

Bertling 1 (15:00) 10 Aug 2012

Ken: Is it B E R T L I N G?

Bertling: Yes

Ken: OK. And, uh, do you mind me asking how old you are?

Bertling: Seventy-six this month.

Ken: All right.

Bertling: So I was a kid when I was working around those cedar yards.

Ken: Did you dad have a yard, or just

Bertling: no

Ken: Paul?

Bertling: no, no, Daddy had a, Daddy had a truck – a semi

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: And, uh, he bought, bought posts at all these yards, depending on if they had what he was looking for.

Ken: Um-hum

Bertling: And then he'd haul it to Nebraska, or South Dakota, or Wyoming, or somewhere up in there.

Ken: Far away, huh?

Bertling: Yeah, Yeah.

Ken: He didn't make any short, short-haul trips?

Bertling: No, not with the cedar. You couldn't, you couldn't sell it 'round here close and make any money. He had to go far to make any money off of it. You know, people really preferred those posts because they were better than creosoted posts.

Ken: Yeah

Bertling: You know, you can take cedar and put it in wet ground and you can't the other types of post. But it'll survive in a, kind-of a, swampy land.

Ken: Now, where was this that you grew up?

Bertling: Marble Falls

Ken: Marble Falls.

Bertling: Yeah, we went to high school in Marble Falls. Uh, let's see. We lived there from, we played there about '47, '48, somewhere in there. I'd have to say that was home.

Ken: How old were you then?

Bertling: I was, when we moved there? twelve or thirteen.

Ken: So you were working age then, weren't you?

Bertling: Yeah. Well, well I had a driver's license when I was fourteen (laugh)

Ken: Uh-huh. Yeah, so you were loading these posts for your father?

Bertling: That was my job. I loaded the posts. I only went with him one time that I can recall. We went to Broken Bow, Nebraska.

Ken: Really?

Bertling: But, uh, I always loaded 'em. I stacked 'em on the truck.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: And, you know, you had to make 'em look good on the outside. We put all the straightest posts on the outside.

Ken: Oh (laugh)

Bertling: But, no, I always loaded the truck.

Ken: How many posts, uh, how would you stack 'em?

Bertling: Uh, well the length of the post, then you go up, you know, up for about, oh five or six feet. But in between there you'd put a rope across the stantions, you know, to hold it together.

Ken: Every once in a while you'd put a rope about?

Bertling: Yeah, yeah

Ken: every so, so many posts up?

Bertling: Yeah, 'bout every three feet

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: about two ropes.

Ken: How many posts do you think you could get on a truck?

Bertling: Oh, five hundred.

Ken: Five hundred!

Bertling: Five hundred posts. I could get, uh, I could get from nearly that on my little trailer out here.

Ken: Have you loaded posts here on your trailer?

Bertling: I have hauled posts. I hauled 'em for a friend of mine down in Hallettsville. You don't find many yards now. I only know of one and I'm sure there's others. But there's only the one in, uh, in Lampasas.

Ken: Right. I know that fella there, Doug Lavender. Uh, so why is your friend using cedar instead of using the t-posts now?

Bertling: Uh, he said the cows could hunch up and push them T-posts over. And down there that's real soft, uh, soft dirt, uh, mud, black dirt.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: And he says they push it over. And he's wanting to put them posts three feet in the ground.

Ken: I see. So he's getting how long – how long a post is he getting?

Bertling: Seven foot.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: Seven foot posts. I took him some. He wanted some corner posts.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: And, uh, he, oh he had to have ten inch tops, he thought. But the bottom's that big around (laugh). They won't fit in a twelve inch hole I said (laugh). I took him up twenty five of them (laugh).

Ken: (laugh together). Those posts are expensive, aren't they?

Bertling: Yes they are. Those big ones like I'm talking about are seventeen dollars apiece. But the others, the others are about four dollars apiece. I don't know how they're making any money off of that. You know, when, uh, when I was a kid, they, you'd cut 'em all with an axe.

Ken: Yes

Bertling: And, um, you know, some of those guys could, uh, make a pretty good living off of cedar if they'd work.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: But they wouldn't work, you know

Ken: They wouldn't work?

