

NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION
(BUSINESS ARCHIVES PROJECT)
NUMBER

79

Interview with
IKARD SMITH
January 7, 1983

Place of Interview: Wichita Falls, Texas
Interviewer: Dr. Floyd Jenkins
Terms of Use: Open
Approved: *Shel Smith*
(Signature)
Date: ✓ 2/8/83

COPYRIGHT



1982

THE BOARD OF REGENTS OF NORTH TEXAS STATE
UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF DENTON

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording or by any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the Coordinator of the Oral History Collection or the University Archivist, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas 76203

Business Oral History Collection

Ikard Smith

Interviewer: Dr. Floyd Jenkins

Place of Interview: Wichita Falls, Texas

Date: January 7, 1983

Dr. Jenkins: This is Floyd Jenkins recording for the Business Archives Project, North Texas State University. Today is January 7, 1983. I am talking with Ikard Smith who was president of McClurkan's for about 35 years and is presently, what?

Mr. Smith: Senior Chairman of the Board.

Dr. Jenkins: And we are talking with Ikard Smith here in the downtown offices of McClurkan's in Wichita Falls, Texas.

Dr. Jenkins: Let's start by getting you to go back and tell us what you can recall of what we now call your roots. Give us what knowledge you have of Mother and Dad, and even Grandma and Grandpa and further back than that if you know it, of where they came from, how they got into this part of the country, the kind of life they lived, and lead us up to when and where you were born. Then we will kind of develop from there.

Mr. Smith: All right. Floyd, that is awful nice. Too often we don't tell our own children enough about our ancestors, and sometimes even our own selves we are unable to go much further back than our grandparents. And it is sad that

we cannot do that, but that is about as far as I can go back with both sets of my grandparents. It is a little bit unusual in the fact that both of my grandfathers fought in the Civil War. My grandfather Smith was born in 1843 and was captured by Grant at Fort Donaldson.

Jenkins: Do you remember where he was born?

Smith: No, I really don't, but in Tennessee.

Jenkins: Close enough.

Smith: That's right. And then he was captured there in Fort Donaldson. I have heard the story said, that is on the Tennessee River, that the flood came and the river went up over the stockade, and my grandfather swam out, returned back to the Southern side of the Confederacy and married my grandmother. My father then was not born until 1881. He was the seventh child of that family. There were six boys and two girls in my father's family. He therefore was raised in Dixon County, Tennessee. Dixon, Tennessee, was where he was raised.

Jenkins: In a town, then.

Smith: In a small town. Really it should be in Dixon County on the farm. On the farm because they had a little hillside farm there. I personally never saw my grandfather. He died around 1920. My grandmother lived until about 1935, and I saw her on two different occasions in Dixon, Tennessee.

Jenkins: How big was the community?

Smith: A very small community. It is just west of Nashville.

So my father came from that area of Tennessee.

Jenkins: And they farmed there.

Smith: They farmed there, little tenant farmers, etc. They just did the best they could. My father had two brothers that became doctors. Most of his brothers and sisters improved themselves with education and did the best they could and had great outstanding lives right from Tennessee. My father came from Dixon, Tennessee, as a young man in 1902, to Denton, Texas. The reason he came to Denton, Texas, he was distantly related to a Mrs. W. B. McClurkan whose husband was quite a businessman in Denton at that time. He was hoping to find some type of work. Finally, Mr. McClurkan said, "Well, I will find a job for you." So he put him as an employee of the store in 1902. My father did not finish high school, but later went to a little business school over in Bowie, Texas, to learn bookkeeping and a little bit of English grammar, etc., to improve himself.

Jenkins: You don't happen to know what school that was?

Smith: I have no earthly idea. Of course, it is not even there now. This was long before North Texas was invented, in 1902. Then in 1906 my father was sent to Krum, Texas, which is just a little ways from Denton. Mr. McClurkan sent him over there to open a little store. You can imagine, not having automobiles or anything, that was 8 or 10 miles from Denton and quite a distance. They had their own

little community, and they had the need of a store in that little community. It was operated about 2 months, and on Christmas Eve in 1906 the store burned to the ground.

Jenkins: What kind of store was it?

Smith: A little general store very similar to a ready-to-wear store and clothing store. Just like Mr. McClurkan had in Denton. And instead of rebuilding or reinvesting in Krum, Mr. McClurkan found a bankrupt department store of the type then known as a department store, in Wichita Falls. He sent my father to open it under the name of W. B. McClurkan & Company in Wichita Falls. Even at that time in 1907 there was a W. B. McClurkan Company in Denton, Texas. So there were two stores with the same name in different towns. And that is how my father came to Wichita Falls in 1907. Now would you like to hear the history of my grandfather on the other side?

Jenkins: Sure.

Smith: My grandfather on my mother's side was a man by the name of Mr. W. S. Ikard. His people came from Georgia. He came from Georgia with his father.

Smith: Farmers?

Smith: Farmers and cattle people. When he was a very small boy.

Jenkins: You don't know when?

Smith: It had to be in about 1850 before the Civil War. My Grandfather Ikard was born in 1845. He also served in the Civil War, basically in the Home Guard, but he served with

the Confederacy and was considered quite a historic man at that time. Now Grandfather Ikard after the war made several trips taking cattle up the trail to Abilene. And this is how he got started in the cattle business, by gathering the cattle on the ranges and taking what he could find that way, plus taking his neighbors' cattle on a contract price to Abilene. He made several trips up the trail to Abilene.

Jenkins: Which trail was it?

Smith: Well, the old Chisholm Trail was the one he went up many times. They first came to Weatherford, Texas. That is where he was raised. Later he and a brother came to Henrietta, Texas, which is in Clay County. As the years went on he began to acquire land. He was quite a successful cattleman. And he began to acquire land, and by 1875 he had close to 200,000 acres of land, which was considered a rather large ranch. It was a large ranch then and a large ranch now. Grandfather Ikard went to the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876 and bought registered Hereford cattle from the royal herd of England, and he shipped these cattle to Denison, Texas, and then brought them into Clay County at that time. He is considered to have been the first man to have brought whitefaced cattle west of the Mississippi. He decided that this was the breed that this part of the country needed instead of the Longhorn. So he is the one that began to establish this

breed in this area.

Jenkins: There was a movie about that. Do you remember that?

Smith: No, I don't remember that movie.

Jenkins: As far as your family is concerned it had to be based on him.

Smith: Yes. It is an actual fact. In fact the Texas Cattle Raisers Association will verify that he is the one that is considered . . .

Jenkins: That was about what year?

Smith: That was about 1876. In 1876 he went to this Philadelphia Centennial, see, when he bought these cattle.

Jenkins: When Panhandle cattle ranching started.

Smith: That's right. In fact, one of my cousins has a horn to this day that has branded in the horn the royal crown of England, because that is where these cattle came from. They had them branded on the horn then. I will tell you two or three little interesting things about Grandfather Ikard. He was a great Southerner. He had six daughters and two sons. One of his sons was named Lee Davis. So you can see that that is in memory of Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis. But anyway, Grandfather Ikard in the establishment of his ranches, etc., became quite good friends with Quanah Parker. So Quanah Parker, being the Chief of the Comanches, was required to stay at Fort Sill, etc., he had to look after the welfare of his tribe. So they had a contract in which Grandfather Ikard would supply so many beeves and

Quanah Parker would guarantee that the Indians would not raid his ranches. Now you see here are two men who have never been to college, but they both figured out what is a good deal for both of them, and they made a written contract. I have heard my grandmother say that when Quanah Parker came to their house and had a meal with them, that he always brought his favorite wife. Quanah Parker had several wives. So this was her comment that Quanah Parker always brought his favorite wife. Another little bit of interesting thing about my grandfather, he had financial reverses in the late '80s because of drouth and he lost these lands. One of the unusual things about it was that he signed on the back of a note for his brother a note of \$250,000, which was a large amount then and is a large amount now. This was to some St. Louis bankers that backed the cattle people. They went through two years of drouth in which the cattle did not prosper correctly, the depression type thing, and did not make any money. They were forced to sell. What makes that note unusual is that this note is the historic precedent for the obligation when a man puts his name on the back of a note making him liable after the man that is on the front of the note as his resources have been exhausted, then the bank can turn to the man on the back of the note. This is a very strong precedent in all law books. This is the case that the lawyers, if you ever have to be referred to for legal

verification of signing the back of a note, this is the case that starts it off. And as a little point of interest, when I was studying in business law at the University of Pennsylvania in 1938, they had a chapter on this particular point of endorsement of a note, and they had a picture of my grandfather's note and his signature on the back. Just a little bit of history and a little bit of interesting facts about the financial responsibilities even of those days.

Jenkins: It helps to clear some things because I had read of Quanah Parker and that very contract. What is the name of . . . is this Ikard?

Smith: Yes. His name was Mr. W. S. Ikard.

Jenkins: I have read of that incident in some western history. That helps a lot.

Smith: That had actually happened, and everybody thinks he was just an uneducated man, Quanah Parker, but he was as smart as he could be. He knew how to take care of his Comanche tribe, without any college education. Another thing that is a little bit unusual about my grandfather. I love to tell this story because I remember it, and yet it is just kind of like the opening comment that I said, "Too few of us tell our children about our family, the roots and our own mothers and fathers." We don't know and things get lost. As I was growing up, my grandfather did not die until I

was 13. I was out of high school when my grandmother died. So there would have been numerous occasions when I could have asked them questions. But, you know, I didn't ask them or my mother. So when I would go to their home in Henrietta, Texas, in the parlor--and many people do not know what the word parlor means--but that is the old fashioned living room that was kept closed off because there wasn't any proper way to heat it, and it was always cold in there. When we would go in there, there were six oil paintings in there: two full length ones of my grandmother and my grandfather; then two bust sized paintings of his mother and father and her mother and father. So this is six oil portraits of people that I as a child used to go in there and look at. I thought they were just great people to look at, but I never asked who painted them. This is the thing that was so unusual. And my mother never told me. Anyway, the story is that when they went to the Philadelphia Exposition my grandfather and his brother hired a young, sick painter from Philadelphia, and they told him, "If you will come west and live with us, we will give you commissions for two years' work and the climate in Texas will improve your health." So supposedly he did this. Supposedly he painted six portraits for my grandfather and six paintings for his brother. So now there are 12 paintings that had been painted by this unknown painter. After the grandfather and

my grandmother died, my mother received the bust painting of my grandfather's father, who is Dr. Milton Ikard. This is the father of my grandfather. He was a hydro-therapist doctor; in those days he treated his patients with a lot of water. It is kind of interesting about that. He was also in the State Legislature of the state of Texas and quite a very fine man from Weatherford, Texas.

Jenkins: What was his name?

