

Frank Castaneda Interview

Castaneda Home in Lewis, Kansas

March 20, 2009

Interviewers: Joan Weaver and Rosetta Graff

Present at Interview: Angelina Castaneda, spouse
Angelo Castaneda, grandson

Interviewer: Frank, can we start off by telling us your full name?

Frank: Francisco Munoz Castaneda

Interviewer: Where do you currently live?

Frank: 709 *Gorham*, Lewis Kansas

Interviewer: When were you born?

Frank: December 3, 1930, in Lewis, Kansas

Interviewer: You were telling us earlier that it was the Santa Fe Hilton?

Frank: The Company (*Santa Fe Railroad*) had homes there, and the people who worked there lived there, so that's where we lived and that's where I was born.

Interviewer: About how many homes were there?

Frank: I think there was room for probably about five families if they didn't have too big a family. Of course, they all grew sometimes.

Interviewer: Just on the north side of the railroad tracks?

Frank: Right on the north side, right north of Gorham.

Interviewer: Were these all Hispanic families?

Frank: At that time there was, I don't believe there was anybody else that lived there that worked on the railroad. But some of the people that I knew worked on the railroad lived south of the tracks.

Interviewer: Was this what brought your mother and father to Lewis? The job on the railroad? That's why they came here?

Frank: Yes, way back, I suppose before, my folks came here in '27. They lived in Offerle. He worked on the railroad then. They started cutting back, so he was moved to Lewis. But before that, in the earlier '20s, he was in Deerfield, Kansas working in the beet fields.

Interviewer: What was your father's name?

Frank: Joe. Jose. My mother's name was *Manuela* and her maiden name was Munoz.

Interviewer: So that is where you get your middle name. What were your grandparents' names?

Frank: Abundo Munoz was my grandfather on my mother's side. Maria Cervera Munos was my grandmother. On the Castaneda side, his name was Nicholas Castaneda and her name was Maria Vidala Castaneda.

Interviewer: Where were your grandparents from?

Frank: Mexico.

Interviewer: On both sides?

Frank: Yes.

Interviewer: So your parents were the first generation in the States?

Frank: No, my grandparents didn't come up here.

Interviewer: So what about your household? Did you have brothers and sisters?

Frank: Oh yeah, first of all, I had a half-brother, and his name was Eusebio Guerrero, because his dad died, and then my mother and my dad married. Then I'm the oldest that is living, but I have a sister who was older than me.

Interviewer: Were you all born here in Lewis? So you had an older sister, then you...

Frank: We were all born in Lewis. Yes, then there would be Pete, Connie, Nick (his name was actually Henry, but we called him Nick after Nicholas our grandfather) Esther (the baby), Joe and Cruz. They weren't younger, they were older than Nick. Then that was it.

Interviewer: You were born in 1930. So what do you remember about living in Lewis, and maybe the end of the Dustbowl days in the Depression and your life as the child of a railroad worker?

Frank: You know back in the '30's things was kind of hard to come by for everybody. In '34, '35, clear up into '37, I remember the dust, it seemed like it always came out of the north.

Interviewer: Did it come into your little house?

Frank: Oh yeah, the folks always put wet blankets and stuff on the windows to kind of hold the dust that would sift in. I remember that sometimes in the daytime, I was pretty small, but I can remember that sometimes in the daytime it got dark.

Interviewer: Your father was probably pretty lucky to have a job wasn't he?

Frank: Oh yes, and he stayed with it for 45 years.

Interviewer: Yes, and during the '30's there were a lot of people that didn't have a job.

Frank: That's right, and I can remember that I would come downtown with dad, and it seemed that the wind was always blowing. And you know what main street is like, and the sand and dirt would just go right down Main Street.

Interviewer: Was the road paved then?

Frank: No, it was dirt. When I'm talking about, all the streets were dirt at that time in town. Later on, Lewis Street and Main Street got paved. Let's see, C Street, it goes down to the school house, it got paved. Today, that's about all that's paved.

