

Oral History Collection

Anna Howington

Interviewer: Basmah Arshad

Date: Unknown

Place of Interview: Garland, Texas

Basmah Arshad: All right. Hello. It is currently 10:04 AM here in Garland, TX. My name is Basma Arshad, with me today is Anna Howington, who is speaking to me from New York. Yes, where the local time there is 11:04 AM EST and we are speaking to each other via zoom to report Anna's oral history for the Milpa Agricultural Placemaking project will, which will be housed within the University of North Texas Oral history program. Anna it's really good to have you here.

Anna Howington: Thanks. Happy to be here.

Basmah Arshad: And also, with us today is Miguel Veliz. He Miguel Veliz. He is my colleague, within the Milpa Agricultural Placemaking project and he is currently in Arlington, TX. So, we're all zooming in together and he may chime in as needed. All right, so let's start the beginning, Anna. When and when were you born?

Anna Howington: So, I was born March 27, 1986, in a house on Austin Street in Denton, TX. Yeah.

Basmah Arshad: Were you born at the Evers farm?

Howington: No, but I moved there. I think I was about two years old or almost two years old when we moved there and my sister was born on the Evers' farm, in the house there.

Arshad: How much of an age gap is there between you and your sister?

Howington: I think 2 1/2 years. Let me see. I'm not 100% sure just like 2 1/2, Two and a half, three, years. Yeah.

Arshad: Do you remember her birth?

Howington: No, I was. I was way too young. But my brothers probably do. I think they do because. They're a bit older.

Arshad: So, what was your childhood like then? How big is your family?

Howington: So, I have two older brothers, Daniel Howington and Abraham Howington. And one younger sister, Isabel Eccles. That's her married name. She was Isabel Howington as well. And my mom and my dad. And, yeah. Growing up on the Evers farm, it was magical. It's an absolutely beautiful piece of property. It was full of wildlife. You know,

everything from foxes and owls to turtles, Bunny rabbits. We had all kinds of animals, pets, you know, dogs, cats. You that cats that we didn't get, they just like came up on the property and we kind of adopted them. Yeah, it was. It was really magical. It was a really beautiful place and cows too. There was a guy that kept cows on the property. So. Yeah.

Arshad: Beautiful.

Howington: Guinea pigs. We had a little like shed for the Guinea pigs outside and, and rabbits too. We kept some. We kept. There were wild rabbits and then also some pet rabbits we had. So yeah, it was. It was great.

Arshad: Sounds like a child's dream home.

Howington: Yeah, it was. It was really wonderful. We used to. We would go out sometimes like a little far from the house, like on the weekends. Like, I don't know, maybe 100, several hundred yards. I'm not good, with little ways away, you know, like a like a 10-minute walk away from the house maybe. And we'd set up these campsites so it was like we were going camping and we called it camp turtleback and it

was just this little area where we would go and camp on the weekends. Sometimes my dad would set up camps and we'd put hammocks up and, you know, have fires and tell stories. And, you know, we could just see our house, like, through the trees. But it felt like we were like a world away.

Arshad: Really lovely. I realize I may have jumped a gun a little. Can you give us some information like where to place Evers Farm within Denton?

Howington: Let me see. I don't want to get this wrong, so it's like just outside of town. It's kind of. I mean, now that Denton's gotten so big, it would be considered in town. But back when I was growing up, it was like right on the edge of town. I would consider it. Yeah. And it was great because I could go to. When I went to elementary school, it was just a short walk from the house. So, it's just right down the hill and then the middle school was also just right down the hill. The Strickland Middle School and Evers Elementary School. So, yeah. So that's where it's kind of situated. I want to make sure I get the directions correctly. But I believe it's the northwest corner of town. Yeah.

So, kind of on the northwest corner of town. Is where you would. Where you would consider it situated.

Arshad: Very cozy place.

Howington: Yeah, it was wonderful. It was wonderful. I mean, the house was really old. Didn't have any central air or heat, so in the summertime there was one AC unit that we had. And it was in what we considered like the TV room. Even though we didn't have a TV until I was like, 12 years old, cause my parents were like, you know, they were kind of hippies. They didn't want us, like, just like sitting in front of the TV, they wanted to get outside, you know, and, and get creative or, like, do other things. So, it was a very long time before we had a TV. But the room that had the air conditioner in it because it was so hot. In the summer times it was like. Right off the kitchen. And then my parent's room was on the other side of. It so we put a big blanket up because there was no door between the kitchen and that room. Put a big blanket up and we turned on the air conditioner and all four of us would pile in that room on like

air mattresses and the couch. And then we'd open the door to my parent's room and have, like, a box fan blowing. The cold air into their room, so we would all sleep together and that little like part of the house. Just so we weren't like, you know. Boiling hot at night so it was- and that was fun. And we used to get in trouble because we wouldn't stop talking, you know, and be like they tried to get us to go to bed and we'd just be like chatting, chatting, chatting. And so sometimes we get, you know, kicked out of the room. We had to go sleep in our hot room because we wouldn't shut up. You know, we just wanted to stay up. You know how kids are, so. Yeah.

