

MRS. RICE: Well, the oldest child is Mrs. Joe Naylor, then the next is Jim Hatch who is, Buster Hatch's dad and that is all except me. That is the three that live in Roosevelt County. We lost a brother, Clarence in World War II in 1945. Incidentally, there were ten of us children and my husband and I are the only ones of the ten that has not left Portales in our married life.

BURROUGHS: Oh, you've been here. . .

MRS. RICE: All of our married life, yes.

BURROUGHS: That is remarkable.

MRS. RICE: The county rather, we've lived in the country a little bit. . .

BURROUGHS: What year were you married?

MRS. RICE: 1921.

BURROUGHS: And you've been here, that's almost fifty years. Well, it is fifty years and one year.

MRS. RICE: We celebrated our golden wedding last year here in Portales.

BURROUGHS: That is very fortunate to have lived a full life on the same place where you were living as a girl.

MRS. RICE: We've lived at this place, where we are now, twenty-five years today.

BURROUGHS: Oh, really. I'm glad that I'm here on this particular day.

Who were your children? Will you name them?

RICE: Maxine was our oldest one, our daughter.

BURROUGHS: Whom did your daughter Maxine marry?

RICE: Orthane Christian. His parents live east of Portales.

BURROUGHS: And they live?

RICE: In Clovis.

BURROUGHS: In Clovis. Now is her husband kin to the M.C. Christian family?

RICE: M.C. Christian is her husband's father.

BURROUGHS: I see. Well, that establishes another relationship. You mentioned a Warnica a while ago. Jim Warnica married Helen Christian. So I think it is very interesting that the old families who have stayed have had children that intermarry. People laugh when they come to Portales and say I never do know who I can talk about because everybody is kin to everybody else.

RICE: They say the same thing about a Hatch.

BURROUGHS: Who were your sons?

RICE: Jack, or Sam Jr. rather, is our second child. He is a lieutenant colonel and he has been in the service, he will come out in November with thrity years retirement.

BURROUGHS: He lives in Florida?

RICE: He lives in Florida now.

BURROUGHS: How many children does he have?

RICE: Only one.

BURROUGHS: And Maxine has one?

RICE: One living, she lost one.

BURROUGHS: I see. Now who is your other child? Jimmy?

MRS. RICE: Yes, Jimmy.

BURROUGHS: And he is the youngest.

MRS. RICE: He's the youngest. He has two little girls. He is dead of the graduate division at Fort Hayes State College. He has his

doctorate degree, his major is math and he has been married beginning his fifteenth year.

BURROUGHS: And that's in Kansas?

MRS. RICE: In Kansas.

BURROUGHS: I think you're very fortunate to have two such smart, successful sons and a beautiful daughter like Maxine. You mentioned the Hatch family, that they had so many kin folks and I know you're related, you are a Hatch. Will you name those people who are in the county still?

MRS. RICE: My brother, Jim and his family, his two sons, Gordon and Buster. Betty, who is Mrs. Jay Brown. Mrs. Naylor and she only has one daughter, Mrs. Travis Gulpepper and their family. Another sister Mrs. Fails, Mrs. Ed How, is her daughter and Buster Fails is her son and Alvin Fails. Buster is a state electrical inspector and Alvin was in World War II and was in the death march and in prison.

BURROUGHS: In a Bataan?

MRS. RICE: Bataan, yes.

BURROUGHS: Can you tell me a little about that? I didn't know there was some member of your family involved.

MRS. RICE: When Bataan fell, there was I think five boys that escaped through swimming to Corregidor which was just a rock, and Alvin was one of those.

BURROUGHS: Now what was his last name again?

MRS. RICE: Fails, Alvin Fails.

BURROUGHS: That was in about 1944, three or four?

MRS. RICE: Yes, I think so. He was there for several years, I believe almost four years, they were prisoners. Then another sister, she only has one son, Mrs. Compton. She is kin to the judge Compton's of Portales. Her husband was a Compton.

BURROUGHS: Which sister is that?

MRS. RICE: Lou. She lives in Childress, Texas. She only has one son and none of them live here and there is no more of the relatives that live here.

BURROUGHS: You had a very large family and they all intermarried with some of the old time people in here and in the county too, didn't you?

MRS. RICE: Yes. There was ten of us children and we are all still living except my brother we lost in 1945 in World War II.

BURROUGHS: Now you mentioned that this was the twenty fifth anniversary of you being here in this house, is that right?

MRS. RICE: Yes.

BURROUGHS: Did you build this house, Mr. Rice?

RICE: Yes, Ma'am I built this house here.

BURROUGHS: I know that contracting was part of your business, will you talk about that some [indistinct] community because of it?

