

Lorenz Bading – May 16, 2012, at his house on farm east of New Braunfels

Tape 1 (15:00)

Lorenz: at that time for our farm use fence posts

Ken: Uh, you cut your own cedar

Lorenz: Um-hum. At that time there was, there were no, there were no cedar people at the time. I mean, it was not, you couldn't go to a cedar yard and buy

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: You have to remember this is about eighty years ago.

Ken: So this would be in 19

Lorenz: In about the 1920s.

Ken: 20s.

Lorenz: I was born in 15, probably it was in the late 20s.

Ken: Yes, and, and, you went there and cut cedar posts with your, with your father.

Lorenz: Yeah, we would go up there, and, I'll tell ya (laugh) I think the property owners appreciated our doing this. Get rid of the pests, you know.

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: And then, in later years, and I mentioned 1940s to 1960, uh, um, things like vehicles, trucks and chainsaws and stuff came in, into use, you know. And, uh, the cutting of cedar for fence posts and fence stays – those are the little posts in between, you know that stuff

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: Uh, I said they became big business, uh, setting up places of business where you could buy those across, uh, across the whole state

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: You know, you could go almost any, any county and go twenty, thirty, forty miles and you'd find a cedar yard.

Ken: I see

Lorenz: But they're still there to a great extent.

Ken: Is there one near here?

Lorenz: Yeah. Yeah, there's one right around, uh, highway 46 between Seguin and New Braunfels

Ken: OK

Lorenz: There's one there.

Ken: Even now? Is it still there?

Lorenz: Oh yeah. I have on the ___ here. I have one that you might want to, want to, uh, there's two of 'em in the state that advertise, uh, in state farm magazines.

Ken: I see.

Lorenz: And I figured somebody's good enough to advertise it as statewide in a farm magazine they've got something on the, on the stick.

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: And there's two of 'em. One of 'em is in, uh, Lampasas and, which is

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: west of here

Ken: I know that, I know that yard

Lorenz: And, you know, that yard and there's another one, they have, uh, one in Meridian, you might know of that yard. They have a branch in Meridian which is in East Texas

Ken: OK

Lorenz: Way I knew, Meridian, they used to have a military unit in my, in our Division in World War II. I think they had a military band and 144th Infantry or something.

Ken: _____

Lorenz: Uh, OK. We talked about it became big business in setting up uh places of business throughout the state. Here's the thing – workers engaged in harvesting cedar were and still are whites of low income, low education, and generally referred to as “cedar choppers”

Ken: Right

Lorenz: This is what I found out, and then as more people of Hispanic descent migrated to the United States, I say they became, uh, engaged in harvesting cedar, mainly for income, and later creating businesses of their own. And I know that today the people of Spanish descent, to a great extent work as crews to build farm and ranch fences using a combination of materials. And I say they are very proficient at this. I have just, the last several years, put about, oh, most, some of the fences on the inside and nearly all the fences on the outside of this property, and, on, between our neighbors over

there, and I know what it costs. But those people don't work Cheap anymore. But for the most reason they worked for somebody. They, very few times do the Hispanics people are the owners of the company.

Ken: Yeah

Lorenz: They work for somebody, but they're very proficient.

Ken: So you changed your fences up just recently?

Lorenz: Yeah, this, this went right around here. Don't get me started on that because that – it hits your pocket.

Ken: Oh, I know.

Lorenz: pretty hard

Ken: I've done the same thing. But tell me, did you have a cedar post fence there ever since you and your father put it up in the 19, uh, twenties, or whenever that was?

Lorenz: I bought, I bought this place in '56 from my, I think 1956 from my Aunt. My Uncle had passed away.

Ken: Uh-huh

Lorenz: And, uh, there were fences on it at that time. And shortly after that I, I replaced most of 'em. And a lot of 'em inside were new, were made new, because they were, the, the fields were relocated, you know, that type of thing.

Ken: Right

Lorenz: But, and only last year did I replace the fences - those fences were in there about forty something years. But I, I did a lot of repair on them.

Ken: Sure

Lorenz: But, I, from the mailbox where you drove in

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: to, what is it, as far as it goes on, I guess you came in on Watson there

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: I replaced, uh, last year

Ken: So those cedar post, those cedar fences lasted fifty years?

Lorenz: Yeah. That's right.

Ken: At least.

