

*The
Kerr County Historical Commission
presents*

An ORAL HISTORY

of

*SCHUMACHER SISTERS
FRANCES
BILLIE
JEANNE*

Kerrville, Texas 2016

Kerr County Historical Commission

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewees: SCHUMACHER SISTERS
Frances, Billie, Jeanne

Interviewers: Francelle Robison Collins
Louis Stephens

Date: November 8, 2016

Place: Kerr County Courthouse
Kerrville, Texas

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

Transcribed and Edited by Jeanie Archer Webb

Kerr County Historical Commission

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MARY FRANCES SCHUMACHER ANDREWS

Date of Birth July 1, 1939
Place of Birth: San Antonio, Texas
Education: Tivy High School, Kerrville 1957
Del Mar Col, Corpus Christi
San Antonio College

BILLIE GAYLE SCHUMACHER ZUBER

Date of Birth July 24, 1941
Place of Birth San Antonio, Texas
Education Tivy High School, Kerrville 1958
U.T. Austin 1963
Schreiner University

JEANNE CLARE SCHUMACHER SUTTON

Date of Birth March 21, 1949
Place of Birth Kerrville, Texas
Education Tivy High School, Kerrville 1967
Schreiner Institute
U.T. Austin 1971

Father: Ben Nolan "Pete" Schumacher
Mother: Frances Gustine Mathis
Brother: Ben Nolan "Pete" Schumacher, Jr. (deceased)

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SUMMARY

The Schumacher sisters are descendants of Texas pioneers who arrived from Germany in 1845 and joined the Castro Colony settling in Medina County. Their great, great grandfather Christian Schumacher later moved to Kerr County and married a widow, Sarah Brazeal Sublett, who had arrived in Kerr County in 1863. The Schumacher family ranched and farmed land in western Kerr County, around the area that became Hunt, Texas, along the Guadalupe River. Frances, Billie, and Jeanne, and their brother Pete, were reared on the property that at this writing is a development called Canyon Springs. They attended the Hunt School and graduated from Tivy High School in the late 1950's and early 1960's. After graduation, each left Kerrville for varying periods of their lives but all eventually returned to contribute as volunteers and historians in Hunt, Kerrville, and western Kerr County communities, following the examples set by their parents and grandparents. In this interview the sisters give us their memories of growing up on the Guadalupe River as well as sharing extensive histories of the Schumacher's and their lives in the Hill Country through six generations.

**An Oral History of
FRANCES, BILLIE, & JEANNE SCHUMACHER**

My name is Francelle Robison Collins and I am with the Kerr County Historical Commission, Oral History Project. Today is November 8, 2016, and I am here at the Kerr County Courthouse with Louis Stephens. We are talking with Frances, Billie, and Jeanne Schumacher, 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 family pictures and documents provided by you will then be turned over to the History Center, the Portals to Texas History at the University of North Texas, and Schreiner University. 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?

ALL: Yes.

FRANCELLE: Let's start with the youngest. Jeanne, can you give us your given name?

JEANNE: Yes, Jeanne Clare Schumacher.

FRANCELLE: OK, and when and where were you born?

JEANNE: I was born March 21, 1949 in Kerrville, one of the last to be born in the Secor Hospital.

FRANCELLE: Do you remember the delivering physician?

JEANNE: Dr. Stevenson.

FRANCELLE: OK, and do you have any siblings besides the two here?

JEANNE: Yes, we had a brother, Ben Nolan "Pete" Schumacher, Jr., who was born on May 4, 1943 in San Antonio. And he's deceased.

FRANCELLE: And Billie, you want to give me the same information?

BILLIE: Sure, I'm Billie Gayle Schumacher. I was born July 24, 1941 in Santa Rosa Hospital in San Antonio because there was no hospital here.

FRANCELLE: And do you remember the delivering physician.

BILLIE: I don't.

FRANCELLE: And Frances, the same question to you.

FRANCES: Mary Frances Schumacher. I was born July 1, 1939, in San Antonio at P and S Hospital.

FRANCELLE: P and S?

FRANCES: Yes, that's Physicians and Surgeons.

FRANCELLE: OK, that's new to me.

FRANCES: I think it was Dr. Roberts.

FRANCELLE: And what was your father's name?

JEANNE: It was Ben Nolan "Pete" Schumacher, Sr. Pete was his nickname.

FRANCELLE: And where was he born?

JEANNE: He was born in Hunt.

FRANCELLE: And, hasn't your family been in this area for a long, long, time?

JEANNE: Yes. Our great grandmother first arrived in Hunt in 1863, which made her one of the very first settlers of the Hunt area. She was about 11 or 12 years old when she came with her mother and stepfather.

FRANCELLE: And Billie, what was your Dad's occupation?

BILLIE: He was a builder, home builder, road builder, jack of all trades.

FRANCELLE: Frances, why don't you give us an endearing quality of your dad, something that you'd like to pass on, something that was very special about him.

FRANCES: He was not a person that expressed, like, undue love, but we knew he loved us.

FRANCELLE: OK. You all agree? You want to add something to that.

