

## **May 22, 2012 – at his house outside Marble Falls**

### **Guthrie O'Donnell 1 (15:00)**

Guthrie: My wife graduated from Austin High.

Ken: Let me get this going. So this is, uh, I'm just gonna go ahead and say that I'm recording you, today is, uh, I'm recording Guthrie O'Donnell, on, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012 in his kitchen

Guthrie: My wife graduated from Austin High School in 195--, uh, yeah, 1950, same year I graduated

Ken: um-hum

Guthrie: And she came to Marble Falls to teach school. She graduated from University of Texas in 1950 – graduated from high school in '45, Austin High, and of course, Austin High was the only school around.

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: And, uh, she came to Marble Falls and got a job teaching school. And that's, that's where I met her. I was coming back and forth to work from Burnet to Granite Shoals coming through Marble Falls. and come in and eat and, but anyway

Ken: At the Bluebonnet Café?

Guthrie: Well, the Bluebonnet wasn't as popular, uh, back then. That's a long time ago. Uh, they had a Frasier's Café and there was a Bluebonnet Café but it was, it was very small. It wasn't anything like, uh, what they got now.

Ken: I see.

Guthrie: It's quite a place now.

Ken: I've not been in it in a long time.

Guthrie: (laugh) you can hardly get in there, oh, man, it's –my wife's birthday was on the 18<sup>th</sup> and we went there with some friends to celebrate her birthday. Actually it was, it was crowded

Ken: Hum

Guthrie: It's always crowded. And he's fixin' to expand it I think

Ken: Hum

Guthrie: But

Ken: Well, why don't you, uh, how did, were you involved in the cedar industry at all?

Guthrie: I was not. Uh, back in, back in those days, when, when cedar was a, was a big, when cedar yards were a big thing. Of course, times were, times were really tough and lots of people didn't have jobs and you had, uh, that was back in the days that you had the CCC that, WPA, the Work Progress, and so forth, and, uh, people that didn't have anything else to do would take their axe and go to the country and start cutting wood. Cedar posts were, were, uh, were a good product. I can remember, you know, when you see these big 'ole eighteen wheeled flatbed trucks and, and back then you had those things that were just flatbed and they had posts on the side and they'd stack those dog-gone cedar posts about eight feet tall – solid all the way from one end to the other. And they'd head north with 'em. Uh, but there was, uh, there was a lot of people that didn't do anything but cut cedar. Uh, somehow it, it seemed like that the cedar that they had back then was, was a better product than later on. I know I cut some cedar posts in west Austin, out in Bee Cave Road several years ago and, and I found some big tall cedar. I cut those poles and drug them up out of some of those valleys and loaded 'em on my trailer and brought 'em up here to the ranch \_\_\_ of these things and I've got the last, never did use a one of 'em, and I've got the last one of 'em out of the pile and put it on my burn pile because every one of 'em rotted. But, our old house, where we lived right down here, where my Dad's family was all born there, he had three brothers and three sisters – there were seven of 'em. And they were all, they were all born there and, and all my, all my brothers and sisters were born there, and, uh, the old house, where we lived, with a big, you know, L-shaped house, and it was probably, that house, the ground, not underpinned

Ken: Um-hum

Guthrie: Had no running water, no heater, or anything. It had two fireplaces that were doubles, but anyway, uh,

Ken: cedar pilings under it?

Guthrie: The cedar, that's what was underneath it, cedar pilings. Never ever gave any trouble at all. Big old cedar. And we had a two story barn. And, and those old poles, gosh, they were that big around and as straight as an arrow. They'd go up to the second story of that barn, you know, where you built a loft.

Ken: One foot in diameter?

Guthrie: Yes.

Ken: That's huge

Guthrie: Yeah, they were stout. And, uh, there's, of course, there's a lot, a lot of old cedar cabins around. Uh, you've got the old, the old, uh, stage station right there in Bertram -- I mean in in Liberty Hill

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: I guess it's still there

Ken: Yes, um

Guthrie: There on the north side of the road. It may be gone now

Ken: They're building that school there. It could be gone

Guthrie: Yeah, it may be. I read where they were building a new school

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: I hadn't been through there in quite a while. But, uh, there's a, there's a, let's see, did you ever know, uh, a guy the name of Sonny \_\_\_?

