

## Lee Cantrell 1

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Ken: OK, here we go. Maybe that's working. Hello. All right, here I am. Let's see if this is working. I'm talking to Lee Cantrell in his backyard

Lee: Yea

Ken: On, uh, what is today? Saturday, October the 27th

Lee: Yea

Ken: Yea. Ok. So you're saying that you and, uh, your Daddy stopped the farming in 1948

Lee: Yep. Well, actually, we stopped farming down there and moved over here and he put two, two years in a

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: grass, Johnson grass patch and he finally told my brother, Punk told him to go find a cedar break. What he - went out here on the Armadillo Ranch and made a deal with Jack Brown to cut cedar off of it. So he'd come back and we moved in 19-, Liberty Hill in 1950, right on the highway

Ken: I see

Lee: Daddy and the girls that were still home would, uh, they still worked crops for somebody, you know, like J. M. Waley was a farmer right above us and they'd help him work - gather his crop and everything, you know, and we cut cedar. But cedar was a poor man's way ... when you're farming, in the wintertime you didn't have nothing to do, you know.

Ken: Yeah

Lee: So, everybody fell back to cuttin' cedar to get by.

Ken: Yeah

Lee: Yeah, and, uh, so we'd cut cedar. About all of our, all of our life, as long as I can remember, you know.

Ken: So, you started out, how, were you starting to cut, you would have been a nineteen, was it 1950? You're--

Lee: Yeah, somewhere along in there.

Ken: You would have been, uh, sixteen years old, to cut, by then

Lee: Yeah

Ken: Did you cut with an axe?

Lee: Yeah. Wadn't no chainsaw then

Ken: No, no

Lee: Just choppin' axe

Ken: right. Double bit Kelly? Did you have a Kelly

Lee: Yeah. A three-and-a-half pound Kelly with a three foot handle and we'd, you could chop a tree down like that in about five or six licks, you know

Ken: Yeah

Lee: and have her down and trim it up

Ken: So what was the deal ya'll worked out with, what was his name? Mr. Brown?

Lee: Yeah. He wanted the posts. He didn't want to take the money. He wanted the posts to fence his place. So he chose his, like, most of the time they charged, back then, if you're cuttin' and paid a percent – bought the cedar. You paid ten cent- ten percent. So he said "just give me every tenth post" he said, "and just stack 'em right there."

Ken: Hum

Lee: So, he'd cut, and he'd tell my brothers "hell, I need some big corner posts", or "I just need line posts" you know.

Ken: Yeah

Lee: So, but he said "just give me every tenth post, but get me what I need to build a fence."

Ken: Yeah

Lee: "For corner posts, and stretch posts, and this and that."

Ken: Yeah

Lee: you know, so, that's the way

Ken: His place wasn't even fenced before 1950?

Lee: Uh

Ken: He didn't have it fenced 'till-before then?

Lee: Oh, no, it was fenced, but it was all run down, rotten

Ken: Uh-huh, uh-huh

Lee: he just wanted to re-fence. He's gona get some goats. Mostly just run cows just then, but, that's pretty good goat country, you know.

Ken: Yeah

Lee: It's got a lot of uh, what do you call it? Shinoak.

Ken: Yeah.

Lee: That old Shinoak brush, you know, and goats, goats get by on that real good.

Ken: So, what'd yall do with those posts? Where'd you sell them when you, when you sold them?

Lee: Liberty Hill, then, had a cedar yard, right here where the telephone office is now. Right next to what used to be Roy Alman's little grocery.

Ken: Yeah

Lee: Right there in that big lot, all that's in there now is a telephone company

Ken: right

Lee: building.

Ken: Yeah

Lee: It used to be a cedar yard, right there. When I moved to Liberty Hill in 1950 there was three cotton gins in Liberty Hill, but there wasn't but one of 'em that was actually still working when me moved in '50. And, uh, they uh, we tore it down and moved it to west Texas in '53. But, anyway, the cedar yard stayed 'till Mark Smith had that little Alman's grocery then. There was Smith's grocery. And he had a cedar yard. He bought post cedar.

Ken: Mark Smith.

Lee: Yep. And then, uh, down here at Leander, well, on 1431 there was usually two cedar yards \_\_\_\_\_. One on the northwest side of 183 and one on the southeast, you know, they's kind-of catty-corner of one another. There used to be a little grocery store. Used to be Winkley's Trading Post

Ken: Yes

Lee: before then, Crumley, Buster Crumley, run a grocery store there and he later sold it out to Wade, and he, he sold it to Winkley, and Bill Winkley, the Winkley boy that's living now's Daddy, he put an auto parts store there. And sold auto parts. And then when John Winkley took it over from his Daddy, well, he slowly drifted over to to this, to more like a hardware, you know

Ken: Um-hum

Lee: And that was about it, but there, never was no place you didn't ha---couldn't sell cedar. There was always a demand for cedar.

Ken: Wasn't there a yard – there was a yard in Bertram too, wasn't there?

Lee: There used to be two yards in Bertram. There used to be two in Burnet.

Ken: Two in Burnet, um-hum

Lee: Used to be about two or three in Marble Falls

Ken: Um-hum

Lee: Callahan used to run a Callahan General Store. It's, there's still Callahan's General Store on, uh, 71. You leave off and go out, well, actually, it's still on 183.

Ken: Yeah, I know the

Lee: \_\_\_like that, and head to Lockhart. And Callahan General Store was over there on the left. And, uh, it's still there

Ken: Yeah

Lee: Yeah, uh, they've got a big cedar yard up there

Ken: Up in, uh, Marble Falls?

Lee: In Marble Falls. And then he also had one in Leakey, Texas. My Uncle Jack Cantrell -- Daddy's brother run, run the cedar yard down there for, I guess, 25-30 years probably. He finally just went out of the cedar business, then Uncle Jack took it over and he run it for about twenty years.

Ken: And what was his last name?

Lee: Cantrell.

