

Oral History Interview
with
Jack and Mary Fields

Interview Conducted by
Latasha Wilson
October 22, 2010

O-STATE Stories
Oral History Project

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O-State Stories

An Oral History Project of the OSU Library

Interview History

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The recording and transcript of this interview were processed at the Oklahoma State University Library in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Project Detail

The purpose of O-STATE Stories Oral History Project is to gather and preserve memories revolving around Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (OAMC) and Oklahoma State University (OSU).

This project was approved by the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board on October 5, 2006.

Legal Status

Scholarly use of the recordings and transcripts of the interview with Jack and Mary Fields is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on October 22, 2010.

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About Jack Fields...

Jack Fields was born and reared in Gage, Oklahoma. He recalls listening to Oklahoma A&M basketball on the radio with his parents while he was in high school, and feels this influenced him somewhat to attend Oklahoma A&M after starting out at Northwestern Oklahoma State University.

Jack graduated from Oklahoma State University (OSU) in 1959 with a bachelor's degree in Math Education and a minor in Business. He moved to Woodward, Oklahoma, where he taught for a few years. He and Mary married in 1961. In 1966, they decided to move to California. Jack taught mathematics in Corona, California, for twenty-seven years.

About Mary Fields...

Mary Fields, who grew up in Jet, Oklahoma, was reared on Oklahoma A&M football. Her parents, who had both attended Oklahoma A&M in 1926, went to most of the games. She also came to Oklahoma A&M early on to participate in 4-H Roundup.

Mary earned a bachelor's degree from OSU in 1960 in Home Economics and Family Relations and Child Development with a minor in Elementary Education. She and a friend moved to California after college to teach. She stayed one year, then married Jack in 1961 and moved back to Oklahoma to be with him in Woodward. In 1966 an opportunity arose for her to return to California, and she and Jack moved to Corona. She taught for twenty-six years in the elementary school in Corona, California.

While at OSU Mary was in Kappa Delta sorority and served on the President's Council, where she helped host special guests to campus. Jack remembers Harry Truman visiting, and feels lucky to have been able to complete his student teaching at Stillwater High School.

Jack and Mary try to make it back to Stillwater for Homecoming. Together, they have two sons.

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Jack & Mary Fields

Oral History Interview

Interviewed by Latasha Wilson
October 22, 2010
Stillwater, Oklahoma



Wilson *My name is Latasha Wilson and today is October 22, 2010. I am visiting with Mary and Jack Fields on the Oklahoma State University campus in Stillwater, Oklahoma. This interview is one of a series of interviews with members of the OSU Class of 1960 who are on campus for their fifty year reunion, and is a part of the O-STATE Stories Project of the Oklahoma Oral History Research Program. I want to thank you both for coming today and allowing us to interview you.*

J. Fields Thank you.

Wilson *Were there some special reasons why you decided to participate in your class reunion?*

M. Fields To see old friends that we've not seen. Last year was special. I had worked at Willard Hall checking the girls in and calling them up when their boyfriends arrived on the old machine where you had to pull the cord up and put it in, and then buzz them. They were having a reunion, so I got to see all the girls I used to flash the flashlight on. (Laughter) Because we had curfews in those days. I don't know if we have curfews now or not.

Wilson *What are some things you are most looking forward to seeing or doing while you are back on campus this year?*

M. Fields Again, visiting with friends that we knew back then. Last year I enjoyed visiting the Kappa Delta house because it was just in the process of being built my senior year, so I did not live in the present house. Where the old house sat is now a parking lot across from Bennett Prayer Chapel.

Wilson *Yes, the chapel. And where are you living now?*

M. Fields We live in Corona, California.

Wilson *Well, we are going to start out with having each of you tell me a little bit about your early life, where you were born, and how you came to Oklahoma State University.*

J. Fields Okay. I claim I'm twenty-eight, but I was born and reared in Gage, Oklahoma, and spent most of my first eighteen years in that particular area. One of the interests that I had in OSU was, I think my sophomore through my senior year in high school, my parents and I would listen to the re-broadcast of, at that time, Oklahoma A&M basketball. It was out of KVOO. It would come on at 10:30, and so those were years that I really enjoyed listening to basketball. Bob Maddox and all of that All-American, and of course I always admired Hank Iba and so forth. I think that's one of the reasons I had a desire to come, at that particular time, to Oklahoma A&M.

Now, I did go a couple of years to Northwestern State at Alva, where most of my friends were from high school. When I came over here, I was kind of by myself. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and I think maybe the first fall I was introduced to Mary, and then we started going steady quite a bit my junior and senior year. That's about all I know.

Wilson *What about you?*

M. Fields My parents were season ticket holders for Oklahoma A&M football. We were introduced to Oklahoma A&M quite early in our life, although I didn't attend a lot of games with them. My father had played in high school with Jim Lookabaugh, who became one of the football coaches here in Stillwater. Jim and his wife were very good friends, so they attended those games and kept on until their early seventies, I suppose, attending football games, which would've been in the 1980s.

