

South Texas Hispanic Farm Labor Communities Oral History Project

Interviewees: Albino Barrera and Ernestina Barrera

Family Member Contributors: Ernestina Barrera (spouse), Rose Cavazos

Interviewers: Mark Robbins, Christine Reiser Robbins

Robstown, TX, April 17, 2013

**For the most accurate representation of the interview, see the audio recording held at the South Texas Archives at Texas A&M University-Kingsville, as the process of transcription can contain errors or not fully reflect voice intonations, pauses, and other factors that may convey important meanings. The transcript might not reflect the precise phonetic meaning of what was said in all cases. For instance, what sounds like “mm hmm” might be transcribed as “uh huh,” etc.*

MR: Would you mind stating your names for the record?

AB: My name is Albino Barrera and this is my wife, Ernestina, and my daughter, Rose Cavazos.

MR: So how long have you all lived in Robstown?

AB: Well, in Robstown since '41, 1941. Inside the city limits since '41. I was born only a few miles away from here in Bluntzer, Texas and we lived there for a little while, 'til I was about 4 years old. Then, when my father and my uncle were farming together, then they moved to San Patricio County, which is... San Patricio is a city. And the place they were farming is called Round Lake because there used to be a good-sized lake there. And we lived near the lake, and they farmed with mules, horses. I don't think they even knew how to drive a tractor. And they farmed there until they decided that there wasn't much money to farm when you were renting. So we moved to Robstown, where there was a better chance for them to find a job.

MR: Did they mostly work by the pound or.... were you renting here, too? Were you renting here, too, working as sort of a tenant?

AB: Well, right away because we moved in, my mom and dad they bought a lot. They bought a lot and it took them just a little while, they built a small house. We moved in later. They added onto the house, so we all were living in a one-bedroom with a kitchen, until they added another room. There was four of us in the family.

MR: Wow. And was the house on the farm that you normally worked at or did you kind of move around?

AB: The farm was right where we lived. You would walk out the door and into the field. We raised hogs and goats, lot of chickens. My ma always had anywhere from 50 chickens – hens – or more. And sometimes we had as many as 15 hogs. And of course my dad owned a couple of mules and two horses. My uncle had another, so they would stitch it together and plow the field. Everything was horses.

MR: And what did you normally grow in the field? Was it mostly cotton?

AB: Oh no. Mostly it was grain. And corn. Corn, lot of corn. We had a patch that would give lots of watermelon. And like, hay. We had, I think they call it cultivator. And we would tie it up and we would stack them up in the field and then after they dry up in the field, they would make hay or haystacks. They had to know how to set the hay because so that it would drain. If it rained, it would drain off, or they would have rotten grain. And they would always stack them up when you would start taking out the hay to feed the animals, it was always dry. Course, they had to know how to do it. They would find a way how to stack it in the field, after the rain they would make haystacks, how to set them up so that every time it rained, the water would drain out.

MR: Was it hard to learn how to do that?

AB: Normally my job was to gather eggs, feed the... the feed in the corrals by the time the men came in so that the mules or horses could drink water and go to work and eat up that hay [difficult to hear]. And also, I had the job to feed the hogs. Gather the hay and feed the hogs. And then you saw the sun going down, made sure that all the hens had gotten into the hen coop, otherwise the coyotes would have a feast. So, we had plenty to do out there til it got dark. We always had 3 or 4 dogs who were pretty well trained to take care of the house, the yard. And they knew when someone was around that wasn't supposed to be around the chicken coops.

MR: And did you ever have...so you had some problems with folks coming by to steal chickens?

AB: Not really, because it was quite a ways.

[Interruption]

AB: Round Lake, we were always [inaudible] to fish and we were only about a mile from the Nueces River. We would circle around and there was quite a lot of...where to go hunting. We had meat available all the time--chickens. We would eat squirrels. And there were plenty of them.

CR: What kinds of things were you able to hunt? Squirrels?

AB: Dogs would find them. Finally they got me a .22. One bullet, .22. Of course, we either were fishing or were out there hunting.

RC: Did you hunt raccoons?

AB: [Spanish phrase].

RC: Because we read *Where the Red Fern Grows*, and you know how they go coon hunting. And he said they used to.