Bertling: No, they worked just enough to get, to get a few dollars, to get a few beers and stuff, and they, they just never really worked. If a guy really worked he could make good money. Now, and I can't tell that posts have gone up that much in fifty years. Um, I don't remember how much they were, but, uh, now they use a chainsaw, you know. But I still think a man that really works can make a pretty good living.

Ken: I wonder how many posts, uh, they could cut with an axe back then in the fifties?

Bertling: Don't know. Don't know. They'd probably make twenty dollars a day,

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: something like that. So you'd cut ten or fifteen posts and not really work at it.

Ken: They were, some of those cedar cutters, I've interviewed some of them, were pretty, pretty good, I understand.

Bertling: Yep

Ken: They really knew what they were doing.

Bertling: Some of 'em were good. And I'll tell you, they had that axe so sharp that it was sharp as a knife.

Ken: Yeah

Bertling: Uh, I cut cedar one day, helped a guy. And the next day he was supposed to give part of the money. He never did. He was a one armed, uh, guy.

Ken: A one armed cedar chopper?

Bertling: A one armed cedar chopper. And he took my axe and ground it all down and, and made it all smooth, and he asked me to go with him, help him. We'd split the money (laugh) but I never got a dime.

Ken: (laugh together)

Bertling: He kept it all (laugh).

Ken: Well, how many cedar yards were there in Marble Falls back then?

Bertling: Well, somebody tell me there was four. I remember two, for sure. Two big ones that we did business at. One of 'em was right there where the Pizza Hut is now.

Ken: Um-hum

Bertling: And that road was not there, 1431 was not there. And there was another big yard out there on the hill – going out of town

Ken: yes

Bertling: you know, out there on the hill. But somebody said there was four, but those were the two big yards in Marble Falls. Two big yards in Cedar Park. Huge yards.

Ken: Yes

Bertling: We used to haul out of those too.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: One of 'em was right there on the corner, uh, where Winkley's

Ken: Yes

Bertling: Was. That was one of the yards. And the other one's down there where the, um, that rental place is.

Ken: Yes. I remember that yard.

Bertling: I remember those two yards.

Ken: Um-hum

Bertling: I hauled out of both of 'em – and there may have been more. There may have been one in George- in, in Jonestown, I don't know. Maybe one over there now.

Ken: I don't think there's any more. I bought cedar in Lampasas too, back before I started

Bertling: Yeah

Ken: this project. I'd, you know, buy cedar occasionally and

Bertling: Yeah

Ken: I couldn't, uh, that was the closest place.

Bertling: He's got two yards. He's got one at Meridian

Ken: Yes

Bertling: And like I said the posts seemed awful reasonable to me. I, uh

Ken: Yeah, I actually have his price list here.

Bertling: Yeah, I do too. I've got his price list

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: you know, uh, I hauled eight foot posts down to my friend, uh, eight foot fours, which are, which were big straight posts. Give four dollars and something for 'em, but, I'm gonna buy the cheaper posts this time. I need to take him about three hundred more.

Ken: Um! That's a bunch.

Bertling: About three hundred would be, uh, half a load on that trailer

Ken: Um-hum, um-hum

Bertling: that's what I'm gonna get, yeah.

Ken: So, uh, when you hauled those posts would you go to the yard and buy 'em and load 'em yourself

Bertling: Yeah

Ken: or would they load 'em for you?

Bertling: They handed 'em up.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: Now they load 'em for ya. At Myer's, as far as I know, you don't have to touch a one.

Ken: You were, would you buy it wholesale, then, your Daddy? Was he buying 'em wholesale from the cedar yards, or?

Bertling: That may have been the only price they had.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: You know, they, I'm sure it was, because most of their sales were in bulk.

Ken: Of course they were.

Bertling: So, I'm ... Myers' only got one price.

Ken: Yes

Bertling: Whether you buy one or a hundred.

Ken: Yes

Bertling: makes no difference. And I, I've got an idea that that's the way it was.

