

**Oral History Interview of
Royce Franklin**

Interviewed by: Andy Wilkinson and Curtis Peoples

March 7, 2013

Keller, Texas

Part of the:

Crossroads Music Archive Interviews

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Transcript Overview:

This interview features Royce Franklin. Franklin discusses guitar and fiddle music and the various musicians he has worked with during his time in music. Franklin also talks about fiddle contests and his involvement with the contests, particularly in Weiser, Idaho.

Length of Interview: 02:06:03

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Keywords

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Curtis Peoples (CP):

—a PhD dissertation on Texas contest fiddling.

Royce Franklin (RF):

Oh, okay.

Loyce Franklin (LF):

What is her name?

CP:

Her name is Laura. Laura Houle, and she's from the Dallas area and going to school at Tech, and she's just finishing up master's degree, working on her thesis. I said, "Well, are you going to continue on with a PhD on Texas contest fiddling?" She's like, "Yeah, yeah. I sure am." And she was going to go off east or up to Tennessee or somewhere, and she got to thinking, Well you know everything I need's right here in Texas, and so she decided to stay. (laughter)

LF:

Tell her all those out of state ones come down here.

Andy Wilkinson (AW):

That's right.

LF:

They have come everywhere. We've got so many friends from the Northwest. All of them come down for Texas fiddling.

RF:

Yeah, they came down here. Matt Hart and his wife, her sister and that's just some of them. You know, they come down, go to school and finish up down here and be a Texas fiddler. What is this right here?

AW:

That's my card.

RF:

Oh, okay. I can't read. I forgot to tell you that. I've lost my vision to where I can't read anymore.

AW:

Oh, I hate to hear that.

RF:

I'm letting my wife do all the driving nowadays. (laughter)

AW:

It's good you got her to do that.

RF:

Yeah.

AW:

Are you going join us? We'd love for you to—

LF:

Oh, I don't know if I could help any or not.

RF:

She probably knows more than I do. I guarantee you she does.

AW:

Well, can we start off with your date of birth?

RF:

I was born in March 28, 1930.

AW:

Got a birthday coming up.

RF:

Yeah. I'll be eighty-three in about another—rest of this month.

AW:

That's an achievement.

RF:

Yeah. (laughter)

AW:

Where were you born?

RF:

I was born in Dozier, Texas.

AW:

Where's Dozier? D-o-z-i-e-r?

RF:

I think so. It's about thirty miles out in the country out of Shamrock.

AW:

Okay. Oh yeah.

RF:

You know where Shamrock is?

AW:

I know right where it is. My grandmother was raised in Texoma, Texas.

RF:

Is that right?

AW:

So we made plenty of trips up to the Panhandle, and I had a lot of kinfolk up that way, and then plus I know Frankie McWhorter—I knew Frankie McWhorter—and he lived at—

RF:

I knew him or have been around him a little bit. My dad was a—oh, he lived out there in that part of the country. I don't know what—when I was about four or five years old, he said he woke up one morning, there wasn't a place on the bed that was clean except where his head was. (laughter) So we came to Whitewright and Bells, Texas after that.

AW:

To White Rock?

RF:

Whitewright.

AW:

Whitewright.

RF:

Yeah.

AW:

Okay. Now where is Whitewright ?

RF:

Whitewright is—White Rock—Whitewright is—oh, it's about ten mile out of Denison, go back a county in the east. We all—me and her both was raised up around Denison. We went to school at Denison's high school, and we left there in about 19—heck, I don't know—40-dsomething, '48, '49—we came down and went to work at Convair, and we've been down in this area ever since.

AW:

Now, so were y'all married then when you—

LF:

Uh-huh.

AW:

So you've been married a long time.

CP:

Since '48?

LF:

Sixty-four years.

RF:

We've been married since '48.

AW:

Wow.

LF:

Uh-huh.

RF:

And we knew one another about ten years before that.

AW:

Wow.

LF:

Yeah. We went to grade school together.

RF:

Went to a little ole country school; it wasn't but about ten kids in that school, and we was two of them.

AW:

When did you get married? What's your—?

RF:

Oh, we got married in Denison.

LF:

May 1.

RF:

May 1, 1948.

LF:

I've got something locked up in the bedroom, or she's going to bark regardless.

RF:

—little old dog about that long.

AW:

She won't bother us if you want to let her out.

LF:

Yes, she will.

RF:

Yeah, she will because you can't talk. She'll just sit there and bark.

(laughter)

LF:

She will. She is now, anyway. But—

RF:

So we—well, we came to Fort Worth, and then I was in the service. I was in the air force stationed out here at Kerrville, and then I had to go to Japan, and she went back to Denison.

AW:

You said you were in Korea?

RF:

No, it was in the occupation after World War II.

AW:

Oh, so right away. You were young when you went.

RF:

Yeah, we—it was in the occupation, you know, right after World War II, and they was pretty well down over there, so they sent a bunch of us over there to kind of help bring it back. (laughs) I was in communication in the air force, and I was stationed in Tokyo.

AW:

Mhmm

RF:

And my workplace was where the old Tokyo Rose used to broadcast—

AW:

Really?

RF:

—propaganda for all the soldiers and all that good stuff.

AW:

Really? Well, that's interesting.

CP:

Yeah, it is.

AW:

We had—

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LF:

They've got this movie coming up, too. I told him he needs to watch it. Probably be interesting to him.

RF:

Yeah, I want to see that, this MacArthur? They got a movie that's—

AW:

Oh, right, right. Tommy Lee Jones is playing—

RF:

Yeah.

LF:

Yeah.

RF:

The main reason is him, I ain't never seen him make a bad movie yet. (laughs)

AW:

No, that's right. He's real good.

RF:

So, let's see. That got us to Fort Worth, and then we went to work at General Dynamics out there and worked there eleven years as a machinist, tool and dial maker, and then I went to Dallas and stayed there the rest of my time.

AW:

And doing what in Dallas?

RF:

Tool and dial-making. And I had about thirty-something years of that in supervision and the rest of it was running machines and stuff. So that pretty well covers us, and then the rest—I retired in '95. And we've been on the road of fiddling ever since.

AW:

Oh, that's pretty good.

RF:

Some before.

AW:
Yeah.

LF:
Many a mile. (laughs)

RF:
We had a motor home and pulled a car, and we made eleven trips to Weiser, Idaho, went up there every year. And then we went to Mesquite, Nevada, and I don't know, then everywhere here in Texas, Hallettsville, all the places where they have contests, used to have quite a few. They haven't got as many as they used to have.

AW:
No. Yeah, almost every town had a contest at one time.

LF:
Uh-huh

RF:
Yeah.

AW:
Now when did you start playing guitar?

RF:
When I was about six, seven years old. My dad bought me an old Gibson guitar when I was nine years old. He played the fiddle and all that and we—Lewis, Daddy's cousin, or—yeah, his cousin, isn't it? No, it's my cousin. Anyhow, he played the fiddle, and me and him played, oh, I don't know, a year and a half with Eddie Miller and his Oklahomans while I was going to high school.

AW:
Really?

RF:
Played the bass fiddle.

AW:
You did?

RF:

Yeah. And Momma and Daddy finally made me quit. They said, "You're going to ruin your health." So I quit, and the rest of my time I've been just more or less playing for entertainment, helping people make a CD or something.

AW:

Did you ever play second with your dad?

RF:

Oh, yeah. Yeah, me and my little brother and my mother all played with Dad back when we was small, played for square dances.

AW:

What did you brother play?

RF:

He plays guitar and the mandolin and bass fiddle, flat bass. He's still playing a few gigs, him and Ricky Turpin.

AW:

Oh, I know Ricky.

CP:

Yeah, I know Ricky.

RF:

Ricky Turpin's from that area out there.

AW:

Yeah, what's your brother's name?

RF:

Ray Franklin.

AW:

Ray?

CP:

I went to school with Ricky at South Plains College.

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Wife:

Did you?

CP:

Yeah.

RF:

Yeah, we went out there one time and—

LF:

We saw him last weekend.

RF:

Oh, me and Jimmie Don, Bobby Crispin, and a bunch of us went out there and made a CD one time at that college out there.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

But Ray and him is mostly just entertainment for—oh, they play for weddings and barbecues and stuff like that. And then he plays with—if they have a dance or get a better job, he plays with Texas Top Hands, ole Texas Top Hands has been—oh, I don't know—for years and years, they just—when they get a gig sometimes, they'll make up a bunch and go play for them. What's his name? The one that gets it up?

LF:

Ray—

RF:

Ray Saars?¹

LF:

No.

RF:

It's something like that. Anyhow, he's been around a long time, and he just—he's kept the name together, but they don't do a whole lot of playing anymore. All of them—most of them died off.

¹ Royce is possibly referring to Ray Szczepanik.

AW:

Yep.

RF:

We've been losing them pretty regular here lately.

AW:

Yeah. Yeah.

RF:

Do y'all know Benny Thomasson and all them guys?

AW:

Yeah, in fact, about five or six years ago I spent a couple days with Texas Shorty, with Jim Chancellor.

RF:

I played quite a bit with Texas Shorty. We spent about three years down at the fiddle camp, me and him. He was teaching fiddle, and I was sitting there helping him a little bit—helping him remember the stories and all that.

AW:

(laughs) Now—go ahead.

RF:

What about Westmoreland? You know him? Wes Westmoreland?

AW:

I know—yeah, not well, but—

RF:

He's a real good teacher. He teaches down there. He played with—him and Randy played with Reba McEntire, out in Branson—they played out there a couple years with Mel Tillis. And then Wes played with Mel Tillis' daughter. So that's kind of scattered around. He's still playing. They had a western swing down here at Belton. Real good. It's worth going to.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

Had Ricky and Randy and Wes—oh, piano player, drums, bass fiddle, steel guitar, electric standard. And every damn one of them good musicians. (laughter) So it's worth—

AW:

That makes a big difference.

RF:

It lasts from twelve till five. I guarantee you, when you—one of our grandkids said, "I've had enough fiddling for today." (laughter) But it's great. It's really good.

LF:

He was sitting there watching his watch when it was supposed to have been over with at five, and I think Randy drug it out till about five thirty. He said, "I've about had enough fiddling."

RF:

The piano player is Wayne Glassen. I don't know whether you've ever heard of him or not.

AW:

Say his last name again.

LF:

Glassen.

AW:

Glassen, no.

RF:

Glassen.

AW:

I don't know him.

RF:

He's the best piano player I've ever been around.

AW:

Really?

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RF:

I guarantee you. **Curly Hollan**dsworth's [?](11:51) good, but he's got him scared. Of course, he's dead now. He died about a year ago. But he was good, you know. He played with Bob Wills and all these guys, but Wayne has just come along here in the last, oh, maybe ten years. He's something else. He's got a left hand that's just as good as his right hand. That's where most piano players fall out.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

He didn't give a damn what he was playing. He was getting all melded over here and that rhythm's going right with it. I've got one or two of his CDs in there.

AW:

Spell his name. G-l-a-s-s-e-n?

RF:

G—

LF:

You know, I think so.

RF:

G-l—

LF:

Where is the CD? I can look. That sounds like it, though. Wayne is his first name.

RF:

Wayne is his first name.

LF:

Glassen.

RF:

Wayne Glassen. I guess that's the way you spell it. Anyhow, I've—

LF:

He's from north Texas.

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RF:

He's from around Bonham, up there. He told me and Bobby Crispin here—oh, I don't know, several years ago—said he used to go around these old contests, and he never did try to play, but he said he was trying to learn to play the guitar, and he said, "I messed around on that guitar a while," and he said, "I finally decided to go get me a piano. But I never did do too good on that guitar." (laughter) So anyhow, that's how I got acquainted with him. He's a good fiddle fan.

AW:

Yeah. No, I don't know anything about him. I'll have to look him up.

RF:

Yeah, he's playing around with a lot of bands now, and if you ever go and see him play, you'll go back and see him again, I guarantee you.

AW:

Does he live in this area?

RF:

He lives—last time—I think he lives out of Bonham.

AW:

Oh, so still up in that country.

RF:

Yeah, down in that area.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

There's another good guitar player down there. Let's see, what is his name? He got arthritis so bad now he can't even play. You've probably heard of him, too. Lichter standard man. Leon? It ain't Leon Rogue. It's Leon something.

LF:

Rouche?

RF:

Leon Rouche—no, not Leon Rouche.

LF:

(laughs) Okay.

RF:

I'll think of it in a minute. He'll make you sit and listen, I'll tell you that. But he—I talked to Wayne down there about two years ago and he said he can't even play now. He's got arthritis in his hand—just gone. Completely gone.

AW:

Now you play acoustic?

RF:

Just play acoustic. That's all I can play.

AW:

And you're playing the six string or a tenor?

RF:

Six string. Yeah, I've got an old 1939 J35.

AW:

Really? You still playing ?

RF:

And I've been playing it for years. (laughs)

AW:

Oh man. Can we look at it before we leave? (laughter) Oh, good.

LF:

You just got your banner, too.

RF:

I got an old Gibson banner in there that's been through every night club in the United States.

AW:

Really?

RF:

Yeah, I think it's even got one gun hole.

LF:

Gibson banner.

RF:

It's about a '42, Gibson '42, along in there—banner.

AW:

I don't know what a banner is.

RF:

Well, that was—Gibson put that name on them, back when they first—they made—I think they quit making them in '42.

AW:

And it's a—is it a big box guitar like a dreadnaught.

RF:

Yeah, it's just a regular standard guitar. Oh, let's see—they're reproducing them now. My little brother's got one he bought in 2000, and it's a reproduction. Now you know they started back up and started back up.

LF:

Of a banner? It's a banner?

RF:

Yeah.

Wife:

Oh, I know we found this one—my brother had it.

RF:

Then I've got an old 1957 Epiphone that's a pretty nice old guitar.

AW:

Yeah. Epiphone in '57 would've been made over here—

RF:

That's back when they was made by Gibson.

AW:

Mhmm.

RF:

And then we've got one, a C-1 in a fiddle contest—I don't what it's—

LF:

It's brand new. (laughs)

RF:

It was made in Japan. It's got an amplifier with it.

AW:

Are we running out?

CP:

Yeah.

RF:

Do y'all need to plug that in?

AW:

No, I just need to turn it off and put in new batteries.

CP:

I've got a plug it you want to plug it in, Andy.

Pause in recording

RF:

—that thing out of it and give to me, and I didn't let nobody else have it for a long time. Finally his brother talked me out of it, and I let him have it and I think Carl Hopkins—have you ever heard of Carl Hopkins?

AW:

No, I haven't.

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RF:

He's one of the good fiddles down at Porter, Texas.

