

OH-3020, Charlie George & Shane Blakeman, 3-31-2014, WY In Flight

MARK: Today is the 31st of March 2014. My name is Mark Junge, and I'm in the [inaudible] City Hall. And what room are we in?

CHARLIE: You're in the public works director's office.

MARK: OK. And I'm talking with Charlie George, Shane --

SHANE: Blakeman.

MARK: -- Blake.

SHANE: Blakeman.

MARK: Oh, Blakeman. I'm sorry. And today, we're just going to talk a little bit about their job and [inaudible] airport. And I want you guys to know that what I'm -- Toby and I already talked. What, you're not going to stick around, Toby? Yeah, you can sit. OK, today we're going to talk a little bit about the airport, and your jobs, and [inaudible] the airport. This is all for the archives, and what I'm doing is I'm gathering history from people like Toby and Marvin [Chronburg?] so that we can archive this, and so that people sometimes can come back and say, you know, "Tell [00:01:00] me a little bit about [inaudible]. When you interviewed these guys, what was what?" That's basically what I'm trying to do. OK? So, first of all,

let me just -- I'm going to ask you your full name,  
Charlie, and date and place of birth.

CHARLIE: My full name is Charlie T. George, and T is just the  
initial. That's all there is. I was born in [inaudible],  
Wyoming 1959, June 18th.

MARK: Shane?

SHANE: Hi, my name is Michael Shane Blakeman. I go by Shane.  
Date of birth was August 7, 1967. Place of birth was  
[inaudible], Wyoming.

MARK: OK. What's your title, Charlie?

CHARLIE: My title with the town is probably [inaudible]  
director.

MARK: Shane?

SHANE: Maintenance and operation worker.

MARK: What's the difference between the two?

SHANE: [inaudible] (laughter).

MARK: Oh, OK, well, I have to kind of keep in mind how the,  
you, know hierarchy goes here. And sitting over here on  
the other side of the [00:02:00] table a little ways away  
from us is Toby Smith who we talked to earlier today. OK,  
I guess what I'd like to find out, and this is what we did  
with Toby, is find out a little bit about how you got to  
Wyoming. Or were you born here, Charlie?

CHARLIE: I was born here. I moved away for a little bit because of the economic problems here in the state. I was gone about five years and then I came back. And so, 90% of my life has been in Wyoming.

MARK: You were gone for about five years, you say?

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARK: How did you get form [inaudible] to [inaudible]?

CHARLIE: Parents moved; they worked their ranches on and off to Wyoming, and so we just kind of moved with them.

MARK: Your mom -- before [inaudible], your mom was a cook, you told me.

CHARLIE: Yeah, she cooked for ranches -- various ranches from [inaudible] down to [inaudible]. Dad [inaudible] all his life, so kind of how they hooked up and...

MARK: How come [00:03:00] you [inaudible]?

CHARLIE: I did for a while. I got married, found out there wasn't enough money, and...

MARK: Why -- didn't you marry a rich woman?

CHARLIE: No, no, I didn't, so.

MARK: Well, that's why there's no money.

CHARLIE: That's why there's no money, yeah. You got to have [inaudible] when working on the ranch, so.

MARK: Shane, what about yourself?

SHANE: No, I was born in [inaudible], grew up in [inaudible], attended elementary in [inaudible], middle school in [inaudible], and high school in [inaudible]. And then when I graduated when I was 18, I went into the military, did 21 years with the military and retired, and came back to [inaudible] because the school system and the people in [inaudible] were so good to me, that it gave me enough education in order to be successful. So, I came back to trade the favor.

MARK: Now, why wouldn't you have gone to [inaudible]? And I didn't know there was -- I guess there was a high school.

SHANE: Yeah, there was a high school in [inaudible] until 1993 [00:04:00].

MARK: OK. And then that was as far as you went? Did you go to college after that?

SHANE: I got equivalent to an associate's degree in the Navy, and then this mostly Navy career. So, I retired as a Chief [inaudible] in the United States Navy, so.

MARK: So, you're up 21 years [inaudible]?

SHANE: I am.

MARK: [inaudible] young age.

SHANE: I am.

MARK: That's pretty neat. Yeah. Well, OK, Charlie, tell me -- I want each of you to tell me a little bit about what your jobs entail. And again, your title is...

CHARLIE: Public works director.

MARK: OK. And what is public works director?

CHARLIE: Public works, we maintain all of the infrastructure for the town [inaudible]; water sewer, buildings, streets, the airport, sanitation, whatever the town's people need. That's what we take care of. [00:05:00]

MARK: Now, you're not just the airport manager?

CHARLIE: No, that's just one hat that you have to wear here at the town. So, the airport is actually a smaller piece of the pie for our maintenance. We don't have a lot of traffic up there, so we don't need a lot of [inaudible]. So, most of our time spent with the water sewer infrastructure in the streets and [inaudible], so.

MARK: How many hours do you think you spend on the airport [inaudible]?

CHARLIE: I could probably give you 30 hours at the most a year.

MARK: Per year?

CHARLIE: Yeah.

MARK: So, what does that amount to? What are you doing?

CHARLIE: We [inaudible]. We do a [inaudible] program up there;  
[inaudible]. We built [00:06:00] [inaudible] a couple  
times a year.

SHANE: Fencing.

CHARLIE: Fencing; we go up there to make sure the fence is  
intact yearly, you know, and that type of thing. We don't  
have any real day-to-day issues up there.

MARK: Why do you need a fencer on an airport-- up here?

CHARLIE: We got a lot of cows -- to keep the cows off the  
runway. They're hard on the airplane if they get on the  
runway, so.

MARK: Have you ever had an incidence like this?

CHARLIE: No, you know, it's open enough out there. The pilots  
do fly by and make sure there's nothing on the runway.  
They [inaudible], in other words.

MARK: Yeah, yeah.

CHARLIE: You know, the prairie dogs and the badgers are hard on  
the runway, you know, which in turn makes it hard on the  
airplanes, but we don't get a lot of traffic. We probably  
get -- on a busy year, we probably have half a dozen to ten  
landings a year there, so [00:07:00] it's pretty quiet.

MARK: How long have you worked here?

CHARLIE: I've been here 11 years.

MARK: And has it always been that slow?

CHARLIE: Yes, for the last 11 years at least.

MARK: Shane, what do you do? Do you help him out at the airport?

SHANE: I help him with whatever he needs. My primary job is water treatment plant operator, and then once I have everything there for the day done, then I assist Charlie in all of his other work list, which is the streets, and the airport, and...

MARK: Where does the water come from? Out of the [inaudible]?

SHANE: It comes out of a well up off of [inaudible], which is an artesian well.

