

**Kenneth Bartman**  
**Interviewed by Joan Weaver and Rosetta Graff**  
**Kenny Bartman home**  
**February 23, 2011.**

Joan: Kenny, can you tell us your full name?

Kenny: Kenneth E. Bartman.

Joan: Where do you currently reside?

Kenny: 818 East 4<sup>th</sup> in Kinsley.

Joan: When and where were you born?

Kenny: 12 miles south of town on the farm.

Joan: And when was your birth date?

Kenny: July 29, 1929.

Joan: What were the names of your parents?

Kenny: Roy and Gladys Bartman.

Joan: And your grandparents?

Kenny: Dan Bartman and Elizabeth Bartman, that's on my Dad's side; and R. P. Allison and Viola Allison were my grandparents on my Mother's side.

Joan: What was your household like? Did you have brothers and sisters?

Kenny: I had a brother and a sister.

Joan: Were they older, younger?

Kenny: I was the oldest one. Vinita was next and my brother was the youngest one.

Joan: And what was his name?

Kenny: His name is Alfred.

Joan: This is just sort of a little background, but what brought your family to Edwards County? Your grandparents, or whoever came here first.

Kenny: My granddad came from Maryland when he was teenaged, and lost track of any other relatives further on back on his side. He married a girl from Zook, and her name was Zook, and her granddad is the one who started the little town of Zook, south of Larned.

Joan: So did he just get on a train in Maryland and come out to be a cowboy?

Kenny: He came out to live with cowboys. But how he got here, we don't know.

Joan: But he was sort of a cowboy?

Kenny: Yes, he was a cowboy. He was kind of rough around the edges.

Joan: Did he work for Mr. Zook? Is that how he came to marry your grandmother?

Kenny: No, he was strictly a cowboy. As far as I know, he never did work for Mr. Zook.

Joan: He just met your grandmother somehow?

Kenny: Yes, but don't ask how, I don't know.

Joan: So then, he obviously settled down. Is that when he bought property south of Kinsley?

Kenny: They lived over at Fort Larned for a while, then later they moved out to Kiowa County. They farmed out there.

Joan: So then was your father born there? Were they at that property farther south?

Kenny: He was born in Kiowa County.

Joan: Do you have any other memories of your grandfather you'd like to include? Any other stories you've heard?

Kenny: Not really, because they had moved to Nickerson in the meantime and lived up there for a while. Matter of fact, that's where he lived when he died. Now my other granddad, I knew him better. He lived on a farm down north of Greensburg and he came from Baxter, Tennessee. Don't ask why he came from Baxter, Tennessee, to down north of Greensburg to those sand hills, because there's no comparison. Tennessee was beautiful, green with small mountains and trees and stuff. And out there at Kiowa County there was nothing. I wish I knew why he came from Tennessee out there.

Joan: Maybe in both cases. Do you know what year the grandfathers came to Kansas?

Kenny: No, I don't. It would have had to have been around 1900 or along in there, I suppose.

Joan: Well, what was it like growing up 12 miles south of Kinsley?

Kenny: Like living out in the country.

Joan: What's that like? What were your duties and chores? Was it crops, cattle?

Kenny: Well, we always had cattle and some hogs and stuff. We did chores. At that time, Dad was working for the state highway department, on that highway from Kinsley down to the Kiowa County line. So we lived on a farm, but it was just normal, living out in the country. No electricity, at first. We came to Kinsley for everything we needed, maybe once a week. That was about it. It was kind of a quiet life out there in the country.

Joan: So your dad did both? Did he farm and work both? Or was it just a small living in the country...

Kenny: He had farmed earlier, but he gave it up during the dirty thirties and went to work for the state highway department.

Joan: And so when you were growing up, it was mainly raising things for the family?

Kenny: You know, occasionally we'd have a few cattle to sell or something like that. But I never got in on that farming stuff. My dad helped with the cattle and stuff.

Joan: Did you have milk cows?

Kenny: Oh yes.

Joan: Then one of your chores was milking?

Kenny: That was one of my jobs there to go run them in to milk and all that sort of bad stuff.

Joan: And chickens and pigs and then a garden?

Kenny: Yes. That was standard procedure.

Joan: And did your mother work or did she stay home?

Kenny: Later on she worked, but she didn't when we lived out in the country. In the '40's when we moved to town.

Rosetta: You moved into Kinsley then in the '40's?

Kenny: In 1946 or '47, somewhere along in there.

Joan: You were born in 1929, so you were still in high school?

Kenny: Just barely.

Joan: And graduated from Kinsley High School?

Kenny: Yes.

Joan: So we're in the '40's now. What are your memories of WWII? Do you remember what you were doing during Pearl Harbor?

Kenny: Yes, I remember that day real plain. It was cold and snowy and nasty. I heard it on the radio and couldn't believe it. I had three uncles that were at the right age to be drafted real quick. Naturally we had to worry about them all a lot while they were gone. Those three made it, but we had another uncle. He was a pilot that flew out of North Africa to bomb Germany. For years he was missing in action. His plan was flying back to Germany or to North Africa, and the only thing they can figure is that he must have gone down in the Mediterranean because there was no trace of them or the plane or anything. After so many years, they declared him dead.

Joan: And you were still in the country during the war, right?

Kenny: Yes.

Joan: And at that time, did you have electricity or do you remember when electricity came in?

Kenny: We didn't have electricity until we moved to town in the '40's.

Joan: How did the war affect your life?

Kenny: Oh it didn't affect me very much. I was young enough it didn't matter very much. I had to worry about uncles who were over in Europe. There were three of them over there at the same time.

Joan: Do you remember rationing?

Kenny: Oh yes, we ran short on a few items, shoes and some food. Bacon was a thing that was hard to get, and gasoline. We kind of had to make a few changes.

Rosetta: Did you go to a country school then?

Kenny: The first two years I did, first and second grade.

Rosetta: What was the name of it?

Kenny: Charlotte. There is nothing there anymore. You can't even tell where the foundations were. However, the school they sold and moved to town. It's down there where Joe Schaller lived on East 4<sup>th</sup>, just down the street here a couple blocks. (725 E. 4<sup>th</sup>) They moved it to town and made it into a house.

Kenny: It was a one room school with one teacher. I don't remember now how many were in it, eight or ten kids.

Joan: Covering what grades? You said kindergarten through...

Kenny: Not kindergarten.

Joan: First grade, second grade through eighth, and you had about eight kids.

Kenny: Eight or ten. I don't remember for sure. I remember Lee Carothers was one of them, but he was about five years older than I was. So he was in fifth grade I think. Just a little one room schoolhouse. I was the only one in the first grade, and I was kind of forgotten. You know, she spent more time with the older kids than she did worrying about me.

