

Margery Mayo Bird

Philanthropist and senior stateswoman
of the Mayo family.

Chapter 1 – 1:22

Introduction

Announcer: The Mayo Hotel was her father's hotel, for it was Margery Mayo Bird's father, John Mayo, who along with his brother Cass, cofounded the Mayo Hotel in Tulsa, Oklahoma during the 1920s. The Mayo Hotel was the place where all of Tulsa's grand parties were held and where movie stars and other celebrities stayed while in town. The hotel also served as residence to notable oilmen of the era, including J. Paul Getty. Once the tallest building in Oklahoma, the hotel originally had 600 rooms with ceiling fans in each room and Tulsa's first running water made the hotel a haven from summer heat. The sister of Burch Mayo, Margery Mayo Bird graduated from Holland Hall in Tulsa, attended Connecticut College for Women and graduated from Erskine School in Boston. In Tulsa, she had long-standing commitments to The Arts and Humanities Council, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa Opera and Tulsa Ballet. Her contributions include three arts-related endowments at Tulsa University and she donated construction of the Mayo Village student apartments. Margery was 95 when she died August 29th, 2012. This interview was conducted in her home on December 9, 2009. We would like to thank our founding sponsors for sharing our mission to preserve Oklahoma's legacy one voice at a time at VoicesofOklahoma.com.

Chapter 2 – 7:25

Mayo Furniture

John Erling: Today's date is December 9th of 2009. I'm John Erling.

Margery Mayo Bird: I am Margery Mayo Feagin Bird.

JE: We are joined us here by Peter Walter. Explain your connection to Margery.

Peter Walter: Margery is someone I've admired my whole life. She was a very good friend of my aunt, Jean Davisson. I grew up with Margery's cousin's children, Allen's Mayo's children. Marsha Mayo was my age and Cathy Mayo Moore was a couple of grades behind me. Cathy and I went around the world together for four months in the 1970s with a group in college. Margery's husband, Don Feagin, I admired, as I did of course Jim Bird who played tennis with my father every Wednesday for 40 years. The Feagins and the Davissons and the Kistlers and the Moodys and the Breens were such an elegant group of people that I always looked up to. Margery, can you think of anyone else I'm leaving out? You, of course have so many different groups of friends...

MMB: You knew everyone at that time, many of whom have died. You knew the Grices and the Masons and the Peters and the Siegers, the Phillips and the McClintocks, the Malloys, I can go on and on, but they're names and that's enough.

JE: So Peter is here to help us visit about Margery's life.

PW: Although Margery's memory is probably better than mine, but yes I understand.

JE: Margery would you tell us your birth date and your present age?

MMB: I born and died in Tulsa. I was born September 28th, 1916. My present age is 93.

JE: We are recording this in Tulsa near 29th and Zunis.

MMB: Correct.

JE: Where were you born?

MMB: I was born at 14th and Cheyenne at my family's home. My father built that home for his bride. He wanted to show her a lot farther out at 19th and Norfolk, and she said, "You're not going to put me out in the country." The house is still there and a law firm has purchased it.

JE: How long did you live in that home?

MMB: I lived in it until I was married in 1939.

JE: What are your memories of that house?

MMB: Oh they were wonderful, just growing up and having a delightful time. I wasn't far from my school.

JE: Your mother's name?

MMB: My mother's maiden name was Lillian Van Blarcom. She was born in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. She graduated from Milwaukee Donner. She came here as a supervisor of music, which I find very amusing because, a supervisor of music I can't believe there were more than two schools, but be that as it may, she came and she anted to find a music stand. She was living at this time in The Proper Boarding House. She went into the Mayo Furniture Store, which was on 5th and Boulder. The man in there saw mother and went over to her and my father also saw her and he said, "I'll take care of her," which he did for the rest of her life. She got the music stand and lots more. (Chuckle)

JE: Tell us about Mayo Furniture.

MMB: The Mayo Furniture Store was on the corner of 5th and Boulder next door to The Mayo Hotel. That was in the Petroleum Building. The Mayo Building is on 5th and Main, so the three buildings were all along 5th Street.

JE: Who started and operated the furniture store?

MMB: My father and his brother started everything, the building, the hotel, the furniture store—they were all real estate enterprises that they operated together.

JE: What was your mother like?

MMB: Mother was 10 years younger than daddy and viciously someone would usually say, “Is your daughter with you?” And he would say, “You get some glasses, you know better than that!” But she was a lovely person.

JE: Your father’s name?

MMB: His name was John Daniel Mayo and he was born in a small town called Clifton Hill, Missouri. He borrowed \$300 from his grandmother and came here from Missouri to meet his brother Cass Mayo who was coming up from Dallas. Cass had left Clifton hill and gone to Dallas to work for a furniture company I think. At that time my Uncle Cass had heard that there was quite a bit of activity in Tulsa. Daddy knew that he didn’t want to stay in Clifton Hill, so he elected to meet him here in Tulsa to see what two young men could find to do. Needing funds, his grandmother offered to give him \$300. When they got here the first thing daddy wanted to do was to get that \$300 back to his grandmother, which he did rather quickly. At that time the furniture store was located in a one-story building at 2nd and Main Street. I think he slept on the mattresses that they were going to sell for a while until he had his own place. (Chuckle) Also, this is hard for me to believe, but I think he said on a Saturday they could go down near the tracks and for 50 cents they could get a shower. The shower usually was a bucket poured over their heads.

JE: So this would be approximately what year?

MMB: Daddy came in 1903, four years before statehood. This would have been around 1903 or 1904. They knew that Tulsa was going to develop and grow and thought they could use a furniture store. They knew nothing about the oil business and remained that way throughout their life. They were exposed to it in conversation of course, but were not actively involved in it. Any time they said they made any kind of an investment in it, they didn’t find it successful, so they thought they should stay with what they did understand.

JE: Where did they get the money to start the furniture store?

MMB: I am sure it was on loan—borrowed money, a little at a time. I remember Otis McClintock said, “I still have the first sofa that we bought from you.” Daddy said, “And I bet it’s still damn good!” (Laugh)

JE: Did John and Cass have furniture experience before they came here?

MMB: No, not really.

JE: They just jumped right into it?

MMB: They just jumped right into it. This is another thing I learned. At that time, furniture stores usually always carried caskets. So they had a couple of caskets I guess, I don't think they stayed in the casket business long and when my mother found out she said, "If I had ever known that I never would have married you!" (Chuckle) At any rate that was just a short phase and the city did grow. There were mud streets and they put slats down so you could cross over from one corner to another in the limited area that Tulsa was at that time.

