

Interview with Dr. Betty Jane Kissler

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Texas State University, San Marcos, TX**

Begin Tape 1, Side 1

Kathy Lea Stinton: Dr. Kissler, perhaps you could begin by discussing your early college days and various decisions and opportunities that resulted in choosing the career that you have since chosen.

Betty Jane Kissler: When I started college— it had never occurred to me that I would not go to college. I just wanted to go to school. I really had no goal in mind except to get a husband. That was primarily what young women did in the early—late forties, early fifties. You were looking for a husband. You went to college to try to find a suitable mate, if you hadn't found one before.

I found myself after two years at the University at Colorado wanting to go to law school. I went to law school the next year. At that time, you could enter law school without a degree. That turned out to be a mistake, not because I wasn't interested in law, I still have a great interest in law, but I was too young. I had just turned nineteen. That was not the time to make that kind of decision. I had been advised not to, but I didn't listen to the advice given. At any rate, I did finish one year of law school and found that C's and D's were not my cup of tea. The competition was pretty keen. I did pass everything, but that was not what I normally made. So, I went back to the arts and science school and finished with a degree in history because I could use history—the law, as a part of the—my courses because I had constitutional law and that certainly would count. And there were a couple of others I was allowed to accept. At any rate, I finished my degree then with a BA in history. No teaching credentials. I did not want to be a teacher. That was not why I was going to school.

I went home and, of course, I had no husband in tow or prospective husband in tow, so I had to get a job. I went to work that summer for an attorney whose secretaries were on vacation and I was merely filling in. I rather enjoyed being a legal secretary. It was kind of fun for that month that I was there. But I could soon see that that was not where I wanted to be either because I would have soon been bored with that. Once you learn the forms and what you need to use, typing in the information is not exciting.

One of the attorneys that had employed me was a friend of the family's, and he was a Democrat, active in state politics. And he said there was a possibility I could work for the state government in Colorado. I said I thought I might enjoy working for the state. And I was recommended by

him to the governor's office. I was employed, merely as a clerk, but with the promise that a position would open in the tax office, which sounded interesting.

Stinton: Would that have been for legal research or accounting sort of thing—

Kissler: It would have been working in the income tax. Colorado had an income tax service at that time, and it would have been working—traveling out of the Denver office. And I'm not exactly sure what all would have been involved because I never got to the point of getting the job. The reason is that veterans got preferences, even with political clout. I talked to the director of the department several times and he said, finally, he said, "I simply cannot hire you. I'm getting pressure from the Veteran's Administration, and I have to hire a veteran." I was not a veteran. And so I was not employed. I stayed in my clerical position for, oh, I think about three, four, months and had an opportunity, again through friends, to learn about an executive training program at Montgomery Ward.

I interviewed and was hired to be—for their executive training program. I was there about two years and found that that really wasn't what I wanted to make a career—I wanted my career to be. I really was not interested in business. I deplored selling. Not that I would have had to sell once I had moved through the ranks. It was an excellent training program. I was at the big office, big building, the department store in Denver. And they had a mail order unit there. And it was an eight-story building that was a warehouse. And when you ordered things from the catalog, it—the way it was in the catalog, you could walk through that warehouse, those floors, and pick up those items. It was, it really was an education in the sense, from the standpoint of how mail order, big mail order, operations run. I worked through the mail order part of that, learned how—just simply—that took about a week, you know, to learn how that goes and then you learned something about merchandising, how they bought the merchandise. Now, I didn't get into the actual buying. I didn't stay long enough to finally get into doing that. But I was actually working in sales. And I was in line to take over the management of the telephone sales unit when I quit. I just knew this isn't where I wanted to be. I learned any number of things, though, in operating—how to sell things, how to promote items over the telephone, how to deal with complaints, handling complaint items, dealing with the public face-to-face because they sometimes come to the—wanting to talk to the clerks they talked to on the telephone unit because they had been promised certain things and wanted that clarified. Although normally we didn't deal directly with the public, usually it was over the phone, but I had to deal with the public in some respect. I'm glad I did that. That was very good, very good education from the standpoint of, when I finally got into teaching, I at least understood a little bit about how sales operate, how other—how the retail business works, retailing to some degree. I would not have had any of that background had I not done that.

