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Interview with
GRACE W. CARTWRIGHT
November 15, 1989

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas
Interviewers: Suzanne La Brecque
Ronald E. Marcello
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Approved: Grace W. Cartwright
(Signature)
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NORTH TEXAS IN THE CITY OF DENTON

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Oral History Collection

Grace Cartwright

Interviewers: Suzanne La Brecque Date: November 15, 1989
 Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello with Suzanne La Brecque interviewing Grace Cartwright for the University of North Texas Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on November 15, 1989, in Denton, Texas. We are interviewing Mrs. Cartwright in order to get her reminiscences and experiences about her time as a member of the Board of Regents at North Texas, and also we are in essence interviewing her to get her memoirs in general.

 Mrs. Cartwright, let's take the usual approach and get some background information. Tell me when you were born and where you were born.

Mrs. Cartwright: I was born on September 18, 1908, in a little community between Boyd and Paradise, Texas. My great-grandmother had come to Texas as a widow with a large family following the destruction

after the Civil War. She acquired land in Wise County and settled there.

Marcello: Where did your grandmother come from?

Cartwright: She came from Georgia by way of Alabama to Texas. The war drove her to Alabama after she was widowed. Then she came on to Texas when the war was over.

Marcello: Did your great-grandfather die during the Civil War?

Cartwright: My great-grandfather died during the Civil War. My grandfather also died during the Civil War. My grandmother remarried, and my stepgrandfather was so successful in establishing a cotton industry in that area that the town was named Cottdale, and that's the community that I grew up in. Cottdale was a thriving little town until the railroad came through. The railroad bypassed it by seven miles, and then the post office and railroad station were in Paradise. So I was born seven miles from Paradise.

Marcello: So it was your great-grandmother who came from Georgia to Wise County. Tell us a little bit about your childhood. Let's start with your mother and father. Why don't you identify them my name.

Cartwright: My mother and father were Fannie Lewis and John W. Woodruff, and they were married in Cottdale. She came up to visit an aunt, and she came from Minnesota to spend Christmas with an aunt. She and my father had a quick courtship, and she was married before she

went back to Minnesota.

Marcello: What kind of background did your father have in terms of occupation?

Cartwright: He was a farmer. He had been educated for the Baptist ministry, but his eyesight was poor. He went to get fitted for glasses in the days before dilation was perfected, and they used too much of whatever they used, and he could never be fitted for glasses. So he had to look to another profession and do whatever he could.

Marcello: What particular kind of farming did he do in terms of kinds of crops?

Cartwright: Oh, just all kinds of crops. Of course, we "agriculturists"--that's a fancy word for farmer--are very proud of our occupation. We are proud because we know we developed the great state of Texas; we are proud because you couldn't get along without us; and we're egotistical because we know that with the help of our co-partner, Mother Nature, we control the world's food supply. So the love of land and love of farming was ingrained in me.

Marcello: And do you think it certainly stems from that early childhood association with farming and the land?

Cartwright: Yes. With the love of land having been ingrained in me, even before I came to North Texas I knew what I wanted to do--that I wanted to work in rural areas--

and I chose my course accordingly. I was a home economics major, but I had a course under Dr. B.B. Harris, who talked a lot about the conservation of natural resources; and in the world where the wind is a factor, that's soil and water. Of course, that's where I spent a great deal of time.

Then when I graduated the head of the Home Economics Department, who was Mrs. McConnell, the wife of the president, would not recommend me. She thought this was a teacher's college, and I should teach. She didn't want me to go into A & M University Extension Service, but I did, anyway. I did that for two years.

Marcello: Before we get to that point, let's back up a little bit. Suzanne, do you have any questions about Mrs. Cartwright's early childhood that you'd like to ask?

La Brecque: I would. Grace, you were the youngest of how many children?

Cartwright: Ten.

La Brecque: And you are a twin, I believe.

Cartwright: Yes.

La Brecque: You have a twin brother.

Cartwright: I have a twin brother.

La Brecque: And yet you've kind of been the matriarch of that family. How did it evolve that you as the youngest became the one to take care of your family?

Cartwright: I was the youngest and, of course, the last one to

leave home. My mother was not in such good health. Of course, what woman would be after all that happened to her. I guess I took over household duties at the age of eleven. I set the day for house cleaning; I set the day for the laundry. Well, I just took over. Then after I married, I lived so near--I was just thirty-five miles away--that I just felt it was still my duty to run the house. So I ran my mother's house as long as she lived. I would go over there, and she would say, "Now you can do the hiring, but I will do the firing." So I virtually ran the house. Then my oldest brother lived in Decatur just twelve miles away, so he and I were very close. He took over Papa's duties, and I took over my mother's duties.

La Brecque: Did this kind of help you in deciding your career to go into home economics, do you think--this family situation?

Cartwright: I just knew what I wanted to do, and I feel so sorry for young people who don't know. I don't know what it would be like to not know what you want to do.

La Brecque: Tell us a little bit about your schooling. I think you had some unique schooling--how you'd sit around at night. Tell us a little bit about the study habits in your family.

Cartwright: Well, we had a long dining table. When we were all around it back and forth, there were thirteen because

my mother's maiden sister and a cousin grew up in my home. At night my father couldn't see, but you could read the math problem to him, and he would tell you how to work it. So those who needed math help gathered at this end of the table, and those who needed spelling and reading and English gathered at that end of the table. And nobody could go to bed until they had their homework finished.

Marcello: Let me follow up what you just said with some other questions. I'm assuming, therefore, that you did go to a rural school for your elementary education.

Cartwright: Yes.

Marcello: Let's talk a little bit about the school that you attended.

Cartwright: The school that I attended was a two-teacher school. It was two miles from home. We walked every morning, and we had to cross a creek. To get across the creek, we had to walk a log. A tree had fallen across the creek so we had to walk that log. Once or twice I fell in the creek.

When we got to school, the class that was being held went to the front seats, and those in the back were supposed to come in and study. One year my aunt was the teacher, and all year long I had failing grades--my brother and I. We were so discouraged. We just studied and studied. Then at the end of the

year, she gave my mother the real report card, and it was straight "A's". That was hard on me! And then one year my sister was my teacher, and that wasn't easy.

Marcello: During that portion of your education, were all of your teachers women? I'm referring to the elementary education that you had.

Cartwright: Yes. Until I got to high school, I didn't have any male teachers.

Marcello: And how many grades were there in that elementary school?

Cartwright: Eight.

Marcello: And then you picked up your four years of high school at Mineral Wells. Is that correct?

Cartwright: No. My freshman year, the very first year, my brother and I drove six miles in a buggy hitched behind "Buck." "Buck" was our horse that was born the same day we were. We had a charcoal burner that we called the foot warmer; and that's what they were, a foot warmer. We got that ready and put it in the buggy and put a lap robe over us because we faced the north wind. When we got to school, there was a line of stalls for horses because a good many of the students did come in horseback or in a buggy. Then in the afternoon, we hitched up and went home. We had chores to do before we left and chores to do when we got

home, like, milk the cows.

Marcello: You mentioned something else awhile ago that I would like to follow up on. You gave what I guess was kind of a romantic side of farm life. On the other hand, there was a lot of drudgery involved in being a farmer, also, was there not? We're talking about a time before electricity.

Cartwright: Yes. Oh, yes. I didn't even have electricity until twenty years after I was married.

Marcello: And just the fact that you did not have electricity, I would assume, increased the amount of time and the amount of physical effort it took to get things done, whether we are talking about milking cows or washing clothes or ironing or anything of that nature.

Cartwright: Oh, yes. You set aside one whole day a week to do the laundry--a half-day for the washing and a half-day for the ironing.

Marcello: Is this why they always call it "Blue Monday?" Have you ever heard that term, "Blue Monday?" It must have something to do with the fact that it is the wash day.

Cartwright: Well, I don't remember which day of the week was wash day (chuckle).

La Brecque: Could you tell us a little bit...I'm still really interested in your childhood. What did you do for fun? I know you worked very hard, and there were days when you also went to school, and you studied hard,

and you did the chores. But what were the things that...did you socialize only with your family? What are the events that you did for fun?

Cartwright: Well, I can't remember much we did for fun. We had a home-grown softball team when the whole family got out and played softball, but we had to make our own balls. We'd take something and wrap twine...we saved every bit of twine and rolled it around and sewed it as we went and made our own balls to play with.

We never had enough things to read. I resolved that when I grew up I would have anything I wanted to read. So I never go to the library. If I want to read a book, I buy it and I have it. Then I give it to the library. My brother, who was just older than I, would go to the mailbox ahead of us, and he would get the Youth's Companion--that was the only thing we had that was ours--and he would read that Youth's Companion from cover to cover before he'd let us have it. Then twice a week we took the farm part of the Dallas News. Formerly it was called something else. Anyway, it was twice a week--a publication of the Dallas News--and it was about farming. So we got that. And I remember very well the first book I ever owned. My brother, who was just older than I, gave me Little Women. Oh, I was so proud of that!

Marcello: How much emphasis was put upon education and learning

in the household?

Cartwright: Very much. My mother and father were of a different disposition. My father was easy-going, and he would have been satisfied if we had just stayed around home with him. But my mother pushed us out and made us want to go to school. Well, we never had to be made to want to go, but she saw that we had the opportunity. Then as we finished the local school, we were pushed out with no funds. They had sent the older ones to college, but by the time I came along I should have been a grandchild, you know. We were just pushed out, and I went to work when I was sixteen to finish high school.

And that was when I went to Mineral Wells the last year because the other schools were not accredited--our local schools. In order to get in college, we had to have a diploma from an accredited high school, and that's why I went to Mineral Wells. I lived with my older brother, who was married and lived in Mineral Wells. But I worked while I was there. Of course, when you talked about what I did for fun, that year I didn't have any time to do anything that was fun because I worked and then did a year-and-a-half of academic work in a year. In other words, I took the last half of first-year Latin and the first part of second-year Latin the same semester.

Marcello: What sort of work did you do during that year that you were going to high school in Mineral Wells?

Cartwright: I worked in a hat shop. I made hats. Of course, I didn't make a hat, but I did the basic part--put a lining in and put a band on. I did that until the shop closed, and then I baby-sat every night with my studying.

Marcello: I want to go back to the farm again. How large a farm was this where you were born and raised? Could you estimate the size of the farm?

Cartwright: It was not large.

Marcello: Was it essentially a self-sufficient farm in that most everything that was raised was consumed on the farm itself?

Cartwright: Yes, it was consumed. One year we raised...well, my twin brother and I picked and threshed peas. You don't shell dry peas; you thresh them. We threshed out four hundred pounds of dried peas and beans. He and I did it. That year I guess we were eleven or twelve.

Marcello: Was there some sort of a cash crop that was grown, such as cotton perhaps or wheat?

Cartwright: Wheat and cotton and corn. Of course, we consumed a lot of corn, but we always had some to sell, too.

Marcello: Normally, where would the cash crops be sold? Where would you take them for sale?

Cartwright: To Paradise, to the railroad station in town.

Marcello: Was that the closest gin, also, in Paradise?

Cartwright: Yes.

Marcello: Okay, so you graduated from Mineral Wells High School in what year?

Cartwright: Nineteen twenty-five.

Marcello: Nineteen twenty-five. Tell us a little bit about your decision to come to North Texas State Normal College, as it was called at that time. How did that come about?

