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Interview with
Mrs. Virginia Benson
May 29, 1969

Place of Interview: Sinton, Texas
Interviewer: Dr. A. Ray Stephens
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(signature)
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Oral History Collection

Mrs. Virginia Benson

Place of Interview: Sinton, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. A. Ray Stephens

Date: May 29, 1969

Dr. Stephens: This is an interview with Mrs. Virginia Benson, Sinton, Texas, May 29, 1969. Mrs. Benson, you've been here, you say, 59 years . . .

Mrs. Benson: 59 years.

Mrs. Sparks: Longer than that.

Dr. Stephens: . . . in Sinton.

Mrs. Benson: Well, I . . . no, I've been here since 1908.

Dr. Stephens: Oh.

Mrs. Benson: But I've lived out here 59 years.

Dr. Stephens: I see, at this location.

Mrs. Benson: At this location.

Dr. Stephens: Well, you might begin by telling us when you first came here and why.

Mrs. Benson: I came here in 1910 because I married (Chuckle).

Mrs. Sparks: But why did you come to Sinton?

Mrs. Benson: Oh, why did I come to Sinton?

Dr. Stephens: Yes.

Mrs. Benson: Well, my sister and brother-in-law came down here to buy land because the land, you know, at that year I believe was put on the market. And Glenn came down, too. He was in school, but

he was from Illinois. He was going to live in Stanford at that time when it was first put on the market. And he decided that he wanted to come here and called his father. And his father told him to come on and buy a place, and this is what he bought.

Dr. Stephens: Now did he come on a homeseeker train?

Mrs. Benson: No, he did not.

Dr. Stephens: Did you?

Mrs. Benson: No. Oh, no because I'm a native of Texas. I actually wouldn't . .

Dr. Stephens: Whereabouts . . . what part of Texas did you come from?

Mrs. Benson: West of San Antonio about 30 miles.

Dr. Stephens: And what did the country look like when you first came?

Mrs. Benson: Well, it was not in cultivation, I can tell you that. It was all brush land.

Dr. Stephens: Mostly mesquite or brush, too?

Mrs. Benson: Yes, oh, yes.

Mrs. Sparks: That is what . . .

Mrs. Benson: But we would call brush land mesquite land. You know it's running mesquite most of it.

Dr. Stephens: Yes.

Mrs. Sparks: Well, didn't you come . . . didn't your . . . didn't Glenn come down partly because of his health?

Mrs. Benson: Well, maybe . . . maybe so, Lura. That was one . . . no, he came because he wanted to . . . he wanted to come to Texas. He had been here before and liked it. But he was not feeling well so he came on down anyway and I guess you'd say as much for his health as anything. And he liked it so well he'd never

leave. He loved it.

Dr. Stephens: Now he was . . .

Mrs. Benson: He was from Illinois.

Dr. Stephens: . . . he was in farming.

Mrs. Benson: No, he was . . . he had a stock farm.

Dr. Stephens: Stock farm.

Mrs. Benson: He was . . . yes. He was not farming grain or cotton. He had hogs, pedigreed hogs, Duroc Jerseys.

Dr. Stephens: And what was his market for the hogs?

Mrs. Benson: Well, mostly he sold to the dealers all over the United States.

Dr. Stephens: Oh, is that right?

Mrs. Benson: At his death we had the first auction sale, and he had breeders from everywhere--Iowa, Kentucky and . . . well, all of the eastern states and southern states. We had buyers. That's the way we disposed of the stock. And the . . . one mother and litter of pigs brought \$700, and that was a fabulous price at that time. And then we had Jersey cattle. However, they were not . . . they were just grade cattle not pedigrees.

Dr. Stephens: Did you milk them?

Mrs. Benson: But the hogs were pedigreed. Yes.

Dr. Stephens: And sold the milk?

Mrs. Benson: And sold the milk.

Dr. Stephens: In the community.

Mrs. Benson: Well, I guess you'd say.

Dr. Stephens: Where was your market?

