

## **ELVIN BUDDY LOWERY**

**Interview 274a**

**July 23, 2015, at The History Center, Diboll, Texas**

**Jonathan Gerland, Interviewer**

**Patsy Colbert, Transcriber**

**ABSTRACT:** In this interview with Jonathan Gerland and Richard Donovan, Elvin “Buddy” Lowery reminisces about his life. Mr. Lowery was born the youngest of 11 children in Smyrna, Nacogdoches County. His family moved to Huntington, Angelina County when he was a child, and he graduated from Huntington High School, where he played basketball and baseball. After high school Mr. Lowery played basketball and attended Panola Junior College and Stephen F. Austin State University. He then went on to play basketball for the ABA New York Tuck Tapers and the NBA Detroit Pistons. While in New York, Mr. Lowery spent his off time as a model, even trying out to be the Marlboro Man and appeared as a contestant on *The Price is Right*. After one season in the NBA, he returned to Huntington where he joined his brother Lester in the sawmill business. Eventually he and his brothers and nephews would own three sawmills and three chipmills and would be founders of Huntington State Bank. Mr. Lowery discusses his childhood on a farm, hunting hogs, picking cotton, rounding up cattle in the woods, hand-making railroad ties, delivering loads of ties to the docks in Beaumont, raising exotic wildlife, and running a bank with his family.

**Jonathan Gerland (hereafter JG):** Today’s date is July 23, 2015. My name is Jonathan Gerland and I’m with Richard Donovan and Elvin “Buddy” Lowery and we are at The History Center and we are going to do an oral history. I guess, I don’t know where the best place to start. We have got a limited time this morning I understand, so you were talking about a certain date that is important in y’all’s lives together. Who wants to start by talking about that?

**Richard Donovan (hereafter RD):** Well let me just kind of introduce Buddy just a little bit, and I don’t know if I can do a very good job of it. But, we’ve known each other about 65 years. You mentioned 1954 awhile ago – that is the date, the year that Buddy and I graduated from high school. We were bitter rivals in high school. He played for Huntington and I played for Zavalla and it was a terrific rivalry between those two schools, and usually there was a fist fight following or during or something like that (laughter). And one day, an old renegade guy by the name of Charlie King, who I thought an awful lot of, told me, he says, “You know we used to have a good rivalry between Zavalla and Huntington,” but he said “You and Buddy Lowery killed it.” Well, he didn’t say Buddy Lowery he said Buddy “Larry”, them “Larry” boys. He said, “You and Buddy Lowery put a good stop to that and we haven’t had a good rivalry since you two guys played together.” But Jonathan, Buddy grew up in the time and era that most people have trouble connecting with today. Buddy grew up in Smyrna Texas, in the outskirts of Smyrna, Texas too, by the way.

**JG:** Nacogdoches County?

**RD:** Yes, and he had a very rural life and I'll just try to be as brief as I can. He grew up and he has been successful at everything he has ever done. He went to SFA [Stephen F. Austin] and he was Mr. SFA and he was Mr. Lone Star Conference, and he was Mr. just about everything you could be over at SFA. Then when he left there he went to work with his brothers in the sawmill business and was very successful in that. He was in the cattle business and he was very successful in that. And, one thing that you've seen I'm sure, as you drive up and down the highway, is he raises elk alongside Highway 69 there, and gosh the list is endless, but I will hush now since I think you kinda have an idea of what questions you might want to ask Buddy.

**JG:** Well Mr. Lowery, just start off maybe by telling us about your childhood. You were telling me earlier you were the last of eleven children.

**Buddy Lowery (hereafter BL):** Eleven kids, yes, three girls and eight boys in our family.

**JG:** You said your father was 44 when you were born.

**BL:** Yes, I was the youngest one of 11 and he was 44 when I was born.

**JG:** What are some of your early memories of growing up? What was your family doing to make a living?

**BL:** A hundred percent farming. We did everything, because my dad was so old when I was born. He was born in 1892, so that dates way back, you know, and in wintertime we made cross ties and the summer time we farmed and that is about it. It wasn't a lot going on back in those days.

**JG:** How did you make the cross ties?

**BL:** Just with a broad axe. I'm probably the last fellow alive that has made ties with a broad axe.

**JG:** Hand hewn?

**BL:** Yes, sure did.

**JG:** What kind of tree did you make them out of?

**BL:** Well, because I was the youngest one, gum logs was softer, so he would cut a gum for me. I was little and I wasn't big enough to handle a big broad axe. I had a small broad axe, and if it was a gum tree I made it, and the older boys would get the red oak and white oak and all that kind. But times were pretty hard. This world has changed a hundred percent from that time up to now. You couldn't have been born at a better time

than I was, in 1936, and you couldn't be raised at a better place than I was raised, because it was ten miles south of Etoile – a little community called Smyrna. They had a school there at one time and our daddy called it scholastics. He said they had 100 scholastics. "Okay Poppa, what is a scholastic?" That is the same thing as a pupil to me, you know.

**JG:** A student.

**BL:** Yes, but he was old and he called it scholastics. But when I come along, the school, they had cut it out and all the kids were going to Etoile. It was just our family that lived out in that area and you could not be raised at a better place, because we worked hard and had plenty to eat, such as it was, you know, salt pork and biscuits and what Dick and everybody had in the country back then.

**JG:** What did you farm, what kind of crops?

**BL:** Cotton and everything, cotton and corn, cotton was his money crop. You know, we made 34 bales one year and we picked it all by hand. Now they got pickers to do that with, but we picked it and done it all by hand. That is the most we ever made in one year was 34 bales.

**JG:** Where would you sell the cotton?

**BL:** At Chireno, there was a gin at Chireno, so we would pick a bale a day – there was so many of us kids, and that was, a bale was 1500 pounds and our daddy could haul a bale on the pickup with side frames. And we would pick a bale every day, put it in a little cotton house and that evening late...I've heard him tell about getting to Chireno, and there would be 30 or 40 bales, people ahead of him and it might be way over in evening before they got it off of him and got it ginned. He would come back and sometime [it would] be almost dark, and we would take a lamp and get down with the cotton, somebody would hold the lamp and we would put it in a big old basket and we would pick a bale a day there was so many of us. We would load it in his pickup and the next morning he would take it to Chireno and we would pick another bale that day. You couldn't have survived, if you didn't have a lot of kids back then.

**JG:** So 34 bales was a good year for you?

**BL:** That is the most we ever made. We would make 20 to 25 every year, and 34 is the most we ever made in one year; it just happened to be a good year.

**JG:** So that was in the forties mostly, or early fifties?

**BL:** In the forties, yes. I was born in '36 and you went to work in the field when you were about three. You didn't work, but I can remember before I got big enough to work, Momma would take a quilt and you know, I was two or three years old, and my first memory of being alive would be laying on that quilt, you know, and it hot in the summertime and fire ants, not fire ants, regular ants get on there and you would have to

knock them ants off. That is my first memory of being alive, sitting on a pallet with the bigger kids picking cotton.

**JG:** Your first memory!

**BL:** By the time you got to where you could pick 20 or 30 pounds a day, you had a little bitty sack and you were out there picking.

**JG:** When you were really little, do you remember if she moved your quilt around as they went up and down the rows or...?

**BL:** No, no, it was the rows were so long that it took maybe a half a day to pick a through, from here to the other end is a through, and then turn around and pick right back.

**JG:** So, your mom and all your brothers and sisters and dad and everybody worked.

**BL:** Yes, momma would stay in the morning, and we would go real early, and mom would clean up the dishes and she would come on to the field a little bit late and bring me. I stayed with her and then I would come with her to the field and get on my pallet. But pretty quick you are out there picking cotton. Our daddy didn't believe in inactivity. He wanted you doing something.

**JG:** Did you pretty much farm your own land or did you lease lands or...?

**BL:** No he owned I believe 328 acres that he inherited from his grandpa. And he always said the reason he survived, and we were the only family left in that end of the county, is he had a lot of land. Most of the people, there were old house-places all over that country that was rotted down and all the people were gone, and maybe ten or twelve or fifteen of them because they had a school there at one time and there was a lot of people lived there. And I would ask him what happened to them, and he said, "Well son they didn't have enough land to survive; uncle so and so had 25 acres and that just wasn't enough to support a family." And he happened, our dad, happened to have enough land to work that he survived. He had enough kids to work it and he didn't mind making you work starting early to late.

**JG:** So you had enough land to rotate around. I understand cotton is pretty hard on the land.

**BL:** It is and he would rotate it.

**JG:** Okay, so they just didn't have enough land to rotate.

**BL:** They didn't have enough land to rotate and he said they didn't actually starve to death, but what he meant was they couldn't make a living and they had to move to town. Nacogdoches was town to us.

**JG:** Do you know what any of them specifically did? Did they go to sawmills or anything like that?

**BL:** I really don't know.

**JG:** Okay.

**BL:** I don't know what they did.

**JG:** So if a family lived in that region and had plenty of children and plenty of land, was that typical, your experiences growing up?

**BL:** Yes that is what everybody did.

**JG:** That is what everybody did okay, okay. Talk a little bit about, you were telling me earlier about your childhood and your father and cattle. How much...just tell about that experience.

**BL:** Well he had more cattle than he could run on his own land, but it was open range back then, you know, and had several thousand acres that was open country. I can remember as a little bitty old kid, we would get up before daylight in the summer time. In the winter time he got all his cows on his own land and we fed them. We had a crib full of corn and a lot of hay, and then in the beginning we didn't have a hay bailer. I'm kind of floating around here, I think of different things as I go.

**JG:** That is fine.

**BL:** And we put the hay up, you set a pole in the ground and we called it shocking it. I don't know what shocking means, but you would have a pole in the ground and you would haul that loose hay in and throw it off and wrap it around that pole until you got so high you couldn't go no farther with it. But later on, he got a hay bailer and we would bale that hay in bales, and that made it a lot easier to feed them because you had a bale you could load and take out there.

**JG:** Square bales?

**BL:** Square bales, little small square bales. But I can remember when I was a kid, you know, sometime – generally on Sunday morning, he would have a lot of cattle on the range and we would leave out before daylight and be over a mile or so from home, you know, and he would always pick him a high hill.

**JG:** On horseback, were you riding on horseback?

**BL:** No, usually we just walked. A few times we would go, but usually we just walked and each one would carry corn in a sack.

**JG:** Okay.

**BL:** We would wait and when it began to get daylight, there was a lot of other people had cattle on the range and every bunch of cattle, Watty Mays and different ones had bunches of cattle, and the cattle would stay together if they were raised together. They had a bell on one cow, called it the bell cow, well when it got daylight and them cows start getting up to feed, you would hear a bell and our dad would listen and he would say, “no that is Lloyd Jacobs” and in a minute somebody else’s you would hear another bell this way and he would say, “No that is Watty May’s bell,” and in a minute he would say, “Son, I believe that is our bell.” He would put his hand up over his ear like that, and he would say, “Yes, that is our bell.” So it would be daylight and the sun coming up and we would take salt and salt them, and look at them and make sure they were all okay. But that was kind of a vacation day, a Sunday and you didn’t have to work. When I was little we didn’t go to church. There was no church down there to go to.

**JG:** So feeding the cows was a vacation day.

**BL:** That was a vacation to us, it sure was.

**JG:** Did you brand your cattle?

**BL:** Yes, they all had brands. Our dad, his name was Ephraim and our brand was E. L.

**JG:** E. L.

**BL:** Everybody had a brand because sometime cattle would get mixed up and if we penned ours and there was one in there that belonged to someone else, our daddy would always let them know that we got one of your cows over here if you want to come get it. Usually they would say just turn it back on the range it will come home.

**JG:** I see you’ve got some Nacogdoches Livestock Exchange papers in your pocket.

**BL:** Yes, yes.

**JG:** Where would you sell your cows?

**BL:** I had a brother that started Lufkin Livestock Exchange about fifty something years ago. In Nacogdoches, there was one sale in Nacogdoches, the Patton Auction Barn in Nacogdoches. And we would carry them and haul them to Nacogdoches, the calves in the fall, you know. We had to do it in a pick-up. We didn’t have a trailer to put them in, so it would take several weeks.

**JG:** Several trips huh?

**BL:** They had a sale I think on Friday and we would take a load. That was a big day, to go to the sale; you didn’t have to work in the field that day.

**JG:** But it would take several days to haul the calves.

**BL:** It would take several days to load them up and take them to the sale.

**JG:** Load them up in the bed of a pick-up truck huh?

**BL:** I can remember when cows got to bringing up \$20, \$25, he didn't think he would ever see another poor day. And, now a cow like that will bring \$1500 to \$2000. A lot of difference from then to now.

