**Oral History Interview**

**with**

**Brenda Johnson Hardgrove Miller**

Interview Conducted by

Tanya Finchum

August 5, 2016

Spotlighting Oklahoma

Oral History Project

**Oklahoma Oral History Research Program**

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**Interview History**

Interviewer: Tanya Finchum

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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 the *Spotlighting Oklahoma Oral History Project* is to document the development of the state by recording its cultural and intellectual history.

This project was approved by the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board on April 15, 2009.

**Legal Status**

Scholarly use of the recordings and transcripts of the interview with Brenda Johnson Hardgrove Miller is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on August 5, 2016.

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**About Brenda Johnson Hardgrove Miller…**

Brenda Johnson Hardgrove Miller was born in Vinita, Oklahoma, in 1944. The family moved out of Oklahoma for a while but returned to Vinita in the late 1950s where they purchased and operated a grocery store. Brenda went to school in Vinita the eighth grade through the twelfth, graduating in 1962. Soon after finishing high school she married Bill Hardgrove and they had two sons, Bill and Brad, before divorcing in 1966.

After the divorce, Brenda was hired by Annabell Southern to work in the kitchen at the Glass House Restaurant making sandwiches. When that did not seem to be working out, Mrs. Southern moved Brenda to the cafeteria line until the end of the summer. Then at that time Brenda was moved over to the snack bar, which she liked much better because there was more interaction with the customers. Before long Brenda moved again, this time into the Broiler Room as a waitress. That meant more pay due to making tips. After a couple of years Brenda left the Glass House and became a cook at Eastern State Mental Hospital in Vinita.

As time went along, Brenda decided to pursue a degree in education. She earned the degree but decided she really did not want to teach. Around that time, she married Bob Miller who was a truck driver. Brenda learned how to drive a semi-trailer and accompanied Bob on runs. The couple drove a truck for a few years and then purchased a night club which also had a restaurant. Brenda tended bar, cooked in the restaurant, and ran bingo. A short time into this venture, Bob passed away and Brenda soon found herself working for Mrs. Southern again at the Vinita exit service plaza on the Will Rogers Turnpike.

**About the Glass House…**

At the half-way point on the Will Rogers Turnpike near Vinita, Oklahoma, stands an iconic landmark. The arched building opened in 1957 and was the first restaurant built over a U.S. public highway. Conoco (Continental Oil Company) commissioned the building with an aim to serve the needs of motorists passing in both directions. The building housed the Glass House Restaurant, dedicated in 1958, and included a cafeteria, snack bar, and sit-down restaurant. On each side of the building, motorists enjoyed full-service gas stations, operated by Conoco initially. Over the years other restaurants and fuel facilities have operated at the service plaza. Host International, Interstate Hosts and Howard Johnson’s have operated the plaza at different times. The Glass House and the Conoco stations employed many of the area’s youth through the years and served many, many travelers. Renovation began on the service plaza in 2012 and in 2014 it re-opened with a new name, the Will Rogers Archway.

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| **Brenda Johnson Hardgrove Miller**  Oral History Interview  Interviewed by Tanya Finchum  August 5, 2016  Vinita, Oklahoma |  |

**Finchum** *Today is August 5, 2016. My name is Tanya Finchum. I’m with Oklahoma State University. Today I am in Vinita, Oklahoma, [and this is part of our Glass House Restaurant] project. With me today is Brenda Johnson [Hardgrove] Miller. So thank you for coming.*

**Miller** Oh, it’s a pleasure.

**Finchum** *Let’s start with learning when and where you were born.*

**Miller** I was born in Vinita, believe it or not, back in ’44 at the old Vinita hospital.

**Finchum** *Brothers and sisters?*

**Miller** No, only child. Then we lived away different times. We lived in California, and up in the mountains, and then we lived in Wichita, Kansas. Mom and Dad wanted a grocery store, so they came back to Vinita and bought a grocery store. That’s where I was raised and finished up from the eighth grade.

**Finchum** *You moved back to Vinita in the eighth grade?*

**Miller** Yes. Went to school here and everything. I got married, had my kids, and got a divorce, and needed a job, and called Annabell. That was the beginning.

**Finchum** *And what year did you graduate from high school?*

**Miller** It was ’62.

**Finchum** *So integration had already taken place or was in the process of?*

**Miller** Yeah, it didn’t affect me, because I was raised on the wrong side of the tracks so I never did consider it any different. I just wasn’t—at Wichita I didn’t notice any difference, and it just didn’t dawn on me what was taking place until—I think it hit me, one time I went to Bremerton, Washington, on a bus. It still—I was by myself and had a baby with me. Billy was with me. Went in to eat, when the bus stopped we went into the snack bar to eat. Something, an issue, was made out of a black. I’m thinking, “What’s…?” I just wasn’t aware. Isn’t that something how you can be that ignorant on things, but…

**Finchum** *It’s just different worlds, too, we grow up in.*

**Miller** Yeah, I didn’t—I still…there’s no difference to me. I’m just—there’s good and bad in everything.

**Finchum** *So you have one child?*

**Miller** No, I’ve got two, got two sons—Bill and Brad.

**Finchum** *And you were married.*

**Miller** Yes, Hardgrove, to a Bill Hardgrove. And he worked at the Glass House.

**Finchum** *Okay. Is that where you met him?*

**Miller** No. I met him in school. Actually, he was coming in our grocery store. That’s where I met him. Then went to school with him and while he was in school he went to work out at the Glass House. He worked with Warren Fetter, and he was in the bakery, and there was a Robert Ramsey that worked down there with him. I remember one time when we was dating he told me, he said that Robert told him, says “‘You know, it don’t make a man to make babies, but it sure takes a man to raise them.’” That left an impact on him. Now he didn’t raise his, but still, I’ve never forgot that. Never. It’s so true.

**Finchum** *It is. So what was your maiden name?*

**Miller** Johnson.

**Finchum** *That’s why they put Johnson.*

**Miller** And then I was married to a Bill Hardgrove. Then long later I married a…

**Finchum** *A Miller.*

**Miller** …Miller, yes.

**Finchum** *Was the introduction okay to have it as Brenda Johnson Miller or do you want Hardgrove in there?*

**Miller** You might, because everybody knew Hardgrove and my kids is named Hardgrove.

**Finchum** *We’ll add that to that then.*

**Miller** Okay. I didn’t marry Bob until, oh God, ’70-something.

**Finchum** *So right out of high school, well while in high school, did you work?*

**Miller** No. I helped in the grocery store.

**Finchum** *So you did work, but not…*

**Miller** Yes, I worked from the eighth grade. (Laughs) I was taught to work.

**Finchum** *Did you have a favorite subject in school?*

**Miller** Math. I liked math and science. Mr. Muncey was our teacher, our math teacher. Mr. Suitor—no, I can’t remember who the science teacher was. Mr. Gudda—I don’t know, I can’t remember.

