

**Oral History Interview of
John and Patsy Smith**

**Interviewed by: David Marshall
July 16, 2018
Ropesville, Texas**

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Transcript Overview:

This interview features John and Patsy Smith as they discuss the Ropesville project and the town of Ropes. In this interview, John and Patsy describe what Ropes was like when they were growing up.

Length of Interview: 01:57:00

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Keywords

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David Marshall (DM):

Okay. The date is July 16th of 2018, and this is David Marshall interviewing John and Patsy Smith. By the way, your maiden name is Sosebee, right? Okay. At their home outside of Ropesville on what is the old Ropesville project land, isn't it? Okay. And little sister, Sue Coker, is also here. Sue Sosebee Coker. In case, you want to speak up during this interview, but we're just going to go ahead and start talking a little bit about Ropesville history and this is in preparation for the big event that's coming up in August. But John, if you don't mind, let's start with you and get a little bit of biographical information if you can tell me when and where you were born.

John Smith (JS):

I was born in Lubbock.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

In 1936.

DM:

Can you give me your date? Full date?

JS:

10/5/36.

DM:

10/5/36 in Lubbock. All right. Well can you give me your parent's names?

JS:

My dad was named J.R. Smith and my mom was Ocie.

DM:

How would you spell that?

JS:

O-c-i-e.

DM:

O-c-i-e. Okay.

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JS:

She was originally a Beeman.

DM:

Beamon? How would you? B-e-e-m-a-n?

JS:

Um-hm.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

And we moved around a lot before we came to Ropesville. My dad was in civil service.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

And so I started school in Plainview in the first grade. In second grade, I went to a little two room school north of Lamesa called Woody.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

And that was after World War II had broke out.

DM:

Right.

JS:

And there was two teachers for eight grades.

DM:

Oh.

JS:

They had an old panel truck for a school bus. And then we moved from there to Lubbock and I went to school for I guess a half a year at a school where the original American State Bank was.

DM:

Okay. Remember the name of that school?

JS:

I can't remember the name of it. It was a three story school.

Patsy Smith (PS):

Was it Central?

JS:

I can't remember, but and then we moved to—got a place out in what was north of Arnett Benson. Went to school there for a short period of time and then—well they were building a school in Arnett Benson and when they got it built, then instead of going in Lubbock, I went to Arnett Benson out there.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

And my daddy was in the military and he was in what was the Army Air Corps back then and he joined rather than be drafted so he could pick the service he wanted and they moved him all over the United States. I think he was in about eighteen months without ever going overseas. But when he was in Washington State, he was in radar. He was stationed up on top of a mountain about two weeks at a time by his self with a radar station and he kept up with all of that.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

And then they shipped him back to Wichita Falls and he wanted to be with his family. There was three of us kids and mother and he found us a place in Henrietta, Texas, that he thought he could afford to pay the rent on and that's where we were living when they dropped the bombs on Japan. And of course, I thought he'd get to come home just immediately, but he took a little awhile. Moved to Ropes and he bought a farm. Eighty acres. And then, that was in—I was in the sixth—fifth grade—sixth grade when we moved to Ropes and I had gone—that was the seventh time I had changed schools so I was glad to get somewhere where I could stay in one place and graduated from Ropes. I met Patsy.

DM:

When did y'all get married, by the way?

JS:

In—

DM:

I know he better remember.

PS:

July fifteenth. Yesterday.

DM:

Really?

JS:

Sixty-two years.

DM:

Wow. Congratulations.

JS:

Anyway, we got married. Had four kids. They're all still living pretty close.

DM:

Good.

JS:

Got two boys that farm and very involved in agriculture.

DM:

When your dad was with the civil service, what specifically did he do?

JS:

You know, and I really didn't know, but I do know they moved him around a lot.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

And for the reason, I don't know. I was just, you know, I guess when I was young enough, I just didn't know what he was doing.

DM:

Yeah. But after the war, he wanted to farm?

JS:

He did.

DM:

Okay. Is that what he wanted to do in Henrietta also?

JS:

No. He just—because he was stationed at Wichita Falls.

DM:

I got you. Okay.

JS:

And that's the reason that he thought that if he was close enough, he could be with the family on the weekends anyway.

DM:

Yeah. Okay. But he decided to farm. What did he farm when y'all moved out here?

JS:

He bought eighty acres. About three miles north. I call it north of Ropes and bought that eighty acres.

DM:

What did he grow out there?

JS:

Cotton.

DM:

Okay. Did he grow anything besides cotton or all cotton?

JS:

Pretty much cotton. He'd planted a little bit of high gear [hegari] bundle feed. Something like that to feed the cows.

DM:

Okay. Right, right. Did y'all have cattle also?

JS:

Had a few cows. Not many. We had probably a couple of milk cows and of course, back then, we milked by hand.

DM:

Was it one of these pretty much self-sufficient farms? Did you have a garden?

JS:

Oh yeah.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

Yeah. We didn't go to the grocery store much. Mother did a lot of canning.

DM:

Yeah. Did you sell anything to stores in Ropesville? Any milk or eggs or?

JS:

You could sell cream. They had a little place there in Ropes that we called a cream station and you had a little ice where it kept cream. It was just small, but it was an insulated building and he would haul that cream to Lubbock. The guy that owned that would haul the cream to Lubbock about twice a week and he had an old flatbed truck that he'd haul it in, in them cream cans up there. Didn't have no muffler on it. He never drove it over thirty miles an hour. But then he would buy some ice and bring it back and put in his ice house to keep the milk cold and then he would sell ice if you wanted to buy ice.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

So that's—

DM:

So you grew up to the farm life, at least after you got out here to Ropes. How old were you? Seven or eight years old when you came?

JS:

When we moved to Ropes, I think I was eleven.

DM:

Eleven. Okay.

JS:

I believe that's right.

DM:

Yeah. Okay. So did you get to do some of that farm work?

JS:

Oh yeah. Yes. We had to hoe and pull cotton. In the fall, they didn't have cotton strippers back then and we'd come in from school and mother would say, "Go get you a bite to eat and change your clothes and get your sack and get out there." We'd pull cotton until dark. I think I kept a record of what I pulled one fall and I pulled about—I think it amounted to about two bales of cotton. You know, dragging the sack stooped over, all from the time we got in from school until dark and then all day Saturday and your back would get to hurting. You could get about sixty or seventy pounds in a sack at the size I had. When you got it full, if you wasn't close to the wagon, you'd put it over your shoulder and walk back to the wagon and drag it—weight it—drag it up to the trailer and empty it. Get out and go again. We did get paid. Daddy did pay us the going wage for pulling cotton so.

DM:

Which was what?

JS:

It was about a dollar and a half. A hundred.

DM:

Did this ever affect schools out here? All of the cotton production going on?

JS:

They did before we came—just a year or two before we came, they would turn out school for like three weeks or longer during cotton pulling season.

DM:

But they stopped that by the time you came out here?

JS:

Yeah.

DM:

Oh.

JS:

They had stopped doing that and so we lived here. When we first got married, we lived in Ropes. Rented the house in Ropes and lived there for what? A couple of years.

PS:

Four and a half.

JS:

Four and a half. But, I farmed. That's what I wanted to do and so I started out farming. My dad said—he bought an old—a John Deere and a little bit of equipment.

DM:

When you first moved out here, he did?

JS:

Yeah. When we first—when I—and he said he'll do the work and all. And he said, "I'll get the equipment." And so yeah. We—I started farming on my own, I guess, when I graduated from high school.

DM:

Well I'll be. So that's been your lifelong career?

JS:

It has.

DM:

Mostly cotton, I take it?

JS:

Yeah.

DM:

Anything else along the way?

JS:

We would raise if we lost our cotton crop, we'd plant some milo or something as a catch [cash?] crop.

DM:

Yeah, right.

JS:

I remember hauling bundles or shocking the high gear and then hauling it in. Stacking it.

DM:

Has it always been those two crops then or did you ever—did it—was there any effort out here at going to other crops over the years?

JS:

We tried sunflowers a year or two. Some of them tried peanuts. I never did. Sunflowers, they just didn't—that didn't work out and so—but I did plant some a couple of times.

DM:

But cotton has been the standby ever since before you can remember, I guess?

JS:

Yes. Yeah. And of course, the price of cotton has gone up and down through the years. Back when I was farming, the loan price was about thirty cents a pound. One year, the market actually went up to a dollar a pound and I had one neighbor that at the time, he didn't sell any for a dollar a pound, but he decided he was going to hold it for a dollar and so he held it and when it got up nearly a dollar a pound, it turned around and went down and when it went down, it went down a whole lot faster. He wound up settling for about forty cents.

DM:

Oh my goodness. That's a gamble.

JS:

He learned a lesson.

DM:

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Well when y'all started out, your dad had an eighty acre farm. Was that pretty typical around here?

JS:

Most of them had eighty to some of them had, on the project, most of the farms wound up being about a hundred and sixty acres. Tillable acres, anyway. Some of the later ones on the project. And that was—are you familiar with the farm project?

DM:

Um-hm.

JS:

Okay. So you know about Roosevelt and the Great Depression.

DM:

Yeah. I still want to hear you talk about it though.

JS:

Well I came along after the Great Depression, but my dad, when him and mother got married, he wanted to farm and he tried it for two years and it didn't rain those two years and he didn't make a crop and they didn't have anything so he went to work at a packing plant and slaughtered cows and these were cows that, I think the government had bought some of them, and he was running them through the slaughter house and his job was to—starting out—was when the cow come into the shoot, he'd hit her. Knew where to hit her the head with a ball-peen hammer and she'd just drop and they'd drag them back and he'd help skin them. He got to where he was pretty good at doing that.

DM:

Where was the packing plant?

JS:

It was in Lubbock.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

And I can't remember the name of it. It may have been Hunt, but I'm not sure.

