

MB1

Ken: OK. I'm gona put that there. And I'm here talking to Morris Bonnet on the 26th of February, 2015, in his living room. Anyway, Morris, let me just get some more information here. Your telephone number

MB: My cell phone is 512-632-8992.

Ken: OK. And, are you a Georgetown address here?

MB: Yeah

Ken: OK

MB: 2501 County Road 255, Georgetown, 78633

Ken: 33. And what's your birthdate?

MB: July 18, '37.

Ken: And you were born here

MB: I was born in Austin.

Ken: Austin.

MB: Out there where you said you were raised, West Austin.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: My dad run a big cedar yard right there. He bought cedar from the Teagues

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: The Farmers, the Williams

Ken: Um-hum

MB: And all of them. My dad worked for King, which was one of the biggest cedar men around Austin area.

Ken: OK

MB: He worked for King

Ken: Yeah

MB: I was born in a house right in the middle of that cedar yard.

Ken: Where was

MB: It was called Hooper's Switch.

Ken: Oh, yeah

MB: Which is 2222, which turns into Bull Creek Road, uh, what's that, uh, highway used to run

MB2

Ken: I think it's gona work. There was another little button there.

MB: OK

Ken: Alright. Now we're in business.

MB: We're back in business.

Ken: I believe we are. OK. So, uh, yeah, I'm just about finished with this. And, what's your wife's name?

MB: Ida

Ken: Ida

MB: She was a Williams.

Ken: Was a Williams?

MB: Uh-huh, over at Liberty Hill. She was born and raised in Liberty Hill. Do you know Chester Williams?

Ken: I don't.

MB: Well, her dad was Chester, but she has a brother named Chester that lives right there by the four-way stop.

Ken: OK, now, you were talking about Hooper's Switch, and you grew up in Hooper's Switch.

MB: I was born there

Ken: You were born there and there was a cedar yard right there

MB: My dad run a big cedar yard for Mr. King

Ken: Uh-huh, now, is that the same King that a yard in Burnet at one time?

MB: Uh, it probably was, because he owned several cedar yards.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: My dad worked for him, I know I was, he was working for him when I was born. Then my sister, who is two and a half years younger than me, she was born in the same house. And, my dad worked for King before I was born. He run the cedar yard for him

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And he bought cedar from the Teagues and the Williams and the Farmers, and all them people back in there on Bull Creek.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: Some of 'em made whiskey.

Ken: Oh, I know, I know that Dick Boatright did, I believe.

MB: Yeah, big time.

Ken: Yeah.

MB: But see, my dad had worked in and out of the cedar business with Dick Boatright all of his life.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: Yeah, Dick Boatright owned a cedar yard. He had, he had several big, you know, what they'd done, they would get the cedar rights on these ranches, they would pay the rancher a percentage of what they paid their, the cutter for.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: They would pay the cutter, the cutter got a price per post.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And, uh, like most of the ranchers would get anywhere from ten to twenty-five percent of whatever, and a lot of times the cedar buyer would pay that percentage to get the cutters to go cut.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: Not always, but a lot of times they would.

Ken: So, I see.

MB: And that's how they come, see, that, the, I was born in '37, the dam was still being built. My dad, after, after he left there, he went to work out there on the dam. And, uh, he worked there along with my wife's dad, he was a carpenter with Mansfield Dam. And, uh, but before, this was even before I was born, all of that river they were cedar choppers in tents all, 'cause they cut that cedar, where the lake was gona be.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And King, and Henderson, Reed, they were all big cedar men. They all, some of 'em, Reed owned well they still call the Reed place back in there, you've probably heard of it. Big ranch.

Ken: OK

MB: It was all up like from Dodd City, went all the way up close to Jonestown, and then some of it, part of the Reed Ranch was on, back on there the other side of the lake over there.

Ken: What's the Dodd City, I haven't heard of that.

MB: That's a little old center, town, they called it, out on the lake. It used to be one of the meanest places in the country (laugh), beer joint – a dance hall, beer joint, way back yonder.

Ken: Is it, would it be under water now?

MB: No. It's still there. And, maybe, still the old beer joint and everything, still might. Like if you're coming out 2222

Ken: Um-hum

MB: And you cross 620 and then, uh, no wait a minute, but you come up, you know where Volente Road is?

Ken: Yep

MB: Volente Road goes around and goes through Dodd City. See, Volente Road comes out over here, uh

Ken: On 1431 there

MB: Yeah, right there in Cedar Park

Ken: Wind around a whole bunch

MB: All the way back, and it goes through Dodd City, Volente, it's all back in there.

Ken: So, Dodd City

MB: Dodge City is right on the lake.

Ken: It's, Dodd City is between Volente and where it hits 1431?

MB: Yeah

Ken: OK

MB: Yeah.

Ken: I didn't know about that. Huh!

MB: If you follow that road you'll go through it. It's real quick, but it comes out over on 1431.

Ken: Uh-huh, yeah.

MB: And they call it, out here, uh, what do they call it there? It goes by that rock quarry. It's not called Volente Road, is it? It's called something else. But it turns into, or runs into Volente Road.

Ken: Right, yes.

MB: Down there, and you've got DoddCity, and, uh, then it hits Volente

Ken: And it had a beer joint there?

MB: Oh yeah, a dance hall, and a beer joint. Big time fighting place. A lot of them old

Ken: I heard about it, I heard that again and again.

MB: It was rough. They was, well, the Wards

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And the Varners, Cowans

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: All lived out what they called Four Point, you know what Four Points is?

Ken: Yes

MB: The Four Points, and Volente, and Dodd City – all of them had beer joints and dance halls way back then.

Ken: And, uh, people liked to fight.

MB: Oh, yeah, they biggggg time fighters. (laugh)

Ken: What is that about?

MB: I don't know.

Ken: I don't like to get hurt.

MB: I never was. I was brought up in a strictly Christian home. We didn't drink or anything

Ken: Your dad didn't drink

MB: No, my dad never drank.

Ken: I'll be darned.

MB: But, I don't say he never, he may have before he got converted. He was raised right out there on, you know where Nameless School is?

Ken: Yes

MB: Well, my dad, my dad's, my granddad owned a place right there by the, right across the road from Nameless School.

Ken: OK, yeah.

MB: I guess what little schooling my dad got was right there

Ken: Uh-huh, yeah.

MB: He had owned a little place a little further up the road, there when they first came into this country, and then he bought a place across the road which my Uncle used to own all that land around Nameless. My dad's sister's husband, Nolan Turner, I don't know whether you've heard of him.

Ken: I have heard of him.

MB: OK. He used to own all that land right up there

Ken: OK. And that's Son's?

MB: No, they're distant cousins.

Ken: OK

MB: Nolan was a different, he was kin to them, a distant cousin, but it was a different set of Turners.

Ken: I see

MB: Dick Turner, Son, Punk, and all of them, their dad owned a bigggg ranch out there around Turkey Bend and back to Cow Creek

Ken: Cow Creek, right.

MB: In fact, Son and Punk still live there

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And that was D. Turner. He was a bigggg time rancher

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And, uh, Dick was the oldest son. And he, actually, he started a cedar yard in Bertram, when I was a little bitty kid. They was cutting cedar off his dad's place

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And Dick moved into Bertram and run that cedar yard there years there, and then, later on, he got a contract on the Goodrich and started that cedar yard right outside of Burnet. And I cut cedar out there when he had that yard.

Ken: So, if, uh, back to that buying of cedar. If a cedar man, say a man made twenty dollars a day cutting

MB: Yeah

Ken: He's gona give the, he's gona take two dollars away from the cedar cutter and give it to the rancher, or just give him an additional, give the rancher

MB: The cedar buyer makes the deal for the cedar.

Ken: Right

MB: OK. Usually they paid the rancher ten to twenty-five percent of whatever they want. And the cedar cutter, it's supposed to come out of his deal, but a lot of the cedar buyers would pay that percentage so the cedar cutter – would get 'em to cut the cedar.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And, usually the cedar cutter would, sometimes he would, and sometimes he didn't. Not always, but, it usually was ten to twenty-five percent went to the rancher.

Ken: Depending on the

MB: Depending on how much you cut, they paid you daily.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: Whole time in cash, some of them later on paid in checks. And later, you come in and you stand you posts off, you had a certain, you had one side a straight side and one side a crooked side. They called it the yard side and the wire side.

Ken: Right

MB: Because that won't fence – They called them line posts.

Ken: Right

MB: They was anything from a stave up to two inches. Maybe five foot, or five and a half foot. Then they had what they called aceys, deuceys, threes, the straights and crooked, and then you go up to a six inch top, that's the biggest they bought, and the fence posts, then you go into the sevens, eights, tens, twelves, whatever.

