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Place of Interview: Bryan, Texas

Interviewer: Floyd Jenkins

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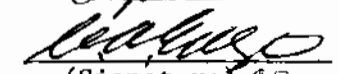
Approved: 
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Business Oral History Collection

Claude Edge

Interviewer: Dr. Floyd Jenkins

Place of Interview: Bryan, Texas Date: March 21, 1982

Dr. Jenkins: This is Floyd Jenkins recording for the Business Archives Project, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas. Today is March 21, 1982. I am talking with Mr. Claude Edge, one of the founders of Lilly Ice Cream. And I am talking with Mr. Edge at his home in Bryan, Texas, at 811 East 30th Street.

Dr. Jenkins: Let's get going here by getting you to go back and give us some personal background. Kind of give us a sketch of where Mom and Daddy, or even Grandpa and Grandma, came from, what you know of your background, how you got into this part of the country, and we will kind of lead up eventually to the starting of your business career. So give us some personal background to start with.

Mr. Edge: Floyd, I am an orphan. Not necessarily an orphan, but I am an adopted child. My mother and father lived near a little community in Eastland County. The name of the store and probably one or two other buildings gathered together was Necessity.

Dr. Jenkins: About where is that?

Edge: It is either Bosque or Eastland County near Ranger, Texas.

Jenkins: I went through Bosque County on this trip.

Edge: It is one of those counties, and I am not sure. As of today there is nothing there. There are no buildings or anything. My sisters took me by there a few years ago and said, "Now that is where Necessity used to be." My mother died when I was 19 days old. I was one of triplets. There were two boys and a girl, and the other boy died. And my mother's sisters took me and my sister and raised us. We were eventually adopted by these families.

Jenkins: Give us some names now.

Edge: My original name is Pritchard, and the three children that were born were Maudie, Audie, and Claudie. Audie died and Maude and I were adopted by families. My family name was Edge, William Edge and wife Elizabeth. She was my aunt and he was my uncle. I knew nothing about this until I was several years old. And even then I knew nothing about the rest of my family. Later on I found that I had two sisters and a brother in addition to my now twin sister, Maude.

Jenkins: Was that twin adopted with you?

Edge: No, she was adopted by another sister. And she was reared in Fayetteville, Arkansas. My adopted father was a farmer. He had mechanical ability, and he finally got into a blacksmith shop.

Jenkins: In what area now? Are you still out there around Necessity?

Edge: No. I am just not sure. My remembrance begins when we were living in Stephenville, Texas, where he was an engineer on a little private railroad built by Cage brothers, who owned a bank in Stephenville. This ran through the countryside to Hamilton, Texas, by way of all those little communities in there. That was their only way of shipping merchandise in and out.

Jenkins: Did they carry passengers?

Edge: Yes, it was a passenger train as well as freight. So we lived in two or three different locations in Stephenville.

Jenkins: Let's go back and get the date of your birth here.

Edge: I was born March 12, 1903. From there it is blank until I am about five or six years old and then living in Stephenville. But during the interim I understand my adopted father was a farmer, that he got into a blacksmith business. I am not sure where that was. But when we moved to Stephenville he accepted this job as engineer on the railroad. The original run was about 1908, somewhere along there.

Edge: I don't know the name of it. All I know is that Dad was an engineer. I knew nothing about my twin sister or about any other members of my family. But when I did I was about 10 years old, and my adopted parents told me about it, and my twin sister came to visit me. Of course, I was just delighted. I had never seen such a pretty little girl. She

came in on an evening train, and she had this big-brimmed hat with pastel colors on it. She was very pretty. So she stayed with us a short time. Eventually the family she lived with divorced, and she came to live with us and go to school. She went through high school there and then went back with her mother. She went to some college, I am not sure where, and got a teaching degree. When I was fourteen, before I had even met any of my family other than my twin sister, my adopted father asked me if I wanted to be legally adopted, and I told him I did. And I well remember going down to the courthouse, looking up at the judge, and his saying, "Young man, you know what you are doing?" I said, "Well, yes sir, I think I do." "Do you want to be legally adopted with the name of Edge and let this be your father?" I said, "I do that." And he said, "All right." Then he asked my father some questions. All I know is that I left there as an Edge, legally. Then I was able to visit my sisters with Maude being present in Ranger, Texas. It was during the oil boom in Ranger there. My own father, Pritchard, owned some land, a rocky hill of a place, that would hardly make a living farming. Oil was found on the land, and he became quite wealthy. My sisters and brother had moved from Ranger after the oil was found. The brother settled in Phoenix, Arizona, and my two sisters settled in California in Long Beach. In the meantime my

own father had five more children with the second marriage, all girls, and bought another farm. And never having had anything he spent all of the money he got out of the oil and was just practically broke. He eventually wound up in California with my two sisters out there, and was hit by a car and killed.

Jenkins: Had your adopted father, at that point of your adoption, told you then of your background and let you know who you were?

Edge: No, he told me nothing about my background. All I knew was that my adopted mother was a sister of my own mother and that because of the death of my own mother they found it better for one of her sisters to raise the two children, the two babies.

Jenkins: At what point did you find out about your father?

Edge: Oh, I must have been about 8 years old, somewhere along there. Those things are so blank. But anyway we lived at Stephenville, and Dad was a railroad engineer, and that carried quite a high position in the community. He was making more money than many of the people there because of his engineering ability. Of course as I grew up I went to a private school. My adopted father was not too sold on public education in those days. So I went to a private school until I was old enough to get into high school. This is all in Stephenville.

Jenkins: What private school was this, do you remember?

Edge: It was run by a Mrs. Alford. That was just in a home. She just had a couple of rooms, and she had a dozen or two dozen children. After being able to get into high school, I went into high school. When I finished high school I entered John Tarleton, which was a private school at that time run by a man by the name of John Tarleton.

Jenkins: Now before we get you into Tarleton, let's go back and look at what you were doing, kind of, when you were growing up. You went to private school until you got into high school. Kind of describe what the schooling conditions were then. They were probably different from what they are today.

Edge: My father was determined that I would have an education. He had two children of his own, a son and a daughter. They had not worked out too well. They were much older than I and were married and were not living in Stephenville. They were living, one in Oklahoma and one had joined the Army and was scattered all over the country and the Hawaiian Islands for a while. But my dad was determined of one thing: that I would amount to something. I had regular chores around the house. We had a cow, and I did the milking. When I went on to school I would milk before I would go to school. This private school was mostly reading and arithmetic, a little history but not an awful lot.

Jenkins: Did you start the first grade there?

Edge: Yes. And went on through, I guess, the sixth or seventh

grade. By the time I was in the eighth grade I went into public school. I don't remember too much about the school except that in those days we walked. I had to walk probably a mile from our house to the schoolhouse.

Jenkins: You did live in town?

Edge: We lived in town, and the school was in town.

Jenkins: But you had a cow?

Edge: And chickens.

Jenkins: Garden?

Edge: Sure.

Jenkins: Pigs?

Edge: I don't remember. All I remember is from the first cold spell we would always have a hog killing, and I don't know if it was our hog or the neighbor's hog, but the whole area, four or five residences, would go in together and butcher the hog, render the fat.

Jenkins: Did you get big enough to participate in that?

Edge: I had to stir the chittlings.

Jenkins: Do you remember some of the process that you can tell us about, how they did the hog killing back then?

Edge: No, I was quite small then, and I didn't like the looks of things. So I stayed in the background until it was all butchered and ready to be salted and packed away. Then when they started the fire under the kettle, as a child I wanted to stir it, so I helped to do that. I know they

made lye soap. I don't remember the process or anything like that. But by the time I got ready for high school, the city wouldn't allow that any more. So that took care of the hog killing in my experience.

Jenkins: You probably worked in the garden and did all of the home chores.

Edge: Yes, I was a big help for Mother in the garden. I enjoyed that. Very early, I guess 10 years old, maybe 11, my father gave me a BB rifle. I would hunt sparrows around the area. We had a garden as well as an orchard, peaches and plums and pears.

Jenkins: What is your recollection of how much land you were using around the house?

Edge: I would say we had at least an acre.

Jenkins: You grew a lot of your food.

Edge: Oh, Mother canned everything. She canned it in fruit jars. I don't remember the process. It wasn't pressure cooked or anything like that. She would cook it and put it up. And then she dried a lot of fruit. I remember she would cut up peaches and plums and pears. In those days we had flour sacks of cloth. She would put them in that and throw them up on the porch, a low porch. She would just stand on the steps and just fling it up there. The sun would dry it. She would take it down in the evening, and the next day it would go back. After some time it would be dry

enough. I don't remember how they stored them.

Jenkins: Now what about the house, not only that you lived in, but where you went to school. What kind of lighting and heating did you have as you were growing?

Edge: We had lamps in our house.

Jenkins: Kerosene?

Edge: Kerosene. And in the school, of course, we had no light except daylight. We didn't go early enough or stay late enough to have to have artificial light. But lighting in those days was all kerosene lamps.

Jenkins: How about cooking and heating?

Edge: On a wood stove. That was one of my jobs. Dad would buy wood by the cord, and I would saw it with a bucksaw and split it. One of my chores, too, was to bring it in and put it in the wood box. So all of our cooking was on a wood stove range. And our heating would be the same way. It would be wood stoves.

Jenkins: Pot belly?

Edge: Yes.

Jenkins: I see. Out in the middle of the room or kind of . . .

Edge: That I don't remember.

Jenkins: How about the school? What kind of heating did the school have?

Edge: It was a wood burning stove at one end, at Stephenville.

Jenkins: Did you get involved in anything besides going to class

and working at home? Were there clubs, athletics, anything like that?

Edge: No. I tried to play baseball and would have made the team except my Dad was disgusted with the way players would act. They would ride the train from Stephenville to the nearby towns to play a local team in this other village, and they were just grownup children, I mean boys that liked to have fun. They were rowdy, and he thought it was a disgrace. So I didn't get to travel anymore with the team. If they played in Stephenville I could play. I played a little tennis. Not much, I wasn't very good. I wasn't very athletical. But I joined in high school into a debating and oratorical club. I wasn't very good at that. They could always out-argue me, and I would lose. But I well remember that they named me . . . I can't remember the name now, but it was just an honor they gave me because we had only a small graduating class. There were only three or four boys in it, and I guess I was average there. But I always had to go home. I couldn't be in athletics or things in the afternoon because I had to go home and milk the cow. They call it Victorian or something like that. It was just kind of a fun thing. After the Valedictorian had been introduced and given his or her talk, then they called me and scared me to death. They got me up there . . .of course in those days we didn't have microphones and things like

that. One of the teachers came over and said, "We want to present you with this milk pail so that you will never fail to have one when you need it when you go home in the afternoon to milk." Of course Momma and Poppa were sitting in the front row, and they just had a big delight over it. I loved to read. Our house was built on piers, and it was kind of high. I would get on the shady side in the summer and read a book. I don't remember where the books came from, but I presume we got them from the local library. They were the Horatio Alger type; of course they made me very ambitious. Then when I finished high school my father said, "Now instead of going out and getting you a working job or laborer's job, you must get an education." I said, "All right." "So you go to John Tarleton." So it being a private school I had to pay tuition. So when I got to college I had a very poor grounding in English. I hated it, and knowing what I know now I should have studied that more than mathematics because I loved mathematics. But I had an awfully hard time in my English courses in John Tarleton. The fact is the first year I came up at almost graduation with a D, and I had a wonderful English teacher. Her name was Bierchwel. She was determined that I was going to pass. She tutored me some. At the end of the first year when I took my final I made a high enough grade to pass the course. Well, the

next year it was a little easier, but I didn't get through college as an A student. I was a B and C student, mostly C probably. At the second year it was taken over by the state.

Jenkins: About what year are we talking about here?

Edge: We are talking about 1919-1920. And when the state took it over I had to take an entrance examination to get back into the second year, and I made it all right. Then we had ROTC, and I was in that. And finally before the year ended I made corporal, which was a tremendous officer for me. But when I finished school I had the good luck, because it wasn't because of my knowing what to take, but I took enough of the subjects necessary to get a degree to teach school. I had a permanent certificate. It was not a degree, it was a certificate. And school was over, and I had my permanent certificate. No offer for a teaching job. I wasn't prepared really for it, even though I had had some mathematics, calculus and geometry, but I was not very promising in those subjects. But right before school started in the fall semester I had this call from the county superintendent in the county that Cisco is in. I don't know what county that is. I would have to look it up on the map. But the county superintendent called me and said, "Have you a place to teach?" I said, "No, I haven't." "Well, would you be interested in teaching

grade school in a little town called Pioneer?" And I said, "Yes, I guess so. I don't have anything else to do." So she said, "Well, come up here and let us interview you." So I went up there, and they gave me this job.

Jenkins: You were about what age then?

Edge: I was 19. So this Pioneer was a little town, oh, I guess it had four or five hundred people. But there was a little oil field around it, and there were a lot of farm houses around outside of the town itself and lots of children. So I taught 3rd, 4th, 5th grade English, arithmetic, spelling and it seems like I had history. But anyway, I had a full nine-hour day of little folks. And of course I got roped in. The superintendent had a four-year certificate, the principal had a two-year certificate, and my having a permanent certificate I was well educated. So the superintendent induced me to take a Latin and a plane geometry class in addition to all of these lower grade subjects.

Jenkins: Had you had any of that?

Edge: Yes, I had had it. Of course I was smart. I got me a helper, a book that had all of the answers for the mathematics.

Jenkins: Where did you take your Latin, at Tarleton?

Edge: Yes.

Jenkins: Why, was that just part of their requirements?

Edge: You had to have it. In those days you had a foreign

language, and it was Latin.

Jenkins: So everybody at Tarleton was studying Latin.

Edge: Yes. Of course the part that I taught was very, very elementary. Well, the most embarrassing time I ever had teaching at Pioneer was when the supintendent came in one of my plane geometry classes. I knew he was checking me to see if I was a good teacher. I was nervous and scared to death. I guess I got by all right because he never mentioned it to me later. But later I realized that he wanted to learn something about geometry, and this would be the beginning. Even so I was scared to death. I had a little discipline problem. The superintendent was very strict. He wanted discipline, good discipline, and he believed in switching. You did the switching yourself. He didn't do it. So I had this little girl in class that was very talkative. She just wouldn't stop talking. One day I kept her after school. I got me a little switch, and she leaned up against the wall and I switched her legs two or three times. And boy did I raise trouble. The next day Mama and Papa and big brother, who was in school and older than I was, all lined me up against the wall and they gave me the riot act. But the superintendent stood up for me, and we were good friends after that. They never did hold it against me. But it was a real experience teaching in this little grade school.

