

(Tape 1 of 2)

An Oral History Tape Transcription

Of

Interviewer: Martha Mayo

Interviewee: Blanche Duplantis

August 18, 1986

MM: Sterling Municipal Library. I'm having an oral history conversation with Blanche Duplantis.

MM: You arrived here, and did not find an Episcopal church?

BD: Right. Um-hmm.

MM: And so, what did you do?

BD: We immediately decided to get a group together of Episcopalians that were living in this area.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: And, uh, found out that in 1918, a petition had been made by some people who lived here at that time for, uh, recognition as a congregation. And there were not enough here at that time to bring a priest in charge, so we were giving the courtesy of priests from surrounding areas.

MM: Oh. Did you have just various ones, or the same ones?

BD: Yes. Uh-huh.

MM: Oh.

BD: No, not, not all of them. [Inaudible]

BD: The, uh, Archdeacon, Weiling, was conducting most of the services at that time. And he served during several years in the old YMCA building in Goose Creek, and in the First Baptist Church in Goose Creek. And in various homes. And then in 1923, the 14 local Episcopa-, heh!

MM: (Laughs)

BD: Episcopalians petitioned the Bishop to establish a mission. And this was done, and the members of this group were: Mr. and Mrs. Walter L. Terry; Ms. Elsie Duke; Ms. Maribelle Duke, who is still alive; Ms. Mary Ropa; Mrs. Anna Wright; Mrs. Gordon Lilli; Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe Zuerlein; Albert J. Rich; Ms. Blanche Dickson, now Mrs. Duplanits; Ms. Olive Dickson, now Mrs. Doyle; Harold Halsey, Sr.; Howard Humphrey, Sr. And, uh, as I've just said up there, three members of this group are still alive and living in Baytown. And going to this church. And, uh, the, uh ... first meetings were conducted in Mr. Terry's office. And this was in the building located on Commerce Street across from the Southern Pacific Depot. Mr. Terry had a real estate company, and, uh, each Saturday night the Dickson girls and some others would transfer the office into a church using a small wooden altar that had been given to the church, handmade, by Reverend Thomas Summers and Reverend Charles Summers of Houston. We had folding chairs, we had homemade kneeling benches, and an organ. Small. Had to be hand-driven. It was given by the Duke family. Uh, then from 1923 to 1927, Reverend Eugene Clark served as a rector, both in Goose Creek and Sour Lake. As the congregation grew, services were moved to larger facilities. The majority being held in either the Humble Community Building, or the McElligott Building in old Baytown. In 1923, the Women's Service League of the church presented the, "Crimson Coconut," the first of a series of plays, bazaars, style shows, and other functions put on by this group for the benefit of this young mission. An interesting note is that in 1923, the Reverend Clark baptized Harold Halsey, Jr., the first male child born in Baytown.

MM: Oh. You ...

BD: Together with a group of 20 others.

MM: He was the first male child born in Baytown? You're not talking about just male Episcopalian?

BD: Um-mm, um-mm.

MM: Is that right?

BD: He was the first male child born in Baytown.

MM: Is he still here?

BD: No, he's in Midland, Texas, now. But he lived here until he was an adult, and his father was working for Ex-, uh, Humble at that time.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: Exxon now. And, uh, Harold, Jr., is still working for Exxon in Midland, Texas.

MM: My goodness!

BD: Raised his family there.

MM: Do you know who the first female child? Oh, you're going to ...

BD: Also in 1923, the first church school program was begun with supplies and monies sent to the mission from the Church of the Holy Comforter of Cleburne, Texas, which was our church.

MM: Oh.

BD: That's where we came from.

MM: Oh.

BD: The Dickson girls.

MM: Girls. Uh-huh.

BD: Sunday school was held in the old YMCA building located at the corner of Defee and Jones. That was across from Grace Methodist Church.

MM: Oh, ok.

BD: Uh, Roscoe Zuerlein was the first church school superintendent and served until 1930. In 1924, the Reverend Clark baptized the first girl born in Baytown.

MM: Oh.

