MB: This is Mary Bond Archivist, with the University of Central Oklahoma and we are so delighted today to have guests from Texas and guests from Ohio. These are all members or descendants of the Fred and Ohla English family that resided in Edmond back in the [19]teen years. The Hunt family which was an 89er family and the English family that also came quiet early. Fred English married Ohla Hunt. Then we have these beautiful descendants here today. I am going to introduce Stanley Christmas and let him make the rest of the introductions and give where you’re from each one of you and then we are just going to visit here today for a while. We are in Evans Hall, restored library that was built around the time English Hall was built. Evans Hall was built in 1915-1916 and we are in that restored building today in the Special Collections and Archives of the University Libraries. Here is Stanley Christmas.

SC: Stanley Christmas I am here with my wife Judy and we are from North Ridgeland Hills, Texas. I am the grandson of Dorothy Rose English Christmas and with me is my Aunt Kathryn English Atkins and her cousin Ruth Fielding Welch

RW: From Youngstown, Ohio.

SC: From Youngstown, Ohio and Kathryn is from Dallas, Texas.
MB: Ruth Fielding Welch will you tell us when you came to school here, when you graduated from school, where you stayed and what part you played in the English Hall story here at the university and Community of Edmond, and that trip you took?

RW: My mother graduated from—at the time she graduated she was Ohla Hunt. Then she married Ed Fielding from Youngstown, Ohio. He had been in the rush and settled 80 acres from the rush. The car that we are talking about was a 1924 Ford and mother took four of us girls, Mary Fielding—graduates from Central High School in 1922 and the [in] 1924 she had her two year certificate from Central [State Teachers College, CSTC]. Then the other three of us was Nina Eunice Fielding, Emily Fielding, and myself, Ruth Fielding. I only attended Central my first and second grade and I had Ms. Hines as a teacher. Anything else, you want to take it from here?

SC: Tell us more about your trip to Ohio?

RW: Oh, the trip to Ohio, Okay surely.

SC: What were the roads like?

RW: All the roads in 1924 were nothing but mud. We got stuck no our little tin Lizzie went right through them where other cars got stuck. We went over the Ozarks and they seemed so high. But when I came through a few years ago we couldn't even find the Ozarks they are so level with all these super highways. But mother insisted that we go through every capital city on the way. We stopped first in Jefferson City, Missouri; then we went up into Illinois we had to go through Springfield, Illinois. What's the capital of Indiana?

SC: Indianapolis…

RW: …Indianapolis, Indiana, and then Columbus, Ohio on the way to Youngstown. Youngstown is in the North East border right next to Pennsylvania. Mary had finished her two year certificate here [CSTC]. She got a job teaching right away in 1924. She taught from [19]24 until she was married in [19]32. Of course when you were married in 1932 you had to quit teaching because they didn't allow married teachers. Anything else?

SC: Yeah, on your trip?

RW: On the trip, oh yes…

SC: Let’s go back to the trip. How often did you have to—where did you get gasoline?

RW: I don't remember. But what I do remember is all the crossroads when they had the white crosses. Every crossroad that had white crosses we knew it was very dangerous because there had been somebody killed at that crossroads, when they had the white crosses. So we were very careful when we came to those.

SC: How about over night, where did you stay the nights?
RW: Over night we had a little lean-too that was connected to the car like a little tent and we slept right there.

SC: How long did it take you to get Ohio?

RW: Seven days it took us to get to Ohio. Seven days.

SC: How did you eat?

RW: Oh yes, I can never forget the malted milk.

SC: Malted milk?

RW: We had jars of malted milk. Every time I wanted something it had to be malted milk. It was powdered malted milk.

KA: How did you keep it cold?

RW: It was powdered.

KA: Oh, you mixed it…

RW: No, we ate it with a spoon.

KA: Oh you ate the powder…

KA: Because you didn't have any water to mix it with?

RW: Not that I know of. I've forgotten, but I do remember dipping the spoon down and eating it. It was so good. Any other questions?

SC: How long where you in Ohio?

RW: Oh, well in 1924…

SC: I mean on the trip, how long did you stay in Ohio? Did you drive to back…

RW: Oh, oh, yes, alright we stayed that summer of 1924. Then mother had a job teaching in Prairie Dell, I think it was and she had to come back to Oklahoma to fulfill her teaching obligation. But we convinced her to let me stay in Ohio with my Dad. Mary the oldest daughter stayed in Ohio because she had her job teaching. The other two girls came back to Oklahoma with Mother and stayed the following winter. So in the spring of 1925, Mary and I came back to Oklahoma by train and stayed the summer and in the fall we all went back. I've been in Ohio ever since.