Chapter 3 – 3:24

71st and Yale

Margery Mayo Bird: My father sold linoleum at this particular sale and it was made in Broken Arrow, which meant it had to be delivered. So on the weekend there was a horse and buggy that took the linoleum and my father and another man in Broken Arrow. This was before my mother and father were married. It turned out that the man was not able to pay for it, but he said, "Can I give you a little piece of property?" He thought that would equate with the price of the sale. My father agreed and accepted that. Later my mother said, "Why do you get these ugly farms? I don't know." Well, I think now that area is known as 71st and Yale.

JE: How long did they hold onto that land?

MMB: It was in the process of being sold when my father died in 1972.

Peter Walter: There were some Mayo farms too that were located along the Broken Arrow Expressway where Met Life and the Ford glass plant are now. All of that land out there was quite a big chunk.

MMB: Yes.

PW: I remember the silos were beautiful.

MMB: They are still there. They liked the idea of the silos with the name of their insurance company. I did go out for the opening and it was very attractive.

PW: The McClintocks had a place out there too.

MMB: Yes, right behind it.

PW: With an eternal flame.

MMB: That's true.

JE: Tell us who the McClintocks were.

PW: Otis McClintock was president of First National Bank and worked technically for Waite Phillips. He built a beautiful house on the Northwest corner of 41st and Lewis that John Duncan Forsyth designed. Gladys and Otis McClintock were very good friends with the Philips and the Mayos. They were very, very nice people. I remember Otis but I don't remember Gladys. Of course I knew Mac very well and Grant.

MMB: Mac was a contemporary of mine. We dated I guess you would say. We received invitations at that time, and at Christmas time we would be coming home from being away at school and the name of the person that would pick you up would be there on it. One time it was with Jack Malloy and we were going to go to Tulsa Country Club 218. This was while we were in college. I got into the car and Jack said, "What in the world do you have on?" And I said, "The perfume that your mother had you give me for Christmas." (Chuckle) In the Malloy family, the father was a very avid Democrat who was a wonderful judge and a wonderful lawyer.

JE: What was his first name?

MMB: Pat Malloy, Senior. He had a heart attack when he was in Arkansas on some business trip and died all too young because he had a brilliant career ahead of him and was having it. They lived at 19th & Owasso. Mrs. Malloy, I feel, never came out of mourning. I thought she was a very elegant woman. She had these boys that were as rough-and-tumble as they could be. They were attractive as far as I was concerned. They were most attractive.

PW: And fun.

MMB: Yes, and fun! Pat Malloy couldn't talk without swearing. That was just a part of his nature. You got to where you didn't hear it because he wasn't himself without it. You would jump if anyone else dared to speak as he did.

Chapter 4 – 4:49

Education

John Erling: Let's go back to your education starting in elementary school.

Margery Mayo Bird: I started at Conway Broun, which was a private school on the north side of Tulsa, over near the Tulsa Country Club. I went to kindergarten through the third grade there. It was the first time I was ever in a play. I loved theater and in first grade we were doing *Sleeping Beauty* and this boy I liked was the Prince and I was sleeping beauty. Well, the Princess is supposed to awaken with the touch of the prince, you know. But I was so enamored with the touch that I didn't come to, so he kicked me. So

the first grade teacher said, "That will be the end of the play." (Laughter) and so I didn't get any more drama for quite a while. After that I went to Riverview. Then in the 6th grade I started at Holland Hall and graduated from Holland Hall.

JE: Where was it located when you went to school there?

MMB: When I when the area was located on Boulder between 18th and 21st.

PW: The building still stands.

MMB: Yes.

JE: I am fascinated with your elementary school Conway Broun.

PW: Aunt Jeanne went there too.

MMB: Yes she did.

JE: Aunt Jeanne was your Aunt Peter, what was her full name?

PW: Jeanne Walter Davisson. She was married to Dan Davisson. Margery, share with John your story about going to Holland Hall with the chauffeur and where the streets stopped and you walked.

MMB: Not all streets were paved at that time, nor did I want to go with a chauffeur. I wanted to go on my own. I did not want to be seen at school arriving with a chauffeur. So I asked them to let me out before I got to school so I could walk the rest of the way. It isn't as if that chauffeur lasted forever but anyway, during the period I was very sensitive about this and I didn't like it one little bit.

JE: So You would have been in about what grade?

MMB: It was maybe the 7th grade.

JE: Did anybody else show up with a chauffeur?

MMB: They might have, but I was only worried about myself.

JE: Right.

PW: Probably Elliot Phillips.

MMB: Yes, there would have been others.

JE: You went on to college from Holland Hall?

MMB: Yes, I went to Connecticut College for women, which is no longer for women. Now it's just called Connecticut College. It's in New London, Connecticut. There were three of us from Tulsa that went to Connecticut College and the president said, "Our representation from Oklahoma has increased 300%."

JE: Who were the other two?

MMB: Mary Lou Adams and Dorothy Blodgett. The Adams family owned part of Adams & Leonard.

PW: Adams & Leonard was a real estate company that no longer exists and that family is no longer here.

JE: Any association with the Adams Hotel?

MMB: No.

PW: Tell us how you got to Connecticut College for Women.

MMB: I knew I wanted to go to a small girls college. Connecticut College for Women came across the desk so to speak, and it appealed to me. I thoroughly enjoyed it. But after two years there, I had worked out all of my prerequisites and I found out I was interested in taking some drama and I was interested in going someplace that had more than Connecticut College did at that time. From L.E. Phillips, part of the Phillips family in Bartlesville I heard about the Erskine School in Boston. It just suited me to a T. So I transferred my junior year and went to Erskine School in Boston and loved it. It was absolutely marvelous. There were certain prerequisites there. You had to go to the Opera and the symphony and visit historical sites and do all of the wonderfully culturally interesting things that were certainly available to us. I can remember that one time we went to this play and it was going to be the tryout of *Porgy and Bess* and it was definitely a success. It was at that theater that the first time that anyone black had come into the theater.

JE: What year was this?

MMB: This would have been 1936. It was the first time that anybody black was in a play. Boston, being as reserved as it was, it was wondered how this would be accepted, but there was great applause and it became a success right then and there. But I had no idea that it was the first time, nor did it have any meaning to me. I didn't have any sensitivity to it at all of what I was supposedly taking part in or witnessing you might say. I never thought about it. That only became reflective publicly later on.

JE: But the black person was such a success on stage that there wasn't any backlash of any sort at all?

MMB: No.

Chapter 5 – 1:46

Junior League

Margery Mayo Bird: I came back and at that time I went into the Junior League and I became active at the Tulsa Little Theater and enjoyed that part of my life. I enjoyed my work in the Junior League, which was very different than what it is now.

Peter Walter: Tell them about the tearoom.