Cartwright: Wasn't it a teacher's college at that time?

Marcello: Maybe it was a teacher college by then.

Cartwright: That's how I remember it. Of course, we didn't have our own car. Decatur Baptist College was a junior college, and all the older children went to that because my grandmother was one of the main ones to establish it. But I knew that I wanted to study home economics. I knew that I wanted to serve in the Extension Service, and Decatur didn't offer those courses. So I worked very hard one week and earned enough money to hire a neighbor to take me early in the summer to see about college and what I was going to do. So when we got to Decatur, I didn't let him stop. He thought he was taking me to Decatur, but I knew I was coming to Denton because that was the nearest school that I knew about that offered home

economics. So we got to Denton, and before the day was over, I had a job, I had a scholarship, and I virtually knew the courses I would take.

Marcello: Okay, let's go back and talk a little bit about each of those. Tell us about the job that you secured during that first day in Denton.

Cartwright: All right. It was a job keeping house, and I was to live in the house. I also had a part-time job in the book room. I don't think you have those now.

Marcello: Now you're going to have to explain to me what a book room is (chuckle).

Cartwright: Well, a book room was where all the textbooks were kept, and at the end of the semester you turned in the books you used, and you got new books for the courses you were going to take. Now you have to buy those, don't you?

Marcello: Sure.

La Brecque: Oh, absolutely (chuckle).

Marcello: That takes a big chunk of every student's budget to buy the books for the various courses that they have.

Cartwright: When I say a part-time job, a man named E. C. King was head of the book room, and at the busiest season he had to have extra help. The busy season, of course, was at the end of the term and maybe at the ordering time. I think he got those from the state. He made out a list of what was needed, and we sent those lists

in. But as a part-time job in the book room, too, it was my job to monitor, I guess you'd say, the auditorium. It was in the old Administration Building. That's still on campus, isn't it? The old Administration Building? Of course, there were just 1,600 of us then. But that was the pleasantest job I had because we had visiting companies come to give programs. We always had a Shakespearean Company, and we always had some sort of musical program. Well, it was my job to see what they wanted in the way of properties and to provide them, and that was hard. In fact, I fell in love with one of the Shakespearean players (laughter).

La Brecque: This is a good story, and you haven't shared it with us. That would be fun to hear about.

Cartwright: He seemed interested in me, and I most certainly was interested in him. When he would come to the campus, we'd have dates; and then in between times, on special days, he would send me a dozen long stem red roses. And we corresponded. Then after I graduated--I don't know--we drifted. I don't know where he is, and I'm sure he doesn't know where I am. But, you know, that's one of those things.

Marcello: Now you mentioned that you received a scholarship that first day that you visited campus. How did that come about? And tell us a little bit about the scholarship

itself.

Cartwright: The scholarship came from the Federated Woman's Clubs. Now what is that called here? In our town it's the Twentieth Century Club.

Marcello: They have a bunch of them, I think, under the umbrella name of the Women's Shakespeare Club or something like that, I think.

Cartwright: It was something like that. Anyway, it was a Federated Woman's Club, and they furnished me a twenty-dollar scholarship each term. See, we had three terms instead of two semesters. So I had a twenty-dollar scholarship.

Marcello: And essentially, was that designed to cover some portion of your education, or could it be spent as you desired?

Cartwright: Well, it was turned into the college for tuition.

La Brecque: How much did it cost to go to North Texas for one term at that time in 1925, if you can remember?

Cartwright: Well, it was the fall of 1926 before I came. I stayed home a year to help my father. I can't tell you how much tuition was, but my salary for keeping house was six dollars a week, and then I had whatever I earned at the bookstore. When I arrived on campus, I had forty-two dollars that I had worked for that summer, and somehow I went to school. I don't know how.

Marcello: As a part of keeping house, you mentioned a moment ago

that you did receive room and board.

Cartwright: Room and board and six dollars a week.

Marcello: And what did keeping house consist of?

Cartwright: It was down on Oak Street, and it was a mile from the college, and I usually walked it four times. If I wanted to come for an evening of something at the college I made the walk another time.

I got up always before daylight and cleaned house--cleaned, dusted, and prepared breakfast, did the breakfast dishes. Then I left something for lunch and then came to school. Most of the time I went home and fixed lunch, but not always, particularly on the days that my schedule didn't permit. But when I got home, I washed the lunch dishes and prepared dinner. Then after dinner I was free to study or come back to the college, which I did very little of. On Sunday morning I did the laundry out in the garage.

Marcello: You also mentioned that during that first day you also received your schedule of courses for the term.

Cartwright: Well, I said sort of. I went by and turned in what I wanted (chuckle), and they passed them.

Marcello: I'm assuming that you did all these things on your own, that is, you located the place where you kept house, you also sought out the scholarship on your own, and you sought the other job on your own.

Cartwright: Well, I went to the Dean of Women's office, and she

had a list of people who wanted help, and I kept calling until I got the person that sounded like I'd be compatible with. And she obtained the scholarship for me.

Marcello: But still, it was essentially up to you to initiate these things, and then somebody else perhaps would follow through on them.

Cartwright: Oh, yes.

Marcello: Suzanne, do you have any questions at this point relative to her career at North Texas?

La Brecque: Now maybe we could get into what happened while she was here at North Texas.

Marcello: Yes.

La Brecque: Okay. Talk about what home economics was like--your major--in the late 1920s.

Cartwright: Well, we took basic foods, and because of my background with sewing I was allowed to skip the first semester of sewing, which, I imagine, was a mistake (chuckle). Well, I took foods, sewing, and textiles and costume design.

When when it came to practice teaching, oh, that was a mistake. I was sent to Sanger High School to do my practice teaching and had to go on the bus. I don't know whether you've heard this tale or not. But I came to the unit on poultry, and, of course, as always, I didn't have much money. So I went to the

grocery store, and the groceryman took me out back where the chicken coops were, and I selected one. I selected a rooster, an old one, I'm sure, because it was cheap. I put it in a tow sack and tied it up and got on the bus with my rooster.

La Brecque: And he was still alive?

Cartwright: Yes.

La Brecque: That's what I was afraid of.

Cartwright: That was one of the lessons--to teach the girls to "delife" him.

La Brecque: Oh, great (laughter).

Marcello: That was the term that was used back then--to "delife" the rooster?

Cartwright: That was the lesson that I was to teach was. It was a new method. It wasn't like ringing a neck. It was like doing a knife into their throat at a certain angle, and it loosened their feathers, and then you picked them off. Well, that wasn't easy. And these are eighth grade girls. But we were getting along, and I was having each one of them come up and pull feathers so that they would know how that felt. One girl came up--and, you know, a rooster has a second windpipe; you may not know that--and just as she started to pull feathers, this second windpipe gave out a noise (chuckle). Those girls scattered out of that room, and I never did get one of them to touch

that fowl after that (laughter). So a Miss Johnston was the supervisor, but she never knew all the details of that fiasco. But we got that fowl cleaned and cooked, and I think we made chicken and dumplings.

Well, one of the projects was making bread, so I had prepared mine ahead so that it could be baked and they could see what it was really like. I got on the bus with my bread bowl under my arm. We got along fine, and the girls got their bread made. But they wanted to make notes. So instead of making them clean up before they made their notes, I let them do what they wanted to do, which was to sit down and make their notes. About that time Miss Johnston walked in, and here's all this stuff out. I didn't make an "A" in that course (chuckle). I did make a "B," though.

La Brecque: And you were probably glad to have it, right?

Cartwright: Yes, after the fowl and the bread, I was glad to have a "B."

La Brecque: I'm sure. Did you have an opportunity to join any home economics clubs or any extra-curricular activities while you were here at North Texas; or were you so busy working with two jobs and everything that you just didn't have time?

Cartwright: I belonged to the W. N. Masters Chemical Society, but I can't remember belonging to a home economics club. But the hard part came when I had to take a course in

home management.

La Brecque: Oh, Grace, I know a lot about that. I'll tell you my story later (chuckle).

Cartwright: That's the one term we had to live in what was termed the "home management house." It was an old two-story house on the campus; and so was the Home Economics Department in one of those. But we took it a week at a time. We had to clean house; we had to buy groceries; we had to cook; we had to be hostess for different activities that take place in a home. So I had to move out of the house where I was working, and that's when I had to borrow some money. I still owed sixty dollars when I left the campus.

Marcello: Where did you borrow the money, if I may ask? From a bank?

Cartwright: No, I borrowed it from a neighbor at my home town.

La Brecque: How long did it take you to pay back that sixty dollars?

Cartwright: First month I worked.

La Brecque: You just got rid of the debt. So within a month of graduating and working, you were debt free.

Cartwright: Well, I graduated in June, but I stayed on six weeks to take an extra course that I needed to give me a Smith-Hughes Certificate. If I had a Smith-Hughes Certificate, then I can work for any land grant college in the United States, so I stayed on that six

weeks. Then I had about a six-week apprenticeship before I would go to my steady job. At the first month I was in my steady job, which started the first day of September, and I paid off my debt.

Marcello: And you started this first job in September of 1929.

Cartwright: Yes.

Marcello: It would seem to me (chuckle) that that wasn't the greatest time in the world to start working, since the Great Depression started in October of 1929 with the stock market crash. Did the Great Depression have any effect on this job that you took?

Cartwright: Yes, a great deal. If I was there to give a lesson on costume design, I would drive to a country village where it would have a club of women, and I would be met with a pan of turnip greens. They'd say, "We've just got to can these." So we'd turn in and can turnip greens. See, pressure cookers had just come in. You don't know what a pressure cooker is. You're shaking your head like you do, but you don't. Tin can sealers and bottle cappers were new inventions that had just come in, and it was the first time you could can meat safely. Many times I've been out and cut up a whole beef and canned it in one day. And that is rough.

La Brecque: Would you cook the beef before you'd can it? You certainly would, right?

Cartwright: What?

La Brecque: Cook the beef and then can it, correct?

Cartwright: Well, no, not necessarily.

La Brecque: So you'd really butcher it.

Cartwright: It depends on what cut it was. Now if it was chili, you'd make the chili. If it was roast you'd put it in the can.

La Brecque: Oh, in the can.

Cartwright: And it wasn't the most delicious food in the world, but it brought us through the Depression. I don't know what we would have done.

Marcello: Now you were in home demonstration over in Parker County. That's where this was taking place. Is that correct?

Cartwright: Yes.

Marcello: And you were there for two years. Talk about some of the other activities that you were involved in as the home demonstration agent in Parker County.

Cartwright: Well, the first day I reported to work, my office was to be in the Chamber of Commerce building. I was told by the Chamber of Commerce director that I was to direct a county fair which was to be on October 31. I never had anything to do with a county fair, but I set forth. Everytime I went to the country, when I saw something that was exhibition quality, I brought it in. I don't know why I'm still living because my

office was on the third floor, and the way up to it was by outside steps. I was carrying a carton--that's twelve half-gallon jars of canned food things--up those stairs.

So I was so involved that by the time October 31 came I had all the things that were going to be exhibited in my office. I had the judges come from another county, and then when I took them to the college gymnasium where the exhibits were to be, mine were all judged, and when I got them on the shelf here was this beautiful section all judged in blue ribbons. Well, the other departments weren't doing so well. In the egg department, for instance, we had brown eggs and white eggs. I thought, "How could you make an egg look pretty?" So I went to the shop and bought blue percale to line the shelves to put the white eggs on to make them look bigger, and red percale to make the brown eggs look browner.

