

FORT BEND COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

ORAL HISTORY COMMITTEE

Interviewees: **Neil Andrew Banfield**

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Interviewer: Bruce Kelly

Transcriber: Carlos Rubalcaba

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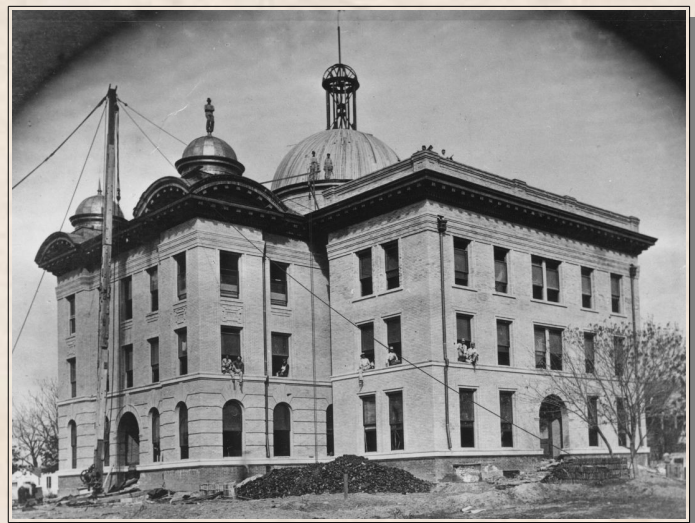
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Transcript

KELLY: When were you born, Mr. Banfield?

BANFIELD: On January 3rd, 1924 in El Campo, Texas.

KELLY: OK. And what were your parent's names?

BANFIELD: My father was Neil Oscar Banfield. My mother was Annie Inez Duffy.

KELLY: Did you ever know your father's parents?

BANFIELD: Yes, Jesse Banfield was my grandfather and my grandmother was Alma Banfield.

KELLY: What about your mother's parents?

BANFIELD: George Andrew Duffy and Dora Cornelius Duffy.

KELLY: Did you by chance ever know any of your great grandparents?

BANFIELD: Yes, Fritz Cornelius was my great grandfather. My great grandmother died early on. My grandmother was in a family of eleven and when her mother died he remarried and had five or six more children. I only had one younger brother named Lester Ray Banfield.

KELLY: OK. So you were born in El Campo, in the city or out in the country?

BANFIELD: They had a hospital at that time and my Mother was taken there. We were living in Danevang. That's a little farming community about, oh about ten miles south of El Campo. Danish, that's the reason it's named Danevang, it's all cotton, mostly all cotton, still is.

KELLY: But your family's not Danish is it?

BANFIELD: No. English.

KELLY: So what kind of farming did your father do? Cotton farming?

BANFIELD: No, rice. My father got out of the service right after World War I, and he started farming. And my grandfather, Jesse Banfield, come out of Conway, Arkansas, went to Beaumont and farmed over there, and finally wound up farming south of El Campo, and he farmed there until he got to retirement age, and then my dad took it over.

KELLY: Any interesting stories you can tell me about your grandfather Jesse?

BANFIELD: No, 'cause he didn't live very long. After I got up old enough to where I would be interested in hearing some of his stories and tales, well, he died. And I didn't get to know him very well.

KELLY: But you did get to know your maternal grandfather, Mr. George Duffy? He was the gentleman who worked for Shanghai Pierce?

BANFIELD: Yes. He used to tell me all kinds of stories. The one that interested me most was how they planted the rose hedge. Shanghai Pierce used that for wind protection in the winter and also for fences. After it got so thick and tangled it was a permanent fence it needed no repair. I inherited a piece of land at Blessing from him and I fought that rose hedge for years and years and years until I sold the place. People have cursed that rose hedge for years 'cause it's really hard to get rid of.

KELLY: Do you know what kind of rose it is?

