

# **Oral History Interview of Charles “Bud” Townsend**

**Interviewed by: Andy Wilkinson**

**April 3, 2018**

**Canyon, Texas**

**Part of the:**

***General Southwest Collection Interviews***

© Southwest Collection/  
Special Collections Library



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

**Southwest Collection/  
Special Collections Library**

15th and Detroit | 806.742.3749 | <http://swco.ttu.edu>

## Copyright and Usage Information:

An oral history release form was signed by Charles “Bud” Townsend on March 6, 2018. This transfers all rights of this interview to the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University.

This oral history transcript is protected by U.S. copyright law. By viewing this document, the researcher agrees to abide by the fair use standards of U.S. Copyright Law (1976) and its amendments. This interview may be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes only. Any reproduction or transmission of this protected item beyond fair use requires the written and explicit permission of the Southwest Collection. Please contact Southwest Collection Reference staff for further information.

### Preferred Citation for this Document:

Townsend, Charles Bud Oral History Interview, April 3, 2018. Interview by Andy Wilkinson, Online Transcription, Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library. URL of PDF, date accessed.

*The Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library houses almost 6000 oral history interviews dating back to the late 1940s. The historians who conduct these interviews seek to uncover the personal narratives of individuals living on the South Plains and beyond. These interviews should be considered a primary source document that does not implicate the final verified narrative of any event. These are recollections dependent upon an individual's memory and experiences. The views expressed in these interviews are those only of the people speaking and do not reflect the views of the Southwest Collection or Texas Tech University.*

## Technical Processing Information:

The Audio/Visual Department of the Southwest Collection is the curator of this ever-growing oral history collection and is in the process of digitizing all interviews. While all of our interviews will have an abbreviated abstract available online, we are continually transcribing and adding information for each interview. Audio recordings of these interviews can be listened to in the Reading Room of the Southwest Collection. Please contact our Reference Staff for policies and procedures. Family members may request digitized copies directly from Reference Staff.

Consult the Southwest Collection website for more information.

<http://swco.ttu.edu/Reference/policies.php>

### Recording Notes:

*Original Format:* Born Digital Audio

*Digitization Details:* N/A

*Audio Metadata:* 96kHz/24bit WAV file

*Further Access Restrictions:* N/A

*Related Interviews:* This is part two of four interviews. Townsend was also interviewed on March 6, April 4, and May 16, 2018.

### Transcription Notes:

*Interviewer:* Andy Wilkinson

*Audio Editor:* N/A

*Transcription:* Ian Fehl

*Editor(s):* Kayci Rush

## Transcript Overview:

This interview features Charles “Bud” Townsend as he discusses a variety of topics that relate to his life experiences. In this interview, Charles discusses his time announcing rodeos, working for boot companies, and meeting his wife for the first time.

**Length of Interview:** 04:14:52

| Subject   | Transcript Page | Time Stamp |
|---|-----------------|------------|
| Recording and interviewing people                     | 05              | 00:00:00   |
| The Beutler brothers buying out Vern Elliot           | 14              | 00:22:13   |
| How he got into rodeo                                 | 17              | 00:30:27   |
| Announcing for Bob Estes’s rodeos                     | 26              | 01:07:40   |
| Seeing discrimination first hand on the way to a show | 28              | 01:18:57   |
| Working all female rodeos                             | 35              | 01:49:25   |
| A horse race he viewed when he was young              | 45              | 02:14:19   |
| Working for Nocona while announcing rodeos            | 52              | 02:33:23   |
| Meeting his wife for the first time                   | 56              | 02:48:20   |
| Bradford and Stetson hats; Levi jeans                 | 61              | 03:11:35   |
| The difference between quality boots and other boots  | 73              | 03:43:21   |
| The Drake Hotel in Abilene                            | 85              | 04:02:57   |

### Keywords

Rodeos, Boot Making

**Judy Cates (JC):**

Bob is like—

**Andy Wilkinson (AW):**

Clammed up.

**Bud Townsend (BT):**

He clammed up. [Laughs]

JC:

They didn't tell him anything like that.

BT:

You said Bob Marrs?

JC:

Morris.

BT:

Morris.

AW:

I knew Bob Morris. You know, I only met Bob Morris once when we were recording that album, and it wasn't long after that that he passed away.

JC:

He was a neat guy but he just clammed up. Lonnie was in it for his master's there at WT [West Texas A&M].

AW:

I get—from time to time, I get people—we'll be visiting and I'll say, "We're going to start recording. I'll turn it on and ask some questions." They'll nod their head. [Laughter] I want to tell them that we're not on television.

BT:

An old cowboy that I used to ride with, Clarence Howard. His hat's out there. I showed you that cutting block that came from his house. It's in the kitchen. He had the most beautiful tenor banjo. Mother of pearl, it was beautiful. I said, "Clarence, my gosh." He lived in the old house that his dad built in 1902 there in—right next to the wilderness Powderhorn, Colorado. He's the one that had the black horse. "What'd you do?" He said, "I played dances down here at the schoolhouse

at Powderhorn.” He was above Powderhorn, though it’s in in the Powderhorn country. And I said, “Could you play it?” Oh, he just played it. So, next time I went I said, “Clarence, I brought me recorder. I want to record you.” He could hardly play the darn thing. It just scared him to death, that recorder. I’ve got it somewhere, what he did. I wouldn’t take for it. Need to give it to his children.

AW:

Ray Reed was like that. Ray would play on stage, play anywhere and you’d put him in front of a microphone in the studio and he’d just tighten up. Ray said to me, he said—what’d he call me? He called me junior or youngster or something. He said, “Junior, when I look at that microphone it’s [imitates Ray] like a damned old rattlesnake about to bite me.” [laughter] I thought—I’d heard him a little frightened in the studio.

BT:

I wonder if your collection—he went out a lot of nights and slept out with his recorder to capture the coyotes. I just wonder if he gave that to y’all.

AW:

No. You know, I’ll tell you where there are recordings of Ray is at the University of New Mexico in the John Donald Robb collection. But they were—Robb was interviewing Ray and I didn’t know Ray had done those recordings or I’d have looked for those because they have a nice—

BT:

He told me—he was at Bob Wills’ day. We all went in the old hotel and he and Frankie McWhorter, a fiddle player, played and he’d tell those stories in between. [A cat enters the room] Hi, granny. You’ve had a haircut, darling.

AW:

My goodness.

BT:

You look so sweet. I think she looks good.

AW:

Yeah. Looks like a show cat.

BT:

Yes. Here comes Mike. [knock on door] Come in, Michael.



**Michael Grower (MG):**

Morning.

BT:

How are you?

MG:

Sorry I'm late.

JC:

You're not late.

BT:

He was quite a catch, Ray was. This was before he started his deal over there—

AW:

In Ruidoso?

BT:

Maybe a year or two after.

AW:

Hey, Michael. How are you?

BT:

He was quite an old cowboy.

MG:

Hello, sir.

BT:

And, you know, he had him a band one time and he played in a band that I've been able to get three or four people to interview who were in it. I may be talking where you all don't of whom I speak, but Bob Crosby, the great steer roper. Maybe the greatest all-around cowboy there ever was. He got—he loved Bob Wills. So, Bob Crosby got him a band called Bob Crosby and the Cross B Boys. And Leon Rausch was in it that sang later for Bob. Bob Crosby himself and I think three or four people that later played for Bob Wills. You know, his brand was Cross B. So, if you say it fast, *Crosby*. That was his brand. And if you ever go to Roswell, just go past the fairgrounds where we used to have rodeos—I announced them for years, always college rodeos. There's a cemetery just—and you go down and there's Bob Crosby's grave marker. In 1927-8,

something, Theodore Roosevelt was a real fan of rodeo and he'd go to Cheyenne and he'd put up what was called the Theodore Roosevelt trophy. It was a trophy of a bucking horse, kind of like that one, then on top of it was a knob of the world, the world's champion; solid—and Bob and Thelma put that on his grave and somebody stole it. Can you imagine—well, I guess old Bob thought that everybody was as honest as he was. But it's gone. His name and the rope and the rope that they have on the stone there—if you're ever over there, be sure and see it.

AW:

I will. I used to talk with Ray a lot.

BT:

But—pardon me—Ray was in that band.

AW:

Yeah he was. He talked—unfortunately, we visited about this all before I ever got this job at the archives so I didn't record all of those great conversations with Ray. He talked a lot about that band. My favorite was he was talking about growing up on that wagon and learning songs from just about everybody that would come through as a kid. Quite a story. I really enjoyed him. But I do need to say for the recording—I'm remembering now that it was recording. This is the third of April, two days after April Fools, just to make that note. It's Andy Wilkinson here at the home of Dr. Charles "Bud" Townsend in Canyon. We have a gallery of people this morning, all friends: Ivan and Judy Cates and Michael Grower. We're going to take up where we left off and probably explore completely new worlds today as we start back to talking. Could we start with a couple of notes from my last time here that I wrote down that I wanted to make sure—and we don't have to do them in any particular order—I have a note to ask you about the Drake Hotel in Abilene then the other note I've got is—

BT:

I didn't know Julie was going to be here but go ahead.

AW:

Okay, we can wait till Julie leaves, I guess.

BT:

No, I can put it delicately.

JC:

I'm of age.



BT:

If you want to see, Michael, a—right over there on my desk, the briefcase that Amarillo Saddlery made me in about 1953; George Pulley.

AW:

Is that P-u-l-l-e-y?

BT:

Yeah.

AW:

Okay.

MG:

Oh my.

BT:

How about that?

MG:

Do you see that, Ivan?

BT:

I tried to call you yesterday.

**Ivan Cates (IC):**

Tremendous.

BR:

I've got a scrapbook down at the Southwest Collection about that size. See, you can't tell. We'll just say fourteen by fourteen. It's got that same—they don't make them that way anymore, do they?

AW:

You know, Michael, what really impressed me, also—now, Dr. Townsend it's because he kept it in a cedar chest—but I can't get over how—1953, that leather is in such great shape.

MG:

Remarkable.

AW:

Isn't it amazing? It's still soft.

BT:

They had a lot better leather in 1953.

AW:

Yeah. I bet it was tanned differently, too, wouldn't you?

BT:

Well, I don't know. Now, what the leather told me at Olsen-Stelzer Boot and Saddlery—I would talk to them about it and they said after the age was over, they didn't get as good—they said one reason it was so great back then—and they got most of that saddle leather—I'm talking about making saddles, not—and you could use belts but they got it from Frank's in Kansas City. Maybe you want to look that up sometime.

AW:

F-r-a-n-k?

BT:

Yeah, just Frank's. And we'd get it in in huge rolls and, you know, it was heavy. They said the reason that it the tanning may have had something to do with it, too, but back then they killed twelve, thirteen-hundred pound steers. By the time the age was over, they were killing six to nine-hundred pounds. So, it was a different kind of hide, so forth and so on.

MG:

You said George Pulley made this?

BT:

Yeah.

MG:

For Maddox Leather?

BT:

That was it. You know, that's kind of—is that under there?

MG:

Yeah, it's right here stamped.

BT:

Okay. I thought it was Amarillo Saddlery. Yeah, George—

AW:

Maddox?

MG:

Maddox.

AW:

M-a-d-d—

MG:

M-a-d-d-o-x. Dr. Maddox was a dentist who wanted to be a leather worker and he ended up doing some leather portraits, one of Will Rogers that was about six-foot tall that his widow had me come up to the house right after I started here—and I didn't know anybody from anybody. So, I said, "You know, this really needs to go to Claremore [Oklahoma]. I believe she donated it to the Will Rogers memorial over in Claremore. And he put out picture postcards of his—he'd do panorama things, but he also had people who worked for him. Pop Beddis worked for him at Maddox Leather Crafters.

BT:

I'd forgotten that it was Maddox. But Pulley owned it then, I think. Pulley had—he had a way of getting a hold of everything.

MG:

P-u-l-l-e-y?

BT:

Yup.

MG:

Okay.

BT:

George Pulley. So, I was with Nocona Boot Company and I said, "Mrs. Justin," Enid Justin, "We need saddle stuff in here, a few saddles and some tack." She said, "Just get it." So, I came out and there was no Holiday Inn's or anything then. There was a motel just past that underpass past the Civic Center. That's where Mary and I stayed. So, I went in to meet George Pulley. I think the reason—he had made a clothes carrier for Cy Taillon. So, I wanted one so, went in, must've

bought five or six, seven-thousand dollars' worth of stuff for four, five, six saddles. Back then, good saddle's two-hundred and fifty dollars. I mean, a good one. So, maybe not that much but a lot of bridals, lot of cinches, whatever, curb straps, headstalls, whatever. So, he said he was going to make me that. So, he made that and he made my scrapbook. It had the black paper in it, you know. So, back then I was—first became conscious of history so I thought, Well, I'll make me a—fix me a scrapbook. I was going to so many colleges then that I said, "I'm going to let you have this and loan it to you and you keep it for me." Something else I've got down there: during the student revolts, you know, the sixties, I decided to take the *Daily Cardinal* of the University of Wisconsin paper and they'd send them to me every day. I bundled them up. I thought, This may be lost, all this rioting. They had the Dow Riots there. Dow made napalm and they rioted against them. But anyway, that bundle's down there and that's good history. Maybe no other place—and I think maybe even the *Cap* [Capital] *Times*, that was the old Robert La Follette paper. But anyway—and I was doing research for them at that time. I told you about that. But anyway, that's how I got that and Mary put it in the cedar chest all of these years. Even got the keys in there to it. Can you believe that? Well, it was so beautiful, I didn't—I bet I didn't take it to the announcer's stand five times. I knew somebody that kicked something over on it or whatever and that's—and Pulley, he was a [pause] shrewd—just the opposite of being—a [euphemism]. He was a shrewd. He was a shrewd business man and he knew what he was doing when he made—but when Beutler Brothers—he was once a rodeo producer. When Beutler Brothers broke up, the original, Lynn, Jake and Elra. What happened was Elra's son, Jiggs, who's the father of the boy that's running it now, Benny, he and Lynn got into it and I think had a fight. Of course, I guess Lynn was older and wasn't any match for Jiggs. Jiggs wasn't known as a fighter or tough. So, that broke it up. Lynn and Jake bought out—let me get this straight. Yeah. Lynn and Jake bought out Elra. Elra was the horseman. He was the stock man. Lynn Beutler was—[phone rings] had that moustache and let it go. Jake, he just had fun. He liked to drink and had a beautiful wife and whatever. So this mane that Elra was out. They kept the Beutler Brothers name. That was one of the most respected we ever had in show business. So, Elra needed some money so he went in with George Pulley and a fellow in Burkburnett—what was his name? He was—I was closer to him because they hired me for some of their shows. So, Pulley got in—it was Beutler, Pulley and whatever the fellow—other's name was. Naturally, Elra could get some of those good shows, though Lynn and Jake got Fort Worth and the big shows: El Paso, and Denver later. They got the big shows. And Elra was a wonderful man. They were all good men. It was just one of those family deals. I announced a lot of their shows. They'd always have Burkburnett or whatever. They had the famous Boomtown Quadrille then. It was the best of the—you know what a quadrille is, that square dance on horseback? So, I guess I'd met Humphrey at some of those rodeos; George. And I'd forgotten—it was written there the whole time. Maddox was what it was. So, George didn't stay too long. They bought George out. Then—

AW:

George Pulley?

BT:

Yeah. They bought—George Pulley, I'm sorry. They bought George Pulley out, though he kind of remained their friends and all. Then they bought the man in Burkburnett out. So, Elra Beutler then gave his son, Jiggs Beutler—interesting. I don't know the business arrangement. I'm sure that's what it was because nobody had big money then, you know, no one. Not until recently has there been any money in rodeo. So, he and Jiggs—and that's when I worked for them. I think his—Elra's wife's name is Elsie. Grand, perfect old lady. A ranch lady. I'd go out and sit with her, maybe, or Mary would talk to her out in the car. She was behind—she never dressed cowgirl or anything like that. So then when Jiggs was killed, and he was—he had shows—he married a girl in Canadian [Texas]—Hill. Her name was Hill. Clayton and Clinton Hill, they were great bronc riders and they had a sister. Of course, they were all around, so Jiggs married her and, I guess, their oldest son was this Benny Beutler who now is in with his son. It's still Beutler and Son but the name—when Beutler sold out, they sold to Mike Cervi in Colorado and today the Beutler—if you see the Beutler Brothers' Rodeo, it's Cervi, it's not the Beutler's because—the name.

AW:

How do you spell *Elra*?

BT:

E-l-r-a.

AW:

That's what I'd done but it just didn't look right. And Cervi, how would I spell that?

BT:

C-e-r-v-i.

AW:

Okay. Thanks. Our transcriptionist will appreciate that.

BT:

So that's kind of the story of those fellows in that page. And then Lynn was very smart. He was—that's why Elra was a wonderful man, great horse man, and stock man, but he didn't have that front. And Lynn, the little moustache. So, there was a rodeo outfit in Wyoming and Colorado. This fellow's name—he'd been in rodeo for many, many years—Vern Elliot. V-e-r-n Elliot, E-l-l-i-o-t, maybe two *t*'s. He lived in Chugwater, Wyoming and through that area, and he



was in with a guy named McCarty, Eddie McCarty or Chet McCarty, whichever it was. I knew his son. I knew Eddie McCarty. He came and stayed with us in Nocona about a week. Vern Elliot and McCarty bought a horse that a school teacher had ridden for about four or five years. They named him Midnight. He was the greatest bucking horse of all time. So, I'll come back to buck—

AW:

We'll get back to the school teacher having ridden him for five years. I want to know about that.

BT:

Oh I don't know—I'll tell you, the best bucking horses is a saddle horse that goes sour. They're smarter. They're stronger. So, this school teacher in Wyoming had ridden this horse, so Elliot and McCarty got him and then they had kind of a make—oh, I found a beautiful picture of him just yesterday in a book called *Old Time Rodeo* that some woman put together; very good. Pictures, not much history in it. She writes about that much and called it a history. Anyway, they found another one and they called him Five Minutes to Midnight. They were the two greatest—well, I guess anything older is always better. But there was never a horse like him, like Midnight. Now, to get back. Vern was getting old but Vern was beloved, old Vern Elliot. I knew him well, just loved him. I knew him at Fort Worth. He furnished stock for the stock show. So, he borrowed some of Lynn's and Jake's horses. One thing led to another and they bought him out, just kept his name for introduction. Then the Beutler Brothers—goes back to our story—they bought Vern Elliot out and called it Beutler Brothers—Vern Elliot and Beutler Brothers. I think it was Beutler Brothers and Vern Elliot. Well, Vern already had Cheyenne, he already had Denver, already had some great rodeos when he and his wife kept office. Her named was Creta, C-r-e-t-a, Creta Elliot. That's where the Beutler Brothers resumed. By buying him out, they took on his prestige and whatever.

AW:

About what year would that have been?

BT:

Okay. About the time that that briefcase was made.

AW:

About early fifties.

BT:

Early fifties, uh-huh. Yeah, because I worked for the Beutler Brothers at some shows in '40—in, let's see, '64, '65. It would've been in the late—mid to late fifties to '65, in that period. They ran such a—Beutler Brothers had such a clean show. There wasn't any whoring, bunch of whores



hanging around, or drunks, outside of Jake, but he didn't show it. [laughter] One time we were at Chickasha and old Buck was around and was clowning. As I told you, Jake didn't do much. He had always acted—and he was lying down on the hood of his Cadillac, head on the windshield. So we were all talking. The rodeo was in about an hour and Buck was clowning; Cajun kid. Outside myself, it was the cream of the crop. Orwell Zumwalt had the rodeo. This is something nobody would ever tell because I was there and most of them are dead who were there. So, Orwell Zumwalt had some good stock. Sounds like a German, doesn't it?

AW:

Um-hm.

