

South Texas Hispanic Farm Labor Communities Oral History Project

Interview with Marvin and Yetta Leshin

Interviewees: Marvin and Yetta Leshin

Interviewers: Mark Robbins and Christine Robbins

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ML: Well, they have had gone through some very bad financial, um, situation in, um, and um, in Waco. My father was running a saloon there. That's where I was born. And then when the prohibition [sic] came in, they had to go out of business. He went -- they went into the women's shoe business. The stock -- they had that big inventory and at that time the women wore those buckles, the shoes that buckled up on the -- it went out of style. They had all inventory and it bankrupted them.

MR: Oh.

ML: So they were just looking for a place to make a living - - things. People that didn't go through the depression just can't realize how bad it was. And, um, they went down there and first crack out of the box I (inaudible), five years-old. And, of course, you know, it was a real hard situation getting started but there were two -- two of the boys. They had two sons. Those two sons, there were six grandchildren born; five boys and one girl. I'm sorry... [sadness]

YL: Marvin, what's the matter? Shall I continue your story? The two boys, out of the two boys, the grandchildren - the, um, okay there were five boys and one girl. And we have three doctors, two attorneys, and the daughter; the girl, majored in literature. Went back to school got her nursing degree, worked just a short while and now sells real estate.

CR: Oh, my gosh

TL: And so

ML: I'm sorry, but I just -

TL: Marvin. But then, but then the oldest boy which grandmother's boy of course and everybody's, he is an endocrinologist. And extremely, extremely bright. Thought himself Russian when he was going to school and he just studies all -- you know, he's just really bright, bright.

CR: Yeah

TL: His brother's second boy, which is the baby of the family, is a mole, is that the way you -- in Winston Salem. That's the, that's the dermatology, the cancer bit. And that's -- and he taught at Winston Salem for a while.

CR: Okay.

ML: At Wake -- at Wake

TL: At Wake Forest. And the daughter, graduated at the University of Texas, married, moved to Dallas, she's married to a veterinarian. And, then she went to school became a nurse and so forth, went on and has two children and has; one, two - has five grandchildren and one of the grand -- her granddaughter's husband died of bone cancer when the baby was very little. And she wanted a baby and so that's -- and so she has recently, he's been dead several years, and she just recently remarried.

CR: Wow.

ML: And she, she works and um -- she went to Hastings Law School

CR: Oh, yeah.

MR: Oh, yeah

CR: One of my best friend's went there.

ML: Alright. And she became, she's a labor lawyer.

CR: Oh.

ML: I don't know the name of the firm, in San Francisco.

YL: San Francisco.

CR: Okay, oh wow.

YL: And so that, that but -- she recently remarried and she married, I can't remember what the husband does, but his wife had died and left him with a child that's maybe a year or two older than her child. These little girls are like sisters.

CR: Oh gosh.

YL: They hit off, they hit off so great and all that, that was just -- okay. Our -- I don't have to tell you about our boys. There, there here and then our middle boy is an attorney in Dallas. And-

CR: So, he's with your niece? She's in Dallas.

ML: No.

YL: She's in San Francisco.

CR: Oh, she's-

YL: She's married --

ML: She's in San Francisco --

YL: Okay. But this, but this, but our middle boy is in Dallas. And he is an attorney

there and has a home in North Carolina, which they spend a lot of time there and he is able to do some law work, you know, from his office there. And so – they're the ones that have the two little girls.

CR: Oh, I see.

YL: And so that's -- does that bring us up to everybody.

ML: I think so.

YL: They can't -- in other words, what Marvin was trying to tell you is that he came a long way.

CR: Yeah.

ML: Yeah, yeah.

CR: Absolutely.

YL: As you all know, with everybody's family, I mean that's the story.

CR: And one of the things that's amazing to us too, when we got together with our families is to see our parents' generation or the next one how many people have come from them. I mean...

YL: That's right

CR: How many children and then grandchildren and now great grandchildren, it's amazing...

YL: You have sisters or brothers?

CR: I have two sisters.

YL: How wonderful.

CR: And Mark has three brothers (laughter).

MR: I'm the youngest.

YL: Alright. And where are your brothers?

MR: Um, pretty spread out. Two are, well, two are actually in Southern California. One is in Los Angeles and one is in Temecula. And, which is sort of...

YL: I don't know that yet.

MR: It's sort of in between San Diego and LA, and interior. And then I have one in State College, Pennsylvania.

YL: Oh.

MR: And he, he's a botanist

YL: Alright. That's what our oldest grandson, not grandson, our oldest nephew. The one that is the doctor.

ML: The criminologist.

YL: But that's what - - that's what he started out with.

CR: Oh

YL: Isn't that interesting.

MR: Oh, wow. Wow. (Talking over each other).

ML: -- undergraduate work and he went ahead and got his degree in botany.

CR: Okay.

MR: Okay. Okay.

YL: Now, what about your sisters?

CR: My sisters, they're both younger. Mark's the youngest in his family and I'm the oldest in mine. So my sisters are both younger. One is in California, Northern California, outside of San Francisco. And the other is in New York, in

Brooklyn. She's gonna be moving to go to grad school. She's been living in Brooklyn for the last past couple of years.

YL: And what's her major?

CR: She's is going to -- she's hoping to go to grad school for social work. She's been working the last couple of years in a non-profit organization that works with people in family courts. And she acts kind of liaison between the lawyers and social workers. And she had been trying to decide whether she wanted to go into the legal end or into the social work end. So I think this job kind of prompted her to realize that she really likes working with people and would like to be in the social services end of things.

ML: Our oldest granddaughter in Maryland

CR: Uh huh.

ML: Is an attorney for an agency that handles abuse and neglected children.

CR: Okay. That would be exactly what my sister -- the kind of situation my sister's in.

ML: And she's on the law

CR: On the law side. Yeah, okay.

YL: And the interesting thing is - - and we're rattling too much and not telling them what they want to know.

CR: No.

MR: No.

YL: But everything closed down. Where -- in Maryland, um I guess -- Tuesday

ML: Because of the snow storm.

YL: -- School. The storm and everything. And when that closes down, the --

ML: Courts do not.

YL: No, wait a minute, honey. The childcare did not close, I mean closed.

Everything closed. So she had to take the little girl to court. Eight months old, and she sent us a picture of the little girl sitting at the judge's desk with -- in her hands and the judge is standing there smiling at her.

CR: That's great (laughter).

YL: You know, that's those pictures are what keeps us going.

CR: Oh, my gosh (laughter).

YL: Let's go back.

CR: I just love that. That's great.

YL: But it was. It was - just for us, it was especially great

ML: But, but, that is what brought us to Robstown. My father, they were just looking for a place to make a living.

CR: Yeah.

ML: And, um, they got started there, but slow 25 foot, um, selling anything from guns to dyes, just anything. It was, of course, it was a hard start, but, and, um,

CR: Were there a lot of -- when you were growing up do you remember a lot of other stores in Robstown too?

ML: Oh, it was -- all these small farms were almost like small factories. You got -- and um, Robstown, there wasn't transportation, transportation like you have now, these roads. They had between Robstown and Corpus, there was one two-way highway. The 37 that takes you from Corpus to Calallen, dirt road. Now, that was -- this is a side -- story about that. When they decided to pave that road, a fellow had bought up some land real near there in claimed it was a cemetery. So he could claim his -- so much damage, you know, the cemetery right...