LF:

Have y'all—have you listened to the Devil's Box? The DVD that—

CP:

I haven't listened to the DVD, and then there's the movie that they did on it.

LF:

That's what I'm talking about.

CP:

And I've seen parts of it but I haven't sat down and—

LF:

Yeah.

RF:

They finally ended up making most of it at the fiddle contest in Hallettsville.

LF:

Yeah, they did.

RF:

And that's the year that Lewis died? Yeah.

LF:

Oh, that's right.

RF:

That's the years that Lewis died. And my little brother, he came to Whitewright to the funeral and he went back and I didn't go back because we decided it'd be too much to drive all the way back to Hallettsville, so we didn't go that year. But a lot of that Devil's Box. Of course they was—I don't know—it took them three or four or five years to put it together, and they got part of it—we seen one in Dallas and then they come back and changed a bunch of that and added something to it, and they found an old tape that Benny Thomasson had made in California, and they put that on the end of it and that's the best part of it. (laughs)

CP:

Is it just him fiddling?

RF:

Yeah.

LF:

Talking.

RF:

Just him and a guitar player, just sitting there, old black and white, playing one tune right after another. Now his son is one fine musician, too. I don't know whether you've ever heard of him or not. Jerry Thomasson?

AW:

I mean, I know of him, but I haven't heard him.

RF:

If you've ever heard that much of Benny's stuff you have—Jerry's playing with him, he's the tenor guitar man that won't quit. And let's see—

LF:

And what are you going to do with this?

AW:

Well, what we do is—we have an archive, which is—I like to think of it as like a museum of words. We have letters, diaries, photographs, journals, business records for musicians. For instance, when Alan Munde, the great banjo player, retired from *Country Gazette*, we got all of the records of *Country Gazette* for twenty-something years, including checkbooks and receipts of when they stayed in hotels and fixed their van. You know, so—and the idea is that we hold it, so that people can study from those materials

RF:

There's quite a history behind old fiddling, really.

AW:

Oh, yeah. And so people are always interested in it, and—

RF:

Now this thing that we get every month, that goes to—

LF:

Oh, that's *The Fiddler*.

RF:

—Library of Congress—*The Fiddler*.

AW:

Mhmm.

RF:

I guess they're still sending it up there. They're supposed to. That was supposed to be one of the deals that they send it to the Library of Congress. We have saved a bunch of them but we don't have all of them, but we've got a bunch of them.

AW:

Well one of the things we really like to do is what we're doing right now, which is called an oral history interview where we talk about—

RF:

Yeah. You find out more that way.

AW:

Well, and not only that, 100 years from now someone can hear your voice talking about what you did, and there's a whole lot of difference between that and them reading what I said that you said, you know?

RF:

Yeah. There's a bunch of stuff on the Internet. Me and Joey McKenzie—

AW:

Yeah, I know Joey.

RF:

—was playing with a guy up in—well, the guy was recording me, but he wasn't recording nothing but our fingers. (laughter)

AW:

Really?

RF:

It's on the Internet somewhere. I've seen it one time, I think.

AW:

Yeah, Joey's a trip.

RF:

Me and Joey was getting after it up there, and he was just recording the fiddle playing and the guitar playing but it wasn't nothing but your hands. It didn't even show our faces.

AW:

Yeah. Well that's exactly the way they need to video me is keep my face out of it. (laughter)

RF:

Yeah, that's what I mean. (laughter)

AW:

Now Loyce, you won a guitar at a fiddling contest?

LF:

Uh-huh.

AW:

So, you're a fiddler?

LF:

No. (laughs)

AW:

Oh, so how did you win a guitar at a fiddling contest?

LF:

No, I just bought a ten dollar—

CP:

A raffle ticket. (laughter)

LF:

There you go.

AW:

Well, I thought we hadn't been letting you in on the conversation here.

LF:

No, I can't do anything.

AW:

I figured—I was just figuring you were a fiddle player and had won the—

LF:

No.

RF:

I know you know Joey—

AW:

And the Quebe sisters—

RF:

Yeah. They're great.

AW:

They are.

RF:

I played with them. The first time they went to Weiser, they won everything they got in.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

(laughs) And that's when they was little old kids.

AW:

Yeah. Oh, I know it.

RF:

They've been good friends of ours for a long time. We've kind of raised up along with them.

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AW:

They're great.

RF:

Gosh, they were—I think they started out with classical fiddling, and they went to Sherry, Joey's wife, and learned some—started learning breakdowns, and then Sherry turned them over to Joey, and said, "You teach them. I've gone as far as I can go with them." So he got them in there and got them playing, and then they decided they wanted to sing, and now they're pretty damn popular.

AW:

I know it.

RF:

They've been all over the world. (laughs)

AW:

I first met them over at Red Steagall's. He was having a barbecue, and they were still pretty little. They were still in school.

RF:

Still in school?

AW:

Yeah, and Joey and Sherry were both there and—but I don't think they were singing. I don't think they were singing yet.

RF:

No, when they first started out they wasn't singing and I think Joey was an instigator. He got them to playing where they're playing three fiddles and all that and taught them all them parts, and then he finally decided, "Hell, y'all can probably sing." So they do a real good job singing, too.

AW:

Most—you know, my experience is most fiddle players can sing, because they listen, especially if they're playing parts. So you've got somebody who's learned a fiddle playing parts, they always hear the harmony, and so you don't have to teach them that. They're really great to have in a band.

RF:

Well, when Joey first come down here—of course he played a guitar all the time—but he was fiddling.

AW:

Oh, was he?

RF:

First contest he come down here he won 5,000 bucks.

LF:

Oh, really?

AW:

Fiddling?

RF:

Yes, sir. At Fort Worth [?] Texas.

AW:

You know, I don't think I've ever seen Joey—

RF:

You need to get him to play you something.

AW:

Yeah, I will.

RF:

He's a damn good fiddler.

AW:

(laughs) I didn't even know he played the fiddle.

RF:

Oh, hell yes.

AW:

He's a—

RF:

That's his main instrument before he started playing rhythm.

AW:

Man, he's a great rhythm player.

RF:

Me and him used to play the rhythm with everybody at Weiser, and then we'd play—he'd play the fiddle.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

And Jimmie Don Bates, I don't know whether you've ever heard of him or not. He lived in Austin.

AW:

I know the name, but I don't know him.

RF:

Back then, he was one of the main guys—in fact, he was president of the Fiddlers Association for a while. But there's a bunch of them.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

We've got some young fiddlers now coming along. I don't know whether you've heard of some of them. Bubba Hopkins?

AW:

No, I don't know Bubba.

RF:

Oh, his wife plays guitar. That's Valerie Ryals, you heard of Valerie?

AW:

Mhmm.

RF:

That's her daughter, and her and Bubba play together a lot. But Bubba turned out to be a real good fiddler—breakdown fiddler. He can play anything you want, really.

LF:

He came from Oklahoma.

RF:

Yeah, he's down here from Oklahoma.

AW:

Did you every play anything—did you ever play concerts or was it always contests?

RF:

Contests—I played some western swing stuff with bands but—I played at the Grapevine Opry one time with Vernon Solomon. (laughter) I don't know whether you've ever heard of the Solomons or not, but—

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

—Vernon and Norman was real good friends. We played all over the country. We had a—let's see, who put that on at Six Flags?

LF:

Red Steagall.

RF:

Red Steagall put it on. We had a thing over at old Six Flags several years ago that was promoting—I think it was mostly western swing and old-time fiddling. We had a bunch of musicians there. It lasted two weekends.

AW:

Wow.

RF:

And it never did turn out like it should. I don't know. The crowd didn't follow us around there where they was having it. You know—

AW:

Was it while Six Flags was open for rides and things?

RF:

Oh, yeah.

AW:

Yeah, that'd be part of the problem would be—

RF:

Yeah, that was one of our problems, getting everybody over there to listen, you know. But we had—hell, we had a bunch of damn musicians there. I mean a bunch of them.

AW:

Red's fearless. He'll try things out—I've played with him. In fact, he and I have written a play together.

RF:

Is that right?

AW:

Yeah, and we—so I've done a lot of things with him. But he—I can't tell you the number of places he's had a cowboy music gathering, and we all show up and play, and we'd be the only ones there because the audience didn't come. But Red will try anything.

RF:

Yeah. He's got a television show.

AW:

Mhmm.

RF:

I never do get to watch it. I can't never remember when it's on.

AW:

Well, I've been on it several times, and the only way I know it is because people will see me and say, "Hey, I saw you on TV."

LF:

Oh.

AW:

But I don't ever know when it's on. (laughter) He's just a good guy, from over—

RF:

Yeah, he's real good. He puts all that contest over here in Mule Alley in Fort Worth.

LF:

And he has the little kids. Yeah, he has the kids—

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

And we've got a granddaughter that started out fiddling, and she won—when she was what, fourteen?

LF:

She won the thirteen-year-old Texas—

RF:

Thirteen-year-old at Hallettsville, state champion.

AW:

What's her name?

LF:

Now it's Jordan Bankston, but it was Jordan Franklin. It was our son's—

RF:

Jordan Bankston now. But she's—

AW:

J-o-r-d-a-n?

LF:

I think she still—yeah, Jordan Franklin Bankston. She's married now. And she married a fiddle player.

RF:

She married a fiddle player, a guitar player, and a whatever. (laughs) They lived at Alvarado.

AW:

Does she still—?

RF:

She plays with a band, but I don't know what band it is.

LF:

He's just freelancing or whatever you want to call it.

RF:

He's been a freelance fiddler and whatever they want him here and there.

AW:

Does she still play?

LF:

She can, but she doesn't in the contest.

RF:

She's still playing but she hadn't—she's kind of, you know—

LF:

She works.

RF:

She had to go to college.

LF:

She finished college at Tarleton.

RF:

After she got out of college, well she ended up with at job at—

LF:

Farm Bureau for a while, but she works—

RF:

Farm Bureau. Now she works for this—

LF:

Fidelity Investments.

RF:

Fidelity, a big financial outfit.

LF:

She was really a very good fiddle player.

RF:

She was as close to my dad as you could get.

LF:

She took from—yeah. Yes.

AW:

Really?

RF:

—on what she played, but—

LF:

In fact, she played in a contest and somebody—one of the judges came and said, “I don’t know who the kid was, but it sounded like Major Franklin.”

AW:

Really? That’s great. (laughs)

LF:

So that was his great-granddaughter.

RF:

Well, that’s the way Sherry taught her, you know.

LF:

Yeah, Sherry was her teacher.

RF:

Told her not to get too fast and make the notes—

LF:

Yeah, she's good.

RF:

—note it out instead of trying to use your bow. A lot of them try to use their bow, and they end up with a jiggle.

LF:

She may play again someday.

AW:

Yeah, don't jiggle the bow. That's what—

RF:

(laughs) We hated that ever since we was little.

AW:

That's what Frankie McWhorter would always say, "Don't jiggle the bow."

RF:

Yeah, don't jiggle that bow. But—

LF:

She played in Weiser, and she—

RF:

It's whatever people like, just like Charlie Daniels. He ain't no fiddle player. But he's a good entertainer. But he's a damn good guitar player, I tell you. He started out singing, playing the guitar, and then he started getting hold of the fiddle every now and then. We seen him here a while back at the diner on Saturday night.

AW:

You know what? I can't quit watching him when he's playing. I keep waiting for him to choke on that toothpick. He's always got that toothpick in his— (laughs)

RF:

Toothpick—and it's—my little brother says he chews aspergum.

AW:

Really?

RF:

He says that's what that is in his mouth.

AW:

Yeah, well, there'll be a toothpick sticking out of it. (laughter) One time, I was at the Cowboy Hall of Fame—

RF:

Afraid he's going to swallow it— (laughs)

AW:

—and he was there and he had a tuxedo about the color of your jumpsuit and a hat to match it and then a blue fiddle.

LF:

Oh my goodness.

AW:

And you know how big he is. That was a lot of blue. I don't think I'd seen that much blue—

RF:

I bet that was a show. (laughter)

AW:

He took over the place.

RF:

Yeah, we like to watch him

AW:

When you learned to play guitar, how did you learn? By listening? Did your dad show you?

RF:

Actually, he knew enough to show me three or four chords, and the rest of it I just picked up over a period of years. Eldon Shamblin was one of my favorites.

AW:

Did you—

RF:

When I was playing with Eddie Miller while he played around in Tulsa, Oklahoma and all up there—we played up there at Stonewall every Saturday night.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

But it's just stuff you pick up.

AW:

Right.

RF:

And a lot of chords—I make a chord—I don't even know what it is.

AW:

Yeah, yeah.

RF:

But I think it sounds good with a fiddle so I just put it in there.

AW:

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

RF:

And that's what my dad always taught us. He said, "You got to follow the fiddle or whatever you're following, an electric standard, or whatever." And that's pretty well true. You can pick out—just like—you know how Joey gets after it. And that's the way he started. He come down here—and he was playing fiddle when he come down here—and I got with him and played with him every time, and then he finally decided he wanted to play a little bit of guitar in there too, you know. Now there ain't no chord on it he don't know, I don't reckon.

AW:

Yeah. Plus he does a really good job of—

RF:

—his rhythm.

AW:

—his rhythm and percussion, you know. He gets a lot of good percussion out of that guitar and not—you know, a lot of guitar players will want to let it ring.

RF:

Yeah.

AW:

But Joey never is on a chord long enough for it to ring.

RF:

He's got that rhythm, and he takes place of a drum and a bunch of stuff, I guarantee you.

AW:

(laughs) That's right. That's right. Yeah, no, he's fun.

RF:

He's one my favorites. Him and Jimmie Don was pretty close. Jimmie Don is one of the good fiddlers there with us on breakdowns, but he—oh no, he moved down to Austin. He was married to Valerie for a while and they busted up and he moved down to Austin, and he hadn't been coming around as much to the fiddlers—fiddling stuff. We had—I don't know how many we had out here in the backyard. We used to have a fiddle party every weekend nearly, but—

LF:

Yeah, we used to have fun. (laughs)

RF:

—got too old. (laughter) And a lot of them moved off where they can't come, you know. But we had Shorty, we had his brother Robert, had Lewis, Randy, Wes, Larry. You know who Larry is, don't you?

AW:

Larry?

RF:

Larry Franklin?

AW:

Oh, no. Tell me about Larry Franklin.

RF:

Larry Franklin is—I've got a CD I'll give you.

AW:

Okay.

RF:

Me and him and my little brother and the guy down a Llano made another fiddle CD—a Texas fiddling CD here about two years ago. Anyhow, he played with Asleep at the Wheel.

AW:

Oh, okay.

RF:

And after that he—well, first he played—

AW:

Isn't he kin to you?