Joan: Was the school heated with wood?

Kenny: Coal. An old pot bellied stove sat in the middle. She had to get there early in the morning and fire it up in the wintertime. The rest of the time it was all right.

Joan: How did you get to school?

Kenny: Walked.

Joan: How far?

Kenny: I only had to walk a half mile or so. Some of the kids rode a horse or had to be brought, but they lived further away. I was fortunate I didn't live very far away.

Joan: Do you remember anything else about going to school in a one room schoolhouse?

Kenny: Well, at recess they always played baseball. That was the highlight of the day.

Joan: Did you have programs and things at the school?

Kenny: I don't remember that.

Joan: And did school start after Labor Day and end...

Kenny: I don't exactly when it started. It was in the first of September, I know, probably that first Monday after Labor Day. But I don't know for sure, that's too many years ago.

Joan: Well, you were pretty young at that time.

Rosetta: Do you remember your teacher's name?

Kenny: Yes, she was Fern Meyers. After a few years of that, she married Earl McBride and they ended up going to Larned.

Joan: We have both their interviews in our collection.

Kenny: Well, she was my first and second grade teacher.

Rosetta: When you moved into town from a country school, did you fit right in? Or were there problems?

Kenny: I didn't have any problems.

Joan: Well, that would have been the third grade.

Kenny: Right, at the Southside School right here in Kinsley. I didn't have any problems, I got along great. I still remember a few of those in the third grade there. Norman Elliott was one of them, so I've known him ever since the third grade.

Joan: Did you like living in the city better than the country?

Kenny: Yes.

Joan: You didn't have chores?

Kenny: You didn't have the chores then, and there was a little more activity. Out in the country, you

stayed in the country. But in town, we could....

Joan: So what did you do?

Kenny: I don't have to tell everything. There was just more to do. You could go to the theatre any night you wanted to and go and go out to play with friends and stuff like that. So there was a lot more to do here in town than there was living in the country. It was different. Out in the country, you had more chores to do. Here in town, you had more time to loaf.

Rosetta: There was a basketball program at the school, and you could play basketball.

Kenny: Well, I never got into sports too much. I always had a job after school working.

Joan: When did you start working then?

Kenny: I started working for Dee Cox at the filling station. My job at the filling station was doing what the men didn't want to do: washing windows, sweeping out cars and stuff like that.

Joan: How old were you?

Kenny: Oh, 15 or 16, along that area. I don't know for sure. I can't remember that far back.

Rosetta: Where was this filling station?

Kenny: Out by the overpass on the west side of the road. The old building is still there on Highway 56 there on the west side, or north side, whichever you want to call it. Some people call it west side, and that's what I call it, west side.

Joan: Did you stay there all through high school? Working there?

Kenny: No, when I worked for Dee was probably more in junior high, because when I was a freshman I started working for Mammals working after school and a few Saturdays at the store. After I got out of school I stayed there and worked there until I went to the army. Then I ended up working for them almost 28 years.

Joan: You started out being like a bag boy and sweeper and stocker?

Kenny: I did that for about two weeks, and then they needed somebody back in the market to slice lunch meat and stuff like that. So I went to the market after about two weeks and stayed there for almost 28 years. The market manager at the time, his name was Morris Rogers, and he taught me to cut meat. I just stayed there, that was my job for 28 years.

Joan: Morris?

Kenny: He was originally from Hutchinson, but a nice guy. He was a good teacher too.

Joan: Now Mammals was a chain type of store, right?

Kenny: They had 14 stores, I think it ended up 13 most of the time. But they were scattered all around

this area, in Larned, Lacrosse, Hays, Russell. I don't remember where all, oh Salina. I ended up working Salina for them for a couple of years there in the '50's when I first got back from the army. It was a pretty decent job, better than average around here at that time.

Joan: How many employees worked at the store here in the 50's?

Kenny: Well, there were three of us in the market. I don't know how many were in the whole store, the market department was completely separate from the grocery department. Norman Elliott, he was the store manager, and he had six to eight working for him. But in the market, there were just me and three others.

Joan: Let's talk about the '50s and '60s a little bit. Were there other groceries in Kinsley at that time?

Kenny: Oh yes, there was the Northside, Weidenheimer's IGA, and for a short time there was another one, but don't even remember the name. It wasn't here very long. It was in the old opera house there across the street from the bank on the east side. It's a vacant building now. It was there for a while, so at one time we had four grocery stores.

Rosetta: Wasn't there a Safeway store at the same time?

Kenny: Yes, it was a block north where Melvin Ryan is now.

Joan: Okay, in the '50's and '60's, you talked about the entertainment a little bit. There was a theater, and a skating rink, what other businesses were downtown? What was the downtown like? Even go back a little earlier to when you said you would come into town once a week.

Kenny: Back then, there were all kinds of businesses. There was every car dealer-- every brand of car was sold here-- and a John Deere Dealer, and International, Allis Chalmer, all of them. Kinsley was a pretty decent town back then. We had everything you could think of it.

Joan: This will be before the war or after?

Kenny: This was before, in the '40's and '50's. This was a real going town, during the war, because all the troops from Dodge City Air Base came to Kinsley on Saturday. They liked Kinsley better than they did Dodge, for some reason. They came over here. They kept the town a hoppin' on Saturdays here in town.

Joan: So I take it there were some liquor establishments?

Kenny: Well, there may have been, I don't remember.

Joan: Well, I was wondering how many of those. You know how many grocery stores...

Kenny: Well, there were at least three pool halls. They all sold beer.

Joan: Is this when we were dry? In World War II? Or were they clubs then?

Kenny: There was no liquor.

Joan: So they would be private clubs then.

Kenny: I don't think they even had private clubs then, all they had was bootleggers back then. In '49 was when liquor could be sold in Kinsley.

Joan: So that was after the war.

Kenny: Yes.

Joan: So maybe the soldier could find a bootlegger easier?

Kenny: Oh yes, it wouldn't have been too much trouble to find one of them.

Joan: So in the '50's you could pretty much stay in Kinsley and do your shopping, clothes and shoes and everything.

Kenny: Oh yes, everything, clothing stores, there were three clothing stores at one time. We ended up with really two most of the time. You didn't have to go to Larned or Dodge to get anything, it used to be right here. Then the town just dwindled, and dwindled away until what it is today.

Joan: This question just flashed through my mind. Where did you get your beef and pork that you cut up? Was that local, or did that come in?