Well, what caused my quitting Montgomery Ward was that I had an opportunity, thanks to my parents, to take a trip to Europe. And so I went to Europe for what was to be about a six-month

stay. It turned out to be five. We just got so homesick and so tired of traveling we had to go home, but—

Stinton: Did you go with your parents?

Kissler: No. I went with a friend, girlfriend. I met her at Montgomery Ward. She was going to school at Denver University but working part-time. And we—she wanted to go to Europe to look at the spots. She was writing a novel, and she wanted to look at places so she could have been there firsthand, you know, and made a firsthand look at these places where she could set the novel. And I just wanted to go to Europe. I had always wanted to. I loved history. That just would be bringing it alive as far as making it live for me. I had never traveled east of Colorado. I'd been west but I'd never been east at that point. Well, at any rate, as I say, thanks to my parents, who were willing to finance that trip, or help me out at least, I was able to make it. Of course, that was 1950. 1950, things were considerably cheaper. And there—we could travel—two of us—we bicycled part of the time. We planned our own itinerary. We went in March, came back in August—went on ship. I went ship both ways. Sybil flew back about a week earlier. She just didn't want to travel by ship, and I'd enjoyed the ship and decided I'd travel—well, I was going to fly back, but we were bringing back some champagne and we couldn't bring it back by flying. So I took the ship.

Stinton: How did you feel traveling on a, on a ship by yourself?

Kissler: There were just two of—there were two of us. The two of us—oh—

Stinton: No. I mean—

Kissler: —oh, you mean on the way home. Well, I was just put in a stateroom with another woman. And it was a first class liner, which turned out to be—I couldn't get tourist class because we were making reservations at the last minute. But my airfare was the same as first class so it didn't cost me anymore. And it was one of the Cunard—I had the choice of the Queen Elizabeth or the Cunard ship. I've, I've forgotten the name of the ship that I came back on. It was a smaller ship, but it was all first class. But the Elizabeth was—you had a first class deck, and you dressed for dinner. I had one cocktail dress with me, and it was not—I mean, we were traveling bicycles part of the time, (laughs), [and] so one cocktail dress was not going to do for dressing for dinner, not five nights or whatever it would have been, three nights. I've forgotten. The other one I didn't have to dress every night for dinner. You needed to dress up. But I had enough dress clothes with me that I could do that. But not—

Stinton: —not as formal as the other.

Kissler: I traveled to Europe considerably different than kids do today. It wasn't backpacking. We took a trunk with us. We had clothes that—for dressy occasions because we were going to plays. And you dressed to go to plays. You did not go in your jeans or in your, at that time, in

your saddle shoes. You were expected to be dressed. So even bicycling we carried dress clothes with us in our packs. When we were in London and in Paris, we had clothes, we carried suitcases. We weren't bicycling at that point. But we took suitcases with us so that we could have clothes that you could—you could go to some of the places. It was quite a different kind of atmosphere in traveling. So, I did have some clothes with me. But I didn't have formal clothes with me, and so it was a—(laughs)

Stinton: That determined the choice of ship.

Kissler: Right. (Laughs) That was an interesting experience in itself, this traveling first class. It was very relaxed. The food was marvelous. That's a very nice experience, too.