**Finchum** *When you graduated, did you have plans on what you wanted to do with the rest of your life?*

**Miller** Be a perfect wife and mother. I was raised to where you did the cooking, you did the washing, and the old-time way was how I was raised up. You didn’t need any skills, other than taking care of a family.

**Finchum** *And to take over the family grocery store.*

**Miller** I didn’t take it over, yes. They didn’t think I could do it because I wasn’t married. I’d gotten a divorce and because I wasn’t married—you have to have a husband. Yeah, things change don’t they? (Laughs) Maybe that’s why I don’t want one. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *So when did you start working at the Glass House?*

**Miller** After I got a divorce in, let’s see, ’66.

**Finchum** *So it’d been open about ten years before you come.*

**Miller** Yes, there’d been a lot of them come and go. So many of them’s gone now.

**Finchum** *How did you know Annabell or did you before you went out there?*

**Miller** Everybody knew Annabell. They had heard of her, if they didn’t know her personally. I didn’t know her personally, but I went out there once and, “That’s a good place to work.” Course the kids’ dad had worked there, Norman Fetter, and Warren Fetter, and they was all friends. One time Norman came, he was coming in on leave and the kids’ dad was gone. Bill was in the Navy. I forget what Norman was in. Was he in the Army or Air Force? Something. Anyway, he come in on leave and he come to visit. Him and I got together, because he’d worked in the bakery he knew how to bake. We made a concord grape pie and forgot to put the sugar in it. (Laughter)

**Finchum** *A little tart, huh?*

**Miller** Yes. Daddy, when he tasted it, his old jaws just, “Would be okay if you’d put some sugar in it.” (Laughter)

**Finchum** *You learn as you go.*

**Miller** Yeah! (Laughs) We have a lot of memories.

**Finchum** *So A*nnabell hired you, she was the one that hired you. What was your job?

**Miller** I started in, working in the kitchen, on a sandwich board. I worked with Nancy Smith, and Ms. Roberts was there. That didn’t work out too good for me. So Annabell put me—let’s see, where did I work next? On the cafeteria line, I think. They had the cafeteria line so she moved me over there and I worked over there until it closed, because they close it after summer. She put me in the snack bar and I worked in the snack bar. I liked that, because we’d cook our orders, and serve them, and get to talk to the customers, and everything, and I liked that.

I worked with, let’s see, there was Corinne Hunt—Corinne. Name was Corinne, is how they said it. And Letha Cordry, Mickie Chandler, and Edith Stanley. I got to thinking about them on the way, of Edith and Henry Stanley. Henry was the custodian, and Edith worked there, and they had an adopted daughter, Mary. She worked there. She married a Stivers, but she worked there. I think she worked under the name Stivers, but anyway, they were my friends. You got to be friends with everybody.

**Finchum** *Working that closely and that many hours.*

**Miller** Uh-huh, you do. You know everything about them. That’s the way it was.

**Finchum** *Becomes family.*

**Miller** Yeah.

**Finchum** *Why didn’t the sandwich line work out for you?*

**Miller** I was real nervous and trying to get the orders that’d come in, and trying to get them. It was a lot different then, because you just had an oven. You couldn’t throw stuff in the microwave, and you’d get a bunch of orders out. Then their char-broiler broke down, so we was having to try and cook steaks back there too. It was just too much. I’ve never done that kind of work and it was too much.

**Finchum** *So how old would you have been?*

**Miller** I was twenty—about twenty-three.

**Finchum** *So you liked the snack bar the best?*

**Miller** Oh yes, I loved that. I got the darnedest thing one time. I got to talking—the college kids from Miami [Oklahoma] would stop in on their way to Tulsa or on their way home. That was…people would stop in there. That was the place. We’d have people that would plan their trip to stop there. Back then we had pancakes. I’ve never eaten pancakes to compare with those pancakes. I don’t—I’d give anything for that recipe, because they made everything from scratch. They made that pancake batter down in the bakery and then they would bring it up and set it in our walk-in. It would sit in there in big crock things, and it’d kind of raise. When we needed pancake batter for either the restaurant or the snack bar, we’d go in there and dip us up a bunch of it and go out. I would buy it by the gallon and take home. A lot of us did. I don’t know what was different about it, but it was the best pancake. People would come in there for the pancakes.

**Finchum** *Regulars?*

**Miller** Oh yeah! That was the place. People traveled that road all the time. They had great, big lollipops that every kid wanted those great, big lollipops. They had something like a pinwheel or something. Great, big, and every kid —I think they sold for twenty-five dollars.

**Finchum** *Must’ve been a pretty big lollipop.*

**Miller** It was a BIG lollipop. (Laughs) They had smaller ones too, but we just—that twenty-five dollar lollipop! That’s pricey today, too. Course they didn’t sell very many of them but still. We had an assistant manager, Thelma. I can’t remember what her last name was [Nafus]. She lived in Miami. We had a fish pond in the front of the dining room with great, big goldfish in it.

**Finchum** *In the building?*

**Miller** In the building, in the front of the dining room. As you came in you would stand there to be seated, and you was right in front of the fish. The fish pond was right over here and you stood here and you could look down at the fish pond and stuff. The water would be rippling. It was neat. It was a big, rock front. It was pretty and she took care of the fish. She had names for them.

**Finchum** *Would people toss coins into it?*

**Miller** Yep.

**Finchum** *Would they?*

**Miller** Yeah. Then the lollipops sat on the desk there where you checked in. That was right there so if they wanted that. I was trying to think who the hostess was then. I don’t know if it was Ms. Reed. Geraldine Reed was a hostess one time.

**Finchum** *For the Broiler Room?*

**Miller** Uh-huh.

**Finchum** *Did you work in the Broiler Room?*

**Miller** Uh-huh. I ended up going in there.

**Finchum** *Being a server, a waitress?*

**Miller** Yeah, yeah. I was the last one when it was closed up to make it...That was my third trip there was when they closed it up to make it a McDonald’s. I was the last one. At the time they was phasing it all out, and I was doing it all. I was waiting, and doing the register, and seating, and I’m slow. We had a highway patrolman that came in there when I first was working there, and I was working at the snack bar. His name was Jack Frost. They had all—highway patrolmen, everybody come in there, and it was all of us talking and everything, you know. He got a big kick out of me. I guess I move kind of slow. He’d kid me and he called me—my nickname was Lightning. (Laughs) He’d come in there, “How you doing today, Lightning?” (Laughs)

We had Corinne’s daughters, the Hunt girls, Priscilla and Dorothy both worked there. I don’t know whatever happened to them, I’d like to know, but Mrs. Hunt was just—she had a big family, a bunch of kids. Her husband did the harvest, the wheat harvest. It just seemed like she mothered everybody. She was a special lady.

