JUNIOR LEAGUE OF CEDAR RAPIDS
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interview with
Barbara Douglas Dixon

Conducted by Laura Derr
February 14, 1985
314 Nassau Drive S.E.

Transcribed by Mary Bowden

BARBARA DIXON

INTERVIEW TOPICS
CEDAR RAPIDS: THE EARLY DECADES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

I. PERSONAL LEAD-IN QUESTIONS
1 --When were you born? Where?
--How long have you lived in Cedar Rapids?
1 --What are your parents' names?
--Where did you go to school?
3 --Are you married or single?
--Did you raise a family? How big?
--What has been your occupation (career) during your adult years?

II. COMMUNITY TOPICS

A. Technology in the Community
1. Transportation
2 --Railway travel (Union Station, trips to Iowa City on Crandic) Chicago & Northwestern
--Trolleys (the Interurban)
--Horses and First Automobiles
--Mud roads and the seedling mile
--Hunter Airport and the first planes
--Cedar River (ferries, floods, dams)

2. Communications
--Newspapers
--Radios
--Advertising
--Telephones

B. People in the Community
1. Amusements/Recreation
--Motion Pictures
--Cedar Rapids Parks
31-32 --Dances (Silver Ball)
--Carnival Week
--Chautauqua
--Community Theater
--Little Gallery
--Symphony Orchestra
--Circus
--Greene's Opera House
--Amusement Parks (Alamo)
--Camps
--Community Centers (YWCA, YMCA)

2. Famous Characters
--Cherry Sisters
27 --Grant Wood
--Carl Van Vechten (<u>The Tattooed Countess</u>)
--Marvin Cone
24-30 -- Mrs. George Douglas

3. Lifestyle
   --Life before air conditioning
8 --Winter Activities
17 --Holidays (Memorial Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, Christmas)
   --Clothing
   --Toys
   --Saloons/Taverns
   --Farm Life
4-19,23 -- Brucemore

4. Family Life
12,13 --Household Help
10,11 --Women's Roles
7,8,9,19-22 --Childrens' Activities/Behavior
   --Sunday activities (Church life, Sunday Blue Laws)

5. Ethnic/Minority Life
   --Immigrants (Czech, Greek, German, etc.)
   --Indians
   --Segregation of Blacks
   --Jobs Available

C. Organizations and Institutions in the Community
1. Education
4-7 --Cedar Rapids Schools
29-30 --Coe College
   --Mount Mercy College
   --Cornell College

2. Government
   --City Services
   --Streets/Roads
   --Relationship with Marion (Courthouse Dispute)

3. Medical
   --Hospitals
   --Patient-Doctor Relationship
   --Broken Bones
   --Polio, TB, Debilitating Diseases
   --House Calls
   --Home Delivery of Babies

4. Business and Economy
   2 --Local Factories (Douglas Starch Works, Quaker Oats, etc.)
   --Local Brewing Companies
   --Retail Businesses /Department Stores
   --Professions
   --Banking and Finance
   --Restaurants (Greek Restaurants in 30's)
   --Businesses that no longer exist (old groceries, drygoods, icehouses)
   --Farmers Market
   --Mills on Cedar River
   --Buildings Erected
   --Manual Labor/Types of Jobs
   --Companies (Labor Unions, Strikes, Pay)

5. Attitudes/Values
   --Children/Discipline
   --Sex/Petting
   --Charity
   --Divorce
   --Work
   --Working women, Voting Rights for Women
   --Patriotism (World War I)
   34 --Dating

D. Historic Events in and Outside the Community
1. Catastrophic Events
   --Clifton Hotel Fire (1903)
   30-31 --Douglas Starch Works Explosion(1919)
   --Bank Closings (1933)
   --Lyman-Stark Building Collapse(1913)
   --Public Library Murder(1921)

2. National Historic Events
   --Womens' Suffrage
   --World War I
   --Roaring 20's
   33 --Prohibition
   34-35 --Great Depression
   28 --Hoover at Brucemore
   36 --World War II-changes in lifestyle
   37-38 --WWII nurses aide

Barbara Douglas Dixon

Barbara Douglas (Bobbie) Dixon was born at Brucemore December 23, 1908. She is the daughter of Irene Hazeltine Douglas, of Jamestown, N. Y. and George Bruce Douglas, whose father came over from Scotland as a young person. Many of Mrs. Dixon's memories relate to her life as a child and adolescent at Brucemore.

She attended Johnson School while in the Cedar Rapids area. From 1934 to 1947, whe lived in California, then returned to Cedar Rapids until the present time. In 1934, she married Gail J. Burck and they had three children; George Douglas, Mahala Barbara, and Mary Borden. They were divorced in 1947 and she married Bruce Dixon. They had a son, also named Bruce Dixon and a daughter, Frances Marion Dixon.

Her memories include social activities of the time period, help to the needy and working as a nurse's aide during the war.

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LD: It's February 14, 1985, Valentines Day, and I'm in the home of Barbara Douglas Dixon, at 314 Nassau Drive S.E. Bobbie can you tell us where you were born and when?

BD: I have the awful distinction of being the only person ever born in Brucemore, and my sister, can I go on?

LD: Sure.

BD: My dear sister Ellen, always says, "Well that just sounds simply great, but I'm the only person ever born in the Turner Mortuary, most people go out that way, but I came in that way."

LD: Of course, it wasn't a mortuary then, and what year were you born in?

BD: 1908, December 23.

LD: Almost 1909, well that's the way I am. Will you give the names of your mother and father and tell us a little bit about their backgrounds, where they came from and how long they were in Cedar Rapids from your memory?

BD: Let's see Mother came from Jamestown, New York, and Daddy came from Scotland. I mean, I think Grandfather came over from Scotland, I don't know

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BD: Let's see Mother came from Jamestown, New York, and Daddy came from Scotland. I mean, I think Grandfather came over from Scotland, I don't know

what date, but he died in 1883 so it has to be quite a long time ago, and he had three sons, no he came over, wait I take that all back, he was one of five sons, that my great-grandfather brought over from Scotland, and they all, some stayed in Canada. Grandfather came too, you want to hear all of this junk, I think it is fascinating, though.

LD: Well I only want just, you know the basic immigrant background.

BD: Yea, well I think it is fun the fact that Grandfather, as I say was one of the Douglas Brothers that came over, who went to Chicago and he and a guy named Brian started the Chicago Northwestern Railway Company, which I think is kind of impressive. The reason, they were from Scotland, of course the railway, the trains ran on the left-hand side of the tracks, like they do in Scotland, came back on the left-hand side the other way, and they still have to change the whole thing in Omaha, because finally the Union Pacific got with it and everything went out on the right side, so they still do that though, they still run on the wrong side of the tracks as far as Omaha.

LD: It has never been changed?