Smith: His name was Dr. Milton Ikard. So my mother brought that portrait home about 1937, and hung it above her mantle in our living room area in Wichita Falls. Again I never asked my mother if she asked her parents who painted it. Nothing was ever said except "Isn't he a dignified looking old gentleman?" My mother passed away in 1963. We were building our own home in 1963. I was given the privilege to inherit this picture of my great grandfather to put in my home. Shortly thereafter at a cousin reunion in Amarillo, Texas, a cousin from the other branch of the Ikard's asked about the painting. And I said, yes, I had one of them. They thought that most of theirs had been lost in a fire. But she said, "You know who painted those paintings, don't you?" I said, "No, I have no earthly idea." She said, "My grandfather always said he made the check out to Frederick Remington." Now, they are not signed. They have been examined. They have been looked at. They have not been verified that they are Remingtons', but we have been told

that, perhaps, the man went to school at the same time as Remington. The brush strokes are similar, and it could possibly in the remotist way be a Remington because we do know that Remington came to Texas about this time, and he was sick. So this makes a rather unusual story. We do have this painting of great grandfather in our home, and it is a very lovely piece of artwork. So this is just another reason why, as we go through life we ought to tell our children about their roots. I didn't think to ask at that time who was the artist, and I am sure that my grandfather could have told me exactly who he was. But he didn't think it was anything. These small little things become a mystery. And that has just in two generations become a mystery.

Jenkins: And at that time, Remington . . . no one might have cared.

Smith: That's right. That is an interesting thing. So my mother then was raised in Henrietta, Texas. She was a school teacher. She had a couple of years at college. She came to teach school here in Wichita Falls.

Jenkins: Where did she go to college, do you know? In Texas?

Smith: I am trying to think. I can't remember. Isn't that awful? I can't remember where she went to college. She did not have a college degree. But, you know, a lot of teachers didn't have college degrees.

Jenkins: Did she teach before she went to college?

Smith: No. She taught afterwards. She even taught one year in Childress, one year in Joy, Texas, and then came to Wichita Falls and taught in the school system here.

Jenkins: Is Joy still around?

Smith: The little community of Joy is still out there.

Jenkins: Where is it?

Smith: It is south of Henrietta.

Jenkins: I probably have been through it, but I don't remember.

Smith: So, anyway, she came to Wichita Falls in about 1915 and met my father, and they married in 1916. My mother was born in 1888. So we have roots coming from Tennessee down to Denton to Wichita Falls. Then the other roots are from Georgia to Weatherford, Texas, to Clay County and then on into Wichita Falls. Now is this about the type of thing that you want, the background?

Jenkins: Yes, unless there is more that you know about and want to throw in, because we want you to get as much in here as you want.

Smith: Again, I do not know who my father's people were. He came from the Tennessee hills, so as far back as I can go is my grandfather. I can't go any further back. And it is too bad that we don't tell our children more.

Jenkins: Let's work up to your folks then and kind of follow you as you grew up and see what was happening to you and the territory around you as you grew up.

Smith: I was born here in 1919, August 25, 1919. I will tell you how I got my name. My first name is Davis, then Ikard, named after my mother's family, and of course, Smith. The Davis came from my uncle who was named Lee Davis. So they gave me a little tie with him. He was a very unusual man. He did not marry. He was a very unusual man with a tremendous personality and was considered a very bright man. And a little bit of a historical unusualness in that he went with a group of about 25 young men in 1915 to help the French government fight World War I before the United States government was in the war. He then stayed in France and then was discharged from the French army and joined the American army. My cousin in Washington has his French Army discharge papers, which were quite elaborate. Then after having been with the United States Army they sent him to the United States to help train the troops here. So he was on his way home when the war was over. It is most unusual and very sad that he was killed 10 miles from Henrietta in a train accident in which he fell off of the train coming home to see his mother and father. This happened in 1918, and I was born in 1919. I am sure that my mother wanted to give me part of his name to go on down the way.

Jenkins: What are your first recollections of life, the kind of home you lived in, the kind of heating and lighting, the kind of community that you lived in?

Smith: Being born in 1919 many things had already taken place, such as electric lights, the automobile, the streetcar.

Jenkins: You were born here?

Smith: Well, actually I was born in Colorado Springs because in 1918 my dad was able to send my mother up for the summer where it was cool. As my wife said, I can't imagine any mother going up to a strange doctor, but I was born in August in 1919 in Colorado Springs, and two weeks later came to Wichita Falls.

Jenkins: You were raised as a city boy.

Smith: Yes. Right here. My first recollection of being a person was about 1924 to 1929 when we lived at 2412 9th Street, which is on the west part of this town. We lived in a little five-room bungalow house. At that time my father had some reverses, and we were living in this very small home on 9th Street. But everybody else was doing the same thing, so it wasn't that particularly unbearable with children all up and down the block. We just had a great time. The streetcar went up and down our street, I remember that so very, very well. So I went through the first two grades of school here while living on 9th Street. I went to a little private school called Miss Annabelle Rutledge, I believe was her name there, and then went to the second grade at Alamo School. The building is still being used as an elementary school.

Jenkins: Public?

Smith: Public school. So in 1929 my father built a home in what is considered now the country club estates of Wichita Falls, and we moved into that. Then I went from the third grade to an elementary school called Ben Franklin, which is still being used as an elementary school. So then, of course, I completed my education in the public schools here in Wichita Falls, going on to junior high and high school right here.

Jenkins: Did you get involved in athletics, clubs, anything like that while you were in school?

Smith: It is probably kind of hard to remember exactly what all the different clubs and things that you were in, but we all tried to stay active in the school. I did not participate in any particular sports in the high school. None of my friends had cars. We still got around the city on bicycles, or walked. It was a pretty good life. We had lots of dances. We had lots of activities. It was just a good life.

Jenkins: The clubs, though, you don't particularly remember.

Smith: I don't remember any of those particular clubs.

Jenkins: As you grew up at that time, did you have chores at home or part time jobs or anything like that?

Smith: Well, you mentioned part time jobs. We always had chores, because you had to do things. Nobody else had any money either, so everybody was in the same fix no matter what area

of town you lived in. We lived in what was considered a little better part of town, and still my father took the bus to town in the morning. Even saving a little bit of gasoline when it was 19¢ a gallon was something. So in some of the summers I worked in grocery stores. I worked in picture shows, and they paid us 25¢ an hour. I just thought that was all kinds of money. Then in the summer of '36 I went to work for the City National Bank.

Jenkins: This was still while you were in school?

Smith: Well, I actually finished high school in 1936, and then I worked temporarily for them every summer when I came home from college at the City National Bank here in town.

Jenkins: So you were working for them part time while you were in . . .

Smith: College, yes.

Jenkins: Where did you go to college?

Smith: Where did I go to college. This was a real question back then: where to go to college, what do you do? My father had never been to college, and so was not a real help to help me select one. So finally I decided to go to a military school. On my own I went to New Mexico Military Institute at Roswell, New Mexico, for two years. Then in consultation with an adviser there I said that I wanted to go to a good business school. And he said that he thought one of the best in the United States was at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia at the Wharton School.

Jenkins: Let me stop you there. We will pick up at the Wharton School. While you were at Roswell, in the summers you would come back and work at the bank, did you get involved in anything in school out there besides making your grades?

Smith: Of course, naturally I made my grades and became quite involved in the military life. I was promoted several times in the cadet corps there and became what they called a commissioned officer in the cadet corps which, I am going to say, helped me two years later when World War II came along. Even though I did not have a full commission in the R.O.T.C. and only had two years of R.O.T.C. it was a tremendous advantage to me to have had those two years of life at the military school there.

Jenkins: Were there any clubs that you got involved in there?

Smith: I am sure that there were all kinds of science clubs and Latin clubs and things like that, but, my gracious, do you know how many years that has been? Well, at that time we had Paul Horgan, who has written many books, was an English teacher out there. So, you know, occasionally I see his work, and it brings back memories of the New Mexico Military Institute.

Jenkins: Did you do any part time work while you were there?

Smith: No. Everybody went to school there. There wasn't any time for part time work.

Jenkins: School and military.

Smith: School and military.

Jenkins: So you went to Wharton.

Smith: After two years of New Mexico, then in the fall of '38 I went to the University of Pennsylvania. During the summer of 1938, when I decided to go to the University of Pennsylvania, the only decision and the only requirement to go to the college was did you have the money. There were no entrance exams. If you had the money, I think that was primarily it. If you had the money they said, "Come on."

Jenkins: That is the way I got in.

Smith: I doubt if I could have passed some of these college requirements now. But anyway, I went to the University of Pennsylvania, which is the Wharton School. A little bit unusual, of course, coming from a military school and then going up there not knowing one soul or anything. But I thoroughly enjoyed it. At that time the University of Pennsylvania was a private school. It is not a state school. And in the Business School they did not allow women. Now, of course, women take all kinds of courses, but before the war it was strictly for men only. My four years of college I did not have a co-ed in any class at any time. Not that that helped or hurt, but it is just kind of unusual to go through college and never be around a co-ed. But anyway, the main activities that I did there, I learned to play handball, I learned to play that type

of game, having been introduced to it in that area of the country. They had the facilities at a place called Franklin Field, which is still the athletic field of the University of Pennsylvania. One of the little unusual things there, I saw Glen Cunningham run. He was the Kansan that had the burned legs when he was a little boy. He became quite a miler. I think his best time in World time then was about 4 minutes and 15 seconds. But now everybody runs it 3:50 or something like that. But anyway, we thought he was just a marvel, that could run that fast in the mile, in about 4:15 at that time.

Jenkins: Nobody would ever break that.

Smith: Oh, nobody would ever break that. You keep asking about clubs. One of the unusual things that I did while I was at the University of Pennsylvania was I joined the Mask and Wig Club, which is a dramatic club. At that time it was strictly an all-male cast, because in the Business School it was all male. But it was a professional type of musical production. We played on Broadway one week. We played in Philadelphia one week. Then during Christmas break we started in Boston and had a road trip clear around to Chicago and played in about 15 different spots, which was a real unusual experience to have by being on the road with a traveling musical group. It was just something, and occasionally I hear tunes and music that is

about that era, and I remember it. One of the fellows that was with us at that time as a student and played the piano and sang and everything, is a man by the name of Bobby Troupe. Now Bobby today is on Emergency on TV. You will see him on that. He is married to Julie London, who also is on Emergency occasionally. She was at one time married to Jack Webb, who recently died. So there have been a couple of paths crossed. We have crossed paths with him again in time gone by, all as a result of this one year when we did all these things with the Mask and Wig Club.

Jenkins: Did anyone play a woman in this?

Smith: Oh, yes. We all took parts. The singing and dancing and the whole thing was all males. Some of them were . . .