**Finchum** *So let’s back up and make sure we get this right. You said you worked there three times?*

**Miller** Uh-huh.

**Finchum** *So the first time you did what?*

**Miller** That’s when I did it all. I did the sandwich bar, I did…

**Finchum** *Cafeteria line.*

**Miller** …cafeteria line, snack bar, and then in the Broiler Room.

**Finchum** *That was for about how long?*

**Miller** Three—let’s see, two or three years.

**Finchum** *Then you took a break and did something else?*

**Miller** Yes, got married and I went to New Mexico, and I came back and went back to work there.

**Finchum** *Annabell was still there and hired you again?*

**Miller** Uh-huh. I was trying to think. I left…no, I worked there the first time a year or two, because I quit there and went and cooked at the state hospital. That’s where I got into cooking, the state hospital. Then I stopped and went to college and got a degree in education. I didn’t want to teach. So I ended up marrying—that’s when I married Miller. He was a truck driver. I ended up going with him on the truck some. Then we ended up buying a night club. So I got into that and we opened up a restaurant. I ran bingo. Between tending bar and running bingo, and cooking in the restaurant, it was pretty busy. Then he died and I ended up driving a truck again.

**Finchum** *A semi?*

**Miller** Uh-huh. And then when I decided I didn’t want to do that anymore I called Annabell again. (Laughs) And she put me to work that day.

**Finchum** *Where did she put you to work?*

**Miller** Dining room, Broiler Room.

**Finchum** *Waitress again.*

**Miller** Yep, I never varied then after that, because they’d started closing everything down. I’ll take that back, I did. They got to where they was closing the—how was it? I worked nights. They was phasing it down and they had too many waitresses and stuff, so you had to do something. I went to work nights in the…they had a—it was where the cafeteria was, but it was like a, I don’t know what you’d call it. It was like a snack bar except they’d come through and pick up sandwiches. Kind of a cafe—I don’t know what you’d call it, because they come through and pick up sandwiches and order a drink, and you’d fix that, or if they wanted a hamburger you’d go back and cook a hamburger for them and stuff.

**Finchum** *Maybe short order?*

**Miller** Yeah, something like that. I don’t know what you’d call it, but anyway, that’s what it was. I went to work there nights. Then when they opened up the dining room again, well I’d go back to the dining room.

**Finchum** *So the second time around, what time period—like years, might that have been?*

**Miller** Let’s see. That time I worked there…I’m trying to get my time together. I don’t know, I probably worked there—I just don’t know, couple of years probably.

**Finchum** *In the ’60s? Or would that have been in the ’70s?*

**Miller** That would’ve been—’70, that would’ve been in the early ’70s. I’m confused right now about…I came back from—that’s when I come back from New Mexico and went to work there. I’m trying to think about where I went after that. I must’ve moved or something, I did something. I don’t know, but anyway, I quit. I don’t know what I did.

**Finchum** *Was it still Host International at that point? At the second time around?*

**Miller** No, it was Howard Johnson’s.

**Finchum** *Okay.*

**Miller** The first time I wore the yellow.

**Finchum** *And the second time?*

**Miller** It was green. We had a green jumper-like thing. Those yellow uniforms…

**Finchum** *Was it still called Glass House?*

**Miller** It’s always Glass House. To me it’s still the Glass House. I don’t know what anybody else calls it.

**Finchum** *When Howard Johnson’s had it was it still referred to the Glass House?*

**Miller** Uh-huh.

**Finchum** *But uniforms were green?*

**Miller** Yes. They had like a green—like a jumper that come around you and tied. You had a brown, plaid shirt. Then if you worked over on the line part you wore pants, green pants.

**Finchum** *Women could wear pants?*

**Miller** Uh-huh, but you know back—they tell me when it first opened up they had a manager, and I can’t think what her name was. Annabell was the assistant manager when it first opened up, the way I understand it. You had to wear hose, and a girdle, and everything. They said she’d go by and hit you on the rear to make sure you had a girdle on.

**Finchum** *That wouldn’t happen today.*

**Miller** No, but when I worked there the first time we wore girdles or I did. I wore support hose, big old heavy support hose that you’d wash in the washing machine. They come from Penney’s. Just it was different. Those bows, you had to tie them just so-so, and it got to be an art, tying those white bows on that apron.

**Finchum** *You had to do it yourself backwards.*

**Miller** No, you did it in front and then turned it around. They was starched so stiff, those yellow uniforms. One time Momma didn’t know and she took my yellow uniforms and washed them with fiberglass curtains. And I didn’t know what was—digging, and digging, and digging. We liked to never got that out of there. My God. (Laughs) Here I’m digging and digging at work! (Laughs)

We had lemon pies, mile-high lemon pie, on the menu for the dining room, the Broiler Room. That was the first time, that was when it was Host. We had strawberry shortcakes that would be piled up with a sponge cake like they do, and we’d have a big old dip of ice cream in it and put the strawberries on it and then cover it all over with whipped cream, put a strawberry right on top. People, when they’d take that out (gasps) they would just—and something about that pie. You’d walk by with that pie, that lemon pie. It was, it was up high. Those guys downstairs made it big. We covered it with whipped cream, stood it up and put whipped cream on it. Everybody would have a fit over that.

Then we had a deep-dish apple pie. They kept it on the steam table back in the—where the…she was a cook. She did the broiler cook and stuff like that. She had her steam set up, her little steam table with our mashed potatoes and everything like that in it. That apple pie, and it was hot apples with cinnamon, with raisins, and almonds, and stuff. They’d put it in a bowl, hot bowl, that hot stuff. Then they had rounds of pastry that they’d put on top. Then they’d put a big cheddar cheese ball on top of that and then put hot cinnamon sauce on top of that. That was quite the deal.

**Finchum** *Sounds really good.*

**Miller** Yeah!

**Finchum** *And it probably didn’t cost very much in those days.*

**Miller** I can’t remember what they cost, probably not.

**Finchum** *I think I saw on the menu forty-five cents or something like that.*

**Miller** Probably.

**Finchum** *Would you do that or would someone in the…*

**Miller** The lady that worked the broiler would do it.

**Finchum** *So the waitresses didn’t have to?*

**Miller** No, we made our salads. We had our salads set back there, and we’d go make up our salads and stuff. We got our bread out of the breadbox and picked up our food up there from the deal. But that was—yeah. We’d take a, on our baked potatoes, we took a little triad thing out with the bacon bits, butter, and sour cream, and held it for the people to get stuff out.

