

**Oral History Interview of
Craig McDonald**

**Interviewed by: Andy Wilkinson
May 30, 2017
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:
*Agriculture Interviews***

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Transcript Overview:

This interview features Craig McDonald as he discusses his early life growing up. In this interview Craig describes his and his father's history and how his family got into farming.

Length of Interview: 01:50:15

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Keywords

Agriculture, Farming, Family life and background

Craig McDonald (CM):

Clamps, you've got to glue it all up real good and so we did.

Andy Wilkinson (AW):

As we were saying before we—I went ahead and turned that on because usually I say the smartest things when it's not turned on so I thought I better—

CM:

You can cut out everything that's wasteful.

AW:

My whole life would be cut out if I was—what—as I said before we got started just now, if you need to stop and deal with those contractors or something that's not a problem.

CM:

Well, Anne can do it. Anne can do it.

AW:

I don't care. And as I also said, I don't feel like—you shouldn't feel like we have to get everything done in one swoop because two hours is about all anybody can stand to do this for at a whack. Also, when we—this morning when we finish up for today, I've got a release form I'd like for you to sign that allows us to let people use this in their research and that kind of thing. It's not too onerous even though it was drawn up by a lot of lawyers.

CM:

[speaking at once] Well, I don't think it would. I don't think it— [laughs]

AW:

So, what I'd like to just kind of get started, do things chronologically. Rabbit trails are the best part of this so we don't mind going off in different directions.

CM:

You can always edit that and straighten it out.

AW:

We don't even edit, we just let other people listen to it. What I'll do is I make notes and if we got off too far on one trail then I know where went off on the trail at and we'll come back to it so don't worry about that. It's more of a conversation than anything. I'm really interested, of course, in your biography—or growing up out here—but also the work that you've done, the work that you and Anne have done together; supporters of the community in so many ways, and

that's an important thing to get into too. Anyway, let's start with beginning like, when you were born?

CM:

I was born on December the 14, 1934.

AW:

And where?

CM:

Right here in Lubbock, Texas.

AW:

In Lubbock?

CM:

In my mother's bed.

AW:

Ah, at home.

CM:

Yeah. There's five children in our family, I'm the next to youngest. Connie was first, then Betty, then Fred—they came pretty fast, all three of them. They're about a year apart, year and a half one of them. Then seven years later I was born, and then five years my little brother Mickey was born. They're all dead now but me. If Connie was still living she'd be ninety-one. They lived pretty good, the male part of our family, going back even to great-grandfathers, all had heart problems. In the early days they didn't know what to do with them, and so we've all had to watch that. My brother Fred had numerous heart attacks, and he's hardheaded ole Scotsman and he wouldn't go to the doc—sometimes he'd have a heart attack and wouldn't even go to the doctor, he'd just get over it, take Aspirin. He flew back from Australia one time like that, had a heart attack in the airport. He told his wife, he said, "Do not tell anybody about this." I bought him some Aspirin. "And I'm going to start taking that." He flew from Melbourne to Sydney, changed planes and flew to LA [**Los Angeles**]. He said, "When I get home I promise I'm going to go see the doctor." When he got home he's feeling pretty good and he said, "I don't think I need to go right now." Just the way it was. Then he died with a heart attack but he was—

AW:

How old was he?

CM:

He was about seventy-four, I guess, when he died.

AW:

That sounds too young.

CM:

That was long. Most people don't live any longer than that.

AW:

Yeah, but now that I've—

CM:

But he could've lived, you know. The reason I'm alive today is because of expert doctors and meeting with them to keep a look on things.

AW:

You've taken care of it. Speaking of which, how are your eyes because we were—

CM:

It's fine now.

AW:

—we were going to do this last fall but you—

CM:

Yeah, it's just—recently when I—everything is—the bubble's gone that they put in there. They laser the eye, back it together, then they put that bubble in there, which is hell on wheels to stay with your head down for two weeks all the time.

AW:

I don't know how you did that.

CM:

That's the worst thing I've ever got.

AW:

I just don't know how you did that. I believe I shared with you, one of my colleagues has had that with both of his eyes and he spent that time—and I just—

CM:

It's tough.

AW:

Since I was a little kid I was fidgeter and I'm still one. I don't know how you do that.

CM:

I'm a little bit that way. It was hard.

AW:

You've been active your whole life too.

CM:

Yeah I have.

AW:

To go through that is, that's pretty miserable.

CM:

We were—I was three and half when we—I was born actually where the Chamber of Commerce used to be. It's the catty-corner across the street from the big building they're working on, the ole bank building that's been empty for so long.

AW:

Oh, the Citizens—

CM:

Yeah, the old Citizens building. Right across there was the Chamber of Commerce for quite a long time.

AW:

That's right, yeah.

CM:

That's where my dad's house was.

AW:

So that's, what, 13th or 14th?

CM:

I think it's 14th.

AW:

Yeah 14th, that's right.

CM:

14th and about J, okay. I'm guessing, I'm not positive about that.

AW:

What did your dad do? What was his line of work?

CM:

He had a pretty interesting life. His father—he was born in Buffalo Gap, South Abilene.

AW:

Yeah, I know right where Buffalo Gap is.

CM:

They had a little farm and he grew up rural, obviously.

AW:

Were his folks from Scotland or were they born in the U.S.?

CM:

No, they were born in the U.S., both of them. They were originally—we've traced all that—Craig's side of the family, my mother's side—we can trace them—the McDonalds I think were renegades. When that Moultrie—when Sherman burned down the Moultrie's courthouse, all of those records would've been in there, should've been in. They've told me that they would've been in that courthouse because the Scots ran all that area right there at Moultrie, Georgia. They would've had—they always kept great records. So if you can ever get your family back to Scotland, they've still got them, and we traced them back to 1745 in Scotland.

AW:

My mother's side are Dixon's, McSwine's and Walker's. One of my aunts, my mother's sister, traced that part of us back. Now, our Wilkinson's, which is Scots-Irish, I don't know. We've never done much work on that but I'd be interested to see.

CM:

We just never could get past about the third or fourth generation.

AW:

Of McDonald's? Yeah.

CM:

Of McDonald's. They were all hardheaded, show me kind of people.

AW:

I think the Wilkinson's and McDonald's are connected because I think—I did look up our tartan once because I was in Scotland, and I was going to buy a tartan kilt till I found out how much that thing cost.

CM:

Well, we didn't know much about them until we really got over there, we've been there three times. The Isle of Skye is where they tell us that the McDonald's—basically where they were. They also had those islands South of there, which would be Ireland. My dad always said, "We're Scotch-Irish," and that's what everybody almost said. Anyway, that's—the back history is good.

AW:

Yeah. So he grew up in Buffalo Gap?

CM:

Buffalo Gap, yeah. Then his father was a—kind of a circuit writer preacher. He would ride to different churches of Christ, to different little towns around Buffalo Gap, and even into Abilene and preach on Sunday. So when it got time to—the elders kind of—and I never saw a picture of him, he wouldn't have many. He died before mother and dad married, just slightly before.

AW:

So you never knew him?

CM:

We never knew him, nobody ever knew him. His name was, I think, F.A. McDonald something. Anyway, daddy was William Alex and so I'm Alex Craig.

AW:

Alex—

CM:

But here's the way—

AW:

How do you spell Alex?

CM:

A-l-e-x, it's pronounced like E-l-e-c in Gaelic. It's a Gaelic word. It's not Alex from Alexander. The people that have 'Alex' in their name generally their name was really Alexander. Of course, nowadays everybody says the same thing. So anyway, when he—he had—I remember as a kid he would get letters addressed to E-l-e-c McDonald because you'd get them on the phone and they'd here that—but it's pronounced 'Elec' like E-l-e-c. He went by his second name so when they made me Alex Craig they didn't call me Alex because his was William Alex so they called me Craig. We both had middle names.

AW:

Now, is Craig your mother's—

CM:

My mother's maiden name.

AW:

I'm called by my middle name too. I don't know how much of a hassle it was for years.

CM:

[speaking at once] The Army drove me crazy.

AW:

Yeah or anybody that makes you fill out paperwork. [coughs]

CM:

Yeah. So anyway, that's part of that.

AW:

So, your dad grew up on a farm, rural?

CM:

Yeah, he was—I think it was kind of a—I don't know what all they—how they made enough money to live except growing crops. Maybe they paid him a little when he preached, I don't know. He later became the first trustee, one of seven I think—Abilene Christian. At first it was Abilene Christian University—Abilene Christian Grade School. They only had like eight grades.

AW:

Oh, I didn't know that. I knew about it being Abilene Christian College.

CM:

His older sister—there were six in that family—and his oldest sister was named Liblick. They lived—their house was right in the middle of that tornado on 9th street. Their house was the only house on that block that didn't get leveled and they were pretty old when that happened at '70, they were like eighty-five, ninety or old then.

AW:

So 9th Street?

CM:

But Gus Jr., we called him Uncle Gus—I don't know what his name was really—but Gus Jr. was one of his sons, and he worked for Furr's for a long time in their refrigeration; he was an expert on refrigeration, frozen cases and all that kind of stuff. He was working and heard about that storm in Lubbock and he took off in the middle of the night and he got to—he said he to University, it was then—

AW:

College.

CM:

—College. He got to there at about 9th street and he couldn't go anymore because of downed lines so he parked his car—or pickup—and he ran all the way to their house which would be a long ways—jogging, jumping—

AW:

And those downed lines were—

CM:

—jumping over wires.

AW:

—really dangerous.

CM:

And when he got to the house they were in bed and they didn't know it had even happened. [Andy laughs] They got up in the night when the front door blew open and they just—I don't know, just lucky. It took both of them to push the door back shut and lock it because they never

locked their house. He said when they got the bolt in there, well that's—"Hell," went back to bed and slept till he woke them up. [laughter] They were the only couple in Lubbock, I swear, that never owned an automobile. They were probably one of the last of them that lived. Aunt Mary we called her, she'd call mom and say, "Lola"—her name was Lola Craig McDonald. She said, "Lola, can you take me—there's a sale going on down at Hemphill's." He said, "I need to get something," I don't know what. Mother'd run errands for her all the time.

AW:

In fact, I was on the Police Department May 11, 1970.

CM:

So you got right in the middle of that.

AW:

No, one of smartest things I ever did—and that wasn't smart because I was lucky—I'd had Dr. Henry cut four wisdom teeth out that afternoon and so I was also in bed at my house, completely out.

CM:

I was on the Rawls' school board at that time and we were having our meeting that night and somebody came running in and they said, "Guys, the radio station in Lubbock [inaudible] is no longer broadcasting. They've had this big storm." The information we're getting—that it leveled that part of town. He said, "I think you better get home, that tornado's coming to us. They said it looks like it's coming straight to Rawls." He said, "I don't think it was, it was going more Northeast." So boy, we jumped in the car and I called Anne—I didn't call her, we didn't have cellphones I remember—but when I got home she already had the kids in the basement. We had a basement there so they were all down there singing songs, trying to make them be quiet. They were little.