While I was in Europe, I finally decided. And going to all the various historical places, and we saw a lot of them, and we spent lots of time—we spent ten days in London. We spent three weeks in Paris, which was great because you really had time to go around and see some things. We spent two weeks in the—touring the—chateau area of France. We spent about ten days in Switzerland. We shortcut Italy. We weren't there as long. We were about ten days in Italy, but, that was through Rome and Venice. We didn't go to the other—other cities. But we did do Rome and Venice in those ten days. But that was too short a time. We went to Oberammergau because it was—1950 was a holy—a year for the play because it's every ten years. And so we went to that. And then we cut short our trip. We were going to Vienna and Berlin, but the Korean War started while we were in Europe. And the American Embassy said, "Don't do that. We would really—" They couldn't tell us not to, but they didn't recommend it. And I think, like today's world, I think if you go into war-torn areas or where there's—you're putting your country in real jeopardy when you do that, when the country advises that you not do it. And I just felt that way then, and I certainly feel that way now, that you just don't put your country in a position where they have to try to get you out and endanger the whole country in doing that sort of thing. At any rate, we were advised not to go. We didn't go. So we cut our trip. That cut off part of our trip. But by the time we had made sort of a circle around Germany back to England, we were both really very tired of traveling, and we just finally decided—we were going to go to Scotland, and that's the part we didn't go to, as far as actually cutting out the part we had planned that we could have still gone to. We didn't go on to Scotland. We just came on home.

But I made up my mind after seeing all those places that I wanted to be a history teacher. So, I came home.

Stinton: Not a researcher, but a teacher?

Kissler: No. A teacher. Oh, I had no illusions about being a—oh, good heavens. College professor was the farthest thing from my mind, almost the farthest. I really hadn't thought about college, at all. I was going to be a public school teacher. The university was completely out of the—university professors, from my perspective, were so smart and so—had so much going for them that the idea—I wasn't sure I could do a master's, let alone a PhD. I was only about a B-

student as an undergraduate. The law school didn't help that average any because, as I said, C's and D's to add in for a year doesn't help your average. So I came out with about a 2.9, or something like that, overall average. And that's not very good if you're going to go to graduate school. In fact, I just was barely admitted when I was admitted to graduate school. It was really conditional on what I would do that first semester in graduate school. Well, at any rate, I went home and asked my parents if they would pay for my—here they'd paid for my trip to Europe and now I'm asking for more money—if they would—since I could go to college in Greeley, which was very near my hometown, I could live at home and it wouldn't cost any board and room, would they finance my schooling so I could get my certification. I wasn't necessarily thinking of going on to graduate school at that point. But I needed to go to school to be certified. My father said, "Well, you've got to have a job, so I supposed we've have to work on that." So, at any rate, (laughs) he, bless his heart, decided that he would help me out again.

And when I went in to be advised about my career plans, and on the certificate, I was talking to one of the, to just an admissions officer, and he said, "Well, have you thought of going on to graduate school to work for a master's?" And I said, "Well, I'm not sure that I'm qualified." And he looked at this and said, "Why don't you go talk to the graduate dean?" He looked at my transcript. And he said, "Well, do talk to the graduate dean." We didn't have any GRE to take at that point. So I went to the graduate dean and he looked over my transcript and he said—I had, I guess, all A's the last semester [that] I'd been at school, my senior year. And I had one B in the first part of that first semester. He looked at that and he looked at my junior year, as I said, with C's and D's, and he said, "Good heavens. What happened to you in your junior year?" And I said, "Well, sir, I was in law school." And he looked at it again and said, "Oh. So you were." And, at any rate, he looked at that. And he said, "Well, I—I would advise you to start working on a master's." He said, "I think you can do it. We'll have to admit you conditionally; but, you can get your certificate," and—it was in January when I was going to school. So, by going to school in January through the end of the summer, I wouldn't have gotten a job before fall anyway, to teach. He said, "You can get your teaching credential and probably be well on your way for your master's degree and maybe come back and finish it the following summer if you succeed." And that's exactly what I did.

I started to work on my master's as well as the teaching credentials. And made good grades and managed to get through and did my—went to work in the fall, then, at Great Falls, Montana. I taught in Montana for three years teaching American History and Latin American History, which was a real love. I learned to—took a course in—at my undergrad—I had taken it as an undergraduate. Then I took another course as a graduate student and I really found I liked studying Latin American History. And so I had an opportunity to teach it, in Montana of all places. So, I then came back. After having taught one year, I came back and finished my master's that summer.

Stinton: Was this at the same university or college as your BA?

Kissler: No. It was at Colorado State College at Greeley. It's today Northern Colorado State University.

Stinton: And then your undergraduate degree was done—

Kissler: —at the University of Colorado.

Stinton: Okay.