Then we had a chicken pot pie on the menu that we’d take it out in a little bowl. They’d set it up for us in a bowl, and it had the pastry like the pie had. We’d take that out to the table and then we would stand there and take the crust off and put it in their plate and then spoon the filling over it and stuff for them. That was quite a presentation.

**Finchum** *Yes, interesting way to do it.*

**Miller** Uh-huh, yeah. I’ve thought so many times—in these restaurants they’ll serve chicken pot pie, but that was the perfect way, because nothing was wasted. It was all fresh and everything. It wasn’t doughy and gooey. Of course we didn’t have a microwave, so everything was kept hot back in the back. We’d put it in this big steam unit and get it hot. Then we’d take it out and—now I did that when I was on sandwich bar, and we’d put foil over those big pans and stick it on the steam table. We had a table there with hot water in it. That’s what kept everything warm.

**Finchum** *Would the chicken pot pie have a bottom crust or was it just the top?*

**Miller** No, just the top.

**Finchum** *And so it was cooked in a metal pan with the pastry on top?*

**Miller** No, it wasn’t cooked that way. It was your vegetables and your chicken stock that was thickened and everything, and we had mixed vegetables. It would just be—it would be in a bowl. I can’t remember if she dipped—no, it was in the bowls. We fixed the bowls of it back in the back, and we’d have little crocks and we’d have those vegetables and that stock in them. She’d have them out in a warmer, I think, in a drawer. When she got an order, she’d take it out and sit it on a plate. Then she’d take this crust and put it on top of that crock. Put a, I think, a sprig of parsley on top of it, best I can remember, because it had to be garnished.

We’d take it out as a waitress, we’d pick it up, put it on our tray. It seems like it sat, there would be a plate, and then a liner, and then the bowl. We would take the liner off, put the plate down or the plate was there. I guess we’d put the plate down. We picked the deal up, put the plate down, and then we’d stand there with a big spoon that was there and take the crust off and put it in the plate. Then we’d put the filling on top of that and fix it for them.

**Finchum** *So the crust was already cooked. It wasn’t…*

**Miller** Right, the guys down in the bakery would cook up rounds of pastry that was about that thick, (gestures) best way I remember it. We used them for the deep dish pies and the chicken pot pie. It worked out. It did double duty.

**Finchum** *Probably tasted good just by itself.*

**Miller** Oh yeah! I bet! (Laughs) They had good food, they really did. When I first went to work there they had already discontinued the steaks. We had a chopped steak, and I think they had shrimp and pork chops. For the first little bit they might have had a T-bone on there. Back, I guess when I opened, they had everything. I can remember we lived in Wichita and Judy Canova was a—that’s before your time, but that was an actress, and she sang, and she had pigtails. A comedy deal. Mom had got the *Vinita Journal,* she had it sent to Wichita, and there in the *Journal* was where Judy Canova had stopped at the Glass House. They had all kinds of people. That was back before people flew everywhere.

**Finchum** *Okay. So then the third time? What did you—what was the time?*

**Miller** Let’s see, that was…

**Finchum** *Before McDonald’s? After McDonald’s?*

**Miller** Before, just before. I was one of the last ones out when it was made McDonald’s.

**Finchum** *So it was still Howard Johnson’s the third time?*

**Miller** Yes, and I was there three years that time.

**Finchum** *Did Annabell hire you again that time?*

**Miller** Uh-huh.

**Finchum** *So she was there…*

**Miller** She was there. Every time she hired me, every time.

**Finchum** *You always left on good terms then or she wouldn’t have hired you back.*

**Miller** Oh yeah, and when I quit the one time to go to the state hospital she told me, she says, “You’re making a big mistake. You’re making a mistake, Brenda. You should stay here.” And I’ve thought so many times…

**Finchum** *She was right, huh?*

**Miller** I look back—I had a calendar and I kept track of my tips. It was amazing that later on in years I worked other places, and I found that and looked at it, and the tips haven’t changed that much. You made that much more there.

**Finchum** *What was the biggest one you ever got? Do you remember?*

**Miller** Probably—oh, a dollar tip we called it a George, and a dollar tip was nice. If you made a five, oh my gosh!

**Finchum** *Did you have a name for it?*

**Miller** No. (Laughs) You just beamed! I know one time I had a table, it was a family, and the man laid a five down and put it down. I watched him put it down, and oh boy, I was so tickled. When I went to clear the table it wasn’t there. Someone said, “His wife picked it up.” I was just heartbroken. I told Annabell, I said, “Oh!” She says, “Now Brenda, don’t be that upset with her.” I said, “But that ain’t….” She says “Look, if a woman does something like that maybe she needs the money and he didn’t give it to her. Maybe that’s how she had to come up with her money.” “Really?” “You stop and think about it.”

Then Annabell told me one time...I mean, Annabell was something else. She told me one time—Mom was calling wanting me to do this, wanting me to do that. And every time I moved I was supposed…I’ve been an only child. You’re supposed to answer and be right there, you know? I was upset about it. She says, “I know, it’s rough. My Mom’s the same way. I learned a long time ago that one of you has to be an adult. If they’re going to be this way and act childish, then you have to stand up and be the adult.” I always remembered that. You have to look at things from all different angles. She taught me that. Don’t just look at it one way. Everybody’s got a different view. She was good with everybody, I think.

**Finchum** *A good people-person it sounds like.*

**Miller** She was, she had a lot of wisdom. I don’t think people appreciated her enough. You know a lot of times when you’re right there, you don’t, until you look back. When it’s happening it just travels by, and your emotions get all involved. You’re either happy or you’re sad, or something in your private life’s interfering and stuff, or you’ve got a bill to pay. You don’t realize the big picture. It’s amazing what we go through in life. It’s a shame you have to get so danged old before you realize all that. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *It’s the journey, though, they say.*

**Miller** It’s a journey, and I tell everybody young to make memories and do what you can. We had a librarian in Vinita, Ms. Moss. We’d go in there and just visit with her. I did, I just loved her. She was in City Hall at the time. She was telling when she was in college one time she could either—she had a chance to go to something, some kind of a play or something. Or she could eat. She chose the play. She says, “If you get a chance to do something and you know it’s not going to come around again, you better do it.” I’ve often thought about that. If you get a chance, do what you can, because it might not come around again. That applies to all of it. The Glass House was special. I can’t remember what the guy’s name was that bought supplies. It was interesting. People would go under that thing and honk. Everybody honked when they went under that. My boyfriend, “Who’s that honking at you?” (Laughter)