Mrs. Benson: In town. But it was picked up and delivered to the different

creameries in Corpus, and I don't know where.

Mrs. Sparks: Well, did they . . . did you send any to Taft creamery?

Mrs. Benson: Well, maybe so, Lura. I've forgotten. That's been so long ago.

Mrs. Sparks: Will you tell . . .

Mrs. Benson: But you delivered it in large quantities, you see, in five-gallon cans.

Mrs. Sparks: Will you tell Ray . . . will you tell Ray the story you've told me so many times about when you first met my father in the post office because I think that's so cute?

Mrs. Benson: (Chuckle) Lura, how can I remember that one?

Mrs. Sparks: Well, he . . .

Mrs. Benson: He called me . . . I was in Corpus, and he called me to come over and help him out. But, Lura, what did he say? Now I've forgotten what he said.

Mrs. Sparks: Well, I've forgotten what he said, but he . . . the man who'd had the post office before him had gone . . . just gone out because Mr. Green had gotten . . . you've told me that Mrs. Green had gotten the post office for my dad and that . . .

Mrs. Benson: Yes. And Mr. Haisley did not know how to speak a word of Spanish.

Dr. Stephens: And you did.

Mrs. Benson: Very little, but anyway I could hand out the mail and talk enough to them, you know, to get by with it. But Mr. Haisley couldn't.

Dr. Stephens: Well, what did the town business look like when you were working at the post office? What size was the business district?

Mrs. Benson: Just had one street, and it was not paved and muddy, a saloon and a livery barn. We had livery barns at that day and time.

The Taft Company had the horses and the carriages here, you know, to take people around to show the land. And Mr. Haisley had an office because he worked for them. He was their attorney, I guess. Wasn't he, Lura?

Mrs. Sparks: Well, he did their . . .

Mrs. Benson: Did their legal work anyway.

Mrs. Sparks: . . . abstract work.

Dr. Stephens: Well, when the homeseekers came down and the equipment from the livery stable was used, can you tell us something about where they took the people and what they told them?

Mrs. Benson: Well, I can tell you where they took them. They just took them everywhere especially to Saint Paul and all out in this area. This most likely was put on the market first. I would think that . .

Mrs. Sparks: No, I think south of Taft was first.

Mrs. Benson: Oh, was south . . . oh, where the hog farm was. Out in there.

Mrs. Sparks: No, south of Taft where we bought, you know, out toward the bay. You told me time about driving . . . you had to drive some horses.....

Mrs. Benson: Some spirited horses (Chuckle).

Mrs. Sparks: Yes. Tell us about that.

Mrs. Benson: Oh, Some sisters came here from New Orleans canvassing for a convent for the church in New Orleans, and Mr. Odom asked me to take them out. And they sent high, oh, spirited horses. You could hardly drive them. I couldn't drive them hardly. But anyway you'd . . . they'd . . . the harder that you'd pull back on the reins, the faster they'd go. We went on and spent the afternoon, and they, of course, got a wonderful donation from

the Odoms, had a very lovely visit. And that was the beginning, I imagine. I don't know, Lura. It's just been so long. I haven't thought of these things.

Mrs. Sparks: Well, I know but . . .

Mrs. Benson: I think they had a church here but anyway that was what they came for was for . . . to help build a church.

Dr. Stephens: How many churches were in operation then?

Mrs. Benson: Well, I wouldn't think there was any when we first came here except the Catholic church.

Dr. Stephens: You are a Catholic?

Mrs. Benson: No, I'm Episcopalian.

Dr. Stephens: Episcopalian.

Mrs. Benson: But shortly after there was a Baptist church organized and the Methodist and Church of Christ. There's all kind of churches in a short time.

Dr. Stephens: Well, that's what I was wondering?

Mrs. Benson: I don't remember in the beginning anything but the Catholic church.

Dr. Stephens: But the churches soon started building up with the community then.

Mrs. Benson: Yes. The Catholics pre-dominated.

Dr. Stephens: Most people were involved in one church or the other?

Mrs. Benson: Yes. Oh, yes.

