

NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION
(BUSINESS ARCHIVES PROJECT)
NUMBER

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Interview with
BEN IVEY, JR.
November 14, 1979

and

OLGIE (MRS. BEN) IVEY, SR.
and
MARY LOUISE IVEY BARDAS
October 17, 1979

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Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Floyd Jenkins

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Date:

Mrs. Ben Ivey Sr.

Open
Mary Louise Ivey Bardas
(Signature)
July 30, 1980

Business Oral History Collection

Olgie (Mrs. Ben C.) Ivey, Sr. and Mary Louise Ivey Bardas

Interviewer: Dr. Floyd Jenkins

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Date: October 17, 1979

Dr. Jenkins: This is Floyd Jenkins recording for the Business Archives Project, North Texas State University, Denton Texas. Today is October 17, 1979. I'm interviewing Mrs. Ben Ivey, Sr. (Olgie), and her daughter Mary Louise Ivey Bardas. We're going to be talking about the Ben Ivey family and the businesses that family has been involved in in Denton, Texas.

Dr. Jenkins: Mrs. Ivey, let's start by your talking about whatever knowledge you have of Ben Ivey, Sr.'s family background, and kind of work through that for a while, and we'll try to get your recollections of the things he has said about growing up. But first let's go back and do the roots bit.

Mrs. Ivey: Well, the story was told to me through the family that Ben's father's health was very bad. So they thought that he should come west. They drove out from Benton, Louisiana and took a trip by horse and buggy up through the country and decided to come on to Denton, Texas

because I believe Mr. Ivey had a sister. Ben, Sr.'s father had a sister living in this part of the country married to Mr. May here in Denton. His health had been so bad at that time, they thought that a dry country would be good for him because of his lungs. So after he got here he decided that it would be a place for them to live. And so he goes back to Louisiana and they moved to Denton.

There were four children; Walter and Ben, Abney and Myrtle. Ben was born in Denton and I think Walter. But Myrtle and Abney were born in Louisiana.

Jenkins: We were searching for an approximate date of their coming to Texas.

Mary Louise: It would be 1880's, wouldn't it?

Mrs. Ivey: Yes.

Mary Louise: It would be the '80's.

Mrs. Ivey: Yes, about 1880.

Jenkins: Were they farming up around Benton, or what kind of work did they do?

Mrs. Ivey: Well, Mr. Ivey was a bookkeeper. And, no they were not ranchers or farmers, they were city folks, and he was the bookkeeper, and after he came to Denton he was a bookkeeper for the H. H. Hann Company, is that right?

Jenkins: The one the street's named after?

Mrs. Ivey: Yes. And so this was his profession at that time.

Mary Louise: And then for the city.

Mrs. Ivey: And then for the city, that's right. I'd forgotten that.

Jenkins: So your husband's father worked for the city as a bookkeeper?

Mary Louise: As County Clerk.

Mrs. Ivey: Yes, in the County Clerk's office.

Mary Louise: Meemaw was mentioning that he had to reconstruct all the files after a fire. There was a courthouse fire in the early days and a lot of records had to be reconstructed.

Mrs. Ivey: That's true.

Mary Louise: I don't know when that was, though.

Jenkins: If we could work up to your husband's birth.

Mrs. Ivey: Well, Ben was born March 4, 1898. And he was born down on South Locust Street in the old homeplace there. It was right south of the Methodist church, right down in that area.

Mary Louise: Where Denton Electric is now. And then there was another house and the lot is vacant at this point, it's been cleared, but that's where they lived.

Mrs. Ivey: They moved into a house and tore that down, I think, and built a home soon after they moved to Denton, I think.

Jenkins: Okay, we've got him born, now, in 1898. What recollections

do the two of you have of stories he's told and others have told about his growing up? The kinds of things that he did as a boy.

Mary Louise: I don't know whether we should or not. (Laughter)

Jenkins: Well, anything that you are willing to tell. (Laughter)

Mrs. Ivey: We're just kidding about that.

Do you want me to go ahead and tell about this, when he was growing up?

Jenkins: Sure.

Mrs. Ivey: Well, I think he had a paper route, I know he delivered groceries for the Hann store.

Jenkins: Now, you said there was some family connection to the store?

Mrs. Ivey: Yes. I'll take you back to the fact that Ben's father's sister married Mr. Henry May, and they lived on Oak Street.

Mary Louise: It's that 614 Oak Street house that's one of the oldest houses in Denton. It's just now being redone. Our cousin has just moved out of it and sold it, and it's being restored.

Jenkins: Let's go back to that grocery store where he worked. Did you say that the family was involved in that?

Mrs. Ivey: Mr. May apparently, as well as I can remember, owned the grocery store and this is where Ben worked as a little boy.

Mary Louise: Now, I think grandfather went into business there with Mr. May.

Mrs. Ivey: Yes, he was in business with Mr. May, that's right. In that grocery store as a bookkeeper, too.

Mary Louise: This was right there on the corner. It's that building that has just been restored by Isabelle Miller there on the corner of Oak. The Scripture building. It says 1882 on it.

Jenkins: Oh, up on the square.

Mary Louise: Right. That was the grocery store.

Jenkins: Oh, yes.

Mrs. Ivey: It was right on the square.

Mary Louise: Yes, right there on the corner. The reason I happened to notice it has 1882 on the building is because of the building that we just sold on the north side of the square several years ago, that was that Stout building. That had been in the family since 1882. And when I looked up and saw that that building also dated from 1882 it brought that back.

Jenkins: But this grocery store was there before then?

Mary Louise: Who knows? I don't know.

Mrs. Ivey: I'm sure it must have been.

Jenkins: So he worked in the grocery store. Do you have recollections of other kinds of jobs that he talked about?

Mrs. Ivey: No, not really. Just the ordinary tasks, I guess, that

young fellows his age would do.

Jenkins: You said that he started to school at eight years of age.

Mary Louise: Right.

Jenkins: And what school did he go to in Denton?

Mrs. Ivey: Lee School, as far as I know. And then he graduated from High School.

Jenkins: About when?

Mary Louise: It would be about eleven or twelve years from 1906.

Mrs. Ivey: Yes, his father died in the meantime, however, When he was very small. His mother, Mrs. Ivey remarried Dad Logan. And that's the daddy that Ben knew. He didn't remember his father so much, but Dad Logan was his father and he was a teacher in Denton High School.

Mary Louise: Right. Mathematics.

Mrs. Ivey: So then Dad Logan ran for County Judge and was elected. He went in to office but died soon after this. But that was when Ben was in high school, I guess about junior or senior.

Jenkins: Now, Denton High, the building of Denton High then, was where, as you recall?

Mary Louise: I'll tell you what I remember about that. Daddy actually had to attend high school at the courthouse, because during those years they were building the high school building on Mounts. The original building that they

were building at that time is the one closest to West Oak Street. And I believe it has now been torn down.

Jenkins: That was the original high school?

Mary Louise: But that was the one that they were building when he was attending high school at the courthouse. And they actually went up and met on the second floor in all those various little rooms and had classes there.

Mrs. Ivey: Yes, I had forgotten about that.

Jenkins: Let's go back a little bit there. Where did they attend high school before they built that building?

Mary Louise: I don't know if there was a building at that same location that preceded the building that has just now been torn down or whether it was somewhere else. Do you?

Mrs. Ivey: No, I'm vague, I really don't.

Jenkins: It was up until last year.

Mary Louise: Yes, in the annuals, the high school annuals, I forget because Uncle Ab was seventeen years older than daddy. There is an annual, a little tiny booklet when he graduated from Denton High School.

Mrs. Ivey: Where is that book, Mary Louise?

Mary Louise: I have no idea, but I remember seeing it at one time. Maybe the Record-Chronicle has an archives of high school annuals.

Jenkins: Maybe Bridges' book will have it,

Mary Louise: Maybe so. That's right.

Jenkins: What did he do after he got out of high school?

Mrs. Ivey: Well, I don't know whether he got any kind of a job or not, but he went to the University of Oregon in Eugene. What did he do before that?

Mary Louise: I think that he was just at that point about eighteen years old and was drafted.

Mrs. Ivey: Oh, that's right.

Mary Louise: It was 1918 or 1919 and he was drafted and went into the army. But before he could be sent overseas the war was over and so he then went to Eugene, Oregon to the University of Oregon.

Mrs. Ivey: That's right.

Mary Louise: And he went to the University and to law school, so that he was gone from home something like eight years from the time he left before he returned.

Jenkins: So he got degrees in Oregon?

Mary Louise: Right.

Mrs. Ivey: The University of Oregon, Eugene.

Jenkins: He got a law degree.

Mary Louise: Right.

Jenkins: Did he get something else in addition to the law degree?

Mary Louise: Well, he got a bachelor's degree and then the law degree.

Jenkins: Bachelor's degree of . . .

Mrs. Ivey: Business, I suppose.

Mary Louise: It may have just been, who knows? Or a bachelor of science, one or the other, probably.

Mrs. Ivey: Well, Judge Logan, remember, wanted him to practice law. And he had planned for Ben to come home. Judge Logan was still living when Ben went to the University. And he wanted Ben to be a lawyer. Well, Ben was offered a job in Portland to go into a law firm there. But as I remember now, Judge Logan had a stroke and so he came home to be with his mother rather than to go into law practice there. He had been in school, and so after this happened he decided it was a difficult time for him to go into the practice of law that Dad Logan wanted him to do because Mother Logan needed him because Dad Logan lived about three or four years after he had the stroke, and she needed Ben to help her with Dad Logan.

Jenkins: Now what's your best estimate of when he got out of college and came back to Denton, in terms of time?

Mary Louise: It would be eight years after about 1919, so that's when it was, whatever that was.

Mrs. Ivey: And he and your mother, Louise, married in twenty-seven, so he had been home a year or two, about two or three years.

Jenkins: When he got back to Denton, he went in to doing what?

Mrs. Ivey: Selling automobiles, car business.

Jenkins: Did he go to work for someone else at first?

Mrs. Ivey: He did that and then he went with Sinclair Oil Company and had the agency.

Mary Louise: He worked for the man who had the Ford Agency at that time.

Mrs. Ivey: J. L. Wright.

Mary Louise: J. L. Wright, that's who he went to work for when he came back to Denton. I would say late '20's.

Jenkins: And he sold automobiles.

Mrs. Ivey: Yes. Because I was in North Texas and he was selling automobiles at that time.

Jenkins: And then you said he did what after that?

Mrs. Ivey: Then he took on the Sinclair Agency, and he was Sinclair Agent here for . . .

Mary Louise: All the rest of his life.

Jenkins: I see.

Mrs. Ivey: And, of course, he went into the Ford Business, but he kept the Sinclair Agency, too.

Jenkins: Let's get some time perspectives. You're best estimate is that he went into the Sinclair Agency about twenty-seven, twenty-eight or so and remained the local. . .

Mrs. Ivey: Dealer, distributor.

Mary Louise: He went in as an agent and it was only after he gave up the Ford Business, got out of the automobile business, wasn't it then that he and Ben went in to the jobbership?

He extended it to the jobbership.

Jenkins: The Ben you're talking about is your brother?

Mary Louise: Right.

Jenkins: So all of his life he was the Sinclair distributor?

Mrs. Ivey: Yes.

Jenkins: But in the meantime he was in the automobile business and other things.

Mrs. Ivey: Yes, for about umpteen years, I've forgotten.

Jenkins: Now, let's go back and get some family history on your mother.

Mary Louise: Okay. Well, she was Louise Stedman Stout, the second daughter of the three children of the Myron Stedman Stouts. He was my grandfather. And he married Berta Inge, and I don't know when the Inge family came to Denton, but I think it was quite early. Her uncle Jim Inge was one of the early day doctors in this community. Really far back, pretty far back.

Jenkins: Can you even give us vague dates?

Mary Louise: Well, I think it was really before the Iveys came to Denton, maybe.

Mrs. Ivey: Yes, I'm sure it was.

Mary Louise: I'm sure, it was because Berta Inge was here in town and I recall being told that my grandfather, Mr. Stout, came to Denton as a middle-aged man and he became a

banker. He had the Exchange National Bank, established that bank.

Jenkins: In Denton?

Mary Louise: In Denton.

Jenkins: Do you have any idea of the date of that bank?

Mary Louise: No, I don't, but I wish that you could talk to my uncle, Myron, he would be the one. His son, who is living in Provincetown, Massachusetts, Myron Stout. He would know all of the dates. Now Ernest Simpson at Denton Electric Company is our first cousin, and he might know these dates.

Mrs. Ivey: I think he does.

Mary Louise: I'm sure he will. But at any rate our grandfather, Mr. Stout, came as a middle-aged man to Denton and went into the banking business and several different things. Real estate, he had farms and different things. And they always laughed and said that he watched my grandmother grow up and married her. (Laughter) When she reached a marriageable age. There was quite a good deal of difference in their ages. But then they had the three children, Mary, Louise and Myron, of which Louise is our mother.

Jenkins: You said they came to Denton, do you know where they came from?

Mary Louise: He came from Missouri. But where the Inge family came from I'm not sure.

Mrs. Ivey: As far as I know about the Inge family they were here always.

Mary Louise: They were really here early. But where they came from we don't know. Out on Teasley Lane where the Mulkey's live now, that was the old Ingefield Dairy.

Jenkins: Oh, really?

Mary Louise: And when these children were young, my Uncle Myron used to come from . . . they had a big place on West Hickory street where Alton House Apartments stands now. And he got up every morning at five o'clock and it was one of his jobs to take the horse-driven milk truck out to the Ingefield Dairy and get the milk and bring it in and deliver it.

Jenkins: Do you have any idea of how long that lasted?

Mary Louise: I don't know how long. Probably when he graduated or went to college, they probably abandoned the thing, I don't know.

Mrs. Ivey: When I was in North Texas I went to the home with the fraternity boys. They'd have parties over there so I had several dates and went to the Stout home. They had the biggest house and enough room for everybody to dance. So I happened to know some of the history of

The Inge family. I don't know where they came from, but it has been known as the Inge Dairy Farm for years and years.

Jenkins: What is the era of the Inge Dairy Farm?

Mary Louise: Ingefield? Well, Myron is about seventy-two now. So this was when he was in his teens. So that would be when the Ingefield Dairy was in operation. I don't know when it was, what would that be?

Jenkins: So a pretty good guess of when the Ingefield Dairy existed in Denton was around 1920 to mid-20's, in that neighborhood.

Mary Louise: When Myron wasn't driving the milk wagon he was going to school at the demonstration school, North Texas Normal College at that point, I'm sure it was.

Jenkins: Remind us again of who Myron is.

Mary Louise: He is my uncle, my mother's brother. And the two girls also went to the demonstration school through grade school, and all of them attended the Methodist Church and my grandmother was one of the founding members of the Ariel Club.

Jenkins: Now your grandmother's name?

Mary Louise: Berta Inge Stout. And then the children, my Aunt Mary went to Columbia University and Myron went to Columbia and several other places. My mother, after finishing two years and taking a teacher's certificate at North Texas, it was then Normal College, went to teach in

New Boston, Texas for a year or so and came back and married.

Jenkins: Let's follow your mother's life.

Mary Louise: Well then, didn't you say it was about twenty-seven that they married? Isn't that right?

Mrs. Ivey: It was.

Mary Louise: Well, then they had the two children and she died in '35 of a brain tumor.

Jenkins: So you don't have many recollections . . .

Mary Louise: No, I was very very young. And Ben was seventeen days old.

Jenkins: I see.

Mary Louise: So I was two. So we really regard Olgie as our mother.

Jenkins: Well, maybe it's time to take your life up and kind of bring you up to the time when the two of you got married.

Mrs. Ivey: Well, let's see, Mary Louise was four years old, I think, and then Junior was about two and a half when Ben and I married in 1938. March 26th, 1938, because that was my father and mother's wedding anniversary, too. It rained and poured.

Jenkins: We didn't get much of your background up to that time.

Mrs. Ivey: I was born in West Texas at Potosi, Texas.

Jenkins: I don't know where that is.

Mrs. Ivey: That's out southeast of Abilene, Texas.

Jenkins: When were you born?

Mrs. Ivey: August 10, 1906.

Jenkins: You went to school where?

Mrs. Ivey: I went to school in Abilene High School.

Jenkins: You went to grade school in Potosi?

Mrs. Ivey: No, we moved from Potosi to Hawley, Texas and lived there. My father was supervisor of all of Mr. John Guitar of Abilene's farms and ranches. And so I was reared, really, on a ranch. And I was very small when we moved out to this place named Hawley.

Jenkins: Now, you went to school in Hawley.

Mrs. Ivey: I went there to grade school and went into Abilene High School a couple of years. Then I came to North Texas to demonstration school and stayed with my aunt, Mrs. Gross.

Jenkins: Which Gross is that?

Mrs. Ivey: John Gross, Uncle John. Of course, she died. You know, they had the Gross house, maybe you heard about that.

Jenkins: Yes. I lived at the Gross house. (Laughter) I think I lived at the Gross house. Where was it?

Mrs. Ivey: It was across from the campus on Avenue A.

Jenkins: Did it later become the Abbey House?

Mrs. Ivey: Yes.

Jenkins: Okay. Yes, I lived there.

Mrs. Ivey: Well. It was the Abbey House first, I think, and Aunt Cora bought it.

Jenkins: It was Abbey House when I lived there.

Mrs. Ivey: I think the Abbeys bought it from Aunt Cora.

Mary Louise: I'll bet they did.

Jenkins: This was about '47, '48.

Mrs. Ivey: Yeah, the Abbey's owned it then.

Jenkins: It was a rooming house, really.

Mrs. Ivey: Yes, it was. But the Grosseş moved out to their home out on Sherman Drive. They had a home out there. But she had this house there and put all of her boys through school there. Uncle John died, he was superintendent of Denton High School and he taught math over there. That was his profession. And that's where I started. That's why I came to Denton.

Mary Louise: Because of her Aunt Cora.

Mrs. Ivey: And to go to school.

Jenkins: You grew up on a ranch, then.

Mrs. Ivey: Yes. West Texas.

Jenkins: Did you feed chickens or anything like that?