Ken: I see. So I'm seeing how this worked now. I talked to a guy named Ronnie Roberts. There was a cedar yard in Oak Hill and he, his grandfather owned the cedar yard. He was blind. And, uh, he was

working out there as a kid and he said he'd take him out of school. He's younger than, younger than, he's my age.

Bertling: Yes

Ken: a little younger than you are.

Bertling: Yeah

Ken: And, uh, he'd take him out of school to load.

Bertling: My Daddy never took me out of school.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: He

Ken: He'd be the one that handed 'em up to you?

Bertling: Yeah. Well it was, the yard had to, had to hand them up.

Ken: Yes. That's what he did all day – is hand those posts up.

Bertling: Yeah

Ken: I bet that's a tiring job.

Bertling: Well, you know, it didn't take that long. You'd think it'd take, uh, you'd think it'd take all day. Well, it didn't take that long

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: stack a truck.

Ken: Do you remember, I mean, I'm trying to get a handle on, say there's four yards – I wonder how many trucks. I mean, when you're in there loading your truck, would there be, do you see anybody else coming to load? Or you

Bertling: Not usually

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: Uh, I would say that probably, this might even be too many, uh, three or four a week.

Ken: Hum

Bertling: Maybe. But there was, we were, would be the only one in the yard.

Ken: So if there's four a week, that right there is two thousand posts.

Bertling: Yeah, yeah. So, I'm sure it wasn't any more than that.

Ken: Yeah. I've heard a really good cedar man could cut a hundred posts a day.

Bertling: I wouldn't be surprised – with an axe.

Ken: With an axe.

Bertling: Yeah

Ken: Yeah

Bertling: I, I believe that's probably true.

Ken: That would be two hundred days per week per yard

Bertling: Yeah

Ken: Is my math right? I mean two thousand divided by a hundred – no! Twenty. Twenty days per week per yard of work. So that, that'd keep, uh, three men busy – each yard, at least, or more.

Bertling: Yeah. Well, like I say most of it was just, uh, go cut a few (laugh) get enough for a beer and quit. And they, they were, you know, they were, uh, very poor. Very poor people.

Ken: Can you tell me a little bit about them. I mean, where they lived and did you go to school with them, and stuff?

Bertling: Yeah. Well, I went to school with one that I know of. Um, like I say, they just lived in little shacks over there by the school, some of 'em.

Ken: Um-hum

Bertling: Uh, that's mostly where they lived. Uh, like I say, the were very poor.

Ken: Yeah. This fella you went to – was it a man you went to, boy you went to school with?

Bertling: Yes

Ken: Do you remember

Bertling: He was eighteen years old in the sixth grade.

Ken: Oh!

Bertling: Yeah. I'm sure he's dead now.

Ken: Yeah

Bertling: His family was involved in the cedar yard. And I talked to Gay this last weekend. Uh, that's who you need to talk to, is Willie Maugham

Ken: Willie

Bertling: Willie Maugham

Ken: OK

Bertling: And I'm sure all, they never owned a yard,

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: But I'm sure he worked in a yard. Uh,

Ken: Ma

Bertling: M A U G H A M

Ken: Does he live in Marble Falls?

Bertling: Yes

Ken: And, you say, he's alive now?

Bertling: Yes.

Ken: Oh, good!

Bertling: Yes.

Ken: So he'd perhaps,

Bertling: I'm sure he could tell you about the names, if he could remember

Ken: He may have owned a yard, or he just worked?

Bertling: I don't think he owned a yard. But I'm pretty sure he worked in a yard.

Ken: He worked in a yard. OK. I will. I'll give him a call.

Bertling: Yeah

Ken: He remembers you?

Bertling: Probably not, but prob, my son-in-law's kin to him.

Ken: Oh, he is?

Bertling: Yeah

Ken: Who should I say he is? To who – as just a reference

Bertling: Tell him James Maugham

Ken: James is your son-in-law?

Bertling: Yes. Of course, ol' Willie is his uncle

Ken: Yes, yes.

Bertling: But a bunch of those Maugham were involved in the cedar business. Some of 'em did choppin' and some of 'em did, uh, work in the yard. I just don't know which

Ken: Um-hum, yeah.

