

Catherine Lyons: The Woman's Club
January 5, 2006

Interviewer: Shirley Beck
Videographer: Charles Willgren

Shirley Beck (SB): This is Shirley Beck, and with Charlie Willgren we are taping Catherine Lyons today. It's Thursday, January the fifth, 2006, and we're going to start talking about the formation of the Blanco Woman's Club because Catherine was a charter member, or is a charter member of that group. Can you tell me whose idea it was to start the Woman's Club?

Catherine Lyons (CL): There was a woman who moved to Blanco who was a speech therapist, and I cannot remember her name because shortly after that she left. But she had the idea of having a speech class. And I don't know who she talked to but someone got the *elite* of Blanco gathered in the Crist home, which at that time was where the post office is now.

SB: Yes, uh-huh.

CL: And they met there and discussed having a, a speech club, speech class. And they decided they'd much rather have a woman's club. So that's when the Woman's Club was organized.

SB: Do you know approximately when that was?

CL: It was in 1937.

SB: '37. Okay.

CL: And —

SB: Besides Mrs. Crist, who were some of the, some of the people who were there at that meeting?

CL: The, as I said, the *elite* of Blanco was invited. The Crists and the Cages and the Lindemans and the Brighams and--well those are the primary ones. And I'll have to add—and this may be something you'll want to delete—they decided that--they would not invite *anyone* that lived west of Blanco.

SB: [Laughs]

CL: Because they weren't [smiles] —it was a snobbish group. There's just no question about that.

SB: Right.

CL: And shortly after that first meeting, they had their first club meeting. And they set the meeting date for being the second Wednesday of the month.

SB: Yes.

CL: Yes, it still is. And--they elected Mrs. Crist, as the first lady of Blanco, as the first president and they decided at that time that—Blanco had, had a lot of new people move in—and they decided at that time that one of the old members of the community would be the vice-, be the president, and then the second year a new member, a new resident, would be. So on the second year my mother was elected president.

SB: Oh great. And her name was?

CL: Maude Chick.

SB: Maude Chick.

CL: Maude Chick. And--after the club had been meeting for some time—I must tell you though that one of the rules was the women *always* wore their hats—

SB: Yes.

CL: —and they *always* carried their gloves.

SB: Yes.

CL: And they always had a very elegant refr--tea hour following the business meeting. And after the club had been in existence for some time--my mother, Maude Chick, and Jane Dale decided that Blanco should have a library. So they got busy and gathered a few books and--they put them on the drugstore shelf because Robert Fulcher had just moved to Blanco with his bride and they'd opened a drugstore. And he was purchasing his supplies at buy one dozen at a time, a twelfth of a dozen at a time.

SB: Right.

CL: And he had a lot of shelf space. So those few books were put on the--the--library, on the drugstore shelf. And the [Blanco] library seemed to catch on. And the first thing you know, they had to have different quarters for it. And they moved it over to the publisher's office. And at that time Jane Dale was the publisher of the paper [Blanco County News]. And so it kind of switched around until they finally found a good space for it. Well the club was organized with—is it five or six departments?

SB: Uh-huh. One, two, three, four, five, six. Six departments.

CL: And each department was expected to, during the month, the chairman of that department was supposed to gather her department together and they were supposed to study. And that kind of died a'borning. I went to one, I remember, and that was as far as it went. But--the lib—the--gardening department seemed to attach more importance to it and was more involved in it and out of that came the library, the--garden club, the Yucca Garden Club.

SB: Oh, okay, so it grew out of the Woman's Club.

CL: Out of the Woman's Club.

SB: Was there any national affiliation 'cause there are woman's clubs in different places, but I've never heard there was any connection.

CL: There was no connection. And there's no connection with the gardening either. But in that garden, in that garden club, it was very active and every year they had a *beautiful* flower show. I remember one year--Roberta—What was her name?—anyway she decided she wanted- she wanted to present a garden so she, she—at that time was living where the Mo Ranch is now [south of Blanco on US Hwy 281]—and she went in and she shaved all of the grass out of her yard and took it to Blanco and spread it out in this garden in Blanco. And she had a beautiful display there. And those first flower shows were worth something. And they were tried and tested and judged. The--garden club I think now has kind of deteriorated to a social club but at that time it was a working club. And you knew how to plant and, how to plant, and how to fertilize, and when to plant and—

SB: Almost like the Master Gardeners is now.