Interviewer: We've talked to quite a few people who were farmers, and their gardens helped them through. Did you do that, or was your dad's paycheck enough to feed all those kids?

Frank: But they always put out a garden and took care of it the best way they could. Of course, for a long time there, we didn't have city water, so everybody had a pump. We carried water in a bucket, but they was able to get through. It must have been '36 or '37 that Dad acquired a cow. He milked that, so we had milk. We had plenty of milk, it got to a point where... actually my grandmother out in Deerfield, Kansas, they farmed for the sugar beet company, so they lived on a farm. I remember one time they was coming out and brought us a hog, a brood sow. So Dad kept her and started raising hogs. Every once in a while we'd butcher one, or he would.

Interviewer: So you were still living in the Santa Fe house? So he had land around there where you could keep hogs and a cow?

Frank: Well, it was the Santa Fe property. He built a shed on it. It wasn't like it was our land. It belonged to the company.

Interviewer: Did your dad have a certain position with the railroad?

Frank: No, he was just a general worker.

Interviewer: Did you work just once section of the track? Like, did the Lewis people work from here to Belpre? Or did they go...

Frank: Not in those years. You've heard of Omar out here, so Kinsley come over part way, probably just past the river this way. Then the Lewis crew would go from there and patrol on over to ... well you was over to Ed Scheufler's, go straight north to the railroad, and that would approximately be the end of this section.

Interviewer: It took 4 men?

Frank: If there was more people, you know there could be four, five or six people, and a certain amount of them would work three days, and then they'd stay home and let other ones go and work three or four days, they'd rotate them. They got paid the first and 15th of the month. They was able to get a little bit in that month, until things got a little better up in '39 and the railroad was able to work more people more hours.

Interviewer: Did your dad retire from the railroad? "Yes" So he spent his whole career on the railroad?

Frank: Yes, the only other work he would do when he was off was if somebody needed something done in their yard. People who knew him, they'd go work for a little bit. A lot of people here that didn't actually have a job, I knew most everybody who was around here then, there's not too many of those left. Then, in 1939, my folks started making a deal for this place. Then it finally ended up that we

moved over here from over there in the early part of 1940. Then we've been here ever since. Then I was raised here, all of us the rest of the way. When my folks died, my dad died last, in that happening, I ended up with the place here.

Interviewer: So you all went to Lewis schools. Do you have good memories of going to school here? Bad memories?

Frank: Good and bad. I have to say, I've had a little bit of the sweet along with the bitter.

Interviewer: So you worked for Cross Manufacturing? When did you start working for them?

Frank: 1952.

Interviewer: That's been a really good thing for Lewis; they employed a lot of people from Lewis and from Kinsley.

Frank: I worked on farms helping people on the farm... I even helped the Carroll family move houses, when he was moving houses. Then, I just went with them. They was just barely getting started when I started working for them.

Interviewer: You've seen it change so much...

Frank: Quite a bit.

Interviewer: What do you remember about Pearl Harbor? Do you remember what you were doing when you heard about it?

Frank: Well, out here, I had just been to California out there messing around.

Interviewer: You were 21 years old, right? (Interviewers error: Frank was eleven years old.)

Frank: Yes, we went out there, and there were people out there that I knew and I went along with a couple of the Negrete boys that lived here. Our folks worked on the railroad, so we had a pass. So we got on the train, and their grandmother lived out there. We just went out there for the summer and picked cantaloupe and grapes for a few days and then came back. Well, right along in there was when all this rumbling about the war started up.

Interviewer: So this would have been in December, so you would have been back here?

Frank: Yeah, because we had to start school again. We heard the rumbling around out there, but at that age, we didn't pay much attention to that. I was going to say, about going to school. When I started school, I couldn't talk English at all, so they had a little tough job of teaching me that, but I guess I learned.

Interviewer: Were there others of you there, or were you the oldest?

Frank: I was the oldest,

Interviewer: So you broke them in? In School?

Frank: Do you mean other Mexican people? Oh year, there were some older than me.

Interviewer: So they were used to dealing with...

