

An Oral History Tape Transcription

Of

Interviewer: Grace Tidmon

Interviewee: Millicent W. Bounds

November 22, 1976

GT: This is an oral taped interview with Mrs. Millicent W. Bounds, a citizen of Baytown and the widow of T.H. Hubb Bounds, a former Fire Marshall. Mrs. Bounds, do you mind telling us your age?

MB: No I don't. I'll be 81 the twenty-first of January, 1977.

GT: Oh, that's fantastic. And how long have you lived in the Tri-Cities area?

MB: Forty-seven years.

GT: Oh, wonderful. I'd like to know something of your family ancestry. How far back can you trace it for us?

MB: Well, to my mother and father; my grandfather and grandmother on each side of the family.

GT: Very good. Could we hear it, please?

MB: My grandfather and grandmother Bickett came to Texas in 1875. And they brought my mother, and she was only seven years old at the time when they came. And they came from Paducah, Kentucky, by train. And when they crossed the Mississippi River, they put the train on a ferry and ferried it across the river, and then continued on to Valley Mills, Texas, where they spent quite a number of years. And then from there, they moved to Hearne, Texas. And in the meantime, my grandfather had died and my mother and my grandmother run a boarding house there in Hearne, because it was a huge railroad center. And uh ...

GT: Now is this the Bickett family?

MB: This is my grandmother and grandfather Bickett.

GT: On your mother's side?

MB: On my mother's side.

GT: Well, how about the other side? Your father's ancestry?

MB: Well my father was born and reared in Washington, D.C., and he came to Hearne and went to work on the railroad.

GT: Well now, excuse me. When you say Washington, everybody thinks about the government. Did your grandparents in Washington have anything to do with the Federal Government?

MB: My grandfather was a Justice in the Supreme Court.

GT: Of the United States?

MB: Of the United States. And my uncle, my uncle Frank, my father's brother worked in, he was the head examiner in the United States Patent Office in Washington, D.C., and brother, his other brother, Robert, was also a lawyer.

GT: I see. That's marvelous.

MB: So we have plenty of lawyers in the family.

GT: Alright well, I'm sorry to interrupt, but now get us back to Hearne where your daddy had come to work on the railroad.

MB: There's where he met my mother. I presume he went to boarding at the boarding house, and that's where he met and married my mother in about 1888. And, uh...

GT: How many children did they have, Mrs. Bounds?

MB: They had six children, but only two survived. I was the fourth child, and I lived. Then they had another baby, and lost him. Then they had my little brother that did survive.

GT: And so really, as far as your maternal side, there's really not too many of your relatives left.

MB: No, I'm the only one of the immediate family left, and I have one nephew and two great nephews that live in Angleton, Texas, on the Ward side of the family. And that's, that's it.

GT: Well, alright then. If the Miss Millicent Ward met and married T.H. Bounds, let's talk about Mr. Bounds for a moment. By the way, I've never heard the man called anything but "Hub." What does T.H. stand for?

MB: His full name is Theophelous Hubbard Bounds.

GT: And that's where we get the "Hub."

MB: That's right.

GT: Alright. Do you know much about Mr. Bounds' ancestry?

MB: He was born in Rusk, Texas, and moved to Hubbard when ... they moved to Hubbard he was just a baby. And he was born-- ; he was reared in Hubbard and went to school there.

GT: I see. And then when he came to Hearne, was he already a grown man? About what year was it?

MB: 1913. He came the last part of 1913.

GT: Well then he would have been about 21.

MB: He was 21 years old.

GT: I see. And what kind of job did he have in Hearne?

MB: He went to work for Allen Hardware Store first, and then he went to work with some garages.

GT: As a mechanic?

MB: As a mechanic.

GT: I see. Well when did his, shall we say, interest in firefighting begin?

MB: It began in Hearne.

GT: You mean he was a volunteer?

MB: He was a volunteer. And all they had there to fi-- fight fires with was this "horse-less carriage" they called it. It was a cart with a hose on it, and they would pull it to the fire if they couldn't get a Model-T car to pull it to the fire they'd ... three or four of the men would get a hold of it and pull it to the fire themselves.

GT: And then, help to fight the fire.

MB: Fight the fire.

GT: I see. That's so interesting.

MB: Well after you had married Mr. Bounds, and he was the garage mechanic, when or why did the family come into the Tri-Cities area?

