ORAL MEMOIR EXCERPTS

OF

LEE LOCKWOOD

A Series of Interviews Conducted
29 May–14 August 1974

Waco and McLennan County Project

Baylor University
Institute for Oral History

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TERMS OF AGREEMENT:
All interviews with Robert Lee Lockwood are unrestricted. The contract and tape disposal forms were signed on November 11, 1974.

LOCKWOOD INTERVIEW NO.

INTERVIEWER:
Thomas L. Charlton, Ph.D., Director
Program for Oral History
Baylor University
Waco, Texas

SETTING OF INTERVIEW:
Place--Mr. Lockwood's office at 1901 Franklin Avenue,
Waco, Texas
Date--May 29, 1974
Length of tape--two (2) hours

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LOCKWOOD INTERVIEW NO. 2

INTERVIEWER:
Thomas L. Charlton

SETTING OF INTERVIEW:
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LOCKWOOD INTERVIEW NO. 3

INTERVIEWER:
Thomas L. Charlton

SETTING OF INTERVIEW:
Place--1901 Franklin Avenue, Waco, Texas
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Consultation--D. D. Tidwell
   Miss Ina Ruth Graham
CHARLTON: So Galveston was the resort?

LOCKWOOD: Galveston, yes, and Corpus. And that was usually their trips in that day and time.

CHARLTON: Did your father travel very much in connection with his banking work?

LOCKWOOD: No, he didn't have much traveling to do because his work was more or less of a local nature.

CHARLTON: Please go on.

LOCKWOOD: Coming back to Waco, you were speaking about Waco in those early days. When the war began—World War I—Waco was selected for the location of Camp MacArthur, beginning where Park Lake Drive is now. They had some thirty or forty thousand soldiers there.

CHARLTON: How much did the opening of Camp MacArthur change the town?

LOCKWOOD: Well, it changed it a great deal because many people were enabled to improve and build up their businesses. There was a lot of money turned loose here in Waco before the war.

CHARLTON: But the opening of Camp MacArthur, in your judgement, was responsible for the building of Waco or at least a great deal of wealth came into the city.

LOCKWOOD: That's right. It created a good deal of growth. The tragic part, I guess, of that time was that severe winter they had when these boys were in those tents and many took the flu or influenza and lost their lives. The undertakers here had more than
they could take care of and it was a tragic thing—shipping the bodies off and local funerals. It was a rainy, cold, bad winter and they just didn't have the facilities to protect the soldiers. Those things, you just can't forget them. They make a lasting impression on you.

Waco was always a proud town. The streets and everything were kept clean. We had many horses in those days. They had the White Wings to take care of that problem and then they had street washers. Always the people have taken an interest.

CHARLTON: What do you remember about the area of Waco known as the "square?"

LOCKWOOD: Oh, that was the most active part of Waco. The cotton firms that I've referred to, most of them had their offices on the square. And that was a busy part of Waco. You could go down there at any time and find all kinds of vegetables in wagons. The vegetable wagons used to go all over town selling their vegetables. It was a thriving area. The square was a big area but on Mondays and Saturdays there usually were no empty places. They had the wagon yards all around but in spite of that, they still had the square filled.

CHARLTON: You father, as a banker, must have had a good bit of interest in the growth of Waco and the business activities downtown. Did he take you as a young boy with him into the business areas of the city and around the square very often?

LOCKWOOD: Oh, yes. We talked quite often. He would talk to me.
about these things. So many of his predictions for Waco have come true that it is just uncanny. At the time I couldn't believe it.

CHARLTON: What were some of the predictions that your father left for you?

LOCKWOOD: Well he predicted that Waco would be a city of a hundred thousand. That was back when we were thirty thousand people. And he took me out one time to a race track two or three miles off of South Third Street.

CHARLTON: Was this the Gurley Race Track?

LOCKWOOD: Yes, I believe that was it. They had the first airplane I ever saw and, I guess ever came to Waco, landed there. He predicted the future of travel. "Will likely be in airplanes," he said. "I don't know how it'll work, but," he said, "It's the coming thing." Just predictions of that nature and about land values and things like that.

CHARLTON: Your father was a rather forward-looking man in your judgment?

LOCKWOOD: Yes sir, he definitely was. Now in those days they had the YMBL, the Young Men's Business League, instead of the Chamber of Commerce as the leading factor in the development of Waco's civic activities. And they had a banquet I attended as a youngster--and I've forgotten--ten or twelve years old. They had Fifth Street roped off from Austin to Franklin and they had tables all the way down the street as many as they could get and they were filled. I know it impressed me tremendously and they had speakers at either
great deal in the school?