DM:

But now, when you came out—when you started farming out of high school or when your daddy came out here, he wasn't part of the project?

JS:

No. We lived across the highway from the project.

DM:

Okay. Okay. So you could see what was going on over there with the project and those were bigger and y'all were with the project weren't you?

JS:

Yes.

DM:

So that might be an interesting contrast if y'all can talk about differences between just being an independent farmer, in that regard, and then being part of the project.

JS:

Yeah.

DM:

We'll get back to that when—after we introduce you here in a bit, Patsy.

JS:

There was some animosity between the ones on the project and the ones that—and yeah, Patsy can tell you a whole lot about that.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

But because when they did that project and I think it wound up with about eighty farms. Somewhere like that. To start with, the government owned the land. They had broke it out. They hired people to come in and work. That was to put people back to work. That was in the thirties.

DM:

It was Federal Emergency Relief Administration, I think, Project.

JS:

Yeah. Patsy can tell you more about that than I can. The community building that they—what they called it—it was where the government people lived in and that's the building that's in Ropes now.

DM:
Okay.

JS:
If you go into that community building.

DM:
While we're on the subject, what was the reason for the animosity? We'll come back to that later too.

JS:
They thought that the farmers didn't have to buy the land, but they actually did. They had to after the World War II broke out and they didn't need that anymore. Put people back to work. And so the government then let them buy it if they wanted to. If they were living there, they could buy it. If they didn't, they just moved on.

DM:
But before that, the other farmers that were already here thought that the government was just giving them property?

JS:
Yeah, thought they was getting a better deal.

DM:
Uh-huh, okay.

JS:
It did cause the school to grow because most of the people that moved on the project had anywhere from two to six kids. They—Eleanor Roosevelt, her idea for the project was to make it a commune. Each farmer would have a certain amount of acres and they would plant a certain amount of cotton and a certain amount of grain and they—she wanted them to bring it on to the gin and put it in one pile. Gin it and then give everybody an equal share of what they made. Crop or not. And some of them didn't work very hard so they didn't. But that didn't go over. That didn't work at all.

DM:
No, that might've created some animosity.

JS:
But she did come out and went out to one of the houses and the story is—and I'm not sure how

true it is—but she went out to the wind mill to get a drank and you know, had a tank there that you pumped into. Barrel. And it would overflow from that. Go on out from there. But she was going to get a drink out of the barrel and there was a dead bird in it so she didn't get a drink. Now, I don't know whether that's true. I don't know. Some of them that were early say that happened.

DM:

These differences between those farmers that were on the project—farm families who were on the project and not on the project. Did this spill into the schools? Was there any difference between kids? School kids?

JS:

Not as far as I knew.

DM:

Okay. [Whispers] Turn this up a bit. That's good.

JS:

I can say that the community building was already—had been—when the government got to where they didn't need it anymore, they just kind of donated it to the—nobody owned it really. They had all kinds of get-togethers there. The kids, it was big enough, they used it for a skating rink. The kids loved to go over there and skate and have parties and things like that and so I—but that was—we actually moved to Ropes in '47, so that was all over with.

DM:

Yeah, yeah.

JS:

Except I did go over there and skate.

DM:

Well I want to get some things that y'all remember hearing about too. Things that happened before y'all were actually out here. Before you can remember. Because I know you've heard some of the history along the way secondhand.

JS:

Yeah.

DM:

We'll talk about that some a little bit. But you got out here in '47. You had a few years to get

established before that drought of the fifties hit, I guess. How did that affect this area? The farmers in this area?

JS:

Well we survived and I know we had some years that didn't make much cotton, but we managed to survive. There was a period in there when prices of cotton was cheap and it didn't rain much and there was a lot of farmers that took bankruptcy and I had some good friends and some of them took bankruptcy and managed to keep farming through the government loan program, but a lot of them just went to town and got a job.

DM:

I assume that Ropes and the surrounding area followed the same trend as the rest of the South Plains in the small farms going away and the larger landholdings coming in as people sold out their farms and others bought it and so what is typical now in this area? You—we were talking about eighty acre farms. A hundred and sixty acre farms. What would be just typical?

JS:

If you're not farming at least three thousand acres, you can't because you have to have the bigger equipment to farm and we've got two sons that both farm and I think between them, they're probably farming about twelve thousand acres and I would say that of those eighty acres that was on the project, there's probably six or eight people that farmed that. They just—you'd buy another farm if you can and keep getting a little bigger and people that retire and sell their farm, you buy it or you rent it from them. Pay rent.

DM:

Do you still have the farmhouses scattered out in the countryside every quarter section or so? Vacated farmhouses or?

JS:

There's not many of the project houses left on the farm. Most of the ones that have, are still there, have been added onto. They were well built houses. In fact, my—our youngest son donated one of the project houses to the AG museum and they set up a replica of life on the farm and of course, we're involved in that. Patsy can tell you about that and but it's—and he had lived in that house, but he wasn't living in it at the time. He'd let—he'd had hands live in it, but it was still in good shape and it was still pretty much original.

DM:

Now, Ella Mae Wards house is an example of that, that you're talking about one that was a project house that was added on to. Is that correct?

JS:

That's right.

DM:

Okay. Yeah.

JS:

And I don't know if hers—has it been added on to? Some, I guess. Now, the chicken house that they've got up there, it—with the project house that's up there—it came off of her place.

DM:

Oh, is that right? Okay.

JS:

And there's a granary, and I think that came off the—

PS:

It came off the O'Neil [?] [0:25:11], which Charles Shannon, he donated.

JS:

Yeah. Charlie Shannon donated that and somebody donated the brooder house and one guy had the outhouse and those were real nice outhouses. Now, they were fixed up. When you opened the door to the outhouse, it raised the lid on the stool and it was vented and out the side.

DM:

Uh-huh. That is nice.

JS:

And he had one of those. It still worked and he was going to donate it and it came a big storm and blew a dead tree over it and just crushed it.

DM:

Oh, too bad.

JS:

There is not another one on the project left of those.

DM:

Oh, my. Golly.

JS:

So we're still looking for one to put up there that's—you know, in that same area.

DM:

That is a fancy outhouse. I've never heard of that.

JS:

They was. They were nice. They were nice.

DM:

What happened to the eighty acre farm? Was it being used as a farmland now?

JS:

Yeah. My younger brother bought it and he's—my oldest son farms it and it's on the highway there if you went by there that it's got a crop on it. Cotton crop. It's got drip irrigation on it.

DM:

Okay. Is the original house still there?

JS:

No. No. The house that was there when we moved there was a four room. At one time, had been a box and strip house. You remember those old houses and they had took the box and strip off and on the outside, they put what looked like brick, but it was just a tarp and I can remember when the candle bugs—I don't know if you call them candle bugs. That's what we called them. When they would get real bad, there was so many cracks in it, you couldn't keep the—we would hold the wash pan up under the—we'd put a little water in it, little kerosene on top of it, and hold it up under the light.

DM:

Uh-huh.

JS:

Until it got completely just—and we—and that would thin them out for a little while, but fifteen minutes later, there was that many more back.

DM:

Oh, so I guess you--

JS:

We'd turn out the lights and go to bed.

DM:

Well I bet the sand came in then.

JS:

Oh. And you didn't have heat in anywhere but the kitchen.

DM:

What was the heat? Was it coal?

JS:

Kerosene's stove.

DM:

Kerosene.

JS:

Cook stove.

DM:

Yeah, I guess coal was probably well before your time out here.

JS:

You know, some of them still—I know the lumberyard used to sell coal and they even sold coal to the railroad at one time is the story that I've heard.

DM:

How did they heat the school when you were out here?

JS:

You know, I don't remember how they heated it.

PS:

[Whispers] Radiators.

JS:

Well at Ropes, they had those radiators.

DM:

Yeah.

JS:

They called them.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

But the first schools I went to, I don't remember. That one, where they—I was in the second grade and we had to ride that panel truck. That's what I called it, but anyway, they made two runs every morning and every night to pick up the kids.

DM:

Really? Two panel truck loads, huh?

JS:

Yeah, but you know, you couldn't get but maybe eight, ten people in there. They would pick up all of the kids and they would take the first load over to the school and let us out and that was before daylight and it was cold and we couldn't get in the school until the teachers got there to unlock it and we'd stand out there and freeze and then they wouldn't—they made both trips and then they'd take the high school kids on into Lamesa. But yeah, they had those old radiators and if you sit next to one of them, you'd burn up and if you sat on the other side of the room, it was cold because it didn't circulate. But they did have windows that would open in the summertime. You could open those windows. They had lots of windows.

DM:

Was that a brick school?

JS:

Yeah.

DM:

Multistory?

JS:

No, it was just one story. The building is still there, but they're—I think they're going to tear it down. They're starting to grow because of all the people that's building houses out here and so they're going to have to expand. They've already bought two portable buildings and put out there.

DM:

Okay. When did irrigation come out here?

JS:

My dad drilled the first well in, I think, in '48, or '49.

DM:

First irrigation well?

JS:

It was. They had started drilling some wells in and he drilled that well and it was on the high—next to the highway there and he'd put a—you know, a turbine pump. He put an eight inch pump in it and it had—and I think it was an eight cylinder motor on that thing. It was that eight inch pump.

DM:

Gas or diesel or?

JS:

It was butane.

DM:

Butane.

JS:

And if you opened that throttle up on that, it would stick eight inch out that far before it'd break. Of course, we was cutting ditches with a little blade on a Ford tractor and so it'd take a half a day to cut a ditch and then you couldn't handle that much water because it was too much water.

DM:

Right, right.

JS:

But no. He'd pump a thousand gallons a minute.

DM:

Wow. Well just in time for the drought of the early fifties, huh? At least you had irrigation.

JS:

We had irrigation.

DM:

Did everybody by then? Or was that?

JS:

They started drilling wells and back then, if you didn't get at least six inch, you thought you got a dry hole. You know, a five inch, that just wasn't enough water.