Then the pecan section wanted help, and that's where my "future" came in. So he looked at my exhibit, and he thought I was pretty smart, and he asked me to come help him. I didn't know a thing about pecans. I knew when they were big and when they were little. But we got them in these quart jars and set them up and labeled them. And he asked me for a date. So we went out to dinner that night, and that

was the beginning of a courtship.

Marcello: Now where was this fair taking place?

Cartwright: In Weatherford, Texas.

Marcello: In fact, that topic is next on my outline. Talk about this gentleman whom you had met and maybe describe the courtship a little bit, and then we'll get you married.

Cartwright: Well, he was a law graduate from the University of Texas, and he had been president of the law society, I've forgotten what you call it. But he never practiced law.

Marcello: For the record, what was his name?

Cartwright: His name was Bickham Cartwright.

La Brecque: Did you call him Bickham? You called him that whole name? You didn't have a nickname for him?

Cartwright: Bickham Cartwright. Bickham was his mother's maiden name.

Marcello: Okay, continue with what you were saying.

Cartwright: Well, I worked alone, and I was helping a sister who was working on her master's degree. He wanted us to be married before that, and I said, "I just can't marry until June, until she's out." Well, we were tentatively set up for late June, and about that time the Depression you were talking about really went into effect. The commissioners court, which paid my salary, decided that maybe they better abolish the

Extension Service in Parker County. I had to stay on to finish up the projects that I had sponsored in order to show them how special my work was to keep those families going. I knew that if a new person, even if she came in the day I left, couldn't take up the work soon enough to avoid that. So I postponed the wedding until September. When September came, I still didn't have those projects finished, so then it was postponed until November. He said to me, "Now this is the last postponement," meaning you-know-what (chuckle).

Well, in order to wind up the projects, I had planned an Achievement Day, we called it. I had about two hundred of the townspeople--women's clubs and the Chamber of Commerce and so on--meet at the Federated clubhouse. We left with sack lunches and toured the county to see these projects. We saw well-stocked pantries where the women had canned a winter's food supply; we saw improved stock; we saw landscaped yards; we saw improved living rooms where the women had taken tow sacks, and we had braided rugs and refinished furniture and scrubbed the floors. We ended up at an abandoned country church on the bank of a creek where I had set up sawhorses with lumber across them and had for a centerpiece on this table 123 varieties of canned food. Those men, when they

saw that 123 varieties that were delicious-looking...well, when the lunch was over, we got back to town, and then after the following Monday they did not eliminate the Extension Service. Then I set the wedding date.

Marcello: Which was when?

Cartwright: November 28, 1931, it was. But we were still very secretive about it. On the Wednesday before we were married on Saturday, I went to Paradise, Texas, and told my mother that we were to be married Saturday morning. That would give her three whole days to get ready for it (chuckle). Anyway, I went back to Weatherford and finished up. The next day was Thanksgiving, and that's the reason I could take off a little early and go home.

On Friday night I left in my car, and he left right behind me in his car. We were loaded. The roads weren't paved, and it was raining, and we plowed through the mud to Paradise, Texas. He went to the little hotel, and I went home. The next morning my mother had picked lots of chrysanthemums out of her yard and had bouquets all over the house. So we married and had breakfast and then left.

La Brecque: Did you have a special dress? Did you make a special dress for this occasion, or did you just wear something that you had?

Cartwright: Oh, I had a new brown suit with a fox collar and a white crocheted blouse. It was a hand-done blouse, very expensive for me. I had a hat to match, a little white hat. So I had the brown suit with the white blouse and a corsage of yellow roses.

La Brecque: Did Bickham's family come to the wedding?

Cartwright: My middle sister was visiting my mother when I went home on Wednesday, and she is actually the one who picked chrysanthemums and fixed the bouquets. We were so secretive that Bickham didn't want to buy the license in Weatherford, so he asked my brother in Decatur to secure the license. So my brother came and brought the minister, and I wanted that particular minister because he was the one that had been my pastor when I was growing up. My oldest brother and my middle sister were the only ones that I told that I was getting married, because that didn't seem important to us, anyway.

Marcello: Okay, so now you're married. Where did you go, and where did you live?

Cartwright: Well, we left immediately from Paradise, Texas, after the eight o'clock ceremony and went to Waco for lunch. That was his hometown. When we got to Waco he wired his mother on his way over to my house that we were being married and we'd be there at noon. By the time we got there, she had the whole family together and a

turkey dinner ready. So I met the family. I had met them before; I had visited in Waco before this.

After lunch we left and spent the first night in a nice little hotel in Houston and went on to New Orleans, where we spent a honeymoon night. Then on our return, we came up through Mississippi and back across Arkansas. We moved into an apartment the day after we got home. In the apartment we had a rug on the living room floor, a sofa, a bed in the bedroom, a card table, and an aluminum camping set. And that's what we had when we moved in.

La Brecque: Did you get any presents or anything like that? Were presents given out in 1931 at weddings?

Cartwright: Well, I sent out announcements. I had those addressed before the wedding. Yes, we had wedding presents that came down.

Marcello: At that time what was your husband doing?

Cartwright: He was ranching. He had made a contract with his father to manage certain properties. His father was getting older and needed help, so they made a contract that he would manage the Parker County ranch, Tarrant County properties, and all the other properties in north Texas. At the end of ten years half the Parker County ranch would be his as well as half of the cattle. We had first set the date for our wedding in January, but I didn't want to go into that until the

contract was consummated. After he had earned his ten-year tenure, we went to work and paid out the land and paid out the cattle. Do you want to hear the gory details?

Marcello: Well, first of all, I'm assuming from what you said that you were not actually living on any of the ranch property when you initially got married, because you had mentioned an apartment.

Cartwright: Well, he was actually on the ranch and had a room in town. He would go to the ranch, which was twenty miles, and stay from Monday until Thursday, and then he would come into town and play around for a day or two. His bachelor quarters were not sufficient for two, so we took an apartment while we could build a house. We had driven over the ranch and selected the site; but it was wintertime, and we had to give the builder time to get it built. So we had an apartment.

Marcello: Suzanne, do you have any questions at this point?

La Brecque: No, not yet.

Marcello: So you actually didn't have that apartment too long, then, before you moved on to the ranch?

Cartwright: No, we didn't. We had it for six months.

Marcello: And you were on the Parker County ranch?

Cartwright: Yes.

Marcello: Now you were mentioning something awhile ago about wanting to know if we wanted the "gory details," and

I'm assuming you're talking about the development of the ranch and the ranch properties.

Cartwright: Yes.

Marcello: Give me whatever "gory details" you were referring to (chuckle).

Cartwright: Well, we knew that we had sacrifices to make, but that was all right. But for the first years we were married--see, this was during the Depression--I budgeted myself twenty-five dollars a month to run the ranch house, drive my car, dress myself, and my grocery bill averaged six dollars a month for those first years. I always had hands to feed, and I had family visiting in the summers because the children loved to come to the country, you know. We didn't allow ourselves picture shows or, well, just not much. We made our own entertainment in the country and worked very hard. I suspect we did things that young couples couldn't do today--pay out land, build up a herd of cattle. We didn't have the taxes back then. I don't think a young couple could do near what we did, even if they made the sacrifices we made, which I don't think a young couple today would do. See, we didn't have electricity, we didn't have telephones, and I cooked on a wood cook stove.

Marcello: I'm curious. How did you feed a ranch on six dollars a month?

Cartwright: Well, I grew a garden, and I canned my meat. I always had a big flock of chickens. I had a milk cow that furnished all the cream and butter and everything like that. I took wheat to the mill for my flour; I took corn to the mill for my cornmeal. I had fruit trees that grew fresh fruit.

Marcello: So there is a definite division of responsibility. There were certain things that you were responsible for on the ranch, and at the same time there were obviously certain things that your husband was responsible for getting done.

Cartwright: We agreed that when he came in the front gate, I was boss; when I went out the front gate, he was boss (chuckle). And we acted accordingly.

Marcello: Approximately how many hands did you have on the ranch?

Cartwright: We had from three to ten, according to the seasonal stuff, you know.

Marcello: Well, once again, that's pretty impressive to be feeding as many as ten people plus yourself and your husband on six dollars a month.

Cartwright: Well, they didn't eat with us all the time. The extra help came mainly to help during the day, and we fed them a midday meal or dinner. They'd have dinner with us, but they didn't spend the night.

Marcello: Was this essentially a cattle ranch?

Cartwright: It was a ranch and a farm. We cultivated about 1,500 acres.

La Brecque: You cultivated 1,500 acres? That means you planted it, and you oversaw the...I mean, that's what you're saying?

Cartwright: Yes.

La Brecque: It was 1,500 acres. That's a lot of acres. How long would it take you to drive around that? Pretty long, right?

Cartwright: The farthest field was about three miles.

La Brecque: Isn't 1,500 a lot to you, Ron?"

Marcello: It seems to me that back in the 1930s that's a lot of land to cultivate.

Cartwright: Well, it was. It was a lot of land, but we had some tenants. We had peanuts and wheat and oats and barley and sunflowers and castor beans and watermelons and cantaloupes. Of course, I helped. Like, on melon gathering day we would all be in the cantaloupe patch by daylight and have the trucks loaded out ready to move out while we still could.

Marcello: And then beyond these 1,500 acres the rest of the ranch was essentially being used to run the cattle and so on, I gather.

Cartwright: Yes. Well, of course, they were on the farmland, too, at times, especially in the wheatfields. The wheatfields furnished winter pastures and winter straw

or hay.

La Brecque: I just thought of something I'd like to go back to. When you built your house, tell us a little bit about that. Did you draw the plans, or did the builder have plans you selected? Was it a brick house or a frame house? Tell us a little about that.

Cartwright: The ranch house was...if you have to describe it, I guess it would be called a Dutch colonial. It was a story-and-a-half with normal windows. It cost \$1,600. When it was built, it had two upstairs bedrooms and one downstairs bedroom, one bathroom, living room and dining room and kitchen. We eventually added a wing that had office space and a big bedroom with a fireplace and another bath, a back porch and a front porch.

La Brecque: How long did you live in the house before you did the addition?

Cartwright: Oh, ten years maybe.

Marcello: Now we're up into the 1930s, and the next series of questions that I want to ask you are those of a historian. This would be the period of Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal, and there are all sorts of agricultural programs such as the AAA, Agricultural Adjustment Administration. Do you remember if that had any particular effect on the operations of the farm and ranching operations?

Cartwright: No, the first experience actually we had was in 1941. Bickham and a man named Fred Cotton were instrumental in bringing soil conservation to our county, and we worked with that. Bickham was one of the first directors of it. That soil conservation program, in my opinion, is the best the government ever instigated because soil conservation is essential, not only to the farmers but to everybody. Well, in fact, we cleared the land--I did. I cleared 1,900 acres of land myself after I had to take management. We were paid a certain amount by the government and supervised by the government to do that. If we irrigated, we were given help to do the leveling and get the irrigation system installed. And we did irrigate from the Brazos River. So that is my first memories of it.

Marcello: And as you go back, like you mentioned, you believe that was an outstanding program and something that was necessary and perhaps long overdue.