Kenny: That came in on trucks, Winchester packing house in Hutchinson brought a lot of it. And then there was Swift, Armour and Cudahy all had salesman that came around once a week and took your order and then a truck brought it out in a couple or three days. We had no problem then, we had good delivery service on beef. It all came in in quarters and we started out from scratch, cutting it up. Now days, it all comes in a box, all boned out. All you have to do is slice it up. So we really don't have any meat cutters around anymore, except in the packing houses, where they put it into boxes.

Joan: When you think even about your luncheon meat and that sort of thing, it didn't come packaged. You got it big and sliced it.

Kenny: You sliced it all up here.

Joan: I'm trying to think what other differences there might have been. You were actually...

Kenny: Well, I don't know. It's so much different, what they're doing today. I don't know what they're doing today about it. But back then, they got all the stuff from the packing house and had to cut it up: lunch meat, cheese, beef, the whole bit was done here. One thing I did like then was sour kraut we got in a wooden keg, about a 30 gallon keg. That was a lot different. This canned kraut you get today is just no comparison to what came in a wooden keg. And I'm used to kraut. I didn't like sour kraut, but I kept nibbling until I learned to like it. Cold, I don't want it cooked, even today, I want to eat it raw and cold. It's good. So yes, that's different.

Joan: Was the milk and eggs in your part too?

Kenny: No, that was in the dairy, or grocery part.

Joan: How did you meet your wife?

Kenny: Well, the only thing I remember, somebody introduced me to her and I didn't think too much about it at the time, but then a few days later I met her again at a dance or something in Offerle. It went from there.

Joan: At this time, you were not in the service, right?

Kenny: No, I was still in high school then.

Joan: I was trying to think what you said. You got married in 1950, and then you were drafted?

Kenny: Yes, I was drafted. I didn't volunteer. I was a coward and waited until they drafted me. I was drafted for two years, but I got three months knocked off for going to Korea. So I was out in 21 months. That was long enough. I didn't have a problem with that.

Joan: You got married in the end of 1950, so how long were you married before you were drafted and left?

Kenny: It would have been about six or eight months.

Joan: Do you want to tell us a little bit about your army experience? Where did you go for boot camp?

Kenny: Well, I was drafted, like I said, in '51, and went to Camp Chaffee Arkansas for 14 weeks. I went through Infantry a Basic, was put on an airplane and went to Korea. That was pretty hasty, from being kid running around doing nothing, to ending up in Korea on the front line in a matter of about three weeks. So yes, it wasn't good. I remember it was raining the day we got there, and it didn't quit raining, it just changed over to snow. It snowed and was cold all winter, and I was glad to get out of there the next spring.

Joan: You were in the fighting on the front lines?

Kenny: Oh yes, I spent 105 days on the front line in one stretch. Our regimental command, the marines had been up there and spent 100 days, so we had to go up there and spend 105 to beat their record. That was a long stinkin' time up there. I remember, we got one change of clothes in that 100 days, 105 days. When we come back off the line, we looked like something that had been left over from, I don't know what, but it was terrible.

Joan: Were you living in tents or you just in the open, or both?

Kenny: Most of the time, was just out in the open. When we were pushing every night, now we didn't do any pushing at night. The North Koreans, they were the ones that liked to fight at night, we didn't, because we couldn't see. Those little devils could see at night, I guess, anyway, at night we'd dig a foxhole to get in it, two at a time. One was supposed to stay awake all night, we switched off, about an hour on and an hour off. And that's how we spent our nights. Wherever we was at, we'd dig a hole and crawl in it. In the wintertime, when it got too miserable cold, we didn't do much pushing, so we built what we called a "Bunker." We'd dig a hole and put some tree limbs across the top and kind of try to stay out of the weather. That's where we spent our night. But there was one advantage: I don't think I had a cold all winter long, because it got cold in the fall and stayed cold till spring, and I never had not

even a runny nose all winter. But a lot of fellas made a mistake, they got frostbit toes and fingers. My toes got cold and I'd stomp my feet a little bit and I didn't worry about it, but some guys, I seen their toes get black and look nasty, and some of them had to have them amputated. It wasn't nice.

Joan: What was your food like?

Kenny: Not to talk about. All we had were C rations there, and you had a little dinky can opener that we carried on a chain with our dog tags. You'd open up a can of anything there, corned beef hash, stew, spaghetti and meatballs. Now that was the best one of the bunch. But it was always cold, most times unheated, and they had a layer of fat on the top, you'd take that and throw it away and try to eat the rest of it. There was always a little can of peaches or fruit. If somebody had one they didn't want, they'd sell that little can for \$2, and that was a lot of money back then, when we were making \$15 a month. But nobody had any trouble selling them, because that proved it was the best food in the pack. Crazy. They furnished a lot of cigarette; always had a packet of cigarettes in each C ration, so we got a packet of cigarettes every day. I don't know, those stinking hills up there.

Joan: You said you were pushing. How much ground would you gain in a day?

Kenny: That would vary. Some days they were pretty easy, we might go five miles or so. Then there were other days we didn't even get to move. Some days, if things worked out, we even lost ground. Not very often, but it had to happen; we'd give up some ground and then we'd take it again. I remember one hill, it was loaded with North Koreans or Chinese on top. The company commander, he called in the air force to soften it up a little bit on top. Well, the guys coming over in the planes, they could see us on the side of the hill, they couldn't see the enemy up on top, so they thought we were targets and they worked us over really good. We lost ground that day, because in the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, there were 42 of us that morning when we started up the hill. There were six or seven of us came back on our own power that night. The rest of them, now they all weren't killed, but a lot of them were killed and the rest of them were wounded. So there were six or seven of us who came off on our own power. That was a long, nasty day. When they came in and dropped napalm bombs on us and were shooting 50 caliber machine guns at us from the plane, well yes, they took care of us in a hurry. I've got a 50 caliber slug in there, I can show you what a 50 caliber slug does. I remember one fellow who was a company commander. He caught one in the shoulder, and that 50 caliber slug just "boom" and his arm was gone, just a hole up there in his shoulder. He bled to death in about two minutes. His arm was just completely gone; there wasn't nothing there but a hole. We stuck a fatigue jacket in there trying to slow the blood down, but we couldn't do it. His left arm, too. He bled to death in a couple minutes. But he was conscious for part of that time, and still giving orders until he crapped out.

Joan: What was his name, do you remember?

Kenny: I don't remember his name. We had another name for him, but I've forgotten it. I remember the first thing he did was grab the telephone, or a radio, and call the company quarters, and said, "You better send a replacement," because he had been shot and was dying. Boy, he was right about that. In a couple minutes he was dead, but he'd called in to send a replacement. I remember, he was a big, tough character, but he couldn't fight that 50 caliber bullet.