Arshad: It sounds so magical. Really fun.

Howington: Yeah, yeah, but my brother Abe, he used to like to sleep on the porch. So, a lot of times he'd just go sleep outside on the porch because there's this beautiful screened in porch. So yeah.

Arshad: I mean, how long has the property been in your family?

Howington: It's not my family's property. We just rented it. So my dad worked sometimes for this guy named Bob Tripp, and he was, it was his family's property,

and he loved that property and he owned the hardware store in town. And my dad's- He's like a contractor. So, he like remodels homes. So, he was in and out of that hardware store all the time. They became good friends. And they rented it to my dad. Bob Tripp it to my dad for something like, I think it was like \$300.00 a month. It was crazy. It was like crazy cheap. So, because he kind of just wanted a family there to, like, look after the property. So, we lived there and I don't think he ever raised the rent on us in the like I want to say 10 or 11 years that we lived there so. Yeah, but then he passed away, and then the family kind of took it over. And so, we moved out after that. But yeah.

Arshad: Do you know anything more about the history of this farm?

Howington: The history of the farm itself? Well, I know it used to be a lot bigger, and they sold off parcels of land over time. By the time we got there. It was their, like country house. I know that. So, like the Evers family was a really prominent family in Denton. And they, if you've ever heard of the

Evers mansion. That's on, I think it's yes on Oak Street, it's this beautiful big white mansion and I want to say, let me see where that's at exactly. Let me make sure I get this right. So. It's on the corner of West Oak and Welch.

Arshad: Ok.

Howington: So that's where their main house was. And then. They had this other house which was the Evers farm, that they, but it was like a working farm like they had there was a barn there. I know they had chickens there. But that was like they're kind of like country escape and there's some really good information on it. And there was another oral history that was taken a really long time ago by UNT about the Evers family. I want to say it was in, like the 1980s maybe, but they talked to a couple of family members from the Evers family and they give a lot of good information and then I know that they bought the property in the early 1900s. I don't know if it was like 1900 or 1901, but I can actually send you the article because we found the article in the Denton Record Chronicle about the sale. And they bought it from a watchmaker who

was a watchmaker in town. And yeah so, that's really kind of interesting. And so, I don't know if the house was already there or if they built the house when they bought it. I want to say the House was already there because it seems like they watchmaker lived there, but I'm not 100% sure, so I'll have to pull that article from I think, they found it on Chronicling America the site with all the, you know, old newspapers, which coincidentally my mom worked on when she was at UNT, because she's a librarian and she worked on the Texas portal history. I think that's how this Texas portal history she, you know, gathered a bunch of newspapers. All over Texas. And they were, you know, taking the pictures of them and uploading them online. And, you know, doing all the cataloguing so. I love looking at old newspapers. I also have a degree in history, so yeah. Yeah.

Arshad: Beautiful, yeah. We've got a little history colloquium then.

Howington: Yeah, yeah, just a bachelors. But you know, I want to go back one day, so hopefully.

Arshad: Fingers crossed.

Howington: Yeah, soon as I find the time. [Laughter]

Arshad: Well, tell me more then. What was your experience like? Well, where did? You get your bachelor's in history, actually.

Howington: Oh, I got it from SUNY York. Yeah, and I actually, I went to the University of North Texas when I first got out of high school, and I went there for about two years, and then I was like, I grew up in Denton. I need to get out of Denton. I need to see the world. So, I moved to New York City when I was 20. And I kind of always had plans to go back to school, but life just happened. You know, I got married, I started businesses. You know, I moved to Westchester and then. Never really found the time to go back and then COVID hit. And I was like, ok, I don't have anything to do, you know, my businesses went under cause they're Pilates studios, so couldn't train any clients. Everything was shut down here for a very, very long time. So, I went back to school and it started out at UNT, studying dance but you know at 37 I'm not going to think I was going to go back to that, and so I went

back for history. And so, I graduated and I think
'23. Yeah, 2023. So just a few years ago.

Arshad: Yeah, congratulations.

Howington: Yeah. Yeah, it was really fun. I loved it.

Arshad: So.

Howington: Yeah, they started my business again. So now I
have no time, but yeah.

Arshad: Double congratulations. That's amazing. So, until you
were 20, you spent the vast majority of. Your life
in Denton, correct?

Howington: Yes, yeah.

Arshad: And most of it was in that house in Evers Farm.

Howington: It was from '88 to '99, so about 11 years.

Arshad: The bulk of your childhood.

Howington: Yeah, I think the most formative years, I think
the most magical years to be a child is, is that
like, you know, age range so. It was great. But we
used to just run all over that property. I mean,
my brothers would make these like ramps for their
bikes. We would build forts everywhere. You know,
we would go fishing for tadpoles and. You know.