JEANNE: Oh yes. I think both of our parents; I would say what was enduring to me about them was their sense of giving back to the community. For example, our mother was a charter member of the Hunt Methodist Church, she was an officer in the PTA, Hunt Garden Club, Hill Country Cowbells, which was a group of ranchers' wives that encouraged the consumption of beef. And our father was president of the Hunt School Board, he was a founding member and chief of the volunteer fire department, he was with the Lions Club and became a regional officer of the Texas Lions Club. Their sense of giving back to the community was certainly instilled in every one of us, because all of us volunteer in various ways to our communities. And Frances is our super volunteer, because she just gives tirelessly to the hospital auxiliary and to the Youth Ranch auxiliary. So I think that was certainly an enduring quality of both of our parents....

FRANCELLE: They both set the ground work and y'all went from there.

JEANNE: Yes, they set the example.

FRANCELLE: And what was your mother's name?

BILLIE: Frances Gustine Mathis.

FRANCELLE: That's pretty.

BILLIE: Her father was Gus.

FRANCELLE: Now was she born in this area?

BILLIE: San Antonio.

FRANCELLE: And how did your parents meet?

BILLIE: Well, my mom was visiting her relatives here and our dad came to pick up his date, who was her friend, at their house. And she visited with him while the date got ready. Then he asked our mom out and they were married six months later. And they only saw each other three of those six months, during a three month period – on and off – for six months. And then they were married until her death, almost 50 years.

FRANCELLE: Oh my goodness, so glad that girl was slow in getting ready.

JEANNE: She turned him down. And said she couldn't go out with him, when he first asked her out, because he was dating her friend. But he was persistent.

FRANCELLE: And did y'all know your grandparents?

BILLIE: Well, John Randolph Schumacher was our grandfather. And Mary Magdalene "Maggie" Rutledge was our grandmother. And she was born in western Bandera County and he was born in Hunt, both in 1889, about 2 weeks apart. She was the older of the two. We knew that her family came to Ozona in a covered wagon, her brother was bitten by a snake on the way, and they had all kinds of problems. Her mother died when she was 10, and she wasn't happy at home. She had a stepmother than wasn't much older than she was. So she moved to Ingram to live with her aunt and uncle. But John was in Hunt the whole time, and they married in 1907 in front of the fireplace at her aunt and uncle's home. And that fireplace is still standing on Highway 39. They tore the house down but where Cypress Springs Estates is, if you look there, the fireplace is there.

FRANCELLE: Oh cool. Have y'all gotten in front of that fireplace and taken pictures? And did you know any of the other grandparents?

FRANCES: We knew our mother's mother, her father having died when she was 8 years old. She was in and out, travelling back and forth, and sometimes we wouldn't see her for a while. I remember white hair. She said she was completely white headed at 23. We called her Mom.

JEANNE: She died when I was 5. So, my only memories of her are two. The white hair and the other was the black lace up shoes that she wore, that had squared heels, higher heels. She was, according to my cousin who knew her a lot better, very particular about her shoes.

BILLIE: She wore those. And of course ladies didn't wear pants back then. Our paternal grandmother Maggie, she worked in the fields, I mean she was a widow for 26 years and so she had to work outside of the home. And she always wore knee high rubber boots with her dress and her sombrero hat. Quite a picture.

FRANCELLE: So they did do farming in Hunt?

BILLIE: In Hunt, yes, John and Maggie.

FRANCELLE: What kind of farming did they do?

BILLIE: Just raising cattle and stuff like that. They had to have hay for their cattle, it was that kind of crop. They had a grocery store and a Texaco gas station right at the entrance to Canyon Springs. And in the 1932 flood their produce, the watermelons, were floating around. And anyway they moved their home – they lived there too, but they moved their home after that, and that was the end of the gas station and grocery store.

FRANCELLE: Explain where Canyon Springs is.

BILLIE: OK, that's a subdivision just beside Schumacher Crossing on Highway 39 in Hunt. That was the family land at that time, a long time ago.

FRANCELLE: Did somebody in the family name it that, or...was it already named that?

BILLIE: No, it wasn't named that at that time. Mr. Colvin bought some of it and started Canyon Springs subdivision and he named it.

FRANCELLE: And there are more people living out there than the Schumacher's, correct?

JEANNE: Another thing about the '32 Flood and the Schumacher grocery store-gas station, they also sold BBQ out of there. But electricity had only come to the Hunt area about 1929-1930. There was a large electric line that ran behind the grocery store, and then crossed the river. Well, a lot of trees coming down the river caught the electric line and caused it to come down, and it hooked behind the gas station. It was a rock building and was starting to move off its foundation with that high pressure of the electric line tugging at it, so – I don't know who, if it was my grandfather – who used an axe and cut the line because it was moving the building. That meant that there was no electric service upriver beyond that point.

FRANCELLE: Now, y'all want to talk about your great grandparents?

JEANNE: Our great grandfather, Christian Schumacher, came to Texas in 1845. That was the year of his birth. I have found various stories, and various records, that he was born in Germany and then came on the ship as a baby with his family coming to Texas from Germany. And then other stories are that he was born at sea. So I don't know. But he arrived as a baby. And his family was some of the very last colonists that came as part of the Castro Colony which was settled west of San Antonio. You had the Austin Colony in East Texas and the Castro Colony was west of San Antonio. Castroville – it's in Medina County. The family settled in D'Hanis and then they moved to New Fountain and to Quihee, which is all a part of Medina County. Christian married Elizabeth Leinweber, whose family had also come with the Castro Colony. They moved in about 1880 from Medina County to Kerr County and settled at Camp Verde and purchased some land there near Verde Creek. She had family members who were operating a sawmill there. They lived there, not for very long, and then they moved to the North Fork of the Guadalupe.

