But then it was like gradually every year it would get a little more students and more students since they had, since it was affiliated with UT.

Michal Hartman: Were there any drought regulations, like, where you can't wash the, I mean you can't water the grass and stuff?

Caroline Twist: Yeah every once in a while they would give notices. Like, you could only water it on a certain day, during these certain hours and stuff. I think we probably got some this summer too.

Michal Hartman: Do, like, the water and light come together on the same bill? Like, I mean, the water and the sewage or trash pickup, or was it a separate charge and stuff?

Caroline Twist: Um, I don't know how they did it back then but now it's like, I think trash is on one and water is on another one. They send little postcards. [laughs] Yeah.

Liza Soria: How did weather affect your houses here? Eventually, over time the houses start to deteriorate. How did you guys keep them up?

Caroline Twist: Um, well in the case of the house, the big house on the corner, my grandpa took out the chimneys because water would start pouring down the chimneys and um, bats lived in one of 'em. And he was not fond of having bats in the house. [laughs] So that kind of helped. But unfortunately, um, the house doesn't have central heat so you take out the fireplaces and yeah the house is really cold in the winter. Um, my dad's had to replace shingles and stuff on his house. And this house got, um, the siding is that um, what is it called? It's like a composite, cement composite thing so to help withstand the sun and water better. Because like the sun blasts on it and the paint strips off and...yeah, but it's a lot of, like, shingle changing mostly keeping the roofs intact to make sure no water comes in.

Michal Hartman: Do you know the type of architect used, like architecture used? Like um, like downtown you know 'cause they, uh, like the style like the way that theater is, is it like a Mexican style

or Italian style like of the buildings that were around? Like, did they look the same or was it just like cookie cutter boxes that all look the same?

Caroline Twist: Well I think there's several different architecture styles from what I've just been able to see, like, passing by or whatever. It looks like some of its, like, craftsman type from, um, the late teens and early twenties and then some of it I think must have been after World War II and those houses look a little different. They look more like this one. [laughs] But, yeah uh, I don't know like specific architecture styles very well but, um, that courthouse is interesting [laughs] compared to what used to be there and that was, like, I guess that would be kind of, I don't know, that arts and crafts era, craftsman. It was real pretty. So I don't know what the new one is, what that style would be called, modern or post modern or something.

Michal Hartman: So, like what was over there? Like, in the main area where the courthouse is at?

Caroline Twist: The square?

Michal Hartman: Yeah.

Caroline Twist: Um, people had their businesses there. Um, there used to be more stores now it seems like it's a lot of law offices. There was a pharmacy on a, what is that? The southeast corner?

Geoffrey Waters: 12th street.

Caroline Twist: Yeah I think so. There was a pharmacy on that corner and I remember a store called Letell's that had dresses and nice clothes. And uh, I'm trying to – those were, like, the two main ones that my parents would take us to; [laughs] the pharmacy and the clothing store. And I remember the buildings, those started kind of I guess needing work. The Citrus was there too; the theater. And um, eventually I guess Edinburg or someone started fixing those buildings up a little nicer. I guess they were trying to get back to how they used to be 'cause they covered them over with like white paint and stuff like that. So now I think they look a little better. And now they're mostly law offices now. [laughs] But there used to be, like, a variety. I think there was, like, a little restaurant there too or maybe more than one. And there was a bank. It wasn't just the tax office. It was like First State Bank or something. So yeah, there was more of a variety of stores and shops and things and now it's mostly law offices, which is kind of different.

Michal Hartman: At what time did, like, the trash man come? In the morning?

Caroline Twist: Oh, I don't remember. Right now they come whenever. [laughs] I haven't figured out their schedule yet. You put it out in the morning and hope they haven't come to pick it up. But yeah...

Geoffrey Waters: You mentioned the Citrus Theater. Was it still like not being used or what was...?

Caroline Twist: No, I remember watching a movie there! I was like five and I think we went to go see one of the pink panther movies with inspector Clouseau. Yeah uh, I might have seen another movie or two there and there was a drive in where Wal-Mart is and we saw some movies there too, that was fun. It was kind of sad when they tore it down. [laughs] And yeah the Citrus was nice. Well I thought it was nice, I didn't know, like we didn't go to the movies much. There weren't really places to go so we had the drive in and we had the Citrus. And I think the Citrus had a balcony but I don't know if the balcony

was in use at that time or not. I know later on they said that, you know, you couldn't go up there. But yeah, it was nice to have those two different styles of movie going experiences.

