

Northwest Arkansas Oral History Project
 Eleanor Jean Wells Goodwyn Interview Abstract
 August 10, 2019

Interviewee	Eleanor Jean Wells Goodwyn
Year of birth	1934
Place of birth	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma County, Oklahoma
Interviewer	Camille Hatcher
Interview date	2019-08-10
Interview location	Civic Center; Gravette, Benton County, Arkansas
Keywords	<p>Goodwyn, Eleanor Jean Wells Hatcher, Camille Bella Vista, Benton County, Arkansas Gravette, Benton County, Arkansas Joplin, Newton County, Missouri Noel, McDonald County, Missouri Gravette Day; Gravette, Benton County, Arkansas Canning and preserving Carnivals and fairs Churches Continental Trailways Recreation Farming Hobos Schools Sewing Small town life World War II Rationing Stamps Program</p>
Description	<p>The sixty-seventh reunion of Gravette High School's Class of 1952 brought Eleanor Wells Goodwyn back to the town where she grew up. In between participating in the Gravette Day Parade (2019) and spending time with classmates, Goodwyn took time for this interview.</p> <p>An only child, Goodwyn and her parents moved from Oklahoma City in 1939 to a farm outside Gravette. She was five years old. The family moved to another farm near Gravette when she was twelve. Stories of her parents are told throughout the interview. Goodwyn enjoyed working outside with her dad. He taught her how to milk cows the right way and later purchased her favorite blue Oldsmobile. Dad shared his knowledge of plowing and use of the family smokehouse with neighbors...that's how people lived in Gravette. Goodwyn's mother adapted to farm life. Soon she was teaching others how</p>

to preserve garden products, sew dresses from the feed sacks, or add a bit of rickrack to hemlines. She played piano at the Baptist Church. When Goodwyn's mother felt the Gravette school children needed hot lunches, she got the program set up. Her mother ran the City Café. Goodwyn served its customers. She remembers the time the railroad engineers gave her a 50-cent tip. She carried that around for a long time. Goodwyn discusses the impact of WWII's rationing stamp program on the family. Sugar was hard to get; her mother wore nylons with runs. As Dad did not use all the tire and gas coupons, the family swapped stamps with others. In one story, Goodwyn remembers the tramps (hobos) knocking on their door. They knew her mother always fed them as guests. Tomato crates out by the smokehouse became tables and Goodwyn joined them for conversation...safety was never an issue. Their plates were filled with the same foods the family was served, including two tablets of saccharine (sugar substitute). While 'the guests' cleaned their plates, Goodwyn recalls the plates were always returned with the tablets untouched.

School years meant friends and good times when the chores were done. Summer meant trips to Joplin to visit family. She rode both ways alone on the Continental Trailways bus. The driver had a dime to get her a drink at the stop in Anderson. Back home, there were slumber parties, paper dolls and church. In high school Goodwyn played in the band so she could go on trips to Harrison and Fayetteville. Class field trips introduced her to nearby caves in Bella Vista and Noel. Then there were the times the family pond froze. Dad made a roaring bonfire. Everyone, farm and town families, came. Soon Goodwyn and friends were 'scooting' over the ice in their shoes.

Following Goodwyn's graduation in 1952, the family moved to Wichita Kansas. She lives there today. But any time the Class of 1952 has a reunion, Goodwyn travels the two hundred miles to see old friends, exchange new and old stories, and talk about the changes to Gravette. That's exactly what happened in August 2019 when she joined classmates to celebrate the current Gravette Day festival. The festival may not include the

	carnival it did when she attended as a child, but the parade remains a highlight. Gravette, while changed, remains a 'nice town and nice times continue.' The drive from Wichita to Gravette is always worth it!
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Questions or Comments	https://nwaoralhistory.org
Interview sidebar	Goodwyn says "In your house maybe the front door was locked. But the key, the skeleton key, was up above the [front] door...back door was never locked...and everybody had a skeleton key...could get into everybody's house." [00:27:57]