

JOE SILVERS

Interview 174a

November 12, 2008, at The History Center in Diboll, Texas

Jonathan Gerland, Interviewer

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ABSTRACT: In this interview with Jonathan Gerland, Mr. Joe Silvers reminisces about his father and grandfather and their time spent at Rayville Ranch. He remembers the things they told him about the ranch, about J.J. Ray, about being a pasture rider, and the different groups of people who visited the ranch, including a group of Texas Rangers and Southern Pine Lumber Company officials. Mr. Silver also talks about poaching, gunfights, and the railroad in the area.

Joe Silvers (hereafter JS): If you want to ask me something, you know, ask me.

Jonathan Gerland (hereafter JG): Ok, alright...it's on now. Today's date is November the 12th, 2008. And my name is Jonathan Gerland. We're at the History Center today and I'm with Mr. Joe Silvers, whose father was John Silvers, one of the pasture riders out at the Rayville Ranch.

JS: Grandfather.

JG: That's right, I'm sorry...grandfather. Grandfather John Silvers. And he was a pasture rider. Just gonna...visit with him a little bit, and ask him a few questions. I will say this too, that back in December...almost six years ago...December of '02, is when Mr. Charlie Harber and I went to your house in Henderson.

JS: Has it been that long?

JG: Yes, sir. I looked it up...it was...

JS: That's hard to believe.

JG: Well, it was the end of...I think it was December 17th of '02.

JS: Ok.

JG: Somewhere in there. Anyways, Mr. Silvers was kind enough to donate some photographs that he had. We're just continuing to learn new things about that ranch operation out there, so I just wanted to visit with him a little bit today. Well, just tell us a little bit about your grandfather...and maybe your father. How did...from what you know...how did your grandfather come to be connected with Mr. J. J. Ray?

JS: I don't know. But, they were...I think they were together before grandma and grandpa ever got married. And I don't know how they come about being in this country because...

JG: When did they marry?

JS: Oh gosh....you know, around...well, let's see, I was born in '34 and my daddy was 20 years old when I was born. So...that would say 1914 when he was born. So, they had to been married before then.

JG: Ok, and we believe that the ranch began about 1913 in Trinity County.

JS: Yeah.

JG: So, they were hooked up before then.

JS: Yep.

JG: Do you know what year your grandfather was born? John Silvers.

JS: No, I don't.

JG: Ok.

JS: I was looking at his obituary a while back and grandma made a correction. And he was raised up around Amarillo. Up in there, you know.

JG: Ok.

JS: And the town where he was born...it's up there around Amarillo somewhere or another. 'Course my grandmother, she was born and raised in Houston County... Weches, Texas.

JG: So, you think they may have met after he came here?

JS: I heard a story one time that he came through, one time, and he was selling horses and mules...buying and selling horses and mules and breaking horses for people, you know...a bronc[o] buster. And they had met...and he went on, you know, through and about a year later he came back. And they got married. I remember Grandma telling me one time that...he used to aggravate her because they'd have these country dances, you know, at somebody's house or something or other. And he would always stand outside 'till everybody got to dancing. He'd come in and he'd never take his spurs off. He'd have them boots with spurs on. Dancing with them spurs jingling, and she didn't like it. But, stuff like that, you know.

JG: Uh huh.

JS: But now, 'course that was before they got married, I think.

JG: Ok. And what was her name?

JS: Clara.

JG: Clara. What was her maiden name?

JS: Smith.

JG: Smith. Clara Smith...from Houston County. Ok. Alright. Well, what can you remember...do you remember your grandfather personally, or is it mostly through your father's remembrance?

JS: Oh, yeah. I lived with him...for...

JG: Ok.

JS: ...one time, for several months. He'd had a heart attack...and, you know, just kind of helped him take care of things.

JG: Where did you live...where was he living then? Where was that...when you lived with him?

JS: He was living in Garrison.

JG: Garrison...ok.

JS: He was managing a cattle operation for Roy Lee, Golden Dream Farms. He had a cattle operation out of Garrison there. 'Course that was on up...Grandpa was around 55... in his mid to late 50's then. Now they left Rayville with Mr. Ray...and I believe they went down here around Renfro Prairie.