**RD:** Where did you see your first cattle trailer Buddy?

**BL:** Probably Huntington after we...our dad moved us to Huntington when I was in the fourth grade, and that is the first cattle trailer. In fact our dad bought a trailer, you know, when I was nine or ten years old when we moved to Huntington. That made it easier to take them to the sale because you could haul five times as many in that trailer as you could in a pick-up bed.

**RD:** You know when the Veterans came back from World War II, that was one of the things that they did, they started making trailers. These welding schools they went to you know, that was some of the first I ever saw was that those guys made.

**BL:** We were about twenty years behind times, due to where we were raised. When we come to Huntington, when I was in the fourth grade, we was the country kids. Everybody was country back then but we were truly, really country because we had been over there by ourselves, only family on the tail end of Nacogdoches County.

**JG:** Why did you move to Huntington?

**BL:** Our dad he taught school. I don't think he had to go to college, but back in his day you could go take a state test and if you passed that test you could teach school. Our dad was pretty savvy, you know, he was smarter than any of us kids and he passed the test and he taught school for years at Etoile and Smyrna, but he never went to college. He just passed the test.

**JG:** So he taught all the years of your...

**BL:** Yes, he taught for several years, but when I had came along he had quite teaching. He got down to straight work. I was wanting him to go back to teaching school, so I wouldn't have to work so hard every day.

**JG:** And his name was Ephraim you said?

**BL:** Ephraim yes, he went by E. L., Ephraim. I don't know what the L stands for, nothing I guess. He always went by E. L. Lowery.

**JG:** So, I know you went to college. How much a role did your father play and did your other brothers and sisters go to college as well?

**BL:** No, I had one...of all of our group, two. Paul, our older brother, he went to college at SFA and then when I come along, and probably the main reason that I went is playing basketball. I got to playing basketball and I got a scholarship at Panola Junior College. I didn't go for the right reason but I'm glad that I did get into it and get to go. I didn't understand the importance of a college education. I got mine accidentally, because I went to play basketball. I hate to admit that but that is a true story.

**JG:** Okay, I was just wondering if your dad had any particular interest encouraging you to move on?

**BL:** Yes, he wanted you to go to college. He believed in education because he had taught school and he saw the importance of education. So, I got a masters. I went to Panola two years and then three years – you could play basketball five years back then. Two in junior college and three in senior college, so I used all my five years up. I kind of love that basketball. I played a lot of it.

**JG:** So by the time you moved to Huntington, had many of your older siblings moved off, and married and moved off?

**BL:** Yes, all the older ones. Usually there were about four, three or four at home. The older ones had already gone from home.

**JG:** So gradually I guess, the farming diminished a little bit is that right?

**BL:** It diminished, it finally played out. But when he moved to Huntington, he had about 130 or 140 acres, but it got down to me and my older brother Giles and him and Bonnie, then they leave home and finally it got down to me and him, and that is just, wasn't enough to work much land so he pretty well gave up farming. And by that time, he was getting to the age he wasn't able. He lived to be 90, lacked two months being 93, and he always said the harder you worked the longer you will live, and he may be right. He lived to be almost 93.

**JG:** Yes, that is pretty good. Did he keep his land that he moved from?

**BL:** Well he kept it for several years, and finally sold it because it was too far to go back and forth. He came to Huntington because he wanted the kids to get a better education than we were getting at Etoile (**JG:** okay) and we really didn't want to move. We liked it over there because we were the only family living there and we liked to hunt and we liked to fish and we worked hard and played hard. But he came to Huntington, and then he sold the old home place, 300 something acres and then I don't know how long it was out of the family, but me and a brother of mine, Lester, bought it back. The people that had it wanted to sell it, and we had got into the sawmill business and didn't have enough



money really to buy it, but we could borrow a little money and so we borrowed the money and bought the old home place back. So, then finally I bought him out and I own it by myself now.

**JG:** Okay, I want to eventually get to college and kind of chronologically, but you mentioned hunting and fishing and you were saying that cattle ranching was a vacation day, but talk a little bit about hunting and fishing and how you did that and where you did it.

**BL:** Well we were in the forks of the Attoyac River and the Angelina River and it was about probably three quarters a mile from our house to the Attoyac River. And we didn't get to fish as much as we wanted to because our daddy could think of something for you to work on every day. But when he would let us off a day or two on the weekend, now and then, we would go to the river. We would walk – we didn't have a boat and motor or anything, what we called throw lines. We would take a line and put five or six hooks on it and tie a weight on it and just pitch it out in there, because we didn't have a boat, you know tie it over here on the bank. And when you got there and your line wasn't pointed down the river, a fish had carried it and your line was pointed up, you know you had a good one on there because a little fish couldn't carry that weight up the river.

**JG:** Yes, so you would throw the lines out and leave them and then throw another one out?

**BL:** Leave and them and go back the next day, and we were liable to have four, five or six, but we didn't have many lines or many hooks or money to buy hooks with. We just had to fish with what we had.

**JG:** What kind of fish were you mostly catching?

**BL:** Mostly op.

**JG:** Op okay.

**BL:** The biggest one I ever remember catching was 16 pounds. I caught him on an end hook and two or three days later we caught a 15 one on the same hook. Man we was eating good when we caught a fish.

**JG:** Were they single hooks or treble hooks or?

**BL:** It was just single hooks, I never seen a treble hook back then. It was just single hooks.

**JG:** What kind of bait would you use?

**BL:** We would catch perch out of the creek, little pollywogs and perch that we caught out of the creek hand fishing.

**RD:** That's what you catch catfish on.

**BL:** Yes, and then we would hook those in the top of his back so it wouldn't kill him, and he was still alive. A big op would come along and we would eat him, that way we got a good meal for the day.

**JG:** What was...describe the landscape down there at the forks of the river. That's all under the lake now, Sam Rayburn.

**BL:** Yes, it's all under the...most of it. The old home place is not because it was at the Angelina side come down one way and the Attoyac side come down and we was kind of on the hills in between. (**JG:** okay) Even the lake is not over the hills, now the old home-place and probably a mile or two down to what we called the point, the Angelina coming down one side and the Attoyac the other side, there's still a lot of land up in the middle of that and we lived in those hills up there.

**JG:** What about the forest, the landscape back then compared to now?

**BL:** You can't believe how big the timber was, big pine, big hardwood. You could ride a horse anywhere in that country when I was a kid. That has been a long time ago but now, you know, the timber has been cut so much and undergrowth has come up there, you can't, you just got to go afoot.

**JG:** There was a lot of good hardwood timber in those bottoms.

**BL:** A lot of big hardwood and most of it belonged to the big Frost Johnson and the big companies out of Nacogdoches owned nearly all of that land back in that day.

**JG:** Okay, so the Kurth lands didn't really go that far.

**BL:** They were more over in this county, in Angelina County, and we were raised in the tail end of Nacogdoches County.

**JG:** Okay. You were in the fourth grade when you moved to Huntington, can you remember a little bit about the Etoile School? Just describe school life if there is anything that you remember and care to share.

**BL:** I hate to admit this because I love Etoile, that is where I was raised, but they just had four rooms, the total school. They went through the twelfth grade and they eventually moved the top two or three grades to Woden. But when I was going, one year when I was in the second grade, there was one senior that year, a guy named Lunsford, Billy Lunsford I think was his name. And there wouldn't be that many. The lower grades would have a lot of kids in them, maybe twenty or thirty because there's still a lot of people lived around Etoile. They had three grades to the school and everybody couldn't figure out why we weren't real smart, because one teacher taught three grades. Like I was

in the first grade, she would pay attention to the first graders for a little bit. We would sit in one side of the room and the second graders would be in the center section and the third graders over all in the same room. She would give the first grade or second grade, every where you was at, a little something to do and you would sit there quiet and give you some little work to do and she would teach these others. There were three grades to the school. That sounds hard to believe now, but that is the way it was then.

**JG:** So, one through three; four, five and six; then seven, eight and nine.

**BL:** One, two, and three; four, five, and six; then seven, eight and nine; ten, eleven and twelve.

**JG:** And that was rooms or buildings?

**BL:** No, rooms.

**JG:** Rooms, and under one roof.

**BL:** It was all under one roof and it had four big rooms for the twelve grades.

**JG:** Yes sir, one teacher for each room?

**BL:** One teacher for each room. They had a man...two men and their wives taught the whole school.

**JG:** Okay, okay. And how was Huntington different, if it was different?

**BL:** Well Huntington was a lot bigger and each grade you had a room of your own, you know, the first grade, second grade.

**JG:** So at least one teacher per grade.

**BL:** One teacher per grade. And they had a bigger school and a lot more students. We didn't like it all that much because...I don't know how many was in school, but it was a lot of kids in Huntington. It would be about like Zavalla.

**RD:** See Jonathan, World War II had started by that time, and the world was a lot different place. It changed just like that.

**BL:** Yes, the world was a different place. That is a good way to describe it, Dick.

**JG:** Were you realizing that at the time?

**BL:** No, absolutely not!

**JG:** Okay. Did you have to adapt much to school life in Huntington, having grown up in Etoile?

**BL:** Not much; they were just kind of kids like us, just country kids. A lot of them still working, but a lot of the parents were working what our dad called public work. They worked at Lufkin Industries or the Trailer Plant or the Lufkin Foundry or the Papermill and they had a little money.

**JG:** Working for others, not working for themselves.

**BL:** Yes, I can remember when I was little. Let me back up just a little bit, you know, you might get two, possibly three, nickels a year to buy candy with. Dick Donovan knows about it; it wasn't just us, it was a lot of other families that way. I think about the school bus come way before daylight to pick us up and I would think about hitting Momma up for a nickel to buy candy with. But, I knew I probably wasn't going to get it and I know she cried many a time because she didn't have a nickel. I would see the school bus coming and I would say, "Momma can I have a nickel for school?" "You don't need a nickel. Get on that bus." And you might get three nickels a year, and that is a sad story, but that's the true story. It wasn't just us, it was a lot of other people. We were all kind of equal, nobody had anything back then.

**JG:** About what time in your life would you have gotten something that you said, "this is my money?"

**BL:** It was after I got out of school, in the summertime and when I was going to Panola Junior College, I had a brother Lester who had a sawmill. And in the summertime I would work at that sawmill and didn't make much money you know, about \$8 a day, but that was pretty big money back then, you know, and I never was completely broke after that because I would always keep me a dollar or two hid out somewhere in my billfold. I never was completely broke after I made my first payday.

**RD:** Jonathan, let me tell you something about him. About 1955 he had a red and white Ford Fairlane. You talk about something that was just out of this world, but Buddy had that red and white '55 Ford Fairlane.

**BL:** Yes, that is when I started school at Panola Junior College and Lester, my brother that was in the sawmill business, he really helped me a lot, you know. He was the only one in a position to help and I don't think I would have ever made it through school if it hadn't been for him. He would give me money when I went back home.

**JG:** How much older is Lester?

**BL:** He is ten years older than me. He is still alive. He is 89 now.

**JG:** How did he get into the sawmill business?

**BL:** I don't really know what interested him to start with but he built a little bitty what we sawmill people call a peckerwood sawmill. A little tie mill. And I'd say it didn't cost \$1500 to put it in. He started at the rock bottom and when he made a little money he improved it, and he'd make a little more and improve it a little bit more. And that is the reason I wound up in the sawmill, you know, when I got out of school and played basketball a couple of years after I got out of college. When I come back here we always got along real good and I got in partners with him and Lester is the one that kind of helped me get started in life.

**JG:** And mainly he was cutting cross ties for the railroad?

**BL:** Yes cutting cross ties mostly.

**JG:** And what trees would he be...?

**BL:** Any kind, he would take any kind.

**JG:** Would the railroad eventually treat those and creosote them?

**BL:** Yes, they would crisscross them and stack them up for so many months and then they would take them down and treat them to go under the railroads all over the country.

**JG:** Now the ties that you had made earlier by hand, hand hewn, were those treated as well?

**BL:** I'm sure they were. I don't know but...

**JG:** So the mill was portable, it could be moved around?

**BL:** Well not...we had a portable mill later on, (**JG:** okay) but the first ones, it was a lot of problem to move. It would take a month or longer to move those little mills to another location.

**JG:** How long would he be set up in a particular location?

**BL:** Well anywhere from... I think he probably was at Huntington 12 or 15 years. We had one at Kirbyville that was there maybe 30 years, you know, and we eventually over the years, we didn't ever have any money because if we made any we improved the mill. After I was partners with Lester for several years we would build another mill and over about a 40 year period of time we had six locations. You know, from Huntington to Woodville to Kirbyville, to Batson, Cleveland. We had a chip mill over at Corrigan one time.

**JG:** In the early days, did you just do the sawmilling or did you also do the logging?

**BL:** No just the sawmilling.

**JG:** Sawmilling.

**BL:** Yes, just sawmilling.

**JG:** Who would have brought the logs to you?

**BL:** There was a lot of contractors, what we called one horse contractors, you know. A guy would have a truck and loaded them with mules up skid poles, way back in the beginning. Then later on they got loaders, you know, where they could pick them up with a loader and load them and get bigger and better trucks. In the beginning most log haulers would have one truck and a team of mules.