Cartwright: Well, it's still in effect. We have a strong conservation program. One generation cannot afford to bring the land back to fertility and productivity if another generation has let it run down to the point of almost no return. But in our lifetime, I have seen land abused and used so hard and nothing put back until it virtually disintegrated. Then the good soil conservation methods brought back the fertility and

productivity.

Marcello: What were some of the innovative techniques that were introduced by these New Deal soil conservation programs during that period?

Cartwright: The process of making water stay where it falls and not letting run off to the edge. That is done by healing these gullies that have already washed by planting grasses, improved grasses.

Marcello: It's also during the New Deal that rural areas get electricity through the Rural Electrification Administration. I'm assuming the ranch and so was a recipient of R.E.A. about that time.

Cartwright: Yes. They were ready to start that, and, well, really had started it when World War II came. We had not had it yet, and we didn't get it until after the war. We got electricity in about 1950, and we didn't get telephones until about 1952.

Marcello: So it took that long even for R.E.A. to reach the ranch?

Cartwright: Yes. Well, for one thing they had to cross the Brazos. Whatever we did we had to cross the Brazos River, and they could always use that for an excuse. But the telephones...well, one time one of the representatives said, "Your name is on every switchboard between here and St. Louis--you've asked so many time for telephone service." We were that

long getting it.

La Brecque: Grace, I've been at your home recently. Some of your friends say, when we eat a meal or something, "Oh, the stories these dishes could tell." I wonder if you could tell us about how the social life was on the ranch, especially during the 1930s and 1940s, I mean, during this time we are talking about.

Cartwright: In a little town, and particularly in West Texas, there's no professional entertainment; you make your own entertainment. The ranch house was a gathering place for lots of people around. Especially our friends in town came out a lot. We square danced and we fished, and we had barbecues, and we played bridge. We didn't own a TV, but we had a battery radio there. But we didn't own a TV until long after they came in.

I always had a winter garden, and I grew greens and salad things; and that's what they were talking about. They'd come to the ranch, and, of course, the food would always be different. I had raised hens, so we always had chicken pot pie or fried chicken. First, I'd bring salad out of this cold spring garden. We always had a good time. I had this big house, and I could sleep twenty-four people. It may have been a little close, (chuckle) but we've had that many.

La Brecque: I remember hearing about...you were snowed in one time, and you had a whole crowd for three days. I

don't have that quite straight. Tell me the story.

Cartwright: Well, we were at a New Year's party in town, and, of course, everybody was feeling real friendly. It was about midnight, and when we started home this whole bunch that was there said, "We'll just go with you." I couldn't believe it (chuckle), so I said, "Well, come on." And they went! It was already bitter cold, and it snowed and it was icy; and they couldn't get back to town for three days.

La Brecque: Do you remember which New Year's that was?

Cartwright: This was, I'd say, about 1939 or 1940.

La Brecque: During the day when they were there, did they help with the work, or did you stop all work and socialize? What was it like?

Cartwright: Well, it took a certain amount of work to feed those people, especially when I was (chuckle) not expecting them to stay. But I was able to pull out enough food for those days, you know, because I wasn't accustomed to going to the grocery store anyway. But, oh, yes, they all helped. They helped feed the fireplace and feed the wood stove and wash the dishes. We played bridge, and some of the fellows played poker, and others just sat around.

Marcello: Are we at this stage ready to talk about Tin Top?

Cartwright: Yes, I guess so.

Marcello: Okay. Give me the background on Tin Top. Let us

assume that nobody has ever read anything or has known anything about Tin Top. What are we referring to when we talk about Tin Top?

Cartwright: Tin Top was the little community that had been. The schoolhouse had blown away in a tornado, and they didn't rebuild it; and the cotton gin had moved to West Texas because boll weevils had come in and ruined the cotton industry, so the gin had moved to West Texas. These two abandoned churches...well, I had seen a little Baptist church that was just right down the hill from our house--that my grandmother had given the land and help build--torn down and hauled away. That nearly broke my heart. So I just couldn't stand to see these church buildings abandoned and just standing there.

So I persuaded Bickham, "Let's paint them." So he agreed, and he and I went over and started to work. Well, when we started work, some of the neighbors came in to help. So we got the buildings repainted and even the interior done over. Then they said, "Well, let's organize a community." I said, "All right, let's start with a Union Sunday School," and we got the churches ready. So we organized this Union Sunday School, and the first Sunday I had five people. Well, we just kept meeting and meeting until it grew. We had about seventy-five in regular attendance when we

disbanded it.

Marcello: Where was Tin Top located?

Cartwright: It was located twelve miles south of Weatherford, between us and Weatherford and across the river from us. We organized a home demonstration club, extension club. Then I saw where there was a rural improvement program sponsored by the Dallas News and the Farm and Stockman. So we entered that, and with that we had some guidelines, and we improved farmsteads. Well, we did all sorts of things. We had home improvement programs, and we had boy's clubs.

Then we were pushed out of the building. The Union Sunday School was pushed out of the building, the church building. We had to be of Baptist denomination or not meet. So we went across the road and built what we called the Memorial Playhouse. It was a community center where we could have all social activities, and we built that ourselves. The women dug foundations, and the men hauled stones. We spent \$7,000 on this. After all of our labor, that's the cash that it took.

La Brecque: And what year was that, Grace?

Cartwright: In 1949.

Marcello: So the whole idea of Tin Top and the restoration started in the late 1940s.

Cartwright: Yes.

Marcello: How did the name Tin Top originate?

Cartwright: The gin had had a tin roof, and when it moved out to West Texas, it left all the debris there. So we went in to clean up the debris, and there were some piers there. I had a bulldozer, and we tried and tried to get those piers out to level that land, and we couldn't. I said, "If these are that insistent on persisting, then we'll leave them and build picnic tables on them, and we'll call this thing Tin Top." That's where it came from.

Marcello: So what we're in essence talking about here is the restoration of an abandoned community.

Cartwright: Yes.

Marcello: And it started out by renovating the two churches which had previously been abandoned and, I'm sure, were run down and so on.

Cartwright: You couldn't even find a fallen member of one of them to ask permission to restore them.

Marcello: Obviously, this restoration project was going to involve some sort of funding. Where did the money come from for funding, or was it all labor donated by people who were interested in this project?

Cartwright: It was all donated.

Marcello: Why did you want to do this?

Cartwright: I thought you would get around to that (chuckle). When I was about to be married, my oldest brother, who

was like a father to me, said, "Now you went to college and worked hard to get away from the country. Why are you marrying and going back to it?" And I said, "I didn't work to get away from the country. I worked to get away from the littleness of spirit that sometimes exists there, but it may exist anywhere."

Early in our ranching career, we made a trip to Europe with a foreign study tour to study the methods of farming over there, where they have such small plots of land to feed their nation. The efficiency and the happiness I saw there gave me a vision to take another step, and that was to erase the littleness of spirit in this community. So that's what gave me the courage to work to renovate these two churches, reactivate these two churches.

In those days, you know, you were warranted out to work on the road a certain number of days a year, and so I warranted the men out to come out and work. One day I think I had forty-two men up and down the road clearing and leveling. A stranger came by and said, "Who is that woman up there?" Well, it gave me the courage to organize a children's theater and children's choir and boy's clubs and birthday parties, bake the wedding cakes, organize study groups for men and women for them to study better farming methods and women to study improved farmsteads.

Marcello: And these are the ways that you obviously, then, went about destroying this littleness of spirit that you did not like about rural life. You were trying to expand the rural spirit, in a sense.

La Brecque: I think that it was during Tin Top days that you got that scholarship program going where every student who graduated from high school in Tin Top had the opportunity to go to college. Clarify that story.

Cartwright: Well, Suzanne, when we entered this Neighborhood Improvement Contest, we entered that five different years, and every year we won a sum of money. Every year that sum of money went into savings and loans and was there for any student who needed it to go to college. And they never drew on it. They knew it was there; they knew we were behind them, and they went to college. I bet that's something of a record.

La Brecque: How many students went?

Cartwright: Not that many because we were just thirty-one families.

La Brecque: So small. Thirty-one families made up Tin Top.

Cartwright: One year we sent a girl up here who was sent not from that fund but from a non-resident's fund, who by that time saw that we meant business and that we were going to be a community, a town. So he agreed to help. At that time he had sixteen scholarships going at Texas Tech. So he agreed to furnish one for over here, and

he furnished the board, the room, and the whole works. The women in the community got together and made her a decent wardrobe, and she came up here and flunked out. She didn't apply herself, and the women in the community were real discouraged about it. I said, "Now don't get discouraged because she met and married a fine man that she would never have met had she not come up here." He was a teacher. In fact, he's still teaching, and he's head of special education in Weatherford. And they've raised a fine family. So you win if you lose sometimes.

Marcello: Who owned this property where Tin Top is located?

Cartwright: It was community property that had been given. Now for the Memorial Playhouse that we built, we had to acquire property. We went to the landowner who owned the land across the little country road and said, "Now look, we want land for a community center and a baseball park." Well, he ended up giving us four acres of a rocky hill--no place for a baseball park. But we had basketball courts and playground equipment, seesaws and swings. This community center had a stage and adequate kitchen, and we could serve meals. The whole community...we did have potluck suppers twice a month.

Marcello: So, among other things, Tin Top was a way of getting these rural families together to communicate and to

exchange ideas and things of that nature. And most of it centered around the community center, eventually.

Cartwright: Yes. I had read where the Rockefeller Foundation was interested in rural community recreation and drama, and I wrote them for plans for this playhouse. I wanted to have a stage and a kitchen. So they sent me plans, but they were much too elaborate for our means. But I could get the fundamental ideas from it and scale it down, and did. But they said, "Now we have a representative at Baylor University this year. Contact him and he will give you help or give you ideas." I did contact him. I went to Baylor, and he sent me a student who agreed to live in the community. He lived at the ranch house that whole year. He said, "In exchange for material for his master's thesis, he will help you organize recreation," which I needed because, well, I didn't know how to organize a baseball team, you know.

La Brecque: Sure.

Cartwright: Before that year was out, this man married and brought his bride to the ranch house. And before that year was out, I thought I was running a Baylor dormitory because we had students working on master's theses who were looking on, observing, teaching drama, organizing recreation. And before the year was out, Paul Baker, who was the drama head at Baylor, came to Tin Top to

see how we were doing. Then Dr. White, president of Baylor, came to dedicate our building.

Well, in the meantime, Dr. Matthews came from North Texas and brought some musicians, and they did an evening for us. William Cambron--I wonder where he is now--came and taught some courses on health management. I think he must have been with the Physical Education Department. Then one of the music students came and stayed a week and directed our Easter Sunrise Service music. So we had contacts from all over.

Then we had a summer course in writing drama, plays, and we had somebody from North Texas and somebody from Baylor, both; and both schools gave credit, so we had surrounding schoolteachers come and take the course for a credit at the college level. We wrote a historical play and produced it, and it was pretty neat.

Marcello: Is this the documentary film that was produced by the Baylor Department of Drama? Wasn't there a documentary film entitled "Tin Top: A Community Builds?" Is this what you're talking about?

Cartwright: No. That film was entirely different. It had historical scenes in it, but it had the modern-day scenes from the modern methods of farming and what the boy's clubs were doing, learning to sew and learning

to cook, the coming of electricity to the community.

Marcello: Didn't the Rockefeller Foundation also make some sort of a sound film?