JG: Yes, sir.

JS: And from there...they went to Glenrose. And, Mr. Ray bought this place in Glenrose. And, that must have been...

JG: About the middle thirties?

JS: It wasn't the middle it'd been before that...because I've got a picture of my first birthday in the front yard of that house down there.

JG: Ok.

JS: And, also...

JG: And what year were you born?

JS: '34.

JG: '34...ok.

JS: So, it had to have been before then.

JG: I think, for some reason, I'm trying to think maybe around '32 is when they left.

JS: I think you may be right.

JG: Left the ranch. And then they went to Renfro for a while.

JS: Right, right.

JG: Ok. So, did your grandfather tell you much about the ranch down in Trinity County? Or, was that through your father telling you?

JS: Neither one of them ever talked about it much.

JG: Neither one...ok. Now you were telling me one time before about your father...I guess he was born out there.

JS: He was born in Alto.

JG: Born in Alto, ok.

JS: Now, he might have...they might have went to Alto, you know, for his birth. Because, see, all my grandmother's folks lived down in Alto, over there...across the river, over there in Houston County on Hwy. 21.

JG: Uh huh. Ok. And Alto's in Cherokee County. So...

JS: Right, Alto's Cherokee County.

JG: Ok. But, he was raised there at the ranch I guess.

JS: Yeah.

JG: Ok.

JS: Lived all his life there, I guess.

JG: And what did your father tell you about the ranch? I remember you telling me that he didn't want y'all to be cowboys.

JS: No. No, he...you know, we'd asked him...me and my brother asked him one time said, "Daddy, why can't we have a horse?" And he said, "Boys, I've had enough horse riding for all three of us." And I never saw him on a horse but one time in my life. But, he...

JG: He didn't want to have any...

JS: He didn't want any part of that cowboy.

JG: Any part of the cowboy.

JS: He'd had enough of it I guess. But, that's real cowboys out there, I'll tell you. I guess that's all my grandpa ever did.

JG: But so...but you, saw the photographs. The photographs that you had donated to us came through your grandfather and then your father.

JS: Right.

JG: What are your earliest memories of seeing the photographs? About...I mean, did you see them as a child, or not until you were an adult?

JS: Oh yeah. I remember seeing them as a child.

JG: As a child, ok.

JS: Yeah, uh huh.

JG: And you asked some questions, I guess, about them or...? Or, they just didn't talk...

JS: No, I asked Daddy one time, he came down there and stayed a few days. First, he had to give a deposition at a trial there in Henderson. And...I got those pictures out.

JG: Uh huh.

JS: And had him sit down with me and tell me who everybody in those pictures were. You know, and he knew them all.

JG: Uh huh.

JS: And, there was one guy there, I think you remember it...this...in this picture right here, where these deer's were hanging up. There was three men...yeah. I didn't know who these guys were. I believe this one here was Hugh Gibson.

JG: Ok...yeah, we're looking at the deer photograph of the three deer hanging up with...it looks like a fox down below.

JS: Yeah, yeah.

JG: From left to right I think the guy on the far left is Hugh Gibson. They've all got shotguns.

JS: Let's see.

JG: Yeah, yeah...we wrote on the back. From the right is Jack Sanders, Bennie Smith.

JS: Now Bennie Smith was my grandmother's...brother.

JG: Brother. Ok.

JS: My grandmother's. On...see, I'm three-fourths Smith.

JG: Ok.

JS: My grandmother was a Smith, my Grandma Silvers was a Smith, and my Grandma and Grandfather, both from here in Lufkin, were Smith's. But, they weren't any kin to each other. And...I don't know how this is...this is not right, because...on the right this is Bennie Smith right here.

JG: Ok, so it's Bennie Smith on the far right.

JS: Yeah.

JG: And then Jack Sanders next to him.

JS: I guess that's right. And I believe this is Hugh Gibson. One of these here is Hugh Gibson.

JG: Ok.

JS: Charlie knew him. Of course he knew Bennie Smith too. Bennie Smith, he owned some land down there around Boggy Slough. It came down through his father. My great...let's see my great-grandfather, yeah.