DM:

Yeah. Do you know how deep people were drilling around here for windmill water back in the—

JS:

The windmill water was—you could drill sixty or seventy feet and get good windmill water.

DM:

Yeah. What would it be now, at your guess?

JS:

Well you got to drill down to what they call the blue, which is anywhere from a hundred and twenty feet up to three hundred and something feet. Depends on where you're at and where you're driven—where that's a hundred and twenty or a hundred and thirty feet. I farmed a place up south of Smyer for a lot of years and those wells held up pretty good. They've still got a pivot on that place. My son farms that. When I quit farming, they—everything that I'd been farming, everything that I owned, they started farming and what I'd been farming, I guess the landlords thought I was okay. They said, "Don't you have some sons that farm?" I said, "Well, yeah." "Well do you reckon they'd farm my land?" So I said, "Well yeah. You can talk to them." So I think they're farming everything I was farming.

DM:

Pretty good.

JS:

I served on the gin board thirty something years. Go up, gin, and served on the schoolboard, I think, twelve years.

PS:

Twelve or fourteen. I can't remember.

JS:

It might've been fifteen years.

PS:

Yeah. It's fifteen.

JS:

I had—I think my youngest son was in school, wasn't he? When I went on the schoolboard. I served until my last kid—after she graduated, well I felt like it was time for somebody else to.

DM:

Is the gin in the same location it's always been since you've been out here?

JS:

Yeah. It's not the same building, but—

DM:

Name has changed, hasn't it? Hasn't the name changed over the years?

JS:

Yeah. It's—it was an independent gin when the co-op bought it.

DM:

What was the name of that original gin out here? You wrote it down, Sue, in something probably in that package you gave me.

Sue Sosebee (SS):

Carter and Kates.

DM:

Carter and Kates?

JS:

There was actually three buildings there at one time and one of them belonged to—I guess Ward owned part of that gin, didn't he? Charlie Ward? Wasn't he involved in that gin?

PS:

I don't know.

JS:

Anyway, it was an independent. There was two independent gins there in the co-op. The farmers got together. They wanted to co-op and they bought one of the independents.

DM:

Oh, okay.

JS:

And made a co-op out of it and then they built—I don't know—two or three years later, they built a bigger co-op. When I—I worked at, I guess three different gins when I was young and the average per hour was about four, maybe five, bales per hour that you could gin and they put in that new gin and it would gin—I guess it would gin twenty bales an hour. Now, they've upgraded it and added to it and I was on the board when we put in the first U.D. press and I think it cost us a little over a hundred thousand dollars. They put in a new one this past year and they spent over two million dollars. Of course, they did a lot of upgrade to other part of the gin too. Put in bigger stands in the leg gin, a bale a minute now.

DM:

Isn't that amazing?

JS:

Yeah. [Laughter] Stand there. When I worked at the gin, we had to press. It would take about twelve minutes to pump it up and then you'd tie it out by hand and you'd kick it out and weight it and then you'd dot it out on the platform out there and they'd haul about thirty bales at a time on a flatbed truck.

DM:

Now, it's all automated.

JS:

It's all automated. It kicked. It weighs that bale and takes a sample and kicks it out and they load it on the truck.

DM:

Is there the one gin now?

JS:

Um-hm.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

Yeah. The other building is still there. It was owned by independent, but they're probably fixing to tear it down.

DM:

Okay. Patsy, let's jump over to you a minute. We're going to come back together and tie some of these things together and talk more specifically about Ropes. And excuse me, when I say Ropesville, by the way. I know it's Ropes to locals, right?

JS:

Yeah, it is and the reason—you know why it's Ropesville?

DM:

Tell me because I've heard different versions.

JS:

Well.

DM:

Oh, yeah. Because of the—

JS:

Post office.

DM:

Post office. Yeah.

JS:

There was another town named Roper and the R and the S could look so much alike so they had to give them a different name, but the school, the gin, and all of that is still Ropes.

DM:

I've heard that, but what I hear different versions of is why the name Ropes came about in the first place. I've heard three or four different versions of that. You want to give me your version?

JS:

Well, and this is hearsay with me, but they used to drive cattle drives and they would round the cows. They could haul them at that time, I guess. They'd bring them to—because the railroad came to Ropes and they'd load them and there wasn't any stock pens so they built a corral town for Ropes. Let's take them over to Ropes and that's the story that I've heard.

DM:

That's the story Max Evans tells. What have you heard, Patsy?

PS:

The only other one was there was there was a man named Ropes that worked for the railroad or was important in getting the railroad out here so there's two different versions.

DM:

Well that's a version I haven't heard yet so that's—

PS:

Yeah. There was a man named Ropes, but we don't know for sure. I don't.

DM:

Okay. Isn't that an interesting mystery though?

PS:

I think ones like Smyer name—you know, after a man. A lot of them were so there's that version, but I don't know for sure if it's—a long time ago.

DM:

Patsy, can you give me your full name and date of birth?

PS:

My full name?

DM:

Um-hm.

PS:

Patsy Gale Sosebee Smith.

DM:

Okay. Okay. And when and where were you born?

PS:

I was born in Lubbock, but we lived in Abernathy when I was born and I was born in Lubbock. So May 17, 1938.

DM:

Okay. Now, can you tell me your parent's names?

PS:

George Wiley and Monty Fay Taliaferro Sosebee. She was a Taliaferro. T-a-l-i-a-f-e-r-r-o.

DM:

Okay. When did they move to Abernathy?

PS:

Back, I guess, 1930's maybe.

DM:

Okay.

PS:

I'm not real sure when they both got there. Daddy came from—he was born in Bosque County and he came from there to, I think it was Draw, where they first came and then for somehow, they landed in Abernathy and mama's folks were—I don't know exactly how they got there. I know they had been around. Lived a lot of places before they got to Abernathy.

DM:

What did they do up in Abernathy?

PS:

Farmed.

DM:

Farmed? Cotton farming?

PS:

Uh-huh.

DM:

Kay. And y'all—so you grew up out there. It was—you were what? Maybe six years old when y'all moved out here?

PS:

I was five.

DM:

Five? You moved out here in '44. Is that right?

PS:

Yeah. We actually came first in '44. Daddy actually bought—he bought project place because whoever was—when they—they couldn't—somehow they couldn't swing it. So daddy, somehow, he got to buy that place.

DM:

You know that seems to fit the chronology because the way I understand it, it was the war when they started selling the places.

PS:

That's right.

DM:

So this was '44, well into—almost the end of the war, so he just bought it.

PS:

Uh-huh. Yeah. He was able to buy it. Now, I—we have records where he kept his records to come, maybe, to the project because we still have those where they wrote everything. You know, they had to write down everything they spent and whatever came in, what they sold, and all that.

DM:

Yeah. You still have all of that?

PS:

We have copies of it. Yeah.

DM:

Oh wow. That's great.

PS:

And but, so evidently, he had something—not that we ever talked about it that much, but he had something to do with trying to come here before.

DM:

I see.

PS:

But he actually bought the place when we moved into it.

DM:

Okay. Okay. How big of place did he buy?

PS:

It had 299 acres.

DM:

Oh, really? Wow.

PS:

It had a big pasture. It had a ninety-nine acre pasture and then the rest was farmland. It was a little bit bigger because it did have a lake on it and different things, but it's just right two miles over. Three. It's not far, just right over there.

DM:

Wow. That's so nice to live where, you know, you lived as a child. A lot of people don't get to do that, but all of y'all have gotten to do that. So he was a cotton farmer out here, I guess?

PS:

Um-hm.

DM:

Did he grow other crops?

PS:

He did. When he was talking about cotton, daddy always had some maze of some sort out with his—and he also had cotton so I don't know if everybody did that or if it was just him.

JS:

I thought he had a dairy.

PS:

Well he had a dairy later, yeah.

DM:

I wonder if there was some kind of stipulation on project land that you had something besides cotton. Did you ever hear of anything like that? They have certain requirements.

JS:

That was what Eleanor wanted it to be.

DM:

Right, right. But of course, he bought it outright.

PS:

Yeah, but they did rotate crops sometimes, but I don't know. I'm not really sure.

DM:

Okay. Did y'all live—y'all lived in a project house, I guess, then. Can you describe it?

PS:

Well were lucky and we got a bigger house. Ours was—let's see. It had three bedrooms and it had a room for a bathroom. There wasn't bath fixtures in it and it had a dining room and a kitchen and then the living room.

DM:

So it was built with a space for a bathroom?

PS:

Yes. All the project houses were, but they didn't have until—as far as I know—until they sold them to the farmer did they put the fixtures in.

DM:

Were these? What else can you tell me about that house? Were they?

PS:

The walls are really pretty on those. Now, the first, like the one we lived in right here, it wasn't built with this nicer wood in the walls and things, but this was the first project over here.

DM:

Right, right.

PS:

And then they come back with the second project and the walls in the second project were really pretty. They were varnished, you know? With wood pine and whatever.

DM:

Okay. Was it wood interior walls as well as the exterior? Exterior wood wall? Interior wood

wall? Was your house like that, John? When you were growing up, did you have a double solid wall or did you just have cheese cloth or something on the inside?

JS:

To start with, it was just—like I said, it was a box and strip house that had wallpaper on the inside.

DM:

Yeah, right.

JS:

That fake brick on the outside.

DM:

Yeah. Right, right. Okay. That's interesting. So this was a pretty good solid house then.

PS:

Have you seen the one up at the museum?

DM:

No, I haven't seen that one.

PS:

You haven't been in it?

DM:

No, I haven't been in it.

PS:

It would give you an idea of how it looks.

DM:

Yeah. Okay. I've been Elle May's house.

PS:

Okay. Well hers is one of the second with the wood.

DM:

Yeah, and she was showing me that wood.

PS:

Uh-huh. It's pretty.