CR: Yeah. Right.

ML: But it didn't work out. But anyway

YL: Now, Susan's parents had a store in Robstown. And --

CR: Uh huh.

ML: There were about -- the downtown area hadn't change much in that time, the downtown there is set up right next to where the two railroads crossed. And had a wooden hotel there -- well one of the hotels is

YL: It's still there.

ML: The old Brendle Hotel.

MR: Oh, yeah, yeah. I know exactly where you're talk about.

ML: In fact, one of these hurricanes were coming in my folks didn't have a place to stay, they'd moved in there for the night. With the two boys, their two boys. But that is was one of the -- and then they had, on Main Street, they had a wooden hotel. That was torn down before Yetta came to Robstown. And, um,

YL: But this is what they want to know about, Marvin. And this--

ML: And that's I don't know about. I don't -- I don't know how that migrant camp

got started; how they used it.

How we got involved - Yetta became pregnant and we were living in, it was right after the war. There was very few -- housing was just nonexistent. They hadn't built any housing all during the war period. And, um

YL: We were in a --

ML: We were

YL: -- garage apartment. The lady was the nicest thing. I still have some of her recipes. Anyway, we were right next door and so -- and that was the thing, the doctor said I had to get downstairs.

Now, then if you talk to Glenn Scoggins Elliff, she would say -- her mother says well, "I lived there, I didn't have to move down." It's amazing how Robstown people lived in that apartment. But anyway, so we had to move. I wanted to move here. Marvin absolutely did not want to. We had quite a discussion but anyway, we had no choice. And --

ML: We had other friends who lived in there --

YL: But we had friends, dear friends, dear friends. And at that time, I can't remember if Willard was still running it or if Haynie had started running it when we moved.

ML: I think Haynie had

YL: Now, that Haynie is the uncle of Scott Elliff.

MR: Uh huh.

YL: Okay, so that kind of-

ML: Scott is the Superintendent of Schools [in Corpus Christi]

YL: See, aren't y'all glad you met somebody that -- Susan and Bill could tell you, I'm sure as much as we have. But anyway, and so that, that was -- anyway they, um - - I wish I had some pictures that I could show you what it they looked like. If you can imagine, the closets did not have doors

MR: Uh huh.

YL: You put, you, you put a rod up, and you put a piece of cloth down.

ML: Now, there was two areas. There was, there was this one area that had these little cottages and then there was this big dormitory type outfits arraignments on another area. Now, that's where they kept the, um, these transient labors stayed, and then I don't know who stayed in these cottages at that time. But there were several people who, like us, were just desperate, you know, to find a place to live.

CR: Uh huh.

YL: But, um --

ML: We lived in one of the little cottages -- two babies

YL: It was -- the living room and the kitchen

ML: Are you sure you won't have a cup of tea?

YL: Of tea

MR: I'm alright. Um, would you like some?

YL: Would you like a cup?

CR: Well, I'll take one if you don't mind, thank you.

YL: I would love it. Would you like a cup of tea?

MR: Well, sure. That would be wonderful, thank you.

YL: We're just tea drinkers. And we got away from the coffee and we talked about, should I make a pot of coffee? I don't have coffee.

CR: My father is a tea drinker?

MR: He loves tea.

CR: He always has a mug in his hand.

ML: Well, I got started with this green tea because it's supposed to be good for you. I've been drinking it for years and um, I've become addicted. But um,

YL: Marvin, push the cookies over towards them, they've got eat cookies.

ML: I beg your pardon.

YL: They've got to eat cookies and they have to know the name of the cookies.

CR: Oh.

ML: Oh, these, these have a strange name. They're called the "Damn Cookies."

YL: These are the Damn Cookies.

ML: The ladies that lived upstairs, they tried to repeat this recipe and every time she, she just couldn't make them. She just got frustrated and she started call them Damn Cookies. I believe she used, she used baking --

YL: Well, the opposite of baking soda, baking power, whatever

CR: Uh huh.

MR: Yeah.

YL: She didn't mash them down and that was the thing. And so you have to eat...

CR: I'm going to try one of these.

ML: Now, help yourselves.

MR: Thank you. It tastes good.

CR: I love that. I love the flavor. That's wonderful.

YL: Well, you'll have --

MR: Help yourself.

CR: That's delicious. Thank you.

YL: Well, you're very welcome.

CR: That is lovely. We can appreciate that idea, the need for housing. The house that we live in -- our house that we bought was built in 1946. And I'm sure it was built for people coming home from war, people needing housing and so forth. Our entire little street, that little section of Doddridge, every house is built

in 1946.

ML: Well, that was all farm land

MR: Uh huh.

ML: That was all farm land. All of this area was farm land.

CR: Oh, okay

YL: Marvin, I cannot

ML: Now, these, these stories every Wednesday in the *Caller* with the history of Corpus Christi

YL: I can't open it [a container]. I'm sorry, I just interrupted.

CR: Enormous.

YL: Well, he drinks (inaudible), he drinks tea. Thank you. Thank you.

CR: That is great.

YL: But, but, as I started to say, this house had

ML: Yetta, may I have either a saucer or napkin please?

YL: I have napkin for you, I thought. You know, I washed my dishes and you know I didn't wash the saucers. I don't know why, so, so we're using these instead.

The, um, back -- I imagine it was about this big -- now, are you thinking with me? It was about this big, we had a small kitchen. You came in the back -- there was a, where he parked the cars, kind of like a shed, something - or carport

ML: A carport.

CR: Okay.

YL: And out there was a deep old sink like they used to have long time ago and there was a place for a washing machine. And so that was, that was -- and there might have been a little door for, um, for whatever, I don't remember that. Okay, you came in, and you came in as such into the kitchen. There was a small place, there was the stove and Marvin's parents had given us, as a wedding gift, a chamber stove. I don't know if you all are even familiar --

CR: No.

YL: -- tell you about it in a minute. But anyway -- and it went - it fit right in that space. And then we had a little sink. It wasn't any bigger than this little area right here, maybe smaller. And that was the kitchen. And across from it we had our little table and our little highchair and then there was the front door. And in the

front door – and, I mean that was the living area. And

ML: There were two bedrooms

YL: Yeah, but I'm trying to think about the living room, how big it was. It was big enough that we had a sofa that made into a bed and we had a couple of chairs.

ML: Now, we're talking about the living room.

YL: That was adequate

ML: The living room

YL: The living room, that was adequate. That was fine. Then we had this little hall and there were two small bedrooms. The bedrooms -- a double bed just about fit into that and a baby bed that was just about this size. The other one, I don't really remember, it must have been about the same size. And they had these small closets. It must have been a small closet in hall, too maybe. But there were these little small - and (inaudible) they were small closets.

CR: Yeah.

YL: And then they had the curtain over them. And that was the house. I was as happy as could be there.

CR: Uh huh.

YL: It was, you know, you think about it, but it was the people that were there. That was the important thing. The little - - the people who were right next door to us were very nice. And they had two small children. The little girl would get out at 6 o'clock in the morning with her trike. And it need greasing; and it was so noisy. It would wake me up. I greased that tricycle. I got in trouble because that's how the mother kept up with where her child was.