MMB: We had the tearoom on 5th street off of Boston and Cincinnati. It was right across the street from the Tulsa Club.

PW: Waite Phillips owned it didn't he?

MMB: That's right, he owned it. We had a lovely tearoom. It was very popular. One day a week we would have a fashion show in different shops. The Barclay Shop was located there at that time and different girls would model and maybe spend 20 minutes doing that. We had to serve x number of hours before we could stop waiting tables. We enjoyed it and had fun doing it. We had our uniform and a lot of repeat customers. I can remember the lady who always thought her tea was too cold. (Chuckle) It was true. We would bring it to her and it would be hot and it would be about 30 minutes later before she would decide to take a sip of it. You learn a lot about life. It's a wonderful idea to serve people—it's really very constructive.

JE: It was called the Tea Room?

MMB: It was The Junior League Tea Room.

JE: Okay.

PW: Of course the money you would make would go to—

MMB: We had the money go to the convalescent home for children that was between 41st and 51st and Lewis. It became the children's medical center.

PW: Yes, it was later torn down and moved to the old Sinclair Headquarters on Skelly Drive.

Chapter 6 – 10:14

Mayo Hotel

John Erling: Jumping back here, you had brothers and sisters?

MMB: I had one brother, Burch Mayo who died this year (2009) at age 90.

JE: What was his profession?

MMB: He came into the hotel business, but he loved music. He was the cofounder of the Tulsa Symphony, he and Herb Gussman. He was president of that for 24 years before he retired from that. He also sang, he loved to sing. I would say that in the hotel business he enjoyed more being in the front of the house instead of in the bowels of it.

Peter Walter: Didn't he want to be an opera singer?

MMB: Yes, he did. He studied it some in Europe and he studied after the war. He was on General Patton's staff during the war.

JE: What did he do for General Patton?

MMB: He went ahead and established residences for him and he also was a liaison with the news press.

PW: He was great fun.

MMB: He could imitate Churchill and you would think you were hearing Churchill. He could

also imitate Roosevelt. He had lots of people whom he could imitate and he did it beautifully. And as I said, he had this wonderful voice.

JE: Did he sing often in Tulsa at various events?

MMB: When the central high school was still the central high school, they had an opera there. The auditorium was just about large enough to handle the crowd that was there. He was in *Tosca*. He had a baritone voice. My son called and Lawrence Tibbit because he sounded just like Lawrence Tibbit. Burch graduated from Cornell, and Mrs. Roosevelt was coming up to Cornell for a weekend and they had asked him to escort her, so he mimicked her husband. In fact, my father couldn't quite understand why bills were coming from Cornell for glasses and coat. Daddy said, "That has nothing to do with education." I had just a stipend of an allowance and my brother was spending rather extravagantly. It made him wonder just how this balance out. He went by his middle name. Burch was my grandmother Mayo's maiden name.

JE: Did Burch attend the same schools that you did?

MMB: No, he went to Cascia Hall and then to Cornell.

JE: About the Mayo Hotel, which was built in 1925, what are your earliest memories of it?

MMB: I would visit it, but not with much excitement. It wasn't just thrilling to me. It was a structure. So the remembrance really for me came at the formal dedication. At that time, when a picture was taken, they would use these flashlights, and they would make a noise. It scared me to death and I hid behind my parents. My mother said, "Well, we'll certainly have a good picture of you."

JE: You would have been 9 years old?

MMB: Yes.

PW: Do you remember the construction at all of the building?

MMB: I don't. Then of course they were adding five more stories onto the Mayo Building. Fire broke out on that one when tar was spilled. Daddy was called from the table one night and it scared me to death. Fire was fire and it was just terrifying. He ran from 14th & Cheyenne down to 5th & Cheyenne. It was extinguished and there wasn't any permanent harm done. The construction of the hotel was after the First World War when there was a lot of steel. It was not required for construction, so they were able to get a lot of this steel that had been shipped into New Orleans and they used that for the construction of the foundation, so it's well-founded.

JE: So John and Cass made quite a bit of money then from the furniture store?

MMB: Yes, and real estate and little by little different kinds of things. Of course they borrowed heavily when they built the hotel. I think they were pressured with people saying that we needed a good hotel here in Tulsa. They could identify with that. We had the Tulsa Hotel then, but there seem to be a need to have another hotel. I know daddy went up

to the Plaza Hotel in New York and like it so very much. So a lot was modeled after that or suggested by that.

JE: Was the Adams Hotel around at that time?

MMB: Yes, it was here. It was a smaller hotel. There were two, the Adams and the Bliss Hotel.

JE: When they had thoughts about the Mayo Hotel it must've been at a higher scale and standard.

MMB: It definitely was I would say.

PW: Absolutely. It was the best.

MMB: It was.

PW: Was it difficult during the Depression because they had just opened five years before the Great Depression?

MMB: It certainly was, they were going to go into bankruptcy.

JE: Did you go move-in after the dedication of the hotel when you were 9 years old?

MMB: No. I never live at the hotel during that period, except when maybe at our house they were painting or doing something and we would go down and stay for a week or whatever. I never lived there. The only other time that I moved there was during the war when my husband Don was gone. I stayed there when I could not join him, but my parents lived there. When they sold the hotel, it was with the understanding that they could live there if they desired until their death, which they did.

JE: Where did they live in the hotel?

MMB: They lived on the 15th floor. They had a very lovely suite on the southwest corner.

PW: And the Chapmans lived there on the 5th floor.

JE: Which Chapmans?

PW: James and his wife Leta McFarlin Chapman.

MMB: They were wonderful people. Of course, Mr. Chapman was a very private person. I remember I saw him one day getting into his car. Puny was his driver and caretaker. Puny was just, huge.

PW: I remember Puny. He was a nice man.

MMB: He was a nice man, yes. Puny would drive him up to the ranch, which was where he left his life.

PW: The Kravises lived there for a while?

MMB: Yes, they did and the Phillips family lived there briefly when they were building their house, Waite Phillips and his wife Genevieve.

JE: Your father and your Uncle Cass, did they actually operate the hotel?

MMB: My father never had any intention of being "the man." The plan was that they would employ someone to do it, which they did in the beginning. But this did not prove to be satisfactory, so it became necessary, is the way my father seemed to interpret it, that they he take over there, which he did. My uncle Cass never functioned there in that

capacity at all. He remained at the Mayo building or the petroleum building managing that and taking care of other things.

JE: So the Mayo building was built obviously before—

MMB: Yes. The Mayo building was the headquarters for Shell Oil and a lot of major companies that were here in Tulsa at that time.

PW: Of course, it is catty-corner from Harry Sinclair's building, which still stands.

