

OH-3040, David Holwell, 6-13-2014, WY In Flight

MARK: [00:00:00] OK, so today is Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2014. And my name is Mark Junge, and I'm in the home of [Catherine?] and David Holwell, correct?

CATHERINE: "Hall-well."

DAVID: Yeah.

MARK: You pronounce it "Hall-well"?

DAVID: "Hall-well."

MARK: OK. And we are at 1522 Montana Street --

DAVID: Avenue.

MARK: -- Avenue --

DAVID: Whatever.

MARK: -- in Upton, Wyoming. And it's been a beautiful day today. Gorgeous day.

DAVID: Has that.

MARK: OK. David, I like to start off by asking people some really basic stuff like, "When and where were you born?"

DAVID: Well, I was born out there in a ranch in Skull Creek.

MARK: Now, pretend I haven't read anything about you. I don't know you from Adam, even though I read some stuff about you. You were born on what day?

DAVID: November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1920.

MARK: And it was on the ranch [00:01:00] on Skull Creek?

DAVID: Right. Northeast of Osage.

MARK: How far northeast of Osage?

DAVID: Eleven miles.

MARK: So was Skull Creek just a ranch stead? A homestead?

DAVID: Well, it was a creek.

MARK: No, but I mean the Skull Creek place. Was it part of  
a community or was it...?

DAVID: It was a ranch. That was our ranch.

MARK: Were you born at home?

DAVID: Absolutely.

MARK: Did the doctor come and deliver you?

DAVID: Right. Doctor Wells.

MARK: You didn't know him at that time.

DAVID: No I didn't, but I knew him many years later.

MARK: OK. Who were your parents?

DAVID: David and Harriet Holwell.

MARK: What was your mom's maiden name?

DAVID: Cooksey.

MARK: C-O-O-K-S-E-Y?

DAVID: Yeah.

MARK: OK. Now you're David the second?

DAVID: David [N.?] Junior.

MARK: OK. Your parents did what for a living? [00:02:00]

Obviously, I know, but...

DAVID: Well, Dad owned a ranch. He also owned a blacksmith  
shop and a machine shop on the ranch. So that's where I  
grew up.

MARK: Did you learn to be a smith?

DAVID: I can do about everything a smith can do, except temper. I never learned to temper. I know now if I'd had these glasses, I could have tempered, too.

MARK: Why?

DAVID: Because I couldn't see the colors.

MARK: So what do glasses do for you?

DAVID: Make me see the colors.

MARK: Oh, are they special glasses?

DAVID: No, no. No, no. When you temper, you get a chisel -- let's just say a chisel -- you get it red-hot. You dip it -- depending on what hardness you want -- you dip it in water, take it out. [00:03:00] You watch it, and there'll be a color come across the front of it. Well, it may be a straw color, so that ain't what -- you don't want straw, you want it a little harder, so you dip it again, look at it, till you get a blue color. That's what I mean. I couldn't see those colors. My dad would say, "My God, boy, can't you see them colors?"  
(laughter) And I couldn't. But I could weld. I could do anything.

MARK: Did you have to work on farm equipment, mainly?

DAVID: Beginning of it, yes, for years.

MARK: Did you have machines back in your youth, in the '20s -- did you have machines? What I mean by machines are gasoline-powered, diesel-powered machines. Or did you have horsepower?

DAVID: All horse.

MARK: What type of horses?

DAVID: We worked Percherons, mainly. [00:04:00]

MARK: Those are big horses.

DAVID: Big horses, very big.

MARK: Did you ride them, too?

DAVID: I didn't ride them -- well, we could ride them, but we had saddle horses that we rode. But the Percherons was our work horses.

MARK: What did you use them for?

DAVID: Everything that had to be done on the ranch. You could plow with them; you could drill with them; you could bind with them; you could... However, I never run a binder with a team. My dad -- I watched my dad do it, but I never did. And you could mow; you could break; you could run a buck-rake; you could do anything you wanted to do with a horse, any -- any, what am I trying to say?

MARK: Anything you could do with a tractor?

DAVID: Well, anything that you wanted done, you done with horses because you didn't have a tractor.

MARK: Was it easier [00:05:00] with a tractor, after you got a tractor?

DAVID: Oh, sure. Oh, sure.

MARK: Those Percherons are strong, aren't they?

DAVID: Yeah.

MARK: What's a binder?

DAVID: Binder? Grain binder?

MARK: Oh, puts the sheaves together.

DAVID: Puts it into bundles.