Jenkins: How long were you there?

Edge: One year.

Jenkins: Were you living near the school?

Edge: I lived with the superintendent in one of the rooms of the big house he lived in. And the walls were single walls with cracks in them. And it would come up a wind out of the west, and the sand, this was a sandy area, would come in through those cracks. And when I would get up the next morning my sheets would be covered with sand.

Jenkins: No paper or anything on the walls?

Edge: No. Oh, there was some, but it was torn off. It had a big potbellied stove for heat. They furnished me with plenty of wood. I had my meals there. We didn't receive any money for teaching. The county didn't have any money. They gave us a voucher, a county voucher. And when the tax money came in they would redeem them. Well, I went home one weekend, I guess early in the term, and I told my dad I wasn't getting any money, I was getting the vouchers. He said, "Well son, you just send those vouchers to me, and you just check on my account." Well, when the year was over I owed more money than I had received.

Jenkins: What is your recollection of what the vouchers amounted to?

Edge: $90 a month. I was well paid.

Jenkins: That sounds great.

Edge: It sure did. Then when I came back to Stephenville my dad had had a wreck on the railroad. In the meantime the Cage Railroad had been taken over by the St. Louis and Southwestern.

And of course they covered a good part of the state. Soon after that the Cotton Belt took them over. I think maybe two or three railroads combined and absorbed the St. Louis and Southwestern. So he had had an accident, a wreck, and they fired him. That was the punishment. They would fire you for two weeks and put you back to work. Well at that time, in about 1919, he was making $250 a month, but he had, oh, a long number of years of seniority, and he was eligible to go over to the main line. So he figured that the thing for him to do was to move to where he could get on the main line and make $400 a month. So he moved to Commerce, Texas. So in the summer after teaching at Pioneer when I went home he said, "Now son, if you are going to be a teacher, you might as well finish your education. So you go out to East Texas Teachers College and get your degree."

Jenkins: Now we are talking 1920?

Edge: I am talking about '21. My birthday being in March, I probably was 20 when I started. Anyway, I went out there, and I did real well. I had learned how to study. I had the idea that I was going to teach, so as Dad had said I would try to be a good one. I took everything that I was supposed to take to get my degree, even Spanish. I had a touch of Spanish. I joined several clubs. I don't know what it was called. In those days, you know, the schools didn't like dancing because that would probably lead to

something worse, drinking, etc. So I remember in my senior year our senior class had a dance in one of our student's homes. Someone told us the next day that one of the teachers had passed by and observed it, and that we were probably going to be expelled. But being the whole class I guess they couldn't expel the whole class, so we got by with it. We were lectured not to let it ever happen again.

Jenkins: What were some of the clubs that you got involved in?

Edge: I got back into this debating society. And as usual I just wasn't very good. I didn't do much debating. I belonged to, I can't think what the name of it was, but it was more or less a social club. Just get together and talk. We did no dancing because it was on the campus.

Jenkins: Was this strictly a men's club?

Edge: No, it was coeducational. We would have picnics and all that sort of thing. So after I finished there I had this application from Jacksboro, Texas. They needed a principal. I went there and was interviewed by the superintendent and some of the board members, and I was given the job. We had a large enough student body that we could have athletics at Jacksboro. Lester Brumolow, who was a great football player at TCU, was one of my prize students. He was such a fine young man. And Othol Martin, who eventually wound up as coach at TCU, was one of my students. Othol, when he came to Jacksboro, he was really from the country. He hardly

knew the difference in a football and a basketball. But I took those two boys plus a young man who had ability, he was a tailor's son in Jacksboro, and we developed around those a little football team. I think we had maybe 15 players. They played both offense and defense.

Jenkins: Was it 11-man football?

Edge: Yes, regular football. And we had a county agent, a graduate of A&M, who had played football. I knew nothing about football. He gave us the plays and positions and everything. Of course I made notes, then I did the practice. I was with them at practice. We just had a lot of fun. The last game of the year we played Bowie, Texas. I well remember. They beat us or had us beaten 16 to 0, I believe. And at half we decided that we were just going to wind up the season with a victory. And I well remember going back out there, how Lester Brumolow, who was in the backfield, just ran over that Bowie bunch. I think we beat them 18 to 16. But from that I developed the friendship of those two boys that helped them on into their college education. I know one weekend during the football season East Texas was playing TCU. And I got tickets and took as many players as I could to the game. And we were able to go into the dressing room for the East Texas club. I introduced the boys to them. Of course that was great for them. And of course East Texas got beat badly. But after finishing the

football season they decided to go to TCU and did a marvelous job there as players, and Othol went on as head coach. When I moved south I lost track of them. So after finishing the year there I came back to Commerce and met this fine little girl whose father owned what would be called a conglomerate in today's world. He had a business called Muller Ice Plant. In that he had a Coca Cola franchise. He had a little ice cream plant. And he had cold storage where the farmers would bring in produce, meats,and freeze them. Then he had a coal business. All the county schools used coal, and he sold them the coal. So I went to work for him, he thinking that I was going to marry his daughter, and I am wondering the same thing until I could learn the business. So I was in the office. I was delivering Coca Cola. I was hauling coal. I did whatever was necessary. I was just utility.

Jenkins: You were about 22 or so then.

Edge: Yes, I was 22. And each weekend I would date his daughter and drive his Franklin. He had an air-cooled Franklin. I was quite a man-about-town. Well, after a year there she decided that she wasn't ready to get married, and of course I was. And I saw passing the business every day at noon this pretty young lady with bobbed hair, a Buster Brown bob. She was the cutest thing. And she was going to the Post Office. The Post Office was just a half block down from the business. I had to work every noon hour. So I

happened to know, having attended East Texas, a young lady who we were very good friends, and sometimes they would come together to get the mail. So I cornered her one day, and I said, "Look, tomorrow you go with this young lady that is teaching in the high school. I want to meet her. You pass by the building, and I will just accidentally come out." She said, "That's great. We will do that." So it worked out beautifully. I got to meet Bert, that is my wife now. And from that I couldn't get married on $75 a month. I had been making $165 as principal at Jacksboro, and I dropped down to $75. She was teaching home economics and homemaking in Commerce High School. The courses were not accredited when she came there. She was a graduate of CIA in Denton, it was then. It is Texas Woman's University now. She was a graduate there and a tremendous teacher.

Jenkins: Now she was from Commerce?

Edge: No, she was from Mount Pleasant.

Jenkins: Oh, okay. And her name was . . .

Edge: Bert Murphree. So got the courses accredited. And after a time we would go to Greenville every so often to visit her aunt and her cousin over there, very good friends.

Jenkins: Where is Mount Pleasant?

Edge: Mount Pleasant is southwest of Texarkana near Sulphur Springs. Driving back and forth to Greenville one evening coming in it was raining. Bert and I were together, and I said, "Bert, would you marry me sometime?" And after a

hesitation she said, "Yes." So then I had to get busy. I had to go to work. Well, about this same time Mr. Muller had an offer from Louisiana Ice and Utilities from Shreveport to sell his business. It must have been a good offer because he took it. And I had met Mr. John Cameron Webb who had leased this ice cream department of Muller Industries. He didn't call it industries, but that is what it was in today's wording. And he was about my age, a couple of years older, but he was a tremendous fellow, work. I am talking about John Cameron Webb who had leased the ice cream department from Mr. Muller. Muller was quite an aggressive man. But anyway when he sold out and Louisiana Ice and Utilities took over, Mr. Webb was not very happy with the new arrangement. And a bookkeeper of this organization was named Claude A. Allard, and he wasn't at all satisfied with the new bookkeeping setup that he had. So unbeknowing to me they decided they were going to quit. They were going to join together as a partnership and see if they couldn't find a small ice cream plant that they could buy and go in business for themselves. And they made a trip, and I knew they had gone out to somewhere, but I didn't know where. But when they came back Mr. Allard told me, because I worked with him, being in the office I had to collect bills, take statements out. In other words I helped him along with any other duties that needed to be attended to. He told

me that they had bought a little closed ice cream plant at Navasota, Texas. I said, "Where is that?" He said, "It is a long way." So I said, "Well, y'all are going to leave here." "Yes, we are. We are going to leave the first of next month." I said, "Will you let me go with you?" And they looked at one another. In fact this was the three of us talking. And they said, "Why not? Yes." They said, "Now we have to have some money or something, because if you are going to be a partner, you have got to bring your part." I said, "Well, I don't have much." "Well," they said, "Mr. Webb has $1,000 cash. He has sold his lease to Louisiana Ice and Utilities for $1,000." Mr. Allard said, "I have an equity in a house and lot that I am going to sell for $1,000." I said, "Well, let's see what I have. I have $200 cash. I have an Underwood typewriter, and I have a Model T Ford." And I said, "That is all that I have." And they talked a little bit, and said, "Well, that will be all right. That will be about as much as we have. At least we can use it in the business"

Jenkins: Oh, the Model T and the typewriter, then.

Edge: Yes. So I told Bert that we were going to move down there and would she be willing to get married and go down there and work together. She said, "Well, I don't think it is good business." She is pretty smart. "Why don't you go down there and get the business established, and I will

teach one more year." So that is the way we got into the ice cream business. The little company that was in Commerce, this little division of Muller's business, was called Lilly. Mr. Webb had worked for an ice cream company in Waco. I am trying to remember the name of it, but I can't. Anyway he was ice cream production man down there. Also in the wintertime he did some maintenance on the equipment. And he was real versed in this type of work. So he married a Greenville girl whose father was an insurance agent. And he loaned Cameron Webb enough money to lease this ice cream plant, to put in some more equipment and make it a commercial plant. He was doing fairly well selling only in Commerce, but he was making a living out of it. But after Mr. Muller sold the business he decided that he would rather be in business for himself instead of having to work for someone. So on February 6, 1927 I resigned earlier and packed the old car, picked up Mr. Webb, and we came to Waco and spent the night with some of his wife's friends or relatives. Then the next day we came on to Navasota. He and I came first and then Mr. Allard, after he got his office work together, I think a month later he came to Navasota. But this plant had been operated for only one year, but it had good equipment. It was old equipment, but it was pretty good equipment. And, oh, Mr. Webb, when he saw that his eyes lighted up. He could

see nothing but good. And I knew nothing about the ice cream business at that time. I had spent very little time in the plant in Commerce with him because I had no reason. I had other work to do. But when we got to Navasota there were just the two of us, and then in a month Mr. Allard would be there, and we did all of the work, everything that had to be done.

Jenkins: The three of you ran the whole thing.

Edge: We ran the whole thing. It was in a large, two story stone building on Main Street. The building was owned by a Mr. Ewing. I don't know what we paid for it, I don't remember. But it was very small. We lived upstairs. Mr. Webb was married and had a son. Mr. Allard was married and had a son. They had the two apartments in the front of the building, and I had a room on the back of the building.

Jenkins: You all bought the building?

Edge: No, we just bought the business, but we were given living privileges upstairs. Of course it was minimal.

Jenkins: You don't remember what you paid for it, but you did pay for it outright.

Edge: The business? It seems to me like we paid about $1,500 for the business.

Jenkins: Outright, you didn't . . .

Edge: Cash plus a note for it seems to me like $5,000.

Jenkins: Oh, I see. Something like $6,500 for the business.

Edge: Yes, for the business.

Jenkins: Now this had a going brand?

Edge: No, it didn't. It had been closed for several months.

Jenkins: Do you remember what it had carried?

Edge: What brand it had? No, I don't.

Jenkins: Now you all picked up what brand.

Edge: Webb kept some of the advertising material that he had used in Commerce. He just brought that with us. And we were so far from Commerce that there was no reason why we couldn't use the same name. So we used the same name. He had his logos and everything. Exactly.

Jenkins: L-i-l-l-y.

Edge: That's right. So we officially started the Lilly Ice Cream Company with Allard, Webb and Edge. The 7th day of February in 1927.

Jenkins: It was kind of cool there, too, to be getting into the ice cream business.

Edge: Yes, it was. However it took us a couple of weeks to get the plant cleaned up and repaired. The ammonia compressor, whereas ordinarily would be driven by an electric motor, was driven by a single cylinder kerosene horizontal engine. And to start it you had a blow torch that you would heat the little tip on the front end of the engine until it got red hot. Then you would get on the big flywheel, and you would rock it and rock it until you got up enough motion where you could turn it over. It would kick off--bom, bom, bom,

bom. Slow, slow speed.

Jenkins: Kind of like the old poppin Johnny John Deer thing.

Edge: Exactly. Then it was belt driven to a compressor. So then we would go around on the other side from where we started it, and it had a mechanical clutch, a big wheel attached to the flywheel on the other side, that you would take and kind of move it forward and back up a little bit and then get enough motion you would push it forward quickly and it would engage the clutch. That old engine would bounce, and the compressor would bounce. Finally in a few seconds it would settle down. That is the way we did our refrigeration. Of course that old engine shook the whole building. And many, many nights we were rocked to sleep with the engine and waked up with the engine the next morning. If it had ever stopped during the night, all three of us were down there immediately to start it, which happened many times.

Jenkins: Tell us some more about the mechanics of how the ice cream business manufacturing was done and where you got your supplies and such.

Edge: We were very fortunate in that there were several dairyman around Navsota that had milk that they wanted to sell. And many of them had small herds of cows, and they would accumulate the cream. They would bring it to us a couple or three days old so that it was still sweet, and that is what we used, the milk and the cream, fresh from the farmers.

Jenkins: And they brought it in to you.

Edge: They brought it in in ten gallon cans, and we had a 100 gallon pasteurizer. We had an upright vertical boiler out behind the building that used natural gas. They did have natural gas in Navasota. And from that we would use the stream to pasteurize the milk. Then we had an oldtime homogenizer that would break the fat globules into real tiny particles so that they would not rise to the top of the mix when you made it. So we would add the sugar and the stabilizer to the milk and cream and heat it and hold it at a temperature around 165 degrees for 30 minutes so that it would take care of all of the bacteria. Then we would pump it to an elevated 100 gallon tank by the viscolizer. It had enough pressure to where it would pump it up. This was about head high.

Jenkins: You said viscolizer.

Edge: Yes, that is a homogenizer or viscolizer.

Jenkins: Was this the way they did it back in Commerce?

Edge: Yes.

Jenkins: You did your own homogenizing.