BT:

He was pulling the flank, you know, these flanks they put on a horse. They're automatic, that's why they're so easy to get off. And he had heart attack and died. So we were sitting there and Jake on his hood and he kind of had a pensive look. Everybody liked to kid Jake because he would take it. He wasn't doing the hiring. He couldn't fire you. Lynn did all of that. He said, "You know, I'll tell you, I think I'm going to quit flanking." We said, "Why?" He said, "You know, Orwell Zumwalt was flanking and had a heart attack, and I'm afraid it might happen to me." Buck looks at him and said, "Oh Jake, hell, alcohol's what killed him." [laughter] Jake said [coughs]—he'd already had some—I thought that was the greatest—"Hell, it was alcohol that killed him," or whiskey. I think he said whiskey. But that's kind of the story of those great producers back in those days.

MG:

Did you ever work with the Goodwin Brothers up in the Springfield, Colorado area? They were from Paducah.

BT:

No I didn't.

MG:

They would've been a little earlier than you.

BT:

I worked Springfield for Harry Vold. I don't know whether Harry Vold—I don't think Harry ever got any of the—and he's dead now. Harry had Springfield, like Clem. It was his show and he hired me for publicity. Clem was his announcer. Larry said, "Bud, I want you to come up and announce Springfield." I said, "Well, that's Clem's show. You don't need me." He said, "I know we don't," but he said, "You can announce some." He said, "If I'll get you up there, and you

wrote the book on Bob Wills, every radio station in town will interview”—so they used me, don’t you see, and Bob Wills. But no, I didn’t know them.

MG:

They’re a little earlier than you.

BT:

What’s the name of them?

MG:

Goodwin. Myrl and Earl Goodwin.

AW:

They’re from Paducah?

MG:

They were from Paducah.

AW:

Texas?

MG:

Paducah, Texas, and they took their whole clan up there.

BT:

They had stock?

MG:

They did. They were ranchers down there in Paducah and they played football for WT in 1922 and eventually ended up in the pros for the Pottsville Maroons.

AW:

The Pottsville—

BT:

Pottsville.

MG:

Maroons, yeah, and then went on to another thing. Anyway, they went into rodeo producing after they—they moved the whole family—they actually did a trail drive in like 1919 from Paducah,

Texas up to Springfield and resettled up there. We got a pair of their—one of their twins—they were twins; six-two, two-twenty. You know, that was big in 1919, 1920.

AW:

It sure was. It's still pretty big.

MG:

It is. So we got a pair of their spurs. And their son, Myrl Goodwin, was the senior steer roping champion here. He just died.

BT:

Oh, I knew him. Oh I knew him well. He came out of Grand Junction.

MG:

Right. That's correct. Yeah.

BT:

Yeah, I used to—I announced that rodeo for, oh, nearly thirty years at Grand Junction—called it Colorado Stampede—and he roped. He was a pretty good roper, not good enough to be at the top but he won his share of, you know, seconds and thirds, and some—and he built a nice place out here. Yes, he was—I knew him and I knew his girlfriend. She built a place out here by mine. I forget her name.

MG:

Pam?

BT:

Yeah. And then she worked over here when they had a pharmacy over here where the [inaudible]. But anyway, those were some days of rodeoing. Beutler's ran such a clean show; smooth. It was just—

MG:

Would you talk about how you got into that?

AW:

Yeah, that's good.

BT:

Into what?

MG:

Into rodeo.

BT:

Oh okay. I would preface my remark about how I got into rodeo—actually kind of got into me. [laughter] That's when you do a good job, when it gets into you. But I owe a debt to rodeo—if I live to be seventy-five again—I could never repay. But the way we—I grew up there in Nocona and I was a shine boy at Ed Hillard's barber shop. Shine boys always had money. If you spend all of it—if you hit Ivan up, "How about a shine?" "All right." You'd get enough to go to the movies and get your money's worth. So I was shining shoes. This would've been—I can tell you exactly when this would've been, 1945. I had just moved back. I lived with my brother. He was working on his PhD in math at UT [University of Texas]. I lived down there in '45. I can remember because that was the great year that the Army had the great number one team and had Doc Blanchard. So anyway, I'd come back and I was raised on a ranch. Horses were our means of transportation. If you couldn't do it on a horse, we didn't want to do it. Unless somebody had an old [clears throat] rattletrap of a car or it would've been a shipwreck of a car, then everywhere we went was either—you either walked—we did a lot of walking—you either walked or you rode a horse. We had the best horses in Montague—well, maybe the best in Texas this side of King Ranch; Joe Hancock's horses. I may have told you that story last time. Did I talk about—

AW:

Um-hm.

BT:

Okay.

AW:

Yeah, we had a good story on Joe Hancock.

BT:

So, we had those good horses and Uncle Dick, momma's brother, lived a quarter of a mile at most, three hundred yards down at the old main ranch house where Papa Keck built—it looked like out of the Giant movie, that huge, real ranch house with eight or ten rooms, no bathrooms, everything was outside, you know, windmill, cattle. He owned thousands of acres and cattle all around. We lived in a smaller one of his ranch houses down—so that was—the cowboy life was all I knew as a boy. And loved horses, loved riding. Only thing is our branch of the family, Uncle Dick and Uncle Jodie and Uncle Joe Hancock and all of them, Uncle Buck, they all had horses but we didn't. My dad was an oil field man and had cleaned out machines and drilling rigs. So, we were—but we rode all of those horses and the cattle grazed right around our house. In fact, after a certain time, that's where the bull pasture would be. I'd watch old bulls fight till daylight,

even hang their horns that I could never get apart. So, we had horses. You went in a wagon or you rode a horse. My, it was—it's after I came out here I ever owned a saddle because our emphasis was on other things. So in about 1945, had to be '45, early '45. Could've been the tail end of—no, I was still in Austin in '40. So in '45, there was a fad. Kids live by fads. Today it's cellphones or whatever—Facebook. But then they—and we'd—Papa took us—first rodeo I ever saw was in 1936. Papa Keck took all the whole family. We got in all those old cars, and we went to the North side. There was no Will Rogers Coliseum. This was the—it's still there; North side. And Ruth Roach rode. I've got her boots and all upstairs. She rode and Jasbo Fulkerson and some of those really—idols, you know, were clowning. And Vern Elliot, of course, had the stock. So, he took us—and I never will forget. He gave us all a silver dollar. You could buy a lot for a silver dollar in 1936. Now, the reason we had that big rodeo in Fort Worth is that the committee, maybe the state legislature—you'd know more about that than I, how they determined where the Centennial would be. Well, they said it would be in Dallas. That's when they built the Fairgrounds, the Cotton Bowl in '37. I mean, that was the beginning of—well, it made Amon G. Carter furious.

AW:

I'll bet it did.

BT:

So, he said it ought to be in Fort Worth. He owned the Fort Worth Star Telegram, he owned WBAP, he owned Fort Worth, and he ran Fort Worth for the good. He wasn't any—if he was a boss, city boss, it was a good boss. And had oil and whatever; rich. I've got a book out there called *Amon*. And I knew him, not personally, but I would slip into the stock show rodeo, be standing here where they'd introduce the big shots. Amon G. Carter, chairman of the board. Billy Bob Watts, his son has run it up until recently, since Billy Bob—and the other was Earl Hayes. "Come out our way, trade your way at Earl Hayes' Chevrolet." That was their slogan. Well, and I'd stand there—Amon dressed in one of those Open Road hats, you know, suit. He might look down and go, "How are you, kid," or something. I'd try and slip in and I'd see Billy Bob Watts. He's a big, fat fellow, not extremely—and Earl Hayes. So, he—Amon Carter was furious. When Amon Carter gets furious, it's hell to pay. So, he said, "It should be here and I'll just have my own celebration." So Amon Carter had I believe it was the Cavalcade of America. He was going to have the best rodeo ever staged there. It was the precursor, of course, to what we have now. And he built the Casa Mañana to bring Paul Whiteman's orchestra in. And the Casa Mañana was on a revolving stage. The old hardware was there for all these years and thirty years ago they decided to restore it and they're still using that. It's, well, big shows and everything. But anyway—and he brought Paul Whiteman in, who was the man who had the elephant; Billy Rose. Wasn't that his name? And he brought Sally Rand. She was married to Turk Greenough, the saddle bronc rider. She had a—she had developed a thing—she wore this hat, kind of like May West, and she had developed a thing to put in front of her feathers that were fans. It looked like,



the way she was dressed behind, that she was nude. I used to have an old Model T Ford and had her picture on it painted and it said, "Sally Rand done lost her fan." [Laughter] But anyway, she sure wasn't nude. I've got a picture of it out there. I saw it yesterday. But she looked like it. Well, you know, this was a big attraction and gosh, all those great musicians: Joe Venuti with Paul White. Well, Joe Venuti—I'll tell you a little Joe Venuti story. And not many people would ever know this one because Alex Brashear—when you listen to Bob Wills' music and he's got that muted trumpet, he kept Alex after he got rid of his big band. Alex was his trumpet man. Well, Alex had played on the West Coast with the Joe Venuti band and had played in—everybody at one time or another played for Paul Whiteman. So Whiteman even stayed in Fort Worth for a number of years after it was over. And Marvin Montgomery with the Light Crust Doughboys, she was his secretary. He told me about Paul Whiteman's wife living there. But anyway, Venuti was a jokester. He one time called everybody in the Los Angeles Musicians Union that played a bass fiddle. There were no such thing as these electrics. He called every one of them and told them there'd be a job for them, big job, at the corner of Hollywood and Vine, to be there at a certain time. Well, about fifty or sixty of them all showed up [laughter]—at the corner of these big bass fiddles—and finally dawned on them that Venuti had—he just pulled all kinds of things. Of course, as you know, was a great fiddler. And Bob just really liked him. Bob was always at the Golden Nugget or wherever he was. He'd get his—he'd always make him put his dressing room where he could see the stage so he could watch Joe Venuti. He was—Bob was a different fiddler to Joe, but he admired his talent and some of Bob's fiddlers patterned after him, like Jesse Ashlock and some of those guys. He was a great, in other words, jazz violinist. So, Venuti, he had—a friend of mine out here, Randy Brown's dad, Derwood Brown, he said he went up there one time and he was with Paul Whiteman. He had him a—he made a moon. He would sit in it and he could rock it out and he'd hit somebody with his bow then he'd rock back; little tricks, you know, to get attention and whatever. He was always picking on some person watching him. Well, this guy at Fort Worth at Casa Mañana. Whiteman was playing and Venuti was playing, cutting up. He kind of rocked and this guy in the audience reached and hit his hand. You know what that does to a musician, especially a fiddler. Joe said, "Don't do that, please." He just kept it up. So, the set ended. So, the guy—they had a bar right there by the—and Alex told me this. So, Venuti didn't say a word to the man. The man went over to drink so Venuti just sidled up to him. Been working so he needed to urinate anyway. So, he just took his penis out, stuck it in that man's pocket, and the man was drinking and didn't notice. He urinated and this man—[laughter] and he urinated down that man's leg, Venuti did. So, when he finished he put his penis back and walked—I said, "Alex, what did the"—he said, "The man just stood there and looked at him. He never did a thing." But anyway—I guess this is way off the subject of how I got into rodeo.

MG:

Wait a minute, I got to go to the bathroom now.



BT:

Okay, Joe Venuti.

MG:

Excuse me a minute. [Laughter]

BT:

Can you believe it? That's Venuti, all right.

AW:

That is quite an unusual story.

BT:

Oh boy. And Alex may have been the last one alive that could've told it. Yeah, he just urinated down this guy's [laughter]—oh boy. Venuti was born on a ship coming from Italy and he was—his mother gave birth when they got into Philadelphia Harbor.

AW:

So he was born in the USA.

BT:

Well, he was. It was in American waters. But anyway, getting back to the rodeo, how I started. I heard—I had an old Model T Ford pickup, best car I ever owned. That's one that had Sally Rand on it.

AW:

That's the Model T Ford pickup?

BT:

Yeah, and also had a thing on the back that said, "Don't laugh, ladies, your daughter may be riding." Then had on that—

AW:

We used to have that same bumper sticker in the sixties for our vans. I guess we got it from you.

BT:

Well, these older men were putting me up—putting this stuff on. One said—we had a cigarette painted on it that said, "All you girls that smoke, throw your butts in here." [Laughter] See, we didn't do anything against the law but it was kind of scandalous. [Laughter] I made a reputation for this and had this old Sally Rand—who ever painted it, just beautiful. She was kind of like

that. So, "Sally Rand done lost her fans." The city marshal stopped me one time. He said—and we lived in an old hotel there and my front yard was the main street and I'd park that there. Well, everybody had to see it and sometimes it was scandalous, you know. So, the city marshal came to me and he said, "Bud, you know you could get"—he couldn't tell me I couldn't do it, because he didn't have any legal grounds. He said, "You could be sued by Sally Rand for putting that on your car." I said, "You think so?" Alto said, "Bud, I believe if I were you, I'd paint that off of there." These women in town had put him up to get rid of this scandalous thing. It wasn't sexy or anything. It wasn't dirty or anything, but it was just the idea that you could have it in this little town. So, we went to rodeos—but anyway, there was a fad. You know, we were so isolated. Only thing we had was movie houses. We were ignorant. We thought that the sun came up in Montague that was nine miles east, and went down Red River that was nine miles north. We thought the sun—that's about all we knew. We'd get a little bit of news on Fox Movietone News, but we were ignorant, we were poor, but we had a lot of fun. So, rodeo to us then would've been what baseball was to a kid in the Bronx in New York. You live—they were your heroes. I look back now and think, Oh my gosh, some of the people that I thought of that were my heroes ought to be ashamed. One old guy hung around the rodeos and I never will forget. He was an ex-con. He had a stick about that long around and a string and a spool for thread. He'd see if he could flip it up and make it come down on that stick. He was one of our heroes and darn if he wasn't an ex-convict. But anyway, it showed you, you know, when you're ignorant and backwards. So, they were—they said, "Bud, we're going over to Forestburg." They were talking about in the brush. Now, I mean, Nocona's in the Cross Timbers, but this was really deep. They'd just cut down oak and blackjack trees and built an arena and an announcer's stand and everything. They said, "They're going to have a rodeo over there Saturday night and some of us are going to ride steers." We didn't ride bulls then. Steers, you know, like about like a dogging steer or a team roping steer. They said, "You want to watch?", "Yeah, I believe I will." I said, "I'll get my brother to shine shoes tonight," because Saturday was a big day. So, we all went over there. We borrowed [inaudible] [0:50:14] angles, as we called them, or bull ropes. Some people learned to make them. So, I rode over there my first time. And I must've stayed three or four jumps. Then Chris Uselton, who was a rancher that married into the Crenshaw's—and they owned thousands of acres toward Henrietta—and still in Montague County—they built an arena there and they had a pretty good rodeo. Then he later built one in—a little show up in Ringo. So anyway, I'd gone—I went up to Ringo. The best ride I ever made was on an old, brittle cow. Cows can buck a lot faster and a lot better than a bull. They're faster, see. A bull's got so much weight. My gosh. Somebody made a picture of it and it looked like to me you could've driven a car under it. I was that high in the air. Somebody had loaned me a satin shirt. I never will forget when I finally off it, my number tore. That satin shirt just nearly killed me. So, I won—no, I believe they disqualified me, said I'd hit with my left hand. And, you know, you just ride with one hand anyway. So, a time or two later, I won second or nothing big, then later on I rode bulls not very long—and wasn't a good bull rider—and rode bucking horses. Wasn't a good—I just wasn't that good at stock like that. But anyway, I loved rodeoing and loved to go. I would sit

around during the week—since I lived right in town, the kids come in, the boys, would go down to Crane's. They had a place that was an old sandstone, had been carved out in front of their tailor shop. We'd sit there and BS, you know, and whatever, just kids. So, I would mimic announcers. "Here comes Clyde C. Look at how he's riding old Bootjack. Uh oh, he's down. Bring in the ambulance. Get out of the way, Clyde, so they can close the chute gate." It bucked him off so quick." Well, we just did that for fun. I did it for fun. So, my mother—this was when I had ridden and bucked off of a—maybe that cow. I got—kind of like your groin muscle, I'd pulled something. I mean, I was in great pain. So my mother, she was a widow woman trying to run this old hotel and do whatever she could to make a living for us kids. It just worried her to death. I'd vomit that old bile up. I was so sick. It was awful. She said, "Bud, I'm going to take you to my chiropractor," about one of the few I ever went to, and he worked on me. She had to pay for that, whatever. So, it was really worrying her naturally. She didn't have money for a hospital or what would've happened. So, my brother, my next-to-oldest brother—he was three or four or five years older than I—he was working on his PhD in math at the University of Texas, major in math and minor in chemistry. He was the best of the bunch. So, he was my guardian, though. I had lived with him, I told you, in Austin in '45. It hurts me. I can remember so many things but I can't remember the two of them, those great players for Army, the number one team: Doc Blanchard and—

MG:

And Glen—

BT:

And Glen—Doc Blanchard and Glen Davis.

MG:

Glen Davis, that's it.

