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Land Use Oral History Project
Patel Center for Global Solutions
University of South Florida

Interview with: Mr. Cullen "Bill" Boyette
Interviewed by: William Mansfield
Location: Wesley Chapel, Florida
Date: September 13, 2006
Transcribed by: Wm. Mansfield
Edited by: Cullen "Bill" Boyette & Wm. Mansfield
Audit Edited by: Kyle Burke
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WM: I always put a label on the disc by saying: "This is Bill Mansfield from the University of South Florida and the Patel Center for Global Solutions talking to Mr. Bill Boyette on September 13, 2006, at his home in Wesley Chapel."

Mr. Boyette we always get people to start out by having them state their names and telling us when they were born and where they were born.

BB: Do you want my real name, Cullen Boyette (Mrs. Boyette laughs) or Bill Boyette?

WM: Well, you can say: "Cullen Boyette, but everybody calls me Bill." Or something like that.

BB: Yeah. My name is Cullen Boyette, but my friends call me Bill.

(Mrs. Boyette: I don't even know him by Cullen.)

WM: Okay. And when were you born?

BB: I was born April 25, 1934.

WM: Okay. You told me that you were born in Tampa but raised in Wesley Chapel?

BB: Yeah, [I was] born in Tampa and then when I was ten days old they brought me home and I've been raised in Wesley Chapel. Been here, basically, all my life.

WM: Okay. When we were talking earlier you told me about how your family got down here [to Wesley Chapel]. If you could tell that story again I'd appreciate it.

BB: Okay. Our family came down here after the Civil War and homesteaded some property over on Boyette Road. Eventually, the homestead was divided up among the sons.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: And some of the family still lives on some of the old homestead—you know—they're still there.

Of course this (referring to his current home and the surrounding property) wasn't part of it. Daddy bought this about—nineteen—the early-forties. He might have bought it just before '40.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: Might have bought it in '39, or '40, right along in there Daddy bought this from some folks. Then we moved here and have basically lived here ever since.

WM: Okay. I think your granddaughter said that you are retired?

BB: Yeah.

WM: What did you do before you retired?

BB: I worked at Sears for forty years.

WM: Okay.

BB: I started at Sears in Tampa, when they were downtown on Florida Avenue, at the old Florida Avenue Store. Stayed with them. [When I] went into the army [I] went on military leave, so I didn't lose my job.

WM: Okay.

BB: Spent a couple of years active-duty with "Uncle Sam," then four years in the reserve. But I retired [from Sears] in '92.

WM: And you've just been kicked-back and enjoying yourself ever sense?

BB: Been trying to. We like to travel and you might have noticed the travel trailer out there where you're parked—that's our second one. We've had two. We've traveled to most of the United States. We haven't hit them all, but we've hit a lot of them.

WM: Okay. Now, you said that you were born here in Wesley Chapel. Tell me about what your father did [for a living].

BB: My Daddy was a farmer and a logger. He primarily logged—um—cut timber. In fact the timber that's inside of this house, we cut this timber; it's all cedar and cypress. The cypress came out of the Big Cypress Swamp.

Years ago, back in the 1800s there was some tremendously big cypress down in the Big Cypress Swamp. This logging company came in, bought the logging rights to it and built a tram road. They cut all of the big cypress out and hauled it to Tampa—on that tram road. Had a little train like [machine] that carried it down there. But they used an overhead-skidder to get the logs out of the swamp. Occasionally some of those logs would just fall—fall down in the water. Well, they didn't go back and get them, they just left them.

So we were logging down on what they call the “Twenty-mile Level,” off of the big Cypress Swamp. It was right after World War II and pilings were in demand, pre-soaked piling. And down at the corner of [Highway] 301 and [State Road] 60, there is a car dealership there now but years ago it was Tampa Creosote Company. You took long pine logs down there and they run them through this kiln and “creosoted” them. They were used either for utility poles or the shipyards drove them in the ground and built docks.

So out in the middle of that Big Cypress Swamp we were down there cutting timber, just saw logs. That year had been a dry year and the water was low. Out in the middle of the swamp there was an old island. And there was some tall virgin slash pine out on that island that would make extra good pilings.

So we cut a trail through the swamp and bought a skidder and started cutting that slash pine off of that island.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: Well, going through the swamp we found these big cypress logs that had been laying underwater and in the mud, for years and years and years, still preserved. Daddy said, “That'll make good lumber for the house we want to build.” So, we eventually got those big old logs up out of that swamp. [They were huge] and the only sawmill around that had a saw blade big enough to cut them was Cummer Cypress Company up in Lacoochee.

So we carried them up there and had them sawed, rough-cut, and brought them home and stacked them so they could dry and when they dried and cured out we carried them to the planer mill and had them made into boards that you could build a house with.

We also cut the cedar out of that swamp. Any mill could saw that so we had it sawed in Land O' Lakes. Dried it and then had it planed into boards.

In the whole interior of this house there is no pinewood, it's all cedar and cypress.

WM: Tell me what Wesley Chapel was like when you were a little boy, when you were growing up.

BB: When I was a little boy we had one church, one little grocery store and maybe thirty-five to forty families. Um—everybody was either a farmer or a logger or had to work for someone. They either worked for the county, or you worked for one of the logging crews. Like my Daddy was a logger. Well he worked four or five people, you know. That was about the only work out here.

Everybody tended to farm a little. Everybody had a few hogs, a cow or two, or a few cows. We had a one-room school, one teacher. The school was right out here by the church.

WM: What, that would be out on Highway 54?

BB: Um-huh.

WM: Well, you say everybody farmed a little, was that like a garden to feed themselves or was it crops for sale?

BB: Both. They would grow—everybody had a garden. That was almost standard. Because times was hard and money was tight—so everybody had a garden. Everybody had chickens. Everybody had a hog pen—you know?

WM: Um-huh.

BB: But they farmed. We raised stuff like black-eyed peas, corn, peanuts, okra, and watermelons. Watermelons would be one of the better money crops.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: There weren't many orange groves. When I was real small the Stricklands had an orange grove. Eventually, Preston Gillette had an orange grove. But most of the people were row cropping: peanuts and black-eyed peas and corn, stuff like that.

You'd take it to the farmers' market down on Hillsborough Avenue in Tampa. I remember my Daddy—ah—

We would have corn and peas and whatever planted here. He'd get up and go to the logwoods and work in the logwoods. When it was about time for school to get out, when we'd be coming home, then he'd come in and bring some of the crew (he might leave part of the crew out there to cut more logs or whatever). He'd bring a few of the crew with him. We'd get out there and maybe pick peas until dark.

We'd pick those peas and pack them in hampers and bring them up to the barn. He had an old flat bed truck that he used here. We'd load those peas on that truck. Then we'd clean up, do our chores and have supper. Daddy'd go to bed, but he'd get up, like [around] midnight, get in that old truck and head to the farmers' market. Then, all of the buyers did

their buying at two or three o'clock in the morning, so the stuff could be in the stores before 8:00.

