

Interview with Edwin M. Fauver Jr.
Interviewer: John L. Horak
Transcriber: John L. Horak
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Location: Physical Plant, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX

Begin Tape 1, Side 1

John L. Horak: This is John L. Horak interviewing Edwin M. Fauver, Director of the Physical Plant at Southwest Texas State University. The date is October 16, 1985.

Mr. Fauver, could you tell me where you grew up?

Edwin M. Fauver Jr.: I spent most of my growing up and going to high school years in Washington, D.C., where my father was an employee of the government. I came to Texas in 1957 to go to college and remained, working in the oil industry, until I entered the Navy after graduation. I was in the Civil Engineer Corps of the Navy approximately seven years, having duty stations in Texas and Europe. I came back to Texas and went to work in San Marcos for the Texas Education Foundation, and then in 1970, I came to work at Southwest Texas State University.

Horak: Just how did you get to Texas in 1957? Was it forced upon you, or did you just happen to choose to come to Texas?

Fauver: I had a friend whose father was an aide to a Texas congressman, and he was coming back to Texas to go to school at Corpus Christi University, and I came back with him.

Horak: While you were in high school, did you play any sports?

Fauver: I did play football in high school, and I went to college on a football scholarship.

Horak: What position did you play?

Fauver: Defensive end.

Horak: Defensive end, just on defense—you didn't play on offense?

Fauver: Well, back in the old days, you went both ways and played both offense and defense.

Horak: By the way, did you all have face masks in high school?

Fauver: No, they came in approximately my second year in college—people began to wear them.

Horak: Did you play all four years in college?

Fauver: Yeah, I really played two years at a junior college and two years in college.

Horak: What junior college did you play at?

Fauver: Montgomery County Junior College, which is outside of Washington, D.C.

Horak: Is that in the District of Columbia or in Maryland?

Fauver: It is in Maryland.

Horak: When you came to Corpus Christi State University, did the players seem about the same and about the same size?

Fauver: Yeah. We had a very good junior college team. We were ranked in the top ten in the nation both years I was there, so the level of football was comparable.

Horak: Why did you decide to join the Navy?

Fauver: In graduating from college, the draft was still in effect, and I decided that I would go to OCS [Officers Candidate School] and the Civil Engineer Corps to gain some practical experience in my field while I was in the armed services.

Horak: Could you tell me a little bit more specifically where you were stationed in Europe?

Fauver: I was assigned to the Field Engineering Office of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, which is in London, England, and my primary duty—I was a project manager for the construction of two communications stations. One was in Thurso, Scotland, on the North Sea coast, to monitor the Russian subs and communications with our Polaris subs in that area. And my second project was another communication station outside of Asmera, Ethiopia, to improve the integrity of the Navy's communications between the west coast of Africa and Australia.

Horak: Where have you traveled during your lifetime? You said you have been to Africa—

Fauver: —and through Europe.

Horak: Is that when you did most of your traveling in your lifetime—when you were in the Navy?

Fauver: That's right.

Horak: Have you ever been to Alaska?

Fauver: No, I've never been to Alaska.

Horak: Well, this question relates—have you ever traveled Texas quite a bit?

Fauver: Yeah, I've traveled Texas quite extensively.

Horak: I'm from West Texas. I haven't told you this yet, and my hometown is Fort Stockton. I thought I would ask you a little bit about—have you ever been to the mountains of West Texas or Big Bend National Park?

Fauver: I've been to Alpine several times and through that way. I can remember one time in college, we were playing New Mexico State, and we traveled by bus from Corpus Christi to El Paso, and the Pecos River Bridge was washed out from a flood. And we had to go down and cross a low-water crossing on the Pecos River and come back up that canyon, and the bus didn't make it up the other side, and we had to get out and walk so the bus could make it up the steep incline.

Horak: When did you get your first automobile?

Fauver: I bought my first automobile when I was a junior in college, and I bought it from a kid who lived down the hall from me from Phillips, Texas. It was a 1948 Chevrolet convertible, and I gave him a \$125 for it.

Horak: Could you briefly describe your job with the university today?

Fauver: I'm the Director of the Physical Plant, which is responsible for the maintenance of the buildings [and] the operation and maintenance of the utility systems that serve the buildings. I'm responsible for the mechanical and electrical portions of the new construction that goes on campus and any other duties assigned by the Vice President for Finance and Management.

Horak: Well, I was going to ask you what other occupations you have had during your lifetime, so could you elaborate a little bit more on your experience in the oil industry.

Fauver: Well, in the oil industry was when I went to college and immediately after I graduated from college, I worked for an independent oil producer, and I was basically in the construction end of the oil field and in production.