Dr. Stephens: I wonder why. This was a social outlet?

Mrs. Benson: I think so as much as anything. This social outlook was the going . . . riding on the trains going to Corpus (Chuckle) on Sunday afternoons. Do you remember that, Lura? And we'd all

go to the depot to see the train when it passed through. Taft passed through, but he didn't make his appearance. And everybody was down to meet him, but he didn't come out then.

Dr. Stephens: Did you go on to Taft?

Mrs. Benson: No, we didn't go to Taft, but we did go . . . but we did go to the station, you know, and he just didn't appear. I guess he didn't think we thought he should because it was Sinton. And, of course, Sinton is part of the Taft family.

Dr. Stephens: So you didn't see him.

Mrs. Benson: No, we didn't see him. I believe we did go to Corpus and see him later but not that afternoon when he passed through.

Dr. Stephens: What else did you do for entertainment or amusements?

Mrs. Sparks: Oh, tell him about the Embroidery Club. I think that was a good story about the Embroidery Club that you'll had.

Mrs. Benson: Well, that, of course, was just the ladies of . . . the older ladies of the town. And we met in the different homes and embroidered and gossiped. (Chuckle) We knew everything that happened. And I remember very distinctly when the little town of Odom was given a name. Mrs. Haisley told us of that.

Mrs. Sparks: That was my mother.

Mrs. Benson: That was Lura's mother. Given the name of Odom, Mr. Odom was one of the larger landholders--Mr. Green and Mr. Odom and Mr. Arnold, I believe, of Corpus or Portland. But the

little town of Odom was named anyway for Mr. Odom.

We had one bank. And, of course, this was the county seat, but it had recently been moved from San Patricio here. But there were not very many people here.

Dr. Stephens: Well, what about this Embroidery Club? Was this the only thing the ladies of the community, or did you have other clubs as well?

Mrs. Benson: Well, I would think that . . . we did have other clubs. We just didn't happen to belong to it, that is, Mrs. Haisley and I didn't because that was our age group. But we did have other clubs.

Mrs. Sparks: There was a young girls' group.

Mrs. Benson: There was a St. Louis . . . what . . . not . . . St. Cecelia.

Mrs. Sparks: Yes, that they organized. It was pretty lively. My mother was . . . helped in one of their entertainments. They . . .

Mrs. Benson: Oh, yes, she was the witch and told fortunes.

Mrs. Sparks: Well, and then before that even she was always giving them ideas for games to play at these parties. Do you remember that?

Mrs. Benson: Yes. And we played, I believe it was 42 and . . . oh, it's been so long ago. I've been out of that kind of a life so long I've forgotten it.

Mrs. Sparks: You played 500.

Mrs. Benson: We played 500. Well, we had a night club that we played 500 with the men, our husbands. I thing there were two tables or three tables. We really did. That was a nice club. I think that's the nicest club we had in Sinton.

Dr. Stephens: Oh.

Mrs. Benson: We played my . . . every . . . about every two weeks.

Dr. Stephens: What about . . . you mentioned the saloon. What about . . . can you describe the saloon in Sinton?

Mrs. Benson: Well, you just look at some of these old, old pictures on T. V. and that's typical of what we had.

Mrs. Sparks: That's true.

Mrs. Benson: It's really true.

Mrs. Sparks: Was Saturday night . . . I was a child and I can't remember. Was Saturday night sort of wild in Sinton in those days?

Mrs. Benson: Well, there was quite a lot of drinking. I guess it would be Saturday night would . . . would be a typical wild life for this part of the country.

Dr. Stephens: What was the effect of prohibition on wild life for the country?

Mrs. Benson: Well, it . . . they voted for prohibition, but anyway it didn't pass. You remember we . . . we've had liqueur all along. Out here when . . .

Dr. Stephens: Not during . . .

Mrs. Benson: No.

Dr. Stephens: . . . national prohibition.

Mrs. Sparks: Sinton went dry even before national prohibition hit. I remember. I mean . . .