Bertling: Like I say, I was thirteen, fourteen years old (laugh)

Ken: Right. How old were you when you moved away from Marble Falls?

Bertling: Uh, well I didn't move away until I went in the service.

Ken: OK

Bertling: But I, I went into the Army at eighteen.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: I got out before twenty-one. Before, just barely twenty, as a matter of fact, when I got out.

Ken: Were you in Korea?

Bertling: No. I was there in that period. I just went in about two months after the armistice.

Ken: Oh, OK.

Bertling: So I come in in fifty-four

Ken: Yes

Bertling: So I come in under that GI Bill

Ken: Right

Bertling: And I went to school under that GI Bill. Uh, for one year, I think. And, um, I went with DPS and I let all that expire. I couldn't go to school where I was, and dog-gone if they didn't come back and reinstate it for anybody that was in after January the 1st, '55 – for the Cold War. Bill, and I got the GI Bill again. So I, I used it this time. I went to four or five different schools. And, uh, I ended up with a, with a Master's degree at San Marcos. But I had to, I don't know what I was gonna say -

Ken: (laugh) Yeah. So, you know, I'm thinking Marble Falls must have been like Cedar Park, a pretty good center – with three or four yards in it and stuff like that.

Bertling: That's really all there was there. The mountain was not operating.

Ken: I see.

Bertling: Uh, and really that was the industry in Marble Falls.

Ken: So, a lot of the folks that lived in or around Marble Falls were cedar cutters?

Bertling: Yes. Yes. And like I say, they are very low class group of people.

Ken: Yes.

Bertling: Have you ever been around shrimpers?

Ken: Not really.

Bertling: Well, you have to, uh, cedar choppers were kind-of a dirty word.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: Um, because they were so trashy, and

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Ken: Were they rough? Were they, were they

Bertling: Yeah, pretty rough, pretty rough bunch.

Ken: I mean 'cause you're a pretty big man. I, I mean, would you ever, do, get

Bertling: I never had any problem with 'em

Ken: You never had any problems with them. Because I know some of 'em were pretty, pretty rough in Austin. I went to school with

Bertling: Yeah

Ken: with some of them.

Bertling: Yeah

Ken: Did they, when they'd come into town on a Saturday night, would they, uh

Bertling: Uh, yeah, they'd hang around town most of the time. Just work once in a while. Uh, a kin of this guy, and I really haven't got his name, he wasn't, his elevator didn't go to the top floor. But he was

strong as a bull and everybody made fun of him. But when they wanted somebody to do the heavy work they'd get him. Like I say, he wasn't very bright. But he was somehow related to this Maugham bunch

Ken: I see. Would you think that, there is talk about, you know, I mean, some of 'em weren't very bright because of, you know, inbreeding and stuff like that.

Bertling: That too. And that's in the Maughams. Inbreeding.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: And my son-in-law don't like for me to mention that, but there is some inbreeding there.

Ken: Hum.

Bertling: But, my father-in-law said that the Maughams came from England and they were, uh, what you would call country gents. They were very well off. They came and settled in Marble Falls. You know, just a really a high class group of people. And they went to the bottom, you know.

Ken: Isn't that something.

Bertling: Yeah.

Ken: Yeah. Just hearing stories like that

Bertling: Yeah

Ken: I was up in the Panhandle. And a lot of those folks were English gents that became cowboys.

Bertling: Yep!

Ken: You know!

Bertling: Yeah.

Ken: It's just. Yeah, you never know what's gonna happen. But, so, do you recall, did many of them get into high school?

Bertling: No. No. As a matter of fact they, the one I was telling you about of 'em finally quit at the sixth grade.

Ken: Um-hum

Bertling: He wasn't passing then.

Ken: Uh-huh.

Bertling: I know of none of 'em that went to high school.

Ken: I see.

Bertling: I don't know of any others that were in grade school. They just didn't go to school

Ken: Uh-huh. I hear – because what I'm doing is on the cedar industry – and it's on the people – and there's really nothing that's ever been written. There's only a couple little magazine articles. Texas Highways in the '80s and

Bertling: It ought to be very, it ought to be very interesting if you can find somebody to talk to.