She died after giving birth to twins. One of the twins lived, but Christian was left with 8 children at home, from newborn to age 18. There was a widow woman in town and that was Sarah Brazeal Sublett, who became my great grandmother when Christian and Sarah married. Sarah had come to Kerr Country in 1863 with her family. Her stepfather was Sherwood Merritt, and her mother was Keziah. Sarah had married Burkett Foster Sublett and they were married about 11 years, when he died. Before he died, he operated the former Tegner Mill, just south of what is today Schumacher Crossing It was a sawmill. He died in 1873. In 1888 she and Christian were married. And they had a real blended family, they had his 10 children and she had children too. Together they just had one child, which was our grandfather, John Schumacher. We are certainly beneficiaries of their goodness because we now own a good portion of the property that Sarah had received when her husband died, she and Christian moved onto and improved, and where John was born. It's beautiful, going from the hilltop all the way down to the river, with Cypress trees. It's one of the widest spots on the upper Guadalupe.

FRANCELLE: And that's where y'all are living out here, talk about that same area.

JEANNE: And so we enjoy it for recreation, so we're certainly grateful. Well in 1926 they built what is today the lower bridge, that was built and that was the first crossing there. Before that there were two ways to get from Ingram to Hunt. One was on the south side of the river and it started at the Kelly Creek crossing and went south along what is today Cutbirth Road and then to Hunt and joined the road. Some of that went right along the riverbed so when it flooded you had no ability for transportation. There was another road, and I'm not sure exactly where it started in Ingram, but it went behind our house and crossed the river right above where the current Schumacher Crossing is because it was low water there, it wasn't dammed. What is now the lower crossing was built there in '26. And it's interesting, when I was doing some research for the Hunt history book I read an article that said that the workers had packed up their tents and had moved from that bridge to Hunt to camp out there with their tents and to build the crossing there, which was a real low water crossing. The Schumacher Crossing was the highest bridge between – it matched the old Johnson Creek Bridge in Ingram, but it was the highest bridge. Everything else probably were not bridges, you just forded the river on gravel all up and down the north and south forks. But building that higher bridge and moving the road from the south side of the Guadalupe over to the north side over to where it is today, that enabled a lot of transportation even during a flood. And so that opened up more settlement, that bridge – enabled more settlement in western Kerr County, and encouraged people to live there because they were able to drive through the river.

FRANCELLE: Well, did people always swim there or was that...

JEANNE: The two dams above Schumacher Crossing were built by our grandfather John Schumacher to create an impoundment pond for irrigation of property above Schumacher Crossing. Those two dams have withstood every flood, including the '32 flood, to date. It's a frequently photographed site in western Kerr County.

BILLIE: The lower bridge that is there today was a single lane bridge, so you had to stop and let everybody pass, and I remember one time a lady named Juanita Foster was coming across and a man had already started leading his horse across that bridge, and it spooked the horse and it came down on her door handle of the car and went into the shoulder. Big happening!

JEANNE: And our mother was driving on that bridge, and I don't think she had a head-on collision, but she had to stop very quickly. I was a little kid and there were no such things as seat belts. I was standing up on the bench seat in the front and the ashtray was open. I still have a scar where my head hit that ashtray and was cut.

BILLIE: It was nice when they built that 2-lane bridge.

FRANCELLE: Well how did it get started – nobody cared in your family that people came down there to swim at Schumacher Crossing

BILLIE: Many years ago, John, our grandfather, worked with the Kerrville Chamber of Commerce and allowed people to camp down on the river below the bridge. And Ethel Starkey still remembers when she was a child; she came from the Valley with her family every summer and they camped on that property. And that all stopped as a result of a Boy Scout trip – the Boy Scouts used to camp there a lot. But one time there was a big group and they got in a pillow fight, and there were feathers everywhere, and that kind of distressed our grandfather. And so he put a stop to the Boy Scouts camping there. It was wide open, you know, he had allowed people...but some people didn't take care of it so after a while – that's probably when the swimming at the bridge became a little more popular.

JEANNE: There was a group of citizens in the Hunt area in the late '30's I can't recall what the name of the group was, but it was essentially to promote tourism in western Kerr County. All the camps were involved, our grandfather was involved, the people who owned that the Mosel's Corral hamburger place, and other businesses, organized to promote tourism. As part of promoting tourism, our grandfather agreed with the chamber of commerce of Kerrville to allow people to come –to his riverfront and camp. When World War II came along, that organization folded.

FRANCELLE: So, I vaguely remember that we mainly swam on the weekends? That's when they mostly came to swim, on the weekend.

JEANNE: There's mostly fishing now, though some swimming goes on still.

FRANCELLE: So it's not closed.

BILLIE: Not by the bridge.

FRANCES: When our grandfather closed his riverfront to swimming, it was below the bridge.

JEANNE: But when you say below the bridge, you mean further downstream. Not right at the bridge, where people still swim. There aren't very many public access points in Kerr County to go swimming. Center Point and that spot right there.