Lorenz: But, the, there were some steel posts in there because that was about the, initially it was built with all cedar posts.

Ken: Right

Lorenz: But then there was some steel posts in it and, uh, they now you still use, re-use, no all of 'em, but, uh, just some of 'em. But, yes,

Ken: Right. They last a long time though. That's great.

Lorenz: And I made the remark that I, how did I say it, I spent the kid's allowance or their inheritance, I figured (laugh)

Ken: (laugh)

Lorenz: They reminded me that I sure did.

Ken: (laugh)

Lorenz: I said that's neither here or there. Yeah, I go, yeah, let me see where I was here. Then I go into telling – wait a minute – let me see. Oh, I think what of interest might be, I do not recall people of German descent being engaged in any respect, any aspect, of this cedar business. Uh, I mean, other than for their own, except for their personal use.

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: Uh, they, they just, well, they just wouldn't have that. Uh, now I'll have you know here, it says, maybe Mr. Myers, although if it were German he would spell it M e y -, but he spells it Myers. I don't know if Myers, which was of German descent or not.

Ken: You mean the one in Lampasas?

Lorenz: Yeah

Ken: Yeah

Lorenz: He may have been

Ken: I don't know

Lorenz: But anyway, uh, Myers, I think, cedar yard, the owner of it could have been of German descent

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: because of the name. But I don't know. I've never met the man. I have not called him.

Ken: Um

Lorenz: All I know is some people, I've heard some people do business with him and he advertises extensively

Ken: Right

Lorenz: And so he must have a pretty good business going. Uh, and then I said, the use of cedar products. This may interest you. With improved distribution, I say, uh, and transportation of products plus the ingenuity of business owners the manufacture of cedar products became very diversified. And it included, like, charcoal, cedar lumber, mantles for fireplaces, cedar chests, and cedar furniture, among the few. In addition to the posts and the stays and firewood there might have been some others, but I, I was just trying to

Ken: Right. All the things

Lorenz: Trying to think of some of the things that – and I think Myers, to some extent, does most of it.

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: I don't know if anybody else does

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: But, and I haven't researched it. I don't have, I have a computer and stuff, but I'm not on e-Bay and all this kind-of stuff where I can get a hold of it. I says ,to hell with it. At 95 I've learned enough, I'm not gonna quit anyway. I'll tell you what it is – when you start something the next day it changes.

Ken: Yeah

Lorenz: And you can't keep up with it. I can't. So, I just do the best I can with what I've got

Ken: Exactly

Lorenz: Anyway, of interest – I say, 'currently cedar being harvested does not always have the quality and the resultant life of the virgin cedar

Ken: That's right

Lorenz: I find cedar posts on this place that I betcha are a hundred years old

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: And, the, and this is why we replace it. Now I bet every hundred, no maybe every fifty feet on these new fences, I put in big cedar. But, uh, the heart of that cedar is current. It's not the virgin cedar that we used to buy. And those, those fences are not gonna last nothin like thirty, forty, and fifty years.

Ken: Right

Lorenz: They're not gonna do it

Ken: Right

Lorenz: And I know they're not, but what the heck, uh, uh, however, cedar is still a popular source of income, I also said. However with the higher labor costs of equipment and fuel costs and delivery costs have had an increase in the very high increase in the cost of the product. And if you want to build a fence nowadays you better have pretty deep pockets

Ken: I know, that's right. Yes.

Lorenz: Do you want me to go on?

Ken: Oh, yes, this is great. I might come back on some of these things, but this is great. You can read your writing better than I could, and

Lorenz: well, I just, I just, scab and scribble it out. Uh, this is of interest, continued. And considering all of this I think eradication of cedar pastures has become very expensive

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: Uh, I know of friends that are doing it right now. And it's very expensive. And I see numerous instances the environment of people that is state and national have become private law. And they're introducing, they're introducing things to us like the, you've heard of the Golden Cheek warbler

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: And all these birds and stuff like that. As their principle birds are preserved and this preventing removal of the cedar and control of land clearing and cedar infested land. There are some lands that people want to develop and they can't touch them because of some of these migratory

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: whatever they are. And you know that. But, uh, when, it hasn't hit me personally, because I don't have any cedar

Ken: Right

Lorenz: But I, I was in construction most of, for fifty-something years of my life, residential

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: And as a result I know something about this because I got involved personally with it – the environment.

