

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

*The
Kerr County Historical Commission
presents*

An ORAL HISTORY

of

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Kerrville, Texas

2012

Kerr County Historical Commission

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Interviewers: Francelle Robison Collins
 Louis Stephens

Date: March 13, 2012

Place: 916 Lytle Street
 Kerrville, Texas

*The Oral History Project is a part of the
Kerr County Historical Commission,
a volunteer organization. Oral History
Committee members are Francelle Robison,
Chair.*

Edited by Louis Stephens
Kerr County Historical Commission

Kerr County Historical Commission

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Name: Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Date of Birth: March 21, 1921

Place of Birth: Shreveport, Louisiana

Occupation: Secretary, Administration Assistant
& Kerrville Homemaker

SUMMARY

Nell Lenard was born and raised in Shreveport, Louisiana where she met and married John Houston Lenard. John went to work for Magnolia Pipeline Company and was transferred to Tomball, Texas near Houston. After their son John Jr. was born he had asthma real real bad and the Doctor advised them to find a drier climate. In their search for a place in a drier climate they came to Kerrville where John saw a man catch a fish in the Guadalupe River in February and decided this was the place for them. Nell has volunteered and/or worked for several organization in Kerrville since moving here. She has raised a family of four boys and a girl and was been heavily involved lives including organizing the boys "Indian Tribe". She was instrumental in bringing a Senior Citizen's Center to Kerrville now known at the Dietert Claim and worked for it for a number of years.

KEY WORDS

Places and Organizations

Shreveport, Louisiana
Eastern Star
Hot Springs Arkansas
First Baptist Church
Magnolia Pipeline Company
Tomball, Texas
Kerrville, Texas
HEB
First Methodist Church
Walgreens
Hilltop Village
Southwest Texas Conference
Morningside Manor
Kerrville State Hospital
Dietert Claim
Quinlan Creek
Kansas City
Houston Cougars

People

Frances Ford
Arthur Ford
Percy Ford
Benjamin Francis Ford
Justin Hughey Goodwin
Ruth Ford
Nellie Ellsworth Goodwin
W. A. Stephenson
John Houston Lenard
Van Clyburn
Chief Redtop
Scotty Evans
Bill Brandon
A. G. Rogers
Dr. DeWayne Spencer
Will Mathis Dunn
Gene Pancoast
Pat Pancoast
Dan Bacon
Pat Earnst
Gilbert Rowe

**An Oral History
Of
Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard**

*This interview was conducted on March 13, 2012 by
Francelle Collins and Louis Stephens on behalf of the Kerr
County Historical Commission Oral History Project. Nell
Joyce Goodwin Lenard is a longtime resident of Kerrville.*

*(Ed. Note: The following is a transcript of the audiotape at the back of this
notebook and has been altered only for clarity of meaning.)-LS*

Francelle: My name is Francelle Robison Collins and I am with the Kerr County Historical Commission, Oral History Project. Today is March 12, 2012, and I am here at 916 Lytle Street, Kerrville, Texas with Louis Stephens and John Lenard. We are talking to Nell Lenard, who understands that we are making audio and video recordings of this interview and that a typewritten manuscript of this interview will be provided so that changes can be made. The audio and video tapes, however, cannot be edited. This information along with the copies of any family pictures and documents provided by you will then be turned over to the Kerr County Historical Commission archives at Schreiner University, and to the Butt Holdsworth Library's History Center where they will be available to the public unless specific restrictions are placed on them by you. These restrictions will be noted in the Release form after you have had a chance to review the manuscript. Are you clear on what we're doing today?

Nell: Yes.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Francelle: What is your given name?

Nell: Nell.

Francelle: Nell?

Nell: Nell.

Francelle: Just Nell no middle name?

Nell: Joyce but I don't go by that.

Francelle: Joyce Nell or Nell Joyce?

Nell: Nell Joyce.

Francelle: And what was your family name?

Nell: Goodwin.

Francelle: Goodwin? Where and when were you born?

Nell: I was born in Shreveport, Louisiana on March 21, 1921.

Francelle: Happy birthday this month. Were you born at home or in a hospital?

Nell: I don't know.

Francelle: You don't know? They never told you, huh?

Nell: No.

Francelle: Are you assuming one or the other?

Nell: I would assume at home.

Francelle: At home. What are the names of your siblings? Brothers and sisters.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Nell: My sister was Frances and my brothers were Arthur and Percy.

Francelle: What was your father's name?

Nell: I have a biological father and I have an adopted father. Which one do you want.

Francelle: Well just give us both of them.

Nell: My biological father was Benjamin Francis Ford and my adopted father was Justin H. I think it was Hughey, Justin Hughey Goodwin.

Francelle: So you were adopted when you were an infant then?

Nell: I was three.

Francelle: Three.

Nell: My mother died. Her sister took my sister and me to live with them.

Francelle: How wonderful someone that you knew well. What was your father's occupation? We will just talk about your adopted father from here on.

Nell: He and his brother-in-law had a plumbing company.

Francelle: Okay and that was in Shreveport?

Nell: Un huh.

Francelle: Okay. What was your mother's given name?

Nell: Which one?

Francelle: Go ahead and give us both, I'm sorry.

Nell: My biological was Ruth and I don't know whether she had a middle name or not. My other was Nellie Ellsworth.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Francelle: And your adopted mother where was she born and when?

Nell: In Tennessee but I don't know when. I have forgotten now.

Francelle: Okay, did your mother work out of the home or was she just a housewife?

Nell: A housewife.

Francelle: What can you tell us about your adopted mother? Can you give us any personality traits that you loved about her?

Nell: Uh, she had no children of her own and I think she wanted to be a business lady but taken my sister and me uh, sort of pushed out to her but she made the best of it.

Francelle: Why sure.

Nell: She made all of our clothes. Back in those days women did sew, you know.

