

BW001

Ken: So, there it is, and it will pick up our voices as we talk – pretty much.

BW: Yeah

Ken: If I put it on the floor, and, uh, so anyway

BW: But, uh, what they done – they traded more. Of course, there wasn't no money to amount to anything. And they would trade a load of posts, or post, for peanut hay, or, different things like that, to bring back, you know, uh, to their camp.

Ken: Now where was this?

BW: Here.

Ken: Here. Is this your dad's yard you're talking about?

BW: Yeah

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: Well they had a yard, and a, they cut posts and hauled them. This is Nolan Creek right here behind us.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: And we went out there about twelve miles - out into Fort Hood now.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: There's eleven hundred acres right there to there and it's full of cedar, and, uh, _____, uh, lay, uh, my brother, my dad's brothers in there because they were the first one to know. They cut these posts and then my dad'd usually he'd haul 'em off, first one and another. But they'd bring back anything. So it's gona be hard – if you figure out how much they give 'em, though

Ken: I see. He hauled 'em off somewhere and traded 'em?

BW: Traded. It was a trade deal.

Ken: What were some of the things he traded for?

BW: Well, like, uh, peanut hay, there was watermelons, tractors, chickens

Ken: Um-hum

BW: You name it. They'd just – anything out there that they could, they could, uh, take it and use it or re-sell it or re-trade it, or anything like that.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: That's what they done.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: You know.

Ken: So, watermelons, that would be for sale, 'cause you can't eat a bunch of watermelons.

BW: Well they, well that little 'ole town that she was talking about the other day, ____ land in there. Uh, that's they went up there and got those watermelons and then they'd bring back here to Belton

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: And sell 'em, you see.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: And they'd work it like on Fourth of July was their big deal back then. They'd go get them watermelon and bring them in here.

Ken: What year would that have been?

BW: Uh, '37, '38, somewhere along in there

Ken: Uh-huh. So your dad, when did he open that yard?

BW: Well uh, I don't know really when. He, uh

Ken: Was it in the '30s though?

BW: Oh, yeah, it would be back in the '30s.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: Early '30s, Maybe in the '20s.

Ken: Uh-huh. And this here was, uh, Nolan Creek

BW: Yeah

Ken: Fort Hood, did it start over there?

BW: Yeah, about, the way the crow flies it'd be three or four miles.

Ken: Uh-huh. Is that where yall's place was originally?

BW: Um-hum

Ken: And they took it over, huh?

BW: Yeah

Ken: How many acres did you have back then?

BW: Had eleven hundred acres, right at it.

Ken: That's a lot of land.

BW: And, uh, they give 'em seventeen dollars for the mountain land and, uh, thirty five for the farming land.

Ken: Thirty five. How did that compare to the, to what you could buy?

BW: What they bought? Right out here they took nearly all the money off of the eleven hundred acres, that right here on top of, right here at 190.

Ken: Um-hum

BW: That's the road there, about four or five miles, to buy a hundred and ten acres. Pretty near all that money to do that. That's all they got for that. That's, you know, several – they got up to be, you know, three or four hundred dollars an acre and stuff like that.

Ken: Oh, I see.

BW: It was a big difference in it.

Ken: 'Cause it was better farm land?

BW: No. It was just, uh, people, they had to sell. They don't give what you wanted. Then you had to take that money and, uh, buy back.

Ken: I see. That's not fair.

BW: No! They should've, if they got eleven hundred acres here, they should've went and got eleven hundred acres sort-of like it.

Ken: Um-hum

BW: and traded out.

Ken: Um-hum. Is that when y'all moved here then?

BW: Uh, no. No, I, I moved, I bought this place here in about twenty, into thirty years ago.

Ken: Oh, OK.

BW: And, uh, I was going ... we moved it back here – this little mobile home and we was building a house up there. And, uh, my wife went down to get the taxes – to see what the taxes was gona run on that house. It's gona' be twenty-six hundred dollars a year for us to live in this house, I says "you really want to build?" and she wouldn't do it. She said "I'm not gona do that." So we lived here in this, this right here and we bought it just to live in long enough to get a new house built. We never did build no house. You know, we just – and then she died, nine years ago.

Ken: Um-hum

BW: And I never did do nothing to it. I quit, really.

Ken: So, when your dad had that yard, where was that located?