MMB: Yes, and the Mid-Continent building.

PW: The McFarlin building is across the street and it's still there.

MMB: There were so many of the major oil companies that were stationed here. Standard of Indiana was here.

JE: The architect of the hotel, George Winkler, did you know anything about him?

MMB: He was from Kansas City, but I don't know anything else about him.

JE: You were too young to have known anything about him. The Mayo Hotel was at one time the tallest building in Oklahoma?

MMB: Very definitely. It had 18 floors.

JE: It had 600 rooms?

MMB: Yes. Someone once said about this house that it only has two bedroom suites, and I said it was because my I had 600 guest rooms downtown. (Chuckle)

JE: You must have thrown your own parties there for your friends?

MMB: Yes.

JE: I can't imagine how my wonderful it must have been particularly at Holland Hall. Can you tell us about some of the parties you might have thrown?

MMB: Well, I'm thinking mainly about parties at Christmas time when there would be dances in the Crystal ballroom. That was very elegant and lovely and exciting. Of course, it was considered expensive to do this with the boys on their allowance or whatever little bit they were making at that time. But of course, the price was right and my husband's father and a lot of the men used to go get coffee at the coffee shop. They did it as a ritual, you know, a 10 o'clock coffee break. There would be Dan Davisson and that group of men that enjoyed each other so much. Finally they raised the price of the coffee and there was a loud complaint. The price was going to go up to 20 cents and they screamed and hollered about it. Daddy said, "If you're going to be like that, we will go back to the regular price." (Laugh) Just to keep it quiet.

PW: Margery, on top of the roof of the penthouse there's an old structure.

MMB: There's a whole structure up there. My parents' plan was to have a penthouse there and build a pool. They thought they might do that. Lewis Perry was going to plan it for them.

PW: He was a decorator here in Tulsa.

MMB: But they change their minds. Then, when Don came back from the service we rented on 38th Street what had been a log cabin.

PW: It was where Oral Roberts eventually built.

MMB: He bought it from my father. During the interim, while we were buying the lot and building this house, we had this little boy and we lived there for several years. We were very happy and they were wonderful years. My parents had visualized using that as sort of a country place.

PW: It was at 38th and Lewis.

MMB: But at any rate, it had five acres and it was very appealing. They would come out while we were there but they decided not to stay out there for their own comfort.

PW: Did anyone ever live in the structure that looks like a house on top of the hotel?

MMB: No, what you are referring to is the place that housed the mechanics and the electrical for the building. The apartment, per se is something that you will see because they are going to turn it into a bar. Actually, I think a couple of business parties have been held there, but I don't know that it's going to be for residents.

Chapter 7 – 3:29

Tulsa Stories, etc.

John Erling: What are the stories that you might remember in downtown Tulsa?

Margery Mayo Bird: Miss Jackson's was down there. Vandever's was down there. There are several, Renberg's, Dorothy's, Brown-Duncan, Boswell's, Connolly's.

PW: I worked there.

MMB: Did you work at Connolly's? It was a wonderful store.

PW: Brenner's.

MMB: Yes, he's still there, not on the corner but in the same building. All of the good shops were there. There were a lot of beauty shops and a lot of men's shop.

JE: Boston Avenue was particularly busy then wasn't it?

MMB: Yes it was. I would say Waite Phillips had a lot to do with making Boston a very busy street.

JE: Tell us why.

MMB: Owning property there in building 2 large beautiful buildings, the Philtower and the Philcade.

PW: I heard a story once that he felt competition from Main Street. Of course that interior shopping area in the Philcade where Margo's was so spectacular—even today and though there are no stores there anymore.

JE: We are talking about the 1920s and 1930s—what about the theaters that you might've gone to in Tulsa?

MMB: Well, the Ritz and the Orpheum and the Rialto and the Majestic were our main theaters. They were very lovely too. I know that they had Vaudeville at the Orpheum and they had somebody at the Ritz that would play the organ before the movie started. We would sometimes on a Saturday go down and have lunch at Brown-Duncan's and then go to the movies at maybe 2pm.

JE: Do you remember any of the names of some movies at that time?

MMB: There was one with vodaphone and I think it was Vilma Bánky and the acoustics were dreadful.

JE: What was vodaphone?

MMB: It was like a voice box. That's about the best way I can describe it.

JE: Okay, so it projected the sound.

MMB: It's a little bit like the way I felt the first time I saw television. There were these black and white dots and I just sat in front of it looking at it. For the moment it was fascinating because it was a new medium.

JE: Any movie stars back then that might've been big?

MMB: Vilma Bánky, Doug Fairbanks, Greta Garbo, Clark Gable and later on Cary Grant, Pola Negri and Gloria Swanson.

JE: What about music?

MMB: What kind of music?

JE: How about music on the radio?

MMB: Rudy Vallee. On Thursday night I would go and sit beside the radio and listen to Rudy Vallee sing.

JE: Your brother had a good singing voice—did you have a good singing voice?

MMB: He told me, "Don't even bother in the shower." My mother told me I was going to take piano lessons, which I did, and I wanted to stop. She said, "When you learn Rachmaninoff's C sharp prelude, you can stop and not until then." I knew that Rachmaninoff was in heaven saying "please Mrs. Mayo don't make her stay that long." (Chuckle) But I was a good dancer, and I still love to dance. Peter won't take me dancing.

PW: There's nowhere to go dancing.

MMB: There's nowhere to go dancing. No one dances that way.

Chapter 8 – 5:22**The Famous**

John Erling: Was their air conditioning at the Mayo Hotel?

MMB: Oh no, not at the beginning.

JE: So it opened in 1925 with no air-conditioning.

MMB: When it came in, it came in, but that meant dropping the ceilings and putting all of the mechanics for it between the ceiling and the drop ceiling.

JE: So that would have been in the 1930s?

MMB: Or even the 1940s. But see, it wouldn't have been a shock then because nobody had it and we didn't expect it. We knew that it was available and we knew that we could complain. The more we were going to pay for something the more we wanted in amenities, so this became necessary. Even when we built this house, we deliberated five minutes as to whether we have air conditioning or not because it was going to be a considerable expense to include it when not everyone had air conditioning.

JE: And that was in 1951 in the house that we are in right now that you've lived in all of these years.

MMB: Yes.

JE: So you opted to have air conditioning obviously?

MMB: Yes.

PW: Even cars in the 1950s did not have air conditioning.

MMB: No, and you still had to wind down your window (crank by hand).

PW: Margery, do you remember at all being in the Crystal Ballroom at the hotel for a dance when it was unbearably hot? I mean, that west sun hitting that building.