FRANCELLE: Do people take their cars in there and wash them too?

JEANNE: Well right there, it's too deep. Now you used to be able to do that at Hunt, but with the new bridge there, it's all closed off. You could do that below Flat Rock Dam. That was a big place to wash your car.

FRANCES: The scene at the bridge, it's been painted a lot. I have three different artists' renditions of that scene.

FRANCELLE: And am I correct, then, that there is a historical marker there. And what year was that?

JEANNE: 2003

FRANCELLE: And there is some recognition, too, that the Schumacher family....

JEANNE: It's a Texas Land Heritage designation and is awarded when a place has been in continuous operation for 100 years. We got that in 1973. In 2023 Billie's sons will be eligible to get a 150-year designation.

FRANCELLE: Put that on the calendar somewhere!! Now, none of you do any ranching or farming, right? You lease, do people have crops there or animals?

BILLIE: Animals. We have a llama, a cow.

FRANCELLE: Alright, well let's talk about, we'll start with Frances. Where did you start school?

FRANCES: At Hunt. And then went to Tivy and graduated from Tivy.

FRANCELLE: How did you get to school at Hunt?

FRANCES: At Hunt we rode the bus or they took us.

FRANCELLE: And how many years did you go there?

FRANCES: Through the 8th grade. And then graduated from Tivy and took a few college courses at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi and in San Antonio. But I didn't like going to college.

FRANCELLE: And what year did you graduate from Tivy?

FRANCES: 1957.

FRANCELLE: OK. And then what did you do after that?

FRANCES: I got a job right after that with the Kerr Country Agricultural agent. I was thinking about that a while ago.

FRANCELLE: So you worked here in the Courthouse, who did you work for?

FRANCES: Guy Powell was the first one, and then Bill Rector. Then I worked at Peterson Auto Company for a year and then out at Mooney for six or seven years, and then moved to Corpus.

FRANCELLE: And was this kind of your retirement when you came back here, you had always planned to retire here.

FRANCES: Yes, this is home. I was gone for like 31 or 32 years. I worked in three different locations for the same company and returned with 31 years' service.

FRANCELLE: Now did you build a home out there?

FRANCES: No, I don't live at Hunt, I live here in town. And Billie helped me find my house and both sisters said, as soon as I moved home, now you find something to do, so that's what promoted my volunteering.

FRANCELLE: Ok, and you want to tell us what all you do to keep busy?

FRANCES: I volunteer at the hospital now 2 days a week, the Hill Country Youth Ranch Thrift Shop a day and a half a week, and at one time I volunteered a half day at the library.

FRANCELLE: Well that's wonderful, that's really nice that you're doing that. OK and Billie you want to start, where did you start school?

BILLIE: I went to Hunt for seven years, completed eight, and then came into Tivy. I was 16 when I graduated, I worked a year for Rudy Weiss, as the city manager's secretary, and then I went to the University of Texas for four years. And then after that I moved to Houston and was a personal assistant to Leon Jaworski. Then I got married, moved to Galveston where my husband was in medical school there. After that we went to Kansas City for his internship and residency, we had our kids there, two boys, and then went to Albuquerque for the Air Force for a couple of years and then came back to Kerrville for him to practice. Dr. Hawkins, the urologist here, made several trips to Albuquerque to recruit him, and I was delighted to come back and raise our kids here. I took some accounting courses at Schreiner and became a CPA and had a practice for a while and served on a lot of boards and committees, and now I stay on the western end of the county.

FRANCELLE: And what year did you graduate from Tivy?

BILLIE: 1958.

FRANCELLE: OK. And then you graduated from U.T....

BILLIE: In 1963.

FRANCELLE: Tell us, your husband did practice in Kerrville? And you want to give us his name?

BILLIE: He practiced here about 30 years. His name is Randolph Zuber and he's originally from Amarillo. We met in college and he practiced urology here at Peterson and then the last couple of years did part-time work at the VA in urology and is now retired.

FRANCELLE: And tell us about your grandsons.

BILLIE: I have six grandsons. And when we did the historical marker, we have a picture of all of them under the marker. Ben and Nolan are in college, Will, Clay and Jack are in high school, and AJ is in middle school. Three live here and three live in San Antonio.

FRANCELLE: But you've got Tivy graduates?

BILLIE: I do. One just graduated and went to Texas Tech this year, and then we have two more in another year.

FRANCELLE: And those are twins? And what grade are they in?

BILLIE: They're in 11th grade now. The twins are a double blessing.

FRANCELLE: As Boy Scouts, they help out a lot at the Historical Commission taking care of historical markers in the county. Is that everything on your side?

FRANCELLE: And Little Jeanne, do you want to tell us about you?