Ken: What did they use them for?

MB: They used 'em for gateposts, and corrals, and stuff like...I don't remember this, but my dad told, and my brother does, they used to buy what they called a four foot block. They shipped a lot of cedar out of Cedar Park and Whitestone on rails because they shipped to San Antone and Houston and places, they put houses on 'em.

Ken: OK

MB: Back then they built houses

Ken: Right, right

MB: They would buy 'em, they would, had to be live seven inch tops or bigger, and four foot long, and they would sometimes cut 'em off and that's – they built houses on 'em.

Ken: They'd leave it four foot high?

MB: Well, they, not always, but that's what the buyer would buy 'em at four foot long. And then they sometimes would cut 'em

Ken: Right

MB: San Antonio, and Austin

Ken: Sure

MB: I guess Houston. They shipped 'em, I guess, in boxcars. I remember daddy talk about some days they, like I said, there was five cedar yards in Cedar Park and Whitestone at one time, and then on up the road there at New Hope, they were two big cedar yards right there, and Leander had, uh, couple of big cedar yards. I don't remember a cedar yard ever being in Liberty Hill. Now Bertram had Dick Turner's for years. And then, uh

Ken: They you had, how many were in Austin.

MB: They was, of course

Ken: Hooper's Switch

MB: All these cedar yards was in the west and northern part of Austin. They wasn't none south. 'Cause there no cedar south.

Ken: Um-hum

MB: But, out there on the west side, I don't remember how many there were, I know my dad run that one big one, that's where I was born, but I don't remember a lot about it because we moved away from there when I started growing up. Then my dad farmed and trucked. All of his life. And

Ken: So, was he there at Hooper's Switch in order to load the cedar, is that what they would do, or

MB: He bought the cedar. He was what they called a cedar checker.

Ken: Um-hum

MB: When the cutters come in, my dad would stack 'em in piles that they go in. Like I told you, one inch, two inch three, four, three and a half, uh, he would, and so many go into a layer and then they criss-cross 'em. And that's how they paid the cutter. They would take a, like a blue chalk, and they would mark, they would always want to see, like, if you had four posts here on this layer, it would be marked four. Well, if you, if that layer, like four inch posts had ten posts to a layer, alright, you'd put six more there, then you'd cross ten.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And that's how they would count how many that cutter had, they would go from that chalk mark to here and then mark, everything that was on this layer, they'd mark that again. And each time a cutter come in you knew exactly how many he had in each pile. They marked every pile. And, same way on the seven, eight, tens. Seven and eights, they stacked them the same way they did the posts because it was criss cross.

Ken: Um-hum

MB: but now you get on bigger that's ten footers, they just throwed 'em in a big pile.

Ken: Right

MB: Some of 'em stacked 'em the other way, but, mostly just, and then they'd chalk 'em. And then when you'd come in with another load, unchalked, ____ would be how many you had

Ken: So every cedar post had a little mark on

MB: On that, when they staked 'em too

Ken: Uh-huh. It'd just be

MB: It would be how many was in that layer, it would be marked

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And then you go from, like, like say if you had four here, it took ten posts to a layer, you'd have six more, then you'd start another layer. Well you'd go that six, and then count the next layer and wherever that number started, that's how many that cutter would have.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And then he'd write it down in the book.

Ken: What do you think the year that the most cedar, I mean, when it was really a big deal. That must have been 1940

MB: It was when the dam was being built

Ken: OK

MB: 'cause they was, or before the dam was, and then, of course, out there in west Austin, that whole Bull Creek, uh, all in there around West Lake, and, uh, all that area in there, the Teagues and different people, they cut cedar in there until Austin grewed so much out in there they, you know, the cedar was gone

Ken: yeah

MB: but, I know they was two cedar yards there, there probably were more because, like I say, that was before my time. And, I know, I remember a little bit, because we lived there until I was four or five years old. And I can remember back when I was five years old. Most every-, I know my dad moved away from there and he kind-of got into farming and trucking after that. But then he went back in, uh, 1949, my dad started a cedar yard there in Whitestone for Nolan Turner and Buddy Rogers. They started cutting cedar off of the Sunset Ranch

Ken: Um-hum

MB: Well, my dad started that cedar yard.

Ken: OK

MB: He ran it for a year or two, then his brother took over it, and he run it, another one of his brother's took over it and run it for several years. He was, he was, pretty much, a big rancher. And then the last person who run that cedar yard was T M Pearson. That's my dad's nephew.

Ken: And I talked to him.

MB: Did you? OK. He was an old cedar cutter.

Ken: Um-hum

MB: His whole family

Ken: Um-hum. Nice man.

MB: His dad died in the cedar break.

Ken: Did he?

MB: Yeah. Forty nine years old. Fell dead of a heart attack.

Ken: Oh my gosh!

MB: My two older brothers, Tim, and another one of his brothers and somebody else, they was in New Braunfels, they were camped out in the cedar break in a tent. And my

MB003

MB: brother said that morning they went out to cut cedar and he was feeling bad, so he didn't go cut. He told 'em he was gona go lay down a while. Well, one of the boys went back to check on him and he was dead.

Ken: Heart attack?

MB: Had a heart attack. Forty nine years old.

Ken: Huh

MB: Two of his sons, one of 'em died at forty nine of the same thing, the other one died at fifty two, and TM

Ken: You said had a bad heart

MB: Had a bad heart since he was in his forties. Of course, he's eighty five now. And then I guess ever one of those boys has heart, 'cause one one, Joe, the one that's just younger than me, he had open heart surgery. Back in his forties, fifties. But he's still living. He's in his early seventies now.

Ken: Huh

MB: Him and Jim's the only two left. The other, they were three other boys, they all died of a heart attacks.

Ken: Damn!

MB: Their dad dies of heart attack. It was kind-of run in the Pearson family, a lot of heart problems

Ken: Um-hum. But basically you're working so hard, I bet a lot of 'em

MB: Yeah, back then, they didn't really know what it was,

Ken: yeah

MB: they just got sick, and if they went to a doctor, doctors couldn't detect what it was. But a lot of 'em didn't even go to the doctor. They just thought they'd get over it and they'd die.

Ken: Huh

MB: And then, like I said, my uncle, he died in the cedar brake. In a tent.

Ken: Let me, Hooper's Switch, I heard another story about it. I heard a story about a place named Landrums. It was a dance hall there.

MB: It was, I don't know all about it, but I've heard it wasn't, it wasn't right there in Hooper's Switch, it was out in that area. Uh, yeah, it was a west Austin dance hall.

Ken: Uh-huh. Were there any other dance halls coming out

MB: Oh, yeah, 183 was full of 'em. I mean, they was on both sides of the road all the way out to Jollyville. You know where Jollyville is?

Ken: Yeah, sort of, I mean, I know where Jollyville Road is.

MB: Old 183 runs right through the middle of Jollyville. There was a cedar yard in Jollyville.

Ken: Is that sort-of where Big Lots is now? And there used to be a Safeway there, it was the first, you know, you're coming up Spicewood Springs Road, all the way up Bull Creek, and then winds around and hits

MB: Hits 183. You turn left and go, it, that still goes through the town of Jollyville.

Ken: OK

MB: I don't know, I haven't been there in years, but

Ken: So you cross over 183 and then

MB: And they was a bigggg cedar yard right there on the right, right there in Jollyville. And then there was another one on up the road there.

Ken: Huh

MB: Back, way back there, two big cedar yards in Jollyville

Ken: They called that Highway 29, didn't they, back then?

MB: No, well, it was a way back yonder was 29. But it became 183 even before I was

Ken: OK

MB: 29 used to come out there behind what is now Bagdad. For years, I don't know what, there in the city park, that old log building, that was a stagecoach stop way back

Ken: OK

MB: And, uh, but that was, one time 183 was 29, and, uh, I don't remember what it was when it went to Burnet, but later on it became a US highway, then they put in 183, and then 29 run from, starts over there by Taylor and goes all the way – 29 ends at Menard.

Ken: So there were beer joints all the way out to Jollyville?

MB: Well, almost to Cedar Park, because at that time that far out in there was dry. Uh, Williamson County was dry

Ken: Yep

MB: When you crossed the county line, they were two beer joints further out, in Williamson County, like one of 'em was called Silver Top and there was one called Hill Top. They were pretty bad places.

Ken: Is the Hill Top where the Hill Top Baptist Church

MB: Hill Top Baptist Church, there was a beer joint there and then, and then going back south, right down there, there's a, right there on the side of the road there used to be a big restaurant there. That was called Silver Top beer joint

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And then you go on down past Jollyville and they was one every half a mile.

Ken: Is that right?