Jenkins: Played women's parts.

Smith: All of them, because there weren't any women because it was an all-male cast.

Jenkins: They didn't hesitate to act women's parts.

Smith: Oh, no. That was part of the deal. This is similar to, what is it, the Harvard Hasty Pudding Club, or something like that. Some of the eastern schools have these various activities. It was a great experience. Great experience. So I can say I was one of the few that danced on Broadway. So after leaving college in the spring of 1940, I came back to Wichita Falls not knowing whether I wanted to go

into the banking business, which I had been in for 4 years, or just exactly what I was doing. And during 1940 the war clouds of Europe were rumbling, and we were beginning to have the problems and thoughts of what was taking place in Europe.

Jenkins: Let me hold you now. We are going to get you back to the World War. I like to ask folks about their experiences, and recollections and feelings concerning the Depression of the '30s. Do you have any particular vivid, unusual. . .

Smith: The Depression started in 1930 and really hit its bottom in 1932 when Roosevelt came in and the banks were closed for two weeks. I really have no recollection of the banks being closed. Some of the things, yes, I can remember.

Jenkins: You were here?

Smith: Yes, I was here. Of course, being born in 1919 I was only about 11 or 12 years old then. So it is kind of hard to remember what it meant to your personal life. I do remember, kind of unusual, that we had a young lady, colored lady, that worked for my mother and lived at the home place. Of course, this was nothing unusual. She paid her \$5 a week. I remember the day she asked my mother if she could raise it to \$6 a week, and my mother said, well, she would have to ask my father. And I do not know the consequences. The lady stayed, so I don't know whether she got the extra dollar or not. But it just seemed kind of unusual. I remember one time that I wanted a pair of

boots. I remember that they cost \$5, and my mother said, "Well, I will have to ask your father." I was turned down, and I couldn't understand it. So even no matter what the situation was everybody in the early '30s were watching their dollars. That is about the best that I can remember, except the other way of life was the fact that we rode the streetcar. We rode the bus and didn't think a thing about it. We would just economize every way that we could.

Jenkins: At that age, though, you weren't conscious . . .

Smith: That there was anything different.

Jenkins: You don't remember soup lines . . .

Smith: No. I never saw them or anything that I can remember. And you won't find many people that do remember then. Isn't that right?

Smith: Well . . .

Jenkins: Unless they get much older.

Smith: Yes, that's right. And, of course, in many of the places around they didn't have them because they didn't feel the Depression.

Smith: I remember just a comment that during, it must have been around the winter of '30 or '31 that they were talking about the different robberies of the homes because of the economic conditions, the people out of work. People were stealing more. I remember hearing my parents talking about that and to be sure and lock the doors or somebody might break in and get something, see. I remember that.

Jenkins: And some people feel, depending again on their age, that the Depression had a significant impact on how they lived the rest of their life and did business. As far as you know that is no particular impact.

Smith: No.

Jenkins: Let's pick you up, then, at World War II.

Smith: As I said, we began to hear it and know about it, because some of my friends had gone the summer of '39 to Europe as an experience between their junior and senior year at college. And they came back with some vivid stories of military movements in both France and Germany. And also they picked up some survivors from a British passenger ship that was sunk in the summer of '39 that really started it all as they came back. Because there was not air traffic across the water, and they had to go by ocean liner. So this all made vivid impressions on us. Even in the colleges of the fall of '39 the Army at that time and the government offered pilot training courses to students, just to learn how to fly such things as a Piper Cub. They would teach you just to get your license, with the first little emphasis of starting young men to flying airplanes. And some of my friends took that course. I did not take it, but they took that course and learned to fly these little 65 horsepower engines and later flew the B29's, because I know which ones did it. This was the start. In

the start of '39 and '40 everybody was conscious of the turmoil and the uneasiness of Europe. Of course, this was some bit in my thinking of what I wanted to do, because in the summer of '40, you see, the draft was being proposed in Congress. You had to register the first of September of 1940. Then, being young and out of college, did I want to go into the Army and get my year over with, do I want to wait for the draft, what do I want to do? So this was quite a decision for me. I made one attempt to get into the Navy, and I was turned down because of poor color perception, which is being color blind, which I didn't know I had until I took a certain test. And then I attempted to get into the National Guard, the 36th Division. I was a little bit late getting in because they had just been nationalized and were getting ready to go to Camp Bowie, Texas, to Brownwood. I had a friend on the draft board, and he suggested that if I would go through the draft that he would get me with this division. Well, I did go through the draft in February of 1941, and joined the 36th Division in Camp Bowie at Brownwood, Texas. I spent most of the summer with this division in Bowie. Would you like for me to go on about my war experiences?

Jenkins: I sure would.

Smith: .When I joined the division . . . as I said, a friend of mine told me, "Go on down there and we will see what we

can do about getting you a commission." Well, actually he was unable to do that. Anyway, I made application soon after I was down there to go to an officer candidate school. And I was selected out of the division to go to Officers Candidate School in the first class after Pearl Harbor. So in December of '41 I was selected from the 36th Division to go to the Infantry Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia. So I left the 36th Division at that time and never rejoined them and took training at Fort Benning, Georgia, received my commission, stayed one year there after having received my commission as an instructor at the Infantry School. Then I spent approximately a year at Camp Blanding, Florida, as the training officer for infantry replacement troops, what we called. At this particular camp we took the draftees from civilian life and were able to train them in a period of 3 months and sent them out to the various divisions throughout the world as replacements. And this is how the divisions, when they had casualties they had to receive the men from someplace. We gave them 3 months training, and then they would join the divisions both in Europe and in the South Pacific. It was quite an interesting experience. Then in the summer of '44 I went back to Fort Benning, Georgia, and took my parachute training and stayed at the parachute school for about 4 months. In January of '45 I was sent overseas to Europe as a replacement officer

for a parachute division. I was assigned after some time to the 13th Airborne Division in Europe as a company commander. It is a little bit unusual that there were only 2 combat divisions in the entire United States Army: one in the South Pacific which stayed in Hawaii; and the one that I joined in Europe, the 13th Airborne Division, and neither division saw any action. So I happened to join the only division in Europe that did not see action. Some bit of an unusual situation. I know I brought people home that wouldn't have come home. It was just one of those unusual things of war, having gone in real early in 1941, when basically they were still wearing wrap leggings from World War I, and then never seeing action. And so this is just one of your unusual things of being in the war.

Jenkins: Well, to be able to serve and not get shot at.

Smith: Not even to hear a gun. Isn't that unusual?

Jenkins: It is unusual and very fortunate.

Smith: Yes, it was. Anyway, I stayed awhile with the infantry reserve here in the United States, and by 1952 I dropped my reserve status and have no longer been connected with the military in any way.

Jenkins: But you went off of active duty . . .

Smith: I went off active duty in January, 1946. Completed five full years, and retired with the rank of major.

Jenkins: And came home and started . . .

Smith: Came home. Okay, then after we got through with that I came home and decided that I would go into business with my father. Since he was born in 1881, he was then about 65 when I came back as a young man. So there were quite a few years difference in our age. I decided that it wouldn't be long, that perhaps I would enjoy it and no doubt would be able to run the company. So this is the decision that I made in 1946 to come back and join this organization.

Jenkins: You did that at that time.

Smith: And I did that.

Jenkins: Now, to the extent that you haven't already done this, give us your knowledge of the history of the company up to the point of your joining it, and then we will pick you up there and go on.

Smith: The best that I know of the company, it was established here in Wichita Falls in 1907. And in 1916 my father and two other men who happened to be brothers, Mr. Ernest Fain and Lamar Fain, purchased along with my father, the three men purchased the company from Mr. McClurkan in Denton. Then the three men here in Wichita Falls owned the W. B. McClurkan Company in Wichita Falls. And Mr. McClurkan owned the W. B. McClurkan Company in Denton. He died in the early '20s and sold his store to H. M. Russell & Company, and they changed the name of it to H. M. Russell & Company. Later on they dropped the name H. M.

and just became Russell's, which it is still today. They sold to the same people we sold to.

Jenkins: I see. I wasn't aware of that.

Smith: Yes. So then in the 1920's after World War I, Mr. Ernest Fain did not come back in the store, even though he was a part owner. He went into the oil business, and had a very successful and strong financial career in this area. Then he passed away in 1938, and his brother, Mr. Lamar Fain, joined his oil company and left my father with the operation of the store. In 1950 my father and I purchased the remaining interest of the store from Mr. Fain, and therefore we owned it entirely, my father and I, in 1950.

Jenkins: Had the nature of the store changed significantly over the years?

Smith: Oh, yes.

Jenkins: Up until that time.

Smith: Oh, yes. They came here, and the first store was started at 7th and Ohio Streets, which at that time was the center of town, that was even before automobiles were here in Wichita Falls, in a building about 50' x 100'. In 1923 my father improved it and wanted to expand, and he moved to the corner of 9th and Scott, which was then a little farther west and a little bit south of the original site, and made a very fine building. He added two floors and the size of it was 50' x 150', so it was a lot larger. He used very fine fixtures made by the Grand Rapid Showcase

Company. This was supposed to have been kind of a show-place of Wichita Falls. In 1923 this took place. All right, then we stayed in that location from 1923. We tried to keep it very modern. He was one of the first in 1936 to put air conditioning into his store. This was a very new added feature for a store where nowadays we think, well, if it is not air conditioned it is something old fashioned. Whether it is your home or business everything is air conditioned, especially in Texas. But anyway, we even modernized and improved that building as best we could until the year 1968. That is when we began to work on the establishment of the building we are now in.

Jenkins: Let's go back again to any knowledge you have of the company before you joined it in 1946. How about the nature of the goods? Did it change significantly? Was there an upgrading or anything over the years?

Smith: My father always liked to keep good quality merchandise. So actually there wasn't too much upgrading because he always handled fine merchandise. I can remember, though, that one of the largest departments was a piece goods department, what some people called yard goods. But anyway, many women loved to sew, they loved to buy material. He loved to have fine silks and fine woolens and this type of thing. And since the age of polyester you don't see any all-silks and all-wools like we used

to have. It has got a blend in it for the easy care of the machine washing at home that the wife does, where in the years gone by they always had the natural fiber materials.

Jenkins: Along with piece goods, did notions go along with those?

Smith: Oh, yes.

Jenkins: What were notions? A lot of folks don't know about notions.

Smith: When you use the word notions you hardly know what they were, but they were the very small things that go along with dress making. And the very small little things that go along with zippers and thread and things like that were what we considered notions.

Jenkins: I wonder where the label came from.