Francelle: Why certainly.

Nell: She was a very good cook. We had three meals every day. We went to church and Sunday School religiously.

Francelle: You did all the right things. So what about your father? What can you tell us about his personality.

Nell: He was a fisherman. While we were going to church he was going fishing.

Francelle: He did that by trade or was that just some of his hobbies?

Nell: His hobbies.

Francelle: Beside the plumbing business then.

Nell: Right.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Francelle: He fished on weekends, then. What else can you tell us say about him.

Nell: He was very good to me. He took me fishing. He had a boat on Caddo Lake. He would have to go and check on it every now and then and he would take me with him regardless that I was very young. He bought me overall and girl did not wear pants back in those days but I had overall and a pocket watch like his.

Francelle: So did you like to fish?

Nell: Yes, yeah yeah.

Francelle: So you were kind of a tomboy then?

Nell: Yeah kind of a tomboy.

Francelle: Yeah. Whatever he liked to do you like to do then, sounds like then.

Nell: Exactly.

Francelle: What about your grandparents? Did you know your grandparents?

Nell: Yes, I knew my mother's parents. They were the only ones I knew. My grandfather worked for the city of Shreveport. He was the manager for two Funeral uh Cemeteries. He managed them, hired the black men to come and dig the graves and took all care to them. They live in a house that belonged to the city at the edge of one of the cemeteries and they had room there for a garden and a cow and it was just like being on a farm.

Francelle: And what was that grandparent's name?

Nell: Stephenson.

Francelle: Stephenson.

Nell: W. A. Stephenson. I guess his name was William, probably.

Francelle: Un hum.

Nell: My Grandmother churned milk and made butter and we bought butter from her. That was her spending money.

Francelle: Un hum.

Nell: And she had chickens and eggs and we bought eggs from her. We tried to go to her house every Sunday afternoon and I remember for some odd reason the minute my sister and I got in the house we said "I'm hungry".

Francelle: You knew that there would be good food there.

Nell: She always had a cake baked.

Francelle: Uh hum.

Nell: We always had cake. My mom's younger brother said one time "Mary, don't you ever feed those girls". Oh that nearly killed her. Woaaaah, she told us "don't you ever say your hungry again".

Francelle: But that is what grandmothers are for to have cake. I remember my grandmother always had cake too. I think that's what kids always did. They knew there would always be a cake there or cookies.

Nell: Right.

Francelle: And did you start to school there in Shreveport?

Nell: Yes.

Francelle: Okay.

Nell: I started before I was six.

Francelle: Was that kindergarten or first?

Nell: That was Regular first grade.

Francelle: First grade, okay.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Nell: So I graduated when I was 16. We only had 11 grades.

Francelle: Eleven grades, un huh. Can you remember what you did in school? You remember teachers or any things you did at recess?

Nell: Well we had some very good teachers. One particular lady was very interested in our welfare. Um, I remember her very well.

Francelle: Do you remember her name?

Nell: Her last name was Joyce. Because my middle name is Joyce it was easy for me to remember.

Francelle: Mrs. Joyce.

Nell: She was a precious teacher.

Francelle: She wanted her students to succeed it sounds like.

Nell: Yes. She sure did. Let's see.

Francelle: Did you do anything after school? Did you have a?

Nell: I had playtime.

Francelle: Playtime, okay.

Nell: And a particular way of coming home from school. No deviation. Don't cross the street even. One Day I did it ooooooh I got.

Francelle: Got in trouble who?

Nell: A lecture, my gosh. She had driven over, I don't know why she was checking on me. I am quite sure she wasn't coming to pick me up because she didn't believe in taking children to school.

Francelle: They needed their exercise.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Nell: Yes. She went down and looked on the side I was supposed to be on and I wasn't on that side

Francelle: Uh oh.

Nell: and she didn't look over there. So when I got home I caught it. She was very strict. Very strict.

Francelle: You remembered to stay on that side after that didn't you?

Nell: I did.

Francelle: What did you do when you got home. Did you play with neighbor's kids, climb trees or what?

Nell: Yes. There were three little girls just about my same age. So the four of us we played school. Ha ha. We had been in school all day well we played school. And we talked about students, jump the rope and remember the one birthday party that I had. My mother had planned that we she could pile her car full of little girls and we would go out and pick wild violets. That was going to be fun.

Francelle: Entertainment. Un huh.

Nell: Entertainment. But just as we were getting into the car my adopted father drove up with a sidewalk bicycle for me.

Francelle: Oh how neat.

Nell: And of course I wanted to stay home and ride my bicycle. I didn't want to go and pick violets.

Francelle: But you did.

Nell: I went and picked violets. That was the only birthday party I can remember ever having as a child.

Francelle: So your little neighbor friends were all there, huh?

Nell: Un huh.

Francelle: And do you have any other memories of school that you can remember that kinda stands out in your mind? Things that went on?

Nell: Well I was asked, I guess it was my senior year or maybe my junior year at the end of the year to be in a program in the auditorium and said oh no, no I couldn't do that. And I got home I told Mother I had refused it she said you go right back up there and tell them that you can do it. So I did. And it worked out all right.

Francelle: Worked out all right. Yeah.

Nell: Worked out all right.

Francelle: Well they had confidence in you or they wouldn't have asked you.

Nell: Yeah, I guess so.

Francelle: Well I'm glad she got you into doing that. You talk about your mother going in a car do you remember what kind of car that was?

Nell: Uuuuuuh, yeah at first it was a Model A.

Francelle: Uh huh.

Nell: And whatever came next, umm I don't remember.

Francelle: You don't remember what it was?

Nell: I don't I don't. When I was a very small child, before I went to live with them, they had a big old Studebaker. I mean a big one but by the time I got there they were driving the Model A Ford.

Francelle: But you walked to school and walked home.

Nell: Every day.

