

Oral Memoirs
of
Paul M. Barron

An Interview

Conducted by Stephen M. Sloan

October 20, 2009

Waco–McLennan County Collection

Baylor University Institute for Oral History

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Memoir Procedure

1. Initial contact with the memoirist
2. Arrangements made for interview(s)
3. Recording of interview(s)
4. Transcribing of recording in the BUIOH office
5. Editing of transcript(s) by memoirist
6. Archiving and disseminating completed memoirs: one printed transcript for the memoirist and online access to the memoir via the digital collections portal of Baylor University. The finished transcript of the oral memoir follows the interviewee's stated wishes as reflected in his/her editing of the draft transcript(s), with only minor further editorial revisions by the editorial staff of BUIOH.

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Interview History

The recording(s) and transcript(s) of the interview(s) were processed in the offices of the Institute for Oral History, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

Interviewer: Stephen M. Sloan

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Collection/Project Detail

The Waco–McLennan County Collection explores various aspects related to local and regional history.

Stephen M. Sloan was director of Baylor University Institute for Oral History.



Paul M. Barron
Oral History Memoir
Interview Number 1

Interviewed by Stephen M. Sloan
October 20, 2009
Waco, TX

[ed. note: The interview takes place in a large room with an echo. Also, construction machinery is heard in the background throughout a portion of the interview.]

SLOAN: The date is October 20, 2009. This is an interview with Mr. Paul Barron. This is Stephen Sloan interviewing for the Baylor [University] Institute for Oral History. And we are doing this interview at the [Waco] Mammoth Site out on Steinbeck Bend in Waco, Texas. Thank you, Paul, [for] sitting down with me and doing the interview.

BARRON: Thank you, Stephen.

100:00:23|

SLOAN: I wanted to go back and start—I'd love to get some background information: you know, where were you born, tell me a little bit about your family, and that sort of thing.

BARRON: I was born here in Waco at the old Providence Hospital in 1957. Was raised here, attended Waco schools. Became aware of Baylor University through, you know, my interaction with my scoutmaster, who was a ROTC cadet, by the name of Mike Flanagan. He used to take us with him on his Baylor geology expeditions. And it was very educational, informative. We got to help flag traffic and stuff like that. And, like I said, I attended Waco schools, then TSTC [Texas State Technical College]. In fact, when I made the discovery, I had just graduated from the dental laboratory program at TSTC.

SLOAN: Okay. Where did you go on your geology trips when you were young?

BARRON: We went down and saw Austin chalk formations. We went as far south as—seems like it was Llano and the Lampasas area. Went down around Austin, Shoal Creek area, different places. Some of them were a pretty good ways away; some of them were a couple of hundred miles away. And we'd all go in caravan, so the scouts would run out front with little traffic flags and flag traffic so that we could all stay together. Of course,

being fourteen, fifteen, it was real exciting. Made us feel really important and then some(??).

100:02:06|

SLOAN: Well, tell me a little bit about your family. Were they—how long had they been in Waco?

BARRON: My mom was originally from Coryell County, Leon Junction area. And my dad's family was originally from the Rio Grande Valley. And they moved up here, I believe, in the thirties. My grandfather had the Jimmy Barron Agency, which was an armored car and security company. And my father was a small appliance repairman, owned a place called Paul's Appliance Hospital down on Bosque Boulevard. My mother was just his helpmate: you know, chief cook and bottle washer, ran—fetched parts for him and stuff like that.

100:02:58|

SLOAN: So growing up, did you spend time around the shop?

BARRON: Spent time at the shop with my dad. I was always fascinated with dinosaurs and anything prehistoric. And so I just couldn't wait to learn how to read. You know, I'd run around with a comic book about dinosaurs and look at the picture and pretend I was reading it. (Sloan laughs) I pretty much was home-taught to read before I ever started school. I had a surgery on one of my eyes when I was four. And during the recovery, my eyes had to be bandaged. Well, my mom went out and bought me a little bag full of plastic dinosaurs. And she still tells the story of how I would feel of those plastic dinosaurs and would tell her what the name of it was and what its diet consisted of and—you know. So I was a—

SLOAN: Even though you couldn't see it at the time.

BARRON: I couldn't see it, but I could feel it. And I knew which one I had, you know. (both laugh) So.

100:03:57|

SLOAN: Well, did you enjoy tinkering with things at the shop and working on things at the shop?