JEANNE: First I'd like to talk a little bit about our brother. Pete was born in '43. He went to Hunt School for 8 years, where they played 6-man football, and they had only 7 boys, so they got a lot of play time. And then he went to Tivy. He graduated there and he went to San Angelo State for almost a year. Then he worked at the USDA site for a while, then he went to Mooney and worked there. And then this was, let's see, he graduated in '61, so this was about '63 - '64 when Vietnam was gearing up. He joined the Army and spent time in Vietnam. I remember, I was watching TV, and why I was doing that in the middle of the day, I don't know, I would watch a press conference with the President when I was in the 8th grade, I'm not sure - but anyway, I was watching it, and President Johnson announced that he was sending the First Cavalry to Vietnam. And, that's what he belonged to. This was the first time that the whole First Cavalry, which was 20,000 people, were moved into the

Central Highlands of Vietnam. I remember my brother telling me the entire helicopter unit was transported aboard ships. They were excited to see that the Panama Canal, but were made to go down below for security, so they didn't ever get to see the Canal. His specialty was to repair radios in the helicopters so he had this avionics training. When he got out of the military, he married his high school sweetheart, Julie Wendel, who was one or two grades behind him at Tivy, and they moved to Dallas. He used that avionics training he'd gotten in the military to work for Collins Radio for a while. Later he worked as an avionics technician for Braniff. Then he was transferred to San Antonio, still working for Braniff, until Braniff went bankrupt. When he was transferred to San Antonio, they bought a house in Kerrville. They had two daughters. He was killed in a motorcycle accident shortly after that, in 1982. But as far as me, I went to Hunt School, so that means all four of us went to Hunt, as did our father. He graduated from high school there.

BILLIE: When they had 11 grades.

FRANCELLE: Well what happened that they got rid of all those grades.

JEANNE: Well, it was sort of a strange...they started moving grades in the late 1930's to Tivy. First, they moved the 11th grade. Then the next year I think they moved a couple more. They didn't have enough kids. They had a huge population of children and then, during the Depression, a lot of people moved away and so they just didn't have enough kids for a high school. Then they had a high school in Hunt again in the '40's, right after the Tivy High School building burned. Tivy didn't have enough room, so they started meeting out at Hunt again. But they were never accredited. That lasted only about 3 more years and then they closed that and went to 8 grades. Frances and Billie and Pete all went through 8 grades there. By the time I came along, it was 6 grades. I went to Hunt for 6 years, and then I went to Peterson Junior High the very first year it opened. They had grades 6, 7, and 8. And it was just very traumatic. I went from Hunt School with 6 grades, with the total student body of 30 kids to Peterson with 640 kids in 3 grades. And that was really tough, but I adjusted. And then I went to Tivy for 4 years after that and graduated in '67.

FRANCELLE: Now which high school location did you go to?

JEANNE: Over there at Barnett, isn't that where y'all went? I graduated in '67 and then I went to Schreiner for 2 years when women were only accepted on a day basis I went there for 2 years and transferred to the University of Texas at Austin and graduated from there in 1971. Then I went into the military. I was commissioned as a Lieutenant and went to various places around the world and around the States. I started out in accounting and then I got out of that and got into budget. Even though that was my major in college, I really didn't care for financial work. So I worked real hard to get into a different career field, and I spent the latter half of my military time working in weapon development, where I managed programs for new weapons, primarily bombs, missiles, and bullets. I'd have a team of people

working for me and we worked with a commercial contractor to build a new weapon capability. I retired in '99.

FRANCELLE: What was your rank when you retired?

JEANNE: I retired as a Colonel. And I didn't have any idea where I wanted to live or what I wanted to do, so I bought a motor home and said this lifestyle may last two weeks, it may last two years. And it did last almost 2 years.

FRANCES: She drove to Alaska by herself.

JEANNE: And that was what did it. That was a looonng way. And when I got there I said, I cannot go back down that Alcan again so I put my motor home on a ferry and came back down the coast that way so I didn't have to drive.

FRANCELLE: How many days did it take you to get there?

JEANNE: I don't even know. I spent about 2 months in Alaska, and then it was about 3 days coming back on the ferry. That was much better. But that was when I said I'm tired of not being in a permanent house. I couldn't hold my arms out in the motorhome and turn around without hitting something with my fingers, so I said it's time to settle down. I came back here and I rented a house on the South Fork by the River Inn for about 6 months. And during that time I found a house in Canyon Springs that was just going on the market, and I bought that and that's where I've been living for the last 15 years.

FRANCELLE: And you still travel quite a bit.

JEANNE: Oh yes, I try to volunteer at some government park or venue, whether it's a national park or wildlife service or something like that every year and work in the visitors' center in exchange for a place to park my motor home, so I've been in Washington State, Virginia, North Carolina, and I just got back from Arizona where I volunteered at a site. And I enjoy that. I get to volunteer and I get to go out and see an area and spend enough time there where I can learn some interesting things about the area.

FRANCELLE: Billie, talk about Rand's family because I know he's got some deep Texas roots, too. You want to tell us a little bit about that too?

BILLIE: Sure, his great, great, great – 3 greats – grandfather was Martin Parmer, who signed the Texas Declaration of Independence at Washington on the Brazos, and then his great grandfather was William Physick Zuber who was the last survivor of the Battle of San Jacinto. So there's a lot of history that far back. He loves history and likes to tell people about it, so he's given talks several places about that.

FRANCELLE: He likes to dress in the period clothes, too, that is so neat. And Frances do you have something that you'd like to add that's keeping you busy besides your volunteer work? Do you travel any?

FRANCES: Only if Billie and Rand take me. They went to see Jeanne at the place she was working in Arizona.