Ken: No

Guthrie: In Austin? He was a, he was a dentist there. His family lived right down the road. His Daddy was a doctor. Doctor \_\_\_\_\_. They had two kids, Nadine and Sonny and they lived right down the road, but later on they moved to, they moved to Austin, and, and, uh, Dr. \_\_\_ practiced medicine down there for years and years, and, and, uh, that old home place is up here on the road and you can, you can see, it fronts on 1980. And, uh, several years ago, hadn't anybody lived in it for – been vacant for years and years, and it was an old frame house, they started tearing that old frame house down, of course, they knew that this cabin was on the inside of it – it's logs, cedar log cabin was on the inside of it, and, uh, you couldn't tell it from the outside, because it was all, it was framed around the cedar. And, uh, they started tearing it down and I drove in there one day to talk to 'em, see what was going on. They were labeling every log as they took it apart and right now the log cabin is about fifty feet from where the old house was and they put it all back together and it's a beautiful, uh, cedar log cabin all made with the same cedar that they took out that was inside this house.

Ken: Can you see it from the road?

Guthrie: Oh yeah.

Ken: I'll keep my eye out for it.

Guthrie: You can see it. I can give you a landmark to look for. Um, there's a lot of, uh, there's a lot of, uh, and old house right up the road here. It's an old frame house and I think it's one of the Metzger's, uh, old Henry Metzger's place, and, uh, his son, uh, lives there. And you can see some of the plaster that's coming off the walls, and inside the walls are the old, outline of the old log cabin that it was built around. A lot of houses back in those days were modernized by building around what was already there, which was a log cabin. Have you ever been to, uh, to Fort Crogan?

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: OK. There's a lot of log cabins, the old Fry cabin, well, there's quite a few

Ken: You know, I had not been back behind it. But I, that's where they are, yes. I've been inside of it, but I need to go back behind it and see those

Guthrie: OK. You've been in the museum up in the front

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: Oh, OK.

Ken: Yes, yes. I – that's Millie Williams is the lady that works there. She's been real helpful on this project

Guthrie: Yeah.

Ken: I didn't know they were. I will go there

Guthrie: There's a lot of cabins, back, back there, several. And they have Fort Crogan Days, which they have every year. They have, uh, they have people come in there, you know, locals, that, that, uh, do hog killing, for instance, and they kill the hog and they butcher it right there and they make sausage, and cook sausage and then people, people, they've got the old wooden, uh, stoves, and they, there's a bunch of ladies that dress up in the old costumes, you know, and come in there and bake biscuits, and pass out the old

Ken: Do you know John Hoover?

Guthrie: (laugh) Sure, I know John.

Ken: (laugh) 'cause he told me he did that hog killing thing.

Guthrie: He sure did. That's what he, he, he's done it just about every year. That's the same thing about John, of course, I've known John forever. Uh, way back there when my, when my, uh, when I was young, we had, we had, uh, quite a bit a, quite a bit of land, uh, in cultivation. And we raised watermelons, and, uh, peanuts, watermelons and peanuts were two big crops. And, uh, John's dad was the tenant farmer on our place. And John lived right down here. I, not too far from where my place is now, yeah. I don't know whether he was born down here on our land but he lived around here a long time.

Ken: He's a little older than you, I guess?

Guthrie: John?

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: No.

Ken: No?

Guthrie: He's younger. (laugh)

Ken: (laugh)

Guthrie: He's quite a bit younger. He's several years younger

Ken: Right

Guthrie: Uh, I'm 84 and I suspect that John is more like 74 or 75.

Ken: Oh

Guthrie: I played a lot of Bridge with, with John. We've got an old friend that, uh, used to, that used to, uh, work for the Nighthawk in Austin. J.C. Blalock uh, worked on the same dairy that I worked as he was growing up, and, uh, and he went on to Austin and, and, uh, was manager of a, one of the Nighthawk restaurants there on, uh, South Congress

Ken: I know it well.

Guthrie: Close to the Big, you know, the Big Bear grocery store

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: Was right behind it. And, uh, and J.C.'s family also lived on our place, and, uh, his dad Pete worked for the Browning Ranch. Browning Ranch is out in Browning. It was a senator's down in Austin. And, uh, J.C. worked for, uh, J.C.'s dad worked for the Browning? Ranch training horses. They had some racing horses and quarter horses and stuff like that. But, uh, J.C. is ninety, I believe he's ninety five and he's in assisted living now in Burnet. And for quite a while we were playing Bridge at, uh, at that place where we were playing it at John's Creekside Apartments. As you go into Burnet there

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: And, uh, and we, had a brief game with a bunch of old guys. John was the youngest one because the rest of us were, I was next, and a couple of the guys were over ninety, ninety-two, ninety-four, ninety-five. But it was

Ken: That will keep your mind sharp, playing Bridge.