Francelle: Come rain sleet or snow you did that.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Nell: Yeah. My adopted father had rheumatism and uh we went to Hot Springs Arkansas several times during my young years and I remember we had lots of flats on the way.

Francelle: On the way. Did that help with his rheumatism?

Nell: He seemed to think so

Francelle: He did?

Nell: Or he wouldn't have kept going back.

Francelle: He went often?

Nell: Several times.

Francelle: Tell me about your family religion.

Nell: Oh, we were Baptist. We couldn't go dancing.

Francelle: Oh no.

Nell: Couldn't play cards, could do this, couldn't do that.

Francelle: Couldn't have a beer?

Nell: Couldn't have any, no that was way out there.

Francelle: That was way out there?

Nell: Way out there. Er, what was I going to say? Something about.

Francelle: Couldn't go dancing, or, or was it something else.

Nell: We went to Sunday School and church every Sunday morning.

Francelle: Uh huh.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Nell: So we were in Sunday School. We went home and had a big Sunday dinner and then Sunday night we went back to worship service.

Francelle: Oh okay.

Nell: And one Sunday night there was a big storm that blew the roof off the car, the Model A.

Francelle: Oh no.

Nell: Oh I was okay. We were driving down the street like, as if we were in a...

Francelle: A convertible.

Nell: Convertible.

Francelle: So that didn't stop you from going to church? You just went in a convertible?

Nell: Yes. We went home in a convertible.

Francelle: So every Sunday you went to Sunday School and church. Did most of your friends go to the same church or?

Nell: No, we went to the one downtown. Mother had been going to that church and so she expected us to go to that church too. It was Baptist, First Baptist Church but there was one in our neighborhood there. Ah, we had been living there, my sister and I possibly a year or two, before my adopted father brought his mother to live with us. She had been living on a farm in Brandon, Arkansas by herself and he decided it was time to bring her there. So she lived with us. She had a daughter that lived in Shreveport and she and her daughter couldn't get along at all.

Francelle: So she lived with y'all the rest of her lifetime?

Nell: Yeah, she was a sweet old lady. But my mama said "you stay out of her room. You are not supposed to be a bothering her". She figured

I would be bothering her. Of course I think the little old lady would have been mighty glad to have had the company.

Francelle: Why sure.

Nell: And occasionally, my mom was a big Eastern Star lady, and when she would go to lodge, she sort of left us in care of her mother-in-law. Just sort of. It wasn't the happiest home in the world but it was a home.

Francelle: Uh huh. You said that about the Eastern Star I don't think we have ever had anybody in that. Were you in Eastern Star also?

Nell: No.

Francelle: No?

Nell: I wasn't.

Francelle: And when you said she's big in, and tell us a little bit about the Eastern Star do you remember what kind of stuff she did in there?

Nell: Well, er they met either once or twice a month, I can't quite remember. She was the secretary for years and years and years. Nobody else wanted to be secretary and she didn't mind doing it so she did her paperwork at home most of the time. But they dressed formally.

Francelle: For their meeting?

Nell: Uh huh.

Francelle: Uh huh.

Nell: And they had the Star Points. Er, they had the red Point, the blue Point, the green Point and the yellow Point and so on like that. They dressed in those colors with long formals. But since she was secretary she could wear anything she wanted to. It was either white or black usually.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Francelle: And Eastern Star is what are they a part of?

Nell: They are attached to the Masons.

Francelle: The Masons, and the women are Eastern Star.

Nell: Uh huh.

Francelle: Division of the Masons.

Nell: That's right.

Francelle: Okay, so dressing formally was something that just something that had always been done then, or?

Nell: Well I presume so. It was a small Lodge that she went to. There were several in Shreveport. I imagine they had about oh, 50 members. Oh, she thoroughly enjoyed that.

Francelle: The comradery and everything.

Nell: That was her recreation, going to Eastern Star.

Francelle: Okay. What did you do after graduation? You said you were 16 what do you do then?

Nell: I went to business college there in Shreveport.

Francelle: In Shreveport.

Nell: Then I got a job with a young struggling lawyer and worked for him about six months and I got married.

Francelle: You do shorthand when you worked for him?

Nell: Yes, I did shorthand and typing. I did all right.

Francelle: You did typing too?

Nell: Oh yeah.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Francelle: And filing?

Nell: Yeah, just whatever he asked me to do, that's what I did. I had been going with my fiancée for a year or two. I told him I couldn't get married until about 18 or she would annul it.

Francelle: She had already said that, huh?

Nell: Well, I got that, I don't think she ever actually said it in so many words but I certainly got that impression. So John and I married in First Baptist Church when I was 18.

Francelle: John, can you give us his full name?

Nell: Houston. John Houston Lenard.

Francelle: And he lived in Shreveport also?

Nell: Yes.

Francelle: Uh huh, and what was John doing at that particular time, when you met him?

Nell: At that time I met him, he was mostly practicing his violin. He lived with his mother and about four hours a day he practiced his violin. He was going to be a concert violinist.

Francelle: Oh, interesting.

Nell: he had already been in the Army for three years.

Francelle: So he's a little bit older than you?

Nell: He's 11 years older.

Francelle: Oh 11 years older. Okay, an older man.

Nell: Of course, I didn't tell my parents how old he was. Ha ha. I passed him off as a 19-year-old. And he really looked it. And anyway,

when he realized he was fixing to get married he decided he'd better get a job so he could support a wife.

Francelle: Uh huh.

Nell: So he took the job with the Magnolia Pipeline Company. One of the straw bosses was a friend of his mother and he she helped him get on with Magnolia Pipeline. And when he was making his application he put on there that he played saxophone and violin and er, the man that was interviewing him said "well er, my wife and I have a riverfront mission from the Baptist Church. Would you consider coming and playing sometime for us?" And John said "Sure, I would be glad to." It turned out that the guy was Van Clyburn's father.

