

FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE

Interviewees: **Kathleen Joerger Lindsey**

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Interviewer: Jane Goodsill

Transcriber: Olga Barr

Comments: Ruth Kendziora, Ms. Lindsey's secretary,
also participated.

23 Pages



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Transcript

LINDSEY: You asked when I was born. I was born January 7, 1916 in the home of my mother and father. My father and mother came to this area because my father had graduated from the University of Notre Dame in Indiana and from the University of Law School in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He had gotten his B.A. degree from Notre Dame University and his law degree from the University of Michigan. People in that area were coming to Texas because it was a new and open country. This was 1906. So, that's when he came to Rosenberg and he set up his office as a lawyer. Many people were coming on excursions to Texas because it was a growing region, and they were all interested in the land in Texas. My father was a lawyer...

GOODSILL: What was his name and your mother's name?

LINDSEY: F. X. Joerger was my father's name. My mother was Mary Elizabeth Kennedy Joerger. I grew up in Rosenberg. I was born here 98 years ago. I've lived here all of my life. Our home was actually not in the downtown area. It was more or less outside of the business area of Rosenberg. It was on what is now Sixth Street in Rosenberg. We had a home with eleven-foot ceilings. Of course, in 1906 there was no air conditioning, so we had transoms to allow air to flow through the house. We never did have an outside toilet; we always had a bathroom with facilities. We had a big cistern and it permitted us to have an indoor bathroom from the time it was built in 1906. The people who built the house were considered skilled workmen. I had one sister and that's all.

GOODSILL: Older or younger?

KENDZIORA: Older

LINDSEY: She died in 1966.

GOODSILL: And her name?

LINDSEY: Mary Angela Joerger. She married Guy L. McNutt later in life. We always belonged to the Catholic Church. At first in 1906 the church was held in a residence. It was a mission church. It was held in a building, which is now Garmany-Carden Funeral Home. The priest would come and say mass. I went to school in Rosenberg, kindergarten through high school in Rosenberg. We weren't a consolidated school then it was just a high school to the eleventh grade, I believe.

A typical day in my childhood would be playing with neighborhood children and friends. I ran around so much and I ate oranges all the time so one of my neighbors called me Kathleen Orange Joerger. She was so kind; she often said she hoped that I would always be as happy as I was as a child because she felt I was such a happy child.

In my long life I've seen great changes in Rosenberg. It was just a very small town with mud streets. It was a long time before streets were paved. I graduated and went first to Our Lady of the Lake College in San Antonio, which was a school for girls—women. It was not a co-educational school. It was just a special school for girls. It's now a co-educational school. It was on the outskirts of San Antonio. I went there to college as a freshman.

GOODSILL: What year?

LINDSEY: In 1932 I graduated from high school. I went to San Antonio one year to college and then transferred to the University of Texas. I got my B.A. degree from the University of Texas. I got my Doctor of Jurisprudence degree in law school in 1939 from the University of Texas in Austin.

GOODSILL: Were very many of your women friends getting degrees at that time?

LINDSEY: Well yes, almost every one of my friends graduated from college. The twelve of us who formed the library all graduated from college, the book club. When I got out of law school and started practicing, twelve of us formed a share-a-book club. We met in one another's homes and discussed books that we had read. We also employed people from Houston to come out and review books for us in our homes.

In 1947 I was practicing law in the courthouse and I often heard people wish that we had a library, but no one ever succeeded in getting one. So I suggested to our club of twelve ladies that we take on as a project the obtaining of a library for Fort Bend County. We investigated other counties and saw how they had libraries and how they worked to obtain it. We went around, each of the twelve took a city or a town in the county and went to the business people, and the preachers, and the well-known businessmen telling them that we were going to seek to get a library, and that someday we would appear before the commissioners court in Fort Bend County and ask the county to finance a library. On the day that we were going to go to the Commissioner's Court we would like for some of them to send a representative to impress the commissioners with the need for a library.

Judge Charles Schultz was county judge, and he had graduated from the University of Oklahoma and was very interested in education. We knew that he would be for it, but there were four Commissioners. We didn't know what their attitudes would be. Since they were elected politically we felt if a number of people were there from all over the county they would listen to the plea.

