

FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE



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Abstract: **Melissa Sledge Dixon**

Melissa Sledge Dixon attended the University of Texas beginning in June of 1966, after graduation from high school. She was at the university during the Charles Whitman killing spree from the Tower.

Melissa describes the sights, sounds and horror of people being killed. She even put her finger in a bullet hole in a car window before realizing what was happening on campus.

In 2016, she went back to the University of Texas for the 50th anniversary memorial service, honoring those who died that day. To this day, that tragic event still impacts her life.

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Interview Summary

People (in order mentioned in interview)

Grover – waiter at dorm

Laura Garner Nesuda – college room mate

Charles Whitman – tower shooter

Places / Businesses

Episcopal Church, Austin, Texas

Scottish Rite dorm, Austin, Texas

The CO-OP, book store

The Drag, nickname for a street

The Tower, University of Texas Austin

Events

After graduation from high school, Melissa attended the University of Texas because her first choice, University of Tennessee, was too far from home and out of state tuition was high.

In August 1966, while walking from class back to her dorm, she and a friend noticed a bullet hole in a car window. Not hearing any shooting, they entered the dorm to eat lunch.

The killing of people on the UT campus was not treated as a major incident. Very little was said to the students, and after a brief lock down, everyone went about their business.

Melissa attended the 50th anniversary of the killing this year and described it as very low key, with only about 200 attending.

Today, you can view bullet holes in the Tower caused by those on the ground trying to kill Whitman. Tour guides do not discuss the incident unless asked a direct question about this tragic chapter.