BANFIELD: No, it's just an old wild hedge. If you've ever been down in that part of the country, you see it growing up, it makes a little old white-pinkish looking bloom but it's not noted for its beauty, it's just a tangled bunch of briars. And people that have dug it up say it's got more below the ground root system than it has foliage above ground.

KELLY: How far apart did they plant the roses?

BANFIELD: He had a pair of mules with a wagon and they had the cuttings on this wagon. On the head of the wagon would be a turning plow, one-man turning plow, and they would open up a furrow, just a straight line, and there'd be one man on the plow and one man steering the mules and one man back in the back. They'd drop sprouts in the furrow, and then kick the dirt back on top of it. And that old stuff was so tough sometime it would go ahead and start rootin' without any rain, but if they got a rain, you'd almost get every one of 'em up.

That was one of his early on jobs.

KELLY: Tell us, for people that don't know, where the Pierce Ranch was.

BANFIELD: It's west of Wharton across the Colorado River, about eight or ten miles over there, and the town of Pierce was named after him. I'll read you this: "When still in his teens, George Duffy started working for Shanghai Pierce and later his brother John Pierce was Duffy's boss. While Mr. Duffy was working for the Pierce Brothers he made the cattle drives to Kansas and Chicago. Duffy often recalled how the market dropped on cattle, and the big cattleman tried to salvage something opening a canning and rendering plant on the Colorado River. The meat was canned in gallon cans and given to anyone that could use it. The fat was rendered into tallow and this, and the hide, would be sold. Boats came up the river to collect the tallow and hides. Many times Mr. Duffy would speak of three blizzards that wiped out thousands of cattle: one in 1895, one in 1908 and one in 1924." And that was the year that I was born. I'm reading from his obituary in the local El Campo paper. It tells all about him planting the hedges and gives you a lot of history.

KELLY: It's dated June 17, 1958, and it's a memorial to Mr. George A. Duffy. Did he always work for Mr. Pierce?

BANFIELD: He started out ranching and before too long he had lots of land and cattle, and it states that in there.

KELLY: Do you know how your mother and father met?

BANFIELD: In school in El Campo. My dad rode a horse and buggy for about six miles from south of El Campo to school. And my mother lived in El Campo.

KELLY: So after they finished school they decided to get married?

BANFIELD: He got out of the service after WW I and came back and they got married.

KELLY: Do you remember living in El Campo as a little boy before you moved to Ft. Bend County?

BANFIELD: Yes, a few things out on the farm I remember. I had an old mule named Beck and my dad rode that mule through the rice fields to shovel levees. We also had a watermelon patch that was out in the middle of the rice field, and it was a mound that was too high to water, so my dad always planted watermelons. We'd ride that old mule, take two tow sacks and ride that mule out to the watermelon patch and put two or three watermelons in each tow sack and throw it over the old mule and come on back through the mud and water.

That's one of the things that I remember and, of course, the old barn and the engines that run the irrigation well, it had a flywheel on it that was about eight foot in diameter and it took one long thing to get it cranked. I moved away from there when I was six years old.

KELLY: Obviously farming techniques have improved since the twenties. How did they plant the rice in those days—did they have it mechanized or did they do it by hand?

BANFIELD: They had the old time drill that they pulled with mules, as best I remember. Then, of course we moved over here to Rosenberg and farmed south of Rosenberg on the George Ranch and on the Moore's land down south. It is still a farm operation down there. There was about four or five land owners that had land, which was irrigated, out of the Brazos River.

KELLY: In Danevang where did they get the water to irrigate the fields?

BANFIELD: Wells. They were all wells and you had a distilate power plant. They were all depending on how big the flywheel was and how big the piston was to determine the horsepower on it.

KELLY: Did the water table stay pretty steady or were there years when it was really hard to irrigate.

BANFIELD: There was so little water being pumped out in those days, we had no problems.

KELLY: Were there any bad years that you recall?

BANFIELD: As long as you keep your pump running, you always had water to irrigate the rice.

KELLY: Why did he move from Wharton County to Fort Bend County?

