

Cecilia Foster Tackett

interviewed by

Mrs. W. A. Schmidt

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ORAL HISTORIES OF FORT WORTH, INC.

MRS. C. O. TACKETT, SR. (CECILIA FOSTER)

JUNE 22, 1902

EARLY HANDLEY

MRS. TACKETT
2844 Canton Dr.

May 14, 1975

This morning we are visiting in the home of Mrs. Tackett. Mrs. Tackett, what is your full name:

My full name is Cecilia Foster Tackett.

I was born June 22, 1902 in a little place in Bell County near Salado, Texas.

My parents were M. C. Foster and Lavene Brown. My father was a carpenter and a blacksmith.

I knew my Grandmother Foster. My grandfather died from exposure which we would call pneumonia, in the war between the States. He died while he was in service.

I met my husband when he was working for my brother-in-law on the farm at Mart, Texas. His full name is Chester Oswald Tackett, born June 6, 1898 in Dublin, Texas, that's down in Erath County. There were 5 in his family of Tacketts, and then there were 3 by a second marriage.

Do you know his mother's maiden name?

Her name was Mary Penelope Hair.

When did you all marry?

We married December 27, 1919, right after the war, and moved to Fort Worth in the summer of 1920.

I have three living children. The oldest one is Louise who was born in September, 1920. She is a Mrs. J. C. Hawkins now and lives in Houston, Texas. The next one was my son, Chester O. Tackett, Jr. who lives over on Ellis Road in the Fort Worth Area. The youngest was Mildred. She married a McCollough and they live in Austin, Texas.

We moved to the Handley area January 5, 1927. When we first came to Fort Worth, we lived at 2718 Avenue F, which has been changed to East Rosedale.

My husband got out of the service and he didn't have any work to fall back on, so he was hunting work; he found work with the North Texas Transit Traction Company in Fort Worth.

He was a streetcar man at first and was trained to be a driver of a streetcar or to be a conductor on the back end, whichever one was needed. He was what they called the extra board; wherever they needed someone, they put him on there. And he worked extra board for years and years before he got any route.

He died September 19, 1969. He retired before he passed away. I think they retired him in '65 because of his health.

I think his route went down Hampshire Blvd., made the circle on Weiler Blvd. over on Meadowbrook and back up to Lancaster, and up-town.

When we moved out here, we were on Route 4. Canton was not paved until the public works administration.

It seems that you had many artesian wells that people piped to, is that how you got your water?

There was a well back - over here on Meadors and Craig and maybe Plant Street ran into that. Anyway, there was an artesian well up there that furnished what we called the West Handley area then down in Handley, there was another well.

All of you had septic tanks out here, didn't you?

No mam, we had outhouses.

Where did you get your groceries? There was a little neighborhood grocery store down here on the corner of Post Oak and East Lancaster, called Dunn's Grocery Store. Canton Street began at Craig and went North to Meadowbrook, from Craig Street south to Lancaster was called Post Oak Street.

Where did your children go to school? They went to East Handley School, the school has been torn down now. It was over there where the Continental Inn is now.

Your life has revolved a great deal around your church - tell us the name of that church?

Our church used to be called the First Baptist Church of Handley at one time. After Fort Worth annexed us into their City Program, we had to change it to the Handley Baptist Church instead of the First Church. It has been known by that name so many years that I can't even remember when that happened.

You say the children walked to school which was about a mile and a fourth.

We had a Model T Touring during this time.

That was one advantage of moving out here, because the Interurbans came early in the morning. My husband would ride the 4:45 Interurban to town to work, and the car was left at home for my convenience.

What did your husband start out making an hour?

When he started to work his salary was - I've forgotten how much, but anyway it increased a cent or two an hour for several times. During the Depression he was making 54¢ an hour, but due to the Depression, they cut it back to 44¢.

We lived off of beans mostly. We had a cow, chickens and our garden. At one time, we attempted to raise our meat, but we found out it didn't pay us to try to raise hogs.

We were strictly out there in the country. You have mentioned some people that you recollect. Could you share that with me.

Oh, that was the former pastors of our church.

When I came out here in 1927, Carl Herford was the pastor. The Seminary students took the little suburban churches to add means to their support. Following Carl Herford was Ramsey Collard and Reverend C. J. Howard and Bill Marshall, James N. Morgan, Earl Slaughter, and Earl Stallings and Lorey Hildreth and Ralph McIntire and Reverend Sammy Brown who is the pastor now.

Describe the church as far as the number that attended and where it was.

The first time I came to Handley was with a friend in 1922. The basement part of the old church that was directly on the corner was there; it didn't have the upper floor fixed, it was just the basement. When I moved out here in 1927, the upstairs part or the first floor had been completed, it was a nice size building though for those times. There might have been 100-150 families attending.

Most of my contact is through the church because we have a nice nursery program for the small children. I am with the bed babies from newborn, the first time they come, until they get big enough to walk. I have been with them since 1942. Now the babies are the parents. There is a lot of sentiment when you see some of these babies come in that you have known their parents.

