

**Oral History Interview of
H.W. Mullins**

**Interviewed by: David Marshall
August 2, 2017
Ralls, Texas**

**Part of the:
*General Southwest Collection Interviews***

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Transcript Overview:

This interview features H.W. Mullis as he discusses the history of Ralls, Texas. In this interview H.W. describes events that shaped the town, such as weather, World War II, and Crosbyton receiving the county seat of Crosby County.

Length of Interview: 01:56:55

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David Marshall (DM):

The date is August 2, 2017. This is David Marshall interviewing HW Mullins in Ralls, Texas. Let's just go ahead and start here with your—how about your full name.

HW Mullins (HWM):

That is it.

DM:

It's HW?

HWM:

HW Mullins, no initials. I mean, initials on them, sorry.

DM:

Is that right? Okay. Well, when were you born and where were you born?

HWM:

I was born at Crosbyton.

DM:

Oh okay.

HWM:

I lived there six months and came to Ralls, so I've been in Ralls over eighty-two years.

DM:

When were you born?

HWM:

Nineteen thirty-five.

DM:

Nineteen thirty-five. What date was that?

HWM:

March the twenty-second.

DM:

March the twenty-second, okay. But you had family living over here closer, didn't you? Didn't you mention a grandmother that lived—

HWM:

A great-grandmother. My grandmother lived between Ralls in Crosbyton, and my great-grandmother lived in Ralls.

DM:

Oh, okay. Did Crosbyton have a clinic over there or were you born at home?

HWM:

I was born at home.

DM:

Did they have—

HWM:

They had a doctor, he had a little office, but that was it. He would just—he just came like the countries doctors, I guess, they all came to the house.

DM:

Yeah, yeah. Just different times wasn't it?

HWM:

Different world. [DM laughs]

DM:

Do you know his name?

HWM:

All I know is his last name was Parkhill. I've heard my mother speak about Dr. Parkhill. That's all I know about him. There was some Parkhill's over there but he assured me that his granddad or dad was not a doctor because I visited with him sometime back.

DM:

So different or maybe a nephew or something.

HWM:

Something other, further down the line.

DM:

Well, how did your family come out here to this country, to Crosby County?

HWM:

They were basically from Oklahoma, and they had the Shell's, which is my ancestors that settled Ralls originally. They came out here and bought a farm.

DM:

Shell's?

HWM:

Shell.

DM:

How do you spell that?

HWM:

S-h-e-l-l. They bought a farm and built a house in town but they had a farm out north of town.

DM:

You know about when that happened?

HWM:

[pause] No. Be probably around 1915, along in there. Supposedly my granddad, he came out here. He was a furniture maker, but he helped John R. Ralls plant the Ralls Cemetery. I don't know when that was but it had to be—

DM:

Pretty early.

HWM:

Early part of the early teens.

DM:

Right, right, okay. Probably before the war, World War I.

HWM:

Oh yes, I'm sure. And he was one of the first people buried out there. He had pneumonia. Back then, I guess, that was—it's still a serious disease but it was serious enough it had taken him. I have a lot of pictures and some of the older people—he had a pet antelope. Everybody else had a dog, but he had a pet antelope that just stayed with him. I've seen a few pictures of my grandmother. Of course, pictures were not very plentiful back in those days.

DM:

What was your grandfather's first name? It's okay.

HWM:

I can't—

DM:

That's all right.

HWM:

It's a very unusual name.

DM:

Oh, okay. Well that's all right. What about your grandmother's name?

HWM:

Her name was Lora Shell, L-o-r-a. Then, of course, she married a Mullins. But Lora, she just had one name, which is—and where I got the name HW only—somewhere down the line I had a far distant relative that was—his name was Henry Ward Gilvie Beecher Mullins. So, I got the HW and my dad got the Gilvie. It wasn't Henry Ward, it was just strictly the initials HW.

DM:

You mentioned that your grandfather was a furniture maker, came from Oklahoma. Did you know where in Oklahoma he came from?

HWM:

They called it Randlett.

DM:

Arandlett?

HWM:

Randlett.

DM:

Randlett.

HWM:

I think they lived in the country which a little—they always—I can hear my grandmother and aunt talk about the tailor stores. It must've been a very, very small—

DM:

Town.

HWM:

Place. They came to—basically, my grandmother and her daughter landed in Childress. My granddad got ran over and killed in 1916, which is kind of unusual at that time.

DM:

How'd that happen?

HWM:

He was walking down the street and a drunk driver ran over—got up on the sidewalk and run over him, which is kind of unusual in that given time.

DM:

Cars weren't speeding around as fast as they do now.

HWM:

No, they didn't have cars going—and he's buried in Childress, but my grandmother then, after she had one boy and one son, she came out here to—the daughter was married—they were all married, I'll put it that way, and she came to live with her mother after her husband got killed. That's where she ended up in Childress—from Childress to Ralls.

DM:

Oh, I see, okay. What'd your family do in this—you said they farmed down here.

HWM:

After she came here—the Shell's farm—and they ended up then here with—her brother had a grain business for years and years. The old elevator here on Main Street—it burned several years ago—but it was a Harvest Queen Mill or something. They were in the grain business and the other brother opened up—had the first Ford dealership here. Opened up for that. Like I said, they were in the grain business and dealer. They had, I guess, enough money. They were into several different things.

DM:

Well, the Shell's, what were they farming? What were they growing?

HWM:

I couldn't say. I really don't—now that's not very smart. I don't know what they would grow back at that time.

DM:

It was a lot different then than now.

HWM:

It's much different. I don't really know, I'm sorry.

DM:

That's okay.

HWM:

I thought since maybe the elevator they had in the grain business, they grew a lot of grain.

DM:

They might have because different crops were being tried back then before they settled on cotton.

HWM:

See what would grow in this part of the country.

DM:

That's right. So that's not unusual for people to not know what their grandparents were farming. Did you ever hear if they had any livestock or anything like that?

HWM:

No.

DM:

So many of these farms were diversified.

HWM:

Yeah. They were probably—most of them, basically, self-sufficient. Surely they were to survive then come to town and buy milk before they build their—you had to have your milk, chicken and eggs, I presume. My grandmother, after she married, she came back here—my granddad—and she married again out here. He came from Iowa, named Lindsay. He brought—he came out here with his livestock, enough lumber to build a house, and a barn and everything on the train. He brought the whole—when he came from Iowa here. They were about six miles out here east of town. He came and—I can remember—by that time I was getting old enough to go out with grandma—and they always hogs, lots of hogs. Great big old barn, big barn and granary.

DM:

They were doing good.

HWM:

He came here with money. I know if he could come on the train, bring his cattle and his—I don't know any—his wife had passed away and he came out here. The story's kind of funny. My grandmother moved in with her mother because she didn't have any place else to go, which is kind of typical at that time. And she had a sister-in-law that lived across the street with her husband. She didn't think that my grandmother ought to be back here living off her mother. So, when the old gentleman came out here and built the farm, he put an ad in the paper—this is pretty true—and he was advertising for a lady to keep house, and cook, and take care of him. So, my grandmother's sister-in-law sent a letter in her name that she would like to move out there on the farm. [DM laughs] That was getting her out of her family. So, he comes, knocks on the door and says, "I've come to get you.", "Do what?" She had no idea. She found out that all that went on, she moved out there, and they eventually married and probably were married about fifty years.

DM:

It worked out didn't it?

HWM:

It worked out okay.

DM:

That worked out good then, fifty years. [HWM coughs] And northeast of town, six miles, is where they lived?

HWM:

Right.

DM:

Did they farm or was it just raising stock?

HWM:

They were farming. He had— I have a section of ground out there.

DM:

Do you know what he farmed?

HWM:

He was grain and cotton. He raised a lot of grain to feed own animals.

DM:

You bet. That was really common back then, I know.

HWM:

When he came to town—he moved to town in 1946 and he bought a block of ground up here. Of course, it's covered in houses now. But he brought a cow, my grandmother brought her chickens, and he brought a couple of pigs. He still came to town—he's still farming—while he was alive he couldn't stand to be without meat and eggs. He bought that—finally he sold it off in pieces. He bought this whole block, had a great, big old house on it. But he bought the whole block and like I say, he had his—brought all his animals from the farm to town because that was the only way he knew to live, I guess. That's kind of that in a nutshell on that. I don't know anything to add to it.

DM:

Nowadays, I mean, the difference is that people—I don't know if there's anyone ranching up around here they'll run cattle sometimes on some grass. Do you know of any in the Ralls area where people are running any cattle?

HWM:

Oh yes. There's quite a bit.

DM:

Is there really?

HWM:

A lot of them have two or three farms and they will move their cattle around. It was Don Crump that farmed a lot of ground. He has a big ranch. Crump's and Caddell's south of town, they both have quite a bit of ranch ground.

DM:

Are they down close to the Caprock?

HWM:

They start—Caddell live at Caprock and Don Crump starts at the Caprock south of Crosbyton and he's got several hundred acres of ranch ground. He farms a lot of ground around Owens and Caprock. He's got a good-size ranch down in there.

DM:

So are they basically farming up on the Caprock and ranching off the Caprock?

HWM:

Ranching off the Cap.

DM:

That's good. They cotton farmers?

HWM:

Cotton farmers, yeah. They're cotton farmers.

DM:

You know anyone who's still raising their own grain for livestock?

HWM:

Not offhand. I'm sure there's some but I don't know of anyone. They usually run ranch ground.

As far as just raising the grain for it, I don't know of anybody that does.

DM:

Right around the Ralls area, is cotton the main thing farmed?

HWM:

Oh yes. Cotton is number one.