CL: Exactly. Exactly.

SB: But I know that because my Aunt Ruth got very active in that, Aunt Ruth Byars got very active and that's where she ended up starting her own business. Being a florist. Yeah. So you've answered a lot of the questions I had down here--you say that they have six departments which are the art, the civic, the garden, the legislative, literature, music. Did they have a reason for choosing those six because there's a blend of like civic and legislative and then other things like, you know, fine arts, arts and music—

CL: I think that they were the ones that they thought were important.

SB: Yes. Uh-huh. And so they had programs just like--the Woman's Club does now?

CL: Every month one of the departments would have a program. And then every year *one* of the departments would put on a special event. And that rotated among the departments.

SB: Right. Um-hm. And so that was their own original ideas. That didn't come from any other—

CL: No.

SB: No. Yes. That's very interesting. Uh-huh. Yeah. So what are some of the, other than the flower shows, or the garden shows, what are some of the other very interesting programs that you can remember?

CL: Well I want to tell you about the first art exhibit they had. I think that was given the month after they were organized.

SB: Oh my goodness.

CL: And it was about the most elegant thing I have ever attended. It was held in the Old [Blanco County] Courthouse and all of the members were in long formal dresses—

SB: Oh my—

CL-- and all of the men were in suits and there's a gorgeous tea that was served in the middle of it—this is at night—and they had an outstanding display of art because--Max Krueger, who was a wealthy man, had made several trips to Europe and had bought art in Europe. And all of that art was at our disposal. So hanging on those walls were gorgeous paintings, beautifully displayed, and then this elegant tea table with linens and the linen napkins and silver tea service. That was when I met Angeline Fulcher. They had just come to Blanco. And she was pretty and light haired, and red headed, and had on a green dress, and was just full of vim, vigor and vitality.

SB: Right. Yes, and she was one of the char--, she was one of the early members.

CL: That's right.

SB: Uh-huh. One of the charter members. And so, so all of the work, all of the art belonged to Max Krueger? Is that, was he—?

CL: Not all of it.

SB: Not all of it. Some of it.

CL: As a matter of fact, some of our art was up there. Some of the other art was up there. But Max Kruger was the one that put the, the wonderful art he had for us.

SB: Right. Right. That was a very elegant thing.

CL: It, it was.

SB: Did they charge for this or was this just a—

CL: Oh no. This was a—the, the purpose of the Woman’s Club—now this is something I should have told you, the whole basic purpose of the Woman’s Club was to bring culture to Blanco. And that night they brought *culture* to Blanco.

SB: Yes they did. [laughs] Yes, I should say. Yes. I remember as a little girl being taken to Woman’s Club meetings with—with my Aunt Letha and Aunt Ruth—and they were like musical programs. Can you think of a musical program that was really outstanding? I know I went to one up at Singletons, on the hill, you know the Singleton family on the hill. ‘Cause they brought in well-known artists.

CL: Yes they did—

SB: —and musicians, you know, from, from very, you know, very reputable—

CL: They weren’t fooling around about being little country stuff.

SB: Right.

CL: Their, their purpose was to bring culture and, and that, that was in their, that, that word was used, to bring culture to Blanco. And that, that’s what they were doing.

SB: Right. Right. Right. Yes. And they have. [Both laugh] And the library. Think about how the library has grown.

CL: Yes, it, it’s almost unbelievable. To start out with maybe a half a dozen books on the drugstore shelves to what we have now.

SB: I can remember when it was in that surplus--military building thing that they had, barracks building, you know, next to [Blanco] City Hall, by City Hall now.

CL: Well, when they finally decided they had to have their own building they bought that, that barracks thing, and moved it back behind the city hall and--one of the newcomers in Blanco was Mrs. Jack Forsythe, and she took it over. And I, I don’t know whether she was a librarian or not, but she made that a very attractive place.

SB: Yes.

CL: And when you went in you enjoyed roaming around among the books. And they stayed there as long as they could. And, I--I--Mary Virginia [Mary Virginia Chick] took it over for a while when Mary [Mary Forsythe] couldn’t do it any longer. And then Jim Williams, who was an attorney, and had been a county judge--had reached the end of his life and his wife was dead and he was kind of bitter about that, and he figured he was going to die and he wanted to do something for the library. So he talked to Mary Virginia about it and he said, “Now I will give you ten thousand dollars in cash, or I will give you

my home. Now which do you want?" And Mary V said, "I'll take the home." So she took the home and of course that was the smart thing to do because they got more out of it than they, than ten thousand dollars. And that's why the [Blanco] library is called the Jim [James A.] and Evelyn Williams Library.