MB: That's plumb into Austin

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And, uh dance halls, beer joints. I remember all them because I used to, I lived in, uh, well I lived in Austin some, but I lived out there, usually around Cedar Park, Whitestone, I drove back into Austin to work. I'd drive that road every day before they ever built one of these ____

Ken: Yeah. I think it was TM Pearson that was telling me that his brother liked to fight, or something like that.

MB: Oh yeah, one of his brothers, younger than him, was in, uh, he was in the Army for ten or twelve years, and he drank a lot and liked to fight.

Ken: Yeah, I'm trying to wrap my mind around liking to, I can understand if you're a cedar cutter, with an axe, you're gona be strong and wirey.

MB: all of them guys, over in around there around Four Point, Dodd City, in that area over there, they were all cedar cutters

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And, I guess, they did want to prove what kind-of man they was, and they fought, I mean, they'd have fights every night. I know, this is a story I heard. There were two college boys come out there from UT one time, they've heard about these bad cedar choppers. And they thought they were mean. And they come out there to Four Points or Dodd City, they were gona see how tough these cedar boys were. And they found out. They whooped them boys and sent 'em back to Austin like you never (laugh)

Ken: (laugh)

MB: They, the tale was, I didn't know 'em, the tale was they said they was they said it was the worst whooping they ever got

Ken: Huh

MB: They gone out there to one of them bars and got a fight and they got their crap beat out of 'em. (laugh). That was UT, college boys. Pretty tough.

Ken: Football players or something like that.

MB: they found out they weren't

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: They were some of them old boys was pretty mean. I mean, they, they some of 'em even used a chopping axe on you, some shooting went on back then. They were mean

Ken: Uh-huh. I wonder why.

MB: I don't know. They just, born in 'em, I guess.

Ken: Uh-huh. 'Cause there were some mean families.

MB: Oh, yeah, I hate to mention names, but

Ken: Well, the Youngs come to mind. I don't know if you've ever heard of them. The Farmers. Rip Farmer, I knew Dewey

MB: yeah, I played in a band with one of the boys

Ken: One of the boys, one of the Farmers?

MB: Uh-huh

Ken: Now, I would like, I went to school with a guy named Dewey Farmer

MB: I knew Dewey. I worked with him.

Ken: Is he still alive?

MB: He is a plumber

Ken: OK.

MB: I think he is.

Ken: I would

MB: Yep, 'cause he is younger than I am

Ken: I would love to talk to one of the Farmers.

MB: Old Dewey? Well, I can give you some names.

Ken: Alright. Yeah

MB: If you really

Ken: I'd like to talk to a Farmer and I'd like to talk to a Pierce. 'cause I went to school with a Luther Pierce and there is one that lives in Florence.

MB: There is a Pierce, I'm trying to think, Ike Pierce, the one I was cutting with, I don't remember, I don't think he had a brother

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: Now, there was some cousins that he had, that I don't know none of those. I knew Ike well, In fact, Ike used to be my neighbor, me and him cut cedar together on the Goodrich for about three, four years. He was a good old boy, and oh, you talk about stout, oh, of course he was big

Ken: Um-hum

MB: He was like six four, six five

Ken: Um-hum The Farmers were big, weren't they

MB: That, the Farmers were, they were big time, I mean, they were rough

Ken: Um-hum

MB: I mean, I knew several of 'em and they loved to fight. And, uh, I was telling you about Ike Pierce. He had hands, his hands make two of mine.

Ken: Hum

MB: And that guy could pick up an eight foot post and just throw it end over end. I mean, you, this guy, he was cutting cedar up there with Dick Turner one time, a guy come in there, and he's watching him hand the posts up. And he got ___ and bet him, made a bet with him. He said, you can't throw one of them posts over that truck. So Ike took him up. He picked that post, swooooooosh, plumb over the the loaded truck.

Ken: How big a post?

MB: I'm talking about a six inch, Six and a half foot long

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: He picked it up and throwed it

Ken: Huh

MB: (laugh) I mean, it's kind-of unbelievable what you learn watching 'em, I mean, I worked a side of him

Ken: How strong they were

MB: They, I thought I knew how to cut cedar, 'cause, you know, my dad, I grew up packing posts, not cutting 'em. But, I thought, he actually really showed me how to cut cedar. He cut 'em, he graded 'em as he cut 'em. He could tell you within a dollar how much he had on that truck.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And when he, I worked with him for one year solid, he was teaching me, how to do this, how to do that, one day he was, uh, his truck had broke down and he got me to haul a load to town. And I was stacking 'em on my truck, he was handing 'em to me. And I was watching how he stacks 'em. I said "I think I finally figured out what you're doing." He said "well it took you a year to learn that." (laugh)

Ken: (laugh)

MB: Me and him, we went at it all the time. And he says "yeah", he says "that's what I've been trying to." That day on I increased ten to fifteen dollars a day. By just watching him.

Ken: 'Cause you could get more posts on the truck?

MB: Right, you graded 'em. You cut 'em according to grade. I was cutting for the number. And I would usually have more posts than he would, but he'd beat me twenty, thirty bucks.

Ken: I see

MB: He knew how to cut 'em and grade 'em as he cut 'em. And that was the trick, you, you don't just cut 'em for the number, because the money don't add up. You cut 'em for the grade, because you knew certain posts would pay good money because they were a good seller. Like a four inch, six and a half foot post was the best selling post on the yard. It was a line post for cedar

Ken: Uh-huh. For a fence post.

MB: And then the eight foots, eight five sixes, and then they go into what's called eight blocks, where a seven, eight inch, ten inch tops.

Ken: Do you remember how much you were getting back when you were cutting?

MB: Yeah, like

Ken: Line posts

MB: A yard four, when I quit cutting back then, they paid thirty eight cents a piece.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: They had a, on the yard side, the straight side, they had a two, two and a half, three, three and a half, and then they went four, five, sixes. Uh, four inch posts were paying thirty eight cents and a three inch was paying, probably, around twenty and a three and a half maybe twenty-five and then I don't remember the little ones. I know the two inch, what they called a yard deuce, was paying seven cents.

Ken: Um-hum

MB: the straight ones.

Ken: Uh-huh, and that was just used for a stave?

MB: They used them only for staves.

Ken: Um-hum

MB: And then they had a stave, which was a five and a half, with like two inch down, and, but they were actually called – they used the regular two, six and a half foot by two inch for different things other than staves. But those staves was a five and a half foot post.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And they put it in between lines, just in the wire. It didn't go in the ground

Ken: Yep

MB: What it done, it helped the wire.

Ken: Right, no I've got it, I've got some on my place. Living on the Turner Ranch, is Jose Palacios, if you ever need a fence built, that family's built, been building fence for decades and they built a good fence

MB: Like I said, back then, that's what cedar was used for, but boy, down south, the King Ranch, like I said, my dad hauled cedar posts there for twenty five years. They never bought anything under eight foot.

Ken: 'Cause they

MB: 'Cause that country is sandy. And they would bury them and they had to have six foot fences.

Ken: Yep

MB: If you'd seen some of their cattle you'd understand. I've been all over the Kings Ranch.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: 'Cause I used to, in between jobs and day jobs I would drive my dad's truck and deliver posts for him.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And I've been all over the Kings Ranch. They bought all eight foot stuff. And it's usually eight fives and sixes and eight sevens. That's about all they ever bought.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And I've been on them places where you go way, I mean, It's kind of hard to believe that there is that much open country down there. It's unreal down there. See, they was the one, there was a million acres in the Kings Ranch

Ken: Oh

MB: They've sold some of it off, but at one time there was a million acres, Well, you know, Dolph Briscoe owns a million acres, or did, before he died. But I've been all over the Kings Ranch. I delivered posts to, and those Mexicans, they lived wayyy back in this pasture, most of 'em had these big Quonset huts or some big metal building and that's where they lived, of course they were all wetbacks, but that's where they lived

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And they worked cattle. Kings Ranch, old man King started that Santa Gertruder breed

Ken: Yes

MB: Him, and he had a partner, and his partner moved out by Post, Texas and he had a, he's dead too, and started a huge ranch out there, but him and old man King were partners. See, old man King had two daughters.

Ken: Uh-huh Well, tell me, back when it was thirty eight cents, how much, how many posts would you be able to cut in a day?

MB: I used to try to cut two to two hundred and fifty pieces. And, when I quit cutting back then, in, I quit cutting cedar in the early eighties, I mean I cut off and on, I was, I was making anywheres from eighty five to a hundred and ten dollars a day.

Ken: In the early, in the 70s, in the 1970?