LOCKWOOD: Well, I would say this, Mr. Tyson did as much as any. He taught biology. I would say he was as much of an influence because of the fact that I was with him on the football field.

But if I was picking out just one man, now Mr. Geinheimer was a principal that had a lot of influence. For instance, he had that human touch, you know. I'll never forget the last day, the last half--we were playing out at Baylor Carroll Field and the last half of the last game. Well, I was the only one graduating that year. The rest of them would be back. So he made quite an affair and shaking hands and telling about the influence that I'd been in Waco High and how proud he was to have had me for a student. You know, that kind of thing. It just shows the human side of him. You don't forget those things. After all these years I still remember.

CHARLTON: Were there any other honors that came to you as a student in Waco High?

LOCKWOOD: As a student? No, I wouldn't say that there was. The last year the seniors, if you made such and such a grade you didn't have to take exams. Well, of course, I made that, but no honors.

CHARLTON: Did you ever serve as a student body officer or a class president or anything like that?

LOCKWOOD: Well, during the war we had set up a military exercise in drilling. During the study periods we would always be down on drills. I was a major and had all the morning drill. And Olive
Torbett, who is dead now, but he went in and became, I think, a general in the army, made a career out of it. He had the afternoon drill. They put seniors in charge of everything.

CHARLTON: What did they call your army training program in the high school? Was it an SATC program?

LOCKWOOD: No, it was not. I don't recall--it had no status as far as--but they did have--

CHARLTON: Why was it begun?

LOCKWOOD: Well I think it was for physical training. We had an army man that supervised and gave us the necessary information on drills. One man was all we had. It was just a program that was brought up. I don't know whether they had it in other schools or not. I never did know.

CHARLTON: You mentioned a few minutes ago that Mr. Tyson influenced you perhaps as much as anyone during the high school years. Was there anyone else in Waco that you would point to as a major influence in your life other than your family members?

LOCKWOOD: That would be Mr. Will Edmond. Mr. Edmond was cashier of the First State Bank and Trust Company. My dad, when I first started in running errands down there and through the whole time that I worked in the bank, turned me over to his supervision. Under his supervision he taught me more business, more banking, than I learned anywhere at any time.

CHARLTON: Why do you say that?
I went off to school I had a pretty good little bank account, for a kid.

CHARLTON: You mentioned that World War I brought some changes to Waco, brought Camp MacArthur to the town. And I'm sure the decision on the part of the United States to enter the war created quite a stir in this town. In April of 1917, the United States declared war on the central powers of Europe and in particular the Imperial German Government. What do you remember about the opening of the war? You were in high school and you were not quite old enough to serve--

LOCKWOOD: That's right.

CHARLTON: --what do you remember about the opening of the war and the way your friends and family and people of Waco reacted to it?

LOCKWOOD: Well, Waco--let me just say this: it was an entirely different atmosphere in Waco during that war than we'll say the past war has been. It was a war which everybody in the community was behind. They were a patriotic bunch of Americans. And they didn't hesitate to let it be known. If there was any question about you, why you were a "slacker." That was one of the words that we used then. And there was a man, I think he lived at Twelfth and Austin or somewhere in that neighborhood, and he, I think, was possibly from Germany and anyhow he'd made some remark or he was eligible--so one night they just painted his whole fence
yellow. And it was just that kind of a set up. Even Mr. Geinheimer, he was of German descent, and somebody had just questioned him. Boy, we had that study room, had them all upstairs there and he was the maddest man you ever saw. Anybody that would question his setup. I mean it was just that kind of an environment. Everybody wanted to get in—coming up in that kind of environment. I was just like all the youngsters, wanting to get in.

CHARLTON: Were you eager to get in and go to France?

LOCKWOOD: Yes sir. 'Cause we all were. Well, everybody wanted to. There was no question about it. The band would parade and they'd have these songs, "Over There" and "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" and all that stuff, you know. I'd get it on our Victrola. That's about all we had then. I don't believe the radio'd come in until just a few years later. Not in numbers.

So my mother, she—whenever I'd even intimate it she'd go to pieces. Said, "When you're eighteen that's as soon as you can go 'cause I'll never give my consent." Well, as things went on I was rather disappointed. I went out to Baylor, and I was working in the bank whenever I could on Saturdays. And if there wasn't football or something. But I had been all summer. All the other boys that I knew were a little bit older than I was. And just like Ross Sams and Bob Poage and Douthit McDaniel and all those boys were out there with me as freshmen and a bunch of them on the football team.