Picking flowers and just like, you know, letting our imagination run wild. And it was just it was. It was really great, you know. Yeah.

Arshad: And you paint a picture for me. Well, how big was that house?

Howington: It wasn't. It's not that big. Uh, they've added on to it a bit since then, which coincidentally, my dad was the one that did those additions. Or one of the ones that did those additions because he knew the house so well, so he did a lot of work on that house over the years from the time before we lived there while we lived there after we lived there. So, he knows a lot about what the materials are the different historic aspects to it. He also worked on the Selby House in town, so he's really well versed and historic homes in Denton specifically. So, if you ever wanted to talk to anybody about that side of things, I highly recommend talking to him. But the house itself, it wasn't like huge. There's about 3 bedrooms, living room a smaller what I think originally was a dining room, but we kind of turned it into a TV room and then a kitchen. And then there was the- a little

small back porch and a big wrap around front porch. And. Yeah, it was. It was, it was older for sure. We had a fireplace. We used to have fires in the fireplace and we had. They were like gas heaters in all the rooms that had, like, flames in them, which I think was, I don't think they have many of those anymore. And in the bathrooms, we didn't have a shower. We only had a bathtub, one no two bathtubs, but one was in my brother's bathroom, and I didn't use that bathroom 'cause it was the boys bathroom. And it was gross. And yeah, but no shower on the back porch. There were a couple little things I remember that just were not very common in other homes. But on the back porch, there was this hand crank ice. Uh cruncher. You know where it where it? What is it? What do they call it when it crumbles ice? The. I don't know, like the shreds ice it makes like.

Arshad: Yeah. A snow cone machine?

Howington: Kind of. But it was a little they were a little bit bigger pieces and I just remember in the summertime we would like crunch ice and then just like eat it. It was great. But yeah, the, my sister

and I shared a room and then. My brothers shared a room, and in between those two rooms were these beautiful french doors. And then my parents room was on the other side of the house. Yeah, yeah. But big, tall, beautiful windows. I mean, I'm sure you guys have seen pictures of it. They did do quite a lot of remodeling when, when they took over the house, not like to the exterior at all, but just to like how some of the rooms were situated and then they converted the attic. Into a room as well. And, I think they put a small addition on the. Back. Oh, but there was this. There was this adorable doghouse in the backyard. And I wonder if it's still there. I hope it's still there, but it literally looked like a small house. Whoever built it, they put a lot of work into it, a lot of care, because it was. It was. You know I want to say. It was like 4 foot by 4 foot, probably little square. It had shingles on it and paneling on the side and like yeah, our dogs never went in it because they slept in the house with us. But I think you know, somebody built that for their dog there. You know, I want actually I think I think it was Bob Tripp's uncle that lived there when he was growing up, and

I think he built that dog house. Yeah. And there was a big barn in the back. It was full of hay, and we would go and, like, play in that all the time and jump off of these barrels of hay into these big piles of hay. And then there was an old chicken coop that was just full of stuff, all kinds of stuff. Papers and, ohh Bob Tripp was an electrical engineer, and so he had all kinds of like electrical parts and you know things in that chicken coop. And so that was just full of stuff. And then my dad had built a small workshop right by it, which is still there. Those the chicken coop is still there, but the workshop is still there. The barn is still there. And then. After we left, they built a big, like garage. But, yeah, like a covered garage area. So those are all the structures I know that are there.

Arshad: Sounds like such a place. There's so much love in this place. It's really beautiful to see here.

Howington: Yeah. Well, we did love it there. You know, we were four kids, and we were, you know, it was the 90s, so we were outside, you know, we weren't

sitting on our phones, you know? So that place was our entertainment.

Arshad: Ok.

Howington: And we weren't. We didn't have a lot of money. So, like. Like you know, that's what we had, we had this, this beautiful property that we were living on. And, Ohh, there was this water tower and the windmill in the back. And like we used to climb up that thing my brother Abe would climb all the way to the top of the water tower. Like all the time. And the wind will all the time. And it would. Just be like. ok. Like nobody. I feel like if you saw any kid doing that today, they'd probably call the police, but. Yeah, yeah, that was great. Still didn't work, but I think it. Could get working again. I know that the well's still there so.

Arshad: May ask us how tall the windmill was, or the water tower.