Another introduction I had to OSU was through the 4-H clubs, because our Junior Roundup was always held here. I always looked forward to staying in the dorms and being a part of the Roundup activities for 4-H.

Wilson *And where were you from?*

M. Fields I am from Jet, Oklahoma. I grew up there and went to school in Jet until I came to Oklahoma A&M. (Laughs)

Wilson *Do you remember which dorm you would stay in when you came for*

Roundup?

M. Fields Willard, I think, was pretty much the standard place that we stayed.

Wilson *And what was your major?*

M. Fields My major was Home Economics and Family Relations and Child Development. I also have a minor in Elementary Education.

Wilson *And what was your major?*

J. Fields My major was Math Education and a minor in Business. For quite a bit of that time I just had a Math major, and he felt like that going out, looking, and searching for a job you ought to have a minor. I had taken quite a bit of accounting courses, economics and so forth. So he said, "How about taking typing?" I thought, "Well, you know, that sounds ideal." I had had my junior and senior year in high school beginning, and I guess, whatever you call advanced typing, but I had not typed all those many years other than just reports. I do remember working lots of times. My roommate would like to have written reports and so consequently, I did type for him.

He enrolled me and we were going to try to get into beginning or intermediate typing, but since I had those two years in high school, I was forced to go into advanced typing. I walked into this room—all females, back typewriter, back in the very back, and that's where I went. I absolutely know that I was the slowest one in the class. We had a timing from five to ten minutes on production. Our instructor said, "A lot of your grade is going to be based on accuracy and production." And I was really surprised. She said, "At the end of class, there will be two that definitely will receive A's out of the class." Of course, I joked to myself, it was Miss "Throw-Her-Carriage-in-a-Hundred-and-Thirty-Five" would have to be number one. (Laughter) But I was surprised that I was number two in production, and she bragged on that to all of the ones that are in the class, that speed was not always the important thing.

Wilson *Accuracy was also important. (Laughs)*

J. Fields Yes, right. I am prouder of that particular grade, I think, than any grade I made because I assumed that, as I said, I was really forcing if I got up to fifty-three or fifty-four words a minute. Now, maybe on a one minute or so I could maybe get into the sixties, but not the long drawn out ones. (Laughter) I sat next to the gal that could throw her carriage at a hundred and thirty words a minute, and I might've had two words there when she was already finishing the sentence. At first that kind of was intimidating, but I got used to it.

- Wilson** *Are there any classes that you especially remember?*
- M. Fields** I was looking out at Old Central as we were in the room downstairs, and I remember my freshman English class in Old Central. When I went home, my father asked me who my instructor was, and I don't remember her name now, but it was the same English instructor he had had. (Laughter) So it was kind of fun to come back to school and tell her that she had had my father earlier. The Home Ec Department was like a family, and Dean O'Toole. I think my advisor was Mary Cox. I was trying to think of another lady that was so dear to me. I know there is a scholarship in her name and I am trying to think what it is. But anyway, it was like a family. All the girls and all the professors—it was really neat.
- Wilson** *Did you ever live in the home management house?*
- M. Fields** No, I didn't. I visited my good friend Mary Joy Cunningham when she was there. That was more for the Home Ec Education majors. Family Relations didn't stay there. But I did enjoy my years with the nursery school. The students brought their children for childcare. We did all of our observation, and our experiments, and we had to learn nutrition for children. We had to be there to help them, to observe how they ate and what they ate, play with them, teach them games, teach them their basics. As a student, that was very rewarding.
- J. Fields** I also had a class, I think American Literature or something, in Old Central. I do remember that if that particular professor held us over—there was like ten minutes between classes, and my next class, I took one particular semester of forestry class and that was way out. If this particular person [held us over], and he didn't do it on purpose, I know, but if we got out late we were late getting to that particular class because of the distance. Lots of times, you wouldn't run, but you didn't dally around. (Laughter)
- M. Fields** You went sprinting out the door. (Laughter)
- J. Fields** I did really enjoy that particular class because it was the first time that I felt like I was really on my own. My best buddy was always very helpful in high school, and then the first couple of years in college. So he would help me with my English parts because he was an English major. Eventually he was the editor for Cliff Notes, so he was pretty outstanding on that type of thing. I really felt pleased because, as I said, I was on my own on this and did fairly well.
- Wilson** *So besides Old Central, are there other buildings on campus you*

remember having classes in?