**Finchum** *Wouldn’t you like to know?*

**Miller** Yeah, that was it.

**Finchum** *Would you have to clean the windows?*

**Miller** No, we’d clean them up just so far. One time I made a gal—that was the third time around. I was working with this girl, that poor girl was so lazy, oh my God. If she made a sandwich, she couldn’t use both hands. She’d use one hand. I’d tell her, I said, “God gave you two hands. You’re supposed to use both hands and your brain.” (Laughs) One time we had an inspection coming up. We’ve got to get all these booths cleaned, we’ve got to get everything done. Well I’d made her mad, because I criticized the way she made sandwiches, I guess. I had to do all of them by myself. So I learned sometimes it’s not always wise to do that. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Or you could’ve let Annabell in on what was going on.*

**Miller** Yeah.

**Finchum** *Were there any stranded travelers during snowstorms or anything like that?*

**Miller** Oh yes, yes. That’s an event. We had a blizzard, and it was a *blizzard*. That night I got off late, and my folks was calling to see if I made it home okay, if I was going to make it home. “I’ll make it, I’ll make it.” “Well, if you’re not home by such-and-such, I’m going to come out there.” “Okay.” So Mike Lewis and my cousin, Betty Cox, and me, we got off work and we went down and got in my little old blue [Chevrolet] Chevelle to come home. Betty and I did. Mike got in his car, whatever it was. We all got stuck. I tore the transmission out of my car trying to get out. Here comes Daddy, big, old Pontiac. He got stuck.

So Pat Layer comes out in the equipment to clear off the parking lot and he takes us back to Vinita. The next morning we go out to work. I do, there’s no electricity. Everything’s electric except one grill. They’re trying to run that place. Course there’s trucks all over, there’s cars all over, there’s everything and we’re trying to run that restaurant with that one grill. They’d make coffee by boiling water and pouring it off the coffee grounds. Then we was trying to keep it warm in the pots with candles. People was complaining about their cold coffee. Well, they was lucky to get any coffee at all. They was trying to take care of everybody and feed them and everything. We did the best we could, but oh Lord, we was glad when that electric come back on. Then I was working there in the Broiler Room one time when the broiler got on fire. That was exciting. They come in with fire extinguishers and there’s people sitting all over. Yeah, they had to close it down for a day or two.

There’s just too many things to—we used to have proms on the other side of the cafeteria line. They’d set that up for banquets, and proms, and…Bob Shoulders used to play there, Larry Thompson and all of them. “Cherry Pie,” I can remember them playing that at the proms and stuff. Everybody dressed up and stuff. My first day there, very first day, they had a prom. I was not—I’d never been in a restaurant kitchen or anything. Annabell puts me to tearing up lettuce for salads. I didn’t know what romaine was and it was different to me, tearing that stuff up and fixing those salads for that.

Then one time we whipped butter, this is all my experience in the kitchen there, and we whipped our own butter. So they told me to—big mixer was sitting there. I’d never been around anything like that, never watched it done. They told me, “You put so many pounds of butter in that thing,” the oleo.” Can’t remember if you put so much water or something. Anyway, I put the wire whip in it. I didn’t know to use a paddle. I put that wire whip in and started it going. All of that cold butter got in the middle of that wire whisk. I didn’t know what to do. Here we are trying to dig that butter, that oleo, out of that thing. Finally, that wasn’t working too good. So I got the bright idea to stick it in the oven, and melt it, and get it out of it that way. So I did that and I stuck it in there. Needless to say, I did not get the kind of butter I was supposed to get. (Laughs) Then one time she had me sautéing mushrooms, that was different, and I learned to clean shrimp. We had boiled shrimp, and I learned how to clean them, which I’d never done.

**Finchum** *Did you have to de-vein them?*

**Miller** Yeah, that’s what I was learning how to do.

**Finchum** *I don’t know how to do that either.*

**Miller** You should work for Annabell. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *I don’t think I’d last very long.*

**Miller** Then she had something on there I loved. She’d make an orange biscuit. It was orange juice thickened and then she put her biscuits on top of it and bake it. Oh, they was good. Annabell was always coming back there, and for some of those dinners she’d fix chicken. I can’t remember what kind of spices, but she’d put a marinade on the chicken breast and bake them. That’s what we had for banquets a lot.

**Finchum** *And she would do that?*

**Miller** She’d be back there overseeing it, yeah. Seeing that it was done, yeah.

**Finchum** *Pick the menu?*

**Miller** Yeah, yeah. She was right there. She was hands on. She wouldn’t stay right with you, but she’d pass through to see and she’d come up with menus and tell you what was going to go on.

**Finchum** *Would she handle the difficult customers? Like if someone wanted to complain about something, would she handle that or did you have to do it yourself?*

**Miller** It started with us and then we’d turn it over to the hostess. Then if the hostess had an issue, it just kept going. Warren or…Warren was just (laughs)…

**Finchum** *Very calm.*

**Miller** Oh yes, I tell you what—I tell him, “If you move any slower you’re going to be going backwards.” That man never got in a hurry. I never saw him walk fast, ever.

**Finchum** *I wouldn’t think he’d get frustrated very easy either.*

**Miller** No.

**Finchum** *Just calm, cool. They balanced each other pretty well, him and Annabell?*

**Miller** Yeah, I never did see her get really upset, that I can remember. She got me to eating macaroni and cheese with chili on it. That was one of her specials. We’d have macaroni and she’d go get her a plate of macaroni. That was on the cafeteria line a lot of times. She’d go through and get her a plate of macaroni and top it off with chili. When I first saw that I thought, “Oh my God.” Well, I had to try it. Now I want macaroni and chili or chili on my eggs. She got me to eating chili on everything.

**Finchum** *And it was homemade chili, or a house made chili?*

**Miller** Yeah, to start with it was. They made everything, they made their soup. They had a delicious homemade vegetable soup. I think Edith made it. Then in the bakery, Kirkendoll, Charlie made a lot of it.

**Finchum** *Okay, yes he talked about making things.*

**Miller** Yeah, I’d like to get those recipes from him.

**Finchum** *He doesn’t have them, I asked him.*

**Miller** Really?

**Finchum** *Yeah, I asked. He didn’t know.*

**Miller** I wonder if they’re just lost.

**Finchum** *I don’t know. Plus you’d have to break it down to an individual size, you know, or family size. Not ten pounds at a time. I don’t know.*

**Miller** Yeah, I’ve been used to doing that because I did institutional cooking and everything. I’ve gone through so many things. I used to, when I had my bingo place, I’d cook for the bingo players. I love to cook.

**Finchum** *At the reunion you ask someone. You need to start a recipe book.*

**Miller** I will. I know it! They made their blue cheese dressing.

**Finchum** *Was house made?*

**Miller** Yes! Their Thousand…and that was before ranch. We had Thousand Island, and blue cheese, and French. The French, I think they bought the French, but they made the Thousand and the blue cheese. I know I got back there to try to see how the blue cheese was made, and it was with mayonnaise, and sour cream or buttermilk, and blue cheese crumbles.