BD: No, because too much bother, I guess, but anyway there is a lot of shifting around in Omaha, if you happen to go by train. Then Grandfather, as he went rolling by, looked out and saw, they went right along, of course, see all the towns on the way out across the river, and Grandfather apparently picked out the, this lovely little town, which turned out to be Cedar Rapids, and he had a cousin named Robert Stewart, and Robert Stewart and he started a little oat meal mill, which turned out to be the Quaker Oats.

LD: A long time ago?

BD: A long time ago, very.

LD: And your mother came from Jamestown then?

BD: Well, she came from Jamestown and then the family moved to Grand Rapids, so that is where she started, I mean she lived most of her life in Grand Rapids, until she married Daddy.

LD: What years were you in Cedar Rapids, during your lifetime?

BD: I was here from 1908 till 1934, when I got married and moved to California.

LD: And then when did you come back again?

BD: Then I got a divorce in 1948, 1947, and married Bruce Dixon, and we came back here, and we were going on to live in Philidephia, cause he loved Philidephia. We stopped by to visit some relatives here and he said, "You know, why don't we just stay here, I think this is the neatest town I've seen in a long time." He did really, so we did.

LD: And you've been here ever since?

BD: Well, yea, more or less.

LD: Except for. . .

BD: Trips here and there.

LD: O.K. Bobbie I want to start with asking you some questions about your family life when you were growing up at Brucemore, and just to get a sense of what your family life was like, tell us a little about your yearly routine, when

you were in Cedar Rapids and when you were out of Cedar Rapids, According to your opinions.

BD: Well, of course, I was . . .

LD: Times of year is what I'm really thinking of, when you traveled out of the . . .

BD: Well, we were dragged as kids out, in fact, at the age of six weeks old, I'm told was the first time I was dragged to California, nothing wrong with California, It was out to Santa Barbara, where mother and daddy rented a house and so I grew up half the year there really, then we would come back in the spring, cause I went to school out there. Then I came back and went to the Johnson, what was left of the year. It was kind of tricky in a way, but it was fun. Probably good experience.

LD: What years, or what months of the year would you have been here at Johnsons?

BD: Well in the fall, probably up until after Christmas, and in fact, definitely after Christmas, and then after, well, you know in the spring we would come back. Most of the rest of the year was in Santa Barbara.

LD: How did that effect your schooling?

BD: Well, I don't think it did any harm at all, because, for instance, they taught French in the first grade out there, in fact the curriculum, being a private school, Santa Barbara Girls School, it was quite, really advanced in some ways, like teaching French. Well, I think they teach French now-a-days in Public schools, but not in those days, and oh, various other things. I think in some ways it was quite progressive for me. I was always kind of behind.

LD: Well, I've never had any, I asked Henrietta Arnold that same question, and she said that she had turned out to be a terrible speller, she had never gotten spelling class, from her childhood, she always managed to miss that.

BD: But somebody never gets spelling anyway.

LD: So you would have been in Cedar Rapids during the summer months.

BD: No, because we would go up to Charlevoix.

LD: O.K. Explain that then.

BD: Well, Charlevoix, there is a lovely place in this lovely town of Charlevoix, voille, Michigan, which is 50 miles south of the straights or the Mackinaw Bridge, or whatever you want to call it, and we went to a resort, which was called the Chicago Club of Charlevoix, which was very up town, Shall we say. But it was lots of fun and we learned all kinds of sports and sailing and canoeing, and everything like that.
much about Charlevoix, I mean isn't that . . .

LD: No, but I really want to establish the times when you were here, so you were here then from

BD: Like when school began like right after Labor Day.

LD: Fall then up to Christmas?

BD: Yea.

LD: Were you here at Christmas time generally?

BD: Yea, we were always here at Christmas. Who wants to be in California at Christmas?

LD: You left after Christmas, and went out to California, stayed there until maybe April?

BD: Easter.

LD: Easter time, then you came back and you were here until summer.

BD: Till school was out, then we went up Charlevoix.

LD: So you had really very limited patches in Cedar Rapids.

BD: Well, but I never felt that way, I always felt the same, I didn't feel that I was missing out on a lot. I don't know why.

LD: Who were your friends, when you were growing up here?

BD: Well, my best friend, my cousin, was Eleanor Cook, Thomas now, but who cares? I mean there was Jane Bolten and Gertrude Cameron and, I don't know, just a whole bunch of people.

LD: Were they people who generally had the same habits as you did, and did they leave town during the winter months and come back?

BD: No.

LD: They were here year around?

BD: Yeah, I think so, most of them were.

LD: Did you have many friends that you met at Johnsons?

BD: Oh, heavens, yes.

LD: What was that neighborhood like around Johnson, in those days?

BD: Well, that neighborhood was just dandy. In fact, I still think it is. There were no class distinctions, shall I say, I mean everybody, well, I remember once when I was in the third grade, coming home from school and saying, because my birthday, well, it has got to be a little before my birthday, which is December 23, and I said I wanted to have Gertrude, and Jane, and so and so, and so and so, for my birthday party. Mother said, "Why don't we just have the whole third grade?", which was so typical of mother, and so we did. Swarming all over the place, and having a perfectly wonderful time. It was such a nice democratic thing to do.

LD: So you felt then, that you were a part of the community. You didn't feel like you just popped in and popped out.

BD: No, and once more I didn't feel like I lived in a great big house, that had more property and stuff than the other folks, because Mother was really so smart. We would, Danny, the nurse would walk me down to the corner, which was the corner of Blake, or Grande, anyway, closest to Brucemore to go across 18th Street, so I arrived at school, I walked home from school, I walked home at noon, just like everybody else did, so there was no feeling like, oh she thinks she is snooty, or anything like that, because I wasn't. Through rain and snow and so forth.

LD: You had the same ritual.

BD: Exactly.

LD: What were your favorite activities when you were a youngster growing up at Brucemore, and I am going to place this in time. This would have been in the 1910, up to early 1920's. What were the things that you would do for fun with your friends?

BD: Well, we most always came back to Brucemore, and we skated on the pond in the winter, oh, boy, that was really fun. On the nights, in the spring and fall, we played some kind of a tag game in the garden, that was, that we dreamed up ourselves, it was quite fun, and we also had treasure hunts, and stuff like that, that led us all around to the woods and everywhere. Halloween parties, for instance, like that, then we would hunt for a witch. Mother always had the witch hidden in some mysterous place, and I can remember, I think it was so neat, one time the witch was hidden, the witch was made of cardboard, and it looked like a witch, with that pointed hat and gray staggily hair and the whole bit, and she was larger than life. The way you found her was to start off in two teams, and one team followed a trail of corn. The other team followed a trail of berries, of some sort, and every once in a while you would come to a place, where there would be a big bunch of donuts, at the next place there would be a big bunch of apples. So eventually, by sort of sunset, you should have found the witch.

