

AB001

Ken: OK. I'm going to start over now. I'm here with Albert Boatright on the 18th of December of 2014 – just about Christmas time. Albert, why don't you just start by telling us about the reunion and how you come to play guitar there and all that sort of stuff.

Albert: Well, uh they've had the reunion out there for, oh, I don't know, probably fifty, more than fifty years now. Everybody that used to live there, even though they moved away, they come back.

Ken: Yeah

Albert: And it's on the Fourth of July.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: Always on the Fourth of July.

Ken: It doesn't matter whether it's a weekend or not?

Albert: Right, absolutely. On the Fourth of July.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: And so, I know, I've been going out there probably thirty five years or so, but my Dad and all his brothers and everything, they went

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: All the time and I was out there with my dad – before he passed away.

Ken: When did he pass away?

Albert: Well, uh, he was about eighty one, I think

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: when he passed away. And I think he was born in 1909, I believe. (calls out to someone else with a question "Was it 1909, Velma?")

Velma: Eleven

Albert: 1911.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: And then he died and I think he was eighty one years old when he passed away.

Ken: How about your Mom. She was Christine?

Albert: Yeah

Ken: Christine Shannon?

Albert: Yeah, Shannon. Yeah. I think she was only about forty years old. She got cancer.

Ken: Oh no!

Albert: Back in those old days they really didn't know what to do.

Ken: No, I know.

Albert: I think she got it in her breast to start with, then it went from there into her lungs. And she died.

Ken: That's too bad.

Albert: I couldn't hardly believe it.

Ken: I bet. Were you pretty young at the time?

Albert: Yeah, probably so. I was probably eighteen or so, eighteen, nineteen...

Ken: That's tough. So your Dad, did he raise you all after that?

Albert: Well, no, I got married when I was seventeen.

Ken: Oh, OK

Albert: So (laugh) I moved out, you know. But then my Dad was around for several years after that, of course. I'd say she was only about twenty.

Ken: Yeah

Albert: He moved around. We went from Bull Creek out there. I think I was about six years old. We moved into Austin, my Dad lived out there and all of his – well, they always lived out there, I guess, born out there.

Ken: You remembered? Back

Albert: I remember that

Ken: Before you were six?

Albert: Yeah, about then, yeah.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: My Dad, he burned what they called a "coal kiln." Where they burned wood and turned it into charcoal.

Ken: Yes

Albert: And he'd take it into town and sell it. East Austin folks had just old wood stoves, you know, and their old irons that they had

Ken: Was he doing that when you were a kid still?

Albert: yeah.

Ken: So that would have been in the early thirties. He was still able to sell that coal.

Albert: Yeah, yeah. And so we moved, like I said, we moved in, he bought some property, I don't know if he bought it from one of his brothers or what, over in East Austin

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: A house and he opened up a little grocery store there, my Dad did.

Ken: OK

Albert: And so, sold to the people over there, mostly black people, at that time.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: He sold to them on credit. They all paid him, seemed like

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: I'd say that's where I got in, started school, John B. Wynn School, I can remember that.

Ken: I don't know that one.

Albert: John B. Wynn, and then it was right on the corner of what used to be nineteenth street and where the IH-35 come through.

Ken: Uh-huh, East Avenue.

Albert: Yeah, East Avenue.

Ken: Right.

Albert: Then when I went to Jr. High we crossed over that to U. J. H., University Junior High.

Ken: Yes, right there near that campus, right across from...right, I know. It's still there, I think, that building is still there.

Albert: But I used to go cedar chopping. I loved to go out and stay with my kinfolks. And I remember they chopped cedar. And I'd go out there and get to chop a little cedar. In fact, I got one toe that's split where the axe got me (chuckle). Because they used the old axes, you know. The old double bit.

Ken: Do you still have your double bit axe?

Albert: I've got one out there.

Ken: Do you really! You ought to show it to me before we leave.

Albert: Yeah, but I loved to go spend. I'd go stay with them

Ken: Who would you be staying with?

Albert: Well, mostly the Shannons, pretty well, and some of the Boatrights.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: My grandmother, my mother's mother

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: Gran and Grandpa and there was still two uncles left. Lonnie Shannon and Raymond Shannon

Ken: I see

Albert: And they cut cedar and I'd get to go out and cut cedar with them, you know.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: Make a little money (chuckle)

Ken: Well, yeah, I bet you, you could make some pretty good money, couldn't you?

Albert: Yeah.

Ken: You were how old then?

Albert: Well I was still just barely a teenager, I guess, in there, and then me and my Dad, there was a place right out here the other side of Sewart Junction there going back in towards Georgetown. As you're going up that hill over there, the other side of Sewart Junction. To the left there was a road that went down in there

Ken: Yeah

Albert: And my Dad and I, we got a job down in there. A guy had a hundred acres of cedar and we got the job of going down in there and cutting that cedar off and we got five dollars an acre for clear cutting

Ken: clear cutting.

Albert: clear cutting, right. But then we got all the cedar posts off it, see

Ken: Was it pretty good cedar?