Smith: I never could figure that out either. You know, I think one of the dramatic things when we are talking about in the stores, a lot of people don't understand is the fact of men's hats. I notice you didn't wear a hat. You see my hat over there. I still wear a hat. But so few people even know how to put a hat on, let alone where to go buy one. You probably don't even own one. In the early days in the summertime, everybody wore a sailor hat. A lot of people don't even know what a sailor hat is. Do you know what a sailor hat is?

Jenkins: I think I do.

Smith: That is the hard, stiff brimmed, straw hat, and they sold them by the hundreds. Everybody wore one because,

supposedly, that kept the sun off of them and kept them cool, etc. Then in the wintertime they all wore a felt hat. And every Easter everybody had to have a new felt hat to go to church in. This was something that we kept stocked, I imagine 500 men's hats or more at a time. And now you can hardly go into a store and find a hat. You have to really hunt for some place. When I came back from the service in '46, two items that I saw that sold the most in '46. One was a man's hat, and the other was an item that they said you write under water with. It was called a ballpoint pen. This was the first time, and I am trying to think of the name that we sold those pens for. We sold them for \$12.50, and they would write for about 2 weeks and then they would run dry. And the idea was, this was the first introduction of the ballpoint pen as it is known today. It was the sorriest thing on earth, and I was trying to think of the name. Some fellow made a jillion dollars selling that ballpoint pen, came out with it. That was a very wanted item, and I don't know why anybody thought they had to write under water with one. But that was one of the selling features of it. Of course, nowadays there are all kinds of give-away ballpoints, etc. But those were the two items that I remember very well as having sold that first Christmas was men's hats . . . Everybody would come in and say, "I want to give my dad a hat. I want to give my boss a hat." If you don't know

his size, give him a little hat certificate. We put it in a little miniature hat box. They would hang it on the tree, then he would come in and get his own hat. But everybody had to have a hat. That day is gone. Nobody wears a hat now except some of us old ones.

Jenkins: How does the industry interpret that, how do they explain that?

Smith: They have often told me that it is the fact that during the war so many men had to wear hats and caps, and when they came home that was the only thing they wanted to do away with. They didn't want to wear a hat or a cap, and they didn't. They just quit buying them.

Jenkins: They got out of fashion.

Smith: Just got out of fashion. You know, another thing was the underwear that was worn during the war. A lot of men learned to wear T-shirts then, underwear T-shirts, and they still wear them because of what they did in the war.

Jenkins: Do you still find BVD's?

Smith: Oh, no.

Jenkins: No such thing.

Smith: No such thing as a BVD.

Jenkins: You cannot stock them.

Smith: Not that I know of, no. Of course, a lot of people don't even know what that is. Oh, no. So a lot of our fashion, a lot of our way of life does come from World War II: the

jackets, the battle jackets, all the different things, the loafers. That shoe you have on right there was the type that the military officers wore. That is where the design was.

Jenkins: The buckle.

Smith: The buckle, yes. I know that shoe. So many things come from World War II.

Jenkins: What about changes, say, in women's hats and whether they wear them? Has there been much change in that?

Smith: Oh, yes. Since 1945 there has been a tremendous amount of change. At that time a lady, a woman, would never go to church without wearing her hat. And nowadays if you see a lady in church with a hat on you say, "How old is she? What is she doing with a hat on? Something is wrong." One time this was a very big department for us, the lady's hat department, a big department, and was sought after by many millinery companies to lease. They would lease this particular department. It was so popular and it was a high fashion type of item that they would lease it from you. In other words they would lease space. They would sell their products, pay their own help, and then give you an override on the amount of business. And, of course, it has deteriorated to where it is strictly casual hats and that is about all. The biggest thing now that the millinery companies sell is wigs. You would be surprised

how many women wear wigs. And we still do a little business, and our department is still leased to a hat department. But 90% of their business is in wigs.

Jenkins: Is it as hard to find a woman's dress hat as it is to find a man's dress hat?

Smith: Just about. Just about.

Jenkins: How does the industry explain that?

Smith: Again, I guess it is the mobility of the woman that her lifestyle changed, and the way she did and the athletics that she went into and the new babies and all. It is just a different lifestyle.

Jenkins: Did the disappearance of the women's dress hat coincide very much with the disappearance of the men's?

Smith: Very much so.

Jenkins: So all dress hats just went out.

Smith: Just went out.

Jenkins: Is that right? While we are on the subject, are there similar things along the line?

Smith: The only similar thing is the way we live. Such as the air conditioning in the home, heating, and the cars are air conditioned and heated better. As a result we don't wear as many heavy clothes as we used to. I don't know whether you remember, but cars used to have a lap robe bar on the back seat.

Jenkins: A carriage robe.

Smith: A carriage robe. They always had a lap robe because there wasn't any heat in the cars, and you got cold. Of course, you don't see any of that anymore, anything like that. Many things are different: the way that we dress, the way we live.

Jenkins: How about topcoats? Are topcoats out?

Smith: This is the thing. A lot of men wear a little lightweight topcoat or they wear nothing just because they can go into their car from their house, open the garage door and out they go, and then drive to either a heated parking garage or inside parking garage and walk directly to their office.

Jenkins: Men's topcoats are not very big?

Smith: Not very big. And overcoats are nothing.

Jenkins: Oh, really? In this part of the country.

Smith: In this part of the country, yes. So it is a lifestyle.

Jenkins: There was a time, though, when you sold a lot.

Smith: There was a lot of time when you did that. You wore long handled underwear and did everything because of the way you lived. And it may have been that the '20s and the '30s were just a little colder, anyway.

Jenkins: That's possible, yes. Okay. Chronologically now you have entered the business. Let's watch the business grow and what is happening to it.

Smith: In 1950 we only had one location. Now soon after the war after I joined the company we began to hear the word

'suburban shopping'. Even in some of the very large cities of America they had not gone to suburban shopping. And by that I mean a shopping area away from the downtown part of the city. The first one that was really built of any size was the Bullocks-Wilshire Store away from downtown Los Angeles. Then the Highland Park Shopping Center was built before the war a little way from downtown.

Jenkins: Dallas?

Smith: Downtown Dallas. And those are the first two or three that we began to know about.

Jenkins: Highland Park was one of the nation's first?

Smith: One of the nation's first. That's right. So this is kind of the start. And then as towns began to grow and as people became not a 300,000 populated town but a 1,000,000 populated town, and as they began to go to the suburbs with cars instead of with the public transportation, people saw that they should have a suburban shopping convenience for them. So this was the start from the mid-50's to the early '60s, and there is a two-step phase of that, which is a little bit unusual. The first step is similar to the one like Highland Park.

Jenkins: That Highland Park was built about when?

Smith: Highland Park was built in the late '30s.

Jenkins: Oh, really?

Smith: So it was really one of the first innovative ideas to get away from downtown. The reason I say that there is kind

of a two-step thing there. The first shopping malls were either small strip malls or something similar to Highland Park, which they tried to develop a small city which is with streets and stores, and you can walk around that way. Well, there were several of these across the country. Then they decided that this was not the proper way. Along about between '60 and '65 they developed the mall, which is an enclosed shopping center. And this has taken many forms and has been developed many ways with what they call anchor stores, stores of various price lines.

Jenkins: Anchor stores?

Smith: Anchor stores. You might have 4 anchor stores that are the major stores and then have the smaller shops in between.

Jenkins: The anchors are Sears and . . .

Smith: The anchor of Sears and the anchor of Penney's, these type of things, see. They picked this idea up from Europe. You say, "From Europe?" The Galleria idea was developed from Europe, and this is the idea of having enclosed malls.

Jenkins: When was the first Galleria?

Smith: The first one that I know of was in Houston.

Jenkins: About when?

Smith: I am going to say it is around '65. It has been there some little bit. About 20 years ago or less time than that. So this is the new concept that everything has gone to. This has made a dramatic change. Of course, the next dramatic change in the way of business was the discount. We did

not get into the discount business. Of course, discounts first started with appliances, then they went to softgoods, then they went to everything. But we did not do the discount. So we have stayed strictly as a middle price point for softgoods merchandise for men and women, and in our business life we have stayed in that area.

Jenkins: In the higher range?

Smith: And from there up. There are many stores that sell much higher priced points than we do. We call it from the middle of the road up.

Jenkins: Until what year was there only the downtown McClurkan's store?

Smith: Back to Wichita Falls, we stayed in the downtown store until 1956. At that time it appeared to me that we had to make some move. The town was growing, and it was growing with a southwesterly way.

Jenkins: How big was it at that time?

Smith: When I came back from the service, about 45,000. In 1950 it was close to 60,000. Probably in '56 it was close to 75,000. That was growing. So we finally decided that we should make a move and go into a suburban shopping center. So in 1956 we heard that there could be a possibility of one of our competitors that would sell his location in Wichita Falls. The department store at that time had about 25,000 square feet. It was located in the Parker Square Shopping Center, and it was named "Cobb's." This company

was owned by some people from Lubbock, Texas. We approached them, they agreed to, and we made the purchase of their company. Overnight we got into the suburban shopping business.

Jenkins: Was that Wichita Falls' first . . .

Smith: This was their first shopping center. It had been established about a year when we made the purchase. So we then had two locations: the downtown operation and the suburban shopping center.

Jenkins: Did you do much to the facility itself?

Smith: Oh, yes, we changed it over the years and remodeled it. It has now gone from 25,000 to 45,000. It has completely been remodeled from one end to the other. So it doesn't even look the same, it doesn't appear the same. And you do this because departments change and the size of them change, such as we no longer have the piecegoods department. The cosmetics department has become very large. 20 years ago it was very small. Just as you mentioned, the ladies' hat department and the men's hat department all decreased. As the years change and the departments change you just make changes in your store to accommodate the public with what they want.

Jenkins: Are you doing some of that yearly, monthly.

Smith: It seemed like we were doing it all of the time. Yes, it is kind of a continuous process.

Jenkins: The store layout is something that you are always . . .

Smith: Always looking at. How can we change this.

Jenkins: Who is in charge of that? You?

Smith: Well, I was. I am not any longer. Oh, yes, we went into discussion with people, our buyers and our other people.

Jenkins: Did you have a layout person, layout people.

Smith: Actually when we began to get into a rather large situation, we would hire professional layout people.

Jenkins: From outside.

Smith: Yes, from outside the company. That is what you are getting at, yes.

Jenkins: For instance, would these be national folk?

Smith: They happened to be national people, but they were located in Dallas.

Jenkins: Who, for instance?

Smith: There were two companies that we used. One time we used the Adleta Showcase people down there in Dallas. And another one that we used was the Robert Young Associates, which is design engineers.

Jenkins: Adleta, of course, sells equipment, and therefore it is in the business of . . .

Smith: Of designing it and selling it.

Jenkins: What about the other one, do they do the same thing?