MB: Well we were urged to come down here by Mr. Charlie Merchant. He thought there was great opportunities here.

GT: What year was that, Mrs. Bounds?

MB: That was 1929, December the first.

GT: I see. Mr. Merchant then, felt that Mr. Bounds could make progress.

MB: Yes, that's right.

GT: And what type of work did Mr. Bounds do when he ...

MB: Well he went to work for Mr. Merchant who had a fleet of trucks to keep up. He was at that time connected with some oil company. And then later on, why, my husband went out on his own ; run a garage for himself.

GT: And where was Mr. Merchant's business located?

MB: Up on what was then Goose Creek Street.

GT: And it's now North Main, isn't it?

MB: Now North Main.

GT: I see. Oh, this is so interesting! Well, when you came in 1929, I remember the...there was an economic crash in October. Did that have anything to do with your coming?

MB: Yes, I think we brought the Depression here with us. [Laughing] And it was pretty hard times during that time. We ... my husband was trying to run this garage and the merchants, of course, had to deliver their groceries because nobody could get gas or oil. They weren't able to buy it. And they would come to my husband and want him to work on their trucks and then take it out in trade in groceries or dry goods; whichever it happened to be, whichever merchant came.

GT: And did you have a family by that time?

MB: Yes, we had four children.

GT: And so you could easily use the food or merchandise.

MB: Yes, yes we could.

GT: By the way, where are those four children today?

MB: My daughter, Beth Kimbrell, lives in Pasadena. My oldest son, James, lives in La Porte. And Robert and William both live here in Baytown.

GT: Oh good, then they're all very close to you.

MB: Very close. I can get to their houses pretty quick within about 20 minutes.

GT: And do you have grandchildren?

MB: Yes, I have 14 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

GT: Oh, that's marvelous. Well back to the time that you actually got into the Tri-Cities area, which one of the – we called them Baytown and Goose Creek and Pelly – where did you actually live when you first came?

MB: We lived first on the end of Fayle Street in what was known then as Goose Creek. And there was just a big field where the 146 Highway is now. Just a barbwire fence and huge ditch.

GT: You mean 146 had not been built?

MB: No, there was no road there. And all back in what is known now as the Aaron edition was just a big field. And at that time we had a cow, and we'd stake our cow back in the field back of the house.

GT: And this was part of your living, too.

MB: Yes that's right.

GT: Well after you moved off East Fayle, where did you go?

MB: Well we went ... We moved down in Pelly on Denby Street, which was close to Horace Mann and Anson Jones School because we had four children in the two schools, and we were getting as close to the school as we could because it was hard to get transportation in those days or any way to get to school.

GT: Yes, I ...

MB: Kids just had to bum rides to school in those days.

GT: I agree that money was very scarce.

MB: Then after they went to Robert E. Lee, Bert Black's Drugstore was on the corner of Texas and I believe Ashbel Street. One of the corners there. And the kids would all gather up out in front of Bert Black's Drugstore to catch rides out to Robert E. Lee. And everybody that had a car that was available would stop and pick up a load of kids and take 'em on out to Robert E. Lee.

GT: Well at least, Mrs. Bounds, there were no problems with bussing in those days.

MB: That's right. We didn't know what a bus was in those days.

GT: Your memory seems so phenomenal to me. Can you remember some of the businesses that existed in Pelly in 1929, and maybe who owned those businesses?

MB: Yes. First there was a little post office on the corner right across the street from the city hall, what was the city hall then. And Mrs. Collier was the Post Mistress there. Then there was Dave Aaron's Dry Goods Store owned by Mr. Dave Aaron, and Miracle Store owned by Mr. Sam Davis. And Kaiser Hardware and Grocery that was owned by Mr. William Kaiser. And also the Stephenson Grocery which was a real old, old building there.

GT: All of that in Pelly?

MB: All in Pelly. And the W.C. Williams Grocery Store.

GT: Well let me ask about the condition of the streets.

MB: Well they were mostly just shell roads.

GT: Well, how had you actually come to the town of Pelly or Goose Creek when you got here from Hearne back in 1929?

MB: Well we came ... they had built the San Jacinto Bridge over the San Jacinto at that time. But a trip we made before, we had to go out around through Crosby and Highlands. And Highlands at that time was known as Alena Gardens, and it was just a huge fig orchard and they had a canning factory out there, and during the Depression everyone would just go out there and gather up basket loads of figs that were not fit for canning, the small figs and those that were a little bit cracked open or something. And that's where we got our fig preserves was out at the canning factory.