BW: Out here on the North Brookhaven, about twelve miles out there.

Ken: I see. And that's the land they took over?

BW: Yeah.

Ken: Did he, did he open up another yard then, when they kicked him off?

BW: No. He said he, they kicked you, kicked us off in about '53 maybe, '52, '53

Ken: OK

BW: And he died in '57.

Ken: OK. So

BW: He never did. But he did, uh, but he left there though. He we went to _____, a little 'ole town on highway 36, pretty close to Gatesville And he opened up a yard there. And, uh, had a grocery store near the yard. See, he'd always have a grocery store and a, was always there by the cedar yard. So the cutters could go in and, uh, they would get, in other words, they'd trade their posts for groceries, and stuff like that.

Ken: Um-hum

BW: He – but things changed, though. I mean, he didn't, they didn't buy much of anything. Wasn't hardly any money there.

Ken: No. You're talking during the Depression?

BW: Yeah.

Ken: End of World War II?

BW: Yeah. It's what I said, you know. See, I was just coming up, in life, see, I was born in '37, you see.

Ken: Um-hum

BW: And, uh, that's when everything started changing, right there. And, uh, if, uh, they were ___ our guy that, uh, Leslie West, on the cedar yard, when my dad, uh, closed that one down there in Flat, Leslie West went up there and he started when he wasn't very old. But he started a cedar yard up there and he run that thing – probably seventy, eighty, seventy years, sixty or seventy years. That cedar yard. And he died about two years ago.

Ken: When did that cedar yard close up?

BW: Uh, well he died, his brother, his son took it over and he didn't mess with it much, and, uh, there's a Dwayne Blanchard has it now.

Ken: Oh, it's still open!

BW: Yeah. And, uh, matter of fact, that's where I bought this last load of posts.

Ken: OK. Where is that located?

BW: Um, the one, now he moved it. It was down there in town, and, uh, he moved it out here where its at right now. You go on, you go to highway 36 and just stay on it and you go on across 84 and then there'd be a convenience store there. And it's 929 or something like that.

Ken: Uh-huh. The road number?

BW: Um-hum. It's down there, if you're going back toward town.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: And there and again and then you go out to, uh, Doug, his dad Meyers. See, Doug is not a Meyers.

Ken: Yeah.

BW: But, uh, he's got full control of everything. And, uh, see his dad died two, three years ago. Well, both of – people like that, that old, ____, way up in their eighties. They got a, had a quite of stories to tell ya there, you know. 'Cause their dad run cedar yards.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: Like, over there. Westley's never did. He's the only one ever had a cedar yard. But, uh, at one time, uh, he was, uh, West was the richest man of the liquid assess – of money.

Ken: Um-hum

BW: You know. And he was in the top ten of people that settled Texas.

Ken: And his name was Wes?

BW: Yeah, West.

Ken: West?

BW: Yeah, West. W E S T

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: West.

Ken: And he had a cedar yard? He got that money making, selling cedar?

BW: Yeah.

Ken: Tell me, could a man, I was talking to someone yesterday in Cedar Park, and, uh, her husband cut cedar in the '40s, um, and he made enough money to buy land with it. I mean, he made, he made, could a man make a pretty good living cutting cedar with an axe back then?

BW: Uh, well. Yeah, they, ____, most of 'em, they won't go and work 'two or three hours of the day. But, uh, a guy that goes out there and works at it, they, right now they can make good money.

Ken: Yeah, I was thinking way back then in the '30s and '40s.

BW: Oh, yeah, I imagine they, you know, of course it, it wouldn't be nothing like it was now. I'd probably see seven, eight, maybe ten dollars a day, maybe fifteen

Ken: Um-hum.

BW: But, uh

Ken: Would it be better than, than wages, if you go work in a store, or something like that? Or

BW: Well I _____. I worked, uh, I worked for a guy five years. You know, building houses, framing houses. And, uh, I went and, uh, I built houses, nursing homes and banks, or anything I could find, but, uh, _____ up, pour out of chute, and concrete truck. That's what I done. You know, I never have worked for nobody by the hour, other than that four or five years.

Ken: Um-hum

BW: I don't work for nobody now.

Ken: Right. So you prefer doing, hauling the cedar because you're on your own, or?