BD: Jessie Humphrey. Along with a group that also included Albert Fanestiel, and Eugene Lovering, Sr. Also in that year the Reverend Clark celebrated the first wedding of the Baytown mission. And on September the 14th, he married Isleta Spurlock of Cedar Bayou, and Connie Swain of Goose Creek. This couple is presently residing in Baytown on Mockingbird Lane. Now this is part of the old history. Since this was written, uh, Connie has died.

MM: Oh.

BD: But Isleta is still living here. In fact, I had a visit with him not too long ago. Then the Reverend R.M. Douglas served as the mission priest during '28. And in '29, Reverend Lawrence L. Brown came here as the priest in charge. He not only had our little mission, but he had one in Harrisburg, Houston.

MM: Yes. Oh.

BD: And he divided his time between the two of 'em. We remained a mission until 1936. And then is when we became a full-fledged parish, or church. 1936.

MM: What did it, did it take to ... to move you from being a mission?

BD: Your ability to support yourself.

MM: Oh, ok. You didn't have to have a budget of a certain amount? Or ...

BD: Well we did – yes, you had to present a budget and prove that you can, uh, fill that budget adequately in your own parish to become, uh, a sustaining church.

MM: That must have been a big moment to move from mission status to your own.

BD: It was terrific! You think we'd worked till – let's see, from '23 to '36.

MM: Oh.

BD: That's, uh, 13 years you'd worked diligently. And that's why we had to have so many bazaars and everything.

MM: Yeah

BD: So we had to prove that we could, and that we had, uh, enough members in the church that were more or less ...

MM: Were gonna be there.

BD: Resident. Uh-huh. That they would be here. Uh, in 1930 – I believe it was 1930 – George Walmsley, Sr., became superintendent of our Sunday school. And he stayed, he was Sunday school superintendent for many, many years. Then in 1931, we organized our first choir, and it was boys and men.

MM: Oh.

BD: And, uh, I happened to be the only woman connected with it cause I played the organ. But other than that, it was all boys and men. And then, uh, in 1933, we had a very horrible disaster: the church was struck by lightning. Completely destroyed by fire because it had been so securely locked that, until it burst the windows out and smoke started billowing out, no one knew that there was a fire.

MM: Oh.

BD: So it was completely destroyed. But we got busy. That was in June. And in December, Christmas Eve Service, we were back in our little church.

MM: Hmm.

BD: A very simple service.

MM: Oh.

BD: A dedication was held by Bishop Quinn then in February of '34. With confirmation of about eight young people.

MM: Oh.

BD: But it was ... we, we surely did work hard.

MM: I bet you did.

BD: In that length of time. Six months. We got things back – course the foundation was there.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: And could be used.

MM: But, still.

BD: [Inaudible] (laughs) Uh, then, uh, Lawrence Brown resigned his post as head of the mission in 1934, and went to another parish in Longview.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: And then we had a Reverend George Provo in May of 1935. And he stayed for just a couple of years. Uh, as I said, we became a full-fledged church in 1936. And, uh, it was on January the 20th. And, uh, we – we were so proud and so happy. And, uh, our church just grew by leaps and bounds. After we became a church, even.

MM: Really? Oh.

BD: It was growing rapidly as a mission.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: But when we became a full-fledged church, why, it – it grew even faster. Uh, Reverend Provo stayed from 1935 to 1937. And he resigned to accept another parish. And then, uh, Reverend Larson came, was just kind of an interim priest until 1938. Then we were without a priest for, oh, several months.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: And in February 21, 1939, Reverend P. Walter Hinkle, together with his bride, Lou, came and took our church over. And he served for the next 33 years. He was our priest in charge. Incidentally, P. Walter is still living today.

MM: Yes, I saw him ...

BD: And lives in Baytown. (Laughs)

MM: I saw him the other day.

BD: Very, very active. Uh, Richard Halter, who a lot of people in Baytown remember.

MM: Yes. [Inaudible]

BD: Became the Sunday school superintendent in 1945. And he stayed with us until his retirement from, from Exxon.

MM: Yeah.

BD: When he, uh ... moved to San Antonio in 1973. And, um, we, uh, sponsored a mission in La Porte in 1946.

MM: Oh.

BD: And it's St. John's Church, now. And then we helped to form a new mission, um ... out in, uh, Lakewood, which is All Saints.