Ken: Right

Lorenz: And they're getting bigger because all the government is growing and as government is growing all of these organizations grow, you know.

Ken: Right

Lorenz: But don't get me started on that.

Ken: OK

Lorenz: Then I say I stated "the manufacture and the availability of posts, like painted creosote and Walnut, uh, brought, uh, and then, uh, plus, here's something else that happened in the meantime. The availability of steel posts and pipe posts

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: You go look at fences now, you'll find there's no more wood in 'em

Ken: Right

Lorenz: And, the availability of, of steel posts and pipe posts had brought considerable competition. But, it's, it's competition to the cedar here, you know. But cedar is still a very viable industry because it has the, you know

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: You've got so many different things going for it now. And then, I end up with giving the names and addresses of the, the two Myers yards. One in South Lampasas, off of 183 in South Lampasas or near there, and the other one is in Meridian. And, I'm sorry to say I haven't got more

Ken: That's great. That's great. Thank you. That's – thank you, for thinking about all of that and thinking it all through. Uh, now I'm gonna go back on some of the things you talked about. So, you said that the cedar yards just mushroomed

Lorenz: Yeah

Ken: And, was that in the '20s or the '30s?

Lorenz: I would think I would say later. I would say in the, uh, mid century. Uh, in the mid century when, when, uh, vehicles, trucks, and uh, mechanical equipment

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: chainsaws and this type of thing, when they, you couldn't buy a chainsaw a hundred years ago.

Ken: No, right, I think the chainsaw was probably in 1960, would be when it is

Lorenz: Right in the mid century, in the mid century that's, that's when I think the, you'd find a cedar yard just about any place. One in almost every county.

Ken: Yes.

Lorenz: And, uh, it's not the case anymore. They

Ken: Right.

Lorenz: They died out.

Ken: So the, um, yeah, I'm trying to place when they really took off, because, uh,

Lorenz: I'd say the '50s and the '60s

Ken: Uh-huh. They were, you know, they were cuttin' it with axes before that though

Lorenz: Oh, yeah.

Tape 2 (15:00)

Ken: Some people call it a Kerrville axe

Lorenz: Yeah

Ken: And so, uh, I'm kind-of interested in when they were starting, when they were still cutting it with the axes. Uh,

Lorenz: Of course we didn't have chainsaws until, oh god, I guess in the 19-

Ken: Yes, I'm thinking ...

Lorenz: Well, my dad never had one. My dad died in '85. But I had 'em before then and, uh, I, I think we, I don't think we had chainsaws until about the 1970s

Ken: I think I think you're right about that

Lorenz: Yeah. That's when I think I bought my first

Ken: Because the first chain was a McCullough. That's when they were coming out. And we had, I had one, then too. So, at the height of the cedar industry, a lot of that cedar, most of that cedar was probably cut with axes. When,

Lorenz: oh, yeah

Ken: when, back before the t-posts. Um, so tell me about your recollections of the people. You said your father

Lorenz: Yeah

Ken: He called, a German name, and I forgot

Lorenz: Well the, you know, uh, we always called, we always called 'em cedar choppers, that's what we called 'em.

Ken: Uh-huh

Lorenz: And, we, I guess we sort-of (laugh) I shouldn't say this, but I guess we sort-of looked down our nose at 'em. They seemed to be, uh, well, not inferior but, why that's the way they had of makin' their livin' I guess.

Ken: Um-hum, um-hum

Lorenz: And you couldn't ____, you know, but, uh, they were, for the most part, they looked like they never took a bath, you know, and they never changed clothes, and

Ken: Yeah, Yeah

Lorenz: (laugh) And, uh, they were just, uh, I wouldn't say they were inferior, but I mean

Ken: Yeah

Lorenz: they were, that was just their livelihood.

Ken: Did they live on this side of the, of I-35, this side of the county, or would they all live up in the hills?

Lorenz: Well, let's put it this way: I don't know any of 'em, I don't know any of 'em that, that lived south of 35.

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: And, I could be wrong

Ken: No, right

Lorenz: But I had, I just don't. Because, well, there was, the reason for it is there was, the cedar wasn't there

Ken: There wasn't any cedar. Right

Lorenz: The cedar was primarily, there was, as I recall, when I was (enter an unknown woman – who laughs) we were talking about when they would, but, they lived where their livelihood was. And, the cedar was up there.