JG: That would be probably sometime in the twenties? Or is that the...?

JS: I'd say so...yeah.

JG: Twenties, ok.

JS: Yeah...I'd say that was in the twenties. In fact Bennie Smith's got a grandson that's a dentist here in Lufkin. And I gave a copy of these pictures to a cousin of mine, and they gave it to him. And nobody in the family had ever seen it before.

JG: Hmm.

JS: And they were really glad to get it, you know.

JG: Yeah...right.

JS: Because they didn't have that picture, I mean.

JG: And your father's name was Raymond?

JS: Yeah...yeah.

JG: Raymond...ok. And we had looked in one of those photographs before, where he had written his name.

JS: Yeah, painted his name on the corral fence.

JG: Painted his name on the board fence.

JS: Yeah, when me and my brother saw that, you know, we just happened to see "Raymond." And we remembered one time we painted "Bar X Ranch," I think, on the chicken house or something, or I don't know what it was (laughing). But, he made us paint over it. He said, you know, "Don't ever put anything like that." He said, "A fool's name, as well as a fool's face, is always seen in a public place." And there he had written...

JG: He'd written his name on that corral fence.

JS: Painted his name on that corral fence.

JG: So... "do as I say not as I do," huh. (laughing)

JS: Right. Yeah, he had his rules. But, I was gonna tell you the time my brother went through there with him. And they went in the old ranch house there and...one of daddy's duties was to keep all the weapons clean. And he was sitting there with a .30-.30 lever action rifle, and Grandma's picture was on the dresser over there. And he just aimed and pulled the trigger. And just shot...blew Grandmother's picture all to pieces. (laughing) Shot the back out of the dresser and he didn't know his gun was loaded, and he didn't check it. And he showed Jim, my brother, the bullet hole there in the wall where he'd shot that...shot Grandma's picture in the back of the dresser out.

JG: And who is your brother?

JS: Jim Ray Silvers.

JG: Jim Ray Silvers.

JS: He was named after Mr. Ray.

JG: Ok.

JS: Middle name's Ray.

JG: Now, is he older or younger?

JS: He's younger.

JG: Younger than you.

JS: He's three years younger than me.

JG: Jim Ray Silvers.

JS: Yeah.

JG: Well, from what I've heard from Mr. Harber and others is that your grandfather was pretty much Mr. Ray's right hand man.

JS: Yeah, he was. He kind of...yeah, he was, I guess you'd call him his range foreman. I don't know what you'd call him. We always called Mr. Ray, the whole family, Dad Ray.

JG: Dad Ray.

JS: That's what they called him, Dad Ray. I, you know, I remember when they moved to Glenrose. They'd come and get me and take me back out to Glenrose with them, you know. And he was...I remember, being real sick. Grandma would take his meals into him and, you know he was in the bed or he may be sitting up in a chair, but he didn't get out anymore. 'Course I remember, you know, when he was up about...when he was so sick, you know, I'd go in there and he'd talk to me, you know but that must have been about '41 when he died somewhere around there. I went out there in '78, I don't know if you want to listen to this...it doesn't pertain, but it's about Mr. Ray, you know.

JG: Yeah, go ahead.

JS: But, in '78 there were some bluebonnets come up in our yard. And I got to thinking about...

JG: In your yard in Henderson?

JS: Yeah, I got to thinking about all the bluebonnets out there in...around Glenrose, you know, when I was a kid. And I told Neva, my wife, I said, "Let's just drive out there at Glenrose." So, we drove out there and as we were going into Glenrose...

JG: Now, that's south of Fort Worth?

JS: Yeah.

JG: Ok.

JS: Yeah. There was a Farm Market Road that went off to the right. And I said...you know, now I hadn't been there since I was seven years old. And I said, "I believe that house is right out this direction right here." And I didn't know how in the world I'd ever find it. But, we got down there to Glenrose and pulled up to that little old court house, or whatever it is there. I remember when I was a kid they had an Artesian well flowing there and that old well is still there but it wasn't flowing. They had a real estate office right across the street, and I just went over there. I told the guy who I was and I said, "I'm looking for this house." And I described the house to him and I said, "There's a creek running along the property line there, and there's a concrete slab that goes across the creek." Not a bridge, but it's a low water slab, you know. And, when water would get up it would get over that slab and it would scare me because Grandpa would drive through that water, you know. And he said, "I know exactly where it's at." And he said, "You go back out of town here about a mile or so and the first farm to market road to your left." That's the road I told her, I said, "I think that..." He said, "You turn and go down it till you come to the first gravel road, turn back left." He said, "It will take you right to the house." "But," he said, "You can't get in there now because it's in that Comanche Creek Nuclear Power Plant Reservation.