Ken: Yes.

Bertling: that was there.

Ken: Yes. Well you know, you were there. And I am

Bertling: But like I said I was a kid and I don't remember, I'm just not remembering what

Ken: I've talked to a few – I've actually talked to a few, a couple of old cedar choppers and one guy who ran a yard in Burnet and Bertram, named Dick Turner. But the one, the one guy I knew who cut cedar, I've heard these stories about not working, and things like that. But this guy raised his family with an axe. And he was a very religious man and, uh, I don't think he drinks.

Bertling: Absolutely. If they wanted to they could make a living. But, of course

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: that's hard work.

Ken: Yes, it's very hard work.

Bertling: You know, a very very hard work. You take, you swing an axe half a day and it takes starch out of you.

Ken: Yes. I wonder if they were doing it this time of year?

Bertling: Well, yeah, but they, they'd start about daylight.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: You know, and probably quit by, quit before noon

Ken: Right

Bertling: but probably quit ten-thirty, eleven o'clock

Ken: right

Bertling: And they could still make a living at it if they would do that

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: And then they may go back, you know, just, uh, before dusk. You've got a couple of hours that, that's not too bad.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: But like I say.

Ken: Did you ever see any of, hear of any women doing the work to?

Bertling: No. No.

Ken: Yeah, because I think that

Bertling: They had a hard life too, but it wasn't, I never knew of any that cut cedar. Now, it's possible that they could've worked in the yard.

Ken: Um-hum. Uh, in Marble Falls, if they were living there, are they living out in the hills, outside of Marble Falls?

Bertling: No, they were living in Marble Falls, but it was, I, I suspect a bunch of old houses have been torn down.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: You know where the school is?

Ken: Which school is that?

Bertling: It used to be the high school.

Ken: The high school out there on the hill?

Bertling: Wait a minute. (Gets map)

Alright, here is 1431.

Ken: OK

Bertling: Down here used to be the high school.

Ken: Where is, oh, 283, 281? Over here?

Bertling: Yeah, 281 is way back in here

Ken: Yeah, yeah, yeah, OK

Bertling: There's the school right here.

Ken: Right, um-hum, right

Bertling: And, in fact, the football field was there

Ken: This is up on the hill, isn't it?

Bertling: No.

Ken: On which side are we on? Are we coming in from Smithwick? Or from the

Bertling: You come in from 281.

Ken: OK

Bertling: And down here, towards the mountain

Ken: And Burnet is up here?

Bertling: Uh, Burnet is up here.

Ken: OK. So I'm coming from Burnet

Bertling: You'd take 1431

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: Come down here, and here's the school.

Ken: OK

Bertling: This used to be the high school.

Ken: Granite Mountain, is that out here too?

Bertling: Yeah

Ken: OK. Got ya. Got ya.

Bertling: Granite Mountain is the mountain out here.

Ken: All right, got ya.

Bertling: There's an old historical building, uh, uh, granite, big granite building

Ken: OK

Bertling: That was the grade school when I went, when I went to Marble Falls. I went to school in this building. But of course it's a big complex now. There's probably a middle school, or a grade school, or something else (laugh) but this was the high school. OK. There's a road that runs right by it and there's a – this was not there – 1431 was not there

Ken: Um-hum

Bertling: Um, the road kind-of curved around

Ken: Um-hum

Bertling: like this, and crossed the creek, now, uh, over in here some of those cedar choppers lived. And over, over in here, north of the creek.

Ken: Uh-huh. I see.

Bertling: And, uh, but it maybe some of those old houses are still there.

Ken: OK

Bertling: Unless the city's tore 'em down

Ken: So this little road – is it still there?

Bertling: The road's still there, yeah

Ken: Uh-huh.

Bertling: Yeah.

Ken: I wonder what its name is, do you know?

Bertling: Huh?

Ken: You don't know if it's --- do you remember its name?

Bertling: No.