- J. Fields** It seemed like most of my math classes were on the fourth floor of the Classroom [building].
- M. Fields** Classroom was a brand new building for us, and we thought it was very lovely. Was there a Merrell Hall?
- Wilson** *Morrill Hall.*
- M. Fields** Morrill Hall?
- Wilson** *Yes, and it's still here.*
- M. Fields** Yes, Morrill Hall. I had classes there. Mostly in the old Home Ec building, I don't even know if it is still here.
- Wilson** *I am not sure.*
- M. Fields** Because the new Home Ec building was built just prior to my coming to school, so that was a lovely building in that time. The old building was still here. We had all of our nutrition classes in the old Home Ec building.
- Wilson** *So where did you all live while you were on campus?*
- J. Fields** My two and a half years was at Cordell Hall. The parking lot that I would park my vehicle in was to the west. In the last like ten years all of that is built up and I don't even know what's over there, but that's where we got to park. There was a small parking lot to the east, but now that has been consumed by the stadium. And I don't even know when they quit housing students at Cordell. I even went to summer school one summer, and for some reason there were only maybe ten or twelve of us. We were there on the south side, on the lower end.
- M. Fields** I lived at Willard Hall my freshman and part of my sophomore year because I was working there. Then, I moved into the Kappa Delta house. Our senior year the Kappa Delta house had sold, so we were moved into —starts with an H, Hatcher?
- Wilson** *There is Thatcher.*
- M. Fields** There is Thatcher, but there was another one I thought that started with an H. We were moved into that building because it was not being occupied by anybody. Maybe it was Thatcher Hall. I was thinking there was another one. I can't think what it is. It was one of the older dorms

while they tore down...

Wilson

Hanner?

M. Fields

Hanner. Maybe it was Hanner Hall. (Laughter) It may have been Hanner Hall, I am not sure. While they were building the new building, the new house.

Wilson

Do you know what year your house was completed then?

M. Fields

It must've been completed in 1961, because I graduated in 1960 and that was the year they moved us out. [It was] the spring semester because our house had sold to a fraternity and they took occupancy, maybe that whole year. See, I was doing my practice teaching that year so those things I just don't remember too much because I was in Ponca City doing my practice teaching.

Wilson

Do you remember if you chose to live in the particular residence hall? Did you choose to live in Willard?

M. Fields

Yes we did, mainly because second floor was filled with 4-H Club friends and my home area. My roommate was from Jet, my first year. The second year I had a friend from Miami, Oklahoma. A lot of 4-Hers chose Willard to stay at. Maybe it's because that is where we stayed at Roundup, I don't know. (Laughter)

Wilson

Were you able to choose your room and roommate?

M. Fields

Pretty much so, yes, in those days. Yes.

Wilson

What about you?

J. Fields

No. I didn't choose any roommate. It was whoever was there. They were ones that I didn't know before and I haven't kept up afterwards. I did my practice teaching, which was a rarity, at Stillwater High School. It was in Math and it was also in Business. Now, I think the Business Department sends a lot of their students down there to observe maybe like an hour. But I was fortunate to be under the dean. I don't remember what his name was, but he was Dean of the Students there at the high school and he wanted me to have one complete week. That was kind of odd to be teaching and here having other students observing you.

M. Fields

Another place, the Kappa Delta house was too crowded. That is why they were building a new house. For six weeks, or maybe longer, they asked some of us to live in what was the international dorm at that time. That was a wonderful experience because we had a great deal of students

from Pakistan. In those days it was hula-hoop, and to see these girls in their saris trying to do the hula-hoop was tremendous. (Laughs) They loved the fact that we celebrated birthdays and things like that. We stayed in—is it North Stout? Or North Murray, I think, is where all of the international students were basically staying. We had a wonderful experience there.

Wilson *Did the residence hall sponsor activities like dances, or social events?*

M. Fields I don't remember the residence halls doing that. I know each of the sororities and fraternities would have different events. I would say the Student Activities sponsored most of the dances for this campus. Like I know Western Week was the week we met. There was a dance at the Student Union. I don't remember. I know we had some outstanding bands in the big band era. Harry James, was it?

J. Fields Yes.

M. Fields Harry James. I wish I could remember them all. I remember I was thrilled when the Boston Pops Orchestra was coming. I used to even know the orchestra leader at that time. He was so outstanding. That was in Iba-Gallagher Hall and it was filled for that.

J. Fields It seems like Willard had dances occasionally because I do remember going in there...

M. Fields Yes, you probably did. (Laughter)

J. Fields I would dance. I didn't know any of the girls, that I know of.

M. Fields And the basement kind of had a place where—yes, the basement had a snack bar and a big room where we could do that. I had forgotten about that. Then they made it into a cafeteria.

J. Fields In place of studying lots of times in the library, there were times that I would go to the lounges that would be on the second or third floor of the Student Union. One of the things that I do remember was that I had never personally seen a politician, like a president, and Harry Truman had a reception in one of those rooms. It seems like one was a Chinese lounge. I don't remember exactly, but I do remember that it was completely packed, but I had kind of wanted to get a view of him. I went and kind of peeked around just so that I could say, at that particular time, that I had seen somebody that had served as our President.