Edge: This is the same process you do everywhere. See, if you don't do that your cream and your milk and your sugar and your stabilizer are not thoroughly mixed into the mass. By running it through there you get it together in a single mass. You change the structure of it, the molecular

structure of it. So when you pump it up into this holding tank you let it stay there overnight so that it can rest so that the ingredients that you put together and homogenize becomes a complete ice cream mix. You see, you take the milk and you have broken it up and added some things to it and you have done the same with cream. In other words you have changed it completely, and it needs to rest a while before you freeze it.

Jenkins: This was before homogenized milk was available to the public.

Edge: Yes.

Jenkins: Were ice cream makers about the only ones homogenizing milk at that time, as far as you know?

Edge: Now the city of Houston may have had homogenized milk. I am sure it did, but we did not. The fact is we didn't have any milk at all. But our business in Navasota was strictly ice cream. I don't know how many flavors, but we sure had vanilla, strawberry and chocolate, because everybody wanted that.

Jenkins: Now was all of it just flavor or did you have any fresh fruit that you put in it?

Edge: Yes, we had strawberries and bananas. We had a banana nut. We would go to our local grocery store and buy all of his over ripe bananas and put them in one of our ice cream containers, which was a five gallon about 20 inches high and maybe six or eight inches diameter. We put it in there and

take a stirring rod, which was a long rod with a flat piece of metal on the end with holes in it, and you would stir those bananas into a mush and cover them with sugar. That would keep the air from getting to them, keep them from discoloring. You put it in the cooler room, in the ante room we called it, until you were ready to use it. We would take strawberries and we would use three parts of strawberries and one part of sugar and stir them up real good, then cover that with a little more sugar and put that into the ante room so that it would take hold. Then when we were ready to use it we would just pour it into the ice cream freezer.

Jenkins: There were still just three of you doing this?

Edge: Yes.

Jenkins: Were you cutting up the strawberries by hand and cutting the stems?

Edge: No, we stemmed them. We stemmed them and just dropped them into a can.

Jenkins: But you did this by hand.

Edge: We did all this by hand. And then when you stirred them up with the sugar that is when you broke the strawberries up. That is the way we started. And I believe a little bit later Mr. Webb started putting a few whole strawberries in there so that people could see it had real fruit in it. But after we put the mix up in this holding tank and kept it

there until the next day, he would go into the freezer room and check his stock and see how many cans of vanilla we needed to make, how many cans of chocolate, and all other flavors. Then he would make that out on his sheet. I would help him get all of his supplies together. And he would freeze out enough of that mix to fill the area in the vault that we were short of. This was the very first month. Then when Mr. Allard came they sent me out on the road. Mr. Allard had a roadster. Do you remember those roadsters? Rumble seat in the back you could lift up? They came down in that. We someway got someone to take that rumble seat out and put a little platform in there, made a truckbed out of it that we could haul things. So we were in business. Mr. Webb and Mr. Allard would do all of the work in the plant, and I would go out from Navasota. I would make a loop of little villages and towns around and come back in that night with orders. The next day I would deliver it, everything packed in big wooden drums with ice and salt. And they had the same in their stores. So I would just leave this drum as it is, pick up the old drum, take it back in, wash the can that night, and be ready to go the next day.

Jenkins: How far away from Navasota did you get with that situation?

Edge: We were driving to the county seat of Anderson, which was about 10 miles. Then we would go on over to Bedias, about

another 10 miles. Then we would drop south to a little town called Richards, and then we would drive directly back to Navasota. That would be three little towns and maybe 5 or 6 accounts.

Jenkins: How many barrels could you carry in that . . .

Edge: We could carry six or eight.

Jenkins: Oh, I see.

Edge: A dollar a gallon. And if they wanted fruit creams, 10¢ extra, $1.10.

Jenkins: How big were the wooden kegs?

Edge: You haven't seen any wooden packers, they called them, of ice cream.

Jenkins: I guess not.

Edge: They would be about, oh, at least three feet high, and the top would be 18 or 20 inches across, and the bottom would be 12 or 14 inches across.

Jenkins: There was a lot of ice cream in there then.

Edge: A lot of ice. That is, ice and salt. Then you would put this six or eight inch metal can with a lid on it down in there and cover it with salt and ice.

Jenkins: And about how many gallons of ice cream in that can?

Edge: Five gallons.

Jenkins: Oh, so you were carrying 30 gallons of ice cream or so.

Edge: Yes. So that is the way we started. And finally business picked up enough to where the little car wasn't large enough. So we bought a Chevrolet panel delivery

that would carry 12 or 14 of those wooden packers.

Jenkins: A brand new one?

Edge: Yes.

Jenkins: Do you remember what you paid for it?

Edge: $550. That was a lot of money.

Jenkins: Did you have to borrow it?

Edge: I don't remember. I was a worker bee. I didn't know much about the office work, except when it was my evening to work. See, we had all of these Negro farmers down here working on these farms, and they would come into town Saturday and Sunday night, and they would want ice cream. And we would sell them a pint of ice cream for 25¢. We would sell hundreds of those things. It was just amazing.

Jenkins: Scooping it up and making a pint.

Edge: No, already filled. We filled it at the freezer.

Jenkins: With your Lilly brand and everything.

Edge: Yes. We had containers with Lilly on it.

Jenkins: Were these black farmers mostly working for someone else?

Edge: Part of them were tenant farmers, and part of them were on big farms. They were mixed. Some of them were farming small acreage, but I guess the majority were working on the big farms in the valley, Brazos valley.

Jenkins: Was anyone else making ice cream around?

Edge: Not in Navasota.

Jenkins: You had it.

Edge: We had an exclusive there. But it wasn't easy because

Houston was shipping ice cream up by railroad.

Jenkins: What brands were they having at that time?

Edge: Ervin Ice Cream was our biggest competitor, a little independent, who eventually became Foremost in Houston. And then there was a company out of Waco who Mr. Webb had worked for. They came down out of Waco.

Jenkins: What was their brand?

Edge: Brown and something. I can't remember, it has been so long. But it wasn't easy. You had to have a good product, and you had to be competitive in price. And of course we gave them a little extra service by delivering it to them rather than them having to go to the depot and get it.

Jenkins: Oh, this other came in by train.

Edge: Yes. We didn't have trucking in those days. All of our streets and roads were gravel, corduroy gravel. Do you know corduroy gravel? Ridges?

Jenkins: Oh, well, I have run across a lot of them.

Edge: That is all we had down here then in 1927-1928. Well, our hardening room was six feet wide x 10 feet long and was refrigerated with coils of iron pipe made in the form of a shelf. It would be a lower shelf of pipes and there would be a middle shelf of pipes. And there would be two sections about six or eight inches apart at the ceiling, of pipe. Well, come 1928 I believe Anheuser Busch was the

one that started it, at least we bought most of our equipment from them. They developed a brine can. They were made in rounds of about 8 inches diameter and about 2 inches thick, 1½ to 2 inches thick, filled with brine. You would put those in between those two shelves in the ceiling, those coils, and freeze them just as hard as a rock. And then they furnished us with a two-hole cabinet, is what it was called. You put a can of ice cream in the corner, but first you put one of these brine cans in the bottom, a brine pad in the bottom and set the can of ice cream on top of it. Then you had a triangular can that was 18 inches high that you put at the four corners of this square hole that fit just tight against the ice cream can. Now that would carry you all day and all night. The next morning you would change them.

Jenkins: You had brine at the bottom.

Edge: We had this little brine pad at the bottom. Then you had four triangular brine cans . . .

Jenkins: Those were filled with brine.

Edge: Yes. That were frozen hard.

Jenkins: And then at the top of it.

Edge: That would hole a temperature of about 0^{o} to about 5^{o} or 10^{o}. Back in those days we didn't put as much overrun in our ice cream as they do today so it didn't take quite as low a temperature to hold it.

Jenkins: Overrun?

Edge: That is the air. That is your profit. They used to kid me in later years. We would buy something, maybe a new car, and one of my friends would say, "Oh, oh, more air in the ice cream coming up." Well, this was a local situation. We couldn't take it to the country because we couldn't take our pads that far, but we could do this: we bought a large canvas bag that had three long holes side by side which would hold three cans of ice cream, nine cans. And between each can we would put one of those triangular pads, pull in the three flaps that covered each little individual compartment where there were three cans of ice cream, then pull in two big flaps, then the other two from the other end and buckle it down. We would take off. Now at this time we put our ice cream in four-gallon size cans instead of filling the can full to five gallons we would lack one gallon filling it. All right, I come into your store and I say, "Mr. Floyd, you have got a half gallon of vanilla, and it is not going to last you until I get back next week. How about you buying a four gallon, and I will put this half gallon on top of it?" That suited you exactly because you didn't run out of ice cream. It suited me because we got an extra sale. That kept my competitor from selling his in the meantime. Now that was Mr. Webb's idea. He was one of the finest ice cream makers with imagination and innovation that I

have ever known, and he worked from stop to start. His life was ice cream, and he was always thinking of something new. We started making Eskimo Pies under his supervision.

Jenkins: The brand of Eskimo Pie?

Edge: Well, we bought the wrappers from the Eskimo Pie Corporation, and they sold us some pans that were about 3 feet long and about 5 inches wide and maybe 3 inches high. We filled that full of vanilla ice cream, put a top on it, put it up in between those two top coils in the hardening room, let it stay overnight. And the next morning we would come out and we would dip the whole thing in water, turn it out, put it on a piece of wood, a plank, and put it back in the hardening room so that it would harden that little outside that we had melted. And then later on during the day we would go into the ante room. He had built a bench of a thing that was about waist high. One end had a place sawed out for a pan of hot water which had in turn a pan of chocolate setting in the hot water. So we had the melted chocolate, then on each end we had an upright, a stick, vertical plank about 2 inches wide. And between those two we would string a wire. And then he crooked some wire, similar to a fishing hook except that on the end it had an open hook that you would hang on the wire. So you would stick this longer part of the barb

into the little block of ice cream, and after it had hardened we would slice it into about a 1½ inch. I am trying to remember how it was sliced, but this pan was so built that it would give you a given number of slices. And then we would have to put those back in the vault and get them hard on this same board. Then we would bring that board out and I would dip it in the chocolate syrup, hang it up and push it down to the right, and Mr. Allard would wrap it.

Jenkins: Each one individually.

Edge: Individually with an aluminum Eskimo Pie. It was a little oblong slice of chocolate. That was a big seller.

Jenkins: What year was this?

Edge: Oh, this was '28.

Jenkins: Eskimo Pie has been around a long time, then.

Edge: Yes. Of course, now they are made mechanically, but then they were all made by hand. Well, in order to sell them a little faster, Mr. Webb decided that we ought to have an incentive. So we put the word out that with every dozen we would put in a pink Eskimo Pie, a strawberry, and whoever got the strawberry pie got one free. So we had a baker's dozen, 13 for a dozen. And of course they sold for a nickel apiece. We sold them for 40¢ a dozen, but we gave them 13. We would always keep these in a separate container. And when we would pack the Eskimo Pies in an

ice cream can 20 x 8 inch or 6 inch can, we would kind of hold it at an angle and just rotate them around. And every twelfth we would put in a pink one, and the next row every twelfth put in a pink one. Some way or other we were sending these to Huntsville. By this time Anheuser Busch or some company had developed a jacket, a single jacket that was about 16 inches in diameter, about 2 or 3 inches jacket, that you would put a can of ice cream in. Put one of these brine pads at the bottom, another one at the top, put it on the bus and send it to Huntsville to a college store over there right across from the Teachers College. And some way or other somebody sent them a can of pink ones. Oh boy, we had a telephone call, they said, "What have you done to me? I am giving away all of my ice cream." So we said, "Hold it. You are just out until we can send you another can." But that is just a little incident on the side of these. But we sold a tremendous number of those.

Jenkins: That became a big part of the business.

Edge: A big part of the business, yes.

Jenkins: What portion would you say?

Edge: Well, of course they were so tedious to make that we didn't have time to make as many as we should have. We didn't have any help. We still didn't have any help.

Jenkins: Just the three of you.

Edge: The three of us. When I would come in from these sales trips, I would wash all of these cans. We had a can-washing container where we would wash them and rinse them and turn them upside down and drain so that Mr. Webb would have them for the next morning. He was probably already in bed by that time. Mr. Allard made all of the Navasota deliveries, kept the books, did the ordering, did the management of the business. And I did the sales work, the delivery work, utility work around the building.

Jenkins: What kind of hours were ya'll putting in?

Edge: Well, many times all night, we would work all night.

Jenkins: You were on the road during the day and come back and work?

Edge: Oh, yes. Something would go wrong with the refrigeration system, and it had to be fixed.

Jenkins: Ya'll did your own mechanics, then.

Edge: Yes. Mr. Webb was a good mechanic.

Jenkins: Did you work six, seven days a week?

Edge: Seven days.

Jenkins: Is that right? You weren't out on the road on Sunday, I suppose.

Edge: No. I would go out on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Deliver on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. As we grew we expanded into Conroe and into a little railroad town . . .

Jenkins: You are talking about deliveries now. You expanded through deliveries.

Edge: Well, sales work mostly. Most of this was shipped by canvas bag on a railroad. We had two railroads in Navasota, and that gave us a pretty good distribution. And we were able to pick up a good drugstore in Hempstead. He would call in about 9 o'clock every night, and we would ship it at 4 o'clock the next morning.

Jenkins: Be there in time to open up.

Edge: Yes. We had good service. Then we had a little railroad that went from Navasota to Madisonville. It left at 8 o'clock, I think, and that gave us time to pack the ice cream in salt and ice or later in these jackets, put it on the train and go up there.

Jenkins: Now you started this in about twenty . . .

Edge: '28.

Jenkins: So you were reaching out pretty quick.

Edge: The first year, I didn't tell you, this $1,000, plus this $200, plus whatever Mr. Allard got for his lot, didn't last very long. For some reason or other we had to have a cooling tower, where we cooled the hot ammonia we used coming out of the coils in the cold room going through the compressor would be real hot. We had what was called a cooling tower with a pan at the bottom to hold the water, and then the water would be pumped back up and

circulated round and round. Well, it developed a leak, and we had to have a new pan, and it cost $30. That was every penny that the company had. So in the meantime my dad had had another accident on the railroad, another wreck. He was getting up near to retirement then so he decided that he had better get off of that main line. So he moved to Lufkin, Texas, and went on what they called the White City run, a little saw mill about 30 or 40 miles out of Lufkin. He would take supplies down and bring lumber back. They had moved over the first year we were in Navasota. We just had to have some money. So I took the old pickup and drove to Lufkin and got in their car and drove around. He wanted to show me the town, I had never seen it. Finally the opportunity came up, and I said, "Papa, I have just got to have some money. We just don't have it. Our business is picking up, and if we don't get it we are going to have to close up." He said, "Well, son, how much do you need?" I said, "Well, Dad, we just need $1,000." He said, "I haven't got that. I tell you what I will do. I will go down to the bank Monday, and I will see if I can borrow some money." So he put a lien on the house for $800 and let us have the money. That got us over the ridge.