Geoffrey Waters: So, what else did you for fun growing up around here?

Caroline Twist: [laughing] We made mud pies! No. [laughs] Um, um...well, obviously my grandma's house was there, so we would run back and forth, get bored over here and go visit grandma. Um, there wasn't a lot of houses at all. [points to across the street] That was, like, a little field across the street. It was a field it wasn't the reservoir. Nobody really lived - there was a couple of houses on the corner, but like Smith Street wasn't even there, I don't think. It was just, like, more fields and things. And um, so we just kind of do what we could. We would go out - my sister and I would go out to the pasture and play under the mesquite trees [laughs] and we had a little garden and I remember we used play in that. And yeah, we would go out wherever there was a patch of dirt. We would get the hose and we'd make mud and coat ourselves in it. [laughs] But I mean that's, like, what we would do here. Obviously, we would go to school and play with our friends and stuff like that. But, um, [laughs] for fun yes, it was like go into the pasture and rile the cows up or something. We had ducks. So, we would play with the ducks too. And dogs and cats too.

Liza Soria: What was the wildlife like? Because I mean, it's changed so much.

Caroline Twist: Um, since we didn't have as much brush at that time it was mostly - we had the pasture which was kind of just, um, a few trees and a lot of grass. And then, they had, um, stuff to take care, stuff to take care of the cows. Um, so they had it more cleared for the cattle to go over there. Um, I remember, like, blackbirds and sparrows and just our animals that we had here; the cattle, the dogs, the cats, we had some ducks. Um, and then once the brush started growing up, um, we got a lot more, like, birds and rabbits and things coming in. So, yeah, the birds have increased as far as variety. Yeah like, now you can just go outside and see kiskadees and um, cardinals and there's a bunch of little warblers of different kinds that migrate through here. And, um, rabbits - we've got rabbits and jack rabbits and, like, cotton tails and jack rabbits, indigo snakes which are helpful. That means we don't have rattlesnakes [laughs]. And so yeah I would say since actually, I think the only bird we lost since we got rid of the cattle, since we sold off the cattle was egrets. We used to have a lot more egrets and now we don't really see those. But since the reservoir is there and it's got water in it, it's like attracting birds. So, now there's whistling ducks and we've seen a few flocks fly over and um, hawks! The other, like about a month ago, I woke up early and I looked out the window and there was a hawk sitting up on top of the security light, eating something. You could see it pulling stuff. [laughs] But yeah, that's part of the wildlife and of course, yeah rodents.

Liza Soria: Did you see any falcons? 'Cause I remember a few months ago seeing a falcon at Pan-Am.

Caroline Twist: Oh, really?

Liza Soria: Mhmm.

Caroline Twist: Um, there's different kinds. I guess different, I just kind of all classified them as hawks. But yeah they're different - some of them are larger and some of them are smaller. Oh, turkey vultures too. [laughs] They eat the dead things. But yeah....there's a lot, a *lot* more birds. We had a chachalaca out a few years ago and that was really noisy. And I remember once I was coming out of one of my classes at Pan-Am and there was a chachalaca in the um, history building and it was trying to frantically get

out and it was screaming a lot. And so yeah it eventually made its way out the door and, like, then the people were screaming because it was making its way out the door with them. Um, and last spring, uh, we had a wild turkey fly in. I'm not entirely sure why, but it just flew into that lot over there. But it was just kind of walking around and making little turkey noises. Um, my husband got that on tape. So, yeah...it's...I think that since the brush has grown up we've, like, attracted a lot more wildlife. I mean its little stuff. It's not like coyotes and things like that, but yeah birds and rabbits and snakes.

Michal Hartman: What about like swimming pools? Were there any swimming pools or anything or lakes where you could go swimming?