Frank: Well yeah, but maybe in a little different situation. Like I said, I couldn't talk English at all, but some of my friends that lived here, they were a little older and they talked with others, but I didn't have anybody to talk with, because my folks didn't talk English.

Interviewer: How did the other kids at school accept you?

Frank: I'd say about normal.

Interviewer: Like kids?

Frank: Oh yeah, well you know, just like when my kids started going to school, some of them had a little problems and some of them didn't. In those days, I think there was, well I don't know if I ought to say any of that or not, you know. Well, all of us had a little problem dealing with each other.

Interviewer: Well, we still do!

Frank: The Mexican was kind of new around here, so it made a little different. My brothers and sister, they graduated from here. I didn't, but then...

Interviewer: How far did you get?

Frank: About the eighth grade.

Interviewer: And then you started working?

Frank: Yes, well, I tell you, I left school and didn't go back.

Interviewer: Do you remember why you left, if it wasn't to work?

Frank: Well, I did get jobs around here, it was kind of I had a problem with school. I didn't have a problem with anybody. As a matter of fact, tomorrow, we're going to bury my third grade teacher.

Interviewer: Oh, she was your third grade teacher? I didn't know that. June McClaren I knew she taught at the JUCO, but didn't know she taught here.

Frank: Oh yes, but before that there was a teacher by the name of Catherine West, she lived here, but she was a little older.

Interviewer: June must have been pretty young.

Frank: You know, she was '83, no 90. So yeah, in those days... she was a lot younger sure enough.

Interviewer: Also, she may have started teaching younger, because back then, they didn't have to go to four years of college. She could have gone to Normal school.

Frank: Well, she was my third grade teacher at that time. Oh, really, the way I look at it now, I had a little problem at school, but that don't mean, it was just the times, I suppose. They taught me pretty good, don't get me wrong, I began to talk and to do things and get... but I never have forgotten how to talk Spanish.

Interviewer: I wish I could speak both. O.K., then Pearl Harbor happened. How did the war affect your family? Did you, well you were the oldest, did you have any uncles or any family that went into the service?

Frank: No, I had three cousins who went into the service over in Sicily. One of them I know went to Africa.

Interviewer: Quite a few of them I know started in Africa, then they sent over to Italy.

Frank: Of course, they got out all right.

Interviewer: Were they here in Kansas?

Frank: Yes, out from around Deerfield.

Interviewer: And they all came home?

Frank: Yes, and as far as relatives, you know I had a couple of brothers-in-law, three, who were in the service too. Her brothers. During that time, well not that far back, they'd gotten out of there in '47 or '48, along in there. As far as the war, I remember having to get food stamps at the court house. I don't remember exactly what office, they would issue out some stamps, like sugar, I don't remember what all. At one time here, even to buy gasoline, buy tires, of course there weren't any tires to be bought, then, except some second grade tires that started coming out) but still the farmers had a heck of a time because they had to show how they needed them. I don't know exactly the procedure they used, but it all had to be done at the court house, or some office over there. I remember that sugar and coffee was kind of restricted items. You didn't just go buy five pounds of sugar like we do today. It had to be... I remember the colors of the stamps they would issue. Everybody had some sort of rationing type of stamps back then. Of course, tires, cars, of course, I wouldn't have had a new car back then anyway, but the cars didn't have no chrome on them, they was just painted. No chrome like they do today. I remember that there wasn't no cars painted green. I remember the Lucky Strikes cigarette pack that was green, well they took that off and made it white, because they needed that color for the war.

Interviewer: Oh, the tanks and the uniforms... I hadn't ever heard that. It makes sense.

Frank: Yes, the Lucky Strike Cigarettes were in a green package with a red center, and they are today. The Lucky Strike today is white; they never came back to the green. That's the way it was. The cars, they were painted another color, I don't remember what, but there weren't anything green. They took all the chrome off; they just had iron for the bumper, maybe painted black.

Interviewer: You said you had a pass for the railroad; did you get to use that any other time, other than going to California?