END OF AUDIO FILE

**OH-3020, Charlie George & Shane Blakeman, 3-31-2014, WY In**

**Flight**

Q: [00:00:00] Today is the 31st of March 2014. My name is [Mark Youngie?] and I'm in the Medicine Bow City Hall. And what room are we in?

GEORGE: You're in the public works director's office.

Q: OK. And I'm talking with Charlie George, Shane --

BLAKEMAN: Blake --

Q: -- Shane Blake --

BLAKEMAN: Blakeman.

Q: -- Oh, Blakeman, I'm sorry. And today we're just going to talk a little bit about their job and [relating to the?] airport. And I want you guys to know that what I'm -- Toby and I already talked. You're not going to stick around, Toby? What? You can sit.

A: Oh, OK.

Q: OK. Today we're going to talk a little bit about the airport and their jobs and -- vis á vis the airport. This is all for the Archives. And what I'm doing is I'm gathering history from people like Toby and [Marvin Crohnberg?] so that we can archive this. And so that people sometime can come back and say, you know, [00:01:00] tell me a little bit about Medicine Bow, and you [interviewed?] these guys, what was what? That's basically what I'm trying to do. So, first of all, I'm just going to ask you your full name, Charlie, and date and place of birth?

GEORGE: My full name is Charlie T. George. "T" is just the initial, that's all there is. I was born in Pinedale, Wyoming, 1959, June 18<sup>th</sup>.



BLAKEMAN: My name's Michael Shane Blakeman. I go by Shane.

Date of birth was August 7<sup>th</sup>, 1967. Place of birth was Laramie, Wyoming.

Q: OK. What's your title, Charlie?

GEORGE: My title [with the town?] is Public Works Director.

Q: Shane?

BLAKEMAN: Maintenance and Operation Worker.

Q: What's the difference between the two?

(inaudible; overlapping dialogue)

Q: Oh. So, I have to kind of keep in mind how the hierarchy goes, here. And sitting up on the other side of the [00:02:00] table, a little ways away from us is Toby Smith, who we talked to earlier today. OK. I guess what I'd like to find out, and this is what we did with Toby, is find out a little bit about how you got to Wyoming. Or were you born here, Charlie?

GEORGE: I was born here. Moved away for a little bit because of the economic problems here in the state. I was gone about five years and then I came back. So... 90% of my life has been in Wyoming.

Q: You were gone for about five years, you say?

GEORGE: Yes.

Q: How did you get from Pinedale to Medicine Bow?

GEORGE: Parents moved. They worked at ranches on and off, through Wyoming, so we just kind of moved with them.

Q: Your mom -- before we went on take, your mom was a cook, you told me.

GEORGE: Yeah, she cooked for ranches, various ranches, from Pinedale down to Walcott. And Dad cowboied all his life, so that's kind of how they hooked up. And...

Q: How come [00:03:00] you weren't a cowboy?

GEORGE: I did, for a while. Got married. Found out there wasn't enough money in that.

Q: Didn't you marry a rich woman?

GEORGE: No, no, I didn't. So...

Q: Well, that's why there's no money in it.

GEORGE: That's why there's no money in it. You've got to have two full time jobs when you're working on a ranch, so...

Q: Shane, what about yourself?

BLAKEMAN: I was born in Laramie. Grew up in Medicine Bow. Attended elementary in Medicine Bow. Middle school in Medicine Bow, and high school in Medicine Bow. And then when I graduated when I was 18, I went into the military. Did 21 years with the military and retired. And came back to Medicine Bow because the school system and the people in Medicine Bow were so good to me, that gave me enough

education in order to be successful. So I came back to trade the favor.

Q: Now, why wouldn't you have gone to (inaudible) [Mount?]? I mean, I didn't know there was -- I guess there was a high school.

BLAKEMAN: Yeah, there wasn't a high school in Medicine Bow until 1993. [00:04:00]

Q: And then that was as far as you went? Did you go to college after that?

BLAKEMAN: I got the equivalent of an associate's degree in the Navy. And then this mostly Navy career. So, retired as a chief quartermaster in the United States Navy.

Q: So -- 21 years, you're on a pension. Already.

BLAKEMAN: I am.

Q: At your young age.

BLAKEMAN: I am.

Q: That's pretty neat. Yeah. Well, OK, Charlie, tell me -- I want each of you to tell me about what your jobs entail. Now, again, your title is...

GEORGE: Public Works Director.

Q: OK. And what does Public Works Director do?

GEORGE: Public Works, we maintain all the infrastructure for the town Medicine Bow. Water, sewer, buildings, streets,

the airport. Sanitation. Whatever the townspeople need, you know, that's what we take care of. [00:05:00]

Q: Now, you're not just airport manager?

GEORGE: No, no, that's just one hat that we have to wear here with the town. So... The airport is actually a smaller piece of the pie for our maintenance. We don't have a lot of traffic up there, so we don't need a lot of time spent up there. So... Most of our time is spent with the water and sewer infrastructure, the streets. That type of thing. So...

Q: How many hours do you think you spent on the airport, relatively speaking?

GEORGE: I could probably give you 30 hours at the most, a year.

Q: A year?

GEORGE: Yeah.

Q: So, what does that amount to? What do you do?

GEORGE: We go up and we mow in the spring. We do a weed program up there in the spring. We go up and drag the [00:06:00] runway a couple times a year. Fencing. We go up and make sure the fence is intact, yearly. That type of thing. We don't have any real day-to-day issues up there.

Q: Why do you need a fence around an airport?

GEORGE: We got a lot of cows. Keep the cows off the runway.

So... they're hard on airplanes if they get on the runway.

So...

Q: Have you ever had any incidents like that?

GEORGE: No, you know, it's open enough up there, the pilots can kind of fly by and make sure there's nothing on the runway.

Q: They scrape it, in other words?

GEORGE: Yeah. So... You know, the prairie dogs and the badgers are hard on the runway, which in turn makes it hard on airplanes, which -- you know. We don't get a lot of traffic -- we probably get -- on a busy year, we probably have half a dozen to ten landings a year there. So [00:07:00] it's pretty quiet.

Q: How long have you worked here?

GEORGE: I've been here 11 years.

Q: Has it always been that slow?

GEORGE: Yes.

Q: For the last 11 years, at least.

GEORGE: Yes.

Q: Shane, what do you do? Do you help him out at the airport?

BLAKEMAN: I help him with whatever he needs. My primary job is water treatment plant operator. And then once I have everything there for the day done, then I assist Charlie

and all of his other work list, which is the streets and the airport and the --

Q: Where does the water come from, [out of the?] Medicine Bow?

BLAKEMAN: It comes out of a well up off of [Como Bluff?], which is an artesian well.

Q: [Whereabouts is?] Como Bluff?