JG: Hmm.

JS: And, sure enough, we crossed the creek on an old slab and pulled up. They'd fenced it and they'd cut a road around that whole place. The power plant...the dam for the power plant was...oh, maybe, half a mile out in front of that house.

JG: Ok, and the house was still there.

JS: Oh yeah. They were tearing it down. They were already...

JG: And it was kind of an old stone house?

JS: No, it was two story...it was a frame house.

JG: Had a stone chimney or something didn't it?

JS: Uh...yeah, it had a...the fireplace in it was made out of petrified wood.

JG: Ok.

JS: I remember that. But, it was posted. And there was a gate there, you know, and I told Neva, I said, "I'm gonna climb this fence and just go on down anyway. If they catch me, they catch me." And I went in and took some pictures, you know, of the...old house there. They had started tearing it down. Like I said, they tore the front porch off of it. And, it had a unusual barn. The barn was built up in the side of a hill. And they had just kind of went in there and cut out the side of that hill where you could drive up, and drive a truck into the top of the barn.

JG: Hmmm.

JS: It had an old Chevrolet truck, you know, that they hauled hay and stuff on...feed, up in the top of that barn. But, they could drive in there and unload hay or feed or whatever they want to...on top of this barn. Just drive a truck in there.

JG: Now, some of these photographs have women in them. Women wearing caps and chaps and...or not caps but, hats and chaps. And it looks like they were...and several of them, they're riding horses and things.

JS: Yeah.

JG: Do you have any idea who some of these women might have been? I think...

JS: One of them is probably my grandmother.

JG: Ok.

JS: Charlie Harber's sister, I think.

JG: Might be one...ok.

JS: Might be one of them.

JG: This is one here. Charlie had gotten these photos just before he died. I'm not sure where they were originally. Now that...is that Mr. Kenley? Did you know Mr. Kenley? Dave Kenley.

JS: No, I didn't. I didn't know him. There's a picture in here I want to show you that I don't know who it is.

JG: We're looking through some...

JS: Was a guy named Gilbert that...

JG: From what I can gather, a man named L. D. Gilbert...who was...I forget his exact title, but he was pretty much the operations manager for Southern Pine Lumber Company, out of Texarkana. But, he was involved in this ranch. I think he was the one who hired Mr. Ray to come down and establish that ranch. They had bought that land, oh, late 1890's, early 1900's.

JS: Yeah.

JG: And had land pretty much continuous along the Neches River there. In Trinity on up into Houston County on the...that'd be the west side of the river. And they had logged most of it, and it was cut over land and that's when they established that ranch. And Mr. Harber, as you know, his father was in the fencing crew and that's the year that we've always heard, that 1913 was when they began to fence that in. And part of the reason was for land title issues. There were some lawsuits actually, that the company had to tend to in those early years and Dave Kenley was involved in some of that, in arguing on behalf of Southern Pine Lumber Company. But, that, and some of the laws of, I forget the exact legal terms, but it wasn't enough just to say, "This is our land, keep off." You had to fence it in and occupy the land. Make use of the land...

JS: Right.

JG: And so that was part of it too, was establishing that ranch and that was to help keep encroachment away, and just maintain ownership basically. And they hired this Mr. Ray to come down and establish that ranch and to manage it. And it was there, oh, close to twenty years, I guess, or just under. And from '26 to '36 they actually leased it to the Parks and Wildlife Department as a game preserve. Starting in '26.

JS: Yeah. Well, I never did understand what kind of arrangement Mr. Ray had with Southern Pine Lumber Company on the cattle operation. Were they in partnerships? Or...