Caroline Twist: Well, this whole area turns into a big lake when it rains, but um, my grandpa made a swimming pool over there in, like, the 50's, I think. And we just actually had that filled in this summer because it was, um, caving in and so it was becoming a hazard. And so, like yeah, I've got a little niece and nephew and they would wanna come and play and it's like, "Don't go over there!" So, we just filled it in. And yeah, we just had an above ground swimming pool. Like, you know the kind you would buy at Wal-Mart that's like 3 ft deep [laughs] and eventually the ducks took over that so we didn't swim in that anymore. But the one my grandpa built was kind of neat 'cause it was in-ground; it was, like, all cement and brick. It was just kind of like long and thin like this table. But obviously big enough for people to go swimming in it. [sighs] But that is no longer there. I mean, it's there, the structure is there, but it's filled in not to be a swimming pool anymore.

Geoffrey Waters: Where did you go to school around here? What schools were you zoned for?

Caroline Twist: Um, well, at that time, the schools were a little bit more limited. We didn't have as many. [laughs] So, we had North Junior High, which is the old one. Uh, it used to be the old college and...so that's where I went to junior high until somehow they rezoned and I was over at South Middle School which is the one in town that used to be the high school. And then, they shifted things around again and there was the 9th grade campus, which is just like by itself on the south-southeast side of town. And then I went to Edinburg High School because there were no other high schools. So, I spent all four years there and then, like, two years after I graduated, they built Edinburg North. So...and my elementary school was, uh, St. Matthew's Episcopal School, which is where my parents sent us since they had helped fund that to get it building. I guess they figured well we better send our kids there and give 'em some more money to help keep it going. So, that's where we went for elementary school and, um, yeah there were a lot less schools. We sort of had a boom I guess in the 90's. And they're still building them. So, yeah, it wasn't as confusing I guess. It was like you knew what school you were gonna go to pretty much and now, I guess it's like there's a lot more.

[brief pause]

Michal Hartman: Were there any reports of alligators in the water or anything? Has there ever been any, like, ever?

Caroline Twist: Hmm...I think the only one - my parents saw one in Falfurrias on a trip. It like, went across the street. [laughs] I was kind of surprised to hear that, but I've never heard of any here. Um, my sister when she was living out on Seminary road, she thought she saw, like, a big cat, like, I don't know what you would call them. They're like a cougar or...?

Michal Hartman: Bobcat?

Caroline Twist: Yeah, some kind of big cat. She and her husband were driving and it was in the morning and they just saw it were like, “Ooh! That was not a dog!” [laughs] They didn't know what it was but yeah....

Geoffrey Waters: So, what kind of chores and stuff did your parents make you do around the house and the ranch?

Caroline Twist: Um, well, I remember ironing. I ironed my dad's clothes a lot. Um, just basic things -- washing the dishes. A lot of times they were like, you need to work on your homework, so that's your chore! Do your school work. And um, I guess when we weren't doing that sometimes we would help him with the cattle. Like, we would help him feed them or call them in to come get fed. And I mean, I was really little at that time from the time I was born until....I think we sold them when I was 9, so I was *little*, little and it was probably more like for fun. [laughs] Um, I'm trying to think....what else did we do? I remember...clearing some brush out here - that was when I was older. Probably like in high school or something and it just started getting overgrown. So, my dad and my uncle were like, “Let's go clear the brush!” So, we did that. And there was a lot of trash that had blown in [laughs] so, it was like clearing trash and brush. But yeah, oh it's hard to think about because I do I remember them telling us, “Your school work is your main...your main thing to do.” And so, we always had to work on that.

Liza Soria: Did they not want you helping out with the land?

Caroline Twist: Um, there really wasn't much to do I guess. Like, they had the farmer who would rent it and he would just come and do his thing and we had a little garden and we grew like carrots and stuff and that was our own thing. And I think my mom really was the one who took care of that and was like, “Let them help. They can pull weeds, whatever.” Um, my dad used to mow all of this himself. Um, until I guess he retired and then it got to be a little bit much for him to do it and um, other than that I guess my sister probably would have been the one she seemed to have been outside more than I was. I was always inside reading and stuff. Um, so if she did anything that I don't know about that is quite possible. She might have done more than I did outside.

[brief pause]

Michal Hartman: Were there any potholes that created, like, puddles of water?

Caroline Twist: Um, this a low spot. So, if we get any rain of any sort, it fills. [laughs] Yeah um...I think it's mostly just where this house is though.

Liza Soria: How would that affect transportation? Just getting places? Since, it floods so badly.

