

FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE

Interviewee: **Gilbert Hellmuth “Herc” Meier, Jr.**

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Interviewer: Bryan McAuley

Transcriber: Sylvia Vacek

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Fulshear, Texas

16 Pages



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Transcript

MCAULEY: Today is November 16, 2013. My name is Bryan McAuley, and I am interviewing Mr. Herc Meier at the First United Methodist Church of Fulshear, Fulshear, Texas. This interview is being conducted by the Fort Bend County Historical Commission and part of the Fort Bend County Historical Commission Oral History Project. Herc is joined by his wife, Vickie, for the interview.

Tell us your full name.

MEIER: My full name is Gilbert Hellmuth Meier, Jr., and my nickname is Herc. My mother gave that nickname to me when I was *in utero* because I had two sisters before me. She said, "This one kicks like Hercules, it's got to be a boy."

MCAULEY: Where were you born?

MEIER: The hospital was in Wharton, Texas, and then I guess a day or two later I came to Fulshear.

MCAULEY: So what is your date of birth?

MEIER: 04/17/1958.

MCAULEY: Do you know the doctor that was involved in your delivery?

MEIER: He was one of the prominent doctors in Wharton, he was an OBG, and he was a famous OBG. He had an office in Wharton and an office in Houston. I remember years later, he had a clinic of his own just as you came into Wharton on the right, but I can't see the name on the building.

MCAULEY: How did your family come to be in Fort Bend County?

MEIER: That goes way back. I have been told through the history that when the Austin 300 were given developments, Briscoe received a parcel or a grant of land and my grandfather was a scout for the Briscoe's. He basically ran ahead of them and started finding where that plot was. I don't know which grandfather it was, it would have been in the 1820's.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Please read Frank Briscoe's and Mason Briscoe's interviews on this website at <https://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/home/showdocument?id=37311> (Frank) and Mason's at <https://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/home/showdocument?id=45442>

MCAULEY: Back to your birth. When they brought you home from the hospital, where did your family live?

MEIER: It was in a house right across the street from the church on Harris Street, just south of the church. My father's parents were Hellmuth Meier and Adele Meier, and they were both from Austin County. That was on my father's side. My history in Fort Bend is on my mother's side.

MCAULEY: What kind of work do you remember your father's parents doing?

MEIER: My grandfather was working on the railroad in Austin County and my grandmother was a caretaker. She went around and took care of people, cleaned houses, and I think she had a thousand jobs by the time she passed away.

MCAULEY: How many children did your grandparents have?

MEIER: Three daughters.

MCAULEY: Do you have any specific memories of times with your grandparents?

MEIER: I remember my grandmother on my daddy's side. My grandmother could speak very little English. She spoke mainly German and broken English. I remember going to her house for holidays and special weekends, running around the streets of Sealy, cutting up, playing, and just being kids.

MCAULEY: So let's talk about your mother's line that is more directly connected to Fort Bend County. Do you remember the names of your mother's parents?

MEIER: William Joseph Walker and Flos Gates Walker. Gates was her maiden name. Then we have David J. Walker and William Joseph. My grandmother was a homemaker. She had people that worked for her, keeping the house. My grandfather was a farmer/rancher. He farmed the area down here that is known now as Bois d'Arc.

MCAULEY: Was he a landowner or a tenant?

MEIER: He was landowner. He bought a general mercantile at the turn of the century which became a Mercantile General Store /Tractor Shop. It was actually a John Deere Dealership that became Rice Belt.

MCAULEY: Do you remember where that building was?

MEIER: It was at Second and Main Street, where Ray's Grill is now. He had that business as well as the farm.

MCAULEY: So did your grandparents live in town or where they farmed on Bois d'Arc Road?

MEIER: They lived here in town. The store was on First and Main; their house was on Second and Main. That house is still there. It's a white house on the corner, and it was purple at one time. They lived there, and then they moved to the house that is at the end of Second Street at Sims. It's a three-story house on the right. I remember they referred to that house as the Reue House, that is who moved in it after they left.

MCAULEY: How many children did your mother's parents have?

