

**Cicero Rust
A Man for His Time
April 2, 2009**

**Interviewer: Linda Howard
Videographer: Barney Cline
Also present: C.A. Rust, Cicero's son**

Linda Howard (LH): Today's interview is with Cicero Rust. You're ninety-three, aren't you, ninety-three years old. I think that's wonderful. I'm Linda Howard and the videographer today is Barney Cline. Now I want to know, I want you to describe to me how the territory was of Blanco County when you were a young boy.

Cicero Rust (CR): I was borned southwest of Blanco September 28, 1915. The school was about a mile and a half away. Clear Spring Ranch, it is today Centerville—

LH: Centerville?

CR: But they nick-named it Buzzard Roost.

LH: Buzzard Roost. I've heard of that one.

CR: But then it also has another name up the fence line from the school house called Stewart's Mountain Gap. I went to school there when I was four and a half years old and I went for about three months. Then we moved. But I can remember when we lived there that I rode the old bay horse named Nell because she's the one knew what to do. I didn't. But we dipped cattle. And we dipped cattle and the man's name, Richard Byer, he had a dipping vat, and that was fever ticks.

LH: OK. Why did they dip cattle? A lot of people don't know why people—

CR: We had to dip every three weeks.

LH: Was that because they got bugs or ticks?

CR: At the old board house where we lived, where I was borned, we had an old hooking cow that would fight me and I can remember taking the axe, put the rope on the handle and dragging it by that cow. But it didn't do no good.

LH: [Laughing] It didn't do any good. So you were a farmer or a rancher?

CR: Farmer and rancher. I was not in the military. But I raised food and fiber.

LH: What kind of fiber did you raise?

CR: Wool, mohair, cotton.

LH: So you were picking cotton.

CR: I've picked my part of cotton. We had some people to help pick cotton when we, in the '23, '22, '24 year, we made pretty good cotton. We hired people to help. I had knee pads and a cotton sack with a wire band on it you put over your shoulders.

LH: When did you start picking cotton? What time in the morning?

CR: Before daylight.

LH: And when did you quit?

CR: You picked until after dark. There weren't no eight to five. You worked all day. And then we planted corn for the horses and the hogs and the mule, cows, and cane, forage. We butchered four hogs every winter, and one calf, and put it in sausage.

LH: And you made all your own sausage, too, didn't you.

CR: And we put the sausage down in lard, we put the bacon down as a ham in salt, pure salt. And when you dug it out, you'd use the lard in a wash—in a frying pan first, then you'd pour the water away, then you fried the bacon

LH: But was it still salty?

CR: No. You could eat it.

LH: You could eat it then?

CR: In fact you did because you didn't have much else.

LH: What was a typical meal like at your house?

CR: In the depression, in the 30s, that started in '29, the biggest fare we had was pinto beans and cornbread. But we had chickens. And from that of course we had eggs. But from about eight or nine months in there, the diet was pretty well beans and cornbread.

LH: What do you remember about the great depression?

CR: That we come nigh to loosing the ranch, we couldn't make the payments, my daddy had to put the Ford Model T truck in it to make a payment. My daddy was a livestock trader of sorts. It was Mr. Rode in the stock yards in San Antonio called on Daddy, wanted to buy four year old steers. And my daddy knew where there was some. And he went trading around down to Atlanta. And Mr. Barsoff had sixty. So Mr. Rode bought them and we got sixty dollars to drive those steers to the stockyards in San

Antonio. And we owed the Koch Motor Company forty dollars and that had been for nearly a year and forty dollars of that sixty dollars went to Edgar Koch.

LH: And you paid your bill?

CR: Paid the debt.

LH: And you had money left over.

CR: It was nip and tuck throughout those years but I wouldn't have wanted anybody else to go through something like that but the education part really did make me a different human.

LH: How far did you go in school?

CR: I went through the eighth grade. Three times. I went to a country school seven years and did good. But then I rode ten miles to Blanco and it didn't work, so in the middle of the third year I bought my daddy a cigar when I went through Blanco. Give it to him. I said, "I'm through with school." He said, "You've got to stay." He said, "I am not going to do it." He said, "The superintendant wants to talk to you in the morning. We'll go talk to him." We did. I told him I was not going back to school. And I didn't. (Grins)

LH: [Laughing] Well, that's OK. There are a lot of people that didn't go, to complete school.