Jenkins: Did he buy an interest then?

Edge: No, he just loaned me the money. And at the end of the

year, that first year, 1927, we paid all we owed, even the man that we bought the business from. We paid him his $5,000. We paid Dad his $800. We paid everything we owed including the man we bought the business from, my dad, and all of our supplies the first year.

Jenkins: Even the $5,000?

Edge: Yes. We paid everything back. We went into 1928 owing nothing. But by that time we had shown the Navasota people, the banks and the merchants, that we were not fly-by-nighters, that we were solid. The bank gave us a little credit, just a few hundred dollars, not much, just off and on. Mr. Allard paid it back. We might not get our $90 a month salary. Well, I got $90. They got $125 because they had a family. So we might be a few days late on our salary, but the bills were paid. So beginning in 1928 when these new innovations came in, the brine pads and the jackets and the cabinets to hold ice cream that we used locally in Navasota, there developed a little friction between Mr. Allard and Mr. Webb. They were there all of the time right together. I was out half of the time or more, and it never bothered me. I never had any problems with either one of them. And this got worse and worse and worse. So in June, 1928, Bert and I had set our wedding date. I went on the train to Lufkin and borrowed Dad's car. We couldn't spare one

of ours, we had to use it in the business. They gave me one week. That's all. That was all I could have from the business.

Jenkins: To get married?

Edge: Yes. So I borrowed the car in Lufkin, went to Mount Pleasant, and we were married. We had a little honeymoon, and got back. We came in on the train. We just didn't have any money, still. Bert didn't know it, and it didn't make any difference then, I guess, like it would now, because we think we can't get married unless we have got quite a bit. But I had made arrangements with a lady who had a boarding house. She had a real small apartment and would serve meals for one of her little apartments. So to get it, to keep it, I had to pay a month's rent in advance. Well, I didn't have the money. So I went to her, and I said, "Would you take ice cream for the first month's rent?" She said, "Why not? That would keep me from making dessert, pies and cakes, and I will just serve that." So she did that. We moved in.

Jenkins: What were you having to pay?

Edge: $30 a month.

Jenkins: Did that include board?

Edge: No, it didn't. It was $15 more for board. But we couldn't afford it, so we ate only one month. Then Bert started cooking. We had a little efficiency apartment,

so she started cooking. That was the way I started. Anyway after that things continued to get worse between Mr. Webb and Mr. Allard. And that fall it came to a climax, one of them was going to leave. Well, we sat down, and I said, "Fellows, I don't want to leave. I want to stay. I have nothing else to do, and I have got a wife, as well as you." So Mr. Webb wanted to stay. So that made it Allard would get out. We didn't have any idea what the business was worth. So finally one of them suggested that we put down two figures on a piece of paper; one a selling price, second a buying price. Well, I didn't want to sell, so I put a high selling price and a low buying price that I would sell for or buy for. When the sheets were opened, the little pieces of paper opened up, Mr. Webb and I had offered more money than Mr. Allard had. So we bought Mr. Allard's part. Well, the figure that I put down to buy was half of what Mr. Webb put down to buy. So I got a half of Mr. Allard's third for half the price that Mr. Webb paid. It was still a partnership. I had to borrow the money to pay. The bank let us have the money.

Jenkins: What did it cost to buy him out, do you remember? Total.

Edge: I think it was $5,000.

Jenkins: Between you.

Edge: Yes. Total $5,000 of which I had to pay a third of $5,000, and Mr. Webb had to pay two-thirds of $5,000. But we were

both happy. By that time we could hire a little help. We hired a young man. He was as strong as an ox. He wasn't very tall, but he was heavy built. His name was Willie Sledge, and I tell you he was one of the best workers we could ever have found anywhere.

Jenkins: How old was he?

Edge: He was 18. A farmer, a farmer's boy. The fact is, all during our hiring history we used farmer people as much as we could.

Jenkins: They knew how to work, I guess.

Edge: Floyd, in our total history of 50-odd years in the ice cream business we had only one college graduate other than me, and that was our production superintendent in Bryan, a graduate of A&M. That is the only two in the history. Oh, they were all educated. They all had high school educations, but nothing more than high school, except one. So Willie's job was to service all of these containers in town that held the ice cream that you had to put the triangle brine pads in. Every morning the first job would be to go in and haul those out. It sounded like chunks of ice rolling against one another. He'd put them in the truck, drive down to the first stop, take two in or four in, bring four melted ones out. Then he would go to the next stop. We would cover them up with a tarpaulin. They would hold up for an hour before we could get them in the

cabinet itself. That was the last of '28 and the beginning of '29.

Jenkins: Now the only cooling the ice cream store had was your brine?

Edge: Those brine pads.

Jenkins: So you had to be there every day, I guess.

Edge: Other than salt and ice, and we did a lot of that.

Jenkins: But no refrigeration.

Edge: No refrigeration. Well, in '29 electric refrigeration started coming out, and we bought the forerunner of the Kelvinator cabinets. It was called a Nizer, and it wasn't worth killing. We never could get it cold enough to hold ice cream, and we paid a big price for it. I don't know whatever happened to it. We worked on it and worked on it. No one knew much about refrigeration then. But the refrigerant was sulphur dioxide and smelled like rotten eggs. In about the latter part of '29 we made an arrangement with Anheuser-Busch again for a delivery truck to deliver ice cream. We were getting mechanized.

Jenkins: Before we do that,what kind of delivery system were you using? Still just that one?

Edge: Still using this big canvas pad.

Jenkins: But just the one truck?

Edge: One truck, yes.

Jenkins: Just one truck.

Edge: The days that I would go out soliciting business, Mr.

Allard would service the city of Navasota. And then I would go out the next day with the same truck and big brine canvas bag with compartments for the ice cream and deliver it to the little out-of-town places, those that I couldn't get to by train. Now when I would go to Madisonville or Bedias or Hempstead or, we had two or three accounts in Bryan by then, we would ship by train. Still in the early days, salt and ice in the big wooden container, and in the later days in the jackets. Of course as I solicited business I would pick up the empty jackets that had been shipped. We had to have quite a few of those to take care of our business. About the last of '29 Anheuser-Busch came out with a truck, two compartments with a little opening at the top just like our vault had that we could slip these pads in that would last 24 hours. So we would load that thing with ice cream and instead of paying freight on the railroad we would just make a sashay down to Conroe and deliver everything. Or we would go down to Hempstead and work everything in between. Of course we had to organize this thing so that we could use it every day. Especially on these areas where we had no train connection, that is where this truck went mostly. The chasis and the body I think we must have paid $2,000 for it. It was a big expense, and I don't know whether it was financed or not. I knew nothing about the office work.

Jenkins: Now go back to that refrigeration. You bought those to put into the stores?

Edge: The boxes that held the brine pads?

Jenkins: No, the refrigeration, the Nizer.

Edge: We just bought one. And I don't remember whatever happened to it. I know we set it on the floor of the plant and it ran and it ran and it ran, and I don't think it ever got cold.

Jenkins: I see. You only bombed out on one of those.

Edge: That's right.

Jenkins: Okay.

Edge: Now we are into '29.

Jenkins: You said before we went on you wanted to back up and pick something up. So let me do that.

Edge: Yes. In 1927 we realized that in the wintertime there wasn't enough ice cream sales to pay expenses. And we decided that what we needed to do was to contact the farmers around Navasota and see if they would save their cream on a weekly basis so that we could pick it up and start making butter, because Mr. Webb had knowledge of making butter also. So after contracting a number of the dairymen, they said, "That would be a windfall for us because we have this cream that we either have to feed to the hogs or we receive no money for, and if you could do that it would certainly help." So that is when we

ordered the churn. It didn't come in until in '28, so we really got the real benefit of it in the winter of '29. We started making butter. In those days we used a box with a false bottom that we would set on a jack, a frame with the center you could jack up and push this false bottom, raise the butter up, and then we had a bow with a stainless steel wire on it that could be set to cut quarter-pound thickness or full-pound thicknesses. And as it came up it would be cut in the pound sections, because across the top of this box there was a frame with stainless steel wires running both ways that were exact one-pound size. Then we had another one for one-quarter-pound size. So by packing the soft butter in this box with the false bottom we could set that on the stand, put whatever size frame on it that we wanted to cut the butter, and then just jack the butter up through there. And as it came up we would pull our bow across and cut it on the quarter pounds or one pound. We had this right beside a table, and as we would cut up a layer we would wrap it and put it in the boxes.

Jenkins: Cut into how many pounds, say, in this box?

Edge: The box would hold 50 pounds. So it would be 200 quarter pounds or 500 one pounds. And we had several of these boxes. So when we made a churning we would have at least two boxes, sometimes two and a fraction. And if we had

two and a fraction we would have a little difficulty on that, because the top would be uneven and we would have to smooth that off before we could get a full quarter-pound or one-pound cut. So that gave us some business in the winter and gave the farmers money for their products, for their cream. And we had a real nice business. Sometimes our butter sales would be in excess of our production. And those were the times that I would go to Brenham, or call P. V. in Brenham and ask Mr. Kruse if he could loan me or sell me 100 pounds of butter. And he never ever refused, he would always say, "Sure. How much do you want? Come and get it."

Jenkins: How did you get to know him?

Edge: That way.

Jenkins: You just needed some butter, and you . . .

Edge: We needed some butter, and we knew that he had a business there.

Jenkins: How long did you know him?

Edge: Until we left Navasota in '33. We moved the churn to Bryan when we closed the plant in Navasota, and used it until it just completely rotted out. So that is the way we got in the butter business. At the end of '29 we had some debt, and business was not too good.

Jenkins: Now you are still in Navasota.

Edge: Yes, we are still in Navasota. My wife and I had lost our

first child as a baby, and things were so difficult financially that we couldn't even afford to pay the $35 to bury the body. But two or three years later when our daughter came along we had saved the $35 to take care of her. Now let's see, back in '29. We had just made the transition from buying out Mr. Allard's interest, and we hired this young man to help us in the city. He never went out of town. I continued to do that. And we also hired a young lady as bookkeeper. She had just finished high school, and we had the simplest set of books that could be worked out so that this high school graduate could take care of that. Incidentally, she stayed with us all through the time we were in Navasota and until we moved to Bryan and she married, and after her first child she quit working. So she was with us for a number of years and would have probably continued if she had not married or had not had any children. So '29 was a terrible year for us. And '30 came on and we worked and worked as much as we could trying to expand our operations a little bit. In '31 and '32 we managed to increase our volume enough to take care of all our expenses, but we really never made any money. We did increase our salaries I think to maybe $200 apiece. And our labor that we hired was at 25¢ an hour. Of course that was pretty good wages even then. In '32, oh, I guess it was mid-year or past

mid-year, July or August, the secretary of the Bryan Chamber of Commerce stopped by on his way from Houston to Bryan. He had been to Houston on some errand, and talked to Mr. Webb and me, and he said, "Would you men be interested in moving this business to Bryan?" And of course Bryan was twice as large or more than Navasota, and it also had the advantage of A&M with all of these students which used a lot of ice cream. So we told him that we would be glad to so we would have to have some financing. He said, "Well, I will take care of that." So he did, and we bought the equipment and moved to Bryan. There was a little confectionary called Holmes' Brothers in Bryan who manufactured their own ice cream, and they had a tremendous business. They were afraid that we were going to put them out of business. So they formed some kind of an agreement with all of the soda fountains in town to buy ice cream from them and not buy from us. And of course that took care of all of our local, most of our local business. It didn't affect our college prospects. They were pretty strong, pretty well known, and made a reasonably good ice cream.

Jenkins: What was their brand, just Holmes?

Edge: Holmes' Brothers. They served it in packages, prefilled packages as well as dipped packages in cones and sodas and everything that you would sell from a soda fountain. So

we finally decided that we would just sit down and talk to the Holmes' Brothers through the Chamber of Commerce secretary. And we worked out a deal with them where we would buy Holmes' Brothers' business, and in buying the business part of the consideration would be the serving of the other stores in town. I don't remember the amount of money, but say it was $20,000 for the business plus the businesses at these soda fountains who they had tied in with Holmes' Brothers on this basis: 50% cash and the balance to be traded out with ice cream. And that solved the problem.

Jenkins: Now I am not sure I understand. Did you then take over Holmes' Ice Cream?

Edge: Yes, they closed their plant. We took their equipment and served their customers.

Jenkins: So you paid off your note with them by serving their customers.

Edge: Half of it was cash.

Jenkins: At what point did you remove the Holmes' name and it become . . .

Edge: Immediately.

Jenkins: Oh, I see.

Edge: Holmes' Brothers when we signed the contract, that was when the Holmes' Brothers' brand was out. This was in '33. Our plant was started in '32, and was finished in '33. The owner of the Stephan's Ice Company had a vacant lot

beside his ice plant, and he built us the first building, and we bought it from him for $10,000 on an installment basis.

Jenkins: Now was Holmes strictly a local operation? No outlying . . .

Edge: Just local.

Jenkins: So that just gave you the local Bryan ice cream business.

Edge: Yes, it did. However, Holmes was not serving all of the ice cream to these merchants. There was ice cream coming out of Houston, plants in Houston, plants in Waco that were also serving these fountains. So we only received that portion that Holmes had which would be, I would guess, 50%. Back in those days they would run out of ice cream before they could get it in from Houston; say, then they would buy from Holmes to fill up their needs. And then when it came in from Houston they would use that up, and if they couldn't get it in in time to fill up the space in their freezer coming from Houston, then they would buy from Holmes. So Holmes did not have all of the business. They had only a portion of it.

Jenkins: It got your foot in the door.