MEIER: My grandparents had three; my mother, Georgia Frances Walker, my uncle, W. J. Walker, Jr. and Mary Francis Walker Shamle.

MCAULEY: What memories do you have of being with your mother's parents here in Fulshear?

MEIER: My grandfather passed away when I was a few months old. He died in September, and I was born in April. So, I don't have any recollections of him. My grandmother lived until I was an adult and married. What I remember about her is that she was the most caring and passionate person. She was a true grandmother. If I got into trouble, I knew how to get to her house. I would walk through the back porch, and she normally had something to nibble on, and she would just sit and talk to us. I can remember her hands being frail all her life. I don't know how that was because I knew her when she was almost 60 when I was born. But she had old hands as long as I can remember. She died when she was 99. She was almost a 100.

MCAULEY: You mentioned that your mother's father was involved in farming and ranching. Obviously he passed so early in your life. Are there stories that you heard about, or was your family still involved in farming and ranching and the mercantile enterprise?

MEIER: Shortly, after his passing, they divided the ranch up between my mother's siblings. She is still alive, she currently lives in Colorado now, but they divided it up, and the portion that my mother received is mostly where they raise cattle. There are a lot of trees. They inherited or bought the store.

Back then, the kids were to take care of their mother as part of their inheritance. Then there were my two uncles who farmed, one did ranching as farming, and one just did farming. The property that we inherited was mostly sold off during the years. My uncle, Bill Shamble, sold his property and moved to Bryan and then to Montana. Then my other uncle sold his or gave away his share, he did not keep it long.

MCAULEY: Do you have any difficult memories from your childhood?

MEIER: My cousin, Paul, was injured and died from his injuries. A stack of hay fell on him, back when I was little. He would have been 6 or 7 years old and that left a scar that has never really healed. Time heals all, but it left a big gap in the world, and that may be one of the reasons I became a paramedic.

MCAULEY: Let's go through your parents' names again.

MEIER: My father is Gilbert Helmuth Meier, and my mother is Georgia Frances Meier. She was born in Fulshear, and my father is the one who came to Fulshear. She was born on what is now called Walker Lane. I still remember the house where she was born. It is actually the same house that my great grandfather was assassinated in. To my understanding, he was a cattle inspector for Fort Bend County. I don't have the dates. He was going to condemn a load of cows going to market the next day. He was shot in the middle of that night. The story goes that my grandmother swooped up my grandfather's little brothers, and the three of them ran to town. She never left town again, she never went back to the bottoms.

MCAULEY: That's some story!

MEIER: Yes! My parents were married in the 50's, right after the war.

MCAULEY: Was your father a veteran?

MEIER: Yes. He was a private, and there are few stories about him that are just real entertaining. In the war he was in the military police. When they were in Paris, France, one of the generals came to him. He was a robust man, so they called him Blimp. They came in and said, "Blimp, we want you to set up a bar, an officer's bar, a company bar." He said, "I need two cartons of cigarettes, two Jerry cans of gasoline and a deuce-and-a-half." They were made available to him. He went out in the countryside and came back fully stocked.

I cannot remember the name of the liquor, but somehow, he got one of the liquor bottles home, and he had it in the closet for years and years and years. I never paid any attention to that bottle of liquor, and I did not know where it came from. One New Year's Eve we had a party and we were sampling the liquor cabinet, so I pulled this bottle out and it was a cognac, Hennessy Cognac. We drank this bottle of Hennessy Cognac, we wiped it out. It was very smooth, it was very good stuff, and I am not a drinking person. The next morning, I came in, and my daddy was in a wheelchair. He rolled up to the bar, and he was looking at that bottle. I can remember tears coming down his eyes, and he said, "What makes you think you had to get into that?" I said, "It has been here forever, we were just trying it." He said, "There is a story to go with that bottle you may want to know about. Back in 1944 or 1945, right after Paris was liberated, when I opened that bar, I told you about that bottle coming from the Hennessy's. I brought it home. I knew the Hennessy's. That is where I went to get all the stock for the bar." Back then it was a secret that he had to keep because it could have gotten them in trouble, and many things could have happened that you didn't want to know.