MM: Oh, yes.

BD: Um-hmm. It's out there now. And, uh ... I have a little bit more detailed history of the years if you want to hear that.

MM: Yes.

BD: In kind of an outline form.

MM: Yes.

BD: Alright, um, in 1947, a need was felt for a parochial school for preschool children. And we started this, and ran it successfully for 20 years. Until the public schools went into the kindergarten field. And, uh, then at the same time in that year, groundwork was laid for St. James House.

MM: Oh!

BD: And this property was given to us by, um, Mrs. Duggan. A Sara Duggan. And it, the property was given with the specific instruction it should be used for a senior citizens home.

MM: Well, now was that your church's mission project? That, that was an outgrowth of ...

BD: No, it was – no, it was this woman.

MM: No, but I mean – but your church ...

BD: Yes.

MM: sort of ...

BD: Oh, yes.

MM: Oversaw that.

BD: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Yes. Uh, uh, Bill Douglass, Loraine Douglass' husband, deceased ...

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: ... uh, worked for many months in realizing this, uh, the consummation of Mrs. Duggan's wish.

MM: Oh.

BD: And, uh, he did the great deal of work getting that, the thing organized.

MM: Uh-huh.

BD: And, uh, getting it underway.

MM: Oh.

BD: I can remember when the first foundations were laid out there. We were just pleased to no end. But ...

MM: I bet you were! When, when was that?

BD: 1947.

MM: Oh.

BD: And it was opened in 1948. [Coughs] For, um ... for use.

MM: And it's such a fine facility.

BD: They're – by the way, it's being doubled, now.

MM: That's what I understand.

BD: Um-hmm.

MM: Isn't that wonderful.

BD: And we have hopes that later on we can build cottages out there on the front.

MM: For ...

BD: Uh, the back of the Brown & Root.

MM: For independent ... you mean?

BD: Um-hmm.

MM: Oh! Oh, how nice!

BD: That's what we have, uh, the architectural plans already drawn up. And they're gonna be four clusters. No wait a minute. Yeah, four clusters of four.

MM: Oh!

BD: Apartments,

MM: Uh-huh.

BD: or little townhouses each. It will be one bedroom and two bedroom.

MM: Well, how nice.

BD: And the plans at the present time are that they will be, uh, serviced by a maid service once a week. And, um, those that live there can be entirely independent of the big house.

MM: Yes.

BD: But if they wish [coughs] to eat, one meal a day.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: This is permissible. They will have, uh, the privilege, when they become, uh, unable to take care of themselves, to move into the big house.

MM: Yes. Yes.

BD: And then if the, the, uh, position becomes impossible for them to maintain themselves in a room, to go on into the hospital part.

MM: Yes.

BD: But that's the big thing. Now then, uh, in 1950, our church was growing so fast that we formed a new Christian education building. And this was dedicated March the 11th of 1950. And then in 1953, there was another need for expansion. This time of the church itself. And it was brought forward.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: From where it was in the old church towards the street.

MM: Oh.

BD: Just that much. 1956, the women of the church elected to have a Christmas pilgrimage. We carried that pilgrimage for 25 years.

MM: Oh, my goodness.

BD: And we used St. James house as our, um, place for the refreshments, and kind of a little ...

MM: Yes, I, I've been on that pilgrimage. Uh-huh.

BD: Um-hmm. Uh-huh. And, uh, we had one associate minister. It was Dr. Thompson in 1959. He stayed through '61, and then he accepted a church in Louisiana. And, uh, this was the same year that, uh, the forming of All Saints Episcopal Church in the Lakewood Area took place. That was in 1959. And then in 1962, we decided that we might want to move our church. And we acquired a bit of property out on Garth Road. Uh ... just beyond where the new Citizen's Tower is now. But ...

MM: Yes, I remember seeing the sign there.

BD: Uh-huh, but we have dis-, we have disposed of that. And we felt that we'd just stay where we were in a later date. And, uh, then, uh, in 1970, uh ... women were admitted to the vestry of Trinity Episcopal Church, and I was the first woman on the vestry.