GT: Well then if I have understood you and, certainly this is so interesting, basically there was just sort of one long gravel road in and out of this place.

MB: That's right. When we first come down there was hardly anything between here and Houston. Just a long shell road with huge pine trees on each side of it.

GT: How very interesting. Well do you remember any specific church activity in Pelly?

MB: Yes, um, the little Methodist Church, Saint John's Methodist Church, which is now located over on the highway. It was on Bolster Street and they had the first sunrise Easter service at this church, and it continued there for quite a number of years until the crowd got so large the church wouldn't hold it. Then they moved it out to Robert E. Lee football stadium.

GT: Yes.

MB: And of course when the weather was bad they'd have to go somewhere else, kind of find another place to have it. And we had some pretty cold Easters, too.

GT: That's very interesting. Well now your husband had shown an interest in firefighting back in 1914. When he got to the Baytown area in 1929, was he still interested in firefighting? While he was a mechanic?

MB: Oh yes. He was volunteer.

GT: I see.

MB: And he was with the Pelly Department for a while, while we lived in Pelly. But then in 1938, he went to work for the City of Goose Creek, and ...

GT: What was his job?

MB: He was a ... he worked in the water department and then in the mechanics.

GT: Oh he was still then using his wrenches, I see.

MB: Yes, and ...

GT: Could you make a guess at possibly what his wages would have been for the city in 1938?

MB: Probably around \$300 a month.

GT: I see.

MB: That's just a rough guess. I don't really remember.

GT: Do you happen to remember the name of the city manager who hired him?

MB: Mr. John Harkins. I sure do.

GT: Oh – marvelous memory.

MB: And we were still living in Pelly at that time, and he wanted Hub to get a place in Goose Creek because he didn't want him living in Pelly and working for the City of Goose Creek, so we set out then to find a place to live. And we hunted a house for about six months. My husband would come home and say, 'well this house is vacant, or that house is vacant. Go see about it.'

By the time I'd get there it'd be rented or maybe just nothing but a little shotgun house, which there was a lot of them in those days. And so one day he came in and he said well I found a house on the corner of Fourth and Fayle that's just been vacated. Said go look at it.

I said, 'I'll take it sight unseen if it's not any bigger than a cracker box.'

I was so worn out trying to find somewhere to live in this town.

GT: Well was your description of it pretty accurate?

MB: Yes it was. It was just about as big as a cracker box. Just a square house built during the oil field days, and I'd like to tell you this. The lumber, this is where I still live, and the lumber in this house was brought from Louisiana. It was made out of Louisiana longleaf pine. The man that we rented from first was Mr. W.P. Wright, which was an old settler here. He was born and raised here, and he told us that this house was built out of the Louisiana longleaf pine.

GT: When did you decide to buy it?

MB: Well, just as soon as he would sell it to us. He held onto it for a while. He said, 'no, I won't sell it to you, I'll just rent it because that's the best paying piece of property that I have.'

And I came to find out that he was giving the rent to the Methodist Church at Cedar Bayou. That was his tithing for the church at Cedar Bayou Methodist Church.

GT: Well, that's marvelous!

MB: That's the reason ... but we finally talked him into letting us buy the house. Of course then we improved it.

GT: And you own it today, and the ...

MB: Oh yes, yes we own it now. Been here ever since 1938.

GT: Well, this is so interesting. Can you possibly describe any of what I'll call Old Goose Creek as you remember it at the time either you got here, or when you moved in, say in 1938?

MB: Yes, I particularly remember a block on from Texas Avenue North, and it was on Texas Avenue and what was then Goose Creek Street. And there was a little, in the first block there was a lot of little wooden buildings there. And right on the corner there was a bakery which burned just before we got here, and the Burnett Brothers, Roy and Herbie Burnett, had bought the lot and put a little brick building on it. But the rest of them were little wooden buildings with little front porches on them. With a huge ditch, a drainage ditch in front of them and a plank that you had to walk to get up on these porches.

GT: Now, would that be about where the present automobile agency is down there today? It's at the corner of North Main and Defee Street.

MB: Yes.

GT: That's it.

MB: Right on that corner.

GT: Well how 'bout the next block?