Guthrie: Well, yeah, it helps, and, uh, those old people that are sitting there in assisted living without a whole lot to do. Uh, it was, you know, we, I, I could never have broken up the game, but another guy whose wife was in a nursing home in Kingsland he finally, he was ninety, a guy by the name of John Cox. He finally broke, he broke the game up. But, anyway, uh

Ken: Tell me some more about, so that was during the depression, and you said people started cutting cedar, and, uh

Guthrie: People were cutting cedar, uh, if they didn't have anything else to do. Of course, the, uh, uh, I can remember, I can remember, I had a lot of friends that cut cedar, you know. And, uh, and I don't have any idea what, what they paid 'em, but, you know, wages were so low that, (laugh), and prices were so low it didn't take very much money to buy groceries to live on. Uh, but, I can remember up and down the main street, the main thoroughfare though town in Marble Falls that cedar yards were

everywhere. I mean, of course, same thing in Cedar Park. And, the Cedar Choppers Festival was, was, they had it every year there for years and years at Cedar Park.

Ken: Yes.

Guthrie: And, uh, but, uh, you know.

## **Guthrie O'Donnell 2 (15:00)**

Guthrie: People would have a, have an old Model A pickup, or an old, old, old pickup, and they'd, they didn't have anything but a, but a, a good double blade axe and a file to keep it sharp – because it had to be sharp

Ken: Yep

Guthrie: And, uh, and, they'd head out in the country, and I don't have any idea what, you know, a lot of 'em went out and cut cedar on, cedar on places that, that, uh, just invited 'em out. I don't think they paid anything. I think they just took – glad to get rid of the cedar and they, they hauled it down to the cedar yard and sold it, in the cedar yard, sold it to these truckers and they transported it north, Dallas and Ft. Worth and those areas where they were building, uh, different things. But there's a lot of, a lot of things back then that they made out of, made out of cedar. I worked for a guy during high school days that made, made cedar, um, log houses. And, uh, and most of that cedar was not hill country cedar. It, a lot of it came from around Bastrop and, uh, different places like that.

Ken: It's a different

Guthrie: It – yeah, it was a different cedar.

Ken: Yeah

Guthrie: Uh, we built a, we built a motel in Uvalde one summer. It was about twelve cabins. I don't know whether it's still there or not. But, but, you take that, take that round cedar and slice off a side, get a flat side over here and a flat side over here and, uh, rabbit up there for a spline and then along here this would, this would be solid flat. And all that \_\_\_ would be put together and then they'd have to, they'd have a band of cedar that held it together.

Ken: That was built with this local cedar here?

Guthrie: No. It was built with Bastrop cedar.

Ken: Bastrop cedar.

Guthrie: Yep, yep.

Ken: Yeah, Uvalde is, they have, that's near Camp Wood, and there was a lot of cedar coming out of Camp Wood.

Guthrie: Yep, um-hum

Ken: So the, the, a, it wouldn't be the farmers and ranchers then that were cutting their own cedar so much to make money

Guthrie: Un-uh

Ken: It'd be more, they would invite people in and

Guthrie: A lot of the, a lot of the farmers and ranchers, uh, did cut cedar, uh, but, it was a lot of, it was a lot of transient type people that would come in and cut cedar. We used to say "well, they's just an old cedar hacker, cedar chopper"

Ken: Um-hum

Guthrie: And, and, uh, they, a lot of 'em were, were just kind-of, well kind-of on the bummy side (laugh)

Ken: Um-hum. Were they, they were transient, they didn't, they didn't live here? Did they settle here eventually?

Guthrie: A lot of 'em did.

Ken: Back in the hills?

Guthrie: A lot of 'em did.

Ken: Um -hum

Guthrie: You know there's a, there's a lot of the cedar cutters that were, take, out of west Austin.

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: Way out toward, uh, um, oh, I can't remember a lot of those streets now. I lived in Balcones Country Club for twenty years. I lived in Allandale for eighteen years. And I lived in Tarrytown for six years. But, uh, I can't even remember the name of those, you know those...

Ken: Bee Cave Road?