MARK: Oh. OK, yeah. So your dad worked with those probably  
most of his life?

DAVID: All his life, I would guess. Well, when he was a  
young fellow he worked for a railroad, as a blacksmith.  
For a year or so. Then they bought the ranch back from  
Granddad.

MARK: Who bought the ranch?

DAVID: Dad and his brother.

MARK: Oh, OK. And there were just the two boys?

DAVID: Well, there was more boys than that, but there was  
only two that bought the ranch. It was four boys.

MARK: But only two wanted to stay on the ranch. [00:06:00]  
Was -- did he homestead the ranch, your dad?

DAVID: Granddad.

CATHERINE: Granddad.

MARK: Oh, excuse me, yeah. When was that?

DAVID: 18--

CATHERINE: --'83, they came here, but I don't know when they  
did --

DAVID: No, no.

CATHERINE: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) the land, I  
don't know about that.

MARK: I might mention on tape, we're sitting at the kitchen table here in your house, and your wife's just off to your left. And your name is Catherine?

CATHERINE: Yes.

MARK: And Catherine, what was your maiden name?

CATHERINE: Thompson.

MARK: Thompson? You're not related to Thyra Thomson, are you, our old Secretary of State?

DAVID: No.

MARK: OK, because they came from this part of the country.

CATHERINE: Yeah, they did, yeah, but --

DAVID: They came over on --

CATHERINE: -- their name's spelled different. Mine's spelled T-H-O-M-P-S-O-N, and hers is spelled --

DAVID: T-H-O-M-S-O-N.

CATHERINE: -- T-H-O-M-S-O-N.

DAVID: We knew them through the family. They'd come over (inaudible) beaver.

MARK: Yeah, yeah. [00:07:00] So the two boys -- two of the boys took over the ranch. Did you raise your own hay?

DAVID: Absolutely.

MARK: And what did you use for water? Was it Skull Creek water?

DAVID: Yeah.

MARK: Was there enough water in it?

DAVID: Was at that time.

MARK: What happened?

DAVID: Well, it got dry.

CATHERINE: (laughs) It didn't dry years ago (inaudible) --

DAVID: In the '30s it dried up, and it never did come back.

I think this year it has, but --

MARK: You had a lot of moisture this year?

DAVID: Yeah, a lot of moisture.

MARK: Yeah. So who's got the old place?

DAVID: I sold it to my niece and her husband. Their name is

Tlustos. [Pat?] Tlustos.

MARK: How do you spell that?

DAVID: T-L-U-S-T-O-S.

MARK: What nationality is that?

CATHERINE: It's Romanian, or [00:08:00] -- I don't know what

that is -- that area of the country.

(knock at the door)

MARK: Somebody --

DAVID: (knock at the door) What?

CATHERINE: (multiple conversations; inaudible) OK.

MARK: Oh, he's going to mow the grass. OK.

DAVID: Yeah. He wants the weekend off, so he's going to do

it now instead of tomorrow.

MARK: Oh, OK. So when you -- what was -- you grew up,  
really, in the '20s. It wasn't a very good time for  
Wyoming. It was a depression period for Wyoming.

DAVID: Well, yeah I guess you could say that, although I never knew it.

CATHERINE: Well, the '20s weren't quite as bad. It was the '30s that were really...

DAVID: Yeah. The '20s was pretty good. Twenties was pretty good up to '29. And then, it just started getting worse and worse and worse till about 1936 -- '37. Then we started getting some moisture again.

MARK: There was a CCC camp up here, wasn't there? [00:09:00]

DAVID: Several of them.

MARK: Up near Inyan Kara, was it?

DAVID: There was one in Inyan Kara, yeah. One at Mallo. One over at -- I want to say Hell's Canyon, but that's not right. But over in that area.

MARK: Tell me a little bit about life on that -- I'm interested in knowing what kind of life you had on that ranch.

DAVID: Well, you know, as a boy growing up, of course, we had all my sisters and brothers. And we had plenty to eat, we had -- well, we broke horses. We worked horses. We played baseball. [00:10:00] We did -- skied in the wintertime. We just had a good life.

MARK: Well you have to have 18 players to play baseball.

CATHERINE: (laughs)

DAVID: Well, we invited the neighbors in. (laughter) I'll tell you -- I'll tell you one thing, we had nine men on a



team, all of them was Holwells but two. And they were cousins.

MARK: So wait a minute: you had -- there were three other brothers, correct? You had three other brothers?

DAVID: I had --

CATHERINE: Five other --

DAVID: -- five brothers.

