

Northwest Arkansas Oral History Project
 Roland Dee Clardy (Rod) Interview Abstract
 November 4, 2019

Interviewee	Roland Dee Clardy (Rod)
Year of birth	1940
Place of birth	Monte Ne, Benton County, Arkansas
Interviewer	Connie Fetters
Interview date	2019-11-04
Interview location	Hiwasse Community Center; Hiwasse, Benton County, Arkansas
Keywords	<p>Clardy, Roland Dee (Rod) Clardy, Ella Summey, Charles C. Walton, Sam Fetters, Connie Avoca, Benton County, Arkansas Bella Vista, Benton County, Arkansas Gravette, Benton County, Arkansas Hiwasee, Benton County, Arkansas Lowell, Benton County, Arkansas Monte Ne, Benton County, Arkansas Rogers, Benton County, Arkansas Daisy Company; Rogers, Benton County, Arkansas Beaver Lake Cabinetmaking Civic government Civil rights movement Cooper Communities, Inc. Corp of Engineers Fishing Gardening Homes and homebuilding Railroads Roads Schools Small town life U.S. Army National Guard Water supply</p>
Description	<p>Roland (Rod) Clardy says he's "worked all my life and still like it." This approach to life is evident from his early years in Monte Ne and Rogers to his current (2019) residence in the Gravette (Hiwasse) area.</p> <p>Clardy spent his childhood in Monte Ne, Rogers and Lowell. His father and mother had a five-acre strawberry farm. After his father died when Clardy was two, he lived with his grandparents. The family received welfare but also worked hard on their own.</p>

Their unpainted, two-story home had no electricity or water. In the winter snow came through the cracks so the second story could not be used. But in the fall, Clardy's sisters slept there so their bedroom could be used to smoke the hog that they butchered. Grandmother had a garden and taught him to cook when he was five. The wood stove assured hot water and kept food warm. By age nine Clardy was working at the Snack Shack Grill; by eleven at one of Rogers' grocery stores; and later at the IGA. He hunted along what today is Dixieland Road.

Clardy shares stories living in Monte Ne during the 1940s and 1950s. He recalls the people he knew, and discusses businesses, railroads, roads, and buildings that remained after the earlier attempt to make Monte Ne a resort. Living in Monte Ne before the construction of Beaver Lake, Clardy's family and other residents fished and boated on the nearby creeks and river. Clardy and his grandfather caught and sold crawdads and minnows. He carried suitcases up to Miss Armstrong's camp for girls and then helped with the horses at the camp. Pay was little or nonexistent, but it was work. Clardy played on the Pyramid that his uncles help build. Like the visiting tourists, he never found any treasure. Family members owned and worked at many of the Monte Ne businesses and hotels. Later, after all the hotels closed, Clardy would rent one hotel's tower section for a party with friends.

Living in Rogers when the Corp of Engineers constructed Beaver Lake, Clardy describes the changing landscape, hardships displaced families faced, and belief that Monte Ne could have become the "best tourist place on the Lake." He credits the Lake with supplying much needed water to the Rogers area to support development.

Clardy went to school in Lowell and Rogers, graduating from Rogers High School in 1958. Working at the IGA store, he was not able to participate in sports. But he found time to load hay...always working. He made friends with artist Charles C. Summey.

Following graduation, Clardy went to work at Daisy, into the National Guard, and back to Daisy. Stories of his service career include time at Fort Knox during the civil rights events in Little Rock. Careers in construction, cabinet building, and photography followed. He and his wife moved to Wichita, Tulsa, Florida, and South Carolina. But 'home is home' and they returned to Northwest Arkansas in 1989. He worked with Cooper Companies to build cabinets, acquired lots in Bella Vista, built custom homes, and bought a storage business in Hiwasse.

Currently Clardy serves on the Gravette City Council, working hard to represent residents of Hiwasse. This position is not his first civic involvement. He was councilman and mayor of Avoca, along with serving on the Northeast Benton County Ambulance Service Board and Avoca Fire Department.

Clardy believes Highway 549 will greatly change the Gravette

	and Hiwasse areas, bringing hotels and truck stops. He is concerned with both commercial and residential overbuilding and 'outgrowing ourselves' similar to 2008. If this happens, he says "I'll have to move on." Nothing slows him down.
Duration	1 hour 8 minutes
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Questions or Comments	https://nwaoralhistory.org
Interview sidebar	Clardy's wife Ella worked at a hotel when they lived in Tulsa. One day Sam Walton, in the area to go bird hunting (and dressed for that), came in for breakfast. He recognized Ella, stopping to asked about Clardy and their kids. When co-workers asked Ella about Sam, no one believed anyone dressed like that could be the Walmart owner. [near end of interview]