Francelle: Wow.

Nell: And Van Clyburn's mother played the piano. Oh she was a marvelous pianist. She taught Van to play. The daddy preached and led the singing and the mother played the piano and Van had a triangle that he played. I always said that my husband's note of fame was that he played with Van Clyburn.

Francelle: While Van played triangle.

Nell: Yes. Van was about four years old.

Francelle: Uh huh, oh that is cute.

Nell: And let's see, very soon after that he got transferred to, Tomball.

Francelle: You said he was with the pipeline or something like that?

Nell: Yes, the Magnolia Pipeline.

Francelle: The Magnolia Pipeline. Okay, and he was transferred to?

Nell: Tomball.

Francelle: Tomball, Texas. Okay.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Nell: Uh huh. I had never driven at all, but he was walking the pipeline checking for leaks was what he was doing down there in Tomball. He had to get to the starting point and be picked up at his leaving point. And so I got a lady living in the duplex to teach me to drive so I can bring a car back home after he started walking. And so.

Francelle: Was this a company truck or was it your own car?

Nell: It was ours.

Francelle: Your car.

Nell: And I would drive around like this. By that time this one was born. (Points to John Lenard – her son)

Francelle: Okay.

Nell: Only he was a mean little bugger.

Francelle: Ha ha, you could drive very well?

Nell: Its a wonder he didn't starve to death. Because I had never even held a baby....

Francelle: Oh my goodness.

Nell: In my whole life. The doctor said "feed him every four hours" so I was going to feed him every four hours and he was crying and crying and crying. The lady next door said "why don't you feed that baby". I said because the doctor said to feed him every four hours. She said "he's hungry, feed him".

Francelle: So you fed him more and that worked?

Nell: Yeah, that worked.

Francelle: Good. You would drive him around with you, huh?

Nell: Yeah, yeah. He was with me when I was learning to drive.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Francelle: Basically it was helping too if you were doing that much to help John.

Nell: And the, uh.

Francelle: How did he check for those leaks?

Nell: I think he just looked for a puddle of oil.

Francelle: Is that right?

Nell: I think that what it was.

Francelle: It would just show on top of the ground?

Nell: Yeah.

Francelle: And he just reported it or would he do something else?

Nell: Yeah, he would report it.

Francelle: He would report it and somebody else would come from the field.

Nell: We went to the Baptist Church once or twice and I had been going to First Baptist Church in Shreveport where everything was prim and proper. This preacher in Tomball had on cowboy boots and a plaid shirt and he also had a kind of impediment in his speech and I wasn't really amenable over that church.

Francelle: That is like Tomball.

Nell: So the older couple that lived in the duplex with us said "well hey, we have a nice young preacher at the First Methodist Church. Why don't you come and visit and see how you like it and if you like it just go every Sunday". We did and we just fell in love with the preacher he was the sweetest man. He wasn't married and we went on double dates with him.

Colin: Oh cool.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Nell: Of course we were married and he wasn't, his fiancée lived in the next town. I'm trying to think of the name of it. But anyway we went to the next town we had to pick up his date. She had two children, his fiancée.

Francelle: You became Methodist then?

Nell: We became Methodist, yes. We joined the Methodist Church before he got transferred somewhere else.

Francelle: Uh huh. Did you all start dancing, then?

Nell: No we didn't. We really didn't. John had danced before he started going with me. He was a good dancer but he was satisfied not to dance. And so (pause) we stayed there at Tomball several years and John had asthma real real bad.

Francelle: John your son?

Nell: This one. (Pointing to John) John Junior.

Francelle Uh huh.

Nell: He had asthma and our doctor said "you have to get him out of this climate, he won't ever get better". So we asked for a transfer. By that time I had the second boy

Francelle: What was his name?

Nell: Bascom.

Francelle: Bascom. Okay, how close are they in age?

Nell: Oh, a year and a half, probably.

Francelle: Okay.

Nell: Maybe two.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Francelle: Uh huh.

Nell: We asked for a transfer and they didn't have a place to send us. So he just pulled up. We were living in or of public houses and we didn't have a whole lot to move but John had a marvelous garden at Tomball out there at the pump station. So we started out.

Francelle: To find good weather?

Nell: Yes. And we got to Kerrville after living in two or three other towns and John saw a man pull a fish out of the river on a very cold morning and he decided that this was the place we wanted to live.

Francelle: Because the fishing looked good.

Nell: In cold weather you could catch fish. So we were staying in a trailer at Take It Easy Trailer Park. Of course they wouldn't want to call it a trailer park nowadays but that's what it was then. Being in there with two little boys wasn't the greatest thing in the world so I said "find me a house, I don't care if it is a chicken coop I want a house. I want out of this trailer". So he found this house.

Francelle: This is the house on Lytle Street? He found it. Where we are today?

Nell: Right.

Francelle: Okay. Here.

Nell: And we moved in here. And I had the third son.

Francelle: How long after Bascom did you have the third child?

Nell: Probably two years.

Francelle: Two years and what was his name?

Nell: Walter.

Francelle: Walter was born about two years after Bascom. Okay, so now you have three sons and a new house.

Nell: Three boys and we needed something that . . . , the neighborhood was full of young boys. So we decided we would have a Indian tribe and we elected one of the older boys as the Chief. And my husband by that time had a shoe repair shop. See he had learned that from his father many many years ago. So he decided that they were going to have a 4th of July parade and he would have the shoe shop have a float and we would have the Indian tribe on the float and it worked out real well.

Francelle: Did you have Teepee?

Nell: I don't remember exactly what it was but we were all in costume I guarantee you that. We ordered one of these wonderful big headdresses, you know. We sweated it coming in time. It got there the day before the parade.

Francelle: Oh wonderful.

Nell: Redtop. Oh, Chief Redtop was out at one of the boys leaders.

