

Date	July 13, 2021
Time	5:30pm
Interviewer	Edward Y. Millar
Interviewee	Jipp and Rick Ortiz
Location	Ed's Garage
Audio log Prepared by:	Edward Y. Millar
Collection Number	AFC 2020/013 <i>The Ransomville Speedway: Dirt Track Workers in Western New York</i>

**Archie Green Fellowship Ransomville Speedway Interviews,
American Folklife Center, Library of Congress**

Audio Log – Interview Part 1 of 2

[0:00] *(start of interview)*

[0:45] **Biographical Info and Early Memories of the Ransomville Speedway and Connections to Racing**

Jipp and Rick introduction: Jipp Ortiz son of Ed Ortiz, Rick Ortiz is Ed Ortiz's younger brother. Ed Ortiz one of the primary founder's of the Ransomville Speedway along with the rest of the original Slowpokes

Discussion of the origins of the Ransomville Speedway around 1955 behind Ed's Garage (then Pedro Motors), Rick's memory of how it started (was around 10 years old then)

Speedway being built on both the Ortiz and Cantara property due to surveying error

Origins of the Ransomville Slowpokes the racing club, that founded the Ransomville Speedway

Jipp growing up at dirt and asphalt tracks – that it was always going along with his dad every summer driving around everywhere: instead of trips around to Disney or vacations, always were going around racing

Jipp's memory of roller skating in the winter (both mom and dad were avid skaters)

[4:00] **Early Memories of Ed Ortiz Racing**

Putting on thousands of miles driving to different race tracks in old cars

Story of flat towing the cars, and fixing the cars: race cars then being very fragile and high maintenance

Racing back then being more 'club racing' than the professional racing see nowadays

- [5:30] **Ransomville Speedway & The Ransomville Slowpokes**
Relationship between the Speedway and the Slowpokes, and Jipp's recollection of how that relationship changed overtime
Originally raised money by passing hat around, then moved into selling stock which raised money for building the new track (current track to this day) on Braley Road
Story Jipp heard of how the Slowpokes gradually ended & when his dad (Ed Ortiz) stopped racing at the track midseason in 1962, involving a buyout of stock & operations takeover by local businessman Harry Schultz
Stan Friesen, when purchased the track in the 1970s, gave his dad the track championship jacket from 1962 (Stan had been racing at Ransomville at that time)
Gradual dissolving of the Ransomville Slowpokes from 1958 to 1962 – 1962, and some of the original crew leaving – Speedway becoming more of a business than a club: 'looking to make \$500 dollars a week'
- [12:00] **Ransomville Speedway Early Changes**
Removal of the modified class (top class) because of the big purse, and Harry focusing more on general amount track can raise weekly
Old, pit entry money paid the purse for the winnings – the grandstand side (hot dogs, concessions, etc.) paid for the facility side
Unlike professional sports, local short track racing – you pay to race (pit entry fees)
Motto of the Slowpokes – 'Safety not Speed'
Origin of the Slowpokes as a way to get the guys to not race on the street: mix of people drag racing on the streets and also racing to Niagara falls
9 original members of the Ransomville Slowpokes who started the club, and quickly grew
- [15:15] **Differences between Original Ransomville Speedway and Current Ransomville Speedway (1958-present)**
Behind Ed's Garage/then Pedro's Motors, turns 3 and 4 banked, 1 and 2 were flat – story of Rick rolling the track with a 5 ton roller
Story Rick shares about working at the concession stand with his (and Ed's) mother at the original track, from being just a cooler to eventually having a charcoal grill too – and in 1957 someone building a little shed for them too
- [16:40] *interview pause*
- [16:45] Jipp sharing memory of his father basically always talking about 'becoming more professional year in year out' – that they saw other tracks doing on TV, so they

kept trying to improve everything every year, new track, new concessions, better maintenance, etc.

Description of the original class at first speedway - the Hobby Stock, and the "safety" (quotations emphasized) measures in them

Memory Rick shares of only time he raced at that original track, as he was a kid (around 11) he was put in the Powderpuff division with the female driver's, and two times the car brokedown, but third time he won and wasn't allowed back to race again – after that, 1961 started racing at the Braley Road track

Description of how Ransomville Speedway track changed over time, and memory Rick shares of going to see the new Speedway at Braley Road when it was being built

Original track behind then Pedro's Motors (now Ed's Garage) carved out through the cars circling around in the oval

[21:30]

Ortiz Family's Connection to Speedway post-departure

Revisiting when Stan Friesen took over and bought the track, and how he gave the coat to Jipp – Ed's

Jipp working at the Pit Concession, and becoming friends with Joel Friesen – selling 'boiled hotdogs'

Ed Ortiz's career being mostly in the 50s and 60s, by mid 70s was towards the tail end of his career – and Jipp learning now and looking back and seeing how hard his dad worked in racing to get as successful during his career

Story of how his dad (Ed Ortiz) quite racing basically 'cold turkey' – just fully stopped, not going to the track

Jipp recounting how his relationship with the Speedway has changed over the years, including time spent living out West

Rick recalling his driving career, racing a bit at Ransomville but also at other places

[27:45]

Ortiz Family Connection to Ransomville continued

Jipp shares a story about how he got his start in his racing career after coming back from the West to the area, and his younger brother having a car, and racing it while his brother went to prom – and it started that 'bug':

Jipp shares that he never really 'ran' at Ransomville fully, as he worked as the starter at Lancaster – and then also later at Ransomville

Building a car for his dad to run at Ransomville in 1996/98

Jipp ran Pro Stock until around 2006/07, and built a sportsman then

[32:25]

wrap up of part 1 of interview

[33:37]

End of Part 1 Interview