Ken: Cantrell also?

Lee: Yeah, Jack Cantrell. Yeah, he's Daddy's brother. But

Ken: I think there's some, uh, I've been hearing about, I've been talking to the, the Simons

Lee: Oh, they

Ken: and the Roberts, uh, their kind-of Bull Creek, uh, area folks, and I believe that they have some relatives here doing the cedar yards.

Lee: I don't know so much about Roberts, but that used to, Bull Creek used to, all that land there, just about belonged to Simons and Boatrights.

Ken: Boatrights, yeah.

Lee: Boatrights come from down in there. Jim's daddy, originally come from there

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: Used to be, um, uh, Stanley Ringstaff

Ken: Ringstaff

Lee: Ringstaff, they come from down in there

Ken: Yeah, yeah

Lee: But, there was more Simons used to be in Bull Creek than anything else

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: You know, any other people, you know.

Ken: Yeah, and the Boatrights, they moved out here

Lee: Yep. Dick Boatright used, used to be three cedar in Cedar Park. There's one, like I said, on the southeast and on the northeast, and then Boatright had another one right next door to Sam's One-Stop Grocery. And then, uh, Bonnet, Joe Bonnet, lives in Bertram now.

Ken: Yeah

Lee: He used to have one right straight across in front of the One-Stop Grocery. And, right where the, I think it's the old Bank of the Hill building, it's still there, isn't it? On the left?

Ken: Yeah

Lee: I think maybe Cedar Park may have it for their offices now.

Ken: OK

Lee: You know.

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: I had to go there to get a permit a time or two when I was working for ... putting in plumbing, down there in Cedar Park. One time (laugh) the train wrecked, it derailed, right behind that cedar yard. And Joe was right behind it. And the picture they got, somebody had a camera, and they took pictures. Some of them boxcars still'd, had crawled over one another, you know

Ken: Laugh

Lee: And, they asked, asked Joe Bonnet "what's you do?" And he said "I run like hell!" (laugh)

Ken: (laugh)

Lee: He said he come, one of them cars come through towards him and he said "I run across the highway" (laugh)

Ken: I imagine so.

Lee: I don't know what caused the derail. Never did, never did know. But, yeah, there's always been a demand for cedar.

Ken: Yep

Lee: And, uh, you know, in the '40's they's still just coming out of the Depression, and the posts as big around as that, and, say tall, say ten feet would bring you about a nickel to seven cents.

Ken: Yeah, that'd be a

Lee: and now it bring about seven or eight dollars.

Ken: Yeah, that's be a, what, a ten foot, or

Lee: Yeah, about a ten foot

Ken: four inch

Lee: Four or five inch

Ken: Yeah, uh-huh, um-hum. Yeah. That'd bring you how much back then?

Lee: Six to eight cents

Ken: Is that right!

Lee: I don't know what they called a two inch post

Ken: A deuce

Lee: A deuce, you know, they'd bring a penny.

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: You'd have staves, you used to tie on your fence, used to have, uh, two for a penny.

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: Had to have two of 'em to make a penny.

Ken: Well that'd be a, that'd be a corner post there practically, wouldn't it. Now that's a good sized

Lee: Yeah. But staves, that they'd tie in

Ken: Yeah

Lee: between 'em, you know.

Ken: They're still using those.

Lee: Yeah. But, uh, they, they just really ... they'd load an old truck down, that's all they'd put on it, it'd bring two or three dollars, you know, the whole load.

Ken: The whole load!

Lee: Now it'd bring three or four hundred

Ken: Yeah

Lee: Five hundred.

Ken: Did you ever go up to Meyers Cedar Yard? Do you know, you know, up there in Lampasas?

Lee: They're still running, but now they've put in another one just before you get to the Florence exit, the original Florence exit, now you've got one that goes through Andice, and that road goes on the farm. But you go on up what used to be Green's Corner, and I don't know why they called it a corner because it wasn't no corner there. It was a T. 183 went straight on north, and Florence Road

Ken: Yeah

Lee: cut back six miles over to Florence.

Ken: Yeah

Lee: Well just barely past there a feller by the name of Burkett is put in a cedar yard.

Ken: Just recently?

Lee: and, about in the last year

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: but most of what he buys, now, he, he'll give you twenty five dollars for one that's ten feet long, but it's got a ten-inch top

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: you know. He'll give you, he'll give you twenty-five dollars. If you haul it all the way to Yoakum, they'll give you thirty dollars. Well, unless you've got a big load you couldn't drive to Yoakum (laugh)

Ken: Yeah-yeah.

Lee: you know. But he'll give you twenty-five because that's where he take's 'em.

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: He gets, he gets Bud Lane, I don't know if you ever knew him, but you probably, if you ever eat a hamburger in Liberty Hill, his mama Wanda used to run the Cafe

Ken: Sure, sure

Lee: And, uh, anyway, you know, Bud's hauling his, uh, big mill block from the limestone quarry up there by Armadillo Ranch

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: He hauled down to Texas quarry and they saw 'em up and make building stone out of 'em, you know. But, on the weekend, if that guy's got a load, well he'll hire Bud to load that big trailer truck and take a big load all the way to Yoakum and he, he might get thirty-five hundred, three-thousand dollars for a load, you know, like that

Ken: Oh

Lee: But he pays real good. Something like that, now, he'd probably pay about twelve dollars, or fifteen-dollars, I don't know. I haven't sold to the man because I haven't cut no cedar since he went in over there. But, it's uh (laugh) It's a hundred time more than it was in the '40s.

Ken: Yeah. Now, I'm starting to hear that in the '50s a man could make more money cutting cedar than he could anything else out here.

Lee: Yeah, they just, the farm labor and, even the garages you know, didn't pay, the quarry, as much as you could make if you were a good cedar cutter and, uh, you could make, make pretty good, in the '50s they'd come out of the depression the price like the four-inch six-foot they called 'em yard four

Ken: Yeah

Lee: Uh, it got up to twenty-five cents. Well, they thought that, that was (laugh) you know, good. Four of them it'd make ya a dollar instead of cedar four cents apiece. And, uh

Ken: How many of them could you cut in a day?