Kissler: The University of Colorado was probably about seventy miles from home. Greeley was about fifteen, I guess, so I could live at home, and that's what I—why I went to Greeley. Greeley is very much the—Colorado State College—very much like Southwest Texas. It was a teacher training institution, had a very fine reputation for elementary education. In fact, it had some of the leading scholars in the thirties, forties, fifties. Some of the best known elementary writers, writing reading books and the whole bit for—elementary education. It had some of the finest professors.

Stinton: When you went back for your teaching certificate, you had the opportunity to work under some of these people, or—

Kissler: I didn't work under any of the elementary—I worked in the history department. It was a social science department, as this was when I came here, social science. They had—there was one government teacher, one geography teacher, about four history teachers, and one sociologist, I think, and an economist. The economics department was in there at the time, or the teacher was in there. But I worked on a master's in history; although, I took a geography course and government course as a part of that program. But I had an MA in history when I finished, and then the teaching credential as well. I earned that in—beyond the master's.

I taught then in the public schools for three years in Great Falls and one year in California. I left California after one year out there because of a broken romance and just disgruntlement with the large schools. I had taught in large public high schools, and I wasn't finding—well, as a matter of fact, when I went to Great Falls, I replaced a woman who had been there probably for forty years. That may have been a factor in my leaving there. When I opened her file—she became ill and had to retire. People had come in and cleared her files and taken out things she had wanted specifically; but the rest of the stuff was left there and I was told, when I moved into the room, that I could do whatever I wanted with any of the information I found there. I opened up the file drawer and started clearing it out and found tests dated 1910. And I looked at that and I said this was 1951, I guess it was, and I said—No. That would have been '50, the fall of '52, I guess. And I said, “No way. (Laughs) No one's ever going to open up my file drawer and find a test dated 1952—you know, down the road in 1990.” So I—(laughs) and, as I said, that, that may have been a factor that caused me to leave; although, I was doing exactly what I really enjoyed doing. I was teaching Latin American History. I was teaching American History. I enjoyed both of them. That was for juniors and seniors. You couldn't do much better in a high school than having

those. I was sponsor of a club that had all the honors students in it, and I loved it. They were great students. It couldn't have been—better, in the sense that my job was great. But I was finding myself getting bored with it. And I found out why I was getting bored with it when I left and took a different job that I wasn't doing any more preparing. You see, I had fallen into, already, the rut that I was prepared. The lesson plans were there. I didn't have to do anything. And so you sort of sit there and vegetate. And I was bored with it. I did other things in Great Falls. I was with the—on a state board of the university women's—AAUW [American Association of University Women].

Stinton: There was a university women's association in the fifties?

Kissler: Uh-huh. And I was their recent grad, recent graduate representative on the state board, which was fun because I had an opportunity to travel around the state of Montana a little bit and met some interesting people. So that was my first venture into doing some other things and getting involved in some organizations.

Well, anyway, when I left Montana and went to California, I found that part of my problem had been with boredom in my, or unhappiness with my job was not strictly personal, but had been simply that I wasn't working at my job anymore. And I found I didn't have to prepare very much. And as I said, I was really kind of bored with it. Well, anyway, California turned out to be a disaster personally, not so much from the job. I was teaching in a school where they had a—it was overcrowded, and they had two sessions. I taught going to school at 10:30 in the morning and taught until 5:00. There was another group that started at 7:00 and taught until about 2:00, and there was just a slight overlap at that lunch hour. And the classes were minimum—I've forgotten if it was forty minutes, forty-two minutes, were very short class periods. It was state minimum, so they could get it in. And I was in a school where there were lots of industrial transit workers and so the children came and went. Not that they weren't concerned about them, but it was a very—well, it just wasn't exactly the kind of place I wanted to stay very much longer. And I decided the best thing for me to do was to go home and maybe go back to what I knew best and where I might be the most comfortable instead of trying to live in the urban areas, to go to a small rural high school where—that's what I grew up in and was happy in the rural community, and maybe that's what I really needed to do. Of course, I was still looking for a husband. And so I just thought that's what I would do.