BANFIELD: He had ambitions to make more money and there wasn't any more land over there to be had. So he moved to Fort Bend County in 1929 and started farming rice when the irrigation canal opened up. I think the first crop here was 1928. They started digging the canal earlier than that. It took a while to dig that canal from the Brazos River down to the George Ranch.

KELLY: So he leased property or did he buy it?

BANFIELD: You farmed on the half. That means the landowner either leased the land or owned the land and he got a percent, and he furnished the land, the water and the seed. You furnished the labor and the equipment to put in the crop and carried the crop to the warehouse or storage facility, and got half of it.

KELLY: What was the most acreage your father farmed at one time?

BANFIELD: Most of them were in the neighborhood of 400 or 500 acres of rice. Half of it he got and the other half went to the landowner--to the canal company. He had to have three or four tractor drivers and operators.

KELLY: Did you help him, growing up?

BANFIELD: Yes, I helped after I got big enough. In high school I helped on the farm.

KELLY: Did you like the work?

BANFIELD: It was just a thing that needed to be done, and I needed the money.
(chuckles)

KELLY: So your dad would pay you for it.

BANFIELD: Oh yeah. I got paid! Before you had chemicals to kill the obnoxious weeds that would come up in the rice, why, I'd get a bunch of my friends who wanted to work and get paid, and we'd go out and pull weeds during the summer. We'd pull weeds half a day and then go swimming the rest of the day.

KELLY: (laughing) Well, that sounds okay!

BANFIELD: They all liked it and they got paid and got rid of the weeds. And then later on they came along with weed killer that you sprayed and got rid of them.

KELLY: Did your family live out near where he worked or did you live in town?

BANFIELD: When we moved to Fort Bend County, it was January or February of 1929. We came in on a truck and a trailer, and my dad unloaded a little D4 Caterpillar. We had most of our belongings on there and it was COLD and raining. He put his slicker on and tied a chain on it, and my mother steered the truck and pulled us back in on a dirt road, about two or three miles, where we were going to live. We lived there on that farm, which was owned by the Moores. We lived back in there for two years, until I had to start school.

KELLY: Was there a house that they furnished for you to live in?

BANFIELD: No, they had what they called 'shotgun houses' that we lived in. They were just temporary things. We lived down there on the banks of Big Creek for almost two years.

KELLY: So basically, your dad started with just a little bit and built his business over the years.

BANFIELD: Yes.

KELLY: Where did you go to school?

BANFIELD: Here in Rosenberg.

KELLY: Did you ride a bus into school?

BANFIELD: No, we lived out there until I had to go to school and the bus came through to pick up all the children at the George Ranch. But it stopped at the end of the road and it turned around and went back to town. So my mother would have had to haul me up to the bus stop, which was a good two miles. When it was wet and bad, there was NO way that she could get there in a car. So they decided we'd move into town. So we moved into Rosenberg. Bought a house and moved over on 1410 Mulcahy. House is STILL there.

KELLY: That was a nice neighborhood in those days, too. All the houses are really beautiful there.

BANFIELD: That and Carlisle. Carlisle was the first old street in Rosenberg.

KELLY: How old were you when you moved into town?

BANFIELD: When I was eight in 1930. We lived in the country two years.

KELLY: That was just at the beginning of the depression. How did the depression affect your family?

BANFIELD: Price of rice was very, very low. I think we got fifty cents for 162 pounds of rice, which is VERY little.

KELLY: But your father was able to maintain the family?

BANFIELD: He kept on farming. He had to feed the crew that had come into help him harvest and get the rice to the dryer. He fed them two meals a day. I think he had people he could buy a calf from and have it butchered and then we'd take the meat from the refrigerator we had in town. He'd haul it out every day to the cook who fed the people when they were harvesting.

KELLY: Rice is seasonal. Did he do anything extra in the off-season?

BANFIELD: He worked on the equipment.