MARK: Oh, well, there's six on the team right there.

DAVID: And then I had four cousins.

MARK: How many sisters?

DAVID: I had three sisters.

MARK: Did they play baseball, too?

DAVID: Well, some of them did, yes.

CATHERINE: Just one of them.

DAVID: One of them was very good.

CATHERINE: Yeah, but I don't think Mary and Ruth ever played much.

DAVID: Ruth played some, but Mary [00:11:00] never did.

MARK: Did -- was there any fishing in Skull Creek?

DAVID: Was all kind of fishing but there wasn't much catching. (laughter) If that's what you meant.

MARK: OK. Were there trout, suckers?

DAVID: No, we planted trout -- my dad did up -- what we called the smithy -- was a place that we got up above there a couple of miles. And they lived for a while, but

-- too much mud. It was in the red dirt, and whenever the water would come down it was too (inaudible). No.

MARK: Did you hunt for your meat?

DAVID: Well, yes. We had our own meat through the ranch, but then we hunted, yes.

MARK: What did you raise on the ranch?

DAVID: Well, raised cattle, mostly, when I grew up.

MARK: Did that change?

DAVID: Well, after we was married, I went sheep, too.

MARK: Why?

DAVID: Why? [00:12:00] Because I liked them.

MARK: Did they bring in more money?

DAVID: Yes.

MARK: Oh, that's right. Somebody told me that you had two crops every year. You had a wool crop --

DAVID: And a lamb crop.

MARK: -- and a lamb crop, yeah. How many could you run on that acreage? Was that a homestead acreage of 160 or --

DAVID: Well, and then we had -- when -- maybe you want the whole history, but the reason my dad -- my granddad -- came out there -- he was a miner. He came from England. He went to Nova Scotia -- hard rock mine there. When the mines opened up in the Black Hills he came out here. He wasn't a -- he wasn't a -- prospector. He was a contractor. Well, the railroad was going through; they needed coal. And [00:13:00] they found coal, right up

above the ranch there, about a mile, isn't it? And so they hired my grandfather from Leeds City to come out here and prove up on that coal -- group, they called -- Briar Hill Coal Company. And they hired my granddad to come out here and prove up on that coal.

MARK: That was the Burlington --

DAVID: Well, I don't think it was Burlington then.

MARK: Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy.

DAVID: It might have been.

CATHERINE: Yeah, that's what it was.

MARK: C, B, and Q. But their big mines were up in Cambria, weren't they?

DAVID: Well, later on they -- the railroad was surveyed into the east mines, and everything, and then they found the coal in Cambria. Was a bigger vein of coal, closer, so they [00:14:00] went to Cambria.

CATHERINE: Never did do anything with the coal there.

DAVID: No, no, other than that. Granddad mined it for the local people, a little bit. No, we never did do anything with the coal mine.

MARK: But you burn coal in your house.

DAVID: At that time, yeah.

MARK: Did your mom have one of those old, coal-burning stoves?

DAVID: No, not to my knowledge. Wood. We burned wood. You know I think we need to pull that down.

CATHERINE: What?

DAVID: Pull that.

CATHERINE: I can't hear you.

DAVID: I said, pull the blind a little. I think it's getting  
in his eyes.

MARK: Well, thanks. How did you notice?

DAVID: The -- no, we burned wood. All together. And my dad,  
being a mechanic and a contriver --

MARK: Thank you, Catherine.

DAVID: -- he built a dragsaw [00:15:00] to cut wood.

MARK: I don't know what that is.

DAVID: Well, it -- you just -- it's just exactly what it  
said. You build it on an arm so that the saw run, and it  
had a track -- you got some -- you got some railroad out  
of the mine in Cambria -- some track built so the car  
would run on it. You'd pull the log along this way, got  
a block on, pull it up -- got a block on. And dad built  
that pull... I helped him rebuild it in 1936, or '37.  
When he built that, he had more wheels and -- God, I  
don't know all what he had on it.

MARK: He rebuilt what?

DAVID: The saw -- the bed pieces and everything went to  
pieces, so we rebuilt it. And we used it for years.

MARK: I take it that you and your dad both had mechanical  
ability.

DAVID: Oh, yeah -- [00:16:00] and all the rest of them.

MARK: Did they?

DAVID: Well, I don't think -- Bob didn't, did he?

CATHERINE: He didn't do much with it, if he -- I think he --

DAVID: He could, but he -- he was a chiropractor.

CATHERINE: Yeah.

DAVID: That's my youngest brother.