Edge: Yes, it did. When we moved here we had one good account, that did a tremendous volume. He was down in the lower part of town, and he had a large negro trade. His business was John Woodyard Confectionary. He sold as much ice cream as we sold to all of the other fountains, in the

beginning. Of course we gradually worked into the A&M concession stands out there, but it was difficult because A&M had their dairy science course in which they taught ice cream manufacturing production and all that sort of thing. And they had to sell that ice cream. If they manufactured it they had to have an outlet. So most everything around College Station bought from them, and then we would get little fill-in orders. Something that happened during that time, a Mr. Sheppardson was head of the . . . it wasn't the dairy science department, it was the whole animal husbandry department, and particularly he was in charge of this section of that which was the ice cream and milk production. I always called him Shep. He finally wound up being on the Federal Reserve Board. But anyway, Shep called me out to his office one day. He wasn't feeling good. He was in a bad humor. He said, "Sit down." I sat down beside him in a chair. He said, "Claude Edge, the reason I want to talk to you is you know we make ice cream." I said, "Yes, sir, I do." He said, "You know we have got to sell it so we can teach these students." I said, "Yes, sir." He said, "And I want you to quit selling these drug stores around the campus." I said, "Mr. Sheppardson, I can't do that." He said, "Why can't you?" I said, "Because if they don't buy it from me they will buy it from Houston." "No,

they won't either. I can control that. And besides you are selling it too cheap." So I sat there and talked to him for a long time. I said, "I will work with you any way in the world. Say I just take their overflow. You sell them all that they need. When they run out and you don't have it I will sell them that." He said, "Well, that is a little concession anyway." So after that we were just good friends. But when we came to Bryan there was no pasteurized milk in Bryan. It was all raw milk. And as I said earlier Mr. Webb was quite an innovator. His mind was a bunch of wheels, always going around. He decided we ought to have pasteurized milk.

Jenkins: For retail.

Edge: Yes, for Bryan. A&M College had it, and we just ought to have it. We had a local dairyman who was quite large in volume. When he heard that we were going into the milk business, he came to us and talked to us. He said, "I don't want you to go into the milk business. You will get my business." I was still in Navasota. Mr. Webb, I don't know what he said to him, but anyway it worked out to where we continued to order the equipment and get it installed. Shipwrecht was his name. He was well known, well thought of, but he was a ruthless competitor. So I think milk was selling for 10¢ or 12¢ a quart in glass bottles.

Jenkins: Delivered to the door?

Edge: No, that was wholesale. It would be a penny more if we delivered it to the door. So we started and got the milk in the stores pretty well. He dropped the price 2 pennies. Of course back in those days 2 pennies for milk was quite a bit. Well, we dropped the price 2 pennies. Floyd, inside of two weeks milk was selling for 5¢ a quart. Well, we just hung on and hung on as long as we could, and we just finally had to quit. We just closed up the milk plant. So that was a disaster. We still continued making butter.

Jenkins: You never did go back into milk then?

Edge: No.

Jenkins: What about your equipment?

Edge: I don't remember what happened to that. To be honest with you I don't think we ever paid for it. Either that or we sold it. Gosh, that has been a long time, 1933. That has been 50 years. And besides I did not have too much to do with the production. When we moved to Bryan my problem was office: accounts, charges, collections, taking care of our notes. We always owed money. We always had to borrow money from the bank. Thank goodness the banks were friends, personal friends, and they continued to help us until we got on our feet.

Jenkins: Let me check with you about pasteurized milk. Pasteurized

milk was still a relative rarity throughout the state of Texas, wasn't it?

Edge: Except in the large cities.

Jenkins: The large cities, did they enact ordinances requiring it, is that primarily what brought it on?

Edge: Yes.

Jenkins: I see. But Bryan had no such ordinance. He just brought it here.

Edge: They did not have. They had an inspector, a health inspector, whose extra duties was to inspect our ice cream and milk plants: production, sanitation, etc. But no ordinance for pasteurized milk.

Jenkins: Let me check with something else here we were talking about at lunch. Up to this point there were very few laws governing ice cream, apparently. Is that correct?

Edge: Federal law only. The federal law which was accepted by the state, would be the minimum percent of butter fat in ice cream and the minimum solids not fat, that is serum solids, that is the casein and the part of the milk that isn't fat. In other words you couldn't use skim milk and dilute it with more water, or you couldn't add water to milk.

Jenkins: What about the sanitation. Were there inspections involved?

Edge: Yes. The local health officer did that.

Jenkins: From the beginning?

Edge: From the very beginning.

Jenkins: Ice cream?

Edge: Ice cream, yes. And also when we were making butter. He would inspect our plant, what methods we were using for sanitation and what we were using, what product, and what percentage of how strong. And also he would inspect our equipment, our trucks, for cleanliness inside.

Jenkins: Was this just kind of visual, though? Were there bacteria counts or things like that?

Edge: No. Well, I am not sure about that. But mostly it was visual. Well, the city of Bryan always had a pretty good sanitation system, and they carried it through and improved it as time passed. But only once or twice were we taken to task because of something that we hadn't done, and then it was simply an oral situation, never a written report. And then they would come back within a day or two to see if it had been corrected. They were very cooperative. Now we are up to '33. Well, from '33 to '38 we were expanding as fast as we could. And in 1938 a man came from the north who was a dairyman and settled in Houston and started an ice cream company which he called Double Dip Ice Cream Company. It was completely retail. He had no wholesale business. He had his own retail stores, and he would sell two dips for a nickel. He took Houston by storm and made an awful lot of money, and then he started expanding. Well, Mr. Webb and I knew that he would be

in Bryan. And one evening, it must have been Thursday evening after work; it was after dark, it was eight or nine o'clock. We had heard that some equipment had been put in one of the stores downtown. So we just walked up and down the streets until we found the building and saw the equipment in there, which meant that in the next couple of weeks they would have a Double Dip store here. Well, to show you how Mr. Webb worked, we did everything today, nothing tomorrow. The next morning, I believe it was Friday, we called in our people; our maintenance people, our refrigeration people; we had a young man who made signs for us, and he was also a carpenter. And Mr. Webb said to all of us, "We are going into the double dip ice cream business. I am going to take you off of what you are doing, and you come with me." In the morning, this must have been Wednesday night, and this was Thursday morning, he and I went down north of town and found an empty building. We rented it that day. And on Friday morning we started moving materials, ice cream cabinets. We had electric cabinets then, and started moving them into this building. The next morning at 9 o'clock we opened for business. When Double Dip got ready to open up it took them about two weeks to get their equipment set. Of course theirs may have looked a little nicer than ours, but ours was clean, and it was a big success.

Jenkins: You were first.

Edge: We were first. We put one at the college right across from the campus. It did well. That was all bulk ice cream. There were no packages or nothing else, and that is a good way to sell ice cream. So we had a meeting, and Mr. Webb and I decided that we ought to expand, but we didn't have the money to expand. This was during the Prohibition days, and Anheuser-Busch were not making beer, not brewing beer, but they had gotten into the refrigeration business. They were making ice cream cabinets and a little vault, a little 8x10 or a 10x10 room with four doors in front with a big compressor to refrigerate. It had coils inside. And we could put this in the out-of-town stores and give them once-a-week delivery. Just leave them 50 or 100 cans of ice cream, and then when they needed it if they needed it before the regular trip they would call us, and we would send a special trip. Anheuser-Busche had a field representative, a salesman, by the name of Shaw. I don't remember his initials, but his nickname was Pop, Pop Shaw. So he came by just as we were getting into this. And we said, "Pop, we need some ice cream cabinets. We need some vaults, some storage rooms for ice cream. And we need some ammonia plates." The first trucks that came out refrigerated were with ammonia. There would be a plate in there that

would be, oh, six-feet long, two-feet wide with ammonia coils in it. And around these coils and inside this frame of this plate would be brine, and you would connect that up with your ammonia system at the plant during the night, and it would harden that brine and there would be enough holdover for us to make a trip all day.

Jenkins: Was that b-r-i-n-e?

Edge: Yes.

Jenkins: Like in pickles.

Edge: They called it brine, it may have a glycol solution, but it was something that would freeze hard and would have a holding ability of staying hard for a long time. He said, "All right, boys." He always called us boys. "How much do you think you need?" And I said, "Well, we haven't got any money." I was the one to give that information. Mr. Webb bought anything. He would just buy, it didn't make any difference to him. Pop said, "Well, we will work that out. Let's see, how much do you need?" We told him the towns we wanted to cover, the size of them. And he said, "Well, let's see, you will need about two trucks, and you will need two carloads of cabinets, plus another carload of vaults." I said, "Now wait a minute, Pop. How much money are you talking about?" "You don't worry about that. You just don't worry about that at all." I said, "It has got to be paid for." "Don't

worry about that. We will take care of that." They sold us all of that, three or four carloads of cabinets, holding rooms and two trucks; nothing down.

Jenkins: My gosh. In '38?

Edge: In '38. '38 is the first year that Lilly Ice Cream actually made a profit above all expenses. But that was the beginning of really the expansion of Lilly Ice Cream.

Jenkins: Did this guy say why he did this?

Edge: He had known us for a long time. We had been buying a few little things from him. We were a little shy at building up a debt. Anheuser-Busch had the backing and the resources. They went more on the person than they did on the amount of money he had.

Jenkins: He thought you were ready.

Edge: He thought we were ready. So from that time on Lilly Ice Cream was spread out. As fast as we could, as fast as we could open them up, we opened up 19 stores in towns around Bryan.

Jenkins: Were these double dip type?

Edge: Every one double dip, double dip ice cream.

Jenkins: You called yours, though, what?

Edge: Lilly Ice Cream, Lilly Ice Cream.

Jenkins: But everybody just knew they were double dip.

Edge: They all knew it.

Jenkins: Let's go back to that double dip thing. An ice cream cone

was a nickel.

Edge: Right, a single dip.

Jenkins: The Depression came along and nickels were harder to come by, so somebody said, "let's give two." Is that how it started?

Edge: No. It started with this manufacturer, this man who had had ice cream experience when he moved to Houston. He decided that he could make an ice cream that would sell directly. In other words he wouldn't have the delivery cost to the merchant or the equipment cost furnishing cabinets to the merchant.

Jenkins: He just opened his own retail.

Edge: Yes, he opened his own stores. No middle man.

Jenkins: Okay.

Edge: So that could let him sell two dips for a nickel.

Jenkins: Did he start off with just the single dip cone with two dips on it, and didn't that eventually . . . didn't they come out with . . .

Edge: The double dip cone?

Jenkins: Yes.

Edge: We used single-head cones. It looked better.

Jenkins: Well, did the Double Dipper have the two heads then on it?

Edge: No, he had the single cone.

Jenkins: Somebody eventually came out with two heads, though.

Edge: Yes. But that just doesn't look as large as one dip on

top of the other.

Jenkins: That's right.

Edge: Many things are sold by sight.

Jenkins: That was the era, though, when this two headed one came out.

Edge: That's right.

Jenkins: Do you remember who did that?

Edge: The cone manufacturer. We had three or four different cone manufacturers in the United States then, and they just added an additional mold to make a double-headed cone.

Jenkins: So now you opened 20 . . .

Edge: We had 19 in nearby towns. Of course we had two or three here. So we had over 20. That was 1938. '39 the war started rumbling in Europe. '40 it was actually in the war then. In '41 we were bombed in the Phillipine Islands, and we went to war. Well, we had to close these stores, because all of the young men we had . . . and the funny thing we didn't think about using young ladies for managers. We just didn't think about it. You never heard of it. Women just were not doing that kind of work. Today we would still be in business, double dip. But these men were being called up so we just had to close one and then another. And in every case where we could we brought them into Bryan. But one of the nice things that happened as a result of these double-dip ice cream stores, in that city where we had one we had developed the name Lilly.

So when it came time to dismantle that store, it was no problem putting that cabinet in some confectionery or some grocery store. We started working in grocery stores then. So we didn't have to bring those cabinets back into Bryan. We just distributed them out in that same city and continued to serve them with the same truck. So that really put us in the ice cream business.

Jenkins: Let's go back here and do the Depression a little bit. You pretty well described what was happening to your company during the Depression, you just kind of hanging in there.

Edge: Just hanging in there.

Jenkins: Until '38. But in terms of being a citizen of the town and seeing what was going on, what are your recollections of the Depression as seen in Bryan, Texas? Did you personally see much that looked like depression?

Edge: Well, yes and no. Yes in the term that our volume of ice cream dropped some. And no in the fact that we still had A&M. So our local business was not cut as much as was our outlying business. The ROTC at A&M had increased its enrollment, and we had been able to sell those, a couple of those confectioneries, on the campus. So it really didn't hurt us.

Jenkins: The local citizens as you viewed them, were there any problems with the banks, were there any soup lines, was

unemployment very much?

Edge: No.

Jenkins: So this town didn't feel it much.

Edge: We just really didn't. Because when we closed our stores, our retail stores, the volume dropped in that town a little bit, but we still had a good volume because those cabinets had been moved into grocery stores, confectioneries or soda fountains to where we could maintain a pretty good volume. The fact is our business was really better on an overall basis during . . . Now are you talking about the Depression or talking about during the war days?

Jenkins: Depression.

Edge: Well, the Depression was just terrible. People just didn't have the money to buy ice cream. It was a luxury. Food and clothes came first. If there was a nickel left, they could buy ice cream. The merchant, head volume was not any better, even though there were a few more people coming along, being born, and children coming on, our volume didn't increase on a normal basis. First our name was not known too well, and second we just didn't have the ability and the financial standing to advertise and to put this ice cream before the public.

Jenkins: How about the town itself. Were there any bank failures here, unemployment up much? So the town itself didn't feel the Depression?

Edge: Actually, Floyd, I don't know, because when we moved here in '33 we knew no one. The business was demanding all of our time. About all Bert and I could do would be on Sunday to go to church. And we were very active, always have been very active in church work. So we didn't notice.

Jenkins: You weren't very conscious of it.

Edge: We weren't conscious of it at all.

Jenkins: The university was out there and things were humming.

Edge: Yes.

Jenkins: It didn't slow down much, or any of that.

Edge: I can remember when we first moved here the dormitories were few for the students. They had built these army barracks, these little square, wood base coming up three or four feet, then canvas the rest of it. They were housing 2,000 students in those, four to each house, just a whole village of them out there in an area. So money was tight. But, gosh, we knew it was tight, and we just lived accordingly.

Jenkins: Let's work on into the war years, then.

Edge: The war years were good years for us, good years for Lilly, because from those double dip stores just before the war years, into the war years we were able to get our name before the public. And we did make a good product. Then in 1946 after all of the retail stores had been closed for three or four years and our volume was picking up even

though we had a lot of competition, Mr. Webb decided to try a new product. And there was no law against it. We decided to make a vegetable product instead of butterfat. Butterfat at that time was about 3 times as expensive as vegetable fat like peanut or cottonseed oil or something like that. So we started experimenting with a small batch, a small batch of ice cream mix made of half butterfat and half vegetable fat. And no one could tell the difference. We just put them side by side, straight butterfat ice cream here and the half-and-half butterfat and vegetable fat here, and let them taste it. You couldn't tell any difference. And one of the best tests we ever made was black coffee. Take a cup of black coffee, put a dip of ice cream in it. If it just disentegrates and separates into or dissolves into the coffee like you had poured cream in it, it is a good product. So we did that with both of these, the straight butterfat and then the half and half. It worked out fine. Then we compared the product of half butterfat-half vegetable fat with a 100 percent butterfat . . . no vegetable fat, with a 100 percent vegetable fat. Well, that was just a little bit different. The vegetable fat product didn't dissolve completely and as easily as did the one with the butterfat in it. But it was so close that one wouldn't notice it. The taste was the same, no difference. The fact

is we would add one percent more of vegetable fat, and it would taste richer. So Mr. Webb developed the name Mellorine.