BLAKEMAN: Eight miles away.

Q: And what kind of water plant pipeline do you have? Is it wood, still?

GEORGE: No, it's asbestos cement. [It's?] 50-plus years old. We're getting ready, this year, to replace it with PVC pipe.

Q: Wait a minute, asbestos? Isn't that bad [00:08:00] for you?

GEORGE: Well, they say it is, yeah.

Q: (inaudible) Well, you're probably lucky to have something that new. Because some places in this country you just have wooden pipes.

BLAKEMAN: (inaudible) still has some wood in the transmission line in their main line.

Q: Have you ever seen -- you watched these landings, right? The last 11 years? However many that is -- 50, 60 landings, or whatever. Have you ever seen any wrecks, or had any problems up there?

GEORGE: I didn't witness it. The only problem we had up there was a plane taxiing off the runway, found a badger hole, and collapsed the [front landing gear?]. Stuck the [prop?] in the dirt. He was just taxiing, so it wasn't a big issue. No injuries or anything like that, so...

Q: No wrecks in this area?

GEORGE: No. (inaudible)

Q: Well, there's just not much going on. [00:09:00]

GEORGE: No, there's not. Like I said, we don't get a lot of traffic, so...

Q: Well, who would fly into the airport? If you did get a flight, what kind of person would fly in?

GEORGE: We get -- Game and Fish uses the airport yearly. We get some people that fly in to eat at the Virginian. Just fly in to see the museum. You know, we haven't really advertised the airport. You know, we get a lot of people that call in here that want to do just a weekend, fly in just to see the area, that kind of thing. We don't have any type of transportation from the airport down to town unless they call ahead and look for a ride, you know. Some people have actually flown in there and walked down.

Q: How far is that?

GEORGE: It's about a mile. Yeah. Mile and a half.

Q: So there's no taxi service?

GEORGE: No. You know, if the weather's good, it's not a bad walk, but [00:10:00] usually the wind's howling [100?] miles an hour, so that doesn't make it very pleasant, so...

Q: Nobody's landing in the wintertime, though, right?

GEORGE: No, we haven't had any landings in the wintertime.

Q: So, what do you do about these -- you guys, what do you do about the badger holes?

GEORGE: We've actually got a retired aviation guy in Casper that has just started coming down last year. He's spent some time down there. He fills gopher holes. He's realigned the runway markers. He's actually put in a weather station for the airport, now, that sends a signal down here to the office so that we can keep track of the wind speed, the moisture, that type of thing up there. He does quite a bit of work for us, just keeping gopher holes filled up, and that type of thing.

Q: Do you fly? Either one of you guys fly?

GEORGE: No.

BLAKEMAN: I've flown, but -- [00:11:00] I don't fly. I haven't had a pilot's license.

Q: But you've flown a plane?

BLAKEMAN: I've been in a plane, yeah. Jet and helicopter.

GEORGE: I've actually flown into this airport. I worked for the government as an animal -- [ADC?] -- predator control.



So we'd fly into the airport up here and we'd take off and fly to the area, you know, for coyotes and that type of thing.

Q: So, how did that -- I'm not, you know, questioning whether this is right or wrong, just saying, how did you do it? How did you -- did you hunt them?

GEORGE: Yeah. Yeah, we'd fly out in a fixed wing, usually a Husky. Tricycle type aircraft. We're about 45, 50 feet off the ground. Sixty miles an hour. Shot them. That's how we'd fly them and shoot the coyotes out of the airplane. And, yeah.

Q: At that level -- were you doing the shooting [00:12:00] or the flying?

GEORGE: Yeah, I was the shooter. I wasn't the pilot.

Q: I mean, that's pretty dangerous work, isn't it?

GEORGE: Yeah. Yeah. You don't have any room, you know. Doesn't take long to get to the ground at 50 feet, so...

Q: How fast were you going? Sixty miles an hour?

GEORGE: Yeah, about 60.

Q: I don't see how a plane can stay in the air at 60.

GEORGE: Well, that's why they use the Huskies. They've got a real low stall speed. So, you know...

Q: Do you think that's an efficient way to kill coyotes?

GEORGE: Yeah, it's very efficient, yeah. Very efficient. You can cover a lot of country, especially in the wintertime when you've got a good snow cover on. You can spot them really easy, and they can't run near as fast on the snow. Soft snow. So it makes it very efficient.

Q: OK. So you were in predator control, but you didn't do any other jobs like round up horses, stuff like that?

GEORGE: No. No, never did.

Q: I wonder who has. I feel like I'd like to talk to somebody like that.

GEORGE: Yeah. I don't know anybody in this area -- you'd probably want to talk to the BLM office [00:13:00] in Rawlins. They do a lot of horse wrangling out of the Red Desert with fixed wing and helicopters, so they'd be -- I could give you a name, I don't know --

Q: Oh, that's OK. I can find that out.

A: They used to, here, back in the '50s.

Q: OK. Shane, how'd you like flying?

BLAKEMAN: I enjoyed it.

Q: More so in a helicopter?

BLAKEMAN: A helicopter seemed like it was a little slower, but... I took off from the USS Nimitz in the Pacific Ocean and flew over to Guam. And we landed and we had to get some chart supplies for some of the ships that had not

brought the appropriate charts. And then flew back to the carrier and did a landing on the carrier. So...

Q: With a helicopter?

BLAKEMAN: With the jet.

Q: I thought that was a one-person jet.

BLAKEMAN: No, they're two.

Q: You were a copilot?

BLAKEMAN: Yeah. I was a co-rider in this case; I wasn't a copilot. [00:14:00]

GEORGE: Holy cow.

Q: Is that -- was that -- how many times did you do that?

BLAKEMAN: Twice.

Q: I'll bet that was a thrill.

BLAKEMAN: It was.

Q: What's the feeling like, knowing that you're [coming from a boat?], land on a boat?

BLAKEMAN: It's actually, when you take off it isn't too bad.

It's when you come back and the ocean's so large. And you think a carrier's huge, but when it's on the Pacific Ocean it looks like a dot. So you're bringing an airplane in to meet a dot. So... it gets bigger as you get to it, but... The takeoff is about 3.7 Gs, and then the landing, when you come to a complete stop, it catches a wire and pulls the plane to a stop, which is a catch wire. And it's pretty

interesting, too, because you slam the deck, and then it catches the wire and you come to a screeching halt. So...

Q: You have to have pretty cool nerves to do something like that, right?

BLAKEMAN: I thought it was fun, but --

Q: You weren't in charge, though. [00:15:00]

BLAKEMAN: -- I like roller coasters, too, so... (laughs)

Q: Did you do much flying besides that?