He would get up and go down to the market and sell the peas, or okra, or whatever we had picked that day. Then he would come back and eat breakfast and then go to the logwoods. I didn't think anything about it when I was kid. It was just something that Daddy did. Now that I'm older I've often wondered: "How in the world did that man go out in them hot log-woods, cut logs, do physical labor until 3:00 in the afternoon, come in and pick peas and load the truck, sleep three or four hours, get up and go to the market, come back and go back to the woods and work in that hot sun again?"

I just don't know how he had the physical stamina to do that.

WM: Yeah, folks worked a lot harder than they do these days.

BB: We could never do it.

WM: We might [be able to] but I don't want to have to find out. (laughs)

BB: (laughs) I don't want to try.

WM: Now the logwoods, were those around here in this area? Where were they?

BB: They were different pastures around here. People who owned pastures—you could either—some of the loggers would go out and they would say, "We'll cut your logs and pay you so much per thousand board feet."

What they'd do is cut the timber and haul it to the sawmill and at the end of the week, when it was tallied up, the sawmill would say, "Okay you brought in this much." And [then] pay him and you'd go to the landowner and say, "Okay I cut this much timber, here's your part of it."

What my Daddy would do is he'd go to a pasture and he drive through it and estimate how much he thought he could cut out of there. He'd go to the pasture owner and say, "I'll give you a thousand dollars, or two thousand dollars—whatever—for the timber on your property. Then if he got more than he estimated, he made good money. If he got less, if he estimated wrong, he took a hit.

We could get whatever timber was there. We'd cut the cypress; we'd cut the pine. In this case we got the cedar and we got—uh—whatever. So that was the two ways they did it.

But we logged down where a lot of these subdivisions are now, my Daddy and I cut the timber off those pastures years ago. Down where Quail Hollow is now, we logged in there for years. Years ago that was the Ryal's pasture back in there.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: We logged back in there a long time. Down at Twenty Mile Level, we logged [there].

WM: Now where is Twenty-Mile Level?

BB: Ah, when you're going towards Land O' Lakes, when you get to where Livingston Avenue comes out on [State Road] 54, right where Livingston dead-ends [there] used to be a dirt road that went back there to a cow pasture. Big Cypress Creek is just to the east of that. That pasture land that was out there, just west of the creek, but before you get to [Highway] 41 was nice level pastureland [that] used to be called Twenty-Mile Level. How it got that name, I don't know, but that's what all of the old-timers called it.

It was flat country all the way from there to Ehren.

WM: But your father did all of the logging right around here? He didn't have to travel too far from home?

BB: No. The farthest we ever really got from home is we cut timber one time—Years ago, over at New Port Richey, there was place over there called the Moon Lake Preserve. They had a high fence all around it to keep the wildlife in. They were preserving wildlife. It was a huge compound. Daddy bought timber in there one time. That was far enough from home. We didn't drive every day back and forth. We camped over there on Bear Creek.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: We cut timber and we camped in tents, right on the creek. Daddy was the cook, of course, me and my cousin were the dishwashers. We camped over there and cut timber and hauled it to Tampa. We didn't go back [and forth] every day. But most of our timber cutting was [around] Wesley Chapel. Up to Pasco, up to [State Road] 52—you know—San Antonio, within ten or fifteen miles of here.

WM: Okay. You were telling me about the free cattle range? Free-range cattle?

BB: Prior to the no-fence law, all of your cattle and livestock, except your milk cow and the hogs you had in the pen that you're planning to butcher, [the animals] roamed free. You registered a mark [for your livestock] with the county. Each family had their particular mark. It might be three slashes in the ear, or two [slashes], whatever. But everybody had their mark.

The cows just roamed free out there on the open land. So of [the land] belonged to people and some of it belonged to the county, but it was just open range.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: So all of our livestock, basically, roamed free. Two or three times a year you had to go out and gather them up and then mark your new livestock, the calves and your pigs.

We were talking earlier about cowboys?

WM: Um-huh.

BB: The cowboys that helped us, where we were, cause every family helped each other, didn't look anything like Roy Rogers—you know? Didn't have any cowboy hats, we had whatever old hats we wore and overalls. Our horses weren't palominos. (laughs) They were regular old [horses]. Might be the horse you ploughed with—you know?

WM: Um-huh.

BB: We had a few people that actually had cow horses and worked cows. I had a couple of cousins that were basically true cowboys. They had good riding saddles and cow whips and lassoes and all of that stuff. They could do all of that, they could ride and rope.

The old horse I rode, I had an old McClelland army saddle. Very uncomfortable and not made for roping. All it did was keep you from falling off the horse. (chuckles) But we'd go out and gather up the livestock and mark the young ones and—

WM: What's that you said about the fences?

BB: We fenced out the livestock, to keep them out of your field. Pastures, the woods wasn't fenced. You fenced in your fields to keep them out [of] your corn and out of your peas. If you have a black-eyed pea field and you didn't fence it and those cows get in there—they loved it. They ate a bunch but they stomped down and destroyed more than they ate. So you had to fence them [crops].

But when the no-fence law came in, like in '50 and '51 the state gave us a year to get up our livestock. If you didn't have your livestock up when the grace period was over, your livestock was considered trespass animals and whoever caught them [could keep them]. Regardless of how many marks you had on your livestock, it didn't make any difference. So we had to gather up all of our stock and everybody had to build fences then. But prior to that you only fenced your field.

WM: I just want to make sure I understand you correctly, the people who lived around here all farmed a little bit and worked at some other job?

BB: Yep. You either farmed or you worked the logwoods or you worked somewhere else. There was no industry of any type out here.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: Back when I was very little, or prior to that, they would do turpentine out here. They would bring people in to collect turpentine. [They would] just move through, turpentine the trees and move on out. That wasn't a job that you could get and work at for any period of time.

But [other folks] worked for the county, worked for the County Road Department, or whatever. Some of them went to Dade City and worked at Pasco Packing. Pasco Packing was big back then.

[There] were jobs like that but we didn't have any type of industry; like I say we have one little grocery store. He had one gas pump. There was no regular, mid-grade, and high-test, there was [just] gas.

WM: (laughs)

BB: And on the side they had a little tank that had kerosene, and a few little boxes of oil.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: But he had a little bit of everything. The store wasn't a convenience store like you see now. He had a small meat case and he had some meat. He had some dry goods and some cold drinks. But he also had staples and some nails and a few rolls of fencing. You know—a little bit of chain and a few nuts and bolts and you know—things you needed every day.

WM: I reckon that's why they called it a general store, 'cause they had a little bit of everything.

BB: A general store, exactly.

WM: Well tell, me if you can, what was the landscape like?

BB: Mostly open woods and, like I said, small farms.

Like here, Daddy had thirty-five acres. When we first moved here, only, maybe ten acres of it, at the most, had been cleared and was a field that we could do anything with. Him being a logger and having equipment, when we first moved here we just farmed the ten acres. Then, as time went by, we would start clearing a little here and a little there and cleared on further out.

