

## T M Pearson 1

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T M: You know, a while back I was in the hospital for three weeks. I \_\_\_ or something

Ken: yeah, you seem to be doing ok

T M: I lost everything, dropped from a hundred and fifty eight pounds, a hundred and nineteen in three weeks.

Ken: My goodness.

T M: I'm down to one hundred and twenty six now.

Ken: Wow

T M: But, it just \_\_\_ me

Ken: What caused that, was it the cataracts?

T M: No, no. I had open heart surgery

Ken: Oh

T M: I've had 4 defibrillators.

Ken: Oh my goodness.

T M: Gall bladder taken out. And septicemia, which gets in your blood and kills ya, gets ya messed up and they have to change your oil out. I didn't know nothing hardly for three weeks, I didn't even know the doctors. They'd come in and ask me "who is this". I didn't know. Asked me my birthday, I didn't know. Asked me the year and the month. I could guess at it. It had me down for three weeks and

Ken: How long ago was that?

T M: Sir?

Ken: How long ago did that happen?

T M: This year, oh about two months ago, three months, about three months ago.

Ken: Well congratulations, you look like you're doing good.

T M: Well

Ken: Are you feeling pretty good?

T M: No. I stay weak

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: But I still mow, and trim

Ken: Do you, good.

T M: Still keep going, inside the house, that's fine. Yeah

Ken: Great, great. Well, so let's, I'm here with T M Pearson, in his home, his kitchen, in Cedar Park, and what day is it today, something like November 13<sup>th</sup>, I'm thinking.

T M: Is it that late?

Ken: I don't know, let's see. The 6<sup>th</sup>, the voting day, it was the 6<sup>th</sup>, and so, the 13<sup>th</sup> was a week, Tuesday, and this is Wednesday. All right. It's the 14<sup>th</sup>, alright, November 14<sup>th</sup>. And we're gona talk about the cedar business. So you, tell me about how you got into the cedar business and

T M: Well, I did it back time I was ten years old until, uh, I had to work 'cause there was ten kids in my family.

Ken: Oh boy

T M: Six boys and four girls

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: Uh, I got in the cedar business with Buddy Rogers, cutting cedar on his ranch, is where I started.

Ken: I see. Were you ten years old when you started cutting?

T M: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Ken: With an axe?

T M: yeah, two pound plumb axe.

Ken: Uh-huh, double bit?

T M: Yeah

Ken: Who were you going out there with? Were you going out with your dad?

T M: Uh- yes. My dad couldn't work because he \_\_\_ I don't know, and he just couldn't ... But he'd drive

Ken: But he'd take you out there. He'd drive

T M: We'd go out. Us two older of boys would cut a load the cedar and bring it to the yard.

Ken: Uh-huh. How long would it take you to cut a load of cedar?

T M: Oh, with two boys could cut real good, you could cut a load in about four, four and a half hours

Ken: Um-hum. And load it up then

T M: Oh, yeah, load it up and bring it in and pull into a run, they'd call it, and you would drop the cedar posts off on this trailer on one side, and the crooked of the other

Ken: the wires, yeah

T M: And then the one that was doing checking would put it in a pile

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: He'd mark 'em in order to get though he'd take up what we had and put another marker on what was there

Ken: Um-hum

T M: So

Ken: What kind of a vehicle did you have back then?

T M: I had a '41 Ford pickup. That I'd cut and haul on

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: And, uh, but with my dad we had an Indiana truck, with the old square cabs, wooden cab, and, we'd work. But, but I quit cutting cedar on and off after I went to work for, I worked a while for the rock quarry, but they didn't pay but eighty-five cents an hour. This was back in 1948.

Ken: In 1948

T M: Um-hum

Ken: So when you started cutting it was '30, it would be 1939

T M: Yeah

Ken: When you were ten

T M: yeah

Ken: And you cut for a few years and then you went to work in the rock quarry

T M: yes sir, we married in '48

Ken: OK

T M: So, I kept cutting after that and finally they let another guy go at the cedar yard and wanted to know if I'd take over. I was twenty-something and I said "yes, I'll take over." So, that's what happened

Ken: Um-hum

T M: And then if it got a little slack I'd take up an axe, go to the Sunset, cut me a load and beat them boys in here, that was over there cutting 'cause they'd usually start coming in around two, three o'clock

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: And I had quite a few cutters.