SB: Yes-Yes. I spent some happy hours in their--, in their house [both laugh] on Cox Road, when they lived out on Cox Road. Remember when they lived on Cox Road? Yeah, they lived out on the ranch road for a while before they moved into town.

CL: Well, I just knew them when they moved into town.

SB: Yeah. They had a, they had an exchange student from Germany and, they had me over to their house when I was still in high school because he was trying to learn English and so that, that's how I got to know them. So they were very influential. Was she a member of the Woman's Club?

CL: No, she was not.

SB: Yeah, okay. So they, that was a major influence on the development of the library though.

CL: That--that--that was right.

SB: --was that endowment.

CL: And Jim Williams, I'll have to tell you, he was quite a character. He belonged to the Methodist Church. And church was supposed to be out at twelve o'clock. And when twelve o'clock came, he got up and walked out, right in the middle of the sermon or anything else. At twelve o'clock church was over.

SB: [Laughing] For him.

CL: And he did it several Sundays.

SB: Uh-huh. [laughing] Okay.

CL: Then after--finally Mrs.--Houck took the library over and I think she was a librarian.

SB: She was--she was my second grade teacher so I remember her quite well.

CL: And then eventually they--bought the building where the post office used to be and where the, where the publisher—

SB: —the newspaper is now.

CL: —the newspaper is now. [312 Pecan St.] And for a long time they were in there. And I really think that--the one who did more to develop the library than anybody else was--Paige---oh, you know who I mean.

SB: Umm.

CL: But she's such a dear friend of mine. I'm just crazy about her.

SB: [Laughing] We're trying to get—

CL: *Paine!*

SB: Who?

CL: Paine. Sandra Paine.

SB: Yes, Sandra Paine.

CL: Sandra Paine.

SB: Yes, absolutely. Yes.

CL: And she drove everybody unmercifully. But she got things done.

SB: Yes. She drove herself mainly.

CL: Yes she did.

BS: Yes. She worked full time there.

CL: And she got more money donated to the library until we could afford to build the building that we built.

SB: Right. Right. Which was dedicated on April 27, 2000, and here it is 2006 and we've all just about outgrown that library, which is how fast it's growing.

CL: One other thing about the library is that Pat [Patricia] Riley [Ryan] gave us that building. There was an old barbecue stand that, restaurant that had been built, and--it went under or it didn't succeed, and the building belonged to Pat [Ryan]—

SB: Yeah, Pat Ryan?

CL: Ryan, yes. And--she—

SB: She's very generous.

CL: —thought long and hard about it, but she gave it to the Woman’s Club. And that was the basis for the building that we finally could afford.

SB: Right--Right--That was a major step. And where was the Williams’ home in town? I don’t remember where it was in town.

CL: It was on one of those dead-end streets, and whether it was Ninth or Tenth, somewhere in there. And it was the last house on the street.

Charles Willgren (CW): So the library was in their house?

CL: No, no. They—

SB: No, they, they gave their house to the library.

CL: To the library.

SB: It was willed to the library.

CL: And then the library eventually sold it.

SB: [Inaudible] the financial foundation of the, of the library which, which the endowment operates off of--of the interest of that money that was put in the bank as an endowment fund. So that’s critical for, you know, that was a critical step for the Woman’s Club to achieve that because any nonprofit group really cannot operate well unless they have a solid endowment.

CL: That’s right.

SB: And that’s what happened for the library. Yeah. Think back about some of the times when you served as hostess and maybe perhaps with your mother? You served as hostess for the Woman’s Club?

CL: Well, the--after the club had been in op--, in existence for a few months, then it came to be springtime, May. And they decided that they would have a May--their May meeting would be a luncheon.

SB: Oh. Okay.

CL: And it was held at the ranch, right over there at the ranch house. [Indicates direction behind her] And--one day I went through the Kodak album and there was a picture that had been taken that day, and that has been printed, and I think there’s a picture of it, I think there is an enlargement in the library now.

SB: Did you ever identify all the people that were in that picture?