CR: [Laughing] I didn't do much. I went to work.

LH: So where did you go to work then?

CR: We cut wood to some sorts. And then we got a Tex-Mex family, his name was August Gonzalez. He had three sons. And he said he'd cut wood for us. He'd cut wood, he'd cut a cord for seventy-five cents and he'd cut everything clean. He did. So we hunted a market for it. My brother had an old Chevrolet, [taps fingers on desk] I believe the bed was ten foot and eight foot wide, we delivered three cords of wood stacked in the town of Blanco for five dollars.

LH: And where did you sell it in Blanco?

CR: Well, I can remember that Percy Brigham in the bank bought twenty cords. Charlie Crist bought twenty cords. Joe Buckner bought twenty cords. G.W. Wall bought some but I can't remember how much. Felix Smith had a Model T and a saw and he kept a sawing it but that weren't nothing to us but he was the one that did it. And Blanco bought the most of that wood. The Tex-Mex family lived out-doors in what we called a wagon sheet over [gestures with hands to show frame]—and they made it.

LH: What did it look like again?

CR: He had chickens. And of course that helped him some.

LH: What did that wagon sheet you said look like?

CR: That was his house.

LH: Oh it was like a shed?

CR: They put rocks against the bottom and those four people slept in there.

LH: Did they have a ground floor?

CR: They had a ground floor, outdoor rock where they cooked and I can tell you this that they cooked good. Cause I ate some of it. [Smiles]

LH: What did they cook?

CR: Tortillas, pinto beans, and some kind of a hash but I can't remember. But it was good.

LH: They kept you coming back for more?

CR: [Smiling and nodding to indicate yes] Yeah.

LH: So how did you get to own your own land and stuff like that?

CR: My daddy had mohair goats, angoras. And I'd help shear the home goats, then I'd shear for neighbors. I got three cents.

LH: Three cents for shearing.

CR: A head

LH: Three cents a head.

CR: A day on. The last goats I had I give two dollars and fifty cents a head to have them sheared because I'm too old to shear.

LH: And you sheared your own sheep?

CR: For my daddy. After I married, why, we was so poor that on the Rust Ranch was a sharecropper's house. The sharecroppers refused to live in it but after Momma and I married, we lived in it nine and a half years. And that's a where we started out. After we was married about fifteen years, we bought land. We worked for fifty cents a day.

Then we finally got up to seventy-five cents. That wasn't no eight to five. That was daylight to dark.

LH: Did you get breaks in between?

CR: We got one hour off for lunch. Period.

LH: Well now tell me the story of how you met this wonderful lady and got married.

CR: I met her at her sister's and at a fair in Johnson City and I would think it was 1927. And we was always friends and I introduced the older one to my brother and he eventually married her. But my wife was with a cowboy, had a paint horse, and he had his picture taken in the Pedernales River with the horse standing on his front feet, a cowboy with his hat off. My wife and that boy dated for four years. I stayed on the sidelines. The cowboy met her at a dance one night and told her flat footed that he was through. What happened was a man at Harper had two daughters. If he'd marry the oldest daughter, he'd give him 1280 acres of land. And he taken her. And I met her and we became good friends. Entered her life. So Mamma sent me word she wanted to talk to me. And I went. So we dated. And her daddy had different ideas. He flat told her that she was going to quit dating me period. She told me in Blanco, "It's over." What could I do? I was sort of like a muley bull I guess. But, anyway, time went by. I saw her in Blanco one day and she got me by the hand and she said, "I want to get married." And when I got my breath I said, "When?" And she said, "We'll have to run off and get married." So we met a little bit along and made plans, and we run off and Grandpa hit the ceiling and he said a word with fire on it about that 'long to two of my friends in Blanco and later he had to eat it.

LH: What did he say?

CR: He said that she can a went to 290 (Texas State Highway 290) and a caught the first car coming either direction and beat what she got. And of course he said some more.