AB: There were armadillos. That's good eating. My mom was there, good cooking. The stove, the cooking machines, were wood burning. We'd chop wood and my mama was there and fixing

something to eat. Everybody had a job. Like, the hens, they would lay eggs. They would find and build a nest and my job was to find where the nest was and gather the eggs, every day. And then on Saturday we would come to town and bring the eggs. Boy, did my mom did have a lot of chickens -- we were ready to sell to Kentucky Fried Chicken [laughter]. We would bring them outside and we had a cook who would load up the chickens in a Model T pickup. We would load up the pickup with chickens and haul off to downtown. Chickens, sometimes chicken and eggs.

There was a man here, can't recall his name, who had a little store and he would sell about anything. Now, he would buy our eggs and then he would spread them around, and the chickens the same way. He had a big old coup there, and put all the chickens there. Now, sometimes they would raid his chicken coop. Our dogs wouldn't let people around at night. We had some very well-trained dogs.

MR: How close were your closest neighbors?

AB: Well, we had one neighbor that was only about 1000 yards away. But he was also farming, but he had [inaudible] the other side. And I would say the other neighbors were probably a mile away. Down that way a mile to the north. And also they would be busy with their farm. I never to seem to remember any time that I was hear that somebody stole a chicken or hogs. Neither did I remember of our neighbors complaining about anything. Once in a while we would hear one of the ranchers who would lose a cattle. Of course, whoever stole a calf, he knew how to get rid of it, how to handle it.

MR: So how did you go about finding the land you lived on here in Robstown? Did you rent the land or was it tenant farming?

AB: When we moved to town, my daddy and my mom they bought the lot. And that's where they built the little shack. And then they added a couple of rooms by the time we were growing up.

MR: That's right, you mentioned the kitchen and then moving out from there. Did most of your neighbors follow a similar path, buying a lot and then farming on there?

AB: Yes. There's a neighborhood here where I grew up. Right where -- about-- south of here. Everybody there--there was, in fact, mostly people living there were engaged in working in the farms. Picking cotton, picking vegetables. At that time, there was just about everybody planted vegetables. Now everybody goes to cotton and grain. But back then, beets and lettuce, just about everything.

MR: Did you feel like there was more rain back then?

AB: Well, I don't remember ever hearing people are talking about how dry they were. I can't remember [inaudible] Of course, seems like everybody would plant according to how the rain was coming.

MR: Were you, and your family, able to do all the necessary farming on the plot that you all owned or did you have to hire out others from time to time to help out?

AB: Well, like when my dad and my uncle were farming together we would help the neighbors and then they would help us. And of course, we would miss school to help pick cotton. By the way the school that I went to, it was in San Patricio. The building burnt up. As you cross the river, as you cross the last store there, you start making a turn going toward Mathis. The school was right there. And we were in Round Lake. So we had to walk I would say anywhere from 3.5 to 4 miles and we had all kinds of objects, the dogs. The neighbors also had dogs and turkey. There was a lady who always had turkeys and she had a dog, big ole turkeys, they would chase us. Sometimes we were more afraid of turkeys than the dogs.

MR: Those were some mean turkeys. So when did you usually go to school? After the harvest?

AB: The winter. And of course, there in the spring they would be planting, cultivating cotton and the grain. Not too much work. Sometimes we had to chop cotton and we would miss a day or two of the week of school to help out. Course everybody knew how to use a hoe, anywhere from my mom to sisters. We knew how to handle the hoe to chop cotton.

MR: So when you were chopping cotton, when did you normally start during the day? Was it pretty early in the morning?

AB: Well, sometimes the sun hadn't come out very well and when we quit the sun was about gone. We had the chopping going on and all of that from sunrise to sunset. We didn't...I don't think we had a clock.

MR: So what were your most memorable experiences when you were chopping cotton? Anything stick out to you as a particular memory that you'd like to share?

AB: Well, sometimes we would run into rabbits in the field. There, we were chasing rabbits...[inaudible] in the back pocket and rocks in our pockets. We didn't have any money. We had rocks. And we were pretty good...

MR: When you caught the rabbits did you eat it?

AB: Of course we would eat it. They were good.

MR: Pretty tasty.