Francelle: A real Chief?

Nell: Uh huh, a real Chief and we invited him to come visit us. We had him here for one of our meetings. Oh the boys thought that was the greatest thing but mine were so young that I doubt if you even remember it.

John: Oh yes, I remember it.

Nell: Do you remember it?

Francelle: So what did you do at the Indian tribe? What did little boys do?

Nell: I'm trying to remember. What did we do? We played some Indian games, I know.

Francelle: So you just made it up as you went?

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Nell: Yeah, we just sort of made it up as we went. Give them something to do.

Francelle: What kind of tribe were they?

Nell: Do you know? I said the name of that tribe.

Francelle: Apache?

John: Was it Sioux?

Nell: I think we made up our own name.

Francelle: Your own name for it huh? Did you make clothes for your little boys to wear or did they?

Nell: Well, they had khakis.

Francelle: Uh huh.

Nell: What, what did Scotty Evans eventually do? Was he the Fire Chief or the Sheriff or?

Francelle: He was the Fire Chief I thought.

John: Scotty Evans was the Fire Chief.

Louis: No, he was Police Chief.

Nell: No, I don't think so.

Francelle: He was what?

Louis: Police Chief.

Nell: He was

Francelle: You're right, Police Chief.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Nell: Okay, well he was one of them.

Francelle: He was one of the Indian boys?

Nell: Uh huh.

John: Bill Brandon was another one, wasn't he?

Nell: Bill Brandon, uh huh. Anyway.

Francelle: Do you have pictures of them?

Nell: I probably do. I would have to hunt and hunt and hunt to find them.

Francelle: That would be fun to see.

Nell: We will see.

Francelle: Yeah. You have more children don't you?

Nell: About that time Molly came along and I started working at the radio station.

Francelle: That was your first job?

Nell: That was my first job here in this town.

Francelle: What did John do here?

Nell: He had a shoe repair shop for several years.

Francelle: Okay, uh huh.

Nell: Until they widened the street and people couldn't get to the shop to leave their shoes or get there to pick them up.

Francelle: And what street was it on?

Nell: Main.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Francelle: Main Street.

Nell: Yeah, and that's where HEB is now.

Francelle: Oh, down there. Okay.

Nell: It was a very good location. He would take me out to work. I had to be there at 7:30.

Francelle: And you were, at the radio station?

Nell: At the Radio Station. It was out on the highway.

Francelle: Right. KERV?

Nell: Uh huh.

Francelle: Uh huh.

Nell: I got started out there as a volunteer. I wanted a program of inspirational type material. And so sure, they said sure we would be glad to have you. So I would go out and do one live and two tapes and in the next time I would go and do one live and two tapes and so forth like that. Until I got acquainted with everyone out there then one morning the manager said "Do you type?" And I said "Yes I do." He said "Well our receptionist is leaving, are you interested?" I said "Well I don't know, maybe." So I talked it over with John and he said "Yeah, why don't you try it." So he would drive me out there to get me there by 7:30. While he was doing that I was plating Molly's hair in the car, getting her ready for school and the boys were supposed to be cleaning up the kitchen from breakfast, you know. They each had their own job. And I didn't know until just a few years ago at the old two older ones told Walter you do my work or we are going to beat you up.

Francelle: That's typical brothers.

Nell: But he didn't tell me that until just a few years ago.

Francelle: So what did you do, did you just do typing at the radio station.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Nell: Yes, and filing.

Francelle: Who was your boss there?

Nell: A. G. Rogers.

Francelle: Okay

Nell: Do you remember him?

Francelle: Uh huh.

Nell: I gathered the local news and typed it, and I was the receptionist, and I had my program every day. That was nine years after Art was born, I mean after Molly was born. Then Art was born.

Francelle: Oh goodness.

Nell: I quit work there, to take care of him.

Francelle: Everybody was in school then?

Nell: Right. I stayed home with him until he was about three, I guess and then Mrs. Kate Remchel kept him. Does that name ring a bell?

Francelle: Un huh.

Nell: She had several, oh six or eight little, little bitty kids so she said "Sure, she would take him." And when he was nearly 6 but not quite, he was not old enough to start public school. His birthday is in September. She said "This child is ready to go to school. If you will pay for him to go to the Lutheran school I will keep him from the time he gets out of school until you get off of work and won't charge you anything." I thought that was awful sweet of her.

Francelle: I'll say.

Nell: She recognized that he was ready to go to school. I then I was working as a secretary at First Methodist Church.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Francelle: Okay, and that was the big one down on Sidney Baker there?

Nell: Yeah.

Francelle: Well, on the corner of Sidney Baker and

Nell: Where Walgreens is now.

Francelle: Yeah, where Walgreens is now.

Nell: And I worked for Dr. DeWayne Spencer. He was the one that hired me and he lasted about another year. Er. He and the bigwigs of the church didn't get along very good.

Francelle: In the Kerrville church or all the way up?

Nell: In the Kerrville church.

Francelle: So he was only here about a year?

Nell: Well he was here about a year or two before I got hired.

Francelle: Okay, yeah.

Nell: So at conference time, well he got sent somewhere else and we got Rev....

John: Rev. Kerr?

Nell: No, no, no Kerr was here many many years

John: Brother Bryan?

Nell: No. his name was Will Mathis Dunn. Well his son is here now. But I think the one I worked for has probably passed away. But the funny part about it. It wasn't funny at the time, I guarantee you. He said "Now Nell you have been here and you know a lot more about this church than I do. Uh if you see where I am slipping up and I need to do something that I'm not doing it you be sure to tell me

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about it" "Okay". Like a dummy I did. I waited about six months and went to his office which was up on the second floor. He wrote poetry, I mean Poetry.

Francelle: He wrote what?

Nell: He wrote poetry. In his spare time. One of them was 13 pages long.