Frank: Oh, I went to Mexico.

Interviewer: To see grandparents?

Frank: Yes.

Interviewer: Did you go to Santa Fe and then down?

Frank: I went to Santa Fe yes, then to Albuquerque and on down south to El Paso.

Interviewer: What part of Mexico did your grandparents live in?

Frank: Oh, I mean, *Torreon*, they lived in the town where my dad came from, Rio Grande, which is from El Paso, maybe five or six hundred miles further south.

Interviewer: Oh, a long ways.

Frank: And then they moved later to a place called *Torreon*, it was on the same line, but a little bit closer, because my dad used to go down to see them.

Interviewer: Now this is just a question, today, many Hispanics who come up here send money back home. Did your dad do that too? Did that go back that far?

Frank: Oh yes, he sent some back. Sometimes it wasn't very much, but then he helped his folks down there.

Interviewer: But money went a lot further down there...

Frank: Yes, well, I don't know how it is now. I went down there a lot when I worked for Cross Manufacturing, they had a plant down there, and I got to go down and helped set it up.

Interviewer: Well yes, with your language skills...

Frank: So after that, every so often, if they had a little trouble, they would send me down there to help them whenever I could. I did that several years while they had that plant down there. Of course, they don't have it any more.

Interviewer: You were a machinist?

Frank: Yes, and a mechanic. You know they had a plant out here at Lamar, Colorado. I helped them set that up too. Not because I was King Kong or anything like that, I was just in that field, and so they would send me out there to help. You know they had a plant at Greensburg for a while too; it isn't there anymore.

Interviewer: Did you know any of this? (To other interviewer) Answer: No. I think I kind of vaguely knew they had a plant in Mexico.

Frank: Did you say you were about Esther's age? Some of that kind of stuff might be a little bit... I don't know.

Interviewer: I was probably interested in other things at that time...

Frank: Yeah, well, I had a good time with them... I was there for 35 years or such a matter. I didn't have enough even after I got out of there, I just retired, and then I put up my machine shop here. I had it for about 20 years, but now I don't. I've just quit.

Interviewer: Going back to about 1940, what was it like living in Lewis during the war and right after? I've heard that Saturday nights were pretty fun downtown?

Frank: Oh yeah, we had two grocery stores. At one time, we had two banks downtown, a shoe shop, a beer joint, a confectionary where you could get ice cream and hamburgers. We had a couple of little restaurants back then, not like the building that's up there now, although it is not a restaurant. In fact, we ran that for a couple of years.

Interviewer: Oh yes, we miss those enchiladas.

Frank: We had two grocery stores and two automobile agencies, which was the Ford Garage and the Chevy Garage. I called it a garage, but they were an agency which sold cars.

Interviewer: Going back, where were the groceries?

Frank: Right on Main Street. One burnt down, right where the post office is today.

Interviewer: There was a grocery store where the post office is! Oh thank you! I've told people that and they said "No."

Frank: Well, I was pretty young.

Interviewer: Like 10 years old?

Frank: Well, less than that probably, but I'd come downtown with Dad. For sure, I can't tell you what year it burnt down. It was in the late '30's because we were still up there and it burnt down and left a big hole. The Brumfield family owned the store. A.B. Brumfield, and then he built across the street on the corner.

Interviewer: You have made her day. But you need to tell that to a lot of people, because they don't know that.

Frank: Well, I know they don't know it.

Interviewer: We'll record it in the library, and then it will be gospel.

Frank: I just can't tell you exactly the year, but I know it was not in the '40's; it was more in the late '30's.

Interviewer: Was there another one maybe later across the street, not where the pub is, but the bank or something?

Frank: No, not later. At the same time, there was one in there. I won't be able to tell you the address, but it was right on Main Street, almost across the street from where the grocery store building is today. It is not a grocery store, but across the street and a little bit to the south. The first one was a bank; it's not there no more.

Interviewer: The first building on the corner?