Lee: I could cut with a choppin' axe a hundred and fifty posts, all that could haul on a single dual, uh, single-wheel three-quarter-ton truck, you know, I mean, that, that was really a load.

Ken: That's a big load

Lee: Because a lot of times you'd have a lot of , uh, in '50, what I was saying about the ten foot with the ten-inch top, they got up to three dollars apiece. Well you can go cut ten and then you've got thirty dollars. You cut all the limb posts that lay on top of that thing – three of them, you know, and then the limb posts out of it would make you a good load of cedar for three-quarter ton. Of course, if you had a



ton-and-a-half, two-ton truck you could, but, and then you cut much more than that on a chainsaw. It come out, it was easier, you know, quicker to cut it

Ken: when did that happen? Do you, can you give me a date on, when did, when did people start cutting with a chainsaw?

Lee: Well, the first chainsaw I ever knew ever in this country was my brother Punk. But he wasn't cuttin' right here. He was cuttin' in Junction, Texas and the cedar had caught on fire and burned. And it, it was all dead and it was hard. Used to ... you know, a chopping axe, you had to fall it down real thin where it would go deep and cut good

Ken: Yeah

Lee: Well, that hard cedar – it would've break a half-moon out of that axe

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: you know, that steel'd just pop out of this big axe. So he bought an old, it was all cast-iron. It wasn't aluminum light like they are now.

Ken: Yeah

Lee: All cast-iron. The whole thing set up about that high. Called a Clinton. And he bought it to cut that hard cedar because a chopping axe just wouldn't take it.

Ken: What year'd that of been?

Lee: Huh?

Ken: When would that have been?

Lee: About in '50, '51, '52.

Ken: Oh, early, really early.

Lee: Not too long after we'd, we'd cut out here for a year or so, on Armadillo Ranch, and pretty near got it cut out

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: And then somebody told him about some cedar down there and the man wanted, wanted, the rancher bought the cedar his self. He just pulled it out of the pasture up to his house and he had a big flat out there and he started stacking that cedar right there. I laughed. He used to, he never paid you with a greenback dollar. He always paid you with silver dollars. And, uh, me and my brother were the only men that could, would go out there and help Punk one week, and he would pay us ten dollars a day. Ten silver dollar.

Lee: You get fifty silver dollars in your pocket and you'd almost pull your pants off (laugh)

Ken: (laugh)

Lee: I know mama, mama used to, she, she'd get, got from us a, a silver dollar with ever, ever kids birth date, you know, like '29, '28, '30, and this and that – as long as they made silver dollars, but, of course, he had to pay the change, like for seventy-five or eighty-cents, you know, in smaller change, you know, but he never used greenback – he used silver dollars. Punk used to carry his in an old five pound flour sack (laugh) threwed on the floor board of his truck (laugh)

Ken: (laugh)

Lee: You couldn't hardly lift it. That's a lot of money.

Ken: That is a lot of money

Lee: I think they claim silver dollar used to weigh a quarter of a pound, isn't it?

Ken: Shoot!

Lee: I believe.

Ken: That's a lot.

Lee: That would be four ounces, really. Yeah, I might do that. It seems like that's what somebody once told me.

Ken: So that would have been, uh, they had these factories, out in Junction, that take that old, dead, dry cedar, hard like that, and they'd get the oil out of it. Is that what he was cutting that for?

Lee: No, no, now this feller wanted the cedar for his own use, on his ranch.

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: And he bought it off.

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: Now, a little further west you'd get on like Leakey, or say, if you went straight west to Mason, and then turned south on Highway 16, it's, uh, it went down into Leakey and Kerrville, Kerr County, you know, and down in there. You got in more good heart cedar. You know, most cedar we've got now, it just grewed up here now is sap. It's got about that much of white: and a little bitty ole' heart like that.

Ken: Yeah

Lee: but out there you get good heart. They'd even buy the stumps after they'd been cut thirty, forty years, they'd go out there and pull, pull the stumps up, and they'd squeeze them things, you wouldn't think there'd be an ounce of nothing in 'em, but they made perfume

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: Is what, what I heard And, I know, my Uncle Jack, he was, like I say, he was down in Leakey and Utopia and, uh, he, uh, he kind-of, little cedar choppers made pretty good money, just bringing in them old stumps, you see

Ken: Uh-huh, uh-huh

Lee: We'd get together and we used them for firewood in the wintertime

Ken: You bet

Lee: but now they, but, that was, you know, better heart cedar. We had a lot of good heart cedar around, you know, 1431, and all, but the majority of cedar now, in this area, is just scrub cedar, uh, all the good cedar been cut out. It come back as a sap cedar and \_\_\_\_\_ some of 'em gets big enough to make a decent post, you know.

Ken: Yeah. How many years did you cut with an axe?

Lee: Up until about '60. Uh, '61, maybe, somewhere around there we started getting chainsaws around in up there

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: Western Auto and White's, there used to be a lot of White's Auto's too, you know, and, I don't know if the White's Auto is still on Burnet Road, down about 2222, Bull Creek Road, I think, used to be a White's Auto over there. But they, Western Auto and White's made a good, cheap, little saw, you know

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: Western Auto called theirs The Wizard

Ken: Oh

Lee: and for a little saw it was the toughest saw I'd ever seen, you know

Ken: Huh!

Lee: And, uh, they'd last, you know. But,

Ken: Cost a lot more to run a chainsaw than it did to sharpen an axe, I imagine.

Lee: Yeah, um-hum

Ken: Did you spend a long time sharpening your axe? Was that a, did that take a long time to do?

Lee: Well, not so much. You just kind-of whittled up the mornings, but, um, when you first bought a brand new one, like I say, it'd be real thick on edge and it just wouldn't go in, you know.