Ken: It's up. And where from here, over west of here

Lorenz: Yeah

Ken: Where Canyon Lake is now, is that sort of where it was?

Lorenz: Yeah. Have you ever, have you ever flown between San Antonio and the northeast corner of the west of 35 and really noticed

Ken: I've driven it a lot of times.

Lorenz: You've really driven it?

Ken: Yes, uh-huh

Lorenz: But you don't really know. Well I say you don't know. You don't appreciate

Ken: Yeah

Lorenz: Or you don't consider it, how much cedar there is. It is unbelievable. You sure, you see the houses poppin' up everywhere there is a roof, but, of course in those days, I, you didn't get around as much in those days. I'm talking about the 70s – 60s-70s-80s-90s. You didn't get around as much as you do now, and you, you didn't fly over the area and all that stuff. But, I would say that, and I don't know how deep that way cedar went. But I remember you saw very little of it going like, uh, past, on 281 and like going up toward Lampasas and through there. You didn't see very much of it there

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: It was mostly bare land.

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: But there was a tremendous amount of it, like, between San Antonio and up toward Kerrville.

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: And, uh, north of there

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: Wrapping around to, uh, Austin

Ken: Right

Lorenz: Um, as I recall

Ken: Yes, me too. I grew up in Austin so I

Lorenz: Yeah

Ken: I'm familiar with that part of it

Lorenz: Yeah

Ken: And so the, these folks, did you ever see, uh, did you ever, were you ever friends with any cedar choppers?

Lorenz: Not that, not that, I guess not, not on a, on a day-by-day business, you know, a day-by-day relationship, is all

Ken: Uh-huh

Lorenz: I knew a number of 'em

Ken: Uh-huh

Lorenz: I knew a number of 'em, um, because of, I bought from them too sometimes, you know, not all the time

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: But I sometimes bought from them. But, the choppers were not usually the ones that sold it. They, they, they did it to a great extent, in my opinion, for other people.

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: The other people ___ they brought this, more or less

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: And, and, they, they are the ones that, that opened up the yards and had the businesses

Ken: Right

Lorenz: Whatever that happened. You know, that's the way I recall it

Ken: Right. Sometimes, maybe they sold it to the yards directly, didn't they?

Lorenz: Yeah

Ken: They just

Lorenz: They sold it, they sold it to the yards

Ken: Do you recall whether they had trucks, or anything like that?

Lorenz: Yeah

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: They had the most decimated trucks you ever saw.

Ken: (laugh)

Lorenz: But they had trucks, yeah

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: They needed to.

Ken: Sure

Lorenz: I don't recall, I don't recall people hauling cedar of any type with mules or wagons

Ken: I see

Lorenz: They may have, but I just don't – see, see, I was, I was gone, I was in the military from '43 to '45. And then at '45 I got involved in several other things and one of 'em was residential construction because my father was quite a brick builder

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: And, I learned a little bit from him as I was growing up. And, uh, and in 1945, when I came out of the service, I had to figure out what to do because my father was still on the farm and so was a brother of mine. And, of course, both of them are deceased now and that's when I bought the property

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: But anyway, that's, that give me, I, I was at the point, I was involved in the farm but I wasn't here all the time

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: I was in construction, living in New Braunfels and in Fredericksburg.

Ken: I see

Lorenz: And that was from, well, for a long number of years, although I bought this place, I think in '56, you know.

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: And I started operating and built a home, this home in '65. So, I was sort-of all, uh, living in New Braunfels, and then living in here, and I, and I was in constructions, I was leading a dance orchestra all over the state and I was doing all kinds of things

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: Because the dance business - what I did when I was in the military

Ken: Um-hum, sure.

Lorenz: And the music business. I'm not trying to impress you

Ken: I know – it's great

Lorenz: It was a crazy, a crazy life, I think, I think I worked twenty-six hours a day

Ken: (laugh with unknown woman)

Lorenz: But it was fun.

