

Marion Day Mullins

Manuscript

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ORAL HISTORIES OF FORT WORTH, INC.

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Miss Mullin's own manuscript
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from Manuscript

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STATEMENT OF
MARION DAY MULLINS

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Marion Day Mullins, born December 27, 1893, in my parents residence, for there were no hospitals in Fort Worth at that time, on the corner of 13th and Lamar Streets, in Fort Worth, Texas.

My father was Dr. Francis Marion Mullins and mother was Emma Tennesall Day.

My father was born and reared in San Marcos, Texas. His parents came to Texas from Kentucky about 1853. For a short time they lived in San Antonio, however during a cholera epidemic they fled, so I have been told, between suns in order to avoid being quaranteened and held in San Antonio. They went to Uvalde where they lived for a time and then moved on to Hayes County.

My mother's family were Tennesseans, coming to Texas from Monroe County in the early 1850's. Grandfather Day was a horse breeder. He brought his string of horses with him. They had quite a caravan. There were several children, several young men came along for the adventure, the family slaves, all riding in carriages and wagons bringing the household goods. About six weeks was spent on the overland journey. They settled first in Johnson County. Later my grandfather found several thousand acres of good grazing land in Denton County, where they finally made their permanent home. My grandfather continued to raise cattle and horses. He must have brought a good breed of saddle and harness horses because his stock was recognized and sought after by those who wanted healthy, dependable animals in both categories. As long as we had horses we had some of his stock.

My grandfather Day had two sons and three daughters. The sons were ranchers and cattlemen all of their lives. My mother was the youngest of the five children.

My parents were married in 1890 at the Day ranch home in Denton County. My father was already practicing medicine in Fort Worth. They built their first home, a two story frame house with cupeloes, bay windows and wide porches, on the corner of 13th and Lamar Streets.

My father, an eye, ear, nose and throat specialist, was one of the first such specialists in Fort Worth. I have a clipping from an early newspaper, stating that he performed the first cataract operation performed in Fort Worth.

While still in his teens my father went to Vanderbilt University to school. He remained there until he completed his medical studies. Upon his return to Texas he practiced for several years at the frontier town of Wichita Falls. Whenever needed he rode horseback to the various great ranches which were already established in that part of Texas. Among his clients were the Waggoners, the Burnetts, the Goodnights: all the early west Texas families. He was probably the only doctor in the entire area.

It was during his stay in Wichita Falls that he got acquainted with Quanah Parker. Thereafter, whenever Quanah Parker came to Fort Worth he made my father's office his headquarters. He came several times a year and brought his women folk with him. Indians were subject both to eye diseases and throat problems so they all needed treatment. Fortunately, my father's office, which consisted of several large rooms located on the second floor of a building on the southwest corner of Fifth and Main Streets, (a building which later was occupied by the Fair Store), had plenty of space to accomodate the Indian women who spent their days there as well as his other patients.

Quanah Parker and his family would always come to Fort Worth for the Stock Show. During the early years the show was in March at the arena on Exchange Avenue in north Fort Worth. There were parades, live stock judging and auctions, horse shows and rodeos, lots of visitors in town, the gala spring party, and festival time for all the citizens.

One year Quanah Parker had a location in the Stock Show grounds. This was in the early 1900's. My father told me to ask some of my girl friends as our guests and he would take us to a rodeo matinee. After the show he took us to meet and visit with Quanah Parker and his family. The chief talked freely with us for he spoke English. The women had nothing to say but showed us their native garments and jewelry. The children were at first curious, looked us over, then left us to continue their play.

Quanah Parker had a big two story home on his reservation in Oklahoma. A home with ample room for his big family. Parker was a handsome man, bigger than most Indians; big

buildings since then, outgrown them and built even larger libraries. At present yet another is under construction.

It takes little imagination and recall to live again in memory the hot summers of the 1890's when all windows were open to every breeze even though it brought with it clouds of dust from the deeply rutted and unpaved streets. Our house was on a corner so we caught the dust from two streets every time anybody drove by. Paved streets were being talked about and the city authorities experimented with various materials. Because Bewley Mills, the largest flour mill in this part of north Texas, was located on Cherry and North Streets, and because a brewery was adjacent to the railroad tracks on South Lamar and flanked by a lumber yard, it was decided to lay one block of pavement on 13th Street from Lamar to Taylor, with brick. Now the brick was laid on a bed of sand and not morticed in. So when the heavy wagons that serviced the mill, the lumber yard and the brewery passed over the loose brick they stirred up the sand so it too blew through our living room windows. The sound of the horses iron shod feet, accompanied by the steady rumble of the heavily laden iron bound wheels of the wagons are among those I'll never forget.

