

FOREWORD

At its first meeting, the Sesquicentennial Folklore Committee decided to gather stories, memories, recollections and family tales from citizens (at least sixty-five years old) who had lived in or near Georgetown for most of their lives. The information would be organized and published in book form for the Sesquicentennial.

At Southwestern University, Dr. Martha Mitten Allen decided to combine Oral History and Folklore into a project as a part of a Texas History class. Dr. Allen, a historian specializing in Western history, has long been interested in the process and the product of Oral History as a teaching tool.

Dr. Allen provided the class and the community with a workshop focusing on Oral History. Approximately thirty-five college students and several citizens from town participated. Each student was required to record three to five hours of interviews and to write a paper which placed the interviewee in the context of Texas history. The students' reactions varied, ranging from enthusiasm about gaining social insights to nonchalance. However, the class as a whole was highly involved, turning in an unusually good set of papers. As the semester ended, Dr. Allen's shaping of the book began. Taking a semester's leave, she listened to the tapes and transcribed some of the stories of greatest general interest. From these individual stories emerged patterns and themes which make up the story of Georgetown itself. As Dr. Allen sought to find the right combination of stories, she put together a book that is, at once, funny and sad and tragic and endearing. As her appreciation of the stories and the storytellers deepened, Dr. Allen decided to complete the book with photographic portraits and for this task she chose one of the finest photographers in the area, David Sprague.

The Folklore Committee of the Georgetown Sesquicentennial is proud to present *Georgetown's Yesteryears*, Volume II, *The People Remember*. The first book of the series, *Reaching For The Gold Ring*, and this, the second book of the series, are largely due to the efforts of Dr. Martha Mitten Allen, for which we, the members of the committee, wish to express our appreciation. We hope that the community regards this series, as we do, to be one of its cultural treasures.

Esther M. Weir

PREFACE

Oral history has a particular richness all its own. It captures memories, many of which would never have been written without the taped interview. It records favorite stories, striking recollections, and personal glimpses in a dynamic sharing from one generation to the next.

The stories in this book are the product of oral history interviews with long-time residents of Georgetown. They were asked to recall an earlier period of community life and to describe it for others. The hours of tapes from which these few stories were taken form a large and rich resource to help future students understand Georgetown's past.

The stories range in time from about 1905 to the early 1940s, with most centering on the 1920s and 1930s. Some of the most compelling stories are those which record local memories of the Great Depression. What was it like when there was little money, when chopping cotton for 50 cents a day was good money, when teachers were paid in scrip, and when families had cornbread for breakfast? In these pages you will meet delightful persons from Georgetown's Yesteryears, such as Candy Bill and Mr. Box, the inventor. Most of all, you will meet friends and neighbors who have generously shared their special memories of earlier days in a special place - Georgetown, Texas.

This book is obviously the work of many people. The Georgetown residents, whose stories appear here; David Sprague, whose fine portraits accompany the stories; Dotty Secor, who typed the manuscript; and Dr. Bob Horick, who provided telecommunication consultation; all played vital roles. Without their contributions, we would still be discussing which type of tapes to use for the interviews. Morton King, Mildred Rucker, Michael R. Weir, and William B. Jones provided valuable last minute technical assistance.

Members of the Georgetown Sesquicentennial Folklore Committee provided advice, counsel, encouragement, and did some interviewing and transcribing. Members of the Committee are: Esther Weir (Chair), Jean Parker (Secretary), Jo Ann Ford, Patsy Brady, Sam Brady, John Score, Marjorie Herbert, Walt Herbert, Bob Phillips, Karen Stevens Hill, Guy Perry, Claude Kennard, Ellagene Lott, Mildred Killen, Beverly Truehardt, Teresa Wineinger, and Pat Osborne, and R.F.B. "Skip" Morse, ex-officio.

Linda Scarbrough of the Williamson County *Sun* graciously permitted the use of the photo of Alpha Slawson, which was taken by David Sprague and accompanied a "Special People" feature in the *Sun* in February of 1985. Thatcher Atkin loaned the portrait of Genevieve Atkin.

Southwestern University assisted in this project by giving the editor a sabbatical leave to work on the oral history tapes, by granting funds from the Cullen Faculty Development Fund, and by providing typing and telecommunication equipment.

Citizens State Bank, in recognition of its role in and appreciation of Georgetown's history, sponsored the printing of this book as part of its Sesquicentennial gift to Texas and to Georgetown. This gift made the publication of the book possible.

To all who helped – a hearty thank you. To the persons whose stories appear here, we are enriched by your memories and appreciate very much your willingness to share in *The People Remember*.

Martha Mitten Allen
Editor