MM: Oh! Well, you certainly should have been. (Laughs)

BD: Served three years. (Laughs) Served for three years.

MM: Yes.

BD: 1972, P. Walter resigned, and retired, and moved to, uh, Georgia.

MM: Oh.

BD: Stayed for about two years, and then came back. And then, uh, Randolph Cooper accepted a call to Trinity Church. He, his wife, and two – his one daughter, Susan. He later had another daughter here. His

wife Susan and daughter Francis arrived in Baytown. And they, he conducted his first services on August 15th. Incidentally, my husband died on August 19th, and he buried my husband.

MM: Oh.

BD: It was a, a sad thing for Randolph, because ...

MM: Yes.

BD: ... he hardly knew the congregation, you know.

MM: Yes.

BD: And, of course, P. Walter, whom we had known all these years in depending had worked with the vestry very diligently, was in Georgia, and we couldn't get him back at the time.

MM: Could not arrange ... Oh.

BD: Uh-huh. So, we've had a ... a fairly successful time. Uh, uh, we've had a lot of hard work. And we have a lot of our old parishioners still there.

MM: I love your telling about though, just – what you said you were 18 or 19 when you came here? And ...

BD: Let's see: 23, four, 19.

MM: Ok, and ...

BD: Um-hmm.

MM: You talked Mr. Terry into having the church service at, in his office?

BD: Well, I didn't have to talk him into it. He was just kind of ready to do it, but just needed somebody to say yes, let's do it. You know, it's one of those things where people will say, "Well, I think we should do this."

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: But he didn't seem to have enough, uh ... uh ... personal support from people. But I guess being young and not afraid of anything. That I – let's do it!

MM: Yeah.

BD: And I was his secretary, and so we did it. That was just about there was to it.

MM: Oh.

BD: And, uh, it – it grew. And, uh – what surprised me was that it hadn't been done earlier. In 1918 when they first started.

MM: Yes. So they had that long ... uh-huh.

BD: Why didn't they do something earlier?

MM: Cause they knew – they were waiting for you. Is that right?

BD: Well, they were waiting for somebody that did, didn't have sense enough to say it would cost us a lot and take a lot of work. It was just, "Let's do it!"

MM: (Laughs) Yes.

BD: But it, it was a lot of fun, and of course, uh, we got substantial help like from my old church back in Cleburne. I was, uh, raised there, you see.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: And, uh, they sent us not only, uh, money, but they sent literature for Sunday school classes. I told them the ages of the boys and girls in there.

MM: Uh-huh.

BD: And as I told, uh, have told other people, uh, Dean Metz, who was the head of the YMCA at that time, wasn't Episcopalian.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: And he had a young son that was in this group. Mr. Zuerlein had four children in that group. And then the Metz had the one, and then I had, uh, two sisters and a brother. And, uh, it just ... [tape cuts off]

BD: It was just the starting thing for a Sunday school. Mr. Terry had one son. And uh, then the, the Loverings, and they have just recently passed away.

MM: Yes, I heard.

BD: Uh, had one son. And he, they came to the Sunday school. And, uh, we had, uh – we did a great deal of knocking on doors. There were a lot of Episcopalians here who had moved from the east.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: Working in the refinery. And they were accustomed to getting in their cars and going to Houston on Sunday to churches.

MM: Oh.

BD: And they were a little bit hesitant at first to more or less throw their caps into the ... (laughs)

MM: Yes. (Laughs)

BD: ... to the pool and swim with us. But, uh ...

MM: What a long drive into Houston to ... to go to church.

BD: It w-, and the roads were horrible.

MM: Yes.

BD: They were muddy. We didn't have paved highways yet, uh ...

MM: Yes.

BD: But they'd (fleet). So that proved that they were good Christian people, you know.

MM: Oh, yes. Yes. Yes.

BD: Get them interested in staying home, why, that helped. And it did.

MM: Oh.

BD: Um-hmm. The, the, uh ... as I said, the parish grew rapidly.

MM: How long did you meet at the YMCA?

BD: I guess we met there ... about two years.

MM: Oh.

BD: Um-hmm.

MM: And, and that had to be prepared on Saturday afternoon, I guess.

BD: Oh, yes. Uh-huh. Yeah.