So I think it was May the twelfth 1947 that we asked people from all over the county to be at the Commissioners Court meeting. I went before the Commissioners and the Judge and asked him and them to finance a county library. And they agreed to do so. We had promised people all over the county that it would not be just for Rosenberg and Richmond, but that we would use a bookmobile (we had found that other counties used a bookmobile) to take books to every little town in Fort Bend County. They would not be forgotten; this bookmobile would service them. So the County approved a certain percentage of money for us to have a library and granted us the privilege of having a library.

Then the question was where would it be? One of the ladies and I went to the City of Rosenberg and asked if we could put the books in the little building adjoining the City Hall in Rosenberg that was vacant. We would put up the shelves and put the books there. They said we could use that space. The county gave us enough money to buy a bookmobile. And so we set up the library adjoining my law office, which was adjoining the City Hall in Rosenberg. We hired a librarian, Mary Lee Cooper, because none of us knew how to setup a library. We soon found that we needed more space than that.

We did get the bookmobile, and then Lillian Stavinoha, an employee of the library, drove it. The first time she drove it all the books fell out of the shelves! She didn't know how to handle the bookmobile. We did go to every small town in Fort Bend County with that bookmobile and met at the schools and children came there to get the books.

We soon outgrew that space. We needed a building, so Fort Bend County gave us the money to build a building, and gave us the money to furnish the building. A lady named Mrs. George let us put it on a piece of ground that she had next to Polly Ryon Hospital if we would build it with the same type of brick that was in the Polly Ryon Hospital. That's what was done. Through the certificate of obligation, the county was able to build that building. The county was able to furnish the building. That building remained the Fort Bend County library for twenty-six years. It was just jammed packed. The taxpayers of Fort Bend County of course paid for everything. We didn't have any big donations of any kind. It was all paid by taxpayers' money.

People often misunderstood, thinking that somebody had given us money. Nobody gave us a cent; it was all paid for by the taxpayers of Fort Bend County. When Lillian Stavinoha's relative became County Judge, he got the George estate to give a large amount of money. They built the building, which is now the Fort Bend County Library. It didn't come into existence until after twenty-six years. That's just about the history of how the library started.

GOODSILL: Were the women in your group proud of their achievement?

LINDSEY: OH, indeed yes, they had no idea, we had no idea it would grow as it did. We were thanked many times by the schools and by all the people in Fort Bend County for providing the library service to the whole county, not just to Rosenberg/Richmond, but the entire county shared in its occupation as a library. Oh, they were very proud. When it came time to have the first board meeting for the Fort Bend County Library, we suggested that the president of our share-a-book club be the first president of that group, and she was.

GOODSILL: And her name?

LINDSEY: Ruth Schult. She had been very active. All the women, all the twelve women, had been very active. Those who had been teachers went to the schools where they taught and the towns where they taught and asked people to come to the Commissioner's Court meeting. Others went to their churches. It was a long hard work to get the appearance before the court. We were very proud of it.

GOODSILL: Did your book club stay together?

LINDSEY: Oh, 'till the last. I'm the last one to die. I haven't died yet. (smiling) All of the other eleven are dead now. I'm the only survivor of the twelve.

GOODSILL: How long did you stay together?

LINDSEY: All our lives.

GOODSILL: I would be very curious to know what books you read and talked about. Do you remember any of the books that were popular that you were reviewing?

LINDSEY: Oh, I wouldn't try to say that.

GOODSILL: It would be interesting to have that list, wouldn't it?

LINDSEY: Yes, that's been since 1947.

GOODSILL: That's why it would be interesting!

LINDSEY: Well that's about the book club I think but I think they did a wonderful job. I think three of those ladies ultimately moved to Richmond, but we still remained close friends all of our lives, all of our lives.

Now as far as organizations I've been a member of, I believe I have a list here. This list has nineteen items, so I believe it would be better if you took this list and just used it rather than for me to read it. [Attached at bottom of interview.] I was a patron not a member of the Junior League in Houston.

GOODSILL: We will, but go down the list and tell me what was the most interesting one that you were on.

LINDSEY: Well I wouldn't attempt to do that. [laughter] I may have left some out, but that's as I recall it today. [The list of 19 items is incorporated herein by reference.]

GOODSILL: Very nice--this is great. I'm glad you did this list for us. So tell us something about your career as a lawyer.