AW:

This was when you lived in the house I visited before, the big, nice house North of—

CM:

No, it was after we'd moved. Yeah, it was after the old house a mile and a half North. It's out there on **Mural**. [0:13:49]

AW:

Okay, got it.

CM:

And so, we had built a house on the hill there about a quarter of a mile from the highway there. We were in there—hadn't been there too long, and Laura was born about eight days later. She was born on 28th. Anne and I—I was married on the 28th, Anne and I, of May and so we had our wedding anniversary Sunday. Fifty-seven years.

AW:

Congratul—fifty-seven. We'll be forty-nine in August.

CM:

You probably weren't either. You weren't—I wasn't young, I know. Anne had gone off—

AW:

I know in her story she'd gone of to—

CM:

Yeah, she went off to SMU [**Southern Methodist University**] and I went to the University of Denver.

AW:

You did, University of Denver.

CM:

I graduated there and I graduated a little early. I graduated in three years and one eleven-week period. We had quarters.

AW:

What'd you study at the University of Denver?

CM:

Finance. My degrees is in BSBA, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. They don't do that anymore but what it was, it required a lot of law. I had a lot of law. They begged me to stay in school one more year. He said, "You can have your law degree in one year," and I was so ready to get out of school. The minute I got out I got drafted, so I went in the Army for two years then farmed [?] one year.

AW:

What years were you at the University of Denver?

CM:

Fifty-three—started the fall of '53, that was the year I graduated from Lubbock High.

AW:

So '56.

CM:

And got out in the December of '56. Went in the Army in April of '57 and I got out of the Army in about—I think it was sixth or seventh of January. The reason I got out early is because I was a clerk in an MP [**Military Police**] unit and I had an awful lot of time on my hands. I wrote up—like a desk sergeant. I was a private but I was doing desk sergeant work so I had to write up—and it's all drunks mostly in Bordeaux. All these guys that would come down there, party, get drunk and get in a fight, so we'd end up locking them up for a few days. I'd had to write all of that up. I registered all the vehicles that were owned by military people, which were nearly all officers in France and Germany. They'd come there to get their cars registered and stuff. I forgot what I was telling you about.

AW:

About getting out early.

CM:

The reason I got out early is because I got to sitting around and reading the regulations. There was a lot of things you could find in there [Andy laughs] and one of them was that if you had agriculture experience and you had to go back to farm, you could apply and get out three months early. So I did and sure enough at the last minute they told me, said, "You're clear to go." In the meantime, I'd bought a Volkswagen—I'd sold my car in Lubbock, took the money and bought a Volkswagen when I got to France. I put about thirty-thousand kilometers on that thing, nearly forty, while I was in the Army in one year.

AW:

That's a lot, especially in Europe.

CM:

Yeah—and so it was wonderful. Texas and France are about the square miles so you could drive all over France in two days. The beauty of being on the military police—my dad always said, "Craig, you should've paid them the eighty-two dollars that you was getting a month. You should've paid them back." [Andy laughs] He said, "You had too much fun." You know, it was just one of those things that happens to you. I made good scores on my Army tests so they put me in a soft—and I had a degree. They didn't put guys like that in the infantry. We had this

'detachment' they called it, and we were the only soldiers in Bordeaux except the few Navy guys that were treating illnesses, and cut lips, and stuff from fist fighting.

AW:

So when did you actually get out, since you got out early?

CM:

I graduated out of—I mean, got out of the Army. I was mustered out in, I think it was, January the sixth. I was in—

AW:

[speaking at once] That would've been 1950.

CM:

I was in Times Square when Castro took power.

AW:

Really?

CM:

Yeah, and they had all those signs going around those big automatic signs. I'd never seen them before.

AW:

Huge crowd too.

CM:

I remembered he killed a chicken in the hotel room.

AW:

Yeah, right, because that was in the *Life* magazines.

CM:

Yeah, he did. That was all—well they were talking—

AW:

So that would've been 1958, January '58?

CM:

Yeah, it was January '58. He took over—and everybody was for it.

AW:

Oh yeah, he was hailed as a hero. I was a little kid, I was ten years old, and read that article. He was—it was—because he had overthrown Batista.

CM:

They thought that was going to be the best thing. Anyway, being born there in—Doctor Overton would come to the house and deliver the babies. So I was born right there in ‘Mama’s bed’, I called it.

AW:

So what was your dad doing in Lubbock?

CM:

Okay, when he was in the eighth grade he and another guy took the principal’s buggy apart—bolts, screws, and bolts, and everything out of that—carried it up to the roof of the school, and put it back together. It was probably a two-story school, I reckon probably, no more than that. Anyway, he put it up on the top. Well, when the word got out—of course, kids can’t keep their mouth shut. In fact, most criminals are—Mr. Milam told me one time, he said, “They wouldn’t be near as many people in jail if the criminals could keep their mouth shut.”

AW:

Right, I can vouch for that as a policeman. People said, “How do you interrogate people,” and I said, “All you do is listen. People, they want to tell you.” [laughter]

CM:

[speaking at once] So anyway, he got kicked out. The principal told him, he said, “Alex, I’m going to—you’re going to get a beating like you have never had.” He got to thinking about that and he said, “You know, I don’t think that’s going to happen.” Of course, when he was—I guess he was nearly grown. In eighth grade he’s fifteen years old, maybe sixteen, I don’t remember. So he got on his motorcycle which he built.

AW:

Really?

CM:

Yeah, he was very mechanical—and out of pieces. It was an Indian—had an Indian base on it. He got on that motorcycle, didn’t tell his mother and dad a thing about it, and he took off for Lubbock because his older brother lived here. His name was Kirby McDonald and he was one of the early people in Lubbock. He ran what was called the ‘Horse and Mule Barn’. It was on Avenue A and about 14th, between 14th and 15th. It was a square block, it’s now leveled I think,

there's nothing there. [coughs] It's right South of the Economy Mills, which is now shut out, unfortunately. So dad went to work and lived with him. His house, ole Kirby's house, was right there in that stock barn. That was all what he could remember of that. There was an auction barn—at the auction twice a week, and he lived there right in that deal. He sold mules, and horses, and wagons, and plows, and stuff. He was probably the first implement dealer in this part of the country, which was—

AW:

How long was that—how long was it before that was scraped? Because I—we moved to Lubbock in '53 because my dad worked for the cotton oil mill, not the one downtown but Paymaster on south 50th. I seem to remember—because Avenue A—you did a lot of business up and down Avenue A back then—I seem to remember still that there was a bunch of that—

CM:

Yeah, I don't know that he—

AW:

Corrals or, pins, or the—

CM:

But there was a hog business there, I know, across the street to the north that's still there today. I mean, it's—I went by that not long ago and there's a bunch of hogs out there, I couldn't believe it, and they hauled them to Plainview because of Jimmy Dean and whatever it is still operating. It's still there. If you had hogs that's where you could sell them, I guess.

AW:

Yeah, and there used to be the Goodnight Sausage place out on Amarillo highway North of town too. So he—they were living with—

CM:

[speaking at once] But that's why he got here. He was born in '95, 1895. By then—and he got—it was probably '10, probably 1910, when he did that, when that happened. We've got the actual dates in a book, but I don't have it. I ought to make a copy of all of that book and give to y'all, because it has a lot of stuff.

AW:

We'd love to have that.

CM:

My sister Connie put a lot of stuff together. Anyway, he worked for a man—when he got old

enough, he started working for a man named W.D. Dickinson and he owned that 'packing house', we called it. Fridge [0:23:22] called it an 'abattoir'. It was—it became later on—Mr. Dickinson was a great old man and he knew—he had a daughter and a son. The son was a bad alcoholic and the daughter married somebody way off somewhere. So, he hired dad as—ultimately a manager. When I was growing up, junior high up until about the first or second year in high school, he still owned it.

AW:

Thank you, Anne.

CM:

When he owned the packing house, of course, there wasn't any regulations in those days. This was 19—became—he had it from—in his name—probably from '24, maybe—

AW:

Where was it located?

CM:

It's there where that Rock and Roll deal is.

AW:

So what later became farm path?

CM:

Right. He sold it to Roy Furr. He and Roy Furr were both on the First National Bank board and they were good friends. So, daddy was sick of all the regulations during World War II and so was about '47 or '48 that he sold it to Roy. I think it's about in there. I was in maybe first year in high school. I used to feed my hogs down there. When he sold it to Mr. Furr, Mr. Furr started to remodel it a little bit. When he did, it cut off my water to my hog pen. I was in Ag [Agriculture] at Lubbock High and I liked hogs, some rabbits, and sheep. I've had sheep, rabbits, and chickens all my life ever since I was old enough to carry a bucket. So anyway, going back to—three and a half—dad borrowed three lots from Mr. Overton in the Overton district, which is—the address was 2221 18th street. The house is still there—I can't think of the guy's name, he lives right across the street from me—but he was there when I was growing up. He's a lawyer here in town and he's bough quite a bit of property down there around Broadway, Church of Christ and down in some of those old homes. Anyway, but that's where—he got a guy to build that house who was a great stone mason from Abilene. They gathered up all this rock, all kinds from—there was a few things in there that was almost semi-precious but most of it's sandstone, granite, red granite, grey granite, all of this kind of stuff. This guy would—I remember he carried me—they have a picture of him, somewhere, carrying me up this ladder to the second story and me putting

a marble about that big, a big black marble, in between those stones. It's still there, you can go and see it. I told—and he was carrying me because I was way too little to climb that ladder. But anyway, that was—and so that—they built the house and owned two lots, kind of. In the third lot became the whole block's, for ten blocks away, playing ground. We had a football field, basketball, we played baseball out there and kids they hardly knew came and played. It was just the gathering place. So that was fun growing up. A lot of kids—I was real active in the Boy Scouts and Cubs, my mother was a Cub den mother. I was very fortunate to have the greatest Scout Master that I think that's ever lived, for sure, in Lubbock.

AW:
Who was that.

CM:
His name was Frank Runkles. He was the one that—he had all the Indian lore.

AW:
Right, Chief Runkles.

CM:
Yeah. Chief Runkles, that's what we called him. We called him 'Chief' when we talked to him, and bless his heart. I still keep in touch with one of his daughters. We write back and forth, kind of, Indian way; greetings and stuff. My Indian name was Black Raccoon. So when I write a letter to her I always—or email I always—we'll actually write letters back and forth. She still lives in Midland, and she's the only one left of their four children, I think. They had two boys and two girls, the boys were younger. The boys were named Biscuit and Donut, that's the truth.