Howington: I don't know. It was really tall, though it was. It went higher than house. So, it was really tall and you can see pictures of it. I think you guys have photos of it too that we took. And then there was, like, my dad built this little like rock. Out

of these like I want to say it was like sandstone rock. This little like table and chair. He like carved it out of rock and put it together. Right by the windmill. And then we also, I don't know we had a lot of, like, like campfires down at camp turtleback and then also behind the house by the by the windmill on the water tower. We have like a fire ring. So, we would go out there. And have fires. And my dad's like a- one of the best storytellers. You'd ever meet, he just had the greatest stories from his childhood. And so, he'd, you know, tell the stories tells Ghost stories, you know, and funny stories from his own childhood. And yeah, so that's kind of like was some of our best memories out there. We'd roast marshmallows and- Yeah. Yeah. And it was always like, because my parents, like, really loved music. And my dad, like, would just be like blasting records all the time in the house. And it was great cause we didn't live by anybody, so we could listen to music really loud. We could be as loud as we wanted. We could, you know, holler at each other, which I'm sure we did as kids. But like it was, it was. There was just a kind of freedom there that I felt definitely

got lost when we moved to a neighborhood. I mean, I think my dad actually still blasts records pretty regularly, but it felt a little bit less, you know. You know, we could. It wasn't as big of a deal out there. So, a lot of jazz, a lot of like weather report, you know Herbie Hancock. Just a lot of music was always kind of going. So.

Arshad: You all enjoyed growing up there. Then yeah, yeah.

Howington: And we have a lot of my dad's an artist too. So, he's a painter. He went to the University of North Texas as well. Actually, there's painting of his hanging in there. And so there's we have a ton of paintings of the house, too, of the House of the property. So. Some very large, really beautiful like oil paintings, so. Yeah.

Arshad: That's amazing.

Howington: And yeah, it was great. It was a great childhood. My mom was a stay-at-home mom and she like, I don't know that. Woman's just. An amazing mom. She just loved being a mom, so it was a great childhood for that reason, and she would bake a lot. In that house, she baked a lot, and we would have baking competitions. Where like the four of us would like

see who made the best cake, you know? And then we'd have her like choose. You know, So. And one time my brother won the baking contest, and I was so upset and I started crying and he was like, stop crying, Anna! I think I must spend like, maybe 7 years old. And so. He picked up a pair of scissors because he wasn't that old either, and he threw him. But he was just trying to get. Me to stop crying. And they landed in my leg and he felt so bad. I probably shouldn't tell that story. Horrible! And so, he was like, I'm so sorry. You can win the baking contest. Anyway. You know, you could take that out if he's. I think he still feels bad about that because he said something to me about that, as an adult. He's like. I feel so bad about that. I was like. I don't even think he knew they were scissors. I think he just picked up the closest. Thing and like you know yeah, you get 4 wild kids and it's, yeah.

Arshad: Sibling hijinks, happens. Yeah. Do you want to tell us any other specific memories from growing up there? You have such beautiful stories, so I'm very intrigued.

Howington: Let me think. Specific stories. One time we were about to leave for vacation. And vacation and my family. We didn't. We didn't go on like vacation, vacation, like vacation was driving down to my grandma's house in Orange, TX, you know, or to the beach where my grandma would get a beach house for all of the family for about a week. And on Bolivar Island, which is like just north of Galveston. So, but we were about to leave. I can't remember where we were going, but we were going down that way, either to where my dad grew up or to the beach and, there was this dog that showed up on the property and it was this Basset Hound and it was so sweet and we just loved this dog and it was just the most adorable dog. And this was like, literally the morning we were about to leave for, for vacation and we begged our parents let don't make us go. We need to save this dog, you know. And we had a couple of other dogs too, you know. So, we kept them at the house, like, just begging them. They were trying to leave in the morning. And I don't think we left until late that afternoon because we were just trying to get them to keep this dog, this adorable dog, you know, it didn't have any collar,

you know, they didn't have microchips or anything back there. And we were like, well, we'll go around and see if anybody has any signs up and. There wasn't anything, and so we named it Boeing and, or Bing. I can't remember if it was Boeing or Bing. I think was being after like a surfboard company or a or a skateboard company. But oh, it was such a great dog. And so, my parents were like, ok, look, we'll put food out and we'll put water out and, you know, the person that's coming to check on the dogs anyway, they'll see if the dog is here. But we have to go. You know, we can't stick around for this dog. And so, I just remember the whole time we were away, we were just like, oh, man, we hope that dog's there and we get back. It wasn't. I don't know what happened to that dog, but I've always. I've always wondered what happened to that dog. But my mom was big on, like, trying to save animals so she would bring like dogs home and things like that and would drive my dad crazy. Be like we can't take another dog, you know? But they always did, you know. So, and then we had this one dog, Ringo, who was uh, he was a sheltie. And so, he was always out there trying to herd the cows.

And we had this long driveway that we would drive up to get to the house. And that's and that was another thing about the driveway. I'll get to that in a second. But we had this long driveway and Ringo was our dog. And the sheltie, and he would chase the car, he would run around the car all the way up the driveway, every single time we came home. And it was so nerve-wracking cause you were like ohh this dog's going to get hit. But then eventually you just learned like he did get hit one time, but it wasn't by us because we knew. Like how to drive like a certain rate so he wouldn't and then one time my aunt. Came up from Orange TX and she was driving, and she didn't know how like you were like the pace you were supposed to go and she ran over his leg and he broke his leg. But he survived. He was fine, lived for many more years after that they got a cast, everything like that. We couldn't stop him like he was gonna run his favorite thing to do was when we pulled up that gate. He would right out of the house and run. All the way down the driveway and just start circling the car as we came up the driveway like he was herding us back to the house you know and. And

every time we'd come home and every time we'd left, somebody would have to get out and get the gate. And so, we'd always fight. I got the gate last time you get out and get the gate, you know, it'd be like, 100° outside in the summertime. And so, we'd be in the car like fighting, who is going to get the gate? You know, and it always have to be one of those kids 'cause you know, our mom wasn't going to get out of the car and go get that gate, you know? So that was always a point of contention. I actually have a picture right behind me of the floor of us sitting on the gate. I'm going to grab it real quick.