LD: You would eat your way to the witch.

BD: Yeah, you would eat your way to the witch, and this one time the witch was in the two room, mysterious cottages that were deserted across Dows Lane, belonged to a lot of Margaret Dows, as a matter of fact, but there was nobody living in them, and there she was this hideous hag, and no lights, I mean just enough to see. I've never been so scared, but then you get the witch, you haul her out, and everybody took her over in front of gardenhouse, where there was a huge pile of leaves and a large fire, and she was burned. We all, you know, danced around like banshees screaming and yelling, but wonderful things for kids.

LD: That was Ellen's birthday too, wasn't it?

BD: That was Ellen's birthday, that is right.

LD: Her big day.

BD: She usually, well, I guess she went on some of them, when we were younger, but of course, eventually she got a little too sophisticated, shall we say.

LD: But you continued the tradition, without her.

BD: Yeah, until we became too old to be interested ourselves.

LD: Talking about the grounds at Brucemore, there are lots of clear spaces now, at that time did you have more trees on the property, was there more of a woodsey kind of environment, or what was it like?

BD: No, not necessarily. The woods were all around the edge like they are today, and Howard Hall is the one who planted all those huge pine trees, because there had been pine trees here and there before. For instance, between the pond and the house all along one side, it was an orchard. It was all cherry trees and apple trees and so forth, and then. Oh, oh, mother loved farming you know, I thought I was being brought up on a farm, quite a bit of the time. It turns out, perhaps it was a little fancier than that, but you know there were cows, and chickens, and horses, work horses and riding horses, and we used to go out and help the guys gather the eggs, I mean, I'm sure they just tolerated us kids, every evening, and oh, it was just fascinating, we thought, which indeed I think it was. Then, as I say, mother got interested, for instance, in a new kind of feed, which now is so well known that it is ridiculous, in those days,

nobody ever heard of alfalfa. So all that part around Brucemore, from the Crescent Street all the way around to where the woods get really, where the gate is, was all planted in alfalfa. It was not glorous manicured lawns or anything like that. But we had a wonderful time playing hide-and-go seek, because this alfalfa grew up to five feet five, or something.

LD: You could hide in there.

BD: Oh, you could hide in there, it was terrific.

LD: Your mother preferred one type of chickens, from what you told me.

BD: Japanese Silkies, they were all white and they had blue top knots, if I told you all this I shouldn't be repeating myself.

LD: Oh, but it wasn't on tape.

BD: Oh, I see.

LD: Oh, she was very particular about the things she raised and she was progressive.

BD: Well, she was trying new things all the time. Let's see if this works and if that works.

LD: What was your dad's role around the house?

BD: Well, he was, of course, when I was a little tiny kid, I imagine he was not there very much, because he was busy with the Douglas Starch Company. I only remember him being the most affable, lovable man. If I felt very dismal, I would climb up on Daddy's lap, if I could find him, and he was always very sympathetic.

LD: Always had time for you.

BD: Always had time for me. In fact, I think the one funny thing I did was, maybe I told you this, I, at the age of about eight or ten, at this time everybody was smoking, this was just preceding the 20's, when everybody had to smoke. So I walked in behind him, nobody else was going to give me a cigarette, and I said, "Daddy, I want to smoke a cigarette." He put down his paper, took out a cigarette, lit it for me, and handed it to me. Of course, I took one puff and all hell broke loose, and I returned it politely.

LD: That was one smart father.

BD: Oh, wasn't he smart?

LD: The whole business of growing up in that household, then your mother took a more active role in the grounds and the household and your father was more of the, he was there whenever you felt like you needed him.

BD: Oh, but he wasn't, he didn't spend too much time there, except with mother and with their friends of course, it was a whole different ball game, I mean they had lots of parties and stuff like that.

LD: Can you describe your memories of those parties? When you were a child at Brucemore, do remember much about the entertaining that they did?

BD: Well, all I remember, to tell you the truth of it, it was an early level, was Ellen and I looking over the banister from the second floor and if you screwed your neck around you could look down into the hall. The great hall as they call it, ho, ho, ho, and there would be lots of lovely ladies and gentlemen, all dressed, I guess they all wore white tie and tails, and

evening dresses, they were all very dressy. To tell you the truth, that's about all I remember, then we were whisked off to bed. I don't really know.

LD: Describe the routine of the, who the household help were and who were the people you spent most of your time with, did you have a regular nanny, when you were a child?

BD: Yeah, Danny, our wonderful nanny, who came when I was born and stayed for 23 years, because everybody loved her so and she was fairly happy. Then she got married, to a guy who lived in Santa Barbara, and lived happily ever after. Well, anyway I remember a series of servants over the years, when I was a little tiny kid, they were German, and I was terrified of them. They were extremely meticulous, and they weren't very friendly. Then came some wonderful Czech people like, Rose Podaski, she was so wonderful, and all those years I spent half my time in the kitchen, you know baking this and that with Rosie.

LD: Oh, she cooked then?

BD: Yeah, she was the cook and Joe was the houseman. Then there was a period when there were French, but that was O.K., they were perfectly delightful They were a little more formal, should we say, then were Rose and Joe Podask The mother had a French maid, and there was a butler, and that was the only time in my life when I got to know about the butler, who stands in the dinning room at all times in case ma'am wished to tell him anything. Well, it doesn't make for exactly intimate conversation, shall we say. However, it was handy to have Lusiano there. Then there was a cook, who was, I don't know I didn't spend much time in the kitchen, I think they must have not liked children. Then there was, wait a minute, I'm not through, I just

remembered, after all these different nationalities, along came the British group and they lasted until I left the scene and lasted, in fact afterwards.

LD: In the 30's you mean.

BD: In the 30's, Ivy, and Alfred, and Burton Balton, they were all Baltons, and they were all English, and they were all just delightful, just delightful.

LD: Where did they come from? Did your mother go through an agency, to bring them from Brownscove, or something?

BD: I don't know. Oh, she found Rosie, her maid, in France, and Rosie was married to Lusiano, so she brought, he came over to be the butler, and I don't know where she picked up the cook, who was a male, it wasn't a lady cook. But Alfred and Ivy, I think it was so funny, after Mother died, I was still living in California, and they decided to move to California, and so they did, and they got a job as a couple for Madam Jeritsa, what was her name, Maria Jeritsa, who was a very famous opera star at the time, sort of the Maria Callis of that period. Anyway, Ivy and Alfred got the job with Maria Jerista, and they would constantly be calling me up, by this time I was Mrs. Burke, living in Pasadena. "Oh, Miss Barbara," Ivy would say, "You should see, we had 90 people for dinner last night at Madam's," and it was too impressive," and on and on. So, I would be suitably impressed and admiring, "Sounds marvelous, Ivy". Well, don't look know, but it wasn't too long before Ivy and Alfred left, and guess who they went to work for? A dear friend of mother's, who had moved to California permanently and of all the stately dowagers I have ever seen, Aunt Dorothy McKay, took the cake, and they were perfectly happy right back there with a well-run household, and no Hollywood stuff or anything.