MCAULEY: Do you think it was in the 80's when that bottle got drunk?

MEIER: We got married in the 80's; this was probably late 80's.

MCAULEY: It was in the United States for 40 or 50 years?

MEIER: Yes. It was really good stuff. That is one of the things he did in the war. He was also a bodyguard during the Nuremberg Trials for Alexander Volchkov, who was a Russian prosecutor who later prosecuted Gary Powers. He was his personal bodyguard and chauffeur during the Nuremberg Trials. The funny part about it was that there was a day when they called daddy into a room. They were going to court martial him!



Russian judges at the Nuremberg Trials, left to right: Alexander Volchkov and Iona Nikitchenko. Not pictured is Roman Rodenko, the Russian Chief Prosecutor.

He said when he walked into the room, he saw all the generals and all the command staff, and cold chills ran down his back because something was very wrong. They asked him what his intent was and what he was doing moment-by-moment.

Earlier that day, he had gone to the courthouse where the trials were being held. He took a note and was passing it to another MP. It was official business, but when he did, his gun passed the threshold of the door by an inch. Within 48 hours, he was back in the United States because that gun had passed that threshold by an inch. It was one of those things. They didn't play around during that time. Things were strict and he was done! When you see pictures of the guards lining the back row, you wonder how they even saw that his gun passed that threshold? It didn't matter, it happened.

EDITOR'S NOTES: The Nuremberg Trials were a series of trials held between 1945 and 1949 in which the Allies prosecuted German military leaders, political officials, industrialists, and financiers for crimes they had committed during World War II. -- *Wikipedia*

MCAULEY: Do you remember any other time in your father's life when he traveled, or was the war the main component of his travel?

MEIER: That was the main component of his life and rightfully so. He grew up in Sealy. He remembers working on dairies, delivering meals and sandwiches at lunch that his mother would prepare. He would go to the feed store and sell them to the workers.

His father had died when he was five years old. I think it was heart complications. So, they were not left without any worldly means. It was hard for them. He would do whatever needed to be done to help his mother survive, and all of his sisters helped, too.

He went off to the war and when he came back, he started a trucking company, or bought a truck as they said back then. He hauled gravel down in Freeport, and from there he ran into my mother, at a place called the Rendezvous in Sealy, which is now called Tony's.

From there he moved to Fort Bend County, over here to Fulshear and went into business with my grandfather in the mercantile. They started a general store. After his passing, we turned it into a grocery store and meat market, and it burned down. Then, we rebuilt it as a meat market. We should talk about the depression of the meat business in the 80's. The idea was that red meat was going to kill you. We shouldn't have gone back into business.

MCAULEY: Were your parents courting during his transition into Fort Bend County, or had they already been married?

MEIER: I would say they got married, and then he moved.

MCAULEY: So he got in the family's business as a result of the marriage?

MEIER: Absolutely. After we closed down the store, I went to work for Fort Bend County.

MCAULEY: Is there anything else you would like to say about the work that your parents did?

MEIER: The only thing I can say about my mother is that she loved Sunday school, and she loved teaching Vacation Bible School. When we moved down to the Bois d'Arc area in 1964, she almost became a recluse down there.

But some of the things she did! She may have been one of the most intelligent women in her time. She graduated from college when she was 18 from TWU in Denton, and she came back and became the schoolteacher at Jane Long Elementary in Richmond. I think it was Jane Long. That is the one right there at Austin and FM 762. She had been married previously; she had one child, my oldest sister, Penny. My mother had gotten her teaching certificate and was teaching at Jane Long. She can vividly remember that there was a veteran from World War II who sat in the playground. He strapped a bunch of dynamite to himself and detonated it. You can talk about acts of terrorism today, but it was there then, too. My understanding is that it was a suicide. I don't believe there were any targets, but today that would have been an act of terrorism.

MCAULEY: How many children did your parents have together?

MEIER: Together they had three; Penny my oldest half-sister, Hilda my second oldest sister, me, and then my baby sister is Terry. There is a caboose (both chuckle).