CATHERINE: He graduated from college, then went into service,  
and then went to chiropractic school.

DAVID: Yeah. But yes, we were mechanical.

MARK: Did he -- did your grandfather build the homestead  
cabin?

DAVID: Well, the family. You see, when they came here --  
they came there in '81 or '82, is that right?

CATHERINE: I don't know, they always said they came in eighty  
--

DAVID: Yeah, '81.

CATHERINE: -- three, I thought.

DAVID: Huh?

CATHERINE: I thought the family came here in '83.

DAVID: Then he built a house on the north side of the creek,  
because you had water there. But it was creek water,  
actually. And he [00:17:00] had his family come from  
Nova Scotia. And they came by boat, by railroad, by  
stagecoach, and team and wagon. And they got to the  
ranch, the eighth day of August in '83. That's when the  
family came. Well, then they went up where the house is

now, where the ranch is. They drilled a well -- dug a well and it was good hard water -- good water -- so they moved everything up there. And so he and the family built the... Grandfather was a miner, so he did everything he had to -- he had to mine a little before he could build anything, so he -- if you seen the ranch, you knew it. He had it dug in. But anyway, they built it out of log. And he built the barn. He had a barn there that was 40 by 80. [00:18:00]

MARK: That's a big barn. That's a good-sized barn.

DAVID: Well, we worked a lot of horses.

MARK: Did he have Percherons at that time?

CATHERINE: No.

DAVID: Well, I guess so -- no, I don't know. I can't --

CATHERINE: Don't know when he started the Percherons.

DAVID: As long as I can remember, they were Percherons.

That's all I can tell you.

MARK: Now, when you say he "dug in" -- "you could tell he was a miner because he dug in" -- did he build into a hillside?

DAVID: Well, no, I -- yeah, he did at the kitchen. He dug a part of -- and dug her down -- and then when they built the kitchen on, a door opened right in -- they dug a cellar into this hill. And right out the kitchen into the cellar.

MARK: Smart.

DAVID: See? And -- but, now the barn was sat down in the ground, the old chicken house was sat down in the ground, I mean, so if it rained water would run [00:19:00] in, I mean... Miner.

MARK: (laughs) Did you -- you had good water, finally. What did you do for electricity or lights or power or...?

DAVID: Well, I'm sure they had kerosene and gasoline lights, I'm sure. I was four years old -- yeah, four, coming four -- when my younger brother and sister was born. And dad had bought a Delco Plant, and he ran the first wiring, my mother, when she was still in bed -- the babies was born. So I didn't see much -- I never lit a gas lamp till I was 18 years old. We had electricity.

MARK: That's really unusual. [00:20:00]

DAVID: Well, it is but my neighbor Tavegie across the street had one just like it. My God, we had -- Dad put a big pole out there and put a big bulb on it, Harry put a big bulb on over there, and we'd play night after night under them lights.

MARK: Where did you get the power? From a windmill?

DAVID: No, no, had an engine. Gasoline engine. And it had 30 -- no, 16 two-volt batteries. Big glass batteries. 32 volts. And -- I can remember mother using irons on the fire. Then she bought her 32-volts electric iron. And dad, being the contriver he was, he made mother [00:21:00] a wash-house out by the well. With steam --

he had a little steam engine, a little steam boiler. He'd go out there and put five gallon of water out there in the wintertime, fire it up. When it got steam -- he had a jet in the well -- he could jet the water out of the well and into the boiler, into the tubs. When he got the water in the tubs, he could take the steam hose and put it in there and heat it. See?

MARK: Did she have one of those old wringer-washers?

DAVID: No, not to my knowledge.

MARK: Did she use a washboard?

DAVID: Well, she had a washboard, yes, but this washing machine run off of the steam. It was a two-tub washing machine. I don't think it ever worked very good, if I remember right. But [00:22:00] -- and it had a wringer...

CATHERINE: Didn't last very long, either. Wash house burned down. (laughs)

DAVID: And in 1929 the wash house burned down.

MARK: What happened?

DAVID: Oh, it just got hot -- 90 degree day, and she was washing and the pitch was out on the boards, and -- you know how they get... OK, I don't know what happened, but it burned down, anyway. And then mother got her electric, 32-volt washing machine. I can't remember who ordered that thing -- was it Sears?

CATHERINE: I can't remember.



DAVID: Anyway -- oh, she didn't know a washing machine could wash that clean.

CATHERINE: (laughs)

MARK: Was it a wringer-washer?