In the forties there was really no industry of any type. [There were] a few orange groves and then in the fifties a lot of people started putting in orange groves. We cleared our place and eventually turned all of the fields into orange groves. A lot of other folks did. They put in a lot of orange trees, north of [State Road] 54.

Some of the ground, west of here, what we call flatwoods really wasn't good land for orange tree[s]. [It was] too low and too wet.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: So there is a little ridge right through here. I don't know if you noticed when you left the interstate, when you come past [the gated community] Saddlebrook, you come up a little bit of a rise.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: Now we're on this little ridge and when you go on down, towards Zephyrhills and you get by Curley Road, you go down another little ridge. Well they planted a lot of orange groves in this ridge part, where it was sandy and they could drain.

In '60, '61 and '62 we had some bad freezes. I mean some bad ones! [The temperature] got down to eighteen degrees and stuff like that.

At that time Wesley Chapel was still pretty much—there were some families that had moved in here that weren't part of the old original group, but it wasn't explosive development; it was just an odd family here and a family there. A family came out and bought ten acres or forty acres. You couldn't come out here and buy a lot—you know?

But then in the mid-1960's people started coming out and buying these old “froze-out” orange groves, or some of the cow pastures.

Quail Hollow was one of the first developments that came in. They sold home sites. They weren't really lots, you bought five acres, you bought ten acres. I don't even think you sold an acre lot. They might have, but most of them were five or ten acres. People— they called them estates— they could come out and build a house and have a horse and this sort of stuff. Then they built the golf club. They put in a little subdivision down by the airport, beside the interstate.

Well, the interstate came in the sixties. Prior to the interstate, to go to Tampa, to go to work, I would have to drive out [State Road] 54, either to Livingston Avenue or on out to [Highway] 41 and drive down Livingston or down 41, all the way into Tampa to work.

WM: How long would that take?

BB: It would take over an hour. It'd take me an hour fifteen or an hour and thirty minutes, depending on traffic.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: So we didn't have a lot of growth, until the mid 1960's. Then, after Quail Hollow and the little subdivision they put in down by the airport, there was an outfit in Tampa

called Williams Brothers Car Lots. They bought and sold cars and you could make the payments there and all of this kind of stuff.

So Mr. Williams come up here and he bought some property off the Pasco Road. He didn't want to build houses or anything, he just wanted to sell property. So he bought it, subdivided it, had some streets put in and he sold acre lots and two acres lots. That [enterprise] went fairly well for him. Then he come up and bought some froze-out orange groves up the road and put in a development called "Double Branch Acres."

He put in the roads, put in his own water system. He put septic tanks on the lots. Then he'd sell you the lot and hold the contract. Then you could buy a mobile home and put on it. And just like he sold his cars, he sold those lots. If you didn't make the payments he'd repossess it. Some of those lots, (laughing) he sold four or five times you know.

So then he bought thirty of Daddy's thirty-five acres and developed this to the side of [our house here].

WM: And what's that? Does it have a name?

BB: I think it was called something like Williams Acres Number Three, or Number Five. It was one of the later Williams' Acres developments. But then, up in the late 1970s, or up through the seventies we had a little lull there, 'cause most of the people that moved—nearly all of this was mobile homes.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: But you didn't see subdivisions yet. I don't know what caused the turn around, —I don't know if you remember when [State Road] 581 was called "The Road to Nowhere?" That might have been before your time?

WM: Certainly before my time in Florida.

BB: Many years ago—ah—and this was a long time ago, Morris Bridge Road, before the interstate, if you wanted to go to Tampa, you had to go over to [Highway] 41 or [Highway] 301. Well, Morris Bridge Road was a dirt road, but it went all the way across the Hillsborough River, it had a bridge. Morris Bridge Road came around and came into Tampa as Skipper Road, which is out by the University [of South Florida].

WM: Um-huh.

BB: Well it was a dirt road. So Pasco [County] talked to Hillsborough [County] and said "We need another road. We'll pave Morris Bridge Road from [State Road] 54 up to the county line. Morris Bridge Road was paved from Skipper Road up to the river. From the river up to the county line was a dirt road.

So Hillsborough and Pasco was going to pave Morris Bridge Road to give us another road to travel. Pasco [County] paved it up to the county line. Something happened with Hillsborough [County] and their budget—whatever—they didn't pave it. Their excuse was, "The money is needed for somewhere else and there isn't enough traffic." It didn't generate enough traffic to pay for it.

A few years later, quite a few years later, Hillsborough [County] is growing out towards the University area. So they want a road out past the University, so they build [State Road] 581. They build it up to the county line. Pasco [County] says, "Okay. We'll build a part out to [State Road] 54. So Hillsborough [County] built theirs [quickly]. They got to Pasco[County] and said, "We're here. Are you going to build your?" Pasco [County] said, "Oh, when we can get some money." (laughs)

So that road sat there for a long time. And the people in Tampa and Hillsborough County named it "the Road To Nowhere." There was really nothing out there but cow pasture, at the time. That was prior to Pebble Creek and New Tampa wasn't known at that time. It was just a bunch of cow pastures. So all the young people in Tampa would go out there to do their drag racing. That was the "Road To Nowhere."

Eventually, after a period of time, Pasco [County] finally paved it on through. Once they paved it through, boy it started developing out that way. Once it started developing there, and it gave another road going into Wesley Chapel—ah—the first thing you know another little development started popping up here.

They came and built Saddlebrook. Of course Saddlebrook was not built to be a housing project like the ones you see along [State Road] 54. That was going to be for a certain group of people that like to play golf—they wanted the money people there.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: They gated it. You couldn't go buy your subdivision house there. It was for the money people. And it brought money. And when it brought money, then the next one started sprouting.

The people who managed to keep their groves, the price of oranges dropped, the price of land went up—you know? And the first thing you know—it's just easier, you can get rich by selling your land!

Why fight freezes, [purchasing for and applying] fertilizer, no rain [and a] poor crop this year? Sell it! Put the money in the bank and live forever. So that's what happened.

When I was a kid, I could walk down here to [State Road] 54, sometimes for an hour you wouldn't see a car. Not a car! Now when you get ready to leave [my home] I'm going to had to tell [you the] best way to try to get out, so you can get through all of this traffic, to get back on 54.

I told you we had a one-room schoolhouse?

WM: Um-huh.

BB: Years ago it was [grades] one through eight. By the time I got there it was down to grades one through six. When I was there we had one teacher.

In the whole school there might have been, in grades one through six, a dozen kids. The year I started in the first grade there was me and one boy, we were the only two. Since our mothers had already taught us how to count and how to write our names and how to do certain things, [within] half a year we had we had read every book that the teacher had for the first grade. She ran out of stuff for us to do. So she asked the school superintendent, “What am I going to do with these two boys? They [completed] every primer, everything we’ve got.” He said, “Well, put them in second grade.” So we did the first grade and the second grade the same year. (chuckles) And the second year of school I started in the third grade.