Smith: They design only, and then they work with you. As an example, one little instance about how merchandise is handled different was when this store was built in '69 and

we put in the most modern equipment, most modern fixtures to sell merchandise. And the day we moved in we found that certain merchandise was packaged different the day we moved in, and we had to buy some new fixtures. And that merchandise was the introduction of the packaged pantyhose. Up until 1969 over 3/4 of all of the hose was sold in the box with the salesperson showing the color and the texture of the hose to the customer with her hand showing through there. And in '69 the pantyhose came out prepackaged, and the customer would reach over and select her own package and buy it by the package. We did not have fixtures at that time to handle prepackaged goods, and within one month had to redesign fixtures to take care of packaged goods. Of course, almost 100% of your hose nowadays is sold prepackaged. They buy it in the stores, they buy it in the grocery stores, they buy it in the drugstores all prepackaged.

Jenkins: While you are on that, over the years what are some of the other really major changes in retailing?

Smith: I think one of the biggest changes in retailing is the method and manner of assisting customers in the selection of their merchandise. In years gone by all types of merchandise basically was shown to the customer piece by piece with the individual salesperson attempting to make all of these selections and show all of the customers

what is in stock, where today the situation is completely changed. We have taught our customers that they should in some way help wait on themselves and pre-select their merchandise. It appears that even from the lowest price point to sometimes even the highest price point, this concept of the customer pre-selection of their merchandise is a dramatic change. This is the reduction of personnel. There is a reduction of cost. As an example of what I am talking about, even Sears now has gone to a central cashier; you select your own merchandise; you take it to the cashier, and she rings it up. No longer does the salesperson ring it up and thank you and bag it for you and hand you your merchandise. Even in many fine stores you will see dresses and other things that retail from \$500 to \$1,000 hanging on a rack, and the customer will pre-select and say, "I would like to try this on. I would like to buy this." And it is still an unusual sight for me to think that everything now is going almost pre-selection. It is a dramatic change, and primarily it is because of the cost of the operation of the retail store. The employee cost has become so expensive that this is the way that we try to control it.

Jenkins: This undoubtedly, then, has had a huge impact of what the floor salespeople are, compared to what they used to do.

Smith: That is exactly right. We now hire people by lifestyle: meaning we will hire people lots of times when they can

work, providing it is working along our hours when the customers are there. We track now the foot traffic, and we know when the people are walking in the stores. So then we try to have the employees there to assist them during those hours. And then as the foot traffic drops off, the salespeople drop in numbers. This, again, also is called "lifestyle scheduling" and "lifestyle hiring". As a result you can not have a highly trained professional salesperson; therefore it becomes that the merchandise is displayed in such a way that the customer basically is pre-selecting, except for finding her size and perhaps trying it on. So if you will notice as you walk through stores, this has all changed. Now the merchandise is all hung with patterns all together. You see color coordinated so that when the customer walks in, "I like that style. There is my size." And then the salesperson says, "I will help you, and I will write the ticket." But you can get along without the oldtime professional salesperson that used to know everyone, keep a clientele book, call Mrs. Jones and say, "We have a new dress in for you. I think you will like it. Come down." This is almost passe.

Jenkins: What does this cause you, then, to look for when you are hiring this floor person?

Smith: Naturally you try to hire somebody that is intelligent, somebody that is aggressive and somebody that will speak to

the customer and say, "May I help you?" But the real problem is that you are unable to properly train and develop this person into a highly skilled salesperson like the ones you used to know, the ones that used to wait on you. It is a difficult situation, and we have depended on and have taught the customer how to wait on themselves. Part of this is also that a lot of women are working, and they have to go fast, and they say, "I want this right now." Another change that has come about because of the lifestyle, and especially of the lifestyle of the working person, is some of the extra services that we used to give the customer. One of them that has become, again, almost passe is delivery service. Many women used to always either call up and say, "Just deliver this." Nowadays the young people, and especially the working woman or even the woman in the age bracket of 20 to 40, she does not use the delivery service primarily because she is a woman on the go. She has her activities. She is not at home to receive it. Everybody is afraid of the burglars, and no one has help at home. So their homes are locked up. We can't deliver it. She knows that, so she either takes it with her, or she comes back for it. As an example we used to deliver 60, 70 and sometimes 150 packages a day just in the area here. Now we deliver twice a week only, and will deliver, perhaps, 8 or 10 twice a week.

Jenkins: During what hours?

Smith: Primarily the one we use, when we can find a college boy that gets off work at 12:00 and maybe he can deliver until 3:00 twice a week.

Jenkins: You don't have late-hour delivery.

Smith: We don't have late-hour delivery. We don't have any demand for it. This is another lifestyle change that has happened because of the working woman and the woman on the go and the insecurity.

Jenkins: So the few people who are asking for delivery are still those that are home. Is that right?

Smith: They are the elderly that have always used this or for some reason or another . . .

Jenkins: Wealthy.

Smith: Are the wealthy, that's right. It is a very unusual thing. And even in the small town of Denton I bet you have noticed a decrease in that service.

Jenkins: That's right. On sales personnel. What about turnover?

Smith: We have some of it. Especially when you start hiring in the age bracket of 20 to 30, because they are the ones that will get married and have babies, etc. Oh, yes, we have some turnover. It takes training and a constant looking and interviewing to keep your staff properly at a level.

Jenkins: Is it significantly different now than it was when these people were selling?

Smith: I don't think it is a whole lot different. Of course, we used to think that when somebody came to work they came to work when you opened and stayed with you until you closed that evening. There wasn't anything as short hours. Most of the people dedicated almost their lifetime to a job. This was another thing. This is what you are saying that a lot of people didn't come just to work for the summer or just for a year or two and move on. But we see people that, the husband, his job has moved him here. She worked in retail someplace else. She is good, so she will work a year or so with us, and then when his job is moved she will go to the next town. So, yes, there is some more transient help than we have ever had.

Jenkins: So you do have a lot of parttime . . .

Smith: Oh, yes. We use more parttime than we have ever used.

Jenkins: What about age groups? Do you look particularly for any age group?

Smith: Of course, naturally, we like the mature woman, meaning the age 35 up to 55. Many of them we hire from 11:00 until 3:00, especially at our downtown store, because that is the peak of the foot traffic. And they like it because they, maybe, have their own household to get ready for some reason or another, children getting to school.

Jenkins: That is all they want.

Smith: That is all they want, is parttime. And this suits them.

They can come home in the evening where their husband is. Pick up a few dollars during the day. So it works. It helps them, and it helps us. You see, when you work only 4 hours you normally don't have to provide a lunch period. You don't have to provide a coffee period. So it helps in many ways.

Jenkins: Do you have a judgement on the quality of this age group for what you want done, as opposed to a younger age group?

Smith: I don't think there is an opinion on quality. We, naturally, try to find as good a people no matter what their age group is. The more mature person seems to be the type of one that doesn't get as sick as often and seems to show up more often. We just prefer the more mature person if we can find them. We have some excellent young people, excellent young people. So there are exceptions to all rules.

Jenkins: Do you have any judgement about the buyers' response to these age groups?

Smith: No, I don't have any real judgement. One of the leaders of our salespersons, our top seller, is a lady 78 years old. Her mind is always on selling. She has been with us for about 35 years. So you can imagine this is her job, this is all she thinks about.

Jenkins: I was wondering whether, and again I am curious, I don't have an answer myself, even a guess, about the more mature women, whether you have a judgement in general that the

public responds to them better?

Smith: They like them real good. The sad thing about it is that as the more mature woman, really through in the 60's and the 70's seem to retire or something or other. We are having difficulty in replacing them with somebody that will stay through that age group. We are finding very few that will stay on through that age group.

Jenkins: Okay, let's drop back then and chronologically kind of work toward the Denton store.

Smith: Okay. You will probably say, "Well, what caused you to go into the Denton store?" It seemed like about every 10 years we determined that we had to make some kind of improvement and advancement in our operation, or we were financially able to. Such as in 1950 we purchased the remaining interest of the Fain interest out of our company. In the late '50s we purchased the Cobb store in Parker Square and expanded that. Then in the middle '60s and late '60s we purchased and developed the new downtown store, which is about twice as big as our other facility. So then in the '70s we began to think about other expansion. And the city of Wichita Falls did not grow in the period from 1963 almost to date, which is a period of 20 years.

Jenkins: Let me ask you, at no point, though, did you ever have more than 2 locations?

Smith: At no point did we ever have more than 2 locations in Wichita Falls. So with a non-growth town from '63 until

'75 we began to look to where we could expand and logistically control it correctly without additional personnel expense. And in looking we thought that 100 miles was about as far as we could extend ourselves. And in looking at this area this appeared to be the best place to go. We eliminated towns in Oklahoma, because we didn't think they were growing fast enough. Abilene itself was at that time a little bit overstored, and it was 150 miles. Childress to the north was 100, but it is so small. So the more we looked the aggressive growth areas seemed to be north of Dallas, which is the Denton area. And at the same time we were looking there we heard about the development of the mall. In making inquiries concerning that, we were able to secure space in the Golden Triangle Mall. We finally made our decision to put a store in the Golden Triangle Mall in Denton, Texas.

Jenkins: What kind of study did you make for that? Kind of eyeballing or what?

Smith: Well, of course, we went up and down every street in Denton. We looked at the surrounding towns to see what the growth patterns were. Then we felt, also, that if Sears and Penney's, those were the two main ones, if they were going to dedicate a large investment there, it had to be a pretty good traffic getter, the center.

Jenkins: Who made your study for you? You just kind of . . .

Smith: We did it ourselves.

Jenkins: Was a great deal, then, of your judgement really kind of faith in Penney's and Sears' judgement?

Smith: There was faith in Penney's and Sears' judgement, that's right. And then seeing the growth of the residential area in the southwest part of Denton, and the natural growth of Denton seemed to be good. I think Denton is a depression-proof area with the two universities there and being close to the Dallas area. And we felt like the competition in our level was not too fierce and that perhaps we could have an opening there. Our justification for the growth of Denton and for the success of the store came about 6 months after we had originally planned for it to come on. We thought after the first year it would grow dramatically, and it really took about 18 months for it to grow dramatically. This past year it has shown a dramatic growth in the Denton area.

Jenkins: It was a good thing.

Smith: It was a strong investment.

Jenkins: Now, a lot of the tales that came out of that thing, and the talk by the people that built the mall, was that they expected actually X number of years before the thing really started paying off. You knew of this.

Smith: I knew of this. We felt like in a year and a half that it ought to go, we ought to begin to not lose money. You

can't just go forever and lose money. We felt like in a year and a half, but really it was about a 2-year proposition before it really began to hit strong. The year 1983 should be a real money maker.

Jenkins: So no regrets about that?