Ken: How many cutters do you think were cutting then?

T M: At one time we had twenty-six, twenty-seven, so, there was quite a few of them was two to a truck

Ken: Um-hum

T M: But, we was more singles driving and cutting. We like to kill ourselves cutting with an axe until the chainsaws come (laugh)

Ken: I bet you did

T M: But, uh

Ken: So yall had a bunch of trucks come in a day. How many trucks might you have come in a day and unload?

T M: Uh, sometimes it would be, uh, well twenty-one, twenty-two

Ken: Is that right

T M: And then I had trucks coming in – I'd retail and wholesale -- I had trucks and stuff coming in and buying and took care of all of that. But I had men that would, uh, you know, gppd on helping load, you know, some Spanish guys

Ken: Um-hum

T M: And \_\_\_ til

Ken: Where was your yard located?

T M: I had ten acres located up there on the corner of Wade's property. You know where that Humble station was right across the road? Going toward old town, it used to be there on the left, right there on the corner?

Ken: \_\_\_ Winkley's on the left. That old Winkley's

T M: yeah. It was right there by Winkleys.

Ken: OK, yeah

T M: This the Humble station was straight across the road on the corner.

Ken: OK, where that Tiger Mart is now?

T M: That and Taco Bell

Ken: OK

T M: I had ten acres leased

Ken: Ten acres, yeah, that's a lot

T M: Yeah

Ken: Did you own that yard or were you just managing it?

T M: No, I was just running it for Buddy Rogers. Nolan Turner was our bookkeeper,

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: He'd take care of the books and the money for Buddy Rogers.

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: He and Buddy Rogers was just real good friends.

Ken: I see

T M: And, we'd see Buddy every, maybe once a week, or two, he'd come out and go up to the ranch, you know.

Ken: Um-hum, he didn't live on the ranch?

T M: Uh, he did for a while, he lived in Austin

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: Yeah, no, we, I know that whole Sunset Ranch. I've been over all of it.

Ken: It's a big ranch

T M: Oh, yeah, around twenty-nine thousand acres

Ken: Wow

T M: Because he paid school taxes in Leander, Liberty Hill, Bertram, Lago Vista, I don't know about Burnet. But he went back over there other side of Cow Creek.

Ken: Um-hum. Do you remember the names of some of the people who cut on that ranch, way back then?

T M: Oh, yeah. Carl Haight, Rick Haight

Ken: Is that related to your wife

T M: yeah, yeah. And, uh, the others were Spanish people, uh, in Liberty Hill, uh, Richard Ward, Charlie Ward

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: And a lot of Spanish guys

Ken: Is that right.

T M: Yeah, they, I can't think of all their names

Ken: Did they have their own trucks.

T M: Yes. Most of 'em lived right there close. They'd go cutting, come in, Garcias, and

Ken: Palacios, is that one of 'em?

T M: No.

Ken: How 'bout the Maynards, or the Whitts, did you have any of them cutting

T M: Well the Maynards would cut for a while, but they didn't like my grading so they quit and went and found some timber somewhere else, went to go to Lester Simpson and Jack Mennicks right up on the road there

Ken: They had a yard here too?

T M: Uh-huh. Jack Mennicks had one up at New Hope Mr. Simpson had one there in Leander where the school is.

Ken: OK. Where the high school is?

T M: Uh-huh

Ken: What kind of, so that's three yards, can you remember any other yards back then, how many yards were there?

T M: Boatright was right beside me.

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: Just a short distance

Ken: JT, is that JT Boatright?

T M: Dick Boatright,

Ken: Dick Boatright, Dick Boatright, OK

T M: Yeah. Jim and John Boatright was his boys

Ken: Um-hum

T M: They worked for their dad

Ken: OK

T M: See, uh, Jim, uh, John lives there in Liberty Hill.

Ken: Yes, I've talked with John

T M: Have you?

Ken: yes. He's doing good.

T M: I worked a little for Boatright, when there were slack times

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: But, uh

Ken: So every cutter had to, you guys, your yard was dedicated to Rogers Ranch, it sounds like.

T M: It was, it was Roger's own

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: Buddy Rogers, he owned the yard, owned the Ranch

Ken: Um-hum

T M: Yeah, they called the ranch The Sunset Ranch

Ken: yes. We live pretty near there, actually

T M: Do you?