DM:

How nice that is. So yeah. But okay. Well how did you heat the house?

PS:

We just had a—it must've been kerosene. The chimney went up through the roof. Would it be kerosene? It wouldn't be wood. It wasn't coal.

DM:

I don't know.

PS:

We had a kerosene cook stove.

DM:

Uh-huh. Okay.

PS:

Like I said, there were no bathroom fixtures as far as I know until after they were sold to the individuals.

DM:

Okay. So y'all had an outhouse to start with? Yeah. Had electricity when you first moved out here?

PS:

We did, but bringing back on the history, there weren't—it wasn't electricity until 1939 or '40.

DM:

Yeah. When did REA [**Rural Electrification Act**] come out to y'all? When did y'all get Rural Electrification out there?

JS:

When we moved, first moved to Ropes, we had electricity,

DM:

Oh, you did? Okay. You know, a lot of people didn't get that until early fifties.

JS:

That's because it was on the highway. And of course, there was just a two-lane highway back then. I could go from our house there in Lubbock, I might meet three cars on the way.

DM:

Did you have any livestock out there? I know you had a dairy later, but starting out, did y'all have some cattle?

PS:

We always had milk cows and chickens and pigs and we'd take care of them.

DM:

Did he slaughter the pigs out there himself or did he take them to be butchered or did he slaughter them himself?

PS:

We'd usually had hog killing day, you know? I don't know how. I know he cured the hams and put them out in the granary, but I don't know how they stayed—I guess the winter's may have been colder or something back in that time.

JS:

Well and you always tried to butcher in the cold weather so he had a fire to—if he's going to scald the hogs, you had a fire and you'd try to hover around that, you know? And had a scalding bed.

PS:

I had chickens.

DM:

Did y'all do the same thing, John? Did y'all kill?

JS:

Yeah. We might kill three or four hogs at a time and we butchered beef too, but we skinned them and daddy knew how to skin so that was.

DM:

Right, right. So whether you were on the project or not, these were pretty self-sufficient farms.

JS:

Yeah.

DM:

Did y'all sell any surplus to any stores in Ropesville? Ropes?

PS:

We sold eggs to Foster Store that was eventually put in right on the—around the corner about a mile up here, he had a little store there, a country store, and we would sell eggs to them, but that's all that I remember. I don't remember going to Ropes to sell any.

DM:

So he wasn't actually in Ropes. He was outside a couple miles, I guess.

JS:

Foster Store?

DM:

Foster Store.

JS:

Yeah, this first big double turn there.

PS:

Yeah, it's out here by this old gin that's out here.

DM:

Was it a store, pretty much, to serve the project?

JS:

He did. Yeah.

PS:

Originally, it was.

JS:

He—I don't know if he—when they built the project, if they built a store there or he put that in, but it was there close to the gin and then when he built a bigger one, he moved to that double curve, but he sold everything. He sold plow, sweeps, bolts. Anything that the farmers needed, plus he had a meat market in the back and got it—cut up whatever you wanted and he had a lot of—and especially in the summer and the fall, when the Hispanics would come to this area to pull cotton or to hoe, he sold a lot of stuff because that's where they'd go to get their groceries.

DM:

Y'all seen any pictures of that store in all of your photographs? Do you have photos?

PS:

I've got some. I mean, it's—the second story still stands, but you can't see it because there are a lot of trees growing up around it, but it's—I tried to take pictures, but they're not good.

DM:

Oh, okay.

JS:

That guy that—

PS:

[inaudible] building [0:51:40] sit right across from that store at that time. They didn't move it into Ropes until '58 or nine.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

I do know that when a lot of them—

PS:

And there's a gin.

DM:

Oh, wow.

JS:

A lot of them people that come to pull cotton, when they'd go to check out, he had a gun there and he'd say, "Now, y'all unload your pockets." [Laughter] If he didn't they'd walk out with a bunch of stuff.

DM:

Oh yeah. Yeah.

JS:

He never—they never had any kids. Just him and his wife run that.

DM:

Tell me his name again. It was—do you know his first name?

PS:

Bill Foster.

JS:

Bill and Mary Foster.

DM:

Bill and Mary Foster. That was his Foster Store. Okay.

PS:

And she was a mess. [Laughter]

DM:

Well you went to school in Ropesville a little, right? In Ropes?

PS:

I only went to Ropes to school.

DM:

Yeah. How did you get to school? In that panel truck?

PS:

Well we had a school bus, but I do remember riding what they called a—it wasn't—

JS:

A chicken coop?

PS:

A chicken coop. I guess when the bus broke down or something you had to ride whatever they had to ride. It was kind of cold and breezy because I don't think they had windows. You know, closed in windows. But most of the time, we just rode a regular school bus.

DM:

We were talking about the school earlier. Do you have anything to add to what we were saying? This is one story, brick, radiator, heater—

PS:

I started to school in that same building, which still stands. It's not got a school in it anymore, but I started school in that and I think I went through the seventh grade or maybe sixth through there.

JS:

Probably, yeah.

PS:

And then we moved. They had us in the high school even though we were not—for a little while because they were building—they built three classrooms and a gym and a lunchroom. The old lunchroom was in what used to be one of the first schools and it was done in the—they had taken off the—it had three floors or two stories.

JS:

Well it had half a basement and then two stories above that, but the top story was—

PS:

Auditorium.

JS:

Auditorium.

DM:

Okay.

PS:

But I don't remember it looking like that. They had taken off those two floors and that was our lunchroom. The down in the basement part was our lunchroom when I first started to school. We didn't have—

DM:

Oh.

JS:

But that's also where the boiler was to heat the steam for the steam heaters.

DM:

I see.

JS:

And I can remember when they—they'd always working on them heaters. You could hear them banging, banging and them heaters always leaked steam, you know.

PS:

By the time I got out of high school they had already built the auditorium in the gym—where they built the gym and three classrooms and the lunchroom and then they came and built the auditorium and some more classrooms now. And by the time I got through there, I think, maybe junior high was going in the old high school. Going to school in the old high school building at that time, but then they eventually tore that one down.

DM:

Okay. Y'all remember any of the teachers? For good or bad?

PS:

I do.

DM:

You want to name? Talk about them a little bit? The ones that—

PS:

The good or bad?

DM:

Either or both.

PS:

There was one I was scared to death of, but I don't know if I want to call her name.

DM:

Oh. Okay. That's okay. Just describe a little bit.

JS:

One of them that taught while I was there was a Nazarene preacher and he was subsidizing his income by teaching because—and I went to the Nazarene church so I knew him and when he moved to Ropes, he had three kids. Two kids. Anyway, he rode the train. I think, either the bus or the train to Ropes and didn't have a car and he lived in what had at one time been the first bank in Ropes and it was a two story and it was so narrow that they put cables on it because when the wind blowed, it'd sway.

DM:

Wow.

JS:

And originally, the banker had lived in the upper—upstairs and the bank was downstairs and then later, the Nazarene church—the Nazarene church actually started a church in Ropes by having a revival in the upstairs of the school.

PS:

At that first.

JS:

At that first school.

DM:

In the auditorium?

JS:

Yeah, and then they organized that church and they bought that building and the first preacher that came lived in the upstairs, but then later, they tore it down and used the same material and widened it out, but the—where the safe was, you can crawl under the church and still see where that safe was.

DM:

Really? Golly.

PS:

They moved it from its first location. They moved it down about two blocks down.

JS:

Yeah, they later moved it.

DM:

Okay. When they widened it, they moved it?

JS:

It was a little while after they widened it that they moved it.

DM:

This is the First State Bank that you're talking about?

JS:

I guess it was.

DM:

First State Bank. 1924 is when it—original.

JS:

Probably, yeah.

PS:

Yeah, it was that building.

DM:

Golly.

PS:

It was not the brick building across the street that they later—a lot of people think it's a real bank, but it—you know where the—have you seen the vault? It's still—maybe it's behind the fences now. I don't know, but it's still there on the second bank.

DM:

Golly. What was his name?

PS:

Who?

JS:

The banker.

DM:

The Nazarene.

JS:

Oh, the Nazarene? Northcutt. Claude Northcutt.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

He was a good one and he controlled the kids. Now, he didn't have problems in his classroom. In

fact, he told us, he said, "There will be no water guns in this class." You know, that was back when water guns and so we all had water guns, but he saw somebody shooting another guy with a water gun. He just walked back there to him and, "let me have it." And he handed it to him. He put it on the floor, took his heel, and just ground it up. Took—picked up the pieces and thrown them in the trash and went right back to teaching. That's all he did, but that stopped the water guns. [Laughter]

DM:

What did he teach? Did he teach multiple subjects?

JS:

He taught several subjects.

PS:

Mostly English.

JS:

I don't know what all. He taught me—

PS:

English, mostly.

JS:

Yeah, English. He was a super nice guy. He was about—

PS:

He made you learn all those poems.

JS:

He was about as tall as I am, but the kids loved him. Them kids loved him. We had a principle when we was in the old building named Burton. Alfred Henry Burton and he was about five feet tall and just as baldheaded as he could be and the kids liked him, but he was walking down some of the high school kids and I think I was—might've been a freshman, but some of them that was seniors walking down the hall one day and took a—I guess a post-it stamp. Slapped it on his head and said, "Burton, we're shipping you to China," and just grinned. [Laughter] But they liked him. He was a good teacher.

DM:

Was he principle? Did he teach as well as being a principle?

JS:

Yes, and when I was in his algebra class. No, it was math. Anyway, plain geometry and because of his other duties, a lot of times, class would be half over before he ever got there and he'd come in one day and everybody was up doing—throwing erasers and all kinds of stuff, you know? He said, "Okay. Every one of you in here is going to get two licks." And he'd line us up, boys and girls, and he gave us all two licks.

DM:

Back in the days when you could do that.