Albert: Oh, yeah, yeah, real good cedar posts down in there. Of course, he and I started and a lot of our other kinfolks come in, different ones, and helped us with the cutting because they wanted the job (chuckle). And we took, and Jim, Jim's Dad, Jimmy and John's Dad, Dick

Ken: Dick

Albert: Yeah, Dick and Aunt Rosie.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: Well, he had a cedar yard right there in Cedar Park

Ken: Yes

Albert: Which, at that time, it wasn't called Cedar Park. It was called Whitestone (chuckle)

Ken: Yes

Albert: But we'd haul our cedar into there. You cut a post six foot tall, six foot long, and if it was four inches at top, what they called a six-four probably. The little end was four inches. We got twenty-five cents a post for it. Twenty-five cents (chuckle)

Ken: What year would that have been?

Albert: That was probably fifty, no more than fifty

Ken: 'cause you were married by then.

Albert: No, when I was seventeen.

Ken: At seventeen you got married.

Albert: Yeah we was married at about fifty-three or four

Ken: OK

Albert: But I was only about fifteen years old

Ken: Twenty-five cents a post. That's not bad

Albert: For that size. The smaller ones, you know, you got less. The bigger ones, of course, you got a big one that was eight foot long and pretty good size, you got more for them

Ken: Right

Albert: That's the price I remember though, was for that six-foot-four: twenty-five cents. (chuckle)

Ken: How many posts do you think you could cut in a day?

Albert: Oh, I'm not sure. That's been way back

Ken: But you know, a good cedar cutter could cut a hundred posts a day.

Albert: I'll tell you, one of my Uncles, Raymond Shannon, they were out there too, boy he was a cedar chopper! Man, about two licks on each side of that tree and it would be cut in two.

Ken: In that, on a six-foot-four?

Albert: yeah.

Ken: Two licks!

Albert: Yeah, he was unbelievable, he was good.

Ken: I remember, so think about, if you could cut a hundred posts a day, and I know people who cut more than that, twenty-five cents each, that's twenty five dollars a day.

Albert: That was a lot of money then

Ken: That was a lot of money back in 1950, wasn't it?

Albert: You bet'cha.

Ken: I think that's a lot more than you could make doing almost anything else

Albert: Oh, yeah. I went, just about the same time we got married, I was seventeen, I went to work for Buck Steiner

Ken: Yep

Albert: In Austin, Capitol Saddlery

Ken: Yep

Albert: And I went to work for him building saddles at thirty dollars a week.

Ken: A week! At about the same time.

Albert: Yeah. Shortly after, yes. Thirty dollars a week.

Ken: Isn't that something!

Albert: Thirty dollars a week, yeah.

Ken: That's quite a skill that you have.

Albert: Yeah (chuckle) stayed there a while, like I say, I, but my Dad and I went and cut cedar out there together, I can always remember that. We bought us a truck

Ken: What kind of truck did you get?

Albert: I think it was about a 42 Ford or something flat bed truck. Somewhere in the forties.

Ken: Yeah

Albert: That's what we hauled the cedar in – to the cedar yard, on the back of

Ken: To Dick Boatright's yard

Albert: Right. To Dicks.

Ken: I have a card, a picture of a card that I got, I guess John T. showed it to me, or something. Dick Boatright, the Boatright Cedar Yard card.

Albert: Oh, yeah.

Ken: Do you know Mary Boatright?

Albert: Yes

Ken: Mary is, you know, is...Johnny is John T.'s son and married Mary, and Mary is a Roberts.

Albert: Uh-huh

Ken: So there's...I mean, those connections, they went way back, but here is Ronnie Roberts, this good friend of mine – his Dad had a cedar yard in Oak Hill

Albert: Um-hum

Ken: His sister is Mary Roberts and she married Johnny Boatright. So, I mean, it's funny, those connections keep

Albert: Well there was a Mary Boatright also.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: There was Mary and Helen and Polly, the three younger sisters, you know, Jimmy John was the older brother

Ken: Yeah

Albert: And Helen was a little older than me and Polly was a little younger than me

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: But we used to go visit them all the time, even before

Ken: Who still lived up there in Bull Creek in, say, 1950?

Albert: Tim Boatright

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: My Dad's brother Tim. He was the only one that stayed out there, I think, of the family.

Ken: I see

Albert: And kept property. So he had property out there.

Ken: I see. Is he Frank's father?

Albert: Franks Dad. Yeah.

Ken: Franks Dad.

Albert: yeah.

Ken: And that would be Marie's granddad.

Albert: Yeah. Frank and I were real close out there 'cause he had a horse

Ken: (chuckle)

Albert: And I used to go out there because I loved to go out and ride that horse. But going out there, come out Spicewood Springs Road, and there was a big hill that you had to come to before you got, six, three...

Ken: Where 360 is now, yeah

Albert: Anyway, my mother would bring me to the top of that hill, but she wouldn't go down it. She was afraid to drive down that hill. So I'd have to get out there and walk the rest of the way. And Frank would usually meet me somewhere, maybe on the horse or bicycle.

Ken: Yeah. I remember all of that. Wasn't there, who was it that had a junk yard up there at the top of that hill?

Albert: Oh yeah, that was – I think that was Floyd Cantwell.

Ken: I think that was Floyd Cantwell.

Albert: Yeah, up on top of the hill

Ken: Yeah. And the Starks lived up there, I believe

Albert: Could have been, yeah

Ken: Yeah

Albert: But, yeah, up on the top of that hill there (chuckle). That was his first wife, maybe, I think. Floyd Cantwell. I think he's had two more since then.