Ken: We live, that's on Round Mountain Road, and we, on Nameless Road, we live right up there on Round Mountain Road toward Liberty Hill.

T M: Oh

Ken: About half way.

T M: Yeah

Ken: Yeah, it's pretty. That's a pretty place.

T M: I know that road

Ken: yeah. So, that, there was the Boatright yard. Can you, can you think of, I heard that there was a King yard

T M: Well, that was back when I was younger. There was King, King had a yard right here where the highways divide

Ken: Yes

T M: Where the old Sonic hamburger place, near that Firestone outfit

Ken: Yes

T M: He had a big yard in there.

Ken: In that, did he close that down by the time your's opened up?

T M: Yeah, he closed that down, oh, yeah, seven or eight years before we opened up and he went to a lil ol place out edge of Austin called Hooper's Switch

Ken: Oh, where is that, what edge of Austin is that?

T M: It's uh, northwest. It's uh, it would have been right on MoPac, MoPac

Ken: OK, OK. And that's where he opened a yard there.

T M: Yeah, he opened one there and 'cause he was getting cedar south of Austin, around Dripping Springs

Ken: OK

T M: And over in there, so

Ken: Can you think of any other yards?

T M: Oh, no I can't.

Ken: Did Georgetown have a yard?

T M: Uh, I don't know of 'em having one.

Ken: Uh-huh. How about going up Florence, and, um,

T M: They had yards up at Lampasas

Ken: Uh-huh



T M: Now they've got one in Briggs.

Ken: I saw that just now.

T M: Uh-huh. They just opened one up in Briggs

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: But, uh, that ol boy I don't know how long he did, in Lampasas

Ken: As long as I can remember

T M: But that's, that's all I can remember

Ken: Uh-huh. So, yall, your wife said that yall closed that yard down in 1969

T M: '69, um-hum

Ken: Were you, were there other, did other yards already closed then?

T M: They had already closed, uh, except in, uh, Lester Simpson and Jack Mennicks, and they stayed open about, oh around six months, a little longer to sell, getting all the cedar sold off the place

Ken: Um-hum. Was that one yard with the two people?

T M: No, Jack Mennicks is one and Lester Simpson's

Ken: I see. And why did they all close at the same time? What was

T M: Back to where you couldn't get any cutters.

Ken: 1969 was, just wasn't

T M: No, it just got slow

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: You couldn't, couldn't sell it, 'cause big truckers got to where they couldn't sell it when they hauled it off

Ken: To what do you attribute that?

T M: Uh, it's uh

Ken: The T-post, do you think that was the

T M: Yeah

Ken: Steel posts

Ken: creosote posts, uh-huh

T M: Yeah, steel posts and creosote had taken off

Ken: Huh

T M: Yeah

Ken: So you had a, yall bought all these ... the small trucks would bring in the, in the cedar

T M: Yes

Ken: What was a bobtail truck? I've heard 'em talking about a

T M: That's a, about a single foot bed, like ten or twelve foot bed

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: A trailer truck is one's that's got big trailers and can haul five decks. A bobtail, we called it, would haul two decks

Ken: What's a deck?

T M: That's when you get up there and stack it on between standards

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: Then put a deck on the front and a deck on the back

Ken: A deck is like a, a

T M: Yeah

Ken: You'd stack 'em

T M: square

Ken: Uh-huh. OK, OK Stack one row this way and one row that way

T M: No, same way, facing the cab.

Ken: Facing the cab, OK. OK, so that bobtail, a bobtail could hold two decks

T M: Uh-huh

Ken: How high would those decks be?

T M: Around six foot

Ken: Uh-huh. That's a lot of weight.

T M: Well, yeah. A trailer truck would haul five decks, they're six feet tall

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: Yeah.

Ken: So these trailer trucks, they'd come down, and where would they take that cedar?

T M: Well a lot of 'em'd take it to up around Lubbock and uh, Oklahoma

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: A lot of 'em already had it sold before they come picked it up

Ken: Uh-uh

T M: And uh, I would sell and resell to the truckers and some of 'em put in a cedar yard after they got it there

Ken:Uh-huh

T M: And sell off of it

Ken: Uh-huh. So, um, I heard that the cutters, so, would often get a percent, how did you figure out the pay of the people who cut it and brought it in?