MMB: No, and that doesn't mean that it wasn't, but I don't remember discomfort. I guess it's just the age you are and innocence is bliss sometimes. If you don't have anything to compare it to, you just abide.

PW: Would things shut down at all in the summer? I know a lot of people would leave town.

MMB: That happened a lot. My father would stay and we would go up to the summer home in Wisconsin. We would be gone for a couple of months. Burch and I would leave early and go up to visit my grandparents. We would get on a train with a big box of fireworks. Can you imagine? We would go just before the Fourth of July.

JE: Do you remember some of the famous people that stayed at the Mayo Hotel?

MMB: Bob Hope, Will Rogers, Mrs. Roosevelt, President Nixon and J. Paul Getty stayed there quite some time. Mr. Gilcrease lived there for a little while too, when he married Norma Smallwood, Miss America.

JE: You are talking about Thomas Gilcrease of the Gilcrease Museum?

MMB: Yes.

JE: Do you remember J. Paul Getty?

MMB: I remember about him. My cousin lives in the house that here rented one time when he was here.

PW: 2801 South Victor. He was here during World War II.

MMB: Yes.

JE: Were you around J. Paul Getty?

MMB: No. I met him and that was all.

JE: Do you remember people talking about him or if he was a keep to himself kind of person?

MMB: I think he very definitely was. He wasn't interested in being part of the community. He was active in aviation.

PW: He owned Spartan at that time.

JE: The others that you mentioned, Nixon, John F. Kennedy, Elvis Presley stayed there?

MMB: Also Sally Rand and her fans.

JE: Did you get to be around them at all?

MMB: My father introduced me to Strangler Lewis. You don't know who strangler Lewis was, and I didn't. Strangler Lewis was a famous wrestler and wrestling could be sometimes a part of a man's Monday night activity. My father was the one who liked to go in he would go with George Bole. One time I asked to go and he said, "No, young ladies do not go there." But anyway, he introduced me to Strangler Lewis who is standing in the lobby when I happened by. He introduced me and I curtsied. He shook my hand and I practically sank to the floor from his grip. Daddy came home and he said, Lillian, I think it's time you stop telling her to curtsy." (Laughter) It was humiliating to him as well as to everyone else. (Chuckle) I was happy to do it because I felt it was what I was supposed to do.

JE: Do you have any recollection of Will Rogers?

MMB: Is there anyone that didn't read the left column of the paper when he appeared there? He was just a tonic. It doesn't matter what mentality one had, he was a necessary part of one's life. He had something to say that applied in any and every way. It was marvelous. It's a simple thing, when he went to the line meeting President Coolidge, as he walked through the line and was introduced to President Coolidge, Will Rogers said, "I didn't get your name?" (Laughter) we were en route to Wisconsin the time that the news came over the radio that the plane was downed. My father went into a total decline right then and there, just as everyone did. There were so many people that stayed there at the hotel. I did meet Bob Hope and Will Rogers. There's a picture of my mother in my father taken with the two of them. I just remember meeting them only to say hello.

JE: So Will Rogers was at the Mayo Hotel?

MMB: Yes.

JE: Was he performing or was he just staying there?

MMB: No, he was in Claremore I presume and had just come down for the day.

JE: What do you remember about him?

MMB: I just remember saying how happy I was to meet him and that's about it.

Chapter 9 – 2:48

Philbrook

John Erling: Talk to us about Waite Phillips.

Margery Mayo Bird: My father was a great admirer of Waite Phillips. He thought he was one of the most wonderful philanthropists in as much as anything he gave he endowed, and that is gifting. This was just a policy of his. Now, he was a very private person and I think he was a very sensitive person. I know that the time that their home was being opened for the first time, I say opened but they were having a private party.

JE: This is Philbrook?

MMB: Yes, when it was there home. The home had been completed and was ready and they were having this dinner party. My mother and father attended it. It was a black-tie affair. Mrs. Phillips came down the staircase and the guests all applauded. The organ was playing and then they had additional music. She was a really shy and very quiet person, so this was almost embarrassing to her. But it was a lovely evening and the dance floor had these lights underneath the surface and the lights would change color as you dance. That was interesting or interesting to me certainly at the age I was then.

JE: And you would have been how old then?

MMB: It was built in the late 20s.

JE: So you were 11, 12 13 and beginning your teenage years perhaps. Then, you knew Elliott who was the son of Waite.

MMB: Yes, and Helen Jane who was older. Chope was younger than I, they called Elliott Chope and Helen Jane was older. She was a contemporary of my cousin, Virginia Mayo.

JE: They were close to you in age, did you visit at all with Elliott? Were you friends?

MMB: Oh yes. I didn't spend time at their house, no. I went swimming on occasion and to a party there. But no, he was younger and he was anxious to get to the ranch. He never liked living in Tulsa. He loved the ranch and that's what he did.

JE: I interviewed him for this website and I asked him about living in Philbrook and if there

was some special room there or anything and he said, “Nah, as far as I was concerned I could just as well have been living in a log cabin.” He enjoyed the nature and wildlife of that area, but Philbrook didn’t interest him at all.

MMB: No.

PW: Margery, you went to a party there when they gave the house, the one that became the museum because I’ve seen a picture of you.

MMB: Yes.

PW: What was that evening like?

MMB: Well, that was a very beautiful party in a beautiful evening. That was emotionally very exciting and touching and in a way it was sad. It was bittersweet. It was wonderful that this gifting had been done. Then the other thing about it was to know that it would no longer be a private residence, but maintained, as it has been, beautifully.

Chapter 10 – 3:11

Southern Hills

John Erling: The International Petroleum Exposition, held in Tulsa for many years, many of the guests stayed at the Mayo Hotel?

Margery Mayo Bird: They did, almost all of them did, if they didn’t stay with a friend. The Grice’s gave a party at their home, which is the large home that’s south as Philbrook. They gathered around the pool. I hadn’t seen a picture like that in which they could do a scoop picture and include everyone in it. It was fascinating. That was a very active time.

JE: Do you remember the infamous Bonnie and Clyde and their crime spree?

MMB: I don’t. I am the wrong person to ask about that.

JE: As they often passed through Tulsa in the 1930s, but for some of that you are away at school, too.

MMB: I was just thinking that I was away during that Kennemer murder trial.

JE: What was that?

PW: There was a murder here in this neighborhood. It was a judge’s son. It was very scandalous. The boy went to prison. Then they let him go to the war, and he was killed in the war. There were several other Tulsans who were there when that happened, prominent families. I was told that part of that was inspiration for building Southern Hills, so these kids would have someplace to go where they would maybe have some other things to do.

MMB: I never knew that but when Southern Hills was formed you might say it was at the Bole home. There was a dinner there. I remember daddy saying that the hotel catered that dinner and it was a lovely dinner.