Frank: Yes, on that corner and the Brumfield Grocery Store. Today the post office...but across the street you will notice a blank space there, well, it was a bank. The Home State Bank was right north of where the grocery store is today. The *Rock Building*, the community center is today. That was the Home State Bank. And then, right off of this corner where I'm saying the bank was, it was the drug store. C.I. Barnes had it, and he was a pharmacist, he could give you prescription drugs there. Then right next to it, in fact the buildings were attached, was a grocery store. In fact, between the walls they had a door. That's the way they wanted it. You could walk from the grocery store into the drug store or back again.

Interviewer: Who ran it?

Frank: Cliff Johnson, Clifford Johnson ran it. As a matter of fact, in the beginning of '47, that grocery store wasn't there anymore. But Cross Manufacturing moved some of their machinery in that side where the grocery store was at. I worked in there and some other people worked in there in '47, or somewhere along in there.

Interviewer: Now this came up yesterday, and I think you've just proved it, was there a band shell? Where was the band shell? You know, one of those places where a band would play for picnics.

Frank: I don't remember a pavilion or anything like that. Like today, do you see where the community hall is? Right north of it is where the Lewis Press is, well, it wasn't there then. In fact, the Lewis Press is where the Brumfield Grocery Store was, at the back end of it, and that spot was vacant. The school would set up and play music there on Saturday. And somebody would come in and put up a big old screen, and they would have movies.

Interviewer: Kay Carney was trying to remember that, and she thought it was where the post office was...

Frank: Well, the school had a kind of a little platform there. When the building burnt down, it just left a big cavity, and for a long time they never filled it in. But there was kind of a platform there and the school band would come and play there.

Interviewer: Where the post office was?

Frank: Yes.

Interviewer: So she was right, she did remember.

Frank: Where the post office is now. They had it fenced and stuff like that. Of course, the community hall has been there for quite a while. 1925, I think, but I'm not sure.

Interviewer: Was the telephone office the one that kind of has brownish siding on now?

Frank: Yes, and there is a building right next to what you're talking about, that's the new telephone building where they have their equipment at now. Then there's another building, a Masonic or something today. But it wasn't there back then, it was just an open lot there. But that building that you're talking about with the brown shingles that was the telephone exchange. But see, it was way back then, but it was still being run after we were married.

Interviewer: That brings us right into it, how did you two get together?

Angelina: I used to work in Greensburg, and for some reason, he found out about it and he would go down there to see me.

Interviewer: Is that where you grew up?

Angelina: No, I grew up in Mullinville.

Interviewer: How did you get from Alva to Mullinville?

Frank: By way of the railroad. Her dad worked for the railroad, not the Santa Fe, but the Rock Island.

Angelina: Yes, we moved to Mullinville in 1932, I believe.

Interviewer: So you don't remember Alva at all?

Angelina: No,

Interviewer: So you found out about her and started hanging around Greensburg? How old were you?

Angelina: 16

Frank: 15, 16, I don't know.

Interviewer: There's the reason you quit school.

Frank: No, I don't think it was. I was working for the Newsoms. Do you remember the Newsoms? The older ones?

Interviewer: No, I remember Caroline and Dean's mother and father.

Frank: Oh, Harold. Well, I worked for his dad, down south of Centerview. I just started working down there, and then I helped *Merrill* and Lowell. It was kind of a family deal. I went to Limon, Colorado to do some wheat seeding up there. That was at the end of '46. But I already knew her, and when we came back, that's when we got married. It was in '47.

Interviewer: So you were 17 when you got married and she was 16.

Frank: Yeah.

Interviewer: And you got married in New Mexico. Why was that?

Frank: Well, there was a lot more red tape in those days, because of our age.

Interviewer: Did you still have that railroad pass?

Frank: Oh no, I had a beat up old car. But it made it.

Interviewer: So did you elope?

Frank: More or less.

Interviewer: Or did your parents know about it?

Angelina: No, they didn't know about it.

Interviewer: What was your reaction when you got back?

Angelina: Oh it was alright. We didn't go to see them until about two weeks later, and by that time they were kind of calmed down and we were too.