Mrs. Benson: I do not remember that, Lura. I don't remember a thing about that.

Dr. Stephens: Do you remember anything about a conflict between the old timers and the newcomers?

Mrs. Benson: Oh, yes.

Dr. Stephens: Can you tell us about that?

Mrs. Benson: I don't know that I could.

Mrs. Sparks: I think most of them want to forget it, don't they?

Mrs. Benson: Yes. It wasn't too happy an experience. In fact, they just now may be outliving it, you know. Taken an awful long time.

Mrs. Sparks: I think that they've outlived it some time back really. I mean I don't think they . . .

Mrs. Benson: Well, it's just every once in a while when you get with the old timers. They feel it yet.

Mrs. Sparks: They do?

Mrs. Benson: Oh, yes. But not like they did.

Dr. Stephens: Was this mostly Catholics . . .

Mrs. Benson: Yes, the Catholics . . .

Dr. Stephens: . . . or the emprissario group versus the homeseekers or those who came during this period when the land was open for farming?

Mrs. Benson: . . . yes, the Catholics pre-dominated.

Dr. Stephens: Do you remember when the Klan was popular?

Mrs. Benson: Yes.

Dr. Stephens: Was it popular with most of the non-Catholics?

Mrs. Benson: Well, I don't know whether they'd be most or not, but there's an awful lot of them.

Dr. Stephens: Do you know why?

Mrs. Benson: No.

Dr. Stephens: Can you remember any incidences such as the parades or
burning of crosses and such around here?

Mrs. Benson: Yes. But I might believe I'd like to forget all that (Chuckle).

Dr. Stephens: Oh.

Mrs. Benson: (Laughter) It was . . .

Mrs. Sparks: Listen. She was . . . her husband was a victim of the
1918 flu epidemic which was real bad.

Dr. Stephens: Oh, is that right? The 1918 . . .

Mrs. Benson: Yes, he passed away in 1918. I remember that Glenn's
death was the first one . . .

Dr. Stephens: First one.

Mrs. Benson: . . . from the flu.

Dr. Stephens: About what time did it hit in 1918?

Mrs. Benson: Well, he passed away in September. I would think about
August or maybe before then.

Dr. Stephens: Did you . . . did you know what was coming? Did you
know it was in any other part of the country?

Mrs. Benson: No, we did not. We didn't know what it was. And Glenn had a
doctor out of Corpus, and he died one day. His doctor's boy
died the same day, and Glenn died the next day. And at that
time that's when they discovered what it was. And different
ones were told not to go to Glenn's funeral, you know, because
they were afraid it was contagious. That was the beginning of
it. Oh, no, it was terrible before it was over--so many deaths.

Dr. Stephens: And quite a few then in the community.

Mrs. Benson: Oh, yes.

Dr. Stephens: About how many? Do you remember?

Mrs. Benson: I don't remember that, but there was just an awful lot.

Dr. Stephens: Of all age groups, too?

Mrs. Benson: Yes, yes.

Mrs. Sparks: Looking . . . looking through the papers of that time, it seemed to me that there were two or three weeks all winter . . . you remember when Mrs. Goodwin died?

Mrs. Benson: Pregnant. She was pregnant. Most mothers that were pregnant passed away.

Dr. Stephens: Is that right?

Mrs. Benson: Yes. It seemed as though . . . well, I don't know most, but anyway there were a few mothers that were pregnant.

Dr. Stephens: And when did the epidemic stop?

Mrs. Benson: Oh . . . well, it was after Christmas.

Mrs. Sparks: Yes.

Mrs. Benson: But I couldn't . . .

Dr. Stephens: I wonder why. Cold weather?

Mrs. Benson: Maybe so.

Dr. Stephens: Kept people from visiting with each other?

Mrs. Benson: I guess so.

Mrs. Sparks: Virginia's uncle, Eli Merryman, was the one who started the "Corpus Christi Caller. Is that right?

Mrs. Benson: Yes, he did.