Cartwright: Well, this is a sound film. The Ford Foundation...I really don't know how Ford got connected, but Rockefeller got connected by the letter I wrote. The Ford Foundation came and researched the community and then made a thirty-minute prime time broadcast. Of course, I have that recording of the broadcast. They made the recording and took it back to New York and broadcast it. That was broadcast overseas to show other countries what self-help could do in creating a sense of community in rural areas.

La Brecque: Isn't that the time when one of the former residents contacted you and said, "Miss Grace, I heard your voice?" Would you share that with Dr. Marcello?

Cartwright: Well, years after that was made...well, it was during the Vietnam War. When he came home from the Vietnam War, he said, "Miss Grace, I heard your voice as I was flying over [some base] in Vietnam." I said, "What was I saying?" He said, "Well, it was a broadcast about Tin Top, and you were asking the blessing at the dinner."

Marcello: I ran across this quote, and I'd simply like to have your comments on it. I'm not sure if you said this or if somebody else said it, but the quote is, "Tin Top

is people acting to solve their own problems, thus preserving democracy at the grass roots." Even if you didn't say it, could you comment on that quote?

Cartwright: Well, I think it needs no comment. It's just what it says. I think that that invariably counts for the success of Tin Top. When I was asked about the success of Tin Top, I said, "I didn't do it at all." For instance, I was elected the first mayor, but, thereafter, every year was a different one. And when I finished, I ran the Sunday School. I was superintendent and organized it, and then every year thereafter there was...and at these community meetings we had, I didn't preside. The night Ford was there, I didn't preside. I made one of the young people preside. I coached them, sure, but they were busy with that, these young people. In Sunday School, I didn't do anything. In fact, I sat back and each person who had charge that particular Sunday did everything. They made the program; they led the singing; they led the prayer; they just did everything. Everybody involved made it successful.

Marcello: How long did Tin Top continue as an active, functioning operation?

Cartwright: It still is. One of the churches...the Sunday School existed eight years, but by that time the two churches had become reactivated, and I felt like the children

needed to be in the church of their choice or their family's choice. It only left, I believe, three families who didn't go into those churches, and we went back to town. But the children kept coming by choice to the Union Sunday School as long as it existed. So Bickham and I rented an Episcopal church camp that's between Granbury and the ranch for a week and took the children who had never been to a camp. Then we studied and we played, and on the last night we had the five ministers--that many denominations concerned--for dinner and a picnic supper for everybody. We went up on a hill, a high hill, to worship where they had set up a cross and made a worship center. We went up this hill, had a program, and formally disbanded the Sunday School. And I can't talk about it (weeping).

La Brecque: That's okay.

Cartwright: Even now I can't talk about it because that was the hardest thing I ever had to do, was disband the Union Sunday School.

La Brecque: What year was that, Grace?

Cartwright: In 1956, I believe.

La Brecque: She was really ahead of the times. The ecumenical movement happened in the mid-sixties. When I was a child in the fifties, ministers from other denominations respected one another, but they didn't

converse or cooperate (chuckle).

Cartwright: Well, these children...I have one now...of course, he's a man now with small children, and he said to me a year or two ago, "Miss Grace, do you realize that in that bunch that grew up in that Sunday School, there's never been a divorce." I said, "Well, Tom, what do you attribute that to?" He said, "Good learning." Isn't that something?

Marcello: Also, during this period while you were active with Tin Top, did you not lead some seminars at various colleges on the topic "Improving the Quality of Rural Living?" Talk a little bit about that and how that came about and what you did.

Cartwright: Dr. Cambron from North Texas got me into that, I believe. Dr. McConnell, who was president part of that time, heard me talk at one time. In fact, I gave a program here on the campus, and he said, "Grace, I just hear greatness in your voice." And I said, "Dr. McConnell, what are you talking about?" He said, "Well, I did." Well, I didn't understand what he was talking about (chuckle), you know. But these seven universities or colleges asked for a seminar, and I taught them that summer. I went all the way...I taught one in Kingsville, one at Prairie View, and one at North Texas and one at Baylor.

Marcello: As I mentioned a moment ago, the topic was "Improving

the Quality of Rural Living." How did you advise these seminars on ways to improve the quality of rural living?

Cartwright: I told them what the needs were. When schools consolidated, that's when the rural community really fell apart. There was no central organization. I said, "You have to learn to communicate with your neighbor, and you have to organize these study groups. You just have to get ideas. They said, "Where do the ideas come from?" Of course, I always told them that ideas came from vision, vision from memory. And ideas are something you don't know where they come from. Maybe they come from a scoutmaster or a 4-H leader or your parents or a Sunday School teacher. But if you will look at what you believe in and what you want, then the ideas will come; but you have to start out with some sort of communications. I said, "To build any community, you've got to know what you want, who you want, what you want to do, plan your work and work your plan. It's just as simple as that." I asked, "What kind of communities would you like to live in? What is your ambition? You've got to think that through before you can plan your work. Then when you get it, why, then the emphasis is on the work accordingly."

Marcello: Is there anything else relative to Tin Top that you

would like to talk about that we haven't mentioned at this point?

Cartwright: Oh, I don't believe so. This historical play was one of the highlights because I've always told them that anything that any of us do will be built on the shoulders of others; and they came to realize the legacy they had--their forebears who had settled the land and developed it.

La Brecque: Who wrote that play? Did you write it or a group of citizens write it? How did you do it?

Cartwright: A group of citizens wrote it under...we had a man...I can't remember the man's name that came from North Texas and another one that came from Baylor. They taught the course, and these adults and teachers from surrounding communities came in and took it. In taking those courses, they wrote it. I didn't do the writing. I gave them a bunch of ideas and encouragement (chuckle).

La Brecque: If I could just kind of bring this to the present, do you still have friends in Tin Top, and are you pleased with where Tin Top is today?

Cartwright: I wish it were more useful, is the only wish I have for it. But times have changed so, and it has grown so that it's entirely different, and almost all of my generation are gone now.

But that lake was built. Instead of being a

river through that divides the community, it's a lake that divides the community on both sides of the lake--solid lake homes. Some of them up there are homes, and some of them are just summer homes or weekend places. The new people that have come in are not rural-oriented like we were, and so it's changed. But it's still real active. The churches have grown. One of the churches built a new sanctuary three years ago that holds 250 people, and they built an education part to correspond. The other church has not built a new plant, but it has added on. A third church has been built. But the only difficulty (chuckle) I have had is that the cemetery has been enlarged. Without getting permission I just said, "Well, let's just move this fence post over here." Well, (chuckle) that's the only friction I ever had in the community, but I knew about it when I moved the cemetery fence from over here to here (gesture). These over here (gesture) had been on the front row but were no longer on the front row (laughter).

Marcello: I'm sure those that were on the front row could have cared less in a sense (chuckle).

Cartwright: It was always funny (laughter).

Marcello: It was about this time, too, was it not--correct me if I'm wrong in terms of my chronology--that you became associated with the State Highway Department. Were

you not a district chair for roadside beautification? When did that take place? In fact, I think you were involved with that for about eight years, according to my records.

Cartwright: Yes. I didn't put too much emphasis on that, but it was through the Garden Clubs, not through the Highway Department. Well, I was appointed by John Connally to the Tourist Board, and we stressed highway beautification, including entries into the cities and removal of billboards. We got a law passed--it's not enforced--that used car lots had to be fenced so that they were not visible from the highway.

Marcello: Was this in any way similar to what Ladybird Johnson had been trying to do with highway beautification and so on?

Cartwright: Yes.

Marcello: She was very active in that sort of thing while Lyndon Johnson was president.

Cartwright: She stressed it. It was the same type of thing, but she stressed the planting, I believe, more than we stressed it. We stressed the cleaning up and removal of billboards.

Marcello: Were you active in getting the law passed or changed where the billboards were removed and so on?

Cartwright: Well, I hope I was (chuckle). I don't know if I was or not, but I hope so.

Marcello: I guess I was going to ask you is that if you were active, what did you do or how did you go about pressuring lawmakers to change the law to get those billboards removed.

Cartwright: We just kept the pressure up.

La Brecque: Did you get a group of people to write letters and have meetings and, you know, pin their toes to the wall?

Cartwright: No, we didn't do it that way. We just did it through our own Tourist Board, I think. I don't remember.

Marcello: Around the same time that you were active in organizing Tin Top and getting it underway, you were also appointed to the Board of Regents of North Texas State College. The name had just recently been changed to North Texas State College. Your appointment was made on June 2, 1949. Tell me how that appointment came about.

Cartwright: We had recently...no, we hadn't built the townhouse. Governor Jester called and asked me if I would serve. We had a conversation, and he wanted me to promise that I would never vote to use the word university in the title because all the university people [University of Texas] were so afraid that we were going to get the name that we now have, and they didn't want that. I said, "Oh, Governor Jester, I can't promise you that because I don't know what the

situation is." But, anyway, I was appointed. In those days the college had a good deal to do about the appointment, and in my opinion--I don't know this, but in my opinion--Mrs. McConnell was responsible for my appointment. I don't know this, but I assume the McConnell's asked for me.

Marcello: So you or your husband did not know Governor Jester personally?

Cartwright: He had known Governor Jester, but I had not.

Marcello: I'm assuming, then, from what you said that even after you married and moved to the ranch and were active in Tin Top, you still kept all kinds of connections and associations with the school.

Cartwright: During those years I didn't have much connection. Whenever I came to Denton, of course, I went by to see the McConnell's because I was really fond of them. But I was too busy with my own dealings to think much about the McConnell's. I sent students up here, and my attitude was good, but my presence was ancient (chuckle).

Marcello: Discuss how you got acquainted with Mrs. McConnell.

Cartwright: She was head of the Home Economics Department. She was the kind that didn't tell you--but she told the next one, and she told the next one--that I was the smartest one that ever went through her department. And, oh, how it would really have helped if she had

told me (chuckle). So I never thought she felt that way, you know.

Marcello: You were, of course, the only woman on the Board of Regents at that time. Did that create any special problems or uncomfortable situations?

Cartwright: Not that I knew of. I don't know how the men felt about me, but I was immediately made head of the House Grounds Committee--which told me that they expected me to do the woman's duties (chuckle). They never expected me to know anything academically or financially.

Marcello: Let me throw out just a couple of names to you of men who were on that Board of Regents when you were appointed for that six-year term and give me your impressions. We might as well start with the person who became the chairman, Ben Wooten.

Cartwright: Of course, he was a wonderful man. He was smart; he had personality; he knew what he was doing. He made a great chairman of the board. He and I were...well, I would describe it as being on the same wave length. He and I could discuss things and get things done that I could not discuss with everybody else on the board.

Marcello: It's interesting that they appointed you to supervise the beautification of the grounds and things of that nature. You were given that job in terms of beautification and landscaping. What did you have to

work with?

Cartwright: Nothing (chuckle).

Marcello: Elaborate.

Cartwright: Well, I had no money; and whatever I did, I had to do. Like, I built the rock garden in back of the old Demonstration School, up around the Administration Building. We had to haul the stones in from, I believe, Rockwall. They never gave me any money to spend.

La Brecque: Talk a little about the planting that you did. I think the yearbook was called the Yucca, and isn't there some story involving it?

Cartwright: Well, with the yearbook called the Yucca, they wanted yucca on this campus. I thought, "How strange." So when I did that rock garden, I planted red yucca up there at the top of it. Then I hauled in 1,500 white yucca, the tall kind, from the ranch and planted them there. It was through my efforts that those yucca were planted. They were later removed.

