

*The
Kerr County Historical Commission
presents*

An ORAL HISTORY

Of

Joe Schmerber

Kerrville, Texas 2018

Kerr County Historical Commission

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewee: Joe Schmerber

Interviewers: Francelle Robison Collins
Bonnie Pipes Flory

Date: December 5, 2017

Place: Kerr County Court House
Kerrville, Texas

*The Oral History Project is a project of
The Kerr County Historical Commission,
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Committee chair is Francelle Robison Collins.*

Transcribed and Edited by Rita Edington Odom

Kerr County Historical Commission

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Name: Joe Schmerber

Date of Birth: February 20, 1936

Place of Birth: Eagle Pass, Texas

Education: Tivy High School
University of Texas
Military School, Ft. Lee, Virginia

Father: Christoval Vann Schmerber
Mother: Lenore Osborn Schmerber

Spouse: Gerry Michael Schmerber (former wife)

Children: Steve, Scotty, Robin

SUMMARY

Joe Henry Schmerber was born on February 20, 1936 in Eagle Pass, Texas. He moved to Kerrville, Texas with his family in 1944. He was one of 9 children. He attended Tivy High School, the University of Texas and a military school at Ft. Lee, Virginia. He has worked hard all of his life. Most of his working life was spent at Mooney Aircraft where he created their Parts Department and their Optional Equipment Department. He then became part of the Sales Department until his retirement in 1999. In 1972, Mooney went into bankruptcy and shut down. Needing a new job quickly, he signed up for a military school in Fort Lee, Virginia and his family moved to Houston to be close to Gerry's parents. After graduating from military school he returned to Houston and obtained employment with Bridgestone Tire Company where he was instrumental in setting up one of their first regional warehouses. He stayed employed there until 1974 when Mooney opened their doors again. He remained employed there until his retirement in 1999. Joe has three grown children: Steve, Scotty and Robin who are all living successful lives.

An Oral History of Joe Schmerber

My name is Francelle Robison Collins and I am with the Kerr County Historical Commission, Oral History Project. Today is December 5, 2017, and I am here at the Kerr County Courthouse in Kerrville, Texas, with Bonnie Pipes Floury. We are talking with Joe Henry Schmerber, who understands that we are making audio and video recordings of this interview and that a typewritten transcript of this interview will be provided so that changes can be made. The audio and video tapes, however, cannot be edited. This information along with copies of any family pictures and documents provided by you will then be turned over to the Kerr Regional History Center, Schreiner University, and the University of North Texas' Portals to Texas History, where they will be available to the public unless specific restrictions are placed on them by you. These restrictions will be noted in the Release form after you have had a chance to review your manuscript. Are you clear on what we are doing today?

FRANCELLE: What is your given name?

JOE: Joe Henry Schmerber

FRANCELLE: Where were you born?

JOE: I was born in Eagle Pass, Texas at Ft. Duncan Hospital on February 20, 1936.

FRANCELLE: Do you remember the delivering physician?

JOE: No, I don't

FRANCELLE: Do you have brothers or sisters?

JOE: I have 8 siblings. I have 3 sisters and 5 brothers.

FRANCELLE: Are they still alive today?

JOE: No. Most of them are deceased. My oldest sister, Alice, passed about 3 or 4 years ago and my older brother Robert passed about 2 years ago. The rest are still alive. I have a sister and a brother that live in Hollywood. They've been there almost all their life. I have a brother, Harold, he has a ranch out behind the YO somewhere and he retired there. My sister Yolanda lives in Corpus Christi and the other two younger brothers, Rudy and Fred, have both passed.

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FRANCELLE: So you have one brother that is pretty close to you here?

JOE: Yes.

FRANCELLE: What was your father's name?

JOE: Christoval Vann Schmerber

FRANCELLE: What was his occupation?

JOE: He was a rancher first and then became a carpenter. And he did that all his life.

FRANCELLE: You were born in Eagle Pass. Was your dad born there too?

JOE: Yes. He was born there also.

FRANCELLE: And what brought your family here to Kerrville?

JOE: Basically, Dad was running out of work in that area. It was in the 40's, the early 40's, 1941 or 42 and he started looking for other areas and they found Kerrville and we moved here in 1944. And I started school here at Tivy.

FRANCELLE: Where did you settle here?

JOE: We settled right across from the HEB store. That road has just closed and there was a house there.

FRANCELLE: Was that Rodriguez Street?