KELLY: He had the responsibility of feeding his crew.

BANFIELD: I think most of them were wetbacks, of Mexican descent. One man, Mendoza was his name, would get the crew to come in. My dad would tell Mendoza what he needed to have done. He worked for my dad for many years, eight/ten/fifteen years, as best I remember. Until mechanization came along with combines and did away with the threshing machines and the binders. You would go through there and bind this rice up in little bundles, about eight or ten inches in diameter, and then they would shock those and stand them in the fields.

KELLY: What does shocking mean?

BANFIELD: That means put about twenty or thirty bundles in one pile, stand it butt-end down, and then you put on a cap-- spread this one bundle out and set it on top so the birds couldn't get to the rice. That one was usually stripped off by the time it was harvested. They'd pick up the bundle and put them on a wagon, haul them into the threshing machines.

KELLY: VERY labor intensive.

BANFIELD: Yeah. About twenty-five or thirty men.

KELLY: Let's go back to your childhood a little bit. When you went to elementary school, which school did you go to, where was it located?

BANFIELD: Robert E. Lee on Highway 36. I started there in 1930 or '31 and it was built in '24.

KELLY: Do you remember your teachers? Your first grade teacher?

BANFIELD: Cecil Foerster was the first grade teacher. Mr. McNeill, who was the principal over there. He was a teacher first and then was made principal. And Mrs. Eichmann.

KELLY: Did you like going to school there? Was it something you enjoyed doing or dreaded going to (chuckling)?

BANFIELD: No, it was a thing you HAD to do (laughing).

KELLY: You had a lot of friends at school, I suppose.

BANFIELD: Oh yeah.

KELLY: Who were some of your childhood friends that you recall?

BANFIELD: Dean Lehmann was one and he and I started school here, together. Don Cowart--his dad was the sheriff of Fort Bend County. And Burnet Juricca--her dad owned a repair shop in downtown Rosenberg. Lydia Turicchi which is now Lydia Mahlmann, her daddy ran the Eagle Café, downtown Rosenberg, where Dostals is now. That was a restaurant, back in the '30s. There were 70 in our graduating class.

KELLY: Where would you go to play in the years you were in grade school? Were there any places in particular where you went swimming?

BANFIELD: Yeah, in the canal when I was at the farm. And they had a swimming pool in Richmond.

KELLY: When you lived on Mulcahy, were there other houses further out?

BANFIELD: No, there was pasture and woods behind me when I moved there. We had our own milk cow. My mother made churned butter and we had milk.

KELLY: Did you ever get in trouble much, growing up?

BANFIELD: Oh, I was always in trouble!

KELLY: (laughing) Well, tell us about some of that!! (both laughing)

BANFIELD: When you graduated from Robert E. Lee why they had a little initiation. Everybody would run the new ones that came up through the belt line. The principal and the superintendent would always sit on the steps and watch it. They knew all about it. Well, when WE went up there, we got run through the belt line and everything was great. No problems.

And the next year there were two or three of the boys that didn't do it--they didn't want to. And they finally forced them into doing it and their mommas raised cane and the principal and the superintendent were sitting on the steps that day watching. Our whole class got three pops by the principal and it stopped there. ALL of the boys in the class! We didn't like those three kids that were involved in that.

KELLY: What year did you graduate from Rosenberg High School?

BANFIELD: In '42.

KELLY: So the war had already started. Do you recall what you were doing when you heard about the Japanese bombing Pearl Harbor?

BANFIELD: I was working at a creamery down at Bay City. My doctor, Gus Yelderman, owned this creamery down there. There were a lot of people that were taking butter and the cream and selling it on the route. So he asked me if I would go down there and work the night shift, checking the routes out. There were about four or five routes going out of there at night. So I did.

KELLY: Did you actually hear the report on the radio or did somebody come tell you about it?

BANFIELD: I heard it down there at one of the stops I was delivering stuff to.

KELLY: Did you enjoy sports in high school?