JEANNE: Speaking of Arizona, one interesting story about our parents. In 1940, Frances was a year old, the Depression was still having its effect, there just weren't a lot of jobs, and my father had, right before they got married in '37, worked with his uncle in Arizona at a ghost town mining ore. And so in 1940 things were pretty tough for a family in Hunt and so they said "let's go back to Arizona and mine". And so Frances was a year old and they went out there, and before dawn he would go to the mine with his uncle and come home after dark. And there my mother, who was a San Antonio city girl, and she was about 22 by then, living in this ghost town with this woman, which was my father's aunt that she didn't know well, and maybe a couple of other miners around there all day, and they had no running water, they drove 60 miles every weekend to haul back water and groceries for the week. And I guess they didn't have electricity either, I don't know if they had a generator...but anyway one day he's mining and she sees a snake trying to crawl up the trellis ...

BILLIE: A rattlesnake....

JEANNE: On the front porch of the house. And she got a gun and killed it. And when our dad came home that night, she said, "I'm going back to Texas tomorrow." And they all came back. Well I have looked at what Chevy and Ford trucks looked like in the 30's, and imagined them driving a thousand miles to this ghost town through west Texas and all, in the heat, in this dilapidated truck. And they had a one-year old with them, whose probably first words were, "are we there yet?" And I think that's a pretty neat story. Well, 50 years later, in 1990, I was still on military active duty, and I had business in Scottsdale, so I said to my dad, why don't you fly out there and we'll go to Arivipa, to the ghost town and so we got his cousin, the daughter of the uncle he'd been mining with, and her husband, and we rented a car and we drove out there. Well, we drove 50-60 miles in the high desert down this dirt gravel road after we turned off the highway, into the mountainous area. And part of the road was along a creek bed. And I was so shocked that we would be riding along – I was driving – and my dad would say, go right, go left. He hadn't been there in 50 years, and those trees, they hadn't grown a lot out in the desert, but they'd grown a little bit. It was just amazing to me that he still knew the route. And then we pulled up over this hilltop and started down, and I saw the house and I knew it. Because they had taken pictures of the house when they lived there in 1940, very arid environment, it hadn't deteriorated very much, and in the 60's they had some Hippies living there who had done, I guess a few improvements, so it was well preserved. And there were also some old ramshackle buildings. Well, a few years later, I can't remember when it was, Billie and Rand and I went to a Fiesta Bowl game and so we rented a car and drove out there and went to the ghost town and got to see it.

- BILLIE:** And we all thought how foolish we were – not one person knew where we were. It was so remote, that if we had gotten lost they would never have found us.
- FRANCELLE:** Was anybody living in the place then?
- BILLIE:** No, and so we just walked all through the house. There was a post office there, actually, and the boxes were still there.
- JEANNE:** My mom said that the ghost town, when she lived there in '40, that it had been abandoned so rapidly that the postal scales were still sitting on the counter in the post office.
- FRANCELLE:** Did it thrill your dad to go back? I bet it did.
- JEANNE:** Oh yes. But I was just amazed that he knew that road so well. One of the things, when he had been out there before they were married, they rode donkeys, that was their transportation to the mine. And our grandfather John wanted one of the donkeys because they were huge. And he said, bring me one of those baby donkeys. And so my dad and his friend brought back a young donkey to my grandfather, and it was a runt!
- BILLIE:** Besides that, John, our grandfather, raised horses. And he trained and raced them, you know, in local races around. And he also served for a short time as a game warden and drove a 1934 Ford Coupe as his game warden vehicle.
- FRANCELLE:** He raced quarter horses or something like that? Did he win?
- JEANNE:** I bet. I have a couple of the registration forms for his horses. And, there was an artist that lived in western Kerr County, her name was Lucille Holliker. And she painted a water color of him holding one of his race horses.
- FRANCELLE:** Y'all have that picture?
- JEANNE:** Somewhere. I have a photograph of it.
- FRANCELLE:** What do you think has been the greatest thing about coming back to Kerrville?
- BILLIE:** It's a wonderful place to live. It was a wonderful place to raise our sons, you know, they had small town values that they would have not gotten in Houston or Dallas or somewhere, and it's so nice that so many people are concerned about other people and help out when there's a problem. It's just been a great place.
- FRANCELLE:** Same with you?
- FRANCES:** Yes.

- JEANNE: I like history, and so having grown up in the area, it's been really enjoyable to do a lot of research, particularly on the western part of the county that hasn't been researched a whole lot.
- FRANCELLE: And you have family roots here, too. That makes it all the more worthwhile to do all that. Do all of you do genealogy? I know Jeanne does.
- BILLIE: We let her do it all.
- JEANNE: Yes, and then I give them stories and they tell me it's wrong.
- FRANCELLE: Well both of you were cheerleaders at Tivy, I remember that.
- FRANCES: One of the most fun things that I tell people about that time was that the stadium was used also for the rodeo, and we had a tall fence around the football field and the cheerleaders were on one side of the fence and the stands were on the other – and people think that is the funniest thing.
- FRANCELLE: And it was. I mean, those chutes were there for a long time even after they weren't rodeoing anymore. I guess somebody cried the day they took those chutes down. Those had been there a long time.
- BILLIE: I enjoyed Joe Herring's column about the history of the stadium.
- FRANCELLE: What else were y'all involved in at Tivy?
- BILLIE: Well, student council. I particularly remember that. And it's funny, I remember being in different clubs but I don't have actual memories of that. I was on the Tatler Staff, the newspaper. And you know, the older I get the worse my memory seems to be. I should have looked at the Antler
- FRANCELLE: You all have friends, though, that you graduated with that are still around here, don't you?
- BILLIE: Yes. And they all look so different.
- FRANCELLE: Do you go to your reunion?
- BILLIE: We had a 50th, a few years ago, and we haven't had one since then.
- FRANCELLE: Do you go to yours?
- FRANCES: No, I did for a while and I think they've had a couple since then.
- JEANNE: We're having our 50th next year.