AB: We would skin them, skin the rabbit and my mama would take it from there. Armadillos....sometimes we'd go out to hunt armadillos. Sometimes they would go – they had holes – and they would go in the holes. And we'd always carry *talarche* [?], a garden hoe, and we would dig him out of the hole. That's where this joke came around that these people were out in the field and here comes a lion. All the animals took off except armadillo. And finally an elephant asked "how come you aren't afraid of anything? You never run away." He said the only

thing I am afraid of is to see a Mexican with a hoe. Every time we see a Mexican come around with a hoe, we take off.

That was a long time ago and we didn't have any Black people around. We hardly ever saw Black people around, even in town. So, whatever was done by the farmers themselves and hired Mexicanos.

MR: And so how long would the chopping season last? How long would you be doing that for, usually?

AB: Well, I can't explain to myself why they would plant. I guess because they were afraid that they would have rain. They would plant the cotton seeds real close together, so when the cotton was about so high we would go and chop off some so we would leave one where it would be about a foot apart so that when they grow up and start having lots of leaves, they wouldn't be crowded together. There was room to breathe. And then after that, well, the weeds started coming, coming up. So we would go out there and chop off the weeds.

MR: So it seemed pretty continuous, always working.

AB: Cause cultivators that would come. They would clear the row of cotton, they would come right -- the row of cotton in between and cut some of the weeds off, but those weeds that were next to the plant we had to go with the hoe and cut them up.

CR: Where did you take the cotton after you chopped it? Where did it go?

AB: The cotton? We had trailers and the trailers that we would pull to go the gin. Like when my dad was farming there near San Patricio, we had to haul the cotton all the way to Mathis. Well, in between San Patricio and Mathis there was a gin, and we would take the trailer and leave it there, load it, and next day we'd go get the trailer, and load it up again.

RC: Did you mean the cotton that had been thinned out?

CR: No, that's what I meant -- where did it-- if it went to a gin, or where in went...

AC: Well, after the gin, they would sell it. They had buyers that would come and buy it buy the bales. I don't remember how much money was in a bale. But that's the way it would go. They would normally, the operator of the gin would be the agent who would bring buyers in to buy the cotton.

CR: Did you have to pay the gin or did the gin just take money from the sales to the buyers?

AB: From the sale. They would take part out of the sale to pay for the gin.

MR: So how long were you at that farm and working in the fields there? I think you mentioned that you came there -- was it in the 1940s? How long were you there for?

AB: Well, we lived in San Patricio since I was four years old. Before that, mom, dad, and my uncle would work together all the time in Bluntzer. We lived on the house just before you cross the river which is now... what is it? 666. Just before you cross the river is a house—there was a store there, and we lived in the house right behind that store. And, of course, again we were real close to the river -- to catch gars or yellow cads, blue cads. It was mostly what. So we always had a line set. And we would check that line every day. We were there and after we moved to San Patricio we start going to school. I didn't go to school until I go to San Patricio. And by the way, I was the only one who could speak English when we were in school there. And that was because we had a neighbor who were Anglos and we used to play, go hunting together. That's where I learned to speak English before I went to school. So a lot of the farm kids, who come from farms, they didn't know any English. So there I was, I always got good grades because I was the interpreter. Even my sister could not speak as well as I could because she didn't have -- our neighbor had nothing but boys. She took a little longer to learn to speak.

MR: Did a lot of the other students at the school end up coming late because they were working in the fields, too?

AB: Same way. It was the same pattern. Sometimes me and my sister would get to school late because it was a long way to walk.

MR: And with the turkeys on the way, too!

AB: Course we would take tacos for [inaudible] and water, we had to go... we didn't have running water. Like us, we used to go in a little barrel. We used to go get -- our neighbors, they had wells that you would drop the can in and then bring it up. We would load our barrel. We always, two boys had the duty of going after water. Course it was natural. Those were the wooden barrels and that normally kept the water cool.

CR: Did you get the water in the morning or at night or both?

AB: We would go get the water the first thing before classes. And of course when school was out, we were ready to take off and go home because normally we had some chores to do. And the days were not very long. Seems like those days were so short.

CR: Did you walk to school with the kids from the neighboring farms too?

AB: Well, where we lived, me and my sister we lived the farthest. Far away. We lived at the Round Lake area. But all the way there sometimes we would pick all... because the school we went to then was nothing but Mexicanos. And the Anglos would go to one school and we went to our school. And of course the Anglos had a pump, to pump the old water. And no, we had to [inaudible] water. And of course after you got to the 6th grade, the bus would come from Mathis to school to pick you up. But it was after you were 6th grade, I think.