**Finchum** *Either one would be good.*

**Miller** Yeah! Edith made that.

**Finchum** *Okay. A cookbook, someone needs to do. Then entertainment, someone had mentioned flamingos? Flamingo dancers or something like that?*

**Miller** Oh yes. I was working there and I had a busload of flamingo dancers that didn’t speak English. They was traveling through. There was like three of us waitresses, nobody spoke Spanish. We’re trying to get the orders and we had a big hot dog on the menu. I think I sold a lot of hot dogs. (Laughs) That was easy to…but oh my goodness, that was memorable. Then one time I was working…the last time when I was working over there everybody had gone home but me. I was left in there by myself for some reason. Either—they was doing something, but I was there by myself and I got a busload. I had to cook it and get the register, all of it. Oh my gosh. You know you can just do what you can do.

**Finchum** *Did you tell them, “I’m here by myself so be patient.”*

**Miller** Oh yeah.

**Finchum** *Most people are if they know that upfront.*

**Miller** Yeah, yeah. Yu just do the best you can and laugh a lot. (Laughs) If you show you’re frustrated, it just adds to it, so you have to just…I’ve learned that through time. You can say a lot of things if you smile. I made one guy mad. I guess he was somebody, wasn’t anybody to me. I didn’t know him. We were busy, busy, busy. They seated him on my station. Oh, he had an attitude and I was doing the best I could to take care of everything. He just kept on and pretty soon I looked at him and I said, “You know Sir, you didn’t have to stop here. We’re doing the best we can. There is other places to eat.” “You can’t talk to him that way!” I said, “Hey!” “Oh my God, that’s such and such!” “Okay.” “You darn sure won’t get a tip and he’s a big-tipper.” “Well, that’s the way it is.” When he left he left me a big tip and his attitude changed. (Laughs) I thought, “Oh my goodness, I’m in trouble now,” but it all worked out.

**Finchum** *Had to bite your tongue a lot of times I bet, did you?*

**Miller** Oh yeah, but when you’re as pushed to your limit you just…like I say, you get stressed too. It always bugged me that some of the waitresses, we had a few, that would brag about conning the people into tipping them and stuff. How they worked them and they did that. That rubbed me the wrong way. I’m a people-person and I always tried to do the best I could and be good to people. I didn’t want to feel like I was using them or conning them. I never did like that.

**Finchum** *There were more travelers than locals?*

**Miller** Yeah, we didn’t have very many locals. That would be—we had a few people that would come out. Really that was the best place, nicest place, to come unless you went to the lake. People go over on Grand Lake and eat, places like that, but the Glass House was *the* place. They’d come out. I guess back when it first opened up it was *really* the place to go, but by the time I got there—it was the first time I was there. People came out more. And we had big business meetings. GRDA [Grand River Dam Authority] came out there. As a matter of fact, GRDA would come out for their meetings.

**Finchum** *Grand River…*

**Miller** Dam Authority. My cousin, Imogene Barbie, was secretary to the chief engineer. I’d tell her that they was coming out and everything. I’d go around and take their orders. I’d look at him and he had the prettiest blue eyes. He was always smoking a pipe. He was so distinguished and everything. One night we was out dancing, and he was there and he was single. Well, I started dating him. I dated him for two years, so that was—I got to meet him there. Then we moved on with our lives. Later on, oh, when I moved down here ten years ago, we started dating again. We stayed friends until he died. He died on my birthday. That was a long friendship.

**Finchum** *Those blue eyes hung with you.*

**Miller** Oh yes. He was something. (Laughs) You never get over something like that. My son said, “Momma, I’d never made it out of the third grade without him.” He helped him with his lessons. You met a lot of interesting people there. Some of them stayed in your life and some of them didn’t. But you know I’ll bet you the customers, if there was some way of getting in touch, or having some kind of a deal to where customers—because that was a place they all remembered stopping there. I’ll bet the customers have as many stories as the employees.

**Finchum** *Did they stop for the food or just to say they’ve been to the Glass House and for a photograph?*

**Miller** Both.

**Finchum** *They always wanted a window seat?*

**Miller** Yep, oh yeah. It was so hot in the summer, that sun coming in there. We had those old yellow uniforms on, it was nylon—hot. Starched aprons and we were supposed to wear a little, black tie around our neck. I hated that tie. If they caught you without that tie you had to buy another one. There’s no telling how many rolls of ribbon I bought, because I was getting caught forever without that tie on. It was too hot to wear that tie! (Laughs) “Brenda, where’s your tie? Come here.” (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Well, did you have to report your tips or…*

**Miller** No.

**Finchum** *…just keep it quiet?*

**Miller** Yep, nothing was reported. I found it a bad policy to discuss your, because some of them was always bragging, “I made this, I made that.” That causes jealousy. Someone’s got—you’ve got your feelings hurt, somebody else’s got their feelings hurt or something. It just causes…so I got to where I never discussed tips. I never counted my tips until I went home, because you’d see some of them standing there counting their tips. They’d have their little jar sitting there and counting their tips and stuff. I never did.

**Finchum** *You’d keep them in your pocket?*

**Miller** Uh-huh. Some of them put them in a cup because I can remember them being in a cup. I don’t remember what the deal was. I can remember them standing there counting, because we had two stations. We had a front station and we had a back station. The second time I worked there, I guess it was. I can remember the girls standing with cups and counting their tips and I thought, “That’s not good.” We worked with—the last time I worked there Lucius Taylor was an assistant manager.

**Finchum** *Haven’t heard that name.*

**Miller** I know it! He was an assistant manager. Anyway, I saw him after I came back here. I was in at Braum’s and run onto him. He was working at a chicken factory. Somebody else they ought to interview is Sally Hamilton. Her name’s never came—I don’t know what her married name is now. She lives up at Blue Jacket. But she was a good waitress and she worked there a long time, and she was there when it closed. She went to Dayton, or something, they had a deal here. She went to work there and I don’t know whatever happened to her. But I loved Sally and there was a…I was trying to think of some of their names.

**Finchum** *The third time you came back, were there still some that had been there when you were there the first and second? Some that stayed the whole time?*

**Miller** Warren! (Laughs) And Vera Lee.

**Finchum** *So the third time would’ve been in the…*

**Miller** It was in the ’80s.

**Finchum** *McDonald’s came in, what? Mid-’80s, something like that?*

**Miller** I moved to Missouri in ’85. It probably closed in ’80—I was trying to think. My husband died in ’82 and then I drove the truck. I came back and went to work there in ’83 or ’84 and I was there three years.