Mrs. Ivey: Oh, sure.

Jenkins: Did you have chores?

Mrs. Ivey: I had a few chores to do.

Jenkins: What kinds of chores did they let girls do on the ranch?

- Mrs. Ivey: Well, I'll tell you, I have ridden horses, I never did help drive the cattle very much. It was more of a farming ranch. But we did have some experience with cattle, but mostly it was farming. I was in school in Abilene for a period of time. And of course I was quite interested in music and I studied music and voice.
- Jenkins: While in high school?
- Mrs. Ivey: Yes. And used to sing a lot. I sang for revival meetings, and anytime they needed a singer they'd call on Olgie to come and perform. I was very interested in the arts and this was my field, if I had one.
- Jenkins: Did you move into town to go to school, or did you commute from the ranch?
- Mrs. Ivey: We boarded. My sister and I boarded with this friend of Mother's and Daddy's.
- Jenkins: So while you were high school age you were spending most of your time in Abilene, although you'd go home sometimes.
- Mrs. Ivey: Well, yes, I did come to Denton and finish high school, and then North Texas for one year, and then I married.
- Jenkins: So you went to North Texas in about 1929.
- Mrs. Ivey: When I married in '29.
- Jenkins: Do you recall some of the teachers, the people who were out at North Texas at that time, while you were in school? Do you recall any names? Who was president then?

Mrs. Ivey: Dr. Marquis was president. And Miss Ruby Smith was my Spanish teacher.

Jenkins: Were there any students that you were going to school with then that later wound up on the faculty?

Mary Louise: Oh, yes, you know lots of people.

Mrs. Ivey: Oh, yes. Dude Williams and oh, my goodness, I can't begin to name.

Mary Louise: All those people in the Floyd Graham Society.

Mrs. Ivey: Bob Marquis and of course I knew Jack Marquis. He's not at North Texas, he's over in Arlington, isn't he? Floyd Graham, of course.

Mary Louise: Did you know the Matthews?

Mrs. Ivey: Oh, Carl and Lena Matthews were up there.

Jenkins: They were going to school?

Mrs. Ivey: Yes, they were in school, at least she was. Carl had graduated, I think he had gone to the university; he went down there for a while, I think, Carl Matthews. I'm not sure, before he became president.

Mary Louise: Did you know Marjorie Patchell and Mary Patchell, the Patchell Sisters?

Mrs. Ivey: Yes, and Miss Ruby Smith was my Spanish teacher, and I'll never forget what she said, She said to me one day, "Olgie, you are a sweet little girl but you certainly don't know your Spanish." (Laughter) That was so funny.

Of course I grew up around a lot of Mexicans around West Texas.

Jenkins: I'm thinking back. So many folks that I have interviewed have musical backgrounds. Tom Nowell, do you know Tom?

Mrs. Ivey: Yes, I know Tom.

Jenkins: Jack Curry, and so many, we ought to get you folks together and have a . . .

Mary Louise: Have a musicale.

Mrs. Ivey: I didn't know Tom sang, though.

Jenkins: Well, apparently years ago he did.

Mrs. Ivey: Years ago. Well, Fama, his wife, is in my luncheon club.

Jenkins: We'll ask her.

Mary Louise: I thought he was from Memphis.

Jenkins: He was, but then he moved to Denton in '51 and he's been here ever since.

Mrs. Ivey: I knew so many, Jack Sisco and Sue Sisco and all of those people way back.

Jenkins: All right, let's see, we've got you married. And so maybe it's time to go back and start getting recollections of the early years of business. Let's start now then, perhaps, with your recollections of highlights, sketches of his business career and we'll pick up Ben, Jr.'s recollections of these, also.

- Mrs. Ivey: Well, when he and I married he was in the Sinclair business and hadn't gone into the Ford business at that time. When we married in 1938 he had the Buick dealership.
- Jenkins: This was before or after the Ford?
- Mrs. Ivey: This was before the Ford. At the time he and I married, he had the dealership of the Buick. He was connected with Deats Headlee with this, and he also had Sinclair. He kept that, he had that to start with. But he kept that with his dealership. Just a short time after we married he sold out to Deats Headlee. And from then we went in the Ford business with Homer Handy.
- Jenkins: About what year was this?
- Mrs. Ivey: This was in '37 and '39. Immediately after we sold out the Buick deal he went immediately down and went into business with Mr. Thomas. Mr. Thomas, that was Homer Handy's ex-father-in-law in Dallas. Ben bought Homer out, he finally bought Mr. Thomas' part of the business.
- Jenkins: Now, we are talking about Denton?
- Mrs. Ivey: Denton, that's right. And took the whole dealership by himself.
- Jenkins: And we are talking about the year approximately '41, '42, '43?

Mrs. Ivey: Yes. Somewhere about there.

Jenkins: Okay. All right, so we have got him into the Ford business. We will check with Ben, Jr. about complications.

Mrs. Ivey: Well, that has been quite some time ago. It is a little difficult to remember all the details.

Jenkins: Now, back just for a moment for my own curiosity, when he was down with Headlee, which is now . . .

Mary Louise: Mulkey Hardware Store. Across from the First Methodist Church.

Jenkins: Let's kind of summarize this as best we can from memory. He has always been in the Sinclair business. He got sales experience in the Ford business with Mr. Wright. From there he bought into the Buick . . .

Mary Louise: Franchise.

Jenkins: Franchise, which was located . . .

Mary Louise: On North Locust. Headlee-Ivey Motors was what it was called.

Jenkins: And from the Buick agency he did what?

Mary Louise: He formed a partnership with Homer Handy and became Handy-Ivey Motors.

Jenkins: Which was a . . .

Mary Louise: Ford-Mercury-Lincoln agency.

Jenkins: And that was located . . .

Mary Louise: On South Locust across from the Methodist Church.

Jenkins: And his next step was . . .

Mrs. Ivey: Well, the Ford dealership.

Jenkins: Strictly the Ford.

Mrs. Invey: The Ford complete, yes.

Jenkins: And that was located then?

Mary Louise: On West Oak.

Jenkins: And the time period there was approximately . . .

Mary Louise: Early, early forties. '40, '41, '42, something like that. Don't you think?

Mrs. Ivey: Probably.

Mary Louise: It's bound to have been because there is just that much leeway.

Jenkins: The Ford agency was at that location for about how long?

Mary Louise: Until he moved down to South Elm, until he built the South Elm building in '48 or '49.

Mrs. Ivey: It was about '48 I would say that we moved to South Elm.

Jenkins: Which is now . . .

Mary Louise: Holbert-Wyatt Volkswagen.

Jenkins: And was that the last location?

Mary Louise: Yes.

Jenkins: Are there highlights of any of that that you recall and want to get in?

Mrs. Ivey: There are probably a lot of highlights.

Mary Louise: I think there were a lot of highlights.

Mrs. Ivey: Getting the place established there was quite something. I have forgotten how many years before Papa died that we were there.

Mary Louise: On South Elm?

Mrs. Ivey: Yes.

Mary Louise: From '48 or '49 whichever year it was that he went there until . . .

Mrs. Ivey: '65, I believe.

Mary Louise: I am almost certain.

Jenkins: So he got out of the automobile business and went back full time . . .

Mary Louise: Into the Sinclair.

Jenkins: The Sinclair which is located where it still is.

Mary Louise: Right. But the original location which they still have, I guess, the warehouse location . . .

Mrs. Ivey: It is just a warehouse. They had a little office there for years.

Mary Louise: On Bell Avenue. That was the original place that he had the little office for the Sinclair Agency.

Jenkins: Where on Bell Avenue?

Mary Louise: Next to the railroad on Bell Avenue right across from the Senior Citizens' Center.

Mrs. Ivey: Where Floyd-Thomas Concrete was.

Jenkins: Yes. There used to be a Gulf sign or something.

Mrs. Ivey: There were all three. There was Gulf, there was Mobil and there was Sinclair.

Mary Louise: And that was right by the railroad.

Jenkins: That was the original Sinclair location?

Mary Louise: That's right.

Jenkins: Bell Avenue across from what is now the Senior Citizens' Center.

Mrs. Ivey: That's right.

Jenkins: At that time what family owned the concrete company?

Mary Louise: Charles Floyd and my former husband, John Thomas.

Jenkins: Okay. I am beginning to get it all together.

Mrs. Ivey: It is a little confusing, isn't it?

Jenkins: Are there other things that you can recall and want to record before we get into his involvement in civic affairs and so on?

Mrs. Ivey: I think that covers his professional life.

Mary Louise: While in Oregon he worked in the logging camps in the summer. That is interesting. He was one of the many who had the 1918-1919 influenza. He said they were just dying like flies. He was in an army camp at that time.

Jenkins: But he worked in the logging camps while he was in school?

Mary Louise: Yes, in the summers. It is National Forest up there.

Jenkins: Let's record now your recollections of the extent in

which he was involved in civic affairs, church affairs, trade associations, politics, honors and so on. What are your recollections of his community involvement?

Mrs. Ivey: I don't know just exactly where to start, he was so involved in so many things. He was involved in the Kiwanis Minstrel for years. He was director of the Kiwanis Minstrel I guess for about twenty-five or thirty years. He and Bill Hicks and Fred Minor. But Bill and Ben were really the directors of the minstrels, and Floyd Graham. That was one of the big highlights, I guess, of his activities and civic deals. And he was very involved in the Chamber of Commerce. I don't know what year he was president of the Chamber, it tells in here someplace all these deals. He had an office in the Ford . . .

Mary Louise: He had a national office with the Ford Dealers Association. I have forgotten what the name of the organization was, though.

Mrs. Ivey: I don't recall, either. And busy with the Boy Scouts, you know, way back, and Easter egg hunts. And then when they planned the State School, buying the property out for the State School, he was very active. They raised that money in one day. Walter B. McClurkan and Ben and Holford Russell, and I have forgotten how

many, got together and raised enough money to buy that property out there in one day's time to get the State School here. It was quite a feat for Denton and for the organization to get that done.

Mary Louise: He was chairman of the American Red Cross for, oh, how long?

Mrs. Ivey: Forever. All during the war.

Mary Louise: Over thirty years, probably.

Mrs. Ivey: Oh, at night during the war we had no secretary. The Red Cross office was in the basement of the Courthouse. And Beth McCullough just took that over, gratis. She wasn't even a paid executive for a long time. But she and Papa, Ben, they took care of that all during the war, and after too, until we got it established and got an office. And then he was very busy in the Kiwanis Children's Clinic.

Mary Louise: During the war I remember there would be three or four men who would take responsibility for a corner of the courthouse for scrap drives, and Daddy was always one of the ones who did, headed scrap drives and bond raising drives, that sort of thing all during the war. He was extremely involved in that. And he served on the school board for . . .

Mrs. Ivey: Oh, dear.

Mary Louise: Hundreds of years. Really ever since I can remember.

Mrs. Ivey: He was president of the Kiwanis Club. And let me see. I did mention the Kiwanis Minstrel. For years he was director of that.

Mary Louise: Back in the days when the local men really did go out and rehearse for six weeks or so prior to a show.

Jenkins: Yes, I remember those.

Mary Louise: You know, it was really a big show.

Mrs. Ivey: A beautiful show.

Mary Louise: It was. It was a beautiful show.

Jenkins: Now, he was on the school board which was an elective office. Did he run for any other? Did he sit on the City Council?

Mrs. Ivey: No, he was on the school board about twelve years, I think. I think that is right. And in the Kiwanis Club, of course.

Jenkins: Are there other organizations either local, state or national that you recall?

Mary Louise: The Texas Oil Jobbers Association.

Mrs. Ivey: He was president of that.

Mary Louise: Yes. And then he was the state president of the Volunteer Council. What is the complete title of that? This was his work with the State School. This was the Volunteer Council of the State eleemosynary institutions.

Mrs. Ivey: Yes.

Mary Louise: I have forgotten. I don't know, but Ben will know what the correct title is.

Jenkins: Are there others of those that you bring to mind?

Mary Louise: Really there was hardly anything that Daddy was not heavily involved with that had to do with the community.

Mrs. Ivey: That is right.

Jenkins: Did he run for City Council?

Mary Louise: No, he never did that sort of thing.

Mrs. Ivey: He was never on the City Council.

Mary Louise: He wasn't interested in political machinations. He was interested in getting things done for the community.

Jenkins: Well, as far as you recall, did he ever get involved in campaigning?

Mrs. Ivey: No.

Mary Louise: No, he really didn't. Another thing that he did that was similar to getting the funds and the land for the State School, was that he was very interested and worked awfully hard and contributed toward getting the Santa Fe Railroad here. He was really concerned about that. It was a great victory when they got it.

Mrs. Ivey: He worked diligently with the Chamber of Commerce.

Mary Louise: And the Denton Industries, too.

Mrs. Ivey: Yes, the Denton Industries. He was very active and

participated in those.

Jenkins: Now, Denton Industries was an actual organization?

Mary Louise: Of the Chamber of Commerce.

Jenkins: Hoping to bring industry to Denton?

Mary Louise: Right.

Jenkins: Are there other organizations or things, honors?

Mary Louise: We haven't mentioned his church work. He was very involved in the Methodist Church.

Mrs. Ivey: Yes, in the building funds. He took a very active part in that.

Mary Louise: He never would run for mayor or for the City Council. He didn't seek any sort of elective, honorary position of any kind like that.

Jenkins: He was in there doing something.

Mary Louise: Yes. But he headed the fund raising drive and that sort of thing.

Jenkins: Any other associations, either with the church or with other groups, that you recall? Do you recall any specific honors?

Mary Louise: Yes, the Chamber of Commerce award for Man of the Year in '67 or '68.

Mrs. Ivey: '67, I believe.

Mary Louise: That's right.

Mrs. Ivey: He died in '69.

Jenkins: Are there other associations you would like to recall?

Mrs. Ivey: During the war when we had no paid executives at the Red Cross office, it was established in our home, really, with Ben because he attended to all of it. Night after night, in the middle of the night, anytime when boys would try to get their homes or messages to their families and things like this, Ben took care of this. And Beth McCollough wasn't the paid executive at that time. I don't know that she ever was. Was she?

Mary Louise: I think she was, but not at first.

Mrs. Ivey: Not at that time. But they had no office. It was down in the basement of the courthouse, and it was a very inconvenient place for it to be. But, oh, night after night we would answer the telephone, because Ben took care of all of those details and things like this and practically ran that office there in the big part of World War II.

Mary Louise: And another thing that comes to mind is the establishment of Fairhaven.

Mrs. Ivey: Oh, yes.

Mary Louise: Yes, he worked for that.

Mrs. Ivey: Business and Professional Women. Mutt Richardson and Ben Ivey and about two or three other people established Fairhaven, as far as getting it off of the ground.

Jenkins: Tell us what Fairhaven is.

Mrs. Ivey: Fairhaven is more or less a home for retired people and

people who are, well, alone. That is located over on Bell.

Jenkins: What used to be the north end of Bell.

Mrs. Ivey: That's right.

Mary Louise: It is still the north end of Bell, but it is not as far north as it used to be.

Mrs. Ivey: Yes, it is down by that little church, Trinity Church. Oh, by the way, I was over there the other day, and they are so happy over there, those people that live there. It is much more attractive than I think Good Samaritan, the atmosphere.

Jenkins: Apparently it was just about the first one.

Mary Louise: It was. We didn't have one.

Jenkins: The approximate date of that.

Mary Louise: Late fifties. Somewhere along in there.

Jenkins: That's the best I can do, too.

Mrs. Ivey: Late fifties and early sixties. That's right. I was there recently for an affair, you know, an open house. And everybody seemed so happy with it and everything. And it looked so lovely. They keep it very well.

Jenkins: There are probably countless of these things that he did, but do you think of any more at the moment that you can mention before we move on?

Mrs. Ivey: I can, probably, when I get home.

Jenkins: For a lifetime, then, he was a Sinclair distributor. He was in the automobile business. Were there other businesses that he got involved in over the years? Did he ever get involved in ranching or anything like that?

Mrs. Ivey: No. He had a farm one time, but he sold that. He wasn't interested in ranching. Well, he would have been, I am sure, because he enjoyed the outdoors and he enjoyed riding horseback. On Hickory Street we had a couple of horses that we got . . . well, he got one for the children, and then we inherited a horse more or less by proxy or whatever you want to call it. And he and I used to ride horseback a lot. The children never did ride too much. They did some, but when we lived on Hickory we had a place for horses over there.

Mary Louise: Where the Schmitz-Floyd-Hamlett Funeral Home is now. It connected with a foot bridge across a little creek and where the Schmitz-Floyd-Hamlett lot is now, it was a horse lot.

Jenkins: Oh, I see. That was before ordinances.

Mrs. Ivey: Yes, that was before a lot . . . it hadn't built up.

Mary Louise: The pavement ran out.

Jenkins: That was the end of town.

Mary Louise: Right. The pavement ran out there one block up, because we would take the horses out and we only had about a half

block to go on the pavement and then it was a dirt road.

Jenkins: Country.

Mary Louise: Country.

Jenkins: What, three blocks from town now.

Mary Louise: That's right. And I think that was Carroll. It was bound to have been Carroll even then. But Carroll was a little bitty street.

Jenkins: Did he have hobbies?

Mrs. Ivey: Dancing . . . I guess dancing. He liked to go hunting, he really did. He didn't take the time to go very often, but he has gone. He went on one deer hunt, I think. But bird hunting, he liked bird hunting.

Jenkins: Was he a trophy hunter?

Mary Louise: No, no.

Mrs. Ivey: No, just to get away. He never had time for sports, apparently, or didn't take time. He could have later on, but that just wasn't in his field.

Jenkins: He didn't branch out. He stayed in the oil business and the automobile business pretty strictly.

Mrs. Ivey: That's right.

Jenkins: You say he took a fling at farming or ranching?

Mrs. Ivey: No, not really.

Mary Louise: He had twenty-five or so head of cattle at one time that he really enjoyed.

Mrs. Ivey: But he inherited that.

Mary Louise: He just got them on a business deal, but he loved it.

Mrs. Ivey: He enjoyed that, but he liked to get out.