BANFIELD: Oh, absolutely! That was the thing that kept me going in high school. Track, basketball and football and a little softball, but they didn't have hardball in those days, mostly softball.

KELLY: What position did you play in football?

BANFIELD: Right tackle. And sometimes left guard.

KELLY: Did Rosenberg have a pretty good team in those days?

BANFIELD: Oh, we did--we did. There's the basketball team, right there (pointed to a photo). We were better in basketball (chuckles). We had good teams in basketball.

KELLY: What position did you play in basketball?

BANFIELD: I played guard.

KELLY: What about softball?

BANFIELD: Left field, I think. Best I remember. Moved around.

KELLY: So sports kept you interested in school.

BANFIELD: Oh yeah. Absolutely. I love competition.

KELLY: Did you meet your wife in high school?

BANFIELD: Yes. She's from Needville. And Needville only had to the eighth or ninth grade at that time. That's as far as you could go in Needville. So the students that needed to go to high school either had a choice to going to Rosenberg or going to Richmond. And there was a bus that transported them whichever way they wanted to go.

KELLY: Your wife's maiden name is?

BANFIELD: Carolyn Katherine Vilt. Her father was the minister in Needville at the Presbyterian church. He preached in Czech and German and English.

KELLY: Three different languages!

BANFIELD: Uh huh. He would go down below Port Lavaca once a month and preach. And he always came up here, and then finally he became a minister.

KELLY: So you graduated in 1942. Did the war call you?

BANFIELD: I started at A & M and went one semester. They were already drafting all the people in my class that didn't go to college. Money was hard to come by so I told my mother and dad there was no use in spending money on tuition and buying all the books, which would turn out to be a waste if I got drafted or called. So I just went on and enlisted in The Air Force.

KELLY: Where did you take your training?

BANFIELD: Man, I had plenty of training! (laughs) That's ALL I did! I volunteered for overseas duty three times and they said, 'No, we're training you.' I was four years in the service and I started training and I wound up in all kinds of schools--gunnery school, armory school where you arm bombs--that was up at Lowry Field in Denver. Then I went to navigation school in Long Beach, California, and also out in the Mojave Desert. I went to pilot training out there in Bakersfield.

And the war with Germany ended so they did away with 75% of my class. So I was one of the 75% that got eliminated and they shipped me back to Denver to Lowry Field to go to B-29 engineers school. That was the big bomber that was supposed to do the job on Japan. So I went through that school and was about ready to go and the war with Japan ended. I didn't have quite enough points so I went to Biloxi, Mississippi, which is Keesler Field. I worked there, maintaining and helping to run the bakery. We baked 10,000 loaves of bread a day for about three big army posts over in Louisiana. I spent three months there.

KELLY: After all that training, you ended up baking bread!

BANFIELD: (chuckles) Yeah. But a lot of the mechanic work and the training, how to figure out problems and stuff, helped me in my life. I can repair most anything that you don't have to have a computer for common sense things.

KELLY: So you never left the mainland?

BANFIELD: No.

KELLY: Were you engaged before you enlisted?

BANFIELD: No. We dated--oh, you asked about how I met her. She came to Rosenberg [high school] for some reason instead of going to Richmond, where her brothers and the rest of her sisters went. They all went to Richmond. She was the only one to come to Rosenberg. She said, "Well, maybe that's fate!" (laughs) I got out of the service in December of '45 and we got married on December 15th of '46.

KELLY: So you got married and set up housekeeping here in Rosenberg. Did you have a little house here?

BANFIELD: We were living with Miss Kitty Lane. She owned the house. She rented out rooms and kitchen privileges. We had our own bathroom. We lived there for about six months.

KELLY: What kind of work did you do?

BANFIELD: I went straight into rice farming.

KELLY: With your father?