**Finchum** *Okay so…*

**Miller** So, and then it was closed. They thought they could have it open as a McDonald’s in a year, but it didn’t happen. It took them longer than that to get it changed over.

**Finchum** *And it was Howard Johnson’s until McDonald’s?*

**Miller** Right. And it had gotten to where it was just more or less hamburgers by then. It didn’t have the—I was trying to think what was on the menu. They always had a chopped sirloin steak. They had that forever. They’d serve it with a big piece of onion on top it, grilled onion on top of it. I remember on one of the menus there was chili and rice. That was something different, I’d never…and that was on the menu. We had fish, fish and chips. I’m sure there was chicken strips of some kind.

**Finchum** *Had a breakfast menu?*

**Miller** Uh-huh.

**Finchum** *Was the bakery still on site?*

**Miller** No, not by then. I don’t know what they did for…no, the bakery closed. Used to, when it—the first time, the dish, where they did dishes was down below in the basement. First floor. Then they went up and they had a dumbwaiter on a conveyer that you would take your trays of dishes and stick them on that thing and they kept going down. Sometimes you’d miss and not get it on there just right or it wouldn’t be loaded and all of those dishes would all fall to the bottom. You’d hear all that. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *“I didn’t do it.”*

**Miller** (Laughs) Yeah! One time I was working there, we had hot syrup for the pancakes. The dishes sat here in the—the thing that pushed them up the elevator thing. We had a big old container of hot syrup, that we put on the pancakes, those scrumptious pancakes. We’d serve them with a great, big ball of butter on top of them. We’d go dig our butter out and stick on top of that. That’s how we served them, with a little hot container of syrup. I was getting syrup or doing something and I dumped that whole thing of syrup down that, all on that dishes. What a mess. I had to admit, “I did it!”

**Finchum** *Did they deduct anything from your paycheck?*

**Miller** (Laughs) They should have! Oh God, the clean-up. We had all kinds of things. We had a—I can’t think of what her name…her sister’s name was Virginia. We had some Duke girls that worked there and they was about—anyway, six feet tall, if not bigger. Big girls. The oldest one, we’d have—she’d have a bus tub and I can’t remember. I think we went back and got the ice in a bus tub and took it out there. When she got through she’d just take that bus tub and she could push it and it would go all the way back to the ice machine. It was like bowling. It got to be a deal. The mugs, we had big, old mugs that we served. I can’t remember, we had big, yellow trays that we carried stuff out on. We’d have those mugs. I bet they weighed a pound. There’s no telling what those trays weighed when we piled them all up.

**Finchum** *Yeah, you’re little. I’m thinking…*

**Miller** Yeah! They could, oh my God. We carried that out and we had our tree stand set out there. You knew how to get down to get out from under that. I never could carry it like this. (Gestures above shoulder) I never could do that. I’d have to carry it on my arm like this. It was something else.

**Finchum** *Good times.*

**Miller** Yeah. If you got the back, I got to where I liked to work the back. You got bigger tables back—I didn’t really like the big tables, but I’d take it back there because I’d say, “I need the exercise. I’ll do it.” Because we’d be running back and forth, that way I got my exercise. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *What kind of shoes did you wear?*

**Miller** Those big, old, white nurse’s shoes.

**Finchum** *Nursing shoes? Okay.*

**Miller** Yeah, big, old, white nurse’s shoes. Every time.

**Finchum** *Good traction and good support I guess.*

**Miller** Yeah. That’s what we wore. Those big, white shoes and support hose. That support hose, oh man. I hated those things. Then you’d cook hamburgers and be around that all day and then you’d decide to go out dancing. You smelled like a hamburger, don’t you know that? (Laughs)

**Finchum** *And onions, yes.*

**Miller** I’ve thought about that. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *The whole cafeteria probably had a unique smell to it with all of those things being cooked.*

**Miller** Oh yeah, and they made some kind of a spaghetti they called “Oklahoma Spaghetti.” I’ve never seen a recipe for it, but my gosh, I loved it. It had vegetables in it. I can remember there was carrots, and peppers, and spaghetti. We had it on the cafeteria line.

**Finchum** *Did it have a sauce? A tomato-based sauce?*

**Miller** It was all in it. It was just a big pot of this stuff.

**Finchum** *And the noodles were mixed in with it?*

**Miller** Uh-huh, yeah. And you’d just dip it out on the cafeteria line. I worked that cafeteria line with Edwina Hoskins. She was a gal, and with her sister-in-law, Janie Goins. I worked there with them. I can remember closing up and everything. Our hot dogs, when I worked in the snack bar I’d just go back and forth. You can tell I can’t stay on any one subject. Whoever’s going over this is going to have a heyday. Anyway, our hot dogs we would cut diagonal little cuts in them and then they would put them on the grill. When you put them on the grill they kind of open up and brown real good. So it made them look really good. Our eggs in there, we cooked eggs in a skillet. We put them on the grill, we put a pat of butter in that skillet, and we cracked our eggs in a bowl and we put them in the skillet then, out of that bowl. You’d flip them. Got to where I could flip eggs. Couldn’t use a spatula on the skillet, you had to flip them.

**Finchum** *Do you cook much today?*

**Miller** No, it’s just me and the dogs, and the dogs aren’t picky. (Laughs) I do cook as a matter of fact. I cook at a Wyandotte food site. I’m on call. I cooked yesterday. I’m on call. I go visit with the seniors, and they say there’s never a dull moment if I’m around. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *I believe it, and that’s a good thing.*

**Miller** Yeah! We all have fun and if you can’t laugh then you better find something else to do. Actually, I think the Glass House, out of everything I’ve done, I think the Glass House was the best. I worked at Tan-Tar-A up on Lake of the Ozarks and around. That was unique. That was a good place. It was kind of like the Glass House in a way, because you had some of your repeat customers. I had special people. But it was—looked out. Had big windows and looked over the lake where at the Glass House you looked out over the turnpike and the airport. They’d have fly-ins. They used to have fly-ins there at the Glass House. I don’t know if they do now or not. It was…

**Finchum** *A good thing for Vinita and a good thing for you.*

**Miller** Oh yes, it wasn’t just me. I mean the people that have worked there, that it’s helped, people that had never worked with the public. Of course I was raised working with the public, but there was people that had never been exposed to anything like that. Annabell was good to try and work you around where you could work in. I don’t think she ever put anybody in a position that they couldn’t, you know. I have to give her a lot of credit, I really do.

