

MATHESON HISTORICAL CENTER

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEWEE: William Corpew O'Neal

INTERVIEWER: Mary Ann Cofrin

February 22, 1996

C: My name is Mary Ann Cofrin. I am interviewing William Corpew O'Neal for the Oral History Program at the Matheson Historical Center, on February 22, 1996, at 141 N.W. 46th Street, Gainesville, Florida. Will you please state your full name and birthdate for the tape, please.

O: William Corpew O'Neal, born December 20, 1915.

C: How do you spell Corpew? I want that on the tape.

O: C-o-r-p-e-w.

C: Corpew, okay. Is that a name for some relative?

O: Yes. My grandfather's name was William Corpew. At eighty years, I've been trying to figure out what your Christian name is and what your other kind of name is, and I still don't know what Corpew is.

C: That was a William Corpew O'Neal, your grandfather on your father's side?

O: On my mother's side.

C: Oh, on your mother's side, so it was a surname, you think? You don't know?

O: Whatever your surname is.

C: Were your grandparents on your mother's side from Florida?

O: No.

C: You didn't know any of them then?

O: Yes I did my mother's mother.

C: She was living in Gainesville when you knew her?

O: I knew her before we moved to Gainesville.

C: And where was that?

O: Valdosta, Georgia.

- C: So you think that part of the family, your mother's family, was from Georgia?
- O: No, they were from Carolina.
- C: South Carolina?
- O: North Carolina.
- C: Okay, and your dad's parents were from?
- O: Dad's parents were from Brooks County, Georgia. That branch of the O'Neal family emigrated to South Georgia.
- C: Do you know from where?
- O: Ireland. He was a civil engineer, which is a high class name for surveyor, as I understand it. His job descended to his son.
- C: That was your father.
- O: My grandfather's son. His name was Charles O'Neal. Later that job descended to his son, Charles, and Lord knows a hundred years or so the surveyor for Brooks County, Georgia, was named Charles O'Neal.
- C: So there was quite a line of them. There were several of them then.
- O: Yes.
- C: And your dad's name was?
- O: My father's name was John Corwin O'Neal.
- C: And he was born in that Georgia town or county.
- O: Yes, he was born in Brooks County. They kind of went by counties in those days rather than towns. There was a community of Morwin, M-o-r-w-i-n. I believe that remnants of the town remain. I know the church is there and my grandparents are buried there.
- C: How about your father and mother? They met up in that area?

O: No, my mother was raised in Melrose and went to school in Gainesville in what then was the state-supported educational college called East Florida Seminary. Thereafter she began teaching and she was teaching in Miami when she met my father, who was at that time living in Dade County and working for Railey Milam Hardware. The Milam involved was Marcus Milam's father, who later moved to Gainesville and married a Gainesville girl named Ethel Beville.

C: So your dad was the first one of the line to not go into the surveying in Georgia?

O: Yes.

C: And he moved to Florida when he was a young man?

O: Yes.

C: So then your parents met in Miami and were married and then where were you born?

O: I was born in Valdosta, Georgia.

C: She went home to have her baby?

O: Yes.

C: Go home to mother?

O: Yes.

C: So then where did you live after you were born?

O: I lived in Valdosta until I was three years old.

C: Now where was your dad? Did he move to Valdosta?

O: Yes, my parents lost two of their first three children when they lived in Miami. They had some sort of idea that it was the tropical climate and he had a chance to transfer to Valdosta as Assistant Postmaster. So he accepted it and moved to Valdosta, and shortly thereafter I was born. I was three years old when he left the Postal Department and became manager of the Ford dealership in Gainesville owned by J.J. Alderman, which was a rather old settler's name in the Putnam County area.

C: So that would have been about 1918 when they came to Gainesville, because you were born in 1915, right?

O: Yes. I was three years old. I can recall waking up in the morning on my fourth birthday and I was saying, "Oh my, I am practically grown up. I'm four years old."

C: And you were in Gainesville then? Where did you first live?