T M: We paid so much a certain size post

Ken: Um-hum

T M: You take from a two-inch post, two-and-a-half-inch post, three-inch post, three-and-a-half, four, five and six-inch, you know

Ken: Um-hum, um-hum

T M: We'd put so much to the layers. Out there in the yard. Of each one we would, when another truck'd come in and unload. If there were six on top of that we'd mark six on it and we'd go

Ken: Here's old Myers's cedar yard right here. He's got all that, uh, just what you're talking about.

T M: Uh-huh. We paid so much

Ken: Six by, two six-and-a-half by two, by three, by four, by five, now what your standard fence post is six-and-a-half by three or four, isn't it? Somewhere in there?

T M: At that time we didn't have to go to six-and-a-half.

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: About Six two. But now it's recommended that, you don't want to buy one under six-and-a-half foot

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: But, uh, we paid so much money

Ken: So, uh, I'm sure these are recent prices. Uh, you called six-by-three would be a pretty standard post, wasn't it, these days

T M: yes sir, six by three.

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: Six inches around it

Ken: Uh-huh, yeah. That's a dollar eighty five now in 2012. What do you think you were getting back in, in, when you had that yard

T M: Well, six foot four I was paying nineteen cents for it and reselling it for thirty eight.

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: I had a Buddy and them give me a book on buying and selling and when I moved here I thought I put it out here in one of those drawers. But I can't find it. I looked this week for it

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: It had the Leander Cedar Company name. And it had a, I'd go out there and take up the posts, mark 'em, \_\_\_\_, I'd go in the office, figure out how much money. If it's twenty dollars, uh, they paid, uh, ten cents on the dollar. Cutting it off of the Sunset Ranch, that's what Buddy got .

Ken: That's what Buddy got, OK

T M: Uh-huh. Ten cents on the dollar.

Ken: And that's the wholesale price, that would be the price that you paid

T M: Yeah, paid nineteen cents for a four

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: And sell for thirty eight

Ken: Oh, that's good

T M: And

Ken: Is that pretty common, you'd double the money, double what you made there

T M: Yes sir.

Ken: Uh-huh.

T M: But now, whew

Ken: That cutter, he'd get the nineteen cents, or you'd have to hold back

T M: Yeah

Ken: You'd hold back

T M: No, he'd get, I'd figure up the whole load

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: His whole load, about twenty dollars, whenever I'd figure up his ticket and all, I'd subtract, uh, uh, ten cents on the dollar.

Ken: I see, so, you'd give him eighteen dollars

T M: Yeah

Ken: Take off two

T M: And that went to Buddy for

Ken: Uh-huh

Wife: Would yall like some coffee? \_\_\_\_

T M: OK

Wife: Would you like some coffee?

Ken: Have you got some made?

Wife: No, but it doesn't take but a second to make it.

Ken: I'd love some. Thank you very much.

T M: yeah,

Ken: What is your email, Dotty. I don't have it, I

Wife: Dotty, D O T T Y P @ Austin.rr.com

Ken: OK, thank you

T M: You go up there to that yard at Lampasas, my cousin cuts a little and he'd takes it up there to him. He just round it over on a lil 'ol pickup -- thirty-five, forty dollars. And you'd almost make a truck down getting thirty-five, forty dollars back when I was checking

Ken: So, it was pretty common for those cutters back, back, back in the 1950s to make, to make eighteen dollars a load.

T M: Oh, they'd make, ,some of 'em make more than that. Some of 'em bring in around fifty dollars a load

Ken: Would that be for two men cutting?

T M: Yes

Ken: Uh-huh, but one man, so one man could cut twenty, twenty-five dollars easy

T M: Yeah, I could take my pickup and in about three hours and and, uh, cut twenty-one, twenty-two dollars with an axe.

Wife: He did that lots of Saturdays. When the yard wasn't open

Ken: Uh-huh

Wife: Because he hadn't made enough at the yard to pay bills and buy groceries too.

T M: See I only made made six percent on a dollar on buying and six percent on selling

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: Sometimes I \_\_\_ back in those days. It was good money

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: But these old boys, up at -- I was selling 8 ft seven corner posts, eight feet long, seven inch top

Ken: Um-hum

T M: I was buying 'em for fifty cents and selling 'em for a dollar. And, shoot, they getting six, seven dollars for an eight foot corner, and give him probably

Ken: Here it says eleven dollars

T M: Yeah

Ken: So, you were, how much did you make at the quarry when you worked there?