MB: In the early eighties, middle seventies. I went up to Goodrich one time in seventy, in 1970, went up there and cut cedar for a little over a year, like I said, I was in sheet metal then I went back to construction, then I went back up there with Ike Pierce in '75, I guess, '74, '75

MB004

MB: And I was there three years that time. And the reason I quit, me and him had went over to Dripping Springs and, a guy wanted us to come over there and cut some cedar, we went over there and we cut - and a log fell on me. And, this foot, it fell right in here and busted every bone in my foot.

Ken: Um

MB: And after that I couldn't get around in the brush.

Ken: Um-hum

MB: Two or three years later I could, but, I went back to the Goodrich and I tried to cut cedar and I stumbled around, I was afraid I was gona hurt myself

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: So, I went back

Ken: That wasn't uncommon, was it, to get hurt?

MB: Oh, no, I had, my oldest brother, he cut his, uh, right foot, let's see, yeah, he cut it here, right behind his little toe, cut it plumb off.

Ken: Cut his foot off?

MB: Plumb off. The little bone, the little toe bone was the only bone he didn't cut in two. And he was in the Sunset Ranch, they loaded him in the truck and they took him, he held his foot with a shirt wrapped around it or something, and they come out, and the people, we lived right there in Whitestone at that time, and picked my mom up and went to the Brackenridge Hospital. They sewed his foot back on.

Ken: Hum

MB: Now, this is where, I'm gona give you a little religion (laugh) my mom was a prayer warrior. She grabbed his foot and rode in that truck

Ken: Prayer warrior?

MB: Oh yeah, she believed totally in God. She prayed all the way to that hospital. They sewed his foot back on, this was in 19, I want to say it was in '48, '49, 'cause he was like seventeen, eighteen years old.

Ken: Hum

MB: And he went from the Sunset Ranch to Brackenridge Hospital. That was the only hospital in Austin. There was Saint Davids

Ken: Two hours probably, back then.

MB: At least. In a little 1946 Ford Truck, is what they hauled him in. And they sewed his foot back on and the doctors, and they drafted him, he was 22 years old, he was drafted in the Army. He was married. And one doctor turned him down because of his foot. And another doctor said "no, he's good enough." So he went into the Army and, uh, in basic training he had to fall out. And, you know, they'd go on their big walks, you know how, if you was in the service, you know they walked a lot.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: Well he couldn't walk very far, he'd go to hurting. So they put him in heavy artillery. Instead of going to Korea, they sent him to Germany.

Ken: Um-hum

MB: And he spent, I don't know, a year in Germany. My mama believed in God healing his foot.

Ken: Well, I've heard the same story from a man named, uh, Ratliff. He's a cutter, cutter family from the Burnet, Lometa area

MB: Yeah

Ken: You know. And he tells a very similar story of him cutting his foot off practically and his mom putting her, laying hands on it

MB: That's what my mom done

Ken: The way he put it.

MB: She laid hands on him and prayed on him all the way to the hospital.

Ken: Man

MB: And one doctor wanted to take his foot on off

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And the other doctor said "no, let's try to sew it back on." They sewed it back and it grewed back together

Ken: Isn't that something

MB: And he was, In less than a year he was walking as good as

Ken: Those axes are so sharp

MB: My brother was known – him and TM.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: Them two guys were known to have the sharpest axes of any cedar cutter around. They would buy axes, of course you didn't have a grinder. You didn't grind the axe because that would ruin the metal. They would use files. They would stick that axe in a stump and they'd sit there and they'd file it and what, they had double bit axes, double bit, two and a half pound axes

Ken: Right

MB: And they would file that thing down to where it was real thin. It would be razor sharp. But they could cut the cedar, I mean, they could sink that thing in a cedar log like you wouldn't believe (laugh). TM Pearson was one of the best. I would have to say he was one of the best cedar cutters

Ken: He showed me his axe

MB: Yeah. Him and my brothers. Of course they all cut cedar together. They were, they were some of the best, and then, you ever heard of the Wards?

Ken: Yep

MB: OK. Charley Ward

Ken: Charley Ward

MB: He's still alive. He is in a home in Leander.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: One of them. About all he ever done – cut cedar.

Ken: Um-hum

MB: Richard Ward, his brother, lived by me there in Leander. I knew 'em all my life

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: They were cedar cutters out of this world. I mean, they made good money. Richard had a cedar yard for several years.

Ken: Yeah

MB: But Charley, I cut cedar with him, and later on, when the chainsaw come out. See, when the chainsaw first come out the cedar buyer didn't want the cedar. Because they claimed the ranchers complained about that flat top

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: The reason they cut posts the way they did, it would turn water.

Ken: Um-hum

MB: You know, they always had 'em cut like this

Ken: Right

MB: That would turn water

Ken: Um-hum

MB: And when the saw come out it squared 'em off.

Ken: Right

MB: And the ranchers didn't like it 'cause they would collect water and make the posts rot.

Ken: Right

MB: When they first came out with the chainsaw, oh, they fought it, the cedar buyer, they, he'd give you bad grades, and, I mean, they'd, then later on that's all there was.

Ken: So you were making more money with an axe cut because you were getting more money

MB: Back then

Ken: Um-hum

MB: 'cause some of the guys back then could cut more cedar with an axe than they could cut, of course, when chainsaws first come out, oh man, they were heavy and big, I mean, of course, now, they've got 'em so light it's, you can sling 'em almost like an axe.

Ken: I know.

MB: I've got four of 'em over there in my barn.

Ken: I've got me a Husqvarna 356. It's not the ones they sell in Lowes. It's a professional one. 'Cause I was up at Meyer's Cedar Yard one time buying cedar, as a matter of fact. It was a Friday afternoon and there must have been twenty guys bringing in cedar and every one of 'em had a Husqvarna

MB: 'Cause Meyers sold 'em.

Ken: Huh?

MB: Meyers sold 'em.

Ken: Yeah, he did, he sold 'em to 'em.

MB: I hauled cedar to Meyers.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: I cut some cedar back here a few, oh, ten or twelve years ago, but I'd go cut cedar right now because I don't have nothing to do. But I can't find no cedar to cut.

Ken: It's no good, is it? The cedar that you do cut. If you find

MB: Well, it's not as good as the old. They still buy it. Meyers still buys a lot of cedar.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And there is a cedar yard right up here, what's it called, Green's Corners.

Ken: Right, um-hum

MB: I don't know who owns that one. He buys a lot of cedar. There is good money in it, 'cause boy I took a load up there at Meyers one day and I couldn't believe the price he was giving. I said "man, this is what I need to be doing." I had a little pickup, three quarter ton, it's an old Ford pickup, sitting back there on the back place. I loaded it down. I had a little old bitty standard and I had, of course, I, like I said, I learned how to cut the prime stuff. I took it up there and it brought a hundred and forty bucks.

Ken: Huh

MB: On a pickup. I used to load a two ton truck down. 'cause I had, most of the time I was cutting up there I had I had a wetback that packed 'em and loaded 'em.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And I would have, sometimes, two hundred fifty, three hundred pieces and they'd barely bring a hundred dollars. You take that up there to Meyers now and it will bring five hundred bucks.

Ken: Huh. Now, back in those days, could you make, while you were cutting with a chainsaw, could you make as much money cutting cedar as doing something else?

MB: You usually could make more.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: It was just a lot harder work. Nobody would do it. I made better money cutting cedar than any construction job I was ever on.

Ken: Huh.

MB: But, like I said, it was harrrrrrrd work. I mean, I can go to the cedar brake, me and Ike Pierce, we lived, both lived in Cedar Park, and we would driving to Goodrich, we'd leave our house four o'clock in the morning, and we'd be in the cedar brake by daylight.

Ken: And that's up, uh, getting near

MB: Burnet, right out of Burnet was the Goodrich. Actually there, you go out of Burnet there, about three miles, to that county road goes to Silver Creek that goes through the Goodrich Ranch all the way to Lampasas.

Ken: OK OK That's the road that parallels 281, the back road

MB: Way back there. It goes all the way through the Goodrich Ranch.

Ken: OK. I see.

MB: During deer season at each end of that road they had game wardens. There was gates locked. The game warden had to let you in and out

Ken: Huh.

MB: Because they, there was so many deer hunters. We could only cut in a certain pasture during deer season because of the deer hunters. They would have designated, I mean, like I said, a little pasture, like ten thousand acre pastures. And they would put us in one pasture to cut cedar during deer season because of deer hunters.

Ken: And they were doing, were they doing that to get the money for the cedar, or, partly, to clear it out of there?

MB: Well, a lot of it, because, see way, not in my time or your time, but way back yonder, Richard Ward was telling me, he said when his dad came into this country, there wasn't hardly any cedar back there. It was prairie land. The robins and the coons brought the cedar in this part of the country

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: You know, cedar grows pretty fast.