FRANCELLE: And you're gonna help. Tell us some other things about living in Kerrville that you can recall, some good stories that you can remember about going to school or playmates, or....

BILLIE: Gustine our mother was also very community minded and she wrote a column for the Mountain Sun called Hunt Happenings. And I can remember, we had a party telephone line – our number was 434, and she would be on our phone, checking with everybody in the community to see what had happened, who had visited, that sort of thing, who was sick. And that appeared weekly. And then later, she had a greeting service here called Kerr Country Greeters, and she greeted, not just in Hunt, but you know, everybody. She was very much a people person.

FRANCELLE: She'd go to their house when they moved here?

BILLIE: Yes, and bring little gifts, you know from all the businesses that subscribed to that, she did that for a lot of years. And then she also worked at the bank, Charles Schreiner Bank in the customer service area with Marge Nicholson.

FRANCELLE: And your dad, too, tell us some more about him and what he did. I know that, didn't he have a lot of equipment?

BILLIE: Yes, bulldozers and road maintainers and that sort of thing. Built a lot of roadways and things like that. He had a really super work ethic which he promoted in us, and he always wanted to do a good job and was very honest, and I think that's an endearing quality.

JEANNE: One of the things I discovered when I was doing the research for the Hunt history book for the centennial a few years ago was that he had built the Hilltop Hotel. They knew this, but I guess they just assumed that I did too.

FRANCELLE: Where was that?

JEANNE: Well, eventually it turned into Villa Camille and that is pretty neat, I've got a postcard of the Hilltop Hotel just after it opened.

FRANCELLE: What is that called now?

BILLIE: La Hacienda treatment center.

FRANCELLE: It's a drug rehab?

JEANNE: Drug and alcohol dependency. Probably the biggest employer in western Kerr County. In fact, it's like rush hour, if you start toward Kerrville from Hunt at about 20 of 7:00 in the morning, it's just all these cars because it's a shift change.

FRANCELLE: Now have they added on to that since it was Villa Camille?

BILLIE: As a matter of fact, our son is a builder and he just built their new medical facility, and it is lovely, we went to their open house and it's quite a nice facility, I thought it was kind of neat that his great grandfather ...no, his grandfather, built it.

FRANCELLE: So people are actually in hospital beds there too, is that what you're saying in the medical part of it?

JEANNE: For their intake, it certainly is.

BILLIE: But they do have some hospital beds there, yes.

FRANCELLE: I'll have to go up there.

BILLIE: You know, Dr. Phil used to send of lot of people to La Hacienda.

JEANNE: That was one of his favorite facilities. He'd mention it every now and then on his show.

FRANCELLE: Good for Dr. Phil. Jeanne, tell us about the books and brochures that you've written.

JEANNE: Yes, for the Hunt Centennial in 2012, there was some evidence that there'd never really been a documented history of Hunt and so I went to a meeting, what do we do for the Centennial – and I went in with the distinct feeling, do not volunteer for anything, and I came out – gonna write a book. So I had a committee but committees don't write books, and I was very willing and interested in doing this, so we published a history of Hunt from 1857, which is the first recorded event that I could find that happened in western Kerr County, to 1959. So it was 102 years of history that was documented there. And it was a best seller in Hunt. All the proceeds go to the Hunt Preservation Society and they've sold about 1400 copies which is pretty good for a self-published book. And then I turned that – I took a lot of the pictures and some of the short stories into a historic Hunt driving tour, made a brochure that the Preservation Society funded and they give away at the Hunt Store and a couple of other places for people that want to take a driving tour, extends from Rio Vista all the way up the North and South Forks. And then I wrote a book, it's a pictorial history of the Hunt schools. One day several years ago I was at the Hunt School. And they have a display of old photographs of students and stuff, and they identified who these people were, and then they put this one picture up, and it says we don't know who this is, if anybody knows these people, please let us know. Well, I'm in the photo. And I said, I need to do something about this. So I did a lot of research and got a lot of photos and published that, and I didn't publish it for sale, I gave them to the Hunt School and to the library and Texas State Library. And every year I've been donating one to the Hunt Booster Club for their annual fundraiser, and I just donated the last one. So they're all out there now and I'm out of business.

FRANCELLE: And you wrote some brochures for the historical commission.

JEANNE: Yes, put together something, updated one that had already been done on the markers that Clarabelle had been very instrumental in putting that one together and then I wrote one on the cemeteries of Kerr County, where they are all located, and that was kind of some interesting research and finding cemeteries I had no idea existed in Kerr County. And I guess that's it. Oh, I put together a brochure on the archives, what is included in the archives.

FRANCELLE: And then you wonderfully organized those archives, too. That was a lot of work.

JEANNE: It was fun doing it because I learned a lot of Kerr County history while I was going through it and trying to put it in some organization. And now I guess, Louis, are you still archiving?