BARRON: You know, that's the thing. I have a good mechanical aptitude, but I also, as a child, had a very rebellious nature. And so when my dad would start trying to explain something to me, I would nod my head in all the appropriate places, and it would go in one ear and out the other. And I didn't come to appreciate my father until he was almost gone. And, you know, then I was attempting to develop those talents. I took [physical] plant engineering technology in the early nineties. And I kept—you know, my dad passed away in '78. And I thought, "Man, I sure wish I'd listened to him," because he was an electrical genius. I mean, he really—he could fix anything but a broken heart or break of

day. He tried to impart that to me, and I was just resistant to it because I was a rebellious kid, you know. And I knew better than to cross him, so I'd nod my head, and, "Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I'm listening." And it was going in one ear and out the other. But I came to regret that, and I came to really wish I had that ace in the hole, you know, when I was trying to learn electrical theory, Ohm's law and such.

SLOAN: What's neat is you inherited it from him, though, because you are very mechanically inclined.

BARRON: Yeah, I did, but I sure—sure could have been easier if I'd have just listened, you know, because he had it all figured out already. (both laugh)

100:05:17|

SLOAN: Well, talk about growing up in Waco in that time: late sixties, the mid-sixties.

BARRON: You know, it was a whole different culture in Waco in the sixties and early seventies. When we were old enough to be let out of the house on our own—you know, we owned our own .22 rifles and shotguns. And there was a real nice little river bottom down off of Nineteenth Street on the way into Bosqueville. And I can remember riding down there on a bicycle with a box of shotgun shells in the basket and the shotgun broke over the handlebars, and nobody batted an eye about it. And we'd mow yards to make money for ammunition and bait, you know, and we'd spend our time in the woods either hunting or fishing. Gas was twenty-seven cents a gallon. You could go get a gallon of gas and go out and mow yards for three or four dollars apiece, and next thing you know, you were off to the races. You know, you were off camping for the weekend.

As we got a little older, we would go to Lake Waco over underneath the Lake Shore Bridge, back in that little cove back behind Lake Shore Bridge. And we would take off on Friday after school, tell our folks, you know, general location where we'd be. If they got to wanting us, they'd pull up and honk their horn. We'd hear them out in the woods and come up to see what they wanted. And, you know, they wouldn't see us again till Sunday evening.

100:06:44|

SLOAN: You'd just camp out there and hunt and fish?

BARRON: Camp out and hunt and fish. And as we got a little older, we started actually getting a little more mischievous. And we'd tell the folks that we were camping down in the woods. We'd go hide our stuff there in the woods and go down to Austin, you know, hitchhike down to Austin and spend the weekend down there and come back in time to load our stuff up and get a little dirty and show back up at the house. You know, "Yeah, we've been camping all weekend." (both laugh)

SLOAN: Well, that was—I guess that was after they expanded Lake Waco in the sixties.

BARRON: Yeah, that happened, I think, in about '64—or '63 or '[6]4. I would have graduated high school—I graduated in '75, so, you know, you're talking early seventies, '72, '73, when we were running around camping down there. Junior high school years from eighth grade on. We, during the summer, basically lived down there. We'd maybe go home to sleep, but as soon as we got up, we'd hit the road and head for Lake Shore Bridge. That was the big swimming hole. (construction machinery drives up near recording area)

100:07:45|

SLOAN: Where was your—what house did you—what part of town did you grow up in?

BARRON: When I was born, we lived over on Wilson [Avenue] off of Nineteenth Street over there. It was about the 1600 block of Wilson. And when I was four years old, my father put a down payment on a nice house over off the north end of Twenty-Sixth Street. Twenty-Sixth Street doglegs into a little street called Alvin Drive. It's about a block long. And there's two houses on one side of the street and four on the other, and we were on the side of the street that had the most houses.

And directly across the street from the two houses was a big chunk of woods that you could go through, had a creek running through it. And you could walk through those woods and come out—there was an old rest home that fronted out onto Twenty-Seventh Street, and then Stewart Drive—that basically—that—Stewart Drive and Twenty-Fifth Street and Twenty-[Seventh] Street were the borders of that little patch of woods. We'd go down there and build forts and camp out. And, basically, that's where I grew up, you know, is down there. I learned to keep my eyes on the ground because of snakes, anytime you're in the woods. And that probably led to me finding the mammoth site, the fact that I was looking down.

100:09:05|

SLOAN: Well, did you spend a lot of time out on the river here?