JOE: Yes. They tore that house down when they built the car business. So we moved from there to Sydney Baker, 833 Sydney Baker. It was right next door to Joe Whelan's Plumbing Shop and we lived there until 1958. When my parents passed I sold the property to Whelan and it became a parking lot and I think it's a laundry now.

FRANCELLE: Did your dad work for himself or for someone else?

JOE: He worked for Earl Stiefel until his retirement. Earl Stiefel had a construction company on Water Street.

FRANCELLE: They built homes and businesses?

JOE: Yes.

FRANCELLE: What was your mother's name?

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JOE: Lenore Osborn Schmerber. She was a housewife and had her hands full with 9 kids.

FRANCELLE: And where was she born?

JOE: She was born there in Eagle Pass. Most of my family was born in Eagle Pass except for the last three siblings I think. They were born here in Kerrville.

FRANCELLE: Did you mother work outside of the home?

JOE: No. She took jobs sometimes. She worked for Dr. Drane. Earlier her doctor was Dr. Drane and I think she was housekeeping for him and later my sister was babysitting for the 2 children. It was a nice family.

FRANCELLE: What are some special things you would like for us to know about your mom and your dad?

JOE: I can't think of anything extraordinary or special about them except that they both worked all their life trying to keep us fed. You know, a carpenter's salary is not all that much so we all learned early in life, especially me, to go out and seek work. I started working in a bowling alley at age ten and at the theater. My older brothers were running machines at the Arcadia and I'd go in there with them at ten or eleven o'clock at night sweeping it up. We were just trying to earn a living.

FRANCELLE: You had to help out with that many children.

JOE: Yes. All of us helped out. I was also out at the golf course caddying. I remember caddying for Scott Schreiner.

FRANCELLE: How much did you make?

JOE: About seventy-five cents to a dollar, maybe a dollar and a quarter. He was real generous. That doesn't sound like much now but back then that was a lot of money.

FRANCELLE: Some of the other guys said they got fifty cents. Weren't you in a pool?

JOE: Yes. Especially in the summertime. You would go in and sign up and the next person that needed a caddy would get the next golfer on the list. Mr. Schreiner used to call on me.

FRANCELLE: And you got to know the elders in the town, too.

JOE: That's right. There was a person, W.W. Vann. I used to caddy for him, Red Brown. The interesting part about him was when he was golfing, he's the only man I knew

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that kept a cigar in his mouth while he was driving. That was always real funny.

FRANCELLE: Mr. Allison, Judge Allison

JOE: Yes. I caddied for him. There were a lot of older people that I didn't realize how prominent they were.

FRANCELLE: Weren't there some pretty good poker games that went on out there?

JOE: (laughs) Well, mostly dominos. After golfing they would sit there and drink a beverage and play dominos. By then we were through caddying and we were all good friends so we would go down to the river and look for golf balls. We would find them and bring them back to sell and that would be extra money. When you came home, whatever money you had you put it on the table and that helped the family.

FRANCELLE: How many bedrooms did your house have?

JOE: It had 2.

FRANCELLE: So all of the kids were together?

JOE: Well, some of the older ones were gone by then. I built a third bedroom myself.

FRANCELLE: How old were you when you did that?

JOE: Oh. Fourteen I think.

FRANCELLE: How did you learn how to do that?

JOE: From my dad more or less. I don't know, things just come to me. If it broke I could fix it. If the car broke I could fix it. I still do all that. The thing is I have three children and every time I was working on a car I would say, "Come over here. Let me show you what's going on." And they really didn't show much interest. I couldn't force them. But they grew up well.

FRANCELLE: What about your grandparents? Did you know them?

JOE: I didn't. I knew nothing about them until 2 or 3 weeks ago when you told me I was going to be interviewed I went over to the genealogy place and those ladies just jump right in to help me with all this and I found my grandparents right away. My grandfather was John Schmerber. He was born in 1869 and I think he was born in Alamogorda area. His parents came across and landed in New Orleans and were originally going to go to Missouri but they changed their minds and stayed on the boat and went south to Alamogorda and the boat unloaded and a lot of the

Schmerbers are there still. But my grandparents came straight west to Carrizo Springs and established a ranch and lived there for several years. They were raising goats, horses, mules, donkeys, you name it. They had a thousand acres there. They stayed there until the kids were beginning to grow up. There were 8 siblings in my dad s family and they were all working on the ranch and then Somehow or other my grandfather and grandmother divorced and she went away and the kids and my dad kept working and my grandfather passed away. They managed to ranch for a while until their mother came back and there were some conflicts so all the kids were run off. They all gathered and some went to Eagle Pass. Well, some went to San Antonio and some back to the Alamogorda area.

