

Interview with Frances Garrett, Rutlader Outpost Cowboy Church

Interviewer: Haley Claxton (**HC**), University of Kansas, Dept. of Religious Studies Intern

Interviewee: Frances Garrett (**FG**), Wife of Pastor Carl Garrett of Rutlader Outpost Cowboy Church

Location: Rutlader Outpost Cowboy Church, 33565 Metcalf Rd, Louisburg, Kansas 66053

Date: June 15, 2015

Time: 5:00 PM

Length: 00:06:42

Transcriber: Haley Claxton

Abstract: Oral history interview with Frances Garrett conducted by Haley Claxton at Rutlader Outpost Cowboy Church in Louisburg, Kansas, on June 15, 2015. This interview features Frances Garrett; Ms. Garrett is a member of the congregation of Rutland Outpost Cowboy Church as well as the wife of Carl Garrett, the church's Senior Pastor. This interview discusses her opinions of what Cowboy Church is, how it has grown so quickly, and her favorite parts of attending Rutlader Outpost Cowboy Church. This interview was conducted for the Religion in Kansas Project as part of a summer fieldwork internship funded by the Friends of the Department of Religious Studies.

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HC: My name is Haley Claxton and I'm here with Frances Garrett at the Rutlader Outpost Cowboy Church outside of Louisburg, Kansas. Tell us a little bit about where you were born and raised.

FG: I was born and raised in Oklahoma. Raised on a farm, my parents had a 160 acre farm that I grew up on, and continued to live there until I went to college, so I have a rural background and a farm background.

HC: What brought you to Kansas?

FG: My husband and I, as pastor and wife, felt the Lord calling us to serve at a church in Overland Park, then we continued to stay and minister in Kansas.

HC: So did you grow up going to church?

FG: Yes I did. It was a major part of my life. My parents both of them were very active in the church that I grew up in. My dad served as a deacon in that church for over sixty years and my mother was very active in the missionary work and all aspects and so I was frequently participating in the services of the ministry of the church as I grew up.

HC: What kind of church was that?

FG: It was a Southern Baptist church.

HC: How would you describe Cowboy Church to someone who had never heard of it?

FG: Um... I continue to try to discern how to describe that. But it is an opportunity for people to get together and worship in a very informal atmosphere that has the sense of—feel of—a country, rural type atmosphere. Many of the people who come are not necessarily cowboy people participating in cowboy activities, but they enjoy that lifestyle. They also enjoy outdoors, nature, and rural activities, and it appeals to them in a relaxed way. There's no set—dress code. No one has to feel like they can't come because of a particular dress style. The church is welcoming to people in a very open way. I would say that—as we've mentioned that—the people who come enjoy the fellowship and a sense that they are accepted here.

HC: So, what is your favorite thing about Cowboy Church?

FG: I should say the sermons I guess for my husband [laughter] since he's the pastor—and he's sitting here [laughter], but I do—and the music is a special part—but they are important. The fellowship of the people who come is a real meaningful. We have people who come very early so they can have fellowship together and listen to the band as they rehearse. And I participate a lot in helping with the meal that we have after. We have a potluck after our services. And so I do a lot of help in putting that together. Have a lot of wonderful ladies who also help with that. But I enjoy that. It gives me an opportunity to fellowship and speak to the people and try to help welcome them and make them feel comfortable so—probably the fellowship that I see that occurs. A new person that comes, I noticed it doesn't take very long until they're acquainted with people here and feel comfortable and are entering into the fellowship also. So, all of that is a part of—the foundation of our worship time together. Because we're—all in a spirit of oneness and fellowship.

HC: The Cowboy Church has been growing very quickly over the last few years. Why—would you say that that is occurring?

FG: I think it brings a—freshness is a word that comes to mind. It's a little different than the traditional that they're used to. They find that informal atmosphere to be very—enjoyable for them. The sense of acceptance is a vital part of their feeling comfortable and the fact that they like to come here. So—

HC: Where do you think the future of the church as a whole—as kind of Cowboy Churches in general—is going?

FG: I would say it will continue to grow. It will continue to be—a ministry to a wide range of interests and people. The—I don't know what would—I can't imagine anything being different because there are always going to be those who enjoy the country lifestyle and the cowboy lifestyle. There are always going to be those of that culture and so worship is relevant to them in that atmosphere. So I can see that it is going to continue to be a vital part of church ministry in our country and in our state.

HC: Alright, I think that is all the questions I have. Thank you so much!

[00:06:42]

[End of Recording]