BT:

So I got half of it. I could tell you the year because of that. So, we—and of course went to the UT games with him. There was nobody in school then. I went to a game in that big stadium and there was three-thousand people; the first game Bobby Layne played when he came back from service. And we got beat. Oh it was terrible. We couldn't find anybody to play so they decided to play a little school in west Texas—it was in the Border Conference—named Texas Tech. We thought it was so beneath us in Austin to play them. And darn if they didn't come in there and beat us. I'll tell you, there wasn't any orange lights on that night. But anyway, my brother was down there so he came home that weekend. It was Labor Day weekend 1946 and momma cried. So he said, "Bud, you are not going to ride"—and I'd become pretty good at riding those little things. I drew a little eight. This was Brahman. He bucked everybody off and they thought I could ride him. So, I drew him. I'm not sure they didn't just put it under the hat and take it out

because they wanted to see if Bud could ride that one. And Bill came, my brother. He was hard-headed, high-tempered. He came—I said, “Well”—he said, “No, you’re not going to ride.” I said, “Well, if”—he said, “It doesn’t make any difference. You take his name out of there. He is not riding.” Oh, I was just a broken hearted. I just knew I could ride that bull. So, the show started. You talk about primitive. We were in this old-made arena and you’d just park cars around it; had an announcer stand wide-open, twice the size of this chair. See, there was no electricity there. It hadn’t come into that—[clears throat] the REA [**Rural Electrification Administration**] hadn’t come in. So, this—I’d give anything. We were so poor and ignorant we didn’t have cameras. We had pictures of some of that stuff. They guy that furnished the sound had an old—I’m going to say an old Oldsmobile or an old Pontiac or a Buick four-door. He would run his sound system off of the car battery. He was crippled. His legs weren’t off but he was crippled. He had a bed made back there in the back and he would sit back there and run that sound system. Nearly all of them at that time would either work on an AC [**alternating current**] or DC [**direct current**]. Then he would—and he’d park by Chute 3. We had three chutes. And he backed it in there, motor pointing down the arena. I mean, there was part of the arena on one side of him, bucking chutes on the other side, and he’d run the microphone wire up to the announcer stand. It was what they called a crystal mic, meaning there was a little piece of plastic, or whatever it was, crystal, that if the sun shined on it very long it would melt and you didn’t have a microphone. So you had to keep a handkerchief on it. So, we were all sitting around there—and Tony Fulnoleo [?] [0:59:03] was later state senator, state representative. He liked me very much and he announced the rodeo at Forestburg and we had one—the Germans had one down at Muenster. So, he was to be there in Ringo that Sunday afternoon Labor Day 1946. I was sixteen years old. So, well, you know, everybody got nervous about five after, ten after. “What are we going to do for an announcer?” Some of these boys that hung out with me in Nocona, “Get Bud up there. He likes to announce.” He mimics these announcers.” They said, “Come on.” Well, I was just d-a-m fool enough. I didn’t know anything about speaking or anything. But a dare for a sixteen-year-old is like a red flag in front of a bull, so I got up there. This man said, “Now put that handkerchief around it.” So I got up there. We didn’t start right then. He was playing Bob Wills music, I remember that. And he was—Sugar Moon. [singing] “When it’s sugar cane time.” Well, I would do that, sing along with him, you know, just being silly—all these cars. It came time to rodeo and I announced this rodeo. Just right off the top of my head I heard these guys. Now up until that time—and they’d go—and the timer, he was a rancher there and his wife, they were well to do. They’d say, “Bud, you’re really doing”—you know, they’d just encourage an ignorant country boy. So I just fell in love with it. I never got on but one bull after that and one horse. So, I went back home and the bug got me. So, I’d go to Fort Worth. That’s when I’d go to hear Abe Lefton and Cy and these guys, learning how to do it. That would’ve been ’47 that I was—oh, what a rodeo they had. So, it changed my life. All of my life I was poor, ignorant, had no goal. I wasn’t like my brother, I didn’t care for books or learning or anything, but I did like horses and I liked—so, what happened to me, it gave me a goal in life, something to live for, that there was hope for me. Not that I went through all this psychologically



but I can go back now and tell you that. So, another thing it—see, they didn't have many rodeos so I'd announce Ringo every Sunday, Saturday night in Muenster and Forestburg and I got these little shows. Of course, all I wanted was that RCA. I wanted to be a pro. So, I would announce anything: horse race, cock fight, baseball games. I would sell—like Heinz [?] [1:02:41] Clark sold refrigerators. I would get the merchants to give me two dollars a week, so I'd make about twelve dollars with my shoe shining. I was doing pretty good. So, I'd sell these ads. Between inning one and two I'd say, "Panhandle Planes Museum"—do a little advertising. So, I was making a little money. I was paying ten dollars—was it a week or a month; ten dollars. A guy had one of those old Masco sound systems and I'd rent it from him. Never forget his name. his name was Burnett. I'd rent that from him and keep it and take it out to this—but we had electricity out at the—in Nocona so I didn't have to use the battery. I would announce these. Well, what it did—I didn't get rid of the old Sally Rand at first. I was smart enough to know: if you're going to sell ads to these decent people here in town, you're going to have to change your act. In other words, I could—I had a gang. You know what I mean? My brothers and others. I don't mean we stole anything or dope or anything, but we were always into something. We were into something, not enough to send us to jail but—I had a gang. Never will forget it. Got a cousin that came—I'm trying to remember—wouldn't take anything from a store. A cousin of came to me. I was shining shoes and this cousin—he was a hard-working boy but tough hombre. He bought him a pretty little Chevrolet. I think it might've been a Coupe, I don't know—and grey. It was grey. Somebody took soap and—you know how kids are jealous of some, or just a joke. Somebody wrote things all over. Jack Keck told me after, many, many years later he said, "Bud"—I never will forget. He said, "I came in the barbershop and you were shining shoes and I said, 'Bud, I want to talk to you.'" He said, "It just looked like one of your jobs." [Laughter] He said, "I want to talk to you, Bud." He said, "Somebody's vandalized my car and put soap and everything on it." I knew I didn't—I wouldn't have done it, period, because I was afraid of him. He was big in Golden Gloves and everything. So he said, "I want—Bud"—here's what happened. He said, "Do you know anything about it?" He didn't accuse me. I said, "No, Jack, but I'll have my boys look into it." [Laughter] That's like I was Al Capone. "I don't know. I'll have my boys look into it." Jack laughed, as long as he lived, about that. So it gave me a goal. I put aside my wild and wicked—as Jimmy Rogers, "My wild and wicked ways," and became a respectable businessman. I was a businessman in Nocona. So that's how I started in rodeo. Had a rodeo over in Marietta, Oklahoma. Those guys from Marietta were ropers and they'd come to Muenster and everywhere. They'd hear me and I'd say, "I'd sure like to"—they had a RCA rodeo and they had—the Shellenberger's lived there. It was a rodeo community. Just across from Gainesville, Texas. It's on 35 today. I said, "Oh I'd love to announce your rodeo.", "Well, maybe someday you will." I was seventeen and they were worried about—but they did know I could announce. So, I stayed after them until 1948. I'd been learning more and I'd gone—announce in Warwick, Oklahoma or Wichita; the 37 Ranch. I never will forget. We had a rodeo there, a few other places. So, I approached these Marietta guys again. I never will forget. One of them ran a produce house there. They were businessmen but the rodeo had just captured that part of the

world. Everybody wanted to rope and wanted to ride, whatever. So they said, "Well, I'll tell you what, Bud." They said, "Our show's coming up in"—I guess it was in June. I've got the schedule somewhere. "Bobby Estes in Baird, Texas has contracted our rodeo. If you get Bobby to agree that you can announce our rodeo, then we'll give you the job. We'd like to have you." Well, I didn't know Bobby yet. He'd won Cheyenne—he was a little guy but had won a lot of rodeos. But he had this string—Everett Colburn from the Lightning C—Gene Autry. The Boston Garden bought his stock for him because they thought we needed another really showy rodeo in Texas other than Everett Colburn, who had Madison Square Garden, Boston Garden, Des Moines, Ardmore, Dublin, all those shows. So he said, "If you can get Bobby Estes to agree to let you announce that rodeo then we'll give you the job." It was RCA. Well, I knew I didn't know who Bobby Estes was but I knew Ruth Roach, the world's champion bronc rider, world's champion trick rider, world's champion all around cowgirl. She ranched over there close to us. We were back on the ranch by that time—and she married Fred Salmon. She'd been married to Byron Roach, one of the early great bronc riders. Oh, she was a dear friend of mine. She liked me and would like to see me do well in rodeo because she was retired and that kind of thing. Beautiful lady. She was the most beautiful cowgirl we ever had in show business. I don't say—I say show business. To me, rodeo at its best was showy, not a sport. So I said, "Ruth, do you know Bobby Estes?" She laughed. She had married five or six times. So she said, "Do I know him?" She said, "When I was married to Fred Alvord, Fred was the secretary for the World's Championship Rodeo—Gene Autry—at that time." She said, "When I was living in Baird, Bobby Estes rode a little Shetland pony and he carried two pistols and they were loaded. He'd ride around town." She said, "Yes." She said, "I knew that Bobby Estes real well." I said, "Well, here's the deal. Marietta wants me but he's got the show." I said, "Would you call him?" And she knew I didn't drink. They called it—I wasn't a boozier. They called it a boozier. "He's a boozier." She could do it in good faith. So she called Bobby. Oh he was glad to hear from Ruth. Later on, Bobby and I would go out and eat at Ruth and Dick's. She could make the best round steak. She could make a round steak better, by gosh, than you could a ribeye. Great cook. She'd done it—so, she called him. She told him about me and whatever. He said, "Ruth, is he good?", "Yes, he's good." Said, "Is he a good boy?" Bobby wasn't that much older than I. If I was, at that time, eighteen, Bobby wasn't much older than thirty-two. Married to a beautiful girl, one of those ranch girls that Colburn used to take to the Madison Square Garden. So he said, "All right then," said, "You tell him that I've got another rodeo just next month in Hamilton, Texas." That's down near Stephenville, down in that area. What's that little, old town? Hico. It's down there by Hico and in there. So, I didn't have a hat, never did have one as good as Ivan. So, I caught a ride on the cattle truck. They'd take those—on the weekends—take those cattle to Fort Worth. So I caught a ride in one of those cattle trucks and went to Washer Brothers. You couldn't buy a Stetson hat from Fort Worth to Amarillo. That's how far it was to buy a hat. Fefferman's, Abe Fefferman, he was good—Olsen-Stelzer was sophisticated when I went there but they didn't sell those good hats. I put the hats in there. So anyway, I went down and got my hat. Hanging right out there. It's just in pieces because the kids wore it later, but I wouldn't take anything for it. And it's drawn



down like yours, you know. Shudder Brothers did mine like they did yours. But anyway, I went to Hamilton—hitchhiked to Hamilton. I put my hat in the box, had maybe one change of clothes, if I even did that. I announced and Bobby liked me. So, I got all of his shows for the next few years. We'd work Baird, we'd work Abilene, Taylor County Fair and Rodeo. We'd go to Lufkin, we'd go to Nacogdoches. And then we took—he took a Wild West show to Arkansas and had me go for that, me and my cousin. The difference in the rodeo and the Wild West show: rodeo is a contest but a Wild West show is just a show. They'll act like it's a contest but it's not. So, in 1948—never will forget it. He said, "Bud, I've come to take a show"—he later took one to Europe. But he said, "We're going to Arkansas. Got three dates there: Hot Springs, Arkadelphia, and Searcy." Why he settled on those three towns, I don't know. But we took chutes and everything. It was just like a carnival. You went in, you set up, you had your show.

AW:

So what kind of space would you take your chutes into?

BT:

I guess they'd—

AW:

Open land?

BT:

Parks right in town, because—I never will forget. Across the street was an alligator farm.

[laughter] One day the Amulet's came in—alligators don't bite your fingers off, they get a hold of it and circle like a saw and saw it off. They brought this guy out. I never will—because—so it was in kind of—and we stayed—this is good civil rights history, too, I can tell you. We—Bob—Jim Keck, he was a good roper, good little bronc rider, but not of professional class. It didn't matter to those people in Arkansas. [Laughter] So, I never will forget. I don't know where Jim and I got in the back of the tac pickup. There was saddles. You know how it smells. Saddles, flank straps, everything, was in the back of this pickup. We just—my gosh, it'd be against the law to ride that way. We had a negro clown, colored clown. Back in—I'm going to use the term we used then. You ought to do that in history. Don't use "African American" if you're talking about 1950. They were "colored," and before that, "negro." Not "nigger," but "negro." So, we had some rodeos later, all-colored rodeos. There was only two white men: Bobby Estes and myself. I would announce—but anyway, we were in—we were going into—went through the backwoods of—you know, no interstates, nothing. Unless they had something to hide, we went through this back country and Alex, this black man, he could sing just exactly like Gene Autry. He was known as Gene Autry's colored comedy bull fighter.

AW:

Gene Autry's colored—

BT:

Comedy bull fighter, yeah. He'd go to Madison Square—and he could imitate—

AW:

What was his name, again?

BT:

Alex, A-l-e-x, Alexander, A-l-e-x-a-n-d-e-r. This is quite a story. These are the stories that won't get into books, you know. I'll wait till Ivan comes back. He's like Joe Venuti now. [Laughter] Wouldn't you have loved to have seen that? That old boy looked down and saw his leg—but anyway, we were going through this back country in the back of this old pickup. I mean, it looked like a—where we went looked like a Grapes of Wrath movie. You go through these little, old burgs and there'd be a grocery store, filling station. We didn't call them service stations. It was filling stations. Maybe that's all there were, maybe one or two houses then you'd come to another—it was, I mean, in the woods. We were headed for Little Rock. So, we went through this one town—you want to cut it off and wait for Ivan or go ahead?

AW:

We can pause just for a second.

BT:

Yeah, pause it.

AW:

And we can talk about our schedule today while we pause it. [Pause in recording] All right, we got Ivan back.

BT:

So, we were going through these backwoods. I can remember it just like looking at the back of my hand. We went through this town. Oh, Carl King was driving the pickup—it was Bobby's pickup—and he had two whores with him—and Alex, all four of them in the front seat. Carl finally went to Huntsville over a drug rap. But anyway, that's aside from this. But we were going through this town and [imitates car brakes]. This little, old Ford car, a little—probably two-door, two-seated—pulled up this little policeman. This tells you how far we've come when they say, We haven't made any advancements. He pulled up. He was the maddest man I ever saw. I thought, What in—we hadn't done anything wrong, didn't have any whiskey or drugs or anything. We didn't know what drugs were. Boy, he got out of that car, kind of pulled over. It

was almost in the bar ditch, because you know how highways were then. He said, "Get out of that car." Gosh, he was mad. I thought it was because we had four in front. That's the law. You couldn't have four in the front. "Get out of there." I said—I didn't say it—somebody said, "What's wrong?" He said, "You've got that nigger in the front of this car with a white woman." In fact, she was a whore. It didn't make any difference. She could've been Marilyn Monroe or Bonnie and Clyde. "You've got that nigger riding in the front seat with a white woman." He made them get out. Oh, he dressed them down. So, Alex, the best-natured guy in the world, he just jumped in the back with us and we said, "This sure won't happen again, officer." So, we went on in to Little Rock. [Phone rings] So, Jim and I, we always—we didn't make the most money but we made enough. We stayed in the best hotels. There were some of those that back then they had their own hot springs, that's why called—where you could take a bath and this, that, and the other. That hotel had a wall here, wall here, and a wall here. We had an outside window in this thing. So, we was tired and we stayed in this hotel. There were two top-notch and it was one of them. This finally caught up with us later. We spent all of our money but we—we was trying—oh, it was hot. There's no such thing as air conditioning at that time. No hotel—maybe somewhere in the world but I never knew of them. Oh, it was hot so we had our windows open, Jim and I, sleeping in this bed. And I kind of woke up. I heard Gene Autry singing. I said, "Jim, you awake?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Is Gene Autry performing here tonight in the ballroom?" They had a ballroom. He said, "Not that I know of." I said, "I hear him singing." Well, the two whores and Carl and Alex had a room up there. I don't think Alex was staying there but they were up there drinking, and Alex got to singing like Gene Autry in this fancy hotel. Our phone rang and they said, Are you with that bunch that's up on eleventh floor or whatever that's making all the noise? They said, They've got the doors locked and we can't get in there. It's disturbing the whole—I said, "Well, we know them but we're not with them. I said, "We're with the rodeo here." I said, "I'm sorry about this." Well, the next morning—I don't know how Alex ever got out of there. Next morning we got on the elevator. Back in those days, you know, they had—you had somebody run the elevator. When they made—you ever ride one of those—they'd stop and just nearly tear your stomach up. So anyway, by the time we got—we saw people in wheelchairs. This was a convalescent place, in a way. We saw people—

AW:

Well Hot Springs, right?

BT:

In Hot Springs. We got to that lobby and, of course, the lobbies in those days were larger than my house. I mean, they were nice. People checking out that had lived there for years. They said, Listen, we're throwing you guys out of here. I said, "Well listen, we weren't in on that. We were in a certain room." Well, we convinced them that we were not part of the entertainment. So, we got to stay and they threw them out. So we had a rodeo at this Wild West show. I'm glad I got to do it so I could tell it for history. What we did, we only had—we had one guy who could

bulldog, Carl Bean. Never will forget his name. He and I got in trouble in Dallas. Carl Bean, Bobby might've ridden a bareback, I don't know, and Jim was the roper. No such thing as team roping or anything like that back then. So, the way we would do that, Andy, is I'd say, "Ladies and gentleman, here's Jim Keck from Nocona, Texas. He's won all over Texas." Jim would come and rope—he was a good roper. Then Jim would go back behind stage or whatever it was and change hats. Then we'd ride a bucking horse and then I'd say, "It's time to rope another calf." Jim would come back around this time with a black hat on. I'd say, "Here is Jiggs McEntire." Of course, when you call McEntire—Reba's dad, John McEntire—and I'd say, "He's from Okmulgee, Oklahoma." Next time I'd have him Buckeye or something. It was the same guy roping, you know. I'd say, "Kenny beat Jim Keck." Well, that's the way a Wild West show worked. Well, it was only one joker in the deck, and that was—people didn't come. I'll bet you we didn't have maybe in three days a hundred and fifty to two hundred people. They didn't come out. And I had an interesting experience with a woman there—girl. I met her down at Walgreens. That's how old Walgreens is. So, I asked her, "Would you like to go to the rodeo with me?" She was a fine-looking girl. You could tell she was a fine human being. So I said, "Bobby, young boy, you pick up—I've got a date. I'm going to go pick her up and bring her." Well, everything was all right until I put her in—and she was wearing Ben-Hur perfume. You remember that?

AW:

Ben-Hur perfume?

BT:

Ben-Hur, B-e-n—

AW:

That's what I meant.

BT:

It was the—you know what it was.

JC:

Yeah.

BT:

Oh my gosh. I was embarrassed to take her to the announcer's stand. She had—

AW:

So describe Ben-Hur perfume for us.



BT:

Ben-Hur was a perfume that had the strong—it was just—let's put it this way, it was for the ignorant, and the hillbillies. You marked yourself. If anybody came in the theater had been—their woman put on Ben-Hur perfume, you'd have to move and go to another part of the theater. So anyway, I took her back and that was the last date with her. I thought you might want to hear that one. Anyway, see what we would do with Alex. We finished the calf roping or whatever and I said, "Now ladies and gentleman, I want you to meet Gene Autry's Colored Comedy Bullfighter. You've seen him clowning but you've never heard him sing." He'd get up there and he'd—he had kind of freckles on his—thick lip and all and had his hat on. I said, "Alex, what are you going to sing for us?" [Singing] "I'm back in the saddle again." Boy, he could sing. [Singing] "You are my sunshine," and, "Tweedle O'Twill, puffing on corn silk." He could sing all of the Gene Autry songs and then he'd go down and fight bulls—by saying fight bulls, clowning. They didn't do it like they do today. Today they're acrobats and they'll jump over the bull's horns. They make the bull look silly. Back then, the great bullfighters made the bulls look ferocious. Alex would throw his hat right near the bull's head. Had that little clown hat. I'd say, "Alex, go get your hat." He'd get over here about where that statue is and he'd run back. He knew what he was going to do all along. Then he'd get a little closer and that old bull would blow his nose and he'd run. We'd do that for four or five minutes until—some people were standing because they wondered if that—and when he ran, those white teeth, and he wore white socks, just looked like lightning going across. So then finally when he'd get up near Alex, he'd run off, then finally grab the hat, run around and hold his hat. But that's the way he clowning. He and I have—we were good friends. He'd borrow money from me. He'd say, "Mr. Bud"—that's another thing. See, it came to me quickly. A black person, at that time, if it was a little girl, three years old, or a little boy, five, he could not say, "Johnny." He'd have to say, "Mr. Johnny." He'd have to say, "Ms. Aaron," or whatever. They actually were—you wouldn't believe the way, you know—you saw what I said about that policeman. One time he—they wanted me and Alex to come to an all-colored rodeo in Palestine, Texas. Is it *Palesteen* or *Palestine*? I've never known.

AW:

In Palestine it's *Palesteen*. In the mid-east it's *Palestine*.

BT:

Okay, *Palesteen* here. So we went—oh, it was about sixty, seventy miles. It was down there by Corsicana. He and I went together and I announced. They knew about us through Bobby's rodeo but Bob didn't have this one. I forget who had this one. So, we would work the show and went back. He stayed—when he was in the Fort Worth, he worked for Mr. Colburn and Gene Autry. Mr. Colburn stayed in the Blackstone. Remember the old Blackstone in Fort Worth? It was an elite hotel. Then in the back of it was a black hotel. It was called the Gem, G-e-m. So we got near Fort Worth. The next day we were going to have to open a rodeo at Olney, Texas; good show. We had—we knew we were going to have to drive all night. So Alex said to me, he said,

"Now Bud"—because he would—I'd already straightened him out on that." I said, "Alex, don't you call me Mr. Bud. You call me Bud when we're alone. Now if you're worried about other people, you call me anything you want to." I said, "I'm no better than you. You just say 'Bud.'" He said, "Bud, I've got to get—I need a shower; dirty." I knew what shower he was going to get, because that was a whorehouse. So, he frequented it all the time. He was bad about that. And sometimes we'd—my brother and I'd trick him. We'd let him get to a whorehouse and we'd—if we timed it about right—and we'd call him and said, "Hey, Gene Autry's in New York wanting to talk to Alex Alexander. Is he?"—"Yeah we'll get him." He'd run—that was our idea of fun. But anyway, he said, "I'm going to go up and take a bath." I knew what he was going to do. He'd say, "You eat anything you want here. I'll pay for it." I wasn't about to eat in that place. And it was clean but probably better—I've eaten in a lot worse. So, finally he came down. And he was always clean; had a nice shirt. Mr. Colburn would give him those hundred-dollar Stetson's when he was finished with them. I mean, a real—100 percent beaver. He dressed nice. He had the best crease in them. So we got in this—see, I had a 1949 Ford Coupe, and Mary and I kept it for a number of years after we married. We were going to Olney. I guess it's—today, highways and all, it's no drive at all but it's all-night deal. Well, at about three o'clock in the morning we'd be—and Alex would make fun of my car all the way. He said, "Bud, won't this thing go any faster?" I said, "No, forty-five miles an hour is about all I'm"—he said, "Putt, putt, putt, forty miles an hour. Putt, putt, putt." So, he'd turn on the radio. We'd have to listen for a while to—he'd find a black station with those preachers, you know, where they really preached. After they went off at about three, then this real black music started. Well, we might have to listen to Carter Family or Light Crust Doughboys early, but after midnight, then black music became respectable. It wasn't respectable while white people—

AW:

Before midnight.