Marcello: This is the thing that I wanted you to bring out, too. You were given this responsibility, and you had nothing to work with. Like you just pointed out, those plants and shrubs essentially came from your ranch.

Cartwright: All of the plants at Fouts Field came from the ranch. I set out 172 cedars at one time. Out of 172 that I

set out, just one died. That's a record (chuckle).

La Brecque: Grace, also you took a real active interest, I think, in the Administration Building. One day you and I walked there, and I'd like you to kind of tell the story about working with the architects and what you did the day they were going to put the clock tower up. Would you tell that story?

Cartwright: Well, of course, the Administration Building was finished after I was off the board. But the day that they started, I stood in the middle of Sycamore Street, and I ordered that tower to be centered right in the middle of that street, and I'm sure the architect had wished that I had gone home (chuckle). I was dead sure that tower was in a central location so that when you went to the college you would know the time.

Marcello: You mentioned a moment ago that they gave you a responsibility that perhaps, they thought of as "woman's work." I can't imagine you not getting involved in some of the other activities in which the board of Regents engaged. For instance, one of the things that I'm curious about is that there was a problem of free water when you first got on the Board of Regents. Do you remember that?

Cartwright: Yes.

Marcello: Evidently, there was a contract with the city of

Denton that went back to 1899 in which the city agreed to supply the university with free water, and then it got rather expensive for the city. Describe that.

Cartwright: Well, every year when it came up before the board, I just referred the city council to that contract, and it ended that for another year.

Marcello: But eventually, I believe, the city turned off the water (chuckle) to some of the buildings and so on. Then I think North Texas came around and did agree that it would pay for the water.

Cartwright: I think so, but not in my tenure (chuckle).

La Brecque: What were some of the highlights of your term on the board, some of the things that you felt strongly about, I guess, in a positive sense, or if you had some strong feelings of great concern?

Cartwright: Well, I felt very strongly about long-term plans, and I'm sure some of those long-term plans were carried out. I'm sure some of them were abandoned, but you've got to start with plans.

I felt strongly about some of the schools being able to get more money from the Legislature than our school until they adopted the formula that it cost five dollars to teach a freshman unit here, it would cost five dollars over at this school. Then we got that funding equalized. When I was in school here, for instance, the president over at TWU took a special

train down to Austin with these girls dressed in their white, stitched, starched uniforms to go before the Legislature. These legislators were away from home and in boarding houses, and they'd look at these girls all in starched uniforms learning to cook. Of course, that was their main job, was to learn to cook. So TWU would come home with a major part of the money, and we wouldn't get anything. That didn't suit me.

Then, of course, I was real eager to see the academic standards raised and raised, and I was real interested in having top students come to college. There are some students, I imagine, here now that don't belong on a college campus. They belong in a trade school.

We had this shifting sand problem, and I know you've got it now. Of course, I was real concerned about adequate buildings. And, of course, it was fortunate, in that I came on the board as we got the first payment of that ad valorem tax money. The ad valorem tax was just for buildings, and we were able to get our first money to get started with the planning our first buildings in 1949. Then we commenced to expand, and, of course, that was important.

[Tape turned over]

Marcello: As you just implied before I turned the tape over,

around the time that you got on the Board of Regents was the time of some rather drastic changes at North Texas. For instance, when it became North Texas State College, it was obviously beginning to shed that teacher college image somewhat. How did you feel about that? It gets away from being known strictly as being as a teacher college or teacher training institution.

Cartwright: I felt like it was real good because we still educated teachers, and yet it was doing so much more and claiming to do so much more.

Marcello: This was also a period when the school was expanding rapidly in terms of enrollment. Like you pointed out awhile ago, this was going to require some careful planning relative to buildings and things of that nature.

Cartwright: Acquiring land and housing became a real problem.

Marcello: It's also around this time that we have a change in presidents. President McConnell was around sixty-five years of age at this time, and I think one of the things that the board did in preparation for the future was to appoint Dr. Matthews as President McConnell's assistant. Describe how that came about and what sort of individual Dr. Matthews was.

Cartwright: Dr. Matthews was a smart man academically. His shortcoming, in my estimation, was that he didn't

delegate. He was a man who, if we would have had money, would not have known how to spend it. In other words, he didn't put first things first.

Marcello: Would you consider Dr. Matthews to have been a man of vision or not?

Cartwright: Yes. He had a vision as far as academics were concerned, and that was his main force.

Marcello: I've heard it said that Dr. Matthews, for the most part, did run the school as a committee of one.

Cartwright: Yes.

Marcello: This goes along with what you were saying about his inability to delegate responsibilities.

Cartwright: Yes.

Marcello: What sort of a relationship developed between Dr. Matthews and Mr. Wooten?

Cartwright: They were very compatible. I'll tell another story. Do you think I should tell it? When Dr. Matthews was elected president, they had agreed with me that Mr. Wooten would bring up the subject, and I would nominate Dr. Matthews. We had a man on the board who had his candidate, and he was very eager, a little too eager. In fact, he wouldn't budge at all. But the minute Ben Wooten brought up the matter of the new president, he shot out of the room. Of course, I knew that he had gone to the telephone to telephone his man to get here while we were in session. While he was

gone to the phone, I nominated Matthews, and we voted and he was elected before he got back from the telephone.

La Brecque: Ron, you only asked her about one person who was a member of the board at that time. I don't know if you want to go back to that or if you think that is relevant to her story.

Marcello: Sure, I can. I've got the list of all the people who were on the board at that time. Would you like me to throw out some more names to her?

La Brecque: Yes. Would you like that? I think that would be real helpful to kind of get a picture of how the board operated. Who was there?

Marcello; I'm referring to the people who were on the board when you were initially appointed. We talked about Mr. Wooten, of course. James Allison, do you remember him?

Cartwright: Of course! He was the one who went for the telephone (laughter)!

Marcello: All right.

La Brecque: Where was he from, and what did he do? What was his business?

Cartwright: He was had a newspaper in Wichita Falls.

La Brecque: Was he a journalism graduate from the University of North Texas?

Cartwright: I don't think so. I think Ben and I were the only

alumni.

La Brecque: Two alumni.

Marcello: Charles Francis.

Cartwright: Charles Francis was a smart man. He was a lawyer from Houston, I believe. He didn't attend regularly, and he was very opinionated. But when he spoke, he had good ideas.

Marcello: Robert Montgomery.

Cartwright: I believe he was from Waxahachie, and he was "Mr. Milquetoast."

Marcello: Can you elaborate on that?

Cartwright: No, I don't believe I will (laughter).

Marcello: Edward Norment.

Cartwright: He was the sweetest, gentlest man and always had good ideas. He was from Sherman, I believe, or somewhere up there. I believe it was Sherman. But he was a real nice man. He died prematurely.

Marcello: George Eagle.

Cartwright: George Eagle had a son here, and when his son's football game went askew it was an unhappy day. He was not very smart. I hope my license to judge hasn't come through (chuckle).

Marcello: S. A. Kerr.

Cartwright: He has been on the other board before this one got accepted. He was the only one who came from that board to this one, and he was adamant in his ideas

about the academic part of the school. He must have been smart, although I didn't work with him that much.

Marcello: Charles McCrady.

Cartwright: I just didn't know much about him.

Marcello: There were a couple of new regents that came on in 1951, and I'll throw out their names to you also. Berl Godfrey.

Cartwright: Berl Godfrey was a lawyer in Fort Worth. He didn't attend much, and when he did he had the most irascible personality. He didn't get along too well for some reason. I really can't tell you if he added anything to the board or not.

Marcello: The last name that I have here is Charles Duke.

Cartwright: He was a strange one, but he was smart. He didn't attend too regularly.

La Brecque: I think this is a good point to throw in here for general information that during the six years that Grace Cartwright was on the board, she never missed a meeting. I think that says something about dedication when she takes on a task and should be mentioned at this time.

Marcello: Was it a problem in getting the full Board of Regents together for meetings?

Cartwright: Yes, it was dreadful. We couldn't have one or the other or something.

Marcello: Did you always have enough for a quorum...

Cartwright: Oh, yes.

Marcello: ...to conduct business?

Cartwright: Oh, yes, we always had that.

Marcello: It's also during this period that North Texas desegregates, that is, it accepts its first blacks. For instance, I do know that in the summer of 1954, a black graduate student, Tennyson Miller, applied for admission to summer school and by law had to be admitted. Do you recall anything about either Tennyson Miller or the actual plans to desegregate North Texas?

Cartwright: Oh, yes. That was discussed at length, and Ben and I had talked about it a great deal. I said to Ben--and my name won't appear anywhere because I never spoke in the general meeting--I said, "No, Ben, it is coming, and we must accept it. Let's make a policy that if anybody says, 'How many colored students do you have on the campus,' we say we have 'X' number of students. We don't know the number of blacks. And numbers are not ever to appear in the school paper or the local paper about how many blacks students are here. We should do that and never make an issue of it and just acknowledge that we just have 'X' number of students, not black or white or Mexican."

Marcello: What was Mr. Wooten's reaction to your comment?

Cartwright: Well, that's how we managed it. Of course, I think he

may have refined that somewhat, but that's how it happened.

Marcello: Were there members of the board who were adamantly against the admission of blacks under any circumstances?

Cartwright: I don't believe so. I don't remember. I think it went very smoothly. I think the way Ben presented it, it was accepted and that was it. Then the president was told what the policy was going to be, and then the deans were told, and it just went smoothly. I can't remember having any difficulties.

Marcello: You went off the board when? In 1955?

Cartwright: Yes.

Marcello: So that would have just been around the time, then, that North Texas was about to receive its first black undergraduate students. I think some had applied for admission in late 1955, the fall of 1955, and then they actually entered the school in the second semester, which would be 1956. So by that time, you would have been off the board. How did President Matthews feel about the whole process of integration?

Cartwright: If he ever felt differently about it, he never expressed it. I can't remember any discourse. The policy was adopted, and the first trouble I can remember hearing about--I was already off the board--occurred in the dormitory. The blacks wore too much

perfume, and Imogene [Dickey] had to deal with that. But I didn't have anything to do with it.

Marcello: Suzanne, do you have any questions stage?

La Brecque: Not at this point.

Marcello: It was also during this period, in fact, that the new president's home was built. I think it was in 1954 that the home out by Fouts Field was built. What do you know about that, and what role did you play in perhaps beautifying the grounds around the president's home.

Cartwright: Well, I had a good deal to do with it because I worked on the plan with the architect for the building itself. Then I was working with a decorator, a man named Yancey, in my own home. I asked permission to bring him up, and he and I worked together on the decorations. Of course, the Matthews's brought much of their own furniture to the upstairs, but it was my pleasure to get...I never had any money, and I was limited (chuckle). But I selected the carpet, and Mr. Yancey did the downstairs and the den. In fact, I gave some pieces of brass for the den, and I wonder where they are. They may be there, but I haven't seen them. The breakfront cabinet that's now in the Diamond Eagle Suite I selected from Mr. Yancey's decorating shop in Fort Worth and brought it over. The colors in the living room were keyed to that

breakfront. And I thought it was mighty pretty.

La Brecque: So this is basically a Chinese kind of motif--the breakfront with black lacquer and a design on it and then the lighter colors.