MB: In the next block, Thomas Garba had a small drugstore right in the middle of the block at that time, and Mr. Sallier had a big dry goods store on the corner where the Scarborough Drug Store was for so many years.

GT: Well that's fabulous.

MB: Then in the middle of the next block, the old Granada Store which was later, Weingarten's Store. And across the street from that was Luttman Lumber Company.

GT: Well that's marvelous. So North Goose Creek, which is now called North Main,

MB: North Main Street.

GT: Well let's go back to West Texas Avenue. How many businesses there do you remember?

MB: Well the Herring Drug Store was one of the oldest establishments there. And on the corner, just across on Commerce and Texas, there was a Mr. Rosenswagg that ran a dry goods store there. And I believe they called him Mis-- ; Red Rosenswagg. I don't know his first name. Then the two theaters were there. The Texan and the Palace, I believe. One on one side of the street, one on the other in the first block. Then on down on the corner where Penney's is now, there's a ... let's see, I believe there's a jewelry store there, right on the corner ... was a filling station owned by Mr. Stiles, one of the early settlers here in Goose Creek.

GT: Will that be on Gailliard Street? The corner place?

MB: Yes, it would be on the corner of Gailliard and Texas Avenue. And just back of that was the old Gailliard home on Defee Street, face Defee Street.

GT: I see. Well how about...do you...what medical facilities do you remember at the time of your arrival, or even in the early '30's?

MB: Well, Dr. Gordon Lily had a small hospital and an office in a big ol' white two-story building, which was on the corner where the Citizens National or Citizens Savings and Loan Company is now. And he had a nice little hospital in this building. Doctor Hankins maintained the hospital on the second floor where Culpepper's was for so many years on the corner of Ashbel and Texas. And then Dr. Robbins maintained an office across the street in what is known now – was known then as the Pruett building. And there were several other offices up there in this building. And Dr. Russell had a office down in Pelly.

GT: Well the place then was really quite civilized by the time you got here, wasn't it?

MB: Yes, that's right.

GT: It had rather lost the flavor of the "boom town" that existed back in 1915 and '18 and '19.

MB: Um-hmm.

GT: Well you mentioned two schools. I should like to know, did your children ever go to Ashbel Smith School?

MB: Yes.

GT: After you moved on Fayle Street.

MB: Yes, they went to Ashbel Smith.

GT: And what high school?

MB: They finished Robert E. Lee high school.

GT: I see. And as a mother, were you involved with them?

MB: Oh yes, I was involved in the PTA when we lived down on Denby Street near the schools. I was room mother over at Anson Jones School. Then when our youngest one, the last one, went to Horace Mann I thought I was through with PTA work. And he came in one day and said, "Mother, guess what? You're room mother."

I said, 'No don't tell me. You're not gonna have a room mothers over at junior high, are you?'

She said, "Yes ma'am, we sure are."

GT: And you were it.

MB: And I was it. I was selected.

[Laughter]

GT: Well tell me in those days – I'm thinking now the '30's before World War II began – what recreation was available for children? Or did they more or less make their own?

MB: They just had to make their own. It was just a very ... well just I can't remember any recreation at all.

GT: Unless they went to the picture show.

MB: We had no parks here. The parks were established later on.

GT: Well do you happen to remember, or were you in the area when the ferry was put in, let's see, from what we call Hog Island over to Morgan's Point?

MB: Oh yes, we were here when ... they built it after we came here. They built the causeway from the mainland over to Hog Island, and then they dedicated the ferry and they had a big barbeque out on Hog Island, and the county furnished the barbeque.

GT: A free barbeque?

MB: A free barbeque.

GT: Who was your county commissioner then?

MB: Mr. Charlie Massey, and this ferry was named Charles Massey Ferry. And also there was another ferry that helped there it was a Lipskel, P.T. Lipskel Ferry.

GT: Well now at the same time that this new ferry went in, was the old Lynchburg Ferry as we called it, already in operation?

MB: Yes, yes it was already there.

GT: I see.

MB: I think it's been there ever since goodness knows when. I don't know when they put in the Lynchburg Ferry, but ... it's been there a long time.

GT: What a remarkable memory you have. Well let's get back to Mr. Bounds here. I'm enjoying you so much that I forget the fire department occasionally. Now, when did he really become the fire marshal? Because this is the way I remember Mr. Bounds.