SC: So then you made two trips in the touring car?
RW: Yes, we made two trips in the touring car. The first trip we went through all the capitols. The second trip we went through Little Rock, Arkansas. This was the interesting one to me. We went to Little Rock and we parked over night in the capitol grounds in front of the capitol. We started to put our tent up and the lady across the street came and said it was rainy and you better come stay with us. So we went in and stayed all night with this party. In the conversation we found out that they were relatives.

KA: No kidding?

RW: …from the Sercey family in Little Rock, Arkansas.

MB: Ruth did you cook anything outdoors?

RW: I can't remember the cooking part of it.

MB: Alright, what did you do to help pay your way to live here and go to school here? How did you make your way to pay for school at the normal school?

RW: Well the only time—well in 1934 I came back and went to school and stayed at the English Hall and helped Aunt Ohla, was just her sidekick. I worked in the dining room, did the dishes, dried the silverware and the glasses and waited tables. I had two tables of 14 each.

KA: Well, did you go to Norman with mother?

RW: Oh, yes…

KA: Mother had an English Hall down in Norman.

RW: Yes. In the fall of [19]34 is when I attended Central College.

MB: Now, we have menus in the collection here.

RW: The menus in the collection were what I typed up in 1934.

MB: Can you tell us something about those menus?

RW: Huh…

MB: You typed them for every meal?

RW: Oh, yes they were typed for every meal; morning, noon and night for a week, I think. Every Sunday we made homemade ice cream with a homemade freezer. I sat on it while LZ…

KA: I remember the freezer, you had to take turns.

RW: LZ what’s his last name? LZ, Brown was it? LZ Brown and his wife took care of the
kitchen and the dining area.

SC: The street in front was College Street?

KA: College

MB: Kathryn English Atkins tell us how it was back in those days. When did you get your degree and I want to know more about the car your folks let you drive.

KA: Well, I received my degree in 1934 and couldn't get a teaching job so mother said she needed my help at the hall. So I was up here all that year. Mother was at English Hall down in Norman and Ruth helped her down there.

RW: In Edmond

KA: In Edmond Too.

KA: Mother had been ill for some time and had been told to take it easy but she couldn't do it. She had too much to do. She became real sick with heart trouble and passed away in May of [19]35 in the bedroom there at the Hall. Then sister and Dot and I moved to Oklahoma City. We rented a house there. Sister was teaching in Oklahoma City then. She said, “Kathryn why don't you go up to the administration building at the Oklahoma City Schools and sit at the table out in the halls, maybe a principal will come by and need a teacher.” Well, that happened. [laugh] The head of the physical education department—I was sitting there all lonesome and he said, “Can I help you?” I said, “Well do you have a teaching job open?” He said, “Well, I'm the physical ed. Department, do you have certification for that?” I said, “Well, no I have elementary and high school for English, I mean high school English and elementary school any grade. He said, “Well let’s see did you take any physical education classes?” I said, “I had four years of natural dancing.” He said, “That's alright, Milta Carl at Webster Jr. High needs an assistant badly and I bet you would be just what she needs.” So he sent me over there and I was there four years. We just had a wonderful time. Anyway that's, that. Then I married at the end of the four years to Jack Atkins and we moved to Panhandle Texas. Jack had played football at Central [CSTC] and had been teaching out there two years.

RW: Did you ask her about the car? [directed at MB]

KA: Oh, know you wanted to know about our old car. Well, dad had a 1924 Buick Touring Car. It was just to use for everything. Sister helped take the kindergarteners up at the Training School on picnics. Let’s see…

MB: When you say sister that’s Bernice?

KA: Bernice, un huh. Well, everyone calls her sister. Mrs. Angerman I can’t think of her first name now, was the kindergarten teacher and sister would help her. Dorothy Rose and I both went to kindergarten on up. When I was six years old I had rheumatic fever and had to miss school all that year; so I started late. Now, let’s see…
**RW:** The car, the car

**KA:** Oh, oh then on up through to the uh—let’s see I think it was my…

**MB:** Kathryn, back about the 1924 Buick Touring Car. Did you ever get to drive that?

**KA:** Yes, I got to drive it later on. Mother had taken the year off supposedly to rest and sister was teaching in Muskogee by [19]28-29, that was the year and we moved to Muskogee. Mother rented a house and Dorothy Rose and sister and I were all there. I was sick all that year I had strip poisoning from teeth and tonsils. So then at the end of the year they had me better and we went back to Oklahoma City. We’d rented out the Hall. Did you know that?