MM: And then ...

BD: Uh, we didn't, uh, really. What we did at the Y was have our Sunday school.

MM: Oh, well then where did you have your worship?

BD: We had the – at Mr. Terry's office.

MM: Oh.

BD: We had the worship in his office.

MM: Oh, I didn't realize that was going on there together.

BD: Uh-huh. Yeah. Uh-huh. See, the – the actual service was in his office. But our Sunday school was over at the YMCA.

MM: Oh.

BD: Yeah. Um-hmm.

MM: I bet you had a lot of fun. Getting it all ...

BD: Just, it was –

MM: ... going.

BD: Every day was fun. You know, it's just kind of a challenge.

MM: Yes. And all of the ...

BD: And, uh, the enthusiasm of the people. But it just seemed like that every time you could literally talk someone into coming and joining you, you could see their enthusiasm generate. And just keep on keeping on.

MM: Oh, that's wonderful.

BD: And that's what made it grow.

MM: Uh-huh.

BD: And, uh, we had a – we did work. We worked hard.

MM: I bet you did.

BD: We worked very hard. But we didn't think about it that way. Because we could see where we were going, or ...

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: ... the direction in which we were going.

MM: And you could see results.

BD: Very definitely. It was ... fun. Really.

MM: Well, this, uh ... coming along in time, you had a fire ... when was that last fire you had?

BD: Mmm... we've had, uh – this big fire was in '33.

MM: Yes, but then, there's been one

BD: But we had another fire – uh, we had a ...

MM: Seven-, in the 70's?

BD: Was it two years ago?

MM: Oh.

BD: Uh, we had a terrible fire two or three years ago. A very bad fire.

MM: Or that – that must be the one I'm remembering.

BD: Um-hmm. Uh, that was uh ... let's see ... long after we'd done the last remodeling. Now when Randolph Cooper was here – I hadn't gone into that – we completely remodeled the church. We modernized it.

MM: Oh.

BD: We took down the, uh – well, we just made it a church in the round is what they call it now.

MM: Well that was when you all had made the decision to stay at the location.

BD: Yes, um-hmm.

BD: After – and we sold the property out there, and took that money, and made the church what it is today.

MM: Oh.

BD: We used all of the stained glass windows. And incidentally, every stained glass window in the church is a memorial.

MM: Oh.

BD: Is a gift of some, from some parishioner. And, uh, the – in fact, you would be amazed to know the number of gifts in the church that are memorials. All of our communion services – and we have three.

MM: Oh.

BD: Were, uh – except our gold chalice. Now that was made up – I believe Walter Hinkle started that. And we gathered gold from the parishioners. They gave the gold, they gave the jewels that are – have you ever seen that?

MM: No, I don't believe I have.

BD: It is absolutely gorgeous. Stands so high. And it has emeralds and rubies and diamonds in it.

MM: Oh!

BD: And we sent all the materials to England and they made the chalice in England.

MM: Oh!

BD: And then we got a, uh, a paten with just the jewel on it. Then we have a complete, uh, silver communion service besides this gold one.

MM: Uh-huh.

BD: And then we have the, uh, one that we call for uh, when they go to the hospital to get communion, they're tiny.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: We have that, too. All the vases in the church, the crosses, uh ... I don't think that the altar itself per se now is a memorial. The, uh, Agnus Dei that's in the center of it is a memorial. But, um ... and parishioners paid for the pews, of course. We didn't put dedication seals on them, but they all – well they were all paid for. But when we made that last, um, no then that was Randolph was here.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: Randolph Cooper. [Coughs] We had, um ... but it was a terrific change, and it was a change for the parishioners. We had always been used to the traditional Episcopal Church.

MM: Yes.

BD: Long, narrow. And this is a church in the round that we have now.

MM: But it's a beautiful church.

BD: But it makes for more closeness of the congregation.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: Uh, I went to Waco recently for a women's meeting, and they had the old traditional church. And I had to sit to the back, and I couldn't see anything. I was so, I'm so small.

MM: Yes.

BD: I couldn't see anything, and naturally, I didn't feel like I was participating. And I had – and I had, uh ... had a little bit of doubt in my mind prior to that time about the feasibility of a church in the round. I came back home quite happy.