CR and MR: Oh (laughter).

YL: I mean, you know, I didn't think about that. At that time I didn't have children. And so, but there was the, um, one of men that worked with Marvin, wife and two children lived there. And there was another couple that lived, that we played bridge with at night, some -- I mean there were nice, nice people there. It wasn't -- as if it was -- and everybody's place was just about like, like that

ML: I don't remember what we paid for it, but

YL: I think it, for some reason I want to think it was about \$45.00. I'm not sure, but I'm thinking about \$45

ML: Now, talk about money, but they -- the federal wages then, minimum wage was 35 cents an hour. Can you imagine?

CR: \$.35 an hour?

ML: And then I remember when they raised it to \$.50 cents. We thought we were going to go bankrupt (laughter). And, um, well, a gallon of gasoline cost maybe \$.12, \$.15 cents.

When I went off to college my ambition was to get a job making \$250 a month. That's \$3,000 a year.

CR: Uh huh.

ML: And we, um, you'd be surprised how these people stretched out money in those days -- I could remember when you went to, you didn't have these chain stores like you do now. There was mom and pop -- you go on to buy a loaf of bread. They want to know whether you want it sliced or not. Or when you went in to buy a garment, whether you want buttons or zippers.

CR: Yeah.

ML: I'll -- (inaudible) an involvement when, um, you didn't dream of an air conditioned car. When they came out with air conditioning you had that big awkward unit installed in your car (laughter). And not all cars had radios. Do you want a radio or not?

CR: What did you sell in your store?

ML: I had a feed mill and a grain elevator, up there.

CR: Oh, yeah. My grandparents, my dad's family, had a grain elevator

ML: Oh, did they?

CR: Yeah, that's what they did. That's where my parents started when they first got married and everything. This was in Illinois.

ML: Oh, Illinois. That's grain country.

CR: Yeah. I used to love to go -- I'd play on all the -- it was mostly corn and so forth. And I'd play on all of the piles and everything. Yeah.

ML: Well, you see, when I got back from the Army, in the '40's, in '45, I went back to school. I needed a semester to get my degree. And then, um, I took this job, be near my parents for one thing, and second I wasn't very successful in finding a job.

YL: In other words, he tried for one day and didn't get a job and he thought -- you heard him, "I wasn't successful"- - one day.

ML: So, I didn't know a thing about the grain business so - but I learned. And, um, I had -- and another boy from Nebraska, he was in the -- a lot of these boys came down here from (talking simultaneously) - - this was the center of the naval air training and they married girls from this area. You know, they bring these girls over for these parties and so forth and that's how they met these boys from all over the country. (talking simultaneously) In Robstown, among our best friends, Susan's sister married a (inaudible) he was from Texas, though.

And then another girl married (inaudible) from Kansas and another one married an aviator from Mississippi. And they all settled in Robstown.

CR: Oh, my gosh

ML: Well, you see the fathers' -- fathers-in-laws had businesses and they needed help.

CR: And they needed help (laughter).

ML: And they used their son-in-laws.

CR: I see.

ML: And, you know, my partner was from Wayne, Nebraska. He married a girl from Taft. You know where Taft is?

CR: Yep.

MR: Uh huh.

ML: Well, he was looking for a job. He grew on a farm, came to our business and that's when my boss decided we'd open a store in Kingsville and put him in charge.

CR: Oh, okay.

ML: So that is part of the tradition. Part of the segment, that has grown up in -- a lot of these people, now live in Corpus, learned about Corpus -- came to the naval air station for training

MR: Um-hum.

CR: Um-hum. And then stayed.

ML: And stayed.

CR: Yeah.

ML: Um-hum

CR: Well, that's interesting.

ML: And um,

CR: Wow. How many people worked at the feed mill and grain elevator?

ML: Well, he had around probably about 18, 20.

CR: Oh, wow.

YL: I bet we had more than, honey. (talking simultaneously)

ML: I manufactured feed, also.

CR: Uh-huh.

YL: We had a feed mill, we had sold, um, feed.

ML: In fact I had -- at one time, this area was a big grower of vegetables until the valley -- Rio Grande Valley became more productive

CR: Um-hum.

ML: And the more land was set in and the feed -- the vegetable industry shifted south. And they had all these big vegetable sheds. These big tent sheds, of course, they've been torn down since then. And um, they were on the railroad because most of the transportation in those days, big heavy transportation, like coal, grain

CR: Um-hum.

ML: And those commodities, were transported by railroad and the factories and people that had to utilize these commodities like grain would settle - - will build to make the railroads.

CR: Um-hum.

ML: Now, and when they were shipping out these vegetables like carloads of cabbage, radishes, onions, so forth they, were, um, they were next to the railroad and then they - - when the vegetable sheds shut down, they became available. That's when -- man I worked for, took over several of them, rented them from the railroad, and um, then in the latter part of the 1900's, with the improved highways and everything, trucking became a more dependable -- sometimes they used railroad carts and so forth. It just -- couldn't -- they just weren't dependable. So as we shifted to the use of trucks, which were cheaper, more dependable, the railroads gave up on keeping up the warehouses. And, um, we had trouble maintaining them. So when the time came for us to, for me to retire --

YL: Did you need more water? Did it get too strong?

CR: Perfect, nope. Thank you very much.

ML: -- (inaudible) they tore the sheds down.

CR: Okay.

ML: That was the segment of - - now, where they had so much agriculture, they shifted and it was all cotton.

CR: Um-hum.

MR: Um-hum.

ML: In the 1940's, after the war, they developed a grain called milo

CR: Oh, yeah.

ML: Which is the red top grain and through selective breeding, like, they would go to Africa to find a plant that was more susceptible, less susceptible to drought and they would breed it into the more prolific of grains and they developed grains that were cheaper to raise, moisture, that didn't require the moisture that the cotton does

CR: Um-hum.

ML: And so the people -- the farmers moved from -- when this country moved from a hundred percent cotton to fifty percent cotton and fifty grain. The grain industry developed there and the cotton industry, the cotton industry -- now, help yourself, we're not counting (laughter)

CR: Thank you.

ML: They, um, and so I was in the beginning of the, of the grain industry.

CR: Okay.

ML: It was a real competitive industry and we didn't grow as much as our feed business grew. But, um, that's how the grain business started and it got

started -- now the Port of Corpus Christi was really established because of cotton. They had -- if you grow it, you have to sell it. And to get to the export market, you had to go by boat and we were - - and Corpus Christi was the largest -- was the port with the largest area of farm production in the United States. The whole area; It went - Kingsville to, through Bishop, all the way into, say almost after you get to Refugio

CR: Okay.

ML: It tapers off. The most productive land was the area, say from Bishop to Mathis -- now, these towns should be familiar -- are they familiar with you?

CR: Yep.

MR: Um-hum.

ML: Bishop, Mathis, going into Victoria and come up back through the coast to Tivoli.

CR: Okay

ML: Now, Rockport was sandy, it never developed into any grain area. But Taft was a very prolific agricultural area. But you know we're not helping any with this...

YL: That's not what you wanted (talking simultaneously); this is what you wanted.

This is what you wanted.