BW: Well, well I'm kind-of (laugh) kind-of hard headed. I'm not gona take nothing off nobody. You know, I'm not, I'm gona do what I want to do, not what somebody else wants

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: That's the way it's always been.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: And, uh, like this girl, lady that works for me. She's been working seven years, and, uh, she said that, uh, I want to do the same thing that you're doing. She told me that five years ago. And she says "I will not ever go back to work for nobody."

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: And she's got a degree in medicine and then a CPA! Made good money – but she's driving a truck now.

Ken: How old is she now?

BW: She's forty three.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: She was thirty six when she started working with me.

Ken: So you

BW: She was a waitress.

Ken: Huh. So you think that's the attraction, is just being independent, being on your own?

BW: Yeah, it, it's just like my nephew up there. Uh, he can't work for nobody. He's hard headed, you know. It's his way or no way.

Ken: Uh-huh (laugh) Well do you think most of the cutters were like that?

BW: No, all of 'em!

Ken: All of them!

BW: Yeah. They will not go – they were not going out there, and, uh, well "I'll give you so much an hour to trim them trees up or cut 'em down, or whatever." They won't do that. They're gona tell you how much they'll do it for and then they will do it.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: They don't, a cedar cutter is a breed of all their own. There's not nobody like 'em. The cutters.

Ken: Now what, where do you think that, how do you think that came about? How do you think that started?

BW: Nature, I guess. My dad was, he would go out there, and, uh, what they'd done, they'd go out there in the woods and they'd clean 'em a little place off and they'd pitch a tent up and that's where they lived. As long as there's cedar around to cut

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: in that place. Then they'd move to another place.

Ken: Would they have a permanent dwelling? In addition, you know, somewhere else, like a, and just pitch a tent temporarily?

BW: That was permanent.

Ken: That tent was their home?

BW: That tent was their home.

Ken: And what about if they had wives and kids?

BW: They was right there with them.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: They'd

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BW: They all went together.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: And everything. You know, I knew, as a matter of fact, that, I've got to tell you. You don't have nothing to do with that, but, uh, I went down to the, I went down interstate 45 going into Houston, and I got down there to this here, uh, Sawdust Road. And then I went east about fifteen, twenty miles. And, but when I got out there seven or eight, ten miles, it just, it's land, out there a ways. It, uh, I guess it belongs to the government, but this guy had these, had leased this land. A bunch of it. Land. From the State or wherever, whoever owned that land. And he run cows on it. But they were people. They had this river going down through there. But these people lived there – out there – and they just lived, and they just put a little 'old cardboard box, or a little tent, or anything, and their family, they raised their families right there. And, uh, I thought, when I seen that I thought about back when I was a little kid and, then you looked, like, you looked to the left and that's what you would see. But then you looked to the right and you could see Houston, the high, the buildings and stuff down there. And I always thought "we was *so close* to civilized country but yet so far away."

Ken: Uh-huh, uh-huh

BW: It didn't – it was mind boggling to me.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: You know. 'Cause that's what I've seen – what I've seen there is what I've seen fifty, seventy five, fifty, or sixty years ago, you know, when I'd be a little ole kid.

Ken: Right. Were there a whole bunch of people living like that, living in tents and?

BW: Oh yeah, down there I bet there were fifty or seventy five of 'em.

Ken: That's now, right?

BW: Yeah, yeah. ___ year

Ken: Back, back then in the old days?

BW: Yeah, nearly all the cedar cutters lived that way. In fact you still run across some today that live like that.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: It wadnt near but ten years ago I guess, uh, there were some cedar cutters like that - the family and the kids went off out there and pitched a tent.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: And cut posts.

Ken: They're white people.

BW: Yeah. Yeah, there wern't no, there are no black people out there.

Ken: I was thinking of Mexicans. The Mexican cutters.

BW: Not very many.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: There's only one group of Mexicans I know. Right there up at the _____.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: Doug

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: Like I say, these, they're white people. And, uh, they all, uh, I don't know if any of 'em ever married out of, uh, you know, both parents would be cedar cutters.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: They'd marry – they don't marry nobody outside of them.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: You know.

Ken: Is that 'cause they hang around together and that's the only people they know?

BW: Yeah, I guess so.

Ken: Yeah. Well, I wonder if the town people, I mean Belton was a pretty fancy little town at one time, wasn't it?

BW: Yeah.