BLAKEMAN: I actually reenlisted in what they call a sea stallion, which is a helicopter. And had a reenlistment on a helicopter in flight, did a reenlistment. So... And then, when I first started out in the navy, I was a submariner. Did submarines for six years, so...

Q: What was that like?

BLAKEMAN: I actually enjoyed it, but it's a lot of time at sea. Close quarters.

Q: Was it a nuclear sub?

BLAKEMAN: Nuclear submarine, you know.

Q: Which one was it?

BLAKEMAN: It was the USS Sea Devil out of Charleston, South Carolina. And we decommissioned it in '92. So... When I left the ship, we decommissioned it. And then I transferred, so...

Q: So your experience in flying is as a would-be pilot. You don't have a license.

BLAKEMAN: No. [00:16:00] Don't have a license.

Q: Have you piloted a plane?

BLAKEMAN: I didn't pilot, I just rode. No. Just -- he did all -- the pilot -- the pilot did all the flying. I just kind of was along for the ride, so...

Q: Oh, OK. Do you fly?

GEORGE: No, you know. And it's on my bucket list. It's been on my bucket list for 25 years, to get my pilot's license. But, you know, it's an expensive --

A: It takes two things to make an airplane fly. Air, and money.

Q: (laughs) And gasoline.

BLAKEMAN: Which is money.

Q: That's part of money. Yeah.

GEORGE: Yeah. It's -- you know, flying for coyotes, it was a blast. I've never had so much fun in my life. Coming in on those coyotes --

A: If you've got a good pilot.

GEORGE: If you've got a good pilot, and I had a good pilot. His name was John [Eisenbrow?], out of Casper.

Q: John Eisenbar?

GEORGE: Yeah. Eisenbrow.

Q: Eisenbrow. Is he still around?

GEORGE: Yeah. He's still up in Casper. You know, he's not working for the government anymore. [00:17:00] He's retired. But -- he was an excellent pilot. And he was calm. He was experienced, and just made the -- just made it that much better, you know.

Q: Coyotes are pretty smart.

GEORGE: They are.

Q: When you're in the air above them, what do they do to evade you?

GEORGE: They hit the sagebrush in a (inaudible), you know, they try to get away from you. You catch them out in the open, there's no getting away, you know. You may not hit them on the first pass, but you'll get them on the second pass, so... But they're very, very smart.

Q: How effective is it in killing them? Because I understand that the more you kill, the more pups they have.

GEORGE: Yeah, that's -- I think they do regulate their breeding cycle on the numbers that they have. So the more you take out, the more there's room for breeding. [00:18:00] So, yeah. It's kind of a double-edged sword, there. You know, the more you kill, the more you have, but you don't get the smart coyotes if you stay after them. You don't get the intelligence into the older coyotes. So

if you stay after them, you're constantly taking out the smart coyotes. So it's efficient. You know. You have to control them, they just go rampant if you don't, so...

Q: Well, we weren't here to talk about coyotes. I'm just interested in that.

GEORGE: Well, I'm here to talk about coyotes. (laughs)

Q: (laughs) All right, let's talk about coyotes. No, I mean, what is -- you say that flying, getting a pilot's license is on your bucket list? So, you haven't flown, actually?

GEORGE: No.

Q: OK. Why are you interested in flying?

GEORGE: It's just the feeling that you just can't get away from once you've been up in the air. Especially small craft. I've flown big jets, [00:19:00] you know, and it's not the same thing as a small craft. You know. [Low?] level flying. I just enjoyed it, so...

Q: So do you intend to follow through on this?

GEORGE: You know, if I can get my wife to -- talked into it, you know.

Q: What does she think about it?

GEORGE: Well, I've got other lists on my -- on my bucket list that she says that I have to fulfill first. I've got one of them out of the way, which was scuba diving. The other one is learning to play the guitar, and that one's kicking

my butt. Because I just can't get it. Can't get all my fingers going the right way!

Q: Why don't you switch to the drums?

GEORGE: It's too late. I already told her I wanted to learn the guitar, and she went and bought me a guitar. So... You know. She's not going to let me do the pilot's license, or [flying?] until I get the guitar out of the way.

Q: Now, Toby was telling me, you've got to have common sense to fly. Do you have common sense?

GEORGE: I believe I do. You know, I'm an equipment operator from way back. I've run equipment since I was old [00:20:00] enough to get in the seat of one. And, you know, it's the same thing. You've got to have a feel for the -- whatever you're operating. I feel I'd have the same feeling for an airplane as I do for equipment, so...

Q: You've got to be focused on the job.

GEORGE: You've got to be focused. You've got to know where you're at. You've got to know that, if you screw up, something's going to get torn up. You know. And...

Q: So, when you think about what you -- I mean, are you just wanting to fly, period? Get licensed and fly? Or, I mean, were you thinking beyond that?

GEORGE: I -- no --



Q: Like, where you'd like to go, for example.

GEORGE: I would like to -- I don't want to do cross country flying or anything like that. I'd like to be able to fly [into?] County. You know. The areas that I know, the areas that I have been before that I'd like to go back. You know. The vision you get from an airplane, you can't get from a [00:21:00] vehicle, and -- It's just something that I've always wanted to...

Q: Are you talking about, like, when you're hunting -- do you hunt?

GEORGE: Yeah.

Q: OK. So you'd like to fly over the elk and see them, what they look like from the air?

GEORGE: Yeah, yeah. It'd be -- you know, the elk and the deer. Just seeing wildlife on the ground is totally different than seeing it out your window of the pickup, you know. It's just -- I don't know. It's hard to explain the reasoning or the why. You know. Once you do it, it's a -- there's just nothing like it. I worked for a rancher in Lusk, Wyoming that had his own plane. And he'd been flying for 60 plus years, you know. And he tipped them over on the runway. He'd [been?] through fences, and... you know. When he told me all these stories, I didn't want to get in the backseat with him, but [00:22:00] he had enough

experience. He knew what he was doing, you know. And he'd -- he flew all these fences, he flew all these livestock. And he salted with the airplane, he'd kick salt rocks out of the airplane, you know, for his stock. And he rolled barbed wire out for the fence line, [reeling?] his own fence line.

Q: Roll it out?

GEORGE: Yeah, he'd kick it out the airplane when he went by, you know. And you had to pay attention when he was flying, because he'd drop it on you. He'd put it right where [he?] was working, so...

Q: Did you have any close calls with him?

GEORGE: No, I never did. You know. It was all good flying when I was with him, and -- but, you know, it's risky. It's just like anything else, you know. You have to pay attention, do what you're supposed to, and...