Ken: Would you play in these local dancehalls, uh, uh

Lorenz: No, I, well we never, we did not go in, that's kind-of odd. Being in the military I, my clientele was dance clubs, private clubs, and, uh, things like that. Uh, never, never any public work to speak of, except maybe college or university

Ken: Uh-huh

Lorenz: Sorority, or stuff like that. You know, upscale. But I did not do any, what I called, the belt-buckle dances, you know, these local dances

Ken: Sure

Lorenz: I never did any of that

Ken: Uh-huh

Lorenz: I did, uh, I did, like in the military, we would travel all over the state, reunions and all this stuff

Ken: Uh-huh

Lorenz: I did that for, over fifty years. But anyway, that's neither here nor there. OK. Let me see. I'm not trying to hurry you. You can stay as long as you like. I just want to remember everything you might have on

Ken: Well, I was thinking about, so, you know, I'm, I'm interested in the people that cut the cedar. Uh, I talked yesterday to a man who had a cedar yard and he gave me a lot of good information. Uh, so did you go to school with some of these, these, these, um, boys?

Lorenz: No

Ken: No?

Lorenz: No, I don't recall. I went to school, I was supposed to go to school at Comal County which is over here at the end of Watson Lane, right across from where the ski place is

Ken: Right

Lorenz: In fact there is a pretty home up there right now. Right where the school was. I was supposed to go to that school. My dad said "you're not going to that school. That, the, the teachin', pardon the expression, ain't worth a damn. And you're not going there." I said "well, I've got to go to school." And he said

Ken: (laugh)

Lorenz: “well I, I’ll get you to school or something.” He – my father – got me into Guadalupe County school. I lived in Comal, but a mile down the road is Guadalupe County and another half a mile or mile down this road was a good Guadalupe County school

Ken: Um-hum. Was the teaching in German or in English?

Lorenz: I’ll tell you a story. The reason, the reason I have what little education I have is because of that guy. His name was Coers. C – O – E – R – S. He was a native of, of Germany, German. And I think he came over from Germany. That guy was bilingual. He spoke German and English and you won’t believe this, but after school he taught me German grammar on his own time

Ken: Oh

Lorenz: And this was after World War I when you weren’t supposed to speak a word of German

Ken: Right

Lorenz: I’ll tell you an interesting story. About two months ago I was in church, we go to First Protestant in New Braunfels. I was in church and a fella walked up to me. He says I’m John Coers. Huh – he’s John Coers. John Coers is the grandson of A. C. Coers, my grade school teacher. Would you believe that?

Ken: Isn’t that great.

Lorenz: What he couldn’t believe was, he says “you must be the oldest student of A. C. Coers that is still alive.” I said “well I don’t know, but you, you might be right.” (laugh)

Ken: (laugh)

Lorenz: But, I’ve had, since that time, like you, he and Mrs. Coers have been here. He, he is involved in the history, genealogy going back hundreds of years and you’d be surprised how interested he was to what little I knew – he didn’t know anybody else that knew anything about that school and Mr. Coers, you know.

Ken: Uh-huh

Lorenz: but that was very interesting. And we formed a good relationship since that time. We meet each other in church and all of that stuff. But this is the grandson of old A. C. Coers

Unknown woman: Uh-huh

Ken: That’s great

Lorenz: Ain’t that something?

Ken: Yeah

Unknown woman: Yeah

Lorenz: That, uh, that is amazing. And, his father, his grandfather, Mr. A. C. Coers, had three children. A girl and then two sons. And one of the sons is the father of this man that I know. Crazy isn't it?

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: It's a small world, really

Ken: Yes

Unknown woman: Yes (laugh)

Ken: Well you know, both

Lorenz: That was real early – 1732.

Unknown woman: Yes

Ken: So the whole, you know, I grew up in the Hill Country. I mean, I, hunting and fishing. My father is Scots-Irish, you know, and my mother is German. And they didn't have a whole lot in common except they loved each other, um, and I couldn't help but notice the whole time I was growing up - the difference between the German farms, you know, and, and the non-German farms. The, the American farms, if you want to call them that, which would have junk – you could see every car they ever had, you know, out there on the -. So, I'm, I'm curious, and, you know, another thing, so I'm kind-of curious about the difference between the Germans and the, and the Hill Country, I don't know, maybe they were, maybe they were cedar choppers, or maybe they were just farmers and ranchers, but, you know, everybody out in the Hill Country was pretty poor. Their wasn't, the land wasn't any good, you know. So I'm, I'm kind-of curious about, uh, how your perception of, of, the German perception of, of, of the cedar choppers, and why, why, why wouldn't a good strong German boy want to cut cedar for a living?