Guthrie: Well, out that area. There was a big clan of, uh, of these people. They lived in shacks out there in those woods and they cut cedar. And there was, there was just all kinds of people that, that cut cedar and brought it in and sold it at the cedar yards

Ken: I was talking to a guy named Ronnie Roberts. He's no relation to me, but his granddad owned a cedar yard in Oak Hill. And, and we were talking about, he's actually related to the, uh, I know the names – I went to school with some of these people, uh, the Pierces, uh, uh, and, uh, the Teagues, and the Pattersons, and, uh, the Simons. And then there was Bull Creek. A whole 'nother bunch on Bull Creek.

Guthrie: Yeah

Ken: And basically, what Ronnie was saying was back in those days these people lived out in the hills, and they, they didn't probably own the land, or they may have owned the land and then, whenever they got, uh, they needed money, they just

Guthrie: Cut some cedar

Ken: or sell a little land

Guthrie: Sell a little of the land

Ken: So I wondering is it, do you think it was like that in the hills around here where people were just kind-of living out – were, they weren't livin' in Marble Falls, were they, paying rent?

Guthrie: Uh, I think they were probably living, rural, living out in the

Ken: in the hills

Guthrie: Yeah

Ken: Yeah

Guthrie: And a lot of 'em might have lived in, uh, barns, or poor packed houses that were out on the land

Ken: Did you know, did you have any of them as friends?

Guthrie: Uh, I had some friends, I had some friends in Burnet that, uh, that had a ranch, and cut cedar, and, and, uh, that were friends of mine. But, uh, most of 'em were, were kind-of, well they were, they were more trashy type people.

Ken: Um-hum. We, we had the name, so you called 'em cedar choppers here

Guthrie: cedar choppers.

Ken: cedar choppers. We did too, In Austin.

Guthrie: Oh, yeah

Ken: And, and, uh, do you recall I was, do you recall anything like different about them. Were they treated different than, you know, the respectable people?

Guthrie: I don't, I don't think they were, I think that uh, that people respected them because, because, uh, they were doing something to try to make their own way

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: you know.



Ken: Hard work too.

Guthrie: Hard work. You bet. Man their old hands showed it and they were, they were (laugh) they were really brown and, and, uh, but they worked hard for their, for what they got.

Ken: Do you know a lady named Anne Darragh? D A -- I'm not sure if I'm pronouncing that right. D A R R A G H.

Guthrie: Darragh.

Ken: Yeah, maybe she. Yes. Uh, anyway, she's from Marble Falls, but she showed me a picture of her parents who cut cedar. And they were -- I wish I had that picture with me 'cause you could identify the truck. It's a flatbed truck and it, you know, a pretty good sized truck, but, you know, I would've said the back end was probably twelve feet long maybe

Guthrie: Yeah, a bobtail truck

Ken: A bobtail?

Guthrie: Um-hum. That's what they called 'em. You know, the cab and then just a flat bed that's behind it. It's bigger than a pickup

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: They usually called it a flatbed.

Ken: Yes, and then they had, it has posts on the side so the

Guthrie: right, right

Ken: And it shows a picture of, of, of him and his wife and the two boys who were at the time of the picture maybe three and five, and then apparently they, the boys and him cut cedar, and he is dark. and, and lanky.

Guthrie: Um-hum

Ken: I mean just, uh, obviously a very strong man. I mean

Guthrie: Yeah. I know, I know quite a few Darraghs

Ken: Oh, uh-huh, OK. He may have, she may have married a Darragh, you know, it could be her married name

Guthrie: What was her first name?

Ken: Anne

Guthrie: Anne

Ken: Um-hum. I'm gonna, I haven't met her yet, but she

Guthrie: Oh

Ken: had, I had that picture

Guthrie: I see

Ken: Yeah

Guthrie: Uh, um, Bob Jay Darragh, you know where, you know where the, uh, bowling alley is?

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: And right across the road is, is Bob Jay Darragh. His, his grandfather was a Jay, so he's Bob Jay Darragh and, uh, his dad was Silas Darragh. And they owned, they owned all of that land where the bowling alley is and all that land on the other side from 281 clear over to Morman Mill Road. Have you ever been down Morman Mill Road?

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: It's not far from 1174.