DM:

What are some of the other crops that they might sometimes grow?

HWM:

They grow a little alfalfa. They're growing more corn than normal, there's more corn. I think they have a hard time growing the corn with this drip systems. The drip doesn't put out enough water for corn and the pivots' kind of rough on the corn crop, going through it with the pivot but they do some of it. Basically cotton.

DM:

I know corn takes a lot of water.

HWM:

It does.

DM:

You ever hear any talk about the water table over here if it's—

HWM:

They all talk. The farmers—it's gradually dropping. They're getting a little less water and a little less water all the time.

DM:

What are they going to do? Do they talk about what they're going to do?

HWM:

They think—they're probably—they count on the drip being enough water to raise cotton. Drip will not get a cotton crop up if it's dry. If they can run their sprinkler—if they've got a pivot running over, wet the ground and get the cotton up, then it'll go down to the—and raise lots and lots less water. But it will not—the drip system will not sprout a seed and make it grow if it's dry. They've got to get the water on top.

DM:

Have you heard any talk in the last few days about all this rain we've got this time of year and how that's going to affect—

HWM:

They all—all I've heard is the "million dollar rain." It's a great time for—it's going to save a lot of dryland cotton, it will save it. It would let it—it would make a cotton crop. Maybe not the best, but it's going to bring it out enough that they will get some cotton on their dryland with this much rain.

DM:

You talked about—I think it was your grandfather Shell that had the antelope.

HWM:

Had the antelope.

DM:

Did you ever hear how he got that?

HWM:

I don't have that—everyone just talked about him having the pet antelope. I have a few pictures somewhere that I got from my grandmother where they had pictures. There just wasn't many pictures back then.

DM:

But there were some antelope around up here.

HWM:

It was pretty barren ground, nearly all this ground. They broke it out and turned it into farm ground.

DM:

Before that, I'm sure it was an ideal antelope country because it was wide-open.

HWM:

It was wide-open and enough mesquites, shinnery for hibernation and hiding. He just really—everyone's talk was him having a pet antelope. That was just kind of his deal. [DM laughs]

DM:

Did you ever hear any talk about other kinds of animals that used to live up here and might even still appear like any mountain lions or anything like that?

HWN:

They used to talk of mountain lions under the canyon, south.

DM:

I wouldn't be surprised if they popped up now.

HWM:

Oh, I wouldn't either because there's some pretty rugged down in there.

DM:

Plus there's plenty of deer now.

HWM:

Lots of deer. The deer are getting more, and more and more plentiful.

DM:

Back when you were little, did you ever hear talk about anyone deer hunting around here?

HWM:

I didn't, no.

DM:

You know they were pretty scarce in most of towns.

HWM:

They were scarce. They just wasn't any deer. They had to all go to south Texas to go deer hunting.

DM:

So that's really changed.

HWM:

Because they can just—brother-in-law—the Bridwell Ranch is a big ranch. Starts east of Crosbyton and works all the way up north of Crosbyton. My brother-in-law's folks own a farm about two miles south of Crosbyton, and it borders the ranch. They allow no hunting on that ranch, that's out of the question. They have so many deer, but they hop the fence and eat your crops. He said he's been out there lots of times at four o'clock in the evening and he'd cap thirty, forty deer out. He said, "I don't hunt them but I take my shotgun, get right in the middle of it and shoot it. They jump over the fence but they turn right around and come back." He said there's really enough of them it's hurting their crop. They're coming off that cattle ground right in the irrigated cotton crops and they really work it over.

DM:

Golly. When they're small and tender, I guess.

HWM:

Oh, yeah. They just clean it out. He said, "It's amazing what they can do in one night."

DM:

I have them wander through my place out near Robertson, some mule deer. There's a lot CRP [**Conservation Reserve Program**] out there.

HWM:

Lot, yeah. They can go out there, lay down in it and you'd never see them. There's lots.

DM:

They got to pop up and then you see those mule ears.

HWM:

There you go. [DM laughs]

DM:

Well, let's talk about you growing up here. You were born in 1935. I'm sure the first place you remember living was Ralls.

HWM:

It was Ralls. I grew up—my dad right after I was born, he was going to have surgery of some type and they—understand, at that time it was pretty normal to give you a spinal block, and it paralyzed him, so he was paralyzed from the waist down.

DM:

Rest of his life?

HWM:

Rest of his life. He never—as a small kid, I never did—of course, I never did see him walk. He walked on crutches. He wore bib overalls. It was a very small—I would stand in his hip pockets with my arms around his neck. We got a few pictures somewhere of that. We manipulated around like that. My mother always worked. Of course, there wasn't any programs then. You either worked or go hungry. She always worked in different deals here in town. I think they called it a 'housekeeping aid' which is about the same program they have now but she would work for different people. She would go get their house—she'd cook breakfast—if the lady was not in the best of health or something, the government paid her to cook breakfast for them, clean the house. She walked all over town because we didn't own an automobile. We lived back over here on the northwest part of town and she talked about here on Main Street, the lady was—I don't know what was her problem—it doesn't matter, but she would go and cook her husband—she'd walk over there, cook his breakfast and her breakfast and he would get to town by eight o'clock to work. So she walked all the way-- it didn't matter if it was raining, snowing or what, she did that. Then during the war, they had a—what they called "the sewing room" and she was a seam—she learned to be quite a seamstress because they made different uniforms for the U.S. government for the army.

DM:

It was a government contract thing.

HWM:

There was probably twelve, fifteen women in there and they made—I don't know what—seemed like they made, like, underwear, undershirts, handkerchiefs, washrags and stuff. It was all a government deal.

DM:

White cotton stuff.

HWM:

Right. She worked there for several years, and when the war was over, she went across the street and worked at a—what do you call it—a “help yourself laundry.” You bring your laundry to town, these old ringers. She was telling me one time, she said, “I thought I was getting ready—the biggest raise I ever remember getting, I got a raise from nineteen cents to twenty-five cents an hour.” But she would get up real early because these people that’s going to do laundry had to come to town early, do their laundry then get back home, whether they lived in town or out in the country. Either that or build a wash pot. Or a few people, I guess, had these old gasoline engine washing machines, but most of the rural area didn’t have any electricity. They had a wind charger so they have one light bulb in the house, and if the wind was blowing, you can kind of see what was going on. But she stayed and then she—my dad—[car passes] a lot of people that was doing any work in town on their house, he was very well-known. His name was—Dick Mullins. His name was Gilvie but his nickname was Dick. Everybody knew Dick Mullins.

DM:

How do you spell Gilvie, by the way?

HWM:

G-i-l-v-i-e.

DM:

But Dick is what he went by?

HWM:

He went by Dick. Everybody knew Dick Mullins. They would bring him—he had a little deal—sitting rack in there kind of in the backyard, and they would bring him lumber that they were remodeling. He would sit in a little rack, cut it with a handsaw, would stack it in a little red wagon, I’d take it around behind the house, stack it in what we called the “wood shed” and we burnt wood overnight in winter. Now, in the summer we had the gas on, little-bitty heat but it didn’t cost much. I don’t know, probably gas wasn’t twenty-five, thirty cents probably a month. We just had that little ole stove but it—the wood stove would heat the house up. Come winter time, we couldn’t afford the gas so we burnt wood. Everybody would bring wood, he would cut it and I’d stack it. He’d sit there, sharpen his own hand saw, cut some more and I’d take it around—so, we lived comfortable.

DM:

You were working when you were a kid.

HWM:

I started out. [DM laughs] The first—and they just tore it down about two years ago—the first

job I really had on the west side of the road before you get to the Lubbock Highway, there was an elevator. It was a Crosby County [inaudible] [00:24:53] But they built that elevator and that must've been in '45 or '46, right after the war I'm sure. The ole boy moved from over here. I got paid a dollar a day, and my job was to go out and pick up nails so when they started hauling the grain, they wouldn't be getting flats. It was kind of cold because—I thought it was cold, and I thought I was going to freeze death. Like I say, I made a dollar—that was my first paying job. I got a dollar a day for picking up nails around that elevator.

DM:

You were ten or eleven years old at that time.

HWM:

Let's see, at '46 I would've been nine or ten. But I nearly always had something to—

DM:

When you heated your house—so you use the wood but the gas, was it a propane tank or did Ralls have a system—

HWM:

Ralls had gas. They had gas here then.

DM:

Oh okay. It was piped in.

HWM:

Piped in.

DM:

Okay. What about water? Did they have a water system too?

HWM:

They had water system. We didn't have water in the house. We had a faucet outside that we got water and carried it in the house, had a little spigot out there. But we didn't have a bathroom, we had an outdoor toilet.

DM:

No complications that way.

HWM:

No, it was all right. We didn't know any difference. We finally—I think all the neighbors went

together and built a little—it was just a little two-room house—and they built a ‘T’ on it. My dad sat in a wheelchair and pretty well-built some cabinets with a handsaw and a hammer. We had cabinets, so we thought we were doing great then at that time—got water into the kitchen sink. We had a little kitchen sink with cold running water and it couldn’t get any better than that. That was as good as it got. We thought that was all right.

DM:

When did REA [**Rural Electrification Administration**] come into this country? [pause] Was it after the war?

HWM:

No it was a little bit before because—I’m trying to think—I’m basing this back on the knowledge of my grandmother and them moving to town in ’46 and they had—I’m going to think, about ’45 is when it came to their part because they did away with their wind charger and had electricity.

DM:

Uptown?

HWM:

Uptown. They had got butane out there and it—they had a gas Servel refrigerator. It would run on propane. Well, it was all butane then. They had heaters, and a refrigerator. They were getting modern—pull chain to turn the light switch on then it really mushroomed after the war. I know before they move to town they did have some power out there.