LINDSEY: My father had an abstract plant. You probably don't know what that is. He started it in 1907. It's a history of the titles to all the land in Fort Bend County. We examined titles to land. We did probate work. I was never a trial lawyer. I never did try cases. I worked in the title examination part of it. That was my chief work to examine titles and do title work.

GOODSILL: That sounds very interesting to me.

LINDSEY: Well, it was very interesting. It is a very pleasant practice.

GOODSILL: Tell me why it was of interest to you.

LINDSEY: Well, it gives you the history of every piece of land in the county. You know who owned every piece of land in the county, and how it passed from person to person. It's just a history of the county, that's what it is.

GOODSILL: Is all the research you did now a matter of county record?

LINDSEY: Oh, we examined the records of the courthouse every day.

GOODSILL: Are you still working?

LINDSEY: I quit working in 1979. I started in 1939, I retired in 1979. I haven't practiced law in over thirty years. I wouldn't attempt to. I sold my library and everything because I wouldn't attempt to do any legal work at ninety-eight years of age when I haven't kept up with it. You have to keep up every day or you're lost.

GOODSILL: You lose your knowledge if you don't keep up with it?

LINDSEY: Well, the law changes. Every legislature changes the laws. Not all laws, laws are changed all the time. You have to keep up-to-date or you're just out of it.

GOODSILL: Did you work with your father?

LINDSEY: Oh, yes. I wouldn't even have studied law had it not been for my father. There were 300 people in my law class, and only five of them were women. I wouldn't have thought of studying law if it hadn't been for my father. He was a very brilliant man. He was willing for me to study law, which was unusual at that time.

GOODSILL: Did you two work well together?

LINDSEY: We didn't have an unpleasant moment in our lives.

GOODSILL: Really? Did he give you specific jobs to do?

LINDSEY: Well, it's hard for me to explain how a lawyer's office works, but I had my practice, and I took care of it.

GOODSILL: So how long did you work with him?

LINDSEY: 'Till he died in 1950.

GOODSILL: Tell me about what kind of man he was.

LINDSEY: He was a very brilliant man. He was a very handsome man. I have given you a description of him and his life, which is not up-to-date, but I think it would be more informative than I could tell you now. [Attached at end of interview.]

GOODSILL: Right. You wrote this in about 1979?

LINDSEY: Probably

GOODSILL: Do you want to tell us a little bit about your mother?

LINDSEY: Well, she had a beautiful voice, and played the violin beautifully. Neither of her daughters had any musical talents whatsoever [laughing]. She was a wonderful housewife.

GOODSILL: Was Rosenberg a very cultural place in 1906?

LINDSEY: Well, it was such a small town that most of us went to Houston for the opera, or for the symphony, or even for the theatre. We had a little theatre. We kept up with fine arts. Our nearness to Houston made it easy for us to go into Houston for things that we didn't have here in Rosenberg.

GOODSILL: Did you drive or take the train?

LINDSEY: Well, actually in the early days, we even took the train to the courthouse. The roads were just not like they are today in 1900. We had no paved highways to Richmond. My father went to the courthouse on the train all the time.

GOODSILL: Really!

LINDSEY: Yes, see it's hard to think back to 1907, 1908. When he first started practicing Rosenberg streets were just nothing. There were very few nice roads in Fort Bend County. When my father was County Judge, he supported the building of county roads. It wasn't appreciated entirely because people didn't want to give right-of-way. They didn't realize how valuable the roads would be. They weren't enthusiastic but he did emphasize the building of roads. He brought the first County Agent to Fort Bend County. He tried to encourage young people to learn how to take care of cattle and how to take care of farms. He was head of the National Farm Loan Association. He helped people to get loans to buy land and not have to pay exorbitant interest rates. He was very interested in agriculture. Through him the original Fort Bend County Fair was formed.

GOODSILL: REALLY!

LINDSEY: He brought in the County Agent, who was the first County Agent to encourage children, young people, to raise animals. My father also bought land. He had Hereford, prized cattle and prized lambs. He developed the pecan trees on the land that he owned so that everything would be first class. He encouraged young people to be interested in improving their knowledge of agriculture because we were an agricultural county, and we still are to some extent.