**JG:** You would buy logs from the loggers?

**BL:** We usually would buy the logs and hire them to...buy the timber.

**JG:** Buy the timber okay, you would buy the timber.

**BL:** Yes, Temple and all the big companies, you know, they didn't use much of their hardwood and when we got bigger in several mills we started buying the hardwood logs. I don't know if we would have ever made it if it hadn't been for Temple, Mr. Temple. Every time after we got several mills and was operating, we didn't have any money but we had several mills and was cutting lots of logs and after so regular, you would get tight on logs you know, you just couldn't keep enough bought up and we would go see Mr. Temple. He would call Kenneth Nelson and tell Kenneth, "These boys need some timber, you know, find them something." Well, Kenneth sometime he would be a little slow and it would be two or three weeks and he hadn't found something and I would call Mr. Temple back and he would call Kenneth and say, "Kenneth damn it these boys need that timber now. Get out there and find them something." Mr. Temple looked out for us all of my life, as long as he was alive. He was kind of a life saver. In fact I get off track sometime, but I bought three different tracts of land from Temple. I can tell that now that he is not here and Temple is gone and this is...I guess this is the first time I will be told this story in my life. Temple didn't sell land. They would sell you timber, but they bought land, but they didn't sell you land. And after twenty, thirty, forty years and we had bought a few places around. Lester and I were partners in land and we would have a tract found to buy, but it would be land locked. It didn't join a public road. Well, we would check and maybe Mr. Temple owned thirty or forty or fifty acres in front of it to get it out to a public road. And so we'd go see him, "we need an easement to cross that, or we would like to buy it." "Well don't tell nobody, but I will sell that to you." And, he always sold them to us too cheap, you know, trying to help us. But he said, "don't ever let anybody know I sold you any land, because if you do I'll have 500 people all over the country wanting to buy land from me." And I guess this is the first time I've ever told that, but I still remember all three places where I bought land from him to get out to a public road. Well, you bought this a lot cheaper because it was land locked. People couldn't get to it. Way back yonder they didn't have to give you, eventually they got it

where they had to let you go to it, but you could buy it real cheap and he would sell us a little bit out here too cheap now that made that worth twice what it was. Mr. Temple was a life saver for us a lot of times in my life.

**JG:** So that was your preference to own the land as well, rather than just an easement.

**BL:** Yes, a lot of time, most of the time we couldn't buy land; we didn't have enough money to do it, but later on after we had several operations and twenty or thirty years down the road we got to making a little money so we started putting it all in land.

**JG:** When you dealt with others with a similar issue, how difficult or what was the process in getting an easement? Was that something that people cooperated with or not?

**BL:** Most people back then would give you an easement.

**JG:** Just give you an easement, without any compensation?

**BL:** Yes, no opposition, because we knew almost everybody. The older ones, because we had been around here so long that we knew almost everybody and they usually would. Sometimes somebody would want a little money but not much money. Usually they would just give you an easement to go to your land.

**JG:** Tell about the Lufkin Industries before we have...I'm sorry to interrupt but tell about the easement that you were telling us about earlier at Buck Creek plant that you gave the railroad.

**BL:** The railroad coming across?

**JG:** Yes. I want to capture that.

**BL:** When Lufkin Industries moved their Trailer Plant out toward Huntington, I had about 2500 acres that joined them up there and they wanted to put a railroad, there was a railroad about a mile all the way across on the opposite side of my 2500 acres. I joined the main line that went from Beaumont to Lufkin and I don't know where else. And they were about a mile across my land, where they put the Trailer Plant. Well, I gave them, they had been so good to me, that I gave them the land. It surveyed out 22 acres from the main line over to the Trailer Plant. They put about an 8 foot dump all the way down that creek bottom because that creek overflowed and where they came in, they came a half a mile right down the creek and kind of up on the hills of the Trailer Plant. They put about an 8 foot dump all the way across that bottom, rocked it and big 8 to 10 foot culverts in it and let the overflow get through and they wanted to pay me for it, but they had been so good to me I was trying to return the favor a little bit, so I give them that land.

**JG:** At the time when they were putting in the Buck Creek plant?

**BL:** Right, when they put the Buck Creek plant in.

**JG:** You gave them the land.

**BL:** I give them 22 acres to come across there.

**JG:** Twenty two acres, just gave it to them, no compensation.

**BL:** No compensation, just give them the land. And, twenty or thirty years later, just a very short few years... Dick how long has that been since they sold out the Trailer Plant? Somebody else has got it now, GE [General Electric] I think has got it. But when they sold the Trailer Plant out and they took the tracks up, they sent me a deed and deeded it back to me. That is a pretty good story.

**JG:** Yes, that is.

**BL:** Two ways for me to give it to them, but they give it back to me.

**JG:** You mentioned a couple of individuals when you were telling the story earlier. Didn't you mention a couple of people?

**BL:** Well Dude Schiller and Mutt Barr and that's the people that I was dealing with. The Trout's owned it and I knew Ed and Walter Trout real good, but most of the trading was with Robert Poland and Dude Schiller. They were the ones running the Trailer Plant.

**RD:** And now Buddy's got a good road all the way across his place.

**BL:** Yes, I got a high dollar road right through the middle of my place.

**JG:** Well that's pretty good. I'm sorry I interrupted you Mr. Donovan. What were you going to ask?

**RD:** I was just going to ask Buddy what percentage of his hardwood sawmilling in later years was export?

**BL:** Probably 10, 15 percent.

**RD:** Y'all loaded a many a boat out down there.

**BL:** Loaded many a boat at Port Arthur and Beaumont. In fact, back before I got old enough, you know, Lester was the main guy in the sawmill business because he started when I was going in college, and then before I even got in partners with him in the summertime I would haul logs down on the docks and load them in boats.

**JG:** So you bought timber from people and then sold the logs and shipped them out?

**BL:** Sold yes, the ties, not logs.



**JG:** The ties not logs?

**BL:** Not logs, it was ties.

**JG:** So y'all milled them and then...

**BL:** I hauled a many a load down on the docks and there is nobody that will ever hear this that can believe it, but there were so many trucks hauling down there, and this is when I was in college in the summertime. I had a brother Giles that owned two trucks. He would drive one of them and I would drive one. Lester owned the sawmill and we would take two loads down on the docks. And if you didn't get in there about twelve or one o'clock at night, it might be fifty or sixty loads there the next morning to unload and it took so long you might not get unloaded until eleven o'clock in the daytime. So we would pull our trucks in there just far enough apart that we could put a cot between them and a mosquito bar because there is nine billion mosquitoes that big on that ocean down there. We would put our cot out there about twelve o'clock at night and we got our two loads and we were the first two in there the next morning when it got six o'clock and they started unloading, you know, we were the first ones to unload. Now we could go back and get another load and make two loads. But you had to go in there and spend the night to get out on time, because if you didn't it would be so many trucks ahead of you, you might be lunch before you got unloaded to get out.

**RD:** You see what kind of...

**JG:** Ingenuity huh?

**RD:** ...well he has just been a worker and a manager always.

**BL:** Well that was the only way. We needed to make two loads and that was the only way to do it. We didn't think nothing about it. We didn't see that as being a hardship; that is just a fact of what you do.

**JG:** Just a fact.

**BL:** You do what you have to do.

**(phone ringing)**

**BL:** I can't believe that thing, it usually rings all day and I generally answer it, but if I start we will be here tomorrow before...

**JG:** When you said trucks, you were hauling trailers?

**BL:** Yes, truck and my brother Giles had the trucking. He owned the trucks, Lester owned the sawmill.

**JG:** Single axle trailers or double axel?

**BL:** No, it was double axel floats, you know, forty foot trailers with two axles, you know, big trucks.

**JG:** How are ties measured, by cords or what is the volume?

**BL:** No it is just numbers.

**JG:** Number of ties?

**BL:** Just number of ties.

**JG:** Do you recall about how many ties?

**BL:** I don't recall but probably two hundred, a hundred and fifty or two hundred because you could put about four or five tiers on that forty foot. The ties were either 8 foot or 9 foot long so you could put it here and put different tiers on there. **(phone ringing)** That will quit in a minute.

**JG:** That is fine; if you need to answer it go ahead.

**BL:** No, no, no.

**JG:** Do you know where those ties were headed?

**BL:** I really don't. They were shipping them overseas or somewhere. They were loading them on boats – I guess it was a boat to us, a smarty fellow would say a boat, but everybody else would say a ship. You can't believe how big those ships were. It was unreal. They would be 200 yards long. They would load on the same ship down there 50 or 60 loads every morning.

**JG:** So would booms be on the ships that would just lift right off the truck onto the ship?

**BL:** Yes, yes...no they would put them out onto the dock.

**JG:** On the dock, okay.

**BL:** Because the ship wasn't always there. They would store them on the docks and then the ships came in and they would put them on the ship.

**JG:** Okay, okay. Talk a little bit more about...well, let's go back to college. You went to college on a basketball scholarship.

**BL:** Yes, I got a basketball scholarship to Panola Junior College and that was kind of a miracle that I got that. I wasn't really good enough to play in college, but the coach that was at Huntington when I was a sophomore, named Cecil Choate, he had left and went to a little town named Gary, up close to Carthage. This is the miracle of me even going to college. The guy that was coaching at Panola Junior College, I wasn't going to college, didn't have no scholarships to go and the guy that was coaching was named Whitehead. When school started I was hauling those ties we talked about, working for my brother Lester. And when school started, Panola had one boy from Louisiana that didn't show up for a scholarship. So, it was kind of late to be recruiting ball players and he accidentally run into Cecil Choate, that had coached me when I was a sophomore at Huntington. Cecil Choate was the coach, he was at Gary, which is close to Carthage. The Panola coach ran into the Gary coach Choate and said, "I had one boy didn't show up do you know anybody that you know of that might be able to play college basketball?" And he said, "Well yes, I knew a boy when he was a sophomore; he come up in the country and was pretty tough and could jump pretty good and pretty mean, you know, if he has progressed on, he might could play." He said, "Well do you know how to get a hold of him?" He said, "Well no I don't, I haven't been there in several years." So, they got to hunting me and I was driving a truck for Giles, hauling them ties at Spurger. Lester had a little mill at Spurger and I come through Spurger one day and the guy run out, we didn't have a phone in those days. I was staying with Giles in a little house about the size of this room right here. And the guy, there was one store in Spurger, Texas called Spurger Mercantile and he knew that I was driving this red truck hauling those ties. He run out there and they had found out through somebody at Huntington that I was living in Spurger driving a truck. So that guy at that store, he run out and flagged me down and he said, "Hey I got a number here for you to call. Some coach at Panola Junior College got word and wanted to see if you were interested in coming up there and trying out for a scholarship to play basketball." I thought man anything would beat hauling ties and camping out on that dock and getting eat up with mosquitoes all night. So I saw that as a way of getting out of work. I was a little lazy I guess. So I went up there and tried out for it. Lester carried me up there on a Saturday evening. And of course I was scared and I didn't think I was going to get the scholarship, but I could jump pretty high and I was pretty big and I didn't mind contact because I had played...

**JG:** Played against him. (laughter)

**BL:** ...against him so I had learned how to take contact. After 30 minutes or so of working out, he blowed his whistle and called time out and he said the scholarship is yours.

**JG:** How about that!

**BL:** So, that is how close I come to missing college.

**JG:** They wanted you bad didn't they?

**BL:** Well I probably wasn't good enough to make it, but I couldn't stand defeat. I was a little bit competitive, (laughing) but not as competitive as Dick Donovan, but I did try to win. So, I went there two years and had about 47 college offers from big schools all over the country.

**JG:** Wow, 47!

**BL:** I didn't know where I was going. All the schools in Louisiana and all over the country... I don't know how my reputation... I guess because I was so mean normally, it got out. So I went down to the University of Houston, I was thinking maybe I would go down there. I had cut it down to just two or three. And I went down there and old Guy Lewis was coaching there at that time. And I stayed down there a week, you know, but he had players from all over the United States and they...I could see they wasn't going to play as a team. They were good individually, most of them was better than I was.

**JG:** Was this before racial integration?

**BL:** Yes, yes, that was before integration. And I stayed there a week and I didn't like what I was seeing, so I called old Glen Rose at Fayetteville, Arkansas. He had offered me a scholarship at Arkansas. And I had offers at pretty well all the Lone Star conference schools, but you know, a kid not knowing, I wanted to go to a bigger school. So I went to Fayetteville, Arkansas and stayed there a week and I saw the same thing. Boys from all over and everybody was wanting to do the shooting. There was no team play and the coach wasn't even working out with us. So I stayed there about a week and school had already been going at SFA about two weeks. Well it got, John O. Stevens, Dick knows John O. Stevens, was the coach over there and he had recruited me pretty hard. I called him and I said, "Coach I'm Buddy Lowery, I'm at Fayetteville, Arkansas I don't like what I see. Have you got a scholarship?" He said, "You bet. Come on." So, I drove all night back getting back to SFA and that is how come to be at SFA. So back then you could play three years. You could play five years all told, so I played there three years and I guess...