Jenkins: Is that where they started then?

Edge: We were the first.

Jenkins: Lilly is Mellorine.

Edge: Lilly Mellorine.

Jenkins: Is that right?

Edge: Now another company also started about the same time we did in Corsicana, but he did not advance as fast as we did. We were the ones that had it trademarked. But foolish that we were, we let the Texas Association of Ice Cream Manufacturers talk us into letting them acquire the patent of the copyright rather than Lilly. There was a great fight of Mellorine at that time, whereas if we had kept it we could have gotten an override royalty on it, but we didn't. We were trying to be good manufacturers, good producers. So our volume increased. It just went up like that. The first year, 1946, I called all of our employees together, all 50 some-odd, and I said, "We are going to push Mellorine, and we want you to help us. And if you will help us in this matter of selling it, talk to your friends to use it, out of town, everywhere, we will set aside 5¢ out of every gallon that we sell, the sale price of every gallon, into a fund, and we will divide it share

and share alike next Christmas." Well, that sounded good. So our Mellorine business just went sky high, and our ice cream business went down. So when we came to Christmas and came to our Christmas party, we had kept it pretty quiet. The office help knew how much we had. The trouble with us in those days was we could not save money. So in order to have this cash on hand at Christmastime, at the end of every month I would go into the bookkeeping department and say, "How many gallons of Mellorine did we sell?" "Well, we sold X number of gallons." "All right, I want a check of 5¢ x each one of those gallons." And I put it into a separate account in the bank. And at Christmastime we had a good bank account. We had more money in that, two or three times, than we did in the operating account. So as I said we had kept it quiet. We had the party. We had food and always had a good time. Then we had the serious part, the giving out of the bonuses for the year. Of course there was great anticipation. We had a negro porter. He was a fine man, Andrew Knox. He was a good guy. He had been with us for I don't know how long. He came to us after the war, and had been with us for several years. I don't think he made over $150 a month, something like that. Of course he made the same as someone else in his area of employment. I said, "Andrew,

come up here." "Yessir." He came up, and I said, "Andrew, we have had a good year, and I want to give you the first check." So I gave him that check for $536, and I am telling you he nearly fainted. So all of our employees, except Mr. Webb and me, got $536.

Jenkins: Which was how much total, approximately?

Edge: 30,000 some-odd dollars.

Jenkins: That is a lot of Mellorine.

Edge: That is a lot of gallons of Mellorine.

Jenkins: Were you delighted for Mellorine to replace your ice cream business?

Edge: Yes. More profitable.

Jenkins: More profitable, less costly to make, and the price was about the same?

Edge: The same price.

Jenkins: I see. And the public didn't seem to care.

Edge: No.

Jenkins: I know my kids were raised on it, and they got to where they didn't like ice cream.

Edge: Well, that is the way Mellorine started.

Jenkins: I didn't realize that.

Edge: Mr. Webb was the one that started that. We talked different names, but that was finally the one that came out.

Jenkins: When the Texas Association got that from you, you just turned it over to them.

Edge: Yes. Everybody made it.

Jenkins: You didn't get anything from the use of the name?

Edge: Then it developed into grades of Mellorine like you had grades of ice cream. What I mean by grades is the minimum butterfat standards at that time was 8%. That was on ice cream, the standards. Mellorine had no standards. So they would make 6% and cut the price. So instead of having a good Mellorine, the general Mellorine business was ruined because some of our major companies made a very cheap or inexpensive Mellorine. So that gave it a black eye.

Jenkins: Did yours then start . . .

Edge: No, ours continued good. We didn't make that type.

Jenkins: Your sales held up then.

Edge: Our sales held up.

Jenkins: Your customers knew the difference.

Edge: That's right.

Jenkins: Ah, that's great.

Edge: We were able in those days to advertise a little bit more, publicize the fact.

Jenkins: Mellorine was Lilly until Lilly was no longer?

Edge: No. Except this little area right in here that Lilly was serving, Mellorine was so bad, they produced low quality, that it just kind of faded away, and then we came back to butterfat ice cream at a higher price.

Jenkins: So you gave up Mellorine, too.

Edge: Yes, we gave up Mellorine.

Jenkins: Does anyone make a comparable . . .

Edge: It isn't advertised as such, but when you see a half gallon of ice cream in a grocery ad for a very low price, you can just depend on it being part vegetable fat.

Jenkins: I see. And are you thinking that it is probably very low standard, too, or not necessarily?

Edge: It has got to be 8%.

Jenkins: Oh, I see.

Edge: They have developed tests on it now. But when we started you could not run a butterfat test on Mellorine and tell if it was all butterfat or if it was all vegetable fat or if it was half and half. But the State Department of Tests and Measures, or whatever it is, devised a method by which they could separate the vegetable fat from the butterfat, and then they were pretty strict on it. But until that time there wasn't. Now I don't know if there is any testing going on on that now or not. I have been out of it so many years. But butterfat now is real expensive. And when you sell a half gallon of ice cream for $1.10 or $1.25 or something like that, it is either ice milk, which has to be at least 4%, or it is part butterfat and part vegetable fat.

Jenkins: So Lilly gave us Mellorine when, about?

Edge: Yes we did about in the '50s. We carried it on for about five or six years.

Jenkins: You were the last to give it up.

Edge: No, we were one of the first to give it up. We decided the best thing for us to do was to go back and make an ice cream, advertise it as ice cream and push it, and advertise it in that manner.

Jenkins: Go back to high quality.

Edge: That's right.

Jenkins: Okay, well carry us on into the 50's.

Edge: Well, into the '50s our former partner, Mr. Allard, had moved back to Commerce and had bought the original Lilly plant in Commerce and had opened it up and was doing pretty good. He had a distributor in Temple, Texas that was a real aggressive young man. And he worked. He had frozen food and ice cream. He carried them on the same truck in separate compartments. He would go into a grocery store, he would sell them their frozen food, and he would also sell them ice cream. He was a smart young man. And working out of Temple he was coming into Cameron and Rockdale and Rosebud and just little towns at the edge of our territory and at the edge of his, and he was doing a good business.

Jenkins: Whose ice cream was he carrying?

Edge: It was named Lilly, but it was made in the plant in Commerce.

So he got to be a pretty good distributor. He was doing so well in this distributor work that he decided the best thing for us to do is to only have one Lilly brand in this area. So one day at a meeting of independent ice cream manufacturers in Palestine I sat by Allard, and I said--I always called him C.A.--I said, "C.A., it is completely wrong for you to have a plant in north Texas and for us to have one here and for you to have a distribution in Temple when we could close your plant, take your machinery and put it in our plant, and serve everything out of Bryan." He said, "I don't know." Well, anyway, I pushed it. The meeting broke up and we went home. Then a couple of weeks later I saw him. He said, "I have been thinking about that. I think it is a good idea." We were a corporation, so we just issued some more stock, took his plant in for so many shares, and started serving them. He had his vault, his cold room, in Commerce. So we just sent a trailer truckload of ice cream in what he wanted: pints, quarts or novelties.

Jenkins: Shut down production there.

Edge: Shut down production there.

Jenkins: Moved it all here and just made a distribution point.

Edge: Yes, and we did the same for the man in Temple. That was our first branch operation.

Jenkins: The first one was in . . .

Edge: In Commerce. Mr. Allard continued to live in Commerce and be manager of that plant. Once a month he would come to Bryan for a corporation meeting, directors' meeting. Some way or other Mr. Webb and Mr. Allard personalities were just opposite, and they got crossways again. That was when Mr. Allard told me one time when he was down here that he thought we ought to buy Mr. Webb out rather than him get out, because he wasn't ready to retire. So we worked out with Mr. Webb a way to buy his stock, and we put it in a treasury, we didn't take it personally. We just put it in the treasury. The company bought it. At that time we had a good production man that Mr. Webb had trained. We had a good maintenance man who had been trained similarly. So we didn't lose anything except a disruption in the management of the business and probably saved a little money on salaries.

Jenkins: And so now all production was here, you had a distribution in Commerce. Now what was it about Temple?

Edge: We were serving him, too. He had a little cold room up there. We sent him a load as he needed it.

Jenkins: Okay. Let's just kind of expand geographically in distribution then from there. Now you never did go out of Bryan for manufacturing, anymore.

Edge: No, we manufactured everything here. The next expansion was to Houston. We bought a little plant in Houston and

acquired his business, put a real energetic manager in there, and he expanded that, doubled the volume of that company that we bought half.

Jenkins: What was that company or brand?

Edge: I would have to call one of my men to give you that name.

Jenkins: Was it an old name?

Edge: No. He had been a worker for some of the companies in Houston, and decided to go into business for himself. It just wasn't financed well enough to take care of it. So immediately after that we went to Victoria. We were serving Victoria out of Bryan, which was an awful long run. The truck would go down, spend a night, and come back the next day. So we bought some land out north of Victoria and built a plant, built a distribution center, with a large vault or cold room, whichever you would want to call it. There was a little house on the property, and we hired a local man who was a very fine young man as manager. He moved out there, sold his house in town. And it helped him, and it helped us. We had just real good business there. Then we went to San Antonio and talked with a family by the name of Faulk; Faulk Ice Cream Company. They had a pretty nice volume. The brother who was running the manufacturing plant had cancer. He had a little remission on it. And the sister who was manager of the thing was scared to death that he would die, and she had no one to

run it for her. So we were able to make a pretty good deal with them for that. That gave us added volume. We were getting good distribution, and our volume by this time was getting into a million gallons a year. The fact is we would run a little more than that, because when I finally sold out to Mr. Barns, we did two and a half million that year.

Jenkins: Which was what year?

Edge: 1968. Now the time between the expansion to these branch plants and '68. In the early '60s Mr. Allard had this automobile accident, and he bumped his head some way in the car, created a blood clot that expanded and began to paralyze him. He had an operation and had that removed. Then a few months later he had to go in again and remove it a second time. It had accumulated. But they apparently took care of it the second time. Someway or other it had just changed his disposition to one of being critical of nearly everything that was done, especially with me as manager of the business. It finally came to the place where he just told me flatly that either I or he would have to get out, to make up my mind. Instead of saying, "I want to sell," he just put it on the basis of one of us were going to have to go. And, again, I did not want to sell. So he made a price on his stock, and I accepted it on a two week's period of raising the money, which

I was able to do. Then when I completed that deal I went to our attorney, and he drew up the papers. I took them to Austin and was given permission to sell our stock publicly. The recommendation we asked for and was approved was that the par value was $10, but it would sell for $15. And for every share that was sold for $15, $10 of it went to the company, $5 of it went to me, on a divison share basis. And that $5 was to pay back this loan at the bank to borrow the money to buy Mr. Allard's share. That was the way we paid the banks back. And, of course, after that we really pushed, advertised and went to work making ice cream. Our son-in-law was in the Navy in Japan a good part of the time, and he wrote me and told me he wanted to resign and was there a place at Lilly for him. I told him there was, but he would have to ask for it, that I would not ask him, because I didn't want him to do something that he would be sorry of later. He wrote back and said, "I am a graduate engineer of Annapolis, and I am going to resign the Navy whether I come into Lilly or not. If there is a place for me, I would like to come." So he came in 1961, and then we really put him to work, because he was a well known young man. He sold stock as well as solicited business. From '61 until '68 we had an increase every year in volume. We had total sales of two and a quarter million. But when my son-in-law, Wally

Anderson, came in the business, I was trying to get started in milk. We needed milk to complement one another, and he helped me do that. He helped us get in the grocery stores, in the display cabinets in the grocery stores, with Lilly milk, not only in Bryan, but in Victoria we had a tremendous business down there thanks to Wally. And we had it in Houston. The manager in Houston had good relations with the merchants, and he was able to get milk in there. So in those two places we did real well.

Jenkins: Now at the year you sold out . . .

Edge: In '68.

Jenkins: Were your distribution points the same as you had mentioned earlier then?

Edge: We had not added any more. We just simply concentrated more on those areas.

Jenkins: That two and a quarter million, was that . . .

Edge: That is dollars.

Jenkins: Dollars.

Edge: Ice cream in those days was about $1 a gallon.

Jenkins: This was ice cream and milk or just . . .

Edge: Both.

Jenkins: Was it predominately ice cream?

Edge: Yes. Maybe $200,000 in milk.

Jenkins: Now carry us through your selling: why you did it, who bought it, how long, if any, you stayed on, your son-in-law,

what happened to him in the business. Just kind of carry us through your getting out of the business.

Edge: The selling of the business?

Jenkins: Yes.

Edge: This young man who bought the business, Mr. Barns, had worked for us back when we had our own pasteurized milk, back in the '30s-'33 along in there. He had driven one of our milk trucks. And being born and bred in the country, he knew a lot about milk stock. So he decided that he could do better having his own farm. He quit, and perhaps not immediately but shortly later got into the milk business, buying milk cows and producing his own milk. And he was selling it to the Producers Co-op, here. Eventually he developed enough and made enough volume to where he could sell it himself. So he started doing that. But when you have a store that has four or five brands of milk in their cases, there is no room for another brand. There is just no space. The store manager or the store owner is going to have to eliminate one or eliminate space from all of them and give you a spot in there, which they don't like to do. What he needed was some incentive to get in that store. And we were in the stores in ice cream. And he felt like that by having ice cream in there that he could get his milk in there much, much easier. So he made me an offer for the stock, controlling interest, and

I sold it to him.

Jenkins: Oh, he bought controlling interest.

Edge: He bought controlling interest. He put Wally in charge of sales, our son-in-law, completely in charge of all sales. Wally really built his milk business up. He built it up from just a pittance on his own to thousands of gallons a month.

Jenkins: Let me ask you. You had Lilly milk in at the time you sold.

Edge: We had Lilly milk.

Jenkins: Did he simply take . . .

Edge: He just simply took his milk, put it in the Lilly label and distributed it.

Jenkins: Okay. That gave him an outlet for his milk.

Edge: Immediately.

Jenkins: Then your son-in-law stayed . . .