Smith: No regrets. I think it was about the best thing I ever did.

Jenkins: In addition to McClurkan's there, do you have knowledge of how the other stores did that first two years, generally?

Smith: Generally, the best knowledge I had, in the year '82 up until about September when I was keeping up with the mall and everything, it was a very aggressive mall, and it was growing percentagewise in '82 strongly against '81. You might say that '81 was a very weak year. Well, yes, but it was still growing strongly against '82. It did not get to where it should have been in '82. And I am sure that in '83 it will be much stronger yet.

Jenkins: So their public pronouncement missed it a little, then.

Smith: Probably missed it a little, but they, as a percentage, are strongly growing in '82.

Jenkins: So the Denton mall is a winner.

Smith: Oh, yes, it is a good one.

Jenkins: Okay. What significant things do you need to say about the Denton store?

Smith: I think it is a little jewel. I think it was something that was needed for that area. It was very well accepted. We had a little difficulty in finding the style and the

price point for the Denton area. It was a little bit different from Wichita Falls. It took us 6 or 8 months to find exactly the type of customer we were looking for. As an example, we have here in Wichita Falls a section of our store called the large sizes or the custom sizes which are for rather large women. We put that type of merchandise in Denton, and it was absolutely a disaster. We were able, because of the way the store was laid out, to get it out real easy, and we are developing a children's department in that space. The dollars immediately went up.

Jenkins: You mean Denton doesn't have large women.

Smith: Apparently they didn't find us. I am sure there is some place, but they didn't find us.

Jenkins: Well, there was at one time a shop for large women in the mall.

Smith: I think it closed.

Jenkins: I think you are right. What about the staffing of that store?

Smith: It was not difficult to staff. We found some excellent young people. In fact, you mentioned young people. Of course, Denton, I think, is a young town. And we found some excellent young people, and we have staffed it with our supervisors. They have no buyers at this time. The buying was done in Wichita Falls with these buyers. But for selling supervisors that supervised not only for the display

and the sale of the merchandise and keeping up with the customers as well as the salesperson to see that everything was correct, we used young people. We were dramatically impressed with them, and thought that they were as good as we had anyplace.

Jenkins: Did you ship anybody down from Wichita Falls? You would go down there, but you were the only one from Wichita Falls?

Smith: I thought you meant permanently based.

Jenkins: I guess, really, that is what I meant.

Smith: No, as a permanent basis we did not move anybody from here. We brought people that we hired up to Wichita Falls, trained them and sent them back to Denton. Then our buyers were required to be in Denton one day every other week. So there was good contact and good communication between the stores that way.

Jenkins: Where did you get the people to run that store? Did you get them from experienced people from other stores?

Smith: It was unusual. We started with the Texas Employment Agency down there, and they gave us names. Then we advertised. They just came from here and there.

Jenkins: Were most of them actually living right there?

Smith: Oh, yes, right in that community.

Jenkins: You didn't have people driving from Dallas.

Smith: No, we didn't. We found them right there.

Jenkins: Did you get many from the small towns around?

Smith: Yes, a few from the small towns. Aubrey, is there a town named Aubrey around there?

Jenkins: Yes.

Smith: Several of them from there. There can't be very many because Aubrey is not very big.

Smith: Yes, but there is Pilot Point . . .

Jenkins: Yes, Pilot Point. So the people just came in from every place.

Smith: Do you have a judgement, perhaps there weren't enough of them, but do you have any kind of impression of the difference between people that you may have got from the 'small' towns as opposed to the 'big' town, Denton?

Jenkins: I don't think there was anything that we could spot that was entirely different. I know what you are leading to a little bit. You are trying to say that sometimes the small town people are harder working.

Jenkins: I have heard that.

Smith: You have heard that.

Jenkins: From various people.

Smith: We used to think that if we could find anybody from a German community that was an excellent type person to have. So I don't think so. Every one of them from the small community seemed to do good with us. Maybe there is something to it.

Jenkins: But the people from Denton did, also.

Smith: Yes, the people from Denton did also.

Jenkins: Have you had much turnover there?

Smith: We have had some, not a whole lot.

Jenkins: But just the usual.

Smith: Just the usual type thing. We made some mistakes in employment, and had to make those changes. We forced turnovers because we made the mistake.

Jenkins: Were they any different than you make in Wichita Falls?

Smith: I don't think so. Of course, we had to make so many quick decisions as to who we hired. You are liable to make a 10% or 15% error just in hiring 100 people.

Jenkins: That's right.

Smith: So we did make some errors. But we were well pleased and highly satisfied with the employment in that area.

Jenkins: Anything else particularly about the Denton Store before we go on?

Smith: I think it is a very well designed store. It is a well laid out store.

Jenkins: Who did the designing on this store?

Smith: The store was designed by the Robert Young Associates in Dallas. There is one thing that is unusual about it. The level of the mall there is multi-level, meaning that the slope of the ground the mall is on necessitates several stores being on different levels. This is not readily observable because it is done with steps and other things that make it very unnoticeable. In the original purchase of our property down there, we were 18 inches above the mall

level, which meant that in the mall entrance to our store we would have to have 3 steps and a handicap or barrier-proof entrance for wheelchairs. So to solve this problem of not having steps, we were able to buy approximately 50 feet in length additional space into the mall and extend about a 16'x20' width into the mall. Then we tilted that department about 18 inches, so that in the entrance-way it is on a slant. This is the entire cosmetic department. The fixtures were designed as such, and the optical illusion is so excellent that even vendor representatives have worked there as long as 2 or 3 weeks and did not realize that the floor was on a slant. Customers never noticed it, and it is one of the fastest and one of the hottest growing departments that we have, is the cosmetics which is the entrance into the mall, and it is on a slant. I don't know whether you have noticed it or not.

Jenkins: I don't recall it.

Smith: All right, the next time you are in look at that and you will see what was done. So many times a problem can be solved in various ways, and the designers did an excellent job on that.

Jenkins: Okay, in whatever way you want to, work us on up to today, and then I will go back and start doing some of my summary questions.

Smith: Okay. Our company, of course, started really to grow in 1956 when we purchased the suburban store in Wichita Falls.

And from that time on we were constantly borrowing money. We were constantly making money, but we had needs for lots of money in the expansion of the company which is the expansion of the accounts receivable inventory which necessitated large borrowing. Our concept was as we developed our stores, we thought the best way was to own our own property. I still am a good believer in that even though that does require indebtedness. The property that we have in Wichita Falls in the downtown area we own ourselves. We were able to purchase it under a rather good note. In a few years it will be paid for. Which means that it will be of good value without any rent, you might say, in the future except just taxes and insurance. The same concept we used in the Denton area. We purchased that property. So as we grew we also grew in liabilities, which did not bother us and still does not bother us because lots of companies have liabilities. I think the main thing is our business grew. My own personal situation was that I did not have successor-management in the family. And this was the real thing as the interest rates began to soar and as difficulties of the economy from 1980 on began to make it more difficult to operate a business. And since I did not have successor-management I decided that the thing to do was to either merger my company in with another one or to sell it so that it would be a wholly owned company into another larger

company. I did not think that I was old enough to completely quit working, so I have made an arrangement where I have a five-year contract back with the company and helping them in every way I can. This is giving me a little bit more free time, but it is also allowing me to work with the continuation of the growth in this company in any way possible. So I will be here five years as senior chairman of the board, and at that time I will be close to 69. I think by then I can ease my way out and do the personal things that you like to do when you get close to 70.

Jenkins: Do you have the option of retiring before then if you like?

Smith: Well, more or less. No, I do not have an option to retire, but I don't have to punch a time clock now, you know.

Jenkins: I see. We need to specify dates, etc. as we can.

Smith: All right, this, of course, has been in the back of my mind for about a year. And you can imagine the discussions in my own family were numerous in deciding 'do we or don't we' etc. So finally the decision was made. This process took about 6 months from the time I made the initial contact with the people until we made the final decision to merge the two companies.

Jenkins: You merged with what?

Smith: We merged with the people called the Dunlap Company. They are in Fort Worth. They had, at the time we merged with them, about 32 stores.

Jenkins: Tell us how widely they're operating.

Smith: They have stores from New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and I think there are one or two in Missouri.

Jenkins: Is their home Fort Worth?

Smith: Their home office is in Fort Worth.

Jenkins: Who was the founder?

Smith: Well, the founder of the company was a man by the name of Mr. Retha Martin. And he started in Lubbock, Texas. He has been in the retail business for many, many years. He is no longer living, and his two sons are continuing the management of this company and the expansion of it.

Jenkins: What did it grow out of, store name?

Smith: It grew out of the Dunlap Company. Since their name is Martin and a Mr. Dunlap was in the company at one time. It is my understanding this company literally started in Oklahoma in one of its small towns. It grew west with the expansion of the western movement. It started in Lubbock from there and then grew out of there. They have stores in Midland, Odessa, Sante Fe, Abilene, Waco, Wichita Falls, Denton and Fort Worth and Tulsa and many other small towns.

Jenkins: Is it their practice to always leave the company name like Russell's and McClurkan's?

Smith: Yes. Normally that is what they do. They have stores under the Dunlap name, and they have stores under the names of the companies that they purchased. Most of the stores

run autonomously, which means that they have their own buyers, their own credit department and their own operation. So there is not a centralized operated organization.

Jenkins: Remind me again of the dates of your actual sale.

Smith: The date of the actual sale was November 1, 1982.

Jenkins: Was this a stock swap?

Smith: No, it was for a cash dollar. Cash dollars and notes. It was a very complicated thing, but it made everybody happy. It was a combination.

Jenkins: This didn't make you a stockholder in . . .

Smith: No, I am not a stockholder in the Dunlap Company.

Jenkins: It wasn't a stock trade?

Smith: No.

Jenkins: Let's look over the years at how sales volume of McClurkan has changed over all of the years that you are aware of.

Smith: That I am aware of. Well, my first recollection of the sales volume of McClurkan was January of 1946 which was the actual, you might call it, the fiscal year of 1945. My father was determined that sales at that time would exceed one million dollars. He had never sold a million dollars in one year before, and he did it by going into the basement himself and taking from the basement the white sheets that were in big demand and bringing them upstairs and putting more on sale. He created a crowd just with that one item, and he exceeded in January so he could exceed his million

dollar total yearly sales. And that was the first figure that I had known. Every year since then our sales, except for one year which was the year 1980, we have increased over the previous year.

Jenkins: What happened to '80?

Smith: '80 was a little bit bad, and then we had unusually large sales in '79 as a result of the tornado when a couple of large department stores in Wichita Falls did not operate for about 8 months. And our sales were exceedingly large, and we did not quite make them again in '80.

Jenkins: I see. Is there anything of historical significance that you would want to mention about the tornado?

