

Stanley Lane
Indians and Settlers
April 11, 2003

Interviewer: Ashley Edwards
Videographer: Ashley Edwards

Stanley Lane (SL): My name is Stanley Towers Lane. I was named Towers after my grandfather; that's my mother's father. My father was a Lane from the Lane County (Valley), which is between Comfort and Center Point. My great-grandfather had 34,000 acres there. There's still buildings standing today where my father went to school. That school was used up to 1962; then they closed it. Now it's used just for elections. They set up posters for the people who are running for different offices within the county, and people go there to vote in that precinct there.

Ashley Edwards (AE): I see. So your family has a long history in Texas.

SL: A long history. My great-grandfather Lane came to Texas in about 1827, and he received the rights to own land. In order to do this, he had to become a Catholic. And his father was a Baptist minister back in Tennessee. His father was the first minister of any denomination in Tennessee—has quite a history back there. But when he came to Texas, he came with a group of men just for adventure. His wife had died, which would be my great-grandmother, and he just came to Texas and several others. He decided he liked it, and he thought he would come back. He went back to Tennessee, and he met a woman that was also a widow. Her husband, who was a friend of his, had died. They got married. A couple of years passed by, and she decided that she did not want to come to Texas. They had kind of pooled their resources together. I have a will that he made out giving her so many horses and so many cows and so many instruments to plow fields with, and they shared some of the slaves that he had. He came to Texas with two of his sons. My grandfather was one of his sons also. His name was Sam. His father was named Sam. But he had two brothers. He came two years later to what would be Center Point, Texas. That's where they established their home. The Guadalupe River goes right through the middle of it. They had land on both sides. Some of the main things that they would do—they would cut down these big tall cypress trees and make homes out of it. They would plane the wood into planks, and from there, they would sell the wood to people who are building their homes around there.

SL: It's interesting because they had big families. My grandfather had a lot of them—nine children. And only three of the boys and two of the girls came to Texas. The rest of them stayed back in Tennessee. But each of the family groups as you go back—there's always been a Sam Lane in every generation back through that time.

AE: So they settled in Lane—what is now Lane County?

SL: Lane Valley. Lane Valley. If you'd go there today—had 34,000 acres as I said—and you go there today, you go in about five miles, and there's a big field. I'm

really getting ahead of myself—I'm going to say this—my great-grandfather was killed by the Indians. It was four days before they found him. And when they found him, his body had already started to decay, so they buried him on site. He was part of the Commissioner's Court in Kerrville at that time, and that was a party that had dismissed their court proceedings to look for the body—to look for him. They knew he'd probably be dead.

SL: Anyhow, when I went to Lane Valley, I was looking for my great-grandfather's grave. I ran across a man who had bought some of the Lane property. He said, "Well, I have something that might be of interest to you." You see, there was a big field—sixty acre field. In the sixty acre field, there was a knoll—just a little knoll, maybe fifty feet high, just kind of round, [indicates shape with hands] just came out of the field—and the field was all around this. He says, "Go up to that field." I was driving in my car, and he was out with a sickle that he was cutting weeds and different types of things he was trying to clear his field out with. I thought, "He's really going to have a hard job with this." Anyhow, he opened the gate, and I drove up to the little knoll where this was, and there was about twenty graves there. Some of them was named Lane. It would be like a Frank Lane or a Jim Lane or a George Lane. There would be a Isadora Lane and Frances Lane and all these different names. When he came, he says, "Well, now these must be all your kinfolks." I said, "You know, I don't recognize any of these names. They don't appear to me at all. I just have never heard of them before." He laughed. He says, "These were your great-grandfather's slaves." Some of the names were, like I said, Lane. Then there were some of them was the name Blank, B-I-a-n-k. That would be like Jesse Blank or Isadora Blank. He says, "You know why those names are Blank?" I said, "No, I don't understand this." He says, "Well, let me tell you. When the Civil War came along and the South lost and the slaves had been emancipated, their owners had to give them so much of their land." They had big broad fields and where the Guadalupe River ran right through it. They had their choice. They didn't choose any of the adobe hills. They chose the fertile lands where the fields had been cleared out of the big trees. This made my grandfather mad. So he told them they could not use the name Lane anymore after this. This was recorded in Center Point. It was in the paper. There was a whole page article about this—how my grandfather had changed the name of the Lanes because of the slaves whose name were Lane, because of the fact that the South had lost the war and the slaves had been emancipated. They no longer had masters.

SL: But I wasn't really going even to talk to you about this. If you have any questions you want to ask me, I'll be glad to help you.

AE: You really had wanted to talk to us about your uncles—your great-uncles?