Edge: Stayed on until Mr. Barns came to the place where they were up to six or seven million dollars a year in the period of time to where he needed to do some expanding. He needed to borrow some money, and I mean a lot of money. And he just didn't have the faith or the desire to do it. So he started thinking about selling it. He made a connection or a deal with Oak Farms to sell.

Jenkins: You were saying that Mr. Barns sold out to Oak Farms. Did he just sell his interest, or was the whole corporate stock . . .

Edge: He sold none of the corporate stock. He sold all of the assets, which would be equipment, rolling stock and cabinets. No buildings. The volume. For instance he sold the distribution system. I guess that would be the best way.

Jenkins: What happened to Lilly Corporation?

Edge: Mr. Barns started liquidating all of the equipment and machinery that Oak Farms didn't take. He liquidated that. Then the County of Brazos bought the land and buildings.

Jenkins: And the stockholders interest, how did they get their share?

Edge: He redeemed the stock at book value which at that time was about $38 a share. So those that paid $15 for it received $38 for it.

Jenkins: So Lilly Corporation no longer existed.

Edge: No longer exists except as a family situation, he and his children.

Jenkins: Is he doing anything with that brand?

Edge: He is using the logo, the brand name on his milk. But the Lilly ice cream stock belongs to him and his family. In other words there is no outside stockholders as far as I know.

Jenkins: There still is a Lilly, but it is strictly in his family, and it is his milk distribution system.

Edge: That's right, it is his milk distribution system.

Jenkins: Let me go back now and get a few kind of summary highlights.

Edge: All right.

Jenkins: You say the year you sold it your sales volume was . . .

Edge: Two and a quarter million.

Jenkins: I think you told us, but give us an idea of what those first couple of years were like, sales volume.

Edge: When we came to Bryan?

Jenkins: Yes.

Edge: In 1933?

Jenkins: Just to give a notion as to how it grew. I think you named a figure, but I can't quite . . .

Edge: No, I don't think I did.

Jenkins: Do you have any idea?

Edge: Oh, I could get the exact figures from our accountant. I expect he still has them. But I would have to guess. I would guess they would be three or four hundred thousand.

Jenkins: The first year. So you started off with a pretty good bang.

Edge: Yes. We were doing, oh, $25,000 or $30,000 a month.

Jenkins: You have already told us about the distribution system, how wide that was. Now you started off with just three of you, and you wound up with how many employees when you sold?

Edge: When I sold out there were, counting the branches and those in the production here, there would be 125.

Jenkins: Those all worked for Lilly.

Edge: Yes.

Jenkins: The ones in the distribution system.

Edge: Yes.

Jenkins: Financing,you have pretty well told us about how you did that over the years.

Edge: We had a fairly good credit rating at two banks. The fact is we had a bank in Houston that also helped us in times of emergency.

Jenkins: You started off as a partnership, did you?

Edge: Yes.

Jenkins: And at what point did you become a corporation, about?

Edge: Floyd, I just don't remember. I rather think it was in the 50's. I remember, I think our accountant suggested that we incorporate when we started buying and putting in these branch stores.

Jenkins: What reason did he give you for thinking you should incorporate?

Edge: Easier to operate. In other words the parent company would be one corporation, San Antonio was another corporation, Houston was another corporation, subsidiary.

Jenkins: I see. Did it remain that way?

Edge: Yes.

Jenkins: So they were sold as separate or subsidiaries.

Edge: When Mr. Barns sold I don't know what happened to the corporations in Houston and San Antonio, but I rather think that they just disappeared, they were just allowed to die.

Jenkins: Your wife never did work in the business.

Edge: No.

Jenkins: Your son-in-law eventually did. So only to that extent was it a family business.

Edge: My family, yes.

Jenkins: I mean your ownership, but you were just about the only . . .

Edge: I was the only one active in it, that's right.

Jenkins: Now the organization structure. In those early days was one of the three of you president?

Edge: In the beginning Mr. Webb was president. He remained president until we merged with Mr. Allard in Commerce the second time Mr. Allard came into the business. Then when the company bought Mr. Webb out, Mr. Allard came in as president. This was in the '50s.

Jenkins: Okay, and you became president when?

Edge: And then when I bought Mr. Allard out in the late '50s, I became president.

Jenkins: Okay, and remained president.

Edge: Yes.

Jenkins: And chairman of the board.

Edge: Yes.

Jenkins: In terms of organization structure, who handled the business; these people out in distrubition points, were they officers or managers?

Edge: They were managers of the business, and one of them was

on the board. Now the corporation in San Antonio, as far as I can remember, never had a meeting.

Jenkins: I see.

Edge: It was just a corporation . . .

Jenkins: Of convenience.

Edge: Yes, of convenience. And I said that Houston was a corporation. I rather think that was not. I rather think it was part of the Bryan corporation, and I know Victoria was, and I know Commerce was. So I believe the only two corporations would be the parent, which would own Commerce, Houston and Victoria; and then the subsidiary corporation of San Antonio.

Jenkins: Who were your major competitors in this area that you were serving?

Edge: Oh, there was Foremost, Borden. And in San Antonio we had a local company there that was pretty strong. I believe it was Knowlton. And Carnation.

Jenkins: Did you and Blue Bell overlap a lot?

Edge: Yes. But they were good competition. They were just good friends. If something came up we talked to one another over the telephone, and we worked it out; whereas with Carnation or Borden or Foremost or some of that bunch, they wouldn't talk to you.

Jenkins: What kinds of competition problems did you have?

Edge: They would give a discount to the owner by some means that didn't go through the books, or it wasn't shown to the

employees of that store or confectionery. Just special deals.

Jenkins: Were there many problems of jostling for space?

Edge: No, we had the space. We were just always being undersold. The merchant would put their's on special and ours they wouldn't. We would go to them and ask them why and they wouldn't give me an excuse. They wouldn't tell the truth.

Jenkins: Was there a lot of going in and out of the ice cream business by small companies at that time?

Edge: No.

Jenkins: You had to be pretty strong to just hang in there.

Edge: You had to be pretty strong. Now what happened when Wally came in the business, he had ability that I had not had in the business before. I told you one time there was only two college graduates. Well, Wally is the third. He had an ability of going into a store and getting space, getting specials and promoting that I didn't have or that I didn't have in the organization. Oh, I had some men that would go out and call on people, but they didn't have that little touch, little spark, that you need to expand.

Jenkins: So he was a definite asset.

Edge: Boy, when he decided to stay with Oak Farms and eventually when they closed this operation here they moved him to Dallas, they put him in personnel, in charge of all of

Oak Farms personnel.

Jenkins: Oak Farms, then, didn't use this facility much, or did they?

Edge: They used it for a while until the volume dropped down so much to where they just discontinued the lease on it and delivered everything by truck. A big truck transport will come in and unload enough ice cream in their delivery trucks here to carry them from one delivery period until the next. And then from the milk standpoint, it is the same way.

Jenkins: Did they immediately switch over to the Oak Farms brand?

Edge: They carried Lilly along for a while. But as soon as the volume dropped then they just cut out the Lilly altogether.

Jenkins: I see. Were you ever involved in unions?

Edge: No. I had the finest bunch of people. They would come in and talk to me. I didn't have to be worried with that. I never had a union.

Jenkins: What were your major methods and media of advertising?

Edge: We put it in the store and on the front of the store. There is a name for that. "Point of sale." Point of sale advertising. We did very little newspaper advertising. We had special printed banners that we put up in the store around the ice cream cabinets relative to special flavors or special prices and things like that on weekends, but it was all point of sale.

Jenkins: Newspapers, radio, television?

Edge: No. We might be a co-sponsor of an Aggie game of some

kind, but other than that nothing regular.

Jenkins: Okay, government regulations. You have already mentioned the early years. And you sold out before OSHA and EEOC became issues.

Edge: We had a problem that we solved ourselves. We knew it would not be acceptable. We had an incinerator that we burned the containers and other trash that you naturally accumulate around a business like that. And we bought some sort of incinerator that recirculated the smoke to take the ash and color out.

Jenkins: But you did that on your own.

Edge: Oh, yes.

Jenkins: No one even asked you to.

Edge: No, we weren't told to do it.

Jenkins: Now you . . . this company with you in it lasted from '27 . . .

Edge: From '27 until '68.

Jenkins: '68, that is 41 years or so. And it was obviously successful, it grew, it was well looked upon. How do you account for the success of Lilly?

Edge: Well, I will tell you, and this is not sacreligious at all. I had a lot of help. I worked hard, but still I had a lot of help. I tried to live right, and I tried to remember that it wasn't all mine, just mine in trust. I tried to use it on that basis. I tried to be honest about it when I

would go out and sell or go out and contact people; and in my business dealings I tried not to cheat anybody, at least I don't feel like I did.

Jenkins: Did you do much credit business?

Edge: Oh, yes.

Jenkins: Did you have much problems?

Edge: Oh, yes. You always have problems with credit.

Jenkins: Do you know how yours compared with other ice cream companies?

Edge: No, I don't. I imagine it would be about average. Of course we worked pretty hard on collections. Our drivers and the men that delivered the ice cream and then our route supervisors. We tried to have a supervisor over every three routes out of Bryan. The supervisor was salesman, collector, trouble shooter, or whatever was necessary. In the branches the manager did that. If we found a customer that continued to give us credit problems or not paying his bill, we would just eliminate him.

Jenkins: Did you lose much from the accounts receivable?

Edge: I don't recall how much. We would probably lose a tenth of a percent. We watched it. I would get the accounts receivable every month, and someone who was getting pretty far behind we would sit down with the supervisor and the manager--I had a manager, too, a sales manager and a general manager and then vice president. We would sit down and

talk about them. We really didn't have a lot of trouble.

Jenkins: Now you have lived in Bryan since . . .

Edge: '33.

Jenkins: So you have been here a long time, 50 years or more.

Edge: Yes.

Jenkins: And you were in Navasota for a while. And you stayed busy a long time. Did you have time to get much involved in civic affairs?

Edge: Well, yes. I was on the Bryan City Council for two terms. On the Industrial Foundation group for three terms, I believe. And every collection deal that came up I was on it. Building funds at the church, I either headed it or was a member of it.

Jenkins: Clubs, did you belong to . . .

Edge: I belonged to the country club. Then we had little recreation club, just individual members, we played bridge, had dinner, just little things like that.

Jenkins: Fraternal orders or such.

Edge: Yes, I am all the way through Masonic Lodge, from Blue Lodge to the Shrine and the Scottish Rite as well as Knight Templar.

Jenkins How about local Lions or Kiwanis or anything like that.

Edge: I am a member of the Rotary Club.

Jenkins: Have you held office in those clubs?

Edge: No, I haven't.

Jenkins: How about trade associations? Are there pretty strong trade associations in this business?

Edge: The Ice Cream Association of Texas. I guess it helped, but after it is all said and done the majors just control it.

Jenkins: They really run it.

Edge: Yes.

Jenkins: Did you ever get involved in trade associations?

Edge: Only the state. We were a member of the state association and also the international. I was president of the Texas Association at one time.

Jenkins: About when?

Edge: That would be in the days of Mellorine in the '40s. I was a director many, many years. Now this is not being facetious, but that is the way they appease the little independents: they put them on the board, make them officers and things like that. Behind the scenes we weren't very strong.

Jenkins: I know you probably belong to things that you forgot about, but are there any others that you can think of?

Edge: Well, this flying association, I belong to that, this private pilot association, SPA, Sportsman's Pilot Association.

Jenkins: Any others before we move into retirement and what you have been doing since then? Okay, well let's get into

what has been occupying your time since you retired more or less in, what, '68?

Edge: '68. I joined the International Executives Service Corp with headquarters in New York, a group of retired businessmen from every walk of life or every walk of business, in 1968 as a volunteer. The members were called volunteers because we volunteered our services for a per diem to go to these developing countries and help similar businesses. Then the other time when we were not out of the country we spent it maintaining this old house.

Jenkins: What are some of the activities you actually got involved in with that organization?

Edge: With International Executives?

Jenkins: Yes.

Edge: IESC. Well, it was mostly advisory.

Jenkins: Where are some of the places you went? What did you do?

Edge: The first place we went to was in Bangkok, Thailand. We spent five months there with a Thai who was a stubborn as he could be. He wouldn't listen. I think it was prestige that he wanted more than anything else, the fact that he had an American advisor he thought would give his business prestige and maybe sell more products. But he was very jealous of his ice cream formula. He had the ice cream formula on a piece of paper locked in his desk. No one could see it. I laughed at him, and I said, "Don't you

know that it doesn't take much trouble to find out what you have in it?" "Oh, yes, yes it does. Nobody knows. Nobody can duplicate it." He could speak a little English. But he did make a good ice cream. And before I left he did do one thing that I recommended. I recommended that he ought to get into fluid milk, that is milk for sale to stores or to people, bottling milk. And he bought a machine and was bottling milk when I left.

Jenkins: Now this was . . .

Edge: Thailand.

Jenkins: In what year?

Edge: '68.

Jenkins: So right out of retirement you went into that.

Edge: Yes.

Jenkins: What was another one you advised?