T M: Eighty five cents an hour.

Ken: Eighty five cents an hour. So, if you worked an eight hour day at the quarry, was it an eight hour day?

T M: Um-hum

Ken: That'd be, eight time eight is sixty

T M: Sixty four

Wife: When we were married you wasn't making but sixty cents an hour It had gone up to 85 when Kerry was born.

T M: That's right. Sixty cents an hour when we were married.

Ken: Uh-huh. When was Kerry born?

Wife: Fifty, Sixty, 1960.

Ken: OK. So, six, eight, eight dollars a day and you could, cutting cedar, you could make a lot more than that

T M: Whenever I'd get off at the rock quarry I'd take my pick-up and the guy that owned the rock quarry and all had the cedar to cut over here, and I'd go over there and cut a load and

Ken: And make double what you made at the quarry.

T M: Easy, easy. But after they closed the yard and all it was hard to find anyone who would let you come and cut.

Ken: Um-hum

T M: So

Ken: Yeah. Did they kind-of run out of cedar? In this area here? Good cedar -- I know it's funny to say this

T M: Yeah, plenty of cedar now, but there wasn't, without the good cedar. And now in those places it's grown up that you can make real good money

Wife: \_\_\_\_

Ken: Thank you. I saw a cedar brake the other... just on Saturday, it had never been cut, virgin.

T M: Oh boy

Ken: On Council Creek. And they were, there were trees that would be straight up and they'd start out about that big

T M: Um-hum

Ken: Like that, you know. They'd be about and eight, ten

T M: About eight inch. Six

Ken: And at the top it wouldn't be that much smaller. It didn't' go down – it'd just go straight up and go twenty feet up

T M: See, we , when we was cutting they wouldn't let you, um, if one was that tall and all, \_\_\_ over twelve, fourteen foot

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: It had to be a certain size, 'cause you didn't sell too many of 'em, it had to be a seven, eight, ten, twelve.

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: And

Ken: If you saw one of those tall trees, though, you could cut it into several posts?

T M: You could cut it off, and I could've knowed 'bout it hit the ground what I was gona make, how many posts out of it

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: If I could go over there I said three hours with an axe and my old Ford pick-up, stack it up to the cab and run it over it, and get twenty something dollars. Then be here to check the people off, I knew where the people were coming to load, to get a load

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: Then I'd be there

Ken: Well that sounds like the best paying job in the

T M: It was

Ken: In Cedar Park

T M: Yeah. Some weeks it wadn't nothing, whenever I had forty, fifty cutters come in, ain't nothing to make around now, seventy-five and hundred dollars a week, and could go back home for lunch

Ken: Huh. So if you had forty or fifty cutters and there were, I think we mentioned four more yards, would they each have forty or fifty cutters too?

T M: I don't know what they had

Ken: Uh-huh



T M: They just had what was cutting on different places hauling to them.

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: 'cause they didn't like my grading.

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: And I had a set of horseshoes welded together

Ken: Yeah

T M: If you could slide one. I had to show an 'ol boy one day and then take a tape and measure it

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: So,

Ken: So you measure it around, Around the circumference, and then divide it by three, or something like that, don't you?

T M: Right

Ken: To get the, 'cause it's not, you can't really do it with a ruler, can you?

T M: No. A regular tape if you wrap it around and if you measure twelve inches then you've got a four inch post.

Ken: Four inch post. Doug Lavender there at the Lampasas told me that. 'Cause I always figured it was diameter. But it's too uneven.

T M: No, no, no, you can't go by diameter

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: But, uh,

Ken: So, tell me, uh, how were these people able to make so much money, it seems like they'd be sort of, uh, they'd be able to live pretty good. You know.

T M: Uh-hum

Ken: You know, yet, the reputation of a cedar cutter is that they didn't live too good. That they lived in tents

T M: Uh-huh

Ken: You know. Tell me about that. I mean

T M: Uh, Well they wasn't, that many homes to rent.

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: And, uh, rent wasn't high on the, three or four bedroom, you know, probably ten dollars a month

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: But, uh, I made good money, I bought a place off of Boatright, a little house and an acre, and I paid thirty seven a month until I paid for it

Ken: Um-hum

T M: And, uh, I still made good money

Ken: Yeah

T M: I didn't wait on nobody to go with me to the cedar brake. I liked to go by myself

Ken: Uh-uh

T M: I could come and go as I pleased, work as long as I wanted

Ken: Did you cut all year round?