**Finchum** *Sounds like she opened a lot of doors for people too.*

**Miller** She did! And she took care of people.

**Finchum** *Sounds like all of you gave a good impression of Oklahoma, since it was tourists coming through.*

**Miller** Oh yeah. They’d ask us, “What does those signs mean? *Don’t drive into the smoke*?” “Well, when the Indians get on the warpath…” (Laughs)

**Finchum** *They’d believe you?*

**Miller** Yeah! They’d come in wanting to see the Indians and stuff. (Laughs) Yeah, yeah. They had postcards there. They’d drop them in and we picked up the postcards and looked at them. It would be funny, “We haven’t seen any Indians.” Just—it was funny.

**Finchum** *They would mail them and you would read what they wrote?*

**Miller** Yeah, because it was just a little postcard and they’d drop them in to send them off, because they’d pick them up and take them to the post office. Annabell, or somebody did. So they was just laying there. So we’d pick them up and look to see what their remarks was. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *I bet you did see some interesting ones.*

**Miller** Yeah, yeah. It was and we when was wearing those yellow dresses, we had a ball. I worked in the snack bar with Dorothy and Priscilla too. We was young. I was in my twenties and they was both young, so we had a lot of fun and college boys and stuff coming in. College kids and stuff. One time I was waiting on these college boys. This one—they’d been stopping every week. So you got to talking to them. He was asking me about myself. I said, “Well, I’ve got two boys.” “Really? What’s their names?” I said, “Billy Paul and Bradley Galen.” He said, “Galen?” I said, “Yeah.” “That’s my name!” I said, “Oh really?” “Why’d you name him Galen?” I said, “Well, my cousin’s doctor’s name’s Galen. When I was naming him she wanted to name him after her doctor.” He says, “That’s funny, my dad’s name’s Galen and he’s a doctor.” Come to find out my son was named after his dad. Just, you know, how often would that happen?

**Finchum** *Not very. Small world.*

**Miller** Yes, she still talks about Dr. Galen. Course they’re all dead now and she’s ninety-five or ninety-six, something like that. We still discuss it.

**Finchum** *We’ve covered a lot, is there one more story you want to tell before we close out?*

**Miller** Well, we’ve covered the ice storm, we’ve covered the flamingo dancers, we’ve covered buses, covered the cafeteria line…Speedy Woolman was quite a guy there.

**Finchum** *Speedy?*

**Miller** Speedy Woolman, Speed Woolman. He worked in the station and he ran those steps, that was his exercise. He’d run up and down those steps to get his exercise. He was always laughing and going on. He was there a long time. And there was a Walker that worked in the station, and there was a Jordan. That was my son’s brother-in-law for a while. He was working there and one night I come in. There was this dog out there on the parking lot. I’m a dog lover. It was a cocker, but oh my God it had—don’t know when it had ever seen a groomer. It had been dumped, and it had sticks—most pitiful thing you ever saw. James Jordan, they said, “We’re going to shoot it.” I said, “No, you’re not.” I was trying to think of the other boy’s name. He called me Mom all the time. They all called me Mom. I said, “No you’re not. I’m taking that dog home with me.” “Oh, you don’t want that dog.” I said, “I’m taking the dog home with me. That is a cocker. I’m taking it. I’m going to get it cleaned up.” They was just teasing me.

I said, “James, find some scissors and try to cut some of that stuff off that dog.” So James looked around until he found some scissors. He tried to bathe the dog and tried to cut it. I mean he worked on it. He had blisters on his hand. So when my boyfriend come in, he’d been to a rodeo, he was a bull rider. He’d been to the rodeo. I said, “There’s a dog downstairs. I want you to take it home, take it to my house.” “Oh.” I said, “I said.” (Laughs) So I got the dog. I worked on that dog. Finally my boyfriend says “Brenda, I’m taking it to Tulsa and get it groomed.” So that’s what he did. He took it to Tulsa and got its hair cut off. They had to shave it. Then there was this little old lady that needed a pet, so she got the dog, so it worked out. She had that dog for a long time. But that was something else.

**Finchum** *It was meant for you to see it that night then.*

**Miller** Yeah, it worked out for everybody. God works in strange ways.

**Finchum** *He does, well I’m glad he brought you here today.*

**Miller** I am too. I’m just glad it all worked out. There’s so many stories, so many people, and I don’t know why more don’t’ want to contribute.

**Finchum** *Maybe they will later.*

**Miller** I hope because everybody’s got…when I worked there the first time, well the gal that they’ve got at Shout & Sack, Looney. It was Jodie Looney and she married Chris…oh golly, age. Anyway, he was in the service. She was working there and I always felt like she was a little above me. We got to be friends and we went to see *Gone with the Wind* together. Just, I don’t know, you got to meet all people that you wouldn’t run into. Now one gal that worked there, somehow a guy that lived in San Francisco saw her picture and decided he wanted to meet her. She just up and married him and moved to…I wondered whatever happened to a deal like that. You always had people coming in.

One time I had a guy come in, young guy. I was single, had the two kids. I was divorced. It was winter and he was hauling cattle. He asked me out. “I better not. Aw, what the heck. Yeah, I’ll go.” I was just breaking up with this guy that I liked. “It’s okay.” So it comes a snow storm and I was going to—I decided, “No, I don’t want to do this. This isn’t right. You don’t just…” I was going to stand him up. I was going to leave. Here comes a snowstorm and I thought, “He won’t show up because he was from Pittsburgh.” He was a ranger, a Special Forces. It was when Vietnam was going on. He’d gone through a lot in Special Forces. So he didn’t seem to have a real big sense of humor and I just—I talked to him a lot before I’d said I’d go. Then I decided not to. Low and behold he knocks on the door. My kids run to the door, of course. “Hi, who are you? My mama’s going to stand you up.” “Was you?” “Yeah.” Anyway, he called me when he got home. He said “Well, I’ll just go.” So he left and he did call me when he—says, “I run off the road several times getting home, I want you to know.” I never heard from him anymore. (Laughs) Leave it to kids. You always wonder what happens to people.

**Finchum** *Yes. As many you see come through, you wonder what the end of the story is.*

**Miller** Yeah! With him being in the Special Forces and stuff because they come back with some issues. I dated one that had been a POW [prisoner of war] years ago. I just can’t imagine what they went through. You lose somebody and it’s hard to lose them. If you know somebody you love has been tortured or is being tortured and everything, it’s just—I can’t imagine. I don’t want to.

**Finchum** *Just keep the good memories at front and center.*

**Miller** Yeah, but it takes the bad to appreciate the good.

**Finchum** *That’s true too.*

**Miller** If you win all the time you don’t appreciate it. That’s like if you have everything you want, there’s nothing to strive for.

**Finchum** *That’s true too. I think that’s a good way to stop today.*

**Miller** Yep. (Laughs)

**Finchum** *Thank you for coming.*

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