BANFIELD: No. He found a place below Alvin, to farm rice. Down there they had plenty of water. Briscoe owned a canal system down there and my dad knew him real well, and made arrangements for me to farm there. I had 625 acres down there that I put into rice. That was a pretty big operation. I graduated with George Fowler from high school and we went into a partnership. We started farming down in Alvin and we farmed down there one year, and then some land became available up here on the canal system here. There were seven people that bought the Richmond Irrigation Company, back in the '50s, somewhere along in there. And they ran it. And one of them decided he wanted to retire. So George Fowler and I came back up here and started farming his portion of the canal company.

KELLY: When you first started rice farming after you returned from the war, had you saved your own money to buy your machinery or were the banks eager to loan you money?

BANFIELD: The Production Credit Association was the way that most farmers got their financing. They were real good about lending money just as long as you were interested in paying it back (chuckles).

KELLY: Were you able to use any of your benefits as a veteran to help you with your business, or was there anything open right after the war to help men to get into business for themselves, either as a farmer or other ways?

BANFIELD: There might have been but I didn't need any help. My dad signed a note for us to buy equipment through the Production Credit Association and we paid the note off the first year we farmed. We bought two tractors, two disks and two combines. We made a good crop down there and got a good price for it and paid the note off. And then we borrowed money every year from Production Credit Association from then on. They didn't require my dad to sign the note any more. And I kept borrowing money from them until up in the '90s, before I quit.

KELLY: When you were farming down near Alvin, before you moved back up to this area, describe what a day would be like in the middle of the season.

BANFIELD: Well, usually 5:00-5:30 you'd be ready to go to work, pretty much after daylight. Well, we'd go 'til dark. Usually twelve hours in harvest season. It just depended on what you were doing.

KELLY: There were some times of the year you'd probably have to work every day.

BANFIELD: When you were raising your crop, you had to check your water every day. And then any time you started planting a crop, like putting the seed in the ground, you went seven days a week. And then you had to be there to water it and keep it irrigated. And get it sprayed and the bugs killed and the grass killed on it. And then you started harvesting and you were there with it until harvesting was over.

KELLY: How did they charge you for the water? Was there a meter on the pump?

BANFIELD: Well, the canal system furnished the water and the land and the seed, and I got half of the crop. It was the same way as it was down there in Brazoria County.

KELLY: Did most rice farmers do it that way?

BANFIELD: A lot of them did. If the landlord had the land and the water source, then they were doing it that way. Everybody that farmed out on the Richmond Irrigation canal system did that. The canal system rented land from the landowners and they furnished the land that they rented, and they paid the rent on it. And then the farmer would furnish the labor, the machinery, put the crop in and harvest it and haul it all to the dryer. And the landlord got his share - half.

KELLY: Were you ever involved in selling the rice, trying to get the best price, or did somebody else do that? Or was it pretty much cut and dried, how much you would get for your crop each year.

BANFIELD: No, Richmond Irrigation Company had an office over there and they had a person there who was working for the system. He would grade the rice. His name was Dan Schlicher. He worked there for many years. And he would grade the rice and the buyers that would come in there to buy it, usually five, six, seven--depending on how many mills they had--they'd come in there and they'd rub the rice out and see if he graded it right. And if he did, then they'd make an offer. It would be high bid.

KELLY: Was there a particular strain of rice that you grew most of the time? Or were there different ones that you would grow, that grew well in this area?

BANFIELD: Back when I first started, there was Zenith, which was a real itchy rice, and there was Bluebonnet and then there was Century Patna, which was a long grain rice. There were some more varieties. But after the Beaumont Experiment Station got into it, through A & M, the doctors over there would breed different varieties.

The early varieties were tall and it wouldn't take but a little bit of a windstorm to blow it down. And then you had to have your combines with pick-up reels on to pick the rice up. It was a mess and you lost a lot of it when you had to do that. So the people from A & M worked over at the Beaumont Experiment Station and they started breeding rice with short stature. It was two feet tall against four or four and one-half feet like the others. They kept working on that and they kept increasing the yield. That's the only reason farmers can stay in the business now. Rice now mostly goes by hundredweight but back then it was by barrel, and a barrel weighed 162 pounds. That was the unit of measurement in the state of Texas for rice. Eighteen barrels was what I made that first year I farmed and that was a REAL good crop. But now they are in the fifties.