Caroline Twist: Um, here I didn't notice it as much. It seems like we were always able to get out onto the street. Where I was living there was some apartments like kind of across the street from Pan-am when I was - after I had graduated. That! Those streets would flood so bad you couldn't even get out and I would have to call into work and call into work a couple of times and say, I can't leave. There's no way to get out of here. Um, I don't know if they fixed that or not, but it used to be a real problem. Here it was like, this was the low spot, so you could just drive up to the high - to the street, which was a lot higher. And...see I don't remember anything like hindering. Hmm...yeah, I wonder what happened over there if they fixed that. [laughs] If they got better drainage...

Liza Soria: Well, it flooded pretty badly during hurricane Dolly, like you could just swim in it practically.

Caroline Twist: yeah, that's kind of how it was here. I was really happy that the water didn't get high enough

Liza Soria: Mhmm.

Caroline Twist: to get into the house. Because what we did I think I woke up at 4 in the morning and I saw the water and it was getting higher outside. So, I woke up my husband and we got the dogs and we went next door, um, to the big house again. Which is on higher ground. And I was afraid to come back because I was like, "Ugh...what if there's water in the house?" [laughs] I didn't want to see that, but there wasn't! Thank goodness. But it was bad enough as it was. [laughs]

Geoffrey Waters: Kelly mentioned that you live here with your husband. When did you meet him and how did you all meet?

Caroline Twist: Um, the first time we met was in high school. I was a sophomore and he was a senior and we had Spanish class together and I sat right behind him. And I thought he was big and scary at that time. [laughs] It was probably 'cause I was like, a sophomore and he was a senior and he was acting like a senior! [laughs] Like, "give me some paper! I don't have a pen. Let me use, let me use your pen." But um, then ten years later we were working here at Allen Floral when Betty Cox used to own it and that's when we met for the second time. And I think we were married like, a couple years later. [laughs] So, yeah, then we moved here. I mean, I was, like, living with my parents and my husband had been living here for a little bit because by that time he was teaching, so this was a lot closer to his school than where he was living before. So, he lived in this house and then, we got married and we lived here for eight years and it was pretty uneventful until Hurricane Dolly. The snow was nice. But yeah, Hurricane Dolly was the one that was kind of like, I was glad to move out and move next door. That was not fun with all of that water. [laughs]

[brief 6 second pause]

Michal Hartman: You said there were fish in the canals. Did you guys ever go fishing at the canals?

Caroline Twist: No, no....

Michal Hartman: Or skip rocks or anything? [laughs]

Caroline Twist: No. [laughs] I mean if we had water out here, we would go play in whatever ditches they made and yeah, again, my sister was the one who was, like, much more adventurous and she would go and do things and I would be like, "Don't do that! No you're not supposed to do that! You're gonna mess it up." So she was the one that would go and have fun and I would be the little prissy one telling her not to do it. Yeah, I don't know where the fish I mean I guess the fish must have come from the canal, but I don't know why, like, they were there or how they got into the canal. I always wondered because they were big fish. I think they were catfish probably.

Michal Hartman: And the canal like, what source of water was it from?

Caroline Twist: Um, I'm guessing probably the one to the east maybe. They might have also used the one over there. I was – I think they have pipes underground and they come, like they have somehow they have underground pipes and they have stand pipes also. Um, but as far as that goes, I don't know *how* they make it work to make the water come over here. My husband probably knows more about that than I do. Um, my dad for sure would know more about that than I do.

Michal Hartman: And also you said this is the only house that doesn't have city water?

Caroline Twist: Yeah it has, like, city tap water, but not sewage.

Michal Hartman: Oh! Ok.

Caroline Twist: Yeah, so there's still a septic tank.

Geoffrey Waters: Are there other septic tanks around on the property that might still be there from the previous

Caroline Twist: Mhmm.

Geoffrey Waters: houses that switched onto city sewage?

Caroline Twist: Yeah. My dad's got one and that one is funny because every once in a while, um, part of the dirt has settled and so you're walking out in the yard and your foot will sink in the ground and there you are stuck in a septic tank. And I think there's one out by the street, um, at the old house. My dad showed me where it was. It's closer to the street than I thought it would be. And then there's the cistern still there. And when it rains or we irrigate the yard that will take on some water but it's really not supposed to. It just does. So as far as I know those are the – this one here that's in use and my dad's old one and then there's an old one over there and a cistern.

Michal Hartman: So no wells were ever used on here?