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: and it took an hour and a half, two hours to file that down with an old flat file, you know. Get, get it down thin enough it would cut, but then if you hit a good hard, like I said a while ago, it'd just break a half-moon out of it, you know.

Ken: You didn't, did you keep your axe from back then? Do you still got it around?

Lee: Huh?

Ken: Do you still have your axe around?

Lee: No (laugh)

Ken: Did you get rid of it?

Lee: Yeah (laugh)

Ken: I've been trying to, I've seen a couple of 'em, but there's not too many of 'em around anymore.

Lee: Yeah

Ken: So you, you were able to make pretty good money, was, when you took a load in, that, a truck load in that - you could make, how much was that truck load worth back in the early '50s, mid '50s?

Lee: Well, it started like in the '50s, or, you know, uh, a hundred and fifty posts would bring in twenty-three to twenty-five dollars

Ken: Um-hum

Lee: And, um, but it just, though the time it just kept getting a little better and a little better, you know

Ken: Yeah

Lee: And, um, really, about, I guess, when I quit cuttin' would be about like in the '80s, maybe the mid-'70s when I started doing a little carpenter work in Austin, and, and, uh, me and the wife got married in '60. And, and, uh, I worked as a carpenter a bit. But, then, you know, a hundred and fifty posts would bring ya a hundred dollars

Ken: Yeah

Lee: you know, then.

Ken: You could—when you were cuttin' early with an axe, you wouldn't be able to cut a hundred and fifty posts in a day, would you?

Lee: Oh, yeah

Ken: You could?

Lee: Yeah

Ken: That's a lot of posts.

Lee: If you, I mean, not, not if you, like I said a while ago, if you got, say you were cuttin' it clean as you went,

Ken: yeah

Lee: You got into a lot of great big logs, you know, you didn't cut that many. But you still, you got more

Ken: more money

Lee: you still made twenty-five, or, you know

Ken: Well, that's a lot better than you could – Ms. Henry was telling me, or was it, somebody was telling me that the quarry paid ninety-two cents an hour.

Lee: Yep

Ken: So that was only, that's less than eight dollars a day

Lee: See, when, uh, in '48, in the winter time, if daddy worked on the ranch he had, I mean farmed, if he had any fencing to do, they paid a dollar seventy-five a day, you know. They was just comin' out of the Depression, you know, wadn't doing anything and that's all.

Ken: Yeah

Lee: Yeah. Daddy worked many a day putting us through school, you know, at a dollar seventy-five cents in the wintertime. Of course, summer time he'd farm and we'd pick cotton. He'd got a – we were farming on the halves you know. We got one bale of cotton, landlord got another bale

Ken: Yeah

Lee: And, most time though, we kept the seeds, cotton seeds, so you can feed the cows, milk cows, we had eight or ten milk cows always. Round Rock used to have a cheese factory

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: It sat right on the banks of Brushy Creek and they had milk - cream routes. Do you remember them ole' five and ten gallon

Ken: Yep

Lee: we used to sell four of them full of cream every week and they'd take that Tuesday's and Friday's. And, uh, we had Jersey milk cows, and, like I said, we milked eight or ten of 'em and, and, uh, they had mama skim that cream off there. If it set nice the cream rose, you know, and she'd skim it off and put it in them cans and she'd, she'd get forty gallons of cream a week, just about. I don't remember what they got for the, I know we used to go over there, you know, a wheel of cheese was about this big around, about that thick.

Ken: Um! That sounds good!

Lee: Every now and then we'd trade for some cheese, you know.

Ken: Who was it that lived here? Was that your Aunt?

Lee: Huh?

Ken: Who lived here? The woman who I used to buy eggs from. I think she used to sell cream, didn't she?

Lee: Yeah. And she sold butter.

Ken: butter. That's what she sold.

Lee: She come originally from here, that was my oldest sister.

Ken: OK

Lee: And she stayed with grandpa and grandma and they farmed on 620, east of 183. And, uh, they sold butter and eggs and milk, and they had them 'ole butter molds, you know

Ken: Um-hum

Lee: and old butter churns, you know. Sit and churn that old thing. And finally they got one that – that you churned. It was a barrel about this big around, about this long. And, and, uh, you made your butter. And they finally got a milk separator that would separate the cream. You didn't have to set it and let it rise, you know, and come to the top. You'd turn that thing – I never could figure out how – it had two spickets on it. One was milk and one was cream.

Ken: Huh

Lee: And, uh, I got two of those separator pots that you poured the milk in and if you turn it too fast it forced it, you forced the milk in. You just had to turn her, just slow, like that. It had a whole bunch of little disks that looked like funnels, they's about that big around. But they didn't have a bottom in them, but they had holes in 'em and there was like twelve or fifteen of 'em in a separator and someway it went through there and separated that cream from that milk, fresh, right out of the cow. And I've got two of them old pots on the front porch with flowers in them.

Ken: So that was your sister that, that, uh, sold me the eggs? Did she have a cow here?

Lee: She kept two or three here, of course, she didn't have this, this, what you see, right there. But, my brother Punk owned forty-two acres going out of Liberty Hill on Bagdad, right straight across there. And she kept eight or ten there, but, just her and Uncle John, uh, taking care of 'em and they finally just, he got down sick and old, and she just kind-of sold 'em off and kept one 'till she couldn't go to the barn and milk it, and, that ole' John Deere tractor sitting right yonder. There's a hole right there in that barn, about like this, and she'd put the old tractor right here and had a feed grinder behind it and she had a six-inch pipe, like a stove pipe, and run it in the barn and she'd blow that feed in the barn. She'd grind that feed up, hay up, and make cow feed out of it.

Ken: Huh!