MB: That was when the cities consolidated in 1947, and Mr. John Harkins was City Manager. And he put in his bid for the fire marshal's job and he was hired. Mr. Art Littleman was hired as Fire Chief at that time.

GT: I see. Well, where would Mr. Bounds' office have been?

MB: It was at the Number Three Fire Station on South Main.

GT: At Gulf Street.

MB: And Gulf. On South Main and Gulf.

GT: Well what were his duties as fire marshal? I believe you said now you had a paid fire chief.

MB: Yes.

GT: And then, Mr. Bounds as Fire Marshal, what was he supposed to do?

MB: Well he looked for all the fire hazards in the city, and got all the old buildings torn down where there was danger of a fire getting started and burning something up. He'd get after 'em and make 'em clean it up.

GT: Did he go around inspecting different places?

MB: Oh yes. He also inspected the nursing homes and hospitals and everything for the fire extinguishers. He kept them all filled and saw that they were up to date.

GT: Then really this man believed that the ounce of prevention was worth the pound of ...

MB: That's right. He was in more in fire prevention than he was in firefighting after he became fire marshal.

GT: Well how noble. But at the same time, did he also help fight fires?

MB: Oh yes. He was right there when the fires started, and when they put them out.

GT: Well, did you ever have to help or get involved in any way?

MB: Oh yes, I, I would help. I would ... when he first went to work he had a little pickup truck that he drove. And he'd be getting in his clothes and we'd be going to the truck, and he'd be probably have his shoes in his hand. And I'd jump in and drive the truck to the fire, and he'd be putting on his shoes and the rest of his clothes.

[Laughter]

GT: I know it wasn't funny then, but you're making it hilarious! What, basically, or were fires prevalent in those days? What was their basic problem?

MB: Well, they had a few arson cases and then, I presume, just carelessness and grass fires.

GT: Grass.

MB: They had a lot of grass fires in those days.

GT: Well would the city have, not having grown as much as it is today, would it have had the fire plugs out in the area where you'd find grass?

MB: No, they had to get the, the uh, tank truck, what they called the tank truck. They'd come in and load it up with water, and go back and fight the fire some more. Then when they ran out, they'd have to come back to town, fill the tank truck up again, go back and ...

GT: So they didn't have the most modern equipment.

MB: No, they sure didn't.

GT: Well, was it still called a volunteer fire department if we had this paid fire chief and the paid fire marshal?

MB: Well when the city consolidated, they began to hire some paid men.

GT: And how do they train those?

MB: They send men to A&M every year to this fireman's training school.

GT: I see. So that they actually can become professional fire fighters.

MB: They're up there a week, and they certainly are thoroughly trained because I used to go up when Hub would go, why I'd go with him, and they would take them out on a huge field and set all kind of fires. For instance, an old house where they'd have to go in. They'd have to put on these suits and go in this house, presumably to rescue somebody. And then there'd be an oil fire, and they'd have to learn how to put out this oil fire. And just different types of fires they'd have it out on a big field there at A&M College.

GT: And this was the training for...

MB: This was the training for the fireman.

GT: Goose Creek firemen.

MB: And it still goes on today.

GT: I see. Well, as city firemen, whether they were volunteer or paid, were they ever called out into the Humble Refinery Plant?

MB: No, Humble had their own firefighting department. It was in the refinery.

GT: Well that's what I had understood, yes. Well tell me ...

MB: And they were not allowed in there.

GT: Well, do you happen to remember where the different fire stations, the actual buildings, were located? We had three Tri-Cities here, and then we merged and voted to name ourselves Baytown, so where were the buildings?

MB: Well the number three was on South Main.

GT: At Gulf.

MB: At Gulf. And the number two was over in old Baytown on Minnesota Street. Then number one was in Pelly on the corner of King and West Main.

GT: And was there anything out at Wooster?

MB: Um, I don't remember when they built that Wooster Station. It was, I believe it was later, after consolidation.

GT: I see.

MB: I believe they built the Wooster Station later on.

GT: Well tell me; did the fire department get involved in any form of civil defense during World War II?

MB: Yes, uh, they had, they built them a little emergency truck. I believe that old panel truck was a Chevrolet truck, panel Chevrolet. And they built a long box on one side of it to hold the equipment. And they took an old couch I had and made a pad on that. Then they hung the back of the couch up like a bunk, and two men could get in there and sleep and rest while they were out on these emergency calls. Others were out working.