JG: I'm not sure the exact arrangements. You know, we don't really have any records on that. Now, some of that is up at SFA and those collections. I don't know if they were Ray's cattle or the company's cattle. But, sometimes in some of those records it's referred to as the Southern Pine Lumber Company Ranch. Now, Rayville was actually near where that house was. The old Rayville house, Mr. Ray's house...

JS: Yeah.

JG: ...was the railroad station of Rayville. And that's where the name Rayville came from.

JS: Ray...not from Ray, Mr. Ray.

JG: Well no it came from Mr. Ray's name but...

JS: Ok.

JG:...Rayville as a, it wasn't really a town it was...

JS: Right. It's just...

JG:...just the station on the railroad and...

JS: Right. Ok.

JG: And that's pretty much generally, you know, the ranch. I don't know if it had an official name or not. But, like I said, we've seen it both...we've seen it as the Ray Ranch, Rayville Ranch, Southern Pine Lumber Company Ranch.

JS: Well, I don't know what kind of financial arrangements they had. But, one of my grandma's, her half brother Elwin Lovell, told me one time that when Mr. Ray left Rayville, Southern Pine Lumber Company offered him a deal. Evidently Elwin said he worked all those years with no pay. You know...that's, see I don't know what kind of deal they had. But he said, there as you cross from Alto...going on 21 towards Crockett when you cross the river there...

JG: Uh huh.

JS: ...see, Southern Pine Lumber Company owned a lot of land in there. And, he told me that they offered him either money or all this big track of land in there. And he took the money and went to Rayville, I mean, to Glenrose and bought that property out there.

JG: Hmmm.

JS: He may have not went to Glenrose right then...

JG: Yeah.

JS: But...now, that's what Elwin told me, my grandma's brother. That's the only thing I've ever heard about that part of it.

JG: Now somewhere along in there, about the time they would have closed the ranch down too, which I think it was about '31 or '32, there was that shooting out there...the death.

JS: Yeah.

JG: And I don't know in some of that company correspondence about that time period too, early thirties is when they were looking to sell some cut-over lands to the national...the newly created National Forests in Texas, to the federal government.

JS: Yeah.

JG: And Arthur Temple Sr. actually kind of pushed to sell some of that. And part of the reason was that shooting out there.

JS: Yeah, I don't think they liked the publicity that shooting brought about.

JG: Yeah, well, it made the Dallas Morning News even. (laughs) And...anyways, so it was all in that time period and, you know, I just wondered what, you know, again how all that was arranged and, you know, why Mr. Ray left. But it was all about that time period. And, of course, also during that time period...

JS: But Charlie Harber told me that the reason Mr. Ray left was that...you know, Southern Pine...they didn't like the publicity that killing had brought about.

JG: Yeah.

JS: And I think, you know, they was afraid maybe they was going to get some of their property burned off or something or another like that. Some kind of revenge motive over it or something...I don't know. I remember them talking about that killing when I was a kid. But...

JG: Well supposedly the pasture riders at that time sort of had dual...they were also commissioned by the Parks and Wildlife Department, sort of, to be game rangers.

JS: Yeah.

JG: You know.

JS: Right.

JG: There was some illegal hunting and stuff that was going on in there and...

JS: Right.

JG: And I had talked with Mr. Harber too about when he was a pasture rider. Not just there, but other places too. And he had said that mostly, he got his money from Dave Kenley. And occasionally he would get paid by Southern Pine Lumber Company. But, most of his...his employer was really Dave Kenley, who was leasing the land to run cattle on. Dave Kenley had had his own cattle and he leased lumber company land to run his cattle and then he paid Charlie Harber a salary to work for him. And that was just part of the job, was just keeping people off the land. You know, that by Kenley leasing it and running his cattle then, he had to help protect it as well. 'Course Kenley was head of the land and timber department for the company.

JS: Yeah.

JG: As well.

JS: That's right.

JG: So he had his own cattle on company land, but yet, he was also responsible for the land and timber as well. And so that's how Mr. Harber was sort of connected with all that. 'Course he was born and raised out there. Just near Bristow Creek he always told me.

JS: Yeah, right.