At about the same time the city was experimenting with Bois d' Arc block paving on a portion of Main Street. While that medium was good for the horses and easy riding for carriages it ceased to be very practical because during heavy rains the blocks would swell and make the streets uneven and sometimes leave holes when the blocks would split and float away. Records show that by 1907 the principal streets were paved with brick. Other materials have been in use since.

Bois d' Arc trees may have been native to this part of the state. Early they were used along fence rows and hedges. They are satisfactory for such purposes because the wood is very hardy, not subject to worms, or the leaves to blight, and the trees withstand drought better than most. Folk medicine attributes various curative properties to Bois d' Arc apples.

The Peak School House was on Weatherford Street in the 1880's, not far from the present County Court House. Weatherford and Belknap were well settled by that time and Samuels Avenue was one of the important residential streets. By the 1890's the better type residences were being built along Taylor, Lamar and Burnett. The residential area did not extend on the west side any further than Henderson Street. That may even have been the city limit. Anything beyond that was spoken of as country.

Henderson was a natural boundry because there was an often dry bed creek that ran along near the street.

I knew the Baker family in Riverside. They had a big nursery, grew trees, ornamental shrubs, hot house plants, fine roses, a wonderful variety of stock, especially for a small town. Their place was a long trip for horse and buggy from the part of town in which we lived. We went out twice a year to get bedding plants for the yard as well as ferns and pot plants for the house.

I went through all eleven grades of the Fort Worth Public School System. I started in the Fourth Ward elementary school (later named Stephen F. Austin School) located on Texas, Macon, and Cherry Streets. A fire station occupies the site at present (1976). The school had grades one through seven. The only high school in the town was on Jennings Avenue. It had grades eight through eleven. Mr. R. L. Paschal was principal of the high school when I was graduated in the spring of 1910. Ours was the last class to finish there because the building burned in the fall of 1910.

It must have been both a frustrating and fun experience going to high school for the following years. Frustrating for the faculty but fun for the students. Classes were held around town wherever adequate rooms and sanitary facilities could be found. There was no unity of classes or departments much less for sports or other general activities. All campus assemblies are such a necessary part of young people's lives at that age.

You asked me about our first automobile which was an electric driven four seated Brougham. It was unusual that the seats faced each other rather than being one behind the other. The operator of the vehicle sat in the rear seat but facing front while two of the other occupants sat on seats in front of the driver but facing the driver rather than forward. Those seats were like jump seats that were pulled down when occupied but closed back into the vehicle when not in use. The car was propelled by many heavy batteries, each unit about the size and weight of the battery used in present gas driven cars. The batteries were located in areas both in front and rear of the occupants. The wheels were solid rubber. The entire weight of the vehicle was entirely too heavy for the light weight inflated tires in use on gas cars at that time.

The car made about 30 miles an hour on level streets but it slowed to a crawl on hills. The batteries had to be recharged about every 200 miles. Fortunately we had our own charger so the batteries could be replenished any time

day or night. My father felt that the electric would be safer and easier for my mother to drive. As gas motors became more prevalent and I was old enough to have a drivers license, he bought a Franklin for me. He felt that an air cooled motor would be more practical than the radiator type, even though we very soon had a Ford also, for country driving. Through the years I had several Franklins always finding them easy and inexpensive to operate, but not very fast. In the early 1900's there weren't many paved country roads anyway so speed was not a special consideration.

However, my dream car was a Pierce-Arrow, so I finally saved my money and bought one. They were much more expensive than any toher car I had had. By that time there were more paved roads; the roads to Dallas and to Waco and even but for a few gaps to San Antonio, were hard surfaced. I had driven and enjoyed my Pierce-Arrow for about six months when we had a garage fire and the Pierce was extensively damaged. So much so in fact that I disposed of it rather than risk having some vulnerable parts develop weaknesses even after careful repairs. My mother ultimately abandoned the electric for a Dodge, and finally chose Buick which she drove for the remainder of her long life.