But of course, we are being taken over by Houston and Sugar Land. Looking back a hundred years is very different. I can remember the first paved streets we had because people used to get stuck in the mud streets right in the middle of town [laughs].

GOODSILL: You were saying not everybody appreciated the roads.

LINDSEY: Oh, no.

GOODSILL: Not everybody had vehicles either.

LINDSEY: Oh, no, no, no. In those days, it was a vast distance between Richmond and Sugar Land and Rosenberg. There was not much cooperation between them. It was hard to move around. See they didn't have the roads to visit any place. Later in life six of us established the Richmond State School. That became possible because of one lady neighbor, Rhydonia Jones. There was a big bank failure in Rosenberg/Richmond, and many, many people lost their businesses. They had a big bank failure.

KENDZIORA: What year?

LINDSEY: I don't know. I've forgotten. Polly Ryon was kind of the founder of the George group, and Rhydonia Jones was a relative of Polly Ryon. She got the Vincent, Elkins, Weems & Francis Law Firm to keep the Georges from going into bankruptcy. Mr. Weems admired Rhydonia Jones quite a bit. There was a lady in Richmond, the wife of a doctor who had a retarded child, and she was active in the Houston retarded family group. She had heard that if some county in the Galveston area would provide two hundred acres that the legislature would establish a school for retarded children in that county. So the mother of the retarded child, Lila Thompson from Richmond, had gone around for a couple of years trying to get somebody to be interested in getting this acreage. Rhydonia Jones and Lila Thompson were going up to see Mr. Weems, who was a partner in Vinson, Elkins, Weems & Francis. She and Lila were going up there to see if they could get him to give them some money so they could buy two hundred acres.

I was going up there to see him to see if he would give us, the twelve ladies, a hundred thousand dollars to invest. At that time you could get five percent interest on a hundred thousand and we could buy books for the library. The money the county was giving us all went for maintenance and salaries -- everything but books! I wanted him to say he'd give us this money and make it a condition that it had to be used for books, we'd get five thousand dollars a year solely to buy books.

We all went at the same time to his office. He said, "Well, you are all here from Fort Bend County, just all of you come in together." So we all went into his room. They told him their story; if they could get two hundred acres the legislature would—there was a possibility that the school for retarded people could be put in Fort Bend County. Then I told him that I wanted this hundred thousand to get five thousand a year for the library for books. He said, "What if I said I'd give you five thousand dollars now? What would you say?" I said, "I'd say thank you." [laughs] He said, "You heard what these ladies said about that two hundred acres? That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard of. Nobody is going to build a big building like a state school for just getting two hundred acres to put it on. Isn't that ridiculous? You are an attorney, tell me, don't you think it is absurd?" I said, "Well, no, Mr. Weems, I don't think it is absurd. I'd be glad to look into it for them. It may be it is a possibility." He said, "Well, okay."

So that's when I got involved with the Richmond State School. For about two years I worked on that. I took the first bunch of people from Rosenberg up to Wharton to see what they were doing because all the counties—the representative from the Galveston area had a chance of getting this school. There was nothing for retarded children in Rosenberg. So like we had done with the library, we formed a group. There were only six of us. We worked on it a couple of years. Several different men offered us acreage for five hundred dollars an acre when it was worth a thousand. But the state wouldn't accept anything that couldn't provide sewage and water and city facilities. So one of our group of six heard of a man with two hundred acres; he was thinking of giving it to his church. So he came to our group and he said if we could just get a hundred thousand dollars we could buy that two hundred acres and Fort Bend County would have a chance of getting that school.

So we tackled that, and Mr. Weems helped us. We did get a \$100,000.00 from the George Estate to buy 200 acres. We then had the 200 acres. The man gave his \$100,000.00 to his church just like he said he would. We met again with the people from the legislature, and they wanted 30 more acres or maybe 50 more acres. Mr. Weems had died. The man's brother had acreage we could get, but he wanted a \$1,000 an acre for his. Mr. Weems had gotten interested in the project with us. So I went to his former office to talk to the man who replaced him. But I went there by myself to beg for the money to buy that additional acreage from the brother. The man who replaced Mr. Weems made me sit there all day long—ALL DAY LONG! I'm not exaggerating.

