



Arnold and June Roberts with Mallory Pearson

## Arnold and June Roberts

**By Mallory Pearson**

Mills County, I have learned over my 18 years of life, is always at a constant change. Thinking back to when I was in elementary school, I already see many changes in how people act, things work, and how different aspects of the county have developed over time. Recently, I had the honor of interviewing the wonderful Arnold and June Roberts at their house. What is neat about their house is that my great-grandparents used to own that home, and Mrs. June Roberts actually stayed in the guest room when she came into town. June told me that my great-great-grandmother would just cook and cook for her, even though that typically did not happen when someone just rented out the guest room of a home at that time. I just love the Roberts and the impact that they have continually made in my life. I was honored to hear their stories about how Mills County has changed in their lifetimes.

Having lived in Mills County for well over 50 years, Mr. and Mrs. Roberts were excited to share their stories of our county in their lifetimes. I began the interview process by asking what some of the most evident changes have been in Mills County over time. Mrs. Roberts went right on to explain the road improvement, house improvement, and Mr. Roberts added the school system improvement - so there have definitely been great aspects that have come out over time.

However, I then proceeded to listen to the fact that a way that Mills County has also changed is how “downtown used to be alive.” I learned that downtown Goldthwaite used to be the place to be every Saturday! There were two drug stores and Picture Shows (movies) that played. The Saturday entertainment was to come into town.

What also interested me was the fact that there were a lot more businesses. For instance, I learned that there were 4 to 5 grocery stores, three dry goods stores, 2 drug stores, 3 auto dealerships, 3 or 4 filling stations, a theater, numerous churches, 2 dentist offices, and a hospital with at least 3 doctors. It makes sense because people used to do all of their shopping in town, whereas now, families go to Brownwood or Lampasas to do some of their grocery shopping.

One of my favorite parts of the interview was hearing about sports. Having played basketball myself for my entire life, I was very surprised to hear Mrs. Roberts explain that when she graduated from Mullin in '45, Goldthwaite High School did not have a girls' basketball team yet. I just cannot imagine a school without a girls' basketball team! Mr. Roberts explained that of course football has always been a sport in Goldthwaite. He said that Star and Mullin built gyms in their schools before Goldthwaite did.

A last interest to me in the interview I was privileged to have with the Roberts was about fashion. Mr. Roberts said that it has definitely gotten a lot more relaxed - he would not have even thought to go church without a suit and tie. Nowadays, a suit worn to church is rarely seen - even the preacher does not dress up that much anymore! I learned that hats and gloves were always worn - whether to church or a football game. I personally do not enjoy dressing up so I was surprised to hear that women always wore dresses, high heels, hose, and even Sunday hats! We talked about how that has changed so much. Women didn't wear slacks like they do all the time now.

I learned that Mills County was made up of farming and ranching. Farming included crops of cotton, corn, grain crops, and peanuts. Ranching included: raising cattle, sheep, and goats. People worked hard, but always had time to help a neighbor in need.

Life in Mills County fifty or sixty years previously was at a much slower pace than it is today. There were no computers, cell phones, or even iPods which is hard for me to imagine life without. I learned that television was just making its big debut. The reception depended on the weather and the location of the antennae. Neighbors visited neighbors to enjoy the programs.

After I look back at the interview with the Roberts, I wonder how Mills County will continue to change and develop in my lifetime. I hope that we as friends, family, and a community as a whole can go back to that slower pace and enjoy our neighbors more. Go outside and share the cool new “thing” with our friends. I hope that we can enjoy downtown and the businesses that already exist in Goldthwaite. Our community is so neat and it just makes me respect it so much more to learn about the history behind it all. I would do anything to experience a downtown Saturday in Goldthwaite, Texas, 50 years ago. As the town is developing into a newer place, I hope that we will never forget the beauty that the wonderful Mills County developed from. I am so grateful for June and Arnold Roberts and their time in sharing with me about this beauty.