Caroline Twist: I don't think they had wells. I'm not entirely sure though. Because from what my dad has told me, it seems like they used like cistern water collection. So I don't know I could be mistaken.

Michal Hartman: And how did that cistern get filled, like did they come bring water or?

Caroline Twist: I know some of it was rain water. Um but I don't, I really don't know like if they had a drought where they would get the water from.

David Garcia: So you all would use the water directly from the cistern? Or would you, you had a filtration system or how did that work?

Caroline Twist: I don't know. All the time that we've lived here we had, um, city water

David Garcia: Oh ok. I see.

Caroline Twist: like, from the taps. So yeah my dad would he's the one that would know like about the older stuff. But I think even he would say, "well I was just a kid!" [laughs] But yeah...

Geoffrey Waters: You mentioned that that one septic tank is really close to the road. Have there been like a lot of – has there been construction on the streets? Like, city construction since you've lived here? Like have they made them wider or?

Caroline Twist: I'm not - I think just on the other side of the street where they put that sidewalk and as far as I know on this side, they haven't done anything. So I don't think they've like uncovered anything. As far as I know it's all been on the other side.

[10 second pause]

Michal Hartman: When was the architectural boom? Like when did all these buildings start coming? 'Cause you said there was like no houses, no schools [inaudible].

Caroline Twist: 2003 is when they put in all these apartments. I remember because as soon as they started breaking ground I went to the hospital so that was kind of - I remember that very well. Um, 2003 is when those started going in and then shortly after they made the little neighborhoods over there. Um, and more and more houses were getting built around. And probably some of those, like, on the other side of the intersection, um, were probably more like in the 90's maybe. But yeah there are a lot of subdivisions and apartments and things have been going in, uh, late 90's and early two thousands and have just kept on.

Michal Hartman: Yeah. Like, and how did university look 'cause all that stuffs new, within the past ten years? It was just land or?

Caroline Twist: Um, yeah. They had, like, some little parking lots. Some of those buildings that they put in now I think were on, like originally were on parking lots. And then they had to make the new parking lots and that's what yeah it's like, uh, there's a bunch of little houses gone that used to be there. They probably turned that into parking lots. So, yeah there was a church there too and I think they bought, bought that and now they use it for something. Oh! Lamar School. That's also part of the university now. That was the elementary school where some of my uncles and aunts went.

Geoffrey Waters: Isn't that in McAllen? Or?

Caroline Twist: No here, it's Lamar Elementary School.

Geoffrey Waters: Oh, ok.

Caroline Twist: Yeah, and that's part of Pan-Am now. I think they use it for something.

Michal Hartman: Oh yeah! Right here, yeah.

Caroline Twist: Yeah.

Michal Hartman: I know what you're talking about. On Schunior.

Caroline Twist: Yeah, and um... Yeah I don't know what they're doing with Sam Houston Elementary. But yeah I forgot they took over Lamar. Huh.

Michal Hartman: And those railroad tracks are - were they in use? Like...

Geoffrey Waters: Yeah they're still are.

Caroline Twist: Yeah, they still are. There are trains.

Michal Hartman: Oh I never see a train pass. I just see the thing's always down.

Caroline Twist: Oh I hear them! I mean you can, you hear 'em.

Geoffrey Waters: They'll whistle. [inaudible]

Michal Hartman: Was that bothersome that you could hear 'em?

Caroline Twist: No I liked it. Because I would wake up at night a lot when I was little and I would hear the whistles and I'd be like "oh there are other people awake too, it's not just me!" [laughs] So yeah, I liked that. Um, yeah I was thinking that RAC building is on the Lamar playground now. That used to be a playground for the school. That's funny! [laughs] 'Cause I remember when it was still a school and one of my friends who would coach little league and he would take the kids over there to play, to practice on that playground, and they started, later they built the RAC there on that playground so, that's funny.

[7 second pause]

Geoffrey Waters: Um, you said that the farmers have always rented this field out; have they always grown the same crops or, like, have they tried different things? Or changed things over the years?

Caroline Twist: Um, I remember when we first started renting it out they did cotton. Um, and we used to go and pick a few little balls and we'd make little pillows and stuff and my dad said the cottonseeds were good to eat so we would eat the cottonseeds. And um, after that it was a lot of sorghum and corn. So basically sorghum and corn is what they've been growing, like, lately - like the past 10, 15, years I think.