FRANCELLE: Do you think there were some grandparents in Eagle Pass that took them there?

JOE: Yes. Anyhow, there's quite a few people that I have dug up in the genealogy from that area, a cousin, Tom Schmerber who worked for the border patrol for about thirty years. I found another cousin, Tom Boles, who also worked in law enforcement there for many years. And I found out just recently that the juvenile detention center is named after him.

FRANCELLE: And where is that?

JOE: In Eagle Pass. And as we back up a little bit more there was a member of my mother's family, his name was Tom Green, he lived up northwest of Eagle Pass, and part of the history that I just read is that he came to Eagle Pass and rounded up a bunch of rangers and they went off somewhere into Mexico – there was a war or something going on. And he was the leader of the Texas Rangers that went into Mexico and when they came back some time later, Tom Green County was named after him. That's kind of an outstanding piece of information that I found. Another piece of information that I found out is that in 1870 a member of my dad's family was appointed to the Governor's Hounds. It's a law enforcement group assigned to protect the governor but that group only lasted from about 1870 to about 1879. I thought that was quite interesting. There were several other members of the family that were rangers. And I intend to find all of them. And backing up even more if I may, to the beginning, the name Schmerber comes from a little group of 6 villages in the middle of Germany. If you take Dresden, Munich and Frankfort triangle and go right to the middle of that triangle there is a community named Schmerb. Six little houses there and that's where the Schmerbers come from. And I understand that in German if you leave a place they add the "ber" to your name. The other item that I found was a boarding pass for Jacques Schmerber departing out of Alsace-Lorraine to the United States. And he came across but he passed away shortly after that. One or two other things. My dad's name was Vann. I traced it back to Georgia. One of my ancestors was named Rich Joe Vann and he was half Cherokee and half German. And he became the chief of one of the Cherokee tribes there. The reason they called him Rich was because he spent a lot of time prospecting and he found a lot of gold. He established a plantation there and he had slaves, a lot of them and slaves took your last name. One of them wrote a big long article about life there. He treated every one of them very well. They were all well fed, well clothed, they worked but they were like family. Back in the 80's around the time the government was getting ready to start moving Indians out to Nebraska some to Oklahoma

but mostly Nebraska. Before they started rounding them up, Joe decided he was going to move so he moved his family and I think some of the slaves to Arkansas and because he was so rich he established another community there which included a boating business right there on I think the Mississippi. He would haul freight north and haul freight south all the way to New Orleans. And what happened to him was that he was on a trip on the steamboat south when another steamboat came up beside him and he didn't like that the other boat was coming faster so he immediately yelled at one of his son's to stoke that fire to move faster and the boy said, "No, it'll blow up". But he said to add more wood – even beef carcasses – and they did and, knowing what would happen the son jumped overboard and shortly after that the boat blew up. And there went Rich Joe Vann. The son told the story and said the only thing they found was one of Joe's arms. Backing up, I don't know if it was a daughter or a slave, I didn't find that out yet. Her name was Lucinda Vann and she wrote a two or three-page article about life in Georgia and it is most interesting. I'm jumping back and forth but one of dad's siblings ended up in Hollywood. She was a beautiful beautiful young lady and somehow or other she got involved in wrestling and she was one of the first 5 women wrestlers in the United States. A gorgeous lady. I saw a picture of her from a Los Angeles newspaper. I thought that was kind of unusual.

FRANCELLE: What year did you say your family moved to Kerrville?

JOE: 1944

FRANCELLE: Did you start Tivy then?

JOE: Yes. First grade. I was a year or two behind because the last couple of years my dad and family, he was having trouble finding work, he bundled us all up and we went north to the migration fields. We were in a tomato field in Indiana. You get tired of tomatoes after a while. You'd go in at the end of summer and hoe row after row after row and plant every foot or so and take out the ones in between. After that we packed it up and went north to Michigan and we were picking cherries up there for a couple of months. Then we came back to Indiana, the tomatoes were ripe and we picked tomatoes. Those were our camping trips.

FRANCELLE: Did you camp there?

JOE: Most of the people had one and two story buildings. You see all these migratory buildings. They were nice buildings and nice people. They would come over and bring eggs and butter and stuff. It was an interesting experience. I was only 6 years old.

FRANCELLE: What did you participate in at Tivy?