**JG:** That is because you had already played two years at Panola.

**BL:** I had played two years at Panola, so I had three more coming and I played those three at SFA. And I played basketball with a guy in Louisiana independent basketball named Frank Bryan. He had played with the Detroit Pistons for several, six or eight years. I guess I can tell this now, because I'd go over there and play with him in those tournaments, and he would enter me, and we might play LSU because he played at LSU, and he knew everybody and he had played with the Detroit Pistons, so he could get games with everybody. And I got to going over there playing with him, you know, and I don't think we ever lost a game but he was so much better than I was. He was a real ball player, named Frank Bryan. He said, "Buddy did you ever think about playing any basketball on down the road?" I said, "Well I haven't gotten no offers nowhere." He said, "Let me call the owner at Detroit." He said, "I think you can make it up there." He said, "you are going to need to go up there and try out, would you like to do that?" And I said,

“Yeah, I’d love to go up there and try out.” I was just doing it because I thought I’d be there a couple of weeks. And when the season started, you know, there was about 18 of us there, you know, they just carried 10, there was 8 teams in NBA, they carried 10 players to the team. So, about 18 or 19 of us went to West Branch, Michigan and stayed there two weeks and when we came back I happened to be lucky enough to be one of the ones that made the squad. But let me back up just a little bit. I think the reason I made the squad is I had played with a bunch in New York, you know, they called it New York Tuck Tapers. It was the beginning of the ABA and it was just as good a league as the NBA, if not better. The NBA had control of who played, and all the boys that didn’t make the NBA was trying the ABA. To start with, they called it the National Industrial Basketball League and old Frank got me a tryout in New York and I went up there. I spent one summer and I think this is why I made the squad at Detroit because I had already played the summer league of the NIBL. Dick probably don’t know this, I lived in downtown New York.

**JG:** Manhattan?

**BL:** In Manhattan. Yeah I was about 40 stories up and I was the unhappiest guy in the world. The whole time I was there I didn’t like it, you know. I was there by myself, didn’t know anybody. I liked the ball playing and it was good, it was just about as good as the NBA. So, that is why I think I made it with Detroit, is because I was in a lot better shape. And I left there, that was a summer league, and in the fall I left there and went straight to the NBA, but I was in really good shape. When I get to rambling I think of another story that is a pretty interesting story. I was down, sick and about ready to squall, and I was down on Broadway about one o’clock in the morning and there was jillions of people walking. You couldn’t tell if it was twelve o’clock at night or two in the morning. It never got dark up there. I had walked down and I was just leaning up against the pole there and some guy with a suit and tie on pecked me on the shoulder. Well, you know what I thought, that was (laughing), I thought he was one of these funny people. I said, “Partner don’t mess with me I’m too mean for you. I don’t mess with your kind.” You know, I thought he was a New York queer just to be honest about it. He said, “No son I know what you think,” but he said, “You have a million dollar face.” I said, “Yeah, sure I do,” just like that. I start walking off and this guy started following me. He just wouldn’t give up and I said, “Partner, you don’t want to tackle me, now I’m in good shape and I come up in the way in the deep woods and I don’t mind whipping your ass right now, now leave me alone.” And he handed me a card and he said, “No, take this card, I understand where you’re coming from, but I happen to know the owner of your team.” You know, it was the New York Tuck Tapers was who I was playing with, and he said, “I’m a friend of the owner of that team.” I said, “Yeah, sure you are,” like that, but I did, I took the card and stuck it in my pocket. The next day when we were working out I showed it to the owner and I said, “Do you know this queer here?” And that is exactly what I said. I said, “Do you know this queer here?” He said, “Oh yes, that is my good friend I’ve been knowing him for years.” I said, “You mean he is not a phony?” He said, “No that guy is legitimate, he is the biggest advertising agency in the world.” He has got no telling how many boys working for him, you know, models. I said, “You have got to be kidding me.” He said, “Oh no that guy is legit, you will make more money with him

than you will ever make playing basketball.” I couldn’t believe it, I was the most stunned guy in the world. So I called the guy back and I got to going around and we ought to have met in my office because all my stuff is down there, the picture of my modeling deal...a male model! Did you ever heard of that?

**JG:** A male model. (laughing)

**RD:** I knew you were.

**BL:** Did you?

**RD:** Yes!

**BL:** I didn’t never tell. How did you know that Dick? I didn’t tell nobody for years and years because to me, a male model was...and I didn’t tell nobody for a long time.

**JG:** (Laughing) What did you model?

**BL:** Well just anything, they would take, you had to be young, first of all, and they wanted a picture to relate to...in fact I made the semi-final of the first Marlboro Man.

**JG:** Really, Marlboro Man!

**BL:** I sure did! We went all over the country, you know, and finally the finals was in New York, and I can’t verify this, but later on they said I got beat out in the semi-finals for the first Marlboro Man and that was bigger than playing basketball really in New York, up there. It didn’t mean nothing down here because I didn’t tell nobody for several years that I had modeled all that summer when we wasn’t playing ball, you know. That guy had me modeling for stuff. They might have six or eight boys and he would take us all to a place and they were wanting a picture of these, like a detective magazine, and they show a guy dead laying there on the floor. That is not the guy that is really dead that is a model down there. I couldn’t believe the things that they took pictures of us for, and there would be five or six and they would look you over a little bit and say “I want to take this boy right here.” Well, if there was four of you there and you didn’t get picked the guy carried you on to another place, you know. I was lucky I got picked really because I was a lot bigger than most of them and taller, you know, and had hair back then so I got picked a lot. I don’t know this to be true, but later on somebody said the guy that beat you out was Tom Selleck. I said, “you know, well the guy that beat me out did look like that guy.” Tom Selleck didn’t mean nothing, he wasn’t nothing. He wasn’t no more than you or you or nobody else in the world. So, Tom Selleck didn’t mean nothing to me. I didn’t like him because he beat me out in the semi-finals. But they’ve told always that I got beat out in the semi-finals of the first Marlboro Man. I got more publicity over that than I did any ball playing I ever done in my life.

**JG:** Well I want to ask you more about the Detroit Pistons but Louis [Landers] dug up some interesting things on you and tell me about the Price Is Right. Were you on that show?

**RD:** I saw him on that.

**JG:** Oh you saw him on that?

**BL:** Yes, that is when I was in New York, you know.

**JG:** How did that come about? Another guy tap you on the shoulder?

**BL:** No I was hunting something to do. That league just played about three games a week so you had a lot of spare time. And a country boy in New York, I was just hunting something to do. I was sick, wanting to come home. I was tired of being up there. If I didn't love basketball so much I wouldn't have stayed all the seasons up there but that is what helped get me on to Detroit. I went to the Price Is Right and a guy by the name of Bill Cullen, I believe was doing it at that time. I can't guarantee that but I think his name was Bill Cullen.

**RD:** It was.

**BL:** And you can't believe the people, it must have been two thousand people there where they had that show. It was just kind of a big auditorium, and in the back, the seats were kind of bleachers back there and I was right down at the bottom, and when the show was over and everybody got up to leave, that is where they picked for two or three weeks ahead for the daytime show. But they also had one show that was their big show on Wednesday night at prime time, Wednesday night at 8 o'clock. So I was walking out when I heard him say, "Is anybody interested in being on the show?" I thought well that might be...so I just kept standing there, you know, and most of the people stayed in there. I'm back in the back and people up there were a little bit shorter than most of us, I was about a head taller than anybody I was around. They picked about 20 just looking at you, this one, this one, and this guy and they had people out there to point you out and they were going to interview 15 or 20, you know, to get one, or two or three. So I thought they had missed me but he said, "hey the tall guy in the back." He pointed right straight at me and I looked this way and looked that way and he said, "no you." I done like that and he said, "yeah, yeah you come on up here." That is how I got interviewed and they picked a few, but I think because I was so much bigger than most of them, you know, and young.

**JG:** And from Texas. Did they know you were from Texas?

**BL:** Yes, and I think that is what got me in, but instead of the daytime program they wanted me to wait and be on the night time, Wednesday night, the prime time program on Wednesday night.

**JG:** Prime time!

**BL:** And that is how I got on the Price Is Right!

**RD:** I can remember him saying, "I'll freeze, Bill." I can remember that to this day!  
(laughter)

**BL:** Well everybody knew I was from Texas. I could say three words anywhere in my life up to now away from here, and they will say what part of Texas are you from. But I never did try to change my talk or be something I wasn't, you know, I was a country boy, I knew I was a country boy and I still am.

**JG:** Do you remember what some of the prizes y'all were trying to guess the prices of?

**BL:** Well they wanted me on the Wednesday night deal, but they didn't have room the next Wednesday night and I was going to have to wait two weeks to be on. They wanted to know if I wanted to do that. I said, "yes I'm here anyway. I'm going to be here all the summer." So, I was two or three weeks down the road and they had a car on that show. I never watched it they didn't have some kind of car on it. So, the only thing...I'm talking about I worked at this because I didn't have much money in my billfold. It would have probably been less than a hundred dollars, so I thought boy, here is my chance to get...make a little money. I was looking at it as a business deal, not being on TV, and I studied car prices. I spent every day we weren't working out for basketball, I spent going to car dealerships. I had a list of prices that long. I could have told you the price of everything in the world and the night I was on they didn't have a car. (laughter) And again I couldn't have won. And, I am not making excuses because you win on your luck, not your brain, and I wasn't the smartest fellow in the world no way. The lady that was right beside me, they put me on the end and her hands actually...I looked over there and just fixing to start and I guess I wasn't smart enough to be nervous. Dick did I look nervous?

**RD:** No!

**BL:** I was absolutely none nervous on that because it was just, for some reason I just don't get nervous in a deal like that. I looked at this lady and her hands were doing that right there. (shaking) And, she was the one right the next one behind me and ever what I bid, if you remember this, you probably don't, it's been a long, long time ago, ever what I bid on anything she just raised me two or five dollars, the minimum, didn't leave me no room to win nothing. My luck failed me and it wasn't nothing big to win. If they didn't have a car on, now they give me a lot of stuff they sent me later on, stuff they give you...skillets and stuff. My wife has still got some of them. (laughter) But that was a pretty good experience you know, to go through that.

**RD:** I remember it well.

**JG:** Well I see it is 10:30.



**BL:** No, if we need to go on I would rather do it today. I told my wife if they called at the bank and I wasn't back there by about this time or pretty quick, I would probably be back and we would do what we was supposed to do this morning, we'd put it off to this evening, a meeting at the bank, so they done put it off, and that is not going to matter.

**RD:** Jonathan, let me tell you one thing here, that will maybe push this hunting thing along just a little bit further. One time I was at the Two Point light here in Lufkin and I looked over on the other side of the street and it looked like where the stump of a tree had blown over and all the roots had turned up, you've seen that before. But I could see that it was a car, but it just looked like a big stump of a tree had turned over. So, I got to looking at it and it was a jeep pulling a trailer, but that jeep was just a solid ball of mud and that trailer was just a solid ball of mud. Well when I passed them, I looked and I could see and Buddy and Lester were sitting in that jeep and that trailer was full of dogs. So, they were hog hunters let me tell you. They were hog hunters. (laughter)

**BL:** Yes, we would rather be hog hunting than anything.

**RD:** I mean they hunted a lot of hogs.

**BL:** Yes, we did. We worked hard, but we played hard too, Dick.

**RD:** Yes sir, y'all had good dogs and y'all hunted a lot of hogs.

**BL:** We hunted a many, many evenings. We would go to the sawmill and stay until four or five o'clock and come what we called the hog range down in Jasper County. The Joe Fisher land, Federal Judge Joe Fisher had about 2500 acres.

**RD:** Down in the forks, by the way.

**BL:** Down in the forks of the river, and we fenced his 2100 acres with an 8 foot deer proof fence and then there was several thousand acres of government land on below that the public couldn't get to because Joe Fisher had the front part.

**JG:** Is that Joe Fisher of Beaumont?

**BL:** Beaumont yes, he was a pretty good buddy of ours. He helped us several times and we had a 20 year lease on that 2500 acres of his down there.

**JG:** Now did y'all...when you say hunted you weren't trapping them, you were shooting them?

**BL:** Well we would do both.

**JG:** Both okay.

**BL:** Where we were raised we would have starved to death if it hadn't been for rooter hogs, rooter hogs, and sweet potatoes, and that is what farm people ate when I was a kid, you know. Our dad had a lot of hogs on the range and we would hunt them with dogs. We just enjoyed hog hunting like a lot of people dove hunt and turkey hunt, we happened to hog hunt. In the winter time we would kill them, but we hunted them year round, you know, and castrate them old males because an old male is not good to eat but if you catch him and castrate him, when he gets well he is just like eating a sow that doesn't have that scent to the meat.