DM:

Seemed like people started out with a light bulb and then started putting outlets in their house.

HWM:

They started putting outlets. Nobody dreamed of an outlet when they first got a light bulbs. What were you going to use it for?

DM:

Suddenly someone figured out and started making some appliances.

HWM:

Make some appliances.

DM:

And then by the fifties people were getting air conditioners in some part of the country.

HWM:

Oh yes.

DM:

Were they here in the fifties?

HWM:

Yes.

DM:

TVs?

HWM:

TV came in [pause] probably about '52. I remember Channel 13, that was the only channel on, PBS.

DM:

Was that Lubbock?

HWM:

It's still the same 13. Everybody got through what they were doing and watched what was on. Man, it was a little ole TV about that wide, black and white.

DM:

About a foot wide.

HWM:

Everything was great then first thing you knew, here comes another station. You had two and you didn't know which one to watch.

DM:

[Laughs] Had to make a decision.

HWM:

Make a decision of which of the two channels to watch.

DM:

[Laughs] And it became a basic necessity too. For a lot of people, you had to have it.

HWM:

Oh gracious, yes.

DM:

[Laughs] Well, let's go back a minute to that government contracting that you mentioned. Where was that located? Where these ladies were sewing?

HWM:

It was in the—one of the rooms in the bottom of the Ralls Inn over here, the Ralls Inn Hotel. About, give or take, where a beauty shop is now. Somewhere along in there. There was a shoe shop in there, and this was next to a shoe shop. That was pretty good business, repairing shoes, putting half soles on them. There was something in all those—every little ole room over there at that Ralls Inn and everywhere else in town, there was something—if there was a building, there was something in it going on.

DM:

So, your mother worked over there with maybe fifteen other ladies did you say?

HWM:

I think it was about fifteen worked in there.

DM:

What was your mother's name, by the way?

HWM:

Eva, E-v-a.

DM:

Well that's really interesting. I didn't know there was any government contracting going on here in Ralls.

HWM:

They did that during I don't know how many years but not—I guess through, probably, basically, most of the war.

DM:

Did you ever hear about any other government contracting that was happening here in Ralls, Crosbyton, Lorenzo, this area?

HWM:

Not to my knowledge. I can't think of anything. There probably was something one way or the other that was, but I don't recall it.

DM:

Let's see, did you start to school at, what, age six or so?

HWM:

Age six. First grade, age six.

DM:

Was there one elementary here in town?

HWM:

We had two buildings. This high school was the big, red two-story building that's there now. And west of it was a elementary. The original one and only school of Ralls was down here south of the swimming pool. They tore that—they built a new high school, and I think it says 'twenty-six'—no maybe it's 'eighteen'—but then they tore down the old two-story building down here and built an elementary so we had two school buildings. That's all we had when I graduated. I graduated in '53.

DM:

What did they take from the old school, the bricks, the framing?

HWM:

The bricks. I guess all the lumber. I guess they used pretty well—

DM:

That's interesting.

HWM:

--Everything there. There's some pictures in the museum. It was a great, big ole box, it's two-story. I've looked at the pictures to see if could even recognize it. They've got one that's kindly blown up and it's got some pictures of some people out in front. This main reason is the sidewalk goes all the way down and then it went to—when you got to the highway, it went a block west and then still—it was sidewalk all the way from downtown to the school building at that time. There was a lot of sidewalk. You wonder why there was a sidewalk down there. Most of it's been tore out—was in the allies, this and that, and they cleaned it. There was a sidewalk from downtown all the way to the school building.

DM:

With two buildings one was high school, one was elementary. What was the dividing—did you have a junior high also?

HWM:

No, no junior high; elementary and high school.

DM:

So, what grade would you go—

HWM:

We went through the eighth grade in the elementary we called it, then you go into high school for four years. They got a little overcrowded and we moved—about the middle of the year, our eighth grade moved into high school building. They had more room over there, the grade school was filling up. After that, of course, they built the elementary way up on the northeast corner of town and tore down the old elementary building. They've turned the high school into a junior high, and built the new high school across the road. But we didn't—Ralls was getting set to build a courthouse here in the middle of the—well, as the deal goes, Crosbyton stole all the papers and they built the courthouse. But they built a big—it was a big building. I'm sure at the time it was a real nice, big—and it was a gymnasium, had a stage in one end of it, and then buildings it on each side. Well, the school tax office was one side, the city office on the other, and we would come from high school down to this gym for basketball. If we had a senior play, this, that, or any kind of activity, they would come down and they'd use the stage. The back of it was an opening and that's where the fire station was, of course, they had one fire truck. That one building, they utilized it pretty well after they didn't get the courthouse.

DM:

So what they did was they had the money together to build a courthouse but they built this building instead.

HWM:

After Crosbyton had the courthouse—or all the papers and wasn't going to turn them loose—they went on—John R. Ralls had donated that center block—or two blocks actually, that and across the road where the city office is. He had donated that for public use on these so they couldn't put businesses there.

DM:

Is that building still there?

HWM:

No, it was tore down in probably 1960. In '53, they built what's the high school auditorium now. They built it and across the road, the red gym there built out of the same type brick. They were built together. We graduated in '53 and that was the first graduating class to use the new auditorium at that time. And they built a lunch room at that time. Up until then, there was a lady who had a little hamburger joint over there. You got and get and a hamburger and a Coke for a dime. She had to watch you because all the Coke was in a bottle. She had to make sure you brought her bottle—you stood out too—and ate your hamburger.

DM:

You didn't take off with the bottle.

HWM:

You didn't take off with the bottle because she probably made-- the bottle cost her more than she made off the Coke I'm sure. [DM laughs] Until that time, there was no cafeteria or anything around the school. There was two or three places over here on east of the bank that catered to—there was a bakery. The farmers ran a bakery and the cooked a lot of hamburgers.

DM:

Kids'll go over there from school.

HWM:

Go over there and get them a hamburger. This black-front building down here was a well-known—now, I don't remember—I don't recall any of that—but it was a well-known restaurant for West Texas. Two old men, never been married, Bill and Tips. Two brothers, Bill and Tip Williams. They had this café and any of the old timers used to talk about, “Man, you go to Bill and Tips.” They'd get out there—and when they got dinner ready, they got out on the street, rang a bell and all the people in town knew that dinner was cooked and ready. They said they made hamburgers, put them in washtub and just had a washtub full of hamburgers. Everybody'd come by and grab them a hamburger, gave them a nickel and ate it on the way back to school. They said they made hamburgers and put them in a metal washtub.

DM:

Pretty good. But this was before your time.

HWM:

This was—I was—about my time I was too young to come to town and do something like that. I usually carried my lunch in a little brown bag. But there was lots of kids who came down here and got them a hamburger. That had to have been in mid-forties during the war, mid-forties.

DM:

Seems like there's a Tips that was in Dickens. Do you remember anything about a Tips?

HWM:

No, I don't.

DM:

That might be totally different.

HWM:

There's a Tips liquor store down there but I don't know anything about it.

DM:

Down in Dickens?

HWM:

In Dickens. I mean I see it going through.

DM:

Maybe that's what that is. It may be a relative.

HWM:

It may be, very possible.

DM:

Did they live here?

HWM:

They lived about three blocks down here. They must've had a restaurant that was really known. When they finally sold it—and they'd been there, I guess—no telling how many years—they put this black style—the Anstead's bought it and really made a modern—man it was a fabulous restaurant. They had barstools, this black marble front on it.

DM:

Can you remember some other businesses that were around Ralls in the forties?

HWM:

Oh yeah.

DM:

Can you name some of those?

HWM:

We'll start here: Reed Grocery, which was here. Next door was a—

DM:

Right here?

HWM:

Right here.

DM:

Reed?

HWM:

Reed. They started out—he came here with a big farmer like I—and it was just a meat market. Reed had a door right here on this side. And that's all he sold was meat but he raised his own cows, hogs, chickens. Of course, you couldn't do that now under any circumstances

DM:

But it was fresh meat.

HWM:

Finally they added groceries some time down the line. I bought the building from his son, the man that originally built the—he built the building and then his son taking everyone's groceries when the old gentleman got too old. Next door was a bicycle shop and it was a booming thing during the war. It was very booming because there was no automobiles or anything, and he did a lot to bicycle work. The compress down here ran all of their night-washers, used bicycles and punched the clocks. It was really a thriving business in that bicycle shop.

DM:

You remember the name of that shop or who ran it?

HWM:

A gentleman by the name of Stevens. Bob Stevens. My dad used to—the reason I remember it—he was real good from his waist up with his hands. I would push him—we lived, from here, two blocks west of the highway and one—three blocks—we lived three blocks down and two west. I would push him in to work in the wheelchair and he went to work in this bicycle shop. He worked for the old man for about a year or so. I'd push him down here. Then when I got out of

school, I'd come by, sit there and watch him mess with bicycles then push him home when they'd close. But it was really a busy place. I mean, they put fabulous paint jobs on them. You'd think you had a new bicycle.

DM:

Was it all bicycle repair or were they—did he sell brand new bicycles.

HWM:

There was no bicycles—it was all repair because you couldn't buy one. That was when Bill and Tips still had the café we were talking about. Then the next door sown, as I recall about that time, they had—that's where I think the deal of recapping tires started about that time.

DM:

Because there was rationing.