LH: They weren't too nice, were they?

CR: Now my mother-in-law never did say too much. I would have married my mother-in-law if I hadn't of got Momma. That would have fixed Grandpa. [both laugh]

LH: But you two did all right. How many years were you married?

CR: Sixty-nine and a half. She was a good woman. She worked too hard. I told her after we'd been where we had quite a bit of wealth, I said, "Momma, quit working." Momma said, "Shut up. I'll quit when you do."

LH: Sounds like Momma was the boss.

CR: She had more sense than I did. She was a good woman.

LH: I think you did just fine.

CR: I know we had a good time. We sure didn't have much...

LH: So when did the boy come along? When did your boy come along?

CR: That was fifteen years after we married. And that was it. It just couldn't work no further.

LH: Well he's a pretty good boy. You raised a good child.

CR: The best. [taps fingers on table]

LH: I think you did very well. Now I want you to think a little bit and tell me what was one of the greatest events in your lifetime that you can remember that happened here in Blanco.

Did you always have electricity?

CR: We didn't have electricity until we was married thirteen years. We didn't have plumbing until we was married sixteen years. We didn't even have an outhouse. My daddy wouldn't let me build one out of cedar. We just went to the open country.

LH: Do you remember ever having to wipe with something other than paper?

CR: Not really.

LH: I had a corn cob one time.

CR: Plenty of them. [both laugh]

LH: I thought that might be the case. OK. Tell me a little bit more about how you got your first car and things like that.

CR: We was married I guess a year and we got a 1932 V8 coop. Wore out. That was our first car. And then, then we traded it off for a V8 half ton Ford pickup. We kept that awhile. We used it on the ranch and it worked. But going back to before I was married, I rode bulls and wild horses and I had a partner by the name of Lee Widener. We rode bulls double. It was ranch rodeo but was nothing like we have today and the bulls we rode were not trained as much. They was ranch bulls and if they was horned, then the horns had to come down this way. [gestures to indicate straight down] Where a muley. But we got double. We got a dollar if we rode single. If we rode double, we got two dollars each. And we learned to come off the bull on the same side so the spurs wouldn't hang in each other's legs. That was easy money at that time. We broke

horses for five dollars and eventually we got ten. But most of them was five. And getting back to Lee Widener after I was married about two years, I quit. I didn't ride bulls. But Lee Widener is buried in the Blanco cemetery, he taken his own life but I never could find out why.

LH: Did that bother you?

CR: Still does. We was good friends. They were raised between Kendalia and Priggs Ranch. He had one sister and one bother named Claude and then another brother but I forgot what his name was. But I danced with Lee's sister, she was a tough customer.

LH: Really? What made her tough?

CR: She was a tomboy pure-dee (pure indeed).

LH: I think you like tomboys. [both laugh]

CR: Not bad.

LH: I take it that you went to the Kendalia Dancehall over there sometimes.

CR: Yes, we did. Yeah. We went to rodeos in Kendalia where Red Bryant rode the bucking horses. I can remember him and Buck Gourley and Buck Gourley's daddy, I believe his name was Porch (Pode). Roy Dale's daddy was named Adolph, and they eventually built a semi rodeo arena for Roy Dale so he could rope. And Roy Dale had a roan, blue roan horse, and we became friends way down through his life.

LH: In what place over there in Kendalia did they hold that rodeo?

CR: It was back of the Kneupper cemetery. I met Leonard Lawhon on one of those roads. He was moving to New Mexico.

LH: Yes, that's Crabapple.

CR: You was borned then.

LH: Yeah

CR: I bought his shearing machine.

LH: Yeah. That's right, you did.

CR: Sold it to Homer Coffee.

LH: Did you make some money off of it?

CR: No, but I made him happy.

LH: [both laugh] Well, that's good, too. That's good, too. It really is. You used to do a lot of shearing yourself.

CR: I used that shearing machine—

LH: —for me so we can get it on tape here. Tell them what you do to get an animal sheared.

CR: I have a friend in Johnson that I bribe and I get it done.

LH: Yeah. But you used to shear, too. I've watched this process. It's not easy.