Horak: Have you ever found any Indian artifacts in the Hays County area?

Fauver: I've never found any in Hays County. I've found some in Zavala County and in—whatever the county in right outside of Boerne, Texas—Kendall County. I take that back, I have found along the river a few chips of spear points and arrowheads. Nothing real special.

Horak: Was that in the San Marcos area?

Fauver: That's right.

Horak: Okay, you said your dad worked for the government. I was just going to ask you what your father's occupation was. Was he a lawyer or a civil servant?

Fauver: He was a civil servant in the government.

Horak: What branch of the government?

Fauver: He worked at the White House.

Horak: For which president, if I may ask?

Fauver: He worked for twelve different presidents, and he ended up returning when Nixon took office.

Horak: Could you tell me a little bit about his duties?

Fauver: He was responsible for the transportation and communications in the White House.

Horak: Okay, that's interesting. I was going to ask you when you came to San Marcos.

Fauver: In 1965, I came to San Marcos to take a job with the Texas Education Foundation who was setting up the Job Corps Center.

Horak: Then that was when it was just coming in. I understand you were the Director of Maintenance at Gary Job Corps Center, also. Was that job greatly different from your job at Southwest Texas State University?

Fauver: It wasn't, but on a much smaller scale.

Horak: I can imagine with the growth you have experienced with the university in your last fifteen years. I was going to ask you why you chose engineering as a career.

Fauver: I think I just had an aptitude for it and chose that as a career.

Horak: I was going to ask you what did you think of the expansion of the Southwest Texas State University campus when it acquired the old San Marcos Baptist Academy and it became West Campus. Did it greatly change your job, or make it a much larger task?

Fauver: It added to our responsibility, but that acquisition was needed for the expansion. I can remember when we first took over the academy, I wasn't sure we could make use of all the buildings, but within two years, we needed to make use of every building over there.

Horak: When was this Physical Plant Building finished? I know it was recently?

Fauver: Yeah, we have been in this physical plant about six months, and the reason we built the new physical plant is the new Applied Arts Building that is being built across the street needed the area occupied by the old physical plant facility. So, therefore, in order to make room for the Applied Arts Building, we had to move the physical plant—so we had planned for the past five years to ultimately build a new physical plant facility.

Horak: That's very interesting. I was going to ask you where the physical plant was located before this. Wasn't it located where the power plant is now?

Fauver: Yeah. It was on the lower end of the present boiler plant, and the present boiler plant remains, but we tore down approximately half of the old building.

Horak: What building stood where the LBJ Center stands today?

Fauver: There was the first girl's dormitory, which was called Sayers Hall, and it was right there on the corner of what was Edward Gary and Roanoke Street. Roanoke Street continued on from the Library Building straight through what is now the mall of the LBJ Center.

Horak: The campus has grown since you started your career at Southwest Texas. How much do you expect it to grow in the next twenty years?

Fauver: There were somewhere between seven thousand and eight thousand students when I came to work here, and we have more than doubled in students. Projections for the student enrollment looks like we are going to level off or have a slight increase for the next couple of years, and then beginning in the 1990s, I would expect to see some growth at a greater rate.

Horak: What do you think is the most difficult building to maintain at Southwest Texas State University?

Fauver: Some buildings are difficult just by the way they were rehabilitated or the way they were constructed. As far as the size of the building and the requirements for maintaining temperature, the Science Building is difficult.

Horak: I can see where that building would be difficult to maintain. In your opinion, how has San Marcos changed in the past twenty years?

Fauver: San Marcos has changed from what you would call a very small town. It has grown into a medium-sized city, and the problems of traffic, environment, providing necessary services, has become urgent due to the population growth, and the city and the university share in some of the common problems associated with that.

Horak: Does the fact that the campus is always changing, mainly by construction, make it more difficult for you to run the physical plant?

Fauver: Yes, it does because we have to work with the contractors who are disrupting existing services trying to make connections into existing services, and so we have to spend a number of man hours helping coordinate the construction effort.

Horak: Are there any springs on the Southwest Texas State University Campus?

Fauver: There are some springs; you might call them springs, that run when it rains. There is one up on the hillside by Jackson that comes out in the street. There's one by this building right here that's running right now down the curb. They might run for several days after a rain—and anytime on the lower campus; the water table is about six feet down, and there are underground springs in that area.

Horak: What do you think has been the greatest addition to the Southwest Texas State University in the last fifteen years?

Fauver: Well, of course, I would have to rank the acquisition of West Campus because that provided much needed space so that we could add new buildings or rehabilitate old buildings.

End of interview

[Mr. Fauver had an unavoidable appointment so our interview was continued the following day.]