Joan: You lost a lot of friends that day?

Kenny: Yes, yes I did. Out of 42, I don't know how many of them got killed, probably 18 or 20. They dropped napalm bombs on us. I was lucky. The bomb hit behind me and flashed over me, so I was

between where it landed and where it did the burning. The guys it got on, it actually melted their M-1 rifles. You know, a napalm bomb, you can't put it out, it just burns. If a little flake of it gets on the back of your arm or something, it just burns right on through. But I remember seeing the rifle that color, it just plain burned up. The fellows it got on, it wasn't good.

Joan: And you did this for 105 days.

Kenny: 105. Now, we didn't fight like that every day. But when we were on the front, you had to watch out where you was at and pay attention to what you was doing for 105 days, and one change of clothes. Now that was the pitiful part. I remember when I first went up there, I had a white t-shirt on. I kept tearing a little hunk off of it to clean my rifle, finally there wasn't anything left of it. So I ended up with just the fatigue jacket and no t-shirt underneath it. It was getting cold up there. It was into, I don't know for sure, end of October, first of November, before we got any winter clothes. It was getting cold! But we survived it; I don't know how.

Joan: Were you able to write? Did you get letters? Or how often did you have contact from home?

Kenny: Well, we got some mail occasionally. We got more mail than we could send letters out because we didn't have time or a place to write anything, but we received a mail a couple times a week. Then if we had a letter home we could send it back with the mailman when he came that day, but a lot of days we didn't have time to write a letter. So, I suppose the folks at home, they didn't get the mail that we did.

Joan: And you were in Korea itself for how long?

Kenny: I was in Korea nine months.

Joan: And you were pretty much busy fighting all that time. Were there ever any...

Kenny: Well, you had to have 36 points to get out of there. I got four points a month, that's what the infantry got if they were seeing combat. I got out in nine months, because I got four points every month. But if you was in artillery you only got three points, and supply only got two and so on back until you only got one point. So some of those rascals had to stay quite a while. Being in infantry and not losing any time being wounded or anything in the nine months, that's why I got out quick as anybody. I was thinking at the time it would be nice, you know, be in the artillery or supply or something. But you had to stay so much longer.

Joan: If you could survive.

Kenny: Yes, if you could survive, yes. A lot of guys didn't survive. It was funny. A fellow got the first two weeks in this area, you got killed or wounded in the first two weeks. Or the last two weeks before he got to go home. I don't know how many people had spent their...had been there for eight months and two weeks or so and damned if they didn't get wounded or killed just before they packed them out. It was weird how that happened time after time.

Joan: And there wasn't any R&R during those nine months?

Kenny: Yes, you had five days back in Japan during that time, of R&R. Five days. They flew us back to Japan, but the worst part of that was having to go back. It was great to go, but that going back wasn't

too great. I remember one kid, he wanted to make a career of the army. To be a career soldier, a combat infantry badge was almost a must. You had to be in infantry. He volunteered to go to Korea to get a combat infantry badge. He didn't last two weeks before he got killed, and he volunteered for it just to have that damned C.I.B. badge. I've got one there, I'll show you. But he gave his life for that and didn't get to use it. He was gung ho. He wanted to be a career soldier. I guess everybody to his own choice. It wasn't mine; I didn't get along with the army too well. Although I did pretty good, I made the rank of sergeant first class, or tech sergeant, and I made the combat badge and the bronze star. So my military career was pretty decent, but I wasn't a career soldier, by no means.

Joan: And you were 21? Was that a typical age for a soldier?

Kenny: Yes, that was about it. We did have a few that we called "retreads". They were left over from WWII and had stayed in the reserves. They sent them over. I don't remember how many of them were sent over, but every one of them said the same thing, when they got their foot out of Korea, they were getting out of the damn army. They'd seen all they wanted of it, and they said it was worse than anything they'd seen in Europe.

Joan: Korea was?

Kenny: That's what the retreads said who had made the mistake of staying in the reserves. They were through if they ever got out of there.

Joan: Was that because of the fighting?

Kenny: Well, everything. There wasn't any flat land in Korea, we was either going uphill or downhill or standing on a side hill all the time. And the fighting too. It was...I don't know it was in Europe, but there was some nasty days of fighting.

Joan: And the climate also. Maybe it was worse.

Kenny: Yes, that didn't help any either. Climate was massive. We walked clear up the Yellow River, which was the border between North Korean and Manchuria. Harry (*President Truman*) called us back to the 38 (*parallel*), and we sat there until it was time to go home. Kind of crazy, but that's the way it worked.

Joan: What are your feelings about the Korean War?

Kenny: A 100% waste of time. And lives. And everything else. It was to stop Communism. The only thing it stopped was the ones who were killed, because the North is still at it. As far as I was concerned, it was a waste of time. My time.

Joan: Now I'm trying to think. Your son was born in '51? So you left a pregnant wife?

Kenny: Yes, Kent was nine months old when I got home.

Joan: Did you receive pictures and things like that in letters?

Kenny: Yes, I received pictures. However, the telegram I got, he was two weeks old by the time the telegram got there. Yes, I had several pictures of him, you know the baby pictures. Then when I got

home, it took a little while for him to think that I belonged around there. He didn't think I belonged. But he got over that after a while.

Joan: Well, your wife had a lot of adjustments there too. She got married, six months later you went to the service, and then she had her baby. Was she living with her folks or anything at that time?

Kenny: She stayed with her folks while I was gone, which was nice. She was great, you couldn't ask for a better one.

Joan: I've heard a lot of good examples from WWII of women who stayed at home and tried to keep things going.

Kenny: I suppose. Yes.

Joan: Can you think of anything else you might want to ask?

Rosetta: Wilda was raised Lutheran, is that right?

Kenny: I think she went to a church in Offerle until after we got married. I wasn't Lutheran either, but when I worked at Salina at one of the stores and when we came back, we got invited to the church up there and went from there. I guess they were the first ones that talked to us about coming to church and that's when we joined the Lutheran Church and started attending. And still are.

Rosetta: So did you go to church when you were out in the country?

Kenny: Not very much, no. We really didn't belong to a church until we joined up with the Lutheran Church. On the dog tag it said, "Protestant." That's because I wasn't Catholic, I guess. I wasn't too involved anyway.

Joan: This is just a question so we can jump ahead and go back, but when did you retire from that, what year?

Kenny: 1974.

Joan: So what changes did you see from 1950 to 1974? In just your job, or in Mammal's, the store, or...

Kenny: Well, the big change was, when we first started working you didn't have a power saw. You did it the hard way with a saw and a knife. After I was there a few years, we got an electric saw. That took the work out of being a meat cutter.

