

Interview Date: June 8, 2007  
Interviewer: Andi Holland  
Subject: Marcella Fuller Plank Bynum  
Length of video:  
Written Summary: Dorothy Bourgo

I was born in 1920 in Woodward. My grandfather, Peter Martinson, came from Sweden with a cousin and landed in New York with 25 cents in his pocket. The cousin stayed in Illinois, and from working on farms my grandfather eventually came to Illinois and met my grandmother, who was Pennsylvania Dutch. They came to Mead, Kansas because he wanted to come in on the run. The first run, they went to Kingfisher and didn't like it there, so they went back to Kansas. Their first child was only 4 years old when he was run over by a wagon and killed, so they just had to bury him on the prairie, which was very devastating. They had another child, and then my mother was born, and they were so poor he had to deliver the baby.

He came in on the run riding double on a Ginny Lynn mule with my great-grandfather, Hans Martinson, who could not speak a word of English. My grandfather had taught himself English and was quite knowledgeable, and he staked a claim down by Mutual, where my son lives today. My mother told me lots of stories of living the prairie: living in the dugout, putting out the embers of grassfires, using cow chips for fuel, and how her mother would sweep out the dirt floor everyday. My great-grandfather was horsewhipped by Indians once because they wanted food and couldn't understand what he was trying to tell them. But grandfather left his family there, which included his father, wife, son and daughter (my mother), and came to Woodward and built a feed store on First Street (which was called Little Denver then).

He later met a German man named Hiram Brockhouse, and a man named met L.L. Stein, who both became his lifelong friends. Mr. Brockhouse had gone to Fort Supply and bought all the merchandise when it closed, which included the big freight wagons, and he fixed them so he could move everything in Woodward. Then in 1895 my grandfather and he built the first two-story brick building (which is still being used today) on what the government said was Main Street in order to stop a feud (and my grandfather was in a lot of feuds in Woodward). A Mr. Long (?) wanted Woodward called Little Denver, and he was on First Street. The government surveyed the first part of Main Street, and Mr. Long hired a railroad surveyor to survey his part of the street, and another man hired another surveyor for First Street on, and they didn't meet. That left Main Street going crooked on down past First Street, and that's the way it still is today. But my grandfather's feud won out.

On the first floor of the brick building, Grandfather put in a general store with living quarters for the family in the back, Mr. Brockhouse had a secondhand store, and Uncle Dick Woodward had a saddle shop. The second floor was the opera house, which was also used as a courtroom. My mother told me they would open the window and yell "court's in session" to the street below, and everyone would go up to the court proceedings.

The famous trial of Temple Houston (Sam Houston's son) was held in this building. Mother said the family was living in the back of the store in 1895 on the night Temple Houston shot Ed Jennings in the saloon next door. Mr. Jennings was a judge, and his family and two sons were very well respected in the community. During a trial that day, Mr. Jennings had ruled in favor of his son, which made Jack Love (Oklahoma's first Corporation Commissioner) and Temple Houston very angry. That night in the saloon, they were playing cards and drinking (and Mr. Houston was an alcoholic, in case you didn't know) when the Jennings boys came into the saloon, and suddenly the lights went out and guns were fired. My grandfather wanted to go see what was happening immediately, and my grandmother wouldn't let him. The reason they were afraid to find Temple Houston guilty was because he always carried his six-shooters with him.

There were 23 saloons on Main Street in Woodward, and Grandpa bought a saloon at 8<sup>th</sup> and Main and

moved it south of his house on 8<sup>th</sup> Street and turned it into a home, and it is still there today. He then moved Mrs. Fitzgerald into the home and took care of her and her children. He brought them clothes and food that had not sold and I remember my Grandmother always making things for them. He honestly believed that if you had money you were obligated to take care of widows and children that could not take care of themselves.

My Grandparents were very religious, and Grandfather was a Lutheran and Grandmother helped found the Methodist church in Woodward. However, since Grandfather was a Swede, Mr. Blockhouse was a German and Mr. Stein was a Jew, they were never accepted by what would be considered the "high society" of Woodward. I find this to be sad because Grandfather and Mr. Stein literally built Woodward

My grandfather was mayor of Woodward during the city's fight over the light plant. Woodward had its own light plant, and OG&E was being called all the time to come and make repairs, and it was very expensive. As mayor, Grandfather sold the light plant to Great Western Plains, and it caused an uproar. But after he sold the light plant, he lost the next election for mayor.

But also while he was mayor, he caused another uproar when he decided to pave Main Street. In those days, the water wagon had to sprinkle the streets to keep the dust down. A man named Mr. Renfry (who was a bitter enemy of Grandfather's) and his "bunch" wanted brick paving. Grandfather had seen that in Europe and knew it wouldn't last, and he wanted pavement with his specifications as to how thick and wide it needed to be. So, every time they brought it up for a vote, he would veto it until he got his way.

As a young girl I remember being very hurt and upset when I heard people talking about him after he lost the election. I always thought of my Grandfather as a very kind, smiling man, and I couldn't understand why other people thought otherwise. But as an adult, I went down and read the minutes from the city meetings, and I discovered that he could be a very stubborn man when he did not get his way. Also, after I went to Sweden myself, I discovered that it is the custom of the Swedes to never flaunt their wealth. So it was very interesting that after studying these different aspects of his life that I was not aware of as a child, I understood more about the way my Grandfather dressed and the way other people perceived him.

Grandfather and Mr. Stein were partners in business. They put up the first street lights on Main Street and Mr. Stein bought the first instruments for a band. Grandfather was vice president of their bank that went broke, which should not have happened because the bank was solvent. But they had bought German war bonds, which were good as gold, but the public found out about it and made a run on the bank. After the bank closed, Mr. Stein was living in the little house out back and he had nothing, and Grandfather found out he was eating out of trashcans. So he sent my mother and father to buy bedding and goods for him. By then his family had left him and Grandfather also hired Nurse Jones to take care of him until I died. Later I found out Grandfather had paid for Mr. Stein's burial and headstone because he felt that Mr. Stein deserved to be buried with distinction after everything he had done for Woodward.

There is hardly a deed in the courthouse that doesn't have Grandfather's name on it at some time or another, but he over extended himself and became land poor. He owned a lot of land He

loved owning land because it was so rare to own land in Sweden. But Grandfather owned Boiling Springs at one time and Mr. Brockhaus owned the land on the other side of the lake, and I don't know if they were foreclosed on or not – I just know the land was divided up. Eventually, he owned a lot of land but could not pay the taxes after the bank closed.

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