O: On South Palmetto Avenue, which is now the street that runs north and south one block east of what the carpetbaggers call Seventh Avenue and what the old time Gainesvilleites called Roper Avenue.

C: Is that your earliest memory -- your fourth birthday? Most people don't remember much earlier than that.

O: I remember many things earlier than that, but not of any consequence for the history of Gainesville. I remember, of course, the pharmacy. My first memory of Gainesville was the bricks at the head of what used to be called N.E. 2nd Street.

C: What were all the bricks for?

O: The sidewalks and streets. The streets were brick. There were brick buildings.

C: Pretty nice in those days. So your dad came to town and what did he do those first years?

O: He managed the Ford place.

C: Oh yes, you told me that. So when you were a young kid, who were your friends that you played with in Gainesville as a little fellow?

O: Well, my father being in the automobile business, my earliest acquaintance was the son of the owner of the Buick agency, the Buick agent being Jim Fowler, who was a politician, a well known politician. He was mayor of Gainesville many times in those years, and his son's commonly used name was J.R. He was J.R. Fowler, Jr., which most of the children shortened to "Jar". The week after I moved to Gainesville another prominent political person moved down. The family was the Batey family, Harold C. Batey, who was in the automobile business for many years, also had a wholesale grocery and creamery, where they sold milk and milk products and also sold all sorts of patent medicines. His second son, Will, William D. Batey, was within one week of my birth, and he and I became very close friends. The reason we became very close friends was that a sort of custom of Jar's was to lay a good whipping on every newcomer boy to Gainesville. Of course, naturally, he initiated me and a week or so later when the Bateys moved to Gainesville, he initiated Will, and shortly thereafter we finally wised up and

one of us hid behind the board fence between our homes and sassed Jar, and when Jar came over the fence, we both initiated him. And he learned that he could without much difficulty whip either one of us, but if he did, he had to whip both of us. We, therefore, became sort of immune and friends.

C: Are you talking about four year old boys?

O: Four and five year old boys. I started at school at age five.

C: Now did those two fellows stay in Gainesville and go on through school with you?

O: Yes, ma'am. J.R. wound up in the Canadian Army and also the Canadian penal system, not as an employee.

C: So you sort of lost track of J.R. but Will stayed on.

O: Will stayed on and graduated from P.K. Yonge High School. There were many students who couldn't pass G.H.S. who went to P.K. Yonge.

C: You'd better not say too much bad about P.K.

O: Why?

C: I went there. Well, let me tell you. There were some smart fellows who went there, namely Hart Stringfellow, a brilliant young man, George A. Dell, Yvonne Cody Dell, lots of bright people went there.

O: Right. Lots of people went there, graduated from P.K. It was several years after I graduated from G.H.S. and I was definitely not a brilliant student in high school. But Will, who graduated from P.K. became interested in farming. His father owned a farm among other enterprises and Will became partners with a gentleman from Archer in the farming business and essentially became one of the, if not the most prominent cattle farmer in the Archer area.

C: Well, let's go back to your Grade School. You went to Grade School over at Eastside, now Kirby Smith? Right?

O: Yes, ma'am. When I started there, it was the only school in Gainesville. It was on the corner of what is now 7th St. and University Avenue. There were two buildings. One contained Grades 1 through 6 and the other, the remaining grades. The red building, on West University Avenue on the spot that now is a parking lot for the Alachua General Hospital, that became the second school.