- Mrs. Sparks: Well, can't you tell us something about him? I think he was quite a character. Everybody always thought so much of him.
- Mrs. Benson: I was trying to think when Uncle Eli organized the Caller, but I don't think that I can.
- Dr. Stephens: Was he the first one?
- Mrs. Benson: Yes, one of the first, he and Mr. Mulbey. Well, I don't like to give you information that I'm just not sure of.
- Mrs. Sparks: Well, tell us a little bit about . . .
- Mrs. Benson: Oh, he . . .
- Mrs. Sparks: . . . Eli. You used to visit him a great deal. What was . . .
- Mrs. Benson: Oh, yes.
- Mrs. Sparks: . . . what was visiting Corpus like in those days? Can you remember that?
- Mrs. Benson: Well . . . well, they had lots of parties there--card parties and church. Of course, the church . . . all of my people were Episcopalian. There's quite a lot of entertainment in the Episcopal church at that time.
- Mrs. Sparks: You had dances?
- Mrs. Benson: Yes.
- Mrs. Sparks: Boat rides?
- Mrs. Benson: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Picnics on the beach.
- Dr. Stephens: Do you remember any particular celebrations--July the 4th, New Year's Day, anything like that?
- Mrs. Benson: Well, we all liked to go to Corpus on July the 4th. But Corpus was so stingey they'd charge us even for the drinking water (Chuckle). Do you remember that, Lura?
- Mrs. Sparks: Yes, I do.

- Mrs. Benson: So (chuckle) . . . no, but we did. We all liked to go to Corpus on the 4th of July. We rode the train over there then because that was horse and buggy days. I wish I could think of things, but I cannot because there is just an awful lot of . . .
- Mrs. Sparks: Well, tell us . . . you were one of the first people to have a car. Tell us about the car that you bought (chuckle). You told me that story.
- Mrs. Benson: Yes, I was one of the first, but we had horses. And I never could drive. You know, they'd shed their hair and blow all in your face, and I didn't like it a little bit. So one day I went in town. I think the Eades always'd go for me if Glenn didn't go. And I know I just got my face full of hair and my mouth full of hair. And I went in the bank and borrowed the money and bought a car (chuckle).
- Dr. Stephens: What kind was it?
- Mrs. Benson: Ford (chuckle).
- Dr. Stephens: Ford.
- Mrs. Benson: I didn't buy it then. I just borrowed the money and came back and told Glenn. He was horrified. And every time . . . you know, it was one that you had to crank that didn't have starters. And every time Glenn drove it he had to take a Mexican with him to crank the car because he couldn't crank it, and I couldn't crank it either. And that went on until . . . oh, I think we must've had a year maybe, and then we bought a Buick. They had starters. But that was the beginning of the . . . oh, when was that?

Mrs. Sparks: It was not too long . . .

Mrs. Benson: Around 1911, I think. Of course, there . . . there were other cars here, and we were not the first to have a car. But we were one of the first. We had muddy streets. You could hardly get through . . . you could hardly get through in a car. Had to be pulled through many times going in town from here.

Dr. Stephens: Can you tell us anything about the relationship between the Mexicans and Anglos? Did they get along all right? Was there friction once in a while or what?

Mrs. Benson: Well, not as much as there is now.

Dr. Stephens: Do you remember what the wages paid the Mexicans happen to have been?

Mrs. Benson: Most likely 50 cents a day. I would think around, I don't know, 50 cents a day maybe.

Dr. Stephens: Do you recall anything about the scare of invasion in 1916?

Mrs. Benson: Yes. Yes, I do.

Dr. Stephens: Can you tell us about that? You lived out here then.

Mrs. Benson: I lived out here. I thought I could hear them coming one night and went to the window and, you know, just sat there and looked out the whole time. And Glenn wasn't a bit afraid, and he wasn't . . . he just didn't think they were going to come. But anyway before daylight we did think we heard them coming. We got up and went in town and spent the night with the McGloins . . .

Dr. Stephens: Oh.

Mrs. Benson: . . . against his wishes. Not his wish did he want to do that, but I was scared out of my wits.