Ken: Oh, I see.

Albert: They passed away. His wives passed away.

Ken: Are you still friends with him?

Albert: Yeah, a little bit. He don't come, well he used to come, he was there all the time, boy. Out at the cemetery association, you know

Ken: Um-hum

Albert: He was there, of course, he was kind-of president and king-of run the thing, and then he kind-of got where he really didn't want to do it so we had to get other people in. In fact, I was the president for two years

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: (chuckle) I told them "y'all can just call me Obama if you want to."

Ken: (chuckle) I bet they liked that.

Albert: (chuckle), Floyd was big out there, in the cemetery committee for many, many years.

Ken: He is friends...I talked with Don Simons. Do you know Don?

Albert: I think I do, yeah.

Ken: He's friends with Floyd. Don lives in San Marcos.

Albert: Oh, OK

Ken: But he was there, him and his brother, another Simons, I met him, I forgot his name.

Albert: All those names get away

Ken: But still

Albert: There's two of the Simons boys that were twins. Just a little older than me.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: Bev, do you remember those old Simons boy's names? The Simons boys, the twins, that I knew? What was their first name?

Bev: I don't know.

Albert: We were really close out there, my Uncle Floyd lived out there, out of Jonestown, just right out of Jonestown, and chopped, cut cedar up there, and what's called Lago Vista out there, before Lago Vista was there.

Ken: Right

Albert: There was ranches and things out there, they cut cedar out there. I went out there and stayed with my Uncle Floyd and cut cedar with him and these Simons boys lived out there too.

Ken: Oh, they lived out there?

Albert: Yeah.

Ken: Huh

Albert: Just a few years ago they lived on that, what's that one called, the No Name or something, Nameless Road. Then one of 'em passed away here a couple years or so ago

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: But the other one then moved on up to, I think out of Hamilton up here somewhere. Because we were real close, they were just a year or two older than me at the time out there. The Simons. They were real good friends.

Ken: When you moved into Austin, you still kept up with all those folks?

Albert: Yeah, right. Oh, I loved it. Yeah. And my mom and daddy let me go and stay with all of 'em when I wanted to. Especially, you know, during the summer when there was no school. I'd go stay with them

Ken: Did you just catch a bus over there as far as you could get, and then walk the rest of the way?

Albert: Well, no, I don't remember how I'd get there, but I stayed for long times, you know, it wasn't just a little time

Ken: Weeks at a time

Albert: Yeah, weeks at a time.

Ken: Well, it's kind-of a paradise out there, isn't it?

Albert: Oh, yeah.

Ken: With that creek and all.

Albert: yeah

Ken: The creek used to be so pretty back in the old days

Albert: Oh, yeah, the ol' Bull Creek. We'd swim in that thing, especially me and the boys, my cousins and all and the Simons and there was some Faglies that lived out there

Ken: Yes.

Albert: And we'd go down there, us guys, and we didn't have a bathing suit. We'd just swim in the nude, you know.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: And we'd go down the river, we'd get down to where one of the bridges go by, and we'd get up there and look both ways, we'd run across (chuckle) and swim way down the river and then come back and get dressed and go home.

Ken: yeah. I remember it well. When I was in school my wife and I, we used to go down there and get a six-pack of beer and put our car right in the middle and wash it in the creek and drink the beer, you know, just enjoy it. Sometimes we'd

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Ken: sneak off and find some hidden pool on private land, you know, and swim in it for a while.

Albert: Yeah. You take down Bull Creek and there was different places, different holes, of water, to swim in, you know. A lot of places were real shallow, but then you'd get on down a ways and be at a hole there and you could swim.

Ken: Times have changed, haven't they. There used to be a lot more water around than there is now.

Albert: Yeah

Ken: I thought it was interesting, you said your Dad was burning charcoal, even in the thirties. I know people were surely doing that before there was electricity, but I guess the people in East Austin, maybe they didn't have electricity in those early days.

Albert: Well, they had them stoves, just wood stoves.

Ken: That's what they were using

Albert: Yeah, and those irons that were just. That you had to heat up.

Ken: Right

Albert: I remember that part of it.

Ken: Did you know anybody else that would burn charcoal back in those days?

Albert: No, tell you the truth, I just remember my Dad doing it. I was only about six years old at that time

Ken: Uh-huh, right. I've heard stories. I think Dick Boatright, wouldn't he be older than your Dad?

Albert: I think he was a little older than my Dad.

Ken: OK

Albert: I think my Dad was next to the youngest.

Ken: I heard a story about Dick burning charcoal

Albert: I bet he did

Ken: and taking it to the capital, but really, what he was delivering, there was something more important than the charcoal in his truck.

Albert: Hum

Ken: He'd take them moonshine.

Albert: (laugh)

Ken: Have you ever heard that?

Albert: Well (laugh) I've got a story about that, I'll tell 'ya, I guess. My Dad and his brothers, they had a moonshine still out there in Bull Creek.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: You know. And, uh, they got raided one day there. And my Dad, my Dad was crippled in one leg. He had that "infantile paralysis" they called it back then, polio later on. So one of his legs was kind-of short, you know. And so they come out and raided them out at their still and everybody got away except my Dad 'cause he couldn't run! He couldn't run fast enough! And I think he had spent about a year in jail.

Ken: Is that right!