KELLY: So the yield has gone WAY up.

BANFIELD: That's the only reason that farmers are able to stay in business in the last twenty years. They've increased the yield on rice.

KELLY: Has the government played a role in regulating rice production over the years?

BANFIELD: Oh, yeah, they got into it, back in the '40s. They got the rice program. Whenever the government gets into it, nobody will bid over that. What you could get from the government, that's about all that the mills would pay you for it. They knew if they didn't buy it, then the government would take the rice over and pay the farmer and then the mills would come along and pay the government for it.

KELLY: So it kind of put a ceiling on the price.

BANFIELD: Oh yeah. And now we're shipping rice in from foreign countries--a lot of it is coming in here. Arkansas and California are still the two main producers. Most of the land that's here in the state of Texas is being bought up and houses are being built on it. A lot of the land that I farmed--and I farmed right here in Rosenberg one year. Jack Wendt put a well down and farmed about two hundred acres right across the street from where Lamar High School stadium is. Where all that subdivision is -- Town Center--that all was vacant land--farmed rice there.

I enjoyed farming and retired in '92. I didn't regret it and I bought and paid for some large acreage in Arkansas that I have rented out. I'm in the process of selling it right now. I'm supposed to close on that farm up there in the next month or so. He's going to continue the farming operation but he's also going to make a duck hunting club out of it.

KELLY: (chuckles) I imagine there's some money in that!

BANFIELD: He's building a 10,000 square foot lodge on the place. I gave him permission to go ahead and get it so he'd have it ready for this hunting season.

KELLY: Are you going to go visit? Do you duck hunt?

BANFIELD: I used to. MAN, duck hunting -- I LOVED it. But no more.

KELLY: Let's touch on one other subject before we close. You said that your wife was the daughter of a Presbyterian minister. Did your parents take you to church growing up?

BANFIELD: I went to church. My mother was Methodist and my dad was too, but he didn't have that much time to spend going to church. But my mother was VERY active in the Methodist church here in Rosenberg.

KELLY: When you and Carolyn married, did you go to the Presbyterian Church or the Methodist church?

BANFIELD: Presbyterian. I've been to the Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian.

KELLY: How many children do you and Carolyn have?

BANFIELD: Five. Beverly is the oldest, Duffy (named after my grandfather), Sally, Andy and James. They live in Austin, Corpus Christi and the other three are here in Fort Bend County.

KELLY: What do you consider your greatest accomplishment in life?

BANFIELD: Well, I fed a wife and raised five children, and they had all the education they wanted. One of them didn't get all he wanted--his job now required him eight or nine years ago to be either a doctor or a lawyer, so he went on and went to night school and got his degree in law. We paid for all that, books and tuition and everything else. And any of the rest of them, we've told them if they want to increase their education, we would pay for it. They got all they wanted. Fed them, and of course helped some of them out more than others.

KELLY: Do you have grandchildren?

BANFIELD: Yeah. Seven, and they are all doing well.

KELLY: That's a good legacy. That's quite an accomplishment. Not everybody can say that.

BANFIELD: When you tell grandchildren now about what things cost back then, they give you a double-look, and 'GOLLEE, we're having to pay SO much more'. That's one thing I've noticed that I can say something to the grandkids about.

KELLY: Do they ask you many questions about your life, your history?

BANCROFT: The older ones are starting to now. The younger ones don't. I have two grandsons who are twenty and nineteen, and they are always asking me things.

KELLY: Are your children interested as well?

BANCROFT: They ask questions, but I guess they've picked up on the way things were then, through Carolyn's and my conversations.

KELLY: Mr. Banfield, I appreciate the time and it was a really good interview.