RF:

Yeah, he—

LF:

Yeah, he's Lewis's son.

RF:

It's Lewis's son.

AW:

Oh, okay.

RF:

Let's see, he started out with—they had a band of their own. What was that band's name?

LF:

Cooter Brown.

RF:

Cooter Brown.

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LF:

No, I know exactly who you're talking about now, I just—

RF:

Cooter Brown—they still play some of their old stuff on this old—where they're playing with these four wheelers in the mud and all that stuff. (laughs)

AW:

Yeah, yeah.

RF:

Well anyhow, he played with Asleep at the Wheel, and man, when he was there I guarantee you they had a good band.

LF:

Well, he quit that, and he went and took old Mark O'Connor's place in Nashville.

RF:

Well, he had a band of his own down in Denison for a while, and they was playing up in Oklahoma somewhere, and the dance hall burnt down and all the rest of us and the amplifier and everything burnt. Larry said, "Now it's time to go somewhere else." (laughter) He quit and went to Nashville. So he took Mark O'Connor's place at the studio that Mark was working at. But we've got some pretty good stuff of him. He played—

LF:

Have you heard of The Time Jumpers?

AW:

Yeah.

LF:

Well, that's who he plays with.

AW:

Ah, cool.

RF:

He's playing with The Time Jumpers. They're going to be in Choctaw up in Oklahoma the tenth—seventeenth of May?

LF:

Eighteenth I believe.

RF:

Eighteenth of May.

AW:

So he's still living in Nashville?

RF:

Yeah.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

Yeah, his wife runs a studio there in Nashville. We made that CD down here at—oh, it's out at Glenrose at—and they got a real nice studio there, and we—

AW:

Really? I don't know about a studio in Glenrose.

RF:

It's—

LF:

It's at Happy Hills Farm.

RF:

Happy Hills Farm, and it's—

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

And what it is—it's a place to straighten kids out.

AW:

Yeah, isn't that just west of Glenrose, back toward—

RF:

Yeah. No, it's east. A little bit east.

AW:

Oh, it's a little east?

RF:

Yeah, you come out Glenrose and go to the first red light and make a left, and it's right down there about two miles. But anyhow, what we—I made two or three CDs down there, and Larry wanted every one of us separated.

AW:

Mhmm.

RF:

Last I made was with Jess Mears—not Jess Mears, but I can't—let me think of it a minute. Anyhow, they didn't mix it right, and I've got a copy of it, but it's—you can't even tell what the rhythm's doing, you know. **[dog barking]** Shut up! Anyhow, this one—he brought his own mic down here that uses it up there in the studio, and we made it, and then he went back home and his wife and him mixed it. And it's pretty damn good. It's a pretty good fiddle CD. So you can tell what I'm doing, you can tell what my little brother's doing, you can tell what Steve on the bass is doing, you can tell what the fiddle's doing. It's all separated and mixed right.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

But I'll give you a copy of that.

CP:

Yeah, thank you.

AW:

Oh, yeah. We'd love that.

RF:

Compliments of the Franklin bunch.

AW:

Well, we'll put it in the archives.

LF:

Well do you want one?

CP:

One's enough. We can listen to it in the car, and we'll put it in the archive and we'll have it there to listen to.

LF:

Well, I've got another one.

RF:

Let's see—have you ever heard of Orville Burns? (laughs)

AW:

No. Say Oliver Burns?

RF:

Orville.

AW:

Orville—

RF:

Orville Burns. He's a fiddle player out of Oklahoma.

AW:

Oh. No, what—

RF:

He died here about—oh, I don't know.

LF:

Several years ago.

RF:

Probably ten years ago or a little less.

AW:

What part of Oklahoma?

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RF:

Oh, you know, I went to the funeral and I can't remember. **[dog barks]** Anyhow, he was one of the old time fiddlers, and pretty good, too.

AW:

No, I've never heard that name at all.

RF:

Him and my dad and Omega Burden and a bunch of them used to play together after I left home and was going through raising a house full of kids and all that. But he was a good old fiddler. He was real good on breakdowns, and he played classical stuff around the college up—it was some place there around where he lived, there was a college close, but I can't remember the name of it right now. But the first time I ever met him, we were living in Arlington and Omega Burden, he's the one that played with my dad a lot too, you know, I don't know whether you remember him or not, real good guitar player on breakdowns. Anyhow, they were over at Grand Prairie at a fiddle contest, and Burden called me, and he said, "Come over here. There's a guy over here I want you to meet." And I went over there and sat down and played a tune or two with Orville right there in the back practicing, you know. Come time for him to get up on the stage, he said, "Just tell them I ain't gonna play." He said, "Me and Ross going sit here and play," and we never did go up onstage. (laughter) So that's when I met him and he was a good friend for a long time. But he had some good scalds on that old breakdown fiddling, I can tell you.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

We never—I don't know if we've—did you get anything off of Bartow in the way of CDs, or—?

AW:

We got some tape recordings that he made at his house that were some really interesting things.

RF:

Yeah. Did he have any of Dad? I guess he did.

CP:

Yes he does.

AW:

Mhmm. He'd been making—

RF:

He knew a lot of musicians.

AW:

Yeah, he'd been making some of those recordings as early as '51, '52.

CP:

'52, '53, because he recorded my great-grandfather and that's how I knew about it.

LF:

Really?

RF:

Yeah, him and Johnny Gimble was good friends—and they played together a lot.

CP:

—my great-grandfather, and so, it took me years to get it from him, but he passed away two years ago.

RF:

Have you heard of Dick Barrett?

AW:

Dick Barrett?

RF:

Bartow had some of Dick Barrett. I don't have—

AW:

Well, then we've probably got—

RF:

Yeah.

CP:

So we've got all the tapes that he had.

LF:

Your granddaddy did? Or your—

RF:

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You might look around there, might check and see, but Dick Barrett is a—he lived in Dennison and went to Washington, and he was one of the big hogs up at the Weiser contest for years, him and his wife.

CP:

No, Bartow passed away—my great-grandfather, he passed away in the early sixties.

LF:

And where did he live?

CP:

Plainview, Texas.

LF:

And what was his name?

CP:

He went by Uncle Cal Brown, and his name was John Calvin Brown, they called him Uncle Cal, and he did a lot of fiddling around there. I have a lot of family that lives up there.

RF:

And I think they lived—they did live in Arapaho, Idaho? Where did Dick Barrett and them live?

LF:

Rapelje, Montana.

RF:

Rapelje, Montana. They moved up there and bought an old farmhouse and fixed it up. But he's still—

LF:

No, he's dead.

RF:

He's dead. I thought he was.

LF:

He died last year.

RF:

Well, let's see. When I was at Weiser, they had a—

LF:
Eightieth.

RF:
Eightieth or—

LF:
Eightieth or eighty-third, I can't remember.

RF:
—eighty-third birthday for him. And we all got together, and—

AW:
I'll bet we have him on the Bartow—

RF:
You probably got some of it if you got stuff off of Bartow. He's probably—

CP:
We've got all of Bartow's recordings, and so there's your dad, Benny Thomasson, Nick Robinson—

RF:
Got Lewis—a bunch of them.

CP:
There's a bunch of people on there.

RF:
Yeah, he made some good recordings.

LF:
He used to record a lot.

RF:
He had an old reel-to-reel and he got some good stuff on the reel-to-reel. My little brother's got one of them, but he loaned some of the reels out and they kind of got damaged. Jason Crisp, that's another good fiddler out of Houston. (laughter) I can tell you, I can name a bunch of damn fiddlers. And all of them—the ones I'm naming are people that can play.

AW:
Yeah.

RF:
I don't call them scratchers. They're people that can actually play.

AW:
Yeah.

RF:
You got Jason Chris, you got Carl Hopkins, you got his dad, E. J. Hopkins. I was trying to think of some more that lived down there around Carl.

LF:
E. J. could probably tell you a lot.

RF:
E. J. could fill your brain.

LF:
He lives at Humble.

RF:
He lives at Humble.

AW:
Okay. Hopkins?

LF:
Mhmm.

RF:
Yeah. He was one of the first—

LF:
He was the one that first started.

RF:
—guys that first started the Texas Fiddlers Association back in '73. E. J. was one of the—

LF:
Officers.

RF:
—directors or whatever you call them. And he's still following contests. He has a little trouble hearing. You now, he's got a hearing aid and that kind of screws your fiddling up a little bit.

AW:
Yeah, I'd think so.

RF:
He's still playing.

LF:
I think when we first started going, there was no young fiddlers. I guess Shorty—Shorty made—

RF:
No, it's really surprising because these young kids—

LF:
They're good.

RF:
Man, you get them started on a fiddle and they eat it up.

CP:
Mhmm.

RF:
Let's see—we got some more fiddlers that came down here from Weiser. Matt Hartz—

LF:
Dennis Ludiker.

RF:
Have you ever heard of Matt Hartz? You may have some of his on that Bartow, too.

LF:
Yeah, because Bartow and him were friends.

RF:

And his wife, Danette Hartz, is a real good fiddler. [phone rings]

LF:

All of the Hartz were.

RF:

And her sister that lives—that's Carl's wife—she lives down there. She's a real good fiddler. I'm talking about breakdown fiddler, whatever you want to hear.

AW:

They came down from Weiser?

RF:

Came down from Weiser and went to college down here at Sam Houston and finished their college down here and stayed—

AW:

Oh.

RF:

—and married down here. (laughs)

AW:

Well I might—I've got some friends—the Gillette brothers in Crockett that have—they don't play fiddle, they play guitar—they play old time music and they have a place to do music in Crockett, and they have a lot of different fiddlers that come through there. I'll ask them about the—H-a-r-t?

RF:

We go to the contest down there every year.

AW:

H-a-r-t?

LF:

H-a-r-t-z.

AW:

Okay.

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CP:
Hartz.

LF:
Hartz.

RF:
We've got some of their tapes here somewhere. In fact, me and my little brother made a CD with them a long time ago.

LF:
I've got one of those in—

RF:
We've got one of them somewhere.

LF:
It's in there where those were.

RF:
Oh, we've even got some—have you still got records of Lewis and Larry?

LF:
No.

RF:
You haven't got—have you got a Texas fiddlers—? Lewis and Daddy and Norman made a Texas fiddling record a long time ago. And there's still some of them on the internet but I don't know how you get ahold of one.

LF:
Some of them have put them onto a CD.

RF:
And then me and my little brother and Dave Davison and Lewis and Larry made a record, a 78 or—not a 33. But, you know, you make them, and that first year or two they go pretty good.

AW:
Yeah, then you have a garage full.

RF:

Then you got a garage full of them. (laughter)

LF:

That's what Larry says about that one that he's—

RF:

We called him—

LF:

I called him. I said, "I need another case of them," because we had sold quite a bit.

RF:

We sold quite a few.

AW:

I know. That's what—

LF:

And he said, "I got a garage full!"

RF:

Yeah, he said, "How many you want? I got a whole garage full."

AW:

Yeah, the worst thing that can happen to you is you sell out that first batch because then you're bound and determined to order another bunch. (laughter)

RF:

Well, he had—

LF:

I've sold quite a few—

RF:

He had quite a few made because he knew that at any of the contests he'd sell every one he got, nearly.

AW:

Right.

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RF:

And the guy out of Hallettsville that helps put on that contest down there, he was at the Whitewright contest the year that we made it, and he bought \$900 worth of them to start with and took them to Weiser. I don't know whether he sold them or what he did with them but—

LF:

I bet he did. I bet he sold them.

AW:

Do you still have any of your vinyl, your 33 that you made? Can that be found somewhere?

RF:

Have you got any of those records?

LF:

No. (laughs)

RF:

Well, you know, it's been so long, we've shuffled them around and we had them in the motor home.

LF:

Yeah, I don't know.

RF:

See if you got one of them.

LF:

Let me see.

RF:

There's two of them that are 78s—not 78s but 33s, but the rest of them are videos or CDs.

AW:

CDs.

RF:

Yeah, I got a bunch of old tapes. (laughs)

AW:

Have you? Tapes that you recorded or commercial?

RF:

Well, the fiddle part is mainly—just keepsake tapes, you know.

AW:

You know, one of the things that we could do is we can digitize those tapes and preserve them, because they're not getting any better by sitting around.

RF:

No, I've got some of them out there in the pick-up and I've got some of them in here, but I have to just go through them and play them to see whether they're even fit to record or not because they come out here, and you know, people get to drinking and messing around and hollering and kind of mess up your music part of it.

AW:

Well, but you know, for our purposes, that's—we just like to have it even if there's that kind of stuff going on in the background because it documents the time and the place, so if you're ever of a mind, we can—

RF:

I might get in there one of these days and see if I can find some that's worth it.

AW:

We'll come down and pick them up and take them back to Lubbock, digitize them—

RF:

Either that, or I can mail them to you, whatever.

AW:

Well—

CP:

I come down. My parents are in Grandbury, so I come this way all the time.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

Oh, okay.

AW:

Yeah. And mail—they can get lost in the mail, you know.

RF:

I'll have to see if I can get in there one of these days and play some of them. Right now—

AW:

Well, you don't even have to—just put them in a box. We'll play them and digitize them, and then we'll give you a copy of the digital.

CP:

CDs, yeah.

RF:

But I don't even—some of them I don't even—I can't even tell you who's on it. (laughs)

AW:

Well, we would like to—you know, what we—

RF:

Yeah, you'd like to know who's on it.

LF:

That's the one with the Hartz.

AW:

Well, and when we get it done—oh, man, that's great. That's great.

LF:

But you can have those because I've got—

AW:

Oh, thank you.

LF:

I've got other ones.

RF:
What's this?

LF:
I don't have a garage full.

RF:
Is this Norman and Daddy and them?

AW:
Yeah.

LF:
Yeah. This is—

AW:
Oh, that'd be terrific.

LF:
This is why he took this.

RF:
Now Lewis and Larry made one.

AW:
From that?

LF:
Well, he didn't, but he said, "I want it to look like it" or something. Larry did.

RF:
Lewis and Larry made one that's just like that one.

LF:
That's it. That's it.

RF:
Okay. But it's some pretty good old fiddling in there. Norman Solomon.

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LF:

I still have a turntable, so—

CP:

Well we do too.

LF:

Do you?

RF:

And Betty Solomon, Norman's wife, plays the piano on there.

LF:

You know, when our other one went out or whatever happened, it was hard to find one when I got the one I got now.

CP:

Yeah, there at the archive, what we do is we've got an area, and I've got about three or four reel-to-reel players, I've got several turntables. I could even play the big old 16-inch transcription disk.

LF:

Yeah.

RF:

That's good.