JOE: I don't remember much. I played football, three year letterman.

FRANCELLE: What position did you play?

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JOE: I was playing halfback behind your brother. I was watching him. Your brother was the quarterback and I was left halfback. We played a T formation but back then we played both ways so on defense I was playing defensive end and linebacker. I enjoyed every bit of it. And I ran track. I guess one of the highlights was I went into Memorial Stadium in Austin and ran there.

FRANCELLE: Was that a state meet?

JOE: It was a state meet.

FRANCELLE: What did you run?

JOE: I ran the mile and the half mile. I also ran the sprint medley. I was the 4th runner and finished the half mile. We didn't win it.

FRANCELLE: Was Coach Daniel your coach your last year?

JOE: Yes. Coach Daniel. Tom Daniel. Nice man.

FRANCELLE: I guess it was your senior year that you beat Thomas Jefferson in San Antonio. It was a big win for Tivy.

JOE: The thing I remember about Thomas Jefferson is their left defensive end. I was the punter and we were back on our end of the field so we had to punt and I remember I was in my punting motion and had my leg straight up and here came that defensive end with his elbow right on my throat. I was spitting blood but it passed and I got back in the game. I wanted to look him up.

FRANCELLE: Isn't that what they call a clothesline?

JOE: Exactly. They named it after that type of hit because that's exactly what it felt like.

FRANCELLE: What year did you graduate?

JOE: In 1956.

FRANCELLE: What did you do after that?

JOE: I went to the University of Texas. I applied for a loan from Peterson Foundation and they gave me five hundred dollars and that's what I used for two semesters. It was hard to get a part time job because I was staying with an uncle in south Austin and I had to get up at 6 in the morning to catch a 7 o'clock bus to take me all the way to the University. It turned out to be quite a hardship because I was taking eighteen hours both semesters. I knew I might not make it all the way

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through so I went one year and decided I didn't like owing anybody so I quit and packed it up and went to Grand Prairie and went to work for Chance Vought Aircraft. They were manufacturing Navy jets, they call them F8U Crusaders. They were manufacturing guided missiles also. I worked for a while there.

FRANCELLE: Did you always have a love of airplanes?

JOE: Since 4th grade.

FRANCELLE: Did you go out and watch the planes?

JOE: When I could. The airport here in Kerrville was where Walmart is today. So I would ride my bike over there. Anyway, I worked for Chance Vought and enjoyed it even though it was the night shift. We went to work at 4 in the afternoon and got off at midnight.

FRANCELLE: And what exactly did you do there?

JOE: I worked in the tooling department as a stock chaser, tooling chaser. Our job was to find the proper tools to manufacture a part for the assembly lines. If they had a work order to do a certain job, our job was to find the tool and bring it to them, have it ready for them so they could start working on that part. It was interesting and it got me started in aviation.

FRANCELLE: Were there a lot of tools to select from?

JOE: Millions. Some of those tools we had to use forklifts to pick them up and take them. They were stamping tools you put on these big hydraulic lifts. You put the tool on the bottom and the top and the metal in the middle and hammer it.

FRANCELLE: Was there someone telling you which tools to find?

JOE: They gave us the numbers and where it would be and we'd go find them. We had a lot of spare time out there and we did a lot of forklift racing. It was outside and in the dark. That was fun.

FRANCELLE: How long did you stay there?

JOE: About 6 months. What happened was their military contract was cancelled and within one week sixteen thousand people were gone.

FRANCELLE: Were they all right there or all over the United States?

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JOE: All right there. But there were a lot of other manufacturing places. I went to TI, Texas Instruments, and tried to get a job there and they said a lot of my contemporaries had already beat me there. I looked in other areas and there was nothing. So I packed my clothes and came back home. I got home on a Friday and on Monday I went out to Mooney Aircraft to apply for a job and they hired me on the spot and I started working that same day.

FRANCELLE: Was that '58 or '59?

JOE: 1958. April 1.

FRANCELLE: When did Mooney start operation?

JOE: Mooney Company was formed in 1946 in Wichita, Kansas. Al and Art Mooney, they were brothers, the designer and the tool and die maker. They formed a company and started building the Mooney Mite, a single engine, single seat. They were building them one at a time. They built several hundred airplanes right there until 1952 or '53 when the government started building the military base right

next to

them. It was McConnell Air Base. Mooney could keep building but couldn't fly them because they couldn't fly into the military flight pattern. That prompted them to move and they looked at several different areas. A friend in Dallas who was the editor of an aviation magazine told the Mooneys about Kerrville. So I guess they came to Kerrville or Kerrville went to them and asked them to come to Kerrville and that's what brought them here in 1953.