RICE: You asked me how I made my living, or something to that affect. When we first married I really was a barber. A little later I went back to barber school to review. And a little later put in a shop here, but I didn't like barbering. But the

first two or three years I was a carpenter part of the time, then I worked two or three years in a grocery store down here. And the man I was learning the carpenter trade under was the man that married us and one of the best carpenters I ever saw.

BURROUGHS: What was his name?

RICE: A.C. Bates. A lot of people still hear of him.

BURROUGHS: Reverend?

RICE: Reverend A.C. Bates.

BURROUGHS: And a carpenter?

RICE: Yes. And he already gave me a chance to learn what ever I wanted to, in fact he pushed me. And I was glad of it because I liked the work. Later then, in about '27 I believe, well I started out on my own in the building business.

BURROUGHS: Were they all residential structures or . . .

RICE: The biggest part of them. I did a few commercial buildings but I always liked the residential part of it. In those days I drew about all of the plans. Sometimes we would send them and have them blue printed. But the builder then, in my case did about all of the plans. I've often said I drew more plans and got nothing for it than any man in Roosevelt County. (all laugh).

BURROUGHS: Just think about the architect's fee now.

RICE: Yes, that's right. After I started contracting, my first building was, well I want to back up a little. Our first home, I built it right down here where the James Schoolhouse sits.

BURROUGHS: Oh, really? That's down the street a little from you?

RICE: Yes. Over on eighteenth street.

BURROUGHS: Yes, two blocks over.

RICE: That was in 1924. But I hadn't started contracting then. I started when I quit work in the grocery store. The first house that I built then was where Mr. J. Roberts, I believe, anyhow Mr. Roberts lives in that home now. Over on Abilene close to the park.

BURROUGHS: Down in the three or four hundred block of Abilene?

RICE: Yes. Another old time homes that I built was the home which is on that same street. I have a list.

BURROUGHS: This is in the early 1920's and '30's then, when you were doing the building?

RICE: Well, '27 was when I started. Then another one of the old buildings was where Johnny Ray Snelson now lives. It was his home, it is his home now I mean. The deceased Bill King, who used to be in business here with Alvin George, I built there home here which has been moved out east of town and Luke Cramer now lives there, it's his home. And Alvin George's home on the farm out here, I built that in the early days. Another one that I built was Dr. Grady Moore and coach Al Garden.

BURROUGHS: They were side by side.

RICE: Right, side by side, built them at the same time. Then another one was Mr. Muntz, he used to be a real estate man here, he was

one of the old homes I built. Rowland McClain, who was the first manager of the Safeway store, I built his home.

MRS. RICE: His wife was McQuine Walton, which everybody knows.

RICE: Yes. And then the Dee Parton home where Joe Atkins now lives, it's his home. Those were a few of the early day homes.

BURROUGHS: Well, all of those homes I happen to know are in good condition and still very attractive. I think it speaks well for your carpentry to be able to keep a place looking as well as those do, still.

RICE: Thank you and I appreciate the people that live there keeping them looking that way because I did build them.

BURROUGHS: They are attractive homes.

RICE: I always had a certain amount of my own pride and satisfaction wrapped up in every house I built and I love to see people keep them that way.

MRS. RICE: He also worked on the Administration Building at the college when it was being built.

RICE: And the first dormitory there. I worked on both of the first buildings that was built out at the college.

BURROUGHS: Now what was the name of the first dorm?

RICE: It's the first one north of the administration building. We just called it the girl's dormitory.

BURROUGHS: Just the girls dormitory. I believe they call that now Harding, is it Harding? Either Harding or Curry, there are three of

right there together. And so you built or worked on both the administration building and the dorm. And that was before 1934 then when the college opened?

RICE: Yes. Then during the depression days, of course building more or less stopped but there used to be a C.C. camp out here where the ENMU football stadium is now, and museum.

BURROUGHS: That's on the Clovis highway?

RICE: Yes. Myself and one more man were the two men that went up there to start that and then later we just built tent platforms for tents when we first started, he and I did. Then they decided to build barracks out there. Then I also went back with the first crew that did that.

BURROUGHS: I didn't know there was an old camp out there. I knew there had been some earlier buildings, but I didn't know what it was.

RICE: And then of course during the war I worked at defense work because material was tied down and no building going on. So I joined defense work. I built four defense camps or bases.

BURROUGHS: Where were they?

RICE: One was what you call a railroad camp at Clovis. It was a little camp that we built very quickly for them to train railroad men to go to France during World War II. Then the second one was the present air base at Clovis, Cannon Air Force Base.

BURROUGHS: And that was called the camp at first?

RICE: No, this little one was, to train railroad men.

BURROUGHS: I see.