Q: I talked to a guy in Rock Springs, and his name was Dick [Randal?]. Did you know him? He worked for the Fish and Wildlife Service as a predator control agent. And then he flipped completely [00:23:00] and became an environmentalist, and -- there were people who wanted to kill him. But he said he was in three wrecks in the air, shooting coyotes from the air. And three wrecks. And one of them, they landed upside down. He survived all three of

the wrecks. I imagine it's because you're going so slow, and -- he managed to -- [if?] you don't go in nose first, you've got a chance.

GEORGE: You know, you're shooting out of an airplane that's got a -- the cockpit is this long. You've got the pilot's head right here. You're shooting out a little window that's about this big.

Q: What, 18 inches or so?

GEORGE: Yeah. You've got the strip -- the wing strip comes right down into your line of fire. And also, your prop -- you've got your prop right there. So you've got a little narrow area that you're shooting a 12-gauge automatic shotgun out of. You've got to pay attention. You know. You just can't --

Q: That was another thing he told me. That he shot his own prop off one time.

GEORGE: Yeah. The pilot I flew with [the most?] told me, "If you shoot my [00:24:00] prop, you'd better hope it kills you when you hit the ground. Because I'm going to if you don't." So I was always very aware of where my shotgun barrel was. And he had a way with him. If he noticed your shotgun was pointed at the wing, or the stern, or something, he'd gently take it and put it in open air where it would, yeah. So he always had to... you know? But it'd

unnerve me, when I think about it. Because you're shooting a shotgun. And we wore helmets and (inaudible), you know, of course, in case of an accident or something like that. But the back of his helmet was black from the shotgun hulls hitting him in the back of the head.

Q: From the what?

GEORGE: Shotgun hulls. When they kick out of the shotgun.

Q: Really?

GEORGE: Yeah. They'd hit him in the back of the helmet. And to me, that would have unnerved me, you know. You hear a shotgun blast go off and then you feel this shotgun hull hit you in the back of the head. But he was just [00:25:00] calm and collected. Just, nothing rattled him, really.

Q: How much of this have you done? This kind of work.

GEORGE: Oh, I can't tell you how many hours. I've got... oh, I don't know. A couple hundred hours, probably.

Q: In a fixed wing?

GEORGE: Yeah, in a fixed wing and... He flew down from Casper. And he'd meet you wherever you needed to hunt, you know. If it was on a county road, he'd land on a county road. Or on the side of a hill, or, you know, in an open area that was pretty smooth. He came down from Casper one time. We were flying and the side of the airplane started

getting oil on it. Well, of course, that's kind of a red flag when you get oil, motor oil, plastering the side of your plane. So we put it down, and he got out and checked it. They'd just done [a hundred hour?] on it. And when they changed the oil in it, they didn't tighten the [00:26:00] oil (inaudible). And it'd come out and just started sucking that oil out. So, it didn't suck enough out to keep us from flying, but that was kind of unnerving, that time.

Q: Did you have any experiences like that, too?

BLAKEMAN: I didn't have any experience along those lines. No.

Everything I did was in the military, and -- they're by the book and all official, so...

Q: You're too young for Vietnam, right?

BLAKEMAN: Yes, I am too young for Vietnam.

Q: So, you were in which theater?

BLAKEMAN: I was in Desert Storm, Desert Shield. I was in Afghanistan, too.

Q: Really. (inaudible)

BLAKEMAN: Iraq.

Q: What was your --

BLAKEMAN: The end of the Cold War.

Q: What was your job?

BLAKEMAN: My job started out as a machinist mate on submarines.

And that's working with plumbing and pumps and motors. And everything that's inside a submarine: taking care of it, repairing it. And those kinds of things. Valves, and all that stuff. And then I transferred over to [00:27:00] navigation and started navigating them. I started navigating ships.

Q: Which takes a whole other course, is that correct?

BLAKEMAN: Yes.

Q: I mean, you have to know math, right?

BLAKEMAN: Yeah, you have to know math, and you have to know geometry, and you have to know seas and weather and all that stuff. So yeah, you've got to lay out a voyage plan, which is putting out waypoints and charts all the way across to where you're going. And you've got to get the ship there on time. And you've got to get them in and out of port.

Q: Did you see action?

BLAKEMAN: I did over in Desert Shield. We were over in the Gulf for --

Q: (inaudible) [rough?]?

BLAKEMAN: It wasn't as rough for us. We were out to sea and they didn't have a whole lot of ships, of course. The rough part was -- is that we had to do -- and they put the

lockdown on the Gulf, so... for supplies. They weren't supposed to get any supplies. We locked them down. Well, we had to [00:28:00] board ships and do inspections. Boarding inspections. So, that was kind of rattling. Because we did those around the clock. You'd pull up on a ship, and you'd board the ship and go on and check it out and make sure they didn't have anything they weren't supposed to have. Found a lot of drugs in those. We also -- when I was with a cruiser in California we did drug ops down off the coast of Mexico. And we used to -- if they wouldn't stop, we'd just fire a warning shot across their bow. And if they still wouldn't stop, then they'd give you permission to light them up.

Q: Did you do that?

BLAKEMAN: We lit them up.

Q: You did?

BLAKEMAN: Mm-hmm.

Q: Really. Sunk them?

BLAKEMAN: Yeah. Because they're doing stuff they don't want to stop and get inspected for. So... We worked with the Mexican government down there. Acapulco and [Mazatlan?] and Cabo San Lucas. And we worked with them down there. And we were -- when we were down there doing drug [00:29:00] ops like that, we also worked with the Mexican -

- they had a small navy that -- they'd help patrol, and they'd report that they had one speeding down. They'd have a speedboat coming out of there, and...

Q: So was this for the military, or for the border patrol?

BLAKEMAN: No, this was military. This was all military. So...

Q: Oh, I see. So taking a job in Medicine Bow, there's no comparison.

BLAKEMAN: Not really. But it's more relaxing.

Q: (laughs) I would imagine!

BLAKEMAN: And I'm home.

Q: And you're home.

BLAKEMAN: And I'm home.

Q: Exactly. Exactly. Well, you managed to put up with it for 21 years.

BLAKEMAN: And then they -- what people don't know, is a submarine is flying. It uses the exact same concept as an airplane. It has a rudder and it has [stern planes?], and it has --

Q: (inaudible)

BLAKEMAN: Yes. It actually steers exactly the same as an airplane. [00:30:00] You have a guy that does the -- it's called helms and planesmen. The helmsman is the one that steers the rudder and turns the ship on the course. And the planesman is the guy that actually causes the ship to



go up and down in the water. So it works as the same concept as an airplane.

Q: Does it do all [three?] -- what do they call it?  
(inaudible)?

BLAKEMAN: Yaw.

Q: And then there's...

BLAKEMAN: Course.

Q: What are they, Toby? Yaw. There's three different motions in an airplane. Yaw...

GEORGE: [Wing?].

Q: [Wing?]?

BLAKEMAN: [Wane?].