LD: They liked the routine.

BD: They didn't realize how much they missed it, I guess.

LD: You had mentioned the dining room and the butler. Can you describe what a typical meal was like, when you were growing up?

BD: Well, breakfast was, there I sat in my highchair, I can remember that and being forced to eat Quaker Oats, which I couldn't stand, with Danny, sitting beside me and I believe we had, I don't know what the rest of them had. Probably eggs and bacon, or whatever you wanted. Lunch was always the same thing, we went to the dining room, and there was usually something like lamb chops, baked potatoes, and peas.

LD: A serious meal.

BD: A serious meal. Dinner, we had, Ellen and I, upstairs, in the sewing room, which is now Peggy's office, which we called the sewing room, and we had peanut butter sandwiches and fruit, and it was a simple supper is what you called it. But Daddy, was so funny, that was one of the times I had fun with my father, he would come in, dressed in his dinner jacket or white tie, or whatever, which they wore every night for dinner, whether there was company or not. He would always come in and sit down and eat up all our peanut butter sandwiches. I think sort of as a hors d' oeuves or something before they went down and had a cocktail, and that's when he was so much fun and I had a such a good time talking to him.

LD: Because he was there on your terms.

BD: Yes, definitely.Then as we got older, of course we got to go downstairs

and then dinner was, you know, roast lamb, and the typical dinner.

LD: I know that your parents entertained a lot. Can you remember some of the people who came to your household to, ah, well, I know there was a number of famous people.

BD: Yeah.

LD: That's not just the Hollywood pictures that were once on the landing,

BD: Oh, no.

LD: Can you remember some of the people who made an impression on you?

BD: Oh, heavens yes, how can I forget the ones that were nice to me? Well, first of all the one that made the most impression, obviously, it was, not Harold Bower, it was somebody earlier than that. Some pianist, Joseph Hoffman? Well, anyway, it was one of those earlier guys and so I was totally unselfconscious naturally, so I was busily, I came down and sat at the piano and he came wandering in, to where the piano was and sort of leaned on it, or was wandering around it or something, and I said, "Oh, would you like to hear my piece?" Well in those days you had one piece, which you learned.

LD: Performed.

BD: You performed, and he said, "I would be charmed, my dear." So I played my piece, which was probably the dullest damn thing you ever heard in your life and after I was through he said, "That's very interesting," he said, "I like that second theme that comes in." And he said, "May I give you a little advice?" and I said, "Certainly." I couldn't have been more impressed

because he was such a great man. He said, "I believe I would have it a little slower here, a little softer here", and you know, gave me some nice little ideas, and I just, well, I thought, how perfectly wonderful of him, a lovely man, but how nice he, he must have been to pay attention to me and to listen to this stupid thing. Then there was, an opera singer named Madam Alda, dressed in black, with red hair, but these were all from my stand point they were all very glamorous, but I wasn't afraid of them even. They were all terribly nice.

LD: It as when the artists, too, I believe, now, I've forgotten what we were saying, but Ellen was telling me, one of the pieces that the Cedar Rapids Art Museum now has, was a gift from your family, and he did, I'm sorry I cannot remember his name.

BD: I can't think, except I would like to say, speaking of portraits, that one of Mary, Queen of Scotts, in the hallway, and I think that is kind of interesting, because of the fact that when Grandfather, this is simply a story of the family, but I think it has got to be true, because who would bother to make it up? When Grandfather came over from Scotland, with old dufflebag type of luggage, I suppose, and the rest of Douglas', he carried one thing under his arm that he wouldn't part with, it was rolled up, it turned out to be that portriat of Mary, Queen of Scotts, that's now hanging in Brucemore, and nobody knows who painted it. There is no signature, as I recall, but the legend in the family goes, that Grandfather knew somebody, who knew somebody who painted it, actually of Mary, Queen of Scotts, and it was probably the best likeness of her that was ever done, because in the first place, it is the only portrait of her, where she looks not only charming, but beautiful, and really appealing, folks, and I think there

is something to that.

LD: So you don't know who painted it though?

BD: But I think it was very old when grandfather got it. Remember she was 1650, Mary, Queen of Scotts. So it was in the family, and I just believe that story, I think it was of her, because it is just the way I would like her to look, as against all those others. That Hovine portrait, I mean, if she was that glamorous, she couldn't look like those portraits that were done of her.

LD: What are your memories of very special holidays or family days, when you were growing up? What was the most memorable holiday?

BD: Oh, I think Christmas, by all means.

LD: Always Christmas?

BD: Big deal around Christmas. Not quite as big a deal as the wonderful decorations they have now, frankly, but gee, but it was a really fun time.

LD: What can you remember about how you did things? Did you have special rituals about the way that you celebrated Christmas?

BD: Oh, yeah, there was always my birthday party on the 23rd of December, which was the best time.

LD: That's lead in.

BD: Yeah, well, that's a great time to have a birthday party. Of course, later on it got to be too close to Christmas, and then Christmas eve we always read <u>The Night Before Christmas</u> and hung up our stockings, in that old,

Peggy Wentworth's office, called the sewing room.

LD: That's where you did that.

BD: Yeah. Well, see there was a fireplace in every room, and then we were put to bed. Then as we got older, I think the routine, never changed much, except that, yes, I do remember my last Christmas there, which is a whole story in itself, well, I mean a short story, but what a difference from those earlier ones, when we were sent to bed with Danny and woke up in the morning rushing in to get our stockings. This was, we had been out at some mighty party at the hotel, downtown somewhere, and we came reeling back, well, not reeling, but it was mighty Christmasie, and we were all full of cheer, and I remember Turner, John Turner, had a voice, a very impressive voice, indeed, and loved to sing harmony, and he sang very well, and so did everybody else. Well, we came back to Brucemore, and we all sat around in a circle, and we had a shaker full of some horrible drink in the center, and we sang Christmas carols, and we thought we were just, well, we were in four part harmony, or sixteen part harmony. We just thought we were simply magnificent. We stopped at the end of a round, Mother was standing on a landing, and she said, "You know, I just think those carols are absolutely beautiful," but she said, "but, could you possible sing on key?" Which I thought was the most tactful remark ever made. Then we'd get up Christmas morning and have stockings, and it was all, and fantastic layouts that mother always did to amuse us. The playhouse was all decorated and everything.

LD: So your Christmas, was a great gift giving time for your family.

BD: Oh, yeah. It was terrific.