Ken: No

Guthrie: You know it's kind-of in between there. Uh, but they owned, they still own a lot of that land. Bob J. does. And, uh, he was their only child, but there was quite a few Darraghs. And the Jay's, his grandfather was a Jay, J A Y, and they had a little, um, back in those days they usually, they called 'em tourist courts. Little houses along main street there and, uh, and he, he was in the cedar business. He bought cedar, uh, but also, and I guess it was probably in the mid seventies I hunted on a, I hunted on a, deer hunted on a place at uh, Round Mountain, and, uh, it was, uh, oh, it joined old Red McComb's place back in there. But it was a, they had about twenty-five hundred acres, and, uh, and I remember when I, one time when I was hunting on that place that, that, uh, the Jay's had come out, and, and some of their, some of their partners had come out there and contracted to, to, uh, buy and cut cedar off of that place. That's probably about the last, uh, of the cedar. However, did you, or you came 1174 and, and, uh, hit 1431. On 281, right where the old, you know where lime plant is?

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: OK. Now right across the road there next to the, next to the, uh, railroad track, somebody recently has put up a sign there "cedar for sale" and they had quite a bit of cedar stacked out there. You know how they, how they'll stack the posts.

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: Somebody's been in that Brownlee Ranch cuttin' cedar. Uh, recently. In the last year

Ken: Well there's still a demand for cedar posts.

Guthrie: Oh, yeah, but there's not

Ken: Nothing like before.

Guthrie: no, because back then you didn't have steel posts.

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: And, uh, and (laugh) you didn't have all this, welding equipment that you've got now. And, you know, you heard the joke about the Aggie that was cuttin' that cedar and, and, uh, he went into the hardware store when they just come out with the chainsaws. And, uh, he went into the, he went into the hardware store and told 'em "well I've been hearing about these chainsaws – that they really do save time and, and, uh, easy to operate and so forth." So he bought him a chainsaw. And he went home and about a week later he came back, he brought that chainsaw back in there

Ken: (laugh)

Guthrie: You've heard it?

Ken: I think I have now (laugh). Keep going though (laugh)

Guthrie: He wanted to return that thing. They said "well, what's the matter? We'll check it and see if there's something wrong with it." They took it back there and pulled the rope string and Vroom. He said "what's that noise?" (laugh)

Ken: (laugh together) You can just see him there with that thing.

Guthrie: (laugh) he wasn't making much progress.

Ken: (laugh) Did you ever cut cedar with an axe?

Guthrie: Uh, I cut a little bit. Not at, just for myself

Ken: Um-hum

Guthrie: I've got, I've got a bunch of axes. Yeah, I've cut cedar. Uh, uh, it's not an easy job.

Ken: And did, were you skilled at it?

Guthrie: No. Un-uh

Ken: 'cause those cedar, I hear that a good cedar chopper was very skilled

Guthrie: Oh, you bet they were, man they could, they could trim those branches off. You know, I cut myself cedar stays when I, we worked on some of my fences

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: And, cedar stays are about so big around, and, and you cut 'em about four and a half – five feet long and, and, uh, (laugh) I'd get in there with an axe, and uh, I could do better with a good sharp hatchet than I can with an axe.

Ken: Oh, uh-huh

Guthrie: On stays. But it's, it's a chore.

Ken: Did you cut the stays off of the larger trees

Guthrie: Yeah

Ken: or just limbs?

Guthrie: Yeah, their just limbs off of 'em

Ken: How many, how many hits would it take to cut one off with an axe?

Guthrie: Oh, it was probably, if you, if you had a good axe it, probably, uh, to, one lick from each side

Ken: Uh-huh

Guthrie: would bring a stay down. And then you'd cut that end off and I'd stand there and, uh, cut the little branches off and make it smooth

Ken: I've heard of, it wasn't uncommon to have a whole family doing that

Guthrie: Yeah

Ken: with the man cutting the big posts and maybe the children, you know, cutting off the – have you heard of it?

Guthrie: Oh yeah, oh yeah

### **Guthrie O'Donnell 3 (15:00)**

Ken: Were even the women working?

Guthrie: Oh, yeah. I've heard of it. There's a, let's see the last cedar post I guess that I bought was, they had a cedar yard, may still have it, over at Lampasas

Ken: They still have it.

Guthrie: Yeah.

Ken: Yeah, it's still there

Guthrie: Yeah. Well, it's, uh, they just aren't many of 'em around (laugh)

Ken: The cedar yards?

Guthrie: Yeah.

