

FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE



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Abstract: **Kenneth Bryce Otto**

Kenneth Bryce Otto was born December 11, 1932 in Rosenberg. He comes from an historical Needville family, the Schendels, who founded Needville. Mr. Otto worked in the family owned general store and shares numerous stories of the various main street businesses, the intricate workings of gin mills including buying and selling of grain and the families who settled in the area.

Once the railroad and Hwy 36 were built through Needville; the town was, and still is, a growing farming community. He served as President of the Board and General Manager of Needville Warehouse, Incorporated while ranching with his brother

36 Pages

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Interview Summary

People (in order mentioned in interview)

August Schendel – grandfather, in 1864 migrated from Germany to New Orleans to Galveston to Benham
 Marie (Louise) Schendel – grandmother
 Christoph Schendel – great grandfather (brick layer)
 Oscar Holcomb – Mayor of Houston
 Robinowitz Stein – held 51% stock
 Dr. Weeks – delivered Kenneth
 Miss Belle Kuykendahl – telephone operator
 Mr. Waddell – owner Fort Bend Telephone Co.
 Mr. Melvin Reeh – Commodity Credit Grain
 Albert Urbanek, Jr.
 Renaldo Lucio – Hispanic farmer for 65 years.
 Mr. Kruger
 Mr. Kunkel
 Benton Schmidt
 J.R. Otto
 Slim Barta – Brahman bulls
 Mr. C.F. Mann of West Columbia
 Louis Fredrickson – rice farmer
 Mr. Banker – Electricity
 Hooper/Warney – owned cotton gins,
 Mr. Stein
 Mr. Rosa
 Joe Surry's daughter

Places / Businesses

Needville
 Valka Meat market
 Southern Flour & Feed
 Southern Cottonseed Oil Co in Richmond
 Horak Gin
 SPJST made loans – Fraternal Organization in Fayetteville
 Cole Theater

Events

Hurricanes 1900, 1932
 Railroad – Needville to Guy to Damon
 1946 Fire of shop – wiring problems, tar on roof fueled, no city water
 1951 Ice Storm
 Dust Storms – Atascacita
 Agriculture grown in Needville: Corn, Cotton, Milo, Rice
 Chemicals: Fostoxin pellets, Methyl bromide gas
 John Deere & International Picking Machines
 Well water with electric pumps
 Sea Island Cotton – Extra long Pima staple
 Yoakum