Smith: Oh, no, actually that was a most unusual thing. Of course, there was lots of tragedy. It was very extensive to our town. Of 150 employees, we had 27 that had total house destruction. So you can see that in every walk of life that this damage was extensive and really very brutal and very heart breaking to see many homes destroyed. As a result also of the storm was the total destruction of the J. C. Penney Company and the closing of the Dillard store for approximately 6 months as well as other parts of the Sike's Center. And because of this we had a very large volume.

Jenkins: Shortage of help?

Smith: No, everybody worked pretty good. We got along pretty good.

Jenkins: I mean the 27 who lost homes.

Smith: The 27, but you would be surprised how many of them came back. Within two to three weeks we had people back. It just worked out. People can take adversities and tragedies in their own lives and seem to work them out and go on. This is the history of people, they just do it. So these people did the same thing. They were building their homes back while working for us.

Jenkins: Did you have to seek additional parttime help because of volume?

Smith: Oh, yes. We had to find additional parttime help. We had to find additional merchandise. That was the main thing, to get the merchandise, because so many places did not have merchandise.

Jenkins: How did you manage that?

Smith: We made extra trips to New York. We got on the telephone and did everything we could to secure extra merchandise. The year '79 was a very, very high volume, successful year.

Smith: Neither one of your stores was touched.

Jenkins: Neither one of the stores was touched.

Smith: We have talked about various locations. Has there ever been a McClurkan label on anything? Have you had private labeling of any kind?

Smith: No, we did not have private labels. We discussed using a private label, but having developed one ourselves, we have not.

Jenkins: How about an indication of sales growth.

Smith: The total sales has steadily grown from 1945 of about a million dollars to approximately 9 million dollars in '81. And our estimate for '82 was approximately 10 million dollars. I think it is significant to say also that this is about 1/10th of the size of the Dunlap Company. So it is rather large. They had 32 stores, we had three. So, again, that is 1/10th of what they had. And in many ways our size is about 1/10th of what they were. We thought it made a nice merger.

Jenkins: How about the comparison of Denton sales with Wichita Falls sales?

Smith: Of course, the Denton store is not as large as the Wichita Falls stores combined; so therefore it did not reach the size of the volume of the Wichita Falls stores, except I will say that in the times of the slow economy, which we have all suffered somebit in the year of 1982, that the Denton store has made a dramatic growth and is increasing over '81 at the rate of about 40%.

Jenkins: Could you speak to the percentage of total sales that is Denton sales?

Smith: Oh, yes. I can tell you exactly the total sales which is Denton sales. Out of the company, they will do about 30% of the total sales of the company.

Jenkins: So the addition of that jumped total sales of McClurkan?

Smith: Oh, yes, it is a considerable improvement.

Jenkins: Okay. You have got 3 locations and Denton is doing approximately a third.

Smith: That's right. This year it is beginning to pull its weight.

Jenkins: Profit-wise, how about . . .

Smith: Actually that is a little hard to say because their rent cost being in the building that they are in and their high interest rate, their rent cost is higher than any place else. But they are beginning to break out and to give money back to the corporate headquarters, so they are helping.

Jenkins: You say you are buying that property.

Smith: The corporation owns that property.

Jenkins: Of the mall.

Smith: No, where the McClurkan store is.

Jenkins: Right, you will own that.

Smith: The McClurkan's Company will own that. I don't own McClurkan's, but the McClurkan's Company owns that.

Jenkins: So that will eventually not be so high.

Smith: That's right. Again, it is a level of payment due to the lender. It is a level payment to the lender for the property. So as the sales go up the percentage cost of the rent comes down.

Jenkins: Someone was telling me a guess of what they thought was an outrageous square foot rent of the Denton mall. Can you tell us about that?

Smith: I do not know what it is. It all depends on the size of the space, the location.

Jenkins: But you didn't go through that, you bought.

Smith: We bought and built. So we own the building and own our own land.

Jenkins: Okay, it just happens to be in the Denton mall.

Smith: It is in the Denton mall. There are four other people just like that.

Jenkins: Explain that to us.

Smith: Okay. Dillard's, Sears, Penney's and Montgomery Ward all own their property and their building. They join and assist in mall operation, but they pay no rent. They own their own property. The developer did not have to put money into that property or build those buildings. He only put money into the inner core and he feeds off of the foot traffic of the larger anchor stores to help him charge more rent, which he has to have.

Jenkins: How about the growth in the number of employees over the years?

Smith: Oh, well, naturally they have done just like the sales. We used to have 30 or 40 people with one store. And now with the 3 stores we have close to 200. So, you know, you go from 1 million to 10 million close, you go from 30 people to close to 200 and some-odd people. It goes hand in hand.

Jenkins: How about financing over the years?

Smith: We have used strictly bank for our operation purposes, and Southwestern Life Insurance for our property financing.

Jenkins: How about the organization structure as it grew? When and why did you do what you did?

Smith: Of course, when we started out we didn't have a structure, didn't have a table of organization. And as we grew we finally decided in working with universities because that was the only place that we knew to go to work with, the people in the business schools and say, "How do we develop a table of organization?" And we were assisted by some of the universities around in this area. In fact the business school in the University of Texas at San Antonio, there was a gentleman down there that we found out about. He helped us. So over the years we have used some people from the University of Texas at Austin. We have developed into such things as merchandise managers, divisional merchandise people, various financial people, operation people. So we have done just like many stores, have developed a table of organization for responsibility flow. We can draw it on a piece of paper now just exactly how everything works.

Jenkins: Is yours quite typical of your . . .

Smith: Yes, I think it is very typical.

Jenkins: Nothing particularly unusual.

Smith: Unusual about having a responsibility of line.

Jenkins: Over the years the type of ownership, how long has it been a corporation?

Smith: It has been a corporation since 1916.

Jenkins: Has it been almost exclusively McClurkan owned?

Smith: Yes. It has been family owned except for slight changes in the family until 1950 when the Smith family purchased it from the Fain family, the remaining shares.

Jenkins: But the day before you sold, it was strictly McClurkan's.

Smith: That's right. In 1982 we did have a small minority interest. They sold their McClurkan stock at the same time.

Jenkins: Dominantly McClurkans.

Smith: That's right, and the Smith family when you say that.

Jenkins: Smith family.

Smith: Yes, that owned the majority of the McClurkan stock.

Jenkins: Yes, okay. Not just you personally.

Smith: That's right. My family. Myself and my children.

Jenkins: Now to what extent has the family been involved in the running of the business? Are you it?

Smith: I am it.

Jenkins: You have never had family involved.

Smith: That is one of the decisions in deciding to sell, was the lack of successor management in the family.

Jenkins: Who have been your biggest competitors over the years?

Smith: The biggest competitors, of course, have been people who have had similar types of stores such as Perkins-Timberlake and many other small specialty shops in this area.

Smith: How do you feel about your share of the market? Maybe we

will separate Wichita Falls from Denton.

Smith: Oh, yes. Well, of course, it took us a long time to get a share of the market in Denton. We think we are getting our share of the market in Denton now, and we think we are the dominant retail force in Wichita Falls.

Jenkins: That is what I was after.

Smith: We think that we are the dominant force in Wichita Falls in softgoods. Sears and others place more furniture and sell more hardgoods, but we think we are the dominant softgoods people.

Jenkins: What you do, you feel that you are the big one.

Smith: Yes.

Jenkins: Okay, I am at the end of a section, if you feel we are through for the day, we will close it off.

Smith: It is 5:30, I am afraid . . .

Jenkins: Before we move on I want to ask you one other thing. What seems to be the future of not necessarily just the McClurkan's downtown Wichita Falls but of other similar retailers downtown?

Smith: That is an excellent question and one that has been given lots of thought. Twenty years ago the Wichita Falls downtown area was a very dynamic retail oriented business district. At the present time the retail business has moved to the suburban area, and it is not a strong retail center. It is becoming a commercial, financial and strong in those areas, and it will never recover the strength and the importance of

being a retail center again. Yes, it will always have some retail business, but it will not have the energy, it will not have the activity it once had. One of the reasons for this is, of course, the convenience of the suburban shopping center. One of the reasons we will always have some downtown business is because there are large office buildings that employ people that do like to shop in the downtown area. Some out-of-town people always like to drive downtown. It is just their habit and their way of life. And then the retail store of Sears has a longterm lease. It is my understanding that they are very happy with their location here in downtown. This is some bit of a drawing card and an extra strength to maintain what we now have so it will not further deteriorate. The actual retail corner of downtown has moved from 9th and Indiana of 20 years ago to 10th and Scott. And it is at this corner that now has the three major stores of Sears, McClurkan's and the S&Q, or better known as the Hub.

Jenkins: And as you see it now, the future still is . . .

Smith: We feel like activity will remain in the downtown area, I see, centered at this particular intersection. And the growth and increase of business here will be slow, it will not be rapid, but I think it has a firm base and will always be reasonable and profitable.

Jenkins: You don't anticipate the downtown McClurkan's moving.

Smith: I do not anticipate it moving.

Jenkins: In terms of selection of managers, what do you look for?

Smith: We always look for good people.

Jenkins: How do you define good?

Smith: Well, we try to find people that have an understanding of the retail business, that like other people, that like customers, that have a desire to stay in this business and not move to something else. These are some of the points that we look at, trying to find people that will be with us for a good long while.

Jenkins: Do you have a tendency to promote from within?

Smith: Yes, we have a tendency to promote from within, and we have done both. We have promoted from within and have developed some excellent people. Then we have also gone to the outside to bring people into our organization that will have knowledge that we desire that they can bring something to us.

Jenkins: Do you have your own training program?

Smith: At the present time we do have our own training program, but since the new management they are going to train in a different way, and they will not use our training program, and so it can be a different viewpoint in the future on how to train.

Jenkins: In terms of employees' benefits, do you kind of cover the waterfront?

Smith: We, I think, do normal employee benefits. It is a very well

accepted fact that most employees should have a hospitalization plan. This is almost universal. We have a small dental plan. We had a profit sharing plan for our employees. And then we have a sick benefit for them. And most of these other large employers also have.

Jenkins: Have you ever been involved in a union?

Smith: No, we have never been involved in a union.

Jenkins: And don't anticipate?

Smith: Don't anticipate.

Jenkins: Speak of your advertising approach and methods.

Smith: We at the present time have three people in our advertising staff. Of course, we have to develop an image because we know that people move to town who have never heard of our company; therefore our advertising has to be strong and consistent so that when a newcomer comes to our store and they are a guest in our store, we hope that they have a pleasant experience so that they will come back. Many new people coming to the city have heard of Sears, have heard of Penney's, or Dillard's, but have not heard of our company. We think if we do a better job in advertising that not only the newcomer but the one that has been here for a long time, that has supported us for the last 25 to 30 years, will continue to shop with us.