MR: So did you end up going to school in Mathis?

AB: I never got to school in Mathis, see, because we moved to San Patricio. We moved to the Calallen area and we went to school in Calallen. So, I know they moved here almost in February.

MR: In Calallen, did they have separate schools for Anglo kids?

AB: In elementary, yes. Once you got out of the elementary and went to the middle school, they would mix high school. But all the elementary grades were separate.

MR: There did you see, after elementary, did you see a lot of farm kids at school in Calallen? Were they mostly farm kids in Calallen?

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AB: well, just about everybody who went to school either lived on a ranch or a farm. Even all of the Anglos. I can't remember jobs like Refineries and all that. There were construction jobs, lot of construction jobs. But I don't remember refineries. And you know, [inaudible] all that kind of work was farther up from Calallen, up towards near where now we have the bridge.

MR: So did a lot of the kids arrive to school late to Callallen because they were helping in the fields?

AB: Well, some. We had a bus, Calallen had a bus to come, one way. They had another bus to go another way. Sometimes the bus would get there late (laughing), especially in bad weather. But nobody griped for getting to school late. Teachers, they had much to say. I don't think they could help it anyway.

CR: What did you and your friends do for fun at school? At recess or something? Were there games that you played before or after school?

AB: Well, the most popular games played were baseball -- softball and baseball. And we had what they call "Hide and Go Seek." You've probably heard. That was something we played. Other than that, there wasn't much to do outside.

MR: What were the teachers like at school?

AB: Well, they used to say that I was the pet because I did a lot of work for the teacher. But the teachers they had to teach sometimes five grades. We didn't have kindergarten [?]. We had 1st grade, 2nd grade, up to the 5th grade. From 1st grade up. Then you would go to another school.

MR: Well, I remember Rose had mentioned that you had coached baseball later on and she mentioned that you had Eugene Upshaw on one of your teams?

AC: Oh, you are talking about here in Robstown. Little League. Well, we won the state championship in '58. I got pictures there (pointing to pictures). We won state in '58 and we had four teams. The team that won the league, the manager would manage the All-Stars. So anyhow, in '58 my team won the League. And then we choose the better players from all the teams. And the Upshaws, well back then the Upshaws came to play Little League -- we were about the first

team in the area who allowed black kids to play. We had three blacks that played Little League, made the All-Star. The two Upshaw brothers and another, Thom(?) or something like that -- I got pictures there -- that made the team.

We suffered quite a bit, because we won state championship. We won 11 games to win the state championship. So from there we went to Kentucky to play in the Regional. And we all, we went on a train from here to Houston, just a passenger. And in Houston we got on a sleeper. We got to Memphis and in Memphis we got off to go, to go get another train. We were going to get on a Louisville and Nashville lines. So we got all our stuff, so we was going to eat breakfast because we got there at daybreak. So, we wound up eating in the garden outside, tables outside, because we had two black kids, three black kids. So then after we ate breakfast, we loaded up on an L&N and it took off and on the way we picked up some professional players, they were playing for Cincinnati. They were on the train with us. And about that time, you probably don't remember, when they had all this in Little Rock, unless you read about it. Okay, we had to go through Little Rock. And one of the coaches that I had helping me, I had two. Both of them were black. The Upshaw father and the other was Hayes, who was related (?). So all the way we start talking about it. So we put the kids to bed and we went to the lounge where all these guys were talking for, you know, from Cincinnati. And the conductor came by and [inaudible] "how long before we get to Little Rock?" And the conductor said "oh, we should be there in about 30 minutes." And then one of the black coaches, he said, "I'm going to bed. I want to be in bed when we go through Little Rock." So then when we get to Nashville, we were the only team that did not go to a motel, hotel. Again, because we had blacks. So, we went to a -- what do you call it? -- to, the name of the place was Metaltown [?], outside of Memphis. And it was like a -- what hotel is here? -- it wasn't a hotel, it was just a lake area.

RC: Oh, like cabins?