Q: [Wane?], yaw, and what's the other one? Rise, and fall?

A: You've got the rotation on your axis. You've got the...

BLAKEMAN: Up and down.

A: Up and down [axis of the?] wing.

BLAKEMAN: And then you have course change.

A: And then you've got your course [change?].

BLAKEMAN: Yeah.

Q: So it's pretty much the same thing.

BLAKEMAN: Same thing.

Q: Interesting.

BLAKEMAN: Yeah. The deeper you go, the more angle you go to go down. And then when you come up, you rise. And then when

you do a course [00:31:00] change. And then if you're actually up to speed when you do a course change, if you come over quickly, it'll actually role the ship over.

It'll bank it into the turn.

GEORGE: Just like an airplane.

BLAKEMAN: Just like an airplane.

Q: So then, is that bad?

BLAKEMAN: No. Just as long as you don't do it too fast.

Q: You come out of it.

BLAKEMAN: Yeah. Because you always want to keep the bottom of the submarine --

GEORGE: On the bottom.

BLAKEMAN: To the bottom. Because the ballast tanks are on the bottom, and if you fill those up with water you're going to the bottom.

GEORGE: But how could you, if they're sealed?

BLAKEMAN: They're not sealed. They let air in and out. That's how they maintain ballast.

Q: So --

BLAKEMAN: So you can roll to a certain point, but then you don't want to go past that point, because if you roll over that and it lets the air out of the ballast tanks, and down you go.

Q: OK, we're off subject, aren't we.

BLAKEMAN: Yeah, we got off subject again.

Q: And you guys have got to go. But I want to ask you about -  
- what do you think the future of this airport's going to  
be, Charlie?

GEORGE: The future of this airport... I [00:32:00] would like  
to see... You know. We've got -- we're working on some  
grants for some new runway surface material. More signage.  
And to rehab or reconstruct the original buildings up  
there. You're probably aware, that's an old mail route  
airport. And it's one of the most complete left in the  
nation. So, we would like to see it be able to come back  
to original condition. And actually have fly ins, you  
know. And kind of just celebrate the airport that's -- you  
know, it's one of the last airports like it, so...

Q: When you say surface it, are you talking about with gravel?  
Or asphalt? Or what?

GEORGE: You know, if there's asphalt it [could be?] more  
usable. It'd be -- I think we'd be (inaudible) in  
[there?]. Gravel would be all right, but it's -- you know.  
It's not as user-friendly as asphalt [00:33:00] would be.  
You know.

A: Gravel's hard on propellers.

GEORGE: Yeah. Gravel's hard on [feet?] and brakes and tires.  
And propellers. And, you know, tail wings and everything.

You know. It kicks up gravel when you land. And so -- I forgot to mention, we also use it yearly for our mosquito spraying. We have a mosquito sprayer who comes in every year and he flies out of there and lands. Loads and unloads, and...

Q: Sprays the town, you mean?

GEORGE: Yeah. Sprays the town and the surrounding 2400 acres as well. We spray the mosquitoes. But, getting back to what I'd like to see done, or see it go, I'd like to see it utilized more. Some more attention paid to it. And given, you know, that we have fly-ins in there, make it kind of an economic -- tourist (inaudible). And actually use it, you know, where people can fly in and, you know, see the [00:34:00] area, spend some money here in Medicine Bow. That's -- it's there, we might as well utilize it.

Q: Do you think they would really pick up the tourism, though? Would people actually come out here just to fly into the Medicine Bow airport?

GEORGE: You know, I think -- not just to fly into the airport. But possibly to use the other amenities that we have. You know. Maybe hunting or fishing, or industrial... you know. Something like that. I think --

Q: Industrial? What do you mean?

GEORGE: You know, if... We've got a coal to gas plant that is a possibility just south of town. I think of it as a bigger runway, longer runway, that we may -- people may come in and use the airport that way versus driving in. It's quicker, [00:35:00] they could pop in, pop out, you know, without having a lot of time spent on the road for industrial...

Q: Now, I'm a little curious here, because I work in historic preservation. You know, for years. And I'm thinking, OK, I could see restoring the buildings, you know. Because you probably have specs on some government records, right? I mean, you could pretty much replicate what was there. And you could put a beacon up. And you could put up those little cones, or those little lights, whatever you wanted to do, on the runways. But I'm just wondering -- if you do an asphalt runway, wouldn't that sort of compromise the whole thing?

GEORGE: It would.

Q: I mean, if you're going to get industrial planes in there, like you're talking about, and you're talking about like twin-engine small jets, right?

GEORGE: Yeah, you're right, it would take away from that area. And I don't know if there would be a way that we could put in another runway, you know, [00:36:00] an asphalt -- for

the bigger airplanes. And leave the -- either go back to sod or to hard-packed gravel, or something like that, you know. Something. There's got to be a way around that, you know, that...

Q: Got to be a way to combine the historic with the contemporary needs, maybe?

GEORGE: Mm hm.

BLAKEMAN: Because with the airport, there was actually two runways.

Q: Yeah, I understand there was.

GEORGE: There's three. Yeah, there's three of them.

Q: Three. You've got an X-shaped set of runways, right? And then I think, Toby, you were telling me there's another one?

A: A north to south one.

Q: Yeah. Just straight north and south.

GEORGE: And it's not even visible. You can't even hardly see the (inaudible) of it. But no, he's right, there is three runways there, and... And there's room. We could gain room there to make another -- I don't know what those airplanes need. Probably 6,000, 7,000 thousand feet.

A: [Moved east?], and then take west to the county road.

GEORGE: Yeah, (inaudible).

Q: So there's no drop off, [00:37:00] like a cliff or anything like that?

A: The county road would, yeah.

GEORGE: Yeah, there is a drop off to the west, but... I still think you could gain -- I think you could have a 6,000, 6500 feet runway --

A: [If you run irrigation?] just to the county road, you could probably get about 7,000 feet.

GEORGE: So, now we're just under 4,000 feet [of runway?].

A: Four? I thought it was closer to a mile.

GEORGE: No.

Q: Really? That's all it is? Less than 4,000 feet?

BLAKEMAN: Well, you wouldn't be -- I don't know. How much does a jet take?

GEORGE: I don't know. I'm thinking we'd have to have at least 6,000, 7,000. 8,000 feet would be ideal, probably.

Q: You know, one of the things I -- when I called you, I laughed over the phone. Because I said, "I understand you're the airport manager?" And you said, "Yeah, I do that. Among other things." Do you ever tell anybody that you're an airport manager?