Well, when you got out of the sixth [grade], there was a school bus. The high school was in Dade City. The school bus started over on Highways 52 and 41. The bus picked up all of the high school kids, down [Highway] 41. Now years ago Land O’ Lakes wasn’t called Land O’ Lakes.

WM: What was it called years ago?

BB: It had three names, Gowers Corner was up at 52.

WM: Which corner?

BB: Gowers. (spelling) G-o-w-e-r-s.

WM: Okay.

BB: Gowers Corner was [at the intersection State Roads] 52 and 41. Then you come down to where the railroad track crossed 41 and Ehren Cutoff goes off, that was called Drexell.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: Then you come on past Drexell and you get to down to [the intersection of State Roads] 54 and 41, and that [was called] Denham (spells) D-e-n-h-a-m. There was no Land O’ Lakes [at this time].

That bus would start up at [State Road] 52, come down 41, picking up all of the kids that were high school age, to [State Road] 54—turn down 54, come to Wesley Chapel and you’d pick-up [students] through Wesley Chapel and turn on Curley Road, to go to Dade City.

From 52, down 41, across 54, to here wouldn't fill the bus with high school aged children. That tells you how populated we were.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: Now if you lived on 54, beyond Curley Road, you caught a bus that come from Zephyrhills and you went to Zephyrhills High School. But because we lived this side of Curley [Road] we went to Dade City [High School].

Well, if you wanted to play sports, or be in the band, or anything where you had to practice after school, you missed the bus. I always liked to play sports. If I stayed after school, I had to hitchhike home. I could get a ride with a boy that lived in Land O' Lakes, well actually he lived in Drexell.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: He had a car. I could ride with him from Dade City to San Antonio. Then he went on down [State Road] 52 and took the Ehren Cutoff. He wasn't going to make that loop around here to bring me home. I'd have to get out in San Antonio and start walking Curley Road, hoping to hitch a ride home. Once in a while a car would come along. If a car come along usually I know them and they know me and they picked me up. [But] there was plenty of times I walked that seven miles home. Therefore I didn't participate [in sports].

If you didn't practice, you didn't play. By the time I'd practice and then walk home, I'd be out to way after dark doing my chores. Daddy'd say, "You can play ball all you want, but your chores still have to be done." So it would up that I didn't get to do much in sports, because I couldn't stay up there and practice. I had to get on home.

WM: Yeah. Going back, a little bit, you said that the Williams Brothers first started the developing [in this area]?

BB: They first started selling lots up here. You could just come buy a lot.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: They didn't build houses.

WM: Right.

BB: They weren't the first. I don't know who developed Quail Hollow.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: Quail Hollow was actually the first that started.

WM: And about when was that?

BB: Oh goodness, Bill. Let's see. (pause)

WM: About how old were you at the time?

BB: That's what I'm trying to [figure]. I'm trying to relate it to what I was doing at the time. 'Cause I started at Sears in '53 and in '53 (clock chimes)—I'm going to say the early sixties.

WM: So that's when things started developing, in the early sixties?

BB: First started developing, um-huh.

WM: Was there any kind of—I don't know—public hearings or zoning—

BB: That part—I'm not aware of. At the time I was working in Tampa and—um—I was busy. I wasn't connected with what was going on in Pasco County government because I was working either in Tampa, or later on in St. Petersburg. I was only coming here [to Wesley Chapel] to sleep. (laughs)

WM: Right.

BB: I knew more about what was happening where I was working than I knew about what was happening here. As far as what was happening with local government about who was controlling the zoning, or whatever—that part I'm not sure.

I know that the building codes at that time were very lax. Now [if] you want to put in a subdivision you've got all kinds of hoops and hurdles you've got to jump through.

When Williams was putting in these streets, they didn't have to be built to a certain standard. Because when these people wanted the county to take over the streets, [the county] wouldn't take them over because they hadn't been built to code. You know?

I know that the building codes were pretty lax when all of that was done. What kind of [bureaucratic] hoops and hurdles Mr. Williams might have had to jump through, I'm sure, was nothing like what they have to do today.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: Because, as time went by, they no longer used the water system that he put in. The county put in a water system. The county come in and finally took over the roads, but they charged each homeowner a big fee to take it over. They had to come in and bring it up to standard and repave [the streets] and all of that kind of stuff.

WM: But thinking back to the sixties when folks started moving out here, what did you think about it then?

BB: Well, at the time, when they first started—that was before all of these “up-scale” [developments]. At the time I thought, “Lord they are buying this land and just running us over with mobile-homes. People who can’t afford to live in Tampa, they’re shipping them all out here.”

Because the first real influx [of people] was mobile-homes. I mean—boy—just piles of them. Because they were cheap and the taxes were cheap here. Their payments were cheap. You didn’t have to have good credit because Mr. Williams would finance the land.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: ‘Cause once you had a contract on the land, [they’d move it] the mobile home in for almost nothing down, or very little down. I thought, “Oh man! Here comes all of those people from Tampa that can’t afford a house—here they come!”

WM: So this wasn’t the money crew. This was the money-less crew?

BB: Right, just a totally different type of growth.

Now [if you pay attention] when you drive out of here. You drive by any of these big signs and they say, “Homes starting in the low \$200’s.”

WM: They’re not talking \$200.00 are they?

BB: No! They want \$200,000.00, see? When I—let me think a minute. You could buy land in 1960— let’s see I went in the Army in ’57 and come out in ’59. (pauses)

Even by ’69 you could buy an acre of land here for \$500.00. Now an acre of land here is anywhere from \$28,000.00 to \$50,000.00. Just for an acre of land, depending on where it’s at. Whether or not it’s under water. (laughs)

WM: (laughs)

BB: You know? So that’s how things have changed.

But the first real growth out here in the late sixties and early seventies was [people] buying lots and putting mobile homes on them. Up at the Double Branch Acres, there’s just mobile homes, all back through there, for miles. Angus Valley, if you’re familiar where Angus Valley is?

WM: I’m not.

BB: Well it's just on the other side of the Interstate. It was developed in the same thing—buy a lot and put a mobile home in it. That was over in the flatwoods that my father and I logged many years ago. The county permitted all of that and let them put lots in there without thoughts of drainage and this that and the other. I've been over there after a good hard rain and you'll see a mobile home just sitting out there and there's just water all the way around it; no place for the water to go.

So you were asking about the permitting process and all? Back in the sixties and seventies they weren't real strict with [it]. You know? If you bought it and wanted to plat it and you carried them a plan, I think you pretty much got what you wanted.

WM: So the first wave of development was largely mobile homes, trailer parks?

BB: Um-huh.

WM: How did you think that would change the community?

BB: I think that was the beginning of us becoming a bedroom [community] for Tampa.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: That was the beginning, kind of like Brandon's beginning. You know, I remember when I first went to Tampa, and used to go to Brandon. Brandon was mostly cow pastures. [State Road] 60 was a two-lane road. [There] were just one or two little stores out there. And now it's a bedroom for Tampa. That's the same way [Wesley Chapel] has become.