Arshad: Yeah.

Howington: I put this in but.

Arshad: Yeah.

Howington: Ohh, let's see. Can you see that?

Arshad: Let's see it. Oh, that's cute. It's a big gate.

Howington: The big gate. Yeah. So uh, yeah, that's my sister Isabel. That's me. That's Abe. And that's Daniel.

Arshad: Oh!

Howington: Yeah. And this is our friend, our family friend Richard, who took this photo. And he has a lot of photos of the place as well.

Arshad: Yeah, that's an amazing photograph.

Howington: Yeah, we're really young here. Get it back up.
Sorry.

Arshad: You're good.

Howington: All right. Yeah.

Arshad: Yeah. Ok, a related question, not animal related, but plants related. Did you have any? Specific plants that your remember grew up there.

Howington: Ohh yeah, well there were a ton of. There was a ton of wildflowers, so there were these big meadows. Two big meadows, actually. And every spring we'd get like, you know, Indian paintbrushes. And what are those ones called the Mexican hats with the? The cone. Kind of tops, but yeah. And then. Yeah, just all kinds of beautiful white primroses. That was really cool. Bluebonnets. Lots of irises too. But that was more like around the house. There would be a lot of irises that popped up every year. Yeah. And then just like the oak trees. The oak

trees all over that property are beautiful. They're, they're amazing. They're old growth oak trees. There's a ton of them. And they would just, they're so shady and. You know, they just surround the house and what else was there? A lot of Mesquite trees, you know, especially around the ponds because there are two ponds, one back towards and they're not there anymore because they- they actually they bulldozed a lot of that property when we left. And it was really devastating because the amount of wildlife and plant life that was destroyed- was, it's just incalculable. I can't even imagine. I just. That was one of the most tragic things of my life, one of one of the of my young life of my childhood life. But yeah, so but Mesquite trees and you know. Yeah, Sycamore trees. I'm not as good with plants, so I don't know all of their names as well. My brother would be better with that. I could ask him but, yeah. But it was just wildlife everywhere. It was just so many animals, you know, they just because the land itself was wild, it wasn't cultivated, it wasn't like. You know, maybe at one point it was, I think that there was some pecan orchards close by, but I

want to say that was in one of the parts of the land that had used to be that used to be there, but that they sold off. But that land itself that was left, I think it's about 24 acres and now it's going to be only 10 because they're going to. Develop half of it. It was just wild land. It was just overgrown, and we had little trails, you know, through it. But. But it was just it was a. It was a great habitat. For the animals. And, yeah, I hope it's growing back. You know, I think there was a lot of devastation to that property that happened. Yeah, but it that's the beautiful thing about nature is that it can come back, you know. But you know it's interesting because the part of the property that they're keeping was the least touched by the, you know, bulldozers and stuff that came in when we were leaving as we left as we moved out. Umm. Yeah, there wasn't as much like, brush growth there on that side of the property so. Yeah, yeah.

Arshad: Do you remember clicking with any of the plants or growing specific plants? Too?

Howington: Oh yeah, my mom would grow like tomatoes, and then there's so. The back part of the house. Like right

behind the house, that part of the property is like flat and super sunny. So, it was a great place we had- She had, you know, tomatoes out there. And then there was, like, there was. I want to say they grew other things too, but I can't remember specifically. I just remember the tomatoes. More than anything.

Arshad: Yeah.

Howington: Yeah.

Arshad: What about any of the animals?

Howington: So, there were cows there, probably about anywhere from a dozen to a half dozen at any given time. That was the other thing with the cows. So, the cows? Uh, there was some guy. I can't remember his name. Who kept cows out there. But there was one bull. And that bull was scary! You didn't want to mess with the bull and the cows themselves were a little bit more docile, but uh, if they we had like a fence around our yard, pretty makeshift fence but had barbed wire on it. And so like, that was around the house. And so, the if you left the gate to the yard open, the cows would get in the yard. And so, if the cows got in the yard, then my dad