DAVID: Oh sure. Everything electric, 32-volt, you bet.

CATHERINE: Had to -- had to heat the water on the stove, in a boiler.

MARK: She had how many kids, nine?

DAVID: She had eight -- or seven. Dad was married twice. He lost his first wife [00:23:00] -- had two boys. Then she had seven, mother did.

MARK: And she had the two sets of twins?

DAVID: Right.

MARK: She was washing a lot of diapers.

DAVID: I'll bet you could tell her that, and she'd agree with you.

MARK: (laughs) My mother -- I remember my mother, actually, she had a wringer-washer in the basement. But she also had a tub -- I mean a pail, with a -- what do you call it?

DAVID: Wash board.

CATHERINE: Scrub board.

MARK: A scrub board, yeah, a wash board. And she'd take out those -- she'd wring out those dirty diapers...

DAVID: Oh, God, yes.

MARK: Your mom worked pretty hard?

CATHERINE: She did.

DAVID: Oh, (laughs) all the time. Yes, she did -- she did,  
like her -- she works all the time, too.

CATHERINE: Well, I never had the --

DAVID: Well, she didn't have to do that.

CATHERINE: I always had the washing machine and running water  
and a bathroom.

DAVID: Yeah, we had...

MARK: Catherine, where were you raised?

CATHERINE: About 12 miles south of down here.

MARK: How far is Skull Creek Ranch? [00:24:00]

CATHERINE: Thirty miles.

DAVID: Thirty miles, I suspect.

CATHERINE: I never knew him, till he was 19 or 20 years old.

DAVID: Well, maybe, yeah, or 20...

CATHERINE: Somehow, you don't get from one...

DAVID: ... community to the next, back then. Well, she had a  
cute little sister, I'll tell you. So I wanted to go  
with her little sister. But we went to a dance out in  
Clarendon, and she introduced me to Catherine. She got  
rid of me that that way, see?

MARK: (laughs)

CATHERINE: Besides, I told you, you never would have got that  
sister. She had another boyfriend, and she married him.  
(laughter)

DAVID: Yeah, she did, and he got -- he and I joined the Air Force the same day.

CATHERINE: Yeah.

DAVID: But he got shot down...

MARK: Let's move on then, because I don't want to keep you up all night, but I always find these tales of early life in this part of the country -- rural Wyoming -- to be interesting because of the fact that some people, surprisingly, [00:25:00] had electricity, like you guys. Others didn't get it until the '30s -- until REA came --

DAVID: Forties, '50s.

MARK: Right, '40s and '50s.

CATHERINE: The regular electricity didn't come in out there till '50.

DAVID: Yeah, 1950.

CATHERINE: Because we had -- we built a new house --

DAVID: When we got 110.

CATHERINE: And we had electricity.

MARK: Where did you go to school?

DAVID: Well, we had a schoolhouse about a mile down the road from the ranch. And we walked down there, or skied, or whatever we had.

MARK: Would you ride horses?

DAVID: No. No. We walked. There was just as many of the Tavegie kids across the creek from us, as there was us. So we all went down to that school. Then they had some

people from up on the divide, and some from on down the creek, so we all gathered there at that schoolhouse.

[00:26:00]

MARK: What did they call that school?

DAVID: They called it Skull Creek -- no, Tavegie-Holwell -- Tavegie School.

CATHERINE: Holwell-Tavegie, I thought.

MARK: Now, Tavegie's spelled T-A-V-I-G-I?

DAVID: T-A-V-E-G-I-A, or -I-E, whichever way. Now, when Mrs. Tavegie signed it, she signed it -- the kids' --

CATHERINE: -I-E.

DAVID: -- report cards -I-E. When Harry signed them it was -I-A.

\_\_: Hey you guys, I have an emergency. I've got to leave, OK?

DAVID: What?

\_\_: I have -- I have an emergency. At home, I've got to leave. I just got a phone call. I'll be back in the morning, and I'll finish your lawn.

DAVID: OK then.

CATHERINE: I'll pay you in the morning.

DAVID: Yeah, but that's where we went to school. We walked, and in the wintertime we skied.

MARK: You did? Was it downhill or uphill?

DAVID: Uphill and [00:27:00] downhill.

CATHERINE: Yeah. Not too much of either, really, going down there.

DAVID: Well, the way did it, though, we'd ski right straight west of the house on that hill, and then we could ski down and go on around the corner.

CATHERINE: Yeah.

MARK: (laughs) Did everybody do that?