Mary Louise: It was more of a hobby. I think you would have to say it was a hobby.

Mrs. Ivey: It was a hobby.

Jenkins: Let's go back a little bit and talk about some of the other things that he enjoyed. You were mentioning that you belonged to some dance clubs. That you had a good social life. Talk about that a little bit.

Mrs. Ivey: Well, we did. We had a wonderful social life. And as I say, we had this dance club in Dallas that we belonged to, the Tripper's Dance Club, and we were always invited to the--we called it the Companion, which was another dance club--the Dallas Dinner-Dance Group. Of course, having a lot of friends in Dallas we always . . . the Trippers accepted out of town membership, but the Dallas Dinner-Dance Group did not accept out of town memberships, but we were always invited to the Dallas Dinner-Dance Club, too, about three or four times a year, which we enjoyed very much. He belonged to the Athletic Club in Dallas for years. They tore the old Athletic Club down, but they moved the same deal over to the bank across . . . that's called the Chaparral Club now. I gave that membership, or Ben has it. It is not for ladies.

Ladies can't belong. It is for gentlemen. So I kept Papa's membership through Ben.

Jenkins: How many years of dancing did that cover? Is this a lifetime?

Mrs. Ivey: It really was. Lifetime. That was his recreation, really. And the Kiwanis Club, doing the Kiwanis Minstrels and things like that he was very, very good at.

Jenkins: What kinds of vacation times did he plan for?

Mrs. Ivey: Well, let me see.

Mary Louise: Very few.

Mrs. Ivey: Very few vacations. We did go to Colorado a couple of times, I think, with the children and New Mexico.

Mary Louise: New York.

Mrs. Ivey: Yes, we had a trip to New York, to see South Pacific and a show or two. But he just never could find . . . I had some trips with lady friends who would take some trips together.

Jenkins: He stayed very close to the business, apparently.

Mrs. Ivey: Yes, very. Very.

Jenkins: To what extent do you get the impression that he did this because the business just held him down or the extent to which he just loved being involved in the business?

Mrs. Ivey: He liked being involved in the business.

Mary Louise: Well, it wasn't only the business. He loved his community.

Mrs. Ivey: Yes, that is it.

Mary Louise: That's it. His town, he loved this town, and he, as the years passed don't you think it would be true to say Daddy became increasingly interested in working for the community and in community endeavors?

Mrs. Ivey: Well, he always was.

Mary Louise: He always was, but in the last years I think Ben was increasingly doing a lot of the business and Daddy did more of the community work.

Jenkins: Did he talk much about community involvement and why he did it? What were his thoughts.

Mrs. Ivey: He didn't talk too much about what he . . . he talked about it in, well, a quiet way.

Jenkins: As you saw him, did he talk about why it was important to him?

Mary Louise: Yes. He thought it was very important to contribute something to the community, to do what you could for the community. And he was always mentioning something that would be good for the town or something that would be good.

Mrs. Ivey: Yes, but he did not tell, he didn't talk much.

Mary Louise: He worked in the community all the time.

Jenkins: He felt this was important.

Mary Louise: Oh, yes. Always.

Jenkins: Now, he died when he was seventy-one?

Mrs. Ivey: Seventy-one in '69.

Jenkins: And he was still very active.

- Mrs. Ivey: Very active.
- Jenkins: Did he ever talk about retirement? Did he even seem to think about retirement?
- Mrs. Ivey: No, no. Never did.
- Jenkins: As far as you know, then, he intended to do just what he did.
- Mrs. Ivey: That's right. As far as I know that is exactly it. And that is the way he wanted it. He almost did die in the saddle. He was very active until he died.
- Mary Louise: And they had just named the chapel at the Denton State School for him that year as a matter of fact.
- Jenkins: Before he died?
- Mary Louise: Yes.
- Mrs. Ivey: Still that year. His trips involved State School activities. When we would go to Austin to a meeting or anything like this for them we did those things, and he was very committed. I mean he wanted to do it, this was it. And of course that was the way he lived.
- Jenkins: At this point I have covered the questions that I had plus a great many more. But we always want to be sure that you have the opportunity to record anything that you may have thought of that I didn't ask. Are there further things that you would like to say before we end this session and pick up with Ben, Jr.?
- Mrs. Ivey: I think we have covered the ground as well as we can

think back. Probably I will get home and think of some more.

Mary Louise: The only thing that I can think of is that I think there is one thing that probably describes Daddy better than anything. His hobby was really the people of this community and his community. I would really say that was his hobby, wouldn't you?

Mrs. Ivey: Yes.

Mary Louise: And when I started doing Meals-on-Wheels about six or seven years ago I took the meals mostly to older people who were largely shut-ins. And everyone that I took the Meals-on-Wheels to, even though I did not know them and had never met them, when I mentioned to them who I was they always said, almost everyone I ever met this way they always said, "Oh, he was one of the best friends that I had." And I think that that is really very descriptive of his life. He knew a tremendous number of people in this community, and most of them considered him their friend.

Jenkins: Their friend, not just a businessman.

Mary Louise: Their friend, yes, their friend. Right.

Jenkins: Let's go back now and pick up Mrs. Ben Ivey, Sr. Tell me your name again.

Mrs. Ivey: Olgie.

Jenkins: Your community involvement over the years.

- Mrs. Ivey: I don't know where to start. I have been very active in the Red Cross. I started with the Red Cross. In fact, I think I have some things here that I went through today. I didn't realize what I had done, but I was chairman, during the war, of the Red Cross and worked with the Red Cross. I have been president one year of the Aerial Club, Varied Study Department. Well, I used to sing in the Community Chorus from the very beginning. I helped organize the Fine Arts Council. It is about twelve years old, and I was one of the originators of the Fine Arts Council through the Chamber of Commerce originally. With Stephen Farrish and Emma Ruth Russell and oh, various small groups got together and we had a Community Chorus and we got the Council organized, which is made up of art, music and drama. And we have the little theatre and I was one of the originators.
- Jenkins: Community theatre?
- Mrs. Ivey: Yes, the community theater, the Firehouse Theatre. So that is what I have been connected with. I did participate some in drives way back during the war and things like this, with the Red Cross and all this type of things.
- Jenkins: There are probably some that you have forgotten, but look around a little more and see if there are any.
- Mrs. Ivey: I was the chairman of the High School P.T.A. for a

couple of years over at Denton High School when the kids were there. And out at the State School. I have worked out there, I have been a participant out there from the beginning of the school with Papa. And still go out there. Not like I used to. I used to do a lot of volunteer work out there. But the last three years I haven't participated as much as I should. I have traveled quite a bit for the last several years since Ben went away. I had some lovely trips, and just sold my home, you know, and that gave me time to get out and do some things that I never had done.

Jenkins: What kind of traveling? Where have you been?

Mrs. Ivey: Well, the first real wonderful trip that I had was to the Orient, and that was right after Ben's death. I think I went with the Eberly's down to the Orient. We were gone six weeks.

Jenkins: English teaching Eberly?

Mary Louise: Music.

Mrs. Ivey: At T.W.U. And Isabel Scionti Hicks. She was with us, and we flew to Tokyo from Honolulu and had a six weeks trip. And I had a lovely trip to Europe with a group from Denton. We were gone about three weeks on this. I went on a European trip with Margie Barksdale. She

and I went together with this group. We flew out of New York and Copenhagen and on up that way. And then I had a trip to Mexico with Isabel.

Mary Louise: Down to the Yucatan Peninsula.

Mrs. Ivey: And then I went to London and spent six weeks two years ago with Marion Bailey, the Irwin Bailey's that used to be here. And he was in Australia, so she invited me over to spend the time with her, which was wonderful. We went up all over Ireland and Scotland and all up in that area. She had a driver and a car. We just had a really wonderful trip. I thought that was quite an experience, you know, to be in a home and be over there. Oh, by the way, I had a card from her. She is on this tour to Greece, and she has been gone about four weeks and she still is not ready to come home. She is going on a little farther. She said she wanted me to come up to see them. They live in Canada.

Mary Louise: He was head of Moore Business Forms when he was here, and it is a Canadian corporation.

Jenkins: Now, what name are you talking about?

Mary Louise: Irwin Bailey.

Mrs. Ivey: Wonderful friends. I guess that's just about my . . .

Jenkins: Now you, like most folks who "retire," you have been probably as busy if not busier since than you had been before.

- Mrs. Ivey: I have been. I have been very busy.
- Jenkins: Now, did you talk about your church work?
- Mrs. Ivey: Well, my church work is not as active as it should be. I used to sing in the choir, but I have just kind of slipped on that. I have to get back into it over the years.
- Jenkins: Over the years, the two of you are very active.
- Mrs. Ivey: Yes, we used to be more active. I used to sing in the choir quite often, but . . .
- Jenkins: Are there other things that either one of you remember that she has been involved in over the years that . . .
- Mary Louise: She used to sing in the Kiwanis Minstrel. For years she sang solos in the shows.
- Mrs. Ivey: In the shows. I used to sing in the Methodist Church Choir way back years ago, but you know how you do things. You just kind of slip out and don't slip back. I think, "Well, I have done that long enough."
- Jenkins: Are there any other things that we need to mention?
- Mrs. Ivey: I was chairman of the Lone Star Council of the Red Cross. I traveled, you know, around the territory with a friend of mine in Dallas for two years.
- Jenkins: Mary Louise, tell us about your community involvement over the years.
- Mary Louise: Well, I haven't really done very much. I was president of P.T.A., and I have been president of the Women of the

Church of St. David in the past. I have mostly gone to graduate school and taught as a teaching fellow on a graduate fellowship at North Texas.

Jenkins: What are you teaching?

Mary Louise: English.

Jenkins: And you are taking what?

Mary Louise: I am taking two graduate courses in English. I have a Ph.D. fellowship. And I am currently the president of the Ariel Club, the General Club. And really, I can't think of anything else that I have particularly done.

Jenkins: Are there any other things that either one of you recall that we need to record before we finish this session?

Mrs. Ivey: I don't think of anything else.

Jenkins: If not, we will end this session here and we will pick up with Ben Ivey, Jr. and continue the family history. Thank you very much.

Mary Louise: Thank you.

NORTH TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY
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(BUSINESS ARCHIVES PROJECT)

NUMBER

39

Interview with
BEN IVEY, JR.
November 14, 1979

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Interviewer: Dr. Floyd Jenkins

Terms of Use: _____

Approved: _____

Floyd Jenkins
(Signature)

Date: _____

July 14, 1980

Business Oral History Collection

Ben C. Ivey, Jr.

Interviewer: Dr. Floyd Jenkins

Place of Interview: Denton, Texas

Date: November 14, 1979

Dr. Jenkins: Continuing the Ivey interview, November 14, 1979. We are recording in the offices of the Ben Ivey Oil Company at 311 East Hickory, and I am interviewing Ben C. Ivey who is president of the Ben C. Ivey Oil Company.

Dr. Jenkins: Okay, Ben, let's go back and get you to sketch your family background, which will give us some more history of the Ivey family in Denton, and kind of work up to when and where you were born, your early childhood experiences, going to school, paper routes and anything like that, to give us a background of who Ben C. Ivey, Jr. is and the kinds of work that he has done during his lifetime.

Ben Ivey: Okay. Probably the first correction that we need to make, because it has gotten very confusing even inside of our family, is that Ben Ivey, original, was a merchant in Denton. He was my grandfather. He died at my dad's very early age of four or five. I am not sure of the exact date. My dad was actually Ben Ivey, Jr. He

never used the junior since his father was deceased. So when I came along and was also named Ben Ivey, I got the junior tag, whereas in actuality I am Ben Ivey, III. I have a freshman at the University of Texas, son Ben Curtis Ivey IV, and he is so designated so that maybe we have straightened out part of the chronological problem that we have had with the name.

Jenkins: Okay.

Ivey: The real recollection that I have of the family business was approximately the start of World War II. I was born in Denton, June 1, 1935. We lived only two blocks from the Ford-Lincoln-Mercury dealership, which Dad operated at that time. And I guess the reason I remember this, kind of the first incident was when price freezes came in on automobiles and production was shut down and everything kind of went crazy there for a while. The dealership was located on West Oak Street where the current Lone Star Gas Company offices are and was called the Motor Mart. It sold gasoline out front. The body shop and parts department and service department was all in one side in the back of the building and the small show room and the general offices were in the other side.

Jenkins: Let me stop you here for a minute and get you to give me some approximate dates. Is that where the agency started and how did it get there? There was some question about

that with your mother and sister. See if you can clarify some of that.

Ivey: Okay. Actually the Motor Mart, or that building, was the Chevrolet agency before that. The Ford agency had been in a building that is directly across the street from the First Methodist Church on South Locust. It is now a TrueValue Hardware store. And through some foul-ups of leases and whatever may have happened at that time, the Ford dealership and Chevrolet dealership swapped buildings. And the Chevrolet people came to South Locust and the Ford dealership went over to the West Oak address. This was all done on one weekend. And back in those days they built some little carts, and luckily the streets were paved, and they used creepers and small wagons and they would set loaded parts bins up on them and haul them down the street and set them back into place with no loading and unloading. And as they made a trip in one direction they would haul Ford products, and in the opposite direction they would haul the Chevrolet products. And this was all accomplished over one Sunday and one Sunday night, and everybody opened up business on Monday morning.

Jenkins: Let me follow it up again for my recollection of the timing problem. Now your dad first went into the automobile business when and where?

Ivey: His first dealership was with E. J. and Deats Headlee on, I believe, North Locust Street. This was a Buick dealership. And Deats and Dad were partners in that business and had a buy-sell agreement. And they decided that perhaps the business wasn't large enough for both, and Deats decided to sell out. So Dad made him an offer, and he took it, and came back, I believe, within a matter of a few days, probably less than a week and said, "This is the worst mistake I have ever made. I really want to be the Buick dealer." So they swapped their deal around, same terms, same money, same everything, and Dad sold out to them. Now at the same time he had started the Sinclair operation. Sinclair had come to Texas, buying out the old Pierce Oil Company, and he had worked in that business off and on for a year or so and then it was just kind of carrying its own weight. And he went back in and reactivated that and worked in that for some small length of time. A very good friend of his, very shortly after he had re-established his Sinclair operation, came in and wanted him to join in with Homer Handy in the Ford dealership. Dad later bought out Homer, I think somewhere around 1937-38. It was two or three years after I was born, and became the sole owner of the Ford dealership in Denton.

Jenkins: Now was this strictly a Ford dealership?

Ivey: It had Ford, Lincoln and Mercury at that time. And, of course, all of the war production for the second World War, no automobiles were made. Ford was building tanks and this, that and the other. But when the business was re-fired up again as a dealership with new cars to sell, Ford came in and depending on the size of the town, relationship to what we now call the metroplex and whatnot, they made a separation of Lincoln and Mercury and I am not positive of how much it had to do with population size and whatnot, but if you were of a certain size you had either to choose Ford or you choose Lincoln-Mercury, one of the two, but you couldn't keep all three anymore. So at that time he chose the Ford.

Jenkins: That time was about what year?

Ivey: It must have been somewhere around the end of the war. Somewhere around '45, 1945. And Lincoln-Mercury traveled around among a number of people after that, until Sam Laney took it on and has been the dealer for many years.

Jenkins: Sketch this again very briefly for us in terms of time. Did he work for some car companies before he got involved in ownership?

Ivey: Oh, yes. Originally he graduated from Northwestern School of Law in Oregon. And the day he graduated from school he went to work for the Ford dealer out there selling cars.

He never practiced law a day in his life. But that is where he originally got into the automobile type business.

Jenkins: We got most of this, but just sketch it.

Ivey: He had planned to stay in the great northwest area. He absolutely loved that country. but he was the youngest by a considerable number of years of all the children in the family. He had a married sister that lived in Portland, I believe. And he had just fallen in love with the country when he had first gone out there. He had worked in the logging camps during the summer time, because back in the late teens you didn't travel back and forth across the country that easily. So once he went to Oregon, well, he just stayed there for his entire college career. Anyway, after graduation he started selling cars. And all these older brothers and sisters ganged up on him to come back to Denton and take care of Mama, because she was by herself and getting up in years. And so they said he was unattached and footloose and fancy free, so they sent him back to Denton, and that is when he arrived back on the Denton scene. What year that would be I have no knowledge. I think one of the immediate things was the gasoline business with Sinclair and the Buick dealership. And then the gasoline business a little bit more, then into the Ford business, then sole ownership

of the Ford business, and then we come up to the second World War period of time. In '47 or '48, and you probably may already have the date from Mama on the thing, built a new building. Because of the war materials were still very very scarce, but he built a new building at that time to have the Ford dealership in on the corner of South Elm and Prairie Street. The building is currently occupied by Holbert-Wyatt Volkswagen-Mazda. Still being used as an automobile agency. So he continued his Ford dealership from the war period then forward until 1956. He had a brother who had moved back to town, a long time resident named Abney Ivey that was in the insurance business here that went by the name of Ramey and Ivey. It currently is Ramey, King and Minnis. But when my uncle Ab Ivey retired he and Dad formed a finance company together to finance used cars. And this gave Uncle Ab another business venture and something to do and a place to put some money to work and went forward from there with it.

Jenkins: Where was that?

Ivey: It was located at the automobile agency. It did really nothing but finance used cars right out of that agency. So in 1956 some minor health problems basically created a situation that it would probably be better to sell the Ford agency. So at that time Bill Utter came to Denton

from Houston, and he sold that business to him, and as of this 1979 he is still the Ford dealer here in Denton. The finance company was increased in capital and we set up a used car lot and finance company, larger scale finance company, at that time.

Jenkins: At what location?

Ivey: Right here, 311 East Hickory. Part of the old finance company are still in evidence around here of the counters and whatnot.

Jenkins: Okay, let's go back now to you, Ben, C. Ivey, Jr.?

Ivey: Ben C. Ivey, Jr.

Jenkins: Or the third, whichever. And watch you grow up and get involved in schooling and work and directing toward what you are doing now.