JG: There...just over into Houston County. But, is there anything else...I know you've said, you know, you're a little far removed from all that. But, and maybe here in a second we'll pull some of these other photographs out...anything else that you can remember or would care to say about that ranch? Again, we're just trying to determine as much as we can...

JS: Well...not really. I just remember some of the things Daddy said. Daddy said they used to...evidently they had one of these little old work cars, you know, that they used to ride up and down the tracks, repairing the tracks.

JG: The maintenance crew car.

JS: Yeah, what do you call it? The little...

JG: The maintenance-of-way car, or was it a pump car or handcar?

JS: But, they had one...had a little one cylinder engine on it.

JG: A little motor, ok. Well, we've got a couple outside on display there.

JS: And he said they used to take...

JG: Speeders, track speeders...sometimes called...

JS: They would take that thing and put it on the track there in Rayville and they could come to Weches. You know, there where the...

JG: Go all the way up huh?

JS: ...track crossed right there as you crossed the bridge there out of Alto over in Houston County there, you know. And they could ride that little old car all the way to Weches there, you know. And they'd spend the day on Sunday...

JG: Hmm.

JS: ...and then go back. And daddy said the thing...it didn't have a forward or reverse. You cranked the engine up and run it backwards, you know, if you wanted to go one way

you cranked it that way...if you wanted to go the other way you cranked it and it would run backwards, you know.

JG: And they could have even put a little trailer, some of them had little trailers that they would pull so if they went shopping and...gathered some stuff they could of...

JS: They just went down there, you know, to visit with family is what they did.

JG: Visit family, ok.

JS: Because they didn't live but about a mile up the road there.

JG: Yeah.

JS: And...I remember daddy talking one time about riding fence. He didn't like that, you know. But, he said, that's the way he got started smoking. Grandpa couldn't turn his head, you know, he never could turn his head...because a horse had thrown him and jammed his neck years before. And he'd ride along behind Drandpa, and when he'd throw one of them cigarettes down he'd just pick that cigarette and ride right behind him and smoke that cigarette when he was 9 and 10 years old.(laughing) Grandpa never looked back 'cause he...

JG: He couldn't turn his head.

JS: He couldn't turn his head, you know.

JG: Now, Charlie, that was one thing before Mr. Harber died, he and I rode through there one more time and we actually also rode just outside the ranch along that old CCC road there...just outside the ranch there out of Apple Springs. 'Course you can see the fence and 'course so much of it's overgrown now and...

JS: Yeah.

JG: That always bothered Charlie. He... 'cause, I'm sure, he did that much of his life. Riding those fences and keeping the brush cleared away and maintained and made sure, you know, all the fence was mended and...

JS: Yeah.

JG: But he pointed that out quite a bit. About, "Look at those fences now."

JS: I tell you, they had some pretty rough customers down in that country I think. I remember Daddy talking about him and Mr. Ray went to Apple Springs one day. And, he was just a kid, and as they was leaving out of town somebody shot him in the back of the car. Shot it.

JG: Hmmm.

JS: Said the bullet went clear through the car but didn't hit either one of them. So, I don't think they was too well liked by them people around that country down there.

JG: Well, I'm gonna...I may pause the recorder occasionally, but, I'm gonna pull some of these photographs out and we'll just kind of look at those and maybe that will jog some memories.

JS: Now, these here...

PAUSE IN RECORDING

JG: Ok, go ahead.

JS: Daddy was telling me about one time these Texas Rangers came in there to hunt. And he stayed with them, three or four days I think. And, he would take them out and put them on their stands and all, you know. He told me, he said, "Those guys amaze me how they can shoot a rifle." And my daddy was a pretty fair rifle shot hisself. But, they impressed him. You know, the way they could shoot a rifle, their marksmanship abilities. And I don't know why, you know, the Texas Rangers came in there. How...unless some way they was connected with Mr. Ray, I don't know.