Cartwright: Oriental motif with the Chinese reds and some of the Chinese blues. We used those colors. Now in the dining room the main thing that I hunted to locate for them was an English hunting table that fit in that bay window. It was so pretty, and it's disappeared. I don't know where it is. Of course, that breakfront was in storage, and then Mrs. Hurley brought that to the Diamond Eagle Suite. But I don't know where the hunting table is.

Marcello: Was the decoration of the president's home again more or less in line with your responsibilities for colors and that sort of thing?

Cartwright: In all the buildings. I had a little hand in doing the colors.

Marcello: How did you determine what sort of color should be used in the buildings?

Cartwright: In the president's home?

Marcello: Well, we'll start with the president's home, yes.

Cartwright: Well, first of all, I knew the budget, and I knew that we had to be very conservative. So we had to have things that would blend and could be moved from this room to that room on occasion. They had to be

pleasing. They did the college entertaining in the home then and not in the Union, so the furniture and the arrangement of the room all had to fit into that scheme of being livable along with being used for entertaining.

Marcello: You know, there were just a bunch of buildings that at least were planned and approved during that period when you were on the Board of Regents--the Journalism Building, the Union Building, Masters Hall.

Cartwright: That was the old Union.

Marcello: That's correct. The Education Building, the Women's Gym, the Library Annex, three dormitories including the Quads and Kendall Hall, which was, of course, a woman's dorm. We've already mentioned the president's home, and we've already mentioned the Administration Building. All those things were essentially approved, at least, during that time when you were on the Board of Regents. The Board of Regents must have been tremendously busy during that period of time.

Cartwright: Well, yes. It was a real wonderful time because I had been here in school and seen the scarcity of buildings, and then to get to help plan those and see the beautification was just so wonderful.

Marcello: Let me ask you this, and maybe you'll know the answer. How did that old swimming pool get dumped in the middle of where it is? I'm referring to the swimming

pool by the Union Building. Of course, that's been there for a long time, I'm sure. Do you know anything about why it was decided to locate it where it is located, or was it actually there...I guess maybe it was there before a lot of those other buildings were built around it.

Cartwright: Oh, yes. Where the library building is, that land back there was a track.

Marcello: Yes.

Cartwright: I think that swimming pool dates back much further than my tenure on the board.

Marcello: I think it does, too. I guess what I'm thinking is, then, the swimming pool was probably there before any of these other buildings were built.

Cartwright: In fact, I think that swimming pool was there when I was in college (chuckle).

Marcello: I don't know how long it's been there, but you can just tell from the architecture that it's a fairly old structure.

Cartwright: I think it's old.

Marcello: Suzanne, do you have any other questions relative to the Board of Regents that you think we need to talk about?

La Brecque: There's one thing that I think might be interesting. I understand that when you met--the Board of Regents--you'd come up maybe on a Monday. Would you meet all

day and then go to work, or would you just meet for the morning? When did the Board of Regents meet, and did you have your committee meetings the same day or prior to or after the meeting? How did that work?

Cartwright: Oh, we were here most all day. Imogene was officially my hostess that day, I being the only woman, and she would try to bypass the dormitories on the way to take me to the meetings. Finally, I said to her, "Imogene, I'm going up, and I know you haven't had time to sweep the gutters." In those days you couldn't take beer in the dormitory, and so they had to sit down in the street; and beer cans would be in the gutter, and she didn't want me to see those.

La Brecque: For the record, we're talking about Imogene Bentley Dickey, who was the long-time dean of women here at the University of North Texas and who was your great friend, right?

Cartwright: And what?

La Brecque: She was your great friend as a result of this.

Cartwright: Dean Clark was Dean of Women when I was in school, and she gave the girls lots of lectures. She said, "Go out into the world and make it a pretty, pleasant place to live." Of course, I thought I could do that, and I'm still kind of working at it. Then she would say, "Now when you go to so-and-so wear your white gloves, and when you sit always cross your feet."

Oh, well, Dean Bentley came in 1944, which she was entrenched before I came on the Board of Regents, but we became friends, and the only time we ever crossed words...do you want this in there?

Marcello: Sure (chuckle).

Cartwright: (Chuckle) The Greek sororities had begun to come on the campus, and when Chi Omega came I was the first initiate. I was an honorary Chi Omega. Well, I went over to Chilton Hall--see, we had The Ramps--and I was helping the girls redecorate and get settled. I bought an inch-thick plywood 4 x 4--that's half of a sheet--and took that to the Industrial Education Department and managed to have them put our emblem on it. Well, you can imagine what a job it was to hang this big thing. I was up on a ladder in the hall about to put that up over the door, and Imogene came along, and she said, "What are you doing?" I said, "Well, I'm putting this up here so everybody will know where the Chi Omegas live." She said, "You can't do that." I said, "Why can't I?" She said, "It's against the rules." I said, "Dean Bentley, I only make the rules; I won't abide by them!" (laughter) Anyway, I didn't put that up. I kidded her about that all the time.

Marcello: I also know that the time that you were on the Board of Regents there was quite an influx of veterans

coming on to campus. They, of course, had started after World War II, but even as late as 1949 there was still an influx of veterans. How did they change the atmosphere and so on around the school? Do you remember?

Cartwright: We had "Veterans Village." We had to move in temporary housing for them. By that time most of them were married, so we had so many married couples. Of course, transportation rules had changed. The time was when a car wasn't allowed on the campus, you know, and a woman certainly was not allowed to ride in a car. Then that's when we started making parking lots. We made parking lots or planned parking lots.

Marcello: I would assume that campus life changed as a result of that influx of veterans. For instance, the freshmen hazing and so on was going to be absolutely, totally ignored by those veterans. I can't imagine people being in the service and coming back to campus and being subjected to freshmen hazing after what they'd been through. I'm sure that sort of thing changed, too, as a result of those veterans coming back.

Cartwright: Well, of course, I never knew much about the hazing.

Marcello: In 1950, President Truman appointed you as a delegate to the White House Conference on Youth and Children. Describe how that came about and what took place.

Cartwright: It came about because of my work with rural youth--all

the things I have done for them at Tin Top. The rural part was the part that I stressed at the conference.

Marcello: Do you know who recommended you for that appointment?

Cartwright: Yes. Our representative.

Marcello: Did you get to meet President Truman at that conference?

Cartwright: No. I heard him but I didn't meet him. That thing happened at the time he got so mad. That was the time he got so mad. The press had criticized his daughter's singing. Isn't that awful to remember that (chuckle)?

Marcello: What went on at that conference? Do you recall?

Cartwright: Lot's of things. Margaret Mead was the keynote speaker, and she was telling us what to do about our youth. That didn't appeal to me.

La Brecque: It did not appeal to you. What were the things that you disagreed with that she had to say at that time?

Cartwright: Well, she said that children were now being begged and pled with to eat, and her methods could overcome that. In training, when they used bad language, where they formerly had had their mouths washed, they were to be complimented by their parents if they didn't do what they shouldn't do anyway (chuckle).

Marcello: In 1957 something occurred that I'd like you to talk about. This is very interesting to me. You organized or at least helped to organize the Brazos Valley

Association. Describe how that came about and why it needed to be done.

Cartwright: It needed to be done because we had the devastating flood in 1957, and that whole river valley through those five counties was just ruined, and it was going to take lots of help and lots of cooperation. So I organized this. I invited the key ranchers from these five counties to meet in Weatherford, and I organized them. The president was a man from Granbury, but I did all the work. Jim Wright was our new congressman, and I had him come to speak. By working together we got that five-county area declared a disaster area. I had to make some trips to Texas A&M and telephone Washington a few times, and we did get it declared a disaster area; and with this cooperation we got the river cleared out. Of course, it had cut a new channel. Do you want to hear about the new channel?

Marcello: I definitely want to hear about the new channel and what happened.

Cartwright: Well, the new channel cut across and threatened to cut off eight hundred acres of cultivated land. In the deeds the property boundaries along that river went all the way to the river bank. So the river made new boundaries.

Marcello: Some people were going to gain land, and some people were going to lose land.

Cartwright: Yes, and I was going to be the main loser (laughter).

La Brecque: It provided motivation.

Cartwright: Well, by that time my husband had become incapacitated, and I had to take over full management of the ranch and the farming and business interests in 1953. So it was my responsibility to get that thing organized. So this new channel project went through Lyndon Johnson's office. He was a senator then. With much to-do he sent the Corps of Engineers by helicopter to the ranch, and I took them by jeep to the trouble spots. They looked at it and scratched their heads and said, "Well, we can't make a recommendation, but we'll go back and you'll hear from us in a few days." I never heard one more word from them. I hired an engineer to come out from Fort Worth to look at it, and he didn't know what to do. Somewhere I had read about car bodies used to make a jetty, so in desperation I went to the junk car place in Weatherford and made a contract with him to haul those old car bodies there; and with a bulldozer we were able to get this jetty across. When the water hit those, they formed a dam and the debris built up. I went behind those car bodies with crossties. The Santa Fe Railroad had gone out of business, and I had bought 1,500 crossties just to use in fencing. I put a string of those across, and then I held those with

barbed wire. Then I came behind that with stacks of baled hay that had gotten wet and were rotting. So it commenced to fill in until it put that river back in its course. Then when it was dry enough that I could, I took bulldozers and built a levee about two miles long, and that levee is still holding. That river is back in its course.

Marcello: And you did all this at your own expense.

Cartwright: At my own expense.

La Brecque: Do you remember how much it cost to do that and how long it took?

Cartwright: How much did it cost? Well, I don't want to be quoted on this because it might not be correct, but I think I spent \$32,000. That's what I would guess it to be.

Marcello: Once all that had been done, then what happened to the car bodies and all that sort of thing?

Cartwright: They were just covered up with debris and silt. They're still there.

Marcello: In a sense I guess it was an indirect benefit with some beautification. You got rid of a whole bunch of car bodies that that ol' boy had and actually got them buried. That's kind of an expensive way to do it (laughter).

La Brecque: How long did it take to build that two-mile levee, Grace, and how many people worked on it?

Cartwright: Oh, I finished up that summer. That flood came in

April, and I had that land dried up and ready for cultivation by fall.

La Brecque: Oh, so about six months. Was this a community project? Did people from the community help with this \$32,000? Did this pay for hired help to do it?

Cartwright: Well, I had to hire big machinery. That was my only expense. But after we got this water back in its own place, we had a community working. Like, on Sunday afternoons it would turn into a social affair. Old folks sat on the bank and whittled willow branches. You know, you can stick a willow branch in the dirt and it will root. So we would get things ready, and the young people would get in the boats up and down and stick these things in and now there is a hedge of willows that helps hold that water.

Marcello: It was also around this time, I believe, that you were appointed to the Texas Water Quality Board by Governor Daniel.

Cartwright: Yes.

Marcello: Do you recall when that took place?

Cartwright: Well, it took place, I would expect, the next year, but I don't remember exactly.

Marcello: What were some of the activities in which you were engaged while you were on the Texas Water Quality Board?

Cartwright: I think our principal thing was getting every river in

Texas its own--what do you call them--river authority.
We got seven of those working in good shape.

Marcello: As I recall from my notes, you were working with the seven largest rivers in Texas to establish those river authorities. What we're talking about, I guess, is water ecology and water usage and that sort of thing.

Cartwright: All sorts of things about water.

Marcello: Once more it seems as though your activities relative to the Texas Water Quality Board go back to something that you said at the beginning of the interview about your love of the land, rural living, and all that kind of thing. It all seems to come together.