Dr. Stephens: Well, now some folks went out into the middle of the cotton patch and stayed all night.

Mrs. Benson: Oh, yes.

Dr. Stephens: Did any of your neighbors do that?

Mrs. Benson: No, I don't . . . I don't know whether they did or not. But I didn't know anyone to do that, but I think that they did. Yes, people were frightened. And we thought they were going to come in from this direction from Alice and through in there.

Mrs. Sparks: Virginia, you were closely associated with my father when he was an agent of George H. Paul. Did you ever meet Mr. George H. Paul?

Mrs. Benson: I don't recall that I did, Lura. But I met Mr . . . oh . . . who was it that had Tanglefoot Farm?

Mrs. Sparks: Oh, Warner. Senator Warner. He was quite a character.

Mrs. Benson: Oh, yes. He'd just married.

Mrs. Sparks: From Missouri.

Mrs. Benson: He had just married this time. He'd been married before I . . .

Mrs. Sparks: Yes.

Mrs. Benson: . . . would think. And he called his wife "the lady with the little green hat," and that's the way he always addressed her.

Dr. Stephens: (Chuckle)

Mrs. Benson: Mr. and Mrs. Haisley came by one afternoon and took me out,

about six miles out.

Mrs. Sparks: Well, do you remember much about the . . . I know you've told me many a time how my mother took care of things in the office, and Dad was out selling real estate and stuff. Can you tell me some . . . about some of the people that came down. I'm sure you were very close to them and knew a little bit about it.

Mrs. Benson: Well, I . . . Lura, I . . . I remember quite a few came in, but I can't think of their names and the faces was always ready, you know. (Phone rings.) Pardon me. If you came in one place the other from the post office over to where you lived. Yes, she never thought anything about being afraid. But we are afraid now.

Dr. Stephens: Do you know why? Why it's kind of a shame.

Mrs. Benson: Well, it's the condition . . . it's the conditions of the country. And you . . . no, I don't know why that it would be now and not then, but they were more civilized . . . I think they were more civilized than they are now. We . . .

Dr. Stephens: I was wondering . . . excuse me.

Mrs. Benson: That's all right. I don't . . .

Dr. Stephens: Well, I was going to ask you about the schools. You remember what the schools were like in Sinton at the time you first came here?

Mrs. Benson: Well, of course, that was after I was in school. I did have nieces and a nephew in school.

Dr. Stephens: In Sinton?

Mrs. Benson: Yes.

Dr. Stephens: What kind of . . .

Mrs. Benson: They had very nice schools, I think.

Dr. Stephens: Did they . . . how many schools did they have around here?
Just one in Sinton for all this part of the county?

Mrs. Benson: Oh, yes. For all of Sinton I think they just had one
school, and it was out near where Mrs. Bishop lived.
Do you remember that, Lura?

Mrs. Sparks: Oh, that was the first . . .

Mrs. Benson: And Mr. Haisley was . . . Mr. Eades was the principal. No,
Miss Lida Daugherty, I believe.

Mrs. Sparks: No, Miss Mary Daugherty.

Mrs. Benson: Mary Daugherty.

Mrs. Sparks: Then they moved it over . . . the next year after we
came they moved it over to that great big building across
the tracks from us. But the first school house was out . . .

Mrs. Benson: Out there.

Mrs. Sparks: Just a little one room school house.

Mrs. Benson: I remember that. Then, of course, that was all changed.
Lura knows lots more about that than I would because
she went to school. But (chuckle) . . .

Mrs. Sparks: Was there (?) . . .

Dr. Stephens: Medicine . . . medical facilities . . .

Mrs. Benson: Well, that was in Taft that they had the hospital.

Mrs. Sparks: Never had a hospital at all.

Mrs. Benson: The hospital was in Taft. We had one Dr. McWhorter (?), I believe, and Dr. Vermillion (?). I think . . . believe we had two doctors here.

Dr. Stephens: Where . . . when you wanted to go to the hospital you went to Taft.