AB: Cabins. Small rooms. So we get to the desk. We get there and the manager said, "Well, your rooms aren't ready." And he looked, talked to me and said, "I didn't know you had Blacks on this team." See, we belonged to automobile -- what was it -- association. "I should have asked permission to allow a team that had Blacks. And I didn't know you had Blacks." But I'll tell you, he says, "the kids can stay in the room. But the adults, I can't let you stay in the room." He said, "I'll tell you what. You see that house over there -- he's talking to me -- see that house over there, that's my house. Tell them to go and choose any bedroom, I got three bedrooms, and they can stay in my house. Or, here is the keys to my car. Tell them to go downtown in my car and here's my card to pay for the room. And they can stay downtown. Either way, go find a room downtown or sleep in my house." They decided to go downtown. And then there I was with 14 people. 14 kids. And we didn't have televisions here [in Robstown]. And all of the rooms had TV. At 12 o'clock at night they were still watching TV. And the adults, then we had two families that were traveling with us. One was the person of the league, and one of his was on the team. And the other also had a kid on the team, Solomon [?]. They moved to the room by themselves. And they took the kids with them. And there I was, running from room to room, trying to get the kids to go to bed. 12 o'clock, and they were still up.

MR: Did they have a game the next day?

AB: We got [inaudible] the next day [they lost].

MR: Were they pretty tired?

AB: We got beat because -- we got up around 8:00, I think it was around 8:00. And we couldn't find a restaurant that would let us in with black kids. We had to go to the Air Force base to eat at the Air Force cafeteria. They came and picked us up. So after we came back, I told the kids, get your stuff because we have to go practice. I said, "I don't think we should practice, but they say it's mandatory that all the teams practice before a game." I wanted them to stay in bed. But they didn't let us. They had to go out in the field. By the time we got to play, it was around 1:00. And the kids... we had a very good team, I would say, for Little League. Out of the 11 games we played, we had made 4 errors in 11 games. And of course we had the big boys, the Upshaws. One was a pitcher and the other was a first baseman. And the one that was pitching couldn't pitch two consecutive games. We had another pitcher and he would play a little first base. We could switch around. But, we could not pitch a kid two consecutive -- he couldn't pitch. So we would start playing, and the first thing -- the pitcher [inaudible] -- two no hitters. Through the tournament. He started pitching, and he walked three straight batters. And I can remember that like it was yesterday. Then the fourth batter came to bat, and he struck out. Then the next guy had a line drive to left field and the leftfielder was taking a nap. And the ball dropped somewhere in front of him. The three runners on base scored. By the time the game was over, they had scored 11 runs.

MR: Oh dear

AB: And we had scored, I think, 3 or 4. That no hitter pitcher we had, he just wasn't there. And so, like I said... We lost to Alabama. And again, in that tournament, we were the only team with black kids. Nobody else had black kids.

MR: Did some of the other players on other teams give your team trouble because of that?

AB: Yes, because we didn't get the rest that we should have gotten. And, like I said, I was running from one room to the other, and the kids [were] watching television at 1 o'clock in the morning, and because I didn't have -- the two coaches were black -- to help me, you know, take care of the kids.

RC: Were they allowed on the field, the coaches?

AB: The -- what now?

RC: Upshaw and Hayes, were they allowed on the field?

AB: What, the blacks? No. We were the only team with blacks. We were the only team that had black kids. And the only reason we had black kids -- because the superintendent of schools here, he said -- he met with us when we elect -- he says -- before the Little League started -- he says, "This is coming." He says, "we're fixing to bring high school kids to the high school." Because at that time, black kids were going to Corpus. And so, we might as well start early. He advised

us, so we started taking the black kids too. At the same time that the Anglos and the Mexican kids, we started taking them in. Do you want to see the picture of the state champions?

MR: Sure, that would be great.

CR: He would love to see that. That's really interesting that the superintendent said, "this is coming, we're going to get started early."

EB: He was a real nice guy.

RC: Who was it?

EB: Mr. Quarter

RC: Oh, it was Mr. Quarter.

CR: Wow, that's amazing.

MR: Were a lot of the students at the school at that time, were they still, were they working in the fields at that point?

EB: I don't think so as – not here it Robstown. That's where he lived, because he lived in the farm. I grew up here. I was born here in Robstown. So I don't know. I didn't have that. The only thing was that my dad was, had a truck, and he worked in the fields –well, he didn't work, he had the truck, he had people working for him. And he brought kinds of vegetables, because here, I mean it was vegetables everywhere. Good vegetables. That's where I learned to eat all of my vegetables [laughter].