Well, I got back home. And I went to the university at Greeley, which was still a college, to update my placement file. And I was talking to the director of placement, and it was a woman, and she looked at my credentials, and she said, "Have you ever thought of teaching at a university?" And I said, "No." And I hadn't. It was still far removed from what I thought I could conceivably do. And she said, "We just—there's just been a resignation here at the university. And the university would like to hire a—instructor to teach for one year and teach the basic courses. And I think you have the qualifications." Of course, this was in the summer. It was in June or maybe early July. I've forgotten just what it was, but it was at the beginning of, kind of

at the beginning of the summer. She said, "Excuse me. Let me make a telephone call." And she left and made a telephone call, and the chairman of the department, whom I knew—history department—wanted to see me. And so I went over to interview him. And while I was there, he said, "Do you have time to go to the president's office?" He called in the meantime, and the president was available. I said, "Yes. I guess I do." And I went to the president's office and with that I left. My mother was waiting in the car all these two hours. (Laughs)

Anyway, I got to my car and told my mother what had happened. And I said, "I think maybe I'm going to be offered a job." And she said, "Well, would you take it?" I said, "I think so. If I can live at home and I don't have to worry about taking care of anything because I'm going to have so much work that I, you know, I don't want to cook, I don't want to be"—which an apartment would have entailed. I said, "If I could live at home and"—but I didn't have a car. Well, anyway, I thought, "Let's not worry about that until it's offered, then we'll see." And I got home, and I probably hadn't been home more than twenty-five minutes, and the telephone rang, and I was offered the position. Well, that turned things around.

Well, we were able to work out—I was able to work out an arrangement with my parents. I went to work preparing lectures. I taught world history, which was four days a week. They were on the quarter system. That was four days a week, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday. And then I had what they called "Social Sci"—"Introduction to Social Science." Never should a beginning teacher teach that course. Well, I was required to teach two sections of that. It met three days a week. And we had, fortunately, a very carefully planned syllabus so that I could follow the syllabus for what was needed when I had to teach. Part of it was a lot of fun because I had some background when we were talking about history, when we talked about political science. International affairs, I felt rather comfortable in it; but boy, sociology. Never had a sociology course. (Laughs) I was really lost. But I got through it. But I never worked so hard in all my life as I did that year in preparing those lectures. I got through the years thanks to my mother and dad who provided the car. My mother did not expect me to do any cooking. She took care of my clothes. They were always pressed and cleaned and ironed so that I could get up in the morning and put on clean clothes and go. And it worked out very well for me. And I got a very good start in my college career, teaching career.

It was that year, after the first quarter, the chairman said to me, "You really need to go on for a doctorate. We'd like to keep you, but we can't," he said, "without the PhD." Well, I said, "I can't do it." He said, "You can do it. You got through the master's here, and there's no problem. You can handle it." He said, "All you've got to do is decide what you want to study and go and get it." And other professors that I had, who were my—who had—I'd studied with, made the same recommendation.

So that Christmas, my parents and I were going to California to visit my sister, and we had about three weeks between semesters. And when school was out, we got in the car, and we drove to Texas and looked over the University of Texas because I had put an application in because I

wanted to study Latin American History. And it was certainly at one of the best libraries and a very good faculty too. The University of California. The University of Pennsylvania was another school I considered; but, it was, ultimately, too far. And so I really only considered Texas and California. I was admitted to both and chose Texas. And I'm not really quite sure why. I like Texas. Probably one of the reasons I accepted it is that I was hired as—in a sense, I suppose that I was hired. I couldn't get a teaching assistantship from UT. And that was understandable. I didn't have that kind of a record to—and they didn't know me. They knew their students, and they would give assistantships to their students. But I was hired by the dorm and could be a dorm director, live there as a graduate student and just be a floor, have a floor, freshman dorm. And that paid for my board and room. So that made it a little less expensive because I would have to pay out-of-state tuition. And I could—I wanted to study with Dr. Webb. I'll take his courses because he was getting near retirement age, and I thought, "Well, I think I'll just go to"—and I went to Texas. And I guess I've never regretted it, coming to Texas.