MM: Oh, good.

BD: That ours was a church in the round.

MM: So you did.

BD: Because, uh, you just ... feel more closeness.

MM: Yes.

BD: You feel that you're participating more.

MM: Yes.

BD: Or at least that's my reaction.

MM: Uh-huh.

BD: But I loved it very much. And, uh, we have some perfectly wonderful workers in the church. The Altar Guild. Uh, the Guild of Long Standing. Of course you have that when you first organize a church. And we have very diligent workers there. We have a group for each Sunday in the month. And we have, uh, Trinity Guild, which is the oldest lady's guild. [Coughs] Cold. We had a Saint Cecelia's Guild. Saint Cecelia was Patron of Music. And, uh – well, for instance, they're getting ready to have a big dinner for the choir.

MM: Oh. Um-hmm.

BD: They do little things for the choirs.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: And, uh, sustain the choir. Then we have a Bishop Hines Guild that was formed – oh, I guess in the late 60's probably – of young, uh, women who wanted to participate in the guild, and because they had small children, couldn't come in the daytime. So we started this night guild so their husbands could be babysitters. (Laughs)

MM: Yes. Right.

BD: And they could come. And that is still going. Now then we have a, another guild that has been formed since then. It's called the, uh, the Christ Child Guild.

MM: Oh.

BD: And this is even younger ones.

MM: Uh-huh.

BD: Course as they grow older ...

MM: Sure.

BD: Why, they graduate. But, uh, they're very active guilds in the church, and, uh, they do things to uh – as I said, Saint Cecelia sustains the choir. Uh, Trinity is just the old reliable one that if they need anything they usually call on us and we try to help.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: And, um, the Bishop Hines keeps the young people interested as the, does the Christ Child Guild.

MM: Yes. Oh.

BD: And I think young people have to have an interest.

MM: Oh, I think so, too.

BD: We have a men's group that furnish breakfast the first Sunday of every month. They do their own cooking and all, and this has been going on for many years.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: And, uh, course the vestry. And the vestry, now, is both men and women. Since, um, 19, uh ... when was I appointed? Hmm! I don't even remember. Seventy.

MM: Oh.

BD: 1970. That's when the, uh, church doctrines, you know – all their things were changed throughout the whole United States, and women were eligible for a vestry.

MM: Now the land that the church stands on.

BD: Was given to us by Humble Oil Refining Company. Way back. When we first started our church.

MM: Uh-huh.

BD: In the 50's, and uh – uh, no, in the 40's. I believe it was. Uh, the, uh... No, it was even further back than that. It was in, um ... in the 30's.

MM: Did you all get to choose the piece of land you wanted? Or...

BD: No. No.

MM: Humble just picks?

BD: I don't exactly know how that was done. I do know that, uh... Let me see, how was that done? The vestry met... Most of our vestry were employed by Humble.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: Edgar Boydell, and Mr. Roberts, now all that had done – and, uh, Howard Kay – they're done all the cement work, the brick work on our church – uh, were aware of the fact that Humble was going to give properties to churches. And, uh, they had given properties to other churches. So ... just how it happened, I do not know.

MM: Uh-huh.

BD: I'm sure it was through their efforts in approaching the powers that be with Humble.

MM: Oh.

BD: And, uh, I ... I think that there were several locations designated, and they had the choice of the one they wanted.

MM: I see.

BD: And they felt that this, on this corner,

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: would be more accessible.

MM: Well, it really is.

BD: Uh-huh. Now the, I do know that they had properties given to 'em over here in, uh, right over here on old Bowie Drive. Mrs. Wright gave 'em properties for a church.

MM: Oh.

BD: And, uh, this was before Humble gave this. And, um ... one other location. But, uh, they felt that this was too far away from people.

MM: Yeah.

BD: You – the concentration of people were at that point, then.

MM: Yes. The southern ...

BD: And so, uh, we – we only sold this property over here – I bet you not over 10 years ago.

MM: Oh.

BD: Um-hmm. And, uh, Mrs. Anna Wright gave it to us. And, um ... this, uh, property was then just the one lot on the corner. And then additional lots were given to us for our parish houses. We have three lots there.