SL: I was going to. It didn't make any difference. These are my two great-uncles. They were captured by the Indians. [holding a copy of *The Boy Captives*] This is a book by them. I have a bigger book. When I was a little boy, I lived in Bandera. Let me say this: in the late eighteen hundreds, the Guadalupe River had a big rise, and it washed all the homes away that was along the river. And so my grandfather's house was

washed away. The water came into inside the house—washed everything away except the school. The school that my great-grandfather had built, where my father went to school, was on a knoll—a little hill—and it's up from the river maybe, uh, two hundred feet, three hundred feet up above the river. It's a high place there. Anyhow, the school stayed there, but the house was washed away. So my grandfather then said okay to my father and his brothers and his sisters that they were going to move to the back of Lane Valley. And when they moved to the back of Lane Valley, that put us as five miles from Bandera on Privilege Creek. He built a home there. That's where I was born and raised. It's a two-story house, and I loved it. It, uh, stood for a long time—still standing—well, not today because it caught on fire. But it had a big fireplace in it. That was the only heat in the house. My mother and father gave me a cot—a metal cot like an old army cot—that I would stay in the living room where the fireplace was, so I'd be warmed in the winter time. It really was cold—lots colder in those days than it seems to be during this day and time. But that's on Privilege Creek that that house burned down. But it's built in its place again. That's the house that my father sold in 1954. He had 1800 acres when they divided the property up. He gave me the money to buy this piece of—this ranch I have here in Blanco now. That's how come I'm located in Blanco.

SL: But I was going to talk to you about that my grandfather's wife—her name was Smith. Her father came from Pennsylvania, and the Pennsylvanian—they're primarily German. Smith is an English name. His name was really Schmidt, S-c-h-m-i-d-t. And when he was going to come to South Texas, or to Texas, he knew that in Europe that Germany had conquered Poland, France—most of the European nations the Germans had conquered. Everybody hated Germans. So he changed his name from Schmidt to Smith, S-m-i-t-h. He came to Texas in 1827. He helped erect the first building in Austin. There was no buildings there, and he helped erect the first one. He and his wife—he married a girl whose name was, uh, Short, S-h-o-r-t. And she became Lane. They had my father, and he had nine brothers and sisters. Her father, who had changed his name from Schmidt to Smith, went to work in San Antonio. He owned a gun shop. He worked on different guns, and he would sell guns to people. This would be in probably the 1830s. From there he became a Texas Ranger, just like the Lanes. All the Lane men became Texas Rangers. They fought the independent outlaws and people who would come to Texas who were disobedient to the laws.

SL: Anyhow, this Smith—my Grandfather Smith—he had nine children. He had two little boys—had more than that—but two boys. One was five years old; the other was seven. They were out tending their father's sheep. They were on the Cibolo Creek. You have any idea where that's at? As you drive between here and San Antonio, just before you get to San Antonio, you pass a creek bed and it says Cibolo. Well, that day—that Cibolo Creek used to run all the time, and he had a ranch on Cibolo Creek. He had sheep out there, and he had got these two boys to tend the sheep. There were about two hundred head of sheep. They would go with them, and they would bring them home at night because of the coyotes and the wolves. We had a lot more different animals during that day and time. They would bring the sheep into big pens. They were out one day with their father's sheep. They saw Indians coming, so they hid in brush. The Indians formed a circle around them. They hollered at them, and they knew

that the two boys were there. They challenged them to come out, and they kept taunting them. They pulled out a gun like they were going to kill the two boys, and then the boys decided, Well, we better go in. They were—like I said, the oldest boy was seven, and the youngest boy was five. When they grabbed hold of the youngest boy, the oldest boy then—whose name was Clinton—he ran underneath the belly of the horse and tried to get away. They circled him again, and this time, they pointed a gun at him, and he knew that if he didn't go to them, that they would shoot him. So he went to this one man who seemed to be the chief, and he put out his hand. And then he put his foot out where he could step on the foot, and he got in the back of the saddle. And so they rode off. The sheep that evening came home on their own because they were used to it. But the two boys were not there. They realized that something had gone wrong. The band of Indians—there were about twenty of them, and they were Kiawahs. That's a type of tribe that was in Texas at that time, and they did a lot of trading amongst the other Indians. So they started heading up towards Oklahoma. And the Texas Rangers tried to head them off, and they would build reserves of men across a certain area. But the Indians would go around them or sneak through at night. They never could catch them. They killed a man's cow as they were going on, as they had no water. The boys first would not eat. Finally, they realized that if they didn't eat, they would have nothing. So they gave them a piece of liver. Even though this was raw, they chewed on it—pretty much so because they were really hungry. They went on and passed Fort Worth and went up into Oklahoma, and there they were traded to other Indians of that tribe. There were Apaches. There were Comanches. And there was one man who was the chief of his tribe. His name was Geronimo. Geronimo has a history of his own. The youngest boy was sold to him. They took irons—hot irons—and they branded the youngest boy on the cheek. This is a picture of the two boys when they were young men [shows cover of book]. This book is about their lives. But there's pictures in here of them that shows the brand, if I can find it. Well, it may not be in this book. It may be in the older one. This is the oldest boys right here—the two boys when they were old men by that time [shows picture from book, page 26]. They were both Texas Rangers in the latter days of their lives.

