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Ted Alley, Oral History Index

Ted Alley

Marcia Lair

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Interview with Ted Alley conducted by Marcia Lair

January 28, 2020

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00:00:01	Introductions and general information
00:01:10	Born January 28, 1948 in Paris, TX. Parents – Wendell Alley and Doris Lee Toon Alley. Siblings – Linda Wright Preas, Denis Alley, Becky Alley, Sheila Alley Cherry, Kevin Alley
00:02:30	Grew up in Cooper; when he was nine, father went to work for the Stovall John Deere dealership. Family moved to Vasco, where they worked livestock and other farm work on Robert Stovall's land. Worked on farm after school every day and in the summer.
00:03:60	Moved back to Cooper when he was in high school. Typed 140 wpm in Mrs. Sparks' typing class. Other teachers – Ms. Bledsoe, Ms. Oliver, Mr. Clyde Heflin, Imogene Polk, Thomas Skinner, Marshall Neal, then Bobby Wiggly were the ag teachers.
00:05:45	East Delta teachers were Sue Peters and Imogene Polk
00:06:50	After high school, joined the U. S. Army in February, 1967 – went to Fort Polk in LA for basic training; Fort Rucker in AL for helicopter mechanics training; then to Vietnam from Sept 1967 to Sept 1968. Served from Feb 1967 to Feb 1970 all total.
00:08:14	In 1968, after Vietnam, married Lyn Newman Alley
00:09:00	Explanation of the "Smoke Ship" in Vietnam, the helicopter he last flew on. He, the pilot, and the door gunner all met in New York in September 2019 to visit that particular helicopter on display at an American Legion Post.
00:11:40	Explanation of how that helicopter ended up in New York on display
00:13:50	After discharge from Army, began at East Texas State University and worked part-time at Harlan's Service Station. After Lyn's father, owner of Delta Funeral Home, passed away, he began working at the funeral home part-time, then completed the program at Dallas Institute of Funeral Services, got his license, and began work full-time at the funeral home. Worked as part of the emergency ambulance service until he completed his apprenticeship and got his license as a mortician. Bought the funeral home from Lyn's mother in 1979. Stayed there 42 years, then sold it and retired.
00:17:22	Delta County tornado in 1954. Vaguely remembers it
00:17:53	School bus accident at intersection of Hwy 154 & Hwy 19 – was in junior high, lived in Vasco, was on way to football game – saw the accident scene
00:18:28	Memories of desegregation – was a senior when the Booker T. Washington students integrated with Cooper
00:19:23	Fire on Cooper Square – remembers it – was in high school
00:19:54	Memories of the Cooper Square as a teenager
00:20:40	Memories of businesses on the square – the theater, drug stores
00:21:24	Cooper Lake construction – glad to see it
00:22:10	Father Wendell Alley was a veteran of WWII; on his return became a member of VFW and the American Legion in Cooper; as the WWII vets passed away, both organizations faded away. Story of father's experience in Germany during WWII
00:24:21	Mother Doris Lee Toon originally married Elwood Wright at the beginning of WWII – he was killed in France. She married Wendell Alley after the war was over
00:24:57	1969 Moon landing – was at Fort Knox in Kentucky, but had a 3-day pass, so drove to Cooper – wasn't too interested in the Moon walk

00:26:00	Memory of being in Ms. Bledsoe's English class when JFK was assassinated
00:26:36	Regarding Miller's sidewalk "walk of fame" - knew most of the characters
00:27:01	Memories of burgers at Silman's Grocery – Maggie Bowers made the burgers
00:27:57	When son Cade Alley was a child, he coached Pee-Wee and Little League teams
00:28:42	Memories of businesses on the east side of town – Vivian Hart's Cafe and the Crowders Mechanic Shop
00:29:45	Johnson's Ice House – around the corner from Hart's Cafe – memories of getting ice delivered
00:30:30	His family had milk cows for their own use – says that when his mother bought a pasteurizer, it ruined the taste of the milk
00:31:00	Memories of living at Vasco – getting telephones in the community, driving the old truck to school and to the pasture when he was in grade school
00:32:54	Mother did extensive genealogy research on the Toon family
00:34:40	Served with the Cooper Volunteer Fire Dept for 16 years – memories – Mr. Guffey, Earl Tatum, Bruce, Mr. Holcutt
00:41:00	History of the Delta Funeral Home – began as a co-op in 1938, with Fred Newman to run it. Jelly and Billie Choate lived in the back and worked for Fred. The building was the Anderson family home and was built about 1915. Key points in its construction
00:41:27	Memories of the East Delta School - Joe Daniels was the Principal–played marbles and mumblety-peg
00:42:00	Family relationships, and picture of some of the Newman family at a train station
00:44:40	Words of advice to future generations – be good to the people around you and they'll be good to you