CR: His name is Hernandez and we're good friends with his wife and kids. He taught the kids.

LH: What other activities did you do as a young man?

CR: Go to Blanco on Saturday afternoon. Hang out with the boys, sometimes girls.

LH: Did you go to the movies?

CR: Yeah. Red Bluff.

LH: How much did the movies cost you?

CR: The first were twenty-five, then it went to thirty-five, then it went to fifty. And that was Ken Manyard and Gene Autry, Gloria Stuart.

LH: Did you do anything else on that Saturday that you were in town?

CR: Yeap. Me and the neighbor boys would sometimes go in the pasture and we'd buy a gallon of wine from Oscar Miller on the Little Blanco River and drink about half of it and then have a headache the next morning.

LH: And still have to work? You have to watch that homemade wine.

CR: It cost a dollar and a half for a gallon.

LH: A dollar and a half a gallon. Well that's pretty expensive for those days, wasn't it?

CR: It was pretty good wine. But the dollar and a half was hard to get, too.

LH: Tell me what Blanco looked like back then. What did the town square look like?

CR: It's sure different than it is today. Edwin Comparet finally made a cement slab between those two rock buildings and used it for a dance hall. We went there some. But it didn't do much good. Then they had a skating ring and that did fairly well for awhile. And then that played out.

LH: Are those the rock buildings on the west side of town?

CR: Well the theater was built later, but Cage was there, Comparet was there, Masonic Lodge was there and there was two fires and I think that was in the start of the depression. The bank was in the courthouse at first and then they got, well they built a little building and moved across the street.

LH: Do you remember the old courthouse or just the new one?

CR: I can remember my daddy telling me that he went to school in this courthouse upstairs and I can remember my daddy telling me that they changed the courthouse. A bunch of thieves came from Johnson City and moved it at night and opened up the next morning in Johnson City. [Both laugh]

LH: Well, we won't talk about that.

CR: Well, they stole it. [Laughs]

LH: Oh yeah, they kind of did. Well we can't say that though. It was a legitimate vote. OK? You said that you grew sugar cane. Correct? Did you make molasses out of that sugar cane?

CR: We did two times. We grew the sugar cane and stripped it and taken to our neighbor Richard Bindseil. He had a press and a vat. We pressed the juice and poured the juice in a vat, built a fire under it, and Richard Bindseil said would we're to put it in buckets. He was a pretty good neighbor.

LH: Did you use that as part of your meals then or did you sell that too?

CR: No, we kept every bit of it.

LH: What would you use molasses for?

CR: Put it on butter bread mostly.

LH: Fresh baked butter bread, right?

CR: My mother made homemade bread and we milked lots of cows when I was a teenager. We taken a load of cotton seed to San Marcos and on that Fischer Hill at Fischer Store, my mother had to chuck the wagon because it wouldn't pull but so much at a time. She got her finger caught between the chucking and the wheel so—

LH: Now what is chucking a wheel?

CR: That's a rock, bark, or a piece of wood that would get behind the wheel and keep it from moving it backwards.

LH: Okay.

CR: And then Momma's finger was in bad shape and I got promoted to kitchen duty and churned butter. And that lasted for, I believe, seven or eight weeks.

LH: Did you have a turning handle on your churn or did you have one of the up and down churns?

CR: We had a gallon churn that you turn like that. [Gestures turning handle]

LH: How long did it take you to make butter?

CR: I don't know but we sold twenty-five pounds of butter a week.

LH: Those were good cows.

CR: It helped pay the bills. We planted Irish potatoes and several years we sold twenty-one hundred pounds at a time. [finger drumming] And that helped pay the payments on the ranch. We raised mules and horses, cattle. We had a drought in '25.

LH: How long did that drought last?

CR: One year.

LH: Well we just came out of a drought.

CR: But that's what started it. The down, downhill of the, the great depression. Boll weevil come after '25 and that hurt us. And cotton. We had to go to something else like oats, wheat, barley, corn. Diversify.

But in this goat business when the mothers had the babies and that was, most of the time, the last three or four days of February, then in March, my job was out in the goat shed for three weeks. When momma wouldn't save the kid, I had to educate her to where she would.