CHARLTON: In the fall of 1918?
LOCKWOOD: Yes. Douthit McDaniel was our manager and Ross Sams was our captain. Well they were getting paid for going out there and doing the same thing I was doing. But they were in the--was it ROTC? Anyhow it was some kind of military training that paid for them going through school.
CHARLTON: Probably the SATC.
LOCKWOOD: SATC.
CHARLTON: Student Army Training Corps.
LOCKWOOD: Yes. Well, anyhow, much to the delight of my mother, armistice was declared on my eighteenth birthday. It was quite an interesting set up, but I always regretted I didn't really get to serve.
CHARLTON: What do you remember about Waco during the war? Did your father who was a banker, participate in the Liberty Bond drives?
LOCKWOOD: Oh yes, everybody did. I guess they were enthusiastic about both the selling and the buying of them. Everybody joined in in that. It was a war that everybody was behind. There was no problem as far as getting the bonds over subscribed. They would allocate so much--
CHARLTON: What about the food program during the war? Was there much enthusiasm here during the war here in Waco for Mr. Herbert Hoover's food administration?
LOCKWOOD: I don't know too much about that. I heard a lot of talk.
about it. But I don't know just what, you might say-- I wasn't really concerned with it at the time. My mother was worried about the food, I know that.

CHARLTON: You didn't miss any meals?

LOCKWOOD: We didn't miss any meals, no sir.

CHARLTON: Were there any other forms of entertainment during your teenage years that you were particularly fond of? You mentioned that you played all the sports in the high school.

LOCKWOOD: Well, of course, one of the picture shows in Waco we had, of course, was the Hippodrome Theatre, and is now the Waco Theatre. Then there was the Majestic Theatre that was on Fourth Street across from Sanger Brothers and the auditorium. There were many shows that came to Waco during the time up to 1922, I will say. I won't try to pinpoint the time, but they came to the auditorium. Then there was a lot of shows that went to the Cotton Palace and played out there to big--

CHARLTON: Now you're speaking of travelling vaudeville shows.

LOCKWOOD: Right. And, of course the Orpheum Theatre had floor shows there, the Orpheum Circuit. The Majestic had floor shows and the Ziegfield Follies went out to the Cotton Palace. I remember that during the Cotton Palace, they had big name bands like Sousa's band. They got top entertainment out there. And then they had the auditorium--we had a good many shows that came to Waco and then some of the big picture shows. I guess probably one of the most--
of that time—the most outstanding picture show was Birth of a Nation. They had an orchestra. It was a sell-out for several different nights.

CHARLTON: You saw Birth of a Nation as a young boy?

LOCKWOOD: Oh yes. Well, in fact, I think I was in high school. I forget just when it came here. I know down there I made most of the shows at the auditorium, and they had some good ones. For instance, Will Rogers came to Waco. We drew top flights of everything back in those days.

CHARLTON: So the people were well entertained, you would say?

LOCKWOOD: Right. Miss Gussie Oscar was the manager of the auditorium. She brought the best of the travelling shows to Waco. We had quite a number of them, too. And we had the Texas League. We had, for instance, I remember they'd bring in—not all of them—but a number of the big league teams to play Waco, you know, during the training season. Babe Ruth, of course, was here. And that was quite a thrill for us to go to see him perform. And he knocked a home run for us. That day was well spent.

CHARLTON: That's very interesting. Your graduation in 1918 came at a key point in the history of the United States. The war was almost over and you were not quite old enough to make the decision to enter the army as your mother stipulated you would need to be eighteen. In our last few minutes of our opening interview, why did you decide to attend Baylor University?
THOMAS L. CHARLTON: Today is June 12, 1974. This is Thomas L. Charlton. I am interviewing for the second time Mr. Lee Lockwood, businessman and citizen of Waco, Texas. This oral history interview is a part of the Waco and McLennan County Oral History Project sponsored by the Baylor University Program for Oral History. The interview is taking place in Mr. Lockwood's office at 1901 Franklin Avenue in Waco, Texas.