MR: This is all very interesting. All of this is interesting, great context. Do you remember when it [Robstown Labor Camp] was first, I mean, we know it was '39 or '40, but do you remember any kind of discussion about it coming into town and being established?

ML: I was a kid. In '39, I graduated from high school. But I didn't even know the labor camp was there?

YL: But what was interesting was when this flood came in. And it was not a flood, the drainage ditch broke behind it. And that flooded the whole town. And we were the area that we got it first. I have a picture of my oldest son on his hands and knees in his baby bed watching the water go over (laughter). Marvin had gotten up that morning and gone to work. He says we got a flood of water and he left. He came back in a couple of hours in the truck to take us out and take us to his mother's house.

ML: ...people work from - we can't come to work, we're flooded. Well, I just left, and it wasn't flooded. So I went back out there and there Yetta was still asleep (talking simultaneously)

YL: My mother was in town she was asleep (simultaneously)

ML: Air mattress – talk about a sound sleeper. And my oldest son was in the next bedroom in his baby bed on his knees watching the water from underneath.

ML: Wow.

YL: And so, but anyway, this flooded the town. There are pictures, there are articles about -- and this is not -- I didn't bring them out because that really wasn't what you were looking for.

MR: What year was that, do you remember?

YL: It had to be the year that Rick was born.

ML: Rick was born was born in '53. He was born in February so this -- this broke a drought. This rain broke a drought - - that usually [is] what happens. It happened in September, I believe, of 1953.

YL: And they had the boats going from places. They had the boat coming to Marvin mother's house to get Marvin to take him to the feed store to get sacks

ML: Burlap sacks.

YL: Burlap sacks because they (talking simultaneously)

ML: Make sandbags

YL: They would sandbag. Every time we had big rains or have anything they come get the bags, sandbags and put sand in them. And so that was part of - -

ML: In the side of the story, Yetta had -- we had quite a few wedding gifts all stored away, no place to put them other than in those storage rooms. And so I said, "we got to save these." So, I waded in and out of that water waist deep for maybe, for hours and then when I thought about it - you know. when I signed a policy for insurance with the thing, I believe there is was something about a flood. So I called my agent. He said, "Yeah you're covered with flood."

YL: We were the only ones in town.

MR: Wow.

YL: Can you imagine that it was lucky and it was - just happened that it was there.

ML: I signed it -- I took the insurance for protection against theft and it had flood insurance.

YL: You talk about an odor in that house. Ugh, it was absolutely -- and I don't remember what we did to get it out but we did something. But, of course, insurance we got rid of everything that was wet and things that I wished I had kept them cleaned rather than -- but anyway, that was kind of that story. But the whole town of flooded.

ML: Have you ever been to the museum, that Robstown-?

MR: Yes, yes, on several occasions.

ML: Well, now, there's some people there that could, could maybe give you more information. And that tractor that I told you about that was developed to um -- all this brush is very deep rooted. The farmers just couldn't farm with all that. They had to get rid of it because it absorbed all the moisture. And so the Morazick family, and they were, the whole family were mechanical geniuses,

YL: And workers.

ML: And they could make barbwire run

YL: They were really, uh...

ML: And they developed that tractor that would - - that could dig up these roots and make the land tillable. That's when - - if they had the land and they didn't have the people to farm it, it was useless. And they couldn't farm big areas, they were still farming with mules.

CR: Um-hum. Um-hum.

ML: And, the, so that's when they sent the trains to the Midwest -- called the -- are you familiar with that?

MR: The - -

ML: The South Texas, the Texas travel sent, the farmers would rent a train to sell this land and they travel to the west and

YL: And they'd bring people back here

ML: Bring the people back here and let them see the kind of land, how they could farm it. In those days they weren't using fertilizer like they do now. People would, would farm the land until they used it up and then they moved down. You understand?

CR: Yeah. Yeah.

MR: Um-hum.

ML: And – because the land was cheap and available. Now, there's lots of people -- there a town in Central Texas called Lockhart.

CR: Yeah.

MR: Um-hum.

ML: Well, there are lots of people from Lockhart, one family moved down, others followed them.

CR: Oh.

ML: Well, why? They'd used up all the land. They farmed the land for maybe a century. See, that was first part - as the first settlements were in Central Texas. And they used up the land. They had to find more land and their skilled within farming, so they moved where the land was productive.

CR: Um-hum.

ML: And that's what helped settle this area.

CR: Settle that -- that's interesting.

YL: Which, um, place did you go to for- to look at the? -- I lost my word -- alright. When you went to look at the history of Robstown. Which, there's two places. Are you aware that there's two places in Robstown that have the history, that have the -- one of them, which -- now, you know what I'm talking about, now?

ML: No.

YL: Alright. The one where the Bosquez

ML: Bosquez

YL: Where the Bosquez store was.

MR: Yeah, that's

YL: That's where you went. Over across the street, from the Methodist Church, there's a little building

ML: It used to be a library

YL: It used to be a library, and there, um, they – and I cannot think of the name but some woman had that at one time

ML: It was La Retama--

YL: But I'm trying to think what was the preacher's name? And she's the pianist. He'll remember.

ML: Edge

YL: Edge, okay. One of the Edge boys fixed this place across the street from the church into a -- he had a collection of things from the past in Robstown. If it is still there or not, I do not know.

CR: Okay.

YL: But it was there (talking simultaneously). Now, (talking simultaneously) Sam Keach will be able to tell you that.

CR: Okay.

ML: Sam grew up like I did in Robstown.

YL: Sam must have given you a lot of good information too, didn't he?

MR: Um-hum.

CR: He did.

YL: Because he --

ML: His grandfather was one of the political leaders of South Texas. Did he -- you know that story?

CR: No

ML: His grandfather was Sam Fore and he was, he was from Floresville. Floresville, the little town out of San Antonio. And he was one of the leading Democrats in the State of Texas and he bought the paper in Robstown and he ran it and then after time, Sam's father had married Sam Fore's daughter. And Sam's father had been a friend of Lyndon Johnson when they both were in San Marcos and, um, (talking simultaneously) what was Keach's, his father's first name?

YL: Sam. No, Carol, Carol Keach. Is that what you're...?

ML: Carol. And Carol, when Lyndon Johnson was making his trips through the

country

YL: Running for president.

ML: Looking for votes, he was asked to, um, speak in Robstown. Carol had him

YL: At the Rotary club

MR: Um-hum.

ML: Brought to Robstown. Then he spoke at the high school and then he spoke at the Rotary club. The day after he spoke at the high school, the ceiling fell on the stage (laughter).

MR: Oh, my

ML: But anyway, that's the connection

YL: The Keach's.

ML: The Keach's.

YL: With Johnson.

ML: That was a strong Democratic, Democratic strong hold. But anyway, Sam's father was a real, real fine, fine man. And he was editor of the paper until Sam

took over. And, um, he was a - - he helped the community, just

YL: But, we got away from this.

ML: Do, um -- curious in terms of people that you know at the labor camp, what was Willard Martin like?

YL: Oh, Willard was fine. He was a fine, fine man. Now, we had lumber yard in Robstown. Did he have that after...?

ML: He bought it after

YL: After

ML: He retired

YL: After he quit.

ML: Now, he came -- I forget what town he came from. Was it Midland?