M. Fields I was on the President's Council and we were to be the hosts and hostesses of international figures, or some of the political leaders or

business associates. The real treat was Haile Selassie of Ethiopia. He is still well loved in Ethiopia, although a coup threw his government over. We had an agricultural college there during the time. That was another reason that we had so many students from Pakistan, was Dean O'Toole visited Pakistan and was trying to establish schools there for women. The women were brought here to be trained to go back and to teach their women the home economic skills.

- Wilson** *Did you maintain a relationship with any of the women from Pakistan?*
- M. Fields** I didn't, no. I didn't at all. I do remember I was also hostess for Bill Kerr, who was the son of Mrs. Kerr of the Kerr Glass Company. I think I was put with him because my aunt worked for Kerr Glass. I remember those names, but there were others that I just don't remember. But that was a wonderful program and we enjoyed that very, very much.
- Wilson** *What kind of interaction would you have with these figures that came in?*
- M. Fields** A lot of times you would take them around the campus or wherever they wanted to go. If there was a dinner, you took them to the banquet or the dinner and sat with them.
- Wilson** *Do you remember any of your conversation or any special moments from those meetings?*
- M. Fields** No, not really. I really wasn't the hostess for Haile Selassie, but I was at the reception. The students were there at the reception. I just remember [he had], I don't know whether you would say flamboyant kind of dress. He had a wonderful personality. His English was fluent. He was a very impressive person.
- Wilson** *Do you remember anything specific about Harry Truman?*
- J. Fields** No, not really. Of course, during the time that I was in seventh, eighth, and high school—see, he served until '52, so I do remember that in high school one student would be for somebody else, and we would always have discussions. I did always kind of—I had followed Harry Truman especially. He wasn't predicted to win in the '48 election, and he got out and barnstormed and did win over Dewey. Then the last couple years in high school and of course, during the time that I was in college, it was the time of Eisenhower. At that particular time, it was still Eisenhower because my first election—and I had always wanted to and was always ready to vote. When I was eligible to vote was going to be 1960. It was between Nixon and Kennedy.

I, at that particular time, kind of had a hang up on religion. That was one of the things on Kennedy, and whenever I was eligible to vote, I didn't vote. (Laughter) I have voted in every election after that, but the one that I had always anticipated that I would vote for, I didn't because I wasn't really positive exactly who I felt like was qualified. Now, there was a lot of debates. That was kind of the beginning of our debate series. Of course, the debate was between Kennedy and Nixon. And then, of course, the tragedy. Mary and I were married in '61, and we had gone on a teacher visitation in Woodward. They always ask all the times that we were there. We went out to visit one school. Mary and I were both in Amarillo, Texas, the day of the assassination, and it was a sad particular time.

M. Fields

It was very interesting how the schools handled it, because it was occurring right during the school day.

J. Fields

I haven't kept up with him, but there in Woodward High School where I taught, I taught all of the algebra, and the other gentleman that was in the math department taught all of the geometry. I never observed him and he had, I believe that spring, resigned and went to Amarillo. I had the school make arrangements for my visitation to go visit him, and I was sitting in the back of the room when the announcement came around 12:30. We had been to lunch. I thought that he conducted and explained to the students and so forth and so on [very well]. Of course, there was a lot to come out. We actually didn't know whether all the announcement was that Kennedy had been shot in Dallas. Gerald handled that situation, and I often wondered if I would have had the dignity if the situation would have been reversed. So I thought his maturity was way better than probably my maturity because I had only been out of school three or four years. Those are things that you remember.

M. Fields

I just happened to think though, a fellow came to teach geometry at Woodward after that, and their daughter was the drum major of OSU's band in later years. That would've been in the sixties.

J. Fields

Right. They were originally from Fairview. Logston was his name.

M. Fields

The thing that was impressive about the Oklahoma State band at that time, the drum majors would strut out to the middle bent over backwards. Their tassel would almost be touching the ground behind them. It was impressive. I don't know when that stopped because they use cowboy hats now, don't they?

Wilson

I think so.

J. Fields

Yes.

M. Fields In those days they had the white helmets with the plumes on them. She was probably one of the last ones to be able to march down the field in such a bent over position. It was fantastic. Yes, they were well known for that.

Wilson *Do you want to tell me about when you met?*

M. Fields My roommate, at that time, was Kay Douglas from Miami, Oklahoma, and she kept saying she wanted me to meet Jack. It seemed like she would try to set up dates for us, and I was either busy or he was busy. We just never could really get together on a date. I think it was in April finally of '58 that—we really didn't have a date, but we ran into each other at the western dance.