LD: Do you remember, did you have, more than one Christmas tree, did you have

BD: No.

LD: Did you have one upstairs and one downstairs.

BD: No, just one.

LD: Not a formal versus a children's tree.

BD: Oh, no, It was very informal, very.

LD: What about your shopping habits when you were growing up Did you buy your clothes in Cedar Rapids? If so, where?

BD: I didn't buy my clothes, at all. I was not allowed to buy my clothes. Mother bought them up until the time I was in, finally launched in boarding school, and all my clothes, were, well, they were awfully nice, but they weren't what the girls were wearing, I can tell you. What I wouldn't have given for a pair of pink bloomers'. Pink, rayon bloomers, that's what everybody was wearing, I was wearing little lace edge panties, which looked something, I guess to those other girls, like something my grandmother should have been wearing. I was so embarassed, I can't tell you how embarassed I was.

LD: So, you had no role in shopping for your clothes?

BD: No, not until on the Q.T., when I got, so we would come down to New York, from the boarding school. I remember we went and after I got out of farming and mainly, we got enough money so we could spend, buying clothes, at a place called, "All The Frances", and you could buy a beautiful dress for $16.50, and although it wasn't where Mother was always taking me, to these super

fancy, expensive, fancy places. Of course, those were the things I liked the best. Dumb me.

LD: Well, because you picked them.

BD: Oh, of course, of course.

LD: So you don't, didn't have many memories of going downtown on shopping trips, and that sort of thing, when you were growing up.

BD: I don't think so, it seemed to me, we were always playing after school and somebody else did all the shopping.

LD: When you were growing up, where did you go for entertainment? Do you have memories of the movies around Cedar Rapids, did you do that much?

BD: Well, yes, eventually, and when we got into our teens, but mother seemed to plan an awful lot of things, and also people spent all their time in other people's houses. There was very little going out to restaurants, or places, nobody had, well, when we got in our teens we had cars, yes, and we could drive them, no matter that we weren't 16.

LD: That's right you didn't have to have a license, did you?

BD: No, you didn't have to have a license, and the boys, were, seemed to drive model T Fords, mostly, and, but, we mostly gathered at people's houses.

LD: O.K. What, can you describe that, what did you do when you went out and gathered at a friend's house, for an evening's entertainment?

BD: Well, my gosh, I, we sure as hell didn't watch TV. There wasn't any TV then.

LD: Or listen to the radio.

BD: No, we didn't listen to the radio until later, that got into it. I don't know, I think we, we did a lot of dancing, there's no question about it, and in the summer we all went to Cedar Park. Cedar Park, which is no longer existing as a dance floor, was specifically a dime-a-dance, in those days. Boy, did we ever meet all the boys from the wrong side of town, who turned out to be just delightful, and again let me bring in Mother. Here were these guys who were really, the west side was supposedly the wrong side of town in those days. But Cedar Park, that's how we all turned out to be such super dancers. I'm not boosting, you couldn't miss, these guys, and I might say, that they were all doing what we finally called Jitter Bug, back in 1918, we'll say. No, wait a minute it has to be a little later than that, 1922 or 3. So,

LD: You were about 15 then?

BD: I was 13. I went to school, cause I went to school when I was 14 and that was 1923. But anyway we danced them up all the time. Then I think we danced at peoples' houses and played games. Charades, you know and games like that, and we had to do it ourselves, and therefore we were fairly inventive, and we invented all kinds of different type parties. Simply because, well, why not?

LD: Do you remember any of them?

LD: Heavens yes, I remember, oh, I remember one that mother dreamed up called a, what is the word, never mind, I can't think of it now, but anyway it was all favors and things like that. Catillian, yeah, maybe it was called the Catillian, and everybody had a chair and they were all the way around that, the great hall, and down to the portrait at the end, and all the way back.

And everybody's name was on a chair, mother was very smart, don't let them try to do it themselves, they'll never get anywhere. There was a boy, girl, boy, girl, all the way around this thing. So then, all the boys would go into the dining room, and there would be a favor for each of them to go and pick out a gal, like horns or were real favors, just glittery, fancy things. So, they would go and give it to the gal they wanted to dance with. Then there would be a dance. Then maybe the next favor the girls would go and get, and come back, and the final one was when all the girls took off, each girl took off her right-hand shoe and the boys all went into the library, in those days there were great big heavy curtains that you could pull across in front of. So, the boys stood on the other side and picked up all the shoes, then they had to go find the girl who matched, who had the other shoe on. Which, is not a bad idea. Then, one final party, that was a Halloween party that Ellen and I gave, I think by this time we were teenagers, and we had started it attic, which is a peachy place to start, and we had all kinds of spooky stuff up there, and you know, oh, I can't even remember them, it was all things that, like they have today even. Some hand would reach over the, there was a thing you would walk through, kind of a passageway made of screens and stuff. Then finally you were lead down from the attic to the first floor, and there we had gotten somebody to construct a slide into the basement, a slide. How could we do things like that ? No, problem, it was a nice slippery slide and everybody sat and went shooting down into the basement, which was pitch dark, which was quite scary. But you know that kind of fun, it was all.

PAUSE

LD: This is Laura Derr, and this is session two with Barbara Dixon, it is February 28, 1985, and we are in her home on Nassau Drive. Bobbie, I want to pick up today with some questions about your mother, and both your memories of her,

at home and also her community involvement, but I also, before that, I heard a story about your roller skating days at Brucemore. Apparently you roller skated in the house?

BD: Heavens yes.

LD: When you were growing up. Can you talk about that?

BD: Yeah. We used to roller skate, we had a circit, which went, started at the dining room door and we went down the main, the great hall, as I laughingly call it, then we went around through the study and back through the back hall, through the back pantries, through the kitchen, to the servant dining room to the front panty, through the dining room, and came out where we started. It was a terrific, circulous route, we realy pounded around there.

LD: How did that effect all those shiny floors? Must not have been a problem.

BD: Nobody snarled. Mother never called us down for anything, fun like that.

LD: Did you ever see the ghost?

BD: No I never saw the ghost. As I think I've said before, the only thing, Ellen was big on ghosts. She saw all kinds of strange and wonderful things going on. The only thing that I can say is that I did feel a definite presence in a room. Like the supposedly haunted library, and there was certainly an odd feeling about that room. If you went into the library, everybody's feeling very cheerful and happy, walked into the library, the conversation, kind of went down to a different level, and it, I don't know, it was just, there was a presence in that room.

LD: I'm going to move on then, to your memories of your mother, and to start where you already told us about some of your experiences, with friends, and parties that she was involved in. But she is so remembered as a gracious lady and patron of the arts, and everything in the community.

BD: Hello, can I insert a story here. My favorite story about mother, and I keep forgetting to.

LD: Please do.