BT:

Yeah. It tells you another thing—and this all was coming out of, [imitation radio voice] "XEXO Del Rio, Texas, by the beautiful Rio Grande." They were fifty-thousand watts. They'd water the tower down and it could be a hundred and fifty-thousand. It'd go all the way Japan nearly. We couldn't do that in this country. But anyway, at about three o'clock this music—you talk about wild music. There was enough Bob Wills in it that I liked it, but it was—so years later, my kids said, "Dad, we want you to hear this music. It's brand new," some rhythm and blues and or something. I said, "New? My gosh, Alex and I used to listen to that all night." But it had not come out into the open, you see, by this time. So at about daylight we got into Olney. I had a place I stayed and I don't know where Alex went. That got me into the rodeo business and I stayed with Bobby Estes until 19—I'm going to say '53, maybe '54. Anyway, Cal Farley called me. Cal cost me my job. Cal called me and said he wanted me—I was well-known. He'd heard about me and said, "I want you to come and announce my rodeo." They had it at the baseball



park then. So I said, "It's a long way out there just for a day or two." I gave him a good price, pretty high price. But I said, "I can't be there Saturday night." It was Saturday, Sunday and Monday; Labor Day. Three days. It was the year that Roy Rogers gave boots to the kids. *RRR* meant both Boys Ranch and Roy Rogers. So we were in Gainesville. We had Gainesville every fall. So, it was beginning to thunder. We'd missed the rain a couple of days. So it began to rain. I had put a slicker over my sound system and everything. Bobby said, "You announce now, Bud. We will not—this is the last—we'll have the final performance tomorrow." It was down where they used to have—you all won't remember it. Gainesville used to have what was called a Gainesville Community Circus, where the whole town would travel with it and they had their own clowns. Good circus. So he said, "Tell them that we'll have this rodeo tomorrow." I said, "Bobby, I can't be here tomorrow." He said, "What?" I said, "Yes, I can't be here tomorrow. I promised Cal Farley I'd announce his rodeo. John's announcing it tonight, my brother. I've got to go out there at that Boy's Ranch." He said, "If you go, you're fired. You'll never announce another rodeo for me as long as you live." I said, "Well Bobby, we've sure gotten along well these years and I'll hate to leave you, but when it's over, I'm heading for Amarillo." So I got in here about time to get an hour or two sleep. My brother was staying where that downtown library is, public library, just a stone's throw from the civic center. It's called the Capitol Hotel. I was staying at the Herring. I never will forget they had a fountain. It was a luxury hotel at that time. So, we went out to the fairgrounds and they were satisfied that John had held the show together. He was just a kid. I wasn't very old myself. I had married by this time so I was twenty, twenty-one. I don't believe Bill had come along so it had to be about 1950 maybe, or maybe he had but it doesn't matter. So anyway, I went out and I got—met Cal Farley. Wouldn't take anything in the world for having met him. I never will forget how he was dressed. He had on a pair of khaki pants, and a white shirt, a wristwatch. He didn't even look like he was dressed for his own rodeo. He was a hustler. So, we had the rodeo out there at the fairgrounds. He's also—he was always smart. It's no wonder he did what he did. He said, "Tomorrow I want all of you from the rodeo"—Beutler Brothers had brought the stock but I don't think they had come. They sent some of their people. And Beutler's sent their stock to that rodeo for many years free.

AW:  
Really?

BT:  
Yes. "Want you to come out and have dinner with the boys tomorrow, Labor Day." I guess we were going to have the show later. I don't think it was a night show, could've been. But anyway, we went out and we ate with them. I never will forget. Dobbs had sent me—Dobbs used to send me two hats every year: a hundred dollar silver belly—got some up there I've never wore—and a Snow White one, about fifty dollar. Snow White, that was my announcing hat. It's out here. So, I had—they had just sent me a forty dollar Dobbs. I'd advertise. I'd say, "The cowboy's pulling down his Dobbs hat." I've got some letters from—they really like me at Dobbs. Dobbs Fifth

Avenue, that's what they called their hats. A beautiful box, black and yellow. So, a kid came—kid was sixteen, seventeen, maybe eighteen. Nice looking kid. You know, then, most of those kids were delinquents, juvenile delinquents. I said—he said, "I'll hang your hat up for you." He looked at. He said, "That's the most beautiful hat I believe I ever saw." He went over and hung it up. Then, the dining hall was pier and beam and chicken wire around it; screened in all the way around. Good food. This boy—I noticed the boy went back and looked at that hat. So, it began to work on me then. Somebody came and said, "The kid waiting on you, killed his daddy with a butcher knife." He said, "His daddy was beating his mother to death. He grabbed a butcher knife and killed his daddy." He said, "He's one of our model students out here now." Well, we ate. The old kid went over and got that hat. I was already under conviction that I had so many hats, and that kid loved that hat so much. How was I going to walk out of here with that hat on? So he brought me my hat. I was still trying to decide. A forty dollar hat was an expensive hat then. So he walked with me to the door, I turned around and I said, "Here," and I gave him that hat. I wonder what ever happened to that hat and whatever happened to that kid, but I'll tell you one thing, I was glad I gave him that hat. But that was when I left Bobby. Then I needed some shows. The big ones were up north in the northwest so I decided to go—[clears throat] I'd been—worked with Kajun Kid. [clears throat] He was very famous at Madison Square Garden. So he was going to come by. I guess we were living in Henrietta then. He came by and we got—I bought me a new ranch wagon. They looked like a station wagon but it only had two doors. So he and I got—and we went to the rodeo—back then we called it the RCA Convention, Rodeo Cowboys Association Convention. All the committees came, all of the rodeo producers that do the hiring—that's where you book your shows. And it was in the Brown Palace Hotel, named for Brown, Molly Brown. So, I booked two or three shows. Of course, I was new up there. That was the beginning of going to some really good rodeos because the next year I booked old Mac Washington, Deb Copenhaver's Diamond Spur rodeo at Spokane, Walla Walla, Washington, which was part of the big four. Lewiston, Walla Walla, Ellensburg, and Pendleton were the big four. I got to do one of them. Then they booked me for the State Fair of California at Sacramento. Cotton Rosser had that show. I began to work these—but travel a lot: St. George, Utah, Gooding, Idaho, Rupert, Idaho, and all of those—and one of my favorite places was Utah State there. Good football team there. Logan, Utah. Boy, those Mormons are strict on announcers and whatever. Ken Bowen was clowning when I went to Logan. It was a real Mormon town. They had a place there called the Blue Bird Café that made the—nobody can fix a rainbow trout like people in Idaho. So, we went up there. And Ken Bowen, he was a Baptist preacher. Huge man. Bulldogger. Won Madison Square Garden and all. He was the clown. He was an old gag we used for years. I learned you better be careful up there. So, you could see where our horses pooped or cow. [Clears throat and coughs] I'd say, "Ken, one of the boys said he dropped his billfold out there and would you pick it up?" Well, he'd reach down like—he stuck his hand in that cow poop and he'd shake his hand off. The people would laugh. [Coughs] I never will forget that. Several men of the rodeo said, "You can go do business with him." Well dressed. Gentleman. I thought he was coming by to tell me what a great job I did. [laughter] He said, "I

want to see you.” I said, “Yes, sir.” He said, “And I want to see that clown.” [Coughs] Pardon me for this coughing. We went out behind chutes and he said, “Listen, we don’t like this rough stuff here.” [Phone rings] Rough stuff? We hadn’t told even a joke that’d be close to bad. I said, “What do you mean?” He said, “Reaching your hand in that cow poop and shaking it. We don’t go”—I mean, you couldn’t do anything. But they were great people.

AW:

Rough stuff.

BT:

I told them, I said, “I’ve noticed something”—

MG:

You’re talking about this and I’ve got to go to the bathroom again. [Phone rings]

BT:

—“About this town.” I said—I learned a lot about them. I worked a good many Mormon towns. I said, “I noticed that you people are all rather affluent.” I said, “You have good homes.” Cleanest town I—they swept—there was a little stream that came through town and they swept the streets every day. I mean, they was as clean as this floor. I said, “Why is that you people do so well financially.” He said, “Listen, I’ve got two boys that I’m going to have to send as missionaries. I’ve got to have a good bit of money.” So, I learned a lot about [clears throat] them there. [coughs] I didn’t say, “Them there boys.” I learned about them—

AW:

While you were there.

BT:

Yeah, while I was there. But anyway, that was—then my—I spread out then and by the next year I was working some all-girl rodeos.

AW:

All-girl rodeos?

BT:

Yes.

AW:

Were there very many of those?

BT:

Yes. There was a good little circuit. Not anything—not as much money. Same way that women have always been treated, not as much money, you know, in girls' basketball as there is the men. But it's understandable in a way. They don't get the crowds, they don't get television audience. But no. And they didn't draw the crowds either.

AW:

Where would they have these?

BT:

They had them all over Texas. The biggest one I ever announced was State Fair of Texas. We had one grandstand that would hold ten-thousand and I worked the show there. I told them I don't like using my own sound system. I said, "I prefer to use"—they said, "How many horns you got?" I said, "Two." They said, We're going to have ten-thousand in this grandstand and you think one university trumpet will take it?" I said, "I promise you it will." So I put that speaker up and went over here, because you'd have some cars. This was the State Fair of Texas. They couldn't believe it. I handled the State Fair of Texas, ten-thousand in one grandstand with one horn. But the all-girl shows—Burr Andrews. I worked a show or two for him. He lived in Clarksville, Texas. His son's a producer now, Sammy Andrews. It was some people down in Clarksville, Texas. I know how I got in with Burr. Bobby didn't get the show—I was still working for Bobby. My uncle was one of the arena directors and he called and said, "Bud, could you announce Chisholm Trail Roundup in Nocona on Labor Day?" I said, "Yeah. I'd love to. It's my hometown." So they built an arena. It was just a touch of class. The best cowboys in the world came there and they had Burr Andrews' stock. I couldn't figure out why they didn't get Bobby, but he had good stock. Wasn't a question of quality but it was a long way down there. So Burr liked me. That bunch in Clarksville had kind of a rough name. Only way he stayed in the rodeo business, his dad owned so much oil down there in one of those East Texas fields that it was named Andrews Oil Field, so money was nothing. He said, "What would it cost you for three days?" I told him. "Four days?" I told him. He said, "Well, I want you to come up and announce one at Osage Beach, Missouri, all-girl rodeo." It was just outside of Camdenton. The girls, they rode bareback horses, they rode bulls, they roped, I guess they bulldogged. They didn't ride saddle broncs. That was the cream of the crop, when we had Jackie Worthington and some girls from California. So, Burr said, "Bud, I've got three shows, the Fair Circuit in the Carolinas, and I would like for you to announce them." He said, "We'll open in Shelby, North Carolina," named after the famous general. "We'll go from there to Charlotte. We'll go from there to Raleigh." Well, I was going to start—I was going to become a Baptist preacher at the time and wanted to go to college. I really had to give up my Wild West days.

AW:

I guess Sally Rand was no more on your—



BT:

Sally Rand had lost her fan, yeah. So, I knew I needed some money to go to school if I could get through my first year, so I borrowed from old Tony Fulnoleo [1:54:01], the guy I told you that got me the announcing job the first time. He had an old trailer that looked like something that came out of *Alias Smith and Jones*, that old cowboy movie. I mean, looked like one of those old railroad cars. So I said, "Tony, could I rent that from you? I'm going to go"—he said, "Just take it. It won't cost you a thing." We finally got a hitch on our car. I don't remember even what I had. We had it for—oh, we went to Benton, where Walmart's headquarters is. We had a rodeo in Benton, then we had one in Jonesborough, then a few—then we headed for Shelby. I'd never been to that country. These guys—Kidman told me how bad Mount Eagle was going to be. That's the one you got to go over before you get in to Chattanooga. Then we went on down—and Mary was pregnant with the twins. Poor Mary. We're out on top of Mount Eagle and she says, "Bud, I've got to go to the bathroom." So we stopped. We had a little deal with us all. She got out, didn't make any difference with trucks coming by and everything. And we slept that night, I think on Mount Eagle. I just stretched out. Well, we had our trailer. Why didn't we sleep back there? But I don't know why we didn't. But anyway, we went on down into Georgia and circled back. I never will forget going through Greenville, South Carolina on our way. This was new territory for me in so many ways. I saw this university, Bobby Jones University. I said, "Well isn't that wonderful?" I'd played a lot of golf and knew Bobby Jones was the great golfer. Don't you know, he was always an amateur. You remember him? But it wasn't by Bobby Jones, it was Bobby Jones the evangelist. There was some scandals about that thing. But then we finally made it to Shelby, one of the cutest, neatest little towns I ever saw. We naturally went to church. The guy that was the manager of the fairs was Doc Dorman. He controlled that—and fairs over there are as big as the stock show in Fort Worth. I mean, it's a big deal. Fairs are in—in that Southeast. We went to the Baptist church there that day. It was just the neatest little town and church. I got to meet Doc Dorman. So then our next spot—now this is really—and you wouldn't believe this was Charlotte, North Carolina, one of the big cities of the world now. It was a little country town. We could drive from where we had our trailer down to the First Baptist Church. It was a round church. And Bates—can't think of his—who had been pastor of First Baptist Church Amarillo, Carl Bates. He was pastor there. But I knew nothing about—and that's when Dr. Moore took his spot. So that's the story of that. But anyway, they had a huge grandstand and a fairgrounds that was just beautiful. They could play baseball on it, football, whatever. So, this was the biggie. No, Raleigh would be the State Fair, but this was a big deal. So, the guy that owned the Fairs Circuit was the man who started the boardwalk, Hamid, George A. Hamid. When Buffalo Bill took his Wild West show to Europe and to Africa, he was—he's an Arab. He was a bareback rider, fancy rider. So Buffalo Bill hired him and wanted to bring him back to the United States. George A. Hamid, H-a-m-i-d. Over there at the fairs, they had a press party and invited all of the press in the Charlotte area and they wine and dined them. Hamid himself showed up. He owned the Rockettes; Radio City. I mean, he was the largest theatrical booking agent in the world. Here he came. He was a little, short guy. But when he came through that



crowd that night, it was like the King of England had come through there. He made a little speech. And I got to see George A. Hamid. But what was really great, his cousin had the orchestra that played the rodeo. They had the arena here and a big platform or stage where they could have stage shows. Well, this was the fringe benefit, the Rockettes came to perform at that rodeo. So we had three shows a night. "We'll just say tonight the Rockettes go first; hour and a half." Kochman's Hell Drivers. That's where we got—NASCAR came out of that and our rodeo. Well, the next night, we went at eight, Rockettes went at eleven. Many of times I managed a rodeo there after midnight. That's the first time I ever saw—you remember when it came out years ago, the dancing waters? They would premiere in the—

AW:

Really?

BT:

So, we would have a—and that band would play and I got—I talked to Hamid. That's how I learned so much about his famous cousin. He told me, he said, "Annie Oakley was on that show with Buffalo Bill when we went to work for Buffalo Bill. Annie Oakley taught me and George to read and write. When we came back to United States, Annie Oakley took us for citizenship. She was there when they swore us in." Well, we had our trailer somewhere. I don't know where we had it, some trailer park. So, I'd pull in on the far side of this baseball field, pull up as close as I could. See, this stage, underneath it was dressing rooms. They had Broadway shows or whatever there. To get to the stage, I had to go through the dressing rooms. There'd be a Rockette here and here. There'd be an old gal—she'd come out and say, "Well Bud, you're going to ride a bronc?" She was pulling her hose [pantyhose] up or whatever. I said, "This is a fringe benefit that I got to watch the Rockettes dress and they didn't think anything about it. So I'd say, "Well I'll try." I said, "You girls going to"—and they were just like anybody. "Bud, you're going to ride a bronc tonight?" They learned who I was and I'd go up and then I'd announce on that stage. Then we went from there to the State Fair of North Carolina. The Rockettes had been performing there for thirty-six years and nobody had ever come close to drawing as many as the Rockettes. Our rodeo was to be a five-day show. Inside their new coliseum that had—it was green glass and they had cables that came down and had long springs so if a hurricane came, the thing would rock. You see what I mean?

AW:

Um-hm.

BT:

And wouldn't tear it down. So we—oh, our show. We had John Lindsey and we had Kajun Kid. [clears throat] We had J.W. Stoker. We had somebody we brought in to play the music. I mean, it was a big deal. And then the Rockettes performed down at the silky track. Silky racing is a big

deal there. I'd never seen it. In fact, Mary and I got in with the guy that started them. He said, "I want you to come down here sometime, Bud." I'd had him come to the rodeo. He said, "I want you to ride, you and Mary to ride, and we'll start a race." He had the convertible. They had a long thing, as long as from here—not quite across this room—from where you're sitting to the wall—fins about that size on the side of that convertible, white convertible. He'd press a button and it'd go back. They put all the silky horses behind it. When they got ready to start, he'd take off. When they got to the right speed, he pressed the button, this came and he got out of the way. But I got to do that. But I was going to tell you this. We broke all records. We had so many people come to our rodeo that we had to have three days. Boy that was good. I sure needed that money. We had an eighth performance. I know it broke Hamid's heart. We were the first group to ever outdraw the Rockettes. While I was there, somebody wanted me to come to Mobile to announce a rodeo so I went down and came back. Then we went to Nashville. It was our last show. Ten performances in Nashville. All Grand Ole Opry stars were there each night. We just had a great—then, after that was—and I camped right on the little river that went through the fairgrounds. It was the old wooden fairgrounds; finally burned. My brother was later the manager of that fair. But I'd go down there to the stable and they had this old colored man. He looked after them, stayed there and slept. I said, "Boy, this is a dude outfit, isn't it? What kind of—how do you ride these kind of things?" You know, just kidding him. He was kidding me about the rodeo and everything. But he was—he lived down there and took care of that stable and the horses. Rich people had those horses, you know. It was a big deal. There was people that could've bought that rodeo and never miss the money. So he said, "Now I'll tell you what, Bud," or Mr. Townsend, whatever he called me. He said, "I'm tired of you talking about us being dude's with these horses." He said, "I'm not supposed to do it, but you come down here," he said so and so, "get here real early where we'll know nobody's going to be here to see you. I'm going to saddle one of these Tennessee Walking Horses," that's what they were. "We'll see how you do." I got up on that thing—and I'd ridden a lot of horses but what they do is they kind of—they're stout. The way they move their head, that bit, and those reigns, I thought, My gosh, he's going to pull me over forward. He took off around that track and, I mean, he went. When I got back, that black man said, "Now what do you think?" I said, "Get me off of this thing." I said, "I'm wore out." I nearly fell down. My knees were so weak. It really takes something to ride those. But anyway, we left there then and I came back to Henrietta—no, Nocona. We were living in Nocona then. I'd just left Nocona Boot Company. I'd drive sixty miles to Decatur Baptist College, sixty miles back five days a week. That's how I started. So, if this is a good place to stop.