Mrs. Benson: Yes.

Mrs. Sparks: Or to San Antonio or the other.

Mrs. Benson: Yes, one or the other.

Dr. Stephens: And what sort of . . . what sort of medical facilities did the ranch have in the Taft hospital?

Mrs. Benson: Well, I think that was unusually good for the area. I'm sure that it was because everything that they did they did well. They were just ahead of us down here, you know. They had wonderful nurses. Miss Effie Miller had charge, I believe, of the hospital at first. And she was a wonderful nurse from Canada. John Miller might tell you some things, Lura, the county judge, because his father and Mr. Hugh Miller . . . I believe Mr. Hugh Miller had charge of the hog ranch, didn't he? And he might remember those things. But I imagine John Miller could tell you quite a few things. He was out and going and I was not. I was with Mr. Haisley in the post office I've forgotten how many years. Just thoroughly enjoyed it, loved it.

Mrs. Sparks: Well, you started . . . when the phone rang you started to say you remember when people would come in and want to buy land.

Mrs. Benson: Well, I know that I can remember so well Mr. Haisley taking them out, Lura, and showing them the land. But who they were or their names I really couldn't . . . I don't remember that far back.

Mrs. Sparks: He had lots of customers.

Mrs. Benson: Oh, yes. He had lots of customers. Really I'd think that he was just about the only one that did show the land not very many . . . Mr. Reeters (?) appeared to.

Mrs. Sparks: Right.

Mrs. Benson: But Mr. Haisley was really the outstanding realtor.

Dr. Stephens: Now he sold for the ranch, for himself, or for just anybody.

Mrs. Benson: He sold for anybody.

Dr. Stephens: Was he the ranch's agent?

Mrs. Sparks: No. He was Mr. Paul's agent.

Dr. Stephens: Paul's agent.

Mrs. Sparks: Yes. And helped him. But . . .

Mrs. Benson: He soon was with the ranch, wasn't he?

Mrs. Sparks: Yes. He wrote abstracts and insurance for them. But I don't remember . . . I don't know what he sold for them. Now he had . . . his office was in a ranch building, one of those green and white building.

Mrs. Benson: Right down from the post office. The meat market . . .

Mrs. Sparks: Yes.

Mrs. Benson: . . . and your father's office were together.

Mrs. Sparks: But they didn't . . . yes. But his office was in the back of the post office at one time when it was . . .

Mrs. Benson: Oh, yes, in the beginning I believe it was. In the beginning it was. I wish I could think what Mr. Haisley said to me when I got off of the train there, but I can't think.

Mrs. Sparks: He said something about, "Take off your coat and go to work," didn't he?

Mrs. Benson: (Chuckle) Something like that "and get at it" (chuckle).

Mrs. Sparks: I think he was sort of desperate because he didn't even know how to put up the mail. But you'd worked for this Mr. . . . wasn't it . . .

Mrs. Benson: Rachal.

Mrs. Sparks: Rachal, Dick Rachal.

Mrs. Benson: Oh, yes. I knew how to do that, Lura, and it was just a little post office, you see. And Mrs. Haisley came down and helped. It didn't take Mrs. Haisley long because she's just as bright as a dollar. She could do anything. I think Mrs. Haisley did as much to the . . . helping the community, building the community as anyone because she was . . . she was very progressive in her ideas. She liked to go forward and had a marvelous education which not very many people did have or had the opportunity that Mrs. Haisley had. She was one of the outstanding ladies of the community.

Mrs. Sparks: Very few people . . .

Mrs. Benson: And then Mr. Haisley, of . . . he was for the men, don't you see? He just . . . he was one of the builders of the town.

Mrs. Sparks: Not very many people remember her today, you know. You're one of the . . . well, you and Mrs. Williams out at Taft are the two that . . . I mean . . .

Mrs. Benson: Well, I have an idea that we are, Lura, just about all, you know, because that's been a long time ago because I'm 84 years old. That's a long time. Doesn't seem like it, but anyway, facts!