I said, "Well, I'll beg, but this is the only time in my life I ever want to beg. But I'll beg because we have to have it. The state won't take it without this extra acreage." Finally after wearing me out all day long, he said he'd let me have it. I was there by myself. I don't even remember his name, but he was very uncooperative, [laughing] I would say rude. But anyway, we got it. We got the money for the Richmond State School. And WE got the school! See, Brazoria County wanted it, Wharton County wanted it and all the counties wanted it. That's how we got the Richmond State School.

At that time, the Richmond State School was mainly just young children five or six years old. Nowadays, it is entirely different—it's not like it was when we founded it. There's nobody under twenty-one years of age there anymore. It's entirely changed. But that's the way it was when we founded it. That was really interesting. I couldn't have given all my time to it if my husband hadn't backed me up with the law firm.

GOODSILL: Was your husband a lawyer as well?

LINDSEY: Oh, yes!

GOODSILL: Now tell us about him. What was his name?

LINDSEY: Robert W. Lindsey, he was from Pennsylvania. His father died when Bob was three years old. He had been ill for a long, long time. They were financially, just really stripped because they had taken the father to Colorado and various places for his health. Bob had a job. This was in 1938, I guess, or something like that. Times were hard and he lost his job. He decided he'd go to Alaska. He didn't want his mother to be burdened with taking care of him, and he couldn't help her. He had one brother and two sisters.

So he started out for Alaska, and she said she knew the day he left he wasn't coming back. He got as far as Lubbock, Texas. He worked his way into Texas, and he met two men right outside of Lubbock. I have a picture of the town where they met. They said, "Why don't you go to school at Texas Tech?" He said, "I can't go to school; I don't have any money." "You don't have to have any money to go to school at Texas Tech. You can work your way through school." So he decided to take them up on it. They said, "You can sleep on the floor in our room until you get a job." The only job that was open was in the physics department at Texas Tech. So he went over there and applied. The man doing the hiring said, "We're not going to employ anybody who isn't majoring in physics." Bob said, "I'm majoring in physics." [laughs] So he majored in physics. [laughs]

So he worked his way through Texas Tech, but he didn't have any money to spare. When it came time for him to graduate in physics, well, one man that he worked for in a store said, "You have to have a new suit for graduation." Bob said, "I can't afford it." He said, "Well, I tell you, you're going to have this suit. When you get out and get a job, you can pay me back." From then on, we visited that man every time we went to Lubbock. He just let Bob take the suit.

Bob first went to work for the Sun Oil Company, I think. Then he went to work for Gulf Oil Company. Then he worked for a man that right now I can't think of his name, but a whole bunch of the Gulf oilmen left and went to work for this man. He sent him to Rosenberg with a crew of thirty-six men. He was over thirty-six men. They were doing seismograph work along the Louisiana/Texas coast. That's where I met him—in Rosenberg. We started going together. I always wanted lots of children. My mother had two children. My sister Angela lived next door to her. It was SO nice, you know. I always thought that I'd do like that too. Bob said, "Well, when you are in the oil business, they move you all the time. You can't have a lot of children [laughs] because you can't be moving them around." He said, "I'll just go to law school."

GOODSILL: Now that was smart.

LINDSEY: So he went to law school. In two years, he graduated from the University of Texas law school. Then we started practicing law together. He became the attorney for the Rosenberg Bank and Trust and Fort Bend Federal Savings and Loan. He was chairman of the board of Fort Bend Federal Savings and Loan for fifty years. My father had incorporated the Fort Bend Telephone Company. He represented them until he died. So that's how it all happened.

GOODSILL: And did you have lots of children?

LINDSEY: We had no children. Never had any children. But that was not unusual. In my father's family there were only two boys and in my mother and father's families there was only one that had children. In my mother's family, there were five children, and she was the only one that had children. My sister had four children, and I had none. My two nieces died—one in 2009, and the other one two years later or one year later. Both of my nieces died, and here I am living to 98 years old, and no children. Life is strange.

GOODSILL: What do you do with your time now?

LINDSEY: Ruth has been with me over fifty years. How many years Ruth?

KENDZIORA: Fifty-five

LINDSEY: I still have an office. I don't practice law. I go there three days a week, and Ruth helps me. I play bridge. Of course, I could be the mother of all those I play with. Still I enjoy it. I belong to the Woman's Club, which is a group of forty women. We have lectures and do charitable work. I have real nice neighbors. Friends take me to dinner. I have a very pleasant life. I've had a very pleasant life. My husband was WONDERFUL.