Joan: So that would have been in the late fifties?

Kenny: Yes, at least that. It was probably, maybe in the late fifties or the early sixties, that we got that power electric saw. That was great. That took the work out of being a meat cutter. You could stand there and run that saw all day long. It took a long time to cut a quarter of beef, when you did it with a hand saw. When we got the power saw, in 30 minutes you could have it all done. It made a world of difference. Talk about cutting up things, I remember when I worked in the store in Great Bend, Larry Lehr was there. We had two blocks side by side, and we always run races to see who could cut up

chickens the fastest. We got to where we could cut and package three chickens a minute. We didn't wrap them, but put them in the container, a Styrofoam container, for the girls to wrap.

Joan: 20 seconds per chicken?

Kenny: Yes. Larry was quite a Larry, but we were in a lot of races cutting up.

Joan: I can't see, but do you still have all your fingers?

Kenny: I've still got all of mine, fortunately, but they've all been cut. That finger there, the fingernail? It's slim on that one side, and the end of it came out up there. I shaved all that off one day. I thought I was going to bleed to death.

Joan: Any other changes in the meat packing? Were you wrapping it all this time? Putting it in butcher paper?

Kenny: Back when we first started, we wrapped it in...in those old meat cases we'd take it out, wrap it up and lay it on the counter. Then later on, when it was self-service, we had those self-service cases, it was wrapped in cellophane, more like it is today, pretty much. Yes, there was a world of changes in that.

Joan: When did the self-service start, about?

Kenny: I don't know...in the sixties. I'm sure it was in the sixties. That changed being a meat cutter too, and working in the market. People would come by, pick up what they wanted and went on. Before, you had to take it out, weigh it and wrap it and put a price on it and all that.

Joan: Then you had some contact with the public. And chit-chat.

Kenny: Yes, you had contact with every one there at first. Then later on, we were still there close, and a lot of people you had to help them with something, but it took the personal contact out of it, yes. I remember waiting on your mother there a lot of times at the store.

Joan: Were there other changes while you were there? Those were two major ones. You know, you don't think about those things.

Kenny: Not really.

Joan: Did you become a teacher and teach other people? I assume you were there the longest.

Kenny: Almost, well I had one boy that...well, I had several boys that worked for me after school and Saturdays. David Warner, I taught him to cut meat, and after I finally quit, he went to work for Harold Burkhart down in the locker plant because I taught him how to cut meat. But boy, he was good at it. He was quite a Dave.

Rosetta: Did you get involved in cutting game for people?

Kenny: Oh some, not much. I tried to stay away from that. One thing, in the grocery store, we couldn't bring outside meat in like that. It had to come from a packing house, where it was inspected and all that

stuff. So no, we didn't get into the fresh game much.

Joan: So your children were in school here in Kinsley.

Kenny: Right, they both graduated down here from high school. Then they both went to college then. Kent ended up a pilot, flying for Gary Davidson. I always worried about him flying a plane, spraying crops. And instead the damn motorcycle got him. We worried about him for the wrong thing, I guess. But he was a good pilot. Then Rhonda, she went to school up to Hays, and ended up being an RN. After she got married, they lived in Halstead there, and she worked in the Halstead Hospital several years.

Joan: Seems like motorcycles...kids in Kinsley like motorcycles. Back in WWII and before, there were motorcycles...

Kenny: Lot of them around.

Joan: Did you have one?

Kenny: I didn't have one, but I rode one a lot. Bill Riddle had one, he was a friend of mine. He had one, and I had a car. So if he had a date or something, and I wasn't using the car, he'd take the car and I'd take his motorcycle. He had access to a car and I rode his motorcycle then.

Joan: When did you get your first car?

Kenny: I think I was a sophomore. '37 Plymouth.

Joan: Is that why you had a job? So you could have a car?

Kenny: That's about it. I remember the thing that helped me get it was the theater down there had a drawing once a week or so and gave away money. I won \$200 there one night. With the money I had saved and the \$200 I could buy this '37 Plymouth. That was in September, because I think the next day after I got that car, I went to the Hutchinson fair. That's the reason I can remember September. That poor old car never got shut off after that.

Joan: When you got home from the service, what do you remember about coming home? You talked about the baby not recognizing you, how was the community when you came home?

Kenny: Oh it was great to get home and try to relax and stuff. I remember one of the kids who went into the army the same time I did, Don Zanovich. He got killed in Korea, and when I came home, his dad met me. I'll never forget, the old boy...he squeezed me. I know it was for the memory of coming back for his son. Because we went over together, and he didn't get to come home. Tony took it pretty rough. I'll never forget he grabbed me and squeezed me like crazy. But he was glad to see me.

Joan: Today, we hear a lot about post traumatic stress syndrome. Did you have an adjustment, or were you just glad to be home.

Kenny: Oh, I was glad to be home. And yes, I had a little problem there... nothing serious. A few dreams that weren't too whippy, but other than that, I survived it I think pretty well. It's funny even talking about being in Korea. For years, I never mentioned it to anybody. It's easier for me to talk

about it now than it was sixty years ago. I don't know why. I guess my memory is getting dull, and it don't register like it used to. I used to not mention it; just couldn't talk about it much.

Joan: Sometimes, I think it's important to tell the story when you get older, too.

Kenny: It could be, I don't know.

Joan: To have someone else hear. So you came back, and...

Kenny: Well, when I came back, I went right back to work in the store in just a matter of days. At that time, if you were drafted, the fellow you worked for had to give you your job back. So, I went right back to work. I didn't really take a vacation in there. I just went right back to work.

Joan: That may have helped your adjustment, to go right back. That was my other question, if you took advantage of the G.I. Bill or anything at all.

Kenny: The only thing I did from G.I. was to get a G.I. Loan to build this house.

Rosetta: Did you build this house yourself?

Kenny: No. Gene Putter built the main part of the house. Now I added on this end here. Right here where we're sitting now was a garage. I tore it off, and I did all the work on this end. I did the plumbing, the electrical, woodwork, I did the work. All except I didn't make the fireplace or lay bricks. I let Alan Baker do that, but I did all the rest of it. On the stairway there, my brother-in-law helped me do that, Ethan Rabe, he helped, but I did all the rest of this: wiring, plumbing, the whole bit, and putting up the sheetrock. And I didn't even know I was a carpenter. I'm pretty well satisfied with the way it turned out.

Joan: And you did that in 1959 you said?

Kenny: Gene Putter built that and we moved in '59. This was all 15 years later. The reason I can remember it was 1959, it was Memorial Day of 1959 when we moved into the original part of the house.