HWM:

You couldn't buy a tire so they would—and I remember the dealers that ran that. They had a boy about my age. When they come out of that machine, they had a little ole, bitty—I guess it'd squeeze it through—we called it the "tit." We'd pull those rubber tits off and chew them. While they come out they're warm. And then next door to that was the Allis-Chalmers tractor supply that's one that vacant lot now where the—and they had a cut across the front where you'd come up—you'd drive in there and buy you gasoline.

DM:

At Allis-Chalmers?

HWM:

At the Allis-Chalmers. Across the street was a little ole, bitty service station.

DM:

That's still there.

HWM:

No, that's a vacant lot. That one is gone. Then there was an old lumber yard that had closed, and they tore that all down right after the war and built what was Abel Chevrolet. The building' still there now.

DM:

What's the one that's—

HWM:

Then the service station is next door to that. That's where the ole boys got a shop there now.

DM:

The one with the historical marker on it.

HWM:

Right, right, right.

DM:

Everything was happening on Main Street?

HWM:

Everything was just about down Main Street.

DM:

I'll be. What about the other direction? What about back north?

HWM:

Okay. Of course, we had the icehouse over there. It was very out—of course—everybody—they delivered ice. I don't remember. They used to make the power for Ralls there., ice plant and power. I don't know what kind it was. It was on the building that—then the blacksmith shop next to it had been there as long as I can remember. They'd been a blacksmith shop. It's a welding shop now but it was a blacksmith shop then.

DM:

That's the right kind of transition isn't it?

HWM:

It's going there. Back this way—on the very corner across from the bank was a mobile service station. You drove up in it, it stood out over that corner. Jeff Martin ran that mobile station there for years, and years, and years. Then right east of it was a car dealership, the Plymouth, Chrysler, Desoto. I don't know if they had Desoto. They had Plymouth and Chrysler. Then was the bakery. There was a little building there—I don't remember what all is in that building, not much, but they finally tore it down and built a big Thriftway grocery store there on the corner. It eventually closed, the ole boy bought both of them and moved it down to here. Then they put a Dollar General in there and it caught fire and burned on a Christmas.

DM:

And now it's over on the main one.

HWM:

When they rebuilt, they built back—

DM:

On 114th.

HWM:

Over here on the highway.

DM:

By the way, what did y'all call that highway way back then? We call it 114 now.

HWM:

It was 82, Lubbock Highway. They added the 114—62-82 came up to where the dollar store is. Sixty-two went north to Floydada and 82 went to Seymour. Then they added the 114—

DM:

I didn't know that.

HWM:

—coming back in. But it was just 62.

DM:

Or just Lubbock Highway.

HWM:

Just Lubbock Highway.

DM:

Was this called Main Street right here?

HWM:

This was Main.

DM:

What was that where the museum is now?

HWM:

Originally it was a bank.

DM:

Do you know which bank?

HWM:

I have something at home, my [inaudible, 00:46:41] got tired—something Warranty.

DM:

I'm asking you some tough questions but you got a good memory.

HWM:

Wouldn't know but it was a bank. I never remember it being a bank. It was the SPS Electric office for years, and years, and years. I remember there was a museum then. They had different businesses upstairs. They had some rooms to rent. Then there was—occasionally a doctor would come here and put an office up there—dentists—but there was always—the barbershop in there about where that—the first door that's closed going west was a barbershop.

DM:

It's a pretty big building.

HWM:

Yeah. The next door was a tailor shop, Smithey's tailor shop. It was there for years and years until it finally—he got too old and he wasn't—everything was wash and wear. Then where the bank is now was a big two-story building, an older two-story—and they had—the phone office was upstairs for all the—and then they always had, like I say, doctors and dentists up and coming through. In the bottom on the west end was the post office. Most of my life that was the post office. Then the Ralls Inn that we talked a little about. Of course, when they built—the bank remodeled, and they didn't want the post office, they wanted the space. People built the post office and leased it to the government where it's at now. Across the road to the north was—well it was a gas company—it was West Texas Gas Company at that time. They always—I remember walking by there going to school. That was—I think gas came here in about '28. But the old gentleman that came here from Kansas with the gas company, he worked for them up in—he ran that office until way up in late fifties, early sixties. He stayed at that—and he moved the old building, it's up here on the highway. Basically, it was antique shop, but they moved the old building that was built there when the gas company came here and built the new modern building. At the time when they did the post office—then they built—right across it—the alley to the north was the phone—they built a big phone office in there where there were lots and lots of operators. There were a lot of operators at that time, they worked there.

DM:

Had a switch board, big switch board.

HWM:

Big switch board.

DM:

You know, Ralls was really booming.

HWM:

It was booming, it really was.

DM:

By the way, you told me the other day about your grandmother, maybe, that had to Crosbyton to pay her tax and didn't like it because Crosbyton had stolen the courthouse.

HWM:

She was the one that—her sister-in-law put her in with this man that wanted a cook out there. Like I said, she was an old-timer from Ralls, over to that courthouse and she wouldn't go to Crosbyton to buy anything. She'd go hungry before she'd go to Crosbyton. She was a little closer where she lived, probably a mile closer to Crosbyton than Ralls. But she always—at that time you had to pay your poll tax so you could vote. She would have to go to Crosbyton to the courthouse to pay her poll tax. It just irritated her because there wasn't a time when she'd go to Crosbyton under any circumstances because she wanted nothing to do with those people.

DM:

Do you know what year that was that that happened? I can find that out.

HWM:

You can find that but it's on the courthouse over there so that would give a rough time.

DM:

Do you remember other people being upset about that, talking about it?

HWM:

Oh yes, there used to be—and there's still a pretty good—the feud kind of fizzles until you get to football season and it come back alive. [David laughs] All the old timers, they just thought it was awful because Ralls was set. Had Ralls got the courthouse, they would—this would be—I don't think seeing that—it would be big town and Crosbyton wouldn't even exist. It'd be kind of like Lorenzo because they had the courthouse, so that brought in lawyers and I guess that was a typical place to build a hospital because you already had the courthouse there.

DM:

You know it generates business.

HWM:

Right? Without the hospital and the courthouse, all the people that—eighty percent of them—a lot of people in Ralls don't care that much about the offices over there. They had to run for office and drive over there every day. But that's—come in.

[pause in recording]

DM:

Okay, so, there's a rivalry between Crosbyton—

HWM:

It's still there some but it don't—it's just—my wife's from Crosbyton and I'm from Ralls so we finally get along. There was a—most of the old-timers that really had the feud, they're all gone. It's not that big a deal anymore. Back during the forties and fifties, it was really—the least little thing started a ruckus real fast. But they've always burned an "R" in the Crosbyton football field and they come over here and burn a "C." [DM laughs] One year the band—I don't know, this was—my son was still in high school—during the football game over there, they always—before the football game—they setup and guard the fields and the schools all night. Pretty much still do because they don't want—they all made it up and they got some little packages of how the band was marching. They got some dry chemical, weed killer, and each one did his part of making and "R" during the lights-out ceremony of them playing the song with the lights out. And they each sprinkled their part of it. Then when it rained and came out—here was this big 'R' in the middle of the Crosbyton—and they never did figure out what happened with that. [coughs]

DM:

Because they kept a close eye.

HWM:

They kept a close eye but they didn't know that each member of that band was making his part of the R with that chemical in a little bag with a hole.

DM:

That's pretty talented. [laughs]

HWM:

That really was. That really was. But now then, like I say, it's not the rivalry but it's still there.

DM:

Oh yeah. Well, was football—as long as you’ve been around here—was football the big sport, big rival sport between the two?

HWM:

Oh yes. Basketball wasn’t that big a deal. Lots of times we haven’t had baseball here until rather lately.

DM:

How about earlier on, did you ever whether basketball was bigger than football in the early years? Any talk?

HWM:

I’ve never—seemed like football has always been the number one.

DM:

That’s interesting. Well—

[pause in recording]

DM:

So I was going to ask you a little bit more about those war years. You mentioned rationing but do you remember anything else about—besides the tires, besides trying to conserve on the rubber—anything about other kinds of ration stamps? Food rationing, for example.

HWM:

I know shoes were rationed. My mother had an old-time doctor over here. The reason I know about the shoes, was here for many years, Dr. Haney. My mother went to see him some time. Her feet were bothering her. Of course, she was home and working all the time and he said, “It’s those shoes.” She said, “I know. I wear out my shoes that I—and I don’t have any—my stamps won’t be good. I won’t have any stamps.” He said, “I’ve got—I don’t wear out my shoes. I can afford very expensive shoes.” He said, “When I do get a pair, they last me.” He gave her a stamp to buy a pair of shoes with. She was just tickled to death because she really—her feet—she had made cardboard insoles in them and everything. So, when she passed away, there was no telling how many shoes she had in her closet. She said—she always told me, “I went barefooted when I was young.” As they got older—either didn’t have the money or the stamps to buy shoes. She said, “Now I can afford shoes and I’m going to have shoes,” and she did.

DM:

So that was something special of hers.

HWM:

That was special to her. She had two closets and they were full of shoeboxes. A lot of them should've been thrown away, but she didn't throw any of them away. It was amazing the shoeboxes we went through when she passed away.

DM:

You know what, that's really nice though because it sounds like it symbolized to her things are better now.

HWM:

They're better. Like I say, she had a pretty rugged life. My dad died, I was eleven. In about two years she married this man and he had three boys. He had no education but he worked. He worked and they saved money. They did real well and had one little girl. As I say, she always had a rough life. Then when she got a little older and a little money, she wouldn't spend it. She would not spend it. She had money for anything she wanted. The neighbors would think that she was—she really didn't have money to buy groceries with. She had plenty of money because she never did waste it. She saved it because growing up she only went to the second grade because, I think, her family moved around and worked on farms. I think she was just a typical person for that area.