GOODSILL: When did he die?

LINDSEY: February 24, 1999.

LINDSEY: It's been fifteen years.

GOODSILL: Hard to believe.

LINDSEY: I know; it's strange. That's kind of the story.

GOODSILL: EXCELLENT story—EXCELLENT.

KENDZIORA: I agree it's interesting.

GOODSILL: It's interesting and you told it well.

LINDSEY: I've forgotten most.

GOODSILL: It doesn't sound like you've forgotten a thing.

LINDSEY: Oh, I've forgotten most everything. Ruth remembers people that came to the office better than I do. You know someone will come up and say—you represented me—and I don't even remember who they are. Ruth has a WONDERFUL memory. She remembers people.

GOODSILL: Is there anything that I should ask that I've forgotten to ask?

KENDZIORA: I can't think of anything.

LINDSEY: I told you I gave a monetary gift to Holy Rosary Church. I have a list of contributions that I've made. I have furnished these to you. And our friends honored us so many times with banquets and recognized our work in the community. The church recognized our contributions. We're frequently honored very graciously. It keeps us busy! We're not idle. [laughing]

GOODSILL: I can see that you're not idle. Well, this was a wonderful interview. I want to thank you very much.

LINDSEY: Well I hope it's what you wanted.

GOODSILL: It's more than I wanted. [laughing]

END OF INTERVIEW

NOTE: Ms. Lindsey requested that two documents be included in this interview. The first is a list of her accomplishments. The second is a brief biography of her father, F. X. Joerger, written Ms. Lindsey in about 1979.

I was involved in the following Fort Bend County History:

1. The establishment of the Fort Bend County Library by 12 ladies in Rosenberg.
2. The establishment of the Richmond State School by 6 persons.
3. Honored by the Rosenberg Railroad Museum for community contributions.
4. A member of the Fine Arts Museum in Houston, Texas.
5. A member of the Junior League in Houston.
6. The establishment of an Endowed Presidential Scholarship at the University of Texas in Austin together with R. W. Lindsey by the colleagues of R. W. Lindsey and Kathleen Joerger Lindsey.
7. The establishment of two \$25,000.00 Trusts, one for the benefit of the Altar Society of the Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Rosenberg, and one for the benefit of the library at Holy Rosary Catholic School in Rosenberg.
8. I contributed \$1,500,000.00 to Holy Rosaary Catholic Church for the establishment of a parish hall in memory of F.X. Joerger and wife, Mary E. Joerger, and R.W. Lindsey.
9. The building of a gazebo in Seabourne Creek Park in Rosenberg for \$50,000.00 in memory of R. W. Lindsey.
10. The recipient of a \$15,000.00 burse from the Catholic Clerical Student Fund honoring Kathleen Joerger Lindsey dedicated to an individual who tirelessly dedicated their time, talent and treasure to the church and their community.
11. A member of the Holy Rosary Catholic Church Altar Society.
12. A member of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Court Holy Rosary #1476.
13. I was one of the five sweetheart nominees of the University of Texas in Austin in 1936 and was a member of the Chi Omega Sorority.
14. I was chosen to be a Bluebonnet Belle while at the University of Texas.

Written by Kathleen Lindsay in about 1979

F. X. Joerger was twenty-six years old when he came to Fort Bend County, Texas. He was born in Tipton, Indiana, on March 10, 1880, the son of Bernard J. and Margaret Walsh Joerger. He was a handsome man almost six feet tall with beautiful black wavy hair and soft brown eyes. He was the most highly educated man to come into the community of Rosenberg, Texas, having received his education at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, and at the University of Michigan Law School in Ann Arbor, Michigan, both prestigious universities then and now. He came to Fort Bend County, Texas, because he was ambitious and he had friends who believed in him and in Texas. Men and women were coming to Texas in 1900 to establish homes and to acquire land. Men from Indiana were impressed with Fort Bend County as a farming community and with Rosenberg, Texas, as a railroad center so he was persuaded to come to Texas. Rosenberg was small and the streets were mud when it rained but a young lawyer was needed. He set up a modest office and acquired a library. He learned the needs of the people and joined in their activities. Then in 1911 he brought a bride from Niles, Michigan, and began to plan to build a home. The year his bride came Rosenberg had a wonderfully mild winter and the couple were happily at home with a Mrs. Carter who had been Mrs. Ebel and who had a large rooming and boarding house on Second Street in Rosenberg. The couple had made a long trip when they married, going to New York City and Niagara Falls which was the destination of many honeymoon couples in the 1900's.