CR: That's smart, yeah. How different today when you drive around.

EB: Oh, it's very different, and that's how I grew up. Eating all that – fresh vegetables. But my dad had a truck and he worked, and they made good money. Mom would say that he'd make a lot of money.

MR: Where did he sell them?

EB: He would go to Houston to the market. He had a big truck.

CR: A big truck, not like a pickup?

EB: A big one

RC: He had a truck that had the big long bed that he used when he worked in the field, and then he had a dump truck. He had two beds, so... switch up the beds. And when it was, well not farming time, he would haul, you know, loads of soil. He would alternate field work and...

EB: But, I never had the, you know...grew up here...

RC: But she did pick cotton.

EB: Yeah, but up to 11 years old. It was not that long. You know, we would go, and my dad would go to -- what was it, um, Amarillo? It was way down there. And Plainview and Slaton, all of those places up there. But, I was young, I was very young, you know. We would pick cotton, because I was the oldest, and when he would go to the gin to take some, you know, the bales of cotton, I would have to help him with...

AB: This is the All-stars of the 1958 state champions [finding the picture to show]

MR and CR: Wow

CR: Look at that. That is so neat.

AB: You see the blacks in the back row, the two Upshaws, and the other, I can't think of his name.

MR: Huh. Wow. So, how long was the trip?

AB: The trip to Memphis?

MR: Yeah.

AB: We got a train here. Do you remember, Tina? It was Friday, 11:00, 10:00 o'clock?

EB: About 10 o'clock

AB: 10 o'clock in the morning, and we went to Houston, and we got on the sleeper in Houston, and then rode night. We got to Memphis, we got to Memphis somewhere between 8:00 and 9:00 o'clock in the morning.

EB: About how many hours did it take, you don't remember?

AB: Well, we didn't lose any time anywhere -- with 10:00 o'clock to the next morning at 9:00 o'clock.

MR: And you played 11 games...

AB: And we played -- we didn't play until about 1:00 or 2:00 o'clock.

MR: Oh, okay.

EB: The 11 games they played were here.

MR: Played here, and then later on, a few more...okay

EB: They lost the only one

MR: Oh, it was one, oh, okay

EB: I guess it was single elimination.

CR: Did the state pay for the team to go, or did...who paid for the team to go?

AB: We did. We raised money, and the league paid for the train.

CR: Okay, wow.

EB: And the parents, of course.

MR: Yeah.

AB: Yeah, it was part of the experience going to the playoffs. Of course [inaudible]

CR: Did the other three – you said there were four teams here...

AB: There were four teams, and there were – one team had mostly black kids -- were on a team called the Dodgers, and the black guy there, he was the manager of the Dodgers. And we had mostly Mexicanos...on the team I had, from this area here. And then, the other manager had mostly kids from the farms, Anglos. When we voted for All-star, we took, according to how good the kids were. We didn't want anybody just because his hair was blonde, or because... we wanted kids that knew how to play.

MR: Uh huh

AB: And we had some good kids in there. Can you pick the Upshaws [referencing the picture]?

[laughter]

AB: One of the Upshaws is still living. He lives in-

EB: Los Angeles

AB: California. That's Marvin. Eugene, he got picked in the first round out of A&I, I think, and went to Oakland, and, of course, he became an All-pro the first year he was on a pro team. And after he retired, he became the president of the national football association until he died. He died unexpectedly. And the young one never played any sports. He was in band. He was in the band. And he also went to school in California. I think it was Stanford. And he died very young, while he was still in school.

CR: Wow. Are there any Upshaws in town still, or no?

AB: No, [inaudible] Upshaw died about five years ago.

EB: A little bit more.

AB: Huh?

EB: A little but more.

AB: And Mrs. Upshaw died I think before him. Before him. And of course, Marvin, he played. Who did he play for? Cincinnati, I think. And when they got together in California, Marvin and Eugene, they formed a team, and they built a restaurant and dance hall place. And they call [inaudible]. They were doing great. And I don't know what Marvin is doing now, but that family came from Cuero, and I see -- once in a while an Upshaw in that area, because there was one playing in the Canadian league about two, three years ago. He was, [inaudible] have been a cousin to this Upshaw. But sometime he came here and they had [inaudible] in the area.

MR: Wow, It's very interesting. What a story. And so, was this, was the trip, was it in the fall, or in the summer, or?