JE: That was land that Waite Phillips gave—

MMB: I know, but Cecil Canary and Bill Warren I think went to Waite Phillips office to see if he would consider this. He said, “Are you crazy? That isn’t how I gift.” To give to the privileged, you know, was not his thought. But he considered it and they were unhappy about something to do with the Tulsa Country Club.

PW: The Kennedys wouldn’t let people build their homes over there. Dr. Sam Kennedy was an oilman and his family members built homes around the Tulsa Country Club, so many people tried to acquire land to build. He really blew it because he was trying to increase the value of his land and then the value went completely away.

JE: How about Cain’s Ballroom?

MMB: It was not a place where I went. I guess I wasn’t allowed to go—I don’t know why, I just didn’t. We went to ice skating at the Coliseum and to other events at the Coliseum. The Phillips 66 basketball team played there. They also had wrestling there.

JE: The Coliseum is known as the fairgrounds then today?

MMB: Exactly.

PW: Yes, but where it was, it burned.

MMB: It was at 6th & Detroit on the southwest corner. There was a lot of activity there at the original site of the Coliseum.

PW: Yes, it was the hub of activity. Didn’t lightning hit the structure do not what started the fire?

MMB: I think that’s what happened and it caused a fire and it was destroyed.

Chapter 11 – 4:12

Bill Skelly – Presidents

John Erling: Bill Skelly, founder of Skelly Oil—

Margery Mayo Bird: Mr. Republican.

JE: He was instrumental in founding the IPE. Do you have recollections of your father with him?

MMB: Oh yes, they were friends.

JE: Did you see him in your home?

MMB: I didn’t see him in our home. He was not very social in that way. She was, but he was

hello and goodbye. He loved being with the men. He loved talking politics and he loved talking business. He was very much a man's man.

JE: He was kind of a big man wasn't he?

MMB: Yes, he was a big man.

JE: He had a very forceful personality?

MMB: Yes, I think he said what he thought and that's the way it was for him from there on out. He didn't change his mind very much.

JE: He was head of the IPE for 30-some years, which had to have tremendous economic impact.

MMB: Yes, of course and then the TV station.

JE: And radio station KVOO.

MMB: Yes.

Peter Walter: KWGS is his initials.

MMB: Yes. He had 2 daughters—Joan, who married Harold Stuart and Carolyn. Carolyn lived in Dallas until she moved to the East Coast.

PW: Her home was where The Mansion on Turtle Creek is—the house part of the mansion on Turtle Creek, which was the Shepherd home, was Carolyn Skelly Burford's home. She and her husband were the last residence in that house and then it became a law firm. Then Carolyn moved to Newport, Rhode Island and was always in the news forgetting her jewelry stolen. She was a very unusual person. *Vanity Fair* magazine wrote an article about her one time about her. She was not well liked in Newport.

MMB: Nor (was she liked) by her sister.

PW: They had lots of legal battles.

JE: Presidents that you might remember like Calvin Coolidge?

MMB: We were in Yellowstone National Park at the Old Faithful Inn. My parents my brother and I were on one corner of the Inn, and President Coolidge was on the other end. Where his end was, you got off the elevator and the Secret Service were there, and that was the end of that walk. We had been cleared so to speak, before we could be on that floor. We were simply staying there two nights en route to California.

JE: Herbert Hoover?

MMB: My parents went to a party that General Pat Hurley was giving for President and Mrs. Hoover. He was the Secretary of War under Hoover and living in Washington, D.C. I just remember I was home with the measles and my father had gone up to Kansas City to be outfitted for a morning coat. It was tails in the evening I guess, a very formal function. The dinner was in their home. The protocol was that following dinner, each one could sit and talk to President Hoover for five or 10 minutes and then move on. This was told to the ahead of time so they knew how to behave. (Laughter) Doesn't that sound exciting? (Chuckle)

JE: FDR? Did your parents have anything to do with him?

MMB: No, they did not. Other than Mrs. Roosevelt was here. She was a beautiful spirit for sure. Now this is an interesting sort of aside, that's the first time that a black person had ever stayed at The Mayo Hotel.

JE: Who was that?

MMB: Her maid.

JE: Was that an issue?

MMB: No, it didn't become an issue, it was a first. They didn't know if they were to make a special room or how they were to handle that. I guess you would say that it's something that you couldn't imagine today, practically, but it was a first at the time. Then we had one person come who had a dog. My father didn't care for that. That would have been toward the end of the 1920s.

Chapter 12 – 2:54

Blacks – Race Riot

John Erling: Blacks back in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s in Tulsa?

Margery Mayo Bird: They were wonderful servants you see, but they were thought of as servants.

JE: You had them in your home as servants?

MMB: Yes, they were wonderful.

JE: Would you be aware of their existence and how they lived?

MMB: We had servants' quarters at home and that's where they lived. They were seemingly happy to live there. They ate at the breakfast nook.

JE: In downtown Tulsa though—

MMB: In downtown, no, they couldn't eat at the lunch counters.

JE: Or use restrooms?

MMB: No, not to my knowledge. You know, there's something if that's just the way it is, then you don't question it, certainly when you are younger. It's just a matter of the color of their skin was different than my skin. A child just warms to them and it's just a marvelous, great empathy and exchange there.

JE: So as a child, you—

MMB: As a child I was always comfortable with them.

JE: Right. Going back to prior to your remembrances, but the Race Riot in 1921?

MMB: The Race Riot for me was that I remember that my father told Charlie who happened

to be the driver and the butler at that time that he could not go home, that he was staying there at the house. He did not want him going home, so he stayed. At this time, when I say they had the quarters, they did, unless they wished to stay in their own home on the north side.

JE: So you were about five years old in 1921?

MMB: Yes. I wasn't aware as far as myself personally that I was supposed to be afraid of anything or that anything might happen—there was none of that. I do remember for whatever reason we went downtown. We were standing on the side of the street when the National Guard came driving down the street. There was seemingly no problem, now what this signified I never knew. It was as though I was standing there watching a parade of sorts.

PW: Of course, you were so young.

MMB: Yes and I wasn't full of questions. I don't know if you want to call it stupidity or just not curious or not full of questions. So I never saw anything dreadful. It was always a comparatively peaceful situation where I was exposed to it and this was on 5th Street.

JE: The Riots happened in the Greenwood section of town and you were on 5th Street.

MMB: Yes.

JE: I had a black couple tell me not too long ago that they had money when they came downtown to the stores and the stores wouldn't accept their money because they were black.

MMB: Really? See, I hadn't heard this.

JE: So they were confined to spending their money in the Greenwood area.