Ken: I mean they've got some nice houses and all. I wonder if some of those town people didn't look down on 'em?

BW: Oh, yeah, a cedar chopper wadn't nothing. But yet they made more money doing that if they'd keep it – they'd make more money than that guy trying to run that grocery store.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: But they don't, they didn't see it that way.

Ken: The people in town didn't see it that way?

BW: Uh, uh. But you take, just like a few years ago, when the high, uh, when I started hauling, you know, twenty five years ago or so, uh, they would, I'd go up there and they'd load me. Mr. West would pay 'em and he'd hold out of their, their pay for that day, what he loaned them yesterday. But then they turned around and, uh, they might go home and then they'd have to go to his house or somewhere and borrow enough money to buy enough gas that would work the next day. They spent all their money. Uh, it's just like uh, Roger Collins over here, uh, he's a cow buyer and everything. And, uh, he said when the TV come out he ... he was right He said, he said "those cedar cutters was the only one that had a TV."

Ken: So they'd spend it not just, they'd spend it on luxuries too.

BW: Yeah, oh yeah! Yeah, anything you see, they'd buy it. It didn't make any matter what it was, if they wanted it, and it would, uh, it would go through the whole tribe of the cedar cho – if one bought something or other, everyone of 'em had it.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: It was like their computers. They got the finest setup of computers of anybody.

Ken: Hum. Did, back in the old days, uh, would there be social, did they hang around together? Did they, were there, like you said, used the word "tribe" just then.

BW: Yeah. That's it.

Ken: So, uh

BW: They all stick together.

Ken: That's what I was thinking. Would, would they party together? Would they have dances, and social life, like that? Music?

BW: They had music and stuff like that there, yeah. They did.

Ken: Uh-huh. Played the fiddle, stuff like that?

BW: Yeah. Um-hum. And, uh, not all of them did, but they, you know, they'd play their fiddles and their guitars.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: And, uh, of course, one thing or another. But they had their own lives. Their own separate ones.

Ken: Their own lives?

BW: Yeah. They lived different from what the other people lived. And yet they'd have more stuff

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: than what the other one did.

Ken: So, in what way would they live different? Just ____

BW: Yeah!

Ken: In what way? Other than their houses weren't as good and stuff,

BW: But no. And they were just, uh, you know, they cooked their meals right there on an open fire.

Ken: Oh, OK. What did they eat?

BW: Oh, they'd go out there and kill 'em a rabbit

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: And stuff like that there, you know, whatever it took.

Ken: What about water?

BW: Well, they had, they'd get close to a creek somewhere.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: They'd carry water up.

Ken: They didn't ever dig wells?

BW: No.

Ken: Uh-huh. So it doesn't sound like most of 'em owned their land.

BW: They didn't own the land. They didn't own nothing.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: No land or nothing like that.

Ken: Car. They'd have to have a truck or something, wouldn't they?

BW: Yeah. They'd have to get one of them.

Ken: I've got a picture of a truck I've got to show you. Here. Tell me what this truck is. Old pictures.

BW: Yeah, that's a – I believe that's, see, that old truck don't have no grill on it or anything.

Ken: Yeah.

BW: And, these tires, you know, on the back, they'd come from out here at Fort Hood I imagine, 'cause they are old Army tires.

Ken: Oh, uh-huh. That'd probably be good for going – I bet it was tough on a vehicle up in the brakes.

BW: Oh, God, yeah. And it blew tires out right and left.

Ken: Uh-huh. That's in Marble Falls.

BW: Yeah. But see, he's done something else besides cutting. Like, this truck here, 'cause he's got side board on the truck, most of 'em

Ken: yeah

BW: they didn't do that.

Ken: So he hauled watermelons or something like that too?

BW: Yeah.

Ken: He's awful dark, isn't he?

BW: Yeah. ____ He gets out there in that weather all the time.

Ken: Yeah. I wonder how hot a cedar brake gets in the ...

BW: It gets hot!

Ken: Hotter than, hotter than normal shade, isn't it?

BW: Yeah. You see that old cedar, it creates a lot of heat in itself. That cedar does.

Ken: Um-hum

BW: And it, uh, they was talking about the other day, about the fires, in San Antonio, about, if it caught on on fire like that, it'd go all the way up there to Weatherford.

Ken: Uh

BW: You know, it could burn everything between here and there.