Joan: Where did you live when you came back before you built this house?

Kenny: Three houses down here.

Joan: Rented or bought?

Kenny: Bought. But it was kind of just a temporary thing until we could get the house along enough. But Wilda drew the plans for this house here and the way she wanted it, you know. I always thought she did a real good job.

Joan: Yes, very nice. Wilda is very artistic.

Kenny: Yes, and she drew a lot of the pictures around here. There's one there and two or three out in the other room, and another one back over there. She drew the pictures. Matter of fact, that's where she is now, down at the school painting down there now.

Joan: Okay, so you graduated from Kinsley High School and then your children also did. What changes were there in that time period? From between when you graduated and when they graduated?

Kenny: Well, I suppose there was all kinds, I really don't know particular things.

Joan: The classes were the same size? How big was your class?

Kenny: Their classes were smaller. If I'm not mistaken, ours had 51 or 52 kids in it, and theirs I don't think had around 30. If I am not mistaken, that or they were divided into two bunches. I don't remember just how many there were, but their classes were smaller.

Joan: What years did they graduate?

Kenny: 1969 and 1971, I believe.

Joan: Does that sound about right size-wise?

Rosetta: The bigger classes were later on; we had some big classes.

Kenny: Are they bigger now again?

Rosetta: No, but in-between, someplace in the mid-70's, there were some big classes. Wilda graduated from Offerle High School. They had consolidation; did she have any feelings or vocal about consolidation?

Kenny: Their classes were a lot smaller, is all I remember. There weren't too many in it, but I'd be afraid to guess how many were in it. It was smaller. Of course, Offerle still didn't have near the kids that we did, so it had to be smaller.

Joan: Was there any controversy during that time that you remember in the community? Or did that consolidation go rather smoothly?

Kenny: I think it had pretty much already consolidated before that.

Joan: What was the year? We've looked that up! Now I've forgotten.

Kenny: You're asking the hard questions.

Rosetta: You're right, we consolidated earlier than I thought. In the late 1960's.

Joan: How many kids from your class ended up living here like you did?

Kenny: A few, I'd say 15 at the most, I think.

Joan: The rest of them? Did they leave? Do you know why they left?

Kenny: They're scattered all over the country, and I don't know why. I suppose for jobs, and a lot of them went to college. Of course they left to get a better job. I already had my job, so I stayed here. I guess I was fortunate; I had a better job than a lot of them around here at the time, so

Joan: So you came back, and joined the Lutheran Church. How have you seen your church change in the fifties, sixties and seventies?

Kenny: Oh, there are a few less people than there used to be. What's completely changed is that when we started, we were the younger ones. There were a bunch of old people running it, and now we're the old class there now.

Joan: Were there Lutheran churches in the country that closed whose people are now going to your church, sort of like the Catholic churches did?

Kenny: This church here originally was eight or ten miles north of town, and then they moved it in here. That was that in '49? It was the late forties. We remodeled it and stuff.

Joan: So the people in the country were already coming in here to church when you came.

Kenny: Yes.

Joan: Activities at the church, was it basically go to church on Sunday, or where there other things that were...

Kenny: Oh there were other things through the week. One thing, we started that sausage and pancake supper that's still going on today. The first one I attended there was in '59. And I've missed two of them in all those years. One of them was this last year because Wilda was in the hospital in Wichita. And one time I had the flu.

Joan: And you've always had a full time minister?

Kenny: No, there was a while when we didn't. We had to share with Offerle. But we even had a full time minister then, but he had two congregations. We're still doing that today. About how many people attend at the churches?

Kenny: It's probably about as small as it ever was now, I think. Maybe 35 or 40.

Joan: Or maybe when you joined it was ...

Kenny: It was better than 50. Things have changed. A lot of them moved away. Of course, the whole county has gone down, what, a third, from what it used to be?

Joan: Yes, that's one thing we're trying to investigate. How that decline in population affected the community.

Rosetta: Okay, the flood of 1965. Did you have water in your house? Or close to your house?

Kenny: We were fortunate, because it was all around the house. It would have been about four above the floor level, but I had taken plastic and laid it down over the doors and put sandbags over that. We didn't get any in the house, but it was about four or five inches above floor level. But we kept it out. It was just starting to seep in the back door somewhat and Norman and I came down here to check on it. We had to climb through the garage window to get in. Then I saw it seeping in just a little bit across the linoleum. We replaced the sand bags and kept it out. But had we not come down there, we might have

had more water in the house. But we weren't supposed to be here, they stopped us down there by Stanley Young's, they had National Guard or somebody down there with a rifle, saying, "You can't go down there, there's a flood." I said, "We know there's a flood down there, our house is down there." Well, they said, "You can't go down." So I said, "Well, you're going to have to stop us." We walked on and they just stood there and grinned at us and we went on. I glad we did, because otherwise, if we'd come down a day or two later, we might have had water all over. We lucked out and just had a little dribble out across the floor. But the yard was a mess. Mud and crap that washed in. You had to see it to believe it.

Rosetta: Other floods, you know we used to have rain and Coon Creek would flood. Did you ever get floodwater again?

Kenny: No, we never had anything serious. Oh, we've had it out in the streets and stuff. But I remember that '65. It was running down the street east here and I was going to go see how deep it was in Harnish's house across the street. As I was walking across the street there my feet were slipping on the pavement. The water was pushing that hard. And I thought, "This is stupid. If that water ever knocks you down, you'll end up down the stream." So I turned around and got out of there. It was really running like crazy.

Joan: Well, we have some questions about the health care changes and things like that. Your children were born in the hospital?

Kenny: Yes, over here in the hospital in 5<sup>th</sup> street. Well, Rhonda wasn't, she was born in Great Bend. I was working for Mammal's in Great Bend at that time. But Kent was born over here.

Joan: So, we're in the 50's and 60's. You had your doctor and eye doctors and dentist. They were all here.

Kenny: Doctors, dentist and everything. Dr. Schnoebelen was here then. He did a good job of taking care of everybody then. He was a good doctor.

Joan: Have you seen changes in the health care?

Kenny: Oh yes. We didn't have a hospital originally. If you had to go to the hospital, you either went to Great Bend or Dodge. Then in '49, we moved over here, and they built this one over here. I was one of the earlier patients. I had to have my tonsils taken out in '49 and it was new then. But the reason I had them taken out then was I didn't want to have them taken out in the army. So I had them taken out before I went in. I'd heard so many stories about army doctors and dentists and stuff, so I had my feet all worked on and my tonsils taken out before I went in the army.

Joan: That may have helped you not have those colds.