DM:

She had learned to be frugal so she just stayed that way. I think that's great. What caused your father to die? Was it something to do with his paralysis?

HWM:

Yes, it just finally got—it just got worse and worse. He was bedfast for, probably, three years before he passed away. It just got progressively worse, his paralysis from that spinal block.

DM:

How old was he when they did that spinal block?

HWM:

He would've been—'15—he would've probably been about twenty-three.

DM:

Do you know why they did it?

HWM:

Well, that was—I guess that—they did that—he was going to have surgery. I think it was only a gallbladder surgery.

DM:

But that was to block the pain.

HWM:

I think they did that rather than put you to sleep. They just give you the spinal block and do that. He was—a man that lived up here told me—he was working for him and he said—he told me he was going to have to have that surgery and he said, “No big deal.” The old man had a farm out here but in his spare time—he had a big thrasher that went from farm, to farm, to farm, and harvested that—put all their grain up in a pile. He said, “Your dad never did make it back.” He would even come in—the old man was still—he would come in here and visit when I opened up and talk about things that him and my dad did together. He said he never did get to where he could walk again. He said, “We would pull that big ole thing with the big ole steam engine and just walk from farm to farm.” That big ole steam engine didn’t travel fast at all. He said, “We had one ole pickup we all got in the back of and went to work. He said, “But your dad worked up there.” I even worked several years for him because him and the old man were real good buddies. I remember the day that they knew my dad was going to die. Didn’t realize this man came to the house and got me to go over and visit with his son. We were the same age in school and we were probably—we were like—say I was eight or nine. He came and got me so I wouldn’t be at the house because he knew dad was not going to make it. We went over there and I didn’t know, we were just playing. All this fine toys this kid had, we were doing good.

DM:

Well, that was a nice man.

HWM:

He really was. He’d come in here and visited quite a bit. He was a kind of an engineer.

DM:

What was his name?

HWM:

Schoolcraft. Leonard Schoolcraft. I think he fired the boiler with all the burrs when the old gin sat here on this vacant lot. That was a big gin in Ralls. He was their boiler man or steam man, whatever.

Woman:

Hi.

[pause in recording]

DM:

You were talking about your going over and playing with your friend's toys. I was wondering, when you were kid what kind of games y'all played around here if you had time to?

HWM:

We played—it was—of course, we had—seemed like all the kiddos my age, nearly, were girls down in my part of town. But we would play hide-and-go-seek, Red Rover, Annie Over. That was the three—the hide-and-seek was always our popular, but all the houses were small so we could play Annie over. That wasn't a problem. They didn't have any monster houses. Then we got down—with a boy or two around—we just got down on our—we usually had—we thought the grandest thing we could ever get—if we could find some skate wheels and put them on block of wood, we made our own cars and trucks, crawled, push toys, and build farms, and plow and stuff.

DM:

Down in the dirt?

HWM:

Right in the dirt. You was dirty as you could be, just crawl and just have a great time. But that was about it. Like I said, there was a radio and that was it. That was back—we didn't sit at home sitting home listening to the radio, we'd play. Like I said, the basic deal was hide-and-seek. And we played scrub baseball if we'd get enough to play scrub. We never did.

DM:

Was there a field here or did you just get out there and play anywhere?

HWM:

We had a vacant lot. From where I was born—the lot is full now, there's six or eight houses up—but we had a full block there with no houses on it.

DM:

You just set some bases out there.

HWM:

Just set bases out. We had a hole over there and we would cookout; build a fire and roast weenies. There was several kids—are lot of them are older than me. They still liked to play scrub baseball and cookouts. So we just, we entertained ourselves really.

DM:

It was an outdoor thing too, wasn't it?

HWM:

You're right, it was all outdoor and we just—

DM:

It's so different from now.

HWM:

We had a great life. We didn't know anything different. Now then, you sit there and punch that tablet all day. [DM laughs] We just had a great time. Like I said, we knew no different.

DM:

Do you remember—when the U.S. went to war, do you remember hearing about Pearl Harbor?

HWM:

Not really.

DM:

You were young.

HWM:

That would've been '41. I would've been six years-old. I remember when the war ended—the fire whistle was on the first leg of the water tower over here, and they blew that whistle for half a day. They blew that whistle for ages, and ages. I remember when it'd been over because I remember that whistle blowing.

DM:

Golly. Isn't that something. Did they have kind of ceremony because that or just the whistle blowing?

HWM:

As far as I know, that was all. We wouldn't have—probably my mother was working and dad was sitting home in a wheelchair or something. I do remember that—of course, he was listening to the radio all the time. Didn't have much radios but you could get a little radio.

DM:

Was it battery?

HWM:

No, we had electricity. I don't know of anything we had that wasn't because I know the ice truck

used to come by and we'd buy a block of ice every other day. It was my job to get the pan out from under it because he couldn't do it. I had to take it out and dump the pan as the water melted.

DM:

Was that a daily thing?

HWM:

That was daily.

DM:

Once a day.

HWM:

Once a day.

DM:

Okay. Did you have an alert—you had a fire whistle—did you have an alert for a tornado?

HWM:

Not at that time.

DM:

Do you remember any tornadoes coming through here when you were young or since then?

HWM:

Well, we've had one or two. One came by and blew a lot of roof off of the compress warehouses down here. We had a pretty good tornado come through here. I guess the worst one Ralls has had was in 1955. The reason—and I'll tell you how I remember—that was before my wife and I married. They had a drive-in theater halfway between here and Crosbyton, and I was running the projector that was ran out of this office here—I mean, the Crystal theater here—and had the oversee of whoever was running it. I would go by and pickup—

DM:

What was it called?

HWM:

Crystal.

DM:

Crystal?

HWM:

C-r-y-s-t-a-l, Crystal Theater.

DM:

And they ran it—

HWM:

And the same people, the Blankenship's, on this drive-in out here. I was running the projector. I probably ran the projectors—I was working for the highway department but I'd run the projector probably about a year out there and my wife ran the concession stand. That's where we married.

DM:

Is that how you met?

HWM:

No, we had already met and I—they needed a concession stand so I asked her. "Yeah, I'll do it." So she went to work at the concession stand. In June—because we got married in September of '55, and there was a cloud—you could see the cloud back there. Of course, I couldn't, I was in the projection room. The people would stick their head in, "We got a cloud coming but I don't think it's very bad." Wife come in there—wife-to-be came in, she said, "I think we better shut this place down." She said, "It's really—people coming in," so I said, "Let's go," so we just kind of started shutting it down, closing up. As we went—the screen was on the east side of the theater. As we got everything shut down, the lights all out—as we went around that screen of that theater, it was blowing all the metal off of it. I started to Crosbyton to take her home, and it blew us off in the bar ditch. We were sitting in the bar ditch with water seeping through the car. As I say, that was June—roughly the middle of June of '55. Of course, they never did build it back. That was the end of it. Somebody come along, pulled us out and we let the car sit—I don't know—I eventually ended up driving it but it—

DM:

You've been in a tornado.

HWM:

So, I'd been in the tornado there. And Ralls got a pretty good lick, and it came from the north, which is very unusual. It got two or three houses up in the north part of town and it skipped some, but that's the most tornado damage I know of that Ralls has had.

DM:

How often do these come along at hit Ralls or close to Ralls?

HWM:

Well, we had one two years after that, '57, because my youngest girl was born. I was working for the highway department, and we had that'd come down this Savage Road, cut across the end of town and went right down the Floydada highway here about four miles. It was about a eight-mile strip through there because it tore a lot of houses. It did all the houses from the Savage gin north on this first little paved road out here. It cleaned everything out out there.

DM:

Was that in '57?

HWM:

Fifty-seven.

DM:

It seems like tornadoes might've been more common around here back then.

HWM:

Undoubtedly because we—seemed like the— I always say they get in the canyon this way or this way. They follow the crowd. That was the two that we had right there in two years. My mother went to the house where we lived in, grabbed Dolores, our baby girl at that time, and carried here up to—her neighbor had a good cellar and they—I was at Calgary with the highway department but it looked awful dark back in here. We didn't have any radio communication. They needed us, so they had to come down there and get us because—had to do our job. I was doing what we were to do down there. They sent one of the straw bosses down to tell us we needed—and we were picking metal off. They were rebuilding this road Floydada and it was under caliche. It was a slimy problem out there. We was trying to dodge the traffic and get the tin off the road. It was like we'd been in a mud fight. That's the only two that's been of any great significance.

DM:

What's the most recent? Any in the last ten, fifteen years?

HWM:

I don't think we've had anything in fifteen—we used to go to the cellar—we've kind of got lights now.

DM:

Now you hear of them in Ohio or Virginia.

HWM:

The time of the month—the time of the year that they don't have them.

DM:

I know, even December.

HWM:

So I guess the trend moved. My dad—step-dad—was born and raised in Oklahoma. When we moved to different houses, he'd rent—we'd get a shed and rent a little—that's the first thing he did, he hand-dug him a cellar. He had a cellar wherever we lived because he said he had watched Smyer, Oklahoma blow away three times from where he lived. He was scared of clouds and he would build a cellar wherever. We bought a little ole shack over here, so to speak, two, three-bedroom house—three-room house, one-bedroom. When Dolores and I married, I had bought it and worked on it a little bit. It wasn't much of a house but it was a home. He'd come over and help me. He said, "Y'all are going to be here. I don't have to be build a cellar where we're living now." He helped me build a good cellar there. With each little cloud they were ready to go to the cellar. They finally bought a house up here and that's the first thing he did. He dug him a cellar, fixed it, and it'd stay there as long he lived. He still in that cellar. That's the only two to speak of. It just demolished that drive-in theater out there. Got a little bit in the east part of Ralls but it came right due out of the north, straight out of the north. That's just not tornado directions.