Ken: Right

MB: You can go cut a, we call it posting, in other words, cutting the prime stuff – leaving the rest,

Ken: Um-hum

MB: You can go in there and cut all of it out, the good stuff, and let that, let that cedar sit twenty years and it's another good cedar brake again. That's how fast it grows.

Ken: So, the, uh, back in the axe cutting days, I mean, the pay wasn't very much, there's hardly anything else you could do to make money

MB: Well, back then, they just ... its what I call, it was survival.

Ken: Yeah. But I'm thinking, what else was there to

MB: There wasn't

Ken: There wasn't anything else to do.

MB: Nothing else to do. Unt-uh.

Ken: Now there was a quarry and that's what, I'll tell you what

MB: Texas Quarry

Ken: It was, uh, Henry, it was, uh, Artie Henry's wife Betty

MB: Yeah

MB: well see Artie is my daddy's first cousin

Ken: OK. OK.

MB: You'll find I'm kin to everybody

Ken: See, I've got a

MB: OK. Artie Henry, uh, his dad and uh my grandpa, my dad's dad

OK, a Bonnet married a Henry girl. A Henry married a Bonnet girl. Brother and sister married brother and sister.

Ken: Right, right, right

MB: Artie was my dad's, what they called a double cousin.

Ken: That's cool.

MB: Him and, there was Artie, Les, and Buzz Henry. They all had little ranches right there out of Cedar Park.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: well, uh, Buzz, he's Artie's boy, I don't know if you know him

Ken: no

MB: He's in the construction – he lives right out, right by where his dad used to live.

Ken: Uh-huh. She, Betty, I guess, the mother, was saying that you could make more money cutting cedar than you could at the quarry.

MB: You could. You just, just nobody wanted ... Oh, the quarry didn't pay anything.

Ken: OK

MB: The quarry paid very low. Oh, yeah, it, there were a lot of people would go work in the quarry, and they'd go back to the cedar brake.

Ken: Um-hum

MB: 'cause they made a lot more money cutting cedar than they did in the quarry. It was good money. It is today. It just, you ain't gona find anybody to work that hard.

Ken: So, you'd go out to the brakes and you'd be cutting at daybreak.

MB: When it starts turning daybreak we would usually load our trucks around noon.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And then, 'cause we'd have a load cut by twelve, one o'clock. We would load up, we would be in the yard three, three thirty, and be home by five o'clock.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And sometimes before. But, when I quit cutting in the Goodrich, I was cutting anywheres from eighty five to a hundred and ten dollars a day. This is back in the seventies and early eighties. That was good money back then.

Ken: That was good money back then.

MB: And, I know, when I got married, of course my wife was born and raised in Liberty Hill, she, she kind-of frowned on me being a cedar cutter, you know, and I said "hey, I make more money at this than I did – I was a Union sheet metal worker and I could go out there and cut cedar and make more money than I was making as a Union sheet metal worker.

Ken: 'cause there was sort-of a reputation, wasn't there, back then, I don't think it still is so much

MB: No, it 'aint now, but back then... Of course, most cedar cutters lived in the cedar brake. Lived in tents.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: But they made a good living.

Ken: Yeah

MB: And a lot of 'em were dirty

Ken: Sure, well, you'd have to, I mean, that is a dirty

MB: How you gona, when you go out there and you're wringing wet with sweat

Ken: Exactly, and you're picking up those posts that got sap all over them.

MB: I was gona tell you, when I'd go to the cedar brake, within an hour I would have water running, I wouldn't have a dry stitch on me from here to my knees. I would be, because all, I usually always took a, at least a shirt, 'cause I'd be so wet sweating by, by the, within an hour

Ken: Yeah

MB: You sling that axe or a chainsaw, you're gona sweat. That's why we stayed in such good shape.

Ken: Yeah, yeah

MB: When I joined this gym, I'm seventy seven years old, well, you know Aaron

Ken: Yeah

MB: He started going and working out, he says "I want to ask you something." And I said "OK." He said "somewhere in your life you done a lot of lifting." I said "yeah, I'm an ex-cedar cutter."

Ken: (laugh)

MB: He said, "man you're doing stuff here"

Ken: 'cause you were, you were picking up weight there huh?

MB: Yeah, and he said "You're doing seventy. I can't get fifty year olds to do ." I've been blessed with good health.

Ken: Yeah. That's great.

MB: Yeah, he worked with, in fact, he give me about two months free sessions just to work with me.

Ken: Oh, that's great.

MB: I haven't been going here lately. I've got to get back. I picked up about five pounds since I quit. And I'm gona get back going. I've kind of got, my knees got to bothering me.

Ken: Yeah

MB: I've got arthritis in my knees. Of course, a whole lot of this is packing big posts.

Ken: You mean, holding it on your shoulder?

MB: Up on the shoulder, packing 'em to the truck. 'cause you've got to get 'em out of the brush.

Ken: and that was the hard part, obviously

MB: That was harder than cutting 'em. I, my two oldest boys, in the summer time, that's where they went, the cedar brake. My oldest son was a big football player. And they told him, " you don't need to lift weights." 'cause he was stout. And he, he loved to work.

Ken: What did one of those big posts weigh? That you could carry

MB: Oh, I don't know, it depends on what size it is

Ken: yeah, the biggest ones you could carry.

MB: Oh, I packed 'em over two hundred pounds on my shoulder.

Ken: Wow.

MB: I know Richard Ward used to, when I was living by him and I was in the trucking business, and the days I was at home he'd get me to go to the cedar brake. 'cause he'd get me to pack 'em out.

MB005

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And he always, 'cause I always had legs like this, and shoulders, he always bragging on how I could, so, you've got to know how to put it on your shoulder.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: 'cause if you don't it'll kill ya. I taught my oldest boy when he was about fourteen, fifteen years old, how to shoulder a post.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: When you shoulder one you get, you get it, stand it up, you come over, you get it on your shoulder, and you'd get it to where it's just a little over balanced to the front. 'Cause you hold it like this

Ken: Uh-huh, uh-huh

MB: And you, you come up, you lift more with your legs than you do your back. But you do a lot of lifting with your back, but that's why I always had big strong legs.

Ken: Oh, OK.

MB: And, uh, when my son was in football he was a running back in high school, he had legs, he could drive like you couldn't believe. And these coaches all bragged "'Cause you worked with your dad.'" And then, too, I worked in the – me and Ike Pierce, we contracted hay hauling.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: Lot of times in the hot summer – It would be so hot in the cedar brake, you'd get somebody gona _____. But most of the time, if I went out there and done done now what I done then, I was dying today, but, I mean, we worked through that heat like it wasn't even there.

Ken: Huh

MB: It just, it didn't bother me. 'Cause I was used to it.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And I went up there to that Goodrich in the winter time, it'd be so dang cold my hands would , just froze, I'd hold onto the muffler of that saw to warm my hands up.

Ken: (laugh) oh, boy! Didn't wear gloves!

MB: Oh, yeah. No, I wore gloves summer or winter

Ken: Uh-huh, uh-huh

MB: 'cause you can't handle them posts, I mean, some people do, but, I always, you know, them little knobby white

Ken: Uh-huh, yeah

MB: 'cause that tar sticks to that cedar. It don't flip

Ken: Right, right

MB: and, but I wear a pair of gloves out in two days.

Ken: Yeah (laugh)

MB: And I, when we were all growing up, in the winter time, in the fall, we went to west Texas pulling bolls. We done that every year. Work in the cedar in the summer, usually around here your crops are out by the end of September, and then way out west they start in October pulling bolls We'd go all the way as far as Lubbock Pulling bolls

Ken: But you wouldn't pick around here, huh?

MB: Yeah, we'd pick, 'cause my dad usually farmed here. And, uh, we'd pick our own cotton

Ken: How many acres of cotton would you have?

MB: Uh, I don't remember, it wasn't ever that big.

Ken: Uh-huh. How many bales would he be able to get up in a year

MB: Well, out west, they'd sometimes make two bales an acre.

Ken: Oh, I was thinking your dad, I mean, how many bales would, would ya'll

MB: I don't, I don't, I couldn't really say. I don't know.

Ken: But you picked for a while, a couple of weeks?

MB: yeah, we picked here, like going to school. My younger brother and sister, they was all, but I never started school in September

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: Sometimes I wouldn't start school until after Christmas.

Ken: OK, 'cause you

MB: 'Cause we went west pulling boels.

Ken: OK. What would you rather do?

MB: I'd rather cut cedar.

Ken: Alright. You're not the only one that said that.

MB: ___ on your back. You've got to pull out a little white trailer. I'd rather cut cedar any time.

Ken: Uh-huh. I've heard that before. In fact, uh, Boatright, John T., I was talking to him and he, he was saying the same thing. You know him?

MB: Yeah.

Ken: Yeah, yeah, he

MB: That Jim's brother.