Lee: mix a little cotton seed meal,

Ken: uh-huh

Lee: But, uh, those old John Deere's had a flat wheel on the side of it and you'd run a flat conveyor belt on it, you know, and run it back to the grinder. I've got two of them old tractors sitting there. One's a '37 model and one's a '47 model. The '37 model is still on magneto and right now I can go down there and put gas in it and turn it about twice and you'd fall right off, but the '47, my Uncle John farmed with it. And, old John Deere's, if you didn't push that spark up, you'd crank them, but then you'd didn't have no spark or, you'd crank one with the flywheel, just turned it, like a lot of those old tractors got a front like old cars, you know, and you cranked it with a crank, you know

Ken: Yeah

Lee: but you turned the flywheel on those old John Deere's to start them. But you had two petcocks -- just two cylinders. It had two petcocks, one on each cylinder. You'd let that compression off where you can turn it better and when you started it you could go around and close them.

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: And, uh, the old '37 was still on magneto and I'd crank it up all the time. I shred that every now and then but it sat there, there's flats on that. I just used my riding mower last week and shredded that down.

Ken: uh

Lee: But, uh, '47, it, he turned it over once, it backfired, kicked back and jerked the meat loose from his shoulder blade, right here

Ken: Um!

Lee: right then the Miller brothers, George, and Ben, they had come up with a flywheel with a, a starter ring on it. And he had to put a started and a battery on it, and it run off the battery – it started to run off the battery. But the oldest one is still on magneta, and it runs good.

Ken: I spent a lot of time at the Miller brother's place in the old days

Lee: Yeah. Boy, they've got some antique tractors over there, my!

Ken: And it always amazed me that they'd go in, you'd take something in and they'd say "I've got one of them around here somewhere." And on the inside it'd just be a mess

Lee: laugh

Ken: and they'd go right to it

Lee: Yep

Ken: and pick it out (laugh)

Lee: Uh, Lewis, you know, he had some bad heart. He lived right straight out 200 where you get up on top of the hill of 200 and 201

Ken: Yeah

Lee: and he's on the left fork, and he gave it up, and, uh, around there, he got an old, a lot of old tractors around there, but he got an old bulldozer that he built his tank on his place, when he bought it, for water. He raised the blade off with a wench, with a cable, you know, it's not hydraulic, or anything – old timey. That thing, he said "man, did it run like a top!" But he told me one time every tractor they had on that lot over there they made run when they'd got 'em.

Ken: I'll be damned

Lee: And, one that sits there, it's still there today, it's almost as long as from here to that trash pile, right there

Ken: laugh

Lee: big (laugh) like a steam engine, you know.

Ken: laugh

Lee: big old tractor

Ken: yeah

Lee: I don't know how he turned it around in a field!

Ken: Oh, I don't think he did. It's probably far up in Nebraska, or something



Lee: Yeah

Ken: and you just go straight for miles.

Lee: Yeah, but that old wheel was that wide on them thing, you know, keep 'em from sinking into the dirt

Ken: Yeah

Lee: Well you have to, you know. it's all cast iron on them things. Ain't no telling what one of them would weigh.

Ken: Amazing. So you and your brothers were cutting out there on the Armadillo Ranch and then where did you cut after that?

Lee: Well, we were getting – like I was gonna say while ago -- we were getting on, you know, Marble Falls, most of the cedar is cut out around here. There was still a lot of cedar in Marble Falls

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: And, uh, so, we'd, my brother Punk moved up there, he finally moved to Marble Falls. And then we'd go up there and stay with him or we'd run backward and forward, you know

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: And, um, cut all around Marble Falls. Most of it was right back down 1431, back in this direction, you know

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: But a lot of that cedar, too, the cedar cutters around Cedar Park brought it back, cause they was too, like I said, always two cedar yards right there on 1431 and, uh, a lot of the cedar come this way and a lot of it went the other way to Marble Falls

Ken: Uh-huh. I was talking to a man there that's a, that cut cedar. I think he started at nine years old

Lee: Yeah

Ken: Charlie Maughan. You ever heard of him?

Lee: There're a lot of Moffets around Marble Falls, and I don't know

Ken: Maughan is the way he pronounced it. Maughan.

Lee: Yeah, yeah.

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Lee: Walter, and, uh, he had a son, Ed Moffet. We called 'em Moffet

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: I don't know how you pronounce that, that's the way he spelled it.

Ken: Yeah

Lee: And then there was some that spelled it M O F I T T.

Ken: OK. But he said he, Charlie and Willie Maughan, they both

Lee: Willie, Willie is a fiddler. He gave me a fiddle over at Callahan's. I was working on the yard south of Marble Falls and Willie was just learning to play a fiddle and he'd buy an old fiddle here and there. And I said "well, I'd like to learn to play the fiddle." (laugh) I never did. But, anyway, he said "well, I'll give you a fiddle." He gave me a fiddle and I'd go over to his house. Burnet used to have a fiddler's contest

Ken: Yeah

Lee: And might still do, I don't know

Ken: I don't know, but they used to

Lee: Like, like the Old Settler reunion, you know, they always had a fiddling contest over there

Ken: Yeah

Lee: And, uh, Willie used to go to that one and Burnet all the time, and, uh, he, uh, he got to be a pretty good fiddler, you know

Ken: Huh

Lee: Jimmy Joe Davis, of course, everybody'd heard of him, you know, he used to be the fiddler of Leander. He settled in right here and I've never heard him drag a bow across the strings of a fiddle, but, uh, they say he's better, better than his daddy.

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: He'd have to be awful good. I remember back there in the late, early '50s you'd see old Jimmy Joe going down the road and he had a big long paper sack and have his old fiddle in it and he'd go to some of the beer joints and play, you know

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: He was, he was the best fiddler I reckon I've ever seen. And Betty Joe Henry's brother-in-law, uh, he used to, before he died, what they called the Rambling Rose Ranch down here, uh, he, uh, was a fiddler and then her other sister, Marjorie, Marjorie was Edmond Rosenbush's, and, uh, the other one as a Bible, A.C. Bible, you know the other high school, football auditorium right down here, he was an electrician, he furnished the electricity for that, and they named it A.C. Bible Field, you know.