AW:

I was thinking that very thing. Before we stop, tell me what year was it that you were there in Nashville and beat the record for running—

BT:

I can tell you exactly. I can tell you exactly when it was because I know when I started the college. It was in the fall—this would've—I would've been—the show would've been in October, or maybe mid-October. Gosh, you know, little Jimmy Dickens came out, Porter Waggoner came out. They just all came and we put them on the announcer stand. But anyway, it was in October 1955. Then, the reason I know, Decatur College was on a quarter system. Three months—November, December, then January, February, March, March, April, May. See, you've got three sections. So I went home and started in the fall session of Decatur College in 1955. I stayed there—well, we can go from there.

AW:

This is a good place to take a break and debate our lunch plans.

BT:

Yeah.

AW:

Great. Thanks.

BT:

Now today I'm going to eat something here. Tomorrow, though, I'm going to take you guys—you're going to be here tomorrow?

AW:

Um-hm.

BT:

I'll take you to Lions Club and take you too, if you're here. We'll all go to the Lions Club and fill it up.

IC:

We've got our Parkinson and yoga, if you can believe it. Yoga meeting

BT:

I've heard good—

MG:

Teach you how to get your foot out from behind your head.

BT:

I've heard of Yoga, but he wasn't a good bronc rider, I can tell you that.

AW:

I would pay money to watch Ivan do yoga.

BT:

Yeah, that'd be something.

JC:

He sits in a chair. It's for Parkinson people. He sits in a chair.

BT:

It's in Lubbock, isn't it?

JC:

No, it's here in Amarillo. He just stretches.

AW:

No, it's good. I've got—

BT:

Y'all can come back this afternoon.

JC:

Yeah if he wants to.

AW:

All right. We're going to take a break. [Pause in recording] This is Andy Wilkinson back with Dr. Townsend, and Ivan and Judy Cates, and Michael Grower. It's still the third of April. We were just talking about El Bracero at Bell and 34<sup>th</sup> Street.

BT:

It's across from—

AW:

It's now on my list.

BT:

—Hobby Lobby.

AW:

I was just there yesterday, nearby.

BT:

I like to go in there and just order one quail, one lamb chop and charro beans.

AW:

Gosh that's great.

JC:

I do not like lamb chops. Ivan loves them and I'm just—

AW:

I do too. I love them.

BT:

You know there's a world—

JC:

I can't stand the smell of them.

BT:

You know what? Mary's father—I don't believe it anymore—eating one of those and he wouldn't eat anything. He was a cow man and that was it. I discovered them in Monte Vista, Colorado. We had a rodeo there called the Sky High Stampede. I happened to go to the Safeway. They still had a lot of Safeway's then. I went out and I saw these lamb chops and I thought—it didn't worry me what they were called but it looked like they would grill so well, so I bought some and took them back to the RV. To me, a good lamb chop tastes like aged beef. That's the way—

AW:

It's real moist.

BT:

Yeah, and really good on a grill. I'll tell you what I like. We got these—Mary and I spent so much time on that Navajo reservation. We like mutton stew. Oh boy is it good. Get you some fry bread and mutton stew.



AW:

I got indoctrinated to lamb and got to really develop a taste for it going up to a cowboy gathering in Elko eating at the Basque restaurants. Man, I'll tell you, they really did—

BT:

Is there one in Elko? There's one in Bakersfield.

AW:

There were half a dozen at one time. There's not as many now as there once were.

BT:

Do they bring you that big old bowl of soup?

AW:

Yeah, cabbage soup.

IC:

Spanish Basque.

MG:

Basques, yeah.

IC:

Herders.

AW:

Yeah, the sheep herders. Yeah, that cabbage soup, I love it. Big plates of spaghetti. And you could get ox tail, which I love dearly and you couldn't—that's about the only place you could find it, except we've got a soul food restaurant in Lubbock now that will fix ox tail.

MG:

We've got one.

JC:

We've got one on—

MG:

Delvin's up on Hughes, north Hughes.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Delvin's Restaurant, 1300 N Hughes in Amarillo

BT:

I've got one right around the corner there in this house. [Laughter]

MG:

Ox tail soup?

BT:

Yeah.

AW:

I love it.

MG:

You know, I tried to cook cow tongue—beef tongue one time. I must've cooked that for twelve hours. It still tasted like a tire.

BT:

I'll tell you how much Mary and I love—

JC:

Did you slice the—

MG:

I tried everything.

BT:

We had eaten Basque food in—it's a place called Wool Growers in Bakersfield. So we went out for some autograph parties when the book came out. It was about nine-thirty in the morning. We got up in Los Angeles and we was going home and I said, "Mary, let's go to Bakersfield and have lunch." Can you imagine? "You should've been going"—we went down. That's how much we loved it and we went back down to Bakersfield. I've never been back but, oh, those people can cook.

AW:

We just love it—or I just love it. It's one of the things I look forward to when I go out there. A lot of Basque people in that town. Most of them now are miners, they're not working out on ranges anymore. At lunch Ivan was telling us about a race from Nocona to San Francisco. We figured you might know—

BT:

I was there when the gun went off.

MG:

Don't start the recorder. I've got to slip out at three-thirty, and I'm sorry because I got a meeting over here at four o'clock. I'm going to slip out quietly because I don't want to interrupt the flow.

AW:

Are you coming back over?

MG:

Tomorrow.

AW:

But not today?

MG:

No, no, I can't. We're going to go till—how long are we going to go today, about four?

AW:

Yeah, four or five. Did you want to go out and eat or something tonight?

MG:

I can't.

AW:

Okay. Just checking.

BT:

El Bracero's open. [Laughter]

AW:

Well, we got the recorder going but I want to hear this—Ivan was telling us about—in fact, if you want to—the two of you discuss this.

IC:

That was 1939. Dawson [?] [2:14:23], he and Justin cooked up that deal. They called it the Pony Express Race but it was actually on the old Butterfield Trail, riding from Nocona to San Francisco. My great-uncle George Cates rode in that. You mentioned Chris Uselton a while ago. He was in it.

BT:

Somebody ran in and crippled the horse or he'd have won it.

IC:

That's right. But you probably remember it real well. I think Amon Carter was the guy that fired the pistol.

BT:

Did he come?

IC:

Right.

BT:

I was too little but I was there across the street at Justin Leather Goods. Nocona Boot Company's on Main Street nearly down to the railroad but not a hundred yards. The old Nocona Boot Company was there. They've got a boot company there now called Montague County Boot Company. Oh my, that was a crowd. There was a lot of pictures to be had. So, we went up—Daddy was alive then. No, now well, let's see. I don't believe it was '39. I believe it was before '39 but you may be right. It seemed like my dad died in '38. But anyway, we was across there and they brought all of these—these horses were prancing around. I don't know how many were in it, how many riders. I'd say maybe forty, maybe not that many. We were all across the street. Then I knew somebody fired the gun. I said I was there when they fired the gun. It was Amon. Then they took off right across the rail—old MKT, Missouri-Kansas-Texas, and then they headed up to Ringo, Henrietta, Wichita Falls and I guess out through Amarillo. They may have gone south. No, they wouldn't have going to San Francisco. So they must've come through here. Oh, we got reports on it every day and it was on national news. Chris Uselton, of course, was close to our family. He and Uncle Buck directed rodeos. He married into the Crenshaw family, where they had those rodeos. I remember one thing there, as an aside—and I'll come back to it—I was there—well, our family. We were close to the Crenshaw's. Pookin [?] [2:17:03] was where they got that name. Pookin [2:17:05] Crenshaw. He was the old gentleman. He had about eight or nine kids. They had this big ranch on the rodeo grounds, and the big home. What was his wife's name? She was friends with my mother. So, I was there when Louis Ikard, which is a famous ranching family in Henrietta. His son was the first Secretary of Energy. Frank Ikard. And Congressman. Anyway, Louis Ikard. He was a little, short guy. High-heeled boots. I knew him then later at Olsen-Stelzer. He was a stock holder. He came up there to kill the cattle. See, that was before that horse race. I never will forget, he had his pistol. He'd go out and there'd be a beautiful white-faced cow. Everything was white-faced then. He'd take that pistol and shoot them in the head. We had barbeque there as long as—see, we didn't have electricity out there so you had to eat it pretty quick.

AW:

This was the—killing the cattle—

BT:

Franklin Roosevelt. That would've been, what, '35 or '36. In two or three days, you could see those big, old cows and bulls and all had swollen that big, just as far as the eye could see. And Chris Uselton married their daughter. She may have died. She was in her nineties. But that's where Chris got with the Crenshaw family. But then on that horse race, we'd hear news—the Crenshaw's were nearly all drinkers or drunkards. Some of them—nearly all drinkers. Some non-drinkers, some drinkers and some drunks. And I loved them. They were fun people. Lee Crenshaw, he was about the drinkingest one of them. He went with his brother-in-law, Chris, as a groom or whatever they—then they pulled a trailer along behind them. You may know more about that than I do. But they'd have two horses and they'd go so many miles then they'd have to stop. Do you remember who won?

IC:

Shannon Davidson from Matador.

BT:

That's right. The reason I knew is my Uncle Fred Keck, that's my mother's brother, was a wolf hunter. He said, "I've got this bitch and she's going to have these pups. Here's a good one. Whoever wins that race, I'm going to name this dog for him," so he named him Shannon Davis. As long as I can remember, he called him Old Shan. But Shannon Davis won it. Of course, they went across the Golden Gate Bridge. They called it the Pot of Gold, and it was a thousand silver dollars for whoever won. Boy, that was a lot of money then.

IC:

That'd be quite a bit of weight, too, wouldn't it?

BT:

Yes. So Enid was there. It was a big deal for Enid, for Nocona Boot Company. Let's see, '38 or '39, whatever it was. I know my dad was there so I don't believe it was '37—'39, because he died in July of '38. But gosh, what a mob there was in Nocona that day. Enid went out—and later I worked for Enid and knew her real well, her brother's too. They're the ones that—the four brothers started Justin Leather Boot Company that's still going today.

IC:

I remember, too, H Reed's dad was one of the riders. Got a picture of Enid Justin where she made a pair of boots for each contestant and a pair of chaps.



BT:

Oh she did?

IC:

I've got a picture of H Reed. They were measuring the cowboy's—the rider's feet. One of them was—H Reed's dad rode in it. I don't know if he got to finish or not but he was another one of the kind of famous names—or well-known names that rode in it.

BT:

Michael, it seems to me there's a sure master's thesis in that for somebody, maybe a doctor's dissertation.

MG:

I would think so.

BT:

Yes. I think that's really good history. There'd be some—

AW:

Maybe a nice movie.

BT:

Yes it would.

MG:

It'd make a great movie.

BT:

It would. Throw in a little violence, and sex, bad words and you got a modern movie.

MG:

And a fiddle player somewhere in there.

BT:

You know, that would—boy, it'd be a nice thing. They had good horses. I forget—Shannon Davis had a cold-blooded horse but some people said that was one reason he won. He had this sure good, you know, big-boned kind of horse. But that was—that was an event for just a little, old town like Nocona.

IC:

There's a picture too of—I got one of Chris Uselton. One of his horses looked like a big, old—maybe a Blue Roan, big kind of stocky-legged. Big stout looking horse. I can't—I don't think I ever saw a picture of the other horse he had. One of the horses that my great-uncle George rode was—the Pitchfork Ranch loaned it to him. He was a big, gray horse.

BT:

Uncle George who?

IC:

Cates.

BT:

He rode it?

IC:

Great-uncle George. But Pitchfork gave him a—called him Gray Eagle, I think, or Pitchfork Boy. He was a tough horse. Of course, that's what they needed: something with good feet and stamina.

BT:

See, you know, you could get into what they fed them, you get into did they take a ferry or a long, how many times did they change shoes. But there ought to be some pictures of Old Shan down in, what'd you say, Crowl [?] [2:24:09]? Shannon Davis.

IC:

He was from Matador. I think he even—after that race, he got to go to Hollywood. Was in some extra—you know, those big westerns. He was a handsome—man, he was a Hollywood-handsome type of guy. Of course, my great-uncle was. He was thirty-five and divorced. So when word got around, he said, "I'm not tied down," so he just more or less entered it to have something to do. But that Shannon Davis, he died in some kind of an accident just a few years after that, some kind of a fire explosion and died from his injuries just a few years after that race.

BT:

That'd be a good thing for you researchers to do, is go to Matador and see who's around that would have known where the pictures are.

AW:

You know, Mary Sue Potts—do you know Mary Sue? She would be a good person to let us know what they have still available down there [coughs] in Matador.

BT:

I doubt if there'd be too many people. See, I doubt if there'd be very many people alive in Nocona who could remember it.

MG:

The Matador Archives is down with y'all.

AW:

Yeah, the ranch. But Mary Sue's got the—she's, I think—

MG:

She's got the county museum.

AW:

Yeah. That's where I think you might see some photographs.

IC:

Did she write a little, thin book on that too?

AW:

On the race? I don't know. I'm going to ask her. I've got to go down and see her.

IC:

I think I've—

AW:

Because you said you had seen something, Michael.

MG:

I'd seen something somewhere.

AW:

Anyway.

BT:

You know, I wonder if—I've got a book out here. I'll check and see if there might be that picture of that Nocona in that book; Amon. It's that thick.

AW:

Amon with an exclamation point. Is that the title, *Amon*!/?

BT:

I don't remember. I think it's just *Amon*. It is a—Leon Rausch found it for me for Bob Wills. I learned about it so I called him and he went out to TCU library book store and bought it for me. *Amon*. You talk about a character. You know, American Airlines started here and he wouldn't rest till he got it to Fort Worth. He said, "Why are you out there?" He wrote a letter to somebody here—well, to American Airlines. He said, "Why would you be in a town like Amarillo?" He said, "They won't even fix a flat there." He said, "If you move down here, we'll change them on Sunday. [Laughter]

AW:

He cast a long shadow. I one time asked the folks at the Amon Carter why they hadn't done Frank Ray show and they said, "Well, Mr. Carter never liked Mr. Ray because he was from Dallas." [Laughter]

BT:

You know, he wouldn't eat over there. If he went over there for a meeting, he'd take a sack lunch. He would not eat—and anything he bought in Fort Worth. Then he got his counterpart. What's that big avenue named over there in Fort—in Dallas? They would—you know, it was part of their show to put each other down at banquets and whatever. You know, one time, Harry Truman came to Dallas. Boy, Carter was big in the Democratic Party. He and Will Rogers would go together to the convention. And he helped get Roosevelt elected naturally with FFW, FAA and the WBAP—not WFAA—WBAP and Star Telegram. So, Truman came to Dallas. Well it made him about half mad. I think he spent the night there. So his train was going to go to Houston, Austin, San Antonio. So he came through Fort Worth. It was an insult if Truman stayed at Dallas overnight and wouldn't stay in Fort Worth. Truman say, "Amon"—you know, he had a stagecoach and they'd have a hold up and a shooting. It was the darndest thing when a big shot came to—Carter put it on the top shelf. So, Truman came. He told him, "No way, Amon. I can stay.", "Well, I understand." So he went in too late. They kept him up late, probably drinking and everything else. He went into his presidential car. So Carter just told the railroad, "Disconnect his car." [Laughter] So the President woke up in Fort Worth. I mean, he was fearless of him. Truman didn't scare him any worse. So many things that Amon did. He was just—he made that town, let's face it.

AW:

He did. In some ways, he made Texas.

BT:

You know, he was one of the big men that started Pan Am [**Pan American**] Airlines. There was no—nothing like that. He and Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney, whom I knew at Saratoga Race Course. And maybe Hughes was in on it. I'm not sure but there's four, five, six of them that formed that. I guess it was Pan Am that was the first passenger transcontinental. But they started that Pan Am. He was a go-getter. They don't make men like him anymore. Oh, and he's the one that built that coliseum. He said—oh, see, he was going to have his Cavalcade of the West, but he needed a place for a rodeo. So, he got—I've seen the letters. He wrote Roosevelt and said, "I need this coliseum in memory of our old friend"—see, it was just—Will Rogers had only been dead a year. He said, "In memory of our old friend Will Rogers." Roosevelt wrote him back kind of like he was kind of flippant. Well he wouldn't stop. He kept writing him. As I recall, a man named Farley was Secretary of Agriculture. So the way they was going to get around it was that it's going to be a show barn for cattle and agriculture. So finally Carter stayed after Roosevelt so long until Roosevelt wrote a letter to Farley and said, "Dear Farley, go ahead and build that damn cow barn for Amon." That's how they built that Will Rogers coliseum. Of course, you had to have Will Rogers and so forth and so on. And a little bit of West Texas in that. They had to have a statue of Will Rogers. So they got W.T. Waggoner's daughter, Electra Waggoner, to do the statue. She's the one who did it at Tech. Oh, and she's the one who did the big one at Cody [Claremore] [2:32:43]. You know that. You've been up there and seen it. So, she was—I'll tell you who knew her real, was Oliver's Saddlemaker's mother. I used to visit with her about it. And, you know, General Motors then brought out a car named for her, the Buick Electra, was for Electra Waggoner.

AW:

I didn't know it was named for her.

BT:

Yeah. The town of Electra, too, is named for her. But the Buick Electra. They made it until a few years ago. Interesting, isn't it?

AW:

Yeah.

BT:

That's when Texas was big.

AW:

One of the things that was—when we were having our talk over lunch—was in this morning's conversation, you mentioned several times you were working for Nocona at the time when you were doing these rodeos that you were announcing.



BT:  
Yeah.

AW:  
Did you work for Nocona before Owen Stelzer?

BT:  
Before Olsen-Stelzer?

AW:  
Yeah.

BT:  
No. What happened was—I'll use Enid's words. I've got this—it's at Tech—this interview. I went by to interview Enid. Of course, I talked to her. Mary and I would go to her house. She was a lonely woman. Mary and I would go to her house. She had a Cadillac and had a stainless steel boot right through the hood of the car, about that size, on her Cadillac. But anyway, she said—she was a little girl when Mr. Justin, H.J., when they moved there, they came in on the MKT. It stopped right there in Nocona, not just seventy-five yards from where Nocona Boot was, but that'd be years later. She always called him Daddy—Papa Justin or Daddy Justin. She said she was a little girl and I believe they went from Nocona to Spanish Fort. They went in a wagon. I don't believe that's a fact, but she said they—I believe they took a piano and a keg, big keg of beer, because, you know, he was German and he had to have his beer. So they went down—they knew the Chisholm Trail passed there. He started making boots just willy-nilly. Then he got the idea—his real place in boot history is he developed the sheet where a cowboy could take it with him to Montana and measure somebody's foot in Miles City or somewhere. Then he began to make these boots. So they—Nocona—I don't know just what the images of bankers and whatever—got him to move to Nocona. So right where that horse started was where Nocona Boot was. We could walk down the alley—you could smell so good, that leather, down through there. Oh man, Barnett—Clarence Barnett's dad, Slim Barnett—he's the one that made the boots go on her hood. He was a machinist blacksmith. And we'd go by there and see him nickel plating those spurs. I think you all have the—don't have it up here, that—their old vats? I heard you did.

MG:  
I don't think that we do.