BD: Well, it was just a very little incident, but I think it shows her understanding of people, there was this salesman who came to the house once. There were always salesmen coming to the house, or people coming to ask for money, or coal, for everything. Here was this, apparently this was kind of the nervous type character, possible his first trip out selling from door to door. So, he came up to Brucemore, and mother opened the door, don't ask me why, and he came in and he was extremely nervous, and extremely awkward, and "Mrs. Douglas, I have this magazine, that I would like to sell", with his head, kind of down. Mother was extremely dowagery she wasn't a bit pleasant at all, she didn't encourage him in any way at all, and she said "No, I'm not the least bit interested." So, he turned around with this crestfallen look, and started to slink out, where upon mother followed him to the door and said, "Just a minute young man, you'll never get anywhere with that attitude, you couldn't sell anybody, anything. Now I want you to start all over again, and come in all over again, and I will open the door and you come in, you have enthusiasm, you know, Mrs. Douglas, I want, my name is so and so, and I want you to see this marvelous magazine, it is absolutely the most, well, I don't know what, but anyway something, where you are really convinced that

it's a great thing." So he, he was floored, of course, to put it mildly, but he bravely turned around and he came in and he did as mother said. So of course, then she said,"W ell it sounds perfectly wonderful, I'll take a subscription immediately, and I'll tell all my friends." So, the point of the story is that she was nice enough and kindly enough, to take an interest in this strange kid, and have him do it all over again, and probably, we don't know, he didn't probably end up president of the United States, but don't you think he probably. . .

LD: I bet it made a difference in his life.

BD: I bet it made a lot of difference.

LD: I bet it did. That is wonderful.

BD: Yes, I think it is a dear story.

LD: She was a very charitable person, but not one that did it publically, as, from what I have heard. Can you remember any other stories about her, you know the things that she did in the community?

BD: Oh, well, I can remember dozens of them.

LD: Tons of them, right, but . . .

BD: I can remember lots of little personal stories, because she helped so many people, so many young men. I think she underwrote their education, because for instance, years after mother died, at least three or four came back and paid Ellen and me. "I owed your mother $500 for what she did for me when I was a young man." Now we didn't know anything about it at all, and each of us would get a check for $250, or whatever it happened to be.

LD: I'll be darned.

BD: Yeah, the old story of don't let your left hand know what your right hand doith.

LD: Well, there was a story written in one of the rememberances, about how she had a regular, apparently a charge account at one of the stores for people to come in, who were needy.

BD: Gee, I didn't know about that.

LD: This is one that you did not know about.

BD: Fantastic.

LD: I think it was at Armstrongs. I believe it was an open charge and the story is that if the clerks recognized that there was a need they could simply take advantage of it.

BD: But think how people could fool you.

LD: Well, certainly. You would have to have a really good discretionary clerk, wouldn't you?

BD: Yeah.

LD: Beyond that, she also was very interested in art and artists, wasn't she?

BD: Oh, yeah.

LD: What was her relationship with local artists?

BD: Well, frankly, I don't think she did anything like what Dave Turner did for Grant Wood. But she certainly was, she gave them a lot of business, and

anything, anytime she wanted anything painted, including the basement, I think I mentioned, she got Grant to do it. I don't know, I just think she was tremendously interested in all of the performing arts and helped in anyway she could. See she wasn't going around advertising that sort of thing, so heaven knows how much she did without my even knowing it.

LD: So you had to catch her doing it.

BD: Right, exactly.

LD: What are your memories of her garden club involvement, I know that she was very active.

BD: Oh, the garden club. Well, I think she kind of master-minded that annual garden club exhibit thing we had. That's one of my earlier memories where, I don't know what they did before that, she finally decided to have it at Brucemore. Every year they had a garden club show, as it were. People had exhibits, and all kinds, and you entered all kinds of competitions, and it was really fun, I mean for instance there was, the three, they were called shadow boxes, I can hardly remember this, but you were supposed to do an arrangement of flowers in a three dimensional, and it had a frame around it, so it was all black velvet, if you follow me, like a picture only it was deep, it was a foot deep or so, and then whoever won the prize of the best of flowers in it or whatever it was. Well, sister Ellen won the prize one year with the darndest arrangement you have ever seen. It had a white polar ceramic, a white polar bear and sticking out of its back were a whole bunch of dandelions, that if you blew them, they would, you know, they were just fluff, the fluff that was left. How she ever got them, but it was, then there was a slightly red little square in the back, so that you looked at this white polar bear with the red background and the black

beyond that, and these lovely, fluffy, and they were so beautiful, of course, but you don't think of dandelions. . .

LD: Generally, they don't win prizes.

BD: No, I wouldn't think so, but this one did.

LD: There was also a number of spring musicals that she sponsored or allowed the Cornell-Coe folks to come to Brucemore, didn't she? Do you have memories of those, those spring events?

BD: Not particularly, but I think she did, I think she sponsored any darn thing that came along that was culteral, or helped. Actually the way Brucemore is doing right about now, folks.

LD: It's kind of gone back to that.

BD: Oh, well I think that mother, as I said before I think, mother, if is possible, I think she is right there thinking "oh, great, this is simply terrific!"

LD: It's nice to see it happen now.

BD: Oh, yeah.

LD: We had talked a bit about people that you remembered had come to Brucemore to visit as guests, artists and musicians and things. Do you have memories of people who were involved in politics and government, that came to Brucemore, when you were growing up? I know that later, you know, Herbert Hover and Mr. Truman, were, well, not later, particularly, but they were there when nobody was home, Truman came by, I am told, and

BD: Well, also, Hoover, I think I've said this, it's the only thing I ever remember about. Hoover was all off in Charlevoix when he came.

LD: That was the one, yeah, when Hoover came and nobody was home.

BD: But never mind, he couldn't have cared less, of course, because he was campaigning. The only thing that worried mother, was the fact that when Ellen took over the room that had been mother and daddy's room and the huge bathroom that daddy had, she had had one of those elaborate, lavender, toilet seats, with a wicker top, like you see in hotels sometimes, it lifted up, fanciest thing you have ever seen, and the only worry that Mother had was that she thought Mr. Hoover, wouldn't particularly like to find a lavendor toilet seat.

LD: He wouldn't think that was just right.

BD: Well, she didn't think that was just right. She thought it was flossy and ridculous.

LD: Why do you think your mother was the way she was? Can you account for it , in terms of her up bringing, or her background, or . . .

BD: Well, that is kind of a hard one. I never thought about it, because I think her up bringing was extremely conventional and social in dear Grand Rapids, even though that wasn't the society center of the country, but I think she was orginally brought up, and I don't know, maybe when she married daddy, who spoiled her rotten, I mean if he could of, but he didn't really, he let her do anything she wanted to, I'm sure. I just think she had a free rein, and she could live the kind of life she wanted to live and do exactly what she wanted to do, and she did it.