LOUIS: Unfortunately.

FRANCELLE: You do that until you die, I think. Because nobody will take your place. You just have to keep working and will somebody take my place, and they say, no, and so you just keep doing it. Y'all want to add anything else? This has been terribly interesting.

JEANNE: I'm glad you gave us the opportunity.

FRANCELLE: Have I left out anything that y'all want to add, I mean, please, add it if you do.

JEANNE: One of the things that we did after our father died and we inherited this property, we said, we've got to do something that sort of keeps his name alive, so we formed a partnership, called Schumacher Sisters, and so that's what we use to, you know, we run the leases through it and keep the fences mended and that sort of thing.

BILLIE: A fond memory that I have of our grandmother Maggie who I said was a widow for 26 years, she used to love to eat sun perch, so she would get us to go with her to fish and we'd go down and the river was deep and she did not know how to swim and we did not know how to swim, and how times have changed. But that was a fond memory of fishing with her. And she would eat those, they were mostly bones but she thought they tasted great.

JEANNE: She was an official weather watcher for the government and had a fancy brass rain gauge.

FRANCELLE: And she would report every day?

JEANNE: Yes, I saw something the other day, it was some certificate, maybe it was a news article that she had been recognized with a certificate for her services.

BILLIE: As soon as she was not doing it anymore, the government picked it up. You know, it was copper and it was real big.

FRANCES: That was a treat for us to go with her to measure the rain.

FRANCELLE: Isn't that something, all those years of doing that and they wouldn't let her keep that. Do y'all have a family car you remember?

BILLIE: Oh yes, Frances can tell you about our family car, a Henry J.

FRANCES: First, Daddy got us a Studebaker to go to school in, and we weren't real impressed with that Studebaker. And then he found a Henry J, and we just about wore the tires off that.

BILLIE: It was kind of a turquoise color, and its picture is in one of the Antlers.

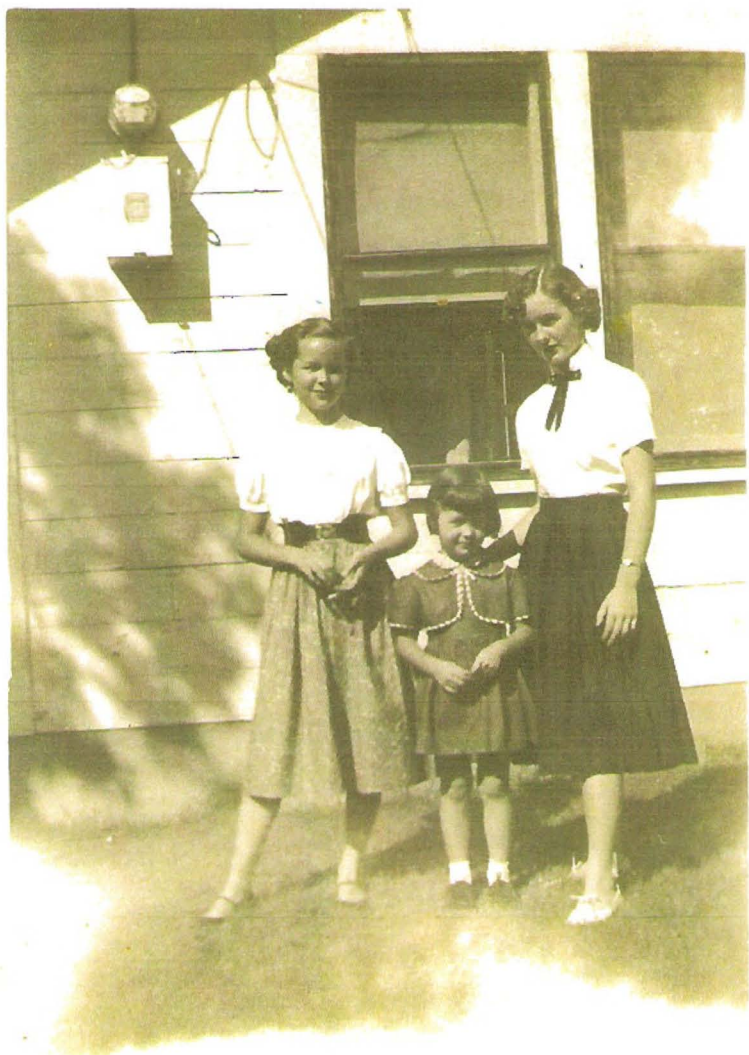
FRANCELLE: Did you call it Henry J too?

BILLIE: Henry. It would only go 70 miles an hour and that's what we did. There was no speed limit between Kerrville.

FRANCELLE: We had a Studebaker. We called it the Stud. You never could get the gas tank, the oil cap – you couldn't get it off, and we'd always laugh because we'd pull in the station and they'd say, can I check your oil, and we'd go, yeah. And he'd go, uuuhhhh, I can't do that, and then when we drove off all that black smoke came. Well thank y'all.

END

SCHUMACHER SISTERS NOVEMBER 1953



GUSTINE AND PETE SCHUMACHER



ZUBER FAMILY PHOTO DECEMBER 2007



SCHUMACHER SISTERS ANCESTRY CHART

Schumacher Sisters Ancestry