DM:

What about some other weather events out in this country? Years where you had—I understand 1941 was a heavy, heavy rain year.

HWM:

It was—everybody talks about the rain they had in '41. [phone rings 01:14:00] I don't remember anything about it.

[pause in recording]

DM:

Well, that big rain then in '41, people talked about it. You remember some talk?

HWM:

Oh yes. I think they lost their crop because it just rained and washed it out, just stayed underwater the whole year.

DM:

Forty-one inches, I think, is what they got in '41.

HWM:

It was unbelievable.

DM:

That's the record.

HWM:

Back to the old gentleman that I worked for, Frank Benson, with the gas company that came here, he was telling about it. Of course, he worked Ralls, Crosbyton, Lorenzo and Petersburg. He said, "To get to Petersburg to make a turn-on for gas"—he probably had a Model A Ford. He said, "We had to go to Floydada and Plainview back to Petersburg." He said, "I couldn't cut through the country. It was a long way." I'm sure the roads were probably thirty-mile-an-hour speed limit. He said that there wasn't no way to cut through the country like they normally did to go from here to Petersburg.

DM:

Because of flooded roads.

HWM:

Everything was flooded. All the roads were covered with lakes. He'd say, "I'd go to Floydada," of course, he probably didn't have a lot of turn-ons at that time. He said, "I would have to go to—when I got ready to read meters, I'd have to go to Floydada, Plainview, and back to Petersburg because everything was underwater."

DM:

That's a long way to go.

HWM:

Some of these farmers that used to be around would remember—"If we just had some rain like we did in '40, we could raise crop now days. We got stuff to work it with." As far as remembering anything about it, I don't.

DM:

Well, the second biggest on record was in—recently in 2004. Got a lot of rain, thirty-three inches.

HWM:

That was—

DM:

Remember that one?

HWM:

Yes, that one I remember. It seemed like every time you'd do something it was raining. I guess they come every so many years.

DM:

I grew lots of good weeds that year. [laughs]

HWM:

It was real good. Looked like we may grow some more this year.

DM:

I'll tell you for sure, I'm already doing that. If I was in the weed business, I'd be doing pretty good.

HWM:

Be doing real good.

DM:

Oh, golly. Well, what about droughts? Remember the drought of the early fifties?

HWM:

Oh yes.

DM:

How did that affect Ralls in this area?

HWM:

Well, it hurt because there wasn't—the main thing, they didn't have the crop to bring all of the hands to town from the valley to chop cotton, and pull cotton and work it to gins. So, all the businesses suffered because they didn't have the people coming in that normally they used to.

DM:

People coming, working, and spending money in town.

HWM:

That's the reason that all these businesses were—they'd make enough money through the spring then the fall, the ones that didn't come to pull cotton—they'd come up—pretty good load—because they'd come up here and they'd make good money, they'd spend it. The old gentleman that I worked with—talking about back during then—he was working with the highway department. He had worked in the grocery store here in Ralls, different grocery stores, because

there was a lot of them. He said, "The main one here on the corner," which was a Piggly Wiggly—and he said, "We would—people didn't come to town. Even the ones that lived here worked." He said they worked a long, hard day, got cleaned up, came to town, and bought their groceries on Saturday night. But they left them and they all went to the picture show. He said, "It would be midnight before the picture would be over," because they had to catch the late one. He said, "We had to stay open until they could all come back by, pick up their groceries that they had bought and take them home with them." He said, "We always counted on working until about two o'clock every Saturday night because that was the only—they go to the picture for a dime and they didn't have anything to do. They worked all week." He said that place was full. He said lots of time they would buy them a ticket and they couldn't go until the next show. But he said it was always two o'clock of Sunday morning before they got out of that grocery store.

DM:

I'll be. I'll pause this here.

[pause in recording]

DM:

Okay, so this drought was pretty rough. It last for a few years, didn't it?

HWM:

It did. Like I say, it got rid of—it got rid of some of the weaker businesses because they counted on all the help from the valley coming up. There just wasn't any need for them, they didn't come. Some businesses prospered a little bit because they picked up what the others left.

Somebody had to pick up for the local—[coughs] but we had—back during, I guess, most of the fifties, at one time Ralls had one, two, three, four, five—we had five dealerships in Ralls.

DM:

Five car dealerships?

HWM:

Five car dealerships in Ralls right after the war. Of course, people had money and anything would sell that would start running because they wore out what they had. The ole boy—and it turned out to be—my grandmother had money and she bought a Kaiser. The ole boy put in Kaiser Frazer dealership over here. She drove that car forever. There were kind of—in a way, they kind of made fun of them. Now they're some pretty nice—when you go to a car show, there's some nice ones out there. But then they had the Oldsmobile House. He came here right after the war and opened up. During the war, we had a Chrysler, and Plymouth, then the Ford House had been here for ages, and ages. The Chevrolet house—[clears throat] we had the

Chevrolet house, and then a man bought this Allis-Chalmers we were talking about here. And he—[coughs] excuse me. He added the Buick so we had—

DM:

Okay. It was Allis-Chalmers and Buick.

HWM:

And Buick. That's quite a combination.

DM:

That's interesting.

HWM:

Like I said, anything you could get your hands on would sell. Then the Logan's bought out that and put in—they had the Allis-Chalmers and the Buick. But about that time, the early fifties, the Straight-8 Buick engine was the hottest thing ever made for an irrigation engine, so they were just—they were building engines all over this end of town or putting engines in stands. That's when they built this big blue building out here as you're coming into town on the left and moved all of their operation out there.

DM:

Those Straight-8s, were they the ones that they used out there on those concrete pads for irrigation?

HWM:

Right, sat up there. Chrysler had a V8 Chrysler that was real big. That Straight-8 Buick, it was the going thing for the type of water we had here, because they sold every Buick engine they could get their hands on and put it in one of these stands. These people in Lubbock—I don't know how many, it was good for them because they were building stands and clutch assemblies.

DM:

Did irrigation really take off with the drought of the fifties?

HWM:

Right.

DM:

Had it been around before?

HWM:

The main reason that it'd taken off so much, they starting running irrigation lines, natural gas, out to the country. It was so much more economical than running the butane lines. That's when the irrigation really taken off. They could afford to run an engine on natural gas.

DM:

What's the earliest irrigation that you knew about out in this country?

HWM:

I guess it was something plumb back in the forties, not a whole lot.

DM:

Now this would cause it to really take off.

HWM:

This really boomed because it was an economical enough fuel, and the water was not that far down. It wasn't that hard to lift it up and water with.

DM:

And those big engines.

HWM:

And they just run them back. They didn't think no—irrigation ditch'd break and it's run water down through the bar ditch for two days. Not any of that anymore. Of course, it's all used—most of it's pivots or little submergible electric engine or whatever to pump it with. That's when it really boomed, I think, when the natural gas started running lines everywhere.

DM:

Did you notice—oh, I was going to ask you, besides the Allis-Chalmers, did you have an International Harvester, John Deere, or anyone else?

HWM:

International Harvester was in the bottom-west end of the Ralls Inn over here. In about '46 or '47, they moved it out and built this building that's right at the end of this street here now. It's not Allis—it's not International Harvester—but it was Abel Pruitt International for probably the—right after the war, late forties. That's when the gentleman came here and put the Oldsmobile dealership into where the Allis-Chalmers was.

DM:

Now what about John Deere, was it ever here?

HWM:

Never had John Deere.

DM:

Did they have that one in Lorenzo at that time?

HWM:

It wasn't—no, the only one that we had was at Crosbyton. They had a great, big John Deere in Crosbyton, right there on—not where it's at now out east of town, it was there in town. But we've never had John Deere. I guess International was real plentiful or popular here at that time. Then they built the big one in Lorenzo. I guess there were half the state of Texas, undoubtedly, that drove farm suppliers that big, the International. Then—I can't say, seventies— International wanted them to build a new building here where this one—you see the front out in town. It was the International building. They said, "No." They'd been there for years, and years. They were ready to, kind of, retire and they wasn't going to build a big, expensive building and move out here but right of the cemetery. So, they'd taken the dealership away from them and put in an International Harvester, and it didn't last but about two years and it was broke and gone, so they used for a shop and everything out there. That International didn't last out there very long. I don't if it's because Abel wasn't running anymore or what, I don't know. A man came in here and operated it, real nice ole boy, but it just never did take a hold and go when they moved it out there.

DM:

Back in that drought, do you remember if dust storms were any worse?

HWM:

Oh yes. They were—

DM:

You were too young to remember those of the thirties.

HWM:

I've heard my mother talk about them. She said she thought that I was probably going to choke to death because it came—I was pretty young when we had it. She said she wet everything she could get her hands on, and cram it around the windows and under the doors because the houses were not made to withstand something like that.

DM:

When were you born again? What day?

HWM:

I was born in '35.

DM:

Yeah but what day was it?

HWM:

March twenty-second.

DM:

April fourteenth or so.

HWM:

She said I was about a month old, and she really thought that I would probably choke because—she said, “I wet everything I could get and put it over every crack.” I don’t know anything about the old house in Crosbyton where we lived. She said that it just—dust was just coming through everywhere. It must’ve really been—I’ve seen some bad ones, really bad ones, since then. That one must’ve been—

DM:

That’s the one everybody talks about. So, you were a month old.

HWM:

I was a month old because I remember her saying, “You were a month old and I knew you weren’t going to make it. I really done everything. I fought all—about twenty-four hours.” It last a long time.