T M: All, yeah I have cut all year, all year around, until, uh, I went to work for the Brown Schools. I worked for them in, I don't know when, in the seventies

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: And, worked for them twenty-three years

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T M: They sold out to a Healthcare International that built big hospitals and I worked for them twenty-three years

Ken: Uh-huh. So, uh, some of those cutters, so you said that they couldn't, there weren't many places to rent. So, were they, they weren't local people that were doing a lot of the cutting, were they?

T M: yeah

Ken: They were local people

T M: Some of 'em come out of Austin

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: Quite a few of the Spanish people. They'd come up and camp over that day and through the night and the next afternoon they'd come in with a load and then they'd come back home and next day they'd go back out

Ken: OK

T M: We worked a lot of Spanish people.

Ken: There on the Rogers Ranch

T M: Oh, yeah

Ken: But the, the rest of the cutters, they were pretty much local boys, weren't they?

T M: Um-hum, um-hum. They'd go and get there around daylight and they would have their load cut and be in the yard in by three

Ken: By three

T M: Um-hum

Ken: Um-hum. The day'd be done

T M: um-hum, yeah.

Ken: Where did they live?

T M: Those Spanish people?

Ken: Oh, no, those, those regular cutters. That lived out in this area.

T M: You know where the old Whitestone Schoolhouse used to be?

Ken: Yes

T M: And about five or six homes right in there that they lived in.

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: And they're the ones that, when they come in from cutting, and I'd need someone to help em load the truck

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: They were willing to make that money

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: I paid them according to the deck a dollar and half, two dollars a deck

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: Yeah. They were making money

Ken: Yeah, you bet. Did, uh, did their kids work in the, helping them cut cedar too?

T M: No, their kids went to school

Ken: OK

T M: And, uh, the old -- whenever the kids got so, so old went back Austin, they didn't stay up here. But, uh

Ken: So, was it unusual, when you went to work at ten years old, were there others, weren't there other kids working that were young too?

T M: No.

Ken: You were the only one, huh?

T M: Yeah, because their dads were all well

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: And my dad had been sick for years. He had, well he lived, he passed away in 1947 and he was only forty seven

Ken: Oh

T M: So then there, I was the oldest from the home and I had the truck and all

Ken: I see

T M: And then me and my other oldest brother

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: We took, cut, and brought it to Rogers, cause we was cutting off of his ranch, and

Ken: So, your mom, were you still living at home with your mother

T M: Yeah, We had a place up there at Leander

Ken: Um-hum

T M: yeah

Ken: So you were kind-of supporting your family, you and your brother

T M: Oh yeah, Had to.

Ken: How many kids?

T M: Six boys and four girls, at that time we had, uh, two girls still in school and the one girl, had three boy still in school. They went to school at the Fairview School

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: After that they started bussing us to Leander. So, I had to take out of school in 1947, and, uh, to make a living for the family. I didn't, and in 1953 I took home courses out of Chicago and got my diploma

Ken: Uh-huh, good

T M: So, I had no problem getting a job, with this diploma

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: I was required to have a diploma, went to Brown Schools, and Healthcare International for the job, I'll tell ya

Ken: Um-hum

T M: I was, I was supervisor over at the Healthcare International, over a hundred and two people

Ken: Hum

T M: I ordered lunch for me every Monday morning, a dinner, and I had all the yard people, I had all the schools to go through once a week, and some of the hospitals, they'd send me off for a week, to do the walkthroughs on them, and bring papers back and show em

Ken: Um-hum

T M What was wrong with them, so we could sell em

Ken: Um-humn

T M: They had, I don't know, thirty some odd hospitals, Healthcare International

Ken: Um-hum

T M: We one up there in, uh, Colorado Springs, yeah. So, its called Cedar Springs

Ken: OK

T M: yeah

Ken: So, when you started cutting at nine, you were still going to school.

T M: Oh, yeah

Ken: You were just cutting in the summer then, or,

T M: Well, no, but me and the oldest brother, he was married, he and I would cut and the rest went to school

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: We wouldn't take 'em out of school

Ken: But you had to be out of school

T M: yeah. But I finished after I got married in '53

Ken: I see, yeah, so you, you had to go back and finish your whole junior high and high school on the GED?