RICE: Engineers and so on, firemen, brakemen, conductors. Then we built this Cannon Air Force Base and I worked up there on lots of buildings. One time I had three or four buildings going at once and as many as four or five men working for me. We had a scramble, we had to work everything that knew what a hammer was. We had some pretty funny things happen. For instance, one day I told a fellow that had just come to work, he and his buddy to take the sway braces down off of the building. And another old fellow I had working which knew what he was doing, he would kind of watch out for me, I had so many men. He came around where I was and said, "Mr. Rice, you'd better go see about those two men and find out what they are doing." I went over there and they were taking all of the frame out of the building. I said, "What are you fellows doing?" They said, "Well, you said take this all out." I said, "No, I didn't say that." They said, "Well, you was standing here with your hand on this and said take all of these sway braces out.

BURROUGHS: So they took out what you were leaning against. (all laugh).

RICE: That's right. And just things like that. Myself and two more men were the foremen on the old hospital building. They've replaced them now with new buildings.

BURROUGHS: You mean on the base?

RICE: On the base. We built all of those buildings. And then next I went to Albuquerque and helped build a new base there. Went

from there to Amarillo and that time I hired out just as a  
man and worked up there. And that's the pair of bases  
I worked on and then I got back in the building business here  
at home.

BURROUGHS: In Portales, after the war was over?

RICE: Continued here until I retired in 1960.

BURROUGHS: So in the twelve years since then you've continued to putter  
around your house do a bit of gardening and keeping everything  
looking [indistinct] and shining.

RICE: I guess I kind of turned antique modeling.

BURROUGHS: Yes, I knew that you did refinish. . .

RICE: I love to fool with antiques. I don't ever do any of it for  
money, don't ever sell any of them, I just do it for my own  
satisfaction, I don't just like to sit around.

BURROUGHS: Well, I can believe it. You said a long time ago when you sub-  
stituted for that teacher, you didn't want to teach school and  
you didn't want to be a barber, and I can understand that you  
just couldn't stay in one place very long. Are there any other  
incidents or recollections that you'd like to mention, in any  
part of your lives, your children's lives? Or the town? Do  
you want to make any observations about Portales?

MRS. RICE: Well, there has been a considerable change in the last, since  
we came here, sixty six years ago. Then even in the last twenty  
five years when we moved out here there was only a house in  
every five acre block. Years ago the first airplane came to

Portales to land and landed in the vicinity of the old high school. And that was not built up out in there.

BURROUGHS: There was no field at all they just landed . . .

MRS. RICE: They just landed out there in smooth ground. Of course when we drive around the square now and see our traffic lights and our nice courthouse and our paved streets, we can realize that the courthouse used to have a fence around it to keep the cows out and all of the sidewalks was board, there was no paving.

BURROUGHS: Streets were dusty or muddy.

MRS. RICE: The streets were muddy or dusty all of the time. There has been a change and we have been able to stay here and see.

BURROUGHS: It's fortunate that you in your later years can enjoy these conveniences. But I would say from looking at both of you now, that the early life that you had and stamina that you both exhibited and your good health now certainly speaks well of your early training and your heritage and I wish we had more like you.

MRS. RICE: Well, Mrs. Burroughs, Portales and Roosevelt County has been good to us. As I stated early, my parents came out here for my father's health and lived to be ninety five. September the twenty sixth, my mother is still living, will be ninety five. My husband and I have enjoyed a happy life with three wonderful children, three wonderful in-laws and four grandchildren. I sometimes wonder if there's a nicer place to live, but all in all, I think we've done well to live in Portales.

BURROUGHS: That certainly speaks well for you and the community. And I repeat, I wish we had more like you.

RICE: Mrs. Burroughs, there's one thing I failed to mention, that meant something to me that is sentimental.

BURROUGHS: Yes.

RICE: I did some work on the old high school building when it was built, and it was torn down year before last and I did a little on it then.

BURROUGHS: You mean tearing it down?

RICE: Just a little. But my son-in-law bought a bunch of brick and I helped him pick it up. That wide a span I worked on it to start with then. . .

BURROUGHS: That was in 1922? And up until about 1970 or '71 for fifty years you went back up to finish the job, didn't you? Are there any statements that you have made which you would like to restrict or do you release all of your statements for the oral history program for Eastern New Mexico University?

RICE: Nothing that I know of. Everybody here knew how times were in the depression, anyhow and how near we came to starving to death. (all laugh). And also the homestead days. But as my wife has said Portales and the Portales people have been very good to us and we have appreciated it very much.

BURROUGHS: And I appreciate being able to talk to you. Thank you so much.

RICE: Well, we appreciate you, Mrs. Burroughs.