BARRON: You know, I've always been fascinated with the water before I could even swim. The favorite thing I had to do was go down to the water's edge and throw rocks in the water and listen to the sound of a rock falling in the water. I've always been fascinated with anything having to do with the water. Anytime I could be on the lake or the river was just great.

One of the worst punishments I ever had in my life was I was told that I wouldn't be able to accompany the family on a swimming outing on a Sunday. I did something bad on Monday, my mama told me not to do. She said, "Okay. Come Sunday, you're not going to go swimming with the rest of the family." I was just sure since I had a whole week to earn a reprieve that I would be able to repair the damage before it was time to go swimming. And you know what? It didn't happen. (both laugh) My mom caught me eating green peaches after she told me not to. And there was no amount of cleaning up the room or being a good boy that would atone for that. And come Sunday, I did not get

to go swimming with the family. But I never ate another green peach as long as I lived.
(laughs)

|00:10:12|

SLOAN: Where were the family swimming trips?

BARRON: Back then we used to go to the—there were two pools in town: one was called the Kiwanis Pool, and one was called the Sun Pool. The Kiwanis Pool was located, at the time, over in Cameron Park. And that was the one that I had to sit out the swimming trip at. Then there was another one—I don't remember exactly where it was, but it was called the Sun Pool. And it was located somewhere closer to downtown Waco.

pause in recording, due to sounds of construction equipment

|00:10:43|

SLOAN: Anything else you remember—you were talking about childhood and swimming trips with the family. And we're also talking about the—along the river, kind of spending time along the river.

BARRON: Yeah. You know, back then, the area behind the Lake Waco Dam and that bridge; it was a river bottom under there. And my dad was self-employed. And on days that—when he felt like he didn't just have to be at the shop, he'd a lot of times roll up three or four old cane poles, and we'd go to the river and sit there on the riverbank with cane poles and a ice chest with a couple of root beers in it. And we'd sit there and fish. And, of course, fishing has evolved a lot since I was a boy. We don't do it that way anymore. But some of my favorite memories as a child are sitting there on the riverbank with my dad, catching whatever would bite: you know, everything from perch to bass to gar to catfish, just whatever was hungry.

Back then, you know, family outings were a lot more outdoor-related. We did a lot of picnics. We'd go down to Cameron Park and have a picnic. And fishing was always real big. My dad loved to swim, so Airport Park and Lake Waco was a popular destination for us. We didn't, you know, usually travel long distances, but a lot of times we'd go and camp out for a weekend or even sometimes for a week at a time. I greatly enjoyed it.

|00:12:22|

SLOAN: What do you remember about Cameron Park in that period? What areas of the park did you use?

BARRON: Well, the Pecan Bottoms and the area right now where the approach to the Herring Avenue Bridge, that area. I suppose that would be on the west side of the bridge.

SLOAN: Paul, you're talking about that Herring Avenue Bridge, Pecan Bottom area? Y'all used that?

BARRON: Um-hm, yeah. We'd have family picnics there. They had a couple of little fountains. And then, of course, back then they had—they still had the Lion's Mouth area. And the Lion's Mouth was a local peculiarity because the water was about fifty-five degrees year-round. You could go up there and jump in on the hottest day of the summer, and you couldn't stay in it long. You know, your teeth would be chattering and lips would turn blue. And we'd have a lot of outdoor activities in the park, where the bridle trails and the horse stables down there and, of course, Lovers' Leap.

|00:13:23|

SLOAN: Now, tell me again the story about Lovers' Leap.

BARRON: Well, now, one of the wilder and crazier things that we'd do as boys is we'd go down there, and we started out—they used to have some slides on a slope that was pretty much flush with the ground. But it was just a long metal slide that kids could slide down. We started out riding our bicycles down those. Well, from years and years of people landing at the bottom of the slide, they'd dig a little divot at the bottom from people landing so when you rode your bicycle down it, that the bottom would act like a jump ramp. So you'd come off that slide and you'll hit it and you'd jump in the air. Then we graduated to actually putting our bicycles up on the wall there at Lovers' Leap, and we'd ride our bicycles down that little rock wall at Lovers' Leap. And, of course, we were always careful to fall off on the parking lot side, you know. (laughs)

SLOAN: Well, to the right of you is a several-hundred-foot drop.

BARRON: Yeah, so we'd try to favor the side toward the parking lot, you know. (both laugh) We never got caught doing it, fortunately, because our folks would have killed us and we'd have never got this old.

|00:14:32|

SLOAN: Yeah. What was the river like then, Brazos there?