Albert: Because of making the moonshine. (laugh)

Ken: I have heard that there was a deputy sheriff named Jim McCoy that was on everybody's case trying to bust them for moonshine

Albert: Yeah. I think, there was one, I ...might have been his name, he was pretty, well I don't know if he called "famous" out there

Ken: yeah

Albert: Everybody knew him, yeah.

Ken: I bet that's the one because – he was never the sheriff. He never got up to that level, he was always the deputy sheriff. But I heard a lot about him, going after various people. Yeah. Moonshine is a, you know, that was pretty, during prohibition, you know, I mean, people are going to, after a while, I understand, they just stopped paying attention to it during prohibition and you've got to buy it from somewhere. So the hills, they had that good water.

Albert: Um-hum, um-hum. They kind-of make some money, you know.

Ken: Make some money – turn that corn into something more valuable, you know.

Albert: Yeah

Ken: Yeah. I certainly don't begrudge them for doing that.

Albert: yeah. Out at Leakey, Leakey, Texas, and Campwood – There was, they kind-of went out there for a while

Ken: Who went out there? Did your Uncle Floyd?

Albert: Uncle Floyd. We lived out there for just a little while before we moved, come back to, uh

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: Of course there wasn't a school out there, I remember, before we moved back down this way on Bull Creek out there in Austin

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: But, yeah, my Uncle Floyd, I know, lived out there, and some of the Shannons, they did, and we, I remember out there my Uncle Floyd was out there. His wife passed away real young, Elsie was her name. She was my mother's sister.

Ken: I see.

Albert: They married sisters and brothers. So I got, what they call double cousins

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: And we were out there one, I think it was one Christmas or something, to Uncle Floyd's, and he had, Aunt Elsie had died and he had remarried, and he had seven kids with Aunt Elsie and then this lady that he married, she had seven kids when they got married, then they had two more kids (laugh) after they married. But we was out there eating one day and I had my brother-in-law, one of my sisters married from Washington state. She met him out at Bergstrom Airforce Base, and they got married, and when he got out of the Airforce base, of course, he took her back to Washington. I tell people he stole my sister.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: Took her away. But we were all out there eating, and, I don't know, they was, I know there was fifteen of us out there probably, or twenty, eating and this brother-in-law of mine from Washington out there, well, they cooked up a nice big bunch of cornbread. Oh, it was beautiful. It looked like cake, you know, cornbread, you know. And they was passing it around, and it got to him and he said "no", he said "no, I don't think I want any cornbread." And everybody in the room stopped.

Ken: (laugh)

Albert: Just stopped and stared at him (laugh) because he wouldn't take a piece of that cornbread.

Ken: What is the matter with you!

Albert: They stopped and stared, boy he looked around and said "well, I think I will." (laugh)

Ken: (laugh)

Albert: So he took a piece of it. So everybody went back to eating. I'll never forget that. That was so funny. We grew up on cornbread and beans.

Ken: Exactly. Yeah. So, you had a lot of cornbread and beans, did you.

Albert: Oh, yeah. That was the main meal, dish, was cornbread and beans

Ken: Did you have a lot of pork with that, or did yall have pigs?

Albert: I don't remember that. Probably do because my Uncle Tim out there, he had what you call a smokehouse. They'd kill the pigs and then skin 'em out and hang 'em in that smokehouse. That would keep the meat, you know.

Ken: Could you catch fish in Bull Creek back then?

Albert: Oh, yeah, yeah. There was fish. I remember, we used to, there was one place there that we'd go. There was a big rock kind-of come out over the, from the bank, you know, and we'd reach under that rock and we'd catch 'em in our hand. The fish would be under that rock.

Ken: Catfish

Albert: Yeah, and we'd catch 'em with our hand!

Ken: Yeah, that's a real popular now. I wouldn't do that.

Albert: (laugh) But, no, that was, that was cool days back then, for sure (laugh)

Ken: When you went to the brakes to cut cedar, what did you take with you to eat?

Albert: Well, I remember building a fire and putting a pot of beans on it, and build a fire and let it cook.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: Let them beans cook 'till dinner. So (laugh) and I don't know if they had the cornbread or not, but I remember cooking the beans out there.

Ken: In the brakes

Albert: 'cause you'd build a little fire and just let it burn. Them beans would boil, you know, for four hours or so, and they'd be ready when you got ready to stop and eat. (chuckle)

Ken: So, when you went out to Leakey and Camp Wood, there was a bunch of cedar cutting going on out there.

Albert: Oh, yeah. Yeah, that was a big deal out there, was the cedar cutting.

Ken: yeah

Albert: Cedar chopping. The Boatrights and the Shannons, and some of the other ones

Ken: Ya'll had the experience, I guess. You knew what you were doing.

Albert: Yeah.

Ken: So you still have a scar on your foot.

Albert: One that big, kind-of middle toe there, there is a little line all the way from one end to the other, and the axe, an axe did it. I remember that.

Ken: How did it happen

Albert: Well, I don't really remember. Because I was bound to have my shoes on. I don't think I'd of been out there cutting barefooted.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: But I remember cutting the toe. I missed with that axe, you know. I was, I probably was trimming the tree and, you get it cut down and then you trim it. Trim it real good. And I was probably trimming it, is what I'm thinking, and what I did, I got that toe.