had to get out there and chase the cows out of the yard. And this was a dangerous endeavor. When it was the bull, because you'd start chasing that bull and that bull would start chasing you back and you had to run up on the porch to get away from it in time before it's horns, like, because they would put his head down and he would literally charge you. We had to get him out of the yard, though, because he didn't know how to get out himself. They get stuck in there like they would come in and they wouldn't like, remember where they came from and so or maybe they just liked the yard because it was like new grass or whatever and. So, it was really that was a big that was always an issue. So, it was. It was usually a lot more manageable if it was the cows with the bull that was always scary. So, you know, that was my dad's job. If it was the bull, it was crazy. And then one time when I was really little, I must have been like 3 or 4 years old, my mom said, she was in the kitchen and she was like making meals or something like that. And like, we were all in the room at, like, right by it. And all of a sudden, she looked up and she couldn't find me. And she was like, oh, no. Where

did Anna go? And so she was, like, freaking out. She was like, oh, my gosh, where did? She go, she runs outside and she looks like across the yard to where they used to put the bales of hay for the cows to eat. And there I was, sitting on top of the bale of hay with all the cows around me, eating the hay, and I was just happy, as could be. I wasn't crying or anything. I was just watching them and looking down and she freaked out and she ran out there and she got all the cows away and she pulled me off of that thing and pulled me inside and she said she was so scared, but I was- I was perfectly happy. It was really cute when they had the calves too, so they would have the calves and you know I mean. And they stayed on that property to a certain point before they would send them off to a feeding lot. And but they had- the cows had a nice life there for, you know. The good majority of their life, oh cow patties everywhere. Sometimes you have to be real careful. They generally stayed in the in the areas where it was like grassy. So in like the meadows and stuff like that. But you had to be careful walking through it, sometimes you don't want to step in a cow patty, but then

they would dry. And they would be like these flat dried discs of cow shit, and my brothers used to throw them at us or throw at each other. It's just like we like this disk, you know. I swear we didn't throw that much stuff at each other. Just those things. [Laughter]

Arshad: That's ok that that type of siblings, that's what you get.

Howington: Yeah, yeah.

Arshad: I was going to ask if you ever ate any of them, but I don't know if I want to.

Howington: Eat any of the cows?

Arshad: Or any other animal.

Howington: Ohh, I want to say we probably did, but we probably didn't know it. I'm sure that it, I mean, I don't know if we didn't slaughter the cows ourselves and eat them, but I assume they went to a nearby feed lot so. Probably. Some of it ended up in the grocery stores by us, I don't know. But yeah, no, we didn't really eat any of them. I think there was might have been one. I'm gonna text my mom real. Quick, I remember a goat.

Arshad: A wise old goat.

Howington: I wanna say that did we eat that goat? Sorry.

Arshad: You're ok.

Howington: I don't think we did my- I don't think my parents had it in them to slaughter an animal. They're not really that type. But we adopted a lot of animals. We had a lot of animals. We had a lot of- I had a cat named Myrtle and she had like three litters of kittens. And so like, we would, she'd have her kittens at, like, different places all over the house. And that was great. And then we always had to, like, find people to get the kittens too. So that was always a process. You know, I was trying. to pawn them off on friends. But yeah. Yeah.

Arshad: Well, we've talked about your experiences growing up on the farm. Do you want us, do you want to bring us up to speed on where the farm is now in 2025?

Howington: Yeah. So, the property was purchased by JPI developers and they were donating a portion of the property to the to the city of Denton because Denton has this like tree ordinance where they can't basically tear down all these old growth

trees. It's like against the city ordinance. So, they're only going to develop part of the property. Which of course is devastating for me because I love that place. It's, you know, it's where my childhood is. But I will say that at least they're giving more of the property than they have to. So, they're actually giving a larger portion than is required by the by the Tree ordinance, which is great. And the portion that they're donating to the city. Includes the house. So, when the property got sold or when it was, it actually just recently the sale just went through. But when we heard that the property was being sold, we were like, ok, well, what are they going to do with that house if they're donating this portion of this property to the city, what are they going to do? Because the house is like, I mean, at least 100 and, you know, 20 years old at least. UM, and if you know anything about the Evers family, they were an incredibly important family in the development of Denton. Like they established the first electric company, the first water company, like they did so much for that town. They commissioned the courthouse clock, like. I mean, it was just like you wouldn't have, didn't,

if the Evers family hadn't been here. So, the idea that they were when we found out that they just wanted to tear it down we were like, that's crazy. Like, why would you do that? You have this beautiful piece of history, which by- the house, the house, the house, by the way- the house is beautiful. It's absolutely beautiful. It's in great condition, you know, it's been loved by many people over many years. It's been taken care of. It's had some additions to it, but you know there's no reason to tear it down, especially when, like it can be used to teach, you know, the community about the history of our town, about the history of farming. There's the original barn there. Like I said, the windmill, the water tower, all of these things that just make it this excellent example of a 19th early or sorry, early 20th century farm. So, we were like. Let's try to save it. Let's see what we can do. So, you know, we got information about who the City Council members were we started writing City Council members. I went to a couple of City Council meetings and spoke, and it just became very clear that the city just felt they had no money to save it. Which I mean, I don't know if