J. Fields Well, I think she hit me on the shoulder.

M. Fields I did! (Laughter)

J. Fields I still have a bruise from it. (Laughs) You want to see the black and blue?

M. Fields But he did, he walked by and I hit him. (Laughs)

J. Fields Of course, I was very bashful and all those things. (Laughs)

M. Fields So anyway, that evening we went to the western dance, I guess.

J. Fields I don't remember. (Laughter)

M. Fields Anyway, we went on a date that night.

Wilson *And you started dating from that point on?*

M. Fields Right, yes.

Wilson *What would you do on some of your dates?*

M. Fields Go to the movies.

J. Fields I often—not that I am a cheapskate, but I wonder how a young man and a young woman, during this particular time, can go to a theater and pay twelve dollars for a ticket or whatever the price, because it seemed like that, boy, if we went to a movie and it was going to be a dollar for each one, (Laughs) I thought it was pretty high, normally.

M. Fields Is the movie theater still here on the corner across from the fire station?

Wilson *No, the Hideaway took over the movie theater.*

M. Fields Well, that used to have the movies, the international movies, they would be in a foreign language, and you would have to read the English below it while you were watching the film. (Laughs) So that was always kind of fun. Most of the time there was a really large movie theater downtown.

J. Fields A lot of our dates—and I don't know that there was—but, a lot of our dates would be that we would just meet at the library and then go for a Coke or something like that.

Wilson *Where would you go for a Coke?*

J. Fields To the Student Union. My hangout was, I thought the fourth floor was the ideal place. (Laughs)

M. Fields There was always music playing up there, and you could dance. During the nice weather there was a place, an outdoor area, to dance. I suppose they played the juke box, I don't know. You could go to the snack bar, there were always students hanging around visiting, and if you wanted to dance, you could dance.

J. Fields Now, you mentioned something about did the dorms sponsor something? It does seem like Cordell at one time, maybe every year, they would be advertising that you could bring a date and you could go through—I suppose that was called the cafeteria down there, our kitchen. I do remember that Mary came over, or I went and got her or something. I don't remember that exactly, but I do remember that she had the privilege of eating at our cafeteria. (Laughter) And that was something that at Alva, it seemed like the food was home-cooked. When I got here—of course I had had two years, and that particular year, my roommate was a freshman. He and I would normally go down—we would try to be back to the dorm so we'd go for our noon and evening meal. But there were some times I thought, "What in the world are we having?" I'd have to check the calendar to find out what I had eaten, or what I was going to. (Laughs)

M. Fields I know Murray, Stout, and all of them had cafeteria-type eating. I think it was my sophomore year they changed Willard's from being just a dining room to a cafeteria. So we had both men and women coming. It was if you bought the meal ticket, you could either use it at the Student Union, or you could come to the Willard cafeteria. That changed from what the other dorms had. There was chocolate cake that, oh! (Laughs) At the

Student Union, I always loved their chocolate cake.

- J. Fields** No, everything seemed to be more steamed. Not that the people that were preparing it were poor cooks. It was just different than what I had been used to. You could always, on a weekend, go home and complain about your food you had had during the week. (Laughter)
- Wilson** *Would you ever go out to eat at restaurants around town?*
- J. Fields** There was a couple times, but this seemed like either my parents would come over or... It seemed like Mary invited me once or twice when her folks came over. But no...
- M. Fields** The place to go was the Sonic Drive-in. It's amazing to me that that has stayed. I mean, that's one of the drive-ins that is still available in the area.
- Wilson** *Do you remember the Hideaway opening?*
- J. Fields** I don't.
- M. Fields** No, we don't. There was a place that some guys had opened up, and I think it was before Eskimo Joes, but two fellows had opened up a pizza place right down where the Wesley Foundation goes. I think down that street were some stores. There was also a store there that for picnics and things, they had a machine and they would roast a chicken for you. You could pick up a roasted chicken and some potato salad and things, and it was neat to just have kind of a picnic.
- J. Fields** I don't know what the enrollment size of how many students are on campus here in the last few years, but you want to remember when we were here, the total enrollment, if I remember correctly, was like seven thousand, and that [included] the ones that were working on advanced degrees and so forth. I would think that there was like 2000 or 2500, so the size was nothing like it is now.
- Wilson** *You mentioned that you had a car. Would you ever drive around Stillwater for any reason, or did you just go home?*
- J. Fields** Yes, I would drive.
- M. Fields** What was the silly saying they used to say? Your date would ask you, "Let's go watch the submarine races and drive out to Boomer Lake," or something. (Laughter) I don't remember what that saying was.
- Wilson** *Did you fall for it?*

M. Fields Of course! (Laughter) So we did do that.

Wilson *And I believe the name changed from Oklahoma A&M to Oklahoma State in 1956? Was that while you were here, or had it changed already?*

J. Fields It was A&M when I came here so, I...

M. Fields That was my freshman year.

J. Fields I would question—did you say '58?

Wilson *I was thinking '56.*

J. Fields Well, I think it was '58. The only reason that I am saying that is a lot of my stuff is still—whenever I go through a lot, like all of my books...

M. Fields All of my freshman [material] says Oklahoma A&M, so that would have been '56, '57, so it would've probably been the following year.