Kenny: It could have. That's why I tried to have everything taken care of in advance. You've heard stories, I'm sure, about particularly army dentists. I didn't want to go there. I remember seeing some guys who quit; they had a cavity or something. One guy, he had a machine to run the drill. You were sitting out in the open to have your teeth worked on. Fortunately, I didn't have to do that. But can you imagine sitting out in the open in an ordinary chair while somebody turned that drill working on a tooth?

Rosetta: Maybe it's cold?

Kenny: Yes, freezing.

Joan: Well, one other area that we are curious about is the minorities in town and how they lived.

Kenny: We didn't have any problem there. There was very few minorities around here at the time. There were Gaines and the Winchester's and they nice people. They were just black. But they were nice people.

Joan: Did Mammal's serve them the same?

Kenny: Oh yes. They were just nice people, they were just black. Now Skeet Winchester, you probably remember him, you couldn't find a better person than Skeet Winchester. I'd rather sit down to talk or eat with him than anybody I know, because he was a nice guy. He was just black.

Joan: How about the Hispanic community?

Kenny: We had a few. I remember Jess Molina and his dad, Joe. And then there was Rincons. They were all nice people. We didn't have any trouble with natives, not like today. As a matter of fact, I don't know of any new ones coming in here, but the natives that live here, Santa Fe (*Railroad*) I guess brought them in, they were all nice people. You couldn't, like I say, there was Skeet Winchester and Joe Molina and Jess, you couldn't find better people than them. And they all traded with us at the store. They didn't cause any trouble and they were great. They all wanted to charge, but they paid up every month. They were great.

Joan: That's an interesting question. Did people normally charge and then pay?

Kenny: Oh yes, we had a big charge business there. Most of them, we didn't have any trouble with.

Joan: They just waited until they had their paychecks and then came in and paid their grocery bill.

Kenny: There was a few that we had a little trouble with, but it didn't take long to figure out who they were. There were even shoplifters back then too. But it didn't take long till you knew which ones to keep an eyeball on. It was usually, the ones who surprised you, you wouldn't think would be a shoplifter, was the worst. But after a while, you learned who to keep track of.

Joan: Well, that's another area that I hadn't thought of before. We talked with Boyd about him getting his first charge card. But before that, the stores let you charge, you know, before we had cards.

Kenny: No, we didn't have charge cards.

Joan: No, it was just written on a ticket.

Kenny: And we put it in the file. We thought it was standard operating procedure. It was back then.

Joan: So, did Wilda work?

Kenny: Yes, she worked at KP&L till she got a little too pregnant with Kent to work. Then she took a leave of absence and was gone for several years. Then she went back and worked several more years until she retired later on.

Joan: Did she go back to work while you went to school?

Kenny: Well, the kids were pretty well out of school before she went back. She took several years off. Then she worked in the meantime for a little while for the Chevrolet garage until it burned down. That's when she went back to work for KP&L.

Rosetta: We have a picture of her when she was at Chevrolet Garage. There are a bunch of them standing there. It is a Christmas picture or when they remodeled or something. But she is in there.

Kenny: Oh yes, I've got to show you a 50 caliber...

Joan: We'll do that in just a minute. What have we forgotten? It seems like we've forgotten something. You moved into town, so you had electricity and you had telephone. Do you remember getting your telephone?

Kenny: Not exactly, we didn't have a telephone till we moved to town in the '40's. I know that.

Joan: How about television? Do you remember when that came out and how that was?

Kenny: Yes, that was in '53 I think. I was working at Great Bend at the store, then. You know, it was a funny thing. We were a little short on cash and wanted a few things, and I got a surprise in the mail one day. I got our, what they called "Foxhole Pay". Which I didn't even know I was going to get. But I got a check for an extra \$35 or \$50 a month for every month I was in Korea in the mail one day. I didn't even know what it was for, or what it was. But it was Foxhole Pay, or Combat Pay. It was a bonus to us. So that's how I got the first TV.

Joan: So what year would that have been? How long had you been out?

Kenny: Oh golly, I'd been out for probably a year or 18 months or so. And one day, there it came in the mail.

Joan: That's unusual for the government to do something like that.

Kenny: Yes, it was a shock, but I enjoyed every penny of it.

Joan: So your first T.V. was in Great Bend? And you had two or three stations?

Kenny: One. And that was Hutchinson, and then a little later on we got one in Great Bend. Now that was a change, because it come in so much better. That first one we got was kind of like watching a snow storm. But it was TV though. And then when they got the station in Great Bend, that really perked things up. Today, though, the way TV is, you probably wouldn't have even watched it. This TV here is so much better than the first one that it's pitiful.

Rosetta: This goes back to your childhood. You lived, I mean, I kind of know where you lived, out by where Charlotte's school was. When you came into town, you would have been on Highway 183, what we call it now. It wasn't paved. You dad was in charge of grating the road?

Kenny: Right. Well, he took care of it, filled up the holes and drug it and all that sort of stuff. That's one that was dirt. I remember when they oiled it, that was a big improvement. But I don't remember what year it was. I'm sure it was in the late '30's, probably, when they oiled it. Oiling and paving are the same thing.

Rosetta: We have a picture of him working with horses during the depression, on that road.

Kenny: Well, Dad had a team of horses that he used to work on the road between here and the county line.

Joan: Well, we learned that the horses were, they got a lot more for the horses than they did for themselves to work. They rented the horses out.

Kenny: Could have been. If it hadn't been for the horses, they'd have been in trouble.

Rosetta: Did your dad keep his team of horses at your house, and then take them to wherever he was going to work?

Kenny: Yes. He lived out there about 12 miles south, and that was about in the middle between the Kinsley and the county line. We had a barn and kept horses out there in the barn and kept them right there at the place.

Rosetta: Is there anything left of that home?

Kenny: The only way you can tell where it was is going down the highway, you can see the ditch where the driveway went to the house. But they've taken the old house and the barn and everything down and the foundations out so they can farm right across it. If you didn't know it was there, you'd never know it, because it's all slicked off.

Joan: I guess we could have asked way back in the beginning because do you remember anything about the Dirty Thirties and the Depression? You were pretty young.

Kenny: The main thing I remember was I was tall enough that I could stand at the window sill and play in the dust on the window sill. Because the dirt was blowing around pretty good and the dust would come in those old windows, and I was playing in the dust on that old window sill. That's mainly what I remember about the Dirty Thirties.

Joan: And you were probably too young to know about the effects of the Depression and...

Kenny: No, I don't remember a whole lot about that.

Joan: And you had food because you were raising it.

Kenny: Well yes, we never went hungry by no means, but we didn't have any money to waste either. But I don't remember a whole lot about that. I don't know, we always had something to eat.