Cartwright: Yes. Well, Dr. Harris at North Texas, as I told you, said that ideas come from vision, vision back to memory. Dr. Harris here at the college talked about conservation of natural resources, and to me in my world it meant soil and water, and that's where I spent a lot of my time.

La Brecque: One thing related to this that you said to me more than one time was that you always wanted to be a pioneer woman, and you guessed that you were.

Cartwright: Yes, I believe you could call me a pioneer woman because I blazed lots of trails, opened many doors. I've been the first in a lot of different things.

Marcello: In 1973 you received an award from the Sears Foundation. I believe this was for your environmental

improvement efforts in Weatherford. One time were you head or the chair of the Weatherford Parks, Recreation, and Properties Board?

Cartwright: Yes.

Marcello: How did you get that award? How did that come about?

Cartwright: I was president of Weatherford Garden Club, and I agreed to be president with the agreement that they would work. It was not to be a social group. When I looked around for projects, the Soil Conservation Office was urging this plot of ground to be restored. It had been the place that I had told you earlier that had been on a YMCA camp. When the war came, it was abandoned, and had been abandoned, and had grown up with briars. The city owned it, and it was a beautiful piece of property.

So with the urging of the Soil Conservation Office, I went to the city council and agreed to work on that. I was on the job out there some every day for that two years. I got thirty-five organizations involved in it, and it was the top project in the whole United States.

They flew in a group of judges, the vice-president of Sears-Roebuck and the national president of Garden Clubs, a botany teacher from New Jersey, I believe. Anyway, five outstanding people came to judge it. They judged it the best project in the

United States. They flew me to Seattle to accept the award. They didn't give the check then. They gave a silver platter.

They came to the community in the summer, and I was asked to set the time, so I set it and took the vice-president of Sears-Roebuck in the parade in a wagon decorated with corn shucks. He never had ridden in a parade in a wagon before. Then we stood in the press box at the rodeo grounds that night, and he presented the check. But I wanted all the thirty-five organizations to be able to participate. Counting that and the other titles that we won, we had \$3,500, and we were going to build a park.

Marcello: How did you ever get thirty-five organizations to cooperate to do anything?

Cartwright: I don't know. But I never have asked anybody to do anything that I wouldn't do myself or that I haven't done. When I ask for money donations, I have made a donation myself.

The first thing we did was the historical log cabin, and the roof was off of it. So we have a National Guard, and I asked the National Guard boys to solve this. They have weekends that they practice, or they do some city work. So I asked them to saw the limbs off and get the brush away from the cabin. Then I went to the banks in town, and I said, "Now I'll put

in \$300, and I want you to match it to buy the shingles." And they did. When other organizations knew that I meant business, and they knew how important it was, and they knew from my history that I was not going to give up until it was done, they just all came in.

La Brecque: And this was the beginning of kind of the whole parks system for Weatherford. How many parks did you build in all, do you think?

Cartwright: Well, that was the first one. Then we took a fifty-seven-acre ex-dump ground and cleaned it up and made it into a park. The city clubs like the Lions Club and the Eastern Lodge came and built Little League grounds. Those are expensive. Then I got the PTAs interested, and they helped do the tennis courts because it was across from one of the schools and the school could use it. Then I contacted B.O.R.C., which is the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, and they would match funds. I got the city because they needed to have sewers over to that new part of the city that was beginning to be built up. They needed to get sewers over there. The city could count all of our labor, all the money that had been put into it, so actually the city wasn't out cash because we had done the work and they had the equipment. We won a national prize on that, and that furnished a little more money. Then

I went from there to this one and that one and developed all the properties.

Marcello: I have a figure in my notes of 147 acres. Was that the total amount involved in all these parks that were created and so on, or was that just this one particular project?

Cartwright: That's one particular project. That 147 acres has a forty-five-acre lake. The Texas-Pacific Railroad had built that lake for a watering place, and then diesel engines came in. They no longer needed the lake, so they sold that to the city for a minimal amount. The city used it for its water supply for almost ten years later, until they built a new big lake outside of town. It had just never been developed, and it's a beautiful spot.

La Brecque: Is this where the Grace Cartwright Park is?

Cartwright: Yes. I had organized the Park Board and got it to be a growing concern, and when I went off of the park Board, they had a ceremony and named it the Grace Cartwright Park.

La Brecque: Sometime we'll have to go, Ron. I mean, it's absolutely gorgeous. Yet, it is just real natural. If we had had this interview in Weatherford, we could have gone to see it.

Cartwright: Isn't it pretty?

La Brecque: It's wonderful! I love it!

Marcello: I'm assuming that it's a result of all these things that you, somewhere along the line, got the nickname, "Amazing Grace."

Cartwright: Yes, it was. Well, do you know Maurice Akers?

Marcello: I've heard of him.

Cartwright: When we finished this first park, we had a highway go through it, and it seems like I've never started a park that I didn't get a highway or high rise through it. But when this highway was finished, we got it acclaimed the Memorial Highway. We dedicated it as a memorial to all veterans, and I had quite a happening. We dedicated the highway and the memorial marker. We had the 2nd Air corps come with a seven-gun salute and a fly-over, and it was snowing the day we dedicated it. Maurice Akers always tells that he never read a speech on the flatbed of a truck in a snowstorm except in Weatherford, Texas (chuckle).

Well, after the dedication the Garden Club gals had prepared lunches. I had all the dignitaries for lunch and turned the park completely over to the city council, completely paid for. Besides all the labor, the thirty-five organizations had spent \$14,000, which was more than \$14,000 now. The city council didn't say one word. They didn't express appreciation when we turned it over to them, and the mayor didn't say, "Thank you." They didn't say, "You girls have done a

good job." Finally, I said, "That's all. You're dismissed." With that, Maurice Akers stood up, and he said, "That's not all, either!" Oh, he dressed that city council down, and that's when he gave me the name "Amazing Grace." So I've been that ever since.

Marcello: A couple of other things. Tell me a little bit about the Beautify Texas Council. You were the vice-president of that for a while.

Cartwright: That is a volunteer organization, and if you have done enough environmental improvement or when you've done enough environmental improvement for the state, you can be chosen or may be chosen Outstanding Citizen of Texas. I was given the Outstanding Citizen of Texas award in 1978. Then after that, the governor asked me to take over the senior citizen division of that, and I did and I still do that. I've been on the board since 1979, I guess.

Marcello: What does that involve, that is, being in charge of the senior citizen aspect?

Cartwright: Working out programs with senior citizens. As you know, senior citizens are those who work on past the age of fifty-five to improve the environment of the State of Texas. I work out programs, things that they can do in their town, and then it's a matter of selecting outstanding people who've done that and give them special awards at the annual meeting, which is

held in June every year.

Marcello: So the Beautify Texas Council, among other things, then, really promotes beautification, ecology, and things of that nature through various programs.

Cartwright: Yes. Right now we've had a marriage--a marriage of the State Highway Department and the Beautify Texas Council. They are funding us. We have a bigger office. Originally, we had offices with the governor. Now we have a separate office. Instead of one on the staff, we have four, I believe. Our main thrust right now is getting the highways cleaned up, and we're the ones who have done this two-mile stretch.

Marcello: "Adopt a Highway."

Cartwright: By scientific measurement from this California firm, we have lessened the debris on the highway by 64 percent. They're still dirty, but they are better.

Marcello: In 1984 you received the Ladybird Johnson Award for conservation. Tell us a little bit about that.

Cartwright: Well, I can't remember who nominated me. The nominations are sent in to the headquarters of Keep America Beautiful in New York City. They are the ones that do it and give the awards. I was judged the best in the nation. They have their annual meeting in Washington. I went to Washington, and I was awarded it. It was supposed to be secret; you're not supposed to know before you go. Well, no way that they'd have

gotten me to Washington just (chuckle) on a pleasure trip. Well, when I was ready to walk to the luncheon where the award was made, I turned and looked, and there was Joanna Hurley by my side. I never was as surprised and pleased because it was so good to have her there with at that luncheon. Somebody that I knew had pulled some ropes to get her to know about it and to get her seated with me.

Marcello: You also established a student scholarship fund at North Texas. Talk a little bit about that--why you decided to do it, when, how it came about?

Cartwright: Well, I established the first one--oh, I don't know--a long time ago, knowing the sacrifices my mother and father had to make to see that ten children got a college education. They were both gone by that time, and it was when my father was gone that I decided to establish this scholarship in their memory, hoping that the members of my family would contribute to it, also. They never have. Well, I think one or two have. Then still later, I established one in memory of my husband's mother and father. Well, I still intend to establish others.

Marcello: How does one qualify for a scholarship?

Cartwright: She can tell you that. They are different. The one from my parents is for any student, and the Scholarship Committee decides. The one in the memory

of my husband's parents is for home economics students, and I don't know what we're going to do when they change that name. I don't like that (chuckle). I think it's terrible. Well, it's specifically for home economics students going into graduate work at the top of their class.

Marcello: You haven't come to grips with Human Resources yet?

Cartwright: No (chuckle).

Marcello: I have one last question, but I'd like to hold it, Suzanne, in case you have something that you would like to add this time.

La Brecque: Well, I was kind of thinking...it might be another story, though. I was kind of thinking about significant relationships as you did all this kind of work, people who helped you, who sustained you when it was hard. How did you muster the courage and the determination? Where did you get your support? I know most of it came from inside, but how did you keep going and who helped you? I think you should address that because you sure fought a lot of battles that you haven't really discussed in opening those doors.

Cartwright: We made a trip to Europe early in our ranching careers to study farming methods, where the plots of land are so small from which they feed their nations. The efficiency and the happiness that I saw there is what gave me vision to erase this littleness of spirit.

Once you get started, there is no stopping. Whenever I see a thing that needs doing or a person that needs help, I'm prepared to do something. Just like I said, ideas--you just don't know where they come from. Bickam used to say that the wheels in my head never stopped turning.

Marcello: I just have one last question. Throughout a large part of your activities--this is something you alluded to in the interview--you in essence were the sole manager of the family's farming, ranching, and oil business because of the illness of your husband. Again, how did you find time to manage the ranch and all the other areas, as well as doing all these things that we've talked about in this interview today? I mean, that seems like two full jobs in itself for one person.

Cartwright: Yes, it was. But I think if I hadn't have had the interest in the hard work, maybe I couldn't have stood his illness. It was so heartbreaking to see a young man incapacitated like that for twenty-one years. I'm sure that hard work saved me to some extent. I don't know how I ever had the strength. I thank my maker every day for giving me the strength.

Marcello: Mrs. Cartwright, that's all the questions that I have. I want to thank you very much for having taken all of this time to speak to us. You've said a lot of very

interesting and a lot of important things. Again, I'm glad I've had this opportunity to meet you and be able to record these moments for posterity.

Cartwright: Well, I've never known anybody that's done their work like you have for this interview.

Marcello: Well, thank you. I appreciate that.

Cartwright: I've never seen that. I never have.

La Brecque: I'd like to just kind of say one thing, also, for posterity. One of the good things about becoming a dean is that you get to meet your alumni, and I would like to say for everyone that Grace Cartwright has provided me a model. When it's been tough, I keep thinking about "Keep with it...keep going." I think that hearing her story can provide that for students and generations to come, and I'd kind of like to end with that. Thank you for being with us.

Cartwright: Well, it's been my pleasure just to talk.