

Northwest Arkansas Oral History Project  
 Timothy Dwight Craig Interview Abstract  
 September 11, 2019

Interviewee	Timothy Dwight Craig
Year of birth	1959
Place of birth	Gravette, Benton County, Arkansas
Interviewer	Randi Van Noy
Interview date	Kindley House; Gravette, Benton County, Arkansas
Interview location	2019-09-11
Keywords	<p>Craig, Timothy Dwight          Check, Ada W.          Denton, John          Hall, Bill Dr.          Van Noy, Randi          Beaty, Benton County, Arkansas          Check's Corner, Benton County, Arkansas          Gravette, Benton County, Arkansas          Benton County Fair; Bentonville, Benton County, Arkansas          Gravette Days Celebration; Gravette, Benton County, Arkansas          Gravette Historical Museum; Gravette, Benton County, Arkansas          Bushwhackers          Business          Cemeteries          Charcoal kilns          Farming          J.B. Hunt          Kiwanis (Organization)          Libraries          Northwest Arkansas Cattleman's Association          Real Estate          Roads          Schools          Small town life          Tyson Foods          Walmart</p>
Description	<p>Farmer, realtor, proud dad, and community volunteer – all these apply to Timothy Dwight Craig. In this interview, his personal and family stories provide glimpses into Arkansas living past and present.</p> <p>Craig's parents, along with other family members, came to Gravette to farm. Some were from Minnesota, others from Oklahoma. Some grew produce; others raised livestock; and others did both. Craig and his two brothers and two sisters grew up on the farm. In addition to farming, Craig's dad was a John Deere dealer and his mother a nurse for Dr. Hall. Craig continues to farm, raising Angus cattle. Comparing his childhood farm to that of today, Craig points to availability of better-quality</p>

	<p>meat, rise in demand for chicken, and one of his favorites, the fact that baling hay now is easier. He's served as President of the Northwest Arkansas Cattleman's Association and is proud that his family was named Farm Family of the Year in 2001. Throughout the interview Craig shares family stories of the land in his family's care. Family member, Ada, from Check's Corner ran the first library in Benton County; his brother lives on the land where the Liberty School stands, and the Beaty charcoal kilns (now gone) stood on land Craig's owned. He helps care for several cemeteries including the Lee Cemetery where family members are buried.</p> <p>Craig discusses the ongoing changes to Gravette area schools. His parents went to the Lee and Liberty Hills schools, his classes were in Gravette school buildings (some that no longer stand), and his children studied in newer buildings in the expanding district. Local schools have 'come a long way.' Craig sees this expansion continuing. He believes keeping schools close contains administrative costs, while adding extra sports and upgraded facilities helps bring new residents to Gravette.</p> <p>Gravette's growth influences his profession as a realtor. In addition to the schools, Craig discusses how the City's overpass, the Highway 549 bypass, medical access, and employment created by Walmart, J.B. Hunt, and Tyson are impacting Gravette. Travel times are lessened, safety improved, land values increased, residents moving further east and west of Gravette, and new businesses opening. At the same time, he says there may be some loss of the small-town feel. Growing up Craig remembers the busy stores on Main Street, the turkey throws, and attending Gravette Day and the Benton County Fair. He hopes with the growth and the influx of new residents the Gravette spirit will remain.</p> <p>Believing one should give back to the community, Craig served as manager of the Benton County Fair from 2003-2017 and remains on the Board. During his tenure the Fair moved from downtown Bentonville to its current location further west. He shares the reasons for its schedule change and why it is harder to get a 'greasy hamburger' at the new location. For him, the enjoyment of watching kids and parents have fun on the rides and see the animals never changes. Reminds him of helping his children raise goats and make salsa for Fair projects.</p> <p>While Craig knows life in Gravette continues to change, he was glad when he was asked to put the spotlight (for checking cattle) back on his truck so they would know it's him... 'It's nice to drive down roads and wave at people.'</p>
Duration	56 minutes
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Website URL	<a href="http://pryorcenter.uark.edu">http://pryorcenter.uark.edu</a>
Questions or Comments	<a href="https://nwaoralhistory.org">https://nwaoralhistory.org</a>
Interview sidebar	Craig tells of the cabin he donated to the Gravette Historical Museum "on one of the farms we own west of Gravette, there was an old log cabin built in the 1840s. A man named John Denton was killed there by Bushwhackers...it was a two room cabin with a dog-trot in the middle...designed so if being chased by Bushwhackers, you could take the horse and buggy through the dog-trot and jump off either side and let the horses go on." [00: 54:34]