Lorenz: I guess the work, I guess, the, the, the where would be, maybe was beneath his dignity (laugh) or something

Unknown woman: Um-hum

Lorenz: And, they just didn't, they just didn't do it as a profession

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: As I know it

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: I could be wrong

Ken: Yeah

Lorenz: And

Ken: I haven't come across it. But if a German – did you know anybody, did you know any German families that lived in the, in the cedar country? You know, that lived in like Fredericksburg, or in, you know, Stonewall, or places like that?

Lorenz: No, I didn't, I did not know any, I did not know any German families except maybe – no, not even relatives, until 1948.

Ken: Oh

Lorenz: That was mid-century

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: And , I was, uh, uh, I bought an interest and got into the construction business and lumber business in Fredericksburg, Texas. And I was there for five years. And I got to know and meet a lot of friends

Ken: Uh-huh

Lorenz: And at that time

Tape 3 (14:51)

Lorenz: Fredericksburg was almost 100% German community

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: Not anymore. It's a trash town now – pardon the expression. You've been there – it's, I hate to say what happened to Fredericksburg, Texas

Ken: Yeah

Lorenz: That's all right. I mean, that's

Ken: Yeah

Lorenz: the way it is. But, in __, yes, only until 19, about 48, did I really know any people. And I did not, at that time, I don't, I don't relate any of my activities having to do with the cedar business, cedar posts

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: or, I was not in farming at the time, except

Ken: Right

Lorenz: down here. I was not involved in farming. I lived in Fredericksburg, Texas and I ran a business there, all over the Hill Country, Mason, um, uh

Unknown Woman: Llano

Lorenz: Llano, uh, Boerne

Ken: Um-hum, Um-hum

Lorenz: I operated within a radius of a hundred miles

Ken: Wow

Lorenz: From, but I did not have any, anything to do, I didn't have anything to do with anything having to do with the cedar industry

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: I don't recall any of that

Ken: Right. So, you, when you build these house, these German, the German, they would probably cut their own cedar, wouldn't they, if they had cedar on their farm

Lorenz: Yeah, they would have cut their own

Ken: Right

Lorenz: Everybody would cut their own. And they used, they used ... although cedar's about the poorest firewood I guess you could find

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: But some of 'em would use it if they had to

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: They'd, pardon the expression, it's not worth a damn for firewood.

Ken: What about for charcoal?

Lorenz: Yeah, it makes good charcoal.

Ken: Did you ever, did ya'll ever use charcoal, that you bought from these folks?

Lorenz: No. No. The only charcoal that I might ever have bought was that which I bought commercially. No, I never bought anything from the cedar yard, or from the manufacturer.

Ken: I mean, when you say commercial, you mean, like HEB in a bag?

Lorenz: Yeah, yeah

Ken: Yeah, yeah

Lorenz: grocery store

Ken: 'cause they say that cedar charcoal is just excellent char – they, the cedar, they would, they would burn it and make, before they would, before it was used for posts, they'd, they were called char, their were people who were charcoal burners

Lorenz: Yeah, that, that's right. That's all they did

Ken: Uh-huh

Lorenz: That's all they did. But, no, I never, I never bought any of that or used any

Ken: Uh-huh

Lorenz: To my knowledge

Ken: Yeah

Lorenz: And, uh

Ken: Did you ever see any of those people, those charcoal burning people?

Lorenz: No. No, I don't, I don't remember

Ken: Yeah

Lorenz: I don't recall ever

Ken: I think that was probably done when the electricity came in. When did electricity come to Fredericksburg?

Lorenz: I don't know, it came in the '30s

Ken: Uh-huh. I think that, 'cause a lot of that was used for irons. To heat irons – for ironing. That charcoal.

Lorenz: Um-hum

Ken: Yeah. So I think that probably did away with the charcoal, the charcoal buring that was going, a lot of that was going over in Gruene, I hear. Yeah

Lorenz: Yeah. Well, you know, you're talking about a subject here that is sort-of foreign

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: I mean, I can, I can envision very few people being really very knowledgeable, unless you just maybe find a, how should I say this, maybe a relative or descendent, or something like his grandfather or his father or something might have, and he might still be involved, you know

Unknown woman: Um-hum

Lorenz: Am I right?