AW:
That's the actual name?

CM:
I think that was their actual name. That's what I—never heard them called anything else, even by their mother. He lived over on—between 3rd and 4th on one of those streets, avenue—it was like it might not have been W but it was—

AW:
Close to the college.

CM:
Maybe before that. It was about three or four blocks from the university. They were—we would've considered them poor. I mean, I guess my family was wealthy in those days, but I had

no idea. We never—all my friends lived in little houses or something else. That house is kind of little where we live now, but in this day it wasn't, it was pretty nice. I'm sure he was considered a wealthy guy in way, although he never—I've done all his bookkeeping for the last, oh I guess, seven or eight years before he died. He just turned it all over to me and went to Rock Port, stayed down there most of the time. He was having bad heart problems and we didn't know it. He hadn't finished—he always had two pins in his pocket and he always wore a suit. You seldom ever saw him didn't have a suit on, even if he was working with pitchfork. He was just—a lot of those old men were like that. Always had a hat on, fedora. He had two pins in there and when he died, my mother was looking at those pins, opened up one, and it was full of nitroglycerin tablets. He'd been taking those things for years and she had no idea. That's just the way it was, he wouldn't tell her when he was not feeling good and stuff. Old school.

AW:

My mother's mother in Slaton had—now, she didn't hide them in a pin, but she was always with a bottle of nitroglycerin. That's just, like you say—

CM:

That's all they had. You either did that or you died. But anyway—but he had—I was very fortunate in that I could wander in and out of that packing house, I penned my pigs down there. I'd take my buddies down there, we'd go in there, we'd walk in that smoke room, cut us some weenies, eat them and didn't make any difference. It was just unbelievable. All of those sharp knives and we'd sit in there and watch those black guys butcher those cows. Boy, they were experts at it. My dad was an expert at it. He'd teach them how to do it so they could do it in three minutes. They'd have the hide off of it in three minutes.

AW:

Three minutes, man. That's amazing.

CM:

And I was a kid, that kind of stuff never bothered me. I could watch those ole guys, they'd get up on a little small ladder and reach over the little wall where they walked the cows in and hit them between the eyes with a sledgehammer. A lot of people, they would've freaked out, but me, I grew up with all of that and it never occurred to me that that would've been cruel to a lot of people. The do-gooders and the politically correct guys now, I think—I don't know what they do, I think they shock them or something.

AW:

I think they have a—for a long time they had a gun that was like a—

CM:

Twenty-two, I think they used that some; shoot them in the head. It had caused them to have a—what do you call it—reaction, shaking on the ground. They'd go to their knees and then they'd cut the throat right quick. The hogs, they'll hang them up live in a chain by the foot—

AW:

And just cut the throat.

CM:

And then cut the throat. They'd catch all that blood because hog blood was valuable, you could sell it to—they used it in cheap hamburger meat. It was—put crackers in there and blood. They did it. But anyway, I camped out—I used to camp out on that river down there.

AW:

At the Yellow House?

CM:

Yeah. Down there by the windmill deal, we'd go back in those trees. They were just about like they are now.

AW:

Did it have water running in it then?

CM:

Yeah. We'd get crawdads out of there. We'd take a piece of bacon, hang it on a string, we'd get those crawdads out of there, and we'd eat them; we'd cook them and eat them. You never thought about—I mean, you could ride across Lubbock on a bicycle when you was twelve years old and nobody touched you. Black or white, didn't matter where you were. We rode all over town. Our Scout troop met in what is now the—what is that, it's part of the police department—but it was the American Legion building with a two-story inside so it had a real high ceiling. It was owned—

AW:

What's called municipal square there between 9th or 10th and J.

CM:

That's it. It's right in there where you pay fines, parking fines, or something. It's on the other side of the corner. In other words, it's a corner away, block across. It's in the same block. I remember all of that. We went to that Underwood memorial for Louise. I was sitting in that building and I got thinking about—I said, "You know what"—this used to be what was called

“Sled Allen Arena”¹ and I just—all of a sudden I just said, “Anne,”—I said, “Mr. Ribble used to take us down there to watch wrestling or sometimes boxing. They’d bring in—and the first time I ever saw the Swedish Angel, that’s what his name was, was right there with Mr.—Sammy Ribble’s dad; Mr. Ribble and Sammy and me. I thought that was an interesting deal. That was the first time I’d ever been in there since I was probably twelve years old, ten or twelve.

AW:

I never went in it as the Arena. I never went to any of Sled Allen’s stuff.

CM:

That’ll all stopped by the time you came along.

AW:

We would go to the fair park.

CM:

Now they started doing it out there, yeah. We had a great time. We Indian-danced all over the country: high school—

AW:

Oh really? Because now, you know that troop in Amarillo is famous for doing the—

CM:

[speaking at once] We were better than they were.

AW:

And you were doing it here.

CM:

Before they were.

AW:

Really?

CM:

Yeah.

¹ Fletcher “Sled” Allen was a sports promoter who brought wrestling and boxing events (and dances) to Lubbock in the 1940s and 1950s. His son is Terry Allen.

AW:

What was the troop number?

CM:

[speaking at once] The only other one that Indian-danced that we knew of was called the Ko Shari's and they were in Colorado Springs. They got all the credit. We used to get aggravated because they'd get all the credit. They had—evidently, some woman who was publicity for them, some mother probably—but they'd be on national TV, and we never got anything. So finally, we went to the Post—we were invited to go to Post to the—in those days they had the Junior Champion Livestock Show and Rodeo; so, the high school age kids. We went down there, we were all dressed up, we danced in the parade and everything, and Movietone news was filming it for the rodeo mainly. They showed us for, you know like, twelve seconds or so. So we went to the movie two or three times and we'd sit all the way through that movie just so we could see that ten, twelve seconds that was dancing. That was our big claim to fame.

AW:

What was your troop number and what—

CM:

Eight.

AW:

Troop number eight—and what was your dance group? Did it have a name like Ko Shari or the **Guwahati's**— [0:35:18]

CM:

[speaking at once] I don't think we did, we were just known as 'Chief's Troop.' We camped out all the time. We went places, we'd camp out at maybe Hanes, stuff like that, go places where nobody else went at the same time. He was—he could get off—if he didn't he had a Tech kid or something that would go as an Assistant Scout Master.

AW:

What kind of work did Chief Runkles do?

CM:

He worked for McElhaney Dairy. He delivered milk with a horse and a wagon. When he quit, that's when—or else he probably quit when they did the wagon but anyway, he had retired by then and had, evidently, enough pension to—and the Scouts paid him. I know as soon as—we were out of the troop by then, but he moved to Post out on a campsite, at the Post Boy Scout Camp and lived out there. About two years into that, we—I think it had to be one year ago—we

were right out of high school, that's what it was—and he got—Danny Dawson who later—he married Miss Lubbock and he was the first guy from Lubbock that ever be on—he was on the first nuclear submarine, Danny was. He became, later on—what do you call him—a pilot controller in Houston.

AW:

Oh, air traffic controller?

CM:

He was one of the top ones in Houston. I talked to him one time when I was flying over there. I didn't know him and he said, "Craig, is that you?" I said, "Yeah." [Andy laughs] We switched over to the channel and we had a good visit. He's dead. We had—that Boy Scout troop was really something. Those guys, we still get together once in a while, great while, and we talk about it and stuff.

AW:

Did y'all ever go to a jamboree?

CM:

Oh yeah. What we went to when—they didn't have a jamboree like we had it—we went to Philmont, which the Phillips 66 people actually built all that and gave it to the Boy Scouts. We would do that, and that was a big deal for us to go over there or somewhere. We went to Santa Fe and camped out a few times, over there by the ski runs.

AW:

Well, Philmont's a beautiful place.

CM:

Oh it is, it was. That was crazy because we were getting a little bit of a more United States look because thirty, forty percent of the people there [coughs] worked from out of New York, and Pennsylvania. We just had a lot of fun on that trip and made a lot of friends and stuff. We was walking out there with those buffalo. We walked right through those things. I didn't know you could do that.

AW:

Yeah. Actually buffalo are—they're—as you know, they're—

CM:

There weren't anybody shooting at these so they were tame.

AW:

And they're not big cows or furry cows, they're a little different animal. They're pretty interesting. Well, so, you went to the University of Denver, you got drafted, and you got out a little early. What'd you do when you got out?

CM:

Okay, as soon as I got out I started farming. What happened was, I'd been thinking about it a long time and I thought, You know, I've got a great education and I learned a ton of stuff from school. I had some great professors. In those days it wasn't quite as legalistic as it is now. One of the best teachers I had never had a certificate, he hadn't even graduated from college but he was the number one stock broker type deal in Denver. He was the—if you were going to be in the business school you were going to have to take his course. His name was Richardson, I'll never forget that. I learned more what not to do than I did what to do which probably saved me more money than—

AW:

I was going to say, "At least in that line of work, that's probably the best education you could get."

CM:

Yeah it was. I had an economics professor—I can't remember his name—but he was great. He was one of these guys that his way to relax was to go up in the mountains and pan gold. He said he could pan fifteen, twenty dollars' worth in an afternoon, then he'd come back to town and he felt all relaxed and everything—in that river that runs right into Denver.

AW:

Cherry Creek?

CM:

Yeah. That kind of stuff, I think he had built a—always—I have a propensity—I like minerals and oil, stuff you dig out of the ground. [coughs] And I've always—I told Anne, I said, "Anne, if I hadn't been so responsible, I probably would've run off and dug for gold somewhere." I always wanted to do that.

AW:

You need to meet my friend Max Evans, the novelist who lives in Albuquerque. He's getting near into a hundred. He grew up in Andrews and Ropes. Max has—and he's a cowboy novelist, a painter—but he has—his whole life has been interesting; in mines and mining and he still owns a mine out south of the big air base out by Albuquerque. The two of you ought to talk because there's something that drives a person about that.

CM:

I got—let me take this thing off, something's going on. I think it's beeping at me.

AW:

I thought that's—I think that's over here.

CM:

Yeah I am hearing that. I wonder what that is.

AW:

I don't but it's not your hearing aid because—

CM:

Anne got me—she forced me into these hearing aids. I haven't had them but about, well, since the first of the year and I've had trouble getting used to them.

AW:

I was going to ask, "Does that take a while to get used to?"

CM:

It does, drives you nuts.

AW:

I don't even like earbuds.

CM:

I can sit around with men—there's ten of us meet every Monday at noon. We're all—got two Catholics, Episcopalian and the rest of them, Church of Christ. And we just have the greatest time. It's all based on Emmaus, on that walk to Emmaus.

AW:

Where do y'all meet?