Frank: Well, my folks and her folks, they knew each other and they had been acquainted. And I'm thinking they thought, "Well, they're right here close." And that's how it was, and we've been here ever since.

Interviewer: Were you in school at the time?

Angelina: No, I quit school, I was a freshman in Greensburg when I quit.

Interviewer: That wasn't that unusual at the time, and you needed to work.

Angelina: Yes, I needed to work.

Interviewer: Kay Carney told us yesterday that when she got engaged, her fiancé was a soldier, and she went to California to see him and married him out there and called back home to tell them. So she did sort of the same thing.

Frank: Well, I've known her folks and the Carneys, for I don't know how long. I kind of know everyone out here. The only ones I don't know are the ones that has only been here a year or so. I don't know quite a few of them. There aren't a lot of them but there are some young people that I don't know.

Interviewer: So you eloped and got married, when you came back, where did you live?

Frank: Well, we came here with my folks. My folks were already here. We built a house right here in the back yard.

Interviewer: Oh, that little old house.

Frank: Oh, it's not there now. Here a while back.... it was there for several years... but here four, five or six years ago we built that garage out back. It was just gonna be in the way, so we tore it down. (Did you cry?) We was just using it for storage. Later, we had another house. We bought the house on the corner right here in town. So we lived there

Interviewer: Because you had a baby that first year too, were you in the little house with the baby?

Angelina: Oh yes, in fact we had three children when we lived in that little house back there.

Frank: Did you put down all the names that was on that sheet?

Interviewer: Oh yes, and the rest are on the back (that was what he was looking for, he didn't have enough children and he knew he had them).

Interviewer: (to Angelina) So, did you work after you were married, or just start your family?

Angelina: Oh no, I didn't work,

Interviewer: She was busy... And then all your children went to school here?

Angelina: Yes, most of them graduated. There is that picture. (Pointing to picture on wall.)

Frank: There's only one missing there...

Angelina: We lost the final baby, Josephine, do you have her down there?

Interviewer: Yes, what did she die of?

Angelina: Pneumonia. She had a bad cold that turned into pneumonia. She passed away on New Year's Day.

Interviewer: That was hard.

Angelina: Oh yes.

Interviewer: It is hard to get over something like that.

Angelina: You never do. She's buried in Kinsley.

Interviewer: Now, you're sexton for the cemetery here, right?

Frank: Yes

Interviewer: That's a full time job too, isn't it?

Frank: Oh no, there's another man who does the mowing...

Interviewer: You do the records?

Frank: I keep the book, and I dig the graves and keep track of that. In fact, not to change the subject, one time three or four years ago you told me that you had, well Westwood was out here that time, and you told me that you was making up some new maps or had made up some new maps...

Interviewer: We have a list, and it's on the computer, on our webpage. You can read who's buried there and their names, but it has not been updated. I haven't updated since. Whenever you gave me that list, it has not been updated. Sometime when you give us the new ones we will add those.

Frank: Oh yeah, there's been several of them.

Interviewer: We need to find a volunteer to go out and take pictures of all the tombstones. We have pictures of Hillside, St. Nick...

Frank: Like what? Taking...you mean, go up to this headstone, take a picture of that, move over...

Interviewer: Yes, with a digital camera, this kind of a camera. When this is done, we'll show you. When did your father become a citizen of the United States?

Frank: My dad never did become a citizen.

Interviewer: But you were born here, so you were.

Frank: Yes, nor my mother, as far as citizenship goes. A lot of people are doing it today, Mexican people who are coming up here are going through the... but they were, my dad had a passport, he was legal, he could come and go. He had to update the passport every so many months or maybe a year. He would just show that as he went. He never really needed it to go down there, coming back was when he needed it.

Interviewer: Did either one of you experience any discrimination like some people today are experiencing?

Frank: Oh yeah, I thought about this the other day. I don't want to sound as if I'm complaining. I'm not complaining, it's been quite a few years ago when all this happened. I don't think there's much of that around here, anyway. I've always thought that if you conduct yourself in a good manner, you're gonna get by.