LH: How did you do that?

CR: Put her in a pen in isolation. And sometimes slapped her with a little stick.

LH: Did it work?

CR: Most of the time. [both laugh] In 1929 we turned the goats out too early. They'd been sheared four weeks. We taken a loss. We owed the bank for the goats and they said they didn't accept dead goats. That was a debt we had to pay. I taken the same lesson in '46. I lost ninety out of six hundred. And I owed for them.

LH: Would you say the ranching business was very profitable?

CR: Yeah but you really have to work. I still run the ranch but I ain't going to tell you how good.

LH: I think you do just fine.

CR: I did it in a pickup. [Smiles and widens eyes]

LH: Well okay.

CR: And I cut wood with a chain saw.

LH: At your age you still do all this?

CR: I cut wood every day. On account of my shoulder. I have a bad shoulders. [crosses arms across chest and pats shoulders]

LH: Is that your exercise?

CR: The saw helps. And I have to lay down flat on my back to get relief.

LH: Can I ask you to explain about your mother and father. Were they hard workers?

CR: My daddy and mother planted a lots of cotton where I was born.

LH: How many kids were there that had to pick cotton?

CR: Just my brother and I. He was five years older than me. My daddy and mother would pick one bale of cotton every other day. And my daddy would get in at night and they'd do it again, and they'd do it again. After we left that place they had money in the bank. But it all went downhill. Didn't work out. [drums fingers]

LH: Were they born here in the United States?

CR: My mother was born up the river from Blanco where the Zerchers, where Roger Zercher lives now. And my daddy was born down the Blanco River where Ashley has his RV court. We have a, my daddy's younger brother is buried on that land.

LH: It sounds like you had a very hard life.

CR: My daddy had (siblings) Henry, Don, Will, Joe and Ben and him and Kirby. They had two sisters. Annie, Annie Clark. She moved to McAlaster, Oklahoma. And homesteaded. And made it. But she never did come back. Her daughter did. And the younger sister was Mert, Myrtle. She had two boys. And she was in Corpus Christi running a filling station and whatever. She married a Hill. Boyd Hill. The older boy married Ben Johnson's cousin. And Henry Hill was deputy sheriff for years in Kleberg County. But we got to visit with him. And Aunt Mert could use cuss words real efficiently and did. But Aunt Annie was just opposite. She was quiet and hard working, and never did get disturbed. That's the way it was.

LH: Is there anything that you would have liked to have done in your life that you didn't get to do?

CR: Not really. I just did pretty good. Had to work hard but just did pretty good. I never did bellyache much, just did the best we could for what we had. And we did. We worked out. We bought our first land that joined the Rust Ranch. The first land we bought above Blanco because, that there, I wouldn't tell my daddy, it come in the paper. When my daddy brought that old Chevrolet coop around the corner and he said, "I thought I'm raising somebody that wasn't nuts." And it turned out that I had bought it.

LH: You did pretty good.

LH: You are kind of a trader aren't you? You buy things and sell them and things like that. Was that fun, finding things and selling them?

CR: In the 50s in the drought we paid up and went kaput. I got credit in '56 and I bought eleven hundred broken mouth mother sheep. And put the papas with her. And when this rain come there was three livestock auction in Aultz, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Campville had two. I believe Edwards had one. I had an old two wheeled trailer with a deck in it and I'd take thirty mammas and lambs. I paid the debt. In one year I paid the debt. And it was big.

C.A. Rust (CAR): They say that you and Mamma used to sell cream. How did ya'll do that?

CR: We had a cream separator finally. The Devine Creamery would pick it up. The Devine Creamery one time came and said, "I'm not coming back. Do you want this route?" And I taken that route, and I went to Knowlton's with it. Every Wednesday morning at one o'clock I'd have till midnight, I'd pick up the neighbors from where I lived to Spring Branch and deliver it. And then when I bought land at Hye, I quit that.

CAR: Where was the Knowlton's Creamery?