Ken: yeah, yeah. I knew Jim real well.

MB: We grew up with him. My brother, my oldest brother and Jim went to school together

Ken: OK

MB: They were the same age.

Ken: Jim was a great guy.

MB: Oh, yeah

Ken: I worked at

MB: And his boy, Greg, went to school with my boy.

Ken: I don't know Greg very well. I worked with his mother, Ruth, at the Post Office for

MB: She was raised in, she was a Pruett.

Ken: Is she from the Pruett, there is a cedar cutting family named Pruett too.

MB: Uh, I don't know, maybe her dad cut some cedar.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: I don't know, what was her dad's name? He's been, he died way back yonder. She was close kin to 'em. But she was raised right there in Leander.

Ken: Um-hum

MB: And, uh, she had a sister Dorothy, and then they had a younger, a couple younger brothers. I remember BW. I went to school with him. And then there was another one. But, yeah, of course, years ago, when about, we lived, this was, before I was born, dad lived down, well, he lived down there, that's when they started that, running that cedar yard, but him and Jim went to school together down on Bull Creek.

Ken: Um-hum

MB: That's where the old man

Ken: Right

MB: Well see, he was, he made whisky.

Ken: Dick

MB: Yeah

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: He'd make whisky and take it into Austin and sell it. He was big time bootlegger.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: Whisky maker.

Ken: He's not the only one. The Simons did too.

MB: Oh, Simons

Ken: Did you know any of them?

MB: The Farmers. OH, I know a bunch of Simons. Eddie, uh, Willie

Ken: Willie, uh-huh

MB: And, uh

Ken: Dick Simons

MB: Dick Simons, there was another one, two others I knew well. One of 'em I cut cedar with, me and, uh, Ike Pierce. Me and him and what was that, Simon, man I know his man

Ken: Don?

MB: No, it wasn't Don. It was Connie

Ken: Connie

MB: Connie Simons. Had a boy named Connie too

Ken: OK

MB: Uh, I cut cedar with him. He was a big 'ole tall slim, hard, stout as a mule. He got in a fight down there in Cedar Park one time in a bar. Actually this old boy tried to pick a fight at him. My nephew told me this. He was in that bar and 'ol Connie said "look, I don't want to fight you." And the old boy was like, he kept on, kept on. And, I don't know, seems to me like, my nephew says, he hit Connie or something, and old Connie just grabbed him by the back of the neck, 'cause Connie was six foot six tall. He had arms like that. He took that old boy by the belt and the neck and just drove his head into the bar.

Ken: Oh!

MB: He pulled him out of the bar and set him on the seat and bought him a beer.

Ken: (laugh)

MB: And he told him, he said "I don't want to fight you." (laugh) After that he _____

Ken: Isn't that something

MB: But them guys was that stout. I mean, that's how, you didn't mess with them

Ken: So, you know, I'm thinking, I didn't not realize, alright, the Simons and the Boatrights and the Shannons, they were all Bull Creek families.

MB: Bull Creek and all of 'em were into cedar.

Ken: And all of 'em were into cedar.

MB: I know the Shannons, the Simons, the Boatrights, I know

Ken: And I didn't realize the Bonnets were also from that area

MB: Well, the Bonnets were more-or-less from out here on Sandy Creek.

Ken: Uh-huh, OK

MB: That's where my grandpa owned a place, my dad grew up out here on Sandy Creek.

Ken: OK

MB: See, the Bonnets, my grandpa actually be my great, my great-grandpa, whether it was his dad or his grandpa, came here from Germany.

Ken: OK

MB: They landed him down here in Indianola.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: I've got a cousin that went back to Germany where they came from and she wrote a book on it. She got the whole story. The town they grew up in. They called us, they had called Bonnet a French name, but there was a river that separated France and Germany, and they grew up, were born, grew up on the German side.

Ken: I see.

MB: They were German. My grandpa, you called him a Frenchman, you might get a whooping.

Ken: (laugh)

MB: He did not like to be called a Frenchman. 'cause Bonnet name is Bonét.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: It is a French name, and he says he is German.

Ken: OK.

MB: Anyway, I guess he was.

Ken: No, so the, those were, what were other, more names? Sylvesters?

MB: Um-hum

Ken: Were they, they were in the Four Points area?

MB: No, the Sylvesters, one of them married a Bonnet. They lived over by the dam.

Ken: OK.

MB: There was Bobby and Junior and there was Earnest, but they grew up right there next to the Mansfield Dam.

Ken: Uh-huh. And the Williams? Is that another name?

MB: Uh, there's several different Williams. My wife was a Williams.

Ken: OK

MB: She's not kin to any of them Williams. There was a bunch of Williams back in there. I don't know if you knew Red Williams?

Ken: Don't know him.

MB: I think he married a Bonnet girl, and he was raised down there, uh, right off 183 going into Austin. Close to all them beer joints.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: He was one of those, his, his dad was killed in a fight.

Ken: Killed in a fight?

MB: Cut wide open, or shot, I don't know which

Ken: Sylvester, Mr. Sylvester?

MB: No, no, Williams.

Ken: Williams, OK.

MB: Now Sylvester, their, my of course, all of them, Junior is the only one that is still living. He's in his eighties. But, they were friends with those Sylvester boys. One of 'em married Nolan Turner's daughter. Which her mama was a Bonnet.

Ken: Who was it that was killed in a fight, though, Williams?

MB: Williams, Red Williams

Ken: Red Williams

MB: And, uh

Ken: I don't know Red, yeah.

MB: He's dead now

Ken: What were some other names, that were sort-of between the Bull Creek area

MB: Well you had the Cowans

Ken: Cowan

MB: The Wards

Ken: OK

MB: And, uh

Ken: Preece?

MB: Preece, a lot of Preecees out in that area, and, uh, well, the Shannons kind-of a lot of them grew up down on Bull Creek, and then there were several, there were two, a couple three different Boatright families, uh, 'cause Dick had a brother down in there and he had kids. They all grew up down in there around Bull Creek. The Farmers, the Youngs, and the Williams, a lot of 'em were whisky makers, and, uh, a lot of 'em burnt coal.

Ken: Yeah

MB: See, my dad done some of that, way back there.

Ken: Way back there

MB: The Wechters

Ken: OK

MB: There was a big Wechter family down in there that, they, their dad, they, they burned a lot of coal. 'cause they, back then in Austin, they heated everything with coal and they burned that, cedar made good coal.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And, I don't know how you make a kiln, but they had certain ways you had to

Ken: I heard all about it.

MB: And they'd sell that coal in Austin

Ken: Yeah

MB: And it made pretty good money

Ken: Uh-huh, yeah.

MB: And, uh, I think Dick Boatright maybe had some dealings with coal.

Ken: He did, and he would, uh, I heard this story, he would take it, I think it was John T.

MB: Cover his whisky up

Ken: He would cover his whisky up, take it to the capitol and sell it. And there was a train that went by and one of the Boatright, one of his – mother, grandmother, one of the two – would, uh, she'd make some sort of sign for the train, saying that ___ had the whisky

MB: I didn't know that

Ken: (laugh)

MB: But I know there was a lot of that went on back then.

Ken: The Farmers, yeah, I would love to get a name of a Farmer to talk to, and a Pierce, because the Farmers, they had a place right there at 35th Street, and, uh, where Shoal Creek and 35th

MB: Well, this boy I played with, that was his dad.

Ken: OK. What was

MB: His dad was Rip Farmer

Ken: Red Farmer. Can I talk to him sometime?

MB: I'll ask him.

Ken: Ask him, if you could.

MB: We go to the Cowboy Church

Ken: Uh-huh, sure

MB: He plays steel guitar

Ken: What is his name?

MB: He's Mike.

Ken: Mike Farmer

MB: He lives out there, uh, right off Round Mountain Road

Ken: Oh, right, yeah.

MB: I'll ask him if he wants to talk to you.

Ken: I'd love to talk to him and

MB: And, now, he's full of a lot of bull

Ken: (laugh) That's alright,

MB: He's a good boy

Ken: that's alright

MB: But he can, now, fighting stories, he can give you, 'cause his dad owned one of them big bars down there. And, of course, his older brothers, Mike's the only one left. He's sixty three, two, 63.

Ken: That's pretty young

MB: But all his brothers are dead. But they were fighters. And they loved it. They loved to fight. And they were good at it too. (laugh)

Ken: (laugh) That is something.

MB: I'll let him tell you the stories, but he can tell you some good ones.

Ken: OK. Good. Good.