In the first summer of their marriage, Mary E. Kennedy Joerger contracted typhoid fever and nearly died from the dread disease. She was a talented violinist and pianist and had a lovely voice. She became active in the Catholic Church and in their charities. In 1913 their first child, a girl, was born. She was named Mary Angela and she subsequently married Guy L. McNutt, a prominent real estate and insurance man in Rosenberg, Texas, who later served as Mayor of Rosenberg; he also served as president of the Rosenberg Lion's Club, president of the Chamber of Commerce, president of Fort Bend Country Club and on the County School Board. In 1916 a second daughter was born and was named Kathleen. She subsequently married R. W. Lindsey, a well-known attorney in Rosenberg, who has served as a director of the Rosenberg Bank & Trust, as a director and president of Fort Bend Federal Savings and Loan Association of Rosenberg, a director of the Fort Bend Telephone Company, a director of Fort Bend Country Club and who has been active in many civic activities. In 1912 the home of the Joerger family on Sixth Street was built with running water, complete plumbing facilities, electric lights, three fireplaces and hand-hewn kitchen cabinets along with all of the most up-to-date facilities of that period.

F. X. Joerger advanced in his profession and served as legal advisor to the Rosenberg Bank & Trust. He helped to organize various school districts. He incorporated Fort Bend Telephone Company. He planned many of the subdivisions in the town and contributed his services free of charge to many churches

in the area who were building and acquiring property.

In 1907 F. X. Joerger established the Rosenberg Abstract Company which is now the oldest established business in the town of Rosenberg, Texas, still in existence. He was an active attorney with an extensive practice in real estate law and probate work. He became an attorney for Fort Bend Federal Savings and Loan Association of Rosenberg in 1940 and continued in that capacity until his death.

World War I changed the lifestyle in the entire area. Young men went away to war and farm expansion lessened. Many families had trouble paying for land. Interest was very high. In 1921 F. X. Joerger became Secretary/Treasurer of the Rosenberg National Farm Loan Association which serviced loans through the Federal Land Bank of Houston and for 22 years he served in that capacity helping farmers buy land and become prosperous businessmen.

In 1928 he became County Judge of Fort Bend County and began an aggressive plan of road construction for the county. There was no paved road to Needville, no hard surface roads in the Guy area, or in the Samuel Kennedy League, in the H. N. Cleveland League or in the Geo. Deidrick and J. Y. Burney Surveys and many other parts of the county were mired in mud. All of these roads were constructed during his term of office. During his term of office the road from Needville to Beasley was widened; an agreement was reached in regard to a bridge linking Needville to Wharton. A road to Powell Point was constructed and a road to Blue Ridge. He was opposed by many

landowners who did not have the vision to see what roads would do to advance the economy of the entire county but he fought for his belief in the future and good roads came to the county.

F. X. Joerger believed in education and that farmers should improve their knowledge of livestock and of farming practices so he brought the first County Agent to Fort Bend County. Out of this there developed 4-H programs and related farm programs and ultimately the Fort Bend County Fair.

He began a movement to encourage a drainage program and organized a meeting at the District Court room of Fort Bend County to further this program for the county. At this time he suffered setbacks in health and had to withdraw from much of his public life.

During his term as County Judge the County jail was improved and suggestions were made for reorganization of the whole prison system. At this time assistance was given to the request for a State Highway from Houston through the Northern part of the county leading to Gonzales - to run through Clodine, Fulshear and Simonton. He pushed for a county wide stock law election. During his term a school was established at Missouri City.

He and his wife believed in education and sent both of their daughters first to a Catholic college for girls in San Antonio, Texas, namely Our Lady of the Lake College, now Our Lady of the Lake University, and then to the University of Texas. Both girls received degrees from the University of Texas and one daughter, Angela Joerger McNutt, attended the

University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, her father's alma mater, for one semester. All of the grandchildren of F. X. and Mary E. Joerger were graduated from college.