T M: Yeah

Ken: Uh-huh, uh-huh

T M: Yes sir

Ken: That's a lot of work

T M: Yeah, I would stay up at night, my wife helped me a little stay up at night to do all my homework

Ken: That's after working, after working in the yard all day?

T M: Oh yeah

Ken: Yeah. And after cutting cedar some days, too, right

T M: You better believe

Ken: I bet you were tired.

T M: No, I remember, I don't ever remember getting tired until I had my first heart attack and, uh, that was in '85. That's when I lived up here in a little house I bought from Boatright

Ken: Um-hum

T M: But I enjoyed working for these companies. They uh, I know of four guys that had four years of college and they fired them, all four. They hired me because I could do the job.

Ken: That's great

T M: I had a secretary, a mail guy that done the mail, called him a runner, the papers I had to go to the lawyers and all, he would take those

Ken: Um-hum

T M: But, uh, any time I got tired in this company I had my own office and had a big lounge chair as soon as you'd go inlock the door turn right and turn the light out your secretary run it, take care of the rest of it. I could go and come when I got ready

Wife: He did pour his coffee

Ken: Well, I want to ask you about the big old cedar trees. When you saw a tree with a base like this would you, would you cut it and get the big limbs out of it as posts?

T M: They call that a spring tree.

Ken: A spring tee?

T M: When the limbs spring out on it

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: You usually just cut the ones that you could reach

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: And you don't fool with the base part

Ken: Because it's so huge?

T M: yeah, and it's got those big knots where you cut it off

Ken: Yeah, yeah

T M: they're no good.

Ken: Back in the old days they used to use that, that for blocking, didn't they?

T M: Yeah, block up homes

Ken: Um-hum

T M: That's what my little house was sittin on

Ken: Um-hum Yeah. Did they just stop being a demand for the blocking?

T M: Uh-huh

Ken: Ok, OK

T M: And they don't use it in homes anymore

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: Either cement blocks or cement

Ken: Right

T M: Or a cement slab

Ken: Right, OK. You know of any old growth cedar around Cedar Park anymore? That hadn't been cut ever

T M: Yes. Some right down Brushy Creek Road here on Loeshmans Ranch

Ken: Yes

T M: Has never been cut and, bubba, I drive by there and get sick looking at 'em. (laugh) I want to get my saw and go down

Ken: (laugh) when did you, when did you start cutting with a chainsaw? When did you get your first chainsaw?

T M: Chainsaw, it was Sears, just come out with Sears and, uh, oh man, probably in the seventies.

Ken: Oh, OK

T M: And they weren't too hot. I didn't, didn't like it. I could use an axe and do better.

Ken: Would you cut faster -- more, with an axe

T M: Well, yeah, if you didn't keep your chain sharp and oiled up

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: You ever touch rock you had to stop and sharpen it

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: But, uh, after that I bought my McCullough chainsaw. I'd go around and do the trimming and 'cause you'd run out of chain real quick

Ken: Um-hum

T M: And I'd come and cut em down

Ken: Um-hum

T M: I'd know where to cut 'em and throw 'em aside

Ken: When you were cutting with an axe would you trim 'em before you cut 'em

T M: Oh, yeah



Ken: Um-hum

T M: Before they ever hit

Ken: hit the ground

T M: Same way with the chainsaw

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: I would rather trim it, then cut it down

Ken: Um-hum

T M: Then I'd know just where I'm gonna cut it off

Ken: On a four inch post, how many, how many hits would it take you to cut it down? With an axe?

T M: I don't know. I know cutting it off at the end, a four inch post, not over five licks

Ken: Uh-huh, uh-huh

T M: two under, three under and two above

Ken: Uh-huh, uh-huh

T M: If I, if I'm taking any more than that I would go file the axe

Ken: OK

T M: It'd have to be razor sharp

Ken: Uh-huh. Do you use a whetstone?

T M: No, I used a file with a whetstone

Ken: Uh-huh, uh-huh. You still have your axe?

T M: Yeah

Ken: Do you? I'd love to see it! Do you have any pictures of those days, of the cedar yard, or of the trucks, or

T M: Yeah, I've got some I don't know where they're at. I can look through a bunch of old pictures and can call you

Ken: I would really appreciate that. I would love

T M: OK

Ken: The pictures, you know, they do say a thousand words.