LD: And out of, out of kind a largess of that life she gave to others. What are your memories of the years when your mother served as a board member for Coe college, do you have any memories of her talking about that exper-

ience, or how she was received or did she feel that she was totally welcomed in that?

BD: Oh, she loved it.

LD: She was the first woman board member.

BD: That's right. I think mother just loved that kind of thing.

END OF SIDE ONE OF TAPE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO OF TAPE

LD: This is side two with Barbara Dixon. In 1919, you were 11 years old, is that right?

BD: Yeah.

LD: That was the year that the Starch works exploded and many people have very vivid memories of that even. Of what they saw or what they heard, what are your memories of that time?

BD: Zerosville is the trouble. I don't think I was even here at the time, I think we were still at the Charlevoix. I remember hearing a lot about it, but I'm sure everybody knows as much as I do, I don't recall anything about it.

LD: Do you remember how your family reacted, to that event?

BD: I'm sure that daddy was over there at all times, I mean from the minute anything happened, but I really don't, I know that he retired after that. He never went back.

LD: Do you know why he didn't start up again?

BD: Well, because, isn't that about the time they sold it to Pinick and Ford? I think he was just, well, I think daddy was maybe, let see, he died in 1923, I don't think he was too happy anymore, I think he felt, and actually as I said before, I think after Uncle Walter went down on the Titanic, his brother, his dear, dear, brother, in 1912. I don't believe he was ever quite all fired up about anything ever again.

LD: They were very close.

BD: Well, they must have been extremely close.

LD: Do you have memories of how your father and mother helped people after the explosion? What they did for families or anything of that sort of nature.

BD: Well, I know that they did. I know that Daddy engineered all kinds of things and also I think had a great hand in picking up a plot in a cemetary for any workers who were killed in the explosion, but I, see I was not interested in that kind of thing, it just passed me by, I'm afraid.

LD: Moving on into the prohibition years, the fun years right? When did you have a debutante ball in Cedar Rapids?

BD: No, we had a party at the Montrose, though, that was called the "Silver Ball", and I think it was as close as we ever came to being debutant.

LD: Describe what the Montrose was like in the 20's.

BD: Well, the Montrose was pretty fancy as a matter of fact, what was it called the ball room, the "Crystal Ball Room", and, but oh golly, it was, it wasn't exactly what you would call a relaxed atmosphere. I can still remember all the parties you went to. You came in the dining, the ball room, and all these, all your mother's friends and your mother, and everybody else older,

was sitting all the way around the entire ball room, side-by-side, all the way around.

LD: In hard back chairs, probably.

BD: Yes, in hard back chairs, all looking extremely dressy, so it was not exactly comfortable, you certainly couldn't fling yourself around. You danced sedately about and went back out into the lounge or the lobby or whatever you called it.

LD: Where you could talk to your friends.

BD: Yeah, where you could talk to your friends. They weren't, those parties really weren't too much fun.

LD: Talk about the party itself, how did, did the boys come with the girls, was it, did you meet there and have a kind of catillion or how did it . . .

BD: No, I think usually, somebody had a dinner party, any number of people had dinner parties, say groups of 8 to 10 to 12 to 20, and then everybody went from the dinner party to the charity ball or whatever it happened to be, and I don't think there was any organized, you didn't have a table with your group or anything like that, you just milled around, out in that great big mezzanine lounge thing, and then staggered in and danced and there sat all those ladies. Well, then , of course, later on, when people, that got old enough to be interested in drinking, then they had these rooms upstairs, and the guys would have a couple of bedrooms and everybody would go up there and sit around and drink.

LD: What year was the "Silver Ball", do you remember?

BD: Oh, ah, let's see 1927 or 8, something like that.

LD: How did people get a drink, during prohibition?

BD: Well, see I was being this lone soul that wasn't interested in drinking.

LD: You just didn't do that.

BD: Well, it wasn't that I dissapproved, I didn't know enough about it to disapprove. Everybody else was drinking, at least, by the time we are talking about, except little dead-tired me, and I wasn't, it didn't taste good, I didn't like it, I didn't know that if I drank a little more I would get bright eyed.

LD: Beyond that point.

BD: Yeah, beyond that point.

LD: So you weren't really too involved in the whole business of getting it, and procuring, or anything like that.

BD: Heavens no, but eventually, when the time came, this is just before I got married, when I was finally lured into taking a drink, and turned out, I had a lot of fun, I was amazed. At that point prohobition, no wait prohibition went out in 1933, just abut the time I started drinking, and here is a thought for today, when prohobition went out, I was at a speak easy, that day, that evening, I was at a skeakeasy in New York, and the only change that was made, was this gal that I was having a drink with and I were asked to move away from the bar and sit down at a table. They couldn't serve drinks at the bar anymore, they could only serve you at a table. How is that for a quaint thought?

LD: So it was really less free than it was before.

BD: Absolutely, I mean in case you wanted to pick up some guy sitting next to

you at the bar, no way you could do that anymore.

LD: No more. Boy that is funny. What are your memories of how dating was done, in the 20's, for instance, was it the way it is today, boy calls girl, arranges date, pretty much the same thing?

BD: Well, you see, you started out, like I said before, we started out in Cedar Park. Great groups of us, 10 cents a dance department, and also, as I said, most people, as contrary to today, started doing it around, like going to somebody's house, the girl's house, almost invariably, and then, we'll say John Turner, as an example, Turner would bring somebody, some friend, who we didn't know and then he would become part of the crowd and vica-versa, but it started definitely as a group type thing in somebody's home, and it was quite a long time before somebody went out on separate dates, but then I don't know that it has changed so much.

LD: Where would you go, beyond Cedar Park?

BD: Well, then when we got to the dating age, you would go to the movies, you go to Danceland, and you double date with some other couple and go to the Country lub maybe, you know, I think just pretty much what they do now.

LD: What are your memories when the depression came in the 30's, its effect on your family, do you have any memories?

BD: Not too much effect on my family, because I think, they, Quaker Oats was a nice stock to have in those days, because on the account that people stopped eating, you know roast beef and went right down to eating cereal and stuff, it is amazing how well Quaker Oats did during the depression. The thing that I noticed most, at my age level then, was that all the guys, who

supposedly would have worked during the summer, this is when we would go up to Michigan, and always young guys came from Chicago, Kansas City, and St. Louis, and everywhere, all up to dear old Charlevoix, and none of them had jobs. So for about three years, well cause it wasn't fair, it was considered unpatrotic to have a job if you had a family who could support you.

LD: Who had enough money.

BD: Yeah, to survive. So they all had enough money, so they were all up there, and those were the most halcyon years, as they say, wonderful. I mean everybody was there for sailing races and for fun and dances, everything was simply glorious, because it was a simple life anyway, I mean, I wasn't fancy, and dressy, and expensive.