Ken: Well, that's not at all unusual. I think most people have cut themselves one time or another. And some of them pretty bad.

Albert: yeah

Ken: So, one of the Simons, I believe, was crippled from an axe.

Albert: Really?

Ken: yeah, I don't know which one. Yeah

Albert: Well, those axes were sharp. Oh man, you took a file, filed them down to, I think they'd shave, probably. Oh, they were sharp!

Ken: Did you sharpen both sides of them?

Albert: yeah, yeah. And then, uh, cut that cedar with them, you know

Ken: yeah. Were there, tell me about being a kid on Bull Creek, your summers, you know, when you would go there from Austin and stay out there a couple of weeks, or something

Albert: Oh yeah, yeah

Ken: What would ya'll do during the long afternoons and stuff

Albert: Of course we'd swim, up and down the river, you know, and then just, I remember we were up there at the cemetery one time, me and my cousin, and, uh, we'd just walk. You know, where we went we walked out in there, of course, my cousin had that one horse, you know.

Ken: Were you barefooted, probably?

Albert: We were. We were barefooted. And I remember it, you know, the bottom of your feet get so tough that you get out in grass burrs, you'd get some grass burrs in your foot and you'd just stop and rake 'em out.

Ken: Uh-huh, uh-huh

Albert: 'cause the bottom of your feet – oh, it was thick and tough. When my brother, one of my younger brothers, that was born on my birthday, he was nine years younger than me. He lives up here. When he was born we were out there walking across the field one day and somebody come and told me. Said "well, you've got a brother. Your mother had a baby in the hospital. You've got a brother now." Another brother. Well, 'cause it was me and Bernice, and Charles and Jerry, yeah. So I already had one brother, so that made me two brothers. Two brothers and a sister when he was born. So we were just out there, we'd go up and down the creek, and things like that, and

Ken: Did you play a lot of ball, or anything like that?

Albert: We would play a little bit of ball. There was a field out there not too far from where one of my cousins lived. And we'd get out there and play some ball, yeah. That was before, you're talking about the grass burrs, there was what you call bull nettles, and we'd get out there and pull up a big, each of us would pick up a stalk of it, and then we'd have war with them. We'd fight each other with them bull nettles. You know if you just hit you somewhere, it stings! (chuckle) But we did, yeah, we'd have a little battle with bull nettles.

Ken: Did they, you know, play music out there. Did they do that do that back in the old days, did they have dances and stuff?

Albert: Well, I remember some of that at the church. I used to go to church, you know, right there where the cemetery is there used to be a church.

Ken: Yep

Albert: And I remember a little bit there, yeah. And the first time I ever played any music was at somebody's farm house, and I don't remember who it was. But they had a dance out there. At their house, in the farmhouse. And I got up there and I was singing Hank Williams songs. And I remember I was just scared to death. My first time I've ever been in front of anybody (chuckle). Doing Hank Williams songs.

Ken: I bet, yeah. Did you ever go out to the, you know, did, I guess, did Bull Creek Road come on back in to, what's now 183, but

Albert: It did, yeah, it made a loop, and comes back in to 29 back then at Jollyville

Ken: at Jollyville, exactly

Albert: They called it Jollyville

Ken: And if you keep going out toward Leander, not as far as Leander really, before you get to Cedar Park, there was the old Hilltop Inn. Do you remember it

Albert: Yeah, oh yeah

Ken: Did you ever play there?

Albert: No, no I didn't. I never, uh, I didn't do it. I remember, like I said, playing at that dance at the house, and then we went out to, oh a place right out of Georgetown there, I can't remember that

Ken: Rattlesnake Inn?

Albert: them names get away from me.

Ken: Not the Rattlesnake Inn toward Florence?

Albert: (calling out to his wife) What was that little town where Kenneth lived?

Ken: Walberg

Albert: Walberg.

Ken: That German place

Albert: yeah, that's it. There was a little beer joint out there. And we'd go out there and play, me and couple other guys.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: I used to tell people that, of course, I didn't drink, in fact I wasn't really old enough to, but, I said "man, if you like to drink, what you need to do is learn to play and sing a little" because we were sitting at the bar and people would buy us drinks. So they just piled up behind me there (chuckle) bottle after bottle because I didn't drink 'em. I said "man, if you like to drink that'd be the thing to do, because you get free beer." (chuckle)

Ken: (chuckle)

Albert: Yeah, Walberg. Yeah, I've got a friend named Kenneth Buchhorn

Ken: I know Kenneth. I know Kathy Buchhorn really well.

Albert: Do you!

Ken: I do. I know her real well. She was. She and I are good friends.

Albert: Well

Ken: And I've met Kenneth many times.

Albert: oh

Ken: He is a painter

Albert: I got him into painting.

Ken: It's a small world, isn't it!

Albert: I got him into painting

Ken: Kathy retired just two years ago. She worked at Southwestern forever

Albert: I think she's quit

Ken: Retired. She did. She retired.

Albert: Just not too long ago.

Ken: If you say hello to Kenneth ever, tell, she knows me real well. Don't tell her any stories about me (laugh)

Albert: Yeah, Kenneth, he's quite a guy, I like him.

Ken: yeah, he's a nice guy

Albert: And he's is a good painter. Me and him, in fact, he quit the guy he was working for, he quit and went to work contracting, Kenneth did. And so he hit me up one time. He said "man, you need to come and join me", you know "and help me contracting."