CP:

And we do eight-millimeter film, sixteen-millimeter film. We can digitize that now. And so as we get these things in we start doing that work. What we did with Bartow's, we've got nearly all that digitized, too.

RF:

Have you?

LF:

Oh.

CP:

And then that young lady that was doing fiddle music, she just went through and started listening to everything. "All right, well this in the key of the A," and then she just started transcribing things and—what it is.

RF:

Start telling you what it is.

CP:

And so we've been working on that, so that's a lot of fun.

RF:

She's better off than I am. I played them old breakdown so long that I know how to play them, but a lot of times they'll say, What is that? And I say, "Hell, I don't know. I'll have to think a minute." (laughter)

LF:

I used to play the piano a little bit, and he'd ask me what key I was in, what chord, I took piano for years. They never taught that. (laughter)

RF:

I'll tell you what, there's a lot of the young fiddlers you can ask them what key and they don't have no idea.

AW:

I know it.

RF:

They learn it mechanically.

LF:

The first year we went to Weiser with Jordan, she had to have Denette tune her fiddle for her. (laughter)

AW:

Really?

RF:

Yeah, she's just a little old kid.

LF:

She just—they told her, they said, “Go to her.”

AW:

Well, I never played with any really concert—I mean contest players, but I played second around Lubbock to some of those people.

RF:

What I aimed to tell you and I forgot—that CD that me and Ray and Larry made, we took the fiddle off of the second part of it and all the rhythm's on there just like we put with the fiddle.

LF:

It's just the top—

AW:

Oh, I saw that on the list. That's right. So you could play along with it?

RF:

You're learning how to play the fiddle. That's what it's for.

AW:

Oh, that's great. My daughter's trying to learn how to play the fiddle.

LF:

Okay, that's—

AW:

So I need to—

RF:

It made be a little fast for her to start with but it ain't real fast. I mean it's—

AW:

No. Well, she's pretty new to it.

RF:

What he did is, he took it up there to the studio—

LF:

Well, that's why he did it. He said, “No one's ever done this. I'm going do it.”

RF:

—and he counts off like “Sally Gooden—”

CP:

That’s a great idea.

LF:

Yeah

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

One-two-three.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

And then nothing on it but rhythm.

AW:

Yeah. Do you have another one of those I could buy from you?

LF:

I’ll let you have one.

AW:

Well, I don’t mind buying one, but I’ll give that to her. She’s learning from a little gal named Callie who learned under Lanny Fiel, up in Lubbock.

RF:

Lanny Fiel? I didn’t ever know too many. I knew—

LF:

Who was your—?

RF:

What the music store people there in—

LF:

Well they live in—

RF:

They live in Abilene.

LF:

Abilene. Yeah.

RF:

That's about as far as I ever knew anybody, personally, except out in West Texas. But for years they had a contest up there and we'd go up there and he's a nice old guy. What is his name?

LF:

(laughs) It's terrible to get old.

RF:

Boy, we're getting old, I guarantee you.

AW:

Yeah.

LF:

I saw it this morning on something.

RF:

His daughter played. She come down here and lived for a long time and she taught school and every time she'd get a fiddle deal up for her kids at the school, why, she'd call me to come over there and help her play at the school. But she's living in another town somewhere out of Dallas. I forget now.

AW:

Do you have many photographs of you playing?

RF:

Not really. There's some in these old fiddlers, but it ain't much good. Now there's some on the Internet. You can get on the Internet and call up my name and find some—

AW:

Some photos?

RF:

Photos where we was playing somewhere, you know, here and there. But most of them, they make it to contests—

AW:

Thanks a lot.

LF:

You're welcome. It's good for somebody like that.

RF:

They're just—they're not—you couldn't copy off of them and get nothing off of them.

LF:

That's why Larry did it. He said—

AW:

That's a smart idea.

RF:

Have you got the thing there where me and Ray was put in the hall of fame at Hallettsville?

LF:

No, don't.

RF:

You know where it's at?

LF:

I know what year—no, I don't. It was 2003.

RF:

2003, me and my little brother was put in the hall of fame in Hallettsville. They had room in there for a couple of more idiots and then they put two more in there.

LF:

That was the first guitar players.

RF:

Yeah, the first guitar players they ever put in there. And on this fiddling, the first favorite guitar player that they had in it—I was the first one to put in that, but I don't have no idea what year it was.

LF:

You're not favorite anymore, though.

RF:

No, I ain't the favorite anymore.

LF:

(laughs) This is his dad.

RF:

But I don't know what we—I don't know whether we've got any pictures left of that.

LF:

Oh, I do, but don't ask me where they are. They weren't in there with this.

AW:

Maybe when you look for those tapes you can look for those pictures because the other thing we can do is we'll copy those pictures.

RF:

He said they can take those old fiddle party tapes and—

CP:

Burn a CD.

RF:

—digitize them.

LF:

Have you got some?

RF:

I've got a whole bunch but I told them I needed to go through them before I ever did it. He lives here pretty close.

CP:

Well, my parents live in Grandbury, so I'm back and forth. I'm in Lubbock, but I come this way all the time.

LF:

Yeah, yeah.

RF:

Do you know Weldon Turpin?

AW:

Oh, yeah.

CP:

Yeah.

AW:

Yep.

RF:

We mess around with him a pretty good bunch, and not lately, but back when he was going to all the contests and everything. Him and Ricky. Hell, he used to make every one of them.

CP:

Right.

RF:

And go to every fiddle party after it was over.

CP:

Where is Ricky these days?

LF:

New Braunfels.

RF:

He's in New Braunfels.

CP:

Okay.

RF:

He's still playing, still playing good.

LF:

His mother died.

RF:

His mother died here not too long ago.

LF:

Yeah.

AW:

I didn't see that.

LF:

I think our neighbor's daughter goes to Texas Tech.

RF:

Does she?

LF:

Stephanie, Uh-huh, or she was last time—

RF:

Yeah, we went out there, me and Jimmy Don, Valerie and the guy that runs the—what was his name? He runs the prison down there.

LF:

Sandy.

RF:

Anyhow, Bobby Christman, we went out there, and we got in my motor home on a Friday evening and drove all the way to Abilene, I guess, when I told them, I said, "I ain't going no further tonight." (laughter) Anyhow, we stayed all night at the motor home park there and then got up the next day and went on up to Lubbock. And we messed around in there all day long trying this, trying that. Now as far as I know, I don't even know whether Valerie's got a copy of it or not. (laughs)

LF:

Now, is that where y'all—what you're talking about?

CP:

Yes, we're at the university.

LF:

Okay.

CP:

And we have a building there that—it's specially designed for holding old stuff. The temperature's controlled, the humidity's controlled twenty-four hours a day, air handling system.

RF:

Good studio.

CP:

Well that's where we house all of our stuff, there, and then now the studio that you were recording at—I wonder if that was a Don Caldwell Studios.

RF:

I don't even remember the name of it. I—

CP:

Yeah.

RF:

Couldn't even tell you the name of it.

CP:

How long ago was that?

RF:

Oh, it was back—

LF:

A long time ago. (laughs)

RF:

Heck, it was probably twenty years ago, fifteen years ago at least.

CP:

When Don's studio was open, it had a lot of burlap sack and old shingles and stuff on the walls, and that's how he controlled the sound. I bet that's where it was at.

RF:

Probably was.

CP:

Yeah. And—

RF:

We—I don't know whatever happened to it. Valerie, you know, she runs the studio down here, teaches music, and her and Jimmy Don was married at that time, but I never did even hear—

AW:

She's back divorced again.

RF:

Yeah. She can pick them. (laughter) That's what she told me. She said, "I can really pick them."

AW:

Yeah, I just heard that because she married a guy that—

RF:

Rich O'Brien.

AW:

Yeah, Rich O'Brien, a friend of mine.

LF:

She's separating from him, then.

RF:

I tell you what, he's got some pretty good CDs without his dad.

AW:

Oh, yeah. He's—

RF:

We played that waltz that he wrote.

LF:

Well, y'all played with the—

RF:

He put it on a CD on the guitar, and Wes and a bunch of fiddle players are playing it.

LF:

Bridget's.

RF:

Bridget's? "Bridget's Waltz."

AW:

Oh, yeah.

RF:

There's a bunch of fiddlers playing it.

LF:

"Waltz for Bridget" is the name of it.

RF:

It's got some pretty good changes on the guitar. (laughs)

LF:

Who was the Irish band on it?

AW:

Rich is not afraid of changes on the guitar.

RF:

Huh?

AW:

Rich is not afraid of changes on the guitar. (laughs)

RF:

No, he don't mind putting them in there. No, he gave me his CD and I sat down with the CD and he also gave me the music where I could pick the chords out. I don't know how to read music,

but he wrote the chords up above where I could learn the chords on it. And it's a good waltz. We play it quite a bit.

LF:

I love it. It's pretty.

RF:

In fact, nearly every year another fiddler will play it in the contest or something, you know? But there's a bunch of them ole—you go to Weiser, Idaho, on the guitar, and they'll run you nuts. (laughter)

AW:

Everybody needs a guitar.

RF:

Well, they go play stuff that you ain't never played before.

LF:

They like waltzes.

RF:

And they'll give you a little old piece of paper, and you ain't never heard the dang thing before, and then they stand up there looking down trying to play the changes. It'll drive you crazy.

AW:

I watched an old guitar player, a friend of mine from Panhandle, try to play second to Alvin Crow a few years ago and it was a train wreck because Alvin—you know, Alvin would—he would play things that, on the guitar, you were to stay in the chord that you were in. But it would sound like he was going somewhere else, and so a good fiddle backup guy would try to follow him, but what he was wanting you to do was just stay in that chord, and it was really something to—we finally gave up on it.

RF:

Well, me and Joey's worked out a lot of changes. I liked to go to Weiser with Joey, back when we was going every year. We'd sit down and hear the thing one time, we'd figured out where we wouldn't make an ass of our self onstage, you know. (laughter) It was fun. We had a lot of fun up there. We'd go up there every year and stay a whole week.

AW:

Yeah. I've never been and I would sure like to go.

LF:

Well, you need to go.

RF:

You should go to that sometime if you get a chance. You'd have to fly to Boise and get you a car to drive up there, but it's worth it if you like to hear fiddle playing.

AW:

Yeah, I do, and I just—you know, I've talked to so many people who've gone and it's—

RF:

Well, there's a bunch of them that are not there yet, but they still play, you know. But they have bunch of them that are damn good fiddlers. I'll tell you that.

LF:

Very good. I think kids love it. I know our granddaughter did. We took her, and we took some more—I don't know, but anyway—she met so many kids from everywhere.

RF:

We took her and her little sister.

LF:

And she still talks to them. She says, "So-and-so called me."

RF:

In fact, I think the last trip we made up there we took both of them and Taylor found Rich—I mean—what's his name?

LF:

Mark O'Connor?

RF:

Mark O'Connor

LF:

Yes.

RF:

And got him to sign her t-shirt or something, and she come back up there and Jordan said, "Where'd you get that?" She said, "I went and got it off of Mark O'Connor." (laughs)

LF:

We had a good time.

JF:

Mark O'Connor started out with Benny Thomasson.

LF:

Yeah, he did.

RF:

He came down here to live with him, and we played around a lot. That's back when he was just starting fiddling, you know. But now he's out of our class anymore. He writes music for damn movies and all that stuff.

AW:

Yeah, yeah.

JF:

He don't play no more.

CP:

Well he offers a summer camp and workshops and this young lady that we're working with, she spent several weeks up there learning with him. So he teaches. Yeah. So he likes to teach.

LF:

I like Mark; he's nice.

RF:

He's got a fiddle camp. In fact Jim "Texas Shorty" Chancellor—I call him Shorty—he goes to a lot of Mark's fiddle camps and helps him, no matter where it's at, you know, in Idaho or wherever. That guy's a good fiddle player, I'll tell you for sure. And he's one of these kind of guys that, when he's teaching, if somebody wants to hear something that he did, and he can stop and go back and do that on the start, he don't have to start over with the chords or nothing.

AW:

Oh, really? (laughs)

RF:

He'll just start fiddling, you know. He'll say, "That's it," you know. Wes is the other way—Wes Moreland. And Randy is—Randy and Wes are swing fiddlers, and they're breakdown fiddlers,

but they started out on breakdowns, and of course Wes plays—him and Randy played a lot of gigs together.

AW:

Yeah. One of the things that's interesting to me—Royce is at—I run into a lot of fiddlers who are one or the other; they play in contests or they play on the stage, and not too much crossover.

RF:

Well—

AW:

What—is there some basic—?

RF:

What it'll do—if you play Western swing for a while, you'll lose your breakdowns.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

Because them old breakdowns is hard to play.

AW:

Yeah, you got to be playing them all the time, don't you?

RF:

People, you know, they don't realize—but like “Tennessee Wagoner”—

AW:

Um-hm.

RF:

That's one of the hardest fiddle tunes you can play.

AW:

Mhmm.

RF:

And get it right.

AW:
Mhmm.

RF:
And that's where they screw up. They don't get it right, and they just kind of cut over it or they go real fast so you can't tell whether they began it or not. (laughter) But if you'll listen to my dad's playing, I guarantee you, he plays it, he plays it note-for-note right.

AW:
Yeah.

RF:
Now they're might be some cussing and whatever in there. Burden, he was the worst. Good Lord. My son, when he was about eighteen months old, we was up at Norman Solomon's one night at a fiddle party, and old Burden was hollering and raising heck, my pa, he turned around to him and said, "Why don't you shut up?" Hell, he wasn't that tall, I thought old Burden was going get him. (laughter) Of course he wouldn't have done nothing to him, but—yeah Pa, he's say, "Why don't you just shut up?" (laughter) But we spent a lot of nights and a lot of driving, and we haven't regretted none of it.

AW:
That's good.

RF:
And we've had a lot of fiddle parties here.

AW:
Would some of those tapes that you've got be tapes of some of the fiddle parties?

RF:
Oh yeah.

CP:
That's—yeah.

AW:
Good. Good. We're really interested in those.

RF:
Well, I'll dig them out.

AW:

Even if Omega's cussing in them. (laughter)

RF:

Oh, yeah, he—

LF:

Are they in those boxes? There's one box sitting in here, but I don't know anything about it.

RF:

Well, there's a bunch of stuff mixed up. You know, we get—a lot of times, we just hear something on a CD or radio or something.

AW:

Make a copy of it.

RF:

And just make a copy of it, you know. But there's some of them.

LF:

These are—

RF:

I've got quite a bit of stuff of Terry Morris.

CP:

Yeah, I've got several of those boxes myself that are sitting around full of stuff. (laughs)

RF:

I'll guarantee you, Terry Morris wasn't no slouch.

LF:

This might not be anything.