JS:

Yeah. We had an AG teacher that if you did something he didn't like, he'd run you through the belt line and you run just as fast as you could.

PS:

Yeah, but I think they did a lot of it on purpose so they'd do better.

DM:

That was the way it was in our AG class. We just did it to get licks. It was a dare I guess. Can you remember any other teachers? Patsy, you remember any?

PS:

I remember—well we had one, Mrs. Rawson, who, her husband farmed or he had a farm out here somewhere.

DM:

How do you spell that? Rawson?

PS:

R-a-w-s-o-n.

DM:

Okay.

PS:

And she had two little girls. I remember one of them's name was Jerry. And then—fourth grade, I really remember her because I thought she had long fingernails and had—you know, I don't know, but she was kind of—I remember her shaking a boy and those long fingernails digging into his shoulders and it scared me to death. But anyway, I won't name her name. Who else did we have? I don't—

JS:

Mrs. Gullage was my fifth or sixth grade teacher.

DM:

How would you spell that one?

JS:

I don't know.

DM:

Gullage?

JS:

Gullage.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

And I then I think in the seventh grade, it was Mrs. Reese.

DM:

Mrs. Reese.

JS:

R double e-s-e.

DM:

Uh-huh.

JS:

And we had one in high school named Adams and he could not control the kids. No way. He couldn't control them and he just didn't know how to control the kids and he had a daughter that was in that class and I felt so sorry for her because she behaved, but it had to be embarrassing for her.

DM:

Yeah.

PS:

I think we had Mrs. Wyatt and her husband ran the elevator there in Ropes. And then Mrs. Gaines was somewhere along as I got older, but I don't remember.

DM:

I guess Ropes was big enough that you didn't have to combine any grades. You had a teacher for each grade.

PS:

Not back in my time. We only had one grade and if there were thirty kids in there, there were thirty. You know? After our kids started school, they would have maybe two or three second grades or first grades.

DM:

Okay. So in the time you're talking about, there was combined first, second, third grade? Something like that or?

PS:

No. Just—you just—well they might've done that to begin with.

JS:

I don't know.

DM:

So you're talking about different ages in one grade?

PS:

No. Not while I was in there. We had a first grade and then a second grade. But by the time our kids got up to first grade, there might be three first grades.

DM:

Yeah. Right, right.

JS:

But the state came out with that you couldn't have over so many kids in a classroom per teacher so that's when it—

PS:

But, you know, probably before our time, they had combined the classes.

JS:

Well that school I went to at Woody, north of Lamesa. It was first, second, third, and fourth. And then fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth. Two teachers for all the kids.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

And my brother was the only one in the fourth grade so the teacher just ignored him. He'd just sit over there and read.

DM:

[Laughter] Who were the rival schools for Ropes when y'all were in?

PS:

Meadow.

DM:

Meadow, yeah. Any others?

JS:

Not near as much.

DM:

Meadow was the big one, huh?

JS:

Meadow was the one and they're just five miles from us.

PS:

Still that way.

DM:

It is, huh? But Ropes, are they about the same size now? Ropes and Meadow?

JS:

Ropes is bigger.

DM:

Ropes has—was it bigger back then?

JS:

No, I don't think so.

DM:

They were close to the same size?

PS:

I would think.

DM:

Oh, okay. Huh.

JS:

But Ropes, because of all its housing projects it's going in out here, Ropes is going to AA I'm sure real quick.

DM:

Right, right. Yeah, the big city's moving this way, isn't it?

JS:

They said in eight or ten years, we'll be a suburb to Lubbock.

DM:

Going to be a sleeper community, kind of like Idalou, maybe? Where people live out here and drive into work?

JS:

They say that Lubbock will be out here.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

But yeah, they'll probably drive. But you know, the highways in Lubbock are good.

DM:

Yeah.

JS:

We're involved in the Ag museum up there and I can leave the house here and be to the Ag museum in less than thirty minutes. About twenty-four minutes.

DM:

Yeah. That's why I got here about eight minutes early.

JS:

Because you can go—yeah.

DM:

You just go right through and Marsha Sharp Freeway goes right by Texas Tech so it's quick.

JS:

Yeah.

DM:

Yeah. So it's coming out this way. Well I'm sorry about that.

JS:

I am too. [DM laughs] I am too.

DM:

When Lubbock hit 200,000, I moved out to the country near Lorenzo.

JS:

Well we thought we was in the country forever when we bought this place.

DM:

Well this is the direction it's going for sure.

JS:

Yeah, it is and it's not all bad. We've got good neighbors.

DM:

Yeah.

PS:

Which is [inaudible] [1:07:45]. I used could see Ropes water tower and all every morning when I was—now, they look at all the houses.

DM:

Yeah, yeah.

JS:

When they built the first water tower in Ropes—when we moved here, Ropes didn't have a water system. They built that first water tower and I guess I was in high school then and the big thing was to climb the water tower and write your name up there. [DM laughs] And so I got up enough nerve to climb it one time and I climbed it. You know, it's okay going up this way, then you go straight up, then you go up to the top because it—and right on top of the water tower was a steel ball about this big around bolted to the water tower and on top of that was, I guess, clearance lights or something so the airplanes—and when they took the water tower down and a guy was cutting it up, the guy at the lumberyard, Paul Cowley, he asked me if I wanted that ball. I was telling him about Patsy and she loved antiques. He said, "Well when they were cutting that water tower up," the guy that was cutting it up for scrap there, he told him that he—if he could—didn't mind, he'd like to have that. So the guy just cut it out and gave it to him. Well Paul then told me, when he found out that Patsy liked collecting all these antiques, he said, "I'm just going to give that to her." And so, I've got it and it's still bolted to what was part of the water tower. They just cut it out around it.

DM:

Wow. Golly.

JS:

And so as she gets her museum going, we're going to put it up there and use it.

DM:

There you go.

JS:

But I did climb up there and touch that ball up there and that was okay, but when I started back down and straight down, I felt like I was going to step up off into eternity.

DM:

I'll bet.

JS:

I almost froze up there. I had talked—I said, "I'm not climbing that thing anymore."

DM:

Well you don't have to anymore. You can just go touch the steel ball anytime you want to.

[Laughter] Nineteen fifty-one is the date I have for that water tower. Does that sound about right?

JS:

Yeah.

DM:

Before that, I guess everybody had their own windmills?

JS:

Yeah.

DM:

Did people have livestock in town?

JS:

Yeah.

DM:

Had what? Maybe a milk cow out in the yard or?

JS:

Chickens. One guy, he raised—had a bunch of hens and sold eggs.

DM:

Okay. Horses? Horses in town?

JS:

He—they—there was some horses.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

You know, people.

DM:

And then just out houses for each lot. Well let's talk about some of the businesses. Think back. Either of you can speak up here. Just thinking back as far as you can remember, going into Ropes. What were the primary businesses that you recall?

JS:

Well that lumberyard, I'm not sure when it started.

DM:

That's the Higginbotham you're talking about. Started as a Higginbotham.

JS:

Right and that was Higginbotham's premiere lumberyard anywhere in the area.

DM:

Okay. Do you think that was the original Higginbotham in this area?

JS:

Um-hm.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

It was. They made it there because Lubbock wasn't very big back then and like I say, we've got record book that in the thirties, they didn't—thirty—but it had been going for a while then.

DM:

Did it change names over the years?

JS:

It didn't until Higginbotham sold it.

DM:

When was that?

PS:

Late eighties or early nineties.

DM:

Oh, so recently.

PS:

Uh-huh. And then Joe Jeffcoat [?] [1:12:07] bought that and he had it as Ropes' Hardware or something. That's—other than that, that's the only names it has had, as far as I know.

DM:

Now, is it completely out of business now or is it still this?

JS:

It's out of business. Now, the guy that has it, Paul Cowley, he was—he did windmill work for a long time so he's got a lot of windmill tires and parts and different things there. But he's not able to do that anymore. He's in a wheelchair. He can walk a little bit, but not very good. He has collected so much history in his lifetime. He taught school at—

PS:

Weldon?

JS:

Well it wasn't Weldon. He might've taught there some, but he taught—what was that school that's no longer there?

PS:

Union?

JS:

Union. He taught school at Union for years. He's a sharp guy, but he collected. All through his years, he collected the things he was going to throw away. He'd keep them and he's got a lot of antiques there and he's been selling. He started having an estate sale. The city told him that he was going to have to get out of that building or they're going to tear it down because—but anyway, he lives in it. He's done a lot of work before he got where he couldn't do it and so there's a lot of things there that's history of Ropes. He'd be a good guy to talk to about what he's got there.

DM:

Yeah.

JS:

But anyway.

DM:

Give me his name again.

JS:

Paul Cowley.

DM:

How do you spell the last name?

JS:

C-o-w-l-e-y, I think.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

He lives there and if you want to go there and talk to him, he loves to talk.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

And to—that front door, you have to go inside the gate. If the gate's open, just go on down to that second door on the left hand side there and that's where he is. Entrance. He's got a buggy there that's from—he bought it in Canada and the reason he bought it there, he could get it cheaper than he could in the United States and it's a nice buggy, and he got it there in 19—he said, "I don't want to sell that, but if somebody wants to give me four thousand dollars for it, I'll sell it." [Laughter] But you know, that lumberyard, I don't know how many times that I've been in there and bought stuff through the years. Used to build—we built a lot of trailers and I'd go buy my lumber and bolts and anything I needed there.

DM:

You were talking earlier about being in there as a kid.

JS:

Yeah. When I was just a teenager and then when I started farming and I built several trailers, you know? I'd take an old car chassis and built a trailer on it. That thing hauled two or three bails on that.

DM:

Sure.

JS:

I think when I quit using trailers, I had about seventeen trailers.

DM:

Oh.

JS:

That was never enough. You'd get them all full, you know, if the gin wasn't ginned over five or ten bails an hour, why, they'd get behind several weeks.