GEORGE: You know, I don't, but I get magazines and publications addressed to the [00:38:00] airport manager. And I kind of giggle at it. You know. It's -- you're

saddled with that obligation, or responsibility, when you get public works director [here?]. You know, nobody else wanted it, so they just tied it onto the public works director. You know, if you're not a pilot, if you're not in navigation -- or in aviation, somehow -- you know, being the airport manager is like -- what's that mean? What am I going to have to do if I'm the airport manager? You know. So we go up there, and we survey it every once in a while. You know, we go up and we check the fence, we pull the [drag?] up and down, you know. And shoot some prairie dogs once in a while. And you know -- that's about that.

Q: What do you think some of the other airport managers around Wyoming -- like, in Cheyenne and Casper -- would say to that?

GEORGE: They would probably laugh, [00:39:00] you know. But you know, it's different when you have -- when your job is airport manager, OK, now I'm the manager of this airport. That's my job. That's all I do. It's easier to say, OK, we need to get a fuel truck, or we need to replace the fuel tanks, or we need to rework the borders on the runway, or this or that. Us, if we get a call after the fact, "Man, that runway's rough!" "All right, we'll go fill some gopher holes. See you next time." That's about how that works. But I would -- you know, I would like to see more



interest put into it, just because it is historical, you know? Rumor is -- and Toby, I don't know if this is true or not -- [Amelia Earhart?] actually landed there one time.

Q: Did she?

GEORGE: Yeah. So, you know, there's a lot of history with that airport. And we should exploit that, somehow, you know, to... Hell, there's airports all over. I get fly-in notices all the [00:40:00] time, that they're having a fly-in here. We're going to give kiddy rides, or we're going to do flour bombings, or we're going to do...

Q: flour bombings?

GEORGE: Yeah. Oh, they mark an X on the spot, and you fly over it with a bag of flour and drop it and see how close you get. You know?

Q: What about the -- the mention of the Flying Farmers International?

GEORGE: Sure.

Q: You ever heard of those guys?

GEORGE: Yeah.

(inaudible)

GEORGE: There's lots of clubs that would -- you know, they're used to flying into all their regular haunts that they go to. If the advertising was there and the airport was brought up to snuff, there was areas to anchor, and you

didn't have to worry about dropping a landing gear in a gopher hole -- you could get a ride down to the Virginian for lunch, or whatever, you know.

A: Go for your \$100 hamburger.

GEORGE: Yeah. You know, I [00:41:00] think there's a lot of -  
- there could be a lot of interest there. But it takes more than a mandated airport manager to make that happen.

Q: Yeah. What's it like living here in Medicine Bow?

GEORGE: You know, it's... There's something about the small town atmosphere that you just don't want to give up. Don't want to -- you know, I could go to work in Casper or Cheyenne, or one of the bigger cities. But there's just something about knowing everybody, you know? You just can't beat it.

Q: More like family.

GEORGE: Yeah.

Q: What's your opinion, [Shane?]?

BLAKEMAN: It's the same. You know, as a kid, I grew up here. And I've known the people in this town my whole life. You know, and everybody's -- it is like a big family. You know, everybody knows each other.

GEORGE: You have in-laws and outlaws, you know? People that you [00:42:00] get along with and people that you can't. Everybody knows it.

Q: But you put up with it.

GEORGE: Yeah.

Q: They put up with you, you put up with them.

BLAKEMAN: Yeah. And when it comes to raising kids, and whatnot, you know, it's probably one of the best environments, because everybody's looking out for everybody. And your kids are safe, you know. You don't have the crime rate like you do in a big city.

Q: Do kids actually get out, here in the countryside, or are they pretty much like urban kids? They go to school, they stay at home, they watch TV...

BLAKEMAN: No, we get out. We go fishing and ATVing, and gopher [plinking?], and hunting.

GEORGE: You know, it has grown up. It's not like it was when we were kids, or when I was a kid. You know. We had three channels on the TV, you know, if the wind wasn't blowing. If the wind was blowing, you only had half of one. So we spent all our time outside. We -- I put 250,000 miles on a purple Stingray bike that I had. You know. [00:43:00] Wore out ten sets of tires on that thing, and we just -- you know? That's what we did.

BLAKEMAN: You'd get on a motorcycle and leave town for three days, and camp out on the prairie. Plink gophers for three days and come back. Or go on a fishing trip.

Q: Where did you go? [Sierra Madre?]

BLAKEMAN: We'd go to Seminoe or -- if we went fishing, go down to Seminoe and go fishing, and -- Seminoe is only thirty miles from here. Go out there and fish all weekend, or -- you just disappear for two or three days and then come back.

Q: So it takes a certain kind of personality to live here, right?

BLAKEMAN: Well, yeah. If you're into big city life, where you like your malls and your movie theaters and your bowling allies, then this isn't for you. But if you like the outdoors and you like to go hunting and fishing and trapping, and whatever, to your heart's content -- ATVs, and so on and so forth -- then this is the place.

Q: But are you in tune with the rest of the world, here? I mean, do people have good [00:44:00] internet? Do they know what's going on in the rest of the world?

BLAKEMAN: Yeah.

GEORGE: Which keeps us...

BLAKEMAN: Stay where we're at.

GEORGE: That's a -- you know, we are connected enough to know that this is where we want to be. We don't want to be someplace else.

Q: OK. Well, listen, you guys. It's past four o'clock. I wanted to get a picture of Toby, but I wanted to get a picture of you guys, too. Maybe we could just get all three of you?

BLAKEMAN: That'll work.

Q: How far is the airport?

A: It's about a mile and half out of here.

Q: Could we do that? Is that possible? Do you have to be home -- your wife expecting you for something?

GEORGE: Yeah, she's expecting, but -- it's easier to ask for forgiveness than it is for permission, so --

Q: You know what? I've been married for 47 years, and what you say is very true. Yeah. Are you married, Shane?

BLAKEMAN: I have been.

Q: You got any kids?

BLAKEMAN: I've got five.

Q: Five kids? [00:45:00] Wow. How old's the oldest?

BLAKEMAN: She's 21.

Q: You're only -- you were born in '67. Well, OK. You're older than I thought. My youngest son was born in '67. And, like I said, we came to Wyoming in '67, so to me this is like -- you know. What [it was?] that makes me question who I am and how old I am?

A: Yeah. I've got a great granddaughter that's five.

Q: Great granddaughter?

A: Mm-hmm.

Q: You could have a great granddaughter sooner than you think, right? She's 21?

BLAKEMAN: Yeah.

Q: And you'd be --

A: It's my daughter's daughter's daughter.

Q: Yeah. You'd be -- if you had one right now, you'd be a great grandfather at -- what are you, 47?

BLAKEMAN: Forty-six.

Q: Forty-six. All right, you guys. Is there anything -- what else do we need to talk about in regard to that airport? I've missed something, haven't I? I'm sure I have.