BT:  
But anyway, Slim Barnett—they would put those spurs in a vat twice the size of that, about that long, from that mantle all the way down. They'd have it about that deep. They might have fifty pairs of bits or spurs in there. They put some kind of nickel something in it, and it was

electrified. The electric current caused that silver, or nickel, to go onto those spurs. He made all of his spurs out of Model T axles. He split them. One of his sons is still alive. I went to school with him. He was—I knew Slim real well. The way she got in the spur business is McChesney wanted to sell out so Enid bought the whole rig and brought them into Nocona. I'm not sure if she transferred it to the new building. I guess she did. But anyway, Mr. Justin put in Justin Boot Company. It might've been H.J. Justin. But Justin Boot Company in Nocona in that old building there. It's still there. They got to doing real well and Enid, I guess, kind of being the girl, was maybe the secretary. I don't know. They had four boys: Avis, John—there was four of them. John was the father of John that was the bigshot in rodeo and all here till he died. Anyway, they had Enid and the four boys. So, Fort Worth wanted them to move to Fort Worth. So they said, "If you move down here, we'll give you a building and thirty-six years tax-free if you'll move to Fort Worth." Well, Mr. Justin—old gentleman—had died and Enid didn't want to move. But in the meantime, working for Mr. Justin—I think even before he died—was a German Julius Stelzer from Muenster. So he was working there. Well, I don't know whether he—I guess he and Enid may have already married, I don't know. So, the four boys went to Fort Worth. They never gave them tax-free, and they never gave them thirty-six years. They lied to them. But they did all right in Fort Worth. Well then she, and the McCalls [?] [2:39:36], and all the people in the banking and all, raised the money to sell stock. They used the same building. I imagine all the same equipment, because nearly all boot companies used what was called USMC, United States Shoe Machinery Corporation. We had them at Olsen-Stelzer. But they didn't sell them, they had a counter on them. You paid for how many—

AW:

You leased them or something.

BT:

When Nocona wanted to buy a machine, you know, instead of making all handmade. They wanted some machines so they got a hold of USMC in Fort Worth or Dallas—United States Shoe Machinery Corporation—and said, "We want to buy—get one of your machines," and they said, "No, we can't sell you people a machine. You haven't got anybody up there who would know how to run it unless"—they said, "How many you got there?" They went down and hired a guy named Swede Flattous [?] [2:40:44]. So here's where the Swede's come in. He knew how to run them so they leased them the machines and that's when Nocona went from more handmade to what we called shop-made boots. You use a machine to last them and do different things. But the old way was to take pliers and pull them around then nail them then cut that off and put the sole in, and whatever. So Julius was a womanizer. He got to going with one of the stitchers—one of the sketchers—one of the stitchers and Enid caught him, so she divorced him. So Julius then went to Henrietta—was just Olsen Boot Company, just a handmade boot company with a family deal there. It wasn't very big or whatever, but made very good boots and they always made better boots than Nocona. I worked for both of them. To me there was no comparison. I'm glad

we're getting that on tape. [Laughter] Though I loved Mrs. Enid and all of them, but the Olsen's were the boot makers. He was Carl Olsen, spelled with an *e*, I believe; Norwegian. They had come from Norway. So, Mr. Olsen just made boots. He made them in different places. There were a lot of those immigrants who really could make those boots and shoes. So, Stelzer went up there to Henrietta, which is only twenty-eight miles, and talked Carl Olsen into making it a shop-made boots, where instead of making three or four pairs a week, you could make twenty, then finally fifty and a hundred and fifty. So, that's where they—Stelzer came in. Enid never got over Julius. She loved him as long as she lived. She told me and Mary a story at our house one time. She always liked—everybody loved Mary. She said Julius brought a cake one time for their anniversary and she said, "There's something in there for you." Enid—female-like emotion, beautiful—found this ring and she said, "Oh"—I'll never forget her—"Oh Cake, you've lost your appeal." Enid had that ring to show to me and Mary. Then she later married a fellow named Coggins and he put in West Texas Boot Company in Wichita Falls—West Tech. They didn't even make as good a boot as Nocona. Then I think she married somebody else. I always said, "Enid didn't produce any babies, she always produced other boot companies." [Laughter] He loved her. I think they did have one child and it may be the reason their marriage—it died. She—Stelzer never got over—Julius didn't—the girl that shipped the boots at Olsen's—they had steps that went up to the top of some of the old boots and there was room under there to stack their boots that were shipping out. She said, "Many of times that Julius—I sat right"—he was a drunkard. He drank a lot. He had sat here and cried all day for Enid. He'd married again in Henrietta but he always loved Enid and Enid—but it was those two strong personalities that—and we made handmade boots there and made good boots. But that's kind of the story of how Julius—how it became Olsen-Stelzer. I think they marked the date that Mr. Olsen came in 19—is there a date up there? Nineteen-oh-one, I think, whatever it was. That brings me to talk about the most beautiful I ever knew, physically and mentally, right up there. You see, the first time we ever saw each other—there's where Ruth Roach came in again. I was in—[coughs] I needed a winter job. You know, you could announce a few rodeos, this, that and the other, but the winters were long and there was no rodeos. I needed a place where I could go work in the winter and take off, at my leisure, to announce rodeos. So, I knew I couldn't get a job at Nocona. Nobody was hiring me in Nocona because of my past. [Laughter]

AW:

Because of your gang?

BT:

The gang. They'd hire my little brother—he'd get a good job—but they wouldn't—shining shoes was all I could do. So, I went up there. I thought, Olsen-Stelzer may be the place, so I went up there. First we went over—we went to cowboy—my cousin and I, we decided we wanted to work on a ranch. So we heard about Hassell Ranch out of Henrietta. It wasn't too far out of there—but too far. So we got up there—and he was the good cowboy on that Wild West show. I

wasn't that much of a cowboy. I could head cattle and whatever but I wasn't as good as he was. So, we said, "Well, we're going to go out"—we'd heard about this job at Hassell Ranch so we hitchhiked out there. A guy let us off and we said, "What? Where is the"—he showed us. I'm telling you, it was the most godforsaken looking place you'd ever saw. I know this sometimes looks godforsaken but down there where old Hassell's house, this man that ran it—you may have known him. We went down there. Old corrals and it was hot and dry. Looked like Old Mexico or something. So, we ate dinner with them. They was very kind people. This old guy's running—I knew—well, I didn't then. No, I didn't know Glen. I think you were right, it was Glen, not George. So, we began to look at each other. I said, "Jim, I think"—we can only use one—I said, "I believe, Jim, you'd fit here better." He said, "No, Bud, I want you to have this job." [laughter] I said, "I'm not about"—I said, "It was forty miles into Henrietta. We never would get into town." So we got out on the highway and that ended our cowboy career of the Hassell. But later I knew Ferd Hassell.

AW:

How do you spell Hassell?

BT:

H-a-s-s-e-l-l, isn't it?

IC:

Right.

BT:

Ferd Hassell. He was the man that owned it. And I got to know him. I got to know his son. His son was a huge man, by that I mean a big German frame. So anyway, we went back to Henrietta and we met this old gentleman. He was about half grouchy. He knew we wasn't going to buy anything. John Firestone, he was the sales manager of the job I later had. So we went back home. Well, I needed this job—getting back here to where we were when I was rodeoing. So I went up and got dressed up the best I could and talked to Mr. Olsen. They were pretty cool. I told them who I was and where I came from. He said, "Well I'll talk to my brother, Harry," Norman did. Oh they were wonderful boys. Two of the finest men I ever knew. Mary said it as long as she lived. So he was pretty cool. He said, "You come back." So I went back. Maybe he didn't tell me to come back. So I went back to see him again. He didn't really like making boots but he was the president. He was an artist. He ended up an artist. So I said, "I sure think it'd fit. I could rodeo and advertise for you. It wouldn't cost you anything." [coughs] He said, "You don't know Ruth and Fred Salmon, do you?" Ruth Roach, who got me the job with Bobby Estes. But I think—yeah, I guess this was afterward. I said, "Yeah, I know them real well. They ranch there by us." So he didn't say anything. So I went home and I said, "Ruth, I believe if you'll go up there and see them, I'll get that job." The old gentleman's dead. So, Ruth called him—went up—no, Ruth



said, "We'll go up there." So I went back. She'd gone. Ruth was—she going to lie. She just told the truth. But she told him I was all right. What he really worried about was anyone drinking. So she said, "He doesn't drink." That wasn't exactly true. So when I went back he said, "When could you come to work?" Well, that day I looked over in the corner and there was this girl. She didn't particularly—her beauty came later. She always kept a pencil over her ear. Bookkeepers did that in those days. And her shoes off. You could see under the—so she was the bookkeeper. Well, she came out there, I think, and I might've spoken to her or whatever. I wasn't too impressed, either one of us. I always ask Mary, I said, "Mary, what—the first time you saw me, what impressed you most?" She said, "How clean you smelled." We used Lifebuoy soap. It was a strong—had a little Crisco dip in it. [Laughter] That was all, "How clean you were." And so, when I took—got the job—first time we saw each other was November 19, 1949. That was when I went up—they told me I had the job—and I saw her. So when I took the job, she brought—she'd bring the cash box up every day, because we had a big abrant [?] [2:52:25] ranch oak table there so I called her Ms. Smith. I said, "Ms. Smith"—there was another girl there—"Could you get me a date with Ruby?" She said, "No I can't." She said, "She's married." That fixed that up. So then Mary and I, we'd just see each other. It was absolutely—I don't think any kind of attraction whatsoever. I don't know why. She said, "You know they're having a dance tonight, square dance, out at the Hut." It was a little log thing where the kids could rent it and have a party. "I'd like to learn to"—I said, "Well listen"—you know, I'd call square dances for rodeos and everybody. I knew how to call square dances. I said, "Well, let's go tonight. I'll take you and I'll teach you to square dance." So we did. Had a great time. But then the fatal thing I happened, I kissed her goodnight. That was it. We were in love. So that's how I met my wife. We went—she was engaged to another fellow. I'd go with her in the week—during the week. He was out of town. He was a World War II veteran from the Navy. She wouldn't go with me on the weekend, she'd go with him. Well, I'd gripe about she wouldn't go with me on regular time. I was going with other girls, too, and I had girlfriend down in Baird, where Bobby lived. But anyway, she said, "That's the way it's going to be. I'll go with you in the week but I'm engaged to him." I thought that was a little shaky. So he came in there one day and we had—see, back in those days—Levi's—there were no Wranglers or any of this other stuff. We had—you only had one dealer. To my knowledge, there's one dealer for Levi's between—on Highway 287 from Fort Worth to Amarillo and that's Fefferman. So we—but we had the dealership. We had them stacked higher than my head. I'd have to get on a stool to get them all. I mean, we had them from little ones like in that bathroom. You saw right on up to the fifties or whatever. So we—I hit—I saw him come in and I knew the way he walked in there was something wrong. He kind of just stormed through there. He said, "Could I see Mary?" The front end is where we had all the clothes and everything. Out she came. She kind of got back into the stacks of Levi's and he was out here. Oh boy, we sold classy stuff, you know, Forstmann wool and Pendleton. We had the lines. I hadn't been there long. So, I said—boy, they talked a good while. I saw her reach and give him her ring. Well I knew then the jig was up. So out he came. So I hid around here behind these Levi's. I didn't even want to look at him until that door closed. So I said, "What



happened?" She said, "He told me to either quit going with you or it was all over." I said, "What'd you do?" She said, "I gave him his ring." Well, six months later we were man and wife. So that's the story of how I met her. It's kind of a funny—it was a—Fred Astaire used to do a song, [singing] "It's a strange love affair," something like that. We fought and we'd break up. Have a fight in the evening, break up but when she'd bring the money up, we'd meet again, fall in love again. That went on for some time. It was—I said, "It's all off," two weeks before the marriage. I said, "We're not—I'm not marrying you." She said, "That's fine with me." She was a cool customer. So we [clears throat] fought, we married, and sixty-seven years later we've never had another fuss. After we married, we never had any fusses. She was the, you know, greatest thing that ever happened to me. She was a beautiful human being. The people who helped take care of her just fell in love with her. I was thinking about [clears throat]—so, when they was looking at Man o' War, the Riddle family, to buy him from the Belmont's. They asked five-thousand dollars. That's a lot of money in 1918, when he was a yearling. So Mrs. Riddle wanted to buy him but Mr. Riddle kind of backed out. So she said—told the trainer—said, "You're going to buy that horse." Well, after that, Riddle would always claim he bought Man o' War but she knew he didn't. He fought it. So toward the end of their career with Man o' War, he said, "You know, the best thing I ever did was to buy Man o' War." His wife said, "Now Sam, you know you're lying. I bought Man o' War. The best thing you ever did was marry me." So I'll tell you that to say the best thing I ever did was marry Mary because she loved—she'd rodeo, whatever we did, whatever sacrifice we made to go to college or whatever, she was right there. So that was the greatest—but I wanted to throw that in my story about Mary. She was—these girls that helped take care of her, they just fell in love with her. The two that took care of her are my best friends now, Natalie and Sonny. Anyway, we're up to, what—

AW:

How long were you at Olsen-Stelzer?

BT:

I went there in '49 and stayed until—I guess it was '53. They had this Chisholm Trail roundup in Nocona. I went down and announced it. Enid and I got to know each other. I guess I asked Enid, said—I told her what kind of a deal I had at Olsen. The only difference I wanted was I wanted to be put on a commission. She said, "Come down here and go to work for me, Bud, and I'll do whatever you want to do." So I went down there and stayed nearly two years. Yeah, I told you '55. So I stayed a couple of years with her. She was a woman that was hard to get along with for a lot of people, but she never—she told me what she would pay me. She never paid me what she told me she'd pay me. It was always much, much more.

AW:

Really?

BT:

Yeah. And she didn't agree to pay my rodeo expenses. She said, "Bud, where've you been?" I said, "San Saba." She said, "Well, give me your expenses." That wasn't even in our deal and they were paying my expenses to rodeo. I mean, I had the best deal in the world. See, I wanted to go back to college. She hated—because a woman broke up her home, any woman that'd break up another woman's home, boy, she hated them. Well, Ruth Roach got to going with this rancher in Nocona who was married to a well-to-do oil family. Had oil on both sides of the river. He left—he divorced Vera and married Ruth. So, Ruth came into town and now there were two big women in Nocona. Enid was the big business but she was the world's champion in whatever, you see. And a lot of people knew the situation but they knew to forgive her. In fact, she later joined the Baptist church and was one of the leaders there. But anyway, we had this Chisholm Trail roundup so I was going to introduce the queen and all. So Ruth was there. I said, "Now Ruth, I want to introduce you." Ruth live to wear red. Had her cowgirl outfit and her buckskin. I've got them upstairs. So I gave her this big introduction. The next morning Enid called me in. She said, "Bud, sit down." And Enid was president of the rodeo, so in a sense I was working for her. She said, "Bud, sit down." She said, "You know, Ruth Salmon broke up Dick and Vera." Vera was her friend. She said, "I don't think you ought to introduce her at a rodeo." May have said, "Among decent people." I mean, she was hard on Ruth. I said, "Now Mrs."—here was the crossroads. Ruth had gotten me the job at Olsen, she'd gotten me the job with Bobby Estes, she'd never done anything to me and was a friend of my mother's and a friend of the family. I said, "Now Mrs. Enid, you know I enjoy you and think you're a wonderful person but," I said, "Ruth's done a whole lot for me. I probably wouldn't be here with you if it wasn't for Ruth." I said, "If I announce this rodeo anywhere and Ruth's there, I'll introduce her. She's a champion." I said, "If you want me to, I'll walk out of here right now. I'll give up my job with you and I'll do something else." I thought, This is it, knowing her. She said, "Bud, that's fine." So we never did have—but when the history's written of Enid—and there's a tape that I did with her down at Southwest Collection. She was sure all right with me. She'd take me—when we'd take our boot display to Fort Worth or Dallas to—we'd stay a month at the State Fair of Texas. I don't want to brag. The year before I went, they'd been going for years. They sold thirty-seven pairs of boots. I went down there and we sold four-hundred and sixty-seven pair. I sold Dizzy Dean a pair there. Never will forget it. You know, the baseball player. He came in there and I never will forget it. He was dressed in a gray suit. You know, he dressed kind of cowboy-ish, tailor-made like Rodeo Ben or someone that made it. He came by and he said—I said, "Well hello, Dizz." He said, "Hello." He said, "You look like you're about the size I was when I was pitching for the Cardinals." I said, "What can I"—he said, "I want a pair of boots." So he went around. We had a wonder—and he ordered, as I recall, a baby gray calf. Can't remember. But when Enid came back I said, "Well, you missed it. Dizzy Dean was here." I said, "I sold him"—she said, "Give me the order." She put "gratis" on there. She wouldn't charge Dizzy Dean. But anyway, when she'd take us—we'd take our boot display to Fort Worth, but mainly to the State Fair of Texas. You could have a half a million people through there in two days. She'd put us up in the

Adolphus Hotel, Southland, pay for everything, the same way when we'd go to Fort Worth, she'd put us in the Texas Hotel. That was *the* hotel in Fort Worth then. Ruth Roach trick rode down through the lobby one time with rubber shoes on her horses. But anyway, that's kind of the story of Enid Justin. She was—you know, made these rash decisions and was high-tempered. So, she brought a nephew in there, Avis' boy. What was his name? I guess his name might've been John—Joe, Joe Justin Jr. She was getting up in years. Oh my gosh, when she—there's an old saying, "There's no place big enough for two Justin's." So she brought Joe Justin there. He and I, we joined the Lions Club together and we were good friends. When he wouldn't melt in her mouth—he had a lovely wife, lovely children. She turned on him, became mean to him. I don't know what it was unless she saw that he was going to take over someday. But I think that's why she brought him in the first place. So he left and went to Wichita Falls and put in a steel company. Did quite well. Well then when she got a little older, the directors wanted to bring Joe down there to make him manager or whatever, you know, tried to get around her. After all, she started that company and she deserved a lot. She got mad. The person she hated more than anybody in the world was John Justin Jr., her brother's boy, who was the big man in this Justin crisis, taking care of the rodeo boys. He was very famous. But he also owned Justin Leather Good, which made the most beautiful billfolds and purses in the country. Was right across from the old Nocona Boot Company. By this time she had a big factory out on 82. It's a beautiful building, still there. So, she thought they were trying to pull the wool over her eyes or something and she got mad and called John Jr, head man of Justin Boot Company in Fort Worth and El Paso. They later practically took over all the boot business in Texas. She called and said, "John"—she hated him. She spent hours telling me how bad—he wouldn't pay a dividend on the leather goods and they knew there was some money somewhere. She said, "You still want to buy this company," and he said, "Yes. I'm not—kind of hard up right now."—you know, putting on a show—"But I might." She said—he said, "I might give four million for it but I want to pay"—what do you call it when you put so much money down? "I want an option. I'll give you so many thousand dollars for an option of one year." So Enid signed the contract. Things were coming back to normal and everything was going fine with Enid. The day before the option was over, John Jr. called and said, "Enid, I've decided to take the company." Legally she couldn't do anything. So John Justin bought Nocona Boot Company. I don't know what it was, maybe four million, whatever it was. Not anything like what I was worth. Then some years—and Enid was out. She died not too long after that. Then he took that and moved it—took Nocona Boot and moved it to El Paso where it is now, where most of his boots are made down there too. And I think they bought Tony Lama, too. So nearly all the major boots companies now in Texas are under Justin. Friend of mine [coughs] is in the executive position with them and he's—pardon me—he's president of the historical society in Oklahoma City. He's Tad Lucas' grandson. [coughs] He works for them. But they're the big ones now in the cowboy boot business. So that's kind of the story of [clears throat] Bud and Mary up there. That's the way we looked. We're looking at pictures up there. Mary on the right and Bud on the left. Oh, and that's that hat I went to Fort Worth—Ivan.



IC:

That's pretty typical.