CR: On Cincinnati. On Cincinnati Avenue in San Antonio Edward Knowlton—Frances Mazuerak's brother—I met a whole bunch of them. They was sure nice people. I take

cream to San Marcos sometimes and Fredericksburg. But my father give up on that. I went into the watermelon business in the summertime, seventeen years.

LH: And what did you do with those watermelons--besides eat them? [Both laugh]

CR: Well except the side of the highway, at first I sold them. But then I got educated and I got the grocery store. I made them believe that it's the right thing to buy my watermelons.

CAR: Where did you get the watermelons?

CR: Harwood, Luling, Seguin, Stockdale. I wouldn't buy the first watermelons because they was too high, but on the second picking I would buy the number two watermelon. And it lasted for two months. It was a good thing for the ranch. It was slow at the ranch and so it helped out. Then one day I drove to Stonewall. I told Simon Burg, I want to buy a load of peaches. He said, "For what?" I said, "I want to resell them." [LH laughs] And I taken them on the highway and sold them.

LH: Did you make money.

CR: [Smiling] Not too much. But then the second trip come, Simon Burg said, "I'll give you \$1.60 an hour if you'll work here in the peach shed. And if you'll bring your wife, I'll give her \$1.10 an hour." We stayed there twenty-five years [Smiles].

LH: Wow. Did he increase your pay?

CR: [Smiling] Simon was good.

LH: I go to Burg's Corner even now.

CR: He was my manager I guess for three years, Charles Schumann was my manager for two years, Victor Doebbler was my manager for two years, and Charles Haas—remember Charles Haas?

LH: Yes

CR: He was my manager for two years. [both laugh] But I learned something about peaches. And if it freezes tonight, it'll split seed, too.

LH: Are we going to have a frost tonight?

CR: It surely won't freeze tonight, will it?

LH: I don't know. I'm asking you. Do you think it's going to frost tonight?

CR: Under thirty-two (degrees) will split seed. But twenty-six will ruin the crop.

LH: Did you have to go out in the fields, the peach orchards and—

CR: No. All along I was the retail manager in the retail room. I sold peaches nobody else could sell—overripes and such as that. The outside people didn't know what to do with them.

LH: Well how did you do that?

CR: [Smiling] Well, I just had to loosen my tongue.

LH: Go ahead and tell us your secrets. Now, come on.

CR: But I never did throw peaches away. But the outside people did. So at the height we'd throw three dump trucks full of it every day. But I just got so mad I wanted to press it in juice. And use it. But they wouldn't listen. But they eventually did.

LH: And you could make jelly out of it, too, couldn't you?

CR: Yeah. But we got caught with a bunch of medium peaches. I believe there was seven hundred half bushel boxes. Couldn't sell them. So I phoned Mrs. Jameson in Schulenburg. I said, "Can you use some peaches to make jelly?" "For how much?" And I said, "If you'll come up here, Mrs. Jameson, we'll negotiate." She come on up right with two trucks and she bought every one of them. We give her a good price but it beat throwing them away.

LH: Yeah. It does. It does. So you're the one that started that, huh?

CR: She was a good woman. She'd make all kinds of jellies and jams and preserves.

LH: Did you get to know a little of the growers up at Stonewall?

CR: Yeah.

LH: Did you get to know LBJ?

CR: [Smiling] Lady Bird and Lucy Baines, in the summer time they'd come in. And one day Lady Bird come in there and she got me by the hand and she said, "Can you hide me." And I said, "Yeah." So me and her went into the corner. [LH laughs] Then she told me, she said, "it was the reporters" and she wanted away from them. So she said, "Can you get me into the car?" And I said, "Yeah." And I got a peach box, tore it open and she held it over her. And she followed me. She could see my feet. So I taken her to a different door and put her in her car. [Both laugh]

LH: That's a great story.

CR: So far on in life she wrote me a note on a—I don't know what you call it—with her picture and Lucy, we got to be awful good friends.

LH: She came up there quite often too?

CR: She'd put her arm around me and she'd say, "Now what kind of peaches am I gonna get?" [both laugh] But Linda, I didn't, never did have any contact with her. And Lyndon, he got to be pretty good. He bought my wife's daddy's estate, what he left. He didn't do what he said he would do but he bought it anyway.