RF:

See what he did, he came along as a young boy behind Daddy and Benny and all them and Orville Burns.

LF:

I don't think there's anything in these.

RF:

He picked up all their fiddling and then kind of sophisticated it a little bit, and he had some pretty good tapes. I've got some of his somewhere if I can find them.

LF:

You've got some out there in your pick-up.

RF:

Got some in the pick-up. That one that I wanted to—that we recorded up at Terry's mother—

LF:

Well, it might be in your pick-up.

RF:

Well, I hadn't got a—it hadn't even got a name on it. Terry just pulled it out, we didn't write nothing on it. So you'll have to just play it to see who it is. That's the one where Terry made a mistake and he just said, "Excuse me," and never did miss a lick, just kept playing. (laughter) And it's on that tape, you know, I've always thought that was pretty funny. He just hollered out, "Excuse me." And he did miss a note or something. It sounded bad, you know.

CP:

That's funny.

AW:

Well when we digitize those, what we would like to do then is sit down with you and get you to tell us—

RF:

See what the—

AW:

Who's on—

RF:

Who's on there?

AW:

Yeah. And about when it was and where it was and that kind of thing.

RF:

Let's see, I got one we made over there at a contest in Fort Worth, and they had Johnny Gimble as a guest fiddler, and—oh heck, I don't know.

LF:

Well that's on a movie.

RF:

Is it a movie?

LF:

Yeah, but I don't have my movie thing.

RF:

And Al Moladous a guy in Dallas—

AW:

I know Al.

LF:

I'll bet you do. (laughs)

RF:

He would a lot of time record stuff. In fact, he recorded this.

AW:

Oh, did he?

RF:

Yeah. Is that Matt?

LF:

Yeah.

RF:

We recorded that in San Antonio, and then him and Matt brought it back up to Dallas—they were both living in Dallas—and digitized it the best they could, you know. Just like I told Bartow, we tried it one time over at his son's house, and we kept going over and over and over. And I told Bartow, I said, "It ain't going to get no better than what you put one there." (laughter) He finally decided, "Well, that's right."

AW:

It's got to go down right.

RF:

You got to get some of it on there right or you can't do nothing with it.

AW:

Al came over one day when I was recording Shorty.

RF:

Oh, is that right?

AW:

And that's when he brought a tenor guitar and played it second.

RF:

Yeah, Al's a good fiddler. He's plays a lot of dances.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

He's a pretty good fiddler. He picked it up, you know, just playing chords. Yeah, most of your dance tunes are just chords, you know, but you've got to know the chords.

LF:

Well, he knows.

RF:

That's the way all of them have played dances, Randy, Wes and all them. You don't have to give them nothing; just give them the chord and they got it. You can give Larry the chord of the tune, and I'll guarantee you he can put some of the hottest stuff in there you ever heard. Have you heard the Time Jumpers—fiddlers—any of the tapes?

AW:

I know I have, because I know who they are.

RF:

Well Larry, on one of the last ones—

AW:

You were saying Larry was playing with them.

RF:

The last one they made, Larry played that first tune on there—Going—“Headed to Texoma” or “Going to Texoma” or something like that. And course he—they got three fiddlers, but we got the first ones that they made when they first started the Time Jumpers. Larry wasn’t on it then. They had a guy named—what was that fiddler that quit?

LF:

I don’t know.

RF:

Audie Haynes?

LF:

Yeah. Audie Haynes.

RF:

Audie Haynes, now he’s pretty damn good.

AW:

I don’t know him.

RF:

On that type of music. But even my mother could tell you if you was playing the fiddle right. She’s one of the best fiddle judges you could ever put out there.

AW:

Really? (laughter)

RF:

But nowadays they just use whoever they can get to go to these contests and there won’t be nobody there that can judge. Maybe a little kid or whatever, and they let them go ahead and judge, you know. We’re good friends with a guy now that’s over at the Fiddlers Association. He lives at Nacogdoches.

AW:

What’s his name?

LF:

Bryan Jimmerson

RF:

Bryan Jimmerson. Jimmerson? But he's a good friend. He's kept up with us, make sure we're still alive and all that good stuff.

AW:

Yeah. Now does he play with Abernathy and the East Texas String Ensemble?

RF:

He made a CD with—what's the old fiddler that lives down there? The one that he used to go to all the contests with?

LF:

Texas—no, wait a minute.

RF:

Anyhow—

LF:

I know who you mean.

RF:

That's another one I didn't mention. He's a good old fiddler. He's real good. And him and Wes—I mean him and Bryan and a bunch of them got together and made a CD, but I don't know what they called it. I've got one in there somewhere, but I don't know where it's at. So many of them, they give them to me and a lot of them I don't even play, you know, I'll never play them because I've done heard them, what they're doing. In fact, we made one—me and Bobby and a bunch of us made one with Jim Day. He used to be the president of the Fiddlers Association, and we went up to Dale Morris—there's another fiddler—went up to his house and made that. He was too old to learn anything else when he come up here. He was from Alabama.

LF:

Kentucky.

RF:

Kentucky. He was a colonel in the air force or something.

LF:

The army.

RF:

He's a military man, you know, and Jimmy Don was teaching—Jimmy Don said, "Let me teach you some breakdowns." And he'd been playing "Billy in the Low Ground," you know, all these years, he'd learn off somebody down there that didn't even get it right near, you know. And Jimmy Don says, "I'm going to teach you how to play that." In fact, he said, "Well, I'll just take lessons from you." Jimmy Don said he'd get him over there, and they'd go through all this crap and make him go over and over and over it, and he said the next time he seen him he'd play it just like it was when he started. He said he'd never get him to change it. But that's kind of like anybody that's getting old, I guess.

CP:

So it says here your grandfather was a fiddler that was teaching Lewis?

RF:

Yeah. Daddy learned how to play on a little old tin fiddle.

AW:

Tin?

RF:

He couldn't—his daddy's fiddle he wouldn't let him play on it.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

So Daddy said that he finally got a little old toy fiddle somewhere and he started playing on that little old toy fiddle, and that was his learning then. But that's the way Daddy learned. He just learned strictly by ear, that's it, didn't know nothing else.

LF:

I think of—every time I think of him, he would have four or five fiddles laid out on the bed in the bedroom, and the kids knew they weren't to touch them, you know. And our daughter that lives in Henrietta, here a while back, she says, "He doesn't know what I did." (laughter) And I said, "What did you do?" She said, "Well, I went in there one day and I took his fiddle bow and I held it up and I went [licks bow]." (laughter) I said, "Yeah, you would've really been in trouble from that."

RF:

Yeah, he had a—after the war, there was a guy in Fort Worth who brought a fiddle back from Germany, and he bought that—I don't know, a long time ago, and that was his favorite fiddle after all. And it never would play out. You know, a lot of them, he'd get them, he'd play them a while and they'd kind of play out and lose their omph and all that, but that one never did, nearly everything—and he played on that tape, probably played on what they called that old black fiddle. And then he got to where he couldn't play. He got—his hand looked just like that when he died, had that carpal tunnel or whatever you call it. Anyhow, he decided to sell that fiddle. He gave a bunch of them away. He gave my little brother one. That's one my granddaughter's got, it's an old Strad-copy Anyhow, he decided, no, I don't know. Somebody called him and he said, "I'll take \$4,000 for it." He said that guy got on an airplane and was out in the driveway the next morning with \$4,000.

AW:

Wow.

RF:

And he said, "I knew right then I had sold that fiddle too cheap." (laughter) But that one Jordan's got—a long time ago Dick Barrett decided he'd take the top off of it and put a different bass bar in it. He took the top off of it and never did do nothing else to it. Finally Daddy told him, he said, "Bring that fiddle home." And he finally brought it home and it was—the top off of it. So he gave it to my little brother in San Antonio, and he took it to a fiddle maker down there and had him put back together. And he told Ray, "I don't know who took the top off of that thing but I'd like to squeeze his head off." You know, he'd splintered it all up. He'd likely never got it all back together. But it's a good fiddle. I mean, old Carl Hoffman said that's the easiest fiddle I ever played.

LF:

Jordan got it when she won—

RF:

Well, she won that prize down there when she was thirteen or fourteen—

LF:

He said, "Okay, it's yours."

RF:

My little brother said, "It's time she gets this fiddle," so he gave it to her. In fact, at one time Larry had made a five-string out of it, played it the band Five String.

AW:

Uh-huh. Yep.

RF:

But he's got two or three fiddles that's pretty good fiddles. I don't know how many Larry's got. They say he's got a whole house full of guitars and fiddles. If you need one, just go look.
(laughs)

AW:

Yeah. Yeah, Joey's got a bunch of guitars.

RF:

Oh, yeah.

AW:

I don't know how many fiddles he's got.

LF:

Oh, he's got plenty of fiddles.

AW:

He's got plenty guitars. (laughter)

RF:

Last time I went in garage down there, he had a wire, and he had fiddles all the way around that wire. I bet there was a thousand up there.

AW:

Oh my goodness.

RF:

He said, "I've never even tried to fix none of them." He said, "Someday I'll fix them." I said, "Hell, you won't be able get around to fix them." (laughter)

LF:

They were in Sweden I believe it was, last week.

RF:

Yeah.

AW:

Oh, really?

LF:

I think it was Sweden.

RF:

They really like to go overseas. They really like them over there, you know.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

They were on a The Diner. Did you see them when they was on The Diner?

AW:

No, I didn't. I didn't. I usually see them at events.

RF:

In fact, they've been on The Diner twice. Yeah. They've been on The Diner twice.

AW:

I usually see them at events two or three times a year, you know, in person.

LF:

We try to go if they're around here.

RF:

We went by to see them—last time we went and seen them was at Waxahachie, wasn't it?

LF:

I think so. We just have to kind of watch.

RF:

Let me get that old guitar and let you look at it.

AW:

I was just about to ask if you would—

LF:

I would do it, but it weighs a lot. (laughs)

AW:

Is it L-o-i-s?

LF:

No, L-o-y-c-e.

AW:

L-o-y-c-e. Glad I asked.

CP:

Man, it's with easy, huh, with Royce and Loyce? They're really similar.

LF:

Yeah. I have a brother named Royce. (laughs) Like I said, we've known each other since sixth grade, I think.

CP:

Wow.

RF:

Have you ever heard of Al Winters?

AW:

No.

RF:

He's a fiddle player—fiddle maker down there around San Antonio—I mean around Houston. It's one of them old towns, I don't know which one it is. But anyhow, he's got ahold of this guitar there, and Jimmy Don bought it off of him, and he brought it to Crockett with him, and I played a tune on it and I told him, I said, "If you're going to ever get rid of the damn thing let me have it." So anyhow that's where I got it.

AW:

Oh, this is that—

RF:

J-35

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CP:

J35? Wow.

AW:

Wow.

AW:

My goodness.

RF:

Wes writes out my changes since I got to where I can't see.

CP:

Make them a little bit bigger?

RF:

Man, you can lay him down on the floor and see. What was that tune we was looking at the other day?

LF:

I don't know.

RF:

Something in bubbles and—

LF:

Oh. "Polka Dots and Moonbeams"

RF:

Polka Dots and Green Moons

LF:

Have you ever heard of that?

AW:

"Polka Dots and Moonbeams"? No.

LF:

"Polka Dots and Moonbeams." When we were at Nacogdoches at school—

RF:

That's when we was at fiddle camp.

LF:

Yeah, at fiddle camp. A little girl from California knew it, and so she had Wes learn it, and then he had his whole class learn it, because she sang—

RF:

We played it in the grand finale.

LF:

Yeah. It's the prettiest song, and John Denver recorded it, Frank Sinatra recorded it. But you just don't hear it, and I asked Royce, I said, "Is it hard, you know?" He said, "Yeah. It's got a lot of changes to it."

RF:

There's the music on that, old Mitch O'Brian wrote.

AW:

Yeah.

LF:

Is that Bridget's?

RF:

Huh?

LF:

That's Bridget's?

RF:

Yeah.

CP:

That's a nice one.

RF:

Pretty good old guitar to be in pretty good shape.

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CP:

For as old as it is.

RF:

For as old as it is.

CP:

It's got that one split but doesn't really seem to be all the way through.

AW:

Looks like it's fixed though.

CP:

Yeah, it seems to be—

RF:

Martin fixed that and Joey put the bridge back on it, and I had the fingerboard replaced.

AW:

And so—

RF:

I mean redone.

AW:

That's mahogany, isn't it?

RF:

Yeah, mahogany side and back.

AW:

I love that.

RF:

It's the cheapest guitar that they ever made.

AW:

You know, I love mahogany. That's my—I like it better than rosewood.

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CP:

You know, I thought I was liking rosewood but I keep coming back to the mahogany.

AW:

I like mahogany. I guess this would be—would've been Gibson's equivalent of a D-18, right?

RF:

Oh, probably. Pretty close. Let's see—my little brother—that reproduction he's got is rosewood side and back. Now that Epiphone I've got in there is a maple.

AW:

Maple?

RF:

It's maple side and back.

AW:

Is it arch tongue?

RF:

I've never seen anther one like it.

AW:

Is it arch tongue?

RF:

No.

AW:

It's flat top with maple?

RF:

It's just an old flattop with maple.

AW:

You know, Guild made a solid maple guitar in the fifties, you know, right when they first came out—[inaudible] and that's the only other flat top I've ever seen that was a maple back and sides.

RF:

Well this one—

LF:

That Yamaha was—you got it in the fifties, didn't you?

RF:

Yeah.

LF:

Our granddaughter has—

AW:

A Yamaha in the fifties? Boy, I bet that's a great guitar.

LF:

Oh, he played it for long, long time and—

RF:

You hit that thing, it'll give you some rhythm.

AW:

Yeah, I was just listening to the ring just a second ago.

LF:

We have a granddaughter that sings and plays and does gigs.

RF:

She writes songs and sings.

LF:

And she's got your Yamaha.

RF:

They do gigs everywhere.

AW:

What's her name?

LF:

Fallon Franklin.

RF:

They live in where?

LF:

They live in New Braunfels. Her last name now is Campbell. She married a guy who works for—

AW:

And what's her first name? Fallon?

LF:

Fallon. F-a-l-l-o-n.

RF:

Did you see how that crack was fixed?

LF:

She plays and sings.

RF:

It's got a piece of wood in it. When I first got it, it was cracked.

AW:

I love that. How'd they do that?

RF:

I took it over there to Martin. I said, "I want that fixed but I don't want no strips put on it."

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

You know, they put two or three strips across it, so it won't come apart. He said, "I'll fix it like it's supposed to be fixed."

AW:

That's a good job.