Interviewer: The people we've been interviewing, they've been white people, and they've always said that there was no difference. That you were their classmate s (not you personally) and you lived in the community and even the black folk who were in Kinsley, there was no difference.

Frank: That's what I say, too, because I never noticed anything much. There was some when I was young. These people that you was talking to, I don't know what age they are...

Interviewer: These were from the 30's and 40's. But we didn't know if that was selective remembering or what...

Frank: I think all in all everything was fine, but I think it like anything, there is going to be a little...this road is not going to be smooth. There's going to be a few stones along the way. You just gotta learn how to treat it. I don't worry about it anymore, maybe not even then. The only thing I can say is that back then, 60 years ago or more, I was younger, and maybe I dwelled too much on stuff that today, I'd just come home and I'll go to bed when I want to.

Interviewer: We have a question, we don't know the answer to this, and maybe you won't either. We were thinking about today, with the war situation. If you go into the service, you become a citizen. Do you know if Hispanics then could go into the service in order to get citizenship?

Frank: As far as the war, there were Mexican people who went to the war, but they went from down there. They didn't come up here and then go in. There could have been some...

Interviewer: Well, we don't even know if that was a route. Today, there are people who have done that. They have gone into the military and they are serving, it's just a faster way to get US citizenship.

Frank: I'd call that a little leverage.

Interviewer: We just wondered if that existed in WWII or not.

Frank: I never heard of it.

Interviewer: We'd probably have to get into some archives in the government to find that out.

Frank: John Rincon, he was in the service several years ago, but he was born here anyway, though not necessarily in Kinsley.

Interviewer: He was wounded...

Frank: Yeah, also his brother was in the service too, though he was a little younger than John Rincon.

Interviewer: You had brothers and you had cousins in the war. When they came back, were they different? Did the war change them in any way you could notice?

Angelina: No, they weren't different in any way you could tell.

Frank: As far as changing, about the only thing I could say was they were a little older.

Interviewer: More grownup?

Frank: Well, their mind, their everything was developed more, so they weren't...I guess what I'm trying to say is that when some of them went in, they might have been 18 or 19 years old, and that was kind of young. When they came back, they were already in their twenties, and even around here that changes you...

Angelina: I had a brother who went into the Navy, and he was very young, only 16, but they accepted him.

Frank: It was only a matter of paperwork, putting the numbers down. I'm not criticizing, it's just...

Interviewer: They didn't check too close, especially after Pearl Harbor. They reacted to Pearl Harbor. My first father-in-law was that way. He went in at 17 and he was reacting. He didn't finish high school and went in. It was the patriotic thing to do... When he came home, was there any kind of celebration? Or did life just go on?

Angelina: No, no there wasn't, we just continued with...

Frank: Not anything special. Everybody was happy...

Wife: I had four brothers that were in the service. My brother-in-law, did you know Carl Weiss from Greensburg?

Interviewer: I know the name, but no.

Angelina: He was husband to my sister Dora. He was in WWII in Saipan. While he was over there, their son was born, Carl, Jr. He lives in Pratt. Dora was living in Greensburg when the tornado struck; she's living in Pratt now.

Interviewer: Did she lose everything?

Angelina: She lost her home, yes. But she went to the neighbor's cellar and she survived that way.

Interviewer: How often did you hear from them while they were away?

Angelina: Not very often, not very often at all.

Interviewer: Did the letters come in stacks, where they'd been held up.

Angelina: No, but they'd been censored.

Frank: Back then, during the heavy war, they would censor all of that, and I'm sure that if something wasn't quite right to them, they would throw it away or file it someplace else. The government, whoever was doing it?

Angelina: And you had to write on that thin...onion skin paper. So it wouldn't weigh so much.

Interviewer: Can you think of any way that WWII changed you or the community? Were there things that were different before? Good or bad?

Frank: Well, a little bit of mixture. Things didn't happen overnight, things just kind of, I guess the only way I can say it is, things kind of started loosening up. Grocery stores, you didn't have to have a special stamp, coupon... that kind of went away and you were able to just get those things that at one time were kind of hard to get.