FRANCELLE: Did they move the whole production here?

JOE: Yes. I don't know if you remember the old hanger. There were 2 hangers, one behind the other and they moved into one section of one of the hangers. They were building Mooney Mites there but at the same time they were designing the 4 place aircraft, the one that you see now. By 1954 or '55 they had the 4 place aircraft designed. But Al and Art Mooney were not business people, they were engineers so they were running out of money, they were going broke. Then Mr. Hal Rochelle, an oil field lawyer, from Midland, came over and told them he would take over all the debts and the stock and if they finished the M20 he would keep them on the payroll up to that point. And he did and they did. And they found out they couldn't build in that one hanger so they moved into the other hanger. That's where the assembly line for the 4 place airplane was developed and produced.

FRANCELLE: Did a lot of the people come with them or did they start hiring local people?

JOE: Only about 3 or 4 people came with them. All the others were local from Fredericksburg, Harper, Center Point, Comfort and Kerrville.

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FRANCELLE: They were mainly assembly line people?

JOE: Yes. There were one or two local engineers. Philip Furman was one and I think he went to the University of Texas and when he graduated he came to work here. They only had about 3 or 4 engineers, that's all they needed at the time. I remember Richard Farris was out there. Now he has a steakhouse.

FRANCELLE: Were they aeronautical engineers?

JOE: There are other disciplines; plant engineers, dynamics engineers. Throughout the years they hired specialists but at the beginning they used what they could get.

FRANCELLE: What was your job there?

JOE: I came to work April 1, 1958 and my job was to take a hammer and nails and saw to strip the big building that was formerly the National Guard Armory. They had a big drill hall and on the side they built little cages for supplies and tools and different things. They frame them and wire them with fencing wire and put doors on them and lock them for security. My job was to tear all that down and throw it out. I painted the walls and I painted the floor. I ordered shelving and what have you and then I went down in the factory and looked in all the corners and closets for all the service parts that were not used because models changed. As they went on and all these left over parts were just laying in boxes. I took all those parts back over to my area and that became the beginning of the Parts Department. So I established the Parts Department and in addition to that, to complicate the issue, the Mooney Mite, the airplane they were building in Wichita and then in Kerrville, all that tooling was laying around all over the place. I had to find all that stuff, label it and move it over into a certain corner and catalogue all that stuff.

FRANCELLE: And it was still being used as an airport.

JOE: Yes.

FRANCELLE: How did you separate Mooney from the airport?

JOE: We didn't really. We were using the same taxiways and same runways. There wasn't that much testing being done. The first year, 1955, when they developed that first 4 place airplane, they only made 9 airplanes. The following year it went exponentially higher and higher. But then there wasn't that much traffic. But after we moved into that second hanger, we started selling more and more airplanes and needed more space. That's when the other buildings started coming in.

FRANCELLE: How many Mooney Mites could you build in a year?

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JOE: I don't recall. They manufactured from 1946 to 1955. They manufactured like three hundred, three hundred fifty maybe. And that was it. The minute they approved the 4 place airplane, that was it. They were selling those airplanes for two thousand dollars back then. And the M20, they were selling them for ninety-six hundred I think. So that's where their emphasis went. The first year after they started building that 4 place airplane it grew and grew and grew and they started adding employees. In the mid-sixties, probably '65 or '66, we manufactured 600 airplanes in one year. We had seven hundred employees. At that same time, about 1964 or 1965 we contracted with a Japanese company, Mitsubishi Industries, to manufacture a twin engine, turbine powered airplane. We brought the first couple of airplanes into Kerrville and tried to assemble them here and found out immediately that we needed more space so they moved that operation to San Angelo. We had three hundred employees there. With seven hundred in Kerrville at that time we had one thousand employees.

FRANCELLE: Then you started doing something different for Mooney.