The people who moved out here in those mobile homes had to go to Tampa [to work]. You know there's a few jobs in Zephyrhills. There's a few jobs in Dade City. There's a few jobs in Brooksville. But the jobs are in Tampa or St. Petersburg. [That's] where the *jobs* are. See?

WM: Um-huh.

BB: So when [people] started moving out here it wasn't like Sun City. It wasn't retirees moving out here. It was families with kids, and the roads were starting to clog-up.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: Boyette Road, then, was a dirt road. And over where my grandfather's house is, he had a front porch that faced the road. But in the afternoons you couldn't sit on the porch because of all the dust from that road, from all of them cars going back and forth to Williams Acres. It'd just smoke you out.

That was my thought. Here comes another, like Brandon.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: Here comes another bedroom community. People have a place to sleep, but they're going to work in Tampa. "Unless you work in a convenience store, or McDonalds or go down here to Quail Hollow or Saddlebrook and cut grass, there's no industry of any type. There is nothing out here but service, service jobs. And you don't raise a family working at McDonalds.

WM: That's a lot of work for a little pay.

BB: Right.

WM: What kind of talk was there in the community from—I guess I'll call you all the "original settlers." What kind of talk was there among the long-term residents about this development?

BB: [They were] wondering if they had made a mistake selling their property.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: After a good number of years my Daddy often said, "We made money selling the property, but sometimes I wonder if it was worth it?" You know?

WM: Okay, but the first wave of development was the mobile homes and then people started building houses?

BB: Yeah. They came out first with a few builders. The growth that you see out here now, it didn't explode until the past ten years. Back in the eighties, you didn't see big sprawling subdivisions with big signs on the side of the road. Somebody would buy some property and you'd see a few houses go up. It just kind of slowly started.

Some of the talk I heard was that Hillsborough County drove a lot of people up here because they kept raising their tax base, trying to support what they had.

Our tax base was lower and people said, "Hum? A fifteen-minute drive, twenty-minute extra drive. I can get across the county line and my taxes are cheaper. I can have a bigger house. Once it started—there where Meadow Point is—

WM: Say what now?

BB: Meadow Point, it's there at the county line? Prior to Meadow Point—oh this was twenty years or so ago—somebody came out and bought some land from Porter and built a little settlement called "Williamsburg." It's where they've gone those New Tampa Shops, at [State Road] 56 now.

Right in the middle between, between those two is the little settlement called Williamsburg, they built that—oh, probably twenty years ago. Everybody thought that was a stretch. Somebody come out from Tampa and built that and Williamsburg was the first development out across the county line on [County Road] 581. For years it was the only one there.

I had a cousin that went down there and bought a house. Everybody said, “That’s the end of that. They bought some property, built some houses and it [seemed like] was too far to drive. [They believed you wouldn’t] see any more coming up.”

Well the next thing you know, across the street from Saddlebrook, somebody bought that property put in some streets and—poof—up come some houses! And it’s your traditional subdivision. When they built those, those houses sold for a hundred thousand or less.

Working people, a couple of guys from Sears, come out there and bought houses. They put that [subdivision] in. After a little while that was the new development out here.

But then when the nineties came—and once the ball started rolling all the builders just started coming up here and paying exorbitant for property. Here it come! Now there is no stopping it.

WM: (chuckles)

BB: The only thing that’s going to stop it is that they are overbuilding. Right now they got an inventory and they are trying to get rid of it.

I was looking at real estate transactions in the paper the other day.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: Usually you go down the transactions and when you get to Wesley Chapel and over half of “some builder” [selling a home] to a person. [Now] instead of being a [long list of transactions for Wesley Chapel] there was a [short list] and there were only two builders in there. All the rest [of the transactions] were people to people.

WM: Huh.

BB: Now they’ve got houses and they are having trouble unloading them. They[‘re] starting offer less money down, or they’ll give you a kitchen upgrade.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: They are trying to unload their inventory. So it may slow down some now, but the horse is out of the barn. You know [the traffic is so bad] I can’t hardly get out on the road now.

WM: I was going to ask how has this change affected you? Traffic is one. What are some of the other changes?

BB: Being retired a major change for me is the traffic. As you can tell, once you get behind the church and get back here to [my house] I'm pretty well self-contained. I've got my three acres. I got orange trees. We travel. We have a little house up in South Carolina. Got a little place up near the Ocala [National] Forest. So we go up to Ocala for a week or two. We go up to our little house—in fact we're leaving next weekend to go up to South Carolina for two weeks. Go up for the changing of the leaves.

So I don't have to go to work anymore. One difference for me is I don't have to drive to Zephyrhills or to Dade City or to Tampa for my basic needs any more. See—I used to have to at least go into Zephyrhills to even buy my groceries. Now, if I can get out on the highway, I can go down here two miles—we got Publix [Grocery Store] we got Walgreens [Drug Store]. Anything you need. They've got a discount auto parts. We don't have a hardware store. I still have to [go to] the Home Depot for hardware. But I only have to go out to Morris Bridge Road for Home Depot.

So [development has] made things a lot easier, as far as me going to get stuff I need for subsistence. I used to go buy groceries once a week. I'd go and buy a whole buggy full of groceries. Now I go to the grocery store three or four times a week and I buy a little bag.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: I've got to go to the post office, so while I'm out I go to Publix or Walgreens, or whatever. I still go to the doctor in Tampa. 'Cause I've been going to him for years—you know—you get a relationship with one.

WM: Oh yeah. He knows what ails you.

BB: Yeah. And I trust him. But just about everything else [is out here]. There are doctors out here. There's doctors right down at the Point of Care Clinic and all of this, but I still go to my doctor in Tampa.

WM: So the growth out here has made things more convenient for you?

BB: Oh yeah. Everything I need is right at the corner.

WM: What about the new people living out here? I mean—

BB: When I was a kid I knew every family. I knew their kids. I knew their uncles. I knew their aunts. Now I don't know fifty people in the whole neighborhood—you know. Most of them are recent [arrivals] and they are the only members of their family here, so there are no get-togethers on Sundays. The only get-together might be, if this guy and his neighbor may barbecue—you know?

Maybe at Meadow Point there will be a little group of them that will get together in a civic association or something. But it's not like it used to be when you were kin to everybody out here and you all went to one church—you know?

WM: Um-huh.

BB: So—ah—when I go in Publix to shop, most days I will not see a person I know, except I see the cashiers, but that's because she's familiar. I don't know her. I see her name on her [nametag], but I don't know her. (chuckles)

Once in a while I'll run into a cousin or I run into some old neighbor, but just like I used to talk about standing in the yard and looking at the lights [of Tampa]— Most of my cousins, all of my children just about—I got one child still in this area but all of them have moved somewhere else. Depending on their career, what they do—you know. We got one son in [South] Carolina. I've got a daughter in Knoxville. Now we've got one son who is five miles away. But most of the old core families that were here in the twenties, thirties and forties, most of their children have migrated somewhere else, either for jobs or whatever.