DM:

Yeah. If you need that many, it's a good thing you can build your own.

JS:

Well you can build some more, but then you build another one and then everybody else did too and you get further behind.

DM:

What other businesses do y'all remember? Besides the Higginbotham. I mean, early on.

JS:

There was Walt's Café.

DM:

I think I've got that written down. Yeah.

JS:

Got that one?

DM:

No, I guess I don't. You might. I might've seen it on your list. Walt's Café. What was that like?

JS:

It just—Walt ran that café. Him and his wife, I guess.

DM:

Was it a diner? Like all-day?

JS:

Yeah. It was open all day and of course, a lot of farmers go in there and drank coffee and refilled for free and they'd sit there and drink coffee for an hour or two.

DM:

I'll bet it was a popular place on a rainy day.

JS:

Yeah. People liked to go in there and they had a drugstore.

DM:

What was the name of it?

PS:

Ropes Drug.

DM:

Ropes Drug? Okay.

JS:

Ropes Drug. I think Bill Berry was the one that ran it.

PS:

No, not Bill.

JS:

Was it a Berry?

PS:

Yeah. Mr. Berry.

JS:

Yeah.

DM:

J.W. Berry? B-a-r-r-y?

PS:

B-e-r-r-y.

DM:

Okay. Okay.

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JS:

And it was right next to the café, I think, and then, between that and the highway was where the hotel was, wasn't it?

DM:

Did the drugstore have a soda shop?

JS:

Yeah.

PS:

It had those fans. It was nice and cool.

JS:

Ceiling fans.

DM:

We have any interior photographs of these?

PS:

There's one. Yeah, we got it.

DM:

Okay. You might've even already shown it to me, but it's—

SS:

I don't think I did. I think I have it, but I don't think I showed it to you.

DM:

Now, I now that the first bank in town was the First State Bank, but what was it by the time— what was the bank in town when y'all were kids?

JS:

There wasn't a bank when I moved here.

DM:

There wasn't? Okay.

JS:

But the building was there, but a grocery store was in that.

DM:

Uh-huh. What was the grocery store?

JS:

What was the name of that? It had been several—

PS:

Start with the Simms.

JS:

Yeah. I thought Simms worked in there. He was in the meat market.

PS:

Oh. I don't remember.

JS:

I don't remember.

PS:

I have all that in the scrapbook.

JS:

It sold several different times as a grocery store, I think, but I don't remember the name. They had—one time, had three blacksmith shops and one of them was Pierce that owned it and one of them was Williams, wasn't it? And I don't remember. Did Gotcher?

PS:

Gotcher ran one.

JS:

Gotcher had one?

PS:

But I don't know if they run one—I don't know if the Gotcher's did.

DM:

Gotcher. Can you give me a spelling on that?

PS:

G-o-t-c-h-e-r.

DM:

Okay. Were any of these still operating when y'all were? When y'all came along?

JS:

Yeah.

DM:

Were they all?

JS:

I know two of them were.

DM:

Okay. What kind of work were they doing? What were they? Just hardware?

JS:

Whatever you needed, they'd—

DM:

Custom made hardware?

JS:

Well and they would sharpen your plow parts back then, you know, you'd heat them on the forge and then hammer them out and sharpen them and that's what the farmers would do when they were fixing to start plowing, they'd take their plows over.

DM:

Golly. I bet it was a busy time of year.

JS:

It was, and it was hard work and they—I know at one time, they built a lot of—back when we bought those cotton strippers, it blew the cotton back into the trailer. On a windy day, you couldn't strip cotton because it was all blowing.

DM:

Over.

JS:

So they built—they came up with this idea of building a buggy top on the—had four posts on—

DM:

So it would blow under the top?

JS:

Blow under that and then you could round that trailer up pretty good. Blow it back in that trailer and they built a lot of those.

DM:

Oh. I bet that was a pretty good business.

JS:

It was. He built a bunch of those and just pretty much anything you needed repaired, take it to them.

DM:

So really, his primary income was from cotton farmers. From the farmers around here. Helping them with their equipment.

JS:

Yeah. When I was here, yeah.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

They had a jail. There was no—I think it was built out of—what was that built out of, Sue?

DM:

You showed me a picture of that.

SS:

Yeah. It was cinder block with—

JS:

No, it wasn't. Before that.

SS:

You're talking the one behind city hall?

JS:

No. The one before that. There was an old adobe—I think it was adobe.

SS:

Yeah, it was adobe.

JS:

It was about a foot thick walls.

DM:

Small building, right?

SS:

Yeah, it was.

JS:

Yeah, it was small, but that was the jailhouse and when my dad moved here, he originally bought the land that that jailhouse was on and he ran a shop in Ropes for—he was a mechanic.

DM:

Oh, okay.

JS:

So he ran a—did mechanic work.

DM:

Well I'll be. He farmed at the same time?

JS:

I was doing most of the farming when he was mechanic-ing. He started out in an old building just—it was next to a service station that a guy by the name of Johnny Flowers ran, which would be on the corner of 41 and [Highway] 62/82.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

And he rented an old building, an old tin building from him to start out mechanic-ing in Ropes and the floor wasn't any good in it and he couldn't keep it warm in there and the creeper would

roll on it so he was in that for maybe six months or a year and then he rented a building that was the first car dealership in Ropes. Lincoln-Mercury? Was it—I think it was just—

PS:

Used to be Thompson's Grocery.

JS:

Yeah. At one time, it was Thompson's Grocery, but I think before it was Thompson's, it was a car dealership.

DM:

I'll be.

JS:

I think. Now, I'm not sure about that. But he rented half of it was Thompson's Grocery, but when he rented it, he got the whole thing, if I remember right, and he was in that for a year or so, then, he built his own shop, which is there across from where the old dry good store—or have you talked to Fred Melton [?] [1:23:47]?

DM:

No.

JS:

Well he's got a business there in Ropes now and he's bought several of those buildings and I know that Riojas moved to Ropes when his kids were in school and he was Hispanic, but he was well-educated and he opened a dry good store there.

PS:

His first one was in an old milo, where your daddy's shop was.

JS:

Well that's what I thought.

DM:

Is this R-i-o-j-a-s?

PS:

R-i-o-j-a-s. Yes.

DM:

Riojas. You know his first name?

PS:

Ralph.

JS:

Ralph.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

He was a good salesman and he made a go of it, but I'd go in there to buy Levi's. He'd always have—he'd have them. If he didn't have them in your size, he'd say, "I'll have them next time you come in." And he was a good salesman, but he'd make you a bargain and then he—it went pretty good there and then he moved right across the street and built the building that's still standing there now and he had that dry good store there and he raised his kids, sent them on to college. He had a son that was just a year or so younger than me that he went to college in the United States and got his eight years and then he went to Mexico and he worked in Mexico and they—I guess it was kind of his training. They sent him to some remote village where he had to take all of his supplies with him.

PS:

He was a doctor.

JS:

Yeah, he was a doctor and he wrote to me several—we wrote back and forth some while he was there and he'd tell me about what he had to do and where he was at and I think he's still—as far as last time I talked to him, he was—

PS:

He's in San Antonio.

JS:

San Antonio. Yeah, like a pediatrician. But anyway, he would—all of this Ralph Riojas' kids. One of the daughters was Patsy's best friend. They were real hard workers and real intelligent.

PS:

She got her doctorate and had her own little Montessori school or what is it? How do you?

DM:

Montessori.

PS:

Montessori school in Oklahoma City. She had her—

DM:

My impression is that most of the Mexicans or Mexican-Americans came into this area in Ropes as maybe cotton pickers, AG laborers, but what about Riojas? Did he come in as a business man or?

JS:

Yeah.

PS:

No. Yeah, he came from a little town.

JS:

I'm not sure where he came from.

PS:

He had a dry good store down there. It was down in Central Texas. He came up here. I don't know how he found out to come up here, but he did.

JS:

But he knew how to make it work. He had four kids, right? And then his wife died and he remarried and then he raised—

PS:

Three more.

JS:

Three more kids and he educated them. He was very, very progressive and a nice guy. And then my dad, when he built his shop there in Ropes, in that building that Riojas had started out in, was my dad's parchment. He had a parch in that and then a shop built right next to it and my dad did a—that was back when irrigation was really getting in and a lot of people drilling wells and most of them were on propane and he'd go out and service wells. He'd start out in the morning. I can remember he'd leave before daylight and come in after dark. Work all day. And so his business really went good. I mean, he stayed busy all the time.

DM:

So was that his primary? When he was doing mechanical work, was it primarily on irrigation wells or?

JS:

Anything.

DM:

Did he work on cars? Tractors?

JS:

School buses. He did—worked on the buses for the school. Just whatever anybody had.

DM:

Farm equipment? Okay.

JS:

But that was back before they got all this technology. You know?

DM:

Right, right. You had to specialize later.

JS:

Before he started—before he put his shop in at Ropes, we were living at Ropes, but people found out that he was a mechanic and for a guy in Lubbock and they'd say, "Well I need to get my pickup overhauled." He'd say, "Well bring it over to the house and I'll drive it to work tomorrow and I'll bring it back to you that night." And he would overhaul and that ring barring and valve job and drive it back home that night.

DM:

Overnight.

JS:

It would be twelve o'clock before he got home. So they got to know him and then he just—he had the business. He did. He had all kinds of business.

PS:

They had a little store. A little store. A little store across from the school. At the time, it was just a tiny little shack.

DM:

Was it something to sell things to kids?

PS:

It was just hamburgers and Coke and maybe a bar of candy or something, but you could either eat in the lunchroom, you know? Or you could take your lunchroom money and go across and eat the hamburger over there.

DM:

Yeah. What was it called?

JS:

Jones is the one that—

PS:

No, it was before that.

JS:

It was before Jones?

PS:

Mrs. Zachary used to run it and I don't know. There's several people. Mrs. Jones run it.