Michal Hartman: And how is the drainage for like the water and stuff?

Caroline Twist: I think it might be getting better. I think one of the reasons...

Michal Hartman: The city put something in?

Caroline Twist: Yeah. I think one of the reasons that the house flooded in 1980 was 'cause there wasn't as good drainage as they have now and I think we probably would have been a lot worse off with Dolly if we didn't have the reservoir and, um, the new, I guess they do underground drainage and stuff. So I think it's helped. Definitely.

Geoffrey Waters: Do you remember if laborers would come to pick the fields or if they still do? Or how do they harvest the?

Caroline Twist: Um, they use tractors. Um, I remember once and it was when I was little and they were

still doing cotton. Um, the farmer himself was out on the tractor and so he took us for a ride. [laughs] My dad was like “oh yeah, go ahead”. So we went in the combine and helped him. Or we watched him, whatever he was doing. But yeah, big tractors is all I remember. Combines and stuff. [softly] There’s people walking down the street. Um...so yeah.

Liza Soria: I see that you guys have an alarm system. Is that, was it a thing necessary, a need to have?

Caroline Twist: Kind of, yeah. When I was in high school, I guess I was a senior, my parents house got broken into twice in two weeks. And so after that it was like “let’s put in alarm systems”. And so that’s just - I feel more comfortable

Liza Soria: Yeah.

Caroline Twist: that way. We haven’t really had much problem since then. Just like every once in a while, like if you leave something outside it goes missing. [laughs] But yeah, it’s just nice to have it. It feels more comfortable that way.

Geoffrey Waters: What did they take when they broke into the house? Did they take things or they just broke in?

Caroline Twist: Mhmm, no they took stuff. Like the T.V. and jewelry and things like that. So yeah um, and they used to - my uncle couldn’t keep lawn mowers cause those would always get taken um, and things like that.

Geoffrey Waters: Did they file, like, a police report and everything?

Caroline Twist: Oh yeah. I think this house got broken into once but I wasn’t living in it. Actually it got broken into many, many times when I wasn’t living in it when there were other renters here and stuff. So if it was, like, a personal vendetta type thing which wasn’t very good but it was, whoever was living here at that time I guess had an enemy or something. And once, I think it was just before me and my husband moved in here, it got broken into and those people got, actually got, apprehended because they tried to pretend like it wasn’t them so they were like walking away real slow. [laughs] And my dad had already called the police and so the police, like, stopped them and it was them! But yeah, it generally, that’s why I was like “there’s people walking down the street!” It’s like opportunistic things I guess you could say. Like they see “oh it looks empty”.

Geoffrey Waters: Especially ‘cause there probably weren’t lights and stuff like that out here [inaudible].

Caroline Twist: There were - yeah, there was a lot less, um, traffic and a lot less um yeah lights and things, so...

Geoffrey Waters: Were there always lights? Because there are street lights out here now?

Caroline Twist: Yeah I think, like, I remember the one next door. There was a security light there in the yard and I remember that one. Um, this one here that we have out in the yard is newer and I don’t, I don’t know if my parents had one or not. But, like, the street lights and stuff they weren’t there. It was just like on your own property.

Geoffrey Waters: Do you remember when they put the street lights in?

Caroline Twist: No. I'm thinking maybe, like, 80's maybe. Late 80's. I'm guessing 'cause yeah, before that I just remember my grandma's security light out there. But no real city lights.

Michal Hartman: And how were the houses around here? Like were they wood? Were they brick? Like, the neighborhood houses.

Caroline Twist: Most of them were wood frame houses for the most part. Like, my parents' looks like its brick but it's just brick veneer. It's all wood frame. [laughs]

Michal Hartman: Did they have bright colors back then like with the architect? You said also that they painted the town square, like, all white,

Caroline Twist: Yeah.

Michal Hartman: How did it look when it was in its prime?

Caroline Twist: I'm trying to remember. It seemed like there was, like, different, like some of them were just brick, like just the natural brick. And I'm trying to think, I think, like, it wasn't just plain white. I remember, um, I think, like, Latell's was brick and it had some trim and then it had the sign and stuff and now I think it's pretty much all white. But yeah, I'm trying to remember. It's really hard to remember. And I think that building that's like, I guess it's the tax office now, it didn't used to look like that. It was just a bank back then. Hmm. [pauses briefly]

Michal Hartman: Mhmm.