JOE: Yes. After I got the Parts Department set up and running they gave me the job of ordering and maintaining the electronics, radios, autopilots that would go into the airplane. So another section that was the Optional Equipment Department was added in the same area. I was working out of two windows. I was also shipping parts because we had dealers that wanted parts for airplanes, mainly landing gear parts and things like that because when you landed an airplane without the gear down it would break everything. So they ordered the parts from us. I also updated all the parts manuals and service manuals. At that time in the Sales Department they had a Sales Manager and three Salesmen. One of them was Don Benedict, one was Ron Schupp, another was Bill Mullen (I don't know where he came from). They kept watching me and asked me if I would mind moving into the Sales Department because we were beginning to sell quite a few airplanes. I transferred in there so my job changed to order taking from the salesmen, process it, purchase orders, all the legal paper work, invoicing and ordering put into the factory to the different departments. Upholstery, optional items, leather seats, paint shop. Everybody had to be on the right page for that order and that was my job to keep it going that way. And when the airplane was finished I was the one that had to get it paid for, receive the customer whether he came to Kerrville or San Antonio and I would hold his hand the whole time he was here, take him through the factory, show him the airplane, check it out, get paid for it and wave bye-bye to him. I did that 10,000 times. I was still there when we delivered the ten thousandth airplane.

FRANCELLE: Did you have to go up in it, fly in it, to know about the plane?

JOE: I started flying in '58 or '59, right after I went there. I formed a flying club. Ten of us went together and bought a J3 Cub. We started flying in that.

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FRANCELLE: Was that a Mooney?

JOE: No. (laughs) It was a Piper Cub. It was a cheap airplane and cheap to fly. It was slow and we all learned to fly in that. I put in my first twenty hours in a J3 Cub and the salesman didn't like that. They said "We don't like you flying in a Piper airplane". As it turned out, Don Benedict said I should be flying in a Mooney. So every time he or Bill Mullen had to go to San Angelo or Midland I would go along and have a flying lesson. I logged seventy-five hours as a student pilot. I was finally able to solo the Mooney to San Antonio and back and if there were some parts to be picked up or radios we needed in a hurry I would take an airplane and go pick them up. After seventy-five hours I decided I wasn't really cut out to be a pilot. I decided I wouldn't fly anymore as a pilot in command. I had other resources. I had other people. At the time we were delivering twenty to thirty airplanes a month and I hired a pilot that was sharp, knew flying, was instrument rated and if I ever needed to go anywhere I got him to take me.

FRANCELLE: How did Mooney stack up against other planes at that time?

JOE: In the early sixties we started selling more than Piper and Beech and Cessna. In the mid-sixties to the late sixties we were number one. And then the whole industry started slowing down. In '68, '69, '70 it slowed way down and so we lost the number one bracket. In '72, Mooney shut down.

FRANCELLE: Is that when you retired?

JOE: No. I gathered family and we went to Houston where my in-laws were and I went to a military school because I was in the National Guard and went to a school at Ft. Lee, Virginia. It was an officer's school and I was in supply and management. I spent several months there and came back to Houston and went to work for a chemical company and I decided I didn't like the smell of those chemicals so that didn't last very long. Another job that came open in the newspaper and Monday morning I was at their door. Bridgestone Tire Company. Bridgestone in probably 1972 was unheard of. It was just beginning. I went in and interviewed and when they saw my credentials they hired me on the spot. They took me back to a four hundred foot building by five hundred feet long and all that was in there was a bunch of metal framework and a bunch of pallets. There were about twenty doors and trailers backed up to all of them and every one of those trailers was full of tires. The parking lot was full of them also. And they had 2 boatloads of tires out in the bayou waiting to be unloaded. And they were being charged for all of that. They said, "This is what you have to do. You have to unload every bit of those and get them out of those trailers because we are paying fifty dollars apiece per day for every one of those. I said you let me hire people to do it and I'll get it done. It may take me 2 or 3 months but I'll get it done. We'll build pallets, stack the tires in them and set up the warehouse. I had just learned that at the military that I went to but I didn't want them to know I hadn't done it before.

We reached an agreement. When I saw how much money they had I upped it a little. Everything I asked for they gave me. They were so good to me. I said I want 4 permanent employees. They said fine. I said I want to hire temporaries, as many as I need and they said fine. So we went to the back with my 4 new employees and I said, "Look, you guys are going to be lead men right now. I'm going to hire 4 temporaries for each of you and every 2 hours I want you and your 4 guys in those trailers, unload them, put them on the deck. I want you to inventory them and make sure they are correct to the shipping order and when you are through call me and I will come and re-inventory and I'll sign off and you go to the next one and the next one and the next one." We did that for 3 months in the summertime. Those trailers were hot and muggy. You know how Houston is. The bottom line is that in about 3 or 4 months we got everything unloaded, everything accounted for and I set up that warehouse for them. And they took that warehouse as a model for the rest of the warehouses. I worked for them for a couple of years and they were just wonderful to me. Wonderful.