**RD:** I remember old Vice Grip.

**BL:** Yes, I remember him very well. He caught a many hog, Vice Grip did.

**RD:** He was their catch dog. They would let the other dogs run them and then got ready to catch one they would turn Vice Grip loose to go catch him.

**BL:** Vice Grip was pretty well trained. You didn't have to lead him. If you were going to some dogs baying, he would just follow along right beside of me. If I ever said catch him, look out. Vice Grip went and got him by the ear.

**JG:** What made for a good hog dog?

**BL:** Well you needed two kinds of dogs. You needed dogs that would bay and not catch, that would stay back away from the hogs, because if you bay up 15 to 20 hogs you need what we call a bay dog, a smart dog, that would go around them and not get in and pinch them and bite them and burst the bunch. But then also you needed a catch dog, if it was a big old male or one there that you need to catch and mark, you know, you'd keep piddling with him and get him cut off. Now you got him cut off but you got a dog baying that won't catch him. Old Vice Grip was the catch dog, he would just stay right with me. When that one cut off that we wanted to catch I would say, "Catch him, catch him," and boy when he did, he would go straight and get him by the ear, you know. I never seen him lose one in his life. I bet we caught three or four hundred, maybe five hundred in that dog's lifetime.

**JG:** So was the difference between a baying dog and a catch dog just something instinctively in the dog itself?

**BL:** Instinct yeah.

**JG:** Just working them through experience, you knew which ones were which?

**BL:** Yes.

**JG:** Okay.

**BL:** Yes, the dogs you're hunting hogs with, that is what we call a bay dog. You don't want him to catch, because he will get over yonder a mile and bay up 8 or 10 hogs and if he catches one, all the rest of them is gone and you got one eat up. So, you wanted one dog or two dogs that would bay and then have a catch dog to catch with.

**JG:** Right, and as you got new dogs, you would let them be with the ones that were experienced and you would see what kind of dog they would be.

**BL:** Right, and two or three times in my life we had dogs smart enough to bay hogs and not catch, you know. He wouldn't catch until you hollered "catch him." He would bay and go around. We had one name Keen and two or three dogs in my lifetime that was smart enough to be a bay dog and a catch dog too. You don't see that no more. But we enjoyed it. It was a sport to us, but also it was a livelihood when I was a kid, you know. Our dad would salt down about 20 hogs or more, you know, in the wintertime and that meat will last all the summer. He would hang it up in a smoke house and smoke it and it would hang there all summer and keep.

**JG:** I know everybody of your generation and even older said similar things about the hog, if it wasn't for the Pineywoods rooter we wouldn't have made it through the Great Depression.

**BL:** Yes, we would have starved to death.

**JG:** And nowadays there are just seen as a nuisance.

**BL:** They're a nuisance now.

**JG:** What...where...how would you describe what happened to make the change?

**BL:** Well way back our dad had always said he marked 2100 pigs one winter.

**JG:** One winter! 2100!

**BL:** That is way too many, but a lot of those little pigs will die out. And it was a livelihood way back yonder in the 1800's, you know, and people had to have that meat to survive on because salt pork and what you canned out of the field... corn and Mama canned corn and peas and beans and tomatoes and everything. Then she could have company and go to the smokehouse and get a ham out and go to the room, she had one room in the house that had about 12 inch boards all the way around the room about that far apart and she would store can goods. That room had can goods all the way around it. Sometimes you didn't have much company, maybe once or twice a year. They would have a revival up at Brewers Chapel, a little church up toward Chireno, and the guy that held that revival would always stay with us. We didn't know, didn't have no telephone, but he would show up and he always spent a night or two with us. Momma could have a table, she would really what they called putting on the dog back then. She would have plenty of meat and beans, she would have a table full for the preacher and he would

spend the night with us and have a two or three day revival up at Brewers Chapel and that is the only time.

**RD:** Did you have a salt box?

**BL:** Yes, we had a salt box, we sure did. How do you know about a salt box?

**RD:** I don't know, Buddy.

**BL:** Put it in there and salt it, then put another layer and salt it.

**JG:** To preserve it?

**BL:** To preserve it yes.

**JG:** So was it just the commercialization of agriculture that kind of did away with subsistence needs of hogs? People started buying store bought things.

**BL:** The country people all moved to town. (**JG:** okay) A lot of people who lived in that area over there, they either all come to Huntington, went to Nacogdoches, went to San Augustine. I can remember asking our daddy way back in the 1940's, "what happened to all these people in these old houses sitting here in this country and we're the only ones left?" He said, "Well they all starved to death and they had to go to public work." They would go to Lufkin to work at the Papermill, or go to Nacogdoches and places to work.

**RD:** Jonathan, I can remember at the end of World War II when all those young men came back from the war, they came back to the farm and some of them worked one or two years but after that they were gone. They never stayed at home.

**BL:** Well Dick, I would have left if I could. (laughter) But, when you are a kid you don't have a choice, you got to go work.

**RD:** Yes.

**BL:** But what I remember most is what we talked about early on, being on a pallet with mosquito's and ants and stuff getting on you. The bigger boys and girls it would be awhile before they get back. I remember that more than I do anything else.

**JG:** And that was when you were a toddler.

**BL:** Yes, a toddler, three and four, five years old and not big enough to work and carry a row.

**JG:** Right.

**BL:** You know by the time you are four or five years old you worked.

**RD:** Did you ever sleep on the front porch at night, Buddy?

**BL:** Yes, our mother and daddy slept on the front porch mostly. The kids slept in the house but they would put their bed out on the front porch.

**JG:** Did you have a screen?

**BL:** Well no we had a mosquito bar.

**JG:** A mosquito bar.

**BL:** Our porch wasn't screened in, but they had a bar that they would put a steeple or something in the ceiling and tie it up to hold it up and it would be about that high above you, but it would come down and you would tuck it under the bed all the way around. I can remember when I was a kid, you know, you would go to sleep with your head like that and your elbow maybe against that bar and it would be a place that big around just as red as blood where mosquito's got you through that mosquito bar. You tried not to do that, but a few times that would happen. That is the way times was way back. You can't even find nobody to talk to about that no more, nobody knows about it.

**JG:** Was there anything else you could do to keep mosquitos away and bugs or anything?

**BL:** We didn't have anything. Nowadays they got spray and stuff you put on you, but we didn't have any of that.

**JG:** No Indian remedies?

**BL:** No Indian remedies.

**JG:** You were talking about the forks of the Angelina and the Attoyac Rivers and years ago before your time there was an old railroad that ran...

**BL:** Came down in there.

**JG:** ...from Lufkin on out to Broaddus and to White City. Was it still there when, do you remember?

**BL:** No, the railroad was gone, but the dump is still there today. I can show you the dump today, (**JG:** okay) and that was, I don't ever remember a train or anything being on that. But before my time I have heard our daddy talk about how a team... that when they had that railroad, this is back in the 1800's down there. It was a cable that was so big and so long they would take a team and hook onto it and it was on this car up here, the spool, and that team would pull that cable maybe two hundred yards down in the woods, down yonder. It was so big a man couldn't pull it. The team had to pull it down there and they

would hook on to...the way he described it, the logs were that big and pull it back to get it on the train and everybody had to get out of the way, it was so dangerous. Once you started pulling, the guy pulling up yonder can't see down there. I don't know what kind of signal they would give.

**JG:** You talking about those big skidders, steam skidders.

**BL:** Yes the big cable, they would pull down there and he said they tore up more timber than they actually logged, the little timber. That big one they would pull it up there and it would knock little trees down. He said that country was demolished when they got through logging, but they couldn't log except where that cable would reach to on both sides. That was a pretty wide deal, the way he talked maybe 300 yards down there. It took a team to pull the cable down there to hook onto the log.

**JG:** Yes, yes. Do you remember, I guess you being in Nacogdoches County, if you were down near those forks across the Attoyac River on the other bank was an old sawmill town known as Warsaw? Do you remember that? Was there a community there?

**BL:** Yes, there was a community there.

**JG:** Okay, tell us about that community. What do you remember?

**BL:** I can't tell you a lot about that. That was south of Broaddus down there on the opposite side of the river to us and we didn't cross that river much but I can take you to Warsaw right now.

**JG:** Yes, well when the lake was down a few years ago it was an island out there, and there is old railroad spikes. That old railroad came across down there.

**BL:** Yes, it came down in there.

**JG:** Believe it or not I. D. Fairchild was one of the owners of that sawmill, back in the 1910's, the Fairchild's were. I was just curious what you remembered of that area.

**BL:** I don't remember much about it. We didn't get out of Nacogdoches; we didn't go across that river.

**JG:** You didn't go across the river...okay. Now I guess Broaddus, do you remember, did Broaddus have any mill operations or anything going on?

**BL:** Not that I remember. My mother is from Broaddus.

**JG:** Okay.

**BL:** She was one of I think 14 kids, and she was from Broaddus. That is not but six miles from where we was raised, go down and there was a bridge across the Attoyac

River. You could go in a wagon or car and go down there and cross the Attoyac River and go up those hills to Broaddus. It is six miles from our house to Broaddus.

**JG:** Okay.

**BL:** But somewhere way back, I may have been four, five, six years old, the old bridge fell in and it never was built back. Also, there was a bridge coming from over there, coming out to Huntington. You could come straight from over there up to Huntington, wasn't but seven, eight miles. And when that old Bridge, they called it Brown's Ferry Bridge I think down, it fell in and then we had to go to Etoile and come around by Ewing to get to Huntington. It was about three times as far once that old bridge fell in.

**JG:** And your father was Ephraim Lowery, and what was your mother's name?

**BL:** Lucy.

**JG:** Lucy, what was her maiden name?

**BL:** She was a Wells.

**JG:** Wells, okay.

**BL:** And she was one of about 12 or 14, it was a big family of them, and then she had 11 kids.

**RD:** Buddy, is Bonnie still living?

**BL:** Yes. There is four of our bunch left, me, Bonnie, Giles and Lester. I got a sister that has been buried 100 years, Dick. I told somebody that the other day and they said that is impossible. I said, "No it's not impossible." I got a sister. I still go by her grave every now and then. The first one, you probably heard there was ten of us, well I've always said there is 11 and the reason I did, there was the first one Momma had – they had them just like cows back then. There was nobody to help her, and she said it took her a day or so, that first one, to have that first one and she said when it was born it breathed just a little bit. They kept her alive for a little bit, but it died. And then in March, this past March was 100 years from the time that baby was buried. Now, that sounds...that doesn't sound real but that is a true story. Her first kid was born in March 100 years ago this year.

**JG:** 1915.

**BL:** Yes, 1915, and see I was born in 1936 and Mama had 11, counting that one. I always said 11. Some have always said there was 10 of those Lowery kids and I always said no there is 11 of us. One didn't live long, but it is still a sister. Y'all got a sister that was buried over there. Back then the cemetery was at Smyrna and we worked it and got \$35 a year for working 3 cemeteries up there and when they quit working it way back

when I was a kid, it was just a community gathering, it might be a 100 people come down there that had left and all come back, three big cemeteries.

**RD:** Dinner on the ground.

**BL:** Do what?

**RD:** Dinner on the ground.

**BL:** Dinner on the ground and we worked those cemeteries and back...it's been twenty or thirty years ago people got to where they didn't want to come work, so they pay somebody to work them now, but there is three cemeteries. And that is where most of the people in that area where I was raised is, in those cemeteries, those three cemeteries there.

**JG:** And what were the names of the cemeteries?

**BL:** It was just Smyrna Cemetery. They called it Smyrna Cemetery, but there is three different cemeteries there. I don't know why there is three. I always guessed that somebody died and there would be family feuds way back 100 years ago and somebody didn't want to be buried here. This is speculation and a guess, but there is three cemeteries and in one cemetery there is room enough to have all the graves in one cemetery, but there is three cemeteries and I don't know why there are. But my guess is old uncle so and so died and he don't want to be buried by this one because he stole a hog from me in 1823. (laughter) I'm guessing that and our daddy always said, he never did tell me what happened, but he kind of verified before he died that was why there were three separate cemeteries, you know. Some families didn't get along and didn't want to be buried with the others.

**JG:** Yes, talk about how you got into banking.

**BL:** Well kind of accidentally. We started that bank about 55 years ago and my older brothers and Morgan Flournoy and a lot of the older people that has all died out, now none of them is left, they wanted a little bank in Huntington. They thought that would be a good thing to help the area and Lester and Herbert was old enough to be in it, when they helped get the charter. Dr. McVicker, I think it was Dr. McVicker's idea.