they did or not. I think they didn't budget for it. I think that's fair. But I think that you know where there's a will, there's a way. And so, you know, and a lot of people grow up, have grown up in Denton looking at that house, knowing that house was the Evers farmhouse. My family's, you know, been in Denton our whole, my whole life. And they're very connected to the community there. And so, we had a lot of. Like friends out there parties out there, you know, a lot of people have have really great memories of that place. And so, I think that. As soon as like the community got wind that the city was trying to tear down this like historic home. You know, the City Council started taking us a little bit more seriously and then, you know, but I understand that there were budget restrictions. So, we decided that we would start a non-profit so that we could say hey like give us a chance to find the funds for this. And I don't know if, how interested they were in that either. But we did get some write-ups in the Denton Record chronicle and I think they started to pay attention and then that's when. Mike Wise from UNT got ahold of us and so we thought, well, if we can partner

or if they can do this project like we could really make this happen. So that's kind of where we're at now. I think I think it's a pretty good idea of where we're headed so. Yeah. Yeah. So, we plan to start fundraising as soon as we find out whether or not this property is going to be saved, whether or not this House is going to be, you know, preserved. Then we're going to start fundraising. And if that fundraising, you know, is for UNT to do it. That would be great because I think you guys have the resources and the knowledge and a lot of passionate people who want to see conservation of the wildlife of the trees and also of the house and the history there. So, I'm really hoping. This all works out. So, and I'll help in any way I can so. Yeah.

Arshad: My fingers crossed. I mean, I feel very optimistic about the prospects.

Howington: Yeah, yeah, I'm. I'm really hoping it does happen. It would be amazing. I would love to go back there one day, you know? And be able to take my nieces and nephews up there so they can see like where we grew up and you know, and also just let the whole

community and like that's the other thing like it's like, this is a great opportunity to like bring something really unique to the, to the people of Denton so that they can understand, like, what this town looked like at the turn of the century. Like who the people were that helped build this place. I think that's really important, you know.

Arshad: So, I understand you live in New York now.

Howington: Yes.

Arshad: Yes, but you're still like, oh, you talked about it.

You're still, like, hugely connected to Denton.

Howington: Yeah, yeah, I come to Denton all the time. So, I mean, I kind of, I would almost say, like, I kind of split my time because my whole family is in Denton. So, like both my brothers, my sister, their family, my parents, you know, so I go there quite a lot. I stay for long periods, you know, sometimes a month or so at a time around the holidays. And then since this since I started working on this project, I've been down there anytime I felt like there was an important City Council meeting, I would fly down. Yeah, I am still very connected, I would say.

Arshad: Really good to hear. So, this question actually comes from Doctor Michael Wise. When you heard, we would be talking to you today, he asked if you had a favorite tree.

Howington: Yes, I do.

Arshad: You like to share?

Howington: Sorry. So, I have, I would say I have three favorite trees. So, there was this one tree by our driveway that we built a tree house in and so we would go up, I would say have four favorite trees actually. So, we would go up to, you know, hang out in the tree house. It's like this little platform that our parents have helped build us. And I love that tree because you could just go and lay down on the platform and look up at the leaves in the sky. And you'd just be like in a whole other world. And then, another tree that I love, there was this beautiful huge pine tree and it's still there. Not sure what kind of Evergreen tree it is, but, and it was that tree that we used to bury our animals under just like our animal graveyard. But we loved our animals. So anytime like a hamster would die or something like that. We would go. And

we would have funerals for them on the front porch. This is very serious. To I would usually oversee the funerals, and I would make everybody dress in black and we would talk about the animal and then we would go, and we would bury it under this pine tree. And that's also where we buried a time capsule. There's a time capsule up there, and we tried to go and find it when we heard that. The property was going to be sold, so we went up there. We contacted the owners and went up there and they let us come out there and we dug around. I wasn't there, my family, my brothers and sister, dug around and we couldn't find it, so that was we're. We're still hoping though if this property gets saved, I hope you let me come out there and like maybe we'll get 'cause I think there's probably some coins in there something so I can get one of those metal detectors and see if we can find our time capsule from when we were kids. And so, I love that tree. And then there was a tree in our front yard that had this swing on it where you could go like so high. I'm, like, dangerously high. But I used to swing on that all the time, and I just have these memories of, like, being out on that swing.

And like, just like listening, my brother Daniel plays the guitar. And so, when I was younger, he would, like, play the guitar on the front porch. And I just remember swinging on that swing and listening to him play. He was learning to play Metallica at the time. And so, you know, and he was like. All those 90s, you know, Nirvana, the cranberries, and he would just play them out on the porch all the time. And I would just be swinging and listening to it. And it was just a great time. And then I would say the most important trees, it's probably two trees, actually. It might even be 3. But when I was a little girl, every night before I went to bed, I would look out my window. And up in the trees there was this shape and it looked exactly like an elephant. And so, I would spend every night before I went to bed. I would look it up that that elephant and I would like think that that was my elephant and that that elephant was going to make my dreams come true. And so, I would wish on that elephant like I was wishing on a star. And it was just such a comfort. And I know it's silly, but I was just a little kid,

you know, and. But I just want to see that elephant again someday.