Caroline Twist: Okay. I'm getting a little sleepy. [laughs] I don't know if it's because of the surgery thing that I had or what. I'm like wearing down. Do we have more questions?

Geoffrey Waters: I think we're just seeing how much we can

Caroline Twist: Oh ok.

Geoffrey Waters: get out of the interview. Um, nothing specifically. Is there anything else you wanted to say? Anything you wanta talk about?

Caroline Twist: Um, well I guess just the way I think it changed most was just that it was a lot less populated here when I was growing up. Um, a lot less traffic down this street, a lot more open land for fields and stuff. And my parents, like, knew the people – neighbors. But the neighbors were like, you know, half a mile [laughs] or whatever, a quarter mile down the road. It's not like now where you can throw something across the street and there they are.

Geoffrey Waters: Do y'all have relationships with new neighbors, your closer neighbors, now?

Caroline Twist: My dad takes the dog, he takes her for a walk around there, so he knows some of the people over there. But I haven't really been much over there mainly because my personality is like stay inside and read. [laughs] So I don't get out much as far as walking around. But, um, yeah no my dad knows some of the people over there and one man has given him, like, chili peppers and stuff in little

pots. He's Pilipino and he grows them himself and I guess it's like the kind of peppers that he liked from the Philippines.

Geoffrey Waters: On that, on that subject have you noticed, like, a lot of different types of people moving to the valley? Or just like the same or similar ethnic backgrounds?

Caroline Twist: No it seems like there are a lot of different ethnic backgrounds. Like now we have a mosque and we've got a Hindu temple, and those were not there before. And like it was primarily Catholic and, like, you would find some protestant churches like a Lutheran church and the Presbyterians and the Methodists but they would have like one church each, at least in Edinburg, and it was primarily Catholic. And now it seems like there's a lot more of these, um, nondenominational type churches and sometimes, like there's one down the street I think it's like on McColl and it's like just in a house and they have their name out there. So yeah there has been more of that too. And um, a lot more, like, ethnic restaurants [laughs] which my husband and I really like so that's, like, really nice. And yeah, there was *not* a lot of fast food places in Edinburg before. It was like Pizza Hut and I wouldn't even consider El Pato to be fast food because that's like local and that's what they serve, it's like local stuff. And so yeah all this sprang up I guess in the 90's and there was like no Jack in the Box, no any of that stuff. And there was like one McDonald's and now I think there's, like, three! And there was no Subway and now there's like five! [laughs] And it's, like, weird.

Geoffrey Waters: Do you remember any local restaurants that were really good that aren't there anymore?

Caroline Twist: Um, I was really, really tiny and there used to be this pizza place where the guy made homemade pizza and we would could see him tossing it and I mean I was like probably like three or something and I remember distinctly seeing in the window of the restaurant like to the kitchen and the guy is there throwing the, (laughs) throwing the dough and stuff so that was neat. Don't remember what it tasted like but they don't have that anymore. And I think there was like a Greek restaurant in town, and my dad would know who owned that. Yeah 'cause he told me about that. They're no longer there. I mean they probably retired. Um, but yeah and, some of the more recent ones I wish were still there but I don't know why they're gone. [laughs] Like Suteki that sushi place that was there, that was like there for a couple years and now it's gone and it was really good. Um, it seems like the fast food is kind of, not running people out but it seems like they're more successful simply because they're, like, a big chain already and they have support. Whereas it's harder now for the little individual restaurants to keep at it, to keep going. Yeah...It is nice to have some of those fast food places when you're not feeling well and just go and stop and pick up something and bring it home. Yeah.

[brief pause]

David Garcia: This is it.

[inaudible]

Geoffrey Waters: Alright. Thanks a lot!

Caroline Twist: Yeah I'm kind of wearing down.

Geoffrey Waters: That was really awesome

Caroline Twist: Well I hope I was helpful in some way. [laughs] I don't even know I heard about "water usage" and stuff and I was like I don't know if I'm gonna be much help with water usage but

Geoffrey Waters: Well they had specific questions and we tried to work around them.

Caroline Twist: [laughs] Yeah ok. Let me just call my dad so he can come over and lock up.