Ken: Right

Albert: And I said “well, I really don’t want to.” I said “I’d rather just work for _____ “ ‘cause when I go home I want to forget it, you know, until I get back

Ken: Right

Albert: Well, he bid a job over in Fredricksberg, the Holy Ghost Luthern Church over there, and he told me, he said, “man” he said “I can’t do it unless you come and help me with it”, you know, and I said “well, I don’t know” I said “I guess I can. I’ll go ahead.” So I went to my boss and I said “sir, I need to talk to you this evening.” And he looked at me and he said “are you gona quit?” I said “Yeah!” So Kenneth and I went to work together as partners and I stayed in Fredricksberg till we got that job done and we stayed partners for several years and then I broke off on my own and he was on his own.

Ken: I’ll be darned. Did ya’ll live in Fredricksberg?

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Albert: No. Just went up there and stayed while we was working

Ken: I’ve got to ask you about another name there. This would be a really small world. Did you ever – an old German contractor, in Fredricksberg, names Lorenz Bading? Did you ever hear of him?

Albert: No

Ken: OK. He’s a lot older. He just passed away recently. The first man I interviewed. He was a builder in Fredricksberg.

Albert: The one I knew, a guy named Cline, there was Bill, Cline and Hofmann, I think.

Ken: OK

Albert: Three guys that were, we did the job through them. They were, I don’t know what you call it now, but they wadn’t painters (chuckle) But, they were, we got the job through them there. I think Cline, I know Cline is still in there, I think.

Ken: Huh

Albert: I don’t remember his first name right off, but, Bill, Cline and Hofmann, they were in Austin at the time, but then I think he’s from Fredricksberg. That’s probably how we got the job, through him, for the church there. My grannie and grandmother lived in Fredricksberg for a while. I stayed with them there (chuckle) I stayed with all my kin. I just loved going and staying and then even, when cotton picking come up, well the cedar choppers, they’d go to the cotton patch.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: And they'd come through Austin, there, headed to South Texas, and I'd go with them. And my Mom and Dad let me go. I don't know why. But I'd go with 'em – to South Texas, and then we'd work our way back, all the way back to West Texas, you know.

Ken: Really!

Albert: Picking cotton.

Ken: who were some of the families that you went with?

Albert: Well, there was the Shannons, there was, of course, my grannie and grandpa, Earl and Lillie Shannon, and then Uncle Andrew Shannon, and there was a Jim, I think there was a Jim Shannon, also. And we all kind-of worked together.

Ken: Huh! Because I have, I've talked to folks. Who was it that was telling me? I think it was John T. Boatright that was saying "oh, man, I would never pick cotton."

Albert: (chuckle)

Ken: He said "I'd much rather cut cedar than pick cotton."

Albert: Yeah.

Ken: So, it always surprised... 'cause cedar, sounds like you could make more money – you could be in the shade, maybe hot...but, you know

Albert: Yeah, you were right out in the sun with cotton picking

Ken: I know it

Albert: But they paid two dollars a hundred. You picked a hundred pounds, you got two dollars. I made a little money. Oh, I loved it, I loved making a little money (chuckle)

Ken: You couldn't get more than about four hundred pounds

Albert: Oh, no, I couldn't pick that many, maybe two hundred

Ken: You'd be a really good picker if you picked four hundred. That would only be eight bucks

Albert: Yeah

Ken: Whereas, a good cedar chopper might be able to make twenty, fifteen-to-twenty, right?

Albert: Yes, I guess so

Ken: But I guess the difference is you've got to find good cedar

Albert: Probably so

Ken: Was that getting scarce, was that why people went out

Albert: It is now

Ken: It is now

Albert: Yeah, the cedar with the posts, you see, a lot of this little old cedar, kind-of like that tree right out there, but it don't have, really have any posts in it.

Ken: Doesn't have any heart in it, does it?

Albert: You're right, yeah.

Ken: Could you tell by looking at it? From the outside – that it doesn't have any heart?

Albert: Yeah, I can when I go by and see it, if it don't have any posts

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: Yeah, I can tell the difference, and most, very little of it, that I can see, has cedar posts in it.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: I see a lot of cedar, but it's just a cedar bush. Like maybe I don't know what they call 'em

Ken: Right, right

Albert: I don't know if it's the same thing as the old cedar trees, or what.

Ken: I know that I cut it on my place and, thinking I'm going to have posts for the future, and I'll go back in a couple, few years, and it's rotted. And yet, the old cedar fence that I have was probably put in about, by Mr. Whitt, I don't know if you know the Whitts, the Manords, and all them. They lived up there.

Albert: Oh, yeah, yeah

Ken: But that's where we lived, and those old posts were put in in the fifties, probably, the forties. They're still

Albert: They did, the old cedar posts, yeah, they would last.

Ken: I know it.

Albert: And used to, that's all it was, was cedar posts. Today you hardly ever see a cedar post in a fence. It's iron, iron stakes

Ken: Right. Right.

Albert: But it used to be just, if there was a fence, it was cedar posts.

Ken: Well that's, I think, part of the interesting thing about this, you know, is that this post fenced the West, back in the forties and fifties and stuff. You see 'em in Colorado and Wyoming and New Mexico. You see cedar posts from the Hill Country. That's pretty cool. I've talked to people – you probably know Dick Turner, had a yard there in Bertram, or something

Albert: Sounds familiar, yeah

Ken: I talked to people who have hauled. Did you ever hear of any Ratliffs?