- C: The 720 Building, that big office building.
- O: Yes, the parking lot of the 720 Building for doctors' offices.
- C: Was that opened by the time you went to 7th Grade?
- O: It opened when I entered the 3rd Grade, and I went about roughly half of the 3rd Grade there.
- C: But the new school, which we called Westside School, I guess, that was 1 through 12 also, and then Eastside School was 1 through 12, then later was only 1 through 6. So then you were no longer living on 7th St. and you moved out to the west side to be in that school.
- O: We lived on Palmetto, and we moved over on McCormick St., which is probably about 3rd Ave., because 2nd Ave. was then called Masonic St.
- C: It gets confusing.
- O: It does now when somebody gives you an address, you mentally have to divide the city into quadrants.
- C: Right. So you were out on what was in the western side of town but not too, too far west of the school and probably were able to walk to school and walk most everywhere. Most people did.
- O: Well, I don't know when they started busses to school within the corporate limits of the town, but I'm sure it was after I was a grown man.
- C: Yes, I think so. Anyway, well, your friends over at Westside School were still Will and Jar and probably a few other people that we know in Gainesville, but anyway you went on to high school there. You finished high school there? Who were your best friends in high school?
- O: You mean who still survive?
- C: No, anybody.
- O: Well, we had in those days what they called high school fraternities.
- C: Oh, yes.

O: Among which there was one called Aran Akbar, and that was supposedly the society, and I'm having difficulty describing this.

C: Maybe you'd just better say just "young gentlemen." What do you think?

O: Well, probably so.

C: But they sponsored dances and all kinds of social activities.

O: Yes, in those days it was a source of income for the high school fraternities to sponsor script dances where we charged a fee for entrance, from which we derived our sole source of income, and with this we had a summer party and a winter party, the winter party being usually at Kingsley Lake. It came in May. The summer party we had a house party at Daytona Beach. I can well remember the time John Allison asked his mother to be a chaperone and Mrs. Allison saying, "My goodness, I don't know how to be a chaperone. What do you do?" John said, "Well, mother, sit around the house and watch the boys and girls and along about 8:30, you get tired of watching the dancing and go to bed, and it doesn't make any difference what time you go to bed, except that it should be early."

C: Did she go and do that?

O: Yes, as well as many other socially prominent ladies.

C: Oh, my! Well, what were your activities in school besides dancing and socializing with the gals? You had some fun times doing other activities, I am sure.

O: Trying to stay out of trouble!

C: Did you do some fishing and hunting in those days?

O: Yes.

C: Where did you fish in those days in Gainesville?

O: We fished the Orange, Lochloosa, Newnans Lake, all of the local rivers, and Santa Fe and Suwanee, Wacasassa. Fishing was not nearly the popular sport then than it is now, probably because of the money involved. I can recall only four individuals in town who owned a boat, trailer, and outboard motor that they pulled from one fishing place to another. In other places they had to rent a boat.

C: Who were those four people? Did you get to fish with them some?

O: Oh yes, well, there was Henry Waits, who was the Seaboard Railroad agent. There were more than four now that I think about it. Mr. Joe Shannon, who owned the local bakery and had a mortgage on practically every fraternity house that wasn't financed by Uncle Gus Phifer, parenthetically, who was not a fisherman.

C: Well, that's not too important, but they would take you fishing. Did they have sons, or were these people your contemporaries?

O: They would take us fishing provided we paddled the boat.

C: Oh, right. You did some of the work. Cleaned the fish?

O: Not necessarily that.

C: So that's an activity you enjoyed most all your life -- fishing. What else did you young people do. Did you do hunting, also?

O: Oh yes.

C: What kind of hunting did you do?

O: Dove hunting largely. Those of us whose families were fortunate enough to have bird dogs went quail shooting. Likewise, with deer. Farm boys became deer hunters.

C: So you did all types of hunting in those days?

O: Different boys did different types of hunting.

C: But all in this same area of Gainesville?

O: Yes. In deer hunting, there were deer camps near and far. There are general areas where they still might be. The Suwanee River swamp area, the Gulf Hammock area.

C: Did they hunt in the Ocala Forest in those days?

O: Yes, the Ocala Forest area. There probably are fifty times more deer in this area now than there were then, perhaps even more than that. My father was not a hunter but

permitted me to go on these deer hunts with my friends and their fathers, and they taught me what little I know about deer hunting.

C: And you continued to hunt during your adult life, didn't you?

O: I stopped year before last. I became pretty wobbly. I can't walk and coordinate well enough now. Not that I couldn't shoot from a stand. I'd just have to sit there and wait.

C: So you graduated from Gainesville High School?

O: Yes.