RF:

He sat down and whittled a little old piece of wood and cleaned that crack out and put it in there and glued it together, and it ain't never moved.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

See, that's two piece. In fact, this pickguard don't even belong on there. At one time somebody put a big old J-50 pick guard on it. Joey said, "Hell, just leave it as long as you're playing it." He said, "If you ever get ready to sell it we'll take the pickguard off and put one on there." It's supposed to be a different kind of material, but hell, you can order pickguards—

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

You can order a whole stack of them for \$5..

LF:

Yeah, our daughter made one.

RF:

I had an old guitar—

LF:

Our son made a guitar. He's made two, I guess.

RF:

Yeah. Anyhow, Betty was going to fix this one up for her grandson. He was in Germany, and he told her, "You want to get me a guitar?" And her brother run an antique place in Jacksboro, and he made all these furniture places and all that. Anyhow, he called me. He'll call me if he ever finds an old guitar he thinks I might want to buy. I bought a fiddle or two. Anyhow, he called and said, "I found an old Banner guitar." And he said, "It's in bad shape." And I told him, I said, "Well hell, don't give them over \$150 for it," or whatever. Anyhow, he bought it and another little old guitar. You couldn't even tune that one in there. I finally got in here and got to admit I can't see good enough to really do anything right. But I got it to where you could tune it up.

LF:

This is the one she made.

CP:

These guitar picks—I've never seen guitar picks like that. Have you, Andy?

AW:

With the hole?

CP:

Well, the hole and the way they—kind of on the side, they kind of look like they've been shaved off a little bit or something.

JF:

Well, this one's warped pretty bad.

CP:

Is it?

JF:

But the hole was put in there so he could hold it.

CP:

Just hold it? Yeah. Yeah.

JF:

But this is the old guitar—he bought both of these for \$180.

AW:

Really?

CP:

Wow.

LF:

This is the Banner. And this was a—what is it called?

RF:

Globe.

LF:

A Globe.

RF:

From Japan.

LF:

But she ordered a pick part on it, didn't she? Anyway, she was going to give it to her grandson.

CP:

Oh, that'd be a good starter guitar, yeah.

RF:

This old guitar right here is busted all to pieces. And I think it's had a gunshot hole right there, filled it up with putty. But this thing will fool you right here, and it's in bad shape. I ain't even got the fingerboard fixed. **[plays guitar]**

CP:

Wow. Wow.

AW:

Wow. Yeah.

RF:

I didn't even think it would stay in tune because it's cracked here.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

But all the cracks are glued together, and it had a tailpiece on it, and they would just run the strings up over the bridge.

AW:

Because the top wasn't fixed, right?

RF:

They were afraid the top wouldn't hold I guess, so I went ahead and glued the bridge back down and put some screws in it, and it's been tuned up now for six months or better and it ain't never moved. You can leave it there for a week, and it don't move so it's all right, but I'm going get Joey—if I can ever get him home in time—he's going to go in there and refret it for me and fix the fingerboard. But if you can do that, and it'll be worth—oh, I'll probably have him go ahead and put a new bridge on it, but that old bridge is—the holes in it—

LF:

Well he sold the—that guitar you brought home was a Hawaiian guitar, and it was a Gibson, wasn't it?

RF:

No, it was a Kalamazoo made by Gibson. A Gibson Kalamazoo

LF:

Kalamazoo, but it was Hawaiian.

RF:

Yeah, Kalamazoo, but it was Hawaiian guitar, a little one.

AW:

You mean like a ukulele or like a Hawaiian steel?

RF:

No, like a—

CP:

A sliding guitar?

RF:

Yeah.

AW:

Yeah, a Hawaiian steel.

RF:

Yeah. Tune it to E. I likely never found out how to tune the damn thing. (laughter)

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

You know, they say tune it to E—well that don't cover no ground.

AW:

No.

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RF:

Me and my little brother got down here and made E, and that's the way we figured out how to tune it. It wasn't tuned, and I wrote down the changes and put it on that little old card that was in the case with it. It had the slide and everything, picks—I don't know what he'd get for it, \$100?

LF:

I don't either, but he sold it.

RF:

Something like—he sold it for \$395, and that was cheap.

LF:

Well a guy—

RF:

But the guy came in there to collect them, and he said, "Well, you want to take it down and play on it?" He said, "No. I want it." He didn't even play it. (laughter) He knew what it was, you know.

LF:

We have a fiddle too.

RF:

We've got fiddles. We even got one of them at Alvarado, we ain't got.

LF:

Yeah, Jordan—Clayton's got it. (laughs)

RF:

But this little guitar here's worth a little money if I fix it up where it'll play good. That one there I've got a \$10,000 offer for it, standing offer.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

A guy in Alabama. Now I thought he was drunk. Hell, it's been several weeks—several months—years ago. He come up to me and he said, "I want that guitar." He said, "I'll give you \$10,000 for it." I said, "Well, I don't want to sell it." So anyhow, the next time I seen him, "You was drunk, wasn't you?" (laughter) He said, "No, I wasn't drunk." So anyhow, he told

me, he said, "If you ever want to settle it I'll give you \$10,000." But come to find out, some of them was selling for more than that in these guitar places. We took an old—me and my little brother took an—he brought it up here—I forget now what it was. It was an old Gibson, and we took it over to a guitar show over there, and a guy, when we was walking in with it, seeing the case, he said, "I want that guitar." (laughter) And I think he got \$1,600 or something for it. He just traded something for it, you know. But that's a lot of people, and the biggest problem we got with people is fixing them up and ruining them. That guitar right there, that one she just took back that's busted all to pieces, you don't want to do nothing with that thing. Leave it like it is, as long as it's together and not rattling, that's the way you want to leave it. But they's—I know of several of them that have bought good guitars at these shows. You can play on that thing for months before it ever wakes up to where it play right, you know, maybe a year or two.

AW:

Because it's been sitting under a bed somewhere for a long time.

RF:

Well, and what they do, they take the top off of them, and all that and everything is all back together tight and your vibration is just not there.

AW:

Right. Right.

RF:

And it does make a difference.

AW:

Yeah, I had a friend that was a luthier in Colorado and when he'd get an old guitar in, the first thing he'd do is he had a stereo—big speaker and just a radio—and he would turn it on just barely, you couldn't even hear it, and lay the guitar on the speaker. And he'd leave it there for a month, and you know, if somebody had taken it out of their closet or something he'd said, "You know, till you get the wood back to vibrating."

RF:

Yeah, it makes all the difference in the world. That guitar right there that's busted—if that thing wasn't busted, I guarantee you can get a bunch of money for it.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

I don't know how much, but you can get enough to say you sold it.

AW:

Well that's an awfully nice guitar. I don't think I've ever seen this model. I mean an old one.

RF:

They make them—there's some of these that were—what do you call it? Sunburst? And then this one here, it had this color, but I don't know whether the varnish is still the same or not, looks to me like somebody's rubbed all the varnish just about off of it. But I never have done anything to it except fix that crack. Joey redid my bridge; my bridge was coming up. But that's been a long time ago. And Mark Cigainero—you ever heard of Mark Cigainero?

LF:

I know who you're talking about.

RF:

He's a real good guitar man over there in Fort Worth that fixes guitars, and he's the one that put that crack in there, fixed that, and then he took all the frets out of it and put new frets, and what they do, just like Joey said, if they're in bad shape, you just take all the frets out of it, take this nut off, and this back here, and you go in there and redo that fingerboard and bring it to where it's supposed to be, the arch and all that it, and then you go in there and adjust this, after you put all the frets in it, and then you got to make sure your frets are all in line. It takes somebody who knows what they're doing.

AW:

Yeah. Yeah.

RF:

And then, when you get that done, get all your frets leveled out and everything like that, you put your nut to the height it needs to be in this, and it's—he does a damn good job on them. In fact, the guitar that—what is it, McPherson lives out there at Glenrose?

LF:

Mhmm.

RF:

He had an old Martin—an old Martin—an old J—I don't know whether it's a D-18 or what it is—a real good guitar. But the neck was warped pretty bad, and he took it over there to Mark, and he straightened the neck and refretted it, you know, fixed the fingerboard and refretted it.

And I was down at Alvarado this year at that contest and he said, "Play a tune on that and see what kind of job you think he did," and I said—I picked it up and just hit a chord or two, and I said, "Man, he done a damn good job on it." You couldn't hardly play it, it was warped to where the strings way up off of there. He had to be pretty good—

AW:

What's his name again?

CP:

Mark Cisneros?

RF:

Mark Cigainero. He's in Fort Worth. I don't know the name—his address, but I'm going to take that old guitar to either him or Joey one of these days and let them fix it. I trust him with either one of them.

CP:

Fort Worth.

RF:

But he was—when he fixed this when he was working for Player's Music there in Fort Worth, or in Hurst—

AW:

Does he have his own place?

RF:

He's got his own place now. He's in the phonebook. But I recommend him.

AW:

Okay. Well it's always—I always want to know a good luthier wherever I'm travelling because you never know where you'll need one. That's pretty amazing.

CP:

Yeah.

AW:

Before we get too far along, I would like to get the two of you to sign one of these for us to keep in our files and I'll leave one for you here. What this says is that scholars can listen to this recording.

RF:

Oh, okay.

AW:

But it also says that if you played any song that you have the copyright on, they can't have it.
(laughs)

RF:

Yeah, we—Larry copyrights everything pretty good—that guy in Nashville, you know. You've got to.

CP:

Yeah.

RF:

We had a bunch of t-shirts and stuff down there at Hallettsville the year that we had made those recordings and took down there. He even made—you know, he fixed up t-shirts where you couldn't copy them.

AW:

Yeah. Trademark them?

RF:

Yeah. Loyce, you'll have to show me where to sign.

AW:

Just don't have to sign one of these. The other one is for you to keep, so you know what it was you signed and gave us.

RF:

Just Melvin Franklin or M. R. Franklin?

AW:

However you sign it.

LF:

Royce Franklin. Go ahead and put Royce.

AW:

However you sign it.

RF:

I'll just put Royce. I guarantee you, you don't know what it's like to try to see.

AW:

I can't imagine. I'll tell you—

LF:

He started losing—

AW:

But Loyce, if you'd sign also, because—

LF:

This too?

RF:

My central vision is what it is. I—

LF:

He has macular degeneration.

RF:

My periphery vision is pretty good but—

LF:

He can tell me how to drive.

RF:

I can tell her how to drive. (laughter) But, I got to where I was getting dangerous in that motor home. Last time we went to Hallettsville—it's been a while.

LF:

When was the last time you drove it.

AW:

Thank you so much.

RF:

Three years ago?

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LF:

Probably.

RF:

Three or four years ago, I had her and my daughter both in there directing me (laughter), watching for cars, and I knew they were on pins and needles, but I didn't make no mistakes but I could have, you know. (laughter)

CP:

Yeah.

LF:

Driving many and a many a mile.

RF:

Yeah.

CP:

Well, if you get a chance, look for those tapes. You've got our cards, you know, just give us a call and like I said—

LF:

You got the card?

AW:

Yeah. You want me to give you another one?

RF:

I got them. I put them in my checkbook.

LF:

Okay.

CP:

Okay.

LF:

Well I bet they're out there in that—

RF:

I'll get them and go through them but like I say, we—

AW:

Yeah, and just give us a call because we're down here—one or the other's down here all the time.

JF:

Loyce, she goes to Wal-Mart or somewhere and she'll go through and see something she likes and she—you know, it ain't a fiddle tape, but it's singing and all that.

CP:

Right.

JF:

And we've got a whole bunch of that stuff. In fact, that thing she brought in here, every one of them is stuff she's bought.

LF:

I did.

JF:

But Burden had a whole bunch of good stuff, and his son's still got it. He didn't ever turn it loose.

AW:

Really?

LF:

F. L. has it?

RF:

Yeah, he's got all that stuff.

AW:

How do we get hold of him?

LF:

F. L. Burden?

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AW:

Where does he live?

RF:

F. L. Burden, he lives in Dennison.

LF:

He lives in Dennison. He has a plumbing company.

RF:

He's retired from his own plumbing company and his sons running it now. It's Burden Plumbing.

LF:

It's on Morton Street.

RF:

On Morton Street.

LF:

It used to be—

RF:

And I'm pretty sure that he hadn't ever got rid of nothing.

RF:

In fact, even here lately—

LF:

He's kind of cranky. He's cranky.

AW:

That's all right.

CP:

Well, I used to call up Bartow, and he goes, "Well, you know, I loaned out one of my tapes and I never got it back so I'm not going to give you anything."

LF:

Now Bartow—

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CP:

And then finally about four or five years later we finally got to go in and do interview with him, you know, and it was fun.

AW:

It was one he loaned to Al Moladous.

LF:

Well I don't have that.

CP:

Oh, is that what it was?

AW:

So when we got up there, the first thing I said right off the bat without knowing any better, I said, "You know Al Moladous?" He said, "That's who I loaned that tape to." So we had another thirty minutes of fighting.

RF:

Well, see for a long time—

LF:

Bartow, he's a good person.

RF:

My dad, when they first come out with these little old tape recorders. He said you'd go somewhere and be playing, somebody would stick one of them things up there and try to record what you're doing, and he said you'd turn it and play it back, and he said it'd sound like the devil, you know.

CP:

Yeah.

RF:

So he wouldn't ever let anybody record him but Bartow for a long time.

LF:

He wouldn't let anybody record him.

AW:

Bartow did a good job.

CP:

Yeah, he did a good job.

RF:

But he said, I just, you know, they'd play it back, and he might say something bad or something. He said, "Hell, I don't want that to be on somebody's tape." And they put it—they took all that stuff to Weiser—Dick Barrett did, and I guarantee you every one of them kids knows every word my dad ever said. They knew more about my dad than I did. (laughter)

LF:

They did.

CP:

That's funny.

RF:

The first year we went up there I guarantee you, we played till what—four or five o'clock in the morning, and I went up there in the motor home and went to bed and Loyce told me the next morning, she said, "You're too old. You ain't going be able to do this every night this week." (laughter)

AW:

I know the feeling.

LF:

It was a hard week, I'll tell you.

RF:

It's a hard week with the guitar players and fiddlers.

AW:

Yeah. Yeah I know. I go to these festivals.

RF:

Yeah. They don't let you sleep.

AW:

No. And then I'm—like Loyce said—I'm good for a night, but the next one I'm not so good.

RF:

Well back then, I could make it up pretty well. I remember the year that you took your dad up there with us. Anyhow, they got up and went somewhere up in Oregon or somewhere, and old Bobby Crispin was sleeping in the back of his pick-up, and I went down there and woke him up and he said, "I got to have something to eat." I said, "Well, we got the motor home up there. We'll go up there and get something out of it." I went up there and got us a—I think we fixed us a bologna sandwich and got a Coors Light.