Jenkins: What media primarily do you use?

Smith: We use primarily the newspaper, some bits of TV, some bits

of radio in that proportion. But 85% to 95% of our business is in the newspaper.

Jenkins: How wide an area do you feel you draw from, geographically?

Smith: We know we draw from about 35 miles south, go up about 60 miles north of us above Vernon, some into southern Oklahoma, just where the newspaper goes. Of course the TV goes in that area some, too. The southern Oklahoma people have a tendency to drive this way rather than go to Oklahoma City, which is a little farther.

Jenkins: Government regulations, have you ever had a brush with OSHA?

Smith: No, have never even had an OSHA person walk into the store. We try to keep current with all of the requirements. Even if they did we don't think we would have any particular problems.

Jenkins: How about EEOC?

Smith: Never had a particular problem with anybody.

Jenkins: Let's get into this kind of last section now. Your present role in the company is what?

Smith: My title is Senior Chairman of the Board with the primary responsibility of public relations, and assisting the new owners in the continuation of operation of the organization here so that it will be strong and viable and continue to grow as it has in the past.

Jenkins: Is there such a thing as a typical day for you?

Smith: The changeover has been rather recent, so I don't know whether I can say I have had a typical day. I have sometimes

felt that I have finished at 3 o'clock and somedays it seems like I can't wait to get down here the next day leaving at 6 o'clock. Right now I haven't found a typical day.

Jenkins: Now you personally have sold the business, but you are still very active and have a contract for several years. Do you have any particular plans or visions for the future of the company?

Smith: Just for the further expansion of the company I do not. Naturally I would like to see this name continue for many, many years. I hope to build this into a strong organization, help the new owners to build a strong organization. And it is possible that in the future that they may allow us to absorb some of their stores with our name and become a larger part of their organization. If that takes place, I am glad to work on it and help with it.

Jenkins: McClurkan's is a very old and obviously a very successful company. Do you have anything in mind as to why they have been successful, the company and your personal life as they are tied together?

Smith: We have tried to operate our business in a normal, correct manner that retail stores have practiced over the many years, and as a result of good practices we have been successful over the years. And there came a time when we did not find management that wanted to continue on in our own family, we felt it was time to merge it into another company.

Jenkins: In terms of how you have attracted enough people to buy from McClurkan's.

Smith: We have used, as I said, what we think are sound, good, business practices that many retailers across the state and across the nation have used. We have been to many conferences. We have listened. We have tried to be modern in our thinking, in accounting, and in our operation. And, of course, we have always tried to encourage our sales people to make the customer feel at home and make their shopping a pleasure so that they will come back to see us.

Jenkins: Have you ever felt a uniqueness of McClurkan's? If so, can you crystallize that?

Smith: I don't know whether maybe it is a uniqueness, but we feel like since we basically are right here in Wichita Falls we get involved in many local activities. We have a good name and public relations. And from that viewpoint many people know us. We support activities and hope that maybe in that way it helps to have a continuity with the retail environment.

Jenkins: Over the years what has been your personal involvement in the civic, community and, say, trade associations?

Smith: Let's take trade associations first. Our company has been rather active with the Texas Retail Federation, which is an organization made up of retailers in Texas that work with and advise the State Legislature on retail problems. And from this viewpoint we have been quite active and have attended many sessions. I have been a past president of the

organization. We think it has been a very necessary part of the retail of Texas to have a strong organization, and we have supported it financially as well as actual work in it. I have also worked in some of the national organizations, attended many national seminars. At the present time I am on the American Retail Federation Board which is in Washington D.C., and is made up of 50 retailers across the nation. I happen to be the smallest on the board, but most of them are represented by the chief executive officers of Sears, Penney's, Carter-Hawley-Hale Company and other organizations like that. And our primary purpose is, again, to assist and advise members of Congress as well as other retailers as to the political activities that could affect retail through legislation. I have been involved in that quite a lot. Also I would attend many seminars and tried to keep our company modern as to the way other companies had done. Now would you like to know a little bit about my civic activities?

Jenkins: Yes.

Smith: Okay. Naturally I have been involved, like many people, in a civic club. I have been a member of Rotary about 25 years. I have stayed quite active in my church and United Way. I have been on a bank board here in town. I feel that all people should be involved at least in two areas: that is in your church and in United Way. From there on I tell my employees, "You can be active in any of the other

activities that you want to, but I think you should support those two." Our company is a strong believer in the United Way, and all of the employees participate, and a high percent of them do participate under the fair share program. We are real proud of that. I have also been on the Board of Regents of our local university. I have also been president of the local school system for a number of years. So, yes, I have been involved in many of the activities, and I have supported many of the bond issues that have been put on in Wichita Falls. So in every way over the last 40 years that I can I have supported what I felt was good for Wichita Falls, and I hoped that it would in some way make this a good place to live.

Jenkins: What are some of the highlights of your school board tenure?

Smith: Well, I really think one of the things that was important the whole time that I was on the school board was that I was president of the school board at the time that full integration of our school system came about. This was a very strong change. It was a difficult time for people to understand. A very difficult time for both teachers and students to work and to make work. But I felt that our decisions in pushing for this was sound, it was the modern way to do, and was necessary even though there were many hard feelings concerning integration in our school system.

Jenkins: Did you feel in any way that this had any effect upon your business?

Smith: At one time I thought maybe it might have. In fact at one time there was such a strong feeling that a group of people . . . I heard this, that a group of people got together and discussed whether they should boycott our store because of integration. And, of course, that was not carried out. In a very few months, 6 months or so, especially after the federal courts further ordered the school system to make further integration then it seemed to be that it calmed down, and everybody went back to teaching children. And this is the way it has been.

Jenkins: Are there any other highlights of any of your civic, community, trade association things that you have been in?

Smith: Oh, of course, there are lots of things. I have been president of the local Chamber of Commerce here. I have helped on many of the big bond issues. At one time I was personally involved in a city bond issue and a school bond issue, and we were able to pass both of them in the same summer. Of course, looking back . . . that was about the year of 1966. Looking back the investment we made then both in the city and in the way of roads and improvement there by way of water distribution, etc., in the city, because of inflation, more than paid their way. And at the same time we built a tremendous football stadium under that bond issue of '66, and it has been a very strong asset for our city. As you know the Pioneer Bowl of the small colleges is played

here in Wichita Falls each December. This is the national champion. Not only do we use it for all of our school system, but it has been a strong asset for our city, plus the other school buildings that we built in '66. So I was real proud of the fact that we got two bond issues passed the same year in our city.

Jenkins: Other than running McClurkan's, have you been involved in any side ventures over the years that you have lived here?

Smith: Oh, basically this has been 9/10ths of my activity. But I did have a side investment of a ranch in south Clay County for 15 years. When I was much younger, why, we were able to operate a 2,000 acre commercial steer ranch down there. We made some money out of it. It was a very unusual set-up which gave activity to my family and everybody else's. We thoroughly enjoyed it.

Jenkins: Did you get to get out and play cowboy yourself?

Smith: Oh, yes, I was down there at least 2 or 3 times a week. We thoroughly enjoyed that activity.

Jenkins: What are your reading habits?

Smith: That is a good question. I always try to keep some book going, or maybe two or three books going at the same time. I read some of the new books. I just recently read some of the new books on Lyndon Johnson which was most revealing his life. Also I have decided to re-read a lot of the Civil War books and to see . . . again, to understand what took

place in that time. So at the present time I am re-reading some of the great books on the Civil War.

Jenkins: You kind of lean toward historical things.

Smith: Yes, I do lean toward historical things. I very seldom read novels, but I always try to keep something going. Naturally I keep up with all of the current weekly periodicals and the newspapers. I always keep some historic book going.

Jenkins: Is this, as far as your own feeling or thought, pure pleasure, or do you have any feeling that this might have had some impact on the way you run a business?

Smith: I doubt if it had any impact on the way I run a business, but it is just something that you like to do.

Jenkins: What are your feelings about retirement? Do you look forward to it? Do you dread it, do you not want to, or what?

Smith: Of course, naturally, I think we all want to stay active. I have been reading where even some of the great men go up to 80 years old or more and are still active. I hope to stay active for many, many years. After my contract with the company I may take up another activity. Maybe consulting with retailers in the state of Texas, helping in mergers, or assisting in many ways. I am looking forward to maybe seeing a different viewpoint on my activities in the future. But I will stay active.

Jenkins: You don't intend to sit on the porch.

Smith: I am not going to do that.

Jenkins: I know in the business you obviously have traveled very widely on business purposes. Other than that, what kind of time do you take off, have you taken off?

Smith: I have taken off very little time in the last 20 years. In fact I would imagine it would not add over 3 or 4 weeks for the entire 20 years that wasn't business oriented away from the city of Wichita Falls. We look forward to taking a few trips. We don't know exactly where we are going to go this summer, but we may spend some time in Florida this summer. We haven't been over in that area.

Jenkins: You are going to start vacationing.

Smith: We are going to start taking two and three weeks at a time.

Jenkins: But you haven't done that.

Smith: I haven't done that in 20 years.

Jenkins: Just too busy, or do . . .

Smith: Since I was traveling so much for the business there wasn't any particular reason to travel again. We had students in college. We had other responsibilities at home, so we just didn't do it.

Jenkins: I have covered my outline, but we always like to say this is your history and your interview. If there is something that I should have asked you and didn't, something that you feel like you would like to say that I haven't covered, now is the time to do it.

Smith: You have mentioned a lot about the roots of my life, and I would also like to say that my wife had very similar roots

even though she is some younger than I am. Her parents and grandparents were basically oldtimers here in this area. Her grandfather on her father's side came to this country as a very young man in 1881 and was a working cowboy for wages in 1881.

Jenkins: His name?

Smith: His name was George Myers and he lived in Jolly, Texas, which is a small community out there. She was born here in Wichita Falls. Her first few years she lived on a ranch near Jolly, Texas. Her grandparents on her mother's side were also oldtimers here. Their name was Mr. and Mrs. Nolan. They basically came from Tennessee out this way. She has strong roots here as well. Oh, I would like to just say this one comment: She and I both, even though she is some bit younger, have helped to celebrate the birthdays of Wichita Falls, and we are one of the few that have been active in celebrating the 50th anniversary of Wichita in 1932. We were active in celebrating the 75th birthday in 1957. And then in 1982 we were active again in the celebration of the centennial of our city. So we have been quite active in city affairs.

Jenkins: All right, anything else you would like to add?

Smith: I think that about covers it. I appreciate your coming up here today.

Jenkins: Thanks a lot. I have enjoyed the interview and the history of the area.