CL: Never did. And I have wished that we had a yearbook from that year. Mother had it. Mother had yearbooks from every year, but she gave them to the library. And at one time we had--papers that--“Well what are we going to do with them?” And my brother built a box, a big, big box [indicates size with hands] to store them in. And that was just fine until after so many, many years had passed and so many, many papers had been accumulated, it's overflowing, and I don't know what's happened to it now.

SB: We'll have to find that because that's, that's critical. It should be in the library somewhere.

CL: It should be. And as a matter of fact, it had a lock on it, and the key was lost. Now whether the key was ever found or not, I--I don't know what the outcome of that was.

SB: Well, a locksmith could still get in it though.

CL: But--Mother did turn all of those old yearbooks over to the club.

SB: Okay. So that's, that's a valuable resource. What was served that day at the luncheon? That was the first May luncheon then you're talking about.

CL: Yes, uh-huh.

SB: And it was here at the ranch.

CL: At the ranch. And--at that time my son was about five or six and he had a little fox terrier. And, and Nicky attended the luncheon, too. [laughter] And he's in the picture.

SB: Oh---how— There was quite a number of people that were here.

CL: Well the, the membership was limited for *one* reason. We were going to meet in the homes. And we had to limit it to how many people could be—

SB: And that was the only reason that it was limited?

CL: That's right. And I think there's been some discussion about it, making it larger but they don't always meet in the homes. They usually don't meet in the homes.

SB: Well it has gotten, it's gotten quite large, you know, in a lot of ways. So there were, there were members and were there guests in that first luncheon or just members?

CL: I can't give you an honest answer. But I imagine there were guests as well, a few.

SB: 'Cause we can invite guests now.

CL: And of course it was imperative if you had a guest that you must notify the hostess ahead of time. And also if you can't be present, you notify the hostess ahead of time. We didn't do things crudely.

SB: [Laughs] Right. Still don't do things crudely. [Both laugh] Oh that's the fun part of being in it. What are, what are some other programs or things that you can remember, that were kind of high points, or people? Tell us about the people you remember being in it. [pause] You talked about Angeline Fulcher.

CL: Yes, Ang—

SB: Myrtle Carter.

CL: And Myrtle Carter. Uh-huh. She was--she was very active. And she was a musician. And she was very active in the club.

SB: Um-hm. Yes, two sweethearts of mine.

CL: Oh really?

SB: Yes, absolutely. Angeline Fulcher, I had--tap dance lessons from her when I was three years old.

CL: Yes, I remember she came and she was teaching dancing.

SB: Yes--She was teaching dancing and we, and I can remember dancing on the stage in the old building, the--what they called the Alamo Building, or the Spanish style building we're trying to restore now. And Myrtle Carter I remember because any event we had at school, she was always picking kids to sing and I had a fairly good voice and so I was one of her prime kids that she, you know, all the way through from, from about seventh, sixth, seventh grade on, you know, on the stage constantly, you know singing for different programs, different programs around in town. Sang for the Woman's Club several times.

CL: We made use of every talent that anybody ever had.

SB: Yes, so I, I've been coming to Woman's Club meetings since I've been about five or six. [Laughter]

SB: [Laughing] Probably about ten or twelve years old. So, anyway, so I know them and I know they brought a lot to the Woman's Club because of, because of their talents and their skills.

CL: Everybody that had any talent at all, it was, it was used. And it was well used.

SB: Yes. Can you think of someone else that was very talented even though it was just maybe a leadership skill? Who, who were the real leaders in the, in the club who really made it work? 'Cause this is a new group back in 1937, '38. Who, who made it really go?

CL: Well, I wouldn't be surprised if Mother wasn't the one, the primary example.

SB: I'm sure she was.

CL: She is the one that recommended that the collect be used, be included in the program and in the yearbook.

SB: Did she write it?

CL: No, it was from a club in San Antonio.

SB: Oh. Okay.

CL: And she thought it was so apropos—

SB: Yes it is.

CL: —that she suggested it be put in and it was.

SB: Good.

CL: And of course Mother was a strong woman.

SB: Yes.

CL: And we have had weak presidents and we have had very strong presidents. I remember--Mary V [Mary Virginia Chick] was president at one time and then the next time they wanted me to serve. I said, "Uh-aaah. Noo, you're not going to put me up there and then compare. Unh-uh." Because my way of doing things was entirely different from hers.

SB: [Laughing] Entirely different. Right.

CL: So after a few years had passed, we had a particularly weak president and the club just was falling apart, and I went to the nominating committee and I said, "If you want me to be president, I will accept." And so I accepted that year, and I think we got the club back on its feet again.