Ivey: Floyd, you know I probably led you astray. I did have another job. Well, we will start at the very beginning. June 1, 1935, was the day of birth here in Denton, Texas. But I do recall having a khaki uniform and what we now call a bus driver's type hat that had a Sinclair emblem on the front of it. And I am sure I couldn't have been over four or five or six years of age. And pumped up at the service station in front of the Ford dealership on West Oak, the old gravity flow pump. You got the handle and pumped ten gallons up into the big glass bowl and it would gravity flow out into the automobile. And I recall

my uniform and my days as a very young gas pump jockey.

Jenkins: I don't suppose you got that uniform from Jake Craven, did you?

Ivey: I would almost bet that is where it came from. I would almost guarantee you that is where it came from. But I played around in the Ford dealership since it was only two blocks from home. Denton at that time was not as large a city as it is today. In fact, the square was my playground. I only lived two blocks off the square at 515 West Hickory. And I could walk around the square and call everybody by name, and we just can't do that today. But I worked as a trash hauler and parts go-fer and just whatever came around on a parttime and summertime basis in the Ford agency.

Jenkins: How old do you suppose you were when you first started?

Ivey: When I first started I was ten or twelve years old or, somewhere along in there. You know, sweeping the floor or polishing the floor or generally being a nuisance of myself is what it boiled down to. But at the age of fourteen you could get a driver's license in Texas, and I got my license on June 1, my birthday, and got a commercial license. And the little Sinclair operation was still going along carrying its own weight.

Jenkins: Now where was that located?

Ivey: That was on Bell Avenue directly east of the Civic Center Swimming Pool. Tanks and warehouse are still down there and we still use them in our business today. I started hauling gasoline on a bobtailed truck at the age of fourteen, much to my mother's ill feelings. But that was my entre, I guess, really, into the gasoline business when I first started having any kind of a rapport with it at all.

Jenkins: How far were you delivering gas at that age?

Ivey: Basically just Denton County. A lot of it was farm business back in those days. And you would drive the old worn out truck out and pump off gasoline into a ground level or an overhead storage at farms. Take them oil. Still in those days we did a lot of five gallon bulk oil deliveries. We would have four or five five gallon cans on the side of the truck, and the farmer would have his own container. You would pour it up into his container. And then every once in a while your pump would break down and you would have to take your gasoline off the pump five gallons at a time and pour it into their tank. And after two or three hundred gallons of that it ceased being much fun.

Jenkins: Were you aware at that age of what proportion of the business was that farm business?

Ivey: I would say probably fifty percent of the business. At least fifty percent. At retail we didn't have that much going on. We were operating two bobtailed trucks and sometimes three bobtailed trucks. We were commissioned agents for Sinclair. It was their product and we delivered it and they paid us a commission for it. Which continued until 1959.

Jenkins: How big a territory was that in the early time?

Ivey: Oh, let's see. When I was driving I would go, to the west I would go to Krum, Justin, Ponder. To the south, the Argyle community. To the east the old Navo community. To the other side of Aubrey. Halfway between Aubrey and Pilot Point. We had a few Pilot Point accounts, but very little of that. There was actually a Sinclair agent in Pilot Point at that time. And to the north almost to Sanger. We really didn't have any business to the north. We hadn't concentrated on that area.

Jenkins: Is the territory about the same today or is it bigger?

Ivey: No, of course, with everything that has happened in the petroleum or energy business today, the world is your oyster. If you want to sell to Houston or New York City it is all the same. Or Denton. So we sell any place that we can find somebody that wants some of the product. And when we can get the product.

Jenkins: We will get to that later, but I was curious. You do

have a much larger geographical area?

Ivey: Right. Yes.

Jenkins: Let's continue to grow then from there, from your getting started at the age of fourteen driving a truck.

Ivey: Driving a truck in the summer time to let the drivers go on vacation, and after that part would be over during the summer time I would go down to the Ford agency and be a go-fer down there and do whatever was needed. As I remember I made seven dollars and fifty cents a week, which was not bad wages. You know, I didn't spend that much so that was fine. But I never worked for anybody else. I have never drawn a paycheck from anybody except Ben Ivey Ford Sales and Service, Friendly Finance Company, or Ben Ivey Oil Company. I have never been employed by anyone outside the family.

Jenkins: Not even a paper route?

Ivey: Not even a paper route. I never had a paper route. I was substitute paper route for some friends and whatnot when they would be gone on vacation, but I never had a paper route. I have always been involved in whatever was going on inside the family. I don't know if that is good or bad. I would hate to go out and have to find a job, never having done that. But in 1953 I graduated from Denton High School. I had gone through the public

school system in Denton.

Jenkins: Did you get involved in many things there besides just going to class?

Ivey: Basically I tried everything. I quit football in the ninth grade because I was too tall, lanky and skinny. I played basketball and baseball through my senior year. Then Key Club was organized at the time, which is a Kiwanis Club sponsored service organization, and I was involved with it. And just a normal school routine. Nothing that was real detrimental and nothing that you would stand up and shout about, I guess. In '53 I went to the University of Texas as a business major and joined a fraternity there, which happened to be the same one that my father belonged to when he was in Oregon, which was Phi Delta Theta. I have a son now at the University of Texas that is a Lambda Chi. He switched off and went another direction. But I would work in the summer time in the Ford agency up until the time we sold it. I went two and a half years to the University of Texas, and basically I would have to say that I was mature enough to realize that I wasn't learning anything, although I was having a very fine time and probably spending way too much money, but I was too immature at the same time to know what I really wanted to do. So in mutual agreement seance with the family members, I

checked out of school at the end of the first semester of my third year at the University of Texas, and I came home and went to work in the automobile agency and then later that summer is when we sold the business to Bill Utter.

Jenkins: Were you working while you were in school in Austin?

Ivey: No. I was just purely student and playboy. As almost all of them are. But after the Ford dealership was sold, my immediate job was to collect accounts receivable and snuff up the end of that particular venture. And after that was done I entered North Texas, which would have been in January of '56, I guess. That's when I became a real college student. And after entering North Texas with barely a C average, well, I think I wound up with something like 2.7 on a 3 point scale and received my degree in January of '58.

Jenkins: Were you going fulltime there too, or were you working in the business?

Ivey: I was working, but I was going to school fulltime. I never had less than fifteen hours any semester. I was going summer and long term.

Jenkins: But you were working in the business at that time?

Ivey: At the same time. Which was the finance company business and a little bit in the gasoline business.

Jenkins: Your father was still active at that time?

Ivey: Yes, yes, very much so. I think at that time you had to have about 124 or 128 hours or something. I had 156 when I finally got out of school. I took a little bit of everything and graduated in January of '58 and Carol and I were married in February of '58, some two weeks after my graduation.

Jenkins: Carol who?

Ivey: Carol Cross, the youngest daughter of Riley Cross, who was editor and publisher of the Denton Record Chronicle. I think I had one date with her when I was a senior in high school. She would have been a sophomore at that time. And then later on we just started getting our act together and one thing led to another. So, anyway, in February in '58 we were married, and at that time I went to work fulltime in the gasoline business. And we were still a commission agent, and after a couple of months started working on changing that business to a jobbership, which is a term that is impossible to describe; but instead of receiving a commission for selling somebody else's product, you then buy all pumps, tanks, lifts, air compressors, all mechanisms and materials and parts and whatnot to do business with. You buy your product from a supplier and then you resell it. You are a real middle man. And this finally happened in January

of '59. It took almost a year to get that lined up. Still with Sinclair. And in January 5, if I remember the date, of 1959, Ben Ivey Oil Company was actually created. Up until that time it had been Ben Ivey Sinclair Marketer. Ben Ivey Sinclair Marketer will date from about 1930-31 or somewhere along in that era. But the oil company ^{is} ~~is~~ a partnership of Ben Ivey, Jr.-- Ben Ivey was formed at that time.

Jenkins: You were a full partner, then?

Ivey: I was a full partner at that time. Uncle Ab Ivey and his wife, Audie Ivey, were really like second parents to me. And they had both passed away and Mary Louise, my sister, and I were both left some inheritance. And so when we created Ben Ivey Oil Company I took my part of it and bought half of everything that Dad had. We went to the friendly lending institutions to get the rest of it together. And that is when Ben Ivey Oil Company was started, at that time. And from that point forward I have been basically involved in the gasoline and fuel distribution business.

Jenkins: Kind of sketch the history of the loan business and phase it out, and we'll go full fledged with the thing that you have been involved with I suppose ever since, until the last few days when you have got involved with something that we will talk about later.

Ivey: The used car business and loan business was operated here at this location. And of point of interest, we had a loan manager by the name of Joe Wankan. And Joe was the parole officer for Denton County. And as you can well imagine we loaned money to pretty unsavory characters because Aunt Sally or Cousin Bill or whoever it may be, you know, was maybe reporting to Joe Wankan. So we were involved from that end of it with really quite a group of people that couldn't go borrow money anyplace else. Joe Wankan was just a prince of a fellow and did a real nice job. And just quite a group of people in distress really depended on him. And he basically ran the whole operation. We didn't have that much direct contact on the managerial control. But when we decided to really get into the gasoline or petroleum end of the business, we decided to phase out the finance company end of it and the used car end of it. In fact, we built a service station out here in front of our office which had been a used car lot.

Jenkins: Now, did you say the loan company was strictly a device for financing your own cars?

Ivey: Originally. It was expanded actually. Once we quit the franchise dealership operation with Ford, the finance

company was expanded to be able to take care of more used cars then, and became more of a primary business where previously it had been a secondary business.

Jenkins: Well, was it still to finance automobiles almost strictly?

Ivey: No, we also made household good loans and things of this nature. Any type personal loans.

Jenkins: And then you phased that out.

Ivey: We phased that out basically in '59. And we sold to Employee Finance Company, as I remember the name. We sold all of our good notes, and then we kept the bad ones and tried to take them on to final conclusion.

Jenkins: So after you sold that, the oil company was it.

Ivey: Was it, and was the primary business.

Jenkins: Well, let's go back now and do the history of the oil business after you became principally involved, in terms of geographical growth, sales volume growth, number of employees, and that kind of thing.

Ivey: Well, it is hard to relate on a today's basis, because we have many days now that we will sell as much fuel as we sold in a month in '58, '59.

Jenkins: As many gallons, you mean?

Ivey: As many gallons of fuel as we sold at that time. When we really kicked off and got into the petroleum business we tried to set a quota for ourselves, of doubling each

year what we had done on a previous month's basis. In other words, in November of 1978 we knew how many gallons we had sold. So our goal was to double that for November of 1979. This worked real well for a little while, until you couldn't double figures anymore no matter how hard you tried. But we did kind of have to hit the ground running because it was not a very large business. It is not a very large business now, but it was really a very small business at the time. There also were very few distributors that we knew of, or jobbers, at that time, and we had to design adequate records for keeping track of federal motor fuel tax, state motor fuel tax, accounts receivable. We had to come up with everything.

Jenkins: You designed those yourself?

Ivey: I designed the basic bookkeeping system that we are using today. We have had a lot of refinement done to it. In fact, I was chairman of the education committee for the Texas Oil Jobbers Association a number of years ago, and had a man from IBM come in and start talking to us about computers. And after about five minutes of conversation to a group of a hundred and twenty-five or a hundred and fifty people in the gasoline business throughout the state of Texas, he realized we were all lost. And through a series of questions he realized

that all of us knew nothing about record keeping. We then had four jobbers throughout Texas--one rural, one small town, one metropolitan big city operator, and the Shell jobber in Austin, Texas who was a C.P.A.-- sit down and devise a uniform accounting system for gasoline distributors. And this then I incorporated into the system I currently was using at the time. And that is what we still use today. We were the small town one that was involved with that end of it.

Jenkins: You had indicated that for a while you were able to double your volume every year. Sketch for us the kind of volume growth you had since the beginning, if you can do that.

Ivey: Floyd, this basically went on for about two years, we were able to double it. Then we had a leveling off period. And since that time it has been a great fluctuation. I have had years where I have sold almost twice as much as I have than the year that would follow.

Jenkins: In terms of gallons.

Ivey: In terms of gallons because a lot of it depends kind of on the market place and what the pricing policies are at the time. And you also have a relocation of gallons. We went through a relocation of gallons a number of years ago, and we got basically out of the farm business completely. When I first started in the business fifty percent of our business was with the farmer, and fifty

percent was retail and consumer fleet business. Nowadays fairly near fifty percent of our business is still at retail through service stations, and the balance of it is all consumer and fleet. And the farm or agricultural use is less than one percent and probably even less than half of one percent, because economically it is very difficult to serve the farmer as vehicles went up, labor costs went up, and it wound up that we just had two companies in Denton that really pushed this end of their business. So, I guess all the other gasoline distributors just kind of got out and gave it all to them, which helped in the matter that they could go out and go down the road and make Mr. Brown and Mr. Smith and Mr. Jones all three right in a row without skipping anybody, and they could unload a truck and come back to town. Whereas we were driving all over the countryside and making Jones and skipping Smith and Brown because he was trading with somebody else.

Jenkins: That then was good for them and good for the rest of you because you could shuck yourself of that.

Ivey: Right. And by the same token I am quite sure it gave the farmer better service, too.

Jenkins: A question pops into my mind and you may not have the answer. You were doing about fifty percent farm business

in your early days. Do you have any idea whether that kind of represented the way gasoline was being used, or petroleum products were being used?

Ivey: I would say that would be pretty close, pretty close. I would say that probably all of your distributors or marketers here in Denton, which most of your major oil companies were represented at that time, most of them would have had somewhere near fifty percent of their business in the farms. Of course, as you know, the Dallas and Fort Worth farmers came to Denton and a lot of the small farms then were consolidated and your fifty, seventy-five and a hundred acres and your two hundreds and five hundreds and you wound up with a lot of less farms, but with a higher usage that was involved.

Jenkins: Today do you have any idea how that proportion is still in this area?

Ivey: I really don't. I sure don't.

Jenkins: Probably nothing like fifty-fifty.

Ivey: Oh, no. Conoco and Gulf are the two primary distributors of agricultural products in this area. And I really wouldn't have any idea what percentage of their business is now in agriculture.

Jenkins: Can you give us an indication in terms of gallon volume how much larger your sales are today than they were in

the early beginnings?

Ivey: I would say overall volume is probably twelve to fifteen times. Some products, and we break everything down in our accounting system; how much lube oil, how much automotive oils, and how much industrial oils, how much diesel, or solvents, or gasoline. Some of them we have had much larger increases than that. The lube oil business is an example. It is much larger today than it was then. It has probably increased twenty-five or thirty times, where the basic product of gasoline and diesel hasn't increased all that much. The relocation of the gallons, as I was speaking a while ago, is kind of interesting. We got out of the agricultural end of it and started concentrating on the service station end, and at one time we supplied a high of seventeen service stations, whereas today we only supply eight, but the mom and pop type operation kind of has gone by the boards in the last few years, and you have to do a more than adequate volume for the service station dealer to be able to make a living. So there are very few of the little mom and dad type operations that still go on in this market today.

Jenkins: Let's pause here a little bit and try to remember to go back to volume. How do you account for that shift, and

mom and pop going out? What has caused that?

Ivey: A lot of it was caused by the major oil companies, where they would go in and offer twice as much for a street corner and build a monument to themselves. I inherited two or three of those from Sinclair that they had built up here, at the time that we went on a jobbership basis. We had to take them over and run with them, and they were tough financially to make a go of, but by the same token that is what the motoring public was coming to. And as a result small locations were eaten up by McDonald's Hamburger franchises and this, that and the other, because of the way a small business operates it depends on a cycle that you are going through. And if something would go downhill, well, something else would be on the upswing. We continue this today. I have a particular service station today that this year does a marvelous job as far as I am concerned on service and sales, and next year it may be at the bottom of the list. And a lot of times it depends on the service station dealer that is involved. So the automobile industry as a whole is becoming much more technical, and people having had cars serviced by somebody that knew what was going on and how to do it kind of led to the decline of the mom and pop type operation.

Jenkins: To what brand station do you deliver?

Ivey: Sinclair, being the company we started with, was taken out by a merger of Atlantic and Richfield Company. Atlantic Refining was a large, east coast marketer from the north to the south through Florida. Sinclair operated in both the north and the east through the midwest, but they had nothing in the far west. Richfield was a primary marketer in some nine states in the west; Oregon, Washington state, California, Arizona. Harry Sinclair, in the depression years, bought Richfield Oil Company. They got in serious financial difficulties, and Harry was running this company. It was not a public company at the time. Harry Sinclair owned Sinclair Refining Company. And so he took them over and assumed their debts and responsibility and said, "I'm tough enough to run Sinclair," and sent all his top management to the west coast to run Richfield. Well, his top management did a beautiful job because they wound up being the number one marketer in half the states that they marketed in. So anyway, at the time that all this came about Sinclair Refining Company still owned forty some-odd percent of the outstanding stock of Richfield. And Atlantic on the east coast, and Richfield on the west coast were merged together, and after that passed the Justice Department they merged Sinclair into it to take care of the midwest and down

the center of the United States. And the Sinclair name at that time was dropped and Atlantic-Richfield Company was the surviving name under the brand name of Arco, and that's the brand that we now have today.

Jenkins: And you deliver only to those stations?

Ivey: Oh, no. We sell gasoline to other unbranded service stations.

Jenkins: Do you ever sell to other branded service stations?

Ivey: No.

Jenkins: There have been rumors during the years that a person might be getting any kind of brand.

Ivey: Well, only to the fact that finally the FTC ruled that gasoline is a fungible product and as such as long as it meets specifications of this company and this company it is interchangeable. I was standing on the street corner and was involved in a federal law suit in Sherman, Texas by a service station dealer of a different brand that I had refused to sell him gasoline. And under restraint of trade and triple damages and whatnot, they took me over in the courthouse in Sherman and we had to fight that one out. But I knew at the time that if I went over and sold directly to a service station dealer that had a flag in front of my product, and he was running their credit cards back into their company I should probably get into a lot of trouble with that

supplying company. And if that is true, you know, I can't be in trouble over here because I didn't sell him. You know, you can't be right both times or wrong both times. You have got to be right or wrong one way or the other.

Jenkins: Well, did you win?