WM: So there are more people and less community?

BB: Exactly.

WM: When we were talking earlier, before the interview began you were telling me about how people in the community got together. I wonder if you could tell that again? Contrast the community then with the lack of community now.

BB: The difference between then and now is then—like I said—there were ten or fifteen core families. Through marriage most of us were related in some fashion, way or form. Since there were no movie theaters out here, no electricity, no TV—church was kind of our central meeting point. There's one church so if you went to church you went to that church. Or if you didn't go—as my grandfather'd say, “That heathen didn't come to church.” (laughs) So everybody would come to church.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: Then as a social activity different groups of the family would meet at somebody's house. Maybe this grandparent this Sunday and that grandparent [the next]. And there'd be four or five, six, seven sections of the family would gather for a Sunday dinner. All of the women would bring some kind of a dish or whatever and we'd have fabulous Sunday meals. After dinner all of the men would gather out on the porch and catch up on the week's events. All us kids were out playing, getting dirty and getting in trouble and fighting and getting yelled at and whatever. The women would be in the kitchen, cleaning up and or making ice cream, or serving pie, or whatever. But it was a social gathering and we were close. Everybody knew what was going on.

Now, for me, even my immediate family it's hard for me to get my total family together once or twice a year for a family reunion. Because they have job obligations, we're scattered—you know? My brother is down in Sarasota. My sister is in Seffner. And like I said, I got a daughter in Knoxville. I got a son in South Carolina.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: It's different from what it was. When I was a kid, women did not work. Women were housewives and mothers.

WM: They worked in the house.

BB: They worked in the house—what I meant is that they didn't have a job.

WM: Yeah, right I understand.

BB: They weren't a wage-earner.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: The men all worked and Mama raised the kids and cleaned the house and washed the clothes. I'll tell you that was a chore, with no electricity and no running water. That was a deal.

WM: That was a lot of work.

BB: Daddy bought Mama an old Maytag, gasoline engine, ringer washing machine. Fortunately, with us living right here and the school right there [close by]—

We had an old pitcher pump and I would pump her wash water on Sunday nights. Monday was washday. That was written in stone. You washed on Monday and ironed on Tuesday.

I would pump her wash water for Monday, on Sunday afternoon and I would fill two of the rinse tubs with cold water. The washing machine was set up and Daddy had made her a little "L" shaped bench. The old wringer washing machine sat here and there was a tub here, a tub here and a tub there.

WM: So, on three sides of the washing machine?

BB: There were tubs [on three sides, with the washer in the middle]. I'd fill these two [tubs] with cold water. Then we had a big old syrup kettle, that we used for making syrup, I would fill that syrup kettle full of cold water on Sunday afternoon. I'd pack the furnace full of wood Sunday afternoon. [The syrup kettle sat atop the furnace.] Then Monday morning—early!—when Momma got me up to do the chores, I'd go out and

light the fire under that kettle and start warming that water. [After] I got the chickens feed and the hogs slopped and all of that stuff I'd come in and eat my breakfast.

Then before I got cleaned up and put my school clothes on that water would be hot. I'd go out and dip the hot water and fill her washing machine and fill that first rinse tub with hot water. Then I'd get my clothes on—get ready for school. The last thing I'd do is run out there and crank that old washing machine for her, because she couldn't crank it.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: I'd crank it and get it going and she'd start washing. Well I'd walk on to school and start school. And you don't know [how many] Mondays that she'd be out there and come to the door [saying], "Miss Stewart?" and Miss Stewart would say, "Yes?" [Mama would say] "I need him just for a minute."

WM: (laughs)

She'd come get me because the old washer had quit running and she couldn't get it cranked. I'd have to come home and get it started for her. (laughs)

WM: You mentioned something about how families would swap work in the gardens and on the farm?

BB: When it was time to harvest people didn't—

Side 1 ends; side 2 begins.

BB: Ah—couldn't afford to hire outside help to come in. So what they would do is—the men would do whatever [it is] they do in the daytime. Like my Daddy would be logging.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: But then, whenever it was time for school to get out and all of us kids come home. If we were picking—me and my brother, my cousin and two or three other cousins—but those kids, from around, and if those men could help out, everybody would converge and we'd all pick till dark.

Then when it was time to pick his [beans] we'd go to Uncle Leslie's and pick. But you helped one another because we couldn't afford to hire [people to do the work]—you know?

WM: Um-huh.

BB: This day and time they go and hire some labor group, either Mexicans or whatever and they do the picking. Well if you have no money, who're you going to hire?

WM: Did you end up working in orange groves or was that after you had already [left home]?

BB: When I got—basically—we started putting out orange trees when I was a junior in high school. I was taking FFA [Future Farmers of America] and my project was citrus nursery. I planted a citrus nursery out here and me and Daddy would bud the trees. That's how we planted our grove, was out of our own nursery. But I used it as a FFA project. So we started putting the grove in when I was a junior and senior in high school.

But then when I went to Tampa and started school I still come up here and worked every weekend. Even after I went to work for Sears I still come helped Daddy. It was just something you do.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: It was a way of life, so I come up here. Even when I got married and I had children, when it was time to pick oranges, me and my wife and my kids, my brother and his wife and kids, my sister and her husband and kids, we'd be up here picking oranges with daddy. It's just—ah—you did that. You know?

WM: Back when you were growing up, were people—ah—were the houses kind of clustered together or were they spread out over the countryside?

BB: No. No. No houses were close together.

WM: About how far apart would you say they were?

BB: Anywhere from a quarter-mile to a half-mile to a mile. Our house—the church was —not the church building you see now but the old wooden church— was out there, just out from [where the] cemetery [is]. And the school building would be straight across the street from where that convenience store is now. Our house was back here. The very next house, about a half-mile down, was the Strickland's. Then another quarter-mile down [from that] was my Grandfather Cooper's [house]. Then about a quarter [mile] past him, was Uncle Hardy Cooper.

You go up Boyette road and go up a half-a-mile and there was my Granddaddy Boyette. Go past his house, eighty acres away and there was Uncle Boyd Boyette. Then the next one hundred and twenty acres (or whatever it was) was Uncle Fritz—you know?

Going [west] toward the Interstate [75]—of course there was no Interstate then— down there where there is a little strip [shopping] center just as you start down the hill towards Holly Brook [Development], the was a house. A man named Joe Thomas lived there.

Straight across, where Tupper Road comes out, there at the entrance to Saddlebrook, was our store. Uncle Jessie Stanley had a store there.

WM: He was your uncle?

BB: He was my great uncle; he was my Daddy's uncle. My great-uncle, but everybody just called him Uncle Jessie. Even people [for whom] he wasn't [their] uncle, everybody called him Uncle Jessie. (laughs)

Then, once you passed there, there was not another house until you got down to Big Cypress Creek where the Redbrooks lived.