BARRON: Well, the river was notorious in local lore as being dangerous with quicksand and undercurrents and whirlpools. So we were strictly, strictly forbidden from ever setting a toe in the river. But the lake was another story. We could swim at the lake with or without adult supervision, and nobody seemed to care. But there was just a deep inherent fear of that river that seemed to permeate the local culture. And anybody that was from around here, they just wouldn't swim in the Brazos River.

SLOAN: Well, this kind of connects up to why we're here today. Tell me about the trips that you would take kind of exploring this area.

BARRON: Well, you know, just anything that had anything to do with hunting or fishing or camping, as a kid, I just loved it. That's what I wanted to do; I wanted to be outdoors. I learned from walking through the woods in Texas, particularly in the spring and fall, if you're smart, you're going to keep your eyes on the ground. So in keeping with that, I

was walking up the creek bed, and we had a little pistol with us that we had loaded with rat-shot. We were kind of looking for snakes, kind of exploring. But what we'd do is we'd turn over a rock or a stump, and if a snake came up from under it, we'd blast it with the rat-shot. But we were really hoping we didn't see one when we turned—(laughs) when we turned the rock or the stump over. Anyway, we were—

|00:16:12|

SLOAN: So were you holding the gun or turning over the rock and the stump?

BARRON: Well, yeah, I think I had the pistol, and Eddie [Bufkin] was doing the stump-turning. Anyway, we had—you know, we had a .357, but it was loaded with rat-shot, so there was no danger of ricochet or anything. And even if we shot each other, the rat-shot wouldn't do much damage. (laughs) So, anyway, we were walking up an old dry creek bed, and being down in the bottom of the creek bed, we didn't realize when we passed the borders of the property that we were authorized to be on. And we continued off of that property, onto the property of a gentleman named Dr. [James H.] Hejtmancik. We had no idea we weren't still on the place that we had leased.

|00:16:59|

Anyway, there was an elevation change. And I began to climb up that elevation change in the little wash we were walking up. And a piece of what I perceived to be rock broke off in my hand. But after looking at it, I realized that it was a section of bone with a marrow section in the middle of it. I began to look around both sides of the cut bank. I noticed a rounded sphere of bone sticking out of the bank that appeared, from where I was, to be perhaps the back of a human skull. So I dug it out and dusted it off and realized that it was some kind of ball and socket knee joint. Then I looked across the cut and noticed that it was a femur bone, between four and five feet long and ten or twelve inches around, still sitting in a vertical position. And at that point, I was 90 percent sure of what I was looking at. I looked a little further, and I saw the apex of the curve of one of the tusks. And, you know, immediately, dollar signs flashed through my eyes.

But then after looking at it more carefully, I could see that it was shot through with little bitty cracks and that just the act of trying to dig it out could destroy it, and definitely if you dug it out or if you tried to pick it up, it would crumble. At that point I knew I was not equipped to move it or to try to do anything with it myself. But based on my experience with the Baylor geology department and my knowledge of the Strecker Museum, I knew that they would have the facilities and the expertise to properly excavate it and care for it. And I did not want it to be my secret. I wanted everybody to see it and everybody to know about it because, I mean, it was always something I was fascinated with. And I just thought that, you know, it was the most amazing thing. I just couldn't wait to tell somebody.

|00:18:53|

SLOAN: Well, take me through your thought process as you start to figure out, this isn't a cow or—

BARRON: Well, okay. The first thing was, Okay, I've got a piece of bone in my hand. I have no idea what it came from. And then I spot something that looks like something I'm familiar with. I thought maybe that I was in an Indian burial ground. So when I went and dug it out, okay, it's not a skull, and it's way too big to be part of a human ball and socket. It's too big to be bovine. So what else is there? And then I looked across the creek and saw that massive femur bone. And at that point I was fairly certain I knew what I was looking at. Then I spotted what I thought to be a tusk and apex of the curve, the point and the root both buried back in the bank. At that point I was pretty confident of what I was looking at.