Francelle: Oh my goodness.

Nell: Of course he had to mimeograph that stuff because he wanted to send it to all the preachers in the area. Well that was what I went to see him about. I said "I think you are spending too much time in your office. You need to get out and visit some of the shut-ins.

Francelle: Sure, see the flock.

Nell: "That's a very good idea" he said. At the next board meeting they cut my time in half

Francelle: Uh oh.

Nell: And used that money to hire a retired minister to drive him to those people.

Francelle: Oh, how terrible.

Nell: There I was working half time. About that time Hilltop Village was being built by the Southwest Texas Conference of the Methodist Church.

Francelle: Uh huh.

Nell: And Mr. Pancoast is in charge. Do you know him at all?

Francelle: Pancoast?

Nell: Pancoast.

Francelle: I remember a Pancoast that went to school

Nell: Gene. Gene Pancoast.

Francelle: Pat Pancoast I think her name was.

Nell: Yeah, their daughter was in school. He was in charge of building the building. We were in a little teeny weenie building down in Kerrville as a temporary office. And he got tired of that before it was time for us to move up to the big building. So we moved up there while the road was still just pure mud and there wasn't any water on the premises up there. So when I had to use the restroom I had to get in the car and drive down to the service station. Anyway we finally got it finished but we couldn't fill it up. He was so busy with other things till one night this lady came in and said you're out of here. They didn't know that the head nurse was his wife. The second in command nursing division was his sister-in-law, the engineer was his brother-in-law. So that was four of them that went when he got fired.

Francelle: Oh, oh you were talking about him I thought you meant you. She said he's out of here. Not you.

Nell: Uh huh.

Francelle: And why didn't they say, just couldn't get enough people coming in to stay there? Or was there something else going on?

Nell: Uuuuuh, I think there was something else going on, too.

Francelle: Uh huh.

Nell: But they felt he should have been able to fill it a lot quicker than he did. And then they sent a man up from San Antonio. From Morningside Manor. He was going to spend half his time there and half his time at Hilltop Village. So half of his time was from about 10 o'clock in the morning until about two o'clock in the afternoon. And that worked alright. But evidently didn't for him so they sent somebody else.

Francelle: So you're the secretary for whoever was in charge out there.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Nell: Yes.

Francelle: Okay.

Nell: During the six years I worked out there I had four bosses. And one of them. Oh yeah, Dan Bacon's daddy and mother lived there at Hilltop Village. And they decided that he should be manager in charge. He lived there, you know.

Francelle: Mr. Bacon, Dr. Bacon?

Nell: Dr. Bacon's father.

Francelle: Father. Okay.

Nell: And he went to play golf in the afternoon.

Francelle: Oh my.

Nell: So I was in charge. So anyway I stayed there from '63 till '69. During that time Pat Earnst from Kerrville State Hospital and I from Hilltop Village had gone to a meeting in Austin where we saw slides of a senior citizen center that look real good to us. She said "Um, one of these days we're going to have one of those in Kerrville". And I said "Count me in". Sure enough, she called me and said "Are you ready to change jobs?". I said "Well, I don't know". She said "Come out here during your lunch hour and let's talk about it". So she offered me \$100 more a month than I was making. I said well I believe that I better take it. So I left Hilltop and went to work for Kerrville State Hospital, actually. Because they were, in order to get federal grants you had to have an Incorporated body so they would give you "in-kind support". So they gave us that after we found this house we finally used. See we looked at several different places but that one seemed to be the best.

Francelle: This is apart from the big hospital on the hill? This is someplace else?

Nell: I'm talking now about the Dietert Claim.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Francelle: Oh the Dietert Claim. Okay.

Nell: On Jefferson Street.

Francelle: Oh, okay.

Nell: Dr. Ross said he would give "in-kind support" so we could get the federal grant.

Francelle: Okay

Nell: It ended up that he gave us all the kitchen equipment we needed and tables and chairs from the dining room and so forth. When we got everything we needed then he put one or two of us on his payroll. And was that a blessing. Anyway I worked there for 20 years.

Francelle: And that was called what?

Nell: The Dietert Claim.

Francelle: The Dietert Claim, and that was a little red rock building, there on.

Nell: Uh huh, I named it. She told me. Well, she had to go to Austin and talk to her boss and tell her what we had, what we were going to name it and all that. She wanted to name it the Piper, eeerrr the one it blew the whistle and the rats followed him, remember?

John: The Pied Piper?

Francelle: Er, the Pied Piper.

Nell: Pied, she wanted, wanted it to be called the Pied Piper. And I said no I think of rats when I think of that. And she said "Okay, you do it then. You tell me what you want". Well I had to go early the next morning to come up with something. And I said well they are seeking to share, they are seeking to go to somewhere and do activity while they pan out loneliness and boredom and we could call it "The Claim" because everybody is trying to stake a claim.

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She said "Aw, that sounds pretty good. Yeah, yeah we can do that. So she took that with her to Austin.

Francelle: Uh huh.

Nell: That's what we went by for 20 years.

Francelle: Well then how did Dietert get it's name?

Nell: Mr. Dietert bought the property and gave it to us.

Francelle: Okay.

Nell: And that's where we had our parking lot, then to the side of the building was used dirt. He had some man come in and plant a garden in that dirt.

Francelle: Okay.

Nell: I can just picture him climbing a big tall ladder to pick the okra that had grown tall enough that he had to get on a ladder to pick it. But that did not last very long. We needed that parking area so badly. We had a little thrift shop right there in the building and a little later on we rented a house across the street and made "The House of Bargains" out of it. And let's see what else can I tell you.

Francelle: Was that just for people to come in and play dominoes? Didn't they make quilts and stuff like that? It was just for recreational things. Nobody lived there, they just came there for recreation.

Nell: Right, right.

Francelle: Okay.