YL: No. No, It's a town that starts with an L. And it wasn't (inaudible) Texas

ML: Anyway, he and his brother came down, they opened up a laundry

YL: The brother had a laundry. And Cliff must have had the laundry with the brother; there were three of them that came. And must have been the

youngest -- and Cliff, I can't think -- was his name James?

ML: James, yeah.

YL: Okay. James and Cliff had the laundry. And Willard, then, had the lumber yard and that's when he built his house. And that's when we built our house next door. But - and so that was a move for us from here to where we built. And it was -- and that was for them, too, more or less. But, um,

CR: So they had been living at the labor camp, they moved out, bought the lumber yard, built a house and then...

YL: But I don't remember when they lived when they moved out. Where they built their house.

CR: Oh, Okay

ML: Well, they might have built the house as they moved as they moved out of the --

YL: I can't remember

ML: I can't remember either, but he was a real fine man.

YL: And she -- I have to tell you an interesting thing about Robstown too. I came to Robstown, of course, just family. And they called me - -, no I was is in the

flower shop, one day and the -- was Lotspeich at that time, was he principal, was he superintendent? He was something. Anyway.

ML: He was, he was

YL: He said - - I guess he must have been a principal

ML: He was a principal there at one of the schools and he needed

YL: But the teacher, a teacher had moved because of husband was transferred. He did not have a teacher. He needed a teacher. Wanted me to teach, come take that position and I did have 15, 18 hours of education, so it wasn't a big deal. But I went home and told Marvin he says no, you're not going to. This school that I would be teaching in was a migratory school. And Marvin said no -- And so he -- and so Marvin said no. Well Butch [?] called back and he said to me, we need somebody, we've got to have somebody. So I went to teach at this, Bullard, was a migratory school.

MR: Um-hum.

YL: And, I met my -- those friends that I met that year, were my closest friends all through the years. Parties everything. I remember the one that - I went to the first party, a brunch. And really those became all through the years - The migratory school you told them, you don't speak Spanish, and on the playground you tell them you don't -- oh boy, would you be in trouble today? Because that would just would not work. And, um, it was a

ML: Well the schools were totally -- not integrated but, uh

YL: This was strictly migratory and they were all Latin

ML: No blacks, just -- when we got to the eighth or ninth grade, they would bring the Spanish kids that had progressed that far into the high school -- I graduated in the class of seventy-one, and maybe two or three in the class. It was terrible the way they treated the Mexican people here.

YL: I can remember one time the principal spanking. That was the only time in my life I ever saw a child get spanked. Horrible. But I don't remember why we was spanked. But it was still something that - it was awful to me then and now, I absolutely cannot imagine. But, anyway that was my first experiences in Robstown.

CR: What grade were you teaching, do you remember?

ML: [laughter]

YL: It was, it was an absolutely nothing grade. It really was. And I can remember the nurse who was a friend came to school one day, and I said, "Would you come into my class and teach them about brushing their teeth?" She wouldn't do it. She wouldn't do it. Do you know what that was? Charlene's sister.

ML: Oh, Virginia.

YL: Virginia. It was Virginia. And so it was, it was – but, do you know for years - - and later when my boys were older, I was asked at the elementary school to help with a program that they had of pictures. It was a picture program and they had nothing at that time. And so these woman had gotten together. And so I had four pictures that I would take and I would move them from one and they stay in that room a week and then I'd go to next room with them. And so there was this one class, and I still remember the little boy, and saw his name on Facebook the other day, that class absolutely they had more questions. They would is not let me leave because they did not want to have class or they didn't want quizzes.

But, anyway, but this was the nice thing, it was a small town. You knew everybody. And years after the program was over, once they got money and they can have all these aides and all this stuff that came to the school, the picture program ended. The pictures were put in the attic of – I can't think of the name of the school.

ML: Martin.

YL: Martin. It wasn't there anymore. We had a fire in the attic and that ended all, you know, all the pictures and everything. But as I started saying, for years I would see children, Latin children, English ch-, I mean whatever, they'd say, "I know you from the picture program." And that was always such a good -- that was neat.

MR: Do you remember there being any kind of school at the labor camp?

YL: Oh no.

MR: In the 50's

YL: No, there was not. And I remember...

ML: [inaudible, talking simultaneously] out there in the 1950s, I think

YL: '53

ML: Wait a minute, wait a minute, what have you learned about this so far?

MR: Well, I know that it started -- they were building it in 1939 and then it was completed, as far as I can tell in the early part of 1940, and it was under federal control until 1948. And then county housing authority ran it after that until 1968.

YL: That's when we were there, then.

MR: How long did you all live in that house right there?

ML: Well, let's see. We moved in just before Rick was born, he was born February of '53 so maybe

YL: We moved out, we moved -- I can tell you exactly

ML: Christmas day of '55

YL: That's right.

MR: '55

YL: I know that because my nephew was born and on right bef -- maybe Christmas day before, something, and the two older children stayed with us and we had just moved into our home.

ML: This was, um, we lived out there two years, it must have been December of '53 to December of '55

MR: Do you remember, or did you interact much with the migratory workers that...?

ML: Not at all.

YL: There weren't any. There weren't any there [most likely referring to the part of the camp that had small single family homes, instead of row housing, which was across the street [both were considered part of the camp property]]. And everybody that...

ML: I never saw one.

YL: No, that's the strange thing. And see, the person who lived in this first house, they didn't get any of this water. They didn't get all of this and it was interesting

to me, and see I can recall to tell you this, because they got a new television set about this time, and here all these other people down here were wet and it was horrible and these people were where they could -- isn't is that interesting?

MR: Yeah, do you mind if I show -- I have a satellite [aerial photo] photo from 1956, and I was wondering if you might help me find, figure what some of this is. So is this where you were out here I think this right here?

YL: I think let's, I think we were this one.

MR: I believe this is Bosquez Street.

ML: Yeah.

YL: And we were here.

ML: This was must have been Bluebonnet. This is, know this is -- does it say Bluebonnet or anything?

MR: It was -- it didn't have any labels.

YL: This must have been a

ML: This was a, uh, an, it was an area -- it was a farm area, of course all this was farm, but I believe this man sold lots in there with out, and I don't believe that it had proper sanitation, irrig-

MR: Okay

ML: It was

YL: It was Sad

ML: It was just a sad area. Then, here is the labor camp.

YL: Here's where we were and it ran this way

ML: We were about here

YL: This must have been the drainage ditch

ML: No, this was the way you came in, remember? This is the irrigation ditch.

CR: Okay.

MR: Now, were the migratory laborers living...?

ML: This was the migratory camp, and this -- I don't know why the two areas. I don't. In fact, I didn't know anything about it at all until we moved out there and I lived right there in the community except -- you know, now-

YL: There was another right here though. Where Haynie lived. Or Willard lived.

Maybe it was right here, but they lived, they lived away from us

MR: Could that be it there - that little spot.

YL: That's what we're wondering

ML: But – we [talking simultaneously]

YL: I don't know what this is

ML: We lived about here

YL: No, here's our house, honey.

ML: Where?

YL: Right here. I had marked it. I had marked it when, when I put it in, it had to have been right there. But, there were other things in front of it. See we weren't the -- we probably were down here and Jim and Betty must have been through here I bet, and then -- I can't remember their names, he died, and she...