Mr. Lockwood, again I want to thank you for allowing me to continue the oral history series with you and ask if we might return to the World War I period which we were discussing at the end of our first interview. You told me about some of the events in Waco during World War I such as the tragic events at Camp MacArthur when many, many of the men in the army died during the influenza
epidemic that took place in the United States during World War I. You were a young man in high school at Waco High School, a young man thinking about his eighteenth birthday, and perhaps a decision to enter the service and go into the war yourself.

I wonder if we might talk about any other topics that concerned Waco during World War I. For example, did you know much about the development of Rich Field, the flying field here in Waco?

LEE LOCKWOOD: Aviation at that particular period of time was rather new. Rich Field attracted a great deal of attention not only in the city itself, but throughout the entire Central Texas area. The field was located three and a half miles from the center of Waco and was located between Bosque and Cobbs Drive from Lake Air Drive to New Road. The field was started in August of 1917, and was completed in November of that year. There were some 350 cadets with approximately 400 airplanes with 81 buildings and 16 hangars. For that period in time it was really an outstanding field.

CHARLTON: Did you have an opportunity to visit Rich Field very often?

LOCKWOOD: We would drive around the field and would watch the planes train. We did this on many occasions because the young people were all interested in aviation. We did go quite often to watch the maneuvers and training that was going on at that time.
CHARLTON: The military airplane was something of the most important weapon the United States was developing at that time. Were there tight restrictions governing civilians going into Rich Field during the war?

LOCKWOOD: On the field itself there were. We were not permitted. But, of course, they had no way to keep us from seeing the maneuvering in the air by the planes in their formations. Probably the most difficult requirement for Waco to get Rich Field and which showed the united support the City of Waco was giving the military at that time, was providing railroad facilities. It was a long distance from the main railroad line. But arrangements were shortly made to buy the necessary property. And a spur track was run from the Cotton Belt railroad on what is now known as New Road and went to Camp MacArthur. After the war the railroad was abolished and New Road was opened which we used quite often in the city.

CHARLTON: Your father as a local businessman may have had some interest in the field. Was he at all a part of the development of the city's interest in Rich Field?

LOCKWOOD: Yes, all of the bankers of Waco united to raise the necessary money to obtain the land and to make it a possibility. This to me was really a tribute to the leaders of that generation in our city.

CHARLTON: Would it be correct to say Mr. Lockwood, that the purchasing of the right-of-way for the railroad spur was largely some-
thing done by the financial community of Waco to help facilitate
the field?
LOCKWOOD: Very definitely. And as you can see, to obtain land
and to run a railroad spur some four or five miles through a
developed area was a difficult task.
CHARLTON: Was there any opposition to this move?
LOCKWOOD: No. Everyone was cooperating with the war need. There
might have been some isolated piece of ground that might have been
hard to obtain, but generally speaking everybody cooperated. Then
after Rich Field was closed, Braniff used it for commercial flights
when they first served Waco. Then we developed it into a municipal
airfield, but it was not large enough for the new planes as they
needed more space to land.
CHARLTON: Were there any people in Waco that you recall who were
concerned about having military aviation in the city? That is,
afraid that this might bring noise to their quiet town or any other
negative aspects of life?
LOCKWOOD: None that I know of. All of the younger group was de-
lighted. We were thrilled to have it come here. One of our neigh-
bors, a young man a few years older than I was--his name was Payton--
and he had been honored often as a successful aviator but was killed
in action. He was given every military honor. The schools turned
out for the funeral and everybody assisted the military in paying
the honor and respect that might be due.
CHARLTON: Are there any other aspects of Waco life during the war that I may have failed to ask you about that impressed you as significant contributions either that the city made to the war or were events in Waco during World War I that we ought to talk about?

LOCKWOOD: Waco was very fortunate in having a very high-class type of personnel at Camp MacArthur. They were National Guardsmen from two of the Northern states. Many of them married in Waco, and many settled in Waco. I think the relationship between the military and Waco was of untold value to Waco's future development.

CHARLTON: One topic that we did not explore very much when we conducted our first interview, Mr. Lockwood, was the topic of either local violence or problems that Waco had from time to time as you were growing up. I'm thinking, for example, of occasional lynchings of persons in Waco, fairly typical events for communities in Central and East Texas for that day. Do these bring back any particular memories for you?

LOCKWOOD: I can only recall two such incidents. One was the hanging and the other was, as I recall, possibly a hanging and the burning of the body afterwards. It was the last of the lynchings, at least in Waco.

CHARLTON: Did you happen to witness either of these events or be in the vicinity?

LOCKWOOD: No, I did not. I was at high school while they were taking place. I did go by the courthouse after school but the