CM:

We're at Carillon right now. We used to meet here for about the first four years, I cooked lunch for them every Monday. When I got—started having heart problems more than three years ago, a little bit—nearly three—so I quit doing it and so we just brown bag over to Carillon. So it's fun.

AW:

Probably a lot easier.

CM:

They're all about my age; couple of them older, some of them younger.

AW:

But farming. I mean, I understand your connection with the animals but you lived in town and that's—

CM:

Well, my dad had bought—during the depression time, I guess—but it was—I know in '30—he bought his first farm in '39, I think, out there by Rawls, and had no connections out there really. So, he started farming actually but he lived in Lubbock.

AW:

[speaking at once] So he didn't lease it out, he farmed it?

CM:

Yeah. In those days, they'd do it. You could—they called it kind of 'windshield farming'—but he would have his suit on. He'd go to a First National Bank meeting at seven o'clock and as soon that was over he'd head to Rawls. He'd go out there with this suit on, white shirt and he always wore those high-top shoes that you laced up. I've got a pair in there just to have as a reminder of him. He'd go out there and he hired guys to work the farm. In those days, the prices were poor but they were a lot more than expenses so you'd make pretty good money. He made pretty good money farming.

AW:

Mostly cotton, is that what he was—

CM:

Mostly cotton but in those days we did a lot more wheat, grains, sorghum.

AW:

Was it dry land or was it irrigated?

CM:

[speaking at once] When I was little I'd go out there.

AW:

Was it dry land or irrigated?

CM:

It was all dry land, yeah. Well's didn't come in till about the time I got out of high school, '53 or something like that. It was funny, he told me that first farm he bought, which is now mine, he paid fifty dollars an acre for it. The ole boy that lived there and owned it told Alex, he said, "I'll buy this back from you for twenty-five dollars in probably less than three years." [Andy laughs] He said, "This is way too high, this fifty dollars." Then he'd bought some more and there was a connect—they weren't all connected but he ended up with enough that in the final analysis, all of the five children inherited half a section, three-hundred and twenty acres then I bought a little bit more to get me to four-hundred just because it fit. Then I farmed that—what happened was, I went through finance school, I really liked it and I made the best grades I ever had. I got out early because I was taking twenty hours. They'd let you if you were grades were B's or better, you could take twenty hours. I've always been in a hurry. Anne says, "Craig, you got to slow down." So I hurried through and then they were drafting then. I had been offered about two weeks before I got out of school. A guy from Pensacola, a Navy guy, came in. He said, "Boy"—there was about five of us about in the same shape. Some of them weren't going to get out till May—and they said, "Look, we want you to join the Navy and go to Pensacola. You're going to have a lot of fun at Pensacola." He said, "Basic training's not that bad in the Navy." "It was pretty but it wasn't as bad as the Army," they said. I said, "How long has it got to be?" "You'll be First Lieutenant," or whatever they call them in the Navy, I can't remember now.

AW:

Ensigns or something.

CM:

And he said, "We want you to—you'll be probably on the ship being the finance officer to make the payments and everything." He said, "Believe it not, they actually pay them with money out on the ship, out in the ocean." I said, "Is that—", "And it's pretty easy. You'll really enjoy it." "The girls like those ensigns," that's what they'd tell us. "And you'll be in Pensacola for about, maybe, four months and then you'll be at sea probably." I said, "Well, how long is that?" He said, "You got to sign up for four years." When you're twenty years old, you think that is an eternity. I said, "Well, I got to get going. I got to make some money out here. I don't want to be depending on somebody.", "We'll pay, you'll have ensign pay." Anyway, I'd said, "I'm not doing that. I'll take my chances with draft." So, I got out the Army in April, three months early—in January, would've been April had I been the full time. In the meantime, I'd been thinking about the Army, the chain of command and all that stuff. I'd had a lot of that bullshit and I thought, You know, it's going to—I was training to be a banker. My dad was a banker but he was—he hadn't gone but eight grades.

AW:

So he wasn't—

CM:

He was a banker because he bought stock.

AW:

He ran a bank but he didn't work in a bank.

CM:

Yeah, he wasn't ever on a salary with the bank. So, I just—I called him up on the phone—the only telephone call I made from overseas. I called him from Bordeaux, France and I said, “Dad, what do you think about me coming back home and farming?” He thought that was the greatest thing there ever was. He wanted somebody to be out there, nobody'd ever farmed out there. He said, “I'll help you get started if you'll do that.” I said, “The only thing—now, I'm going to get out in about two weeks”—and I said, “But I got to have at least a week's skiing in Denver.” [Andy laughs] He said, “That's all right, you deserve a week out there.” Anyway, I got my little Volkswagen and I drove to Denver and skied about ten days, then I came on the farm. As soon as I got on, the next day I was on a tractor. That was, like, mid-January. He didn't think I'd last. The first year was rough. It was one of those years it rained about forty inches out there.

AW:

That's two years worth of—

CM:

I'm saying—hail out, we had a thunder storm every day, nearly. I planted—we planted on about the ninth of June. We he had finished planting—what he had done, he put me—he said, “Now Craig, you don't anything about farming,” and I said, “That's right.” I worked for my grandmother who had moved out there in '40 after going broke in Nebraska. That's another funny story. So I'd just done cleaning eggs, washing eggs and stuff like that. Anyway, we went out there and there was a guy named Uel Arthur who was an ex-veteran, World War II.

AW:

Uel, E-u—

CM:

U-e-l. Arthur, A-r-t-h-u-r. He was—he would've been about twelve years old than me. He's about C.B.'s age, ninety-two, ninety-three if he was living. He died not too long ago, too many years ago. But anyway, he was a family that grew up as tenant farmers. His brothers and stuff, they had a bunch of brothers—one of his brothers was with Phillips 66 and this boy was—Uel Arthur was working for Phillips up at Border. He didn't like that, he wanted to farm like his daddy did, so he—my daddy found out about it or something and hired this guy. Anyway, then he put that guy in charge of me. I lived in the ole house, that was the first house, and started

working on living by myself for a year—but I worked for him, really. Whatever he did, I did. We had four Farmall tractors to plant with. I ran one, his father-in-law ran one—Mr. Davis—his wife ran one and he ran one. So that's four tractors running, four-row farm hauls. Mrs. Davis, the mother-in-law, did all the cooking. Man, we ate—they were big people. They were six-four. They were all big. They'd eat stuff—you'd have chicken, fried fish, no telling what all you'd have. Two desserts, two pies, we ate—they were all pretty big and I wasn't because, I don't know, I was just working so hard then I just weighed about a hundred and seventy pounds.

AW:

If I recall, on the farm in Slaton we had that big meal we had at noon.

CM:

Yeah, it was at noon.

AW:

We called it 'dinner' and at night it was 'supper'.

CM:

We had dinner together. I ate my own breakfast and dinner then my dad—of course, he was a lot like I was. or I was a lot like he was—he had a key to my house. He'd be in the kitchen six o'clock, especially on a Monday because he knew I'd been fooling around Saturday and Sunday. Saturday night if you'd stay out—if he thought you stayed out too late, he'd wake you up at four, five. It was just that way. He always got up at five anyway. He would come out there and he'd bring breakfast—he'd be cooking breakfast when I woke up. I'd hear him banging around in there. [Andy laughs] He was teaching me to get up and get after it, that's what he wanted to do and I learned that. The rest of my life, as long as I was farming, I was up by six. I learned—from this guy is when I really learned how to farm. He was very cautious, very conservative, very tight. The first tractor I bought cost three-hundred dollars. It was a second-hand Farmall, and then it wore out—down Seminole, in the sand country. I bought two combines and both of those I paid three-hundred for one and three-fifty for another. Nobody else in the county had anything that old. He said, "Craig, you got to learn how to do this stuff." He'd help me and we'd buy that stuff cheap then rework it. I learned to weld.

AW:

I was going to say, "You learned how to work on it too."

CM:

Oh yeah, learned how to weld. We had—at one time, I had three of those combines. They were the kind that had the big, white belts that went around and brought the grain back up in them—Allis-Chalmers—pulling behind a Farmall. He didn't want any wasted time so he taught me how

to—if one was running a little bit faster than the other and it's coming up behind you, then the guy in front made a circle, come back and got in behind him. He did that automatically, he did it. That way you never pulled over and let it—you know, you made this little tight circle. He taught me how—he said, “That way you don't waste any time.” [Andy laughs] He was the kind that if you had a break for lunch—for instance, after Anne and I had married she'd bring a lunch to the field—and so he'd get on the tractor and he'd run it. He didn't want it to sit even, he didn't want it to sit there. If we was cultivating, he'd be cultivating. He'd come out of there and his ole white shirt would be covered up with dirt and his suit. My mother gets upset at him but he didn't care, he just—he didn't want anything to slow down. We started drilling wells about the time I started farming. It was a little bit before that but not much.

AW:

How far did you have to drill then?

CM:

Three-fifty. They learned right quick that the bottom of what they call the 'red bed', which was the bottom of the Ogallala, in our area was about three-hundred and fifty feet. So you wanted to drill into it, kind of hit it so it'd kick up that clay then that'd be the bottom of it. Then you'd pump from maybe higher.

AW:

But you'd drill that far down?

CM:

Ultimately, we were down on the bottom floor. In those days, man, I'm telling you, I'd work daylight to dark. Those guys never quit, he couldn't see. By the time you got to the house and took a bath you weren't very hungry. You'd eat a peach, an apple or something, that was about enough. Big breakfast, big lunch and not much supper, which is what we ought to all be doing.

AW:

I know it. We did that growing up. We had—

CM:

I get my big meal at night which is why I got fat.

AW:

Yeah me too, it's a bad habit. I remember on the farm, supper was crumbled-up cornbread and sweet milk or buttermilk, depending on your preference.

CM:

Black-eyed peas, that's one of my favorite. Put a little honey on top of black-eyes peas, that's—

AW:

I never did honey but I love black-eyed peas. I'm going to try that.

CM:

We tried it. We had some the other day that I shelled last fall.

AW:

I love black-eyed peas.

CM:

Dad was one of those kinds, he never made a whole lot of money in the way I think of money now. I remember the day—the year he died was the biggest income he ever had, it was seventy-thousand dollars. I'll never forget that—which was a lot. That'd probably be like maybe two-hundred now or something like that. He died in '78 and I would think that'd probably be about the same as that. Anyway, but he gave away a lot of money. He gave church—they'd get in trouble or something down there, probably, and he'd give them fifty-thousand dollars or thirty-thousand dollars, stuff like that. He taught me to give, he really did. But he gave the kids—he was always—we all went—we all went to college and he paid our stuff. I never had to work going to school, all I had to do was study and make good grades. Of course, tuition at Denver University—it was a sister-school, really, to SMU.

AW:

Yeah, I went to graduate school at DU. [Denver University]

CM:

Okay so you know what I'm talking about.