Arshad: Really [unclear]

Howington: Yeah, this is perfect. I mean, it was like perfect cut out of an elephant. It was crazy. I don't know how the trees just made it like with the trunk and everything, and it was like that. I mean, I swear it was like that my whole childhood. It was like the trees didn't grow in that direction for some reason and they just, like, grew out and they just kept that perfect. Picture of an elephant. I have a, I have a picture of that too. I don't know if I can find it. I mean I can e-mail it to you. I don't know if you care, but yeah, but.

Arshad: No, I'd love to see that, yeah. This is the type of childhood that you typically only see in picture books. It's like it's been a real joy to listen to this.

Howington: Oh, thank you. There is a joy to live it.

Arshad: Yeah.

Howington: Yeah, I'm sure my, the rest of my family have a lot of stories too. So, if you ever want to talk

to them, you can call them up as well. But because we definitely had a good time there. Yeah.

Arshad: That does conclude the questions we have for you today.

Is there anything we didn't ask today that you want to bring up?

Howington: No, I'm sure I'll think of a million other stories by the time I get off the phone. And like I've gone through my day. But I think I've probably gave you enough. I hope it was. I hope it was what you guys are looking for. So.

Arshad: It was. It was a real joy, genuinely to listen.

Howington: Thank you.

Arshad: Do you want to close off with the final story?

Howington: The final story. I don't know. I can't think of one right now.

Arshad: I put you on the spot. I'm sorry.

Howington: I thought of one, but it's not that good. It's just kind of terrible. It was about my brother Abe. He was like. I don't know it's. It was about he- he must have been like. I don't know 13-12 or 13. And he had this great idea of taking apart a

firecracker and putting it back together because he's actually, my brother now, he's an electrical engineer at Peterbilt. So, he like when we were kids, he loved to take stuff apart and put it back together. And so, he decided he was going to take apart a firecracker and put it back together. And. And then light it. And this was on New Year's Eve. And so, he went out in the backyard, and he did this. And then he had blew up in his face and he had to go, this is not a good story. I'm sorry. It was terrible. Oh, when he was, he was so he was in so much pain. He survived it, though. He got- he's fine now. Nothing too terrible. Didn't even. He didn't even get any scars or anything, you know. Remember being so, worried because I was at a friend's house and my mom called him and she goes oh no, your brother's in the hospital and I thought he was dead or something. I was so worried, and I just remember being terrified. And so, I was really happy when he turned out alright in the end. But [laughter]

Arshad: I'm really happy to hear he's all right.

Howington: But that's the thing. We were always doing crazy stuff like that because we were just. We were running wild, you know. Luckily, we survived it all. You know, everything turned out ok in the end. But, yeah, yeah. I think it's good for kids to run a little wild too. I was telling my friend Kim, one of my best friends from my childhood, who grew up in the neighborhood real close by and we became really close when we were about 8 years old and we're still friends today. We traveled together and stuff, it's real fun, but when we were younger. I was we would talk about how like we I would literally just leave my house on my bike. I would go to her house. I might tell my mom where I was going. I might not, and we would literally ride our bikes for like miles. Like I'm talking like 3-5 miles away from our houses. No cell phones. Nobody knew where we were. Nobody had any idea what was going on, you know? I have another friend that I met because I just wandered down into the neighborhood one day just walking around, just looking for friends, because that's what you did back in that day, like you would just walk out of your house and you'd just go walk through the

neighborhood and, you know, see if there were any kids your age and then that became your friend, you know, and that and met the I met my friend Becky like that. I just left the house one day and just decided I was going to go walk around. And there she was. And she was around my age. And so, we just became really good friends. And we're still, you know, we still friends today, you know, on like, you know, we follow each other on Facebook and stuff like that. And she's doing really good. She's got a great family and everything. But yeah, yeah, but it's just funny, you know, it was a different- It was a very different time. You were allowed so much more independence, you know. And that was one thing that I loved about that place is that when we were kids, we had so much independence. You know, it was great. That's great. Yeah.

Arshad: I mean, that's a really lovely life. Thank you so much for sharing with us.

Howington: Yeah, yeah, of course.

Arshad: Ok. All right. Last call, anything else you want to bring up before we end the call?

Howington: No, I think I think I think it took enough of your
time.

Arshad: You can take as much time as you need.

Howington: That's alright. I think I think I gave you guys a
pretty good picture of what it was like.

Arshad: It was beautiful. Thank you so much.

Howington: Course all right. Thank you, guys. Thanks for
taking an interest in it. I hope it helps save the
house somehow. Or maybe that one day somebody will
least listen to it and. Know that there was a place
there that people loved.

Arshad: Hope so too. ok, I'm gonna stop recording.

[End of Interview]