Ken: Yeah. Here's another truck. What year do you think that truck is?

BW: It's probably about a '32 or '3 model.

Ken: Now here's one you'll be more familiar with.

BW: I'll tell you where truck's sitting at. It's down there at, uh, Bastrop. That's exactly what they, that's the way they used, you see. That's, that's quite a set up right there. 1958 Chevrolet.

Ken: Well that's, that's what somebody guessed. You might have a different opinion. But that's a lot of weight for that truck to pull.

BW: Oh gosh, yeah. See, just one of them axles pulled, both of 'em didn't. Well, that's a Chevrolet. And, uh, it's not a '58 'cause that, 'cause of that windshield wraps around and comes down here

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: And on a '58 it comes, it slopes a little bit. It's probably about a '53 or '4 model.

Ken: Oh, earlier, OK.

BW: Yeah

Ken: Good. Yeah. Here's another picture (laugh) It's a Bull Creek group of cedar choppers. Look at them. They were living in a tent.

BW: Yeah, that's it.

Ken: That's at Bull Creek. You know, right off of Mopac.

BW: Yeah.

Ken: 360

BW: Um-hum

Ken: And, um, apparently, back in the old days, all

BW: ____ Bull Creek

Ken: Uh-huh. Well, it's fancy houses there now. But down in the bottom of the creek they can't build any houses, because, you know, it floods.

BW: Yeah.

Ken: A lot. And, um, it, it hasn't changed much, except, uh the little creek isn't as pretty as it used to because of a kind of green algae

BW: Yeah. You see, I build houses down there from '64, '63

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: to about, well I quit it about '84 or '5 I quit completely in construction.

Ken: You were a contractor?

BW: Yeah

Ken: Yeah. Well tell me, these folks in Bull Creek, they were, they were actually pretty famous for, uh, brewing moonshine.

BW: Yeah, oh yeah, they'd make good moonshine. In fact, let me see, there's one in this room

Ken: Yeah

BW: Uh, (shuffling papers) Right here's a map of 1936, of that country. And, uh, you see, uh, there is Belton. It's near where you go out here, out this road here, and, uh, this is what they called Doss Springs. They was a spring, a water, right there. And then, uh, we, uh, well this road right here comes across ___ but this road right here

Ken: Um-hum

BW: They had cut it all the way through here.

Ken: Um-hum

BW: And, uh, these two houses right here. That's, that's where we lived.

Ken: Oh.

BW: Right there.

Ken: Uh-huh. So all that is Fort Hood now.

BW: Yeah, um-hum

Ken: So do they, did they brew moonshine out in these hills too?

BW: Oh, yeah. They always, somebody had one all the time.

Ken: Had a still?

BW: Yeah.

Ken: Was that just during Prohibition? Or was that even after, later on in the '40s and '50?

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BW: Uh, that was, uh, well, back in the '40s or something. I guess the '50s or '60s they quit doing that pretty much. And they'd go buy it.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: But, uh, but that's, uh, that's ... This right here though, is where, uh, uh, the little town of Brookhaven was right there.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: There might be a name on there.

Ken: Did you ever talk to, you know, they did, uh, the Army, several years ago (I'll turned this off).

Skip some conversation

And it was, uh, how many cedar yards do you think there were, in this area, around Belton? Back in the, at the peak of the business, probably 1950 would be the peak, wouldn't it?

BW: You go out to, that road here. They had two yards there, at that Doss Springs.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: When I was a kid. And my dad had one there in Brookhaven and one in _____. Well, just that one survey, I guess that's four or five yards there.

Ken: Um-hum

BW: And, uh,

Ken: So, were they, all be, uh, I'm trying to get a handle on, so, how many people would bring their cedar in a yard? Did everybody sort of go to one yard, I mean, same person would go to the same yard every time

BW: Oh, Yeah. Yeah. 'Cause see, he had to, uh, he had to, with the posts that they cut was off of that yard's place, you know, they had, that guy would go out there, that owned that yard. He would buy the owners, the owners of the land out there, he'd buy their posts, cedar posts, and, uh, hire, they'd pay 'em so much percent to cut their posts off of that _____. He would pay them x amount of dollars for the whole thing.

Ken: Uh-huh. So the cedar yard owner would contract with the, with the land owner

BW: Yeah

Ken: and pay him a percent of the value of the posts that
that the cutters brought in.