Ken: I think you're right. There's nothing been written about, about the, about cedar. I mean, it was just a big business

Lorenz: Yeah

Ken: That's why I thought I ought a

Lorenz: Well, I would to tell you the truth, I would never give it another thought, except when you called me over in this, Sammy called me, and said "hey, can you help Mr. Roberts". I said, "I don't know, I'll try" I said, "I've been around a few years and I've observed them." So when I'm talking to you about it, this more or less observing

Ken: Right, right.

Lorenz: Eighty – ninety years, that's what I'm talking about. I happen to have a pretty good memory. That's, uh, that's the way it is.

Ken: What I, when I talked to you on the phone, that was like you said, last summer, uh, you said those cedar yard blossomed out. Most of the people, you said, were in dire straits. Owned Model-Ts and Chevrolet trucks.

Lorenz: Yeah (laugh)

Ken: I wonder what year, would those trucks have been made before the war?

Lorenz: Yeah. Some of 'em

Ken: Uh-huh

Lorenz: Some of 'em were made in the, in the '30s. That would be about the, you know, Model A Ford Trucks. Model-T Ford trucks were made in the, in the, when was the first Model T made? 19? The first Model A was made in 1928. I know that.

Unknown Woman: How?

Lorenz: Because I remember the day they had the opening in 1928 of the Erlich Motor Company. But the Model T was made in the 1910s

Unknown Woman: Wow!

Lorenz: Around World War I.

Ken: Hum

Lorenz: And some other cars: Dodge.

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: Dodge made a touring car. General Pershing drove a Dodge touring car in 1917 and we had one just like it. And, uh, so there were, there were Model Ts and touring cars made before 1917. I say from, in general of course they didn't have roads or nothing at that time

Unknown Woman: Yeah

Lorenz: But in general I would say from 1910. And some of, but none of these people w____, and they were not, these vehicles were not generally available, in my opinion, to the general public until the '20s and then in the '30s, you know

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: So, uh, but, uh, we had a 1917 Dodge

Unknown Woman: Wow

Lorenz: And uh, I remember that

Unknown Woman: (laugh)

Lorenz: I still drive Dodge.

Unknown Woman: (laugh)

Ken: (laugh). So these old trucks, yeah. Uh,

Lorenz: Yeah, some of 'em, some, of course, you have to remember, these people were just like everybody else. Some were more proficient and more efficient than others. Some were scum of the earth. But some of 'em, they worked hard -- all of 'em worked hard, of course, worked hard and they opened their own businesses, you know, and as it, as it became available and they had the money they would, they would increase their status in life. Some of the would, not all, most of 'em. And they would buy vehicles, maybe old beat-up trucks

Ken: Uh-huh

Lorenz: But that happened. That didn't happen until about the thirties, the forties, the fifties. The mid-century

Ken: Yes, right

Lorenz: Yeah. In my opinion.

Ken: In your, um, did any of the people in your, in your unit, or, or any of those, I mean, they went into the Army, didn't they, those cedar chopper boys?

Lorenz: Well, they may have, but

Ken: But you didn't know

Lorenz: I don't remember everything anybody that were involved in cedar chopping in the military. My boys that, I say "my boys", I happened to be first sergeant of the unit and later on band leader

Ken: Right

Lorenz: So, uh, these people were, for the most part of German descent. Because most of them was Germany in the '40s.

Unknown Woman: Um-hum

Lorenz: And, uh, and about half of them were, not, maybe half, maybe a third of them were agriculture, you know, and but most of 'em lived in town

Ken: I see, yeah

Lorenz: And a lot of them was young, you have to remember they were high school students

Ken: Sure

Lorenz: Something like that. And they got into the military before they ever graduated from high school. I have, I had guys in my unit seventeen years old

Ken: Oh

Lorenz: When we were mobilized

Ken: Um

Lorenz: That's the way it was.

Ken: Isn't that something.

Lorenz: We was, I want to tell you a funny story. I'm full of funny stories I think they're funny but other people don't.

Unknown woman: (laugh)

Lorenz: We were in, we were stationed in New Braunfels after being, after being mobilized. And, of course, in the military, have you been in the military?

Ken: No

Lorenz: OK. You have something to learn if you haven't been in the military.