JS:

I know Mrs. Jones ran it. Her husband worked for my dad as a mechanic for a while.

PS:

But it was a tiny, little store and then the Allen—well I guess that Mrs. Astridge bought it out, but she built a longer building. It still stands out there across from the school, but the kids can't go over there anymore. They have to—

DM:

Oh, it's closed campus?

PS:

Lock down, yeah.

DM:

Oh, golly. Oh. This—some of these—well these churches. You know, First Baptist, Methodist Church, Church of Christ, Nazarene, were they all there when y'all came out here as kids?

JS:

Yes.

DM:

Were those the primary churches? Or Catholic church, maybe?

JS:

Church of Christ. No, there wasn't a Catholic.

DM:

Wasn't a Catholic?

PS:

I don't think there was a Catholic at the time. I think it was very recent.

JS:

Church of Christ, Baptist, Methodist, Nazarene.

PS:

And there was a little Church of Christ because we went to the little one. It was a non-Sunday School.

JS:

Non-Sunday School Church of Christ.

DM:

Okay. All in their separate buildings, though, I assume, by the time y'all came out.

JS:

Yes, yes.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

And they were different. All different buildings. In fact, the building that was the Methodist Church at one time, the guy that bought it moves out on the farm.

DM:

Oh, really?

PS:

Yeah, it's straight out this way too. You go far enough out into the west.

DM:

Huh. There was a church sitting out there? Church building?

PS:

Well it's a building. It's her house now.

JS:

It's fixed up as a house.

PS:

It's pretty much the same.

JS:

Yeah. It didn't change that much.

DM:

I know that one of the really early businesses in Ropes was the Wide Horn Hotel and Café, but was that long gone by the time y'all came along?

JS:

Yeah.

DM:

How about—what? Was there a theater there when y'all came out? What was it called?

JS:

The first one was The Wallace, wasn't it?

PS:

Well it was The Wallace, but it had to be the Lariat [?].

JS:

There was actually—and I may be wrong, but I think there was actually three different locations for theater.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

And I think the first one was where my dad had his first shop, but I'm not positive about that, but that's the way I remember it, that when he rented that building, it had a cement floor in it, but it was tin building and so I'm not sure that it was a theater.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

But at one time, I think there was five service stations in Ropes and there was a feed mill. You'd take your feed and have it ground.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

The station there on the highway now, which Pete's there, that was originally further down on the other side of the road back south, and when they widen the highway out, a good friend of mine bought that building and it was a stucco building. A block. Concrete block building and he worked and chipped all that cement off those blocks. Saved those blocks. Moved them down there and put them back up. Made a station and that's still the building that's there now.

DM:

Golly. The Lariat Theater.

PS:

But see, nobody ever calls it that anymore, but we've got it in proof that it came to Lariat.

DM:

Nineteen thirty-seven.

PS:

So it had to have been done—it was put in by the Blankenships.

DM:

Okay. Huh.

PS:

But it hasn't been called the Lariat for a little bit anyway and I don't think anybody realizes that. They just call it the Wallace.

DM:

Yeah. You've got proof right there though of the Lariat Theater.

PS:

And I wouldn't have that, except for my good friend, Mrs. Cane. I kind of got some of her stuff when she passed away so.

DM:

Oh, okay. So I assume that was one of the major means of entertainment there in Ropes. What were some others?

JS:

Well they had a domino hall and at one time, it was a pool hall.

DM:

Okay. They had a skating rink, I think, you mentioned.

JS:

Well that was a community building after they moved it out on the project.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

That's where the kids would all go skating and things. At one time, there was a service station there on the corner, where they've built a new house there now that was next to where my dad had his shop and then that building, parched building, and then next to that, they tell me that there was a service station on that corner at one time and when the state came in with this deal, if you had any underground tanks, you had to dig them up to see if there was—they'd ever leak in it. And we worried about that because we didn't know if that service station ever had an underground tank or not, or if it was just one of those above ground and you pump that handle and got however many gallons you wanted, but there was a big concrete slab there, where that service station had been, but I don't know the name of it. I don't really know the history about it, other than that.

DM:

Sue, I don't know if I've mentioned this to you. We might've already talked about this, but it would be nice to get a—maybe a big, modern map of Ropes and get people to kind of place where things were.

SS:

Yeah, I've been working on it.

DM:

I mean, it would be different in different decades.

SS:

Her friend, Ivory Young, said there was a roller skate rink there someplace real close to the bank. So there was something in town at one time, but I'm not for sure. I'd have to go back and read her memoirs to find out. There was one in town before they moved. [Inaudible 1:36:32].

DM:

Okay. I've got that in 1965, that's about when Ropes peaked in population and number of businesses. The figures I have are 950 in population. Do you ever know if it having been any higher than that?

JS:

I don't remember it ever being that high.

PS:

I remember it being five hundred, but I don't know about nine hundred.

DM:

Okay.

PS:

Could've been. You know, I mean, I wasn't paying attention when I was so little.

DM:

Yeah. And then, forty-eight businesses. That's a lot of businesses.

PS:

Probably.

JS:

It had a lot of businesses, yeah.

DM:

What is it that caused it to start declining?

JS:

When the project—when the farmers begin to farm more land. Less people.

DM:

Right, right.

JS:

Because when they—when the project came in and all these families had anywhere from two to six, seven kids and so the school just—I mean, they couldn't and the school grew and it did go to—I guess that was back when it was still B and it went to A and they had some good basketball teams. The girls went to state twice in a row and the boys, did they go twice or just once? The girls won state and I know the boys got beat out in the finals and that's—a lot of the kids came off of the project good ball players.

DM:

At some point, did kids start moving into Lubbock after—I mean, is that part of it too? This draw.

JS:

Well yeah. That, and the fact that there just wasn't as many people farming and so it dwindled back down.

PS:

Well also, they started building those new shopping centers, like on 4th Street and it was pretty easy to get into town and get groceries at that time and you kind of got where you were going to Lubbock anyway, you know?

DM:

It's easy to get in, like you were talking about, the transportation got so much easier and fast to get into town.

JS:

Yeah. You didn't—

PS:

And your doctors were all in town, in Lubbock, at that time because the doctor that we had out here was long gone by the time I remember anything. You know.

DM:

You were mentioning the state championship girls basketball team. Let's talk about some of the

highlights in Ropes history. Let's talk about some of the things that would've made the headlines whether they were good or bad. Like, for example, I think a tornado tore through here one time.

PS:

Yeah, it did.

JS:

Yeah, I guess it was a tornado.

PS:

It was a tornado.

JS:

It was either that or a tremendous downburst. They were building that—what was a last theater. They had the walls up and that wind came through one Sunday. A wall cloud and it laid that thing flat on the ground so they had to start all over. Put the walls up again. They got it all built back. Estes Burgamy [?] [1:39:59] was the one that built that theater.

DM:

Okay.

JS:

And what was the guy that ran the projector?

PS:

Ulus Gregg.

JS:

Ulus Gregg.

DM:

Ulus Gregg?

JS:

Yeah, he ran the projector.

DM:

Okay.

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PS:

But he also ran it when it was the old Wallace.

JS:

Did he?

PS:

Yeah, he did. That was his first job, I think.

JS:

Okay.

DM:

So it was maybe a tornado, but not a confirmed tornado. Is that what you're—

JS:

That's kind of.

DM:

Yeah.

JS:

Yeah.

DM:

What year was that, roughly?

PS:

Fifty-two?

JS:

Probably.

DM:

Were there any other tornadoes or damaging storms?

PS:

No, but it tore up—several people lost their porches and things during that time too.

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DM:

Same storm, you think?

PS:

Uh-huh.

DM:

Oh.

PS:

I'm pretty sure it was a tornado, probably.

JS:

Sometimes, you can get a real hard downburst off of a small cloud.

PS:

There was a time when there was a hole in that big tall elevator, but was that the tornado that did that? Or did it just blow out?

JS:

No, that wasn't it. It just wasn't built good.

DM:

Huh.

JS:

That cement elevator, it gave away and spilled a bunch of grain. A guy that was running it back then was Floyd Arrant [?] [1:41:39] the one that was running that?

PS:

I guess.

JS:

I know my sister worked there as a bookkeeper for a year or two, but that—

PS:

But that happened a long time before she was working there.

JS:

Probably.

PS:

Yeah.

JS:

Probably did.

DM:

Sue, you showed me some pictures of some pretty good snowstorms here in Ropes. What kind of snow did you used to get here? How deep?

JS:

We had one snowstorm that—I guess it was three or four feet on the level. That was back in what, '53? It—I was dating Patsy then.

PS:

It was '56.

JS:

It might've been. I couldn't get over there to see her in the car because you couldn't go anywhere. It was about three or four foot on the level.

DM:

On the level? Wow.

JS:

And so after about two or three days, I got my horse and saddled it and rode it over there.
[Laughter]

DM:

You ought to be flattered.

JS:

She don't remember that.

PS:

No, you didn't.

JS:

I did too. I did too. I rode that horse over there.

SS:

Tell him about your daddy meeting President Bush?

JS:

Huh?

SS:

Your daddy meeting President Bush. You haven't told him that.

JS:

Yeah. If I'm not badly mistaken, George Bush Sr., when he was campaigning for Congress, he came to Ropes and he had a rally in Ropes and he was on that same building that we was talking about, there next to my dad's shop. Had a front porch on it and he had his banners all up and everything and he made his speech there and the town was full of people.

DM:

Wish we had some pictures of that.

JS:

Yeah. I don't.

DM:

There might be some around. Who knows where they would be?

JS:

Yeah. There wasn't many pictures being took back then. My dad's got a lot of pictures of Ropes back in its hay day.

PS:

Well probably. Did you see those when they had—did you show him?

DM:

On the flash drive?

SS:

The colored ones? The pretty colored ones? The ones his daddy took.