C: I guess you remember some things about the Depression years in high school times, don't you? It was pretty tough on most everybody in town.

O: Yes.

C: Did your father stay on with the Ford agency then?

O: No. We moved back to Miami for two years.

C: What year was that?

O: In the late 20's.

C: You weren't even in high school by then? Late 20's, I guess you were.

O: Yes. Dad had bought some property which turned out to be quite valuable and he wanted to go back to Miami and develop it and become wealthy on it. He was quite fortunate in that he got out of Miami with something like \$25,000.00 instead of a million, and came back to Gainesville.

C: So then you were here for life. How long did your dad live?

O: He was ninety-six.

C: Did he go back with the Ford agency when he came back?

O: No. When he came back, he got a real estate broker's license and he had one or two ventures in automobile sales. He had partnerships with Ogletree and Tom Bridges. He

was not very successful. My mother opened a boarding house out on West University Avenue, which was very successful.

C: And that saw you through the Depression days -- and beyond probably.

O: Yes.

C: So your mother lived how long?

O: She was sixty-seven.

C: Were you in college? Was it after you graduated from high school?

O: Oh yes, it was after. It was after I was married.

C: Okay. Well, that was a good while. Well first, let me ask you. Do you remember the big fire in Gainesville in 1938?

O: Yes, ma'am. I was away at school.

C: You went to college then? Where did you go to college?

O: To Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tennessee.

C: And you stayed there for the four years?

O: No. It was sort of a one-year university. I believe it was in that time that everything burned. Thomas Hardware burned down.

C: So after a year at Cumberland, where did you go?

O: Well, I came back to Gainesville and went to work for a lawyer.

C: Who was that?

O: Zach Douglas, who was a highly successful criminal lawyer, a trial lawyer. He had a brilliant mind and a brilliant memory but couldn't handle John Barleycorn. He could sit through a three-day trial or a four-day trial without making any notes. When getting in an argument about testimony that had occurred three days prior to the argument, he could quote exactly what the witness said as opposed to the exact opposite the other person might claim.

C: It was then that you went to college, or I guess after that you were in the war, weren't you?

O: Yes.

C: You went into the service before you finished college?

O: Yes.

C: And what branch of the service were you in?

O: The army. The Army Air Force, the Army Air Corps.

C: And where were you stationed in those days?

O: About twenty different places! I was in a training command at about twenty different places.

C: Did you ever go overseas?

O: Briefly.

C: And when World War II was over, you were married by then or you came to Gainesville?

O: Yes.

C: You were stationed in Arkansas?

O: No, I took my flight training in Arkansas, my initial flight training. I met Katie when I was in primary flight school.

C: And that was in the middle of World War II?

O: Yes, the beginning.

C: Were you married while you were still in service?

O: Yes.

C: What year were you married?

O: I wish you hadn't asked me that.

C: Okay. In the 40's.

O: Probably 1943, 1944, maybe 1945. I spent one year in service after Katie and I were married. I wanted to stay in, but because of an injury I had received I could not pass a general flight physical. That physical would have qualified me for flight combat. I could not pass that. So they said they were not going to retain any limited duty pilots. There were some jobs in the Air Force -- I had one, for instance -- where you flew but you didn't fly combat, where you had to have a MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) which permitted you to fly but it was not a part of your regular duties, and I had one of those. They were abolishing that so I did not want to stay in service and just be a desk private, so I went ahead and got out.

C: Now, let's go back one minute. We haven't even given Katie's full name. She was Kathryn, and it was K-a-t-h-r-y-n?

O: Yes.

C: H-o-g-u-e?

O: Right.

C: So, after that year that you had spent together and you were out of the service, you came back to Florida?

O: We came back to Florida right out of service.

C: You hadn't finished college at that time, had you?

O: No.

C: So you finished at the University of Florida?

O: Yes.

C: And then you went on to law school?

O: Yes.

C: And Katie was the one who talked you into going into law school. Is that correct?

O: Well, she insisted that I do. I was going to make a lot of money being a crop duster. It didn't pay a lot of money, and it was very dangerous and she just wouldn't put up with it.