SL: Anyhow, the youngest boy was branded, and Geronimo was kind to him. He was assigned to one of Geronimo's wives—he had several wives—and that's same true of Clinton. Clinton was the oldest boy, and Jeff was the youngest boy. They lived with the Indians. Clinton lived five years with them, and Jeff lived seven years with them. They went on different raids with the Indians, and as they spent more and more time with them, they begin to feel that they were part of that tribe. They would ride horses, and they would have camp meets together. They had all types of ceremonies where they would pull tricks on the white boys. There were other white boys and girls that were captured by other Indians. But they would get to have meetings together. They'd have foot races, and they'd shoot arrows and chase things, and they made them ride horses—wild horses. They would tie their legs underneath the belly of the horse so they couldn't get thrown off. But the horse would pitch—just really shook them up. They learned to ride horses good that way. Anyhow, one of the questions that I used to ask them when I was a boy, "Did you ever shoot anybody?" They would kind of hang their heads because they had become just like the Indians themselves. They had lost

the relationship with their real mother, real father. Really, they had almost forgot how to speak English. They knew Apache and Comanche, but they could not really speak English well. So this book draws a lot about them.

SL: That's a picture of Geronimo right there you're just looking at. This is Geronimo [showing picture from the book]. You remember him. Have you ever read about Geronimo? He was a famous Indian chief that caused lots of trouble amongst Texas. He would raid and kill and steal horses, steal cattle—did a lot of terrible things. But for young boys who were of the impressionable age, they begin to think that's the way life was. They begin to feel just like they did. They enjoyed that kind of life. The book tells about how that they would compete with different tribes—horseback riding and shooting arrows and shooting guns and swimming, learned how to swim, do all things of nature. As they were with the tribe longer, then they would take horses and would watch them at night. Sometime they would hobble the horse so they would not run. Some of the horses would try to run away, so they would hobble them so they would not run away. Their job was to watch the horses at night and fetch wood for the squaws and do menial tasks. As they grew older with the Indians, they begin to fight *with* them. When they went on raids, they would go on raids with them. The oldest boy, who was part of a Comanche tribe—the American soldiers begin to press them real hard. So they sold them to some “Mexicheros.” These were Mexicans who would come up into the Indian country, and they would trade ammunition and trade different things to the Indians for skins from buffalo or skin from bear or skins that they would have use of.

SL: And so as things pressed on, as their tribe were being pressed by the American soldiers, they sold Clint to the Mexicans, and the Mexicans then took Clint back to Texas. His father had to pay money for them. He ran away from home several times, but they would always catch him again and bring him back. He really enjoyed the Indian life, and he could not associate at first with his father or his mother, even though they—he knew they loved him. There was something about them that he realized that. He was old enough that he remembered that they were good to him and things like this. But still there was a streak within him that wanted to let him get back to the Indians. The youngest boy was two more years with Geronimo. He was with Geronimo for seven years. And finally, some of the tribes—some of the Indians, male Indians of the tribe—took Jeff to some of the Comancheros. That's what they called the Mexicans who would trade with the Indians. And they sold him for so much ammunition. They were being pressed at that time for food and for ammunition. So they brought him back. Jeff, the oldest brother, remembers when they brought this boy, who was captured and was tied on his horse when they brought him to his father. He recognized him, even though he would hide from him and didn't want to be seen by him. Yet the little boy kept looking for him. The little boy—by that time, he was probably thirteen or fourteen years old, maybe a little older than that.

SL: Anyhow, they untied him, and they—the two boys together celebrated knowing each other and seeing each other again after so many years. They left home. They went with a man who was—whose name was Chisholm. They took herds of cattle up to Kansas. It was called the Chisholm Trail, the Chisholm Trail drivers. They would do

this for maybe twenty dollars a month, something like this, which would not be very much money, but to them, it was a lot of money. This is how they gradually grew back into the understanding that they were white, and the Indians were a different tribes. They understood that their part, their place, should be with their families.

SL: Anyhow, when I was a little boy—I was raised in Bandera on my grandfather's ranch—these two boys would come to visit my grandmother who lived with us. And they would play tricks on me. They said if I ran around the house three times real fast that there would be something following me. And I thought, Unh, I can't believe this. So I tried it. I'd run around the house real fast three times. They would pull up my britches leg and look at my calf of my leg, and they said, "See you have two little calves following you. That's what the calf of your leg is called—*calf*." So I thought that was funny. They took great delight in playing tricks on me as a boy, all kind of tricks. But I held them in high esteem. I knew that they had been captured by the Indians. And I knew that their lives had been different.