FRANCELLE: Did you move back to Kerrville then?

JOE: I moved back to Kerrville in 1974 when Mooney opened again. I had 3 young children and I said I can't raise these kids in Houston. We were down in the southern part of Houston by the original airport and the smog goes that way and we didn't like that so we moved to Spring Branch on the northwest side and it was much better.

FRANCELLE: Tell us about your family.

JOE: My oldest son, Steve, was born in 1961, went through Tivy, graduated and went to A&M, graduated, met his wife there and married. He went to work for AT&T immediately in Tyler as a customer service manager. After that the company started splitting off into electronics and he ended up in Austin as a manager of one of those electronic sections. He worked there for many, many years, started raising a family and has done fifteen to twenty years there. The company went through 2 or 3 transitions. And he started raising 6 children. Then the company moved him to North Carolina which is right at the factory area because they wanted him to do a couple of special projects. That factory takes about 4 square blocks. I went to visit it in the wintertime. They do fiber optics. They have the doors in the back with all the trailers. As they manufacture the fiber optics it goes right into the trailer. They kept moving the stuff day and night. Anyhow, his project was that he was going to do a tour system so they could take customers from all over the world, bring them in and tour the factory. Then he built a display area right in the middle of the building with glass walls around it like a 40 x 40 and he set up every one of their displays, whatever they did, so he could go in and show them, this is what we do. That's not what he's doing now because the company bought out another subsidiary and he is now the manager of one third of the Eastern United States from Florida to Canada

Joe Schmerber

FRANCELLE: What are your other two children's names?

JOE: Scott. Scotty. He went to Tivy and played football. He went to Angelo State and graduated from there and went to work for Kerrville RV Sales and worked for the Kerrville Times as a salesperson and now he owns the Lazy Dog Sports Bar.

FRANCELLE: Is that in town?

JOE: Yes. Right across the street from the VA. It faces the lake.

FRANCELLE: Yes. We've been there. It's wonderful. So that's your son.

JOE: He's very involved in doing benefits for people. Mainly the Wounded Warriors. Every year he has a Wounded Warrior benefit. He collects twenty, thirty thousand dollars for them. And every penny he makes on that goes to them.

FRANCELLE: And your 3rd child?

JOE: My 3rd is a daughter, Robin. She went to Tivy and graduated from college at San Marcos. She graduated in journalism and had several jobs and accounts and now she works for the City of San Antonio. Her current job is in special operations, special projects manager for the director of the airport.

FRANCELLE: You didn't give us your wife's name.

JOE: My former wife. Gerry. She came to Tivy in our sophomore year. We had already started school at Tivy a couple of days earlier. I was sitting there with the kids waiting for the bell to ring and the door opens and she walks in and I saw her and that was it. The lights started flickering and I said "Get out of the way" and I started walking toward her and some other girl went up to her and said "Can I help you" and took her into the office. So I missed the first encounter. And I spent the next several weeks doing everything I could to get her attention. Eventually I did. We got married and had the 3 kids. Steve has 6 kids. One is a doolah, a midwife, except she doesn't deliver. She holds your hand all the way from pregnancy to delivery and that's a business and she's doing very well. In addition to that she has 5 kids and she home schools. The next boy is a doctor. He's in San Diego and works for the University of California. He's a teacher part time and he runs one of their satellites part time and he loves it. He does research too. Real smart. Aggie. His older sister was an Aggie too. The next boy just got married about a month ago. He is a guidance counselor at University of North Texas Catholic counselor. I guess he wants to keep the kids interested in the church. The rest of the kids are still just growing up. The 4th kid, she works for The University of Texas I think. She was soliciting jobs for people. They are opening a medical branch in San Antonio and she would go out and find doctors and nurses that wanted to be teachers.

Joe Schmerber

FRANCELLE: Thank you. We appreciate your time.