GT: Well this sounds like the forerunner of our present emergency corps.

MB: It is. It was.

GT: Then the emergency corps is an outgrowth of the fire department.

MB: That's right.

GT: And the fire department, does it have a diver like in the drowning cases?

MB: Yes, they bought some diving equipment, and they took it out to Cedar Bayou, tried it out before they ever got a call to use it. And whether they ever rescued anybody with it, I don't remember. But um, I remember when we went out and tried it out, out in Cedar Bayou. Red Grantham, who worked for the city at the same time, went down in this diving equipment. And Hub was manning the pump while Red was down in there prowling around.

(Laughter)

GT: Who are some of the, I'm gonna use the word the "old timers," that you remember as a part of the fire department?

MB: When? Before consolidation?

GT: Yes, or after. Just go back in ...

MB: Well before consolidation the volunteers was Red Grantham and, and I believe Red Pruett was one of them also. And Pete Amy, and Doug Fykes, and Emery Williamson.

GT: Well, after ... I remember when I came there was a Fire Chief King. Who succeeded him as the chief?

MB: Mr. Littleman.

GT: Art Littleman. I see. And Hub was still Fire Marshal...

MB: Well, yes that's right.

GT: After the consolidation.

GT: Well tell me, did you as a wife and in rearing these four children and being involved with your PTA and everything that mothers can get involved in, did you ever resent Hub's being a public servant?

MB: No, um, that was his job, and that's what he loved. That was his life, and I just went along with him and helped him the best I could.

GT: And you felt that he was performing a great public service.

MB: That's right. That's what he did. He sure had the public in mind while he was out fighting fires.

GT: Well, tell me when did he retire?

MB: He retired the third of October 1963.

GT: How old was he then?

MB: He was 71 years old.

GT: Oh.

MB: They hadn't passed the law then that where you had to retire at 65, so he got to work until he was 71.

GT: Was he the only man to retire?

MB: No, Mr. A.V. Barber, who was Finance Director for the city, and Mr. Jim French, who was the Fire Chief in Pelly at that time.

GT: All three of them retired?

MB: All three retired at the same time.

GT: Same time. I bet you had quite a party!

MB: Yes we did. They threw a big bash for us out at the country club.

GT: You felt very important.

MB: All the city commissioners ... oh yes, we were real important in those days.

GT: Oh well I'm glad.

MB: City commissioners and city managers ... all the higher-ups and all that.

GT: Well listen, after such an active and involved life as that, surely this man didn't just come home and sit down in his retirement. Did he have a hobby or something he did?

MB: Oh, no. He loved photography, and we made wedding pictures and pictures of the Little League boys, and we worked a many a night 'till two or three in the morning to get those pictures out.

GT: Did he develop his own?

MB: He develop-- ; he developed his film. Then we developed the pictures ourselves.

GT: You mean you had your own dark room?

MB: Yes, we made a dark room out of our kitchen here. And I'll tell you one funny little incident that happened. During that time my grandson was staying with us, just spending the weekend with us, and we were working on pictures. And Hub was making a picture of a house where a hot water heater had exploded and set fire to the house and burned a man up in there. And we were working the pictures here. Hub was developing them and putting them in the acid fix, and then we'd put them in the stop, and then in the wash. So this grandson and I were helping with it. He was working the, enlarging the first pan, and we were working the second pans. And all of the sudden, he disappeared. Hub disappeared out of the kitchen, and we didn't know where he went. And Joe and I were so busy. That was the grandson.

We were trying to find this man's skeleton in this picture that we had just developed, and we were holding it up looking at it. And Hub tiptoed back to the door, and about the time he got there and sneezed, he got there and sneezed, we almost made a new hole in the kitchen wall, I tell you for sure. We thought we'd found the man's skull in this picture. We were holding it up, and it was dripping down in the pan, you know. Water dripping off of it. Just like to scared us to death.

GT: [Laughter] Oh what wonderful memories you have. I'm telling you. Well listen, how long was he to live after he retired?

MB: He lived six years.

GT: So you had him a very long time, didn't you?

MB: We had our golden wedding anniversary, and then he lived two years longer. We lived together 52 years.

GT: Oh I think that's marvelous. Well tell me now, how do you occupy your time?

MB: Well I'm just as busy as a bee all the time. I don't have time to do ...