SL: My grandfather had already died, and my grandmother had a big trunk, and I stayed upstairs—that was my room, was upstairs—had a big trunk in it, and I was really not to touch that trunk. When she died, my mother took that trunk out, and she opened it up, and there was three Indian scalps in there. My grandfather had done this. They felt that the Indians saw that they had scalped other Indians of—they would not slaughter them. They would shoot them maybe but not cut off a arm and leg or things like this, which they would do. They would honor him and not put him to a torturous death. They would just kill him. So he had pistols in there, and he had these three scalps in there. My mother saw these things, and she took them out, and she burned them. I was really envious of those guns. I thought, Golly, I would really like to have those. But I couldn't say anything. There was nothing I could say.

SL: But, anyhow, these two boys—they became ranchers—had their own ranches. The oldest boy had a ranch; it was south—let's see, actually west of San Antonio, maybe 120 miles. The youngest boy lived in the city. They became good citizens. Geronimo was finally captured. When he was captured, they brought him to San Antonio. They kept him at the quadrangle at Fort Sam Houston (shows picture of Geronimo from book), and they both went to see him. When they went to see him, he threw his arms around them, and they cried. All three of them were crying because they had lost something. Geronimo knew that he probably was going to be put to death. And the two boys wept over him because they were—he was like a father to them. Their father, let's see, after Texas became an independent statehood, their father was a federal marshal, one of the first federal marshals of San Antonio.

SL: There's a picture of him right here. [shows picture from book] In San Antonio at the museum, there's a big picture of him—this man here [indicating picture]—because as a federal marshal, everybody wore guns. Everybody wore guns. All fights ended up in a gun fight. He was a federal marshal for two years in San Antonio and killed twenty-two men. When you think about this, you think, Well, this man was terrible. But actually that's how many time he laid his life on the line. He was lucky that he didn't get killed.

He had got wounded several times. [showing picture] But he killed those many men. The Texas Historical Society in San Antonio, which is right next to the Witte Museum—if you've ever been to San Antonio, there's a life history about him and as he was the federal marshal. Federal marshal at that time was appointed by the state out of Austin. It was not appointed by the city itself. It was appointed by state officials. And so he served that capacity for two years.

SL: Then he moved to his ranch on the Cibolo River, and his wife, my grandmother, had died, Fannie Short, and he met another woman and had a little son. And this woman did not really—she was a city girl, and she was not used to the country life. It's a hard life. It was a hard life. They had no running water in the house, no heat in the house. If you had anything like that, you had to have a fireplace, or you had to have an iron stove that you could burn wood in. He got sick and he died. He's buried now where Camp Stanley is. Are you familiar with that—where Camp Stanley is? As you go to San Antonio, if you went by Boerne, you would go by Camp Stanley first. Then there's another big camp there—bigger than Stanley. I can't think of it right now. But it's a big military camp. It's on the north side of San Antonio. That's where they practice with their tanks, and they have all new equipment out there. It's thousands of acres. It's a big place.

SL: Anyhow, these two men—as I was growing up, they would come over to see their sister, my grandmother, and I had a great rapport with them—meant that I really admired them. I was a boy who probably thought that I would have liked to had that share—living with Indians, this man called Geronimo, and these Apaches, and the raids. You know you have your figment of imagine. Little boys—you want to do such things as this. And I think their father was a federal marshal in San Antonio. That was something I used to think about too. Anyhow, that's just a little brief story. I would really invite—they have this book [holding up book] here in the library. You'd check it out; you could read it. You'd enjoy it.

AE: It looks very interesting. Did they have troubles with language, going both ways?

SL: Well, you know, I'll tell you two things. They picked up the Indian language very easy, being young boys. They picked it up easy. But they had—you think they would always have English, but they didn't. The youngest boy really had a tough time remembering English words. He'd know words, but he couldn't form sentences. He finally got back into it with riding with other ranchers and these Texas trail drivers going to Kansas and stuff like this. He began to pick it back up. And they'd become civilized. They went back home. They recognized their mother and their father, their brothers and sisters, and things like this.

AE: How long did a trail drive take? You mentioned the Chisholm Trail drive.

SL: It took about three months. You're herding a bunch of cattle up there, and you have to let them graze a bit. And you try to take them to a place where there's water, there's creeks, and stuff like this, where they drink. You let them drink for three or four

days. Then you start the trail drive again. There would be *buyers* in Kansas, where there's no *buyers* in the rest of Texas. You had to take them where the buyers were. There'd be great herds up there. Someday if you have interest in seeing these things, I live northwest of here, six miles out. I'll be glad to show you these collections.

Notes:

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