Nell: We had a meal there and also that's where Meals on Wheels were coming from.

Francelle: Okay, that's where it originated, there at the Dietert.

Nell: Yeah.

Francelle: Okay. Going back to the state hospital, they got funding? The state hospital got funding for that building?

Nell: No, they had to give. Someone from Austin called Pat said "I have some money, you can have a Senior Citizen Center in Kerrville which you will have to get an Incorporated body to say that they will give you in-kind support.

Francelle: Okay.

Nell: So she got Dr. Ross to say he would.

Francelle: I got ya. Okay.

Nell: To say that he would give us in-kind support.

Francelle: Okay.

Nell: We now of course have that big beautiful building

Francelle: On Guadalupe Street.

Nell: Oh yeah.

Francelle: Uh huh.

Nell: In a nice area.

Francelle: Was that your retirement then? After you left Dietert? Was that your last job?

Nell: That was my last job. In '89, but then I started going out to the new place to visit twice a week and exercise twice a week and I did volunteer work at the little thrift shop.

Francelle: Uh huh.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Nell: For the Youth Ranch I did volunteer work once a week and that's what I wear this for (points to pin on she is wearing). For the 20 years I did volunteer work for them.

Francelle: Now when did John pass away?

Nell: In '90.

Francelle: In '90, after you had just retired?

Nell: Yes, I just retired. We went on a long trip up into Canada and he fell while we were on this trip. I got to thinking "We get into the French part of Canada". I thought to myself I can't even speak their language, if he were to have to get in a hospital I would be by myself. So I told him "You know, Maine is such a beautiful state, let's get back over into Maine". And so we stayed there another week before we came home back to Kerrville. Then we went on one little overnight trip after that. And then he passed away.

Francelle: From the fall?

Nell: I don't think so.

Francelle: Oh, okay.

Nell: No, I don't think so.

Francelle: Okay.

Nell: I don't think that had anything to do with it. I think he had a....

John: An aneurysm.

Francelle: Oh, okay.

Nell: See, he had had one once before. Several years earlier. He found it himself. I had a flat board and he was laying on the flat board and he said "Hey, there's something here I have never felt before". So he went over to the doctor and said "You get it out, let's get this

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

thing". So they fixed that one but this other one he never did get fixed.

Francelle: So what do you think has been the greatest thing about living in Kerrville? When you think back.

Nell: The people and the climate. That's the best. Yesterday I went to church with some friends and four different ladies came up and just hugged me. They were just so glad to see me, I haven't been out much lately.

Francelle: Uh huh.

Nell: And I thought "they sure are sweet" and we went to Cracker Barrel for lunch and someone came by and gave me a big hug. The people are just so friendly here.

Francelle: Right.

Nell: And the climate you can not beat it.

Francelle: When it's 80° in March, huh?

Nell: Check. Right. If nothing else isn't that enough?

Francelle: Absolutely. Absolutely. But if you had to live your life over would you do anything differently? Or would you do everything the same?

Nell: Probably.

Francelle: Probably, that's it. Yeah.

Nell: Yes I would.

Francelle: Wonderful. Well John is over here and he was going to tell us a funny story and has some connection to you too. About down on Quinlan Creek.

John: Down on Quinlan Creek.

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Francelle: Oh it wasn't Quinlan Creek.

John: Yes, Quinlan.

Francelle: Oh okay. Can you move that (camera) over there.

Louis: No, he will have to move over there.

Francelle: He's going to have to sit over there?

Louis: Yes.

Nell: Trade places?

Francelle: Yeah. Thank you Nell.

Nell: You're welcome.

John: Can I get an option.

Francelle: Don't slip on the back, back there.

John: The story that I am going to relate to you it's about time that Gilbert Rowe, who lived over on Prescott Street, and I were down goofing around on Quinlan Creek with an old upside down car top. I had gone across the creek several times on it so I knew it would hold me up and everything but Gilbert probably weighed 50 or 75 pounds more than I did. He and I got on it together and we got it right out in the middle and it just sunk on us. And it was in January.

Francelle: Oh gosh.

John: So we came to mother's house and, you know, we were soaking wet up to our nose and I guess the funniest part was Gilbert trying to wear a pair of my blue jeans home. They were like, you know, a pair of pedal pushers on him. He was about a foot taller than I was. But you know, thinking back on it and realizing how great a research scientist and oceanographer he turned out to be, it was kind of comical that he and I....

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Francelle: Started out in Quinlan Creek.

John: started out riding a submarine in Quinlan Creek.

Francelle: That is a good story.

John: I should have told this at our 50th reunion party.

Francelle: You should have. Yeah.

John: Because, the only reason I didn't was I just didn't want to put Gilbert down, you know, here he was a research scientist and still working at A&M on the coast and didn't want people thinking I was trying to put him down. It was hilarious, it really was. Boy we sank that thing.

Francelle: That's where he started with his boating, too. Because I always remember him from canoes to kayaks.

John: Kayaks, yeah.

Francelle: He always had some kind of boat in the river, so I guess he thought that he should do boats.

John: Exactly.

Francelle: So, you have been back in Kerrville how many years, John?

John: Oh, since '95 is when we came back. We've been in Kansas City for 20 years and we lived in Baton Rouge for a number of years, you know, and Mississippi and a bunch of places. It is just nice to be back here, but mother says, that people are extremely nice. It attracts a lot of people who are not natives of Kerr County that are really an asset to the community I think. There are more and more realizing we probably have the best weather in the state of Texas.

Nell: Absolutely.

John: So it's fun to be here.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Francelle: And you have your landscape business here correct?

John: Yes. I had one in Kansas after I left the agro-chemical industry and I have one here. We are kind of a mom-and-pop operation that we have been really blessed with some fine conflux of some nice jobs including the Dietert Center over on Guadalupe Street. We were able to do that project for them. It rained, I predicted it would take two months and it lasted six months so it was a real experience to get it done. The other one over in that vicinity was the Cailloux Foundation. It lasted about two years. They like to deal with operations and small operators and we are really, like I say, a mom-and-pop operation. We have a few people working for us.