ML: It wasn't Redding, was it?

YL: I don't remember.

ML: I think it was.

YL: that we played bridge with, she was...

CR: Somebody mentioned bridge playing. I don't remember who that was. Mentioned that people would get together to play bridge. It might have been Bill Martin or something.

YL: It was Susan probably

CR: It might have been.

YL: Because her mother her mother played bridge in a group from the time that I can remember until she got sick. I mean she still played in that group. Now, I didn't play in that group and somebody said to me the other day they didn't know I played bridge when [inaudible]. But, you know, I had the two boys and I had other things, and so that was later.

ML: She was a real stay at home mother.

YL: I was. My children - - I didn't, I didn't, fortunately, didn't work. I was able to raise my boys like I wanted to and all that. And I didn't - - you all will laugh

ML: You know, I just, really can't tell you

YL: We gave them false lead

MR: [laughter]

CR: What is Jim and Betty's last name?

ML: I beg your pardon?

CR: What is Jim and Betty's last name?

ML: Read. R-E-A-D.

YL: (Talking over each other) Jim died many -- but he died oh, oh.

ML: He worked -- he was going to be my partner.

CR: Oh, okay.

ML: And he was in Laredo, Texas on -- he was the best feed salesman I ever saw in my life. And I was in the feed business almost 50 years, me. And he's still the best I ever saw.

YL: [inaudible] that personality.

ML: And he was in Laredo, 37 years old and died of a heart attack. But he smoked two packages of cigarettes a day.

YL: They just built a home and three girls, you know, just

ML: Thin as a rail. You'd think he'd lived to be 150. But

YL: But it was sad. She later remarried and lives in Corpus. And, I don't know if Betty would know very much or not. I'll talk to her and if she does, I'll get

MR: Oh, that would be great.

YL: -- if she can remember anything at all, I'll tell her to get, you know. She and her husband have recently moved to a

ML: Assistant living.

YL: Yes. And last I talked to her, she wasn't happy at all with it. And, you know, there comes a time I guess if her husband was having trouble.

CR: Do you remember were all of the houses full, were people living in all?

YL: They must have been.

ML: We had to wait until we got – when one was available.

YL: Yes, that was a good question.

ML: But I just- I don't even know who was in charge.

YL: Well, it would have been Haynie.

ML: Well, you said the county took it over.

1:02:55

MR: Yeah, they still had a farm manager, or a camp manager at that point. The county had taken it over in 1948 but it was still run as a labor camp and they still had a manager at that point and it might well have been him at that point.

YL: I can't remember where Haynie and Jo Marie lived after they left the labor camp.

ML: I can't remember.

CR: What's Haynie's full name?

ML: Who?

CR: Haynie's full name?

ML: Elliff.

MR: Yeah.

YL: Okay, now you talked with his son.

MR: We did. We did.

ML: Now, Haynie is the name of one of first doctors of Corpus Christi. And they have a -- you know, a lot of people will name their child after the doctor that delivered him.

MR and CR: Wow.

ML: You'll see a lot around in Robstown that - there was a very, very excellent doctor named Belo Stone, B-E-L-O. You'll see just lots of boys named Belo. And Haynie, was named after doctor Haynie who was one of the first doctors.

YL: In Corpus

ML: In, um, Corpus Christi.

YL: Okay, now then, this Belo that he mentioned, Stone, his son is

ML: Larry

YL: No, Larry is not in the

ML: Richard

YL: Dickey Stone. Is an attorney

ML: He's an attorney

YL: He's an attorney in Corpus and that's his son and Larry was a doctor also.

And Larry lives up -- he's not practicing anymore

ML: I believe he lives in Bernie.

YL: I can't, I don't remember, Marvin. But anyway, so that -- but I can't remember, I've been trying to remember - Rick had a friend that lived out here that went, that he went to school with all three. And they lived right in through here and cannot remember their name and they have not been in Robstown in a long time.

The girl that I -- (laughter) fixed her bicycle, she is married and lives in Corpus. And her name is Sharon, and I don't know

ML: (Inaudible)

YL: Um-hum. Um-hum.

ML: But I don't know

YL: But I don't know and I don't know if the son -- but I'm to think if there were any other families or children. And I can't think of any of them that lived there

MR: Did it have, the street here, did it have a name at that point?

ML: No, they didn't

YL: Not as I can recall

MR: I was thinking maybe I could look at a city directory from then

YL: No

ML: You know, you're going to run into people like me, I really didn't really know the place existed until - - there was no reason for me to

YL: I was trying to think, Marvin, if there was somebody -- so many of them have passed away like Willard and Haynie and

ML: Now, Bill Martin ought to know more about the actual

YL: Did he -- could he tell you very much?

CR: He remembers things that a kid would remember in terms of places that he played, and

YL: Because he was little

CR: Yeah

ML: He would know from living with -- living in -- living with it

YL: I bet Vicky would know more

ML: Who?

YL: His sister

MR: Yeah

YL: She might know more then he, because she was older. But Bill, he was, I mean, he was really - - when he lived next door to us and the boys, I can remember him in our back yard I probably have a picture with him as a little boy in our back yard with a rabbit that the boys caught in the back yard.

ML: Glenda Elliff, now

YL: Oh, her mother, you know, no, uh, Glenna Scoggins. Scoggins would maybe know a lot about the people. She might not know who lived out there, but she know, she might...

ML: Yeah what's her last name?

YL: Scoggins. Scoggins.

ML: Yes. Her, her parents lived -- owned the Chevrolet agency in Robstown for maybe 50, 60 years. And she married Haynie Elliff's son.

YL: Oldest son.

CR: Okay.

YL: That's the one you talked with.

CR: Um-hum

MR: Yeah, yeah.

ML: Now, she may have more recollection

YL: Glenna's mother might.

ML: I don't know how

YL: You want me to call Glenna for you?

MR: Yeah.

CR: That would be great

MR: That would be great.

YL: Oh, that's no problem.

ML: [inaudible] her mother's capable

YL: Well? From what?

ML: I know I don't seem to be much help.

CR: This is very helpful

ML: This is very helpful

CR: This is exactly what, what -- we've been doing piecing together what people remember so this is exactly perfect.

MR: Absolutely.

ML: I was -- I had very little - - the feed store took care of one hundred percent my time. And I didn't have time to know what was going on.

CR: How long did it take you to get from the house to the feed store?

ML: Oh, maybe, ten, 15 minutes.

CR: Okay.

ML: Maybe not that long. I always went home for lunch. Stopped -- Yetta, oh, she's not -- stopped on the way back from work get a raspa. You know what a

raspa is?

CR: Oh, I do but I haven't had one before.

ML: You haven't had one yet?

CR: No, not yet.

ML: Oh, for heaven's sake.

CR: Yeah.

ML: That's flavored syrup on ice.

CR: Yeah.

MR: Oh, wow.

CR: Yeah, my students talk about it all the time.

ML: Oh.

CR: Yeah, okay.

ML: There used to be a taco stand right across the street from the migrant school where Yetta taught.

YL: Ten cents or a nickle a taco and they were the best, and you still can't them
(talking simultaneously) this good. Still can't get as good.