Wilson *How did you feel about the name change?*

J. Fields I like Oklahoma A&M. In fact, I still refer, lots of times, to this as Oklahoma A&M. No, I am going on with it seemed to be the advertisement at that particular time, that there would be more prestige if it was going to be called Oklahoma State, and this was not the only agricultural college that changed their name during that particular time. There was Utah, New Mexico, and a lot of those that were 'A&M' that went to 'State' about the same time.

M. Fields It offered the opportunity for them to change the way they looked at things. It broadened the ability for what they were able to offer here at Oklahoma State because it then became the College of Home Economics, the College of Engineering, instead of it being Oklahoma A&M College, or Oklahoma A&M University. It broadened the offerings.

J. Fields Right. I don't think the word 'university' was—now I could be wrong about that—I don't think that 'university' was given to Oklahoma A&M. I think the university status was when it became Oklahoma State University. No, I laugh and joke. At that time, I went to A&M, but they had to change the name to get rid of me. (Laughter)

Wilson *What do you remember about Pistol Pete? Do you remember Frank Eaton?*

- M. Fields** We remember the original. He always was either on a horse or most of the time on a stagecoach for the Homecoming parade. He was usually always here.
- Wilson** *Did you ever meet him personally or have any encounters?*
- M. Fields** I don't believe so. Other than that, I don't recall.
- J. Fields** I don't.
- Wilson** *What are some of your Homecoming memories?*
- M. Fields** We come now to Homecoming. Everybody's either in jeans or slacks, and orange, which is kind of traditional of all the colleges now. Except in the south, where they still dress up—the women are very dressed up. That was a day to wear some of your finest clothes and have a big corsage, and in those days it seemed like we had sweater sets. You had a small sweater, you had a cardigan sweater over it, and a skirt of some kind in the fall colors, pleated skirt or whatever. And you wore heels. It was a day for dressing up.
- Wilson** *Did your residence halls or your sorority do anything like they do now with house decs, or participate in the parade, or anything?*
- M. Fields** The parade was much bigger in those days. There were more floats by the sororities and the dorms. The dormitory seemed to always have decorations on their lawns. At the old Ford place down here is where there would be a truck, and it would be covered with chicken wire in the shape of whatever you want. You spent the whole night putting... (Laughs)
- J. Fields** It seemed like that. A couple of times I remember going down there and working, but it must've been a class float that we were working on because I didn't belong to any fraternity, so consequently I wouldn't have been, you know... And the fraternity...
- M. Fields** There were a lot of floats in those days.
- J. Fields** And so it just seems like a bunch of us would say, "We've got to go down and..."
- M. Fields** Well, Cordell Hall may have had a float.
- J. Fields** They may have had. I'm not positive about that.

M. Fields I know one year we did the house decorations, but never anything as elaborate as what it is now, with all their electronics and everything. It was very small. I don't know. Does the university have pictures and things in your archives of those?

Wilson *Yes.*

J. Fields No, last year when you began to hear that OSU has the biggest Homecoming and all that stuff, for years and years, you kind of question that, but we came last year and I thought, "My land, this is a mob!" (Laughs) Out there by Theta Pond and all, whatever that street is, I can't remember.

Wilson *University.*

J. Fields Okay, University. That doesn't seem to be what it was called. Maybe it was called College.

Wilson *I think it was called College.*

M. Fields It was. (Laughs) It's a change.

J. Fields The biggest crowd that I remember, and I think this is '56, we beat Kansas in basketball, and that was when Wilt Chamberlain was playing. The largest crowd I remember was over there at that intersection south of Willard and Stout, but that crowd was nothing to compare with what was around last year for Homecoming. That, to me, back in '56 or whenever it was, well that was a large crowd. I remember riding home with my folks.

M. Fields Did anybody ever tell you about the panty raid? (Laughs)

Wilson *Yes, were you involved? (Laughter)*

M. Fields I was at Willard hanging onto the door to keep them out, and the quarterback was right across [from me]. I was looking him right in the eye. (Laughs) We kept him out. We kept them out. (Laughter) That was kind of an exciting time, and flooding. We had so much rain that I worked many hours one night moving water out of the basement of Willard Hall because it had flooded. (Laughs)

J. Fields Now, I remember my advisor. I think his name was Frasier, but he had a home that was, I am going to say a half of a mile north of our present campus. It may have been further. You know, there is kind of a valley-type area. That area flooded, and I remember going up there and helping to move furniture or whatever. That may have been during summer

school.

Wilson *You mentioned you worked in Willard?*

M. Fields Yes.

Wilson *What did you do?*

M. Fields I have been trying to remember. I wasn't called a proctor, I don't think, but I would check the girls in at night to be sure that everybody was in their room by eleven. They couldn't be roaming in the dorms. Eleven was to be in your room. Then there was a little tiny office there with a switchboard, and it was the old fashioned switchboard which you would pull up the... (motions) ...and stick it into the hole for that room.