Interviewer: Tires and sugar?

Frank: Yeah, there was a name, maybe you can think of it, black market? When somebody was handing stuff under the table? Well, there's some of that today, not necessarily groceries or anything like that. There's other things that are going on... Of course, money was always tight. It is again!

Interviewer: Did the young men, who left for the war, did they come back to Lewis?

Frank: Well, the ones that were from around here...I can think of some of them, in fact I was out at the cemetery, and a fellow by the name of *Conroe Newcomb*, he's out there. He went to school here and he was in the service. He died, and he's out here. There's some others, you know, Scott, he died. Not Willis, he was in the service too, but a little more up this way. I can't think of any right now, but I'm sure that there's some that died...

Interviewer: Now Lewis started losing population. Was that after the war or in the 50's or 60's or...

Frank: I'd say roughly, maybe 60 years ago, from there on it started diminishing a little bit. Not real fast, but it got to where the grocery stores had to shut down. We're down to one bank, and it's been kind of changing hands and stuff. We even had a Laundromat here at one time, a coin operated thing. I don't know, some farmers retired and came to town, and they've died.

Interviewer: The young people didn't stay?

Frank: No. There wasn't, outside of Cross Manufacturing, there wasn't too much to stay for, for a young person. Our boys, well we've got one living here, but they went. Our oldest boy has worked for Boeing for quite a few years. He retired from that. The other two, one's in Kansas City working for a farm implement manufacturing concern, the other one is in Topeka and has his own business. He takes care of animals, dogs, horses. The boy that is here, he works out here at the Cross plant. I guess what I was getting at, is...

Interviewer: So you have 12 children, and only one boy and a girl lives here?

Frank: Frances, she lives in Kinsley.

Interviewer: So two, a boy and a girl, out of twelve still live in Edwards County. So that sort of tells you, kids just can't stay in the county.

Frank: Well, Frances has been over there for a pretty good number of years with that Medicalodge. We've got several kids around in Texas. We've got three or four of them in Texas.

Interviewer: I've just thought of this. Belpre had a Catholic Church and several other churches, and Kinsley had a Catholic Church and several Catholic Churches in the county. Lewis never had a Catholic Church, is that right?

Frank: Not to my knowledge.

Interviewer: That always surprised me, so I was just double checking. So, you always went to Belpre?

Frank: Well, years ago we went to Belpre. When we was at home, the folks just drove over to Belpre. Later on, we would go to Kinsley too. For just a short period, we, her and I and the kids, lived on a farm south of Belpre. Then we went to church in Belpre with family and stuff. Then when we moved back into town, of course the kids always went to school here. The reason we moved out there was it was a bigger house. We just needed more room. Then they started leaving, we just moved back here, and usually went to church in Belpre. But we've been going to Kinsley for several years. I used to take the kids to catechism classes as they were growing up after school. I loaded my nephews and nieces and my kids up and took them over there on Wednesdays. They used to have catechism classes there. They still do.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you can think of that you would like to have on this tape? Is there any story that you would like to pass on to your children, your grandchildren, your great-grandchildren?

Frank: It is hard for me to just think of all this, but it has been pretty nice that you have asked me questions. I either know it or I don't know it.

Interviewer: Well, you've done very well!

Frank: Oh yeah, this town has really changed, but I don't have any pictures that I could show (outside of the centennial book) that showed main street. We had an ice cream parlor, a shoe shop, the filling stations that were here in town.

Interviewer: Then the highway changed, you used to go down Main Street.

Frank: It used to come in around here and used to cross the road that's there now and there was a curve, not like it is now...

Interviewer: But you went down Main Street, Belpre did the same. And when that changed, it took away some chance of business.

Frank: Yes, and I know that the politicians that were around here at that time would have meetings, mainly up on main street, talking about what to do about it. Because all the traffic out there doesn't come to town unless they just turn in and come in...

The audio ends here.