Ken: Yes

Lorenz: The military is fun. The military is always, could be hell if you don't accept it – let's put it like that. So, anyway, we were at, it was one evening, and we were having a military, what we called a stand-off, or a inspection. And we had this, this commanding guy come along. And, uh, and me being, I guess, a something-or-another, I happened to be there. Anyway, here was this young kid and he was, and he was in our unit. He was about fifteen-sixteen years old. John Ties, I'll never forget it. And, uh, I don't think he had ever shaved or anything, you know, he looked – so anyway, to make a long story short – the commanding General walked up to him and, and looked at him like that and he says "and how old are you, son?" And he said "seventeen" (high pitched voice).

Unknown woman: (laugh) That is funny, isn't it?

Ken: (laugh) Yeah, that is funny

Lorenz: I didn't even charge you for it!

Ken: Ah-hah, funny – you're funny

Lorenz: And in the military

Ken: That is funny

Lorenz: Yeah, but anyway, that's the, thought you'd enjoy it. OK, I didn't mean to interrupt.

Ken: Oh, not at all. I was just looking at your notes. Um, back then, yeah, you said you never knew of any Germans that cut cedar and then, about the wolmanized wood and then you said, I quoted you here, you said "I don't know if I can say this – German people, I mean my father, he would call them, and I couldn't, I don't speak German, it's like 'dregen, dregen Americana'".

Lorenz: Dregen means dirty, or filthy

Ken: How do you spell that?

Lorenz: Dregich?

Ken: Yeah

Lorenz: D R E G I C H

Ken: OK

Lorenz: D R E G I C H

Ken: Uh-huh

Lorenz: I'm pretty sure

Ken: So that he was saying they were filthy Americans.

Lorenz: Yeah

Unknown Woman: Yeah

Ken: yeah.

Lorenz: ___ like I said, some of 'em looked like they had never shaved in their life and had never changed clothes.

Ken: Yeah.

Lorenz: And, I'm, I don't mean that to be derogatory.

Ken: Yeah, Yeah

Lorenz: That's just

Ken: No, that's – I've heard that everywhere. Well, did you ever, would they come into New Braunfels on a Saturday night and raise hell, or, or Fredericksburg?

Lorenz: No

Ken: No

Lorenz: Uh, I don't recall ever. Well now you have everybody breaking the law and everybody's murdering and doing what they shouldn't do. But I don't remember ever those people being out of line or anything like that

Ken: Uh-huh

Lorenz: Or causing any trouble, or being jailed, or being, you know what I mean?

Ken: Uh-huh. Good. .Yeah

Lorenz: For the most part, hell, they worried about staying alive and getting something to eat.

Ken: Yeah

Lorenz: They didn't have time to mess around and buy booze, you know, and raise hell.

Ken: Yeah

Unknown Woman: Um-hum

Lorenz: In my opinion

Ken: Yeah, yeah. Do you have any idea where they came from? Where they, you know, were they local people? Or did they come in when the, when the cedar business took off, did they come from somewhere else? Any idea?

Lorenz: I don't know

Ken: Uh-huh

Lorenz: I don't know where those people came from. They were not, I don't think, they were not German people that came over with any of the German immigration, say like from Germany or from wherever they came from. They were not, where they came from I don't know

Ken: Yeah, yeah

Lorenz: I just don't know. They might, one of my sons-in-law, his name is Evans, and he had people by the name of, his parents, on his mother's side I think was Jackson and his father was Evans. And, uh, but those people, um, they, they were not, they were not cedar choppers or anything like that. But they came in from Kentucky and through there and then Arkansas and, uh, that's where he was from when he was inducted into the service and met my daughter. He's an awful fine young man. They've been married fifty years. But nevertheless, uh, he was somebody I would not call him a dreg -- cedar chopper, you understand

Ken: Um-hum

Lorenz: But his family was an entirely different breed, I guess you might say. My daughter's family was

Ken: Um-hum, um-hum

Lorenz: And that doesn't mean that they weren't as good or anything

Ken: yeah

Lorenz: I mean, it's just that they came from a different place, a different source, landed in a different place, migrated and did different things

Ken: Um-hum, um-hum, just like my father and mother

Lorenz: Yeah ____

Ken: Yeah

Lorenz: So, anyway

Ken: Yeah

Lorenz: Naturally. That's the way it is

Ken: Well, it sounds like that's about it.

Unknown Woman: Yeah, you gave us lots of --- you did a lot of thinking on it and wrote it all down

Ken: Thank you so much!