C: You also talked about maybe being a game warden.

O: Yes.

C: Those two things.

O: Katie was much more of a socializer than I was. She liked to belong to organizations whereas I liked to have a few friends, a few good friends. Katie didn't have any enemies.

C: She liked lots of people.

O: If you would go to a gathering of people with her, like a football game or a dance or anything like that, and be in a hurry to leave and try to get her out of there, in about an hour you could maybe get her out, maybe.

C: Well, she was a great gal.

O: Yes, certainly I've said many, many times that when people would congratulate me on the success of a trial or something like that, I would say, "You know if it weren't for Katie I would never have been a lawyer." They'd say, "What do you mean?" I'd say, "I would have been a game warden probably." I think I have a natural talent in that direction, and I think I would have headed in that direction.

C: That's interesting. How did she. . . She just decided you ought to be a lawyer?

O: Right. I was going to be a lawyer, so I went back to law school.

C: It wasn't a decision you ever regretted though, was it?

O: No.

C: And she was a wonderful gal. Loved by everybody as far as I know, that ever knew her. Was there any man or any individual in Gainesville that you think influenced your life a lot?

O: I don't think I can remember that far back.

- C: Well, in Gainesville as a lawyer, were you ever involved in civic activities in the city government?
- O: No. I was a civil trial lawyer, representing insurance companies, largely in automobile accidents. I, therefore, could not ever belong to a civic group, such as the Kiwanis, any of them that meet every Thursday at the Primrose Grill, because I practiced in twenty-two counties and I had no idea where I'd be the third Tuesday of the month, so I couldn't have been a Lion or Kiwanian or any of those things. I'm sure I would have enjoyed it.
- C: Were you ever involved in city government?
- O: No, ma'am.
- C: For the same reasons?
- O: Partly for the same reasons. I remember how honored I felt when I was asked to join a group of fifteen or twenty men in the courtroom or one of the hotels or one of the banks, who would persuade someone to take an office. Being a County Commissioner or a City Commissioner would not have revenue-producing activities. We'd be discussing a job and one of the men would say, "Well, old so-and-so's very well qualified. He's never run for public office, but we paid him a zillion dollars through the years to be our lawyer and that S.O.B. is going to be running for office or else I will change lawyers."
- C: And it's his turn!
- O: That's right. I felt most honored to be asked to be a member of that group.
- C: And that went on for a good many years but then somewhere along the line it changed and that's when the University . . .
- O: It started that the University personnel would run for public office for better or for worse. I've often been quoted as saying that Gainesville went to hell about the time we received our twelve hundred and first inhabitant. It was no longer the country town that I was raised in or preferred.
- C: I think life was better and simpler when Gainesville was a smaller community, but it is a beautiful city and it's a nice place to live in spite of a lot of its drawbacks.
- O: It is.

C: You and your wife lived in Gainesville in several different places and then you moved out to Long Pond. You said your mother was from Melrose, or lived in Melrose for a while?

O: Yes.

C: Is that how you happened to get property out in that area? Tell me about that.

O: Yes. Shortly before the war between the states, the center of the citrus industry was located south of the St. Johns River. Along the St. Johns. It kept gradually moving into this area and they had a very, very debilitating freeze in 1884 and 1885, I believe it was. Of course, they knew nothing really about protection, about fertilization. The way they used to get around one of those lakes and plant citrus and fertilize it with fish. One large grove that survived was the old Maxwell grove over on the east bank of Lake Santa Fe.

C: Well now, your mother's family had property around there?

O: Yes, my mother's family. They were in the turpentine business and had a store. They also had several groves of citrus. I remember my favorite ancestor was Hiram Fickle in Melrose. Although he lived there, he was really a citizen of North Carolina, so when the war between the states came he went back up to North Carolina and raised a regiment. He lost his left arm, his left hand, in the war but he came back to Melrose and went back into producing citrus.

C: And this was back in Civil War time.