BT:

That's the one that I went down to Washer Brothers. I had to buy it at Washer Brothers. There might've been one other place in Fort Worth that sold Stetson hats. Then when I became sales manager, I put in Bradford hats, which was made by Resistol, then later Stetson. Learned a lot about Stetson after. But Bradford really sold—they were ten dollar hats. [Coughs] Stetson was really honest. If they put three *X*'s in a hat, it was seventeen dollars and a half. If they put four *X*'s, about forty dollars. Five it might've been sixty. Then they didn't put twenty *X*'s—it said Stetson 100. I don't think I've got one because Dobbs gave me mine. But [clears throat] Bradford decided that it didn't cost anymore to buy a stamp with ten *X*'s than it did to put three *X*'s. So in their ten dollar hats, they'd have ten *X*'s. They'd sell them for ten dollars. Well boy, the people said, "Hey look, I can get a 10X Bradford [clears throat] but it'd cost me an arm and a leg to get one from Stetson." So they really began to sell hats. Resistol owned them. I knew the guys real well that—the Rolnick's owned it and George Rolnick called on us. He and I visited a great deal. Then I decided I'd put in Stetson. I really enjoyed the Stetson man. He told me their building in Philadelphia at that time was eleven stories and it was a square block, city block, eleven stories high. He told me how they determined the price of a hat, or the *X*'s. He said—and he showed me—but first of all he made a joke about. I said, "What do those *X*'s mean?" He said, "Not anything." He said, "It's like pork and beans. There's a lot of beans and very little pork." I never will forget that. He said, "We'll just put it right here. You're going to make the old"—one of the best hats ever made was that old Stetson No. 1 Quality. You remember? It just said, "No. 1," no *X*'s in it. He said, "We'd get a lot of that beaver right back here." He said, "We moved to a twenty dollar hat. We'd get some of it here." He said, "Fifty dollar, that's only the belly of a beaver. We'd get a little bit of beaver here." It gets softer like your belly; harder back here. It was just like a human. Then he said, "When we'd get over here, maybe seventy-five dollars." He said, "When we got ready for a hundred dollar hat, right up the navel, put a silver dollar on it and cut around it. When we got enough of those woven together, that was a hundred dollar hat." It was so interesting because, you know, he'd just tell me the truth. Oh, and he said there's a man that's about seventy-five years old, been with the company since he was a boy. "He's the only one we'll let take that beaver here and make a hundred dollar hat." He said, "We don't have many people as hundreds of people we have at Stetson. Only two or three can make a hundred dollar hat." But that was when—you know, now. They put fifteen *X*'s in your hat and claim it's—and it'll say, "Beaver." Well, it means it's got a little beaver. Unless you had it made special, I don't know that you could buy a pure beaver hat.

IC:

I had an argument with—there was a Jewish fellow there in our hometown of Crowell, Easy Fish [?] [03:16:12]. You could order Nocona boots. You may have to send your measurements. But I

ordered a Stetson hat. I told him I wanted a four-inch brim, size 7, and an open crown. He said, "You can't—you got to have that hat shaped for—ordered for you." I told him, "No, I want an open crown so I can shape it myself." We argued for about an hour over that—finally got it, of course, open crown. We'd steam them, you know, and put them fifty creases in them, like typical. I like to never have convinced Easy [?] [3:16:49] that I wanted an open crown hat.

BT:

When I first started selling hats, there's no such thing as pre-creased. That's something that came in modern times. Then later we'd—Bradford—we'd shape it like I've got then bend it just a little in the front and the back. That was the popular crease, say from '49 to '60. But you won't believe this: I never ruined a hat. When we put in Bradford—and we got another brand or two—I didn't have a steamer. I'd go back to the saddle shop where they wet their leather and turn that warm water on and wet that hat as wet as I could get it, and I shook it. I'd tell the customer, I'd say, "You come back in a couple hours unless you want to take it—when it dries." And I never ruined a hat. So Mr. Olsen said one time, he said, "Bud, I've been seeing where they advertise steamers." That was the one that had the gallon jug on it. You remember? So he got me a steamer. It was kind of disappointing. That was the old days, the way I—many hats. I had people that'd drive two-hundred miles just for me to crease their hat, because there weren't many people who could do it back then.

IC:

That's right.

BT:

I'd crease their hats. They'd sit around and maybe sell them a pair of boots while they're waiting on the hat, or a saddle or whatever.

IC:

What did Levi's cost back then? I can't remember. Maybe two and a half, three dollars or maybe more.

BT:

I'd say—the first pair I ever owned—that was one of the happiest days of my life. I had a pair of my uncle's old Levi's. We had—momma had stitched a piece of cloth in an L shape but I still loved those Levi's. Finally somehow I got the money to buy my first pair of Levi's. That would've been in about '47 or '48, something like that. Dollar ninety-five for a pair of full—they didn't make anything but 501. They didn't make anything else. Then when I worked at Olsen's—I couldn't say for sure, but I don't believe they cost a dime over three ninety-five. Keep in mind, that was three day's work almost. Three ninety-five doesn't seem like much but it was then. Mary and I—I was making forty a week for forty hours and she was making thirty a



week for forty hours. You see, that'd take a pretty good chunk. The other thing I loved about those old Levi's, they had an odor to them all of their own. They had, at the back—they put it in the pocket now—it had a piece of oilcloth. You remember that?

IC:

Yeah.

BT:

And you took that off. But that told about the guarantee and everything. They're just—in my opinion.

IC:

Those old one's now are highly collectible.

BT:

They sell as much as thirty-thousand dollars. I remember when I first started wearing them. You'd remember, too. They had a gird on the back. Right on the back they had a little girt and a buckle with claws in it. You could adjust it. That was the way Levi's were sold then. Then when I first starting wearing Levi's, oh gosh, I'd give anything for a pair. Instead of making the brads like they are now, hidden on the pocket—the pockets had a brad just like—and women just screamed—little kids would sit down and tear their furniture because of that brad. You know how a Levi brad is, it caught them. So that—when they started putting the brads in there and sewing over it. It was a—you know, I think it's the greatest garment ever made. You know what Stanley Marcus said about them? And I've got a letter up there to prove it. Wouldn't take anything for it. Somebody asked Stanley Marcus, they said, "Mr. Marcus, you worked for the ultimate in quality at Neiman Marcus." He said, "But is there any real quality left in the world?" He said, "Yes, there are three things that are left that are real quality. One is the New York Times." We know that's not so now. "One is the New York Times. The other is Levi's. And the other is Sara Lee Pound Cake." [Laughter] So I wrote him a letter and I said, "I want to be exact on it because I'd quote it to my students about Levi's when I'd be lecturing." He wrote back and he said, "As I recall, here's what I said." And I've got it up there in my file from Stanley Marcus. He's dead now.

AW:

Sara Lee Pound Cake. [Laughs]

BT:

You know, he might have a bottle a bottle of Petrus. It cost four-hundred dollars. Now it'd be fifteen hundred—a bottle of Petrus wine and have the big shots of Dallas and serve them Sara Lee Pound Cake with it. My gosh, it is good. I don't think a woman can bake a better yellow

cake than Sara Lee Pound Cake. Boy, those Levi's were—they were something, and still are. They haven't changed them. They won't change that at all.

IC:

I know that there was three older—when we was growing up, lots of times we wore those old—we called them possum belly overalls. You know, the stripy ones. Just hook one strap and we finally got to where we could wear some—we called them waste britches. And finally when we was old enough to get some Levi's, that was—of course, like you said, there wasn't any Lee's or Wrangler's. It was Levi's or else.

BT:

That was the costume of the cowboy. Of course, I think before then Carhartt may have been making—because, if you get a picture of Theodore Roosevelt, it looked like he's got on Carhartt. If it wasn't Carhartt it was the precursor and then Carhartt copied it. But they've got those old—

IC:

I noticed, too, some of those old pictures like you were saying: Roosevelt, old man Bivens and some of those. They wore these turtleneck sweaters a lot.

BT:

Yeah they did.

IC:

A lot of them. And maybe those laced-up high top boots. They must've liked those collared—I mean, those sweaters for some reason.

BT:

Yes. I've noticed that Lee Bivens has one on this picture I've got out here. Have you seen that picture out there?

IC:

Yes sir. Yeah.

BT:

He's got one on. You know—see, Levi, he died early. He was making these out of tough material, denim, that he got somewhere. He heard there was a saddle maker in Reno that was good at putting brads [3:25:24] so he'd send his pants over there to Reno—it's not far—and he'd put the brads. That was Levi Strauss; German. They were German people—Jewish people. And he died in about 1897. He never married. He didn't have any children. So his sister got the thing and that family took over and stayed in San Francisco. They've really set up some really good

scholarships for the University of California, Berkeley because they figured they made their money there in—[coughs] I've always been a student of Levi's. The way they went back to really find out how they were made and whatever was in the gold mines. They were made mainly for gold miners. Some for cowboys but I think the first was for miners. The ones I—they used to have a button here, just like here, have it here and here, for your galluses as they called them, the suspenders.

MG:

And no belt loops.

BT:

No belt loops.

MG:

They didn't have belt loops.

BT:

I didn't remember that. No telling what one would—if could find one. When they got into the gold mines, they had to be careful of these guys who'd steal, fill their pockets with little pebbles and whatever. So when they went out, every man had to strip naked and hang those Levi's up then get their street clothes and go on. When these mines shut down years ago, a lot of those Levi's were hanging there and now that's how they know the evolution of the Levi.

MG:

Only had one back pocket.

BT:

Is that it?

MG:

One back pocket and no belt loops. I've had a pair of Levi's re-rigged so I could do my Living History cowboy program.

BT:

And you've had a new—

MG:

Uh-huh, put the gird on the back, had a seamstress put on one the back. I got in touch with the Levi's historian out at San Francisco and she sent me pictures of a pair of those they found in the mines. It's fascinating to see them. One back pocket.

BT:

They were—and what wonderful people. They used to send me box loads of Levi's and they said, "What size is your little boy?" They'd send me more Levi's and shirts. I got some of their first shirts, see, because of rodeo. You got out in my garage, I had a thing made. I was trying to talk them into going on the television and have their buckle. See, they were the first that really made rodeo, not RCA. It was the Levi—they started to outlaw rodeo in about 1928. I may be [pause in recording] Fifty-thousand dollars just for that little—and he's got the stuff. I never saw anything. What is his name? He made his money with cleanout machines and got in the oil business. He owns a pharmacy there.

JC:

It's not Abraham's?

BT:

No, it's not that. It's not the Abraham's. And he's had a stroke but he stayed up—they won't let—you can't go in there. You can't take pictures because he doesn't want people to know what all he's got in there. But he owns a whole building and it's an old time drug store in the bottom and he's got Roy Rogers silver saddle a few things the public can see, but only by invitation can you go up to see this—oh, it'd be worth a trip up there if we can get you in to see it.

MG:

In Canadian?

BT:

Yes. I've never seen anything like it.

AW:

On the bottom floor is where the steakhouse is, too?

BT:

Yes. No, no. Steakhouse is over there? It's on Main. This is off to the right.

AW:

Oh, okay. Yeah. I know where you're talking—

BT:

They've got the old fountains. What is—sorry. I can call David. I think he kind of helped put up the money to bring them there. What they do is raise money to give these books away. Oh my gosh. They had [clears throat] a hat, Stetson hat, of somebody from the first Hardin-Simmons University Cowboy Band that went to Madison Square Garden. Stuff like that. And paintings,

bronzes. Oh my gosh. It must've been a hotel or something because I know there are five bathrooms up there, I guess, say, for the 1920s.

AW:

I've never been in that.

BT:

Have you heard about it?

AW:

Yeah, because I sometimes used to stay at a bed and breakfast that was just down the road down Main.

BT:

That's where Deb stayed, at that bed and breakfast. But that's called something Exchange.

MG:

Cattle Exchange.

BT:

That's where this guy's family have—they're connected with electronics to two-hundred different bidders on Wall Street. Now we're talking big—we're talking big—

JC:

That's Abraham.

AW:

That's Abraham's. That's one of his grandsons.

BT:

And that's his restaurant. Hold on, I'll get this book.

JC:

It's one of the brothers.

AW:

The place he's talking about, I think, is just down the main street toward the—

MG:

Not Malouf's deal.



AW:

No.

MG:

Not the Citadel.

AW:

No. It's not that far down. There's a whole block of buildings right there.

BT:

"God wants you to win."

MG:

I've seen it.

BT:

"Devotional by world's champion calf roper Jeff Copenhaver. Inspiration for champions."

JC:

You've got that, don't you, Ivan?

IC:

Yeah. I think Dr.—

BT:

Oh there's Deb, the guy I was talking about.

IC:

Dr. Bud gave me one.

BT:

Who?

IC:

You did. You remember?

BT:

Oh that's right. Yeah. Anyway, he—we met down there. They wasn't going to tell him that I was going to be there. I said, "I haven't seen him in sixty years but I'm going." So Sonny used to help take care of Mary and this little girl came to church there, Jaren, she came a time or two.

They took me up there. So we was all going to meet in this museum. So Deb, he's a short—he's short. I think all of us get a little shorter when we get older, having never gotten there I wouldn't know.

AW:

You've heard about it.

BT:

Yeah. Here he came with his hat on. Here's our picture. You can see there. Sonny made that up there. Anyway, I said—he was standing there in that drug store before we went up to the museum. You only get up there through the elevator and it's locked. So I said, "You know, I seem like I know you." He said, "Well," he said—you know how you put on a song and dance when people tell you they know you. "Oh yeah." So Deb began—and he was talking like a little Irish man. I said—he said—I said, "Yeah but I can't quite place you." He said, "Well"—I said, "You ought to know me." He said—I said, "Do you remember, Deb, when you had a rodeo in Spokane called the Diamond Spur and a young fellow from Texas came up and announced it for you?" He said, "Bud," and just cried. He put his arms around. "Bud," he said. We reminisced. He was just—he said, "Bud, nobody ever knew you in the northwest. When I brought you to Spokane, everybody wanted you." He said, "Walla Walla wanted you, Omak wanted you, Joseph wanted you, Spokane." He said, "I'm the man that introduced you to"—I said, "You're exactly right." I said, "I never had trouble getting a job after I worked for you." But anyway, and then—oh, he and I—he wouldn't let me out of his sight. He just wouldn't, and I didn't want to be out of his sight. Then we went to church. Oh he's uninhibited. "Hallelujah!" he'll say. Everybody just loves him. Then his son takes a rope and puts on a thing. He said, "We've all sinned." He'd miss the dummy, the roping dummy, he put down on the floor of the church. Then he'd say, "But we finally get it." I mean, I moved my feet. That thing went by there eighty miles an hour. So I remember asking him. We were looking at all of these boots. I said, "You know Deb? I've been in the boots business and know boots but," I said, "I've never been able to get a pair of Hyer boots. Did you wear them?" He said, "Many of pair." The reason is that they're not handmade. Hyer boots is welt to the heel. See, a handmade boot, it's—you'll have a welt from here to here but a handmade boot then is instead of having a welt, you peg them, hand-peg them, and that holds the outer sole to the inner sole. But Hyer always made theirs welt to heel, which meant that the piece here is flat and this is flexible. So a bronc rider would buy them because this would bend and fit over a stirrup. So that's why Deb said, "That's a long story of telling you about a Hyer boot."

IC:

Makes sense.

BT:

They were the bronc—Bud Linderman used them—Bill Linderman—and they weren't—there was nothing fancy about them. They were the plainest but they were a nice style, and usually kangaroo or calf. There were no exotics back then; kidskin, maybe. But it was called CH Hyer boots; H-y-e-r, I believe. So Deb wore them but nearly all the bronc riders—Bud Linderman wore them—because they would, you know. But you take a handmade boot—the way we made a handmade boot at Olsen's, you know what we used to make the shank?

IC:

Probably a ten-penny nail or sixteen.

BT:

Sixteen-penny. A sixteen-penny nail and bend it. My gosh. You know, when that hits the stirrup, it's not going to budge. You'd put that in and then you'd peg around it, hold it in. We used to have a guy named Peewee—what was his name, Peewee—I'll think of it. Doesn't matter. He'd put—he'd get him a mouth full of pegs. Little, old pegs are about like that, wooden, and they've got a sharp end on one and blunt on the other. He had an awl [3:38:25]. That's a little thing you'd hit with a hammer and it'd drive you a hole in there. Then he'd—he could do it just—so then they—that's why they called them hand-pegged. Now these are going to be—the end of the peg is going to be in here, the sharp part. So when we pull the last out—that'd go into the last. It was shaped—when you pull the last out, boy, those things would stick up. Then we had to rasp the thing. We'd rasp those down and that's the way we did the hand-peg. But see, there wasn't a peg in a Hyer boot.

MG:

Or a shank.

BT:

No steel shank. They had a shank, of course, but it was part of the sole.

MG:

I know Harry Beck told me they used a twenty-penny nail. You know, a Beck boot's a really heavy boot. I've got a pair of those. It's a—it uses a twenty-penny nail. That's nearly three-eighths of an inch around.

BT:

You know, I saw somebody the other day, Michael, who had a pair of beautiful dress boots made by Beck. I said, "Where—how did you get those? He won't make a dress boot. He makes only work—cowboy boots and he won't make a dress boot. They've got to be tough." They're really great boots.

MG:

I'll wear mine tomorrow so you can see them.

BT:

But they're not dress, are they?

MG:

Not really, unh-uh.

AW:

This is the boot maker in Amarillo?

MG:

Yes.

AW:

My friend Andy Hedges has got a pair of those. Really likes them.

MG:

Real heavy.

BT:

Now, he used to—

JC:

I've got a pair and they're so heavy I just don't like wearing them.

BT:

You know, he used to make a good, pretty boot. I was kind of envious of him at Olsen-Stelzer when I'd see a Beck boot because, oh boy, they were class. They were up there with the very best but I guess that's all he makes now. He told me a little story. I went up there to see him one time. My son-in-law wanted some boots. I was going to tell him what—which to buy. So I went up there and we got to visiting. He said, "You're with Olsen-Stelzer?" I said—he said, "I'll tell you a story." He said, "During the war, my stitchers all quit or struck. I had orders for boots and a bunch of tops made. I didn't know what to do and I called Harry Olsen." He said, "Harry said, 'You send me those tops and I'll have my stitchers do them.'" So Olsen-Stelzer did his tops and Beck made them. Beck told me that the last time that I saw. You asked me how I would rate boots. I'd rate—then or now?

MG:  
Then.

BT:  
Now, I'd say the greatest boot maker in the world—you know, a lot of people would say Lucchese, and they do make good boots. I've got several pair. I'd say the best boot maker in the world—and he's dead now but he left it—is Paul Bond in Nogales, Arizona.

AW:  
I went down there to get fitted two years ago. But you know what bothered me was there wasn't a person in that whole shop wearing a pair of boots. They were all wearing tennis shoes.  
[Laughter]

BT:  
I knew Paul. Paul was a bareback bronc rider then he—and he became a—

AW:  
He's been dead for—

BT:  
See that Little boot?

AW:  
Yeah.

BT:  
That was given to me for a lifetime achievement award and he made it. That year at Lubbock they gave away ten pair of those. That boot costs thirteen-hundred dollars a pair, and I was glad I got the red one. But he had all colors and Paul himself got one. I don't think Paul lived three months after that. I'm going to say Paul's been dead about ten, twelve years.

AW:  
When we were down there we did a—Andy Hedges and I did a program just outside of Nogales. So we wanted to go to the Paul Bond boot shop and they were really nice folks. They've still got my measurements. I hadn't quite decided to buy a pair because I've got to where I can hardly wear a boot anymore.

BT:  
Well you better order them while you can still afford them. Boy, they go up all the time.



AW:

These are plain boots but they were not as high as I expected. It was a pretty plain boot but it was like eight-hundred, nine-hundred dollars, which was—

BT:

That's what mine cost, but now I think they're a bunch—

AW:

What's the difference between them today and other boots? How would you describe it?

BT:

Absolutely 100 percent handmade; and very carefully. I've got—before you finish all of this, we'll go up there and I'll show you my boot collection. My favorite—I've got a boot with a top on it that size; Paul Bond. I can run and jump in it.

AW:

Really?

BT:

Yeah. You won't hardly have to—that's how perfect he makes them.

AW:

So how hard is it—if you're living out here and you've been measured and you order a pair, if they don't fit exactly right, what do you do?

