

Alberta Leonard Hirsch

interviewed by

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We will be talking to Mrs. Alberta Hirsch who is at Arlington Villa, Arlington, Texas.

I was born at Canyon, Texas on March 28, 1903. My parents were Robert McDonald Leonard and Della Patterson. I remember my grandparents slightly. My mother's mother was Suzanna Jones Patterson and her father was Andrew (Andy) Patterson. My mother's sister, Cora Patterson was a teacher in the Fort Worth schools for many years. She taught first grade and also was an instructor for teaching first grade students out at TCU for a number of years. I remember their telling me that the family came from Tennessee in wagons. Several families came together and had what we would consider hair-raising experiences. I came to Fort Worth when I was about twelve years old from the panhandle of Texas, first living on Cooper Street and later on Worth Street on the Southside.

Although I had worked vacations and Christmas at various department stores, my steady working years were doing secretarial and bookkeeping work, first as a secretary to Stripling's executives; later as secretary-bookkeeper to the building manager of the Continental Life Building.

Since my husband was in the business of buying and selling animals...and you still needed animals to work farms, the depression didn't effect us as much as many others. It probably made me more thrifty and money-conscious.. and wiser as to the needs of all families.

I was a young teenager in the glorious days of World War I. I had two brothers in service and it was during the time that Camp Bowie was here. The YWCA was quite active in having entertainment for the soldiers who would find themselves in town with nothing to do but stand on the street corners. We would have parties at the Y quarters; those were quite enlightening years for young girls.

I suppose that Amon Carter was the most outstanding and universally appreciated man , but W. C. Stripling, owner of W. C. Stripling Company was well known, liked and appreciated throughout all this country. As my employer, I saw many prominent people on the national level call on him. These were just names in the newspaper for me prior to that.

I saw others such as Pershing and Lindberg in parades here. The stores and schools would close when they had a big parade in Fort Worth.

My education atarted in Tulia, Texas and continued here in the Eighth Ward, Junior High, Paschal High and Arlington State College. That just about finished me off as education goes. Miss Laneri at Paschal was my English and study hall teacher. She remains in my mind as a pleasant, kind and very strict teacher. As a little girl I took elocution, later called public speaking, and enjoyed it very much.

My children went to the Handley Schools when Handley was a separate little town from Fort Worth. All of them later went to Arlington State College. Maxine went on to SMU in Dallas. My oldest son, Allen, was sent to Annapolis.

He is now Capt. Allen Phillips and living in Los Angeles where he works in a spacecraft factory. Edwin always wanted to do what his older brother did and studied hard to make acceptable grades for going to the Academy...something that he hadn't given too much thought to earlier. Sure enough he got his appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy just as his older brother who set the pattern for the family. Edwin is now Chief Engineer for a ship building concern, Designers Engineers in Houston. Ann is married and living in Dallas. She's busy with her family and church work, being soloist in the choir. My youngest son, Arthur, passed away.

The move to Handley because of cheaper living conditions and a highly recommended school. It was in the last days of the interurbans which we always used. Later it was by bus and now everyone goes by personal car.

Our church, Handley-Meadowbrook Presbyterian, had Rev. H. O. Bennett as the pastor for many years...and actually started the church. Earlier we met in the old Presbyterian church over close to the firehall. For some reason I didn't understand the church split into southern and northern groups. I stayed with the minister and built a new little church.

I remember the pavilion at Lake Erie as extending way out into the water. They had dances and many big celebrations there. People brought baskets and had lots of activity going on.

Working as I did, my main interest was my five children and the church. Handley appealed to me as a typical Texas village. Small towns seem to have better boys. Since my boys had no father it seemed the thing to do was to get in a small town where other people could help me keep them corralled while I was working. While Handley has lost much of its small town atmosphere it is an area of Fort Worth to be proud that you live in.

Later: Mrs. Hirsch mentioned that her father, Robert McDonald Leonard, was a builder and architect...and built the courthouse in Tulia, Texas. After retirement Mrs. Hirsch lived at 2721 Sandy Lane but now resides at the Arlington Villa due to a long illness.

Dale Bennett, son of Rev. H. O. Bennett, Bill Boswell, son of Rev. Thurman Boswell, Handley-Meadowbrook Christian Church and the late Arthur were all good friends, rotating spending Sunday dinners with each family. Family tricks were played on the boys such as placing a ceramic worm in their salad and creating quite a stir.

The Handley<sup>er</sup>-Presbyterian Church was then located on the NE corner of Forest and Routt. The organizational meeting of Meadowbrook-Cumberland Presbyterian Church was held in Meadowbrook Elementary auditorium in the early 50's. They met for a time in the Gateway Theater on Lancaster and are now located in their own building at Norma and Emily.

Bill Boswell is now minister at the First Christian Church of Brady, Texas and has been there for the past ten years.