AW:

Perfect. (laughter)

RF:

Yeah, we were working down through there where all them people was staying all night and one old guy got up and said, "Now y'all know how to live, don't you?" (laughter)

LF:

The first year—

RF:

Old Bobby ain't never forgot that. He said "Hell, that old guy knew our ways of living. ."

LF:

The first year we went up there, Wes Westmoreland had begged Royce and begged him. He said, "Just come to Weiser." And he said, "I'll tell you what." He said, "Don't—" He said, "Just wait and don't come the whole week. If you'll just come on Wednesday and through Saturday, you know." So we went on to Canada—

RF:

We went to Canada.

LF:

Yeah, and then come back down through there.

RF:

And come back down and—

LF:

And I couldn't believe it. I mean, he got up on top of the motor home and took just a picture as far as you can see.

RF:

Campers and tents.

LF:

I mean, campers and tents.

RF:

That's when they was letting them camp on the football field.

LF:

Yeah, they let you camp right on the football field.

RF:

Well, to give you an idea, the year that—

LF:

But it was unbelievable.

RF:

One of the years that she was up there, there was 350 contestants.

LF:

Yeah.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

And that's a bunch.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

I played with ninety people one year.

AW:

My goodness.

RF:

They'll give you—the guitar player gets—

LF:

They just can't attend anything, go on stage with.

RF:

They don't have a contest. They just—however many you play with and that's how they pick up how to give—(laughs). I played with ninety people and I got, what, \$40?

LF:

I think so. (laughter)

AW:

My goodness.

CP

Forty-five cents a play—

LF:

But that wasn't all the playing. I mean, the playing is out on the football field—

RF:

They pay you.

LF:

And in the practice room and—but it is, it's—

RF:

No, the guy that—

LF:

Anyone ought to go. His brother—we got his brother to go one time. And he said, "Been there, done that, don't want to go back." But we really enjoyed it.

AW:

Yeah, you got to have your energy ready for that.

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RF:

Well he pulled a house trailer up there and he decided that's all he wanted to do. You go through all them mountains and everything with a house trailer, you got it wound up pretty good, and even that old motor home pulling a car.

AW:

Oh, yeah.

RF:

I had an old thrity-seven-foot Holiday Rambler with a Ford—no.

AW:

454?

RF:

No it was a—454 is what I had in the Chevrolets.

AW:

Oh, that's right.

RF:

But the Fords were just about the same. But boy, I guarantee you—

AW:

Four miles to the gallon? Is that what—?

RF:

Yeah, we've had it in low gear and wide open going up some of those mountains.

AW:

Yeah.

LF:

Yeah it sure would cost nowadays to go.

AW:

Oh gosh.

RF:

Yeah, we couldn't afford to drive it I don't believe, nowadays.

CP:

They're expensive.

AW:

We saw—what was the highest we saw? \$3.79 on the way down today.

CP:

\$3.79

RF:

Yeah, it's terrible.

CP:

Expensive.

RF:

And it's higher than that when you get out towards California.

LF:

Yeah, we got out of a Honda and bought a Cadillac, about the stupidest I think I ever pulled in my life. (laughs)

RF:

Well, just like my son said, no more than your driving now. It ain't going to kill you.

LF:

No, we don't have to drive to work.

AW:

If you were working in Dallas and living here, you had a little bit of a drive, didn't you?

RF:

Yeah I drove it for thirty-four years. Every mile. Every day.

LF:

About thirty. Yeah, but when we first moved out here that was no problem.

AW:

Yeah, it wasn't so bad. Yeah.

RF:

Nah, there wasn't no airport or nothing up there when we moved out here.

LF:

He could drive. Yeah, he could drive.

RF:

You could open it up after you got out on 114, just take off, and you wouldn't normally see any cars. And when I retired, that time of day it was just bumper to bumper coming out of 114.

AW:

Speaking of which, we're—

CP:

That's what we're getting ready to get into right now. (laughs)

RF:

Well, y'all have got to go back?

AW:

No, we're going to the Texas Steel Guitar Association's conference. They're having it at a hotel down by the airport, and so we've got to head—

LF:

Out here at the airport?

CP:

In Irving.

AW:

In Irving, on the south side of the airport I think is what I'm—

RF:

Well, they got them some good ones. I've got a tape in there of a guy that—I never had heard him before. My little brother gave it to me. Man, he may be out there. I don't know.

CP:

You never know.

AW:

Yeah, there are a bunch of them.

RF:

I can't even think of his name. I got his CD.

AW:

There were a bunch of them have names that I didn't know.

RF:

This old guy that played with the Time Jumpers when they first started. Boy, he was in the Steel Guitar Hall of Fame.

LF:

Is this it, Royce?

RF:

That's it.

LF:

Is it?

RF:

Yeah.

LF:

Yeah, steel guitar.

AW:

What's his name?

RF:

See if you can see his name on there.

AW:

Jim Loessberg.

RF:

Write it down.

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AW:
I will.

RF:
He might be over there. He plays with—oh, have you ever seen that country on Saturday at 12:30 with Bobby Forrest and all them?

CP:
Huh-uh.

RF:
All of them people? He plays on there every once in a while. That's where my little brother got a hold of it.

AW:
Let's see if it says anything inside.

RF:
He's a pretty good steel man. They got these old—

LF:
You just—you play acoustical guitar?

Man:
Yeah, I play acoustic guitar, and I'll play some electric. And I'm playing with this girl right now, but I'm playing bass because she needs a bass player because hers is—her bass player's playing mandolin bluegrass down in Belize. (laughter) He went out of the country, so I'm playing bass next week for it. It's just—you know.

LF:
Okay.

CP:
But I'm also trying to learn some guitar parts and I do my own kind of thing, and we've been working the last couple of semesters—I have a little group at the college and we do some old music. We're doing some Bob Wills and some old folk standards and, you know, some stuff like that, and just kind of learning some old—what they call Americana music.

RF:

I tell you what, that's the only music there is right now. This new stuff some of these people are writing, I can guarantee, ain't nothing but hollering. (laughter) And they don't need nothing but a drum.

CP:

Right.

RF:

You know, they just beat that old drum.

LF:

Well I guess Fallon—she plays somewhere all the time, doesn't she?

RF:

She's got a gig nearly every week or so.

CP:

Yeah. I normally don't play with drummers, but I guess it depends on what kind of music you're doing or whatever, you know. If you were doing big bands or something—

RF:

A lot of his stuff—if you don't have a drum, you ain't got nothing, you know. They don't—if I had a western swing band there wouldn't be nothing in there but a set of drums and he wouldn't be using nothing but brushes.

CP:

Yeah. Yeah. And I was going to use some drummers on some recordings, I was like, brushes, the snare, and maybe a little kick drum, that's about it. You know, I don't want too much.

RF:

That's what Randy told that sound man down there at that western swing thing. He had amplifiers all over them drums and had them turned up and Randy said, "Turn all of them off." He said he can make more racket than any of us without any amplifiers.

CP:

Yep. That's right.

AW:

Yeah, when we—I had a cover band in the eighties and when they would audition a drummer, the audition was this simple: whichever drummer took the fewest trips out to his van was the one we hired. (laughter)

RF:

You didn't want to get him lit, did you?

AW:

No, because whatever they brought it, they were going to play. (laughter) So your—is this Fallon Campbell your granddaughter?

LF:

Uh-huh. Yeah.

AW:

I've got a dear friend who lives over at McKinney. Her last name is Fallon.

LF:

Really?

AW:

Good Irish name. She's a pastel artist, not a musician.

LF:

Yeah. Oh, okay. No, she's an only child. Our oldest son, anyway. And—

AW:

Well I'll look out for her. I teach songwriting at the school of music at Texas Tech.

LF:

Oh, okay.

RF:

She writes a lot of stuff. In fact, she writes nearly everything she sings.

AW:

Good.

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LF:

She made it as far as Las Vegas on America's Got Talent. She did pretty good. But she, you know, she likes it. She plays guitar. She had an old Gibson, wasn't it, that wasn't very good or something?

RF:

Oh, her granddaddy had given her an old Gibson—

LF:

So Royce told her, he said, "I'll give you, you take that other one [?] home." She's got other ones since then.

RF:

And I told her to take that Yamaha and keep it as long as she wanted to keep it. But I didn't want to sell it, you know.

LF:

But she usually plays in San Antonio, Austin. They lived in Austin, then she graduated from U.T. But—

RF:

She's got a gig over here at Grapevine once a month.

LF:

Yeah. Yeah.

RF:

\$400.

CP:

Wow.

LF:

And she plays out there at—

RF:

You know, and then they've got another in Houston.

LF:

What's the big hotel?

RF:

It's a restaurant and a bar.

LF:

But yeah, that Cactus Inn or whatever it is.

RF:

But she keeps quite a bit of [inaudible].

LF:

She likes to. She drives all the way to Houston.

RF:

By herself.

LF:

Yeah. We don't like for her to do that.

RF:

We don't like that.

LF:

But she likes to.

RF:

It don't pay you to be on the highway at night by yourself if you're a girl, anybody, as far as that goes.

AW:

I was going say—

RF:

Our daughter that lives in Henrietta, we always make her call us when she gets home. It takes her about an hour and a half, but she's still out on the road, something happens to your car, you're just sitting out there like a duck, you know.

LF:

We had taken our youngest granddaughter with us to Llano to a contest, and she was about what—seven or eight. And we took her down there, and coming home she said, “You know, I

think I'd like to do that." And we said, "You want to? We'll get you a teacher," you know. And so she took for maybe two weeks, three weeks—"

RF:

You talking about Taylor?

LF:

Yes. She's a soccer player, and she's just too fidgety.

RF:

She's a good soccer player, but she ain't no fiddler.

LF:

But her sister, then, is Jordan.

RF:

Jordan's her sister, and she's turned out to be a pretty good fiddler.

LF:

And Jordan said, "I'll do it." And she did. She really turned out good. And she did real good.

But she's just, you know—

RF:

Well, she didn't—she wasn't interested in it. So if they're not interested in it you just as well forget it, you know.

AW:

My daughter wasn't interested in it till she got in her thirties, so now she's taking fiddle lessons—

LF:

Okay.

AW:

—in her thirties, and I said, "You know, this would've been a whole lot easier on all of us if you'd started when you were little."

LF:

That's what our daughter in Henrietta took for a while—took fiddling for a while.

RF:

She played the clarinet in the band in high school, but she figured out that fiddle wasn't all that easy.

AW:

No, it's not.

LF:

Well, she tried, but her kids would complain.

AW:

Well, my daughter doesn't have any children yet, so it's—that helps. They can't—

RF:

Gripe?

AW:

They can't get in the way.

LF:

Well, she'd probably do all right.

AW:

Well, she's—I mean, she's got musical abilities so she's—

LF:

Yeah.

AW:

But a fiddle is not an easy thing to pick up.

LF:

I think it's one of the hardest.

RF:

No, everybody thinks that—that's what I was telling you while ago.

LF:

I don't know. Maybe a—I think a harp might be harder.

CP:

A harp would be hard, I would think, all those strings tuning it.

LF:

Yeah, that's what I'm thinking.

RF:

A good fiddler that really knows how to play, he's got to get it right because there ain't many places to slide them fingers, ain't no frets there either.

AW:

No, and you've got to—the thing I like about the fiddle and fiddle players is their ears, you know. You can't be a fiddle player if your ears aren't good.

RF:

If your ear ain't good, you can't do it.

LF:

It's just got to be there.

RF:

Oh, you can do it with an orchestra and stuff like that and read, but you still got to have a good ear.

AW:

Still got to know where that—because you can—like you say, you can move that finger just a little bit, you know. On the guitar we've got a little bit of leeway, but—

RF:

If I can't hear a tune, I have trouble finding the changes on it, even if I got them wrote down. But if I get the tune in my mind, I can sit down and work it out real quick.

AW:

Yeah, I'm the same way. I got to hear it.

LF:

There's a little girl that started to Baylor—Mia.

RF:

That's another one. I forgot. I guarantee you, she can play.

LF:

Yeah, she is so good.

RF:

She won a contest at Weiser this year.

LF:

Yeah, she won first.

RF:

And she don't weigh but about ninety pounds. And she's a black belt in karate. I'll tell them old boys around there, I'll say, "Y'all don't mess with that girl. She can beat the heck plum out of you." (laughter)

LF:

She started out in classical, and then her dad talked to Royce and he said, "You know, she wants to really learn Texas fiddling," and he said, "Who can we get to teach her?" So they drive from Lorena, Texas, to Joey, and Royce told them, said, "You get Joey."

AW:

Yeah.

LF:

Or Sherry, either one.

RF:

I remember the first time—first or second time we went up there, she was winning contests.

LF:

Yeah.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

Course, she already knew how to play, you know. But he told her, the first time he went up there—or she did—he said, "I'm going tell you right now, you forget everything you've already learned—"

LF:

About bowing.

RF:

About bowing, because he said, "What I'm going to teach you is to play breakdowns and it ain't the same." And she went back out to the car when they got ready to go home, and she told her daddy, she said, "I don't know." (laughter)

LF:

I don't know whether I want to.

RF:

She said, "He's pretty strict." (laughter)

LF:

See, that's when Jordan—Jordan stayed with Sherry until Sherry said, "I can't take you any farther. You're going to have to go to Joey." And she wouldn't go to Joey.

RF:

Have you ever heard of Gene Gimble, Johnny Gimble's older brother?

AW:

I have, but you know, I've never met him. I've never met him.

RF:

Anyhow, the story was—

LF:

He is really a—

RF:

He plays the fiddle and the guitar, you know, pretty well—good musician, but he writes a lot of books on changes and stuff like that.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

Well anyhow, what he did—he had a little old tenor guitar or a mandolin or something, and they lost a screw out of a key, and he said, "Man, I couldn't find that screw nowhere." And he said,

"I've checked many stores and the Internet," and somebody told him to go to Joey. They said, "If he ever had one he's still got it." (laughter) So he got stuff piled everywhere. Anyhow, he went down there and he got a thing and Joey said—told him—said, "We're fixing to do a little rehearsing if you want to stick around a little while." And he said, "Them girls," he said, if they even drug the bow in the wrong direction—anything—he'd stop them. He said, "No, that ain't the way we're going to do it, you're going to do it like we always do it," but he said, "After I sat there a while I figured I didn't want to take no lessons off him. I'd get plum irritated."

AW:
Yeah.

LF:
That's what Jordan—she said, "Ugh."

CP:
The girl that I'm working with, her big question was, "I want to know about bowing techniques," you know, when you ask. And so it sounds like we may want to be talking to Joey.