**RW:** No.

**KA:** Rented the hall…

**MB:** You rented the hall to some other people?

**KA:** Uh un. So then mother took it back.

**KA:** Yeah, that’s right.

**MB:** While you were in Muskogee?

**RW:** While you were in Muskogee?

**KA:** It had been rented out.

**RW:** Oh, that I didn’t know.

**KA:** Yeah, she had rented it out. I can think of their name tomorrow. [laugh] It was the mother of one of my friends; but we were in high school. But anyway I wasn't supposed to walk very much when I entered the junior year of high school. So, Dad let me drive the car and that was the 1924 Buick. Oh we had a lot of fun with it. By the year we were seniors he still let me drive it. He let us take it for the senior trip to the mountains. But before that, one time we were a bunch of us going to Oklahoma City and the top blew off. Well just didn't pay any attention to it. Cause Susie, we name it Susie, and Susie was topless after that. When we went on to college she was used in the parades because she was so easy to put decorations on. Everyone was acquainted with Susie.

**MB:** That was when you were a senior in high school before you started college. But when you where in high school were you attending the Normal School or the public school?

**KA:** The public school, I went to public school, high school.
RW: I didn't know that?

KA: Yeah, I graduated with Ardis, my best friend was a year younger than me.

MB: At about what year?


MB: From high school about [19]31 and then...

KA: No, no, graduated from uh, yeah, college in [19]34.

MB: Graduated from college in [19]34.

KA: That's right, you could make college get all you needed in three years and four summers and that's what I did.

MB: Here at the Normal School?

KA: At the Normal School. It was Central State Normal School. No, Central State Teachers College on my Diploma.

MB: There was a name change in 1939.

KA: To what? Was it the teachers college? Maybe it was Normal I haven't looked at that diploma in a long time.

MB: We’ll have to look at it up.

RW: Alright we’ll look that up and get that straight.

RW: I’ll tell you what we found last night after we were finished. We saw something last night.

MB: You started tell something earlier too that I said let’s save that and get it on the tape. You were going to tell us something out here and I interrupted.

RW: Oh, about the dust storm.

MB: Ruth yes, Ruth about the dust storm

RW: Dust Bowl. Yes I was with Ohla English in Norman when she had her house there. First half of the year I spent in Edmond with her in the Hall then she needed me to help her in Norman, so I went there. That's just when the Dust Bowl started. When we were coming to or from school, when the wind would blow we would have to walk backwards to keep the wind from blowing us apart. I can still see a crock of milk out on the back porch. She had it well covered with rubber bands around it or something and when she took it off the dust was all
underneath the cover. It had blown clear under the cover.

**MB:** Dish towel or something?

**RW:** Yes, uh un, she had it well covered with whatever. But it had been able to seep underneath this cover, the dust.

**KA:** Here I don't even remember the Dust Bowl.

**MB:** Many times I think they took like a cloth.

**RW:** Yes a cloth and wrapped a string or rubber band around it and tucked it under.

**MB:** So the dust would filter through the, actually filter through the cloth.

**RW:** It must have filtered through the cloth or it got through.

**MB:** Tell us more about the business that Ohla had in Norman.

**RW:** She roomed and boarded a group of men students. She fed them for lunch. Bright Larkin was one of them from Guthrie.

**MB:** So she had a house there

**RW:** She had a house similar to what she had [in Edmond] only in Norman she had the boy students and in Edmond she had the women students. She housed women students in the rooming house, rooming part of it. But she fed both.

**KA:** She didn’t have many extras.

**RW:** She fed the women

**KA:** Down there?

**RW:** In Edmond.

**KA:** In Edmond?

**RW:** She had the two tables of women students and she had the table of teachers, a table of football.

**KA:** Yeah, football players.

**RW:** So she had the four tables. And she sat about…

**KA:** That was before the building was…
RW: …14 at each table.

KA: Before the hall was enlarged.

RW: Well, that was 1934, fall of 1934 was when I was there; fall of [19]34. Then in January of 1934 she took me to Norman. She did feed a table of the boys.

KA: With that table of boys; no extras.

RW: No extra’s, just the ones that stayed there.

MB: How was she able to operate both? Did she only have the Norman one for a short time?

RW: That I don't know. But I know that she was there—she needed me to help her down there. I came in the fall of [19]34 to Edmond. Then she asked me to go with her in January. But…

MB: January of [19]35

RW: [19]35, but when I down there I wanted to enroll in the school. They found that I had attended Kent State in Ohio so I had to pay out of state tuition and I could not afford to pay out of state tuition so I had to drop out of school. Then’s when I went back to Ohio.

MB: Now was Ohla was driving back and forth between Edmond and down there.

KA: No she had a boy driver. She didn’t drive.

RW: That I don't know. I don’t remember.

KA: Mother didn't drive.

MB: But you don't remember whether she just stayed at Norman for a while?

RW: Well, she was in and out at Norman. She stayed with me quite a bit though. I think she probably stayed there.

KA: She may have stayed through the week with you.

RW: Yeah, she probably stayed during the week with me.

MB: Who was taking care of the business here? At that time she wasn’t doing this?