SB: Feet again. Yes--Yes. Evidently it's had enough strong leaders that it really has developed it as a—

CL: That's true. I--I want to give a little plug right here to Vickie Pautz. She's president now and I think she's an outstanding president.

SB: Yes she is.

CL: And she's the one that brought--*Amahl and the Night Visitors* to Blanco.

SB: Yes, that was a wonderful program.

CL: You--you got to see that one?

SB: Yes, it was great.

CL: And that's--that's the sort of thing that the Woman's Club has tried to do. And some of the presidents have carried it on. And--some of them haven't quite caught the—

SB: Yeah. And see what I like about--and the community programs that I've enjoyed the most are the cultural ones like the art show that we had at the library was just excellent. And, you know, and then we've had other programs that to me are, are important, but they were not such cultural things. And like you say from the very beginning, the emphasis for the Woman's Club was on culture. Bringing culture to Blanco.

CL: Definitely it was. There's one musical program that I, that I remember, but that may be because that's just my own personal liking, and that was at the Pautz home. And Vickie was playing the piano, and Sherri Stockman and—[Puts forehead down on hand]

SB: Probably—

CL: Remember she used to be the music director at the Blanco Ch--the Methodist Church?

SB: Oh, Elizabeth —

CL: Hodges. Sang. And--one number that they sang was--from *La Bohème*, and it just ouhhhhhh [shivers and smiles].

SB: Chill bumps.

CL: Got goose bumps all over me because I just love that opera. And that, that was an outstanding program because they both have good voices and of course the pianist was excellent.

SB: Right, excellent. Yes--Yes. Very good. Well it's--that to me was growing up and going as a guest, you know, or, you know, someone who was maybe performing in a small way was what the Woman's Club to me was about. And then the added bonus was their work with the library because there's not very many clubs, you know, civic

clubs that will actually take on a task which is day-to-day, year-to-year, like the library. And that's been extremely important for the, for the community of Blanco.

CL: I think it's been just outstanding. I really do.

SB: Yes. And for really being the main supporter, you know, of a public library the way they have.

CL: The Woman's Club was formed for a purpose and it's been doing it and going on with that for a long time and still doing it.

SB: Yes, 'cause I can remember as a little girl coming to those shelves in the drugstore and my mother looking for books, you know, and there were always—from the very beginning, there were a few children's books there that we checked out and took home and I read. And I learned to read before I ever hit first grade which is a good thing because I had six first grade teachers. [laughs] When Thelma Houck got a hold of us we all had to start all over again. But anyway, I--I--re—you know it's been a major influence on the, on the lives of a lot of different community members, which it still is. It's a very important thing. So, you know, to me it's the history of the Woman's Club is really tied up in not only the cultural events and the, the, for the well being of thirty-five members and guests but also the community with the library.

CL: One thing that has rather disturbed me about the club recently, in the last few years, is--I wonder if when a new member is taken in, if the membership chairman informs her of the responsibilities of the membership. Because when you are a member of the club you have to be in one of the departments, which means you have to take part in one of the programs, one program during the year, and then every six years you had to put on that special event. And--they just seem to, you know you belong to the Woman's Club, then you can drop out if you want to and go on the associate list and the associate list keeps getting longer and longer and longer and longer. And--it seems to me that they are—*cheapening* isn't the word I want, but —

SB: Kind of diluting.

CL: That's it. The--the--Woman's Club.

SB: That is a concern. I can see that would be a concern.

CL: Now when I realized I can no longer do anything for them--I resigned, and I wanted to resign and they accepted me. They accepted me not as an associate member but as something special. I don't know what it was. But, anyway, I was willing to go on the associate list because I knew I was going to go when I could.

SB: You are a member-at-large emeritus or something like that. Right.

CL: And I knew I was going to go when I could. And I was going to retain my interest in the club. But it wasn't just drift in and drift out.

SB: Uh-huh. Right. Yes. That's a very important thing.

CL: And there are a lot of people on that associate list who don't come and have no intention of whatever coming. And I don't know why they want their name to be on that list.

SB: Yeah--Yeah--I can see that would be a concern if you've been a very active person as you have been. Yeah. And you worked at the bank? Is that right?

CL: When my husband died, I was--I got the job as the president's secretary.

SB: Oh, okay.

CL: So I was Percy Brigham's secretary.