Every advantage of education was given to the children. They were taught music, dance, expression and knowledge of the Arts. The home was filled with books and good magazines but most of all it was filled with love and devotion to one another.

When the youngest daughter wanted to study law, her parents supported that ambition. She received her law degree and practiced law in Fort Bend County for thirty-seven years.

The family acquired a beautiful farm on the Brazos River near the only waterfalls on the river. They acquired other land in the county all of which was left to their daughters. During his lifetime F. X. Joerger raised purebred Herefords and fine sheep. He cleared most of the acreage on the Brazos River of underbrush and worthless timber and left only the pecan trees which he had grafted with various soft-shell pecans. At one time four families lived and worked the river land but with the cut in acreage by the Federal government the families were no longer needed. On the prairie farm owned by F. X. and Mary E. Joerger sugar cane, cotton and corn were raised in the early days. The cane was made into molasses. The balance of the land was used for pasture.

During the depression, F. X. Joerger used lots he owned in the town of Rosenberg now occupied by the offices of the Rosenberg Abstract Company and Guy L. McNutt Insurance Agency.

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as a site for a building where people could can meat and vegetables to provide food for themselves.

F. X. Joerger and his wife, Mary E. Joerger, were active in Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Rosenberg and in Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Richmond.

His contribution to the community and to Fort Bend County was valuable and extensive. He died on August 18, 1950.

Mary E. Joerger died September 15, 1971.

copy In February 1912, F. X. Joerger and Mary E. Joerger contracted with J. A. Carter for the construction of a brick home located at 1220 Sixth Street in Rosenberg, Texas. The house was located on Lots 11 and 12 in Block 12 of Hillyer's RePlat of Tinker's Addition to the Town of Rosenberg.

snij The home built by the Joergers was a two bedroom home with one full bath, a living room, dining room and kitchen. The home had an enclosed back porch and a front porch. The ceilings in the home were 11 feet high. The house had three fireplaces. The living room had large sliding doors into an adjoining bedroom. The house had transoms over all the doors inside the house to help cool the house and provide circulation of the air. The walls were brick covered by plaster and then canvased and papered. The clothes closet for the master bedroom was an about 10x8 walk-in closet. In the kitchen a sink with a pump furnishing rain water from a cistern was established in addition to the usual kitchen sink. The rain water was used for washing fine clothes and for washing hair. The house always

had running water and complete bathroom facilities because it was provided with an enormous underground septic tank. The house from the beginning had electric lights and later had gas heat. The kitchen had a wood-burning stove in the beginning supplemented by a kerosene stove which was kept on the enclosed porch. The refrigerator used ice from the local ice house which was delivered daily.

The list of businesses furnishing material for the original house reflects many names of early settlers in Rosenberg. Among the businesses were:

Max Schuech & Son	Lumber
S.C. Light and Power Co.	Electricity
Cochran Bros. & Co. (Oliver	
Cochran, W. C. Hinkle, Beecher	
Cochran)	
H. F. Moers	Blacksmith & Wheelwright
Salash & Jircik	Blacksmith & Wheelwright
Wm. F. Erp	Hardware etc.
J. A. Elkins	Hauling
L. W. Cummings	Furniture
Houston Co-Operative Mfg. Co.	High-Class Mill work
C. L. & Theo. Boring, Jr. Inc.	Hardware etc.
Moorman & Otten - Cincinnati, Ohio	Golden Oak Mantel -
	Onyx tile
S. E. Sadler	Tubs
E. W. Cumings	Drugs (Glue)
H. C. Schmidt	Galvanized Iron etc.
J. F. Barwick	Canvas and Papering
W. I. Moody	
C. Rice	Surveyor
L. R. Camp	Labor
R. G. Hughes	44 loads of gravel
J. J. Weyles	wells
J. J. O'Shieles	
John Ebell	Brick mason
G. W. Songer	Brick
L. F. Loughtin	Plumbing
C. E. Coats	Plastering

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In later years an addition consisting of a new kitchen, breakfast room, bath and utility room was added to the house. At that time all of the cabinet work was done by Louis Schmalnauer who was a well-known craftsman. The house was painted and papered by Mr. H. E. Griffith who was a respected resident in Rosenberg.