Ivey: I won that. I sure did.

Jenkins: What are the products that you sell? Go through that if you will.

Ivey: Starting in 1975 the Environmental Protection Agency in rulings by other governmental agencies, no-lead gasoline was established on the market for a non-pollutant measure. We had had two grades of gasoline at that time, regular and ethyl. We now have added a third grade called no-lead. So this is the primary part of our business. The secondary, which almost equals it, is the diesel fuel business, which in the northeast they call number two heating oil. It is all the same product. All the same product. The solvent business, which is our naphtha we sell. Specialty items such as anti-freeze, brake fluids, oil filters, air filters, all brands of motor oil. As far as the brand name or trade oils are concerned, we will sell the house brand of Texaco, for example, Havoline 10W 40. We wholesale out of our office, too, not just the Arco

brand. We handle all brands of the automotive type oils. Industrial oils, cutting, machining, hydraulics are all Arco brand oils.

Jenkins: Is most of this in bulk, or is a lot of it retail customer packaged?

Ivey: All of the automotive oils which are used by your service station dealer and small commercial fleets come in twenty-four quarts to a case. Your industrial people and your large fleet people use fifty-five gallon drums and go bulk. We have just started in the last six months a true bulk oil package whereby we put a 275 gallon tank into an establishment and pump the oil bulkwise into this tank. They have an automatic gun that is very similar to a nozzle on a service station that they can dial one quart, fifteen quarts, up to fifty quarts. Pull the trigger and it automatically pumps that much oil into the fill tube of the engine. And this is a brand new deal for us. We have one installation at this time which was our guinea pig, and it has worked out real well. We are going to take a real good look at that market.

Jenkins: Are there other products?

Ivey: That primarily is it. Of course, your greases are both industrial and automotive. Grease, for some reason, doesn't seem to be as big a deal as it was back when you

had to have the old axle grease years ago. So many things are sealed units nowadays, and you don't grease them. You just let them wear out and then you replace the whole thing instead of greasing them.

Jenkins: Now, dollarwise and/or volumewise, gasoline is what proportion of your sales?

Ivey: Gasoline and diesel fuel run in excess of ninety percent of our total volume dollar business.

Jenkins: And of that, between diesel and gasoline what kind of ratio?

Ivey: It varies too much. One month we may sell half again more diesel than we do gasoline, and the next month we may sell eighty times more gasoline than we do diesel. It is a very fluctuating market.

Jenkins: What are the reasons for that fluctuation?

Ivey: Most of it is price and availability. If you can find the product at the right price, you can find the customers. And, of course, in the energy situation that we are in, one month you can only find so much gasoline, but you can find a big slug of diesel. And the next month you may have a very fine gasoline supply, and be dry as a bone on diesel fuel so it causes fluctuations from that end of it, also.

Jenkins: Well, at the moment you are selling all that you can get your hands on?

Ivey: Correct.

Jenkins: How long has that kind of condition prevailed?

Ivey: It actually started in about mid May of this year, 1979. Gasoline had been readily available, diesel fuel had been readily available. There was no problem. Diesel fuel absolutely went dry in the north Texas area, the entire metroplex. You had all kinds of commercial fleet people that just hit the bottom of their tank and nobody had any diesel fuel. I am going to guess it was somewhere around the late 18th, 19th, 20th day of May that it really bottomed out. We found a source in Oklahoma for diesel fuel in between the 20th day of May and the last day of May. We picked up about four hundred thousand gallons of diesel fuel extra and got it into this market. And, of course, the original tightness was back in '73-'74 when you had lines at service stations and everybody was on a true allocation. This went on for about eighteen months over a two year period of time.

Jenkins: Let's pause here a minute and go back and reminisce a little bit about the price of these from the time you first remember them, and how they have changed up until today. And maybe your wildest guess about what they are going to be in the next few years. Your first recollection of the business, what were these prices?

Ivey: We didn't have price wars when I first got involved, but the price war situation came about very shortly thereafter. And at that point in time I sold ethyl gasoline excluding tax, for nine cents a gallon.

Jenkins: Now this was when?

Ivey: This would be back in '60, '61, '62, or somewhere along in there.

Jenkins: It was selling at the pump for about what, how much at that time?

Ivey: All right. At the pump it would be somewhere around 24.9. That would be regular. It would be about 27.9 for ethyl, including tax. Tax at that time was 9¢, so ethyl . . . they sold transport loads of it for 18¢.

Jenkins: That was ethyl, you say.

Ivey: That was ethyl.

Jenkins: Regular was running . . .

Ivey: Ethyl, I had a better price on ethyl than I did on regular at one time. I sure did, through one source. If my customer wanted ethyl, he bought ethyl cheaper than I could deliver him regular.

Jenkins: Why was that?

Ivey: Well, oil companies are very strange people. Marketing departments ran the oil companies for years and years and years. And they had a term that they used called the "increment barrel" and the "increment gallon," and

they would set a quota to sell during the month. Once they crossed that quota they said, "All of our costs of operation are now behind us. We can now sell every gallon from this point forward cheaper." Well, we would get into bidding situations and annual contract situations whereby this increment gallon would be put out on bid to very large users. A lot of them were governmental agencies, local municipalities, public schools, things of this nature. And they would have a locked-in price which would be pretty darned low for usually a year period of time. Slowly they started getting away from that, and the accountants started saying, "We are not making any money. The chemical end of it or the plastics division or your overseas operation is making all the money for the oil company." So they slowly but surely woke up to that situation and the marketing people stopped thinking gallons. "If we can move every gallon we possibly can, we have got to make money." That does not necessarily hold true. So they got away from that philosophy and started looking at the cost of operation and making some kind of a margin on every gallon that is sold, instead of some being sold below cost, which I am quite sure a lot of it wound up being sold back in those days.

Jenkins: Okay. Let's follow that ethyl price. Just pick out any one of them. So you remember selling it for as little as 9 and selling at the pump for 26 or 27.

Ivey: The lowest I remember selling regular gasoline for at the pump would have been somewhere around 17.9. That was full service. You got your tires aired, your windshield wiped and maybe got swept or vacuumed out, your oil checked, battery checked and 17.9 all inclusive was the price of gasoline.

Jenkins: That was about when?

Ivey: That would have been early 60's also. And for many, many well, for a long period of time the price would slowly increase. You would have perhaps two or three changes a year. And it was slowly going up, but about the time that it would take a little jump of, let's say one cent, somebody would find an extra bunch of gasoline somewhere and all of a sudden a price war would start and you would wipe it all out and fall back down to 21.9 again. And it would slowly go the other way. So this went on for a long time. It seemed to me like the retail price of gasoline was still only 28.9, depending on self-serve, unbranded independent, to about 32.9 for a full service, major oil company at the time that the first energy crisis hit in 1973. And since that period of time it has just gone crazy. The regular price today--

well, the service station out in front of our office is "not on his lawful ceiling price as calculated by Federal Energy Administration rules." In other words, he is below that and is selling at 99.9. We are at a dollar gasoline for regular around here.

Jenkins: And the bulk price now is . . . compared to 9¢?

Ivey: All right, the bulk price now would be just about 10¢ a gallon under that.

Jenkins: Now, have you got to the point where each load goes up a little?

Ivey: We almost have. We were saying that you would have two or three price changes a year, and sometimes prices would be going down, not going up. You know, we would have two or three price changes a year and maybe it would drop a half cent or maybe go up a penny or whatnot. Now you get a mailgram from the company saying at midnight last night the product increased four cents a gallon, or two cents a gallon and you would get one of these every day for three days in a row. And you never know what is going to happen next. But no more small drops. Of course, base oils have become a problem in just the last six months, which make up the lubricant end. We have had four price changes this year. We have had three on industrial oils and two motor oil cost increases. And for years and years and years we would

go with anywhere to a half to one cent per year cost increase on oils, industrials or motor oils. This last one which we got in this Monday, industrial oils increased fifteen cents a gallon just in one fell swoop, and that is the third price increase this year on industrial oils.

Jenkins: Have you got any mailgrams since Carter's announcement of the Iranian situation?

Ivey: We had a price increase of two cents per gallon on diesel fuel only, this Monday, two days ago.

Jenkins: Which was just about that time.

Ivey: Just about that time. We'd also had a price increase of two cents a gallon on diesel the week before, and the gas went up two cents a gallon at the same time. So we've got to look forward to continuing escalation of prices.

Jenkins: Let's look now at your geographical expansion from the beginning. You had described how local it was earlier within what, twenty miles or so?

Ivey: Twenty, twenty-five miles outreach was the maximum. Most things were closer to home than that. Of course, back in those days we also didn't have a transport truck, and at that time everything was done by bobtails. It carried nine hundred to twelve hundred gallons of gasoline, so you were more limited in how much product you

could put off in a given area, too. It was really uneconomical back in those days to drive too far with a small amount of gasoline. But we only operate one bobtail truck today, which holds two thousand forty gallons. It's double the size of what we originally had, and transports hold in excess of eight thousand gallons. But currently fifteen, twenty mile radius of Denton is a normal delivery. We deliver Ft. Worth, Dallas, Gainesville, Sherman, McKinney. This is of a recent nature. Anything past that I usually use common carriers and let them carry the mail for us, because it ties up my truck too long.

Jenkins: So you're delivering gasoline that far.

Ivey: Gasoline and diesel.

Jenkins: And oil and so on. Beyond that you restrict yourself to something someone else can carry.

Ivey: Right, a common carrier.

Jenkins: Do you deliver gasoline by common carrier?

Ivey: Oh, yes. We deliver, and diesel by common carrier.

Jenkins: Who does that?

Ivey: Oh, Fruehauf is one name, Chemical Express is one, Bacon Transport is another. These people are all licensed by the railroad commission to deliver, usually not on all points in Texas. They'll have a radius of from Ft. Worth, seventy-five or a hundred miles that

they can go.

Jenkins: So you're delivering through them seventy-five to . . .

Ivey: Well, they just haul it for me. I just call them and say I want two loads of gasoline taken to such and such place, and they bill me for the freight and haul the gasoline for me.

Jenkins: But what distance do you cover with that?

Ivey: The furthest that I've gone is from Ardmore, Oklahoma to Houston, Texas on gasoline.

Jenkins: The proportion, though, that you sell that way.

Ivey: That way is very small.

Jenkins: Ninety-percent of what you sell is within . . .

Ivey: A seventy-five mile radius, yes.

Jenkins: Are you pretty consistent in what you carry there, are you delivering to specific locations time and again, or are you dealing out in that market?

Ivey: No, it pretty well is a market that we have worked up. In every case, we have no ownership of property or fueling equipment. But if some person that owns his own service station or garage, and with a fleet of trucks or whatever, we have gone down and solicited his business and we have worked it up to become supplied by us. But we actually have no investment. It is a both semi-bid type business and a semi-service type business and a semi-friendship type business, whereby

you say, you know, . . .

Jenkins: But these are what you call "regular customers."

Ivey: Yes, they're still regular customers.

Jenkins: Even through the common carrier.

Ivey: Yes.

Jenkins: Give us some idea of your problems of sources of gasoline.

Ivey: You know, somewhere down the line, history will undoubtedly prove that our crisis in the energy business, our gasoline and petroleum end of the energy business is a contrived, man-made type of a problem, or that we are seeing the very first order of petroleum shortages from a productive end. How much is there left out there? When will the Far East run out of crude coming out of the ground? Things we read in the papers today say that they're overtaxing their wells, currently, trying to keep up with supply. So this part will be interesting. I wish we'd live long enough to be able to discover it, but our case is basically the same as everybody else's. It's economic survival of our business. And it's result, with salary increases, equipment cost increases, insurance premium increases, everything that we're doing, not also to say that Environmental Protection Agency's rules and regulations are not costly also. Which winds up, most of it, being placed on the final

consumer. But for vapor recoveries and things of this nature, which I'm fully in agreement with, if they're effective. I have some doubt in my mind about how effective the current regulations in equipment is. But in any event, to be able to maintain your business growth, and if you don't have growth you don't survive, we are all placed in a position where our supplying company or companies have us on allocation that we cannot live with. Whereas we sold, as an example, a hundred thousand gallons of gasoline this month last year, they want us to survive on an allocation of seventy-five thousand gallons of gasoline for this month this year. Well, if that true figure is a million gallons and only seven hundred and fifty thousand that you're going to get, you have a two hundred and fifty thousand gallon shortfall this month. Well, that two hundred and fifty thousand gallons is on the bottom line of your profit and loss statement and you just can't make it. So as a result, too much of our day is spent on the telephone trying to find somebody somewhere that has another load of gasoline or another load of diesel fuel, and they will part with it and as such. Well, we do buy from both other wholesalers and other refiners. It makes it much more difficult to operate and makes it

more expensive to operate. But without the gallons of fuel to sell, we don't have any way to survive.

Jenkins: Is this on a bid basis? Are you out there bidding against other distributors?

Ivey: Floyd, it works very funny. It's strange the things that you see that get written into a contract, yet in our industry I can talk with somebody and say, "Yes, I will take your fifty thousand dollars worth of fuel." And he says, "Fine." And he and I may never have met each other. And I'll send him the money.

Jenkins: This is over the phone.

Ivey: Over the phone. And also if I have some fuel that I could let go to some place, I can say the same thing. He sends me the money, and I guess we all just go on an honor basis and you know, the first time you renig on a deal you're out of the game. And all of us know some of these people that we are not going to do any business with. And that word gets around faster than, "Yes, Floyd Jenkins has some gasoline somewhere to sell." You know. But there's a certain amount of honor, I guess, that's involved, because you don't have time to write a letter back and forth. You get a letter of credit from the bank or something of this nature, but I'd say a great majority of it is done over the telephone and you say, "Yes, I'll let you have two or three loads

of gasoline or diesel fuel or whatever."

Jenkins: And you can't burn over one or two, I suppose.

Ivey: That's right. That's exactly right.

Jenkins: They get on to you in a hurry.

Ivey: Yes. But we currently buy from two or three companies.

We bought Vickers product in Oklahoma, we bought Champlin product in Oklahoma and in Texas, we bought Petroleum Industry products. I've gotten products from Texaco distributors, from Conoco distributors. I've gotten a product that I don't know where it came from. It's a pretty wild, crazy business. Of course, from that end of it we spoke earlier about gasoline or diesel being a fungible product which means that it is interchangeable between one company and another as long as it meets the specifications of the new owning company.

Jenkins: You know your quality is standard.

Ivey: We always know what our quality is, except for this; some that we wind up we don't know where it comes from. But when that happens we tell our customers. And this will never go into a retail outlet, to start with. It's going to some commercial account that has fleets of trucks to operate and you say, "I've got some product that's coming in from so and so, and it's gasoline or it's diesel and that's all I can tell you about it, and it's so much money." And they can say, "Yes," or "No."

So there's a little bit of that that goes on, very little. Most of it we know where it's coming from.

Jenkins: Looking back over the history of the company, tell us the extent to which the number of employees has grown, fluctuated, and why.

Ivey: Well, in a wholesale operation, which we are, we do nothing at retail, we're all wholesale. We actually have had a reallocation of employees rather than an addition of employees. Again, much as the gasoline and fuel business has gone to. Whereby before, we would operate two bobtail trucks that have a thousand gallons apiece, we now operate a bobtail that holds two thousand gallons. So as a result, one employee winds up being able to dovetail in and operate what two vehicles did before. And also in operating transports you carry eight thousand plus gallons with you, and you can make an awful lot of deliveries. And it can take care of a tremendous amount of volume just in itself. Our current operation, I probably only have sixty to seventy-five percent full facility use of my rolling equipment. I operate one shift only, I don't operate two shifts. I operate each driver on his own truck and when he's through for the day that truck is parked. He's the guy that will be driving it again tomorrow. Whereby on hauling product you can go to the twenty-four hour a

day basis if you wanted to. But I don't get one hundred percent facility use out of my rolling equipment now.

Jenkins: So the number of employees has been very steady.

Ivey: It's been very steady and actually the number of trucks is less than it was years ago.

Jenkins: How many employees do you have? Let's look at the office and the whole crew now.

Ivey: Okay. Bobtail, transport, office, that's it.

Jenkins: So you work here and your wife works here and you have two drivers?

Ivey: I have one driver only right now, because my bobtail driver is no longer with us and my transport driver is handling his deliveries.

Jenkins: But he still keeps up with it all.

Ivey: With the whole shooting match.

Jenkins: Are you needing another driver?

Ivey: Not right now, with the government wanting you to sell less fuel than what you were selling before on everything, we're able to take care of it. Now we have to go to the common carrier incident every once in a while and have them carry fuel for us. But right now we're able to take care of it with just this crew.

Jenkins: The common carrier, then, does help you not have to hire short term people.

Ivey: Right. Which you cannot do in this business. I don't want to hire some guy off the streets that says, "Yes, I'm a commercial driver, here's my license and I can drive anything that went up and down the road." Not when he's handling gasoline. I really don't ever use anybody as part time help. I want to have professional help. So that's either my crew that I know something about or the common carrier, which is a professional gasoline or fuel hauler.

Jenkins: How long has your driver been with you?

Ivey: Oh, goodness. He's a member of the family. Stacy Jennings has been with us fifteen to seventeen years. I'd say probably seventeen. I'd have to go look. I've known him all my life so it's hard to say, you know, exactly how long he has been with us.

Jenkins: Now, your other driver. Had he been with you a long time?

Ivey: Quite a while, quite a while.

Jenkins: You haven't had the need to replace one.

Ivey: We haven't replaced him yet. We sure haven't.

Jenkins: What kind of safety record, insurance problems, do you have in terms of that?

Ivey: Insurance premiums are tremendously high because of the volatile product that we carry. We have had no safety problems. I should knock on wood. The last claim that I know of we've had, our transport pulled

another transport away from the loading dock when it went dead down there. Well, you don't want to jump start another truck. In the process of getting that truck away from the dock we ran over a light standard. And now I can go back three years from there, I can't think of a thing. So, we've had very little problem.

Jenkins: That's all that you tore up was the standard, you didn't set off anything?

Ivey: Oh, no, we just ran over a light standard.