**RD:** Well, I'm not sure about that, could have been.

**BL:** I'm not sure either but he was one of the main ones. In fact I think he was maybe chairman of the board the first bank...I mean this bank.

**RD:** Well Morgan Flournoy and Bead Townsend came down to me. I was a young boy and they ask me did I wanted to be a stock holder in that bank. I said man I don't have any money. They said well, so anyway Buddy, I came up with \$700. I invested \$700 in that Huntington State Bank and I just kept it in there until y'all had that reshuffling here a



few years ago and shoved me out. Jonathan and it was just exactly like losing part of my family. It really was. (laughter) I went by the bank to get my check...

**BL:** Yes, but you can still do anything you want to do at Huntington State Bank as long as I got it.

**RD:** I went by there to pick up my check and I got it you know, and I was looking at it and nice lady said, "Well are you not satisfied or something?" And I said, "Oh yes I'm satisfied." She said, "Well what seems to be the problem?" I said, "Well I just feel like I've been kicked out of the family."

**BL:** (laughter) And I can understand that. And I can't really tell you whose idea that was, but Bead Townsend was on the board, Dr. McVicker and all those are gone now.

**RD:** Yes, oh yes.

**BL:** It was a lot of stockholders in there that just had a few shares and it was costing so much, you know, the regulations and stuff. It made sense to do what they done at that time.

**RD:** Yes.

**BL:** But there was a lot of people that didn't like it because they got them out.

**RD:** It wasn't that I didn't like it, I was just, like I said, I just felt unloved and unwanted.

**BL:** (laughter) You know what I told him the last time he said that? I said, "You can still do anything you want to in that bank because I have got a little control of it now."

**JG:** So how did you get involved?

**BL:** Oh yes that is what I was telling you. My brain don't work as good as it used to. I get off on different subjects, then I forget what you had asked me. When, it's been...I probably bought 47 percent of it. It had got down to where there was just a few in it and I'm going to say this has been 25 years ago and somebody, I don't even remember who it was had 47...oh yes I do know. I had to think a little bit. My brain don't work as good as it used to.

**JG:** That is fine. Take your time.

**BL:** Lester and Mark and Joe, Lester and his kids wanted to get out. They were starting the Texas State Bank. Well the logical ones to buy it was Rex and Randy, because Herbert had got killed. The brother just under Lester, and so I thought they were going to buy it. I wasn't interested particularly in buying it. I had been in the sawmill business and doing different things. I never worked in the bank, don't know anything about how to run a bank and I wasn't too interested in it. But Rex and Randy finally decided they didn't

want to buy that 47 percent that Lester wanted to sell, because they wanted to get out. You know how families are, they don't always get...the older ones maybe get along but the younger ones was having a little problem and they wanted to get out separate, so Randy and Rex was going to buy it. They just finally got cold feet and didn't want to spend that much money and they wanted me to buy it, because they wanted to keep their stock. So, that is how come me in the Huntington Bank. And then the bank had a few problems here a few years back and I had to put a little money in it to keep it going. It is doing real good now and has the last couple of years, but we did have a little hiccup a few years back. That is how come me getting in it. Lester's side wanted to get out and Herbert's kids wanted to stay in, and they didn't want to buy the stock, so I bought the stock.

**RD:** What is Randy doing now, is he in the insurance business?

**BL:** No Randy, he has got an interest in four auction barns. He owns a third of Nacogdoches Livestock Exchange.

**RD:** Yes, that is right.

**BL:** In Center he owns half of Center, half of Carthage and he owns Elkhart by his self.

**RD:** Yes, I remember that now.

**JG:** So some of the typical bank customers, who do you loan money to?

**BL:** Anybody and everybody. We got lots of...I guess because I was the little guy coming up all my life, we still cater all we can to little people that needs to borrow \$1500 or \$3500, you don't make a lot of money doing that, but it's just kind of in our blood to try to help that end of the population. Of course, we got a lot of high dollar people in there too, because we have got nine locations. We have got one in Sugarland and one in Tyler is the farthest off. The rest is in Nacogdoches and Huntington, you know, and this area.

**JG:** Did y'all buy those banks or did you start them?

**BL:** No we started them off.

**JG:** From scratch, okay.

**RD:** The one in Sugarland and the one in Tyler, those are Lowery Banks aren't they?

**BL:** Yes, that was when Randy had the bank and I got to admit I would really rather call it Huntington Bank, because it cost a good bit to operate three different main banks, but Randy was doing it at that time and so he named that one Lowery Bank and the one in Tyler the Bank of Tyler. There's talk now we probably will end up and may change that back one of these days, but we are Huntington Bank.

**JG:** Do you know why Sugarland... that is pretty good distance away?

**BL:** Well I think because we are down there, Randy was running the bank at that time and he was kind of the head man in the bank and he lived in Sugarland.

**JG:** Okay.

**BL:** He had kids going to school. The reason he was down there, he had a boy that was really a good basketball player, you know. He played one year at Centenary and he played at Baylor. He didn't make the starting team, but you know he could shoot the ball probably as good or better as anybody I ever saw in my life, Logan. And Randy wanted him to go to a bigger school to play basketball and so then he got in, he was on the squad at Baylor for three years. I thought he should have gotten to play a lot more than he did, but the coach I guess didn't see it that way. But that is how come him to put one in Sugarland, well we call it Houston it's really Sugarland.

**RD:** That area was exploding about that time.

**BL:** Yes, it has been a real...it's been a good move that Randy made by doing that. In fact of all, we got Lowery Bank in Sugarland and Bank of Tyler in Tyler is probably making more money than any individual local bank here, but we...I'm kind of loyal to the local area here, because I've been here a long time.

**RD:** Yes, part of your blood.

**JG:** I know I'm jumping around as well, but talk a little bit about playing basketball for the Detroit Pistons. And talk about, I imagine the way the game was played was a little different back then than the way it is played now.

**BL:** It is a lot different; in fact I think it is a lot better now. I roomed with the first black guy to play in the NBA. A guy named Earl Lloyd.

**JG:** Earl Lloyd.

**BL:** Because we were raised pretty close to a black family, Wiley Price, just across the Attoyac River and our dad sometimes he would hire them kids to come work with us, so we kind of come up being around black people. So, we didn't have no... a lot of old people didn't like black people 50 to 100 years ago. Not everybody, but there was some friction between the blacks and whites, but we didn't have it because we were raised with those black kids. Well the coach asked me, did I mind rooming with Earl Lloyd and I said no, I didn't. Now he said that was just through training camp, when the season starts we will be back, but when we went to training camp I roomed with him for about a month. The best guy, I still talk to him now and then. He is over in Georgia, somewhere. He is about 85 or 86 years old, still doing good.

**JG:** Was he already playing when you came on board?

**BL:** Yes he had already been playing five or six years.

**JG:** Oh okay.

**BL:** With Detroit.

**JG:** Was he a starter?

**BL:** Yes, he started, he was a starter, and there was two or three black guys come in right at that same time, but just by chance he was the first one to play in a game, so he was always considered the first black guy to play in the NBA because he played in a game. Another black guy come in about the same time and it was just a game of chance, they had a game ahead of this other bunch, you know, so that put him being the first guy to play in the NBA. Best guy you ever saw, raised kind of like I was – a cotton picker and country boy. It was what we called town boys, those big city boys, just a little different breed and Earl and I were kind of the same background, so we just hit it off just real good.

**JG:** What position did he play?

**BL:** I think how I got in with Detroit, Frank Bryan, the guy that had played with them, he had put in a good word for me and I was in real good shape. You know, I really didn't intend, because they had about 18 or 20 boys there trying out for ten positions. I don't know how I wound up with one of them, but I never did start. I played in a lot of games, but I never did start, you know, be a starter. And after then the first year, I started to go back the second year and just got completely ready to go. I had done played one season in New York, I had weathered one season with the NBA, and that is a lot of traveling.

**JG:** How many games did y'all play back then do you remember?

**BL:** About 85, 87 games, somewhere along there.

**JG:** Wow! You played one game a night in a city and moved on.

**BL:** Never played but one game in one town. You would go and play in New York, get on a plane and go to Boston, you know, or Syracuse was in it at that time. And I don't know why they didn't go like baseball, play three or four games and then go somewhere else, but you was on airplanes all the time. I never will forget coming in one night, we was landing in Detroit and we had come from Boston in a blinding snow storm, you couldn't see. I was sitting there about half nervous, you know, and you could tell everybody was nervous, even the pilot, because they talked about going to another airport, but he finally decided he could get back into the airport there in Detroit and you couldn't see the ground until the plane touched down. Detroit was a little above some of the other teams. They had a plane of their own, so we didn't have to get on commercial

flights. When the game was over with, we would just go get on the plane and go where we were going. I just knew that was the end. It was a blinding snow storm and you couldn't see... when it touched down, you still couldn't see nothing and that very same night the Lakers had a plane that crashed, landed. It didn't kill any of them. You may remember that. It was pretty big news at the time. That has been 50 something years ago, and that scared me, but that is not why I didn't go back the next year, you know. All the five starters were coming back again and one of the starters had roomed with the guy that was coaching. Well, everybody thought four of them really should have been starters, but this one guy that was starting that was rooming with the coach had played with the coach somewhere and that didn't fit real good with me. I didn't complain about it. I didn't say a word about it. This is probably the first time I ever told it, but everybody, the whole bunch was going to be back the next year and I just decided not to go back. My salary, I made \$15,000. It wasn't no big money back then. And, that second year...

**JG:** They make \$15,000 a minute now probably.

**BL:** A minute now! That second year, there was three people, Wilt Chamberlain, Bob Cousy and maybe Elgin but there was a third...no I tell you what, it was Chamberlain and Bill Russell. Wilt Chamberlain and Bill Russell and Bob Cousy signed for \$100,000. And boy everybody thought that was... Why would you pay anybody a \$100,000 to play basketball, because most of us would have played for free? We just liked to play. That was a pretty good experience to see, but it was a pretty tough experience too, because they play in a different town every night. If you had been starting and playing all the time I would have liked it a little bit better. But, what the coach...they called and called me several times and said, "You got to wait your turn." I said, "Well I don't understand wait your turn." He said, "Well, you know, these boys was done playing and when one of them quits, you'll move up." I said, "Well where I come from we play the fellow that was worth the most that night, and y'all got one guy playing there that couldn't have made my college team." "Well him and the coach has played together and they room together and that is just the way it is." I said, "Well that is just enough to keep me from not coming back, because I think I'll end up not getting to play enough." I was always used to playing, starting and playing the whole game everywhere I ever played. Then I couldn't accept sitting on that bench, so I didn't go back.

**RD:** Buddy I got to tell this story about you. Y'all were playing...what was the kid from Big Sandy's name? Milton Williams?

**BL:** Milton Williams, yes.

**RD:** Milton Williams stole the ball and was heading down court and you were like you were penning cattle or something, you took off after him in hot pursuit and you said, "Head him off." (laughter)

**BL:** I don't remember that, but I remember Milton Williams because he played with us in independent basketball for several years.

**RD:** He was kind of good wasn't he?

**BL:** Yes, he was a real ball player, that boy was.

**RD:** Shot 98 free throws before he missed one, as I recall.

**BL:** Yes he could shoot it from anywhere on the court. He played with us for several years in the independent tournament. We would go to Houston and play a lot and we would pick him up on the way. He was at the Indian Reservation at that time.

**RD:** The Lowery Brothers had their own independent basketball team and I played with them some.

**BL:** Yes sure did. Oh Mickey Kitchens that played with you, played with us a lot.

**RD:** Yes.

**JG:** Any comments about how the game was played, I mean just...

**BL:** I think it was played a little rougher and a little dirtier way back yonder, than it is now.

**JG:** Really?

**BL:** Because I think the players are a lot better now and a lot of the players that I played with at Detroit and SFA [Stephen F. Austin] and everywhere, I think the level of the games is way above what it was when Dick and I played. Would you agree with that Dick?

**RD:** Oh yes, they play all the time now.

**BL:** Yes, they play year round. The high schools, the junior college, the senior college, the NBA, I think all of them is a lot better now, than they were back then. I've said that...people say "Aww, no we could beat them," but if you are going to be a hundred percent honest and I think I'm being a hundred percent honest, I think the teams in the NBA when I was there, maybe Boston could have played pretty good [against] some of the teams now, but overall the basketball, high school everywhere, is a lot better now, a lot better, than it was when I played.

**JG:** Bigger and faster.

**BL:** Bigger and faster, and they play year round now. They work out, they eat right, they train right, and it is just bigger players, better players, than it was when I was playing.