Ken: What do you think happened to the, to the cutters? To the people that were dedicated. You know, that were living up in the, were they living, you know, living up, what, what do you, do, did they turn into, uh

Guthrie: I think they turned into regular citizens

Ken: regular citizens

Guthrie: got regular jobs

Ken: Yeah

Guthrie: Yeah

Ken: Um-hum

Guthrie: You know, they, as progress came along, well, well, uh, of course, back in those days, in the late thirties there just wasn't any jobs and the government had, had a lot of programs like the WPA and the CCC, and the CCC built lots of, lots of projects all over the country

Ken: Uh-huh

Guthrie: Longhorn Caverns

Ken: Yeah

Guthrie: and all of that fencing, and those building, There was a lot of cedar that went into those buildings at Longhorn Caverns

Ken: Um-hum

Guthrie: We lived, our place was not far south of, uh, Longhorn Caverns. And my mother and dad, uh, when they were first married, of course, my dad ranched all his life and raised a lot of horses, and, and, my mother was – I've got a picture – there was my mother when she was going to teach school – teach country school. She rode horseback to school where she was teaching. But, uh, a lot of, a lot of, uh, people back then, hell there just wasn't anything for them to do. And they needed some money to buy some groceries and to live. They didn't live very well.

Ken: Yeah

Guthrie: But, but, you know back then, hell, I went to school down here, to the little, was it Crownwood Chapel – I don't know if you've ever heard of it

Ken: No

Guthrie: At the Fairland Cemetery. It was started before the end of the Civil War and it was finished after the guys came back from the Civil War. And, uh, and I went to that, and our school, through the seventh grade was, was on a building that was built onto a, had kind-of a shed-like building that was built onto the back of that thing. And, uh, I went there through the fourth grade. And then we moved to Burnet and I went to Burnet High School. But, I remember when, uh, when the, WPA, uh, Roosevelt Administration, but they came to, they came to our school down there, the WPA did, and built us a pit toilet. Damn that was the first one I'd ever seen (laugh). You ever been in a pit toilet?

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: OK. Uh, you know, we had a (laugh) we had an outdoor toilet. A lot of places, hell I lived right over here – this mountain right across the road over here – Slaughter Mountain – and, uh, and I lived there. Uh, we were living there. Well I've got a picture taken over there. Easter Sunday, 1946. And, uh, when we, when we moved into that place we had a pit, a, just an outdoor toilet. And, and we had sold that place a long time ago. But I've still got the toilet that came from that place. It's over at my ranch and I use it every now and then (laugh)

Ken: (laugh together)

Guthrie: When I don't want to go in the cabin.

Ken: I'd like to see those pictures when we're done. I really would. Yeah, uh, did, did those kids go to school. The kids that were the, you know, that you said, the itinerate people. Did those kids go to school?

Guthrie: A lot of 'em didn't. A lot of 'em didn't. There wasn't any, there wasn't any, uh, any rules and regulations like there is now, about kids going to school. Uh, uh, some of did, but some of 'em didn't. There was quite a few, they were, they were some pretty rough looking numbers.

Ken: Rough looking kids?

Guthrie: Yeah, yeah. Well they, you know, they didn't have haircuts and they didn't have clothes. When I was, when I was going to school at Fairland, in which I went to fourth grade. Hell I can remember puttin', puttin', I wore lots of hand-me-downs, and I remember putting cardboard in the bottom of my shoes

Ken: Um-hum

Guthrie: keep off the grass burrs.

Ken: Um-hum. Did you ever wear cotton sacks or, you know,

Guthrie: No

Ken: have cloths made of sacks, you know

Guthrie: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

Ken: It was pretty common back then. They used to print them. I heard they put prints on them

Guthrie: Oh, yeah

Ken: so, they'd be prettier.

Guthrie: Oh, yeah. You could make shirts out of 'em an all kinds of things with the, with the print cotton.

Ken: Uh-huh

Guthrie: Yeah

Ken: Was that a pretty comfortable cotton?

Guthrie: Oh, yeah.

Ken: (laugh)

Guthrie: Yeah, it was soft

Ken: If, uh, you know, I've heard some stories about the, I'm pretty familiar with the kids west of Austin. Because they were up into the 1950s, you know, when I was a kid

Guthrie: Yeah

Ken: And they were pretty tough then. I, I had an experience one time when I was fishing with a friend of mine – we were just coming down to the river and, um, these two kids walked up to us that were several years younger. We were probably eleven at the time, riding on bicycles. And they were probably eight. They were, they were quite a bit shorter and skinnier and smaller than we were. But they had this big stringer of fish. And, uh, they said "you want to buy some fish?" And my friend says "If we wanted to buy fish we'd go to the HEB

Guthrie: (laugh)

Ken: They didn't take well to that

Guthrie: (laugh) I'm thinking

Ken: (laugh) and they came back with a club, clubs, and they were gonna pretty much kill us

Guthrie: Yeah

Ken: And we ran

Guthrie: (laugh) They're pretty, they're pretty dog-gone tough. They, they'd get after you.

