

FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE



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Abstract: **Billy Self**

Mr. Self was born in Simonton, Texas in 1932 on his family farm. Billy attended a 1 room school house with about 25 kids from the farming community. He enjoyed hunting rabbits, squirrels and ducks and fishing. After serving in the Army during the Korean War, he came home and worked on the farm and the ranch where his dad, Allen Self, was the ranch manager.

In 1962, Billy worked for Walter Mischer in road construction as a heavy equipment operator until 1987 when the company closed its doors. He worked for another road construction company for the next 25 years and retired as General Superintendent in 2018 at the age of 82. His wife, Kathy retired as a school administrative assistant.

Billy talks about growing up on a farm including picking cotton by hand, feeding the chickens and gathering eggs, milking the cows, pumping water and heat it in a kettle to take a bath in a wash tub. He did not encourage his children to go into farming.

14 Pages

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Interview Summary

People (in order mentioned in interview)

Harry Berkman – grocery store owner
 Abe Daily – grocery store owner
 Queen Rosetta Lewis – aunt
 Ike Donegan – cotton Gin owner
 Jack Frost – rancher/landowner
 Vernon Frost – rancher/landowner
 Sam Guyler – landowner
 RL & SB Harris – large ranch/farm owners
 Willie & Minnie Hench – uncle & aunt
 Arthur Hilton – local farmer
 Walter M. Mischer – developer
 George Roland – farmer
 Erlenw Self – sister
 Janet Self – sister
 Kathleen Self – spouse
 Lewis Self – brother
 Stella Mae Lewis Self – mother
 William Allen Self – father
 Willis Benton & Musetta Mae Self – paternal grandparents

Luke Senior – farmer

Sonny Senior – friend

Places / Businesses

Alief, Texas

Berkman Grocery Store

Bessie Creek

Brookshire, Texas

Clodine, Texas

Daily Grocery Store

Dinky train

Houston Livestock Show

Lamar Consolidated School District

Orchard, Texas

Rosenberg, Texas

Simonton, Texas

Simonton Independent School District

The Esquire Club

Valley Lodge Subdivision

Wallis Cemetery

Weston Lakes

Events

Billy Self, born in Simonton, Texas in 1932, grew up on his family farm without electricity, indoor plumbing or water with more chores than hours in the day. Billy stated that “life was good” when they got running water, electricity and a telephone in the 1940s.

He attended a one room school with about 25 kids until high school. Billy was drafted in 1953 with just one-half credit short from graduating.

He reminisces about life on the farm with the never ending chores. Fun time was hunting for food and fishing. After serving in the Army in Korea, he married Kathleen.

He and his brother Lewis, who goes by ‘Bo’, went to work in 1962 for a developer as heavy equipment operators for 25 years.