CAR: Tell about how you closed the gate on him and the Secret Service.

CR: 50:03 We were dividing the estate behind the house, four sisters, my mother's, wife, and two Wilkey girls. And we had all of our pickups behind the house. And we had the gate open. And directly there was a bunch of big black Cadillacs went through and they dusted. He was looking to buy it. And he saw there was nobody there. So I didn't say anything to the girls. I went and shut the gate.

LH: Shut it on Lyndon Johnson?

CR: And when I saw them coming, I shutted the gate. The Secret Service said, "We're going through." I said, "You're going to run over me." I wouldn't move. Lyndon got out.

LH: [laughing] And what did he say to you?

CR: We let him through but it take two hours. He had Dean Rusk, Bob McNamara,

CAR: General Westmorland.

CR: And the Blanco man.

CAR: You got to meet everybody that day, huh?

CR: Yeah. Lyndon chewed Dale Malacheck out for giving the wrong report that there wasn't nobody there. [laughs]

LH: [Laughs] That's cute. I love that story.

CR: Lyndon give me a pocket knife. We got to be pretty good buddies. He said, "I won't let you give me money." So I had to give him a penny. He knew Momma's sisters. He danced with them. And him and Momma hit it off.

LH: Really!

CR: Yeah. They made it good.

LH: So maybe you had a girlfriend of his, too. [both laugh]

CR: He liked Momma. I know that. Which was all right. He wasn't the only one that liked her. She was well liked.

LH: So who did he have in the car again? Westmorland and who else?

CR: Ma'am?

LH: Who else did he have in the car with him that day? General Westmorland and who else?

CR: Walter—what was that CBS man's—oh Cronkite.

LH: Walter Cronkite.

CR: He was there at the house.

LH: I thought you said that.

CR: Of course he would have enjoyed that but there was no mention to him of that.

CAR: Dean Rusk was in the car.

LH: Oh Dean Rusk. Him too?

CAR: And Robert McNamara was in there.

CR: [to his son CAR] When Lyndon's funeral was, what was the man's—CBS—that me and him talked about so much?

CAR: Dan Rather?

CR: No, the other one.

CAR: Cronkite?

CR: No, no. The other one. The one that traveled all the time.

CAR: Charles Kuralt?

CR: Yeah. Yeah, we talked a long time.

LH: Oh wow.

CR: He was in a—in the press behind the cemetery behind the fence.

LH: Well, you're just a celebrity that just don't know he's a celebrity then.

CR: I was just a country boy enjoying myself. [laughs] Lyndon, he liked women. And Lady Bird knew what to say. They questioned her. "Half the people in the world are women and he loves them all." [Grins, and all laughs]

LH: Is that what she said?

CR: That's what Barbara Bush told a reporter when George Bush was in South Texas hugging and taking a beer with one of the bar maids.

LH: She told them the same thing, huh?

CR: They asked her, I believe, about three days later something and she said, "I slept with George Bush last night." [All laughs]

LH: [Still laughing] Oh my goodness.

CR: Barbara Bush is a good woman. She's smart.

LH: Well, good.

CR: Now when Nellie (Brill) Connally (later Mrs. John Connally, first lady of Texas) was a girl of about that tall [gestures shoulder level], Arno Brill hunted on the Rust Ranch—deer. And (their daughter) Nellie Brill come along sometimes. And I had a collie dog named Ring. My daddy give Nellie Brill my dog. And it didn't suit me period.

LH: So what did you do?

CR: I didn't do nothing but pout.

LH: So Miss Brill got your collie dog.

CR: They come back several times after she had the dog. But she really was good to the dog.

LH: Well that's good then. That's good. Well is there anything else that you think I ought to know about your life?

CR: [Shaking head to indicate "no"] I run out. [pointing at camera] Broke that thing. We have to quit. [All laugh]

Notes:

This interview was conducted and produced by the Oral History Committee of the Blanco County South Library District.

In spite of the best efforts of the Oral History Committee, some errors may be present in this transcription. Please refer to accompanying video for original source.

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