MCAULEY: Do you remember where your family was living when you were a child?

MEIER: Originally, we lived in this little house next door, and I can still remember little bits and pieces of living there. But when I was seven, we moved one block over, which is now Casey Pope Properties. We lived in that house, and I have a lot of memories. Our store was where Ray's Grill is. There wasn't a bank there, that was a pasture. I had ponies. Then we moved down off Bois d'Arc, which is at the corner of Pen and Terry, where we live now.

MCAULEY: So talk a little bit of a typical day for you as a child in Fulshear, and what your family did for recreation, relaxation.

MEIER: When I was a child, days were pretty simple. We woke up, ran and gathered up all the town kids. We ran anywhere. As long as we didn't show up in Rosenberg, Katy, Richmond, or Brookshire, didn't cross the river, and got home before dark, we were okay.

I didn't grow up with one set of parents, I had a hundred sets of parents. Ms. Zearlene (James) was downstairs. She would be one of those people that had an eye on me half the time. Ms Viola Randle would be one that you couldn't get away with anything. It didn't matter, it was getting back, good or bad. When we were young, we basically ran the roads barefoot and on bicycles. But when we grew up to be teenagers, I went to work for my parents there in the store, and the other kids went into various degrees of work; part time hauling hay, those type things. Now that we are all grown, I am the only one left here.

MCAULEY: Were you involved in sports in anyway?

MEIER: Going through high school, we were involved in sports. We all went to Lamar; we all played the football thing. I left Lamar my sophomore year and transferred to Brookshire Royal, which is where I met my wife, Vickie.

But it is funny, that is one of the ways I learned about politics. There were a couple of teachers that wanted to get rid of their head teacher, the one in charge of that area. They went in and accused me of stealing, and that did not work well. My daddy took it to the school board, and as soon as we did, they called in a national organization to investigate, which proved that the leader of the group was doing things not allowed. Basically, he was allowing students to work for him for grade points. Not a good thing, but these were mechanical skills the students learned.

MCAULEY: What role did religion play in your life as a child here in Fulshear?

MEIER: Actually, my young religious life was right here on this corner, Fulshear Methodist Church. Every Sunday we showed up here and went to Sunday school. I can remember many times where we went to my grandmother's house for a big cooked meal. Sometimes after church, we would get into the station wagon, or a van, and we would go up Westheimer and eat at one of the cafeterias. What was funny is that back then, everything was way inside the loop. There wasn't a loop, and we would go in and have lunch at Wyatt's, Alfred's Cafeteria. My daddy loved cafeterias, so we would go to a cafeteria.

MCAULEY: Do you recall whether finances were an issue for your parents?

MEIER: Finances as a child was never an issue. My grandparents had left my parents well off, left them with a producing income. Our business supported, or was supported by, the oil business. So, in the eighties, with the oil crunch, it just went basically to Hell in a hand basket.

MCAULEY: Did you grow a garden or crops?

MEIER: I remember it was corn and cotton, and they alternated years. I remember the latter years; the LeBlanc brothers did all the farming for them. They did all the disking and planting. My father wasn't a farmer, he ran the store, and these guys did the farming down in the bottom. I can vividly remember packing cotton; a bunch of us kids getting in there and jumping up and down in the cotton trailers.

EDITOR'S NOTE: "Disking" is done with a disc harrow, which is a farm implement used to till the soil where crops are to be planted. It is also used to chop up unwanted weeds or crop remainders.

-- Wikipedia



I know that my grandfather technically classified himself as a row cropper. But, they grew different kinds of vegetables here. He would load those in the truck, take them into Produce Row and sell those there. He would stop on the way home and bring back processed meat products. We had an ice house where we sold blocks of ice before refrigeration was very common. Our store actually had a freezer locker, and we would keep people's stuff frozen. They would come into the store, and then go to their locker and get what they wanted for the next day or two and take it home.

MCAULEY: We talked a little bit about your schooling...