LD: And you had leisure.

BD: We had more leisure than we knew what to do with. We had treasure hunts and we had everything you could possible think of, making our own fun more or less. Anyway, nobody felt rich, nobody dared feel rich, but at least you, at least we had more fun.

LD: Do you have memories of friends whose families where effected deeply by the depression?

BD: Well, I should have, but to tell you the honest truth, I think I was so well entrenched with people badly, really badly affected, that I don't have things that stand out. The thing that stands out more with me is, I think I told you, was when the war came along, the second world war, and everybody either lost all their money or didn't have any, couldn't live the way they had before and we all had to cut down, cut back to zerosville, completely, and

the funny part was, then I will shut up on this, but this was one thing that could be said for the id le rich, was that all of us who had had servants and nurses for our children and the whole bit, we all moved into tiny little houses and we all did our own work from then on, we didn't have any, and we loved it, we had fun.

LD: This is because of the war effort.

BD: Yeah, exactly. And everybody came, nurse's aids or whatever job they could do, and I think we were better sports about it. I don't mean to boast, I really do think all those gals in California that I knew so well, they handled it better than a lot of people who couldn't face it, or bitched away about it all the time.

LD: That's an era that I, of course, have no memory of, but . . .

BD: That is a fascinating era.

LD: Yes, you either responded with great patriatism and zest or you didn't.

BD: But, boy, if you want to know the truth, Laura, and I shouldn't say this, but I got to thinking once, did I tell you this?

LD: I don't think so.

BD: If I had one period in my life to live over, and this is strictly horrible of me to say, it would be that decade from 1940 to 1950. I actually, I never had so much fun, and also I felt the most worthwhile that I ever did in my life.

LD: Because you were giving something up for a bigger cause.

BD: Oh, golly, I worked like a steer, and not only did I work as a nurse's aid,

which is about the only thing I thought I could do, but then we got shifted seven times, my husband's in the Navy, and we had to move seven times during the war. Suddenly I found myself down there in Florida, and Gale was at an airbase that was 30 miles, 37 miles from the beach where we were living at, which is right outside of Jacksonville. There were five airfields there, and everybody you ever knew in your whole life showed up, anybody who had anything to do with the war, and you were right in the midst of it. We were, oh, we were so necessary. Not only in being a nurse's aid, but all the women, gad, we sat up till two in the morning, or three in the morning, or four in the morning, with some poor guy, who was going to go out the next day in a P.T. boat. Well, you never heard of them again, and you never knew whether they came back, you know, it was a certain odd part of the war, that I wouldn't have missed it.

LD: You're experienced as a nurse's aid, were you with a lot of people who came back from the front, then? Did you help out with the hospitals, for the people who were, who had been wounded?

BD: Oh, when I was in Florida, I did, but I started out right here at dear old Mercy Hospital, in Cedar Rapids, and just loved it.

LD: That would have been early, though.

BD: 1943.

LD: What did you do at Mercy?

BD: I was a nurse's aid. We were the lowest thing on the totem pole.

LD: In other word, you filled in as a volunteer.

BD: OH, yeah, we volunteered, but we did everything the nurses did, except give

medication, and that was really, and I just loved it.

LD: And then when you moved up out to California, you continued that.

BD: Yeah, until they didn't need us anymore.

LD: So, did you have connections, or did you meet a lot of people who were actually involved in the fighting?

BD: Oh, heavens, yes. We had more airforce guys, that they got to be so friendly with us, who lived at Atlantic Beach and all along Jacksonville department, that they would buzz us, the air guys. They would come over practicing maneuvers.

LD: That's a doubtful favor, isn't it.

BD: A doubtful favor is putting it mildly. And they would come zooming down, and you would think, oh, will they make it, will they pull up, will they get out of here, but they were all younger kids, and they all thought, well, everybody else may get killed, but I'll never be killed.

LD: Interesting. I'm going to force you to backtrack just for a minute.

BD: Haven't I talked enough?

LD: Almost. O.K., bank closings in Cedar Rapids, during the 30's, do you have any memories of that event, when there was a bank holiday, and the banks reopened, were you here during that time, because that would have been, well, it was right before you were married.

BD: Yes, it was right before I got married. Vaguely, I remember it, but it is so vaguely that I don't think I could be of help at all.

LD: It didn't really effect you.

BD: No, nothing seemed to affect me at that time.

LD: You were very happy.

BD: Oh, yeah, I was sailing off.

LD: Have you, was your father a member of a group called the Horse Trader's Club? Or did that come later in time?

BD: I think that came later. I don't think, but then I wouldn't know, I mean it could have been, but I don't think so.

LD: I had heard that it was, you know, a group of businessmen, who really did get together on an informal basis.

BD: You will have to ask somebody else that, I don't think I know. Is that it?

LD: One more.

BD: Oh, one more.

LD: Your mother would have been, well, about the same that you were about 11 years old; voting rights came in for women.

BD: Oh, my gosh, that

LD: 1918,or 1919.

BD: Oh, was it that late?

LD: It was that late. Isn't that awful?

BD: Yeah, it is.

LD: Do you have any memories, about was your mother involved in any of the voting rights suffrage or do you remember any, anybody talking that as being an important thing.

BD: I don't think so. I'm afraid, at that age level, you are not interested in that sort of thing, and you're just hopeless, and your are interested in playing kick the can, and a whole bunch of other things.

LD: Well, it almost would have had to of been, they would have had to of taken you out on marches or something like that, to have had an impact on you.

BD: Yeah, definitely. No, I don't recall anything else.

LD: O.K., I'm going to leave you alone, but I am going to ask you one last question, that is really kind of a tuffy. You grew up in Cedar Rapids, and then you moved away, and then you came back to Cedar Rapids, and you had a, you have a perspective,that is a special one. How would you compare the community today, to the community that you grew up in? In terms of quality? In terms of quality of life, do you feel that we still have the same things now that we, that you had when you were growing up.

BD: Yes, I think it is terrific. Where would anyone rather live than here, and I also feel that it is a wonderful place to bring up children. I brought up all my children here, and I can't see that my grandchildren are suffering. I have finally come to the conclusion, I know I am prejudiced, but not too, remember I have lived around alot.

LD: You have lived away.

BD: I lived 13 years in California, and then in Florida, and all these other places. I think, that frankly, that Iowa and Michigan, there ain't two

better states in the world. I really do from a stand point of, general comfort, happy living, culture, and every, everything is good about the middle west.

LD: Yeah.

BD: I know, I sound like a chamber of commerce, but

LD: No, no, you sound just like yourself. Thank you very much, Bobbie, we really appreciate it.

BD: Well, thank you Laura, it was fun.