BW: That hasn't, still hasn't changed a bit.

Ken: Yeah. What percent?

BW: Uh, right now, a good brake, well, he'd have to pay about, to the cutters you'd have to pay about
twenty five or thirty five percent. And they'd go, and they could go down as low as fifteen.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: Ten or fifteen percent.

Ken: I heard that back in the old days it was as low as ten and people were

BW: Oh, yeah. Ten percent.

Ken: Pretty normal?

BW: Yeah, and, uh, you know, like you, they'd be, uh, you know, whatever the rate would be when they
brought their posts in, uh, we, uh, they'd settle up with the cutters and they'd take that, uh, sometimes
they'd, the cutters would, uh, wouldn't pay no percent. They'd just cut 'em, you see. But the owner,
when they got the, all the cedar or trees, or the cedar, or whatever, he would pay it, you know.

Ken: To the rancher?

BW: Yeah, he would.

Ken: Uh-huh.

BW: That's the way that went.

Ken: So he'd just hold back

BW: Yep. But I remember when I was a kid is ten percent, five percent

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: Or, if they flat cut it, which they cut all of the cedar, killed all of the whole tree, uh, they didn't pay
anything for that. They just cleaned the land.

Ken: And got to keep the posts.

BW: Yeah.

Ken: Yeah. So, I know price of posts has gone up a lot. But let's say back, when a post, when a good fence post was a dollar. Uh, retail, you know.

BW: Yeah

Ken: How much would the, how much would the cutter get for that post?

BW: Well, they'd probably get, uh, like if I went and sold one for a dollar, you see, I'd have to buy that thing for, uh, depending on what size it would be, like a three inch top or something

Ken: Um-hum, um-hum.

BW: Uh, I would have to buy that, pay about sixty or sixty five cents to do that. The cedar yard then, he would, uh, he's got to make, you know, handling, unloading them, he'd end up with like, it cut it back down, you know. To about thirty or forty cents and the cedar cutters would probably get twenty cents for cuttin' it. You see. Everybody _____. See there's a lot of ... that post goes through a lot of hands before it gets to the destination

Ken: OK

BW: Just like, you know, the landowner, he's gona get, uh, out of a, a, uh, a dollar a post. He's gona get ten cents out of it.

Ken: OK

BW: No it won't give a dollar to him. It will be on the back, you know. Uh, like sixty cents. He'd only get six cents off of it.

Ken: OK

BW: And then, uh, the chopper, he'd get uh, probably, uh, twenty-five or thirty percent. Thirty cents off of it. And then the, the, uh, cedar yard would have to go for thirty-five to forty cents on that, uh, you know, fifty cents or so, sixty cents for him handling it, you know.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: And waiting on somebody to come buy it.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: And that's the way it all works. It goes through several hands, you know.

Ken: When a cutter brings in a load of posts, does he unload them himself?

BW: Uh, yeah, he buys 'em off the truck. And they have a guy at the yard that grades

Ken: grade them, right.

BW: Um-hum

Ken: So, when you bring in a load, they're gonna be all different sizes, aren't they?

BW: Oh, yeah. There's everything in there.

Ken: Uh-huh. Staves, deuces,

BW: yeah. And threes and fours.

Ken: Um-hum

BW: Some of 'em'd be ten – ten foot long.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: You know, _____. Whatever is out there in front of 'em, if they have to cut it, they got to cut it.

Ken: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

BW: (cough) What's happening today is that everybody wants the same post. Is a five inch top, seven foot long.

Ken: That's a big post.

BW: That's what everybody wants. And, uh, I can't get enough to stay busy.

Ken: Is that a corner post, or do they use 'em as

BW: No. A line post.

Ken: That's a big post for a line post.

BW: Um-hum. And they put 'em nine foot apart most times.

Ken: Are they putting t-posts in between them?

BW: Not, no, I mean sometime they do. But if they put t-posts in there they use an eight foot, post eight foot long. They like to use about a six or seven inch top.

Ken: Hum

BW: And they put another sixteen foot.

Ken: Why does a man prefer, why would you build a cedar fence today rather than, rather than, you know, pipe fence, t-posts and all that sort of thing?

BW: Well, uh, cheaper for one thing.

Ken: Is it?