**RD:** Buddy was one of the first to perfect the jump shot.

**BL:** Yes.

**RD:** It was a new invention.

**BL:** And let me tell you how that came about. SFA [Stephen F. Austin] played Rice University, and of course Rice University was in the Southwest Conference. SFA was in the Lone Star Conference at that time, and I'm telling this and this proves another point I'm going to make in a minute. The Lone Star Conference, in my day, I don't know about now, but in my day, the Lone Star Conference was just about as good as the Southwest Conference or better. We played A&M a scrimmage game, and we beat them and we played Rice, a real game, and beat them, you know, but Rice came to SFA and SFA beat them you know. They were in the Southwest Conference. And they never would play us no more. We beat A&M, we beat...SFA beat Rice, and you couldn't get them to play. The big schools like University of Houston and Texas didn't want to play the smaller schools because what they said was, we don't have anything to gain, because if you beat us it's an insult to Texas to let SFA beat them. There was very little difference in the Lone Star Conference and the Southwest Conference in my day. Now I don't know how it is now, but I think it would probably still be the same way.

**JG:** Of course SFA is paying or not paying, they were getting money, I know the football team they were having those big teams come down and play them, and remember they were getting tons of money.

**BL:** Yes, yes.

**JG:** It was almost like...

**BL:** Getting lots of money.

**JG:** ...we will let you beat us up for a million dollars. (laughter)

**BL:** They will do that a little on basketball games. They call it their money game.

**JG:** Everybody knows they don't have a chance.

**BL:** Everybody does it, yes. They got to play one big school to get beat.

**JG:** But they get a lot of money for it.

**BL:** Yes.

**JG:** Talk about Detroit as a town. I know probably just after your years, it went through a lot of changing and is going through a lot of changes lately. What was Detroit like in the fifties?

**BL:** There was a slum area in Detroit when I was there. I didn't have a car, but I stayed, they furnished me a place to stay right close to the...they called it the Olympia Stadium and I could walk from...what did they call it? It wasn't really a hotel, and it wasn't an apartment, but several people stayed there. A real nice deal and I could just walk down to the Olympia Stadium. And of course they went through it and got a big coliseum now, but... I wasn't in Detroit a whole lot, I didn't have a car, but some of the boys did and we would ride around. We went to an area in Detroit and they wanted to go, a guy named Archie Dees, he was an All-American at Indiana, Archie Dees, and he had a car and me and him was pretty good buddies, and he wanted to show me an area of Detroit. I could not believe it. It was so run down and so ratty, and I think they have torn it all down by now. I'm talking about a big area. Just drive on and on and just big...people living in five stories up there in old, old buildings. Now, there was a new modern Detroit that looked kind of like New York, but it must have been an old town, because there was a lot of that was really run down when I was there.

**JG:** When you were there even.

**BL:** I think they have rebuilt most of it over the... probably our tax dollars help rebuild it now.

**RD:** Yes, yes.

**BL:** It was kind of a scary place really.

**JG:** Talk about the Diboll Millers baseball team. You played a little baseball didn't you?

**BL:** Yes I played some. I wasn't quite old enough, but I got to play some with the Diboll Millers. You know Lester and Herbert, the older boys, were playing with the Diboll Millers and I had got big enough. I always had pretty good luck hitting the baseball. I did have... oh I had forgot about it, I had an offer to sign with Pittsburgh Pirates. I went to...they had a deal old...I'll get back. I told you in the beginning...

**JG:** About the Buffalo's.

**BL:** Yes, I went to try out down at the Old Buff Stadium. Was it Buff in Houston?

**JG:** Yes.

**BL:** Buff Stadium is what I remember.

**JG:** Yes, the Buffalo's.

**BL:** Me and Bobby Bounds from here in Lufkin and one other guy, and they had offered me a deal with some little team in Florida. Several days we went down there and stayed at the Pittsburgh Pirates tryout camp, you know, and we were just...we weren't baseball.



The high school had a team, but I always had pretty good luck hitting the ball, but my weakness was I couldn't throw the ball as hard as I probably should have.

**JG:** You needed to be in the American League, huh, and be a designated hitter.

**BL:** Yes, and when they got through they offered me a little deal, seemed like \$2500 or maybe \$3500, for some little team in Florida. I turned...I didn't do it. I was a better baseball player than I was basketball, because I could hit the ball. And that gets back to the Millers, you know, they let me play some before I was old enough, because for some reason I could knock the cover off that baseball. I was a better baseball player than I was basketball and we played a lot of baseball. We had a team one time, the Lowery Brothers team, you know, in baseball and basketball, there were so many of the brothers. I have always hated that I didn't go try that baseball. That is one thing in my life, that is the only thing I can think of that I would change in my life up to now, is that I would have went and tried that baseball.

**RD:** I didn't know Huntington had a baseball team then.

**BL:** Yes they had one when I was in high school.

**RD:** Zavalla didn't have one.

**BL:** Yes, Zavalla didn't have one. Central had one. Hudson didn't have one at that time, but there was enough teams around. We had a baseball team when I was in high school. I don't know why Zavalla...really didn't have enough ground to have a baseball field at that particular time.

**RD:** Yes.

**BL:** Y'all had buildings on all the grounds.

**JG:** What position did you play when you played baseball?

**BL:** I played second base mostly, and the reason they always played me on second base is I couldn't throw from deep short stop to first – you know how they will whip that ball and it hit a man's head all the way over there? I never could do that. And that is probably the reason I didn't go try the baseball, because why I don't know. I worked all my life. I don't know if I hurt my arm when I was young, or what it was, but I knew that I had a weakness in baseball. I think if it had just been the batting and hitting, and then that is the reason they wanted me to come down there, you know, they liked that I could knock the cover off the baseball. But I never could throw that ball; like a lot of people from short stop throw it and a man catch it anywhere to first base. I couldn't do that, Dick. I had to put a little hump on it to get it over there. I don't know to this day why. I worked all the time, I was stout as a bull, but I never could whip that ball real hard. That is probably the reason I didn't try it. If it had been just the hitting, that is what they wanted me for because I could knock the cover off it, but I couldn't throw it so I never did try baseball.

**RD:** I never knew that.

**BL:** That hasn't been told many times. I didn't tell it because...but I got to be honest with you today. I got to tell it like it is today. And that is probably the reason I didn't. I don't know why, I don't know why I couldn't throw that baseball hard.

**RD:** Buddy, I'm not going to tell them about the time that...

**BL:** Turn that off...if that is still on turn it off. (laughter) He is fixing to tell something he is not supposed to tell.

**RD:** No, I won't tell it.

**BL:** No, tell it, go ahead. It don't matter what it is, tell it.

**RD:** About the time you and Mickey picked me up and that guy named Kirbyville picked me up at SFA. You reckon I ought to tell that story.

**BL:** Go ahead and tell it because I have kind of forgot it. I can remember a little about it, but I kind of forgot it too. Tell it!

**RD:** I was going to school at SFA [Stephen F. Austin] and Mickey and Buddy and a kid named Kirbyville, I never heard him called anything else but Kirbyville, ran track over there if I'm not mistaken.

**BL:** Yes, yes. I still remember him very well.

**RD:** They came back through and picked me up and the Nance Café in Nacogdoches, and we came on through and we came through the Woodman of the World Baseball Camp up there on North Timberland. I don't think it was North Timberland then, but up there. We came through and there was bunch of them and it was dark.

**BL:** Dick, let me interrupt you... that is a good story. I'm glad you are telling that.

**RD:** There was a bunch of cars sitting there and it was dark and it was Thanksgiving...

**BL:** Late at night.

**RD:** ...late at night and we were coming in for the Thanksgiving holidays. As we went by, the lights came on in these cars boy, and they whipped out there and took in after us. Well Mickey lived over here in Lufkin by that time, and Buddy was going to take him and Kirbyville over there and put them out and then Buddy and I were going to proceed on but those guys curbed us as good as...

**BL:** Blocked us in, took enough cars to block us in and forced us off the road.

**RD:** ...John Dillinger couldn't have done it any better. And they pulled us over there and they came rushing up there and jerked the doors open and got me out of there and jerked me out on that side and pulled me out.

**BL:** Tell where I was at, now I was across the road part of the time with that 30-30.

**RD:** Not yet, not yet. (laughter)

**BL:** Okay, I'm getting ahead of you Dick, go ahead. (laughter)

**RD:** So, anyhow they pulled us out of the car and about that time they did, they looked at me and they saw said, "I know him" and looked at Buddy and said, "yes this is one of them old Lowery boys." So, anyhow Mickey and Kirbyville, they were sitting back in the back, you know, and they kind of fluffed us up and put us back in the car and said, "look you boys need to get out of town y'all might get hurt." Said, "we saw that yellow jacket hanging." Mickey's basketball jacket from Zavalla was gold like Nacogdoches.

**BL:** Dick, wasn't it the night before Lufkin played who?

**RD:** Nacogdoches wasn't it?

**BL:** I believe so. It was the night before Lufkin played Nacogdoches and you got to tell this so they will understand your story. They were out there afraid Nacogdoches boys were going to come in and burn their big pile.

**RD:** I was going to get to that.

**JG:** The bonfire?

**RD:** Yes, they said, "you boys need to get out of town; y'all might get hurt." Said, "we thought y'all were somebody from Nacogdoches coming over here to burn our bonfire."

**BL:** Has statue of limitations run out on this.

**RD:** I don't know.

**BL:** If it hasn't don't tell it! Go ahead, tell it! (laughter)

**RD:** So anyway we get back in the car and we start up and Buddy looks over at me and says, "I didn't much like that did you?" I said, "I didn't like it a bit." He said, "well let's do something about it." Mickey and Kirbyville back in the back said, "well let us out of here first; we don't want to get involved in any of that thing." Buddy just kept driving so we drove on down there and Buddy said, "I got a 30-30 there in the back of my car" and said, "you get over here and drive and we will do something about that." So we go down Timberland and we come up there to First Street or Denman Avenue and I angle off one

of those streets that goes up to the old Lufkin High School, off up there by the railroad track you know. We pull up there to, I guess probably Raguet Street.

**BL:** Pretty close to where they were going to have the bonfire.

**RD:** Yes, a pile of wood up there and they got some little warming fires, they were all standing around warming and I even saw a couple of cops there. So, anyway I turned around and we stopped and we get out and we start hollering, “Yay Nacogdoches! Yay Nacogdoches!”

**BL:** Yay Nacogdoches Dragons!

**RD:** That’s right. (laughter) And boy they started running for those cars and getting in them and we took off and I think I was doing about 85 miles an hour when I went across Timberland Drive there and then when I went under Two-Point out there, the needle on Buddy’s red and white Ford was doing just like that. It was bumping against the thing.

**JG:** Pegging the...

**BL:** Where we stopped was way down about the auction barn. We were half way to Huntington when we finally pulled over to stop. They were running us and we were ahead in my car.

**RD:** That is right. We were going and we were out running them all except one and here is this car and these headlights kept getting wider and wider and wider and wider. They were gaining on us you know, and gee-whiz that thing was fast, and he pulled right up beside of us and just kind of started petting his accelerator like that. Buddy had that .30-06 and he reached over behind me and he shot over the top of that thing. (laughter) A ball of fire ran out the end of the barrel about that long. That boy mashed down on that accelerator and that car rared up just like a speed boat, you know. Whoom!!!! So, we knew, you know, he had to come back. So I just pulled over like that and we saw his headlights sweep around like that so, Buddy jumps out with that 30-30 and that car goes back by about 115 miles an hour and Buddy fires a couple of them. (laughter, shooting sounds)

**JG:** Like a rifleman huh? (laughter)

**BL:** But I made sure I was way over it. I will tell you that! (laughter)

**RD:** So we turn around and follow him, come back into Lufkin and we drove all up through there and didn’t see him, so we saw that car sitting at Beams drive in. So, we got out and go in and there is nobody in there. And that waitress says, (gesture). So we go around the corner. Beams was an L shaped deal, so we go around the corner and there is nobody back there. So, we walk on back and we could hear scuffling around on the floor and everything, and those boys were down underneath the table hidden in Beams Drive-In. (laughter)

**BL:** We weren't always that crazy though, Dick. They just kind of struck, made us mad, when they forced us off the road out there.

**RD:** What was that old boy's name that had that car? That was the fastest car I ever saw.

**BL:** I know the one you're talking about but I can't put a name on it.

**RD:** Jonathan knows him because he did a lot of super electronic things. Went to prison a little bit.

**BL:** I didn't know that.

**RD:** Yes, he did some time in prison because of doing some television short circuiting. I don't remember what it was but they owned a piece of land.

**JG:** Was this his '55 Fairlane y'all were in, that the other guy was chasing?

**RD:** Yes. But this guy was in a brown Coupe old model Ford. We made him show us the engine in it. It had two of everything on it Jonathan. It had two carbuerators. It had two generators, it had two everything.