AW:

Yeah but by the time I started in the seventies it was no longer Methodist affiliate.

CM:

Okay, it was when I went. All the trustees were Methodist and the school—the town supported it pretty strongly.

AW:

[speaking at once] It's a great school.

CM:

I don't know what they do now. I guess they do now.

AW:

Yeah. Well, I don't know anything about it now but in the seventies it was a great school, great hockey school in the seventies.

CM:

Yeah, they still are. I think they won the college hockey—

AW:

Was it when you were going there?

CM:

Yeah it was—then skiing. When I went up there they was like—I think for the last nine years they'd won the NCAA [National Collegiate Athletic Association] Skiing seven of those nine.

AW:

I believe that. As part of my penance for being a graduate student I had to teach. They gave me a Monday, Wednesday, Friday class, which was just—it meant a Wednesday class because all those kids were skiers and they'd be gone Friday through Monday so I had to have one day a week.

CM:

Were they still on the quarter system? I think they were, weren't they?

AW:

They were.

CM:

I had that. When I was taking twenty hours I'd take four courses in the morning, five days a week. It was like going to high school, which I loved. I think doing it out here made it easier.

AW:

Oh yeah. Well, you got better usage out of your buildings. You didn't have any down time, really.

CM:

You had a day to goof off and not concentrate on what you were doing, I think, made a lot of difference.

AW:

I liked it, I enjoyed that school. It was—of course, by the seventies it'd grown up a lot around—

CM:

All that area.

AW:

Yeah, all that area. A great school.

CM:

The finance school, when I was there, was downtown by the capital building.

AW:

So you didn't go out on—

CM:

So, we lived on the campus, lived in the housing there until the second year, then I moved downtown in an ole beat up place. You had to ride the bus to school because I never had a car until I got out of school. We'd ride the bus and I was like the Texan: some lady'd get on the bus and I'd get up and give her my seat. She'd look at me like, "You're an idiot." Finally you get where you're just as tough as they were and you'd let some old lady stand there while you— [laughter] That was a great school for me but I never—because I graduated early, I didn't graduate with nearly all my friends. Hardly anybody got out in December. So, we just kind of lost contact.

AW:

[speaking at once] So you haven't had really a—

CM:

I really have been a big supporter. I'd send them, like, a hundred dollars a year or something, they'd send me a thank-you, and that's about it.

AW:

I don't know much about—I was just there as a graduate student and I never—I went in this odd program. I'd left here, I'd gotten my degree at Tech while working nights in the police department, I grew up to be a policeman in Colorado and I went to—started in graduate school. They started you in this program that was a doctoral program. Now, you only had a bachelor's degree but it was a doctoral program because you were supposed to stay there and get it. I was working sixty, seventy hours a week on the department and trying to take a full load and finally at two years I said—

CM:

Married probably.

AW:

Married, we just had our first child and I said, "You know, I don't want to be a doctor." A Ph.D. I mean. But, I really enjoyed the school and so I never had kept up with either so I don't know what their alumni relationships are.

CM:

[speaking at once] Well, they send out stuff and they have really great magazine comes out four times a year. You may get that, I get that.

AW:

Here's a DU question, I'll bet it was. There was a—the best greasy hamburger joint on the planet, the Stadium Inn, was—

CM:

It's still there. It was there.

AW:

I loved that—

CM:

It was, that was good. We'd go up the Coors plants, we'd take a tour—

AW:

Get a free beer.

CM:

—and those guys finally said, "Look,"—we'd go up there on, like, a weekend a lot of times and we'd sit in there and drink beer for hours, free. Finally those ole boys said, "Look, you don't have to go on a tour, just come on up and have some." [Andy laughs] They got tired of taking us on a tour. It was a good experience out there, I'm glad I went. I don't have any real friends because of it. I have one guy in particular that I was great friends with and learned a lot from but he died of a brain tumor.

AW:

I'll bet Denver was beautiful—

CM:

It was.

AW:

—in those years, too.

CM:

They didn't have any fog in those—smog in those days.

AW:

Well, it was smoggier by the time I got there but I still have a lot friends up there.

CM:

It's a pretty school. Did you ever go to—do you remember out on the railroad tracks going west on Colfax, west Colfax, out—when you got to the railroad tracks—which wasn't too far past the main, whatever that main street was. Colfax was that East to West one.

AW:

Yeah because I was a policeman in Lakewood which was—it started at Sheridan Boulevard and went right to Golden. I was all over Lakewood.

CM:

On the railroad tracks there was this famous, great steakhouse restaurant that was there that had all the breeds—you know every kind of animal they would breed would've been shot and stuffed in that place. Big bears hanging over you when you was eating. It was really fun to go there. I always take somebody that came to Denver to see them at that time, take them up that way.

AW:

I'm trying to think of the name of it.

CM:

I'll think of it too but I can't. The ole boy that owned it and started it was—he would guide Teddy Roosevelt when they went hunting all the time. He'd come to Denver, he'd get these guys, they'd go up there taking horses, packed mules and stuff like that and shoot big deer—I don't know what all—bears and whatever they had.

AW:

I'll think of the name of that place in a minute. I don't think it was still operating in the seventies.

CM:

It probably didn't. I know when Anne and I went skiing up there after we married, it was there because I still took her. It was already changing a whole lot.

AW:

It wasn't The Fort, that was a little later. The Fort was a little further West.

CM:

There was an Italian place that was a great restaurant there.

AW:

Oh, and they had great Italian food in Denver. They had a lot of coal miners

CM:

[speaking at once] They probably still do.

AW:

Yeah, they still do. Because of that though—and this is just a sideline—but because of that, we had the junior version of the Mafia.

CM:

I think they had it there.

AW:

What it was, was the Mafia in the really tough places like New York and Chicago—that's a hard business to retire from and so when you got kind of old they would ship them off to Colorado so they'd come to Pueblo and to the Denver area. They ran sort of minor—

CM:

I wondered about that because this Italian food place that was so famous that we'd go to was—I mean, it was just down-to-earth, authentic and they were all—

AW:

They cut their own noodles, for one thing, and make their own sauces.

CM:

One of the guys that was real active there in Denver was—he was a Mafia, sure as world. He ran the wrecking business: car wrecks, chopped up cars and all of this kind of stuff.

AW:

And towed cars.

CM:

Yeah, so that's what he did.

AW:

We had our big fights with the tow truck operators. They were—

CM:

You would know more about that than I would.

AW:

I had—I was in a car that'd just been wrecked and I was in trying to get them to loosen their seatbelt, get them out and all of a sudden I felt the car shaking. There was one of those tow truck guys that latched onto the car was getting ready to haul it off and we were still in it. [laughs] It was pretty dicey.

CM:

Those car haulers and that kind of stuff, they had a tendency to run kind of shady. They may do it here, I wouldn't be surprised.

AW:

It's a tough business and they were all, back in those years, they were all on amphetamines. So they were—as a policeman, you had a difficult time with those people because they were hopped up.

CM:

One of the things, I think, we were blessed with going to high school is I had never heard of the word 'marijuana'. I couldn't spell it if I wanted to. Of course, there a lot of words I couldn't spell but when I was in high school—I didn't pay too much attention in high school. But anyway, we had no drugs. I mean, cigarettes were the only drug that we had. A couple of times we'd have a get together on Saturday night or something and they'd get out the cigarettes. I'll never forget, I smoked two that night and nearly choked to death. It burned my tongue and I decided, "You know, that is stupid and I'm not going to do it." Anne and I, neither one growing up, ever smoked.

AW:

My wife and I didn't either although our parents—well, her father, J.T. Alley—he was a policeman when you were going to high school.

CM:

I forgotten about—yeah, I knew him.

AW:

That was my father-in-law. He smoked and my dad smoked but we've never smoked and I'm grateful for it.

CM:

Anne's mom and dad smoked like chain-smokers. She'd get in that car, they'd go to Dallas or something and she'd nearly choked to death as a little girl in there. We just—thank goodness. My little brother died of cancer all over him and he smoked from high—when he was in high school, it was the thing to do. He was in there with E.J. Holub, Bill Pruitt, Mac Davis and that bunch; they played football. I never played football but they did. They smoked from about fifteen years old till they died.

AW:

Yeah. There was—a lot of the kids that I went to school with—and I was a few years later—but they smoked.

CM:

But I grew—that's the funniest thing, we weren't but five years apart but in our group, when we had a reunion—we had a reunion here this last year—and there's still nobody smoking. They never did smoke.

AW:

That's pretty interesting.

CM:

It's weird. It was not the thing to do. You were, kind of, considered a little bit low-life if you smoked cigarettes. Here three or four years later it was the thing to do and kids, you know, one of them wears a yellow shirt and the next thing you know they'll all have a yellow shirt. If they don't have one, they'll want one.

AW:

How you rolled your cuffs up or don't, whether you leave the patch on your Levi's or you don't, all that stuff was real important.

CM:

Cut your britches. I saw a girl the other day—I'm not kidding you—we're in the—I think it was at Chuy's. Hispanic gal, nice looking. Real nice looking. She had her britches cut about that far apart all the way up to her panties and you could see it. She was a little bit heavy, not fat, but heavy for those pants. They were pretty tight, and there were a little—skin was out, pushing out just a little bit through those. I thought, That don't make sense to me.

AW:

The thing that still doesn't make sense to me is buying a pair of jeans that are already worn out.

CM:

Yeah. Go out and buy the ones that they have to get them worn out. They wash in them in rock or something. I forgot what it is.

AW:

I don't know what it is. That just—still just gets me.

CM:

I went to Dupre school, Walked to school. From where I lived it was like four blocks, I guess, and 19th, you could cross it—

AW:

What was your junior high, Carol Thompson?

CM:

Carol Thompson, yeah. And that was when they were—our senior—well senior year—our what would be ninth grade at Carol Thompson; seventh, eighth and ninth was what we'd—the ninth grade we went half a day and the other half of the day was—I guess it was O.L. Slaton. It was either O.L.—Monterey, I think.

AW:

Monterey wasn't built till '56.

CM:

Okay. We got out in '53. It had to be O.L. Slaton then, junior high, because a lot of kids—Anne went to there but she went the other half so.

AW:

Because it was too crowded?

CM:

Yeah. Well, they needed another school. It was just too crowded I guess.

AW:

Not that many years later when I started Atkins, we went in shifts.

CM:

To do that kind of—like that.

AW:

And then when we went to Monterey, we went in shifts because they didn't build Coronado till my senior year.

CM:

I like that half day though, man. In the morning, you'd gripe about getting up too early but you started at eight and got out at twelve-thirty, I think it was. Then we had the whole afternoon to go play football, or basketball, chase rabbits or whatever you was doing.

AW:

How did you meet Anne?