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: Leander. He was a fiddler. And, they all used to, used to right down here below you, down here at that old school on the right – Nameless?

Ken: Yeah

Lee: You know, they, um, used to have fiddling there, they'd go down there and fiddle all the time, you know. But Jimmy Joe Davis, I used to be, he used, on, way back when there used to be an old two-story building in Leander. Well, the building's still there. But, uh, it was the old hotel in Leander. Jimmy Joe wound up with it in later years and he made quite a few fiddles. He made a little fiddle, the neck and all wasn't that long.

Ken: Huh

Lee: He was a little old boy and he used to play that thing (laugh)

Ken: Huh . So he'd play at the beer joint. Where were there beer joints, uh, in

Lee: Well, used to be, see 183, back in the, up until, somewhere maybe in the mid '50s, called 29, you know

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: And, uh, I don't know why they changed it, but now 29 is out here like that

Ken: Yeah

Lee: And, and that's 183. I don't know why they give it that name, but before they changed it to what it is today, off to the right, in Austin, from the railroad tracks all the way back up, they cut off, I guess, three or four miles of it. All that used to be beer joints.

Ken: Where's that now? I'm trying to place it.

Lee: OK, uh, say, from, uh, Spicewood Springs Road

Ken: Yep

Lee: That's where it started. The old road goes like that and meets it back

Ken: Yeah, I know that

Lee: Yeah. That used to be the old

Ken: The Old Lampasas Highway

Lee: Yea. It used to be, uh, four or five, the Hilltop was the last one on the, on the, that cut-off where they put 183 over here.

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: And then one they called The Vagabond Club, and, uh, Tommy's Place. There was four or five beer joints up through there.

Ken: Was there a Silver something? Was there a Silver?

Lee: Now that's this side of there. That's on the left, you know where the Hilltop Baptist Temple is?

Ken: Yes

Lee: Buck Wicker put that building in. It used to be Hilltop beer joint and dance hall.

Ken: Yes. I remmember that one

Lee: Silver Top was the very next one. It was there for years and years and years

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: way before I was even born, probably. Yeah, Silver Top. And I don't know why they called it Silver Top. It was down in the valley like that, you know

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: But, yeah, that, it used to be a main one, and then back over there, where I told you a while ago is Volente now, used to be Dodge City, there used to be a lot of beer joints but they was, a lot of cedar choppers and old hillbillies back in there, boy, they'd just wreck them places, you know.

Ken: (laugh)

Lee: The Wards used to live in Leander. There was four those brothers. Old man Charlie Ward, Bob and Emmett, and Charlie and Little Charlie, we called him, his boy, and Richard Ward. They told me there used to be right where the road turned to the right off of 620 now

Ken: Yeah

Lee: And they called it Four Point

Ken: Yeah

Lee: That little 'old community there. They still call it Four Point

Ken: Yeah

Lee: The road went down to Volente, but it used to be a Dodge City. And there was a place called The Anchor Inn right there. All four of them Wards said they was in that fight that burnt that building down. Richard said that he never seen so many people ... everybody in there got into that fight and they just completely wrecked it and then it caught on fire somewhere and burnt down.

Ken: Huh. Were those folks cedar choppers, back then?

Lee: Huh?

Ken: They were cedar choppers?

Lee: All them boys was all cedar choppers. All four of 'em, then, you know

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: Yep. A lot of Wards that I guess were just kin to 'em, from Four Point on toward the Lake/River, on 620, used to be a lot of Wards right in there, and they were cedar choppers and, they'd done a lot of junking and old cars, and stuff, you know, stuff like that

Ken: Any of them still around?

Lee: Not that, there probably hasn't been down there in twenty-five, thirty years, but, uh, River Ward used to be the last one. And I know he'd have to be over a hundred. He'd be dead now. He, he had a Bob Ward, son, and he might be around. He may not, I don't know. Now, all of the Wards that I just named off, they're all dead. The last two, uh, just died in the last year, down here in the New Hope Manor Rest Home

Ken: Yeah

Lee: Yeah. And, uh, one of 'em's boy, Charlie, his boy is the well man around this area now, he, uh,

Ken: That's where I knew the Ward name from. He built, did my well work.

Lee: Yeah

Ken: Yeah, sure. But his daddy was called, was it Richard?

Lee: Charlie

Ken: Charlie, OK. Sure.

Lee: Richard, Richard, meanwhile, I don't know, some reason didn't ever have any kids. Adopted one, but he never had any. But Charlie had, I guess he maybe had two girls and, and LeRoy is Charlie's boy. He lives in Bertram now, but he's in the well service.

Ken: Yeah. What were some of the other names that you remember that cut cedar back in this area or any other area that

Lee: Well, I don't know

Ken: You have a good memory, by the way

Lee: they were just a, just a whole lot of, you'd be sure, uh, a fella by the name of Nip Haight. Now he run a cedar yard more than he cut cedar

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: But his boy, Carl Haight, he cut cedar and all the Wards, they cut. Richard was the last one that had a cedar yard in Cedar Park. He was on the right hand side. Joe Bonnet had one on the left, but Richard was, he'd \_\_\_\_, Richard run one there. And, I don't know, some people name of Moore's used to be here. They cut a lot of cedar and here in Liberty Hill, Buddy Kirk and his boy used to cut cedar around here, until, you know, the cedar give out and then they drifted out to different towns to find work, you know, and do, uh, around, but

Ken: So, the cedar gave out here, and then you went to Marble Falls, and I imagine it gave out there

Lee: Yeah. A lot of it. Now a lot of the Simons wound up on, further like my Uncle Jack, on down towards um Utopia, there is a lot of good cedar way on down Leakey, Rock Springs, Camp Wood, El Campo, all them towns down there, and still a lot of good cedar. They're still cutting. But a lot of the Simons went down that way. But all the Simons that I knew cut cedar around there and went down there. They are all dead now. And, uh, used to be some Pierces, they spelt their name P I E R C E

Ken: Yeah

Lee: And, uh, they used to be Ike and Monroe, but they were, and then there were a lot of Pearsons in Leander that was cedar choppers, you know, and, uh

Ken: The Pierces. I used to

Lee: Well my mama was a Pearsons and her daddy, my grandpa was a, (laugh) I called him a backslid Baptist preacher

Ken: laugh

Lee: He was a good feller but he was a preacher all the time, but his boys, he had, two Uncles, Charlie Pearsons and George Pearsons , they cut cedar.