Ken: Well they have reputation, they had a reputation back then from talking to this Ronnie Roberts, I mean, that they were, uh, just, some of 'em were pretty mean.

Guthrie: Yeah

Ken: Did you have any of that experience?

Guthrie: Yeah, sure.. Yeah, they (laugh) their disposition was a little different than yours and mine

Ken: Why do you think that is?

Guthrie: Well, they, uh, they weren't associated, uh, in my opinion, uh, with the, with the same class of people, you know. They, they didn't have friends that were educated and, and, uh, had good jobs and stuff like that. So, they were just, they were just a different class of people.

Ken: Do you think that they resented people that had

Guthrie: Uh-huh. I think they did. I think they showed that to you on, on your fishing deal

Ken: Uh-huh.

Guthrie: (laugh)

Ken: And, and, so if a man had land, even if he was a poor man, I mean everybody up here, everybody in the hill country was poor, weren't they? Pretty much

Guthrie: Oh yeah

Ken: talking the forties, even into the fifties, right?

Guthrie: Oh, yeah

Ken: So, but if a man had land they would resent that? Or, I mean, or, if you treated them right, I mean, wouldn't

Guthrie: Oh they, uh, if you treated them right, why you didn't, wouldn't have any problem with 'em

Ken: Uh-huh. But some people must have looked down on them

Guthrie: They did, no doubt. No doubt they did.

Ken: Huh

Guthrie: You know when I go over to, when I go through Southwestern, boy, it's a lot different than when I graduated there. You know

Ken: I've seen pictures (laugh)

Guthrie: (laugh)

Ken: It sure is.



Guthrie: (laugh)

Ken: It's a country club now. It's such a country club that it's gotten too expensive for the average kid to go to school there anymore.

Guthrie: I'd of never gone there if I hadn't had the GI Bill.

Ken: No.

Guthrie: I, when I got out of, when I got out of high school, I was to graduate in 1945 and, and, uh, I had already received my, the War was winding up and I had already received my draft notice. I think I've still got that letter "your friends and neighbors have selected you." And, uh, So I, I knew as soon as I got out of school that they wanted to take me, so, uh, my coach wanted to, there was a couple of us that he wanted us to stay over to the next year, because sometimes during the war we hadn't had, uh, football so, we could, we could, we were held another year. So we stayed over and left at mid-term. And, uh, when football season was over. And then they drafted me and sent me to, to hell-hole Camp Polk, LA.

Ken: Um

Guthrie: Between Leesville and \_\_\_\_\_ if you're familiar with it

Ken: Bet you didn't like that

Guthrie: Oh, man, that's an awful place. An old newscaster said "if you son's at Camp Polk, LA, pray for him because (laugh- it's between couple of hell holes down there," but, anyway, I did basic training there then I went over to Japan and stayed a year over there – occupation forces.

Ken: Oh, OK

Guthrie: It was quite interesting

Ken: I bet that was interesting

Guthrie: Their country was tore up, and when, when I, on a layover we stopped at Pearl Harbor and Pearl Harbor hadn't recovered or anything. The ships were still sticking up, and, uh, of course, The Arizona was still there. We stayed there a week and then we went on over to Japan and I was stationed in Yokahama, which wasn't but just a few miles out of Tokyo and, and, uh, we'd go over there shopping on the Ginsa. Ginsa, which was one of the main streets. And, it was, (laugh) it was about fifty feet wide and these, and these Japanese would ride their bicycles in there and they'd back 'em up and have, have their wares that they're selling in a little ol'e box off their bicycles. When I see pictures of the Ginsa now – it is, I bet that street is a hundred yards wide and the buildings are way up there, all along the Ginsa. The Ginsa is one of the main streets in Tokyo.

Ken: Hum

Guthrie: But back then it was, it was nothing. Of course, that whole country was, was torn up

Ken: Um Yeah, 1940s. So, uh, yeah. I'm thinking that, uh, I heard from Ronnie that part, during the early '40s, I mean, do you recall anybody using wagons to get the cedar out of the hills?

Guthrie: Uh

Ken: They said that gasoline and tires were at a real shortage during the War.

Guthrie: during the war. Uh, yeah. You know I, I, uh, I'm trying to think. Um – If I can – I can't recall anybody that would, would bring in their, their, uh, cedar posts to town on a wagon. But I'm sure that they used 'em on the, on the, in the country.