But you go down [State Road] 54, the other side of the Interstate, there's a road called Old Pasco Road. Pasco Road was a dirt road, but you go up the dirt road a way and to the right there was a family, the man's name was Albert Godwin. You'd go on up [another] half-mile or so and there was a man named Jack Stewart that lived there. Go on up, three-quarters of a mile or so, and my Uncle Leslie had a house. He was on the backside of the old Boyette Homestead. Past Uncles Fritz's—there was nobody.

Over where all of the schools are now, is called Wells Road. There was a family named Wells that had a house over there. Then on the other side of Curley Road, way back in the woods, a man named Ruben Barnes had a house.

But that's the way the houses were scattered out.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: And what I said, the focal point for the community was the church. 'Cause you either saw the people at church or you saw them down at Uncle Jessie's store, or at a gathering on Sunday.

A lot of us didn't have cars. Some of the families did, some didn't. Some had a horse and buggy. But—ah—after the Depression—ah—a lot of people left here. Just the core families stayed. 'Cause in the Depression, what Daddy told me, things were tight as a tick out here. I mean—buddy you farmed to eat!

WM: Um-huh.

BB: About the only work around a little bit on the WPA [Works Progress Administration]. So a lot of people just had to pick up and leave.

WM: What about World War II, how did that [change the community]?

BB: World War II—ah—the part of it I remember— was a lot of the family having to leave home [and] go into the service, my uncles and stuff. If my Daddy hadn't a had bad high blood pressure he'd a been gone [into military service]. He was almost too old for the draft but they took him up and was going to draft him and he failed his physical. He come back 4-F, otherwise he'd a been gone in the service.

But the part about World War II, that I remember most is rationing, food [ration] stamps. You know—they gave you stamps, if you wanted to go buy sugar. If you didn't have a stamp, you didn't get to buy any sugar. I remember the rationing.

For us, out here—now in Tampa there was work for people. [They] went to the shipyards and stuff like that. For Daddy, it meant getting more timber down to Tampa Creosote – that kind of stuff.

But economically it didn't do a whole lot for the ones living right around here. First of all, they couldn't afford to drive to Tampa to get a job in the shipyard, or whatever. Your options were to move down there to work there.

I got a cousin that did that. He actually went to Tampa 'cause he had friends down there and lived in Tampa. He went down there without a car and five years later he comes back up here, buys property and he's driving a car. You know?

WM: (chuckles)

BB: 'Cause he made enough money working in the shipyards, he was able to come up here buy him some property, build him a house and he's driving a nice car. But when he went down there he didn't even have a car.

But economically World War II didn't bring a lot of money. The things I remember—meat was rationed. We always had cows and hogs and all of this stuff. And while it wasn't "big-time" we could sell— I guess you'd call it the black market— but we could take fresh meat. We'd kill a couple of cows and take it to Tampa. I know there was one market out in Sulfur Springs called Godwin's Market, a guy named Harry Godwin run it. You could take two cows in there and—buddy you could get sugar. You could get butter, things you couldn't get and you didn't have to have any stamps. You take him a cow and you could get some groceries. (laughs)

WM: You were bartering. (laughs)

BB: Tires were hard to get. We had trouble getting tires. Man! We did some real things to try and keep tires. Logging out in the woods, you'd run over stumps and stobbs and you punch holes in the tires. Well not only do tires cost money, but you couldn't get them. You had to be on a waiting list and all of this kind of stuff.

We'd have old tractors out there with tires that got so many holes in them we couldn't patch them any more. We were putting boots in them and patching tubes.

Daddy would take a chain and put a chain through the wheel and around the tire and we'd drive it flat, on the old tractors, just to pull them logs. With no air in the tire, the wheel would just spin inside the tire. So he'd put chains around the old rubber tire. There was no air in it, it was just worn out. We'd drive them old tractors on flat tires, to pull them logs, because we couldn't get [tires]. (laughs)

WM: You said that you all had livestock, tell me about that.

BB: Oh everybody—well nine out of ten people—you'd have you a milk cow, a brood sow. These you kept close to the house. Then you would have a few something-or-others, a few cows, a few hogs that, before the no-fence law, ran in the woods. Because you could sell a cow and get enough money to buy school clothes, or something like that.

Daddy had maybe ten, fifteen or twenty head of cattle, when we had to give them up, maybe a little more than that. [He had] several hogs. We would bring in three or four and put in a pen to fatten-up for killing. Because when they just range out there eating what they can get, they don't get real fat.

We called them "Scrub cows." You'd have to bring them in and feed them up before killing them, or butchering them, whatever.

Most of the families had—nearly everybody had a milk cow, had a chicken pen. You couldn't run to the store and get a dozen eggs. You raised your own. There wasn't no milkman to deliver the milk and set it on the corner. Man we were lucky to have an iceman that come once a week; and your ice didn't last a whole week. So you had to have your own milk. You had to have your own eggs.

WM: Um-huh.

BB: Mama had a big old thing, you didn't buy two pounds of flour. We bought fifty pounds, you know because Mama made biscuits three times a day, or corn bread. You couldn't go to the store and get a loaf of bread; you had to make the bread.

WM: But most of your neighbors kept livestock too?

BB: Um-huh.

WM: I'm just thinking about the contrast between "then", with the livestock and "now" with—

BB: Now all you see is a few people that have a horse—you know? I don't know of anybody out here now that's got a milk-cow. I don't know of anybody out here that's got a hog pen in the back yard any more. You know?

WM: I guess they'd have a little trouble getting that past the zoning board.

BB: Yeah. Can you imagine that? Somebody in the middle of Meadow Point with a hog in their back yard? Their neighbors would be screaming. There'd be code enforcement out there and the guy would be in jail! (laughs)

WM: Yeah, I don't think that would last too long.

What do you foresee for the future?

BB: I think, because we've allowed ourselves to overbuild—when I say we I'm talking about all our county officials and everybody, we've allowed—we've overgrown our infrastructure. Our roads can't handle what we've got. Now, they keep increasing the impact fees. Taxes are going up. What they do, is they say, "We're lowering the tax rate." But if your house was assessed at a [value of] \$100,000.00, now they are saying it's worth \$200,000.00. They lower the tax rate, but when they raise your assessment, your taxes still go up. That's what they're doing. They're doing it here. They're doing it in Marion County. I got property up in Marion County.

I got property in Anderson County, South Carolina. They just done that to me two years ago. Almost doubled the value of my house. [They] lowered the tax rate, doubled the value. The tax went up— see what I mean? — because it's worth more.

Right now there is a big development that's on the planning board, up by San Antonio. They're going to be a big three-stage monster development called Belle Verde. You may have heard of it?

WM: No.

BB: It's going to be Belle Verde. That thing has been put off now for the third time in two years. There is nothing there but a sign. And I know it's because we're just gluttoned. If you were to leave here and go towards Zephyrhills, you'd go out her two or three miles— [you'd see] new buildings going up. New buildings, new buildings, new buildings.