100:19:47|

But I took the rounded sphere, the knee joint, to David Lintz at the Strecker Museum. And I was met with not really any interest, really. He was pretty dismissive. He said, "We find that stuff all the time when we excavate building foundations." And I said, "Well, I really think it'd be worth your time if you'd just come out and look at it." I said, "It's big." He said, "You think you have a complete animal?" I said, "I think I have several complete animals." And, at that point, his interest peaked a little bit. He said, "Well, after lunch we'll go out there and look at it." So I waited around Baylor campus until he had taken his lunch, and he loaded up a couple of his associates, and we headed out here. And once they saw the site, they both got real quiet. But I could see in their eyes that they were definitely more than interested. And—

SLOAN: How did you get to the site then? Did you come in from—

BARRON: Well, we accessed it the same way I accessed it the first time because I really didn't even know where I was at. The only way I knew to get to it was the way I'd gotten to it. And, basically, you had to drive across that creek wash to get to my sister's house. And so we parked right there in her driveway and walked down in the creek and came up the same way I'd come up. This was in the days before GPS and all that stuff. I had no idea where we were, but I knew how to get there. You go up this creek. (laughs)

100:21:13|

SLOAN: So they were speechless.

BARRON: Their demeanor changed noticeably. I mean, I could see that there was awe and wonder in their eyes at the magnitude of what was there because, you know, usually when you hear about it, you hear of somebody found a tooth or they found a few bones. We had complete animals. It was pretty obvious that that would be the case. The more you looked, the more you saw, you know. I mean, there was undergrowth and everything, but you look beyond that and you started seeing—after the fact, I think maybe it was on the way back to our cars, I had noticed a phenomenon with that particular bone, that the porous sections of it would gather moss and turn to green, turn a greenish hue. And as we

were walking back to our cars, the creek was just littered with little greenish rocks. And if you picked any one of them up, it was definitely washout material from the mammoth site. So at that point, David Lintz and his associates were excited about the mammoth find, and I was too.

|00:22:35|

SLOAN: What was the next step?

BARRON: Well, for who?

SLOAN: For you. (laughs)

BARRON: For me? Well, to read about it in the paper. I read—you know, my name was in the paper in May of '78, and I was credited with finding it. And then all of that kind of went by the wayside, and for the next twenty years I read about the Baylor discovery (Sloan laughs) and my name was left out of it. And there was a gentleman [who] excavated this site by the name of Ralph Vinson who, over the course of his twenty or so years excavating down there, became curious on his own and wanted to know who had found it. They told him, and he was like, “Well, why hasn't anybody credited him with it?” And nobody could tell him why. So he pretty much insisted that they at least acknowledge that I had found it. So nineteen years after the discovery, I was presented with a little plaque that said, “Thank you for sharing your discovery with the world.” I still have it. It's kind of scratched up, but I still have it. Anyway.

|00:23:45|

SLOAN: When was the next time you came out to the site?

BARRON: The next time I was able to visit the site myself—I believe that, in association with that plaque again, I was granted a visit down here. Then several years later I was employed with a materials testing and geotech firm called Kleinfelder. And there was some discussion about future plans for how to protect the site. And Scott Langerman and uh, (taps fingers while thinking) uh—gosh, I can't remember the other gentleman's name [Ottis Foster]. There were two or three other engineers besides Scott who came out and another gentleman from Baylor [Joe Yelderman]—and if you mentioned his name I'd remember it, but right now I can't think of it. Anyway, we all came down and just kind of put our heads together about how we could best protect the site from the elements and from drainage water. Joe—it starts with a Y. I can't think of his name. It starts with a Y.

SLOAN: I'll see if I can find it for you.

BARRON: Yeah. I haven't talked to him in many years. Yelderman, I think. Yeah, I think it's Yelderman or something like that. (makes tapping noise while he thinks) And the other guy—and I worked with him for many years, and I can't think of his name right now. Anyway, we all came down, put our heads together, and tried to think of some ideas for how to protect the site.

100:25:33|

SLOAN: Do you know when that was, around that time(??)?

BARRON: That would have been somewhere around 2000, 2001 maybe. Somewhere along in there.

SLOAN: So you hadn't been out there since then.

BARRON: Unh-uh.

SLOAN: Okay. What'd the site look like then when you came back out?

BARRON: It was still open to the elements, and I think maybe they had just like a circus big-top tent over it with no walls or no sides. And there were no berms up or anything. So the site was pretty much open to the elements. And I did spend many a night in a heavy rainstorm sitting at home thinking, Man, I hope that stuff's not washing away down there, (Sloan laughs) you know. And it did bother me that it was open to the elements for so long. But from what I've seen today, you know, we got really lucky because everything seems to be pretty well intact and looks great.