Jenkins: So, you've never had a truck burn on you, never had one wreck?

Ivey: No.

Jenkins: Nothing like that.

Ivey: No. We've gone down through the bar ditches a time or two, you know, when some yoyo stops in front of you and you're traveling along in a rig this size and you'd have to take to the bar ditch. But we've never turned one over or been in any serious accident.

Jenkins: You must carry for your driver some personal insurance?

Ivey: Personal insurance, yes. Hospitalization and life insurance.

Jenkins: Because of the industry, is it unusually high or not?

Ivey: No, his rates are really no different than anybody else's.

Now in Workmen's Compensation it is, as a fuel hauler.
As they classify it.

Jenkins: But you still get a break on your safety record itself
on that?

Ivey: Well, you don't really get a break. You just can't find
an insurance company if your record gets too bad. And
if you don't find an insurance company you're out of
business. Because most of these refiners and terminal
operators nowadays are very afraid of something happening
inside of their terminal, because they've got a fuel
form there that may have hundreds of thousands of
gasoline and diesel on hand, where it's just come in by
rail car, pipeline, whatever it is that we're fueling
our transports with. And as a result most of them cur-
rently today, they want a million dollar umbrella
furnished for them for your truck to drive in and
start loading.

Jenkins: The proportion that you ship by your own vehicle, and
the proportion that you ship by common carrier.

Ivey: Floyd, it's hard to tell. So far this month, of course
it's just the fourteenth day of the month, we have
hailed nothing by common carrier. So it can fluctuate
in one month to us hauling one hundred percent of our
product completely ourselves, the next month for every
gallon that we haul we have two gallons hauled by a

common carrier. So it all depends kind of on where our volume is falling for the month.

Jenkins: So you have at least the equivalent of working two vehicles.

Ivey: Yes.

Jenkins: Taking into account the common carrier.

Ivey: Right. Or more. Well, a month ago I found some product in Oklahoma that had to be hauled all in one day, and I had seven common carrier transports that hauled the fuel out of there for me. So we had seven loads hauled for us in the space of one hour.

Jenkins: I see.

Resuming Ben Ivey interview, November 28, 1979. Let's move into a little different area now, Ben, and let me ask you, in terms of the Ben Ivey Oil Company, what kind of financing have you done over the years? Your recollection of any that your dad was involved in, and then as you have come in to full managing of the thing.

Ivey: Well, after we got our original money paid back that was borrowed to go into this business, all the financing from this point forward has been done through a local bank. And all that has been primarily capital financing, which would be service stations, or new trucks, or new pumps and things of this nature. All other expansion that we've done has been done out of just cash flow.

Jenkins: Now these banks, primarily short term financing?

Ivey: Yes, right. Ten years on some service stations. We go to ten-year financing on service stations, but everything else . . . We always try to do it borrowing the money as cheap as possible, which would be on a six-month note, and then you pay as much as you possibly can every six months and renew it and whittle it down again.

Jenkins: Well, I don't think you've talked about the service stations. You own service stations?

Ivey: Yes.

Jenkins: Speak to that.

Ivey: Well, we own six service stations, and we have two service stations on lease, and then we also supply some other service stations which are not even branded. They're just an independent, self service service station out there. And we have customers in the Dallas and Ft. Worth market that we supply this way.

Jenkins: Where are the service stations that you own? In Denton, primarily?

Ivey: Yes.

Jenkins: In the city limits of Denton.

Ivey: Yeah, except one at Krugerville, Texas, by Aubrey. And then everything else is inside the city limits of Denton.

Jenkins: Now, let's go back. You said after the initial financing,

and I don't recall whether you told us about that or not. You said after the initial financing that you had operated through bank loans.

Ivey: I think we spoke to that last time. Of course, Dad had this little operation that had been sitting there kind of carrying it's own weight under the name of Sinclair Refining Company. The brand name was that at the time. I took the money that I had inherited from another side of the family and bought half of his equipment and put ourselves on an equal partnership basis. Then we went to the bank and borrowed the rest of the money that we needed to buy Sinclair out in this area, because we had to then buy all of their pumps and tanks and lifts and air compressors and all the merchandise that was on hand, both gasoline and diesel fuel, kerosene, all the oils. And at that point in time, instead of operating on a commission, we were on a jobber basis. We bought it from a supplier, Sinclair in those days, and we resold it to the final consumer.

Jenkins: Remind us of the date when you became a full partner.

Ivey: It was in 1958.

Jenkins: Now I want to talk a little bit about organization structure. Has it always been a partnership?

Ivey: No, it was a partnership until some three or four years after my father died, and at that time we incorporated.

At the time we incorporated it, well I owned seventy-five percent of it and my mother owned twenty-five percent. And then shortly thereafter I bought out her twenty-five percent and became one hundred percent of the corporation.

Jenkins: But it is a corporation.

Ivey: Yes.

Jenkins: For the sake of the record, tell us what the organization structure of the corporation is.

Ivey: I'm president, and my wife, Carol Ivey, is vice-president, secretary and treasurer.

Jenkins: How about your board?

Ivey: Well, in the state of Texas in the rules of incorporation you have to have three incorporators. Well, mother was one of those to start with and since then she has dropped off so there are only two officers and two directors.

Jenkins: So your board consists of you and your wife.

Ivey: Right.

Jenkins: This has always been a family business?

Ivey: Yes.

Jenkins: And over the years the family who have worked here, in addition to your dad, you, and your wife, have any other family members worked here?

Ivey: My sister, Mary Louise, did for a short period of time, doing some record keeping and whatnot. But after she

went back to college she wasn't involved in any daily operation anymore. That would have been back in, I'm going to guess, mid to late sixties.

Jenkins: But no other family members involved in that?

Ivey: No.

Jenkins: And hardly anyone outside the family has ever worked here.

Ivey: Well, we've had very few in number employed. In the wholesale business, even though we deliver an awful lot of product because of the type of product and the size quantities we deliver, it just doesn't take a whole lot of people to do it. Stacy Jennings is like a member of our family, does ninety-nine percent of the delivering that we do off of the transport. And a lot of the package delivering and of course I do some of it, too. At one time we had two bobtail truck drivers. That was many, many years ago before we ever really ever got into the transportation part of the business. When our last bobtail truck driver took another position we did not replace him, and thought we'd just give it a try and see if we could handle it without filling that position, and so far it has worked very well.

Jenkins: Let's look at how you see and feel about competition and how it may have changed over the years in your business.

Ivey: Probably the easiest way to look at that, Floyd, is to

think back some ten years ago when you could buy the product at a convenience store or whatnot, unbranded, self serve for 19.9 cents a gallon. Those of us that were major company suppliers at the time were up on 24.9, which is a big nickel a gallon or something that was a differential. And, of course, even though we were giving service and offering credit cards and things of that nature, the price was important then, that nickel saving, as it is today with a nickel savings when your price is up to pretty close to a dollar a gallon. I think the primary difference that we've seen, competition-wise, we've always been friendly competitors and would help each other in times of crisis. But it was much, much more cutthroat ten years ago, because there was so much product that was readily available. And you would just cut prices and cut prices and cut prices and cut prices trying to move volume. Whereas nowadays everybody is scrambling trying to get product and, by golly, if I had a few thousand gallons left at the end of this month and my friendly competitor was in dire need of it, well I might loan him some product this month that he would repay me with next month. So competition has changed to that degree, because primarily it's gotten down to the source of pure economics. Because you look at the rental values that are on properties nowadays,

and insurance and maintenance that's involved, you can't afford to have a service station shut down any more than you can possibly keep from it. So I know I don't want any of mine shut down, because I still have a lot of every day expense that goes on. So if I can possibly get product to put through it, I sure want to do it. And I feel the same way about the other man, too. But we're still competitive. The price still makes a difference, location makes a difference, quality makes a difference.

Jenkins: Well, is a lot of the, I don't know what to call it, skill or efficiency now directed toward finding and getting the product here, rather than moving it to the retailer?

Ivey: Right.

Jenkins: So you simply don't think about having to move it once you get it in your hands.

Ivey: Of course this varies along at different times of the month, too. Early in the month everybody has product, their allocation, and then you start to run out near the end of the month and you start scrambling around trying to find every gallon that you can find. So the first of the month you've got it for sale and you're hunting for business and the end of the month you don't have any for sale and you're trying to find some so you

can take care of the business that people are calling trying to buy from you.

Jenkins: And this happens every month.

Ivey: It's been true basically the last six or seven months. And of course it was very true back in '73, '74.

Jenkins: Let's get your feelings concerning competition and free enterprise and how you think it does work or should work, and the extent to which it is endangered or free at the moment in the United States.

Ivey: I think our primary problem that we have, such as many industries have, and that is government intervention. A friend of mine always says, "The government's supposed to do three things; guard the coastline, deliver the mail, and leave me alone." And, you know, they're not doing any of those three very well at the moment (laughter), particularly on leaving us alone. We fill out a multitude of forms every month for some agency of the government, whether it be taxing agency or an agency that wants to know how much product you have in inventory, how much you are paying for product, how much you're selling the product for, what are your lines of distribution, etc. etc. on and on and on. But from that end of it, my personal belief is if the government would get out of our industry it would take a very short time to get our house back in order. And with things such as

coal, that you can have conversion to petroleum, with the oil shale deposits that are in the United States. As foreign crude increases in price, these things become economically more feasible every day. And I think that this is what we need to start looking at. I'm all for competition. I wish I could put a Texaco and a Shell and a Gulf and a Conoco and a Mobil and an Exxon and an Arco, you know, every one of those signs in front of my service station, because no matter how low your price is or how much product you've got or where your location is, you still are only going to be able to get so much business. But your competitor down the street or across the street, or whatever, he's going to get some, too. There seems to be plenty of business out there, and then winds up for us to put our best foot forward for our line of distribution of product to be correct and we'll do plenty of business.

Jenkins: What are your feelings about government and particularly small business?

Ivey: Small business is in just an awful lot of trouble. Most of it is based on the total dollar volume that a small business can do, based on his increased cost of operation. You know, a business can do a lot of things if their cash flow is adequate to be able to afford to do them. A

small business whose cash flow is not large becomes hamstrung very quickly, just because their operating capital is consistently tied up in inventory and accounts receivable and merchandise of this kind or that kind, in rolling equipment, in stationary equipment, whatever it may be. I think this is probably one of the toughest things. Of course, I can always speak about our business more factually and closer concern. The government, of course, came in and put a so-called freeze on the amount of margin that we can make on a gallon of gasoline. The date they picked was May 15, 1973, and you had to go back into your records and look at your sales on that day, or if you didn't sell a particular product that day you had to go to the fourteenth and then to the thirteenth and then to the twelfth, you had to go backwards in time until you find out what you sold the product for. You had to look up your cost and that was then your historic margin to sell by. Well, today we're selling on that same historic margin that we were doing on May 15, 1973. Of course, salaries have gone up and insurance has gone up, equipment has gone up, the EPA has come into existence with all their materials that you have to install in your service stations and on your trucks. Yet they think that we can make the same margin on a gallon of gasoline today that

that we did in May 15 of '73 and survive. And the second part of that is they don't want us to sell that much, they want us to sell less than we were selling in May of '73.

Jenkins: Is that a percentage margin or a cents per gallon margin?

Ivey: Cents per gallon margin. If my cost price is ten cents a gallon or a dollar a gallon, I can only mark it up the same number of pennies.

Jenkins: Not only related to your own business, but your knowledge and feelings concerning small business in general, do you feel that government regulations are perhaps even harder on the small business than they are on the larger business?

Ivey: Very definitely, because of the people situation. Large businesses have to, because of the structures of their business, keep more records than a small business does. As a result, they do have the people available to do some of this other governmental work that is required. Very truthfully, in a business this size we can keep every record we could possibly need on scratch paper around here and have adequate records for our business and to be able to make business decisions with. Otherwise we go eight hours a day with calculators and different forms and bookkeeping systems and everything in the world, trying to have enough records that are adequate for

different government agencies when they want to come in and do an audit or do a check or find out something about your business.

Jenkins: So the cost per sales dollar . . .

Ivey: Is prohibitive for a small business man. Yes, very definitely so.

Jenkins: What government regulations does your business particularly have to watch out for? Are there some that are particularly peculiar to your business that you are conscious of?

Ivey: Primarily on a business our size, OSHA is not an agency to be reckoned with at this point in time. We would have to be larger, with a total dollar volume larger than ours, and employment larger than ours. In fact, there is some rule of exemption now which we would qualify for that OSHA would not even come into our place of business and even bother to check because of the size with both employees and total dollar volume of the business. Environment Protection Agency is probably the primary problem agency, if that's a good word, that we have to deal with, which costs us many thousands of dollars in capital outlay, plus the constant hassle of doing the things that are required by this particular agency. This goes back to your lead-free gasoline and your vapor recovery system, things of this nature. We

bought a new transport truck only to meet the new vapor recovery and bottom loading system we had to go to for this area for air pollution. Each one of the service stations and each commercial and fleet account, we had to go in and put in a vapor recovery system for those pumps and tanks. This runs into thousands of dollars. Yet they still want me to make the same few pennies a gallon that I was making in May of '73, it's like that didn't cost me a thing to do that.

Jenkins: Do you do any advertising at all?

Ivey: We have not done, basically, anything more than institutional advertising with people that we want to advertise with in the last year. And I had gotten away from institutional advertising, because I had kind of reached the point that institutional advertising on today's market is wasting your dollars. We had gone away from that and gone to advertising, running specials through either the wholesale oil company or getting our dealers together and for them to operate or offer a special, and we would do the advertising for them on that to try to draw a customer in to take advantage of a particular special pricing on tires or on oil and lubrication and filter changes or some other type service arrangement.

Jenkins: This is your service stations.

Ivey: Right.

Jenkins: The Ben Ivey Oil Company, do you have any kind of advertising budget? For the wholesale part.

Ivey: It's more of a hip pocket type advertising budget. We advertise with different little groups that for one reason or another we've done business with. Primarily it's kind of a back scratching type advertising.

Jenkins: For instance.

Ivey: Oh, maybe the Denton High School Bronco annual, or it may be some social club of a bunch of ladies or . . .

Jenkins: Public relations more than . . .

Ivey: Public relations type advertising. Then we'll advertise on something that is being done by North Texas or T.W.U. on some special days when they'll have a signature page in the paper, or the Denton State School, or the Chamber of Commerce, United Way. Things of this nature, we'll sponsor some ads on those type things.

Jenkins: To what extent do you think that brings you any dollar business and to what extent is it simply kind of a community feeling?

Ivey: I think that ninety-nine percent of it is community feeling, that you're doing your part in the community.

Jenkins: I've got a section here that I think we can cover very quickly. The employees here are you, your wife and a truck driver.

Ivey: Right. And then, of course, we have two other businesses

that also have employees that operate out of here, too.

Jenkins: But in terms of the Ben Ivey Oil Company, you don't worry too much about selection and training methods since you don't have any turnover to speak of.

Ivey: We have very little turnover. The previous transport driver we had before this was with us, oh, twelve to fifteen years. I'd have to look it up to see exactly. I had an office manager that was here for seven years and finally retired when he got to retirement age. And we don't have many changes.

Jenkins: What about your service stations? Do you do the hiring?

Ivey: We do not operate any service stations on a direct salary or commission operation. Each one is an independent businessman to himself. We lease him the service station, if we own it.

Jenkins: You own the real estate.

Ivey: Right. Or we have the station under a primary lease. So in this case we give him a secondary lease, or if we own the property we give him a primary lease. Then he operates that as an independent businessman. Just like this building right here, if I didn't own it and was leasing it, I'd still be an independent businessman in this building.

Jenkins: Before we move on to other business ventures, are there any other things that you want to say about the oil company?

Ivey: Well, I hope this may enlighten somebody to understand a little bit about petroleum and petroleum distribution. There are so few people that are actually in this middleman position, that the consuming public doesn't understand too much about the function of how everything works. I don't know if we have necessarily made this too clear or not. But they are small businesses, and you do run them on an economically sound business basis, which you are required to as a middleman to be able to survive. My son, as an example, he is a freshman in college now, has seen enough of me pulling my hair and going crazy every two or three days over some line of distribution, or trying to sell product that I can't find a home for, or trying to acquire a product when I already have a home for it, has really kind of turned him off toward this business type of an operation. He is an archaeology major at the moment at the University of Texas.

Jenkins: Did he ever get involved in even truck driving?

Ivey: No, he's never driven a truck. My daughter's worked down here in the summertime and done some auditing for me, but he's never been involved. He's gone out and cut grass and weeds at service stations and done some painting and things of this nature, but he's never driven a gas truck.

Jenkins: So that's the extent of his involvement in the business.

- Ivey: Right. I think he probably has heard me gripe more than anything else. (Laughter)
- Jenkins: Well, we were pursuing whether there were any other things you wanted to say concerning the business.
- Ivey: I think that's probably pretty close to being it. To me it's interesting, everybody else may be bored to tears with it.
- Jenkins: How many other people doing what you're doing, performing this function, are there in Denton, do you suppose?
- Ivey: There'd be about eight. All of which are not in the same capacity. Some would be jobbers or wholesale middlemen. Some of them would be commission agents that operate on a commission basis between the retailer or final consumer and the parent oil company.
- Jenkins: Is there any way to judge comparable size or are the combinations so different that it would be hard to judge comparable size?
- Ivey: Oh, no because dollar volume and gallon volume are going to be in pretty close harmony with each other, and you could tell somebody how many dollars it is and they could come up pretty close with how many gallons, or tell them how many gallons and they'll come up pretty close how many dollars that you do.
- Jenkins: What do you see as the future of your own personal Ben Ivey Oil Company, and maybe what do you see for this

function in the oil business in the future?