AB: What now?

MR: The trip, was it in the fall or the summer?

AB: No, it was in the summer.

MR: In the summertime, okay.

AB: Little League goes...after school time....

CR: Was there -- the teams here then were separate; there was the Anglo team, and a black team, and a Hispanic team?

AB: When we were playing in Little League, we didn't have any distinction.

CR: Oh, okay.

AB: Now, us, Robstown. We were playing Anglos or Mexicanos together.

CR: Okay.

AB: But, this is where [referencing the picture]

Discussion of the picture of the team, their Little League trophy and the idea of donating it to the Robstown Museum

AB: The All-Star team had one, two, three, four Anglos. And they had, one, two, three blacks. And then the rest were Mexicanos. One, two, three, four, five. Five Mexicans.

Brief discussion of the dog making noise in the other room.

CR: Was there ever any trouble having mixed teams here when you played in the games? No, no trouble?

AB: We never had a problem. And, I think it was only one team, had one little black kid. It was Taft. I think they had one black kid in Taft. Then, we played all the way to the Valley, to Laredo, and to – and we never played with a team that had any black kids. We played Kingsville, we played Alice, Laredo, Falfurrias. We beat all of those teams to win the state championship. And, of course, Taft here, and...we played. Because we were eliminating each other, and we beat all of those teams to win. Because we played 11 games and we won all 11 games. Beat some Corpus Christi teams, who were pretty good teams.

CR: When you were growing up either on the farm or in Calallen, did you go to Corpus Christi? Would you ever go to Corpus Christi for any reason?

AB: To Corpus Christi?

CR: Yeah

AB: I don't remember going there often. Maybe once or twice a year. Of course, most of the time, we would go in a truck and we stayed close to the truck.

MR: While he was getting the picture, you were starting to talk about how your dad had a truck, and how you picked until you were about eleven, so...

EB: We would go out into the, you know, where the farm was, you know. After he finished here, so he would take the family and we would go, and I would help him when he would go to the gin. I would help him weigh the sacks. And I would have to pick them up and empty them and weigh and keep the, you know. But, it was not that bad for me, you know. It wasn't that long, because we would go in September – that's where I would miss the school – we would leave in September and we would come in like November. And then, I would start the year, but I would pass all the years. I mean, I would pass. Because I was an A student. I was lucky in that. But, I didn't work that long. I didn't have a hard time as he did. So that's the only thing that I remember. And when he would bring it all the, when there was Watermelon time, and Cantaloupes, he would leave some at home and we would sell them. People would come and buy them there. Or my little brother would take them in a little wagon and he would sell them down the street. So that's about it...because my mother would say that she had kept some chickens way back, because they let them there in the city, you know, to keep a chicken coop. But, only for the family. But she would tell me. I don't remember it. I don't remember.

CR: Where in town did you grow up?

EB: Across the tracks, close to the Catholic Church.

CR: Okay

MR: Okay, right by St. Anthony's right there?

EB: Yes, about a block and a half. And he grew up on this side. And, we got married in '51, and I didn't know him, I didn't know he existed [laughter]

CR: How did you meet?

EB: Well, one time they took us to a, like a banquet. It was from church, you know. For young ladies. And that's -- he was the bus driver. And that's where he saw me.

CR: But you hadn't known each other?

EB: No

[Simultaneous talking]

CR: And different parts of town, did that make a difference?

EB: No, not really because he would go to that church.

CR: Okay

RC: He got a lifetime achievement award from the church.

MR: That's great.

CR: Congratulations.

RC: He started working there, when? When he was 14?

EB: Well, I got one too.

CR: Congratulations.

MR: Wow.

RC: Yes, they got it at the same time.

RC: In this house, since 19 what? 56?

EB: 56

CR: So you celebrated your 60th wedding anniversary a couple of years ago.

EB: We have some work to do. We are coming on number two [laughing].

CR: We came back and we met -- How long have the Stevers been married. Sixty years?

MR: I think maybe 70, I think.

CR: We came back just as some friends in Corpus were celebrating, I think it was their 70th wedding anniversary. And they announced it, and they looked at us, and they said, "you have some work to do." Sixty-nine years to go. [laughter] We had been married three weeks or something.

MR: I suppose we could actually end the recording. Thank you so much. I'll stop the recording.