[00:46:00]

GEORGE: Well, I'm sure you never can get it all in a short time. But, you know, we're pro-airport (inaudible), if there's any questions here. We're pro-airport, pro-Medicine Bow.

Q: Sounds that way.

GEORGE: That's [our motto?]. [We know?] -- you know, sometimes we get slapped around, it seems like, but we still keep plugging away, trying to make the best we can out of it.

Q: Well, this happened a long time ago. You guys started getting slapped around when they built the interstate. They built I-80.

GEORGE: They did. They kind of killed these small towns.

BLAKEMAN: Kind of like Route 66. When they take your traffic away, they take your business.

Q: Yeah. I think there's a certain amount of traffic on 66 just like there is on 30, but people who -- you know, like the old car enthusiasts.

GEORGE: We get those [down?] here. You know, the Lincoln Highway bunch. The old Model T's and everything coming (inaudible). Motorcycles, and... [00:47:00]

Q: One of the things that -- you know, if the town was -- if you had money, I mean, that's the key to everything -- but if you had money -- if I had money, and I had to make an investment in this town, one of the things that I would do -- and don't laugh at me -- is I'd restore the Sunset Cabins. And the reason why I'd do that is because they used to be along the Lincoln Highway, and that was the way people lived. In the early days they camped. You know, you probably know this. Toby probably knows this. Shane, you might not be old enough. But they used to camp. Take their utensils with them, mattresses and stuff, on the back of the car or the truck. And then they offered something

new: cabins. Where you could actually put your car under a -- what do you call it?

BLAKEMAN: Awning.

Q: Yeah. Under an awning or a canopy. And you could go in and there would be pans to cook with. You wouldn't have to bring your own pans. Stuff like that. And I don't know if the Sunset Cabins goes back that far, but -- does it? But I really think they're neat. And I talked to the lady who used to run them 20 years ago, Ruth [Dalgard?]. [00:48:00] But that was 20 years -- well, 23, 24 years ago. There's another set of Sunset Cabins in Evanston. Did you know that?

GEORGE: I didn't.

Q: Yeah. They're not quite like these -- it's more like a motel than it is individual cabins. But yeah. And those kinds of things -- well, when I rode my bike across this country, [on?] the Lincoln highway, came right through here. But you ought to see what they've done in the Midwest. In places like Pennsylvania and Ohio. They've really taken advantage of that tourist aspect of Highway 30. Really.

GEORGE: Yeah. Unfortunately, you know, a lot of the groups that come through here -- we don't take advantage of them. You know. We don't offer them anything when they come



through here. We -- there's a bike club that comes through here every year. There must be a hundred and --

BLAKEMAN: Well, one time [they?] said that they've got 150.

GEORGE: Yeah. A hundred and fifty bicyclists come through here, and, you know, they don't all come at once.

[00:49:00] They come in groups. But they'll come down -- there might be 15 or 20 camped down at the [city?] park.

Q: On their way to Sturgis or something?

GEORGE: Yeah. Well, I don't know where they're going, but... no, they do a scenic byway. Anyway, if they don't call me, let me know that they're going to stay there, then they get wet because I don't shut the sprinklers off. Then they wake up with the sprinklers.

Q: Did you get the old Lincoln Highway guys through here?

GEORGE: Yeah.

BLAKEMAN: Yeah.

Q: They stayed here?

GEORGE: Well, I don't know if they stayed here.

BLAKEMAN: A couple stayed at the Virginia one night.

GEORGE: Yeah, they...

BLAKEMAN: Yeah, the bicycle outfit, they go clear up to Alaska, believe it or not. They're bicyclists, and they're on bicycles. And they go all the way from -- they start out

east of the Mississippi, and they go out all the way up to Alaska and back.

Q: And back?

BLAKEMAN: Mm-hmm.

Q: Are you kidding?

BLAKEMAN: No.

Q: I mean, I heard of Bikecentennial, but...

GEORGE: I'd go back, but it'd [00:50:00] probably be on a plane. Sell my bike in Alaska.

Q: Wouldn't it be fun to fly your plane to some of these old airports? I mean, this is unique, right? This one here? I mean, there's nothing like this in the rest of the country, I understand? Is that right?

GEORGE: Yeah.

BLAKEMAN: But there used to be, every -- what was it, 120 miles, or something? They were hoppers?

A: [There was the?] beacons that the [mail route?] used. Like, you've got that [paper route?]. You've got -- they start, like, in Cheyenne, there's one in Laramie, one here. One at Rawlins -- no, one at Cherokee Hill.

Q: One at Rock River.

A: I mean... There wasn't at Rock River.

Q: I thought there was.

A: Laramie and here. And just west of Hanna was one, it's not Cherokee Hill. We had Rawlins, Cherokee Hill, and somewhere out in the Red Desert. And Evanston.

Q: But I thought that -- go ahead.

GEORGE: The ironic thing is that when you fly over, [00:51:00] all these mail routes had a number on the top of the building. And that's where they identified it. And then when they left, after they dropped their mail, you know, if they just flew by and kicked their mailbag out, they would leave by the concrete arrow that's marked out there. That's how they got their [heading?]. To head out. You know, which direction (inaudible; overlapping dialogue).

Q: Well, didn't you have an airport southeast of here too? I mean, it might be in somebody's pasture, now, but... Just on the way to Laramie?

A: Used to be one there at Rock River.

GEORGE: There was one there at Rock River.

A: Gibbs. Gibbs had -- [Freddy Gibbs?] had one there.

GEORGE: There was an airport at --

A: Hanna. The Yeats had one out there [outside the town?].

GEORGE: There's a lot of private strips around. [Phil Ellis?] has got one west of town, here. But you know, as far as the mail route, [00:52:00] Medicine Bow is --

A: It was the only airport besides -- Laramie, and then here, and then Rawlins.

GEORGE: And you know, they are working on restoring it. They've got some leads on the beacon, you know, that they can replace it.

Q: I think it would be kind of cool if they could get that done, but...

GEORGE: I do.

Q: All right. Gentlemen, I think we're done. It'll take me just a little bit to get this wrapped up. Oh, could you put that guy's name down on there? That you talked about, was a pilot?

GEORGE: John Eisenbrow?

Q: Eisenbrow. Yeah. I'd like to talk to somebody like him. Shane, you got any obligations right away?

BLAKEMAN: No.

Q: OK. I know you guys probably want to get out of here and have a coke or something. But -- Toby? You want to do that?

A: What's that?

Q: Well, I was going to go out here with these guys and go out to the airport, really quick, just for a shot. [00:53:00]

A: Yeah. I'm just (inaudible) here.

Q: OK. Well, you got your coat on.

A: I know.

Q: OK. Let's get this off of here...

END OF AUDIO FILE