MM: I see.

BD: Um-hmm.

MM: Do you all furnish the home for your pastor? Or does he ...

BD: No.

MM: He furnishes his own.

BD: Um-hmm.

MM: So that wasn't in [inaudible].

BD: Uh-um. Uh, we would rent a place for him.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: But the – as far as the, any, his own personal effects -

MM: Uh-huh.

BD: Those were his. Now, it has become a movement in the Episcopal Church that the parish no longer furnishes the priest with a home; he buys his own.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: Now, Father Barmer hasn't done that yet. But should we get another one that would be the ... thing to do.

MM: Oh, I understand, instead of, uh-huh [inaudible]

BD: [Coughs] No, uh ... no, we've never furnished it.

MM: About how many members do you have, now?

BD: Uh, I think – well, there's a lot of difference between book members and active members.

MM: Oh, I know very well. [Laughs.]

BD: I think book members, we have 750. I think active around 350.

MM: Oh. That's, that's a pretty good percentage.

BD: That's good. Um-hmm.

MM: That is.

BD: Um-hmm. And, uh, you – as you know, this is a town where people move in and move out.

MM: Yes. Yes.

BD: And, uh, so it – but it stays. And when I say active, I mean really active.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: They come regularly, they participate regularly, they're, they pledge regularly.

MM: Yes.

BD: And, uh, they, they are active. But I would say that double the number are members.

MM: Oh. Well, I think that, that's good.

BD: Well, for the Episcopal Church it is because we're not a... I don't guess you'd call us a popular church.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: We're, we're an old, old church. But, uh, we're not, uh... Well, I don't know. We've never created a, an interest in the masses.

MM: Yes.

BD: So to speak.

MM: Uh-huh.

BD: And, and – you often wonder why. If we're, we're not diligent enough in our contact with other people, or if it's our ritual that keeps 'em from coming, or ... you do.

MM: Who knows? Yes.

BD: You do. You sit and wonder sometimes why you're not, uh... more appealing to the public than you are. Because, as far as I'm concerned, it's a beautiful service.

MM: Oh, it is. My father's an Episcopalian.

BD: Oh?

MM: Or was.

BD: And, uh, the ... it's just ...

MM: And what, what about the organ? When...

BD: Well, the Duke's gave the first organ.

MM: Yes.

BD: And it was just a little, tiny, old-fashioned organ that they had in their family for many years.

MM: Uh-huh.

BD: You had to, uh – beat, it had a, the peddle pumps, and it had a little side pump. And if you could inveigle a little boy to stand at the side and pump, you were better off. But I played it for years, and I peddle pumped it.

MM: Oh.

BD: Because the church – well, we met in Mr. Cherry's office, it was so tiny. There really wasn't room for a child to get back there to pump it. [Laughs]

MM: Yes. [Laughs]

BD: Then we graduated to a little bit larger organ, and I do not know who donated it, but it was donated. And it was still... pumped.

MM: Uh-huh.

BD: But it was so big, that you had to have a boy to the side to pump it. We used it for quite a number of years, and then we, uh, finally raised enough money to get a little Hammond organ. A little electric organ.

MM: Oh, yes.

BD: That was our first electric organ.

MM: Did you – how long did you play the organ there?

BD: Oh, dear ... heh. From the very start until ...I don't know what these pictures mean here.

(End of tape)

(Tape 2 of 2)

BD: ... this is, uh, the boys' choir. Jack Walmsley lives in Baytown. Jerome Zuerlein is dead. Homer Wilson is dead. Ted Zilsky: I do not know what has become of him. Harold Holser, Jr., is in Midland, Texas. And, um, Roscoe Zuerlein is dead. And Fred Palmer – I read in the paper – died not too long ago. Those were the original ...

MM: First ...

BD: Uh, Gorden Lilli died about maybe three months ago.

MM: Oh.

BD: He became a physician. Howard Humphrey, uh ... was, he killed, he was killed on a tractor out at his home several years back. And, uh, Mr. Walter Roberts is gone now. And, uh, most all of that little choir from 1932 is gone.