Ivey: Floyd, the primary thing that we are faced with in the metroplex, and when I say metroplex I am looking at a sixty mile radius from the Dallas-Ft. Worth center proper, any of these oil companies as far as retail distribution of product, and that will be gasoline, driveway type motor oil, and diesel fuel, can do this themselves. Let's pick a company. The "Podunk Company" would love to have three service stations in Denton that they have five employees, they operate seven days a week, maybe fourteen hours a day. Each station would have twenty-four pumps, and they're operating direct from the refinery, probably even back from the ground up with the crude to the retail pump, and everybody in this chain is an employee of the company. They will then return the highest possible dollar figure profit-wise that they possibly could, because these three service stations they would want to do a hundred to a hundred fifty to two hundred thousand gallons a month. Whereas now you might take "Podunk Oil Company" with ten service stations in this area which average fifteen to twenty thousand gallons an outlet. Well, it's much cheaper with real estate costs, with total investment costs including the pumps, tanks, buildings, etc., insurance,

maintenance to have one unit to replace three or four. So rather we'd be talking about Arco, Exxon, Gulf, or Mobil. Each of these, because of the ease of delivery in this metroplex area, and because of the consolidation of so many people in the area, you can do a high volume. So why should they have eight, ten, twelve, fifteen stations instead of twenty-five percent of that, but still do the same volume? And I think some day it will come to that. That is in the Dallas-Ft. Worth market proper. You see more and more of that every day. So, basically, in our line for survival what we are looking at we can relate back to our earlier conversation. The closer I can have my business to fifty percent being commercial and fleet business, the better off that I am, because they cannot serve those people because they're taking smaller volumes or they're hard to serve, or has special equipment requirements, or has a daily contact problem that you have to meet. And so the more volume you can have over in this type of business, the stronger that you are with your supplier, because they have no control over that business whatsoever.

Jenkins: If you're looking at traditional retirement, you're looking at twenty some-odd years ahead of you.

Ivey: Right.

Jenkins: Do you intend to follow this business, if possible, for

those twenty-some-odd years? The oil business.

Ivey: Yes, if it remains profitable. I would follow it all the way through.

Jenkins: And as you see it now, you feel that it will last that long.

Ivey: It could. It certainly won't the way that we're marketing today. Just like five years ago and five years before that, it's a constant change. And somewhere down the line, even with the profitability factor involved, you might decide to get out. We broker a lot of fuel today, which is something we didn't do five years ago. Five years from now we could be out of the retail business one hundred percent and be doing nothing except brokering fuel. Or we might be back in with car washes or lube centers or something else. It just depends on which way the industry starts going, or where you see that you can fulfill a need that will be economically feasible.

Jenkins: Do you think it would be pretty hard in this industry today for you to have very much of a five-year plan that you could depend on?

Ivey: It's almost impossible. We live almost day to day. It's really closer to month to month. But we are living month to month because you pretty well know what your lines of supply are to thirty days in advance, but after that you don't know what's going to happen to you. Like our

company can put up a hundred percent allocation for December, next month, and on the tenth day they can call and cut that to eighty percent. Well, maybe I've already pulled twelve percent of my fuel for the month. It's probably going to be retroactive to eighty percent from the first of the month. So then I have to reschedule everything for the balance of the month.

Jenkins: Well, do you think in terms of expanding the number of retail stations that you own?

Ivey: No, I think in terms of selling every gallon I can get my hands on.

Jenkins: So expansion in those terms . . .

Ivey: Expansion is in the marketplace, rather than through owning controlled outlets.

Jenkins: So the expansion that you would like to have, or can hope to have, you can operate pretty much the way you've been operating. It would not be a matter of expanding facilities.

Ivey: Right. It would be probably more in the line of tearing down existing facilities if the location proved to be all right, which right now all of our locations are fine. I have no problem as far as availability, property-wise, to meet the current market. So we might tear down a two-bay service station as a wash bay and lube and an office and a store room and four to six pumps

out front, and put in a car wash and a lube center, or a gasoline and tire store, or a gasoline and a parts store, or a convenience store. I tore one down last year and built a store for Seven-Eleven.

Jenkins: Was that out in the shopping center?

Ivey: It's on 380 East. You know where the bowling ally is? Back in the back across there I tore down an old two-bay service station there.

Jenkins: Okay, anything else on your oil company before we move into your other ventures?

Ivey: I imagine we've probably confused this issue enough.

Jenkins: Okay, let's move into other business ventures you have been in and are in.

Ivey: Some twelve or thirteen years ago the Denton State School, which is the state school for the mentally retarded here in Denton, became interested in a federal program that was out of the OEO office. Ed Killian was superintendent of the school at the time. This program was called the Foster Grandparents Program, whereby people sixty-two years of age or older with minimum income, in fact the guide rule recently was twenty-two hundred dollars from every source annually, could go to work for the Denton State School for four hours a day. They would teach the kids how to dress themselves, how to feed themselves, minor motor skills, offering them

one on one direct love and attention. This is a great two-way street because, number one it put the people back to work with an interest in life rather than, say, sitting on the front porch rocking and watching the world go by. And also it's saving the State a fortune in the cost of a true employee dressing and feeding this child every day, plus just the enrichment of life the child gets from being able to perform these functions for himself. So involved in this program was transportation. They were paid a stipend, which amounted to about a dollar forty an hour, to go out there four hours a day and work with the kids. Involved in that, though, they did get their transportation furnished from home to the school and returned. Mr. Killian came to us at that time and we took a look at transporting the people.

Jenkins: Now had you in any way been in the transporting people business before?

Ivey: Not at all. But we had been very active as volunteers at the Denton State School. And Dad had been a chairman of the volunteer council at that time. I'm currently vice-chairman of the volunteer council out there now. After he served his term as the chairman of this local volunteer council, well he was state chairman for all the volunteer councils for the Department of Mental Health

and Mental Retardation. I've never been chairman of this local council, but I also have been state chairman for the department. I just never have taken the chairmanship of this particular council out here. But we've had some awfully good people who've done that through these many years. But anyway, to get back to our subject matter, we went out and bought three buses; and we just buckled down and started trying.

Jenkins: School bus type?

Ivey: School bus type vehicles. And we started pulling people in to an orientation program which they designed out there, on teaching them how to work with these kids and what they were trying to or attempting to get across to them. And, Lord, we've never backed up since. It operates twelve months out of the year and it's continued right on forward to where we're still operating three busses. Through the years we've learned how to dovetail things together, and we're hauling more people more miles than we ever have before. But we're doing it with the same amount of equipment. We run four counties every day.

Jenkins: For this same operation?

Ivey: For this same operation.

Jenkins: Where do you get your drivers?

Ivey: A lot of times it is catch as catch can. I have always been very lucky to have one good stable driver that has stayed three, five, seven years, and as a result I can always kind of use this one as a lead person. Currently we are using two college kids for the so-called spare or third unit on the thing, which they can take the off hour stuff. I have two people on fulltime in this operation. One of them has been with me about, oh, three and a half years now. One of them has been with me only about three months, but both of them are just absolutely beautiful people.

Jenkins: Are all these buses carrying people to the Denton State School?

Ivey: Yes.

Jenkins: But you pick people up out of how many counties?

Ivey: Four counties. Denton, Collin, Cooke and Grayson.

Jenkins: And in terms of the distance driven per day . . .

Ivey: Four hundred and fifty-six miles a day, currently.

Jenkins: Total.

Ivey: Total.

Jenkins: So those counties are relatively close.

Ivey: Right. Yes, they are all adjoining counties. But we make two trips to Gainesville and back every day, and we make two trips to the farthest point, being Whitesboro. We hit the edge of Collin County during this period of

time. Then we have two trips a day in Denton proper, and we have two trips a day to Lewisville.

Jenkins: Now, you have not ever tried to branch out and use these buses for other things?

Ivey: We have done a little bit of that. We are a little hamstrung. We operate on a Railroad Commission permit. And we are a little hamstrung on what we actually can do with these vehicles. Like for instance, we couldn't take a group of people and take them to New Mexico to go skiing, but we can under our permit do things in this general locale. In fact, we can do anything inside the city limits of Denton. Well, tomorrow night we are making a run down to Carrollton and taking some General Telephone people down there to a meeting and returning. But this thing has basically just kind of carried its own weight all these years and we never have got to the point of expanding this end of it. But back at the first of this year it became very evident that if we were going to stay in the transportation business we had to get a little bit bigger in it, because we couldn't afford to do the service that we had been doing. And, of course, we were paid actually by the federal government once a month to handle this service for them. And they don't go up. We are doing it for the same money that we have for a long time. So as a result we just have to get

better use of vehicles and people and work at it from that approach.

Jenkins: So does this lead to the other business you are . . .

Ivey: Indirectly. Indirectly it led to the taxi cab and airport limousine business.

Jenkins: Is there anything else about the bus business before we move into the cab and limousine business?

Ivey: I probably spoke fairly harshly about government intervention and the problems that we have in the business with the government. And there are a lot of things all of us dislike about it, but by the same token I can see a program such as this that operates, and what a two-way street the whole thing is, with the help to the older people, both financially and for an interest and enrichment of life for the kids. For enrichment of life and that love and attention that they get every day. And they are getting ten times their dollar expenses worth out of it. There is just no way around it. It is a great program, and I just wish all the rest of them were that way, too.

Jenkins: In terms of income for your company, though, apparently it is kind of limited. You feel that you really have got to expand it in order for it to . . . really for it to survive? Is that kind of the way it is?

Ivey: That basically is what it boils down to, because it is

like any other business that you operate for a period of time. You see how and you learn how to start saving money. That two years ago you did this and it cost you. And you see how you can dovetail things together and make one hand help wash the other, and you can cut a corner over here and you can make this saving over here. As a result, you can do some saving of cost of operation just by learning your business more. And you start out in a business which we knew nothing about. Well, through the years we have been able to keep the thing rolling. Actually, I guess, though, the best possible business management that we could come up with, because the federal government does pay us to do this. Yet they keep it on the same basis that they have had it on since 1967.

Jenkins: Is that part of Ben Ivey Oil Company?

Ivey: No. It was originally, and then we branched it off and put in into another corporation which is called GTD Inc., which was a made-up name right quick one day.

Jenkins: Does it stand for anything?

Ivey: Well, originally it stood for Gemini Transportation and Distributing Company.

Jenkins: And that is solely owned by . . .

Ivey: By me, yes.

Jenkins: Personally.

Ivey: Right.

Jenkins: Anything else now before we move into the cab and limousine business?

Ivey: We didn't say much about the little busing operation. It is something that I have had a lot of interest in, both because of the good that it does and also because of my continued involvement at the Denton State School. And even though there is not much to say about it, there is not enough that you can say for it by the same token. It is a tremendous program. This also, by the way, has been rated the number one Foster Grandparent project in the United States of America.

Jenkins: I see. Now, how many of those people do you say you bus out there every day?

Ivey: Ninety-six. Ninety-six people a day. We also do some small amount of transportation for the State School at the same time. Some of their kids who work in town we transport back and forth for them with our buses.

Jenkins: All of the funds that you get from that come through the federal . . .

Ivey: Federal government until such time as we did reach the point of transporting some of their kids for them. And then the state started picking up that tab. But actually it is federal funds, state administered. So our money comes once a month from the State Comptroller in Austin.

Jenkins: Let's move into the cab and limousine business.

Ivey: The taxicab business here, of course, you won't remember . . . You might remember the old Goose.

Jenkins: Oh, yes. I rode the Goose. My kids rode it.

Ivey: There originally was a public transportation here in Denton. A bunch of old buses. It must have been late 1930's models that made a circuitous route. North Texas to the square to TWU, back to the square to North Texas, and had--I am going to guess--four buses running at a time. And then at one time they also had a route through southeast Denton that came up and also interchanged on the square. But this was the old nickel bus ride deal, and finally through years and years of operation their equipment just absolutely, I guess, went to pieces. And the people that owned the bus company then purchased some six or seven or eight taxicabs and went into the taxi business. At that time there was a man that, I think, owned two taxis. We actually had two cab companies for a while, and then the original busing people bought out the other guy so there was one.

Jenkins: Now who was the busing owner?

Ivey: That was J. O. Pannell, and Bob Neale, Sr. was an owner in it, and some three or four others whose names I am not familiar with. And a fellow by the name of Burroughs owned a couple of cabs and ran them before this time. But

anyway, the Pannell group wound up buying Burroughs out, and they operated for a number of years. And then Brad Gibson came to Denton, retired from American Airlines and he bought out the Pannell group and must have started somewhere around '66, '67 with the taxicab business under his ownership, care and control. And some few years ago I understood that he was going to have to leave the premises from which they were operating, and I had an old doggy service station that I didn't really want to do anything with particularly, moneywise, at the time on refurbishing or redoing. But I got the idea that a cab company has a dispatcher that is there all the time talking on the radio, and why couldn't you operate a taxicab out of a service station? You have got somebody there that you are paying anyway. You could self-serve the gasoline, put a pretty good price on it and make a few hundred dollars a month in that type of operation. So I went to Mr. Gibson and explained it to him and he came down and looked at it, and we made our deal very quickly on it. And they moved into this old doggy station.

Jenkins: This was about when?

Ivey: This would have been in about '70-'71, along in there. So he moved in and they have operated out of that place ever since.

Jenkins: Now, you didn't get into the cab business?

Ivey: No, I didn't get into the cab business. I supplied them with gasoline and ran the property. And it worked very well for both of us.

Jenkins: Where was that location?

Ivey: It is at the corner of Bell Avenue and McKinney, right across from Harpool Seed. But anyway, through the years and with our contact on it I made mention to Brad that if he ever decided to get out of it or whatnot that, you know, we probably would like to take a look at it. Well, Mr. Gibson died in March of this year, and a week or so later Mrs. Gibson gave me a call. And we sat down and started negotiating at that time about the cab business. They also then had instituted an airport limousine service to Love Field and DFW Airport in which they were also running.

Jenkins: Gibson?

Ivey: The Gibsons, and it also operated the same place out of the cab stand. And I think that thing has been going, oh, I think some five or six years at this point and time. But anyway, through a lot of seances and bartering back and forth and "would you" and "could you" type operation, as of November the 12th of this year, some ten days or so, two weeks ago, we took over the cab business and the limousine service and have been going crazy

ever since trying to figure it out.

Jenkins: What are some of the problems that you are facing with that?

Ivey: I guess the primary thing, and people would think it is hard to do . . . We can go back and talk about the oil business for a minute. When you are handling the bulk product you think, "My gosh, the accounting and the inventory of it would be so tough to do because one gallon of gasoline looks like another gallon of gasoline." But through the years, well, we have streamlined and streamlined to all intents and purposes and possibilities that we can possibly think of, and it is not hard at all. We balance our inventory every month and just whiz bang it and go right on.

Jenkins: Who created that system, mostly?

Ivey: I designed primarily the entire system as far as the oil company is concerned. But we got in this cab business and, by golly, when you have a dispatcher that is figuring rates and whose cab it went out to, and then you have a cabbie in this unit who is writing down what he has done, and you try to match all this back up together, and you are supposed to have done \$127 in cash business today and he only has \$121.52, and you have got to keep track of the overs and shorts and match the

dispatcher back against the cab report. And it's really driven us almost insane for the last two weeks. I had my CPA up here from Dallas the day before yesterday, and we walked him all the way through the thing, all the existing records and with our understanding after about ten days or so of operation. I sat down at home the other night with him and more or less redesigned some of the accounting system that is currently going on. I think it is going to be a lot easier. It has got to be a lot easier.

Jenkins: Is this also a separate company?

Ivey: Yes. It operates under the name of Travel and Cruise Service Company, Inc.

Jenkins: Is this solely owned by you?

Ivey: Yes.

Jenkins: It is a separate . . .

Ivey: Another separate small business.

Jenkins: Do you have a manager for that, or are you the manager of that, also?

Ivey: Right now I am the manager of it, also. The other part of my thinking, of course, with the bus operation, too, is that we will combine these as soon as we get it kind of under control, and I will have some kind of a superintendent or general manager of that entire operation.

Jenkins: How many drivers do you have at this point?

Ivey: Floyd, the day that we took the operation over there were supposedly five cabs that could be made to run, of which there was one that would run. There were three airport limousines that supposedly could be made to run or were running. There was one airport limousine running. This is one of those seven day a week jobs, too. And we primarily hit the ground running, on trying to get everything up mechanically so that we weren't broken down on the side of the road every time we turned around. In fact, the day that I took it over one of the airport limousines was at DFW Airport broken down. It had been there two or three days and they hadn't even gone to get it. So we got that piece of junk brought back up here. And when I say junk, two of the limousines were '77 models, they are two years old. And one of them was a '78 model, only a year old. So a lot of it was poor maintenance that has been a major problem. But at this point in our life today, we have three cabs on the street that I am not particularly concerned about mechanically. It looks like we have cured most of their ills, and that took three or four hitches to do. Bringing them in, doing what we could and getting them back out and finding out what else was wrong with them and then bringing them in and working on them again.

Jenkins: Do you have your own mechanic?

Ivey: The service station dealer in front of my office, this station out front, is a factory trained mechanic, and I have made a deal with him to do the entire mechanical service part of the business. And he is somebody that I believe in, that I can trust and who I can converse with very easily since he is right here at the same location. And so far this has worked very, very good.

Jenkins: He is not an employee of the company.

Ivey: No, I have contracted with him to get this fleet up in shape. Well, the first three days that we were operating we put \$1,100 worth of tires on vehicles. And these are all factory car type tires or small truck tires. So that is typical. You know there wasn't a tire that I would run from here to the courthouse and back on any vehicle. They were all just bald as everything. And engines, the oil hadn't been changed and whatnot. And, of course, this thing had just been kind of hanging fire for about six months after Mr. Gibson died. There wasn't any close management given to it during . . .

Jenkins: They were still operating out of the station.

Ivey: They were operating, yes, on a breakdown maintenance type situation. You drove them until they quit and then you did something to them to get them back on the road.

So we are trying to cure that.

Jenkins: Is this the only cab company in Denton now?

Ivey: Yes. And we will have, of the five cabs we have now, physically inspected each one of them, and we are changing doors out from some of the older cabs that won't work. These are all Checker cabs. And on Checker, all chassis parts bolt on. As a result you can swap a fender from one to another, or a deck lid, or a door, or a hood, or whatever it may be. So it appears we are going to get five cabs up in good condition and repainted. It will take care of us for a little while on that operation. And the three limos will make it another little while.

