

# FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

## *ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE*

Interviewee: **Kathrine (Trinka) Helmcamp Miller**

Interview Date: 06/24/2011

Interviewer: Diane L. Ware

Transcriber: Marsha Smith

Location: Riverbend Country Club, Sugar Land, Texas

6 Pages



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*Transcript*

WARE: Let's start with some biographical information. When and where were you born?

MILLER: I was born in Sugar Land, Texas, September 21, 1935 in Laura Eldridge Memorial Hospital, on Lakeview Drive. [Editor's note: It might have actually been called 3rd St. then, though it is Lakeview now.]

WARE: What brought your family to Fort Bend County?

MILLER: My dad worked here and my mother was living here with her family when I was born. Her mother had died not long before I was born. Shortly after I was born, we moved away.

WARE: When did you move?

MILLER: We moved to Houston in 1936. We moved back to Sugar Land in September of 1949.

WARE: You said your dad worked here. What type of work did he do?

MILLER: For a while he worked in the bank in Sugar Land. Then he went to work in Houston. Sartartia Dairy had cattle and they milked the cows out here. In Houston, there was a plant where they bottled the milk and made ice cream and that sort of thing. He was the office manager for that part of Sartartia Plantation Dairy.

WARE: So Sartartia Plantation Dairy had a plant in Houston. Where was it located?

MILLER: I don't remember the name of the street it was on. It was in the vicinity of Richmond Avenue, I think. They had delivery trucks that they would load there and then go out and deliver the milk in Houston. They didn't deliver milk in Sugar Land.

WARE: Did you have any extended family that lived in the Sugar Land area?

MILLER: My mother's brothers lived in Sugar Land. When the older one (Kenneth) got married, I think he lived here for a while but I don't know. I suppose the younger one, John, must have lived here for a while after he got married also.

WARE: What was their last name?

MILLER: Jones.

WARE: Where did they work?

MILLER: I don't know.

WARE: When you lived in Sugar Land, where did you live?

MILLER: We lived outside of town at the Sartartia Plantation.

WARE: Did your parents own the house?

MILLER: No, it came with the job. After they closed down the dairy, they went to beef cattle and cotton. The man that ran that part had died so they gave my dad that job, managing the land and the cattle.

WARE: That was WAY out there, at that time!

MILLER: Now there are houses all over it. (laughing)

WARE: When you came back to Sugar Land in 1949, you were a teenager. Describe a normal day.

MILLER: I was a freshman in high school and I didn't ride the school bus. My mother would take me to school and pick me up for lunch. I was a spoiled, only child. Then she'd take me back after lunch and pick me up in the afternoon. I don't remember anything 'typical'. There were times when friends got together for a sleep-over.

WARE: Tell me about attending Sugar Land High School.

MILLER: It was very different because it was so much smaller than the junior high where I had gone to school in Houston. There were individual little buildings that made up the high school. I remember walking under the portico to get to different classes and having off-time in the middle, in the grass. It was very different. I liked it a lot.

WARE: What did students do for relaxation and recreation?

MILLER: Of course, football was big. I guess by the time I came along the football team had gotten better. But I think even when the football team was NOT that good, football was still very big. Seemed like everybody in town always went to the football games. I don't remember basketball as very big but maybe track was. I remember one time we had a hayride and we went out to the old Mexican cemetery. Of course, we got scared, wandering around out there. There were some boys who were hiding out there with cattle prods. I don't know who they got with the cattle prods. (laughter)

WARE: Is that the cemetery that is now part of Sugar Creek subdivision?

MILLER: Probably.

WARE: Where did they play football?

MILLER: Kempner Stadium.

WARE: What other types of recreational programs were there?

MILLER: When I was a freshman, I played a little basketball and a little volleyball. But I'm not really a sports person. I love to watch sports but I'm not much on participating.

WARE: Did just about everyone play some sport?

MILLER: Oh, yeah. There were probably no more than 17 or 18 boys on the 11-man football team. The first year I also carried the bass drum in the band. I decided I didn't want to do that anymore either!

WARE: So they had a full band?

MILLER: There was a point before I came that they let 7th graders be in the band because they needed more members. If you played your instrument well enough, then you got to be in the band that went to the football games, and the contests.

WARE: How did you and your husband meet?

MILLER: We met at church because we both went to First Presbyterian Church. And we saw each other at school. We started dating when I was still a freshman and he was a junior.

WARE: Do many of your classmates still live in Sugar Land?

MILLER: There are a few who still live in the general area.

WARE: Why did you move away?

MILLER: I went to college for a year and then when we got married, he was in the Air Force and we moved all over. When he retired from the Air Force, we didn't want to come back to Sugar Land because Houston had gotten so big. We wanted a smaller area so we ended up in Austin where we have been for almost 34 years.

WARE: Where did you go to college?

MILLER: Baylor.

WARE: Then your husband went into the service.

MILLER: He went through college ROTC to go into the Air Force. Several of his classmates joined the Army; Allan Landin and B. I. Webb.

WARE: What year did you graduate from high school?

MILLER: 1953.

WARE: Did you have children and have they ever lived in the Sugar Land area?

MILLER: My children and I lived here for a year, with my parents out at Sartartia, while my husband was overseas in the Vietnam War. We first got here in May, right at the end of the school year. They both were in the new building up there at the elementary area.

The next fall, my son was in the junior high school and our daughter continued to go to the one at Lakeview. He went over to Dulles Junior High. That's the only time they lived in Sugar Land. Our daughter lives in Austin and our son lives in Breckenridge, Colorado.

WARE: What's your favorite memory of Sugar Land?

MILLER: I've always said my husband became interested in me when we started dating because I liked football. I was an only child and my dad loved sports and loved football. I started going to college football games when I was about 9 or 10 years old. So football plays a big part in my memories of Sugar Land High School. When Kenneth Hall came along and we started having really great teams, that was a lot of fun.

WARE: Who were the better players when you were in high school?



*Trinka Miller at Sugar Land High School mini-reunion June 24, 2011 at Riverbend Country Club, Sugar Land, Texas*

MILLER: In our class, we had J. B. Kachinsky, Juan de los Santos, and Tommy Tallas. Most of the boys did play. The year behind me was Tommy Fatheree who was a very good player and went to Baylor on a track scholarship. The girl he married was in my class. They got married the day after Ron and I got married.

WARE: Thank you, Trinka.

MILLER: Thank you.

Interview ends