JF:
You need her to get hold of—of Wes?

LF:
Wes.

JF:
Wes taught bowing at the fiddle camp last year.

LF:
Yes.

AW:
How do we get hold of Wes?

RF:
He lives in Temple, Texas.

LF:
He works for Scott and White. He's a pharmacist at Scott and White.

RF:

Just looking at him, you wouldn't think he's that damn smart, but he's pretty damn smart.
(laughter)

AW:

Is it West Moreland?

LF:

Wes

RF:

Wes Moreland

CP:

W-e-s?

LF:

W-e-s

AW:

W-e-s-t and W-e-s-t M-o-r-e-l-a-n-d?

CP:

Wes like Wesley.

LF:

It's probably Wesley but it—

RF:

We don't even have his phone number, do we? We might have his phone number.

LF:

I don't know whether I do or not.

RF:

But anyhow, he taught bowling down there—

LF:

He lives on Belton Lake, but he's—

RF:

He's a fine musician.

LF:

He is. He's real nice, too.

RF:

And he's a good guy to go along with it. He's not a smart ass. (laughs) But anyhow—

LF:

Yeah, okay, that's Wes Westmoreland.

JF:

But that'd be his daddy's, though.

LF:

No, it wouldn't. Try this: 832—it's his cell number—492-0778.

AW:

Okay.

LF:

I've got a post office box here and it says Temple, Texas. But they live on Belton Lake.

RF:

He's bought that house since then.

LF:

Oh, yeah.

RF:

So it that's a cell phone you might still get him.

AW:

Well, if he works at Scott—

LF:

Yeah, but he works for Scott and White.

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RF:

Scott and White. He's a pharmacist.

LF:

He's a pharmacist.

LF:

At Scott and White.

RF:

He went to—he graduated from where?

LF:

Well he graduated first from Tarleton.

RF:

From Carlton.

LF:

Tarleton.

RF:

Then he went to playing, and he played all over the country and then he went to Branson and played with Mel Tillis.

LF:

He went down to A&M for a while, and then he come back to the University of Houston.

RF:

Anyhow, and then he married Tillis's daughter, and they decided that when he—when they got through with a year or two up there at Branson, why they'd go back to Texas and he'd go to college and come home and finish his degree for a pharmacist. Well anyhow, he came back down here and started school, and when it come time for her to come back down there she didn't want to. (laughs)

LF:

You're not supposed to tell.

RF:

Well, that's all right. Anyhow, he is married again and he's got kids that's grown.

LF:

But he's—

RF:

One of them is—what did he tell us the other day? He's a comedian? (laughter)

AW:

Wow.

LF:

No, he's not out of high school yet.

RF:

He's going to school to be a comedian.

LF:

He's got a daughter in college and then a son at—

RF:

Wes said that they were griping at him, telling all that stuff in school, and said he told them and he said, "Dad, I'm funny!" (laughter) Yeah, he said, "Well, you better be."

LF:

He would—

AW:

Well I can't think of a tougher job than being a musician unless it's being a comedian.

LF:

But he would be somebody, too, to talk to, because his granddaddy played and his daddy played.

AW:

Yeah, I know his name, I just never met him, but if he's in Temple, we could—

RF:

And his dad's a good guitar player but he cut his fingers off. Cut two of his fingers off on a saw here about two years ago.

LF:

But he's—Wes is a real nice person.

AW:

I have a friend who's a luthier in Mansfield and he has—right by his saw—has a big picture of a hand that somebody's tried to re-sew the fingers back on.

RF:

Oh.

AW:

It's just—

RF:

To put it back together?

AW:

So when you stand there by his saw you go, Oh, yeah. I know why I need to be careful.

RF:

She made me get my stuff up. I had a whole garage full of stuff.

LF:

He did woodworking for a long time.

RF:

I had to give it all—I gave it to Paul, my son down there at Burleson, but—

AW:

Yeah.

LF:

I just told him, I said, "You just can't do this."

RF:

She said, "You're going to cut your fingers off!"

AW:

Yeah, if you're—

RF:

Man, I tried everything you can think of around here after I retired. I welded up chickens (laughter). I think I made eleven porch swings. Man, I was busy.

LF:

He did a lot.

CP:

Yeah.

LF:

For a while.

AW:

If you play music, you shouldn't get around a saw or a cow rope. (laughter)

RF:

Yeah, that cow rope's pretty hard.

AW:

Because either one of them's going to get you into trouble.

LF:

That's right.

RF:

I ended up after all those years in machine shop and everything, I ended up with one bad place right there.

AW:

Really?

RF:

Had a little old jig grinder spindle broke, spun up my finger. But I was lucky and I was pretty careful. I always was pretty careful.

LF:

That's why he hated to give those saws up, I think. He's really worried about the son.

RF:

I was afraid to give that stuff to Paul because he wasn't around machinery like that and you can get careless right quick and it don't take but one little zip and you're gone, and you got something broke or gone.

AW:

Yeah, and you can even be trying to be careful, but if something breaks and—

RF:

Oh yeah, even a saw blade breaks.

AW:

Or you hit a snag in the wood.

RF:

Hit a snag in the wood, especially them damn table saws.

AW:

Yeah and the cheap wood that you get at Home Depot.

RF:

Yeah.

AW:

They're full of knots and all kind—it's just—yeah. I don't know. I don't want to get near one.

RF:

Well, if you use all the safety stuff, and make up all the safety stuff that comes with it, you can make it pretty safe.

AW:

Mhmm.

RF:

But people—they leave them running without even that kickback thing back there. You know, they don't care. They won't put it down there. They just don't want to mess with it. Well that dang kickback hits you in the face or makes you cut yourself or whatever. And I made all those little old things that you put up against stuff to hold it down this way—they got all the pictures in there, blueprints and everything. You can make up all them and use them. You can make it pretty safe but people won't do it. I had a guy working for me—you can't make them be safe, you know. We had a lot of punch presses out there and that's really bad news, right there.

CP:

I've ran a lot of punch presses and—

RF:

They take the safeties off of them. They do everything to keep from having to mess with them, you know?

CP:

Yep.

RF:

I had a—this is the worst thing I ever had happen—I had a dial that we made—the part that goes on stadium seats where you—this little armrest is what it is, made out of aluminum. And you have to blank them and then you put them over there in another place. Anyhow, I had—I think we had four of the presses lined up there on the wall by the restroom, and all of them—Mexicans run them. Some of them couldn't speak English, but you could show them and they'd understand. Well anyhow, this guy was sitting there running those little old stadium things and he got up and went to the bathroom. Well while he was gone to the bathroom, the guy that was running the one behind him went over there and started running that one and cut his damn fingers every one off on one hand. You know, I mean just whacked them off. Man, make you cringe just thinking about it.

AW:

Um-hm.

CP:

Yeah. I knew a guy that—the big shears—and he got his fingers down in that shear and took them right off.

RF:

Them shears are the worst things in the world. Well I had to get some of them out of them. We had a guy hung up—had a maintenance man hung up in a big old fifty-ton press. No, it was bigger than that. And he wanted us to—after he got hung, he was in there. You know, he couldn't get out.

CP:

Yep.

RF:

Well anyhow, when we went back we heard him hollering. Me and my guy in the shop went back there, and he wanted us to reverse the motor. I said, "Man, ain't no way we're going to do that. That thing will cut your hand plum off while it makes that cycle." He was maintenance man, too. So what we did, we got on the fly wheel, and you know, took the dial and

turned it by hand and we got him out of it. Of course it cut two of his fingers off so bad he couldn't use them.

CP:

Yep. I know.

RF:

It'll get you.

CP:

I've done a lot of that work and it's just—be careful.

RF:

Well, I was telling Loyce, I had one girl that got into one, got hung, got her fingers cut off, and I can still hear her hollering. You know, it don't ever get away from you.

CP:

Well, I went back to school and got me a desk job working in the archive and doing music because I—they come over there with their big old thick metal and you get it down and you're pulling on it trying to get it in those breaks and shears and stuff. It was just—it'll tear your back up, too.

RF:

Well, that's what's wrong with my hearing, some of it.

CP:

Yep.

LF:

Part of it is. I'm sure it is.

CP:

Yeah. It's loud in there.

RF:

I don't know whether you've—you know this conveyor that when you're at the airport that your suitcases come around on and them things work like this?

CP:

Yep.

RF:

Them things are made out of quarter-inch thick hot roll steel.

AW:

Wow.

RF:

Oh, hell. We had to buy a 250-ton press just to try one of them out. You know, we made the dial for them. And that thing, when it'd hit, it'd shake half of Dallas back there.

AW:

I bet. I bet.

RF:

Boom. Man, they just hard lick.

AW:

I didn't realize those were that heavy metal.

RF:

Yeah, they're quarter-inch thick hot roll steel. And the ones we made—and you can still see them, and they just—you know. They tie them together some way.

AW:

Loyce, what was your maiden name?

LF:

Stallcup [?].

AW:

Oh yeah. I knew some Stallcup growing up. And what was your date of birth?

LF:

09/3/31

AW:

Great. Just wanted to make sure I had that down.

LF:

Yeah, Stallcup, came from Scandinavian countries.

RF:

Well I can keep spreading some more bull if y'all want to hear.

AW:

Well we probably need to get on and get checked into our hotel room.

RF:

I hope we can give you something that you can use.

AW:

Yeah, this is good. This is great.

CP:

Oh yeah, yeah.

RF:

And like I say, I'll get those—I'll get those tapes out and see.

LF:

I'll make him do that. I have to give him my [inaudible].

RF:

Even if they're just—if I don't know what it is I'll still give them to you and then you can figure it out.

AW:

Yeah.

LF:

Well, you can still listen. You'll know when you listen to them.

RF:

Yeah.

AW:

Yeah, and that'll help, but we can also copy them—digitize them—and sit down with you and you can listen to them and tell us.

RF:

Yeah, well that's all right. I probably couldn't tell you the name of the tune. I might.

AW:

But if you know who the players are and kind of when it happened that'll help us a lot.

LF:

He will remember those.

CP:

And then like that—like that one girl that sat down, she goes, “Oh, this is this tune and this is that tune.” She knew what the tunes were because she studies those tunes, and so that’s—we find some of that out.

RF:

I can figure—I mean, I can bring it back—

LF:

Tell you what, there's some gals that can fiddle. (laughs)

RF:

But there's so many of them old breakdowns.

CP:

She can too.

LF:

We were at Hallettsville last year. Our daughter comes down and goes with us and she was so mad when we left that contest because there was two girls that should've been in the top three. One of them was the Wallace girl and the other one was Mia O'Roscoe.

RF:

Mia O'Rosco?

LF:

But they didn't make it. But they should have.

RF:

Well, they've got to—what do they call it—the top when they throw out?

LF:

Well, they have five judges and they take the high and the low and throw it out.

AW:

Well, there's something wrong with that.

LF:

Yeah, there is.

RF:

It ain't worth a damn.

LF:

It's not good. That's the way Weiser does though, too.

RF:

That's the way Weiser does it, and they got them in a room by their self.

LF:

Yeah, they can't even see who's playing.

RF:

The year that Norman Solomon was up there as a judge, he had every one of them women back there crying. You know, they said, "Let's give this guy—he's his kid." He said, "Well I don't care who he is. He's in a fiddle contest. He got to fiddle or he ain't going to get it."

LF:

But they—

AW:

Yeah. Well you don't help anybody by giving them something—

RF:

Joey won't either. I've been to contests and they let Joey judge and—

LF:

You don't know that.

RF:

And, you know, people have got this idea—I said, "Well, he won it last time. Let's let this one have it this time." Well that ain't right.

AW:

No.

RF:

If he wins it, well he wins it.

AW:

That's right.

CP:

That's right.

LF:

Well, they're just—if you go enough, you know—you know—

RF:

You know who's supposed to win.

LF:

I judged one time (laughs), and I didn't want to but I did. You know, you know when it's good and it's not and all.

AW:

Oh yeah.

RF:

But she is just like my mother. She's too critical.

LF:

No, I just—

RF:

I've heard her say, "Jimmy Don missed a note."

LF:

He did.

RF:

I said, "Well I didn't hear it. I was playing with him." "I don't care, he missed one."

LF:

I saw a boy won up at Nashville, too one time, and he shouldn't have won it. But, anyway—because I know he didn't do it right.

AW:

All right, if I ever take up the fiddle I'm not going to let you be my judge. (laughter)

LF:

No, I've just heard it so much, you know. I'm like—our little grandson or great-grandson said, "I've heard all the fiddling I want to hear." (laughter) And I said, "I have, too." I said, "I'm ready to go home now." (laughter)

AW:

Well on that note, let's—we'll stop it. That's pretty good. Thank y'all.

RF:

We really enjoyed having you guys.

CP:

Well, thank y'all for letting us in.

RF:

I hope I gave you something you can use and I'll try to get you some tapes to cut and mess with.

AW:

Oh you did. That'd be good. And we may—

LF:

And we can come to Lubbock and see—

AW:

We'd love for you to see it. And we may holler for help if Omega Burden's son in crankier than we can deal with.

LF:

He's kind of cranky.

RF:

Well you tell him I set you on him and maybe he'll get off of you.

AW:

Okay. All right. Thanks.

RF:

But I do know that he is—

LF:

He lives up above the plumbing company.

RF:

Unless he has lost them or done something with them, he had a whole bunch of them tapes and they're—they're some of them reel-to-reel too.

LF:

But he's also put a bunch of them on CDs.

AW:

Yeah.

RF:

In fact, he's even got some videos that he's made, several videos of fiddle parties. He's got some videos he made right out here in the backyard, got some he made over at Joey's one time when we was over there fiddling. So if you could talk him out of some stuff there might be something you could use.

AW:

Yeah. Sounds like it.

RF:

But, you know, some people are—they figure out—

LF:

F. L. doesn't play anything, does he?

RF:

Huh-uh. Now Dick Barrett, he had a bunch of stuff that Bartow had brought up there and he—he got with me and Ray and wanted to know if we cared. I told him, "Hell, I don't care. It's up to you, whatever you want to do with it." But F. L. I think kind of balked on it, but—

LF:

Yeah, he might be.

RF:

[inaudible] Being his dad's, you know, that was on some of them tapes.

LF:

But just you might tell him that Royce sent you.

CP:

Well, if he wants them back we just want to—we can get copies, we can make CDs.

RF:

Well, tell him that I've said it'd be fine, and I'll be responsible for anything he gives you and all that, and y'all would too.

AW:

Well, and we're not—nobody's going to sell them or make recordings—no, it's just for a study, scholars, so—all right, well thank you very much.

CP:

Yeah, thank y'all.

RF:

Well we enjoyed it.

End of Recording