KA: I would

RW: Kathryn was taking charge of Edmond.

MB: Ohhh!
KA: Believe it or not.

RW: Oh, I have to tell you about Kathryn and I doing the beds.

KA: Oh, don’t

[laughter]

RW: Every weekend the women students would have to take the bedding off their beds.

KA: They did it once a week.

RW: Yeah, every weekend the students would clear the beds and then Kathryn and I would go along, we would make up fresh beds and put the sheets and pillow cases…

KA: When the sheets were clean

RW: …put the clean sheets and pillow cases on. That's how we became such close friends, I think.

KA: Well I believe mother send out laundry to…

RW: Well, they were all clean. Yeah, they came in to a lot…

KA: I remember the laundry descended and counted it.

RW: Um uh, we had to count the laundry. Then every weekend we’d go put fresh clean sheets and cases on the beds.

KA: Has it been mentioned…

MB: Kathryn do you remember what the laundry name was, who did the laundry for English Hall?

KA: Oh, I really don’t.

RW: It will be in the book.

KA: It’ll be in the book probably. Has it been mentioned before how many students who went to Central worked at English Hall and paid their way by working at the Hall, washing dishes, waiting tables. Yeah, we mentioned that a while ago. Yeah, that’s right

MB: Tell them about the vegetable room.

KA: Oh, there were so many vegetables to peel to get ready for the meals that dad built a little house out the back. One room covered it all with screening and with a roof on top. That was the
vegetable, was that the vegetable house? Is that what we called it? Well, anyway students would sit out there and peel—get things ready to cook; get vegetables ready to cook.

**RW:** Prepare them.

**KA:** Uh un, I remember when the first electric ice makers came to us. Mother had a great big ice chest it was built into one of the closets. It would hold two cakes of ice. Do you know how much ice is in a cake?

**RW:** Twenty-five pounds, fifty pounds?

**KA:** A hundred or three, three hundred pounds, surely not. But anyway they were huge cakes of ice. They put them in and then we would have to chip them out with an ice pick. Then I remember when we got the first frozen ice makers and they were just individual trays that just sat into a case. I remember one of the cooks spoiled me because I liked chicken salad and she’d save out white meat and chop it up fine and put a mayonnaise in it and make a tray of that and freeze it for me.

**MB:** What about the little English cottage?

**KA:** Well that was on the property when mother and dad bought it. It was to the East of English Hall.

**MB:** Do you remember music lessons being taught in there, or dance or piano?

**KA:** No they were taught in the Hall. The dancing teachers mainly, Werner Reeves from Oklahoma City, we have some of her programs in the display here.

**RW:** Did she teach them in the living room?

**KA:** Taught them in the living room.

**RW:** In the living room?

**KA:** That was after the big dinning room was built.

**MB:** Taught in the living of English Hall?

**KA:** Uh un, move the furniture back and she taught us ballet. Then I don’t remember…

**RW:** But the cottage did they house married?

**KA:** That's in the main story, married couples; I think we had two apartments and maybe three rooms.

**MB:** Were they in the lodge or the cottage?
KA: The cottage. Now the lodge behind the Hall, North of it, Dad built that and there were seemed like four apartments. I remember watching him put tile on the bathroom floor; individual pieces of tile.

MB: When you first moved up there, with your earliest memory, was the cottage for single teachers, like Ms. Brown?

KA: Yeah.

MA: It was for single teachers or women…

KA: Yes, it was single teachers or couples.

MB: Oh, it could be for couples?

KA: Uh un. Well, that's in the story. There was one couple who lived there and had two children. He was a traveling salesman and he'd leave the family there so the children could go to school and knew they'd be well taken care of. There was a daughter and a son and I had a letter from the son just the other day. He's about two years younger than I am. He drives through Edmond every so often and he said it certainly wasn't the same place where he grew up. He wanted me to send him more information about the college. So I will have a lot to tell him when I go back.

MB: We just appreciate you doing this so much.

[tape ends, then it begins again]

MB: Ruth, more about your mother Ollie Hunt?

RW: Ollie Hunt. When they first came to Norman—Grandpa Hunt was a home sitter. He came up in the run and they settled in Norman. They came up from Texas in the run and they settled in Norman; they lived close in. Mother when, Oklahoma University opened mother was the first woman student to enroll

KA: Do you know the year on that?

RW: In 1892. Mother enrolled in University of Oklahoma. Mother was the first woman to enroll.

KA: She has a clipping about it.

RW: Yes.

SC: Now mom said your mother would have been the first student…

RW: Mother would have been the first student, some man stepped in front of her. I know his
name because I've seen it written up but mother was the first woman. She was the second student, the first woman. I figured out she must have been only sixteen years old because she was born in 1876 and she would have been 16 in 1892.

END