GT: Well it seems to me at 80, I was hoping maybe that if I live that long I could slow down a little. What are some of the things you do Mrs. Bounds?

MB: Well, I make quilts and make stuffed toys and dolls for the children – the little grandchildren, great-grandchildren. I made clown dolls for all the grandchildren. Then when the great-grandchildren came along, I started making more clown dolls and other dolls.

GT: Well you're very artistic with your handicrafts. Well tell me – isn't this nose question – are you involved with a church?

MB: Yes.

GT: Where is your membership?

MB: It's in Second Baptist Church, I joined.

GT: And do you have any job there?

MB: Yes. I joined-- We moved our letter to Second Baptist, August 5, 1952. And I belong to the largest Sunday school class. I'm Class Minister. I take care of the love offering, and send out birthday cards and get well cards, and visit our old folks in the rest homes.

GT: Well how commendable. Well how about a lodge or fraternal organization? Do you belong to one?

MB: Yes, I belong to the Rebekah Lodge.

GT: And have you, as we say, gone through the chairs and all ...

MB: Yes I'm Past Noble Grand. I also belong to the Past Noble Grand's Club, and ...

GT: Is there any particular award that you are proud of?

MB: Yes, I have an award coming up for outstanding services to the city and the lodge for which I will receive credit. And this is to be given at the Rice Hotel in March in '77, the coming year. It is an award known as ... I can't think of the word now ...

GT: I'll bet it had something to do with chivalry if I know my ...

MB: It's a Degree of Chivalry is what I'm trying to say. Degree of Chivalry.

GT: Well has this local lodge ever given that award before?

MB: No, it never has.

GT: Well then it's quite an honor, isn't it?

MB: It is. And I was hoping it would be given here, but it's going to have to be given in the Rice Hotel because there's so many people. This is a state convention, and it's so many people all over the state is going to get it. So it will have to be in Houston.

GT: And you'd like it to be in Baytown so your friends could see it.

MB: Yes, I sure would.

GT: Well you know there's one area, you've lived such a wholesome and whole life, there's one area we haven't even mentioned. Do you vote regularly?

MB: Oh yes.

GT: Well have you ever been a political delegate for ...

MB: Yes.

GT: As in, going to the precinct's convention, and then ...

MB: That's right.

GT: Well that's marvelous. You see? I knew that you had participated in the whole works, and certainly you've seen a great deal of history. Tell me, what do you think of Baytown now in 1976?

MB: Well, I think it's a grand old place. I think we've come a long way since 1929, I'll tell you for sure.

GT: Well do we have any particular problems that you'd like to see solved?

MB: Well, I would like to see it cleaned up a lot.

GT: I've heard other people express that.

MB: Sure would. This trash just kind of gets under my skin.

GT: Well what about our future, Mrs. Bounds, with new industries and new people moving in?

MB: Well it seems like we're always having new industries coming in, and a lot more people.

GT: Do you think we'll be able to keep pace?

MB: I believe we will.

GT: We have in the past, haven't we?

MB: We've managed so far, and I guess we'll just keep on. We'll make room for them somewhere. They've got to be here and work.

GT: Well yes, it does mean a great deal to the economy.

MB: That's right.

GT: Well tell me, as one who has lived 80 years already, do you have any personal philosophy, or perhaps a creed that you live by?

MB: No, not that I know of. I just kind of live day-by-day, and do the best with what I have, and trust in the Lord. That's all I ...

GT: Well I think that's the best creed we could have. Take it one day at the time?

MB: That's right.

GT: Oh that is absolutely fantastic. Well, you do realize we've been taping for the Oral History Association in Baytown. Let me ask, do you object to this tape being placed in the Oral History Collection at Lee College, which understand now would be available to the public or any student who is doing research, now or in the future?

MB: No, I don't object at all. I'd be glad for them to play this tape and see what this town was like in 1976, our bicentennial year.

GT: Well thank you so much, Mrs. Bounds. This is the end of the interview. Today is November 22, 1976, and the interviewer has been Mrs. W.O. Tidman.

GT: Mrs. Bounds would like me to correct one error. It was the Stiles home that fronted on Defee Street, not the Gaillard home. The Gaillard home is farther north.

I would also like to add that Mrs. Bounds' grandfather was William Ward, an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. End of tape.

Transcribed by: AS 12/2017