Albert: The Ratliffs?

Ken: The Ratliffs, yeah. Simon Ratliff lives in Burnet. They would haul it up to Wyoming

Albert: Oh, long haul it.

Ken: Long haul it.

Albert: Yeah, they'd gather it up here and carry it somewhere else. Because they could get more money for it too.

Ken: Yeah, sure

Albert: Carrying it off somewhere, long hauling it. Yeah, a lot of 'em did that. I remember long haulers (chuckle)

Ken: Let me ask you about...you mentioned moonshine. You didn't drink

Albert: No

Ken: But some folks, like I was talking to Don, Don's dad, uh, he's a moonshiner and Don called him The King of Sixth Street.

Albert: Sixth Street was big, yeah, I remember that.

Ken: Yeah. But, so, it seemed like he probably drank too much. Was there just a big dichotomy between people who drank and people who didn't drink?

Albert: I'm not sure because I don't remember my dad ever drinking

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: But, uh, yeah. Now, my Uncles did. I know the Shannons did, for sure. I'm not too sure about the Boatrights (chuckle)

Ken: Yeah

Albert: My Uncle Raymond, him and one of his cousins, Forest Shannon, they'd go down on Sixth Street and they'd drink and fight – oh, they loved to fight! (chuckle)

Ken: Huh

Albert: They'd get to drinking and they'd fight. Anybody that come upon them

Ken: I don't get that. I mean, it does seem like there were some folks that just loved to fight back then.

Albert: And this uncle of mine, Raymond, he lived out there at Leakey and Camp Wood, and, wouldn't nobody mess with him ,boy. Everybody was scared of him except there was one Texas Ranger out there, and I can't remember his name, right off. But, when they called this Texas Ranger, (snaps fingers) Raymond would snap out of it just like that. He wouldn't mess with that Texas Ranger (chuckle). But anybody else, everybody else was scared of him.

Ken: Huh

Albert: But not that Ranger.

Ken: Was he pretty aggressive? When people would insult him or something, he'd just

Albert: Probably so, when he, but I think it was the drinking that brought it on.

Ken: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

Albert: It seemed to me like when he was sober he'd give you the shirt off his back

Ken: Uh-huh, uh-huh

Albert: He was just generally kind, but when he got to drinking, boy that was, a whole different thing (chuckle)

Ken: Was there any places for kind-of rowdy drinking like the old Hilltop Inn?

Albert: Probably so, yeah

Ken: I heard about a place called Hooper's Switch. Do you know where that is?

Albert: No

Ken: It's where the railroad, up, it's up there by Allandale, north of Austin. Somewhere in that area there. I don't think it's there anymore, but there was a joint there that fights took place

Albert: I'm sure, then of course Sixth Street was famous.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: East Sixth Street, that is, was famous for the beer joints. That's where everybody went

Ken: I think, maybe, South Congress has quite a few too.

Albert: It did have, yeah, spaced out, but Sixth Street, from Sixth down to East Avenue and around, from Congress: Boy, that was the beer joints

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: That was the whole thing, down through there. Me and my friends would, we used to shine shoes down there.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: And we'd get, I think we'd get ten cents or something for shining somebody's shoes. That was when they'd pay us, though. We'd shine their shoes and they wouldn't pay us

Ken: Oh, my goodness

Albert: We was just kids

Ken: yeah

Albert: Yes, East Sixth Street, that was ... In fact, that's where everybody went, I think, when we had kinfolks that come into town, they'd go to East Sixth Street, down there, that's the place. They didn't care about going anywheres else but East Sixth Street was, was the place

Ken: That's....you lived there, practically, didn't you. You just took

Albert: Yeah, 19th street wadn't too far away it is right down there. We'd walk into town sometimes. Sometimes we'd ride the bus, because as kids it was a ride a nickel. You could ride the bus for a nickel. Then the old Cactus Theatre down there

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: That's where we'd go first of all, and if you was under twelve, you could get in there for a nickel, I think. (chuckle) So my Dad would give, me and my sister would go down there, he'd give us thirty cents apiece.

Ken: Oh!

Albert: And we could go and spend the whole day on thirty cents apiece!

Ken: Isn't that great!

Albert: Maybe seeing two movies, go up to the Ritz

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: The Cactus, then The Ritz, maybe on up to _____, the Queen

Ken: Uh-uh, the Paramount

Albert: The Paramount, and The State

Ken: The State, right, yeah. Woolworths was right across the street

Albert: Yeah, I remember Woolworths very well, right on 6th and Congress.

Ken: Yeah, remember Petmecky's ? My father went there all the time, it was a gun store, or sporting goods, you know, deer hunters. Petmecky's was right there too

Albert: Yeah. Of course, I can tell a story about it now. My best friend, one of 'em, we'd go in there to Woolworth, and they had a little bar in there, you could get you a soda water, or whatever. And me and him and another friend of mine, we'd go in there, when we would come out, and he'd just be loaded down with stuff. Every pocket he had would be full, and he was stealing it!

Ken: Oh my god.

Albert: (chuckle) He passed away here a few years ago, but he, and he, he had a real fine mother, that anything he wanted she got for him, you know. But he was just, he loved to steal.