MM: Oh! Aren't they sweet looking?

BD: Oh, they were the cutest boys to work with!

MM: I bet they were.

BD: Oh, we just had so much fun. We, um ... It's, it's just ... It was wonderful. The enthusiasm.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: The... this was ... part of it. This is a picture of the, when it was brought to the front.

MM: Oh. Uh-huh.

BD: See, before it was a small. Well, you can see how small it was back there.

MM: Um-hmm. Yes. And then...

BD: This, this picture brings it to the front.

MM: Then ... yes.

BD: Now then, you see this part's still there.

MM: And now you're even further. Uh-huh.

BD: Well, we're out this way now.

MM: Oh.

BD: We came to the side and built our entrances over here.

MM: I see.

BD: This window right here, uh, I made a dedication window, uh, dedicated that to Mr. Duplantis when he died.

MM: Oh!

BD: And it's known as the Trinity window; that was the old entrance.

MM: Oh!

BD: Sometime if you're ever down there,

MM: Yes.

BD: go by there and look at it from the inside. It is beautiful.

MM: Oh, I will.

BD: And it's made of, uh, faceted glass. The old Tiffany glass is not being used so much anymore for churches that have outs-, out of surface windows, because it can be broken.

BD: And you have to put a protection over it that cancels out the beauty.

MM: Yes.

BD: This you can throw a brick at, and it will break the brick.

MM: Is that – the glass?

BD: Um-hmm. It's what they call faceted glass.

MM: My goodness!

BD: It, uh, it's, it's very beautiful. It's very beautiful.

MM: Oh.

BD: Um-hmm. And, uh, we traveled quite a number to, quite a number of churches to, uh, see theirs.

MM: Um-hmm.

BD: We got the names from this manufacturer in the east, and I was – it was when I was on the vestry. And we traveled around to see. And they proved to us this actually would do. They would throw bricks at it. [Coughs] And it, it was.

MM: Where did you have it made?

BD: Philadelphia.

MM: I see.

BD: And it was shipped by bits and pieces, and then their, uh, arts and crafts people came down and assembled it.

MM: With it. Oh.

BD: And installed it.

MM: Oh!

BD: It didn't take very long, neither.

MM: Just went together like it was supposed to, I guess.

BD: It's just – you know how they'll number pieces and all that sort of... But, it did. It, it –uh, it was just a beautiful thing. And, uh... Well, all the windows in the church are beautiful.

MM: Yes. I, I've ...

BD: Every one of 'em. We, uh, when it, when the first fire, the Duke family had given us – or Elsie. Elsie Fitsimmons. Elsie Duke Fitsimmons had given us a, the most beautiful flag you ever saw. And, uh, the Delski family had, uh, over the altar, had a window: the Garden of Gethsemane window. I, round.

MM: Uh-huh.

BD: I don't think I've ever seen as pretty a production as that. And when the church burned, we lost both of those.

MM: Oh.

BD: But, the Garden of Gethsemane window was replaced. And it's out in the narthex of our church now. Still dedicated to the Zilski family.

MM: Oh.

BD: It's beautiful.

MM: Oh. Well, I'll have to note it now that I've heard this.

BD: [Coughs]

MM: It'll mean more to me.

BD: Yeah. Well, you, you'll kind of look for these things.

MM: Yes.

BD: And, uh, if you'll notice that under each window, the person, the family giving it is named with the person to whom it's ...

MM: Oh, yes.

BD: For whom it's dedicated. It is has quite a meaning. To, you know, to, to look at these. Course most of 'em, they're gone.

MM: Yes.

BD: But, you remember them and the work that they did when they were there.

MM: Oh, I'm sure. I'm sure.

BD: And, uh... it's ... I'd heard – did you know the, a Heather Margaret Robbins? I don't believe...

MM: No, I don't believe so.

BD: I think she was gone. Anyhow, they have two of the small narrow ones in the, uh, by the side of the one I did for Mr. Duplantis. Honoring her mother and dad.

MM: Oh.

BD: Dr. Robinson and, and then her mother, Mrs. Robins. They're quite beautiful.

MM: Oh.

(End of tape)

Transcribed by: Amanda Smoke 3/19/18