MR: You don't by any chance -- this is just a shot in the dark - but remember
what these little things were [pointing to the aerial photo of the labor camp],
were they?

YL: I don't know. I have no idea.

MR: Were they little bits of housing?

ML: I believe this is was a minor road down here, Yetta, and I believe the
Massey farm was about in here someplace.

YL: But I don't think any of the Masseys wouldn't -- I mean there not

ML: Rebecca--

YL: Becky Robertson

MR: Do you remember a community hall at all in?

ML: Yeah, there was community hall

YL: But, you know

ML: It's, it's way down here.

YL: Oh, it's not anywhere near.

[talking simultaneously]

YL: No. We don't know what this -- but I can tell you that one of girls that worked for Marvin -- maybe I'm wrong. Now, see I thought she had that party, I thought she had it here for her daughter but it could have been at that, at that place that we always

ML: Community center

YL: Yes. Yes.

ML: See, there's a Czech community, you know, people with a Czech background that had -- there was in a community -- this is, this, going this way you'd run into Banquete, going west. Over - - after you leave Robstown about three miles, three or four miles out, take a right hand turn. It leads you to the community hall.

YL: (On the phone...recording skips ahead to right after the phone conversation ends)

MR: Do you remember a lot of traffic with, traqueros; truckers coming in to

pickup (talking simultaneously)?

YL: Oh, no. Nothing. We did not have any traffic here whatsoever

MR: So nothing?

YL: Nothing

ML: I don't believe it was occupied while we were there. I didn't see anybody.

YL: And the thing is, that- -

MR: Did -- so, this did you ever go down this way very often [pointing to photo]?

YL: No, no, no.

ML: No, after I left here I went home.

YL: He went home and Jim Elliff and Jim and Betty Read's daughter would push my (phone rings. Yetta talking on the phone).

ML: (On the phone...the recording skips to right after the end of the phone conversation).

CR: It makes sense between -- I mean, you were young parents at the time and with the feed mill, you would be just coming and going. Right?

YL: He would and I was home because I didn't take my -- my boys were 15 months apart, 15. And I didn't take them out, I stayed home. That was, that was, and then when we built our home, I still stayed; I was a home-mother. And I didn't go to work until my boys were all gone from home and one day one of the girls called me from the office and said, "a girl just quit we need for you to come for two weeks." He to this day claims he doesn't know it. You know what? -- but anyway, my two weeks there was a long time, but I didn't work in the office like she wanted me to come. I worked out in the warehouse. And I saw that the feed was loaded for the customers and things. I was a warehouse lady. (Laughter)

ML: You know, we had, I had these migrant people working for me, they didn't speak English. And the girls that work with me said they wanted to see how these migrant spoke English like she did. (laughter)

YL: But they would talk English behind my back. So, they weren't, they weren't really -- and you know what difference did it make? But anyway, it's just another interesting story that doesn't have to do with this.

ML: When you go through Robstown to go to Kingsville, you take, take Avenue A, are you familiar?

CR: Yeah.

ML: And then you take, go down Avenue A, and then you take Lincoln to -- as you turn to Lincoln off of Avenue A, right there on that corner where there light is

now, that used to be my -- well on both sides of the track and across from

YL: It was, we were the

ML: I'm gonna show you, come in let's go in the study. I want to show you the picture of that

YL: I knew that

[Break in the recording]

CR: If it won't come out, we can take a picture with our phone or something

MR: Sure, we can do that.

YL: Will it, will it show?

CR: Yeah

MR: It would. That's a good idea.

YL: If not, if you could do it better (talking simultaneously) -- I was looking to see, this again is when.

CR: Oh, my gosh

YL: Now, this was at the labor camp, that's the house. My little one, my big one.

CR: Oh, my gosh.

YL: I don't know why I had him outside taking pictures. No, this was in East Texas -- if this is anything. Okay, there's the labor camp.

CR: Oh, really.

MR: Oh, wow.

CR: Oh.

YL: See. And there.

CR: Would you mind if I took a picture of that?

YL: No, I don't mind.

CR: That would be alright? Thank you.

YL: I don't mind at all.

ML: Anything you see that can be of value, of use to you (talking simultaneously).

MR: Oh, absolutely.

YL: Let's see, this is outside, I guess, the labor camp.

MR: Oh.

YL: I think.

MR: Yeah, it looks like the same color houses at least.

YL: Um-hum.

CR: And then the kitchen

MR: Do you want me to lean over?

YL: You want me to turn off the light? Is the light too much?

CR: I think it's okay.

ML: You turn off the light, there's no light here.

CR: Excellent. Oh, is that also?

YL: Yes, that's the living area.

CR: Look how cute. Let's see.

MR: Do you want me to --

CR: Almost.

ML: We can move to a different area if it will

CR: I think, I think, I think that's alright, move your hand a second [Mark]. I think that's okay. Let me check it a second to see how, yeah, that's great. Oh, my goodness, how neat to see it. Is that in the kitchen -- that's the table in that little kitchen area?

YL: Yes.

CR: Okay.

YL: You see that little thing.

CR: Yup, yup.

YL: Didn't realize that we had enough room for --?

ML: There's the baby's bed.

YL: But see, I don't know if -- see, that's the room -- here he is on floor of the kitchen. See, this is open too.

CR: Yeah.

MR: Does it go that quickly?

CR: Um-hum.

MR: Oh, wow, your phone is better than mine (laughter). Oh, look at that

YL: Here's the other part of the kitchen.

CR: Oh, you were gonna say what the, the kind of stove

YL: Chamber

CR: The chamber stove. What is it?

YL: I'll tell you in a minute (talking simultaneously). They don't make them anymore and we need them most -- we really need them now.. Let's see if there's anymore

CR: That is wonderful to see pictures of the inside

MR: Um-hum.

YL: That's not...

CR: That's - - my sister. Oh, trying to get out.

YL: That's right

CR: My sister is about -- has a baby who will turn one in January and she's pregnant with her second and they will fourteen month apart, so

YL: You know what? It, it's wonderful if she can manage the first but my second would stand at the door and wait - not this house - and wait for the first one to come home from kindergarten. Oh, it was so sad and

CR: This is a classic picture, look at that with the--

MR: Yeah.

CR: Kids don't change.

YL: And with the diaper, you know, and I can't believe -- I don't know Marvin. That's what I was looking to see -- oh that's the one, that's taken at home.

CR: That's so great. So then...?

YL: That's Jerriella.

CR: Oh, really (laugher).

YL: These aren't anymore. This is my oldest son. They were sticking -- they were changing the name of the -- I think that's

CR: When you moved then, and you built your house on the plot, that was next to the Martin's?

ML: Yes.

CR: Okay.

YL: So we were neighbors all those years, we were neighbors all those years. And when a couple of times that Marvin had problems in the middle of the night, and Vicky, the older, Bill's sister, would come stay with the boys.

CR: Uh-huh.

MR: Oh.

CR: That's really neat.

MR: Did um -- Willard Martin ever talk about what it was like managing the camp?

YL: You know, that's so long ago, that I don't, I don't, I don't remember. Do you Marvin? I think that's all here. I think the rest are other places.

ML: I don't know why he even came to Robstown.

YL: They -- the whole -- they all came. Darryl can tell you that probably. But, but you know Cliff came and, and um they all -- about chamber stove

CR: Um-hum.