J. Fields Now, what did it do? It buzzed the room?

M. Fields It buzzed the room, yes. We did different things in the dorm. Whatever we were assigned to do.

J. Fields I think they were called proctors.

M. Fields We may have been, but I was thinking there was another word for it. Sometimes we worked the snack bar down in the basement.

Wilson *Do you remember how much you earned?*

M. Fields Forty cents an hour. (Laughs) Yes, but forty cents an hour in those days went well. Our tuition wasn't that much. I have no idea what tuition is now. I can't remember what we paid for our son in the eighties, but I think—did we pay about \$5.25 a credit hour, or \$5.00?

J. Fields I don't remember what it was. It seems like that it would be around eighty dollars for whatever you were taking for a semester, and that was pretty rough to come by, I remember.

M. Fields Especially in that year. I know when my father passed away, the lawyer said, "The years you went to college were a struggle for your folks." He said, "I don't know whether you knew it or not." (Laughs) I was fortunate. I had a wonderful summer job. I worked for the Department of Agriculture in Alfalfa County. I was very fortunate to be able to afford to come.

Wilson *What do you remember about the teams and athletic events of that era?*

M. Fields Moe Iba, Eddie Sutton, was it Dick something that was the big tall

center?

J. Fields It begins with an S.

Wilson *Soergel?*

J. Fields Soergel.

M. Fields Soergel. Dick Soergel.

J. Fields Our football team one year went to a bowl. They hadn't gone to a bowl and I think it was called the Bluegrass Bowl. I'm going to say that it was in Lexington, Kentucky, but I may be wrong about that. I thought we had a fair football team. Now, I don't think our basketball team was as competitive as it had been in the years that I became acquainted with Oklahoma A&M.

M. Fields I remember the year we beat Kansas. (Laughs) Wilt Chamberlain was playing, that was such a treat. I enjoyed the wrestling. I thoroughly enjoyed our wrestling teams.

J. Fields The basketball boys—I'm not positive about the names, but I remember seeing them on campus. I had economics with a couple of them, and they were all always very, very pleasant boys. They spoke and smiled like we were friends, like, "I know you." It would be only by appearance.

M. Fields I would take dancing, that was one of our PE things. The football coach had decided that his boys needed to have a little more grace to their movements or something, and so my dance class was filled with football boys. For a 300 pound tackle to polka was very interesting. (Laughs) I can remember we had a lot of fun during polka class, when we were learning how to polka. I don't know if anybody ever polkas anymore, but it was to help them move better on the football field.

J. Fields But all the games with OU, that would be around Thanksgiving time and of course, we would try to get back to see the games and they were always the runaway, like fifty to zero in favor of OU.

Wilson *Did you attend all of the games? All of the football or basketball...*

J. Fields Now, the most exciting game that I really remember—I don't know what year it was, but it was a Homecoming game, and I know that my folks came down for it. It was with Air Force. Air Force had only been participating in their division like five or six years, so they were quite young, and this was an exciting game. I'm not even going to venture to

say what the score was, but I assume that OSU got beat. They had led most of the game, and the final score would've been like twelve to ten, or some score like that. We talked about that particular game whenever I went back home because it was exciting for my folks, and it was certainly exciting for me.

M. Fields

We had one of the most outstanding wrestling teams at that time. It seemed like we were in the NCAA finals most of the time. I know Tommy Chesbro was one of the wrestlers who later became a coach here. He married one of my sorority sisters, so that is how I kind of kept up with him. I was trying to think who his coach was, was very famous. I can see his face, but I can't think of who it is. It was a wonderful experience for me because in high school we never experienced wrestling as such. We had a speaker in California, probably two or three years ago, that had been on the wrestling team here at OSU. It was very interesting when he found out that's where we graduated from.

J. Fields

It does seem like that about the time that we changed our name from A&M to State, is about the time that we were invited into the Big Eight, at that time. Most of the conference was known as Missouri Valley. I know in basketball, we played Cincinnati and that was during the time of Oscar Robertson, who was very outstanding. The Missouri Valley schools were not the ones that I remembered, like Wichita and Tulsa, and the St. Louis Billikens, and so forth. They were on up in the Ohio area, it seemed like. I think that they...

M. Fields

Was it Myron Roderick?

Wilson

Myron Roderick, yes. What is it about Oklahoma State that you think sparks such loyalty in students and alumni?

M. Fields

I don't know. It's like a family when you go here. I think it's just a family atmosphere that you have here, and I guess the traditions of things that we did. The sports teams are fun to follow. But that wasn't the total picture of the school. We just had a high quality of professors, and they were interested in their students, and they just made you feel welcome, and that your education was very important.

J. Fields

Right. I agree there. I don't know, I suppose at a smaller place you would have gotten to be more acquainted with the professors, but I had a Dr. Robison in the Math Department that I thought was outstanding. The classes were not—like in the math classes, they were not large.