T M: I have some up, where I had the load on a little pickup somewhere

Ken: Oh, I'd love to see those.

T M: OK

Ken: That would be great.

T M: I'll run through a bunch of old pictures, with some trailer trucks I was loading

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: I have some pictures

Ken: OK

T M: See what I can find and I'll call you

Ken: That's a deal.

T M: yeah

Ken: Well, I guess, anything else, any stories you've got about, other stories, about somebody maybe, I know a cedar axe is a dangerous thing, you ever cut yourself, or know anybody else who cut themselves bad?

T M: I've had two stitches right here in my knee, a scar from walking with a sharp blade down and pulled my knee up in it, but far as the others

Ken: You could just cut your knee right through a pair of trousers

T M: Oh, yeah

Ken: Just by bringing your knee up to that axe.

T M: I brought my knee up and in the corner of that axe went through it. taken me six or eight stitches

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: But that's the only cut I've ever had.

Ken: Well that's good.

T M: With an axe

Ken: How about

T M: Then I was hurt with a saw, a chainsaw

Ken: Um-hum

T M: I had it, tore off my shoe. Uh, ripped a little bit with a chainsaw

Ken: Um-hum

T M: But, you be as careful as you can and still can't be careful enough

Ken: Yeah, that's for sure

T M: So

Ken: Huh. How about some of the other cutters, you ever know anybody that hurt themselves pretty bad?

T M: No, really not.

Ken: Good

T M: You know, you take Charlie Ward and Richard Ward and \_\_\_ brother-in-law Nib Haight

Ken: Um-hum

T M: Naw, they never was hurt. Uh, with either one an axe or chainsaw

Ken: Did you know a man named Simon Ratliff by any chance? He lives up by Burnet?

T M: Yeah

Ken: Did you! OK. You remind me a little bit of him, I talked to him. And, I, he's a very, he also, you know, didn't drink or smoke, or anything like that, but, now, some of the cutters, I know, in Liberty Hill, and I'm thinking their names like Johns, uh, Floyds

T M: Yeah

Ken: Some of them were some pretty rough characters.

TM: Oh, man, whew (laugh)

Ken: (laugh)

T M: They'd just as soon use an axe on you as not

Ken: What were they like? Have you got any stories about them?

T M: No

Ken: (laugh)

T M: No

Ken: But what made them so rough, was it

T M: They just come out of rough families

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: Yeah, um

Ken: So yall didn't get in any trouble with folks those like that

T M: No

#### **T M Pearson 4**

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T M: No. I've always gotten along with all the people.

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: I've never had an enemy one that I knew of

Ken: And did they, did they have some hard, kind-of wild parties and stuff like that in the hills?

T M: Yeah

Ken: Yeah. Did you ever go to any of them

T M: Oh, no. No. I used to go to a few house dances back, but they didn't drink or anything.

Ken: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

T M: That's when my two brother-in-laws and I and another kid played instruments. I used to play a banjo, and old mandolin. I've got two Gibson guitars under my bed. One is solid and one's an open face with a sunburst. Yeah

Ken: Did you ever go to any dances there at the Hilltop Inn? There used to be

T M: No. That was a rough place

Ken: Is that a rough place?

T M: Whew! You go in there and turn around and you looked at someone wrong, and he's ready to fight

Ken: Huh

T M: Yeah. I was in there one time when I went over there to pick up my uncle

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: They called me to come and pick him up. He'd gotten in a fight with six or seven Spanish guys

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: He had 'em all backed up in the corner.

Ken: Just that one man did

T M: Um-hum. He, he wasn't but five foot eight and weighed about one hundred and sixty pounds.

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: That's all he wanted to do, was drink and fight

Ken: Did he cut cedar too?

T M: Yes. Yes, he was daddy's brother.

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: My daddy, he didn't drink. He smoked some, dipped or chew

Ken: Um-hum

T M: No, I was raised in a good family.

Ken: OK

T M: Yeah

Ken: That's good. That's good. Well it paid off.

T M: All us still get along good

Ken: Uh-huh

T M: I have ten or eleven step brothers and sisters and we all get along good.

Ken: Great

T M: Yeah

Ken: Great. Well, I sure do appreciate your time. I'm gona stop ...