Chapter 13 – 1:49

WWII

John Erling: Do you have any memories of World War II?

Margery Mayo Bird: Oh yes.

JE: Did the rationing affect you?

MMB: Yes it did for all of us. We all had our rationing tickets. It didn't seem to be a problem. You simply organized your life a little more carefully.

JE: Do you remember what it was that was rationed?

MMB: You had to watch your gas, so you measured your trips. You were circumspect about that.

JE: What brand of cars did your parents' drive?

MMB: We had Packards and a (inaudible), and then after that Cadillacs.

JE: Were other things rationed besides gasoline?

MMB: Well, there was meat rationing. You had food stamps. Clothing was not rationed.

JE: Do you remember hearing about concentration camps?

MMB: Yes. Now, my husband Don was on an aircraft carrier and he was in charge of radar. At that time when he was home on leave, he was not allowed to tell anyone what he was doing. No one knew what radar was back then, but he was not allowed to mention the word radar because it was so top secret. We were stationed in Sea Island, Georgia, which was lovely. We stayed there and then went on down to Hollywood, Florida where Don was in charge of the radar school. Jim then later on was also involved in radar and followed him. Jim Bird my husband.

Chapter 14 – 3:57

Mayo Brothers

John Erling: This is such an amazing story that started with two brothers coming to Tulsa and starting a furniture store and that's the crux of it right there.

Margery Mayo Bird: It is.

JE: So there were people from miles around that were coming in maybe—

MMB: They were coming in and staking and buying. There were the Snedens and the Gillettes and so many people that have come and gone.

Peter Walter: The Snedens lived in the The Garden Center and the Gillettes built the Gillette Mansion on 15th Street.

JE: Your father and your Uncle Cass, were they politically active?

MMB: Not one bit. Their policy was, the business they were in, the hotel business, if you were a Democrat or a Republican others might say that they were not going to stay at their hotel or whatever. No, no they never expressed themselves, not even at home.

JE: You just reminded me, when people would go shopping, didn't they get dressed up?

MMB: Oh, yes. I wouldn't go (shopping) without a hat and gloves, certainly not. It creates a demeanor of its own. Truly, only in discipline are you free. That's the only way you can know freedom is through discipline.

JE: The boys made money in the furniture business, did they really add to their wealth through the hotel?

MMB: There was the good and the bad. It's a hideous thing to say, but the war was just a windfall for them because the hotel was packed all of the time.

JE: Why was that?

MMB: This was quite a center of aviation during the war, and also the Army bases that were here like Fort Sill and Muskogee. Aviation was very active here. Douglas, American, Spartan.

PW: Margery, when did they sell the hotel?

MMB: They sold it about three years before daddy died, which was 1972, so they sold it about 1969. They sold it to the Swigs, the same family that owned the Saint Francis Hotel in San Francisco. Don't forget that this was about the time that the economic climate was changing here in Tulsa. The oil business was becoming more concentrated in Houston.

PW: And downtown was declining.

MMB: The whole economic scenario was changing and it was not good in many ways.

PW: And the hotel was a certain age, too.

MMB: Absolutely.

PW: There was a lot of competition.

JE: Business had declined?

MMB: There was no one so to speak—I don't think Burch was ever really interested. I think he might have been relieved.

JE: So your dad was getting to the age where—

MMB: He was. My father died just shy of his 91st birthday. He was at the office that day.

JE: He worked?

MMB: That was a pleasure for him. He loved working. The only exercise he got was walking and he did walk. He always stayed in good shape and he was always I think he was quite proud of that and I was proud of it for him. They lived on the 15th floor and he would often climb the stairs and maybe take a walk down to 14th Street or wherever.

PW: Did he smoke?

MMB: He smoked a cigar and sometimes a pipe. I would not have liked it on anyone else, but I accepted it from him.

JE: The furniture store, when did that come to an end?

MMB: That sold much earlier. There was a third brother who was not part of the business structure, the youngest brother. He came here and he managed it until they sold it.

JE: What was his name?

MMB: Haskell Mayo. He had a small ownership in the company. He was probably 10 years younger than Uncle Cass, who was two or three years older than daddy.

Chapter 15 – 3:11
Church & Helmerichs

John Erling: Church, was religion a part of the life of your family?

Margery Mayo Bird: Yes. First Presbyterian Church, born, bred and died.

Peter Walter: And you still go there.

MMB: My father came as a Baptist and my mother came as congregationalist and so they met on common ground. Dr. C.W. Kerr baptized me and married me there.

JE: Do you remember when the building when Boston Avenue Methodist came along and built that tall, beautiful structure and it was the talk of the town?

MMB: Yes. Miss Jackson lived at The Mayo Hotel too. When we say that, that doesn't mean that they lived there for their whole life or anything like that.

JE: Maybe for a year or two?

MMB: At least.

Peter Walter: What did people think of Boston Avenue when it was first built? It was pretty radical.

MMB: Oh absolutely. Myself included. I had mixed emotions, but I think it's gorgeous.

PW: I do too.

MMB: It's just beautiful.

PW: It's incredible.

JE: The architect was Ada Robinson?

MMB: Some say that Bruce Goff was the architect. I think others maybe think that he took her drawings and maybe oversaw them in part. It's disputed, but I think our feeling is that is as she who was the architect.

JE: You mentioned Miss Jackson, talk to us about her.

MMB: She always wore a hat. She was quite a private person. She lived at the other end of the 15th floor.

JE: The Helmerichs own Miss Jackson's.

MMB: Oh they own Utica Square.

JE: Right.

MMB: Walt and Peggy are very good friends of mine. When I reached age, Mr. Helmerich and Cadijah his wife had an annual Christmas party at the Tulsa Club.

JE: So your dad knew Walt's father?

MMB: Yes, very well.

JE: Do you remember when Peggy came here to live and she was a Hollywood actress?

- MMB:** Yes, but she never came as an actress, I'll put it that way. She came as Mrs. Helmerich from the very beginning and has remained that way I think ever since except when she's been called upon to give these interesting interviews and tell the story. She's a charming wonderful person isn't she? She is just lovely.
- JE:** When I've talked to you, and I've interviewed Peggy too, there's a striking resemblance between the both of you.
- MMB:** Well thank you.
- JE:** In the way you speak and that theatrical way that she has, you have that too.
- MMB:** My noisemaker?
- PW:** Elegance!
- JE:** Yes, elegance! That's a good word for it. Both of you are very elegant.
- MMB:** You are kind. I count that as a compliment.