Ken: I don't --- OK

Bertling: I used to. I, I lived over here

Ken: Um-hum

Bertling: We lived in a big 'ole, big 'ole, uh, colonial house that was built in 1900 I think. They moved it here very recently. But anyway, this was not here. There was some old houses all back over here around the school. And then there was this, there was a railroad track, I can't tell you right where it was.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: And there was some, uh, old houses in there.

Ken: Just, just shacks?

Bertling: Yeah, shacks.

Ken: probably dirt floors? Or,

Bertling: I wouldn't know. But they holes, you know, let the wind through.

Ken: Uh-huh, and, uh, yeah, probably wouldn't – I wouldn't think they'd have water then. I wonder where they'd get their water from?

Bertling: I don't know.

Ken: You know, a lot of them in Austin would live on, live on creeks because that's where they got their water from. And then, uh, I'm always thinking that drought in the '50s must have been hard. Uh, you know, on people who didn't have well, didn't have a well, or had a shallow well.

Bertling: You know those wells were pretty shallow in Marble Falls

Ken: Yeah. Oh, are they?

Bertling: Oh yeah. They're not anything like what we got out here.

Ken: I see, OK.

Bertling: oh, a hundred feet. And, and you got water.

Ken: Is that still the case?

Bertling: Yeah.

Ken: I'll be darned.

Bertling: Yeah. Most of the places out there you hit granite. There is granite all over that country.

Ken: Yes. Yeah. So I wonder if they, uh, what happened to them? I mean, the kids, if they didn't have any education, you know, and they're your age and my age, what are you gonna do?

Bertling: They didn't live that long. They didn't live that long. They died very young.

Ken: Huh. Because they were living so hard?

Bertling: Uh, I'm guessing that's right.

Ken: Um!

Bertling: Because of the way they lived. But they didn't live to be our age, I assure you.

Ken: Hum. Isn't that something.

Bertling: Yeah.

Ken: yeah. It's one of them, this one man I talked to, well he, you know, he worked all his life in, like I said, didn't drink or anything, and

Bertling: Yeah.

Ken: He's in his eighties.

Bertling: Yeah. You won't find many in the industry that lived that long

Ken: Yeah.

Bertling: Because it was very, it was a very hard life.

Ken: Well, you were a law man. So do you, do you think they were, were they, were they law breakers? I mean, were they

Bertling: Uh, not really. No. They didn't have any trouble out of 'em. Um, they were some, the town drunk was probably a cedar chopper.

Ken: Um-hum

Bertling: And there was probably more than one town drunk.

Ken: Um-hum

Bertling: Because they'd go out and get just enough to get drunk. Have you ever seen anybody drunk on vanilla extract?

Ken: No. I can't imagine.

Bertling: Well now, you talk about a sloppy, nasty drunk. Because of the alcohol content in it.

Ken: That sounds disgusting (laugh)

Bertling: It is kind-of disgusting, (laugh together), but see, Marble Falls was dry.

Ken: Oh, uh-huh

Bertling: And, the only, the only booze was 'across county line to the south. Burnet County is all dry.

Ken: Because of all the Germans in the

Bertling: Yeah

Ken: Yeah

Bertling: Yeah, but you had to go, you had to go to, um, uh,

Ken: Uh

Bertling: It's not Blanco County, is it?

Ken: It might be. Johnson City would be

Bertling: It was between Johnson City and Marble Falls. It was about seven or eight miles out of Marble Falls to the beer joints.

Ken: Oh, I remember. There's still some up there now!

Bertling: Yes. Yes. They're not nearly as active as they were

Ken: no. no.

Bertling: but, there were a whole string of 'em there in Round Mountain.

Ken: Yes

Bertling: That's where they had to go to get, to get any kind of booze.

Ken: Huh

Bertling: As a matter of fact I think from there all the way north to Oklahoma was dry.

Ken: I'll bet

Bertling: And some of it still is.

Ken: Oh, yes.

Bertling: Marble Falls is, I'm not sure what, what they are now. I think they're semi-dry.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: I don't think they have a package store. I don't know that. But, uh, you can buy

Ken: beer. I know you can buy beer in a convenience store. Huh

Bertling: Yeah.