100:26:28|

SLOAN: When you came back, was that the first time you'd gotten a real idea of the scope of the find?

BARRON: Well, no, because I'd been keeping up with it via the media. I knew that there were something on the order of twenty-three complete animals that had been identified, catalogued. So, yeah, I knew that—and I knew it was big the day I went and got them. I was thinking, you know, three to five animals when I went to David Lintz because that was pretty much what the visible evidence indicated. But the further they excavated back, the more they ran into. And, yeah, I stayed abreast of it the best I could, but I was out of the loop because I didn't work for Baylor and didn't have any connections, really, through Baylor other than just David Lintz himself.

100:27:28|

And I think at some point someone had gotten the idea that—you know, there had been some looting of the site at some point. And I think that someone had the idea that my sister or some of us were responsible for it since we for sure knew where the site was. But then the fact that it had been covered in the news media—I think perhaps someone through the news media might have leaked where it was at and someone else came down. Long story short, it led to a little bit of hard feelings between us and the people that were working on it. They thought that we were coming down there and robbing it. And we thought, How dare they think that. We brought them to it, you know. So it caused a little bit of hard feelings and animosity. Of course, I'm way beyond all that now, and I understand why they would think that because we were the only ones that they knew for sure knew where it was. But anyway.

100:28:19|

SLOAN: Well, how did you feel today? We came back, and they've got this recently completed enclosure. I mean, what are your feelings seeing it today?

BARRON: You know, I'm relieved. I'm very pleased and very satisfied with the lengths that they've gone to to preserve it and everything. This far surpasses any dream or hope I had for it. I mean, I did want everybody to know about it. I had no idea that it'd work out to be something of this scope and magnitude. And I'm just grateful and pleased about it as I can be. And I would like, you know, to be continually associated with it somehow. I do feel vested in it and feel like I've done a good thing here, you know, that bringing it to the attention of Baylor was, in retrospect, the right thing to do.

100:29:14|

SLOAN: Well, it's a wonderful find.

BARRON: It is amazing. And over the years I've heard of people that'll go out on their property and find one animal and sell it for five or six thousand dollars. Man, multiply that by twenty-three; I could have got rich. There again, you know—and I could have gone to a state university like UT [University of Texas] or A&M [Texas A&M University] that had state funding, and maybe I could have got a little something financially out of it. But the thing is, Baylor had poured into me as a young man, and Baylor is in Waco, and Baylor is Waco in a lot of ways. And so I took it to them, and I'm not—I've not regretted that. I'm pleased that I did that because it helps the Waco area. It's a good thing all the way around. It's a win-win for everybody.

100:30:19|

SLOAN: Well, I mean, you think of the generations of people that are going to get to enjoy it.

BARRON: You know, I did. Maybe not the day that I found it, but as I realized the magnitude of it, I thought, You know what, as insignificant as my life could have been otherwise, I've made a mark on history. And I really feel that way. And there again, that's another reason that I would like [to] continue to be credited with the discovery and not covered up. I have nieces, nephews, grandchildren who have actually been ridiculed when they would tell their teacher, "Oh, well my uncle found that." "No, he didn't because his name would be out there if he'd done that." Not so much. I had to go and prove to the teacher so that they wouldn't actually ridicule my niece or nephew in school for stating that I had found it. But there again, I am proud of the fact that I found it, and I wouldn't mind having my name on it somewhere, you know, so that I could continue to make that claim and nobody make light of it or whatever. And I really felt bad for my niece because she did, she came home in tears because the teacher had ridiculed her for stating that I had found it.

100:31:51|

SLOAN: Well, I sure appreciate your discovery, and I appreciate your bringing it to Baylor. And that's one of the reasons why I wanted to do this, to get this recorded and put down.

BARRON: Well, thank you for taking the time and the interest and for giving me a little preview of what's going on down here because, you know, every time I drive down Steinbeck Bend the gate's closed. I'm just—it's just killing me to know what's going on down there. (Sloan laughs) And so now I know. I have a little heads-up on it, and that's great. It's awesome. And I'm very pleased. I think that everyone associated with it has done an awesome job. I'm not a bit worried about any erosion on the site or any damage. And I'm real pleased with the efforts that've been made to protect it. I know now I could die tomorrow, and I've left a mark on this world that generations to come will be able to enjoy. So I'm very pleased for that.

SLOAN: Well, thank you, Paul.

BARRON: Thank you, Steve.

end of interview