Joan: You've told us a little bit about your life, since 1970. You've retired.

Kenny: In 1974, I took my retirement from the sale of Mammal's and put it in Investor's Saving and Loan and was getting 15% interest for a while. And things were great. I went to work for the hospital and worked there for 20 years.

Joan: What did you do at the hospital?

Kenny: I was in charge of maintenance and went to work for the ambulance service. I was an ambulance driver for a while. For a little longer than that, because I did part of that while I was still working at Mammal's. That's what got me out of the store to the hospital was the fact that I had taken a job with the ambulance service. They already knew me, and when they needed somebody that did maintenance, I thought that would be a pretty good deal. I would do maintenance and be right there to drive the ambulance. So they talked to me about switching jobs, and I'm glad they did. It cut my hours down from 65 hours a week to 40 and I was making more money than I was at the store. So it all worked out great. Everybody ought to work on an ambulance service for a while. You never know what you're getting in to.

Joan: And that would have been at the new hospital?

Kenny: Well, I started over here on 5<sup>th</sup> Street.

Joan: And then moved out there. In 1969?

Kenny: Short time. We moved out there in the tail end of 1974. I was only in the old hospital a few months. Quite a switch.

Joan: Why was it a switch?

Kenny: New hospital and everything in it was upside down, backward and wrong side out. You could not believe the boo-boos that was in the new building. One that was so humorous, two of them. There was the mangle, the ladies in the laundry was trying to get the mangle to shut off. It run backward. They had a hell of a time. Then the next one, that north hall that went clear up to the north end, it had one light switch. Well, guess where that was at. Clear at the north end, and the women working there at night, they didn't like it. They had to go clear up to the north end to shut it off, then walk back in the dark. So I had rewire that and put a switch on each end. I got that taken care of, and after a while they said, "How do we get the lights off there in the lobby at night?" They were looking for a switch, but there wasn't no switch. It was turned on, and that was it. So I got the blueprint out and looked, and what they had done originally, it was planned for a dimmer switch. They decided that thing cost three dollars and they needed to put a flip switch in for 39 cents. So they put "Delete" instead of "change". Well, they deleted it and didn't put anything in. They just left the switch out of there. So I had to get into the wire again and rewire so they could have a switch to shut the lights off. And it was just one thing after another like that. You couldn't believe all the boo-boo's that was in that building. One reason for that, though, the county was saving money. They didn't hire an inspector to keep an eyeball on them while they were building. So, then after it was over, then they had to change all that stuff. Yes, we changed plumbing, electrical, everything. You couldn't believe. I remember one pot that was hooked up for hot water. When you flushed the pot, you could feel the heat and steam coming.

Joan: That was nice in the wintertime.

Kenny: It was crazy

Joan: Somebody in the library yesterday was talking about some controversy. Did we figure out which hospital? There might have been some controversy about keeping the hospital or having the hospital in Kinsley rather than Lewis. Do you remember that?

Kenny: There was some controversy over that. Nobody around here was too enthused about putting

one in Lewis, but the controversy came because there was the one on 5<sup>th</sup> street, then we built the new one out west. Now that was the real controversy. It was funny, they said this was too small, which at the time, they had people sitting in the hall and stuff. But, at the same time they moved out to the new one that's when business slowed down.

Joan: So the population decreased and you really didn't need the bigger facility.

Kenny: We didn't need the bigger hospital. And another thing, state regulations changed. This hall over there was a foot narrower than the state recommended later. So the hospital out there had a foot wider hall, and just scads of little dumb things like that. It didn't make any difference. And the truth was, this old hospital was fine, we shouldn't have ever moved.

Rosetta: Because it wasn't that old.

Kenny: No. It opened up in '49. So it wasn't that old. But anyway, there were a few that wanted a new hospital, and they got it. Which was a mistake to my way of thinking. This old building over here will be standing when the, not the newest part, the middle part, falls in before this one over on 5<sup>th</sup> Street falls in. Because this is a good building over here. That other one out there, it's tin, and the roof leaked and rotted in on it already. So it's a much better building over here on 5<sup>th</sup> street.

Joan: Maybe they had inspectors over here, too.

Kenny: May have, I wouldn't know. I wasn't involved with that. But it was just a better building to start with.

Rosetta: They still had pride in their work when they built that. And they didn't over here.

Kenny: I guess not, and the original plan over here on 5<sup>th</sup> Street was that if they ever needed more room, it was built sturdy enough they could have had a two-story. They could have built on top. But they didn't want that, the few that was against this hospital and wanted a new one. They kept going until they got the new one, which was to my way of thinking, was a mistake. Which doesn't mean it was a mistake, but I think it was.

Joan: Well, looking back overall. How do you think living in Edwards County affected your life?

Kenny: It didn't really affect it. I just grew up. I always managed to have a good job and no problems. You know, if you've never had something, you don't miss it. Now looking back, there's a few things I might have been short on, but at the time, if you've never had it, you can't miss it. Or at least I don't think you do.

Joan: The population has continued to decrease since 1970. What other changes have you seen as it's gotten lower and lower. It's stabilized right now, we learned the other night at the city commissioner meeting.

Kenny: Well, the only thing changing, we've got more illegal's living here than we used to. But it's kept the population up. I guess that's what happened, I don't know. But it's staying about the same now?

Joan: The last few years, it has sort of leveled out. Of course, the downtown is... We have no car

dealers now.

Kenny: Yes, no car dealers and a lot of vacant buildings. One thing we do have more of than we used to, and that's little dinky parks where there used to be a building. That change is not necessarily good.

Joan: What do you see for the future of Edwards County?

Kenny: I won't be here.

Joan: Do you think it will stay a viable community? We talked about this last night at a library program.

Kenny: Oh, it will be around for a long time yet. I don't know how long, but as long as the county seat's here, it will be a town. Now they are talking about consolidating with four or five others, now that might be the downfall. Well, you know it will be. So I don't know where the county seat would be. Probably Dodge City then. Isn't that what the talk is now?

Rosetta: I know there's talk, but I don't...

Kenny: They're saying Kiowa, Edwards and Pawnee, Rush... Dodge City would probably be the most central place if they ever go to consolidating four or five counties together. I know that's the talk. Matter of fact there was a piece in the paper just in the last week or so about it. It had a map showing the counties that would be consolidated. I don't know if you saw that or not in the Hutchinson paper.

Joan: We were talking just last night at the program, there are 105 counties in Kansas, and Arizona has 15. A lot of states don't have as many counties as we have.

Kenny: Arizona has one thing we don't have, and that's a sheriff that rules the roost out there. Quite a guy there.