Edge: After I left there and came home in March or April of '69 and immediately got a call from New York to go to England to meet a young man, a graduate of MIT, who lived on the island of Cyprus. He had a family operation, and he had just separated from his family. He and his father had separated from his father's brother and his children, and they were going to put in their own plant in another location in the outskirts of Nicosia. He wanted designs and new equipment recommendations and all that sort of thing. So we spent two weeks in London with him going

to suppliers of ice cream equipment. He wanted a novelty machine that makes popsycles and creamsycles and nowadays Eskimo pies that would be all mechanical or hand made. He bought one made in England that I didn't recommend because it hadn't been fully developed. After he had built the plant and got the equipment installed, I had a few letters from him and he had had trouble with it. But everything else apparently was all right. I never did get back to see him. Then they had that Turkish invasion. His plant was bombed, and I don't know how seriously it was bombed. But some way or another he lost his ability to speak English. Because we went on a cruise from Athens in the islands around Greece and going across to Egypt we passed pretty close to Cyprus, and I had the captain on the ship who spoke English and Greek to talk to him, but I didn't get any satisfaction out of it, the static was so bad. I gathered that business hadn't been too good since the war. But I did find out one thing. He had put in yogurt made from milk, and it didn't go over very good. He changed to goat milk and did a great business. Then as we came back through New York I stopped at the IESC office, and they asked me if I would be interested in going to Teheran, Iran. Of course, Mrs. Edge and I were just delighted with the opportunity. So within a month after we got home we had the contract to go there. This

was a new plant built by an Iranian Jew, very wealthy family, who had married a New York Jewess, and they had their first child, who was about six months old, I guess, when I arrived there on the project. And I sat in the hotel for three days twiddling my thumbs, because his baby was sick and he wouldn't leave the baby. Finally when I did get to him he spoke good English. In fact he could speak several languages. He would pick up the telephone, and he would call Germany or Italy or French, England, just rattle it off. He was one of these executives that had five telephones and four secretaries, and he kept them all busy. His father had a rug and ceramic business. This was one that an Italian group of ice cream manufacturers had talked him into putting in. After they finished he was dissatisfied with them and wanted someone to help him. Well, I helped him all that I could. Finally after a month and a half he called me in and said, "I tell you what I want you to do. I want to get rid of this ice cream company. If you will find someone, some international ice cream company, that will buy it, I will give it to them if they will rent my building." I found Beatrice Foods who were interested, and they went to see him, but I don't know how it ever came out. Then after that I went to Maracaibo, Venezuela to help a father and a son company--both were graduates of Texas A&M--expand

his plant and put in some automatic, sophisticated equipment. He had no one there who knew anything about it, some of these machines that make bars on a stick. I had to help supervise building a new freezer room. Then I put in a conveyor system where he could convey everything from the freezer to packages from the freezer filled with ice cream right on into whichever room he wanted to go to. Then I had to go back later and help install some more equipment. He put in some butter equipment. He had a big butter business, and big milk business, and a small ice cream business. Then I made a third trip down there for ice cream alone, which was for retail ice cream stores. He spent a lot of money setting these stores up, putting in the equipment, painting them and decorating them. But they paid off. It is just beyond understanding how much ice cream he sold out of these stores. One of them was in a little shopping center, and it was underneath a picture show, cinema. It was upstairs. And that store on weekends would do a tremendous amount of business. It would average for a month $1,000 a day in American money. Now that is a lot of dips of ice cream. He had sundaes of all descriptions. He had hot fudge sundaes. We introduced a new novelty. He had this automatic machine that made these items on a stick, ice cream items. We would make a vanilla bar and put it

in the store. Then we developed a container, similar to what we used many years ago when we first started, of hot water with chocolate pan inside the pan that held the hot water, and we would dip this uncoated chocolate bar in that hot chocolate coating and then roll it in peanuts and sell it. He would sell those things for--I told him he was a robber--seven times what they cost him, seven times.

Jenkins: Do you have any idea what it would be equivalent in American money?

Edge: Yes, it would be about 10¢ cost to sell for 70¢.

Jenkins: That type thing is selling for close to 90¢ in the malls.

Edge: That is what they sold them for many years ago. Then in 1970 I went to Barranquilla, Colombia to help a cooperative milk company or group of farmers. They had been in business for about three years, and at one time had been the predominent distributor in the area. But due to bad management and probably other things that I didn't find out about, their volume had dropped to the lowest of three in Barranquilla, their volume had dropped. And actually they wanted to know whether they should liquidate the business or should they borrow money from their agricultural bank and get back in business again. After being there a couple of weeks and looking over the situation, I advised

them to borrow the money. So before I left, I didn't stay but two months, they had made arrangements for the money. Pesos was the name of their money. They borrowed in the amount of $400,000 in American money. I don't know how many pesos that would be. They borrowed it primarily for tank trucks, also for a pasteurizer for pasteurizing their cream that they were churning for butter. They were using ten gallon cans, and that was very unsanitary. They had a pretty good size butter business and a fairly good size milk business, but the volume just wasn't enough for them to be making money. So they were in the situation of deficit financing, where they would buy the milk from the farmers and pay them and then sell it and cover their overdraft at the bank. Two years later they called me back. The manager that borrowed the money had a heart attack and had to retire, and they used another man who was the older man's assistant who was the trained dairy specialist in their university system and was a smart young man. And this young man spent the money, and he didn't go down the list as I had given it to them for the equipment that he needed to buy. And they were churning their cream unpasteurized. Of course you can do that, but it is just not as good. The shelf life is shorter, it becomes rancid quickly. I went back in two years, and they had 80,000 pounds of this butter stored

in one of their butter rooms. You just stepped in there and you could smell the rancidity. It was awfully bad. And the board called me in. We sat down through an interpreter, and they asked me what they could do with it. I told them that we would rework it and make it into good butter. They were amazed that such a thing could be done. They also had in addition to the fluid milk business and the butter business they had a milk powder plant. In the wintertime when there--our wintertime here would be summertime there--they had a flush milk period in which their milk would be more than they could use. So they would powder that and save it for their off season or low supply of milk. They could borrow money on that. If they had an inventory in the warehouse they could borrow money on the milk powder, but they couldn't borrow money on this rancid butter. So they had all of their operating capital tied up in butter. We started working on that. We found an old vat in the plant that we could rejuvenate, repair and remodel, and made a pasteurizer out of it. So I would go down at 4 o'clock in the morning and we would pasteurize a bunch of this butter. What we would do we would reconstitute it into cream by adding milk. Their milk down there was very rich. They used Brahma cows, and some of the Brahma cows would give quite a bit of milk, whereas here they are low volume producers. Down there they were pretty heavy. So

the milk would come in 4-4½ percent. We would take 100 gallons, we would want 100 gallons of cream, so we would figure out on a pound basis how many pounds of butter at 80% fat and how many pounds of milk at 4% fat, put them together and pasteurize them. That would melt the butter. Then we would run it through the homogenizer so that the cream would be all the way through it. Put it in another tank and age it, and then churn it the next day. When I left at the end of a couple of months, they had sold about 14% of it.

Jenkins: Now you didn't lose any of the butterfat or the milk.

Edge: No. Well, we lost the skim, the skim milk.

Jenkins: I see, the washing.

Edge: The part we used to wash.

Jenkins: What could they do with that, if anything?

Edge: They had some hog farmers that they saved a lot of it for. I think they got 10¢ a can for it or 10¢ a gallon. They got a little money out of it. They were real fine people. We just made some friends with some of the members of the board that were just as fine as they could be. But the last time that I was down there, which was '75-'76, whereas in '72 they were operating on a deficit financing, in '76 they were operating making 15 to 20 million pesos a year. That is net profit which they had to divide with their producers. That was a happy bunch of producers.

Jenkins: Co-op type.

Edge: Yes. But they had remodeled and put in a lot of new equipment. They bought a milk packaging machine from Germany, which is plastic, that I recommended they not buy because they would have so much trouble maintaining it, repairing it. But they had a young man that was exceptional in this area of being able to determine the problem and solving the problem in this delicate machinery. And they were to the place where they could package a litre, everything was in litres, a little litre of that in a plastic container they could put it on the floor and stand on it and it would not rupture. So they were in good shape. And then the next place I went was San Jose, Costa Rica. This was another co-operative called the Three Pines, Tres Pinas. And what they wanted was to change a drive-in from food service to milk and ice cream service. They had a real live wire as manager, and he spoke good English, even though I had an interpreter. I took her with me. She was a jewel. She was one of the finest young ladies. She traveled in the United States some, and she could translate my slang expressions perfectly. He said to me and to her in Spanish and in English to me, "You have a free hand. Do anything you have to do. Just tear the whole inside out if you want to. I want to sell more of our own products instead of buying from somebody, preparing it and then

selling it." So we did, we tore the whole inside out and put in a new system of counters and everything. When I left they were doing real well, but I have never heard from them.

Jenkins: Are there any other things in this retirement that you want to mention that you have been up to?

Edge: I have a woodwork shop that my son-in-law and daughter gave me. I tell them that they did it with a motive. I have good equipment, and I have made many little things for them. I enjoy doing it.

Jenkins: Have you had other hobbies over the years? A couple of things that I forgot. How many trucks was Lilly running when you sold?

Edge: Locally?

Jenkins: Total, I guess.

Edge: Branches we had, too?

Jenkins: Everything.

Edge: All right, Bryan would be 5, Commerce 3, Houston 3, Victoria 3, San Antonio 3, That would be 17.

Jenkins: And you started off with one.

Edge: We started off with one, that's right.

Jenkins: Just another thing or two about this organization now. Who footed the bill, who financed this organization that was sending these retired executives around the world?

Edge: It was financed by the client. The country where we went,

the owner of the business would pay our per diem. I got in early in the being of this International Executive Service Corp work, and when I got to Thailand the company was not able to pay all of the costs. And IESC operates under contributions from big business. They have got a hundred or so companies. AT&T and other manufacturing companies contribute thousands upon thousands of dollars. Then the client pays as much as he can. Then the government under their foreign aid policy supplemented or gave them the balance that they needed. So in Thailand they were paying me $50 a day, of which IESC had to subsidize 50% of it.

Jenkins: You say our federal government subsidized it also.

Edge: It subsidized a small part of it. It was not under the government, it was independent.

Jenkins: And their purpose simply is to upgrade business operations throughout the world.

Edge: It is to take these retired men who have experience and knowhow and send them out instead of sending them under government programs which wasted so much money.

Jenkins: Another thing that I wanted to ask. When you first came to Navasota you say you were low man on the totem pole.

Edge: Yes.

Jenkins: You were out running around and working and sweating and doing all these things. At what point did you feel that

you were becoming an executive, a manager, and making internal plans rather than being out there in the field operating?

Edge: For the first, oh, I don't know, Floyd, how many years, but the first many years I had to divide my time between office work and production work. If they came to a place where they needed an extra man on the cup filling machine, I would leave my office work, what little part I was doing, accounting work, and go help them.

Jenkins: Were you still doing any of that after you became president?

Edge: Well, I didn't actually do it, but I was there watching them do it. And we had one thing I did an awful lot of, and that was call group meetings. I would get all of the production group together, and I would bring out these items that they were making or had been making and show them the condition that they were and show them the faults and the unsaleable look that some of them had, to help them improve. I just don't know. I guess when I moved up here in '33, then I had been with it long enough to know what needed to be done and would be best. Then I began to share in the management of the company.

Jenkins: Did Lilly keep the same logo all those years?

Edge: The only change we made was from Lilly Ice Cream Company to Lilly Dairy Products when we added milk.

Jenkins: As far as you remember, who designed the logo?

Edge: I don't know. I accused Mr. Webb of stealing it. No, he had it somewhere where he found it and just liked the idea and started using it. What it originally was was just simply a little lead slab that you use to print on paper, on one side was Lilly. And they could put that in and print stationery because all of the other print would be just regular print, and we could give it to the newspaper if we did want an ad. And we would just have Lilly Ice Cream Company in ordinary letters with the logo at the top. That is the way it started. From that we had advertising companies to use that same form and same design on sheets of advertising.

Jenkins: But it was always just Lilly.

Edge: That's right.

Jenkins: You never had a picture or anything.

Edge: No. No pictures.

Jenkins: I see. Okay, I have asked all of my questions, but this is your interview. Is there anything that you can think of that I should have asked you and didn't?

Edge: I would certainly want whoever reads this to understand starting a business on their own is going to take work, it is going to take patience, and it is going to take a lot of understanding to work with people. And I would want them to know that this was not a one-man affair. In the beginning it was a three-person affair, equal and

share and share alike. And then as we grew and started adding employees we brought them into the management in an advisory capacity. If we were needing a new refrigeration machine, I would call this maintenance man in who was tremendous. And I would say, "Doc," his name was W.E. Dunham, we always called him Doc. I would say, "Look, Doc, you tell me you need another machine. Or production says they don't have enough refrigeration, and they need another machine. Who do you recommend?" And he would tell me. And I said, "That's it. If that is what we need, let's get it." Some problem would come up in the plant that would need to be something added to it to make it a little faster operation or a little more perfect, and he would just come in and sit down and say, "Mr. Edge, I have an idea. If we do this with that packaging machine, it will give us this." And I said, "Doc, what are you waiting on?"

Jenkins: So you trusted their judgement.

Edge: Oh, absolutely. And in our sales we had a young man who was with us before the war, went into service, went to the South Pacific, he was smart, a smart little fellow. He was so smart that when he got down there . . . It was pretty rough in the South Pacific. And one day in the PX he saw a sign "We need a barber, we need a barber shop. Can anyone cut hair? If so, report to Sergeant Somebody."

He said, "I reported." The Sergeant said, "Can you cut hair?" "Yes, sir." He said, "I was most embarrassed. We would have these picture shows at night, and I would look up in front of me and that was the most terrible haircut you could imagine that guy had in front of me." But when he came back I put him on as supervisor of two or three trucks. I mean he took care of them. Then from there he came into the office as sales manager and right on up to manager. We promoted within. The ice cream maker that we had when I sold out was a graduate of A&M to whom we gave a scholarship for 4 years. So when he came out he had his military duty, when he finished that he came right into the plant and would still be with us.

Jenkins: Did you have a lot of people who were with you for many years?

Edge: Oh, yes, many came right from the very beginning to retirement.

Jenkins: So your turnover wasn't high, among managers, anyway.

Edge: No. In the better or higher work areas we didn't have too much turnover.

Jenkins: Toward '68, was it getting to where turnover among labor was getting pretty high? Was it going up much or had it reached that point yet?

Edge: We never had a lot of trouble. I tell you probably our biggest turnover was in our route men. They are all high school graduates, some of them maybe had a year of college,

and this would be kind of a stepping stone. They would drive this truck and meet the merchants, their customers, and begin to get more confidence and be offered a better job. But in management the only way they left was when I fired them.

Jenkins: Did you fire many?

Edge: Several. One of the worst things a man can have in a business is to have to call in a man who has been caught short, a route man has been caught short, checked up short, to see a grown man just cry like a baby. That breaks your heart.

Jenkins: You just let them quit, though, you never did prosecute.

Edge: It was a mutual agreement.

Jenkins: You didn't prosecute.

Edge: No.

Jenkins: Okay, anything else that you would like to speak to?

Edge: No, I just want to be sure that you understand that this is not a Claude Edge affair. It is something that has been a great satisfaction to me of being associated with it. I look back now in my college work, and I see now I should have studied my English better. I have butchered the English language so many years. Because when you get into a business you are going to be called on, or if you are active in the church you are going to be called on, and it is real embarrassing when you butcher the King's

English before a crowd of people. So my advice is, if you have the opportunity to go to school, take every advantage of it. You will never be sorry. In South America if I had followed my Spanish training at East Texas, I could have been self-sufficient down there, whereas I wasn't. And there is a difference, Floyd, in trying to translate English into Spanish, their Spanish, and vice versa. You lose some things that sometimes are quite important. No, I just appreciate your coming by and giving your time. You are the one that has suffered.

Jenkins: I always enjoy it. I love it. And if you can't think of anything else you would like to say, we will close it, and I thank you for a real interesting interview.

Edge: Thank you.