**JG:** Two engines. (laughing)

**RD:** Two engines! It was something!

**BL:** That is kind of funny now. It wasn't real funny right at that time, was it?

**RD:** I wish I could think of that boy's name, but he had the awfulest car I had ever saw in my life.

**BL:** Seems like one of those old boys was Robert Tights or something like that.

**RD:** Could have been.

**BL:** That was in that deal.

**RD:** I think this boy just died not too long ago or something, but he was real smart, oh he was smart.

**BL:** I guess everybody does a few little things that they wish they hadn't done. They ought to been smart enough to not do it.

**JG:** That is what happens when you hang around with this guy. (laughter)

**BL:** Momma always said don't play with guns, play with anything, but don't play with guns.

**RD:** I think they learned a pretty good lesson that night though, Buddy.

**BL:** I think so, yes.

**JG:** Did they know you were from Nacogdoches or from south Angelina County?

**RD:** Well they saw that yellow hanging up in the back of that car, and they thought that was a Nacogdoches jacket.

**JG:** But did you ever set them straight?

**RD:** Oh yes, they knew us when they pulled us out of the car.

**BL:** We have all laughed, every side has laughed about that for fifty years or longer.

**JG:** That is funny!

**RD:** I ran into one of the old boys that was in that car over in Waco. I lived over at Waco you know, and run into one of the boys over there, and we laughed about it over there.

**BL:** I never did finish my story on why Lowery Bank was down there, but it was because Randy's boy was going to school at Kingwood and he lived down there and his kids was kind of raised down there, and that boy went to Baylor, and he's got that... boy is working for a bank in Houston and I'm sure Randy had in mind that that his boy would take that bank down there. But we are down there because Randy wanted to put one down there.

**JG:** Talk about your wildlife preserve and how that got started.

**BL:** Well I don't really know how it got started but we always liked fooling with deer and elk and animals and this place in Huntington where I live, I had fenced it with a high fence and there is not any money in it, you just do it because you like it. I had a lot of white tailed deer and fallow deer and axis deer and buffalo and elk, just a lot of different kind of animals. In fact I had over 700 elk at one time because I had been at it for years and years and I wasn't trying to sell a lot of them. I would sell a few along, somebody just come wanting to kill one. I had so many I didn't have room for my cows, so I kind of sold out, but after I sold out I was a little lonesome, I kind of missed fooling with them and I bought a few and started back. Now they have multiplied up. I've probably got 150 now. We don't have any axis deer or fallow deer, just white tail deer and the elks.

**JG:** Where do you buy elk and buffalo?

**BL:** They have sales all over the country.

**JG:** Out west?

**BL:** Yes, Huntsville is the closest one to us. I don't know if they still have a sale or not, but used to they would have sales, elk and deer, just like cows, you know.

**JG:** So when you sold them...

**BL:** You have to do it in the wintertime when they don't have horns.

**JG:** Okay, so when you sold yours you took them to like an auction place?

**BL:** No, I sold them to a guy and they went to Illinois, somewhere way up north and they had bought a big, a lot of country.

**JG:** So you just worked that out without taking them anywhere. They just came and got them.

**BL:** They loaded them in big covered trucks and hauled them up there (**JG:** okay) but we had to do it in the wintertime when the bull elk didn't have horns.

**JG:** Did you have to have a special license or anything to have those kind of animals captive or anything?

**BL:** No, if you've got them shut up you can own them just like owning a cow. Now on the white tail deer, you've got to abide by the state laws on killing your bucks and stuff, but elk you can kill them anytime you want to or axis deer or fallow deer, which don't have axis or fallow anymore. You own them just like a cow.

**JG:** Other than eating grass and feeding them hay in the winter, do you supplement their diet with anything?

**BL:** You usually keep some kind of mineral out for them.

**JG:** Salt blocks and stuff or range cubes?

**BL:** Yes, mineral blocks.

**JG:** Mineral blocks and things, okay.

**BL:** They do good here, they do real good.

**JG:** Okay.

**BL:** I just kind of like fooling with them. I have fooled with them so long and after I sold out and didn't have none I was kind of sad that I had sold all of them out. I bought a few

back and now they are multiplying so fast I'm going to end up with the same problem again.

**JG:** What about the buffalo, how many heads of those do you have?

**BL:** I had about 200 buffalo at one time. I started with about 20 or 30 and there wasn't much market for buffalo. We would sell a few every now and then but there wasn't much market for them. They just kept multiplying and I finally got rid of them.

**JG:** Oh you don't have any buffalo right now?

**BL:** I don't have any right now. I kind of wish I did have 8 or 10. There is so many people with kids, people from all over the country come down there and ride around the roads. If I had seen them looking, I would let them in the gate. "Oh it ain't going to hurt nothing go up there and look at them." I kind of got a kick out of letting people in to go look. I wish I had kept a few. In fact if I can buy 8 or 10 buffalo, there is still people ask me about the buffalo. A lot of people seem to like the buffalo more than they did the elk.

**JG:** Just something we don't see too often.

**BL:** No you don't see that much in this area.

**JG:** Well Mr. Donovan do you know of anything else we need to cover?

**RD:** No but we will think of a thousand things.

**JG:** Yes, I'm sure we will.

**BL:** Yes, well make a note of all of it and we will have another little short session one day, do that.

**RD:** Buddy has done so much, you know, Buddy kind of...well those two mills that you put in that you sold to LP [Louisiana Pacific] Buddy, was that right? Did LP buy those two mills?

**BL:** Yes, well Ronnie Paul, he was with LP. We sold out to them. Yes, we had six operations at one time. Three sawmills and three chip mills. It took a long, long time to get all of that, you know, because when you start out with one little bitty mill and you don't have any money to do it with, and you can't borrow much money, it takes a lifetime to get to where we had gotten to and we got a pretty good opportunity.

**RD:** Those were pretty modern mills that you sold there.

**BL:** Yes, we sold some high dollar mills to Ronnie Paul with LP bought us out. I wasn't really quite ready to sell out and they paid us more money than we deserved. They got to wanting to buy them and we were getting, you know, Lester is ten years older than I am



and we just decided it would be a good time to get out, and I don't think they would have brought maybe 30 or 40 percent, three or four years later. You could not have sold at a better time and that wasn't done by design or by being smart. That was 100 percent accident. I would like to say I was smart, that I knew what I was doing, but I didn't and Lester didn't either. It was other problems and we just decided to get out. Kids were coming on and getting involved in stuff and it was getting so many of us that we just decided we would sell out, rather than having any problems, and so we did. You could not have picked a better time in my life to sell out, because in less than five years they wouldn't have brought 20 percent of what we got for them. You know, Temple went out, LP [Louisiana Pacific] went out, all the big companies went out and that is who we were dealing with mostly, was the big companies, buying their timber.

**JG:** How, what size crew would you have had to run the mills?

**BL:** We had about 125 people working for us.

**JG:** A 125, and that was spread over how many mills?

**BL:** Six, three sawmills and three chip mills.

**JG:** And that is full time employment all year long?

**BL:** Yes, we run all year round and about the same thing with the bank, you know. We down a little at the bank right now because all banks kind of modernized and we did have about 120 people at the bank, but we are around a little less than 100 right now.

**RD:** Which is your best bank now, Buddy? Which does the most business?

**BL:** Probably Sugarland right now is doing most business, Tyler would be second, you know, and probably Huntington third. I guess because we live down that way and know everybody in that area. But they are all doing good now, we on good track.

**RD:** That is good. I know your sister has come back and she is helping you isn't she?

**BL:** Well my daughter.

**RD:** Your daughter.

**BL:** My daughter is back, since the nephews had a little problem, you know, and we got rid of a lot of bankers.

**RD:** I had heard she moved back from Dallas, I believe it was.

**BL:** Well she hasn't moved back, but she comes and stays with us two or three, she is pretty well...Don Neil is my head man and then I'm glad to have him too. I tell you that. He is a good one. I got a good crew all the way around.

**RD:** Good.

**BL:** Shanna is working with Don, and I was afraid I would have a little trouble getting Shanna in, because she is kind of raised and been in Dallas for several years and never worked in the bank and I told her when Randy and Rex and the younger crew had trouble and was getting out of it, and I needed Shanna to get in because I didn't know anything about running a bank. I can run a sawmill or a ranch, but I didn't know how to run a bank and Shanna had a CPA degree from A&M and she had worked with banks and audited banks and all of that, so she had a pretty good background in banking. That is what she has done in her life, but it was not her family's bank. So, when I decided to bring her in I told her, I said, "Shanna I don't know much about anything, but I know a good bit about people and how to get along with people." Of course, I had kinfolks in the bank and I said, and Don Neil is kind of my head man now and I said, "When you come in, you act like you don't know anything about anything. When you come in and ask them about stuff, and can you help them with this, and show me this?" And that really worked good. She didn't come in saying, "hey I got a CPA degree and I've been auditing banks for 15 years," you know, she came in just as a nobody, and that really worked good. All the people I got, about 100 now, is getting along with her real good and she just gradually come in.

I said, "The fellow that you really need to let know that you know a little something about this, you're not like me, I don't know anything about how to run a bank..." but she does and Don Neil does. I said, "Don's the one that is going to be your boss, not me. You are going to answer to Don." I had told Don, I said, "I don't know if this girl knows anything or not about this." I downplayed it all I could, and Shanna did too, and after about four, five, six months, Don called me one day and said, "Hey I need to talk to you." I didn't have a clue what he was wanting to talk about. We was fixing to have a board meeting the next day, and he lived in Tyler. He is fixing to move to Lufkin, but he lived in Tyler and he was fixing to be down here for a board meeting and he said, "I want to meet with you before meeting tomorrow. I got something I want to talk to you about." Well shoot, I couldn't sleep good that night. I couldn't imagine what... I was afraid he might be wanting another job, and I really like him and he likes me and I think we are going to be partners until the end of time, now. But I met with him and I couldn't figure and in a little while he said, "I didn't know you would pull a fellow's leg like you will." Just straight laced me, looked at me and didn't smile, didn't grin, didn't do anything. He said, "I didn't think you would fool me about anything." I said, "Man I don't know what you're talking about Don, if I've done anything wrong, I apologize. I haven't done anything. What are you talking about?" He grinned a little bit and he said, "well I think you knew your daughter knew a little bit more than you let on to me, that she knew about banking." I said, "Well she has got a CPA degree and she has audited banks, you know, for all these 15 or 20 years and she has got a CPA. She is a certified and got a CPA license from A&M," but I said, "That don't make her smart being from A&M. I wanted you to train her." And he said, "I think you knew more about her than you thought, than you are telling me." I said, "Well Don let me tell you, if she had come in being my daughter and kind of all of a sudden, she is your first assistant, everybody in the bank would have been mad at her about it. If she comes in and doesn't know anything

and she ask you about everything, and everybody she is talking to, she asks them to help her to get in on this, it has worked real good.” And he said, “well it has worked pretty good but I want you to know you snowed me on this one.” He said, “That girl is a lot smarter than you led me to believe she is. She is your next man to run this bank when I get through with it.” And, they get along just like that, they are just like two little puppies and Don likes her and she likes Don. She won’t do nothing until she runs it by Don, you know, and most of the people, I got the head people now, is they will mend, the two of them hired them. It is really working good right now.

But why Randy is down there, he built that bank down there thinking that one of these days we might split these banks up and he would have one in his area down there to take, you know. That is a little bit of speculation. We didn’t talk about that. We didn’t talk about why we were going down there. I wondered myself why we were going down there, to tell you the truth about it, you know. But Randy was doing it and so now, you know, that was a few years back and now that time has passed I know why we went down there. And it is one of the best moves we had, and I didn’t have nothing to do with it. Randy’s is the one that has put the bank down there and it’s one of the best moves Huntington Bank has ever made. He is the reason the one’s in Tyler, because later on he admitted, he said, “I thought Shanna would want her third if we split them up.” Well we hadn’t never talked about splitting them up, even to this day. Randy had a thought that me and Rex and the rest of us didn’t have, you know, we might want to split them. That is good thinking. He done some good thinking. I’m not knocking him for it, because I think it is good thinking on his part.

**RD:** But you have been the glue that has held it together for the last good many years.

**BL:** Well yes, I’ve been about the only same spot in it, you know, and now Rex is gone and Randy is gone now.

**RD:** Yes.

**JG:** Well again I sure appreciate it. I’ve enjoyed it!

**BL:** I have enjoyed talking to you, you know, an old fellow enjoys talking about old stuff and that is kind of what we’ve talked about. Me and Dick does when we get together; we both about the same age.

**JG:** Well that is great because I think what Mr. Donovan said will be true, you will probably think of things and he will think of things, and just kind of keep a running list and maybe we can get together and do a follow up.

**BL:** There will be other things that we will think about, well I wish I would have asked him this, and well why I didn’t think to tell them this.

**JG:** Sounds good. Well again thank you very much.

**BL:** Okay, I’ve enjoyed it.

**JG:** Thank you!

**END OF INTERVIEW**