You asked what we did for recreation during my high school years. We danced, had picnics, went on hayrides in the warm weather. Young people didn't have automobiles between 1906 and 1910 and very few had horses. The streets, most of them, were too rough for bicycles. If we were riding any distance we went on streetcars. When any number of couples got together day time or evening, we danced. We even danced on the high school stage at recess. We enjoyed all kinds of dances; square dances, Virginia Reel, Polka, waltz, two step, Put-Your-Little-Foot, even occasionally the minuet. Our crowd of boys and girls, ten or twelve couples, danced some place every week end. At the homes that had space enough, but very often in the Parish House of one of the Episcopal Churches. It was easily reached by streetcar, had a good dance floor, and was big enough when we asked additional couples. There were several negro bands around town. I mean that had two or three instruments. We had no refreshments. Nobody was hostess. We just came together to dance. My father and mother most often chaperoned. Most of the other girls had younger children in the family so their parents were not free to leave home. As I was an only child they ususally asked my parents to come along. I even remember a few occasions when Mr. Paschal chaperoned. That there be some older person present was a matter of course.

How did we spend Christmas? There was always the church Christmas tree several days before December 25th, which was quite a party for the entire membership. Gifts for all the children with sandwiches or pie and cake and coffee for the grown ups with maybe a piece of fruit or tiny sack of hard candy. Much gaiety and fellowship for all. We never had a private or household Christmas tree. We hung up our stockings at the fireplace mantle for Santa to fill. I don't recall ever seeing a big decorated Christmas tree in my home, so that kind of celebration must not have been the custom.

Family dinners where the aunts, uncles, and cousins came together were a day or two before the 25th. Sometimes each family brought certain dishes for the feast, like scalloped oysters, or mashed sweetpotatoes laced with brandy and topped with marshmallows, the house of the hostess supplying only turkey and dressing, or if they had it, a side of venison.

Then for our personal household we had the conventional turkey dinner, and it was always understood that my father would bring home for dinner any of his men friends who dropped into his office or that he found at his club. Usually the men were bachelor friends of my father's when they were all young men about town together. That was the way I grew up knowing so many of the leading citizens of the community, both professional men and those in the business world.

You asked about grocery stores and food shopping in general in Fort Worth at the turn of the century. Turner and Dingee had one of the largest grocery stores located on Houston Street about 4th or 5th. They covered a good part of the block. Several years later Sandegard & Adams had a big grocery store on the corner of Ninth or Tenth and Houston Streets. There were several neighborhood grocery stores. Lewis Grocery is the one in that category that I remember best.

But the grocery clerk came to your kitchen door every morning and took your order for the day and then delivered your food soon after. Bakerys and meat markets were separate stores. The grocery men handled neither bakery goods nor meats. Mrs. Bairds bread advertisements are a portrayal of her beginnings when she baked in her own kitchen and her products were delivered to the customer.

Then there were always the vegetable wagons who came to your back gate several times a week. The housewife looked over his stock and selected that which she wanted much as she does when she visits the fruit and vegetable department of the supermarket today.

Again, in season, there were the calls of the strawberry or blackberry hucksters as they took their small wagons through the residential streets. For the children there was the musical voice of the hot tamali man in the winter and the irresistable peal of Hokey-Pokey Ice Cream Man's bells during the hot summer months. Too bad if you have missed the joy of visiting with those two vendors while you enjoyed their ever tempting delicacies.

I don't remember when we first had a telephone. Perhaps since it was beyond my reach and I could not touch or play with it, I was not conscious of it. The first telephones were the big wall type; so big that there was space to keep the telephone book on a shelf just below the mouth piece, which extended out several feet on a metal arm. At first we rang a bell mechanically to alert the central telephone operator. When she replied you gave her the number you wanted, or better still the person in the household to whom you wished to speak. Ultimately you talked to the person you wanted.

In Fort Worth for several years there were two telephone companies that were not interchangeable. If there were many local people you had to communicate with it was necessary to have an instrument, book, and different listing for each system. One system may have been Southwestern Bell. The other was called Fort Worth Telephone System. I don't know whether the latter was bought out or just faded away.

You asked me to bring my personal life up to date. I finished high school in 1910 then went two years to Tunston Hall, Washington, D.C. While I carried a full academic course, I never missed an opportunity to visit museums, attend sessions of Congress, go to concerts and the theater, as well as attend social affairs and "at home days" in the homes of members of Congress, foreign ministers and ambassadors and the socially prominent people in the Capital City. After graduation there I went to the University of Texas, but was called home because of the serious illness of my father. I was at home but busy until after his death in 1918. Meanwhile I had been elected National Treasurer of my college sorority in 1913. I carried on that work and inspected college chapters when possible. In 1915 I was elected National President and served in that office for four years. Later I was elected Vice President in charge of Alumnae, and then Historian. I wrote and published a two volume History of the Sorority in 1937.