BT:

Send them back.

AW:

Send them back?

BT:

Um-hm. You know, because they have what we call seconds. We just put them on the shelf. Michael comes along and says, "That looks like my size," and you sell it anyway. Did you go in the place?

AW:

Um-hm. Yeah.

BT:

Gosh, all those racks.

AW:

That's how they fitted me.

BT:

Oh, leather up above you, all the way around.

AW:

They had seconds. They had seconds so they measured me and then they pulled down all these different seconds and you'd try them on. Then they—that's how they narrowed it down to something that was your fit, which I thought was an interesting process. It wasn't just measurement but it was measurement and trying on these—

BT:

You know, he owned half of that town. I'll bet you Paul was worth millions of dollars because he went down there and started buying that real estate. My gosh, that place where he is now, you won't believe it.

AW:

There's a fellow that is a, I think, a partner and an owner. I'm going to see if I can look him up. I think he's from Amarillo.

MG:

You know, Harry Beck made mine because they were bought for me, the Beck boots. He didn't measure them. He used a foam mold.

AW:

Jodie Bloodworth.

MG:

Foam mold is how I think he did my boots, Harry Beck did.

BT:

That probably is a newer way since—but if I was going to rate them, I'd say Paul Bond is the best. A man very close to him—I don't know his name—lives out there in that oil country by Midland, just godforsaken country. After you come off of 10 going into Midland. Rankin, out in there. There's a boot maker out there. I saw—this guy owns Amarillo leather. He had on a pair

of boots. Instead of having the regular wrinkle, he had a V. Absolutely—as a boot maker, I knew they were special. I said, “Who made those,” and he told me. He said, “But he won’t make you any.” He said, “I’ve tried to get him to make more and he won’t.” I said, “Tell me his name. I’ll call him.” I really loved this guy; like to meet him. He said—I said—we talked that I’d seen his boots and everything. I said, “Would you make me a pair? I’m an old”—“No.” He said, “I couldn’t do it. Wouldn’t take your order.” Here’s what I love about what he said. I said, “Well tell me somebody that makes a boot comparable to yours.” He said, “There is none.”

MG:

There you go.

BT:

So I fell in love with him, a man that’s that crazy about his boot. Now whether they’re as good as they used to be, there’s a boot company in San Angelo named Mercer.

MG:

I’ve been in that shop.

BT:

He made up there at top quality. I always thought Leddy, M.L. Leddy at San Angelo, made a top boot but they’re not quite up with those others, but they’re great boots. Then I would—one of the best boot makers—but he’s dead now—and you guys need to see what you can find on him—was a black man—

AW:

In Lubbock?

BT:

Yes.

MG:

I’ve heard about him.

AW:

He made my father-in-law’s boots.

BT:

Willy Lusk?

AW:

Um-hm.

MG:

I've heard of him.

BT:

He made Lynn Butler's boots and he's the one that did that V.

AW:

He also made John Wayne's pair of boots.

BT:

That guy can—well, he made Benny Binion's boots all the time. You know that story, do you? Did I tell you?

AW:

No but my father-in-law was chief of police and he knew Willy for years and years. So that's who made his boots.

BT:

What happened on Willy, he had just had a little hole-in-the-wall, but he made Lynn's boots, Lynn Butler's. Just marvelous. But I don't mean cheap—I don't mean just dude stuff, I mean good boots, but not overdone like Beck's you can tell are work boots. I mean, these are—anyway, he made Lynn's and I guess Benny Binion; learned about it. So he either went to Lubbock—probably was no problem for him to run to Lubbock. And he made Benny Binion some boots. So Benny Binion—it'd take so long, even like Paul Bond would take you, what, nine months. So he said, "I can get you some in a year or whatever." Benny said, "No, I don't want that." He said, "I'll tell you what I'm going to do, Willy. I'm going to buy you the finest equipment money will buy. I'm going to build you a building in Lubbock, second to none. It's yours, but if I call you for a pair of boots on Monday, you have to have them by Friday. You must guarantee me that you'll put my boots ahead of everybody." And that's how Willy got this place, because Benny Binion made them. I don't know—Paul Bond would be close, that guy out there in Rankin. Then I saw a cowboy one time at that ranch rodeo in Abilene who had bought—some boot maker in Childress had made him some boots.

IC:

Shorty Hall.

BT:

They looked—

MG:

Say again.

IC:

Shorty Hall.

MG:

Shorty Hall?

IC:

Yeah.

BT:

They were top notch.

MG:

I've heard about him, too.

BT:

Then I guess I'd—after I went by those—the little small shops, if they're good. If not, a lot of little small shops will show it. They don't have the finish that a Paul Bond would have or Willy Lusk or Olsen. I'll tell you who used to—they're dead—gone now—is the Dixon Boot Company in Wichita Falls. But then I'd put Lucchese in there among the top four or five. Then I think you'd have to—you wouldn't—certainly wouldn't put Justin in there. Justin is a factory-made boot and always will be. But listen, they're the greatest at what they did. That's not to put them down. Nocona was the same way. But Lucchese. Tony Lama makes a good boot but they're not in that class. Then—oh, those boys down in Mercedes, they'd have to be among the top. Rios. There's one called the Mercedes Boot Company and then there's Rios, R-i-o-s. I've got some of theirs. I don't know who—whether King Ranch has anybody that's that good or not, but that's kind of the way I'd—I never would have ranked—at one time, you know, in Deb's days, I would've put C.H. Hyer up there among the top [clears throat] five or six boot makers. They didn't have the—and they—it seemed like to me—and I've seen many—Hyer only made one style. [coughs] One boot they might make two colors. Has that been your experience?

MG:

Yes.



BT:

[coughs] I'd give anything to have a pair.

MG:

Me too.

BT:

I'd just like to have them in my collection.

IC:

I had a pair of Olathe one time.

MG:

Olathe, yeah. I've got a pair of Olathe boots. I've got two pair.

IC:

I guess I wore them out eventually.

MG:

They're good cowpunching boots.

IC:

Just ordered them in the mail. Sent my foot measurements in and it felt good and comfortable.

MG:

They're not in Olathe anymore, they're down in El Paso.

BT:

They never were, I don't think, up there with some of them. But I just thought of one. In their day—the real cowboys, especially those in Colorado—there was a boot company called Blucher. It's either in Kansas City or in Olathe. I think Blucher was in Olathe.

MG:

I thought they were in Wichita.

BT:

I may be. Yeah.

MG:

I think they may have been in Wichita.

BT:

That's right. Now they made great—good-looking boots and they invented a toe, it slants backward. You know, most boots have the toe come out and cut under. They cut under theirs here so you wouldn't stump it. I've got some up there. They made Tom Mix's boots and I've got a pair up there that Jay Griffith-Blucher made me and gave them to me, the Blucher. I believe his name was Gus Blucher, German as the Rhine. The story is told—oh, they've got letters to prove it.

AW:

Keep talking.

BT:

Let me see if I can get it. Blucher came to Nocona and worked for old man Justin. Isn't that funny that I call him old man Justin? You shouldn't do that, you know. That's kind of the way he was known. Blucher came to Nocona and worked for Mr. Justin. Well, then he got dissatisfied and wanted to go out on his own. I believe I'm telling the story right. Justin didn't—sure hated losing. They were friends and whatever. So Blucher went to Cheyenne, I think, Wyoming. This is way back. So Mr. Justin wrote him and said, "Gus, you're too good a boot maker to be hidden up there in Cheyenne," or wherever it was. I think it was Cheyenne. He said, "Why don't you move," meaning move to Nocona. He said, "You know, H.J., I don't have the money. I'd like to move but I don't have the money." So Mr. Justin said, "How much do you need?" He told him so Mr. Justin sent Blucher the money to move. Blucher moved to Olathe. He said, "Well I gave you money." He said, "No you didn't, you gave me money to move and I moved." [Laughter] So Blucher put the big britches on Justin over that. But that's just one of the stories of those boot makers.

MG:

I'm going to slip out here, boys. I've got to go to that meeting.

AW:

What time tomorrow morning?

MG:

Ten.

AW:

Ten?

MG:

I've got to go to a meeting. I'm sorry.

BT:

I know how that is.

MG:

This is a tutorial that's priceless.

BT:

Huh?

MG:

This is a tutorial that's priceless.

BT:

What does that mean?

MG:

Tutorial?

BT:

Up there?

MG:

No, no.

BT:

Oh here.

MG:

Listening to you is a tutorial for me. Thank you.

BT:

It's too bad.

AW:

Michael, I might come in and get started a little earlier.

MG:

Okay. If I can get away earlier, I'll come over.

© Southwest Collection/  
Special Collections Library

AW:

Okay. We'll go ahead and get going tomorrow morning

MG:

Thank you.

BT:

Get here as quick as you can. Your question set me off.

MG:

Is that a good thing? I hope.

BT:

Yes.

MG:

All right. I'll see y'all tomorrow.

IC:

You bet.

AW:

All right. Thank you.

IC:

Judy, I guess probably you and I need to—

BT:

You know one reason I hate think of ever dying is that all these things I know, if we don't get them down, they'll never be known. Just like things I've told you all today, I wouldn't have thought to tell them, like Joe Venuti or those boot stories and whatever. When you go, you know, unless you've got it down somewhere—

IC:

Andy, you know, I guess what's about—a song about Charles Russell says, "Get it all down." He and Tyson, I think, wrote it. Good advice. Like you say—

JC:

I've been trying to get Ivan and his brother to write a book.

BT:

I know it's not—at least they can put it on tape.

JC:

He's got to where he's not able to talk now.

BT:

Huh? Who's that?

JC:

Ivan's brother.

BT:

Oh his brother.

AW:

I'm going to pause this for just a minute if you don't mind. I need to ask you two a question before you get out of here. [Pause in recording]

BT:

In other words, Texas Aggies, we didn't have much of their business but we made—they used to say "cowboy and military boots," but the guy that made most of the boots for A&M was Lucchese.

IC:

That was cadet where it was—

BT:

What'd they call them? Well, they're military boots.

IC:

Those are good looking boots.

BT:

Yes they were, and they're hard to make because you got to have a hard piece in them to keep that calf. But Nocona could make them. But now Olsen, we could've made a special one.

JC:

I have thoroughly enjoyed this. This has been good. Just keep your seat.



BT:

Your being here made it a lot better.

AW:

Thank you for lunch, Judy.

IC:

You're welcome.

JC:

You're welcome.

AW:

And Ivan.

IC:

We'll see you at church, hopefully, Sunday.

JC:

We'll see you Sunday.

BT:

If I'm alive, I'll be there.

JC:

You'll be alive. [Laughs]

BT:

Bye-bye.

JC:

Bye-bye.

BT:

God bless. Love you, guys.

IC:

I think we're the only church in the world that can play hoedowns first thing in church.

JC:

You'll have to come visit us sometime.

BT:

You know what they can do? They can play a more secular piece and it almost sounds religious. When they do songs like y'all did Sunday, like the King's Coming, it's just so worshipful.

IC:

Red Steagall, I did that Cowboy Church that he wrote and does. Those fit in pretty good.

BT:

The king of that was Stuart Hamblen. [Pause in recording]

BT:

Now is—kept me that shaved ice. I've got some of that margarita mix, same thing. But I need that shaved ice so that'll be here tomorrow. [AW laughs] But I find I get along just well without it. Anyway—

AW:

You know, it's more a habit than it is a necessity.

BT:

It's really social. I've discovered that when Bill comes, my son, he'll have a glass of wine with me. If I'll go in and get some orange juice, it'll be just as good, because you've got something in your hand. I think it's social.

AW:

I think so, too. Speaking of hand, another note I had was that your accident led to some changes that were beneficial to the farming community. Is that correct, that there was some safety legislation that came out of that accident? Is that—am I mixing that up with something else?

BT:

I don't recall that. It could be. If it is, I'm glad.

AW:

[laughs] I think you'd know it if it did.

BT:

Uh-huh. Of course, you know about this and that. We can get into that if you want to sometime when Michael's here or whoever.

AW:

I think Michael may have told me about the—or thought that there was—I'll tell you what we can do while we've got a little time, and I'll leave you alone until tomorrow morning. Could we get started around nine o'clock tomorrow morning? Is that too early for you?

BT:

Yeah, because I'm going to have to—I'm going to knock off around eleven-thirty, eleven-forty to get us down to—Michael's coming. We're going to the—

AW:

Lions Club.

BT:

Lions Club. I wish we could've taken them.

AW:

So is nine o'clock okay to get started?

BT:

Yeah that'd be fine.

AW:

Okay. I'll be over here at nine o'clock then that way we'll get a good run before we go to the Lions Club then we can do a little more that afternoon before I have to head back to Lubbock tomorrow.

BT:

You're going to head back pretty early?

AW:

Well, I need to—I'd like to be back six or seven. So I don't have to leave. We can do a little more in the afternoon. Maybe this is a good time, since Judy left, for you to talk about the Drake Hotel in Abilene.

BT:

Maybe we could wait on that. That's a good one. It wasn't—

AW:

We could—I'll tell you what, why don't we just knock off today and wait till Michael gets here.

BT:

She's not going to be here anyway.

AW:

That's right.

BT:

She's not going to be here. It wasn't that bad. I've already talked about the whores. When I talk about the whores, I don't mean I'm any better than they are.

AW:

No. I understand.

BT:

"By the grace of God, there go I." But some of the stories are funny. The one on the Drake Hotel, if you want me to tell it.

AW:

Yeah, yeah I would.

BT:

It was just a—well, it was rodeo. So they were going to have—let's see, I guess I was going to announce it. I know I did because Clyde took his old horse. So we decided that we'd all go.

There was four of us: Clyde C., and myself, Jim Keck, and it could be Tom Hancock was with us. So they're having the rodeo. It was—I guess it was the Taylor County Fair. This was before they had all that beautiful place they've got out there where they have the—

AW:

The expo.

BT:

Yeah. I announced that thing for six, seven years.

AW:

Really?

BT:

Yeah. I announced it when we were in a barn, when we had a little grandstand on each side.

They'd bring those people in from the—what was it—the Green Ranch over at Albany. We had eight or ten ranches. But anyway, this was long before that one. I had the job announcing. So we

were going to go and Clyde was going to rope. Had him a beautiful horse, couldn't run or anything, but it was beautiful. So, we were staying in the Drake Hotel. I know one thing I remember, you know, people get to drinking or just cutting up, and there was a ceiling fan and somebody threw a boot up there and broke off one of those blades. So that cost somebody. I think Clyde did it, but I don't know who did it. I didn't pay for it because I didn't do it. But the Drake hotel—there used to be a Drake in Amarillo. It was the same way.

AW:

Same company, same ownership?

BT:

Yeah. The Drake in Abilene [clears throat] to my knowledge was not a brothel. It was just what happened. So we're getting ready—oh, I know. It's all coming back to me now. I was thinking, Why did we have them there in the first place? We were staying in the Drake Hotel and going out to the rodeo. I guess it was three or four day show. The Goree Girls, that's the clentcher.

AW:

G-o-r double E?

BT:

G-o-r double E. That's prison down at Sugar land, in that area, for women only. The Goree girls they called them. So Bobby Estes knew some of this rodeo committee and there was some businessmen or whatever. I bet if you knew who all was in it that it would've ruined the city of Abilene. So the Goree had to have a place to stay so they put them up on the sixth or seventh floor, series of rooms. I imagine there were thirty of them. The reason they had them for the rodeo is they had a band. They came to play for the rodeo, and I guess you could pay so much of their expenses and whatever and bring them to your rodeo. So, it's not a long story. My gosh, we never saw as many men going upstairs all day and into the evening as we did at that Drake Hotel. They were going up to fraternize—I imagine some of those old gals were wild, too—to fraternize with the Goree Girls. So that's the story of the Drake Hotel. But they—I never will forget it. It's a really conservative town, you know? Abilene. It was a steady stream of men going up to the fifth or sixth floor in the Drake Hotel. The Goree Girls.

AW:

I'm going to make a note of that. I wonder if that Drake was connected to the famous Drake Hotel in Chicago.

BT:

I think they were. There was one here.



AW:

I used to love a martini in the captain's table at the Drake Hotel in Chicago. It was well-known for its martini. I'll tell you what—

BT:

What was that other hotel in Chicago?

AW:

The White—

BT:

Where they had the convention. They nominated McKinley or somebody. It was called the Smoke-Filled Room Convention. What was that hotel?

AW:

It was about the same era similar to the Brown Palace.

BT:

Yes.

AW:

And it was White—had something to do with White in the name of it.

BT:

It was right across the street from the bus depot, because I went in there on a bus one time and you kind of went underground to go up. I went in, [coughs] being a shine boy. They had about eleven shine boys on this long shine chair. They had that black music going. These boys could get together and pop their rags like they were drums. It was one of the darndest things I ever saw.

AW:

The Whitehall. Was it the Whitehall?

BT:

No.

AW:

Okay. That's the one I was thinking of.

BT:

It's a simple name. One name. It's right downtown. And Bill and Janet stayed there, my son and

his wife, recently. I don't think it was a brothel. If it was, it's high-class. All of them will get you a women. The best hotel is Waldorf. It was not notorious for that. What was the name of that? Not Biltmore.

AW:

I was just thinking of the Whitehall, which is all one word, but it was the same timeframe as the Brown Palace in Denver. They were kind of—what—let me ask this, what would you like to start with tomorrow morning?

BT:

According to what you fellows want, let's see, we haven't talked about the Bob Wills thing.

AW:

No we haven't.

BT:

That's a long one. But we could start with that or we could—

AW:

What would work with breaking—

BT:

Go on with my rodeo to the end and my education.

AW:

Let's do that because the Bob Wills I'd rather not break up.

BT:

We'd pick up at where I went to college.

AW:

Yeah, let's do that. Let's do that. I've got to go answer some emails and things back at the hotel with my computer. Let's start with college and then—

BT:

And more rodeo.

AW:

More rodeo. One of the things—

BT:

Where I went to work for [inaudible] [4:12:02] and then—nothing too exciting there. I was with him thirty years. So we could do that.

AW:

Good. And I would like—one of the things I'd like for you to do, since I'm a performer myself, I would be interested in hearing you talk a little bit about your craft as an announcer. You've just been talking about, "I was good at this. I'd listen to these people and I did that." But I think your craft would be an interesting thing to talk about.

BT:

You can find it. Sylvan Dunn. You know who he was?

AW:

Oh yeah.

BT:

Sylvan told me—and he's the only one—he had some good ideas. He said, "Bud, I want you to tape yourself announcing a rodeo." I never would've done that. So at Greeley, Colorado, which is the biggest on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July anywhere, I did that and sent it to the Southwest Collection. See if you can find it.

AW:

Yeah, I will.

BT:

I'd like to have a copy of it myself, because I don't have a copy and it's the introductions, everything. I imagine they have a section on me, don't they or not? Don't you—

AW:

I would—yeah, I'm would—I'm sure.

BT:

That's where my scrapbook ought to be.

AW:

I'm going to find out about that.

BT:

But I brought some other things. Oh, I made a lot of tapes. I've got the best, maybe the best tape

on old Joe Hancock the horse and it's down there—with my Aunt Cora, because she could tell about when the horse was foaled and everything. But see if—but we'll talk about the craft of announcing.

AW:

Yeah. All right. Great.

BT:

It was a—to tell you the truth—well, I'll say that later. But I never did consider myself—I was known to be maybe the best lecturer at this college. But I never considered—I didn't consider it lecturing, I considered it acting. I considered it—used to put me in who's who. I'd say, "Profession: performing artist." [AW laughs]

AW:

That's good. That's a good—

BT:

I did that.

AW:

That's a good note.

BT:

One of the who's who.

AW:

That's a good note to end on.

BT:

Performing artist.

AW:

All right. Well, thank you.

BT:

Yeah. But I think if you're going to—

***End of Recording***