M. Fields

History classes were a different thing. Those were in a big auditorium. (Laughs)

J. Fields Some of the required courses that you had to take, I feel like that I was maybe lost at times. Like in the history class, it seemed like my history teacher wasn't the one that was making up the test, it was somebody else, and he would every once in a while say, "I think this might be what you would experience." I would think, "You're the guy that will be making up the test." But I don't think he was. (Laughs)

M. Fields I'll never forget that I had history, and it was time for the final. I could not find my notes or my history book, because we had cleaned the cabinet out at the house that weekend and somebody had put it on a shelf in the library and I didn't find it. I was concerned, so I went to my history professor and I said, "I've lost my notes and my history book. If I could just borrow a history book I think I'll be all right for the final." Well, I was working the 4-H Roundup, which was the week after finals. I ran into him and he said, "Well, I guess you did all right." He said, "The grades aren't posted yet, but you got an A minus." (Laughs) I was thrilled and I thought as big as that history class, for him to remember me and to, you know... Even with all the huge number of students that were in there, he had a personal interest in all of us and that was good. Then, I suppose one of my favorite classes was biology. We got into genetics and I enjoyed that very much. The professor was from my home county, which was kind of interesting.

Wilson *Would you like to say a few words about what you did after you left OSU?*

J. Fields I taught mathematics at Woodward High School. I finished here in January of 1959 and went for an interview. The science students had been going over to Woodward and they kept saying, "They have their eye on somebody that they want." I didn't apply until Christmastime. When I got there I felt like that I had the job. I taught seven and a half years at Woodward High School. I thoroughly enjoyed it. I was single there, and my first couple of years, I think I sponsored every sock hop after every football game and every basketball game. I felt like I was closer to the students than I had ever been in my life.

While I was in college, I worked as a seasonal park ranger a couple of summers in the Badlands in South Dakota. I worked three summers as a seasonal park ranger in Rocky Mountain National Park. This is where Mary and I spent our honeymoon. The first year at Rocky, most of the seasonals reported July 1, so we set our wedding day for the 25th of June. Lo and behold, I was the ranger that they were wanting to come to the western slope on June the 1st. I really didn't know who to contact, but sometime in April I contacted one of the permanents that I really didn't work under, but I knew. He said, "Jack, don't worry about it." He said, "You still come June 1st and we'll end a couple few days at the end in

there, and a couple beginning few days, and you will have about four days off.” So that is the way I came back. We did go ahead and were married on June 25th. We spent that summer and the next summer working with the National Park Service. Maybe even the next summer, I don’t know.

M. Fields

I started my teaching career in California. Liz Long from Garber and I graduated in 1960, and we started that fall in what is the county of Los Angeles, but it was the Rowland School District, which was only an elementary school district. It was out in the countryside, out with the dairies and out with the groves. We had a beautiful drive to work because the closest place we could live was Covina (to the school). We taught one year there. She met her husband that year and stayed in California. Jack and I became engaged that December so I came back in June. We taught in Woodward, as he said. I taught third grade. He taught in the high school.

We were having a hard time making ends meet with the salaries we were getting in Oklahoma, and we just happened to see a newspaper article about they were interviewing for Corona Unified School District. We went to Oklahoma City for the interview. We were hired, and we moved out there in 1966. Jack taught twenty-seven years in the high school. I taught twenty-six years in the elementary school. That’s where we raised our two sons. Our older son could hardly wait to get back to Oklahoma. Two weeks after he had graduated he had moved back with my parents, his grandparents, so he could set up his residency to come to an Oklahoma school. He has his BS [Bachelor of Science] from Oklahoma State, and his master’s degree. It was in Accounting and his master’s is in Business Administration.

Wilson

What is his name?

M. Fields

Douglas. Douglas Fields. His wife also graduated here, and that is where they met. He was her flag football coach. (Laughs) That is how they met. Anyway, so it has been good, a good experience. My parents started school here, my dad in ’26 and my mother in ’26, and ’27. In those days, you didn’t graduate to become a teacher. You had two years and you received your teacher’s [certificate], so my mother had two years here. My father only had his freshman year here. This was the only place that we were to come. He had instilled that in his grandson too, I think, eventually. Although I’m afraid OU, all during high school, was his dream. (Laughter) But when it came down to it he chose to go to OSU.

Well that’s great.

Wilson

If it hadn’t been for Mary, I probably would’ve never gone to California.

J. Fields

I laugh and joke with the ones that I know in California that I am just like Will Rogers. And of course, the whole joke is, you're supposed to say, "How is that?" Will said that whenever he left Oklahoma and went to California he raised the IQ of both states, and I like to pull that joke. I pulled it on a couple the second time. (Laughter)

Wilson

Well, thank you so much for talking with me today and I hope you enjoy the rest of your weekend here for OSU Homecoming.

Well, thank you.

J. Fields

Thank you very much.

M. Fields

----- *End of interview* -----