CM:

It was a strange thing. I knew her—my dad and S.E. Cone, Susie Cone, were really close friends. The Cones were always close friends, and Margery Castleman—you remember her?

AW:

Yeah, oh yeah.

CM:

She's my mother's first cousin. Her—yeah, I think that's the way it was. Her father, Margery's father, was Parks—Mr. Parks, P-a-r-k-s, and he and my grandfather were first cousins. That's how my grandfather came down here. He moved from a farm in Nebraska to Lubbock in 1907. There wasn't a paved street in Lubbock in 1907. They were building Broadway and they were digging those holes. Mother said they used to go out there—mother was seven years, she was born in January 28, of 1900; made it easy. She said they would play in those holes. They would dig straight down and then they'd—and they had those A-frames, you know, with the bucket crank—and then they'd dig down the street and down there about—I don't know—ten, fifteen yards and have another one. They just kept going and that's how they built that huge—you know, there's a pipeline down Broadway that's almost big enough for a Volkswagen to drive through.

AW:

I didn't know that.

CM:

Right down the middle. I think that's why the road's so crappy now. It's got dips, and holes, it's got this leaking all in there.

AW:

Yeah and it's got those bricks, which are kind of—

CM:

But, you know, you wouldn't think about kids around—you wouldn't let your kids go down in that place—well, they would have it roped off but in those days you played—that's why kids are not near as free as we were.

AW:

Oh no.

CM:

We grew up free. I told them, they couldn't believe it.

AW:

I think we didn't let our kids do this but we'd leave the house in the morning and wouldn't come back till night and there's no telling where we'd wind up. This was in the fifties and sixties.

CM:

And they never locked the doors, nobody would lock the door. My mother used to make custards all the time. We had a lot of chickens and had a milk cow. Boy, she'd make those custards in those little brown jug things about that tall.

AW:

With—

CM:

Bake them in the oven.

AW:

—brown sugar in the bottom?

CM:

Yeah, in the bottom, and glaze sometimes. She'd make those things, she'd make like forty of them. She had one shelf in the refrigerator that that's all that was in there. The kids of the neighborhood would come out of school—even if I wasn't there yet, they'd come out of school, they'd come in there, come in the house, get one of those, sit down at the kitchen table and they'd be eating it when I got home, or when mama got home. Nobody—you couldn't think about doing that now. I grew up—my dad was—he always kept us busy with chores and so even in Lubbock, when we grew up in Lubbock, everyone thought I grew up on a farm. I didn't, I grew up down on Avenue W and 18th Street. I could walk to all three schools and did. My mother, as far as I know, they never took me to school. I've still got a big scar right here that was a pretty poor job but I had a bicycle wreck going to Dupre, and a guy that was riding by Lubbock High School hit me at an intersection on the ally—I was driving across a vacant lot at an angle like they used to do and he was coming down the alley or something and we hit, collided. I had a bicycle with no grips on it, you know, just a pipe. It went right through there and went all the way to the bone.

AW:

Man, that hurts to think about it.

CM:

Well, I got up, I was kind of—I wasn't crying, I got up and I—but hurting but it wasn't bleeding. I mean, it just missed the artery some way. My pants were still on, had a little tear in them, so I pushed my bicycle—of course, it bent my wheel—and I pushed my bicycle down the alley two blocks to my house. I told my mother, I said, "Mom, I'm really hurting." I said, "I don't know what's the matter with my leg but something—I barely could get home." She said, "Well, pull your pants down." Of course, she wasn't all excited that I wasn't crying and I wasn't limping. She said, [phone rings 01:13:04] "Pull your pants down and let me"—I pulled my pants down and I looked—I could see the bone. It was like a cookie cutter. [phone rings 01:13:10] Anne'll get that. That was my first big accident, I guess you'd ever say. Anyway, I've got this big ole—right here, you can still see it. Man, I had to be, what, eight years old or something like that when that happened. We had more accidents growing up.

AW:

I cut—I fell on a piece of glass and cut my wrist right down to the bone. We lived in Lubbock but our—we'd been in—I was born in Slaton so—and our grandparents were all down there so our doctors were all down there. They put a rag around it, got in the car and we drove to Slaton. I remember looking at that bone as a little kid thinking, I got—

CM:

"It really is a bone in there."

AW:

--that's a bone. I don't know how I survived that either.

CM:

One of the worst things we did growing is that one year—we used to—of course, that Overton area there, if you had bought it at the time my dad did which—so it had to be 1930, he probably bought it in '34 or five. I was three years old when we actually moved in the house. You could still have animals, so I had a horse when I got old enough, but I had rabbits and chickens when I was just barely big enough to carry a bucket. He'd go with me out there, we'd feed them and take care of them, gather the eggs—he ate all the eggs. He ate the eggs, ate the rabbits. I never did make any money with them, but he bought the feed so that was all right. He told me how to butcher them. When I was seven years old I was killing rabbits and dressing it out.

AW:

You have to good at that to keep that fur from getting on the meet.

CM:

Yeah, getting in there. It was just the idea that—use animals to eat and stuff. I didn't—nowadays, kids just freak out. My kids—I killed a bunch of chickens one time in front of them and they just went crazy.

AW:

My wife still prefers to buy things in the shrink wrapped and the Styrofoam. She doesn't want to think about it.

CM:

They think those chickens—if they had to buy a real chicken and do it, boy, they'd freak out. Maybe a fish but nothing—something else. They just think, "Well, they must be born to eat and they're packaged in plastic."

AW:

We didn't do that in town. You couldn't do that by the time we moved to town in '54, '53. We were on the farm long enough that as a little kid that you got used to it. It's like you say, that's what they were there.

CM:

But Anne and I, we were at Lubbock High at the same time. We never had a date. I liked her, she was very sweet and stuff. She lived out there next door to where S.E. Cone did, where Harvey Pruitt ended up for a while. It was on Slide and—the house is on Slide and 19th, on that corner, big ole white house back there.

AW:

[speaking at once] Oh yeah, the Southwest corner?

CM:

It'd been empty for years. When Harvey divorced his wife—she's nutty as a fruit cake—but she won't sell it, she won't do anything with it.

AW:

That's too bad. That's a beautiful place.

CM:

It's crazy. She got somebody that stays there off and on to kind of keep it up. But anyway, she lived next door so I'd go out there, Dad would—our family would go out there and Susie's family would be out there. He had—let's see, he had [pause] he had two—first he had Margery Castleman, and that was the oldest one. Then he divorced and remarried Adeline. Adeline was younger, and pretty and she grew up on a little ole farm out by University of Mexico, I think. She was here working for the government, as a government secretary. I don't know what it was. I think it was a work—W.W.W., whatever it was.

AW:

WPA [**Works Progress Administration**] or the CCC [**Civilian Conservation Corps**]?

CM:

Yeah. But anyway, he started dating her. In the meantime, his first wife who, was the one that kin to us, she was—she got tuberculosis. A lot of people got it in those days.

AW:

Yeah. A lot of them got it from the dust.

CM:

Yeah, probably, something. I don't know. They had to have some kind of virus in there, whatever they called it. I don't know what it is; bacteria or something. But anyway, she was sent to—I think it was either Big Springs or Sweetwater—to a clinic; sanitarium is what they called them then. So she was down there and while she was down there, Susie was running around with the secretary. Susie ran—you know that—there was a—on Broadway where you go down and come up on Avenue A. Right there on the North side of that there was a grain elevator, big grain elevator. That was Susie's father-in-law's business, Mr. Parks.

AW:

[speaking at once] Right in front of the tracks.

CM:

Susie went to work for him and real—he was aggressive and made a great—he started doing a lot better job than Mr. Parks was. Mr. Parks was also in real estate so Susie took over all of that stuff. That's when he was fooling around with Adeline who was working there too. She was working—had two jobs or something. She was real poor. Margery's mother and my mother were really close friends and they were cousins. Mother didn't know what to tell—she knew about this deal.

AW:

That's a tough spot.

CM:

Mrs. Parks was down there living at the clinic. When she got out, came back to Lubbock—evidently if you had clean living and something—I don't know how they'd do it, a lot of water, rest and everything—you could get over that stuff without drugs. Now they've got iron drugs or something that they use. Boy, she was hostile. She got back home, found out about all of that, and she blamed my mother for not telling her. For the next fifty years, they didn't even visit, that was the end of it. They used to practically live together. That was always kind of a hard thing in the family was between those deals. But Susie, when he lived out there, my dad would go out there and he'd take the kids and they'd have—he had this big barbeque pit, which I'd never seen anything like it; all brick like they did in those days. We'd play—and Steve, which is—Adeline had three children with him, and the oldest was—no, she had two children. That's what it was, with him. She had—so Margery was a half-brother—or half-sister to these other two kids, and Steve was one of them who was the same age as my little brother, Mickey, so they ran around together. In fact, they were at each other's weddings. Then Kitty, they called her—and I'm not sure what her—Katherine, I think, was her name. She ended up—she was a gorgeous girl—and she ended up marrying a Sinclair Oil guy out in Beverly Hills. She lives out there now, she's still living. She's about seventy-five or so, I guess. Probably eighty now, almost eighty. Probably more like seventy-six or seven.

AW:

So would Steve—did he live here? Because I went to high school with some Cones: Mary Cone and—

CM:

Yeah, now Mary's a good friend of mine now. She was Dr. Cone's daughter.

AW:

Yeah, that's who I'm—

CM:

And she married Dale Lewis. Dale actually offices in that same building I do out there.

AW:

Dale and Gale went to high school with me. They were a year or two younger.

CM:

That's an interesting story because Anne and I—I'd always wanted to scuba dive. I told Anne, I said—I even took a magazine about scuba diving—I said, "Anne, oh I'd give anything," but I was so busy farming I just didn't have time. One day she told me, she said, "Craig, next Wednesday we're going to start scuba diving lessons." I said, "Anne, I can't do it." She said, "You got to do it, we're already signed up."

AW:

[laughs] So where did you go to get scuba—

CM:

She we did. There was a swimming pool on what is now Marsha Sharp Freeway on the West side—on the South side of it—and it was about—let's see what it'd be: Quaker, Raleigh, and something. It was about Salem—it was somewhere right in there. There was an actual swimming pool that was a private pool that a lot of people went swimming in. We went—

AW:

Was it on the North side of the—

CM:

No, it was built on the South side of there. Of course, I think it was probably where the lanes were when they built the big deal. It was there until about the time they built the highway. It was Brownfield highway. We signed up, that's where we went, we took our lessons there, and Dale and Gale were there taking their lessons. That's how we got to know them. So when we—and by that time we had already sold—I was one of those kind—my brother and I had a boat dealership, a sailboat dealership, and a motorboat dealership. The reason we did is because we could buy them wholesale, we was always looking for an angle. We got both of these dealerships—Morgan Sailboat Dealership—and we bought three—shipped to Lubbock. These were ocean-going type deals. Dr. Connery, Millard Connery, bought the big one. He bought the—

AW:

Art Connery, his son, we went to high school together and played music together.