MEIER: I started school at Travis Elementary there in Rosenberg. From Travis, we went to Crockett in Richmond for the sixth grade. Crockett for one year, and then I went to Lamar Junior High and then Lamar High School for two years. I went to Brookshire Royal and finished high school. I had a couple of runs at Blinn Junior College in Brenham back then. I actually rode the Sealy bus; I would drive from Brookshire and catch the bus that ran from Sealy. I guess the biggest part about college, I wasn't really interested in it, and I was more interested in my girlfriend who was going somewhere else. So that always kept me bottled up, and it wasn't Vickie.

There was a teacher in high school, all through high school, that kept referring to me as such a waste. I couldn't understand what she was talking about, kind of downgraded it, until the store went under and I went to work for the county. I didn't want to stay at the bottom of the pile forever, so I went to Alvin Community College and got a paramedics certificate. I really enjoyed that, and it kind of opened me up to a different world. I love being a paramedic.

One day we were talking with the English teacher who had kept telling me I was a waste. She wanted to tell me how great it turned out. How proud she was, and it was such a shame that she could never connect with me. I said, "What do you mean?" She said, "You are such a waste! You realize that you could have been a doctor, but you never stopped long enough to take advantage of learning!" So then I knew what she was talking about.

I have been very blessed as a parent. Our three kids have all graduated from Texas A&M. One graduated with a leader's degree in agriculture, and is a firefighter in Sugar Land. I am very proud of him. My oldest daughter, my middle child, graduated from the veterinarian school at A&M this last year. She is working at the Simonton Vet Clinic currently. My youngest daughter, Mary, works in media relations communication for the City of Fulshear.

MCAULEY: Let's talk real about the types of work you did.

MEIER: After my attempts at college, I came back to work in the family business. It was a meat store, mainly in the meat business. I started dating Vickie. We got married and started raising a family.

When I was still in high school at the age of 15, Jim Dozier and I had a restaurant where the candy store is now, called the Aggie Inn. Jim Bo was running his dad's service station, the Exxon, here in Fulshear. We had fire phones, there were like five phones, and one day the fire phone rang. No one else answered it, so Jim Bo answered it. There was a fire up on Pool Hill, he was just 15. He came running down, "Hey there is a fire and nobody to drive the fire truck." I had just gotten my hardship license at 15. We ran over and got into the fire truck, got it started, and took it to the fire. Funny, I tell firemen that I didn't even know where the fire siren buttons were. I knew where the sirens were, but I didn't know where the on switch was. I kept waiting for that big howl of the siren. We drove down to that fire, got the pumps started, swished water on the fire until Rosenberg showed up and finished putting it out.

The next day Lee John Bentley, the fire chief, came by. I was ready to run and hide because I knew he was going to tear me a new one for playing with his fire truck. He came and said, "You need to go to fire school with us." I said, "OK." He and I were the only ones that went to Texas A&M back in '74. We went to fire school the summer of '74 and took our first classes on fire fighting. Then two years later, they elected me fire chief, and I am still the fire chief. That's been 38 years!

MCAULEY: Wow! The town of Fulshear incorporated in the late 70's, is that right?

MEIER: I think they incorporated in '76 or 75, if I remember the numbers right.

MCAULEY: So you essentially have had that position most of the time since incorporation! Since you brought up Vickie, let me ask her a few questions. Where were you born?

VICKIE MEIER: I was born in Jennings, Louisiana. When I was four years old, they came looking for a man to run the rice dryer out in Brookshire at the corner of FM 529 and FM 362. My dad was offered the job. I am one of six kids, so that was an opportunity he could not pass up. He needed a job, so that is how we made it here.

MCAULEY: When were you married?

MEIER: September 20, 1980.

MCAULEY: What type of work have you done?

VICKIE MEIER: I have been in the banking business, mortgage business, all my life.

MCAULEY: Let's talk about the changes you have seen in your professional life in Fulshear?