Ken: You know

Lee: Later on Charlie, he went into the steel business, tying steel.

Ken: Uh-huh. So your, your father was a, farming cotton

Lee: Yeah. He done more farming. He'd cut a little cedar in the winter time

Ken: Uh-huh. Well a lot, a lot of people did to make a little bit of money

Lee: Yeah. Um-hum

Ken: Would, what about, do you know where your grandfather came from? Was he from Texas? Or was he from Tennessee? Do you have any ideas?

Lee: I don't know. Uh, all I ever hear really him talk about was that they was around here. I know they used to load up, mama told me they used to load up in the wagon, it'd take 'em sometimes three weeks to a month just to go out here to San Angelo or, they went to Ranger, Texas a whole lot. Mama used to have some pictures where horses would be belly deep in the main streets of Ranger. They were just hittin' oil way back there, you know

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: And, they'd go out there and pick cotton and stuff around, you know, and, uh

Ken: Did you ever pick cotton?

Lee: Huh?

Ken: Did you ever pick cotton?

Lee: Oh, yeah. I picked, that's how we done right there, mill, my growing up days.

Ken: Right here?

Lee: Huh

Ken: Right here?

Lee: No, back in Leander

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: Off New Hope

Ken: Which do you think is harder – picking cotton or cutting cedar?

Lee: Oh, I'd rather cut cedar. (laugh)

Ken: (laugh)

Lee: but, but, you know, cotton, in, uh, in '45 cotton brought more money than it did in '50. The last cotton that my sister Clara and Uncle John raised was right on 22, I mean 2243 right down here, and Bagdad Road, they owned on the right, there where that big subdivision is, that used to big ole' fields in there

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: And they had to go to the bank and borrow the money to pay the people to pick the cotton. The cotton didn't even pay for itself.

Ken: Oh

Lee: They picked together. So, that was in '60 they quit.

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: cotton was bringing eleven, twelve cents before then it bring thirty-five, good clean cotton bring forty, you know

Ken: Hum

Lee: And, you'd make pretty good money in cotton, you know, but then the bottom fell out of it.

Ken: Yeah

Lee: They had, they give it up. That's the last, that's when they moved, she bought this place in 1960

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: And, uh, moved here, and brought all their cows. And then she sold, still sold a little butter and eggs here \_\_\_ put this fence up here then but she used to have a henhouse. There was just a driveway between that barn and it. It run from here to that corner.

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: And, of course, then, all the chickens run out, you know -- chickens just love grass and stuff like that, you know

Ken: Yeah

Lee: but they'd come back to the nest she had in there to lay, you know, and she still sold eggs. Used to be a store, uh, named Rylanders, for a guy in Austin

Ken: I remember it.

Lee: And the Rylanders own the land behind me now.

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: But he, he, he died about a year ago and his son live on top of the hill on the left, just when you turn down here.

Ken: Yeah

Lee: and head down right to it. You go up the hill and his driveway is to the left.

Ken: Yep. Paved one.

Lee: Yeah



Ken: Yeah

Lee: His, uh, son-in-law lives there now and, and uh, he, uh

Ken: What's his name?

Lee: I guess they was the last --- I just trying to think what his name was. I can't think of his name, but anyway, he was having that cedar cut, but they, he just kind of turned 'em loose in there and, uh, they just went at it and they was taking those big posts that I was telling you they'd get twenty-five dollars apiece for and it kind-of ruined his pasture. We got mad and they were supposed to have piled the brush to where it could be burned, they just left it where it fell.

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: And he was crippled and couldn't get there and take care of it. But every now and then he drove down in there and seen what they were doing and made them stop. And, uh,

Ken: Were you

Lee: It cost him seventeen thousand dollars to get a, one of those great big brush grinders, you know

Ken: Yeah

Lee: great big ones. Cut roads in there and just, aww, it ain't been, even been years, just like seven or eight months ago, cut road from around when you go up the hill and turn and when you

#### Lee Cantrell 4

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Lee: You head straight south of here

Ken: Yep

Lee: right on top of the

Ken: yep, yep

Lee: they cut road all the way down through there to get that big old machine down there and he said "no more". Ya'll just run it, you know.

Ken: Uh-huh. Did ya'll have to clean up the, the, clean it up, when you cut the cedar, did ya'll have to pile up the brush or could you just

Lee: No

Ken: you just leave it there?

Lee: Not until just, just before my two older brothers quit, there's right out here on Bagdad they was cutting a little, and the guy wanted his brush pushed away from any big oak trees and piled up. And they

taook the front-end loaders, took the bucket off and, uh, put forks on right, used it like a fork-lift, you know

Ken: Yeah

Lee: And it picked that brush up or just pushed it like a dozer, you know, just push it and pile it pretty well, but, now, when you was cutting in the pastures, uh, you know, if the rancher that owned the pasture, you know, wants it what they call flat cut

Ken: Yeah

Lee: and that's what every, every green cedar there was, you know. You cut it for the cedar. But if you posts, there's posts there, that's what's in there, then you had to pay a percent for the cedar, you know.

Ken: So, if you flat cut it, then, that's your percent, I mean, you're doing him a favor by cutting the little cedars too.

Lee: Yep, cutting every bit of it, every little bush, I mean

Ken: And just leaving it there?