CM:

His daddy told me one time about Art. He said, "Art's pecker's bigger than his brain." [Andy laughs] He fathered children by three or four women.

AW:

I know it. We played—

CM:

But he was a good looking, he's really handsome.

AW:

He's a fun guy and he's a good musician. Art, he was quite a character. Well, his older brother was a character—they were all characters.

CM:

Yeah they really were. All of them were.

AW:

I never did know his dad very well.

CM:

He was my doctor at one time. My brother-in-law went to him and so he got me to go to him. So we bought this boat for him and that was one of the reasons—when they said, "You're going to ship a forty foot boat to Lubbock, Texas?" He said, "Yeah, this guy—he wants to keep it on dry land for a year while he has his—he's going to run a boat-lumber business out of it, which he did try and charge it all off is what he's trying to do. He got in a big fight with the IRS [**Internal Revenue Service**] over, and force over. They told him, "You pay and you won it." He had a trial and he beat the IRS. The ole boy that was a prosecutor for the IRS, he told him, he said, "Mr. Connery,"—he said, "If you ever do this again, we're going to put you in jail." Art said, "I believed him. I shut down that business," but he had a telephone, and that boat and all that kind of crap. That was a fun time.

AW:

I read one time—

CM:

I've still got the boat, by the way.

AW:

You have? Where is it?

CM:

Down at Rockport, 1972.

AW:

I remember reading on time in the fifties, Lubbock, Texas had more boats per capita than any city in the world that wasn't on a major body of water.

CM:

That's probably right.

AW:

So you were a part of that.

CM:

Yeah. We sailed a long time at the White River and then moved it down to Rockport.

AW:

That's something I've always believed I could do was sail. I've never had a sailboat.

CM:

You learn a lot about flying, and later on I learned to be a pilot and flew all over the country.

AW:

And you learned part of that from sailing?

CM:

Yeah. It's a lot of the same theory between the way the air flows, the Venturi. As a matter of fact, two years ago in January I had a heart attack. I had pneumonia and a heart attack at the same time. It was right after Christmas. Boy, they got me out there, they put in a stint, I got better, and that was it for about a month. Then in March is when I came down—Hal Green called me up, he'd done some blood work and he said, "Craig,"—he said, "Come by my office"—I was out working in the office and he said, "Come by my office, pick up this paperwork, go straight to the heart hospital, they're waiting on you when you get there." I said, "What's the matter," and he said, "Well, that test we ran on you—" there was one—there's this kind of a new test that's like about ten years old. It's like BHP [**Blood Hydrostatic Pressure**] or BHH or whatever, something like that and he said, "It indicates the efficiency of your heart." He said, "A healthy person has a gradient of two-fifty, two-hundred and fifty." One: it's getting older, and weaker and stuff, might have maybe five-hundred. He said, "We don't—I mean, I've never seen one that was over five hundred." He said, "Yours was one-thousand two-hundred and ninety. You should be dead. Your heart efficiency is like ten percent." I'd been real weak for about two or three

months and I didn't know what's going on. I said, "God, I've taken naps and doing everything." So anyway, Dr.—and they scheduled me immediately for surgery with Dr. Morgan—no, Robertson, Dr. Robertson. At that time, he lived right over here on Quaker and 13th—not Quaker and 13th.

AW:
Salem or—

CM:
Salem and 13th. But anyway, that guy is a miracle worker and so he told me what he's going to do. One thing he said—he came into the room and he had this chalkboard and he's drawing on it. He said, "Do you know anything about sailing?" I said, "Yeah, I got a sailboat.", "Oh yeah, okay. Well you know about the Venturi effect," and I said, "Yeah I do." I said, "If you do it right, you can make a boat go faster than the wind—against the wind." He said, "Okay. Now that's what I'm going to do. You've got a terrible problem in your heart." He said, "Your right—I think it's the right ventricle. It's like a muscle-bound weight lifter." He said, "You start lifting weights with these guys and a few of them will like that look and they think, 'Hey,' so they get more and they start working out five days a week, six days a week, seven days a week. Two hours in the morning, two in the afternoon and everything. Next thing you know, they've got their arms so big in here and stuff that they walk like that. They can't—

AW:
They can't put their arms down.

CM:
Yeah. He said, "That's what happening in your heart. There's a muscle in there that should be straight up on this side and it's built out to where it's like that. Well, what's happened is when that air—when that blood, I mean, gets pumped, it comes around—should be going up here just like that. It's coming around that curve and when it does, it's speeding up because it has farther to go. It's just like a sailboat or an airplane wing. What's happening is this low pressure area. When you speed it up and have the same thing, it becomes low pressure and that makes it lift. Well, it's pulling the valve," which he said looks about like a tulip, that's sitting in here. And he said, "It's pulling it over before it's supposed to, before it's supposed to move so it's cutting off—the blood starts up there and this thing pulls over and shuts it off."

AW:
So it's not pumping.

CM:
He said, "I'm surprised you're still walking. You're tough. You're really—you're just tough.

That's all there is to it. Your heart's just strong enough to fight it off," but he said, "You won't live long like that. I'd say not the end of the year." This was March. It was on March 8 two years ago—it was '15, I guess it was. Why, I had this surgery and man it—

AW:

What did they do with that surgery?

CM:

They opened up—they went inside the heart and cut that out.

AW:

Cut the muscle back?

CM:

I asked him, I said, "How do you—what do you do if you slip up and a little bit of that meat gets down in there?" He said, "Oh, we just put a water hose in there and turn it on real fast and it'll blow it out." [Andy laughs] They had my heart cut in half and sewed it all back up. They stitched it up just like you would any other thing.

AW:

How long did it take you to get over that?

CM:

Well, it was probably six months at least. The first month was tough. It's like an open heart.

AW:

Were you in the hospital most of the time that first month?

CM:

I was in there for eighteen months—eighteen days, eighteen days, and that's all. I came home and I had—Anne was a nervous wreck.

AW:

I bet. I remember her talking about you being in the hospital but not—

CM:

[speaking at once] And so she hired a young group of guys that came in here and stayed twenty-four hours a day with me for about ten days and they'd help me get up because you had that red heart, they'd give it to you on a hug. If you start coughing, it's not good.

AW:

[speaking at once] When my brother—my brother—I know we made fun of my brother because they gave him that big pillow.

CM:

So you have a lot of—anybody that's having open heart would have probably the same kind of deal.

AW:

Well, let me ask you a question about that. It's something that's very interesting. I read Larry McMurtry, the novelist, wrote about having open heart surgery and he remarked that it took him a full year to be able to read. Not because he couldn't read, but because he couldn't concentrate.

CM:

I didn't have any of that.

AW:

You didn't have—he attributed his own case to being essentially not in his body for however many hours you're on that table. It took him a long time to get back to being a complete human being. Is that your kind of experience?

CM:

I was out, they said, about four hours; I was actually out. The worst part about that was is it shuts your lungs down.

AW:

So you had to—

CM:

That's where I had my trouble, was breathing. I got out of there—

AW:

And trying not to get pneumonia, right?

CM:

Yeah. And so you had that problem of you was kind of breathing a little bit hard. What I didn't realize was, was I was gaining liquids in the spaces between the heart, and the lungs and everything. It wasn't in the lungs, it was on the outside of the—what do they call it—'film'. After I was home about three weeks, I was beginning to get [coughs] pretty good, getting up and walking around. I'd walk down to the corner and back and stuff like that. I was having—I'd lie

down and I could feel this water moving around in there. You could actually feel it moving. You'd roll over on this side and it'd come—it'd start running over there. The way that thing was divided, you had two open spaces on either side and so—a good friend of my son's—I can't—a doctor that does lung work here, Mark something—so he came in to see me. Eric said, "You got to go and talk to him and see what's going on," so he came in and questioned me about it. He said, "I think you've got liquid on your lungs so let's x-ray it." So they x-rayed it, sure enough, it had. The cardiologist wasn't looking at that angle of it. I went over to Covenant, they checked me in, x-rayed it again to be sure everything was right and they brought this lady—little, chubby doctor in there named Cook. I'm telling you, she set me up on the side of one of those beds—it's like a hospital bed. They rolled me in there, had me sit up like this and she said, "Now, what we're going to do is I'm going to put a drain plug—hose in your area in there." I said, "How do you know where to go?" She said, "I do it enough, I do a lot of this." She said, "I know where it's going." She had that liter bottle there, and that had little hose, it looked like an old-style air conditioner hose. She said, "Now, what I want you to do is to take a deep breath, real breath." So I got all ready and I said, "Let me take a short one or two then I'll take a deep breath. And I took short one and a"—a deep breath then wasn't much. By the time I got through breathing, she'd already drained it. I mean, she'd already started it. You could see it—I was sitting up like this and I could see it going in there. She filled that thing up and filled up another half, a liter and a half, out of my right side. A week later I went back and she took a liter and a half out of the left side.

AW:

That's a lot of liquid.

CM:

I know it, it was a ton of it.

AW:

No wonder you had trouble breathing.

CM:

Once I got that out, boy, I started uphill after that. I was really good shape. It was a year before you were—all of a sudden dawned on you. I must've had that thing a long time ago. It took probably a year to get completely free. I used oxygen—they sent me home without oxygen, that's what I couldn't believe. I was having trouble breathing and they sent me home. I never will forget that. That night, about—it was like Saturday night, of course.

AW:

Right, nothing ever happens on a Tuesday night or something. [laughs]

CM:

I told Anne, I said, “Anne, I don’t think I can sleep. I’ll never be able to go to sleep, I can’t breathe if I get my head down like that.” She got panicky, and so she called the doctor and got a hold of Hal Green at a party, he was at a cocktail party. He ordered the machinery out—he had to get that machine and the hose—so he signed off on that about ten o’clock. I got—and that ole star, whatever it was—

AW:

Down there on—

CM:

You’d know it if I could say the name, star-something. But anyway, they brought that thing out there in thirty minutes.

AW:

[speaking at once] Lee Lewis’ son’s place, the Star ER?

CM:

I think it’s—well, it’s not that one. Gerald Woolam, you know Gerald Woolam? Dr. Woolam.

AW:

Yeah, I know who he is.

CM:

He went to school with us. He was a little younger, about a year or two younger. His son is the one that owns that company, whatever it is. They sell wheelchairs, bring them and all that kind of—beds and all that kind of. But anyway, that ole boy got that thing out there and got me all fitted with it. I’d never had that deal on except in the hospital. They didn’t send it home with me so once I got that, I was home asleep. But, it’s like everything else, you get dependent on it. It’s like whiskey, you drink too much of it and the next thing you know you’ve got to have some. Boy, I didn’t want to get rid of that oxygen. Anne had me on a fifty-foot. That was about the limit that you could do, a fifty-foot deal. It was about that far short of the refrigerator. [laughter] I said, “You do this on purpose.”