BW: Yeah. The t-posts – you get a group of guys building fences, ____ where I unloaded yesterday. Uh, he could, uh, set up his boys in _____. Just about all brothers, six or seven of 'em, and, uh, they'd get a job ____ would be coming about eight o'clock or so and they'd have those holes, they'd be diggin' them holes and set the bob wire up. They'd take 'em off the truck and put 'em in holes.

Ken: Um-um

BW: And, uh, that's the way they done it. And, uh,

Ken: Where was this?

BW: Madisonville

Ken: And that's pretty easy, that's pretty nice soil to dig, isn't it? It doesn't have rocks.

BW: Well, Huntsville and Madisonville, all down through there, they got a, a uh, a sandstone rock about that far down, under, you know there. And, uh, that sandstone is just like sandpaper. You drop that drill in there and you've got to change bits on there, auger about every five or six posts.

Ken: Hum

BW: Or you got 'ta wait until you get some, when you get a lot of rain. It digs good. But then, of course you, like here, you know, it's, you've got your rock here.

Ken: Yeah.

BW: But, uh, it's uh, Bettie Anne, she's got, she's probably pushing seventy or more, and she's kind-of retiring now. And sh's been building fences for years. But she built five mile every week.

Ken: In Madisonville?

BW: No, this is down South Texas.

Ken: Oh. She, you said "she"?

BW: Yeah.

Ken: She has some men working for her?

BW: About fifteen or twenty Mexicans.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: It's a strange life, you know, they just like, uh, _____, it's just like ones that build the, haul cedar fence, they do that all the time. They won't hardly build a, a t-post fence or iron pipe or nothing like that.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: They put stays everywhere they do that. They've got people, you know, they can't, they can't make it work right, you know.

Ken: Did you ever long haul cedar? Did you ever haul it to other states?

BW: I hauled to Louisiana one time.

Ken: Did big trucks ever come down here and buy from these yards and take 'em out west and?

BW: Uh, well Doug has got a truck. He got 'em, he took off and goin' to New Mexico, Clovis I think he said. And the driver left Sunday. He was supposed to've been out there Monday morning and he tore the, the clutch pan on that thing, went out in Sweetwater, and he had to get the truck and everything back down to Brownwood before he found anybody to work on it.

Ken: Hum

BW: But, uh, see this truck out here? That truck right there is the one I've been using. I guess I'm funny. I don't change body styles up. I don't change trucks up.

Ken: Um-hum

BW: I very seldom do. But I have the, I would drive a, Ford trucks, '85, '86 models, and, uh, they come out with these trucks here, ton and a half. And I bought one. And, uh, I made one trip in that thing and I parked it. It stayed parked close to a year I imagine. And I wouldn't drive it because it was too rough, you know and I just wasn't used that.

Ken: Hum

BW: I'd go to a one ton.

Ken: Um-hum

BW: And, uh, and this, uh, I had, uh, tore my other truck up, naturally, and I'd have it sittin' out there, hadn't been used. I had to use it, and, uh, that girl, the one up there, started to, she drove it to Huntsville one day. And that was what she, uh, (sound of shuffling papers). That's her right there. She's about thirty-six, thirty-seven right there.

BW004

BW: Right there, uh. You ____ went out there. I tell you, it was, in that, uh, Fort Stockton

Ken: Yeah

BW: Where that McDonald, what is it?

Ken: Observatory.

BW: Yeah

Ken: Yeah

BW: That's where that was taken.

Ken: OK. Ok.

BW: And, uh, her and I, we went out there, and her boy. And, uh, but she, ha, her boyfriend don't know how to take that, me coming with her. And I'm a cedar hauler.

Ken: Uh-huh

BW: (laugh) It ____ her mind

Ken: (laugh). That's something.

BW: That, uh, well let me, what I need to do is get a hold of my sister and, uh, and I need to go through the house here and look. I don't know if I could find that, uh, metal bread box. There are all kinds of things in that. ____ '48 to '53 or '4.

Ken: Uh-huh. OK. That'd be good.

BW: See, what it is, and I don't know, uh, my, my folks they never did didn't throw nothing away. You know, everything was kept, you know

Ken: Um-hum

BW: And, uh, it's like I've got an ole bed in there probably worth three thousand dollars.

Ken: Hum

BW: You'd have to choose, like I say I don't never...

END