JG: Well, you know, I don't know either, but, what I was thinking of is, you know, it was...that's another something we don't know a whole lot about is, you know, from '26 to '36. 1926 to 1936...it was a game preserve. And they were doing that all across the state. They started it in '25. See, the state didn't really own any land that they could have...protect game on, you know. And about that time period the game had gotten pretty well depleted. And so, they began to solicit from individual private owners...land that they would agree to lease it to the state. And the state would manage it and protect it and even stock it, re-stock it with game. Turkeys, and deer, and fish. And that was the early conservation efforts that the state did. And it was through efforts like that and...a lot of the deer I think they actually brought in from Mexico. And, you know, Charlie Harber's told me the story that he remembers his father telling him about stocking, you know, the deer being brought in on the train. And they talk about Mr. Welch that was out there, he's quoted in Thad Sitton's book of seeing the deer jump out of box cars. So sometime in there is when I think they would have done that. To protect that game, you know, again I think, you know, the game wardens and the, you know, all that was kind of in its infancy. And there really wasn't very effective trespassing laws. I don't think there were any trespassing laws. And so that's how they...

JS: It's just kind of open range...

JG: Yeah.

JS: ...deal...I mean they run hogs and hunted whatever they did, you know.

JG: And, Mr. Harber told me that he remembered, you know, his father was paid for their hog brands. Basically, just the company paid him a certain amount of money for any hog that had that brand on it...that mark. The ear marks.

JS: Uh huh. Yeah.

JG: And then, that's how they sort of paid everybody off. Basically trying to fence it in and close it in. But, yeah, there's just so much we don't know about it. Just trying to gather as much of it as we can.

JS: I'd give anything, you know, if Charlie had found out about Daddy, you know, before he died. He could...he could tell him everything about it, you know. It just, you know, it's a shame.

JG: And when did your father die?

JS: Let's see...daddy died in...ninety...I believe '96.

JG: '96, yeah. Just a few years too late huh?

JS: Yeah...yeah.

PAUSE IN RECORDING

JG: Let's see, we're talking about the goats that were out at the ranch.

JS: He said they had three thousand goats.

JG: That's your father said that huh?

JS: Yeah.

JG: Three thousand.

JS: I believe I wrote that on the back of there.

JG: Yeah, three thousand goats.

JS: Yeah, three thousand goats.

JG: Mexican goat herder.

JS: Yeah.

JG: And I guess that was to eat up the hardwood brush is what...

JS: Yeah, eat that underbrush out. Right, keep it down.

JG: ...several people said...eat it up to help the pines to...

JS: Charlie said they had a goat house.

JG: Yeah.

JS: I don't know...

JG: You can see it in, I don't know if we've got a picture of it here, but in some of those old photographs...I think we already had one...you could see that old goat house in the background.

JS: I believe it's the one Charlie had where they were planting those pine...pine seedlings.

JG: Oh yeah...yeah.

JS: And that goat house was in one of those pictures.

JG: Ok. Yeah maybe I'll pull it here after a while.

PAUSE IN RECORDING

JG: He's talking about the Lovells. And tell me again.

JS: Well, this was Uncle Lee here, this was Grandma Silvers' full brother. And then Uncle Jim was her stepbrother. And then there was Sherman, and Elwin, and Lloyd Lovell. And then they had another brother named Emmitt. He died, and then it's Paula (?).

JG: And they lived there near Weches.

JS: Weches, yeah.

JG: And Lloyd Lovell was sheriff of Houston County, you said, for...

JS: Yeah.

JG: A number of years.

JS: 16 years I believe.

JG: Was he sheriff then?

JS: No, he was...

JG: When these photos...?

JS: No...he was just farming then.

JG: Ok. And these photos were made in '37, '38?

JS: Now let's see, wait a minute. He was...I think he was a J.P., or a constable, or something back then.

JG: Ok.

JS: I'm not sure....now that was Rayville, that's grandma's.

JG: Yeah, yeah. Let me pause it again.

PAUSE IN RECORDING

JG: Ok, well Mr. Silvers I really appreciate you sharing with us today. And just to wrap things up, you retired from Eastman Kodak...is that correct?

JS: Yeah.

JG: Ok. And you worked for them for...?

JS: Thirty-six years.

JG: Thirty-six years.

JS: A little over thirty-six years.

JG: And again your father didn't want you being a cowboy so you went another route huh?

JS: Right...right.

JG: Ok. Well thank you again.

END OF INTERVIEW