AW:

[speaking at once] I was going to say, “That’s helping you—

CM:

Anyway, I lost thirty-something pounds during all of that.

AW:

That's helping you out both ways.

CM:

Which I shouldn't be down now, I gained it all back. It was—about a month later, I used that oxygen about a month and finally he said, "Okay Craig, you can go to Rockport. Don't be sailing and don't be doing anything. Just go down there, enjoy it and eat a little seafood." I got ready to go, I had that machine, and I'd been using it every night and about half the time during the day. I'd get a little feeling I was going to get some. I put it in the car—I lifted it up and put it in the car and it's pretty heavy, big ole thing about that tall, about that wide. I got it in there and I tied it down with little ropes so it wouldn't slide around. We got out and Anne said, "Now, let's spend the night in San Antonio," and I said, "Anne, you got to get a first floor deal because I can't get that"—she said, "Why don't you try. Now, we've lost altitude so it's going to be easier to breath down there." I think San Antonio's about six-hundred and eighty feet or something.

AW:

It's a lot different than here.

CM:

Not a safe flying experience. But anyway, I didn't have it that night, I never took it out of the car. That was it, I took it back to them. When I got back home I wasn't using it. I was down there a week and I just weeded myself off of it that way. Down there, you could breathe a lot better. These guys that are on oxygen, smoking and stuff like Glen Morgan, they ought to move down there. It makes a lot of difference.

AW:

I think poor, ole Glen—

CM:

Yeah, I see him every week, we go eat lunch every Friday.

AW:

I always get my car work done there.

CM:

I do too.

AW:

I just, I love Glenn.

CM:

He's a great guy, yeah. He's probably one of my closest friends.

AW:

I'll tell you, I really do like him a lot and his son.

CM:

He's having a hard time. He can walk about here—if were to get out of this room and walk down to the sidewalk at the front, he'd have to stop at least once and hold onto something. He's just in that shape, and he's better now than he was.

AW:

I've noticed, I sure don't see him—now, I haven't taken my car in a lot the last few months but I don't—he used to always seem even—

CM:

Yeah, he's quit all of—he sold out to his son the rest of what he had.

AW:

He would come and hang out and I don't even—

CM:

[speaking at once] Yeah, but he didn't even do that.

AW:

No, I don't even see him there.

CM:

He had some real hard times there for a while and he told his wife, he said, "I can't—I'm not going to down there anymore." And so he hadn't. Of course, Mitch does a great job. Mitch's son graduated from high school this week and he's signed up to be a Navy Seal. He's going into that program. Now, his odds are like fifty-fifty to make it through but he was an excellent swimmer for Lubbock High and he loves water and stuff. He thinks—he's pretty muscled up for a little—he's small but a lot of those guys are small.

AW:

That's probably an advantage for them.

CM:

He's probably, I imagine, five foot ten.

AW:

[speaking at once] Mitch is not a big guy.

CM:

No, he's about like me I think. I've shrunk an inch from high school.

AW:

Me too, I know where that inch went for me. [laughs]

CM:

When I was in high school we had a group that we thought we was cowboys. We didn't play football, wasn't quite tough enough or something. Basketball, I couldn't—I just wasn't that good and so we rodeoed. I did a lot of rodeo—

AW:

Oh did you? What was your—

CM:

Bareback.

AW:

Bareback?

CM:

Yeah.

AW:

That's safer than saddle broncos. Saddle bronc you get hung and that—

CM:

[speaking at once] I didn't know how to ride with a—I got a wonderful saddle that my dad had that's a hundred years old but—and it's right out here, I can show it to you in a minute. We were crazy.

AW:

I rodeoed one year and I wouldn't take for it, I wouldn't ever do it again. [laughs] I wasn't any good at it.

CM:

One guy broke his arm, one of our buddies who was a fireman—can't think of his name right

now—should have—but anyway, James Taylor and some of those guys—James still—he's not doing roping but he was a great—what do you call it—we called it a 'heading heeler'. He and one of my other buddies, they still did it in high school. They did it all the way through to about two or three years ago. They go so old they couldn't—

AW:

We just worked a thing with the—a group of college rodeo alums, a nationwide group. I think they're heading—we're going to have all their records. I did an interview or two with them. You know what was remarkable about these guys that had done college rodeo? They went on and a lot of them did PRCA [**Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association**] events afterwards, but I was really struck by the ones who rodeoed through college. They went to these little rodeo schools like Panhandle.

CM:

Yeah, a lot of them do that.

AW:

Yeah but all of them went on to be teachers and professors, some of them—in professional roles—and they still rodeoed. Most of them were still rodeoing up until their fifties and sixties.

CM:

It's amazing.

AW:

It is amazing because I knew a bunch of the other kind of rodeo guys who—you know, the Larry Mahan crowd and that bunch—they didn't last.

CM:

I used to follow that. I still watch bull riding stuff and rodeo on TV sometimes. When I'm sitting around doing nothing, I'll watch that. Anne will go read a book, it doesn't take her long to get enough of that.

AW:

With your connection to Chief Runkles, did you frequent the OS [Ranch] steer roping?

CM:

No, I never did do that with him but I went down a few times to the—when we was talking about drouth and they had the Four Winds, they had the fire and everything and Zoe Merriman was involved in that. [Andy coughs] Zoe was a good friend of ours, she was ahead of us in high school just a little bit. She was a beautiful girl when she was young. She's still pretty.

AW:

Yeah she is.

CM:

And we're good friends.

AW:

Yeah, they're nice folk.

CM:

What's funny, one time we went to Seminole to a rodeo. It was about like Rawls, or Floydada or whatever. They were saying, "Craig said you got a good draw. You've got one of the"—they drew for you, we didn't actually—they said, "You drew probably the roughest horse. If you can ride it, you're going to win the money." So, we went down there and we decided we'd go down the night before and we'll watch the rodeo, we'll watch the horses and that way we'd know how they're going to do. That night, we weren't riding but we were sitting up there in the pens right behind them. We was cowboys and I was telling them about that Seminole deal. This horse comes out and the minute it gets outside that gate it rears up and falls completely over backwards and hurts this guy's leg real good. It runs down about ten feet, twenty feet, spins around, comes back, runs and hits the fence and kills it.

AW:

Kills the horse?

CM:

The horse died, and I was the happiest guy you've ever met. I thought, Man, I'm glad. So I got another that wasn't near as tough as that.

AW:

Wasn't as good about—

CM:

I was scared to death when that horse reared up backwards. I thought—

AW:

I did it just enough that—

CM:

He did a little rodeoing too.

AW:

I got talked into it when I was a police lieutenant in Colorado. This is a crazy story. We decided we were going to start—not we, there was a couple guys that were in my command that worked for me that they were going to start a Police Rodeo Association. The idea was to get inner city kids out into a healthy environment and as soon as they got going—that was back in the years—this is the seventies when they had teen rodeo like Denver had it. In fact, Gerald Ford's son was one of the—good guy—was one of the riders. Also on that Denver team was a young kid from Lakewood. There was a—this is back when Donny Gay was riding bulls and he was really top guy. This kid was right up there with him. We got this thing started and then one of the first advisors we got was Larry Mahan. I said to my guys, I said, “You know, I think we're going backwards on trying to get these young kids out of the bad environments. We would put them in there with—because back then Mahan, he got—

CM:

He grew up in New York.

AW:

Well, and he got past his big drug but that was back when cocaine was a big deal among those guys. But anyway, so they shamed me into riding. Well, I'd never ridden and so you know what you do when you don't have any money, you don't have a horse and you don't a trailer: you ride the bulls, right?

CM:

Yeah.

AW:

So that's what I did. I was not any good at that either. In fact, I was championing for what I called the 'cumulative ride rule'. You add up all your seconds over the season and divide it by the number of rides to see if you got anything. [laughter]

CM:

I never did bull riding. I never decided—that looked too bad for me.

AW:

It's a real adrenaline burst. Of course, I was in the police business and that was kind of what drove a lot of that when you're young. I still, to this day, if I watch—and it's been a long time ago—but if I watched somebody getting on that bull in the shoot, my stomach knots up. The ride was nothing.

CM:

Yeah, it's getting ready to ride.

AW:

It was getting in that shoot with that bull because, man, that was a dangerous—that was a dangerous spot.

CM:

If you don't have good—it's kind of like saddle broncos—if you don't have good pickups guys—and most of these little rodeos don't—or you don't have [Andy coughs] good clowns to handle those bulls—and mostly little rodeos don't—that's where it's really dangerous.

AW:

I've watched—we had that police rodeo outfit—we had regular PRCA clowns. I saw one of those guys out getting limbered up behind the shoots one day, put his hands on a post like this and lift his body up sideways. I don't know—

CM:

They're strong, strong guys. They're quick, they're quick as a rattlesnake.

AW:

And fearless or crazy, maybe some of both.

CM:

When the guy's getting ready to come off one of those things, they're right there on that bull. They usually have their hands between their eyes, what's get me.

AW:

I know it. Pretty amazing.

Anne McDonald (AM):

All right, I came out here—the plumbers have for lunch. They'll be gone an hour and a half.

CM:

What's it look like in there? They cut the floor yet?

AM:

I don't know.

AW:

Well, we need to probably—

AM:

You want a break for lunch?

AW:

Well, I've got some things I've got to do this afternoon. What we'll do is we'll break and we'll pick a time to reconvene. I know where we are, [Anne coughs] you're about to—

CM:

About out of high school.

AW:

Yeah—well, you're out of high school but we were talking about you and Anne meeting and you were talking about Susie Cones, the Cones.

CM:

[speaking at once] And the Cones and stuff. That's where we can start back.

AW:

We'll start back with that and I'd like to get a little bit more—I'd like to talk this next time about farming, and then the time after I want you to talk about sailing. I'm really interested in hearing about sailing, and flying and all that sort of thing.

CM:

We've done a lot of fun things. Our old body's wearing out but we've—

AW:

But isn't that the point?

CM:

And a lot of our adventures weren't—really didn't get going until we got—till I got old enough and my kids were grown, we had time to do something.

AW:

Yeah, that's a—I'm going to say 'thank you' and then I'm going to shut this off and I'm going to tell you a funny story. So, thanks, it's been fun and we'll be ready for the next time.

CM:

All right, that sounds good to me. [Pause in Recording]

AW:

So, the—

CM:

I'll tell you about the connections we had with the Cones, Margery—

AM:

Well, they were my next door neighbors out on Levelland Highway.

[End of Recording]



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