Jenkins: You haven't been in this ten days.

Ivey: Right.

Jenkins: What kinds of situation with getting and keeping drivers, resources of drivers do you anticipate?

Ivey: Texas Employment Commission, probably number one, because we need drivers oft times during school hours. I also have talked with the Student Placement Office at North Texas University. I think we will probably do some advertising in the local newspapers. But to begin with, our primary source will be the Texas Employment Commission. And at this point and time we have three dispatchers, because of the hours that are involved

seven days a week. We have three limousine drivers, because every day you are not running more than one at a time. And then we have four cab drivers, even though we only have three cabs that are running.

Jenkins: You have cabs on call twenty-four hours a day?

Ivey: Yes. Right.

Jenkins: Do you shift to one sometimes?

Ivey: We shift to one. Usually it is around eight o'clock at night. It can go later than that. It depends a lot on what the colleges may be doing, as kids are coming in or out at the start of school, end of school, holiday season, vicey versa. But normally it will run somewhere around eight to eight-thirty at night when we will go to one. At this point and time we also are doing away with our dispatcher and using an answering service, whereby the answering service receives the call on our telephone line, but then the cab driver has to call in every time he is through with a run to find out. So we are having a radio unit installed at the answering service so they can contact him directly by radio, and they will take over the dispatch for us at whatever time we want to turn it over to them at night, until five-thirty in the morning when we have a dispatcher who comes back on.

Jenkins: It will be interesting someday to look back and see what the cab rates were in Denton in 1979.

Ivey: Well, this is one of the primary problems and something that we have got to face as soon as possible. The last time the cab company had a rate change was in April of 1974, and you know how much gasoline--we discussed the price--and insurance and the cost of vehicles and drivers' salaries and all these things have gone up. So we are going to have to apply for a rate increase.

Jenkins: To whom?

Ivey: To the City of Denton who gives you a license to operate a cab company. So we will have to go before the city and prove up that we need a rate increase.

Jenkins: What are those rates now?

Ivey: Oh, that is almost impossible to say. It is 85¢, initial, getting into the cab. It is then 15¢ per three-quarters of an inch on a map that was produced by the Chamber of Commerce in 1964, if you can see how out of date that is. On that map one inch equals 1900 linear feet. When you boil this whole thing down including your 85¢ up front, the effective rate is approximately 40¢ a mile, one way.

Jenkins: How do you pay your drivers?

Ivey: Cab drivers are paid on a straight commission of the

total fare. They get 33% of the total money that comes in. They take in a hundred dollars, they get thirty-three bucks. Plus tips. They get 100% of their tips.

Jenkins: Do you have any way of knowing how good tippers in Denton are?

Ivey: I understand they are not very good. That's what they keep telling me anyway.

Jenkins: How about the limousines?

Ivey: The limousine service currently is an on-call basis. There are five trips a day made to DFW, scheduled. And then to Love Field is unscheduled and any other trips that we make are unscheduled or on a charter type situation. But the five trips a day, the drivers make five dollars a trip. So there is twenty-five dollars a day that you are looking at depending on the time period involved. Anyway, we are looking at twenty-five dollar a day cost, for nothing but driver. Because whether he makes a trip or not he is on call and we pay him five dollars. That is seven days a week. An interesting fact, of course, I told you earlier we were meeting with Surtran yesterday, who is in charge of all ground transportation at DFW Airport. To take your limousine into the airport and pick up or discharge passengers and leave, upon leaving you pay three dollars. You may have been there five minutes, you may have been

there fifty minutes. So we put one person in a limo to go to DFW. We have five dollars involved with the driver. We have three dollars to get in and out of the gate. That is eight dollars. The current fare is eight dollars. So where we have got one we lose money.

Jenkins: Gasoline today costs you probably . . .

Ivey: At that rate it is the same thing. It hasn't been changed since the day that the limousine started. So we also are going to have to update this.

Jenkins: What do you figure it costs you in, oh, just fuel alone to get to DFW and back?

Ivey: Floyd, we haven't even been able to get a good picture on this, because the records that have been kept on it. In fact, right before you came I had just gone to the printers and had a new sheet made up whereby we are taking speedometer readings from the moment that the driver gets into the vehicle until he is through, know how many miles. He will also fill it at the time he gets in it and at the time that he gets through. And we are going to have to match all this back up. We don't know whether we are getting twelve miles to the gallon, four miles to the gallon, eighteen miles to the gallon, how many total miles we are running.

Jenkins: It would probably cost you at least two dollars to go

up there and back in gasoline. So that is ten bucks.

Ivey: Yes, with no wear and tear on your vehicle.

Jenkins: Well, are you getting pretty good business there?

Ivey: Well, I guess getting three cabs on the street proves it, because we can keep three busy. And a lot of this is just word of mouth. We have done no advertising on it yet, because I did not want to advertise until we knew that we could take care of the demand. But basically through word of mouth. Maybe we had people waiting too long. We can keep three cabs busy where there were only running one, but we are not having any waiting time. Actually, from what the dispatcher report shows so far this week the cab has arrived ten minutes after a call. And that is awful good in any size city.

Jenkins: You have only been in it ten days, but what visions do you have for what might happen to the cab business?

Ivey: Oh, I think that it is something that should just grow by leaps and bounds, because I think we all are pretty well in agreement that this city is going to grow and in a short period of time, with Peterbilt coming in and all the other industry and, of course, with the universities. Also from the fact that automobiles cost more money now. Gasoline costs more money now. I think more people will ride a cab.

Jenkins: What about the limousine service? Are you getting

pretty good ridership on that?

Ivey: The only ridership that we are really getting on it is what the two travel agencies have said, "Oh, you can go to the airport in a limo if you want to." But no advertising has really been done. I think that ninety percent of the people or more don't even realize that there is a limousine service.

Jenkins: So you really don't even know what that is yet, either. You just haven't been in it . . .

Ivey: No, not long enough. I think that we'll get this thing squared up a little bit, so that we know from our end of it the dependability is going to be no problem. I think at that point in time and we advertise it that we will quadruple our rideability.

Jenkins: You don't know yet how many people have to ride in that limo for you to come out?

Ivey: No.

Jenkins: Two.

Ivey: Right. At least two.

Jenkins: Well, in the short time that you have had the limousine, has there been someone for each of the five trips almost every time?

Ivey: The day of the week has a lot to do with this. Saturday is the world's worse day. Mondays, Fridays and Sundays are the big days. But Saturdays people have either

already gotten to where they are going or they are not going on Saturday. So I would say out of the five trips on a daily basis, almost invariably you are going to have one, currently. Out of ten trips on a Tuesday and a Wednesday you may have one trip that no one is going.

Jenkins: Before we move on is there anything else that you want to say about this ten-day-old new business that you have gone into?

Ivey: Help!

Jenkins: Okay, let's move into the section here involved in your own personal civic, community, trade association involvement. To what extent have you been involved in Denton over your lifetime?

Ivey: Primarily, I guess, from the word "go," which derived particularly I am sure from my father, who was so very caught up. In fact, this was his passion or playtime, really. He had no hobbies of any kind, and I guess being involved in civic, humanitarian type work was his relief and relaxation mechanism. And as a result I was kind of brought up the same way. And, of course, through the years I have been involved at the local level with the Denton State School of the Mentally Retarded. Still involved with it. Vice chairman of the Volunteer Council, and I served a year as chairman

of the State Volunteer Council. At the time I was chairman there were twenty-seven schools and hospitals throughout the state, where the chairman through the central office worked with each one of these volunteer councils at each one of the institutions as a kind of clearing house or central headquarters to help cure problems and answer questions and generally make a nuisance of yourself, I imagine, in a lot of ways. Then, of course, church activities. Chamber of Commerce activities. United Way Activities. It has been no real problem to stay involved. Of course, Denton, you living here, too, realize the involvement that goes on in all methods and ways of life in Denton. And if you have got the interest, well, there is a group here that you can be involved with. There is Big Brothers and Big Sisters or the YMCA, the Boy Scouts or the American Red Cross or whatever it might be. And I guess for different short periods of time I have been involved with almost each and every one of them.

Jenkins: Well, record those at least. Specifically which of these organizations have you been involved with?

Ivey: I have been a director of the Chamber of Commerce a couple of different times. I served two terms as chairman of the local American Red Cross. I served one or two terms as the regional fund raiser for three

states for the American Red Cross. The United Way, I served as a division chairman. I served as the campaign chairman a number of years ago for the fund.

Jenkins: Service clubs?

Ivey: Service clubs. I served in the Kiwanis Club for many years until, very truthfully, I just got too many other things going on. I made one fling at politics. I served on the City Council.

Jenkins: When was that?

Ivey: That was in '74 and '75, I guess.

Jenkins: What were some of the big issues?

Ivey: Primarily it was TMPA, the Municipal Power Association or Agency. Water, of course, was as big then as it is now, a crucial problem.

Jenkins: Do you want to speak to those issues?

Ivey: It is hard for me to do it at this time, Floyd, because you really have to . . . you know it is easy to say, "Gosh, my electric bill is too high," or, "My sewer charge is too much," or, "Why can't we get water?" But unless you are there looking at all the reports, attending all the meetings and seeing everything that comes up and down the pike, it is almost impossible to put your finger on any one thing or be able to say, "You bet you. I really believe in this." You would almost have to leave that to the person that is highly involved

with it at the time. I was the council representative to TMPA, as an example. And at that time I was a hundred percent for the Texas Municipal Power Agency. I thought it was the thing for us to do, and still to this day it sounds to me like the thing to do. But after being out of it for some three years I really can't speak to it anymore, because I don't know what has happened, what has been involved in this end of it. So you just cannot speak with knowledge when you are not really one hundred percent involved and seeing all the data that you need to see.

Jenkins: Do you recall any other local organizations or drives that you have been involved with?

Ivey: Well, for a long time I used to say that for my age I have probably gone out and tried to raise more money for more causes than anybody else in Denton, but as the years pass and the gray got in my hair, I couldn't say that anymore. But, oh, in organizations such as SPAN. I wasn't an originating member of that, but I have served on their board and seen their operation.

Jenkins: What is SPAN?

Ivey: SPAN is a service organization to the elderly, whereby they have a meal plan, they have a transportation plan, they have a telephone call plan, they have an activity plan for the senior citizens whereby they have an

involvement primarily with their peers in both recreational and therapeutic and service work.

Jenkins: Are there any others, locally, that you can think of?

Ivey: Well, the Denton Association for Retarded Children, through my involvement with the State School, and also because of my chairmanship of the campaign for United Way, was almost on the point of going under because it was primarily a parent organization and had no money. They were just really lending support to each other as they best well could, and also had the auspices of one of the churches here as kind of a helping group.

Jenkins: What was that church?

Ivey: I believe it was the First Christian Church on Fulton Street. But I talked with whoever was chairman at the time and attended one of their meetings, and after I learned a little bit more about them and also told them a little bit more about the United Way, they came to our United Way and made a presentation and we were able to secure them as an agency in the United Way. So as a result they went from a budget of almost no dollars to, I think, this past year United Way, they were probably involved to the tune of somewhere around eighteen to twenty some-odd thousand dollars. I would have to take a look at the sheet to know. But those of us that are so fortunate not to face some of

these problems don't realize the trials and tribulations on a twenty-four hour basis, seven days a week that parents have. And I was very pleased that they came in and got with the United Way.

Jenkins: Any others that you think of before we ask about the state level?

Ivey: Through the years you don't really come and go, but you get interested in a particular agency or association or group and you work a year or two or so with them, and then after that you kind of have done what you can and contributed what you can and somebody else needs to go in there and get some new life and new spirit and new blood into it. And so I guess most of the agencies or groups I have been involved with sometime or another, you know, through the years.

Jenkins: What about the state level, trade associations, any of that that you have been involved in.

Ivey: Well, primarily from that end of it has been through the gasoline business. The Texas Oil Marketers Association has an office in Austin, Texas which is an association made up of gasoline and fuel distributors throughout the state of Texas. And I have been involved with it for some fifteen or sixteen years, I guess. Really seventeen or eighteen years, I am sure. I started very shortly after I got into this business. I have

served as regional vice-president of a certain county area. I have served as secretary-treasurer of it, and I have served as director of it. I have served everything except president, and I can't afford to be president.

Jenkins: That takes a lot of time.

Ivey: It takes a tremendous amount of time and a tremendous amount of money, because that organization operates on a volunteer basis for the industry, for your fellow distributors.

Jenkins: Just the big boys.

Ivey: You need a big boy in there who can afford both the time and the money, right.

Jenkins: What hobbies do you have?

Ivey: I talk about playing golf all the time and never play. And that primarily is it. Of course, any type of sporting event just suits me fine. I am a pretty good spectator on any sport. No fishing, no hunting. I have been fishing probably two or three times in the last twenty years, and I have been hunting twice in the last twenty years. No, anytime I can get some time off on the recreational end of it, I go to the golf course if possible.

Jenkins: So you do get out there when you can.

Ivey: Right.

Jenkins: You have been coming down here for a good many years, but you have still got a good many years to go until that mythical retirement age. How do you look upon retirement? What do you anticipate in terms of personal retirement?

Ivey: Well, I guess that I have never had a retirement program. Number one, I really don't care anything about retiring. I think I will probably be working at something until the day that I am no longer able to work. But, of course, I am like a lot of other people, I would like to finally get my stuff in shape whereby it didn't take absolute constant care and daily supervision of whatever that may be. And with some of the things that we are involved in now, the transportation end and whatnot, this could be very feasible.

Jenkins: Do you ever vacation?

Ivey: Well, I have a junior daughter at the University of Arkansas and a freshman son at the University of Texas, and until I get all that schooling over with I doubt I am going to be vacationing very much. This crazy business that we are in, you almost have to be here every day. We take long weekends. We may leave on Friday and go to a football game or do something over the weekend. We are much more likely to do seven to ten weekends a year rather than all week long.

One of us has to be here.

Jenkins: You can't both get sick even at the same time.

Ivey: Right. Not this year, but summer before last we took a trip to the great northwest. We saw Washington state and Oregon. We rented a condo out on Orcas Island in the middle of Puget Sound, and I had never been to that part of the country before. I was gone about ten or twelve days, and Carol and the kids were gone almost a month out there.

Jenkins: Who looked after the business?

Ivey: I flew back and forth.

Jenkins: So you really weren't gone.

Ivey: No, I really wasn't gone.

Jenkins: What kind of reading habits do you have, regardless of whether it has anything to do with the business or not?

Ivey: From that end of it, since you mentioned it, we can talk about trade journals first. I peruse more than really read, and just really do nothing but read articles of interest. All the other reading I do, besides two daily newspapers, are recreational reading. And I read the Smithsonian Magazine, National Geographic.

Jenkins: That's the way you take your trips.

Ivey: Yes, right. That is quite a bit of it. And then the rest of it is primarily junk reading. I read everything. I read mystery stories and westerns. Louis

L'Amour is the greatest writer that has ever walked the face of the earth. If he has ever written a book that I haven't read I don't know what it is. I read some science fiction. I am pretty indiscriminate in reading. I am a very fast reader, and I don't usually buy for quality or quantity. I buy for relaxation. This is probably going back to, since I don't play very much golf I can sit down and read a paperback novel in an evening just real easy.

Jenkins: The Ben Ivey Oil Company has been around a good many years now. And you personally have been running it for how many years?

Ivey: Oh, probably seventeen or eighteen years, directly.

Jenkins: How do you account for it still being here and thriving? What do you think has made it go?

Ivey: Well, number one, I would really have to say it is because you are in an energy business, and I don't know of any energy type businesses that have not been either stable or are growing. But this business, by the same token, is no different from any others. You have to grow, you can't stand still. But I would say the primary thing that we have tried to do is kind of roll with the punches and be very certain that we keep abreast of the changes that are going on in the industry. I don't necessarily want to guinea pig anything that is

coming along, but I don't want to be the last one that makes a move, either. So as a result we have changed our method of marketing. We have changed our methods of distribution. We have changed our methods of purchasing. Actually, all this is in a constant state of flux. It almost seems that every day of the world you have something that you may be doing a little bit different than you did the day before.

Jenkins: Do you enjoy this particular type of business? In order for it to go you have got to be down here all the time, but to what extent do you get up in the morning and look forward to coming down and facing it?

Ivey: Number one, I guess because I like people, and you deal with people all day long. And part of it is a challenge of trying to get this accomplished or get something else accomplished. A lot of times you are frustrated, and I just like frustration, by the same token. I guess primarily this is basically the only thing that I have ever done, but I enjoy the hell out of it. This has never been a chore to me. It has never been a chore to me. Now it has gone directions before where I didn't like the direction we were going in. You have to pull back or pull yourself up by your boot straps and say, "Wait a minute," you know. "Let's choose up and start over or do something a little bit different."

From that end of it it is still extremely interesting.

Jenkins: You really look forward to it.

Ivey: Right. And a lot of it, at the age of the very early twenties when I got into it--I was into it per se before that--but as far as any administrative or managerial end of it, I was directly out of college. So I had a lot of growing up that was going on at the same time that the business was growing up, so as a result most of the history is history that I created in one form or fashion or another. And as a result as long as the old memory stays there, well, you kind of think, "Goodness," you know, "why in the world in 1965 did I ever do this way when it is so much easier to do it this way."

Jenkins: Lifetime of learning.

Ivey: Lifetime of learning. It really is.

Jenkins: Okay, I covered all of my questions, but I want to be sure that if there is anything that I have missed that you can think of that you would like to add to this before we shut it off that you have a chance to do it. Do you have any last parting words?

Ivey: Well, we probably rambled about as far as we can go. But I have enjoyed it very much. It is interesting to sit down and do some reflecting. We probably don't do this enough. And as you know from stumbling around on dates and everything else you forget that, you think it happened yesterday and it didn't. It happened five

years ago. So there is a lot of this that goes on. Thinking back on it I probably thought of something while we were doing all this that I may turn around and take another look at, or try to reinstate, or change even.

Jenkins: Okay. Well, if there is nothing else specifically that you want to add, we will close it at this point and thank you for an interesting interview.

Ivey: Thank you. I have enjoyed it.