Stinton: Well, you've stayed.

Kissler: I've stayed. (Laughs)

Again, I wasn't sure I could handle it. I took nine hours. At that time, when you entered graduate school, if you didn't have background you could take undergraduate, junior-senior courses. You had to probably—I imagine I have about seventy hours beyond my master's, sixty maybe. I'm not sure exactly, but part of those are undergraduate hours because you made up deficiencies. But there had to be a certain number that were graduate, probably what is required today or what is still required today. But they required the make-up if you wanted to take a field where you didn't have the background, you had to take those courses. And so I took Dr. [Walter Prescott] Webb's "Great Frontier" and his seminar. I think I took the Latin American history course with Dr. Castenada. I think. But that was also an undergraduate course. So I took nine hours, but two of them were undergraduate, I think. I may be wrong on that, but, anyway—

Stinton: Two hours or two classes?

Kissler: Two cla—, three classes. I took three classes but two of them, I mean two of those may have been undergraduate. I've really forgotten how that worked. Well, I made A's in all of them. In mid-semester, Dr. Webb's grader left, and he asked if I would take—I'd taken one exam at that point, and he said, "Would you be willing to grade the remainder of the semester for me?" I said, "Well, Dr. Webb, I don't—I don't—I would be taking the exam with the students." He said, "Well, I'd grade your paper. But, you know the material. You did the first—for the midterm." And he said, "I don't know why you couldn't grade the final." Because he just gave the two tests. "—and grade for me." Well, I couldn't turn Dr. Webb down (smiles indicating fond memories of an exciting moment) because I knew it could lead to the next semester if that worked out. And, at any rate, I did grade that semester. And that was great because I enjoyed working with Dr. Webb and getting to know him better. I had a seminar with him, and he made a

believer out of me as to what you do in a seminar doing research. I did fine. I—and so I appreciated what he did for me and the opportunity I had working with Dr. Webb.

But that's the beginning of fall se—, the spring semester, because I—I guess it was still in the fall semester because school was out. At that time, we went through Christmas, and you didn't take the finals until the en—after Christmas. And it was during finals or around that time. Nothing had been said about what I was going to be doing. And I was debating about moving out the dorm because I was finding that freshmen and living in the dorm—I really wasn't liking that very much. I'd passed that kind of stage. I really wanted to get out of that situation. At any rate, another woman who was in the dorm—we were both thinking of moving out, and we were looking for apartments. And then I was called by the history department one day to ask if I would be interested in supervising student teachers. I said, "Well, I've never done that." And they said, Well, the education department is looking for someone who has public school background in history that could help them in supervising student teachers. I went over to the ed department and talked to them. And I was employed. And employed in a very nice job. I had a lectureship, and it paid about twice as much as a TA position did. And I'm not quite sure why that was the case, but I wasn't going to argue with them.

So, I went to work for the School of Education but continued to work on my degree in history. But that changed the direction of my career because by working with student teachers, I was employed here [SWT] because the history department for the university here, a year before I was employed, had changed their policy of people who supervised the student teachers in the secondary schools would be in the content areas. So the content areas had to employ someone to supervise those students and teach the methods course. At that time, we had a methods course. It long since has been dropped, but there was a methods course—but also teach history. So, my experience at the University of Texas put me in a position to be qualified for the job here when they were looking for one. And my contact with Dr. Webb, who was a very good friend of Dr. Taylor's, who was the chairman of this department, brought the two of us together. And I was first employed merely for one semester—the semester that someone else was doing supervision. One year they had one person do it, one year before I came. But I was employed to teach for Emmie, Emmie Craddock, who went on leave, went then—went to Europe—in '58, I guess that was. And—

Stinton: Was that the summer or fall or—?

Kissler: It was the fall. And that was the year there was someone employed to do the supervision. Then when they—when she left—when that didn't work out—the woman that was doing it didn't like it and didn't want to do it. It wasn't working—then they were looking for someone, and I had been here one year, and that's when I was offered the job to set up the program. They said, We need someone who'd be willing to set up a program and get it to run, and to, well, to give it some—

Stinton: —sort of substance?