YL: It was, um, - - I can't remember now who it was. It was somebody from Corpus that had the stove -- and we had the store in Robstown, anyway, it cooked without gas.

CR: Oh.

YL: I might have some interesting-

ML: (Inaudible)

YL: The chamber stove

ML: Oh, there was the Flato family here that

YL: That's-

ML: That owned the Corpus Christi Hardware Company.

CR: Okay.

ML: And developed the -- I don't know, somebody else developed this chamber stove, that it was a gas stove, the reason we don't have one here.

CR: Uh-huh.

ML: But, um, it was -- somebody up in Midwest, some place, invented it and the Flato people bought it out and it was a, it was a stove where, Yetta will tell you, she'd put a roast in the night, and in the morning it will be ready.

YL: You cooked with the gas turned off.

MR: Huh.

CR: Wow.

YL: That's was the neat thing. The oven and it was same thing -- there was a thermal bit and you put the -- in and you turned off the gas, just like with your crock pot.

CR: Yeah, yeah.

MR: Yeah.

YL: It was the same idea but the stove was absolutely -- and the griddle was, instead of having a broiler you had a griddle, and the top came up and you

had -- and I was looking to see and what was so interesting somebody had one on sale recently and I kept trying to call and find out what they were asking for it. We left it. We don't have gas here so we left it there and the people who lived there now tried to -- wanted to keep it. They bought the house,, they wanted the stove. The people that moved out would not let them. I guess -- I don't know where I had all this and I was really keeping it because it was so interesting.

ML: Well, Glenna's mother has one.

YL: Oh, she's got -- yes, she's got a red one. And she got -- and they - - I forgot that - - and they came at the same time with a gas refrigerator. And she -- and it was red too. And she's had -- the last I knew, she still had that too. But, the interesting thing is that -- and that's why I wanted to show you that -- I don't know what I did with it, though. I hope I kept it. I guess I didn't. The -- (talking simultaneously). Would you like to go eat Mexican food with us

CR: We would love to, unfortunately, it's Mark's department's

MR: Christmas party

CR: Holiday, gathering. So thank you. But unfortunately -- maybe some other time we would love to.

MR: We'd love to do that.

YL: We'll do it another time.

ML: We don't want to rush you off now (talking simultaneously)

YL: You watching your time then, I know.

MR: Actually, I'm not actually sure what time it is.

CR: We'll, we were just going to be late. It's not a-

MR: Oh yeah.

YL: Whatever you think. If I find that though, I love to share it

CR: Yeah, I would like to see that.

MR: That would be great.

YL: Because I was really going to give it to Glenda's mother so that if the day came she sold hers, but this -- it had three burners and then it had the thermal bit. And it had -- everything was chrome. It was so good looking.

ML: It made the best roast.

YL: But you would turn -- I put my roast in when I went to bed at night and I put in -- and I turned it off. We'd get up and the house would be smelling so good. But the oven -- I mean you cooked with the gas turned off with the oven. That

was the whole idea. And, that's why it would be so great now.

Marvin brother's wife, they had one and I believe [?] there was another stove that was outstanding, at that time, that you never hear of. And which one I wanted and so, of course, that was the -- but there is a company in Houston that repairs these stoves. And so that what's been so interesting, too. And it's, it's expensive to have them repaired. But I can remember one of my burners and one of the wires to the burner broke or something, but we had a friend that did all of our work and he came out and he fixed it. And that was that -- took care of my stove. And I cannot remember, I cannot remember, it seemed to me that they paid \$550 for it, that is what I'm thinking.

ML: And that was a lot of money.

CR: Yeah, yeah.

YL: That was in, pardon me, 1952.

MR: Oh wow -- okay, that is

ML: The folks bought that for us when we moved into--

YL: The apartment - - no, no. They bought it in - - I had that horrible stove with the apartment. And I didn't know how to cook to start with, so a horrible stove was a good excuse and so they bought me that [laughter]. They bought me that stove, bought us that stove as a wedding gift. Then it went, Marvin, it went out to labor camp with us and then went - we built it in [inaudible] at home. And so, that

- it served us over the years but when my sister-in-law built her home, and this was several years before, she didn't move it. She left it for the people -- no she left it for your mother. Your mother, it went to her, and she used it for years and then when whoever bought the house then, got the stove when she passed away. So that was our story there.

CR: That's need. I'm gonna have to look up a picture of one.

MR: Yeah, yeah.

CR: That's great.

YL: But it was, you know, and that's what makes me were wonder what I did with it, because there were pictures of the stoves from different years. And they all looked a little bit different, of course. But you had -- mine was white and Perlle's was white. And, but they were different colors.

ML: You know, Robstown was a wonderful town to raise children.

YL: Oh, I cannot -

ML: Wonderful town. And then when this - - they had upheaval and, uh, with the Latin people, uh, became the majority, they called -- they started party called Raza Unida, that means rising of the race. And they ran the office and took over the schools. And when they took over the schools, the people from Robstown took their children out of schools and went to Banquete and surrounding areas

where - - Calallen -- see Calallen was nothing but farm land.

YL: And the thing was, this, the first group that moved out, they got a bus. And they bussed these kids to Banquete. And my youngest was in that group, but he stayed in Robstown. And he, um, he, um, I think they must have been fourth grade, fifth grade, but the sixth grade, if I recall correctly, like Marvin said, some moved to Calallen area.

But Len took a test, the whole class took a test, and you could not get the results of the test until the kids all came back. They had gone out and stood on the hill. When they came back to school and they took the test, then we could get the results of the first group. But, and these kids [inaudible] all out on the hill.

And so anyway, that was the beginning. And then, that child had a math teacher, that he was teaching her math. So we had to do something different then. That was, that was a - - became a crucial time. My oldest boy got through with it fine, my second boy

ML: Well, see that in '71 was when Rick graduated

YL: Yeah, but the second boy, um, he majored in

ML: Television (laughter)

YL: I'm not joking. He went to school. He didn't go to school at 8 o'clock, or 9 o'clock, he went and then he went later and took - - and I just, oh, if we didn't have a time? [laughter] - - oh, it was a time. But anyway, he graduated without any problems and all that, but his mother had problems [laughter]. And so

anyway, but that was the sad school story.

ML: A school makes a community. There was no -- look at Portland, look at Calallen.

YL: Tuloso Midway did well. I don't know what it's doing now, but it did very well and that's where Len went to school (talking simultaneously).

ML: And Corpus is lucky they've got the man they have as superintendent, Scott Elliff, because

YL: He's done -- I told him the other day I'm so proud of him, he's done such a good job

ML: His family, he's from -- he lived in the Banquete area. Banquete and Agua Dulce. And I guess they've been here a hundred years. They're old, old family and they, all of them spoke Spanish as well as they spoke English. I don't know if Scott does or not.

YL: He probably does.

ML: But, um, he's, he and my youngest son went to school, were in the same class.

CR: Okay

YL: Except he stayed in Robstown and finished school in Robstown. Where we

sent ours off to school which was a horrible mistake. Never, ever would I do - - I mean it was, he got the education he need and everything you miss being at the dinner table at night with your family, and that is so important.

After thoughts. You do what you can. Alright, we've told you all our history, we told you everything we know