

GHM-Oral History Project- Interview Answers

Phyliss Thomen (nee **Riley**)

ID:8/21&4/22

DOB: 7/30/1931 Bethany Hospital Kansas City, Kansas

1. Are you a **Gardner native** (born here or in the metro area)? No
2. What brought you and/or your family to Gardner?

“My husband (Bob Thomen) ’s parents lived here, and his father (BK Thomen) worked for Cramer Products for his brother-in-law Chuck Cramer. We moved here so my husband could set up his dental practice and be near his family.”
3. When did you move here? 1959
4. What was your family’s trade/business? Dentistry
5. Tell us about this experience...

“My husband set up his practice in the Reece hospital. Dr. Reece is also my husband’s uncle. In 1973, he built an office on Elm and park and from 1973-1993 when he retired, I worked in the dental office as a dental hygienist.”
6. If you are not a native, when did you first move to Gardner? N/A (1959)
7. What is your earliest memory of Gardner?

“Our 3 kids were born in 1957, 1959, and 1962. 2 at the hospital at Shawnee and Elm, and one at the hospital when it was on the westside of town. We lived in California while Bob was in the Air Force from 1957-1959”
8. What is your favorite memory of Gardner?

“Doing things in the community, like teaching Sunday school, reading to the community children in the library when the library was on Main Street, being President of the city Council from 1977-1981 and being the first woman mayor of Gardner. (1981-1989)

9. What have you noticed that has changed the most about Gardner during your residency?

Do you perceive this as a good/bad? And why?

“Increase in population. Neither, just different.”

10. Anything else you would like to share?

“Great place to raise kids, Convenient to places in the city with more relaxed lifestyle.”