You can turn right on Meadow Point Boulevard and it will take you all the way back to the [Hillsborough] County line. When I was a kid that was all cow pastures. I was telling you about the no-fence law?

WM: Um-huh.

BB: Back where all of those new houses are going up now, was nothing but open woods. When I was a kid we had to get all of the livestock up. You know families helping families. We was over there getting hogs and cows up from there. Now, you just leave [State Road] 54 and it's houses all the way to Tampa.

WM: Hmm.

BB: All the way! You just finally come out at Meadow Point, there at the County Line and [State Road] 581. And it's just houses! It's just like the ground just sprouted houses. Just thousands and thousands and thousands.

WM: Like mushrooms.

BB: I think now, there is going to be some slow down. Now, instead of these massive developments I think it is going to start getting more selective. Smaller developments here because they got so many houses that they're not selling.

I got a daughter-in-law that's a real estate agent, in fact it's Jessica's mother [in reference to Jessica Brown who suggested interviewing Mr. Boyette.]

WM: Um-huh

BB: [She says] a lot of people bought these houses expecting not to be in them long. So they bought them with a very small down payment. Some of them are interest-only payments. Some of them are balloon [mortgages] that are going to hit them here in three or four or five years. There's going to be a lot of these people that are going to [be] moving out of them houses. And they are going to be back on the market.

I look for the building boom to slow down some. I don't think it's going to stop, because even though Pasco County is [increasing] their impact fees [and], they are upping their taxes it's still much cheaper than Hillsborough. I still see the people coming here.

But the growth is, even now, beginning to creep on in to Hernando County. And where all of the growth for the past ten years has been either over on the other side [of the Veteran's Expressway]. That [has] exploded on [State Road] 54. The growth has been on the 54 Corridor.

Now it's beginning to move up to the [State Road] 52 Corridor. Belle Verde is on 52. And they are having second thoughts. It's just sitting there, still cow pasture, except there are no cows in it.

WM: (laughs)

BB: Pretty soon you're going to see one of two things happen, they'll have to start putting some roads in and building houses. Or, you're going to see cows back there. They will lease it out so they can get back the Greenbelt [tax reduction] on it. 'Cause you can't have Greenbelt if you don't have some [agricultural] activity on it.

WM: Just to make sure I understand [you], Greenbelt is where they pay lower taxes because it's farming?

BB: You lower your taxes because it's agricultural. But you have to have a functioning agricultural venture of some nature. You can't just say, "I'm going to have a pasture."

WM: You can't turn a cow loose on it and call it Greenbelt.

BB:[Yeah] throw a cow in there and say there is a cow on it. You've got to be buying and selling and show a loss or a profit, so you can get Greenbelt.

But we're over built. I don't know why—it's not just Pasco County, it seems to be everywhere. It seems like we do everything backwards. We've built so many houses the roads can't handle it. Then we come in and start tearing up all of the water lines, moving all of the power poles and try to build enough road to move the people.

Why they don't put in the infrastructure first, put in the roads, put the right water in and power in and then put the houses [in]—I don't know. But we always build a pile of houses then when the houses. Then the traffic [backs up and] we're sitting on the highway and can't go and then say, "Well I guess we ought to raise the tax and make that a four-lane."

Then all of the power poles have to be moved water lines have to be moved. The cost is unreal.

WM: Maybe they want to make it that much more inconvenient. Maybe they want to have a constant source of annoyance.

BB: Yep.

WM: Maybe that has something to do with it.

BB: But the difference in the neighborhoods is that most people that come and buy in these subdivisions—they're not long-term residents. They are buying the house, either to live there two to five years. They are going to sell it make money on and move somewhere else. It's a different community. Years ago when you bought a house; you were probably going to die there.

WM: It's a much more mobile society today

BB: But people move. They are moving because of their jobs. They move down here and a hurricane comes and they say, "My God! I didn't know that Florida had hurricanes."

WM: (laughs)

BB: So they put their house up for sale.

Like I said, my daughter's up in Knoxville, the people who have been there a long time have a name for people that are moving from Florida to Tennessee. They call them "Halfbacks." They move from Michigan to Florida. Then the taxes and the hurricane get them. They don't want to move back to Michigan. It's too cold. So they move half-way back. So they call them halfbacks.

WM: Well, I've been throwing questions at you for the past two hours I guess. Is there anything you want to comment on that I haven't managed to ask about?

BB: Oh I don't know. I guess some concerns I have, what's going to happen with future growth. We've allowed overbuilding and poor planning to get us into this mess, now to where I just don't know what the next phase is going to be.

I don't anticipate the tremendous growth we've had these past ten years, but I think it's going to continue to grow. Because it is still cheaper to live here [in Pasco County] than it is in Hillsborough County. So they are still going to come. But until they get over this hump now—of being over built—I think it's going to slow down some. But what's going to happen next?

Now they are [putting four lanes on State Road] 54 on the other side of [Interstate] 75. Once they get that [finished] they are supposed to move over here and four-lane 54, from 75 down to Curley Road. Then they are going to stop there, for the time being. Then they are supposed to re-align Curley to come out on 54 further down. They are supposed to re-align 54 to come out of Zephyrhills differently than it does now and it will come out on what they call Eiland Boulevard and come straight across.

[The State Road] 54 that we know now, once you leave here it starts bearing to the south and bears around and then gently curves back into Zephyrhills. They are going to eliminate that and bring it straight out Eiland Boulevard and connect it just the other side of Curley. So they are going to re-align Curley, re-align 54. That's why they are going to stop four-laning at Curley until they get all of that re-alignment done.

Then eventually they will four-lane right on to "New" [State Road] 54 all the way to Zephyrhills. By the time they get that four-laned and all the stuff that's on the planning board that hasn't been built yet, this [road] is going to need to be six lanes. But it's not, [it will be four lanes] and then when that won't handle it?

I was talking to the preacher out here the other day, and because of the cemetery rather than go to the hassle of relocating all of those graves they're going to push the road that way. It will be a little jog. When they come up the hill it will jog a little over to the north, past the cemetery and then kind of come back.

Well, they've got to buy several of those houses there and wipe out that store and all of this kind of stuff. I won't live to see it. But in ten, fifteen or twenty years from now, if something doesn't happen they are going to six-lane [that road].

I'm just not sure that we—

WM: That we haven't got it figured out yet.

BB: Exactly.

WM: Okay, well that point of confusion might seem to be a good place to conclude.

BB: All right.

WM: I want to thank you for taking the time to talk with me.

BB: Oh, I've enjoyed it.

WM: Well good. I want to remind you that the information you've shared with me this morning will be deposited in the Special Collections of the University of South Florida's Library. In order for scholars—researchers to have access to it I need to get you to sign a release form.

BB: No problem.

WM: Also, I've been photographing everybody I've interviewed. Do you mind if I take your picture?

BB: (laughs) No, not exactly.

WM: Okay my camera can handle a lot.

BB: (laughs) I may break it.

WM: Well, we'll find out. But let me shut this thing off.

end of interview