O: Yes. He's famous for having the best bird dogs in the area. He had a general store in Melrose, but he was a wonderful camper. One of the old men told me, "He could split more kindling with one arm than any man in camp could do." He didn't have a damned thing to do with running that store because he was a wounded war hero.

C: So your mother was born in North Carolina and raised in Florida, in Melrose. So that's how you got the property that you have still to this day, on Long Pond?

O: No, I bought the property about 1952 and was familiar with the property because of the Bishop family.

C: At first you just used it as a weekend retreat and summertimes, and you and Katie lived a lot of different places in Gainesville but I guess the last place was Kirkwood? And then you eventually built your permanent home out on the lake?

O: Yes.

C: And you still have that permanent home on the lake? It's a pretty place.

O: I'm going to have to sell it now because I'm not in the best of health.

C: And live in town?

O: Yes, I had another fall. Night before last.

C: Had another fall.

O: Just on a plain floor. There wasn't anything like a chair or anything. I had to pull it all the way around the room.

C: To get yourself up?

O: I had finally gotten to the chair and was just getting up when Pat came in.

C: It sounds like you might need somebody. It's not too good. Well, have we covered everything we can think of? Can you think of anything special you want to add to your story of Gainesville and Alachua County and your life? I guess we have to say that we lost Katie in 1988.

O: It will be eight years.

C: She was a wonderful, wonderful lady. Well, I thank you very much for sharing this with us and we will give you a copy and you can edit it and see if you've anything we can add to it. I'm sure that it will be something that other people will enjoy reading about -- what Gainesville was like and what your life was like. Thank you.

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C: We are back because I forgot to ask Mr. O'Neal about his experiences with the University of Florida football team, so tell me how did you get started helping the football players.

O: Well, of course, I had an interest in the Gators accelerated beyond that of the usual kid because my eldest sister was one of the secretaries to the Athletic Director.

C: Was that Patty?

O: No, it was Isabel. She got little odd jobs for me in the Athletic Department, one of which was to see that the officials got to the game on time properly attired, all that sort of business. The train came down in the middle of Main Street. It originated in Jacksonville, and it arrived supposedly around noontime at Gainesville. So I would go down and meet the train and pick up the fellers and take them to the White House Hotel, where I had a room ready for changing their uniforms.

C: These were the officials for the game?

O: Yes. Then if they wanted to eat in that room, they could have room service at any time of day and eat outside. They had a little better food than you get just ordering off the menu, but the job of getting them to the field. The field was surrounded by the cyclone fence and the fence was a hundred or two feet away from the stadium itself and had several gates, one of which was just for vehicles. I could drive the car through that gate and drive up on the field anywhere really that I wanted to go and sit in the car and watch the game or go sit on any vacant seat that there happened to be. Well, after I got them near the coaches, I'd go sit on the bench or anywhere I wanted to.

C: Now, what year was this? Was this high school, when you were in high school?

O: Yes. That just kept on happening through the years and I got really accustomed to the boys. Along about the late 50's I began knowing the children's parents and in the early 60's I had a cousin named Bruce Bennett, of Valdosta, who came on scholarship and who desperately wanted to play quarterback. He had made All State Quarterback. He was left-handed, which is bad, and he didn't have a shot arm, which is bad, but he could run like hell with the football. He wanted to play quarterback the worst. Finally, Ray Graves told him, "All right, I'll make you a proposition. I'll give you a chance to be a starting quarterback. I don't think you'll do any good but I'm going to give you a chance." That was all he wanted was a chance, and he played fairly early and he let Tommy Shannon play the other half. Of course, Tommy was a hell of a lot better quarterback than Bruce. Bruce was a tremendous defensive back. I told him, I said, "Well, cousin, think about it this way. There are hundreds of boys got cut out down in that football field in a football uniform. How many of them do you think could be an All American safety man, an automatic defensive back? How many of them do you think would be an All American quarterback? You'll find it about five to one." And he settled down a little bit and began to see that it was more fun to play defensive. Later we met the Trammels, Allen and his parents. Our son, Pat, was going to be a freshman in school the next year, and this is stupidity to the nth degree. Pat was a very gifted student in high school. Ray said, "Let's move him into Yon Hall out here."