CATHERINE: Well, most of us did, I think. Yeah, Bob and Ruth did, and Mervin did, Marguerite... I don't think Mary ever did. But Merle did, Bill, and the Tavegie boys.

MARK: There were the Holwells, the Tavegies, and how many others?

DAVID: Oh, God.

MARK: Approximately. I mean was this -- this must have been a crowded school.

DAVID: Probably five or six others.

MARK: Was it a one-room schoolhouse? Who was your teacher?

DAVID: I had many teachers. I was just reading a report card -- that desk downstairs, the one of mine [00:28:00] -- [Eva Cook?] was my first teacher. She married Clayton Dewey. My second teacher was Cora Powell, and she married -- I can't tell you. A boy there, anyway. And then... Five or six, anyway.

MARK: Was it chaos in that schoolroom, or did the teacher rule with an iron fist?

DAVID: Well, now, Cora Powell had a piece of corn stalk about that long that she ruled with. But otherwise, no, and we had no trouble.

MARK: She had a corn stalk?

DAVID: Harness tug.

MARK: Oh, really? For a -- what's that, like a piece of wood?

DAVID: Well, no -- a tug of a harness, a leather scrap.

CATHERINE: (laughs) [00:29:00]

MARK: Did you ever feel that?

DAVID: I did.

MARK: David, what did you do?

DAVID: Well, she told us boys -- the little guys -- she didn't want us playing in the water. But we played in the water anyway. See? Wasn't anything very bad.  
(laughter)

MARK: Were you a good student?

DAVID: I was. I was a top student, actually.

MARK: Good speller.

DAVID: Huh?

MARK: Good speller?

DAVID: I could spell. I could -- mathematician --

CATHERINE: Can't spell now, but he could then I guess.

(laughter)

DAVID: Good mathematician.

MARK: But you were -- so that's one of the things that made you a good engineer. I mean, you could engineer things. Not only did you know the theory -- the mathematics -- but you had practical training in the blacksmith shop. That must have been a wonderful education.

DAVID: Yeah. Then, you see we had a machine shop also.

[00:30:00] When -- well, Dad had made him a lathe. When he was 19 years old, he made him a lathe. An iron lathe. I mean, he didn't have the -- he had to move the feed by hand, with a crank. Oh, yeah -- yeah, he did.

MARK: Is that where you get your mechanical ability?

DAVID: I'm sure. Then, in '28 or '29 -- whenever they closed the Cambria mine -- he went over there and bought a big lathe. Nine-foot bed, 22 inches.

MARK: Did -- when did he and his wife retire from the ranch?

CATHERINE: Ninety-five. We came in here in '95.

DAVID: No, Dad and Mother. Well, Dad slowed up. I don't know what -- when Mother passed away. [00:31:00]

CATHERINE: He didn't do much after I was there.

DAVID: No.

CATHERINE: And that would have been in...

DAVID: Oh, '50, '49, '50.

CATHERINE: A little after -- before '50.

DAVID: Yeah, he did a little work in the shop, but not much after that.

MARK: So, did you fully intend as a young man to stay on the ranch and work the ranch?

DAVID: Absolutely. I don't know why. I'd have been a lot better off if I hadn't have, but...

MARK: What happened?

DAVID: Well, I mean, there was jobs that would have paid me way more, and I'd have probably got a pension. But I stayed with the ranch.

CATHERINE: What he should have done was finished his high school and been a veterinary, was what he should have done, but he didn't.

MARK: Really?

DAVID: Yeah, I was a good vet. I was a good vet.

MARK: So you knew how to do the homespun remedies?

[00:32:00]

DAVID: Yep. And I had a good teacher. I had an old vet, lived up here. He wasn't an old man then, either. Doctor [Port?]. Come down there to do a water belly, and he said, "David you can do this." "Why, Doc, I couldn't do it. I haven't got anything to deaden it with." He reached into his satchel and got out his stuff and give it to me -- "Now here," he said, "I want to have you do this." Water bellies.

MARK: What are they?

DAVID: Water belly is a -- there's a stone gets in the --

CATHERINE: Urinary.



DAVID: -- urinary tract, and when the head over the back of a steer comes down, there's a nest in the penis. And you just kind of slip down there -- go in there and you found the stone [00:33:00], take it out...

MARK: This was in a cow? I mean, a bull, rather?

DAVID: Yeah.

CATHERINE: Yeah.

MARK: Well, I'll bet the bull didn't sit still for that.

DAVID: Well, because you deadened it. See, you'd go in -- he'd give me the hypodermic needle, and he'