MEIER: Thirty plus years is easy, it is the last five that are momentous. Fulshear used to be referred to as 'po-dunk town', the 'po-dunk' town that I loved. I was fortunate to have a horse. I can remember as a child, Kenneth Crowse, lived where the Methodist parsonage is now. He and I were running buddies. We would actually lie in the ditch of FM 359, and when a car passed by we ran to the other side. When we got to the other side, we waited for another car to pass and run back, that was a way of killing time. Unfortunately, we took many naps on the side of the road waiting for a car to come! I remember distinctly the day we got caught. That was the day I learned that when my parents said something, I should listen very distinctly. This is the only time I can remember receiving a belt. I remember that there was no traffic in Fulshear. I can remember walking down FM 359, from the store to our house. I guess I would have been 5 or 6 years old, just getting into school or out of school. But, I remember somebody stopped, and it was an adult from Fulshear. I don't remember who it was, but they stopped and looked over at me and said, "John F. Kennedy has just been shot." I was a kid, but I remember them yelling at me that just had happened.

I didn't know the ramification of it, and when I walked into the house I remember my mother turning on the TV because someone had called her. With all the party lines in Fulshear, everybody knew pretty quickly what was going on.

I can remember the telephones being party lines and that you had to wait for your ring. Once you realized it was your ring, you would pick it up and hear all the other phones letting down or picking up [both laughing], it was always a click, click.

I remember when they came with underground telephone wire to get rid of the pole mounted telephones, and got rid of the party lines. We had one of the first direct Metro lines in our store, to go into Houston. I remember people used to come up to the store to make a phone call to Houston because it was long distance if they stayed at home, if they were able to get on the phone.

I vaguely remember horse drawn wagons coming in from what we called The Bottom. I remember more groceries being picked up than being delivered because the farming and growing cotton were kind of tapering down and everything was taken elsewhere to be processed. I remember cotton was taking off and truckloads of cows going to Sealy to the market on a real regular basis. Of course, the rice that was raised at Cross Creek Ranch was always taken to Katy. That is where the driers were. That was the main staple of farming and agriculture in the area.

MCAULEY: Was The Bottoms down near your place on Bois d'Arc?

MEIER: Actually, The Bottoms were anything south of the tracks, I guess because it was Bois d'Arc Lane as far as Bowser. Many times, I have been told that the intersection of Bowser Road and FM 1093, Pool Hill and FM 1093, right there is the highest elevation point in Fort Bend County. So, I always laughed. Take it to The Bottoms and actually be at the highest part of the county. Everything ran downhill from there.

MCAULEY: Let's think about the perspective you have of your job in Fulshear? Are there any comments you would like to make about how the services are provided here in the community?

MEIER: That's pretty colorful in itself, the fire service obviously. I can remember as a child there was no fire service; there was no fire department. If something happened, they would go get their cattle sprayers and try to prevent anything else from burning. I would have been less than seven, I don't even think I was in school yet. There was a lady that had like a day care and took care of the kids. Sharpstown was brand new.

We drove home from Sharpstown in the back of my aunt's station wagon one day, and the lady's house had burned down. That is actually the first house I remember burning down, and it had a fatality, the lady's husband had perished in it. There was a story about him smoking, but I do not remember all the details on it, and it would have been pure speculation. We didn't have CSI back then. It burned down, which probably played a part in getting me in the fire service.

I remember in the sixties, a group of men bought a used fire truck from Rosenberg and built a little metal building. That was the fire department, and it was like that for many, many years. If you don't have any fires, you don't have a fire department.

In about '71 or '72, there was an arsonist who went around burning down hay barns. You just wiped out a livelihood for a rancher because that is what he needs to feed his cows. So, it was really a big deal, let the house burn but save the barn. Lee John Bentley is the person I remember going through the community, sharing his concern. They bought a new truck and put a tank on it, and that is how they started the fire department back up in '72. One of my goals was to never let it down. From that beginning, I got into it, and we are basically like any other fire department in a small town. You are as much a social club as you are a public service. That went on for quite a few years. One of the things we did was take alcohol out of the fire station. It couldn't be there. At the time, we were not old enough to buy it, so it wasn't a big deal. When we did get old enough, we were not going to be a social club. We tried to keep it as professional as we could. We built a new fire station, and we had Fort Bend County bring out a paramedic to run medical calls out here. We started staffing one person every twenty-four hours, and then two every twenty-four hours. Now we have four stations. It is a growing thing; it is really a business now, not a hobby.