DM:

Oh, okay.

JS:

When the town was full of cars.

DM:

Yeah, yeah. Oh, those. Yeah, that color is amazing on those.

JS:

My dad took those pictures. He went everywhere with a camera in his hand, just like Patsy does.

DM:

Oh. Well he was using some good film because it held that color for a long time. Yeah, those are fabulous photos.

PS:

I think they were slides.

DM:

Yeah. Yeah, and you know, those slides fade so quickly, but not these. I can't remember what kind of film Tai suggested that probably was, but it's a good preserved—well-preserved—kind of film.

PS:

Yeah, because a lot of the ones I have turned blue.

DM:

Yeah. Oh, those slides do that. Yeah. Well that was probably a headline event at the time then. What about these state championship teams? The one girls' basketball team won state?

JS:

That was back when the girls, they had forwards and guards.

DM:

Yeah.

JS:

You know, the forward is on one end and the guard is on the other. You couldn't go across the center line.

DM:

Right. What year are we talking about?

PS:

Nineteen fifty-six and fifty-seven, because the year I was a senior, we went to Austin and then—

JS:

Yeah. We went to—

PS:

I didn't go. I wasn't on the ball team, but we went. In '57, the boys—was it the boys? We went both years, but—

JS:

I guess the boys went both years. I'm not sure.

DM:

Basketball?

PS:

Yeah.

JS:

But see, that was because of the crop of kids that—a lot of them came off of the project. In fact, our oldest son's—

PS:

Brother-in-law.

JS:

Brother-in-law was on the—

PS:

Jim Beavers. Have you ever heard of him?

DM:

Name's familiar.

PS:

Yeah, He's a banker.

JS:

He played college basketball at a small college, but he made the all-college team. He was a good

ball player. He played some team that year that was supposed to be a real good team. They had an old boy that was about six-six and they thought they was just going to run over Ropes.

DM:

Didn't happen, huh?

JS:

And they had that guy. He didn't know which way he was going.

DM:

[Laughter] So fifties is when Ropes was really big stuff in athletics, huh?

PS:

Yeah. It hadn't been that way much.

DM:

Oh.

PS:

Well it kind of has, but they never have—I don't think we've ever gone back to state.

JS:

No.

DM:

Has basketball always been stronger than football out here?

JS:

Not—it's been pretty equal.

DM:

Was it eleven-man football back when y'all came out?

JS:

Yeah, and then they went to six-man later because they didn't have enough kids coming out that wanted to play and they had some pretty good six-man teams. They had some fast kids. And six-man, if you've got a little fast kid or two, it changes the whole.

DM:

Right. Can you think of any other highlights? Ropes highlights?

SS:

We had a teacher named Smith. I can't think of his name. He went to play with the 49ers.

DM:

A teacher? Huh?

PS:

Well we had a lady that went to the film. She was—went to California in the movies.

DM:

Huh. Remember her name?

SS:

I have for the names [?][1:48:03] She's in a couple of movies. She eventually married. Who's married to Barbara Streisand? What's the guy's name that's married to Barbara Streisand? She was married to him first. I mean, she divorced the football player, married this guy, and then he married Barbara Streisand.

PS:

Names are leaving me. I can't remember.

SS:

I'll try to look it up.

JS:

I have not kept up very good with sports since I got out of school.

DM:

Well, let's see. Joaquin Jackson is from Ropes, right?

JS:

Yeah.

PS:

He lived right out here on the project.

DM:

Really?

JS:

Yeah. I was in the same grade with him.

DM:

Oh. What was he—

PS:

Just right down 168 and the next road that goes that way, he lived right there.

DM:

What was he like?

PS:

He was pretty nice.

JS:

He was. His parents were—they liked to go nightclubbing, but he was sharp as a tack. He moved. I think when he was in the eighth grade, he moved to Smyer.

PS:

He graduated from Smyer.

JS:

He graduated from Smyer and then he went on and played basketball and then he got—he got into joining the highway patrol and then he went ahead and applied to be a Texas Ranger. You've probably read his books.

DM:

What was his personality like?

JS:

He was likeable. He was likeable. We played against him after he moved to Smyer. We played Smyer. That was always royal battle up there. I'll never forget we were playing Smyer one night and he was on the team and old boy that used to be sheriff in Hockley county later was on that team. His name was Leeroy Shuley [?] [1:50:02] and he was a big old boy. Stout, big. But something happened and I don't remember what it was, but I know one time he made a goal for us and he thought he was on the wrong end when he shot. Another time, he got mad and slammed the ball down and it went plum to the scene. [Laughter] But he was a good sheriff when he was sheriff.

DM:

I know he was a lot older than y'all, but did you ever meet Max Evans?

JS:

Yeah.

PS:

Yeah. Got his signature.

DM:

What is he like? I mean, personally.

JS:

Patsy can tell you more about him than I can.

PS:

He was just real nice. I don't know what to tell you about him, but I also knew his family. The Swafford's were kin to him.

DM:

Oh, okay.

PS:

So I went to school with Mary Anne. We graduated together and Jim Bob is an artist. Have you heard of him? He's in Bovina right now. He's a Swafford. But anyway, they keep--

DM:

Jim Bob Swafford. Oh yeah. Have you me—you mentioned him maybe, yeah.

PS:

Yeah. But he stays in touch with Max all the time so I kind of get things—what's going on with him. And I went to Levelland when they had his dedication. I think, they had for Max over there at that courthouse. I think, maybe, they have a plaque or something.

DM:

Okay.

PS:

So, he seems really nice.

DM:

Who are some of the other famous people from Ropes? I think y'all have mentioned, but those are the two that really stand out in my mind.

SS:

Uh-huh. Like Lindy Harden [?] [1:51:51].

PS:

Yeah, but he was more Meadow.

SS:

His family lived in Ropes, but he was--

PS:

Well they lived in Meadow when he was—probably until he graduated and then they moved to Ropes because their daddy was a ginner.

JS:

His dad was a ginner, wasn't he?

PS:

Yeah.

JS:

Worked. He was a—

PS:

He played the piano for Elvis, but I don't know that we can claim him for a Ropes.

DM:

Yeah. So the two recognizable names that come from Ropes were Joaquin Jackson and Max Evans, I guess.

PS:

Probably.

DM:

Yeah.

JS:

I'm sure there's—

DM:

I'll tell you what, that's a lot more than most small towns.

PS:

Jerry Fletcher did something.

DM:

That's pretty amazing.

PS:

What was he? Some kind of air—

JS:

Jerry Fletcher was—at one time was head of the South Plains Fair and then he went on—what all did he do? He wrote articles. He had some articles in the Reader's Digest. He was—that Fletcher bunch was—it was a whole family of kids.

PS:

Macknows [?] [1:53:00].

JS:

And they were all smart. They didn't have to study. I mean, they were just sharp and their mother ran a café out at Busterville trying to make—I think their daddy was blind or something and so she was trying to make a living for them kids and they was plenty sharp. You know, Jerry Fletcher was in school.

PS:

He was something in the Navy or something.

JS:

He may have been. May have been a—was he a Navy Seal?

PS:

I don't remember.

JS:

He done a lot of different things.

PS:

I just remember he was pretty popular there.

JS:

Because when he was in school, he didn't have to study. He was so smart. Him and about two other kids, they was having a contest to see who could get the most bustings. He was right up there with him.

PS:

I don't know that this has anything to do with it, but Diana Collins married Randy Neugebauer and she was here.

DM:

From Ropes?

PS:

Yeah, for a while she was from Ropes.

JS:

Yeah. The house that she grew up in after her daddy built a bigger house, my dad bought that house that they had lived in and moved it on the farm and that's the house that we grew up in.

DM:

Okay. Y'all are full of good information. Y'all have answered a lot of good information—good questions this afternoon.

PS:

I don't think so.

DM:

I have a feeling I'm going to have some more questions for you after I kind of digest everything that we've talked about and listen back through this, but is there something else you'd like to add today? Some big gap that I might've missed?

SS:

Did you keep that article of the minor league?

PS:

Oh, no. I didn't get it out, but I can.

DM:

What's that? Oh, the minor league team?

PS:

I have some articles from an old newspaper.

DM:

If you don't mind, sometime, I'd ought to get it.

PS:

There's lots of stuff I have in there that—

DM:

Yeah.

PS:

But you know.

DM:

We probably ought to get a—see if we can get a copy of that sometime because we have a collection of the minor league teams on the South Plains.

PS:

And it was like the Spradling, Mr. Spradling [?][1:55:27]. Some of the ones that were on the project that were actually playing.

DM:

What was the name of that team?

JS:

Lubbock Hubbers.

PS:

No.

JS:

Later on, it was.

DM:

The one out at Ropes, though.

PS:

Yeah, the one at Ropes.

JS:

I don't know what they called it.

DM:

Well when you get that article sometime, as you come across it, let me get a copy or borrow it and make a copy.

PS:

Oh. It's a—I got it up at the library, you know? Just going—putting Ropesville in, you know?

DM:

Yeah.

PS:

And that's where I found it and it's not real clear, but you can still read it pretty good.

DM:

Oh, okay.

PS:

So yeah. I'll get it for you.

DM:

Okay. That sounds good.

JS:

Royce Bradley played for the Lubbock Hovers at one time.

DM:

Okay. From Ropes?

JS:

From Ropes.

PS:

He was on the project down the road here.

JS:

Yeah. And I went to—his oldest son, they were in the same class, but he was a pitcher and I think he was a pretty good pitcher.

DM:

Okay. Well there's a lot more to gather about Ropes, I realize. But—

PS:

Well it's amazing what you come across that you're not expecting.

DM:

That's right.

PS:

Oh, lookie here. We used to be this.

DM:

I know. It always—you know, it works that way. This starts coming out, the more you think about it, the more this information comes out. Well I'm going to go ahead and shut this off.

End of Recording