Chapter 16 – 2:12

Peter Walter

- John Erling:** I want to tank you Peter.
- Margery Mayo Bird:** Peter is always an asset, there is no doubt about it. His mind is incredible.
- JE:** It is incredible. When were you born?
- Peter Walter:** October 11, 1953. I just turned 56.
- JE:** So then many of these memories come to you as a very young man then? They were bigger than life to you?
- PW:** Yes.
- JE:** We haven't named your parents, you mother and dad.
- PW:** My father is deceased. He was Peter Charles Walter. My mother is alive and doing great. Her name is Jane Catlin Walter. Her father was the CFO for Reading & Bates. He died young. My mother grew up here.
- JE:** What did your father do?
- PW:** My father started a company called Mallard Transportation. It was a gas transportation company that used tank cars. It was a very good business. Koch Industries wanted to buy it for stock and I'm sorry that he didn't do that because I wouldn't be working so hard now.
- MMB:** Yes, you would.
- PW:** But anyway, he was very successful.

MMB: Tell them about his railroad car.

PW: He had a private railroad car that was built in 1911 by the owners of Kansas City Southern Railroad. It was mahogany on the inside dining room, living room four state rooms and baths, a quarters room and a kitchen.

JE: Where was this railroad car?

PW: It was mostly in west Tulsa.

JE: So he bought it and built it out?

PW: Well, he spent a fortune updating it because to be able to use a railroad car it had to be completely up to date. So the under carriage was completely rebuilt with new electrical systems and all of that. He didn't use it that much because it was very expensive. Plus I remember one time they went to Houston on it and they ended up in the worst part of Houston and he was supposed to spend the night on it. It was one thing to go to New York, where you could actually stay at the Waldorf in a private railroad car underneath. But again, my dad was a train nut and it wasn't really that big of a deal. I would have much rather had an airplane, but they couldn't afford that.

MMB: There's something romantic about the train though isn't there?

JE: Your family had a high social standing though in the community. How did that come about?

PW: My parents knew everybody and so did my grandparents, but they weren't the most prominent people in town or anything like that. They were just a nice family.

MMB: They were very nice. They were a lot younger than I.

Chapter 17 – 6:18

The Mayo Hotel Lives On

John Erling: Doesn't it make you feel good to know that the condition The Mayo Hotel is in today in 2009—tell us about your feelings about that.

Margery Mayo Bird: It does indeed. It's nice to know that I've lived long enough to see it survive. I was watching it decay. it's very rewarding for me and just a happy time to know that people like the Snyders have made this kind of commitment. i think they are very brave. I wish them the best in every way. I think it's great.

JE: Yes, the Snyders come along and that's private money, but it should make you feel good to know that government money also went into it, that Tulsans voted for it with Vision 2025, so the people of Tulsa—

MMB: Yes, they also have a financial interest in it.

JE: They felt it was so important that we keep the Mayo Hotel and that should make you feel good.

MMB: And it does, it truly does. There are so many people I wish were alive to know this today. A lot of those faithful employees that were there—it was their life. I can think of quite a few of them in particular.

JE: Thank you Margery for this interview. You were very giving.

MMB: You're welcome. There will be lots of things, which I will think about later that I will wish I would have told you. The Town Hall is going to have its 75th reunion at the Mayo Hotel. That goes back to when we used to have it at The Ritz and then they would go over to the Mayo Hotel to the Crystal Ballroom to have lunch and that would be a part of it. I remember one time I was introducing Jessica Tandy and her husband Hume Cronyn. She was a true stage actress. She was almost blind, which no one knew. Before a lecture or anything she did, she would come on her own and memorize where you were sitting exactly and have a good idea of the space so that she was totally comfortable making a quick address to you. She had all of the talent in the world and they were a great acting team. Vincent Price came and was staying at the hotel. We had a dinner out at Southern Hills. He had written his own cookbook and he was traveling with the Sears & Roebuck Art Collection. It was on the road for quite some time. It was quite a spectacular collection that year. He said that whenever you have "a la" it's an apology for the entree. (Laughter) I've always remembered that. I've always felt that you should avoid the "a la". (Laugh) isn't that wonderful? Then John Mason Brown, whom I so admired because when I was in college he was THE drama critic for The New York Times. He came (to town) and he was great, he was absolutely charming.

JE: The names of your friends in high school or after college that you would have spent time with?

MMB: So many of them are gone. Sue Moody is older than I as far as still surviving friends. She is a graduate of Holland Hall, but she and I were not contemporaries. I was a good friend of Betty Bole's and a good friend of Betty Moore's. There were different clubs then and our club was called the Gammons.

JE: What do you mean by clubs?

MMB: It was a club like a sorority or a fraternity, but this was before that period. You were invited to be a member of that club and you usually stayed within your own group.

JE: Was this in high school?

MMB: Yes. Then we would usually have a dance and we would invite everybody from the other club and boys to come to our Christmas Dance.

JE: It was a fun time wasn't it?

MMB: It was definitely a fun time. I had a wonderful time. I almost feel apologetic because it was really just a beautiful time of life. We took so many things for granted. I don't think we did it in an abusive way. We did it in innocence. It was just there for us and not a lot was demanded of us, certainly respect, and manners and behavior. Of course, there as one time (chuckle) I loved athletics. I was active in so many things and I was anxious to win that pin. They had posture at school in class at Holland Hall. Those that sat up straight for the longest in a week got an award or something. I was to to win all of those kinds of things. During this time, my grades were suffering a little bit. I was doing a lot in the way of athletics and they wanted me to be the captain of the team, etc. So mother and daddy held a meeting with me and said to me, "Margery, we think you are going to have to cut back on these athletics and concentrate a little more on your studies." I said, "If I can't have athletics, I don't want to live!" (Laughter) They knew I could be pretty stubborn, but they were right.

JE: For students listening to this, do you have some advice for them?

MMB: I guess I, without thinking about it, just said then what I truly believe and maybe I knew how to fight against things by saying, "I don't want to" but I do feel that discipline, and I am sincere about this, that only through discipline are you a free person. You know your limits and so you are not fighting for something that isn't acceptable. I will say this I think it behooves every student to take advantage of his education at the time that it comes across your plate. The rewards are so much more than it would be without it, and I envy them, the beginning of it.

JE: Very good. Thanks again. You were very kind.

MMB: You're welcome.

JE: Thank you Peter.

PW: Thank you.

MMB: We enjoyed it.

Chapter 18 – 0:30

Conclusion

Announcer: Voices of Oklahoma is happy to share with you the story of Margery Mayo Bird. All who knew her would describe her as a very elegant lady. She set a wonderful example of contributing to her town with style and grace. Now her voice and story are preserved for all to hear. Our thanks once again to our founding sponsors and those who provide our funding and share our mission, preserving Oklahoma's legacy one voice at a time at VoicesofOklahoma.com.