MB: I'll ask him. I'll see him soon, I'll tell him, he can't walk right now, he's got, about two years ago had surgery, put two steel rods right down here, he hurt his back years ago, got a pretty good settlement out of it, but, and then, recently, he's been into the, was in the hospital with the knee, he's got some kind of gout in one of his knees and he can't hardly, he has to use a walker right now. But he's, just now, he's just not healing up, been in and out of the hospital, but, he's a good boy, good Christian guy, you know

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: Like I said, I go way back

Ken: You guys play, what do you play?

MB: I play guitar and he plays steel

Ken: OK

MB: He's good on guitar. We've got a band out there in that church, you ought to hear it.

Ken: Oh, I bet.

MB: We play country gospel

Ken: You guys ever play at the Stocktank? I hear they're playing.

MB: Me and Mike and Jerry Davis and Bobby, another guy, we went out there and played. They want us to come back. We went out there and played one night.

Ken: I wish you'd let me know when you're going to go back out there because would like to hear

MB: Jerry Davis, you know, he's a fiddler

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: I know you've heard of his daddy, Jimmy Joe

Ken: Yeah, yeah

MB: One of the best fiddlers that ever was around this

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: Jerry is pretty good hisself.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: We've got a guy in our band, actually, he's our band director. He's a world champion fiddler. He came here from Branson.

Ken: OK

MB: He played with the Sons of the Pioneers for the last eleven years.

Ken: OK

MB: He's been on the Grand 'Ole Opry, and all of that, that guy can play a fiddle.

Ken: You know Albert Boatright? He plays

MB: Yeah, Albert Boatright, now Albert is a

Ken: Guitar

MB: I don't know if he's kin to

Ken: He is, he's kin to them.

MB: OK, Mike Farmer knows him real well.

Ken: OK. 'Cause they had a band

MB: I don't know Albert

Ken: 'cause I bet it's the same band.

MB: He's got a band

Ken: Yeah

MB: He's got a band and Mike Farmer knows him real well.

Ken: OK. I've talked to Albert

MB: They may have played together.

Ken: He lives out in Marble, Kingsland

MB: Mike had his own band for a long time. He used to play in honky tonks, he had his own band a long time ago, then he got saved, got in church

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And I've been playing with him out there at church now for about three years.

Ken: Tell me, did you know, uh, did a lot of those families back in the '20s, '30s and stuff, were they church going people?

MB: A lot of 'em were. A lot of 'em were. Not all of 'em were, but a lot of 'em were.

Ken: Uh-huh. So a lot of 'em didn't even drink.

MB: Oh, yeah. See, my, my family, we grew up against it. Totally

Ken: Uh-huh, uh-huh

MB: And, I used to tie one on (laugh)

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: I quit. Way back yonder.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: But, my older brother, the one that lives out there, Doug, he was one of those ones that would do it. Me and him were probably the worst out of the bunch.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: But we, we both done quite a bit of drinking, but it didn't last long

Ken: Oh, OK

MB: Because of our mom, I guess, our bringing up, it didn't take us long to learn that there were better things to do (laugh)

MB006

Ken: Now is your, your, Williams, your your wife is a Williams. Do 'yall have Whitts in your family, too, don't you?

MB: My mama was a Whitt.

Ken: Your mama was a Whitt. That's what it was.

MB: Yeah

Ken: So, the Whitts, now they're a, they're a Liberty Hill family.

MB: Oh, yeah. My mom was raised on a ranch right out there on Round Mountain Road.

Ken: Yeah

MB: That's where she was born and raised. Her daddy owned a ranch back there.

Ken: Can you say exactly where it is?

MB: Oh yeah, I've been on it, I, they, he moved off, see, way back when I was about five or six years old my grandpa had a heart attack and the doctor told him he had to leave the ranch. So, he sold his ranch and bought, when you go, you know when you go over old 29 and cross the railroad track?

Ken: Yeah

MB: OK. That house sitting right there on the corner? Well my grandpa used to own twenty five acres. He built that house back in the '40s. He built that house right there.

Ken: See, now, we live on a ranch that we

MB: You live off Round Mountain Road?

Ken: Off Round Mountain Road.

MB: Whereabouts?

Ken: On the Whitt place. We, we bought that in 1973

MB: Your ___name was Bernard

Ken: Bernard Whitt.

MB: That's my mama's brother.

Ken: OK

MB: Part of that was my grandpas. You know where Bernard's old house was?

Ken: Yes, we lived there for five years.

MB: OK. He traded that for a place in Okalla

Ken: OK, yeah, yeah, that's right

MB: My grandpa lives right east of him.

Ken: OK

MB: Back in, he owned, I don't remember how many acres, over, over a hundred acres

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: How my grandpa come about it, the Whitts came here from Virginia. My grandpa was just a young boy. They were six families. That's when the government was giving land grants.

Ken: Um-hum

MB: I think each one of them got forty or sixty acres. They was all right there together. Well, my grandpa wound up with that.

Ken: OK

MB: 'cause all of them but him moved off to California.

Ken: OK

MB: And he wound up with all of their places

Ken: Alright

MB: And then Bernard bought a place adjoining him, and then he wound up buying part of that from my grandpa

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: He lived there for, his son grew up there, but that's, of course, Bernard was raised right there

Ken: Right, yeah

MB: But then he bought that, we he come out, he was in World War II. And, uh, when he come out of the Army he bought that little ranch

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: Where he lived. He ranched there for years and then he traded that and bought a bigger place up here to Okalla

Ken: Right

MB: And he lived there and he finally, he sold that and retired, and bought a house up on, in Tow, on the lake. And his son still __, I know his son, he only had the one kid, from what I know his son still lives there.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: His mama, of course, him and her both dead. But, they were my mom's, he was younger than my mom. My mom was the oldest daughter and she had one brother older than her. Alvin Whit, have you ever heard of him?

Ken: Unt-uh

MB: He lived there in Liberty Hill. He was older than my mom. My mom was the oldest girl and he was the oldest boy.

Ken: So they were more like farmers or ranchers than anything else?

MB: Both. He run cattle and farmed.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: 'cause, I heard my mom talk about it, they picked their own cotton

Ken: Yep

MB: At one time there were two cotton gins in Liberty Hill.

Ken: I know that

MB: There was one in Leander and

Ken: I used to, there is a place called the Maynard Place, we called it the Maynard, right near, one of the Maynards lived there

MB: Right, out there

Ken: And I put cattle there and they died.

MB: See, there was a lot of Maynards out in there

Ken: Right

MB: They were all cedar cutters.

Ken: They were all cedar cutters, huh?

MB: Yes.

Ken: They owned land.

MB: Well, the, two or three of 'em owned places back in there.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: Uh, I don't know which one owned the place where you're talking about. Uh, now over on the, kind-of the southwest side of my grandpas, my mama's sister just, younger than mama, married a Maynard that owned a ranch back there.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: His name was Frank Maynard.

Ken: OK

MB: They had five girls.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: OK, it didn't join my grandpa's, but it was just a little ways farther

Ken: That's the one, that's the one. And I put, I put, I put goats there one time, way back in the seventies.

MB: Frank Maynard. He wasn't kin to these other Maynards.

Ken: OK, oh

MB: He was a different Maynard

Ken: OK.

MB: I'm saying he's not, he may have been a distant kin

Ken: Yeah, right

MB: He had one brother and a couple of sisters, but he wasn't out of this other group.

Ken: OK

MB: Uh,

Ken: One of the groups is called, and I don't know, called the Bloody Holler Maynards

MB: Yeah, that's a different set

Ken: OK

MB: That's a different set of Maynards

Ken: Alright

MB: Uh, they were all cedar cutters

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: Most all of 'em, and, there's a whole bunch of them around.

Ken: Was there anybody that lived out here that didn't cut cedar back in the '30s and 40s?

MB: Quite a few.

Ken: Yeah

MB: Back then that was the, that and farming, or ranching, was the

Ken: That's what there was

MB: That's right. And even a lot of your ranchers and farmers, they cut cedar at one time. Because that was a way of making a little money

Ken: I talked to a couple of 'em. Now, Jerry Hawes, who owned the feed store in, for the longest time, and it's still there, in Georgetown. That old feed store as you're coming

MB: Yeah, on the right

Ken: Right on the right hand side. That was Jerry Hawes, his son Clint now runs that.

MB: OK

Ken: But Jerry's got a big place over where that lake is, Lake Georgetown.

MB: Oh, yeah, there is some good cedar in there.

Ken: There is, and he said, and I talked to him, and he said he never cut cedar. And then Pete, he said he never, his family, they were farmers.

MB: Yeah

Ken: I'm not sure that they even – yeah, Kaufman

MB: Kaufman, no, they never cut any,

Ken: Yeah

MB: they were ranchers and farmers

Ken: Now would they look down on cedar cutters?

MB: Some of 'em did. Some of 'em did.