Lee: Yeah, yeah. And even when you post it, you just went thorough there and and just left the brush, you know.

Ken: Yeah

Lee: It'd then rot down, you know, and when grass come up through it, the goats could still reach around in there and get it.

Ken: Yeah, yeah

Lee: It took cedar longer to rot than it would, uh, hackberry, or oak, or something like that, you know, but that old cedar post, right along there, when I moved that fence, used to come up here a little closer, I planted it, or them vines here, them ole' -- this ole' I can't ever think what you call this thing, but, my wife, when that tree was little the leaves on it were twenty-four inches long and twenty-inches wide. Looked like a big old elephant. But each year they get smaller and smaller. What do you call it, do you know?

Ken: I have no idea.

Lee: She ordered it. Used to be another one over here, but it, on the other side of the gate, the same distance. But, it got run over by the kids playing or sump'em by sump'em and broke it off and she ordered another one and planted it and it got about five or six feet tall and it last a couple of years, and then, I don't know, it just died. But that one had leaves there about like that

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: Uh, Boy name of Watts lived down on Bagdad. I went to school with. He's got one in his yard and he told me it is about thirty-six years old a couple of years ago when I was talking to him, and, it's supposed to have real pretty purple blooms and now if the blooms \_\_\_ long bean like a mesquite bean, you know, and but maybe they've got to be pollinated, maybe from one to another and this one never did have any blooms or never did have any, uh, beans on it.

Ken: Yeah

Lee: But, uh, and the leaves are down to about a five inch leaf. But it used to be big leaf, twenty-inch wide and twenty-four long. I measured a bunch of 'em and they was every one the same. Almost exactly the same.

Ken: Huh

Lee: This tree, I don't know why I planted that one. It kind of reminds me of a maybe a Maple or something, but it, that ain't what they call it.

*[break in recording while talked about yard]*

Lee: ... But it was about, twenty, it's about eleven, twelve o'clock. I asked him, He said "hey, look here, listen to this." He'd take his left arm and bend it like that that and click, click. I put my hand on it and said "man, you've got two broke ribs right there, right at your heart. You better quit that." "Aww", he said "I'll be all right". I said "What happened?" He said "Ed Nobles hit me on the arm with the standard off of his truck. We was fighting out there at the beer joint and he grabbed the standard off his truck and I throwed up the arm to block it but he come right on" and it hit him right on that"

Ken: Oh, man. Yeah, Charlie Maughan was telling me that beer joint was up there, what do they call that area,

Lee: Used to call it the 281 Tavern

Ken: Yeah

Lee: It was on the right, and then they had another one that was called the Lazy A on the left, but they was all south of Burnet County, you know, they was

Ken: Yeah. 'cause Burnet was dry

Lee: Yeah

Ken: Right

Lee: You had to go to the Buchanan and that was Llano County, you know.

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: Yeah, Burnet was dry

Ken: Is that why there was so many there in, uh, where you were talking about before, because Williamson was dry and that was Travis, or something like that?

Lee: Now then that Silver Top and the one I told you is a Baptist temple now, them was in Wills ... Williamson County is down there, really past Spicewood Springs Road just a little. Williamson County goes way down in Austin

Ken: OK, uh-huh

Lee: So, all those beer joints, just about, uh, Williamson County goes past 620, uh

Ken: yeah

Lee: I imagine two or three mile maybe down to the left is a McNeil Drive, and to the right is Spicewood Springs Road

Ken: Um-hum

Lee: You know. That's just about the County line, right along in there. And all them beer joints are back in Williamson County. Now this, that north part was dry, these upper precincts, you know, was dry. Way back in the '50s half way between Round Rock and Georgetown, used to be a little old beer joint on the west side of, then it wasn't any residents, it was just highway 81. And, uh, called Sunset. That was the closest one. In Round Rock was usually always, you know, they used to have a, right there at the red light in Round Rock where the old part, old town is now

Ken: Um-hum

Lee: And, on the northeast side used to be a -- the oldest beer joint I ever knew in Round Rock, you know, in the, they called, in Austin they called that East Avenue, you know, before the call it I-35 now, you know, but they used to call it East Avenue. But, uh, no Williamson County, not all of it, but around Taylor, you know, that end of the county was always, you know, all them bohemians down that ways

Ken: Uh-huh

Lee: Use to have them ole' big dancehalls out in the country called SPJST Halls

Ken: Yes

Lee: There's one or two still left.

Ken: Yeah, I've seen it. Right there near Round Rock

Lee: And, uh, they claim that, now I never worked down there much, but they claimed that them Pollocks and Germans and what have ya, whatever nationality, all them there, they put on a pretty good fight too.

Ken: (laugh)

Lee: You know, in 1950, used to be a little ole', Taylor used to have a radio station called KTAE. And there was a feller by the name of Jimmy Heath and the Melody Masters, and he run the station and then they, he had a band, and I don't know if you ever knew this, he was a fiddler, Harry Schultz, he, I don't know if you ever remember the old - it was a real popular fiddling tune called Jolie Blon. Harry Schultz made that music and, uh, I don't know what he got into, but he was in Houston, and the cops beat him to death and mister, they liked to have a bohemian uprising, now, some of them old bohemians wanted to go to Houston, just tear Houston apart, but

Ken: Hum

Lee: they finally got it settled down. But they beat - beat him dead inside of a jail cell.

Ken: Uh-oh, hum. That's terrible

Lee: Jimmy, he drowned. Him and an Austin reporter and somebody else, and, uh, what, you know where Lake LBJ dam is, where it starts, uh, LBJ, you know,

Ken: Um-huh

Lee: Just west of Marble Falls. Some reason or another they were, across the river it's just solid granite rocks going down pretty steep. They camped over two or three days and then somebody went over and see those vehicles sitting there and went over there and nobody around so they called the law and they got to looking and they found all three of them in the lake. I don't know how they drowned or what caused it.

END OF TAPING