Ken: Uh-huh

Albert: I mean what they call 'em "cleptomaniac" I guess, I don't know, but wherever we went if there was something he could get he would just get it and put it into his pocket!

Ken: Huh

Albert: He was my best friend, really, one of 'em. I had two. Him and my other friend Bill Allen, and Sonny, they called him Sonny, his real name was James Hersty Hummond III. But he lived a lot of times with his grandparents, right across the street from us, and their last name was Shadownens, and everybody called him Sonny, so most everybody thought his name was Sonny Shadownens (chuckle) I liked him. We got along good. But, he would steal. I don't know why, but, he would steal. In fact, he would, when I was a painter and had a guy that was working with me, and he would be working somebody's house, and he'd find something, maybe out in the back yard, you know, and he'd get it, you know, and take it. And I said "man", I said "you're making yourself a thief for a quarter. That probably ain't worth a quarter, but you're just taking it so you're a thief." (chuckle) I said "I ain't going to make myself a thief for a quarter, you know. Of course, then there was something I told him too. I said "now, if you find a million dollars, I might go in with you." (chuckle). I was joking with him, you know. I don't remember his name exactly, but, he would find some little old something and he'd get it (chuckle) 'cause we worked at people's house all the time, where they lived.

Ken: Yeah. I'm trying to think of some of the people that married, did ya'll know a Young, wasn't there somebody in Bull Creek, one of the Boatrights married a Young?

Albert: Well, it's possible. I know some Youngs, but I don't know if, I don't remember back that far

Ken: Uh-huh. That's a pretty common name, but I've written it down. Let me see what I've got here. Let me get my glasses. John Sparlin Young. He'd be older than you. He was born in 1891. But, uh, he was, you know Lee Boatright?

Albert: yeah

Ken: That's what John T. --- Leneerst, or something

Albert: My grandpa's name was Leneerst, something like that

Ken: Uh-huh, yeah

Albert: That's where the Lees come in.

Ken: Right, he married a Williams, Annie Williams.

Albert: yeah, ok

Ken: Francis Annie Williams, right?

Albert: I think that was my grandma.

Ken: That was your grandfather, right. They had Dick and he had J.T. and Jim, and stuff like that, and then this, their sister was Lucy Francis Boatright. She married this John Sparlin Young. Have you not heard of him?

Albert: No

Ken: OK. Because the Youngs were, they were a Bee Cave – in that area, you know, the Youngs, they weren't a big family, but they connected everybody, they married a bunch of other...the Tuckers, and one of those names, the Teagues, the Pierces

Albert: There was the Teagues

Ken: Some of them were pretty rough. I'm getting the impression that the Bee Cave bunch was a tough, was rougher than the Bull Creek bunch. Some of the Teagues were called the fighting Teagues. Did you ever hear of them?

Albert: That sounds familiar, yeah

Ken: Here's a Teague...and the Youngs were, well, talk about moonshining, did you ever hear of Ol, there was Ol Young, then he had a son that was a moonshiner and they had a still right across Lake Austin where about Mt Bonnell. I found a story in the Austin paper where that still got busted by the revenuers and he had left

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this Mexican in charge of watching the still and given him a pistol. When the came over to bust the still this Mexican shot and killed this revenuer. Have you ever heard that story?

Albert: No, I don't believe so.

Ken: So, that was a pretty big, front page of the Austin paper, you know, he went to Levenworth for it. Every one of those Youngs was pretty bad...did something pretty bad. Here is an Ollie Boatright, she is the daughter of, I guess it's Alexander Evans Boatright.

Albert: Oh, Elic, Uncle Elic we called him

Ken: Elic, E L

Albert: Yeah, we called him Uncle Elic

Ken: Uh-huh. And he married Mae Teague

Albert: Teague, yeah, OK

Ken: So that's, I think it's real interesting how just a few families kind-of dominated the business, it seems like, and even went out west to Leakey, and stuff

Albert: Well, the were, you know, they were out in the cedar breaks and things, so they were out where they could do that. And maybe not get caught, you know

Ken: I was thinking of the cedar business – dominated the cedar business and the, maybe and the moonshining too, but surely the cedar business, moved out to, you know, came out to Liberty Hill, Leander, then moved, moved on out to Burnet and Leakey, and Camp Wood

Albert: Yeah, down in there

Ken: So they just followed it

Albert: Yeah

Ken: It kind-of surprises me that more people didn't do something like you did. You know, so many of 'em seemed to stick to that cedar. Why do you think that is?

Albert: Oh, I'm not sure other than, other than they just live out there in the cedar. There's Rusty

Ken: Well, you're a big boy (talking to the dog)

Albert: (chuckle) a big boy

Ken: You're a pretty thing. How old is he?

Albert: About ten years old, I think.....

Ken: You've got a bunch of dogs.

Albert: Yeah, we've got the three little ones and then the cats

Ken: Well, that's good.

Albert: Yeah, you know, especially that moonshining, way back in them days, in the thirtys, I guess, and on, that's when they outlawed liquor, didn't they, of all kinds.

Ken: Yeah

Albert: probably, and so

Ken: Prohibition

Albert: So they were able to go out there and make a living. That's what a lot of that come up to, was making a living.

(starts talking about the dogs, not transcribed)