DM:

Came in kind of slow, slow and black.

HWM:

It just must’ve really been something else.

DM:

They say it shut down some cars and everything else.

HWM:

Those cars weren’t made—well, nothing was made for something like that. There wasn’t many— this gentleman is—

[pause in recording]

HWM:

This two-story building—you can see the Masonic Lodge corner stone—okay—back and it says—I believe in the early thirties, the lodge was very prosperous. I mean, they had lots of members. So, they built that building and they were going to always be able to rent the bottom, pay for all the upkeep of the building, pay for the building, and everything then the depression hit. When it did, rather than lose the building, they sold the bottom of it and they maintained the top. Which is kind of unusual, a two-story building with two owners. Then, all of their members kind of dwindled down but all of the—they were all so old, they couldn't climb the stairs so they bought a building up here on the highway and moved up there. The man that had bought this and put a parts house in it for years donated it to the city, and they put a little clinic in there. It's been several different things, schools use it. They'd always have the income and it'd operate your lodge, good forethought. But the Depression hit and they just—they didn't—nobody needed to rent that building down there so that—

DM:

Best-laid plans—they had a good plan but they didn't know what was going to happen.

HWM:

Didn't see the future that much. It's odd, they've ended up buying this little building on the very far south end now for their lodge members, but it's all on the ground floor and such. But that was built in—I don't know anything about the lodge. The floors kind of sunk down up their was, and the main lodge, wherever he sits—he sits up above everybody else, where the floor was cut so they remodeled that building. It did have a kitchen and a bath. Probably nowadays they can just put them an elevator in there that wouldn't cost that much, and they would still be—because they building they moved up here on the highway and bought—which was great, a little cement-tile building that had been a butane, and chemical and farm store. After a few years, all that chemical had soaked into the cement and the tile walls, and they'd get sick every time they'd go in there so they had to vacate it. They've had a terrible time with their lodge, so to speak. They're pretty well situated over here.

DM:

Interesting. Now what about—we talked about, we talked about the businesses, what about churches here in town. What churches have been here over the years and way back?

HWM:

Okay, the older ones, the oldest two buildings that was here—the three buildings that I remember was the Methodist, the Baptist and there was a great, big—it's up the street here now—was a big, old wood monster building like you see pictures and all, was a Presbyterian.

DM:

Those were the three big churches?

HWM:

That was the three big churches in Ralls. The Emma Church of Christ that's on the corner, they stayed at old Emma—they started at old Emma, and they stayed down there. They finally moved their building to town in probably early forties, move it over here a block north of the post office. Just an old, white bungalow wood building.

DM:

Did all of Emma eventually just move to Ralls?

HWM:

Ralls and Crosbyton. The merchants—there's some pictures of the merchants pulling their buildings with steam engines going either to Ralls or to Crosbyton, shows them stopped and doing business on the way. Somebody wanted something they stopped. They did business on the way. [DM laughs] There was one grocery store, the church that stayed out there, and a few houses for a long time. The old wood grocery store, there was a man that lived in it for years and years and years. It just eventually—they got a pretty nice cemetery out there. They're still a few people buried at old Emma cemetery.

DM:

I've seen the old town plat and it looked pretty sizeable.

HWM:

It was a good-sized town. It would've been great had the railroad cut from Lubbock through there. Everything had been there.

DM:

Another one of those best-laid plans that just doesn't work out. Can't help it.

HWM:

It just happened.

DM:

We were talking about how Ralls was really booming, especially along Main Street here, but it reached a point where it leveled off. What caused that and when was that? Was it still doing okay after the war?

HWM:

I'm going to say it pretty well-leveled, during the war it leveled. I would say that to the best I can—but it got pretty—and then it picked back up a little when the war was over, people had money to spend, the irrigation brought the farming into a good operation, and it boomed pretty good through the fifties.

DM:

Even during the drought?

HWM:

During the drought it still did all right. Then about the sixties, well, it started—it just started slowly going downhill.

DM:

Why was that?

HWM:

I don't know. I guess it made it too easy to go to Lubbock. I guess at that time roads were good, automobiles were good. Because Cone out here, eight miles, was a pretty good-sized little town. They had school out there for a while. But they had two groceries stores, a feed store, blacksmith shop, service station. Then Farmer four miles west was a pretty-thriving little grocery store. Of course, everybody had a gin. I mean, all these little places because they did have a haul this cotton. Kind of like, back then you had a school, and a gin about every four to five miles. That was just standard procedure.

DM:

And you had these little quarter-section farms.

HWM:

Right.

DM:

Now you still see the houses out there but they all consolidated.

HWM:

Consolidated, and they're going in a hurry because they're getting in the—they're in the way of these twelve-row equipment. Then we've got to file up everything to plant around that shed or that house.

DM:

So they dig a hole and push it in.

HWM:

Push it in. If I need a hand, I can pay his rent in Ralls or somewhere. And it's really—

DM:

Very different.

HWM:

We had—like I say, when it was me working with the gas company from '59 to '72, we had hundreds of houses on gas out there. When we were reading irrigation meters, we had near as many houses we did—and now then, I get out there—of course, they'll go out there and work but there's no houses out there like there used to be. I can drive down the road and remember—I had houses that's three miles here that's gone. It's gone. It used to take a man, his wife, and maybe one hired hand to work a quarter of a section of ground. And now then, one man can work five sections with a pivot, twelve-row planters and twelve-row cultivators. It's just a completely different rural area than it used to be.

DM:

Sure is. Did you ever hear how many of those little town schools consolidated with Ralls? I assumed that happened a lot.

HWM:

Yes. Caprock. They never did have school at Savage but a little bit south of Savage they had a League 4. I think they consolidated with Caprock, and then Caprock consolidated with Ralls.

DM:

League 4, I've heard of that.

HWM:

Owens school consolidated with Ralls. Cone, they had a big—the high school from Cone used to come to Ralls, and they had up until about the sixth or seventh grade at Ralls—at Cone. And they wanted to—Ralls told them that—then they wanted to close the whole school, and move it to Ralls—I mean consolidate with Ralls—and Ralls said, “No, we're not going to do that. We'll take your kiddos but you'll be in the Ralls School District, not the Cone.” Well, that quadrupled their taxes that had been a pain on those irrigated farms. Some of those old-timers, they wouldn't even drive to Ralls. They'd walk to Floydada to buy something to eat before they'd drive to Ralls. It caused a lot of—Ralls didn't think they should educate their kids for very little. But Farmer came to Ralls. They had up to the sixth grade. And Cone eventually did, but they went to

Floyddada because they didn't want to pay Ralls school taxes. It was probably three or four times what they were paying. They didn't take much to operate that little ole school out there. It was Fairview that consolidated with Ralls. New Home is four miles north of town, the old building sitting right there on the highway. Then four miles east of it was another school.

DM:

They all came to Ralls?

HWM:

They all came to Ralls. Four more miles is another one at Big Four but they went to Crosbyton, which was logical. There was Fairview, Caprock, Canyon Valley, New Home, about six different schools that have consolidated with Ralls.

DM:

I guess in Crosby County now, what, is it only Crosbyton, Ralls, and Lorenzo?

HWM:

Ralls, Crosbyton and Lorenzo. And they're always talking about a central location for one high school for three towns.

DM:

And that would be Ralls. [laughs]

HWM:

That's the main holdout. Nowadays, that wouldn't be a bad deal if they were to. They've talked about building it somewhere, just starting from scratch out here between here and Crosbyton. Because the center of the county is about four miles east and two south, and that's basically the center of Crosby County. So, they thought out in that area about where the drive-in theater used to be would be a good place for a central—

DM:

So no one gets their feelings hurt that way. [laughs]

HWM:

And it would be good for the kids. There's a lot of these kids now from—I had a niece that graduated from Arlington, but she was already a sophomore in college from the classes she had been taking. But when she went to school, she came to Wayland at Floyddada—at Plainview. And I think it would be good if—the old-timers have about all thinned out—if they had one big high school, they could offer so much more for them.

DM:

When you were talking about sixties, by the sixties things were slowing down in Ralls. Were kids leaving Ralls and not living here anymore? Were they going to bigger cities?

HWM:

Well, they would—as they would graduate and go to school, there was no need to come back to Ralls. If their dad wasn't a farmer and they were going come back and farm, there was nothing in Ralls so they just gradually dwindled away because of that. There was nothing to bring them back to Ralls.

DM:

Has the population declined much?

HWM:

Very little. It's staying pretty well the same. Like I said, the older ones die off. People from Lubbock come over here and buy a lot of the houses because they can—they think they can live easier, quieter town and drive to Lubbock, so they buy their groceries or they buy everything in the evening, they come home for the night and spend the night. That's what holds the population up. There's hardly any vacant houses of any—they sell real easy.

DM:

That's good.

HWM:

That's what keeps the population up fairly close. We were at twenty-four something I think there two-thousand and something so we're down some.

DM:

But still holding pretty well as compared to Lorenzo.

HWM:

Oh, Lorenzo is just really gone.

DM:

Kind of sandwiched in between Ralls and Idalou-Lubbock. I say Idalou-Lubbock because Idalou is just like a suburb of Lubbock now it seems like to me.

HWM:

If Lubbock moves this way at all, it'll be kind of like Wolfforth, Idalou'll just be part of Lubbock.

DM:

Well, y'all got married in '55 and then you—somewhere along the way you started your plumbing business but when was that?

HWM:

Okay. I started in '72. I was working for—which was Pioneer Natural Gas at that time. Now it's Atmos but it was the gas—

DM:

This was?