There was a bank down on Handley Drive and Lancaster that was the First National Bank of Handley. It is now the City National Bank.

Three of my children graduated from Handley High School. It is now the Middle School. We have a West Handley Elementary School as well as the East Handley Elementary School. Across Meadowbrook, between this and the Turnpike, we have Atwood-McDonald Elementary School. And a new elementary school over here near the Eastern Hills High School. So there's lots of buildings and nice accommodations for our children even if they are crowded at times.

I believe that the City Limits of Fort Worth proper ended at what is now Tierney Road and between Tierney Road and West Handley that has been done away with due to 820 was kind of a no-man's land in there because the Handley City Limits ended at West Handley.

That was really just farm land then.

My son threw the papers just before he went into World War II in April, 1942. At the time that he had the paper route, there was a hundred houses between Meadowbrook and Lancaster, north and south that way, and Stark Street and Cravens Road (which is a continuation of what we used to call Old West Handley Road). He had a hundred houses to throw papers to, so the community has built up considerably.

When the City of Fort Worth annexed the City of Handley proper to the Fort Worth property, we had a number of streets changed, Handley Drive used to be called Jennings Avenue; the Post Office was on Jennings Avenue in Fort Worth, and the Handley Post Office was on Jennings Avenue in Handley. They had to be changed.

They had a few of the citizens to go knocking door-to-door to say "we're going to have to change this street name and do you have any suggestions as to what you would like to have the street named?" Then, they took it to the City Council meeting; they gave them names according to the listing that had been suggested. This is why many of the streets are named for people who have lived on that particular street area for so long.

It was actually after the City was annexed that the growth really began. As far as the paving of the streets and development.

Well, down in the business part of Handley, we had two drug stores; one of them was Hubbard Drug. I can't remember what the other one was, and a hardware store. The grocery was down in that main business part of Handley.

We had a grocery man upon East Lancaster in Fort Worth who lived across the street here, Mr. P. E. Casher; I would make out my grocery list and give it to him in the evening. The next day, he would bring my groceries to me.

J. Frank Norris lived out here. He lived on the west side of Meadors Street. His house caught fire and they moved out. I never did remember where they moved to from here.

The North Texas Traction Company was the name of the City transportation in Fort Worth; it was changed to the Fort Worth Transit Company between 1935 and 1940. They took off the street cars and put buses on. The first bus route ran in 1923 and the last street car ran in 1939.

It was considered a good job. During the depression we were very fortunate to have a steady job. The salaries were very small, even then, but we thought we were doing real well to have a salary even.

Well, we are on the corner of Canton and Craig, the house just next door to me was an employee of the Traction Company, his name was Clyde Hawkins. Next to that was Bob Boring, and next to that was Inspector Oscar Blackburn, and then Carroll Norris. A little further on up the street there was Mike Darty and Ted Brewery. On Rich Street, there was a Ray Young. As the buses were put on out - between Fort Worth and Dallas, we had several of the Texas Motor Coach people that lived out here. There was a Mr. Beck.

We were getting out of City taxes we thought and the transportation was very accommodating to the employees.

Major Handley died earlier, but they reinterred him around 1930.

What was the reason for this?

The best I can remember, is that Major Handley came into this location as a young man. Driving around over the countryside looking for a place to buy to build his home on, he drove by the property that is now Rose Hill Cemetery. And he got out of his vehicle and walked around up on Rose Hill and said "that would make a fine place for our residence because you could look any way and see all the countryside". I don't remember the details of why he never did build, but he did not. Since I have been out here they did bring the remains of his casket and he was buried in the Rose Hill Cemetery.

Do you recall much about when Lake Arlington was constructed?

Yes, I remember when Lake Arlington was constructed because when they were working on it, they said it would be 10 years before it would ever have enough water in it to call it a lake; by the time they got it finished it began raining and it filled up immediately.

The first Post Office when I first came out here was in the building that Mr. Groves Insurance Office is in. On Handley Drive. Part of it was Post Office and part of it was insurance office. Mr. Weiler had the insurance and real estate in the old Post Office building. Then they built a post office on Mr. Weiler's property right across the street; I always called it an alley, but they called it a street. I think that building is a wood shop building. Then they moved the post office down on Erie Street which made the third one, and now they built another on down Handley Drive north of Meadowbrook. Mr. Smith had a watch shop in the old Post Office Building; he still piddles around doing a little bit of watch work. He said he always wanted to have a church of his own, so he built that little church out in his front yard and it had stained glass windows in the front door, and he has a clock in the steeple there that keeps correct time.

Have you known the Howells for a long time?

Mr. Bill Howell - Mr. I. B. Howell is the one that had the feed store when I came out here. Bill was a young man at that time and went some place else to try his wings at something else. But he came back home and went into business with his father and married. Bill and his wife have a boy and a girl, so the boy is in business with his father now. Mr. I. B. Howell has been gone a number of years.

Well, did the Handley Power Plant being built there make a big difference in Handley?

The Handley Power Plant was there when I moved out here - a small one; that was the old Interurban station as well as the power plant.