SB: Uh-huh. What year was that? Do you recall?

CL: [Hand to forehead] Oh, gosh. No. [Both laugh]

SB: Okay.

CL: It was back in the late thirties or early forties.

SB: Uh-huh. Okay.

SB: And so, were you, you were a member of the Woman's Club--before that?

CL: Yes, I was.

SB: Okay--Okay. So you, you were working as well as being an active member of the Woman's Club.

CL: Yes, uh-huh. And I had a lot of fun as well as a lot of experiences as secretary to the president of the bank.

SB: Oh, I can imagine you did.

CL: Because I--he was--president of the bank, he was chairman of the Red Cross, he was the attorney. And I've forgotten what else. But anyway all that fell in my lap.

SB: Sure.

CL: And--he was lovely about saying, "Well, just give it to the lady. Give it to the lady."
[Both laugh.]

SB: He was a great man.

CL: Yes, he was. And you, did--did you remember when the bank was robbed?

SB: No, unh-uh. When did that—oh, I kind of remember, but I don't know—

CL: Well, you remember how his desk was? And then, then the cages?

SB: Yes--yes.

CL: And Joe Buckner was in the cage.

SB: Yes.

CL: Well, I--I wasn't there. It was—It happened before I went to work for them, thank heavens. But that robber walked in and laid a gun on the counter and, "Give me your money."

SB: Oh my.

CL: And Joe Buckner handed it out. And the robber walked out and Joe Buckner came out, "We've been robbed! We've been robbed!" Mr. Brigham said, "We have? Well when? What happened?" [The robber] walked right past Mr. Brigham's desk. [Both laugh]

SB: Yeah. So what happened? He just got away, huh?

CL: I think they caught him up by Johnson City, if I'm not mis—I don't remember for sure.

SB: Right--Right. But that was before you went to work there.

CL: Yes, uh-huh. That was just one of the tales that was given to me.

SB: Right--Right--Right on. [Laughing] Yeah. So back to the Woman's Club—So they always dressed in their hats and always carried their gloves.

CL: Definitely.

SB: And I remember as a little girl having to wear a hat and bring gloves. [Laughs]

CL: One day, one day Mary Virginia and Mother came over -- they were going to pick me up and take me. And I walked out and Mother looked at me and she said, "Where is your hat?" So you know what I did? I came in and got my hat.

SB: [Laughs] Uh-huh. Well, I re—women wore hats to church. And for every formal occasion they wore hats. And so that was a sign of how important this club was—

CL: That's right.

SB: —that you would dress in your very best clothes—

CL: That's right.

SB: —to come to this, to this, to this club meeting.

CL: That's right exactly.

SB: Yes. And you would, you know, and of course all the women, all dignified women, wore gloves.

CL: That's right.

SB: You know, and, so—

CL: I wish they still did. [Both laugh] And my sister was the first one, I think, that ever wore trousers to a Woman's Club.

SB: Oh, is that right?

CL: And how she got by with Mother, I don't know.

SB: [Laughs] I can see that would be a, that would be a real difference. Uh-huh. Yes. And your mother didn't make a big to-do about that, huh? If she did—

CL: Well, I don't know. That--that happened over there. [Gestures out window behind her] And I was over here. [Gestures down towards floor]

SB: [Laughing] If you did, it didn't make any difference. Virginia still wore trousers. Yeah. What, when did they, when did they quit wearing hats?

CL: Just gradually.

SB: Uh-huh.

CL: Just gradually.

SB: 'Cause people quit wearing hats to church. I used to, when I was a young one, we all wore hats to church, you know.

CL: And I still, I wish we still did.

SB: Um-hm. It was much more formal. 'Cause I like hats. Now we don't wear them.

CL: Well, when you, when you have a hat on, you feel like you're dressed.

SB: Yes. And so that's a, that's a different cultural thing. What else has been different? One of the things you pointed out was that the, the numbers of members was, was limited to—

CL: Thirty-five.

SB: —thirty-five so that they would fit in people's homes. So that was another change which, you know, we still have thirty-five, but we don't always have the program at home.

CL: No we don't.

SB: Yes. And so is there any other really significant changes that you can think of, from the first days to now? You, you've already talked about maybe the, the quality of the members themselves, you know, about being involved in programs and things.

CL: Well, that's the thing that really bothers *me*.

SB: Um-hm. Right.

CL: It's people coming into the club and not appreciating.