When the new people moving to our community call 911, they expect a big red truck, an ambulance with it, four people on the fire truck, and two people in that ambulance. They expect it to be just like in Houston. That is what they expect. When they move into the community, the Realtor is going to say, "Hey look at this big shiny house." They are in awe about the house, and they move in. When they get their first insurance bill, "Whoa, whoa, why is my fire department so sorry?"

So many times, I have told them, "Ma'am it is the fire plugs, it is the fire hydrant in front of your house. You do not move into a community without MUD taxes, without growth, you are getting exactly what you are paying for." Nobody wants to pay more taxes than the next person, but I just want to pay the same taxes as the next person.

The people moving in have expectations from where they came from. They expect that the service is already there, that the insurance rate should be low. I want to tell these people that I have been paying high insurance prices my entire life; you don't get a lot of sympathy from me. This is my norm. You are coming from an area that has been invested for years and years to pay for the infrastructure. When you pay for your insurance, it's gone in a year, but you pay your taxes that build the infrastructure that is here for a lifetime. So, which one is a better investment? It is not always about griping about taxes. I am as conservative as they come. If you go broke once in your lifetime, you know what conservative means.

But when you talk about public services, I can't help but pick on the police department; they are our brothers in blue. In Fulshear, we ran through five or six police chiefs, politics got every one of them. Kenny Seymour is our current police chief and is doing a great job. When the last police chief left, Kenny came to me and said, "Should I run for that job?" I said, "Only if you want to become a target." When you are head of an organization, I don't care what organization it is, somebody else wants it. You are strapping a target on your back, and you have to stay out of politics. If you can find it in a book, it's a rule, it's righteous, but when you go to one person and work this person against this to get this, that's politics.

MCAULEY: I want to touch on a couple of things that you mentioned earlier. Your great grandfather, Walker, who was scouting with the Briscoe's...

MEIER: It wasn't my great grandfather, it was a multiple great.

MCAULEY: I had in my notes that he did some scouting for Jane Long.

MEIER: Very possible. There is a book that is written about Jane Long and I remember reading it. I should have documented on it, when her husband was in the Mexican jail, during the Black Bean Incident. There was a gentleman who escorted her from Texas to Tennessee, and then back. In the book, it said S. Walker, and I know some of my great grandfathers were Seth Walker.

MCAULEY: Is there anything that we didn't talk about today, that you hope will make it into this record?

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Black Bean Episode resulted from an attempted escape of the captured Texans as they were being marched from Mier to Mexico City. After an escape at Salado, Tamaulipas, on February 11, 1843, some 176 of the men were recaptured within about a week. A decree that all who participated in the break were to be executed was modified to an order to kill every tenth man. The victims were chosen by lottery, each man drawing a bean from an earthen jar containing 176 beans, seventeen black beans being the tokens signifying death. Commissioned officers were ordered to draw first; then the enlisted men were called as their names appeared on the muster rolls. Observers of the drawing later described the dignity, the firmness, the light temper, and general courage of the men who drew the beans of death. Some left messages for their families with their companions; a few had time to write letters home. The doomed men were unshackled from their companions, placed in a separate courtyard, and shot at dusk on March 25, 1843. In 1848 the bodies were returned from Mexico to be buried at Monument Hill near La Grange, Fayette County.

--courtesy <https://tshaonline.org>

MEIER: If I ever truly remember what those stories were about it would be great to know exactly when they came to Texas, when they came to Fort Bend County. Was it ahead of the 300 or behind the 300? That would be amazing to know. My grandfather, Seth Walker was actually County Commissioner for Fort Bend County at one point in time. I have a pin or badge that says Fort Bend County Commissioner. I just got that recently from my aunt.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Seth R. Walker was county commissioner for Precinct 1 in 1866 and later, most likely due to boundary changes, for Precinct 4 from 1866-1868.

MCAULEY: Thank you for your time this morning