



Gatlin Peters with Peggy Sanders

An Interview with Peggy Sanders

By Gatlin Peters

I am a lifelong resident of Mills County. Although I attend school in Priddy, my family and I live near the town of Mullin. Living here has allowed me to get to know many people that have impacted my life in many ways. Peggy Sanders is one of these people. Recently, I sat down with Peggy, and her husband Roger, to talk about how Mullin and Mills County has changed over the years.

Peggy Pafford Sanders was born on October 11, 1938 to Melvin and Willie Pafford. Peggy has always lived in Mills County. Her family farmed and ranched like most families did, and Peggy has carried on that tradition with her own family. Peggy attended school in Mullin. When I asked her about the school in Mullin at that time, Peggy said "There were about 175 kids in the school. My graduating class had seven members. One major thing that happened was we got a new school building in 1955, my sophomore year." She remembers one major difference between kids now and then. "Everyone rode the school bus back then. Even the older kids, since no one drove cars. Now, a lot of kids drive themselves since they have vehicles."

Peggy graduated from Mullin in 1957. She married Roger Sanders in 1960. She and Roger stayed in Mullin and started a family. They have one daughter, Amy Sanders Kitchens, who still lives near Mullin with her own family. I asked Peggy what life was like in Mullin back in the 1950s. She said, "There were two grocery stores in town, a post office, a general store, a feed store and lumber yard, three filling stations, and the community center." Peggy mentioned a special memory to her, "There was a theater in the top of the general store building when I was in the second grade!" It is hard for me to imagine such things in this dusty little town. But as Peggy and Roger spoke, I could just imagine how different it must have been for them to live here during that time. Peggy continued telling more details about the community. "There was a depot and livestock pens located behind the big stores along the railroad tracks. There was also a hotel along the tracks west of town. I remember the trains that came through had passenger cars, because that is how people would travel back then. Now, there are just freight cars."

The farming and ranching industry has seen a lot of change in the past 50 years. "People had larger herds of livestock back then. Now, the herds are smaller, and many people have gotten out of the business altogether." Peggy attributes this change to the fact that many of today's youth do not have the agriculture knowledge and skills that kids did when she was young. "When I was younger, many kids, if not all kids, knew about agriculture. It was our way of life."

As we continued our conversation, one thing that Roger and Peggy both elaborated on really made me think about how life was probably better in the "old days". "Families were always together. Kids were always at home for dinner. Going to Brownwood was a special trip. Now, it's not a big deal." Peggy recalls her family owning a TV when she was a senior in high school. "People would come over to the house to watch TV. Many families did not have one of their own."

Although a lot of change has occurred, Peggy believes that life is really good today. It was fun for me to sit and listen to Roger and Peggy talk about what it was like when they were young, and in a way, I wish I could have lived back then, at least for a little while.