SB: Well it, maybe it's because they don't really understand the purpose of the Woman's Club.

CL: Well, and that's part of where the--the--management of the Woman's Club has fallen down because the membership chairman is required by the by-laws to *do* that.

SB: Yes, to really educate people.

CL: Any, anytime any name is put up, the, the membership chairman has to go and visit that person and, and discuss with them what membership in the Woman's Club means.

SB: Ah, see that's not done anymore. That's not done.

CL: But it was done.

SB: Um-hm. 'Cause now it's just a matter of recommendation, you know, and that's--by, by two other members.

CL: And--at one time they finally had to announce, don't ever announce the election of a member as unanimous, just it was that she was elected, because if it wasn't unanimous we don't care to have it published, if there was a vote against her.

SB: Okay.

CL: And at one time there was one name put up and it was discussed among the members, just don't ever present her name because she'll be voted down.

SB: Ah. Yeah.

CL: And if that ever happened to anybody else, I don't know of it, but it happened to her.

SB: Right. Yeah--Yeah. And so there--there was a certain kind of--what shall I say—

CL: There's a criteria.

SB: Yes, a criteria.

CL: And they had to stand up to it or they didn't get into the club.

SB: Yeah--Yeah. And I'm sure that that's not as closely adhered to now as it was in the past. And perhaps it's because we have so many new people moving in that it's difficult for people, you know—

CL: Yes, you can hardly find the old— My husband used to laugh—you--you know that expression, the FFVs? [First Families of Virginia]

SB: Yes.

CL: Well he used to laugh and call them the FFVs [SB laughs] because there was definitely a group of *First Families*. And--you can't find them among the rest of them now anymore.

SB: Uh-huh. No, no. That's true in every community though. When we lived in Greeneville, Tennessee, it was, they were called the Four Hundred, you know, and--some of them didn't speak to each other but, you know, when someone died, they all showed up for the funeral. [Both laugh]

CL: That's right.

SB: It was, it was quite interesting to see how, you know, sociologically that--that change is--is happening in Blanco now to a certain extent. 'Cause a lot of our people

have not lived in Blanco, you know what I'm talking about, current membership, have not lived in Blanco but maybe a year, two years, or something like that?

CL: When-when--Mother and Dad first bought this ranch up here, people said, "Well you'll never be accepted because the Germans up here just simply won't accept you." But they did, and I don't know why. As a matter of fact--Dad was called Opa. [German for Grandpa] All our neighbors just called him Opa. Opa Chick. And I—I--he visited with them; it was just, just a nice great big club of people living down there in the valley.

SB: Right--Right.

CL: And we never felt any of that. But I could see it in other places. And I don't know why. Or what made it.

SB: Well a lot of it was probably your parents' attitude when they moved in here, too, you know, that they came—

CL: Well I'll tell you how I feel about it, Shirley, I feel like that Mother and Dad moved in here and they made a place for us that I--I occupy because of them. I didn't earn it myself. And my grandchildren, the same thing is true. And I think we have *obligation* to uphold that reputation. And I—I--that may be real stuffy of me but —

SB: No, no because--that is true. If you're the--the community is there, the community forces are there and—whe--when a newcomer moves in, you have to accept the fact that you're going to be new but your attitude towards being new, if your parents had come in and they'd been very critical, your mother would have never been the second president of the Woman's Club.

CL: That's right.

SB: She would never have been *invited* to even be in the Woman's Club.

CL: That--that's true.

SB: But so—

CL: The people on the west side of town.

SB: Right. The attitude was, the attitude, you know, that they came in with is prob--, probably what established them as community members. They were open to people and friendly—

CL: Well, and then I--I feel an obligation to it, and when--some of my progeny get a little out of hand, I--I remind them of it.

SB: [Laughing] Yes.

CL: Well I do. I think it's only--it's only right. If they are--if they're going to accept the, the benefit of it, then they have an obligation to uphold it.

SB: Right--Right. I wish *all* citizens of Blanco felt that way. That'd be great if they did.

CL: Well I didn't raise them all. [Both laugh]

Notes:

This interview was conducted and produced by the Oral History Committee of the Blanco County South Library District.

In spite of the best efforts of the Oral History Committee, some errors may be present in this transcription. Please refer to accompanying video for original source.

Transcriber: Carolyn Boydston

Transcription editor(s): Priscilla Seals

©Blanco County South Library District, Blanco, Texas