Francelle: A couple of your brothers were firemen here correct?

John: Yes Bascom was a fireman here for 15 or 16 years and his son Tony Lenard, I think he is second or third in command with the Fire Department now so. We are blessed with having some good relatives that have not run Kerrville out of statehood or anything.

Francelle: Absolutely.

John: And Tony's son has moved back to town after getting his Master's degree in music and is planning to teach this year in Tivy's music program.

Francelle: So music keeps coming back in the family then?

Nell: Uh huh, right.

John: Uh huh, yeah.

Nell: It keeps coming back.

John: Daddy was, I mean after he passed away we found something in of his stuff. It was a letter of invitation to go to LSU.

Francelle: Wow! On a music scholarship?

John: Yeah, on a music scholarship.

Francelle: Oh, okay. Well thank Ya'll. This was fun. It wasn't bad at all was it?

Nell: No. It wasn't as bad as going to the dentist.

Francelle: That's right. Everybody thinks it's going to be more than it is. It just talking so you know. Louis and I really enjoyed doing this. We learned so much about people that we thought we knew a lot about that we really didn't know anything about until we get them talking.

Louis: When you asked her would you change anything about your life you know. I figured she would say "yes, I would knock John in the head when he was born."

Francelle: Yeah.

John: Put him out of his misery real early, huh. I guess I am only reason she is in Kerrville because I had asthma. They would still be kicking around down there in Tomball otherwise, probably.

Nell: Probably.

Francelle: And that is too close to Houston. I lived down there for a while and that is the sticks for sure, Tomball I mean. I think Louis will say we have gotten some really great story from people and that's the fun of it.

John: A good story, yeah.

Francelle: To hear stories that you didn't think about.

John: You know, if we had lived there I might have been a Rice Owl or a Houston Cougars?

Francelle: Yeah, it is the Houston Cougars.

John: I mean there are some dynamite teams there. I tell who is good coming out of the woodwork and that's the Baylor Bears.

Nell Joyce Goodwin Lenard

Francelle: I know. Yeah

John: They are playing some good basketball.

Francelle: Yeah, yeah I tell you, they had a football season and now they have a good basketball team.

John: They really have.

Nell: You might be interested to know that I only have half a heart.

Francelle: Half a heart?

Nell: Uh huh.

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T Life's Treasur

Honoring those who make



All those who enjoy the Dietert Center are in some part indebted to Kerrville's Nell Lenard, one of its first employees and longest-time advocates

Fruit of her labor

By **MARK J. ARMSTRONG**
Assistant Managing Editor

If Harry Dietert was the "father" of the Dietert Center, then it's fair to say that Nell Lenard is the equivalent of the center's "mother."

That's how Lenard was described in her nomination as one of Kerr County's Life's Treasures this year.

Lenard, who was one of the first employees at the Dietert Center, began working there in 1969 as a program specialist. She is credited with coming up with the name of the center and calling it "The Claim" because the participants would "mine the gold of service, activity and fellowship."

"We had Thanksgiving dinner the first year, and we had 50 people there. We thought that was just wonderful," Lenard said.

See **Lenard**, page 4

"Over the course of her 20 years of service, Nell was instrumental in developing many activities, programs and special events that have made the Dietert (Center) such a valuable and vital organization for thousands of Hill Country seniors and their families. Forty years later, Nell is still active at the Dietert Center, participating in weekly exercise, yoga classes and games. It's great to see her enjoying the 'fruits of her labor', and we are honored to have her!"

— **Tina Woods, executive director of the Dietert Center, in letter nominating Lenard as**

a Life's Treasures recipient



Lenard | continued from page 3

Lenard, who turned 89 this year, worked for the senior center for 20 years. Although now retired, she's showing no signs of slowing down.

For her 81st birthday, Lenard road a camel on a trip through Big Bend, and two years ago, she rode a zip line through the trees for her 87th.

"I've just been doing what I please," Lenard said shortly before heading off to her yoga class at the Dietert Center.

"I don't have any responsibilities now, and I just enjoy the Dietert Center," she said.

For her birthday this year, Lenard decided that at her age she had certain prerogatives about when to celebrate.

"I changed my birthday this year. You can't plan anything in March. It's going to be in July this year," Lenard said.

Come July, Lenard plans to have a picnic on Tranquility Island in Louise Hays Park.

"I just love Tranquility Island. I'm going to have my ashes spread there when I die," she said.

Lenard, who was born in Louisiana, moved to Kerrville in 1945 from the Houston area after her oldest son was diagnosed with asthma. Many people with breathing difficulties moved to the Hill Country because of the air quality and climate.

Three sons still live in the area, and Lenard continues to work as a volunteer at the House of Bargains and the Hill Country Youth Ranch Thrift Shop.



Tom Holden/Times Photo Editor, photo@dailytimes.com

Nell Lenard, known to many as the "mother of The Dietert Center," continues to do yoga taught by Willie McDaniel regularly at the center.



Nell at 3 years of age in Shreveport, LA



Nell celebrating 87th Birthday with overnight Camel Trail Ride



Nell's 90th Birthday celebration with family



Nell as Lil Abner's girl Daisy Mae



Willard Land, Nell and daughter Molly at the table with Lenard family



Nell and Family at Tea Garden in San Antonio



Nell Feeding Deer



Nell feeding the gulls



Nell as Mrs. Santa Claus representing the Women Division of the Chamber of Commerce



Nell with friends Dottie Dunn and Jean



Nell and Grandson Dustin



Nell and her 5 children John, Bascom, Walter, Molly and Art



Nell receiving Kerrville Trailblazers Walking Club Award