HWM:

This was—Pioneer was the name of the gas company. And I went to work for—I left the highway department on Friday and went to work for the gas company on Monday. And then we would go out make sure because—of course, we were not in a repair business. We did do a little but more then than they do now but they would—the old gentleman that came here and they did—they worked real hard to get gas companies started. So they'd go take your little space heater out, take it down to the service station, blow it out and bring it back. They really had water heater troubles, cook-stove troubles, something that we couldn't adjust. We wouldn't adjust anything. And they'd just panic, "Oh, there's no plumbers." You're not going to get nobody to do that. So I got a thought, Why don't I go in the plumbing business? And I told Dolores, I said "We got our house paid for, two out of three kids through school," and I said, "If I'm well into work, I don't think that they'd starve me out." I forgot about credit when I did that. [Laughs] But anyhow—

DM:

You had to setup an inventory. I'd take what little I had in retirement—and I didn't have too much because I had twelve years with the gas company, and I drew my retirement down—and started out with that with the inventory. A little ole wore out van that the TV man had wore out here. I bought it from the Ford House. I started out debt-free and didn't have anything. Finally, I thought, I can't do it so I've got to borrow a little money to have more inventory." First thing, the man that owned this building passed away and his sister didn't want to mess with it, so the bank handed it to the state, called me and said, "We want to sell you that building." I said, "Do what?" Ed McLaughlin was quite a character. He was one of the original owners of the bank. He said, "We'll just sell it to you for what you're paying rent," so I ended up buying the building. We just been [inaudible, 01:46:04]. The lady that owned this one next door, her and her sister, they were Ralls decedents, and they owned—they were splitting all of their buildings up because her sister really was interested in getting a museum started. So, they split all of their—"You take this building and I'll take some more of the Ralls Inn—the museum." She'd come down there—she'd call me one night and she said—or come in here one morning and she said, "They still got down

here last night.” I said, “What are you doing, breaking in?” She said, “No, I measured my building. It’s the same width, it’s the same length.” She said, “I want to sell it to you.” She said, “I don’t even know what you gave for this one, but I’ll sell it to you for exactly what you gave for this one.” I said, “Well, if the bank’s got enough money we’ll do that.” She said, “You don’t have to have money, I’ll finance it.” “No, let’s get it done.” So, I went down and told Ed again what I wanted to do. “Yeah, we’ll just—you’ve had that long enough that you nearly got it paid for.” He said, “We’ll just leave the payments like they are,” so I ended up with the two buildings. That’s how we ended with two buildings.

DM:

Well, you needed the space eventually.

HWM:

I needed the space because I sure—and the first thing—I did start out—a friend of mine, we had a feed store in there. Had the Purina feed store. He raised a lot of cattle. Well, I decided that we wasn’t making enough money. We weren’t losing any money, but we weren’t making any.

DM:

Off of the Purina part?

HWM:

Purina part. It wasn’t a—so I told him, I said, “Let’s close that down.” So, we worked that out, we split what little money was in the kitty and he’d taken his money—I was to furnish the building and he was to furnish the money to buy the feed with to start with. We split the profit up and I started using for a plumbing shop. He started his feed direct from Purina and we worked at that.

DM:

Pretty good.

HWM:

Then the lady passed away that owns the third one down that’s got the black front on it. Her son had been gone from Ralls—he said, “I don’t want no property in Ralls.” He said, “I’ll make you such a deal that you can’t turn it down if you want that building.” We talked a little bit, so I ended up buying it.

DM:

Oh I didn’t realize.

HWM:

So I've got the three buildings here.

DM:

Three buildings. You have things in that?

HWM:

That one is my collection. I collected Coca-Cola for years, and years. So I brought my house—the overflow in the garage and then I put a little of anything down there. Opened up the 62-82 garage sale. If Saturday's a pretty day I'll go down, open the door, and set some stuff out. It's kind of a hobby, so to speak.

DM:

It's your own personal Coca-Cola museum down there.

HWM:

Museum. A lot of I don't sell because it's very unusual, but I've got it set there to get rid of some of it from the house that I had two or three of. My special items that relatives and friends and what have gave me, I don't put them down there if I've got something. I'll take Coke cans and put them on green picture frames or frame them in different designs. Those usually sell pretty good. I don't do the woodworking I used to, but I still do a lot of woodworking. Anything I make and take down there it'll sell.

DM:

Where do you do your woodworking?

HWM:

In the back of here. I've got a table saw, band saw, planers, sanders.

DM:

Sounds like you own half the town here. [laughter]

HWM:

Well, I do. I've had a lot of fun.

DM:

Forty-five years in the business, right?

HWM:

I've always liked wood. That's the only reason that I liked to get thrown out of high school. I

always loved wood work. Okay, they had to have FFA [**Future Farmers of America**] [1:50:15]. I didn't have a car. I didn't want to raise no pig out in the country somewhere. Well, my senior year they opened up a woodworking shop. Man, I signed that up and, man, I was tickled to death. Already had enough credits to graduate. Of course, that would still be credits, but I could take a period and a half, two periods with woodworking because I had everything but the English credit. They called me and said, "You can't take woodworking. You're going to have to have three years of agriculture before you can take woodworking." I argued with them but it didn't do any good. I did not get to take woodworking, but I've always enjoyed it. I picked up over the years.

DM:

I guess you kind of showed them, now you got your own woodworking shop. [Laughs]

HWM:

I've built several cabinets for different people in town. I'd buy a house, build a cabinet in it, and remodel it and use for a rent house or sell it. I enjoy cabinets. I've built half the furniture in our house.

DM:

You might've inherited that. Didn't you say your granddaddy—

HWM:

That might've come all the way down. Of course, there's the week before last—thumb right there, and it was all—only injury I've ever had in all of woodworking back there. It was just a careless deal, just got careless.

DM:

I mean, over all the years of woodworking, that's not bad to have—

HWM:

It's really not because I have—

DM:

People lose fingers and everything else.

HWM:

Everything else. I have did lots of different cabinets, like I said. I used to be able to do a lot of vanities to fit a spot. Somebody wants to take a little wall-hung lavatory, I'd build a vanity, oblong, offset, whatever it'd take. I used to do a lot of that but anymore—if I can't buy one

somewhere off a dealer, didn't fit—I tell them, “If you get one, I'll put it in.” I've had a lot of fun here, I really have.

DM:

Forty-five years.

HWM:

Forty-five years.

DM:

Well, I've got one more big question for you.

HWM:

All right.

DM:

How has the plumbing business changed from 1972 to now? What are some big differences here? I know—

HWM:

We have so much better material that's so much easier to install that it makes it more economical for the home owner.

DM:

Are you talking about for metals to plastics mostly?

HWM:

Right. All your galvanized pipes that we put in is what was there when we started. It's already eaten up. Then we started soldering plastic. Now we use the PEX, the flex pipe with the brass fillings that you—plumb the sewer on the bathroom take forever. You laid that old cast iron, you beat the oakum, and put a running rope running all those lead joints. Now you can go in there with a saw, can of glue and cleaner, and you can do more work in a half a day than you used to do—you could do in three days.

DM:

And that flexible pipe's got to be a real advantage.

HWM:

Advantage. You can just work it around, crimp it and go. Even your copper you had to clean it, solder it and this. So, it's the material that has changed so much in the plumbing business.

DM:

What about the varieties of—surely the varieties of fixtures and things like that are huge now, like for example, someone has—let's say something like a faucet goes out over here. Can you easily replace those things or do you have to order?

HWM:

Most of them are replaceable without a big problem. Sometimes they have something special.

DM:

Are there standards, pretty good standards?

HWM:

Pretty good standards. Every once in a while they'll have something that's very unusual that but I can usually—there's a place in Fort Worth that I can usually order and get anything very unusual if I can't get it in Lubbock.

DM:

How long does it take to get here from Fort Worth?

HWM:

I can call them and they'll have it UPS'ed the next day. That's a big factor in some unusual stuff. It used to, some of that unusual—you just wait, and wait, and order. There's a few of the older Crane, which is a fabulous brand—the kitchen sink kind of sits there and come—anyhow, it'd take a special faucet. And we have a terrible time for what few—99 percent of those cabinets have been remodeled and brought up to date. But every once in a while somebody—and we try to find—we have a hard time finding a special faucet for that Crane. Other than that everything else is pretty well available.

DM:

Well, when you think about—what we were talking earlier when you were a kid, y'all had an outhouse, you had an outside water faucet, and then to now. That's an amazing transition.

HWM:

Amazing.

DM:

Anything else you want to add today?

HWM:

Well, offhand I don't. I can probably think of something.

DM:

Your wife's sitting here, you want to say how wonderful she is? [Laughs]

HWM:

She's been a big help, and she's pretty well been right here with me since the start.

DM:

That's great.

HWM:

Like I say, used to be myself, one hand, and her and that was it. Now then—the last ten years I've kept two hands and I've eased off. I take them parts. That's good for me anymore.

DM:

That's good. Well, congratulations.

HWM:

I don't have any trouble running to—if I don't have a water heater in stock—I usually try to keep the basics. I'm still quite—I run to Lubbock.

DM:

Got a good stock.

HWM:

We've got one fly that's past and I didn't have the door open this morning.

Dolores Mullins:

Oh, you did too.

HWM:

I did too, didn't I?

DM:

That fly found an open door.

HWM:

I leave the door open and that fly—we'll spray for flies before—gradually.

DM:

I guess I'll go ahead and shut this off unless you have anything else to add.

HWM:

I can't think of anything. I really don't know.

DM:

All righty.

[End of Recording]