Kissler: “substance.” Right—and to work with the public school teachers. You have to be able to work with the public school teachers as well, and that’s a public relations job almost as much as it is anything else. Well, I said, “All right, I will take the job.” I didn’t want to come back as anything less than an assistant professor because they’d hired me before when Emmie was gone. I was an assistant professor that fall. Dr. Taylor said, “That’s fine.” So, I came back as an assistant professor, but I stayed here forever as an assistant professor (laughs) because of not finishing my degree. But anyway, that’s when I started working here then.

Stinton: Well, did the PhD degree lag primarily because of your fulltime employment here?

Kissler: Partly that’s the reason. Another reason—I came here in ’58, taught that one year, then came back in ’59 for the fulltime position. And my mother died in November of ’59, and then my father died in August of ’60. And that, although they were in Colorado, I was here. And so you’re away from it. It’s not as though you have to live with the day-to-day kind of thing. I didn’t—I really didn’t think it was going to bother my school work, but it, it finally did. I realize that that just—it was enough of a disruption that I didn’t go back to school. I—

Well, I had pretty well finished my coursework, but I was needing to take my orals. And I simply didn’t do it—when I should have. And of course, the longer you’re away from it—and then we were beginning to get more student teachers, and we needed to hire some additional people, and the program was going very well and was working pretty hard in keeping that program and getting—you know, experimenting with some things and trying to get it going. And, finally, ’65 is when I made the decision that I either forgot it or go back to school because I couldn’t play it both ways. No, as a matter of fact, I decided in ’64 that I would do it. And I went back to the University of Texas then, that fall. Didn’t necessarily take courses, but I wanted to sit in because I needed to get—it turned out I worked fulltime because they had increased enrollment and they needed someone. So, it turned out I worked fulltime. But I didn’t want to take courses. I really wanted to sit in and listen to, get the—their—because—they were going to be sitting on my committee, and there had been some changes. One of the professors had died that I really wanted to study under. He had died. And that was a factor too. So, I needed to get acquainted with some of these new people and find out what—how they would—what type of questions they would ask, what I needed to do in preparing for the orals. And so, when I—I was in school and was doing that, and I decided that year—because again, I taught fulltime, not intending to, that I was going to get the reading done that I needed to.

So, I finally asked for a leave and was granted one in—for the spring of ’65. And again, I had worked this one out with my sister because I couldn’t afford to be gone for a full semester—I—and live. I just couldn’t save enough money to do that. And so my sister said, “Why don’t you come and live with us in California?” And they turned over a bedroom to me. And they were gone all day because the children were in school, my sister was teaching, [and my] brother-in-

law was working. So they were gone all day. It turned out to be—work out very well for me. I stayed with them for eight months. And they were very near Loyola University. I could walk to Loyola. And in L.A. And the library was what I needed. It had all the journals and all the information that I could use there. And if I needed other—I took books with me, some of the standard works. At any rate, I went out there and studied and prepared to take my orals, which I did then the following year when I came back. And—passed them. And started on the dissertation, which I did fullti—while working fulltime, which was a—took a while. I didn't get my degree—I finished in '70, took my orals in the fall of—I mean the final. I finished in the spring of '70, but the professor that had supervised my paper was gone during the summer and so I wasn't able to take the exam until fall of '70.

Stinton: Was it—

Kissler: The degree wasn't conferred until '71, but I had finished all that in '70.

Stinton: The orals or the defense or—?

Kissler: The defense. It's the last one that I had to do and—

(Lengthy pause)

Stinton: Since we have gotten to the point where you now have your Phd and you're really going to become more involved, it would seem, in SWT from this point, it might be a good breaking point. And then we could pick up at our next meeting with the SWT and the post-doctoral career. If that's—

Kissler: That's fine.

Stinton: —agreeable.

Kissler: That would be fine.

Stinton: All right, then we'll just go ahead and end for today, and then we'll set up some sort of plans for a—

Kissler: —follow-up.

Stinton: —another meeting.

Kissler: Okay. Sounds fine.

End of interview