Ken: Well, you know back in the, the, they used to brew back in, make home brew back in the '30s.

Bertling: Yeah

Ken: in Austin.

Bertling: my neighbor makes home brew.

Ken: (laugh)

Bertling: I never tried it. But he, he makes it. He's got ____.

Ken: They used to, Cactus Pryor, apparently, his father had a – do you remember him?

Bertling: I remember Cactus Pryor. Yeah.

Ken: His father, I believe, had a bar in Austin back in the '30s all of Austin would get their moonshine from the hills.

Bertling: Yeah (laugh)

Ken: There was, old Shoal Creek and all that. Someone, I wonder if that was the case in Marble Falls, too?

Bertling: Well, you know, I'm too young to know if they had

Ken: Yeah

Bertling: any stills or anything like that. I don't recall any

Ken: Yeah

Bertling: Um, they may not have been smart enough to operate a still.

Ken: (laugh)

Bertling: I'm serious!

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: You know, they were a very backward, the cedar choppers were a very backward group of people. I suspect they're all dead now, nearly.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: Uh, uh, Willie's still alive. And I'm not positive that Willie was involved.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: But I think he was.

Ken: Uh-huh. Isn't that something. You wonder why they didn't just do something else, you know.

Bertling: They didn't want to work at all. Like I say, I'd compare 'em to shrimpers.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: And the reason is the shrimpers go out and stay on those boats. They may stay out ten days, two weeks. Come in, they get paid, then they get drunk and stay drunk until they go back out again. And they get in fights and all kinds of, all kinds of stuff. They just, uh, they're that type, like the cedar chopper.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: You know, they really don't want to work. But they have to for that, but they spend all their money on, on, uh, booze.

Ken: I bet the wives didn't like it too much

Bertling: They didn't have any wives. That group didn't.

Ken: Oh, OK. They were just men, huh?

Bertling: Yeah. Just men with nothing else to do. The shrimpers.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: And I feel for sure there was a lot of those in the cedar business too.

Ken: Yeah, yeah

Bertling: But there were some of them married.

Ken: Uh-huh

Bertling: The married ones were, of course, more stable than the, than the single ones.

Ken: Yeah. Yeah

Bertling: But I just wonder what they could do now with a chainsaw. That, they're working in this kind of weather (it was very hot). But I bet you that they're doing it early in the morning and late in the evening.

Ken: Um-hum

Bertling: I bet you they can really turn out the posts.

Ken: I bet you they can.

Bertling: With a chainsaw.

Ken: I think the wood is just not as good as it used to be. I think that's part of the problem.

Bertling: yeah

Ken: I've been told that, you know, about the wood, the quality of the wood is not the heart wood it used to be.

Bertling: Except up, up there in Lampasas. In Lampasas there, they're cuttin' in some virgin territory.

Ken: Oh

Bertling: And they've really got some good posts down there. And they're still getting a lot of good posts.

Ken: With a lot of red heart?

Bertling: Oh, yeah. A lot of heart, yeah.

Ken: That's cool.

Bertling: yeah

Ken: That's good.

Bertling: You know, there's a lot of difference between the, the Hill Country cedar and the Bastrop cedar.

Ken: Oh, I know.

Bertling: Bastrop cedar will rot before you get it in the ground (laugh).

Ken: Well even the Hill Country cedar is not as good – this second growth stuff. I've got some stuff that I cut and beautiful big posts as long as this table here

Bertling: Yeah

Ken: and I thought "Oh, this is gonna be my corner posts " and I stacked 'em up real nice and they rotted

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Bertling: They say, though, that that's second and third growth.

Ken: That's right

Bertling: But what they're cutting up there, they're still cutting up there at, out at Lampasas somewhere. They got into some big, you know, they're getting some big heavy timber up there.

Ken: Hum. Hum. Amazing

Bertling: And Lampasas, up there at Meyers, they've even, they even sell the lumber. Cedar lumber.

Ken: Let me show you some pictures of trucks. I want to ...

End