In 1923 a friend and I decided that we would take a world cruise in 1924. In preparation for the trip I went to TCU and took several history courses in order to fully

appreciate the opportunities that such a trip afforded. Since I had earned more college credits to add to those I transferred from Tunston Hall and the University of Texas, I decided to continue work for college degrees. In 1927 I was awarded a BS degree, a life teacher's certificate to teach in Texas and a Masters Degree. I had belonged to several local literary clubs since 1914, and because of them became interested in the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs. I was elected state treasurer of that body and was treasurer when the Texas Federation of Women's Clubs Building was erected in Austin.

In 1923 the group of Fort Worth literary clubs had moved into the Newby Building. I had been appointed secretary in charge of Texas Federation Headquarters. The Woman's Club of Fort Worth offered us a room in Newby Building for use as state headquarter. So when the Austin building was dedicated the headquarters were transferred there and an Austin secretary was in charge.

In 1919 because of a cousin who had established several of our family lines my mother and I joined the local DAR Chapter, Mary Isham Keith. After several years of service on various local committees, I was elected chapter treasurer and then Chapter Regent. I was next elected State Treasurer and in 1937 was elected State Regent. In 1941 I was elected Organizing Secretary General of the National Society, with Mrs. Wm. H. Pouch of New York as President General.

Meanwhile, I had become seriously interested in the study of genealogy. I went to Americom University the first summer they offered a course on the subject. While I lived in the dormitories on the campus our classes were all at the newly completed National Archives Building, not far from the National Capital.

Since then I have done genealogical research extensively throughout the state capitols and county courthouses in the south and mid Atlantic states, establishing the lineage of many families and assisting in editing family histories for publication.

However, my intense interest has been in the study and preservation of Texas records, especially those of the era of the Texas Republic and early statehood. Some of the findings have been published and many are on file in the State Archives in Austin. Because of my contribution in that area, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas elected me an honorary member for life. And because of my work in American Colonial Records the National Society of Colonial Dames in Texas placed my name in that organi-

zation's Roll of Honor housed in their headquarters in Washington, D.C. In 1973 the Alumnae of my Alma Mater, TCU, elected me one of its distinguished alumnae. In 1975 TCU awarded me an honorary LL.D degree. In 1977 I was elected an Honorary Trustee of TCU.

"Hopefully," according to Thielke, "they will find this new giving habit to be a satisfying experience and will continue of the '5x Plan,' which is \$5 times the number of years since graduation."

Participating seniors are listed on a bronze plaque set in permanent display in the Student Center.

Ten members of the Class of '77 went beyond the 5x category to join the Century Club; several of the memberships were graduation gifts from their parents.

Dates for Alumni

- Sept. 9-10 Class of 1967 — 10-year reunion
- Sept. 16-17 Class of 1972 — 5-year reunion
- Sept. 22-24 TCU-USC Football Weekend Extravaganza; pre-game luncheon in Los Angeles
- Oct. 1 Class of 1927 — 50-year reunion
- Oct. 21-22 Class of 1947 — 30-year reunion
- Oct. 28-29 Class of 1957 — 20-year reunion; Homecoming Weekend
- Nov. 5 Pre-game luncheon in Lubbock
- Nov. 18-19 Class of 1937 — 40-year reunion



In charge of planning for the Class of '57 reunion are Gayle and Richard O'Neal and Sandra Saunders Taylor (at right). Below, Committee members for the QuinQ Club are (from left) Dr. Marion Mullins, Catherine Kidd Nash, Herman Clark, Belle Evans, Harry Taylor, Harrold Evans.

Six Classes Will Have Reunions During Football Weekends in Fall

Six alumni classes, instead of just the 20-year Honor Class and the 50-year "QuinQ" Club, will have reunions this fall.

A change in the class reunion program is part of the restructured Alumni Association board, and such events are

under the guidance of Malcolm Loudon, Class of '67, vice-president for activities. Working with him is Lynn Segall of the alumni programs and annual giving office.

The Honor Class will have its gathering Oct. 28-29 during Homecoming weekend. Chairpersons for these plans are Dick and Gayle O'Neal and Sandra Taylor of the Class of 1957.

To be held as part of the Oct. 1 ac-



FALL 1977 = "This is TCU"
 A Dr. Marion Mullins