JOE: Glad to help

END



JOE'S MOTHER LEONOR OSBORNE AND FATHER CHRISTOBAL VANN SCHMERBER



MY LIFE IN PICTURES



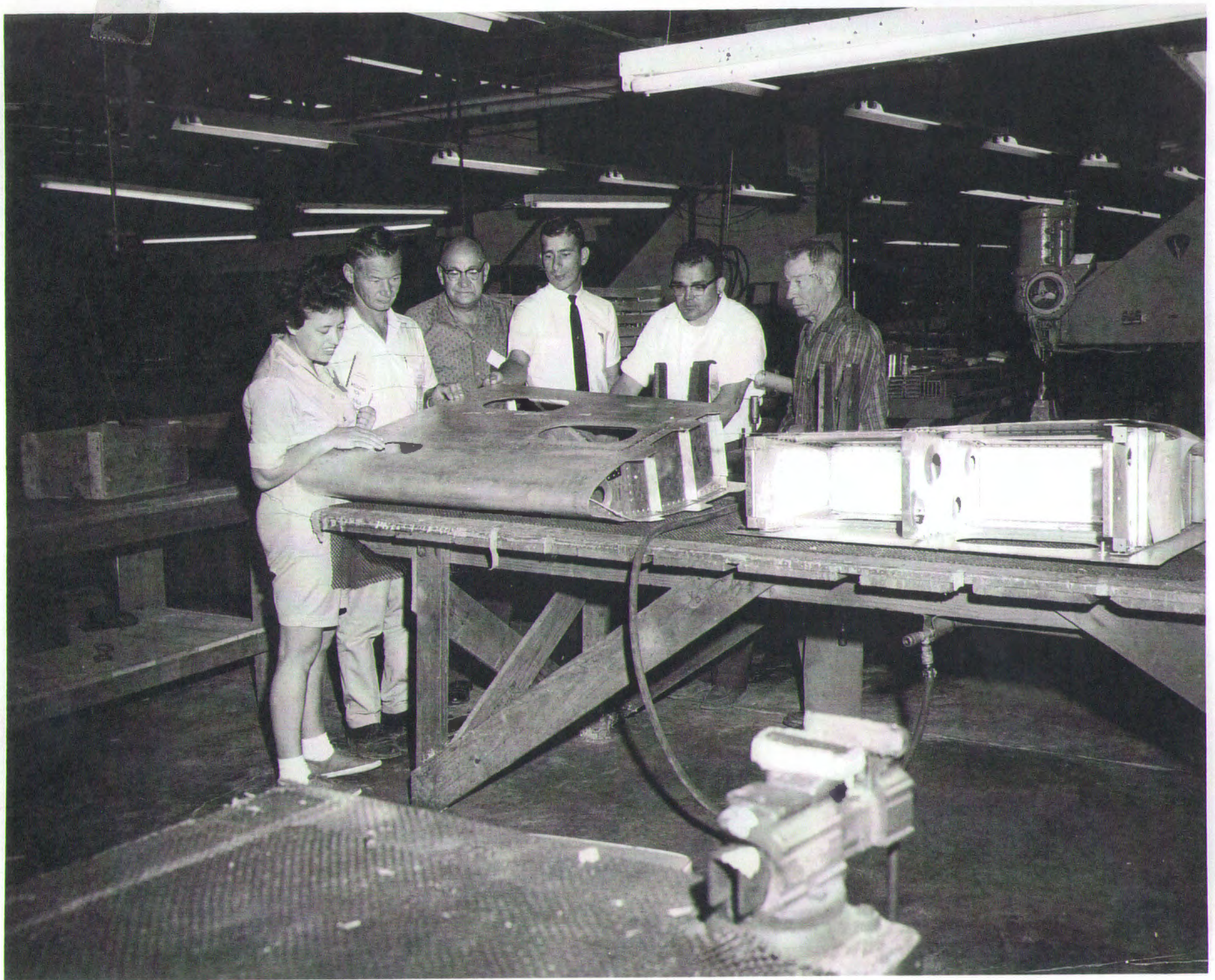


JOE IN NATIONAL GUARD UNIFORM

JOE, COACH OF MOONEY'S PONY LEAGUE TEAM THE "MOONEY MITES"



JOE (4TH FROM LEFT) CONDUCTING A FACTORY TOUR AT MOONEY AIRCRAFT





JOE GETTING CONGRATULATIONS FROM JACK FURMAN AS NEW PRESIDENT OF THE KERRVILLE JAYCEES

RECEIVING EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR FROM HAL RACHEL, CEO OF MOONEY AIRCRAFT



RECEIVING AWARD FROM TOM SMITH, PRESIDENT OF MOONEY AIRCRAFT





JOE SITTING ON MOONEY AIRCRAFT WHILE AT WORK



JOE (AT LEFT) AT SIGNING OF 4TH OF JULY PROCLAMATION FROM MAYOR FUZZY SWAYZE



JOE AND FORMER WIFE GERRY SHORTLY AFTER WEDDING IN 1959



MOST OF THE JOE SCHMERBER FAMILY