C: You're talking about Pat now, your son?

O: Yes. The first grade period it happened. If he made almost straight A's, we'll give him a job tutoring in one of the minor sort of credits and put him on scholarship. Fine, you know. This was going to be a snap. It would have been just a snap if he hadn't started running around with the big-shot football players. He was damned lucky to make a C average, much less a scholarship. So, Bruce and Allen Trammel and the other players became very close to us.

C: Now he didn't stay in Yon Hall then?

O: He not only didn't stay in Yon Hall, I don't think he stayed in school, but there were a lot of football players' girlfriends hung around the house. Katie was their off-campus momma. They started calling her "Aunt Katie" and started calling me "Uncle Willie." I started it but I didn't count on that I didn't care for anybody calling me "Uncle Willie" because anybody I knew of whose name is Willie and also accepts the name Willie is not the same color I am, but at any rate, they sort of hung around together. The boys had played football in the decade. . .

C: before the sixties, you were going to say?

O: Oh, I'd say not just exactly in the 50's or 60's but the earlier ones had started an organization. They called it the Golden Era. The idea was to have a meeting in the summertime, not just like a house party, but to have an organizational meeting in the summer, where guys, kids and wives each other, met each other, and they became acquainted and friends as they grew older.

C: This was after they graduated?

O: After college. So after seeing how well that worked and knowing how well it worked, Katie suggested that we ought to do that for this group and name it something appropriate. They decided to try it one summer, and we tried it and it worked quite well. They have an organization now starting with the boys in the early Graves era.

C: Ray Graves era, you're talking about.

O: Yes. Having such a beautiful place, have a meeting every summer since the original organization began, and it has other little things like one boy got killed in an automobile accident. They put his two boys through school. His wife has gotten remarried, and I think the boys adopted the kids and now they are going to school at their own father's expense out of the organization.

- C: Now do these guys get together in Gainesville or different places?
- O: The same place every year. Crystal River.
- C: Oh, in Crystal River. I can understand how you got involved but you became more involved than just knowing these guys. You've helped a lot of them in their pro days, did you not? Helped them with their contracts or their negotiations? What was it exactly?
- O: Well, in those days you had pro contracts. I represented them. The reason I got started doing that was that the agents for the professional football players in those days operated on a ten percent contract basis. They had him signed up to a contract that made them their agent for any activities connected with the profession of football, so that they could go in ten years and be an announcer in television, or something like that, and the guy gets ten percent of that contract. They endorse clothing or something like that, and that didn't set too well with me, so I just started representing them for free. It was right costly at times. I know one year I had more than \$4,000 in telephone calls.
- C: I imagine. But it was a labor of love. You were very fond of all those boys and they were fond of you and Katie, too. You about gave them a home away from home for a lot of them.
- O: Yes, they were nice boys.
- C: And you and Katie did a lot of traveling at that time, and you traveled to most of the games, wherever they happened to be.
- O: Well, we enjoyed going and we got to go to a lot of them "on the house."
- C: A lot of fun. Ray Graves was a fine man.
- O: Surely.
- C: Still is, and he's a good friend of yours. And after his era was over, did you continue to do things for the football team to a degree?
- O: Lesser degree. During the Graves era, I always went to the dressing room after the games. The guys would grab me and throw me into the shower and mess around, horse around. After the first game after Doug Dickey took over, he sent me word that he didn't want me in the dressing room, so I never went back.

C: And they've been the ones that had more to lose than you ever did. But as to Pat, though, he did go on to finish school at the University of Florida?

O: Oh yes, but he finished at Arkansas.

C: And then he went on to law school, too.

O: Law school at Florida.

C: Well, have we forgotten anything before we shut this off one more time? Can you think of anything we've left out now?

O: No.

C: Well, thank you again.

O: I've enjoyed it a lot.

C: Well good. I've enjoyed it, too.