Ken: Yeah, uh-huh

MB: They, this is my whole thinking on it, they thought they were better.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And they just, they didn't, they didn't want to be associated with cedar cutters.

Ken: Uh-huh, uh-huh

MB: Actually its kind-of the way people lived back then. I mean, I don't hold it against 'em. I don't agree with it, but

Ken: Yeah. Some of 'em were, some of 'em would marry

MB: Right, because, the reason is that a lot of the cedar cutter were just dirty people. Lived in tents and what-ever they could

Ken: They had to be dirty.

MB: And, that right

Ken: they didn't have any water.

MB: Well the water was in creeks and that's where they took a bath.

Ken: Yeah

MB: And, uh, when they took one (laugh)

Ken: Yeah, yeah, yeah

MB: But, yeah, they were, a lot of people looked down on 'em

Ken: Yeah

MB: They did. Because, I can remember a lot of it.

Ken: Marjorie Carlton, right

MB: Jimmy Carlton

Ken: Jimmy Carlton's daughter

MB: Preston Carlton

Ken: Preston, right, uh-huh. They had a pretty nice ranch in Sandy Creek

MB: Uh-huh, out there. Way on out by Lago Vista. Back down in there on the lake

Ken: Got flooded and all, and so

MB: Well, actually, I think one of the old houses the lake covered up.

Ken: Um-hum, um-hum

MB: And, uh, yeah, Preston, Jimmy Carlton was his daddy. And he grew up on that ranch back there.

Ken: She married a Simons

MB: a Simons. He was a well driller

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: Uh-huh. Those, uh, no, just a minute. Yeah, JD Simons

Ken: Uh-huh, uh-huh

MB: The, he, no, Simons, he wasn't a well driller.

Ken: He's a cedar cutter right there. 'cause he was cutting on

MB: a cedar cutter

Ken: He was cutting on her ranch.

MB: The Calhouns was the well drillers

Ken: OK

MB: OK, the Frank Maynard place,

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: The Calhoun place is right there by it.

Ken: oK

MB: The old man Calhoun was a well driller. And two or three of his sons were well drillers. I think only one of them is alive up in, Jimmy, Jimmy Calhoun lives in Jonestown

Ken: Yeah. He dug my well, I think.

MB: They had them old pounders

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And there were Jimmy, there was Jackie Calhoun and there was another. They all were well drillers. They followed their dad's trade, they did well drilling.

Ken: Yeah, yeah, 'cause I was, I was curious that, you know

MB: Right now that Calhoun place and that Maynard place, that's pretty rough country. There's a lot of dope in there now.

Ken: I know what you're talking about. Uh, I live right there, you know, and

MB: Yeah, you live north of there. You live right there by where, Uncle Bernie used to live

Ken: Yes, right there.

MB: See, that's north of

Ken: OK

MB: where I'm talking about. What I'm talking about

Ken: Oh, Sandy Creek. You're talking about Sandy Creek.

MB: Yeah, Sandy Creek. They called that Rats Falt

Ken: Yeah, OK, right (laugh)

MB: (laugh)There's a road that, what is that Faubion drive?

Ken: Yeah, Foulkes Road

MB: It goes in there to the Maynard Ranch, the Calhouns, and it also used to go up in there and go through a gate and come through my grandpa's place.

Ken: OK

MB: And it come out over there by where you live. Actually the road that gone into, it would probably be hard for me to find it now, but it came out right there at the county line.

Ken: Yep, that's my driveway.

MB: OK

Ken: Well, I mean, there's a bunch of people living on that road now.

MB: Yeah, yeah, but that's where the road that went into my grandpa's, you go down that little old gravel road and he had a house way back in there

Ken: Yeah

MB: And that road would go on through and come out by the, the Maynards and the Calhouns and it would come out there at that little Baptist Church, which is Faubion Drive

Ken: OK

MB: That road went all the way through there. And that old Armadillo Ranch is on back in there behind it.

Ken: Yep, yeap

MB: Uh

Ken: Isn't that something

MB: That's where my mama grew up, right back there.

Ken: I talked to one of the Whitts. 'cause they've done sort-of a family tree and this man lives, I don't remember his name, but he wants to come out and visit, uh, he's done the family tree of the Whitts and he lives, I want to say, up by Waco, somewhere up there. Uh, but he'd like to visit.

MB: Hey, I think that's a different set. They're kin to 'em.

Ken: Um-hum

MB: But it, it's not my grandpa's. That, he out of the Melroy Whitt and they were about twelve of them. But they were cousins, I mean, their daddy was first cousin to my mama.

Ken: But if you know any of them, and I

MB: I think the one you're talking about, I can't think of his name, it's right in that book, I know. They have a Whitt reunion

Ken: Yep

MB: I see him there once in a while, and I hadn't been to the reunion in a, but they have their Whit reunion and then there is a Whitt reunion for my grandpa's side.

Ken: OK

MB: Then we have the, Will Bonnet, which was my grandpa, we have our reunion every year. Used to have it here in Andice. And now we're having it at the VFW, well, had been having it, got crowded, we're gona be in the Baptist Church in Leander next year. It's in June.

Ken: Huh

MB: Second weekend, or – in June. And it's gona be at the Baptist Church.

Ken: Yeah

MB: It's a big reunion. It's

Ken: Well, I'll be happy to, any of those Whitts you just tell 'em to give me a call and I'll be happy to let 'em come on out

MB: There used to be one right there on the left going to your house. Tommy Whitt. He died here, two or three years ago. And then Tommy has a brother lives right here off 1869. His name is, I can't remember, Jake, no there's a JV then there's a Chigger, he lives here in Liberty Hill somewhere, and they were all brothers. But they are, their dad was my mama's brother. He was the oldest one of the Whitt family. My mom was the second. She was the oldest daughter. But they were like three or five, four of the Whitts, my mama's brother, and then there were like, uh, there was six girls, five or six girls, I remember. There was nine of 'em. They was five girls and four boys.

Ken: Uh-huh. Now, is your, uh, is a Doris Bonnet

MB: That's my sister.

Ken: Who married a Reeves

MB: Right. That's my sister.

Ken: Right. Your sister.

MB: She, he died.

Ken: OK. Now, he was a cedar cutter?

MB: No, he was from Houston He was a good beer drinker

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: (laugh)

Ken: (laugh)

MB: Yeah, Steve Reeves.

Ken: OK

MB: Yeah, he, uh, I never had anything against Steve, he wasn't real good to Doris. They had a son. And, uh, I never liked him. Never had anything against him, but, it's some of the things he did. At one time he was an alcoholic. He got, they sent him, sent him to Austin, actually the asylum, but he went there on alcohol, there's a rehab

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: That's where Doris met him. She was a nurse there.

Ken: Oh, OK

MB: And she met him there and then when he got through. They thought he was through with it, but then he got back in it after they got married. He went back to drinking again and they moved back to Houston. He was a, his mama had, at one time, had quite a bit of money, but they squandered it, him and his sister, he had a sister. Him and Doris lived in Houston a long time and then they moved back here, I don't know, twenty-five, thirty years ago.

Ken: OK

MB: Yeah, she married Steve Reeves.

Ken: Well, you've mentioned a lot of people, uh, like Mike Farmer. Who else do you think that I really need to talk to? Who else would be, can remember the thirties and the forties, or maybe the fifties?

MB: Well, TM was one.

Ken: TM I did.

MB: You talked to him?

Ken: I talked to him.

MB: And, of course, my brother, he knows a lot more than I do about the cedar cutting.

Ken: Maybe I should talk with him.

MB: I'll try, I'll try to set up a deal with him.

Ken: Gene?

MB: No, that's Doug.

Ken: Doug, OK

MB: Gene lives in Victoria.

Ken: OK

MB: I'll, he told me one time, yeah, he'd talk to you.

Ken: Good.

MB: And he can tell you more stories than I can, 'cause he's like six, seven years older than I am.

Ken: Exactly, right, it makes a big difference.

MB: And he cut a lot of cedar with an axe before he got, but, when Doug was fairly young he got out of the cedar. He was a carpenter.

Ken: Um-hum

MB: He married a girl from Leander. She was a Smart. Her dad owned a service station and a garage there in Leander and

Ken: You mentioned, was it, Ike,

MB: Ike Pierce

Ken: At your, play with you, you play with him

MB: No, no, I play with Mike Farmer

Ken: You cut with him, you cut with him.

MB: I cut cedar with Ike.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: The only family he has is his sons, but they all live in San Marcos. They don't live around here no more.

Ken: Uh-huh

MB: And, like I said, I don't think Mike had any brothers. He has maybe a couple of sisters, but I don't ever remember, I know he had some cousins and, but he, I don't know of any any brother he had.

Ken: OK. Well, that's good. I, see, I can talk to people forever.

End