Ken: In the brakes?

Guthrie: Yeah, in the cedar brakes.

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: But I don't think, I don't think ... Along about that time, um, tires were a real problem. Uh, you had to have a permit. And I've still got some of my old stamps "As" and "Bs" and "Cs" and "Ts" – you had to have a "T" stamp for, for gasoline for your truck. And you had to have, you know, and, tires, they were retreading tires. My dad worked in the, in the OPA office there in Burnet. Which, which controlled a lot of that stuff. And, uh, boy tires and gasoline, both were a real problem.

Ken: So, what I wonder is if the cedar business didn't just really take off after the War when you get, start to haul that stuff, you know, across country and, uh, what, what year did your, was it your father that fenced off the place? You said it was, it was open range before that.

Guthrie: Uh, yeah, well, what I said was it, uh, it, he had, some of this land that was inherited by, by some of his kids, that, uh, he fenced off because he bought, bought some of it, and, and, when my father, I don't know what year it was, but, it was in the late, it was in the late '20s. When he had, he sent a load of steers to Nebraska to the feed yards. And, uh, feed lots. And, uh, the Depression hit and cattle weren't worth anything and feed was scarce and, and, uh, his, his feed bill, up there, was more than the

## **Guthrie O'Donnell 4 (4:24)**

Ken: Oh,

Guthrie: And, uh, of course nobody declared bankruptcy back then, but, he had a, he traded a, he sold about five hundred and seventy acres right across the track from where, where we lived. And, uh, he sold that land to pay off that feed bill in Nebraska for his cattle that were

Ken: That's terrible

Guthrie: along the down-side of things. Uh, I heard the stories about when my grandfather brought the lumber to a, to, uh, build that old house that we lived in. Of course it was a box house. It had one by twelves that ran straight up and down. It didn't have any inside walls. It didn't have any

Ken: Right

Guthrie: two-by-fours and, from frame building inside, the windows would just stick out, that kind-of stuff but, uh, the story was that he, that he bought most of that stuff from uh, from uh, Round Rock, which was the end of some kind of transportation line. He, some of 'em were moved by ox cart back up here to build that house

Ken: That's a long way by ox cart

Guthrie: A long way. A long way

Ken: When we first moved out to Liberty Hill our house, it was, the house we moved into was like, built like that. And, of course, the boards want to warp on the inside rooms. The boards separated from the rooms and they put a strip of coffee can, you know, nailed into one side, coming over to the other side of the other board, and nailed to that side

Guthrie: Yeah

Ken: Keep 'em from spreading apart

Guthrie: Yeah. That's something, isn't it?

Ken: Yeah. How did they keep – so the outside walls are single vertical one-by-twelves

Guthrie: Right

Ken: Now how, what did they

Guthrie: They had strips that went on the outside, that over that

Ken: Yes, of course

Guthrie: That overlapped the seam.

Ken: Yes, and what kept that from just pulling apart and warping – was there a

Guthrie: Well

Ken: a cross beam or something like that?

Guthrie: They usually had to have some kind of a, of a band holding it on the inside. But when you put this, this was about a four inch strip

Ken: Yes

Guthrie: And it was nailed to each one of those things

Ken: Right

Guthrie: And that would keep, keep it from separating, or one coming out

Ken: I remember when we moved in there it was a hot house during the summer time (laugh)

Guthrie: (laugh together)

Ken: tin roof. And no insulation. And it just, by the, by mid-afternoon that thing was just an oven

Guthrie: Oh yeah

Ken: up there

Guthrie: Yeah. This house had a, this little home place had a, had, I guess about twelve foot ceilings. Beaded ceilings. And, uh, a lot of the, what few closets we had were, were closets that, uh, that went up so high and then you had a storage area above them. And then you could walk into this area where there was a closet and there was stuff just stacked everywhere.

Ken: Yes. You know, it's something how things have changed now. A bathroom now in a modern house is like a palace.

Guthrie: That's right, that's right, and we didn't have a bathroom

Ken: No.

Guthrie: I could remember, I can remember, uh (laugh), one time when this, on top of this one closet, I can remember this old gun that, that was there. And, and, uh, I was just a little ole' kid and I looked at that gun, it's got a patent date of, uh, 1864

Ken: What, what caliber is it?

Guthrie: I'll show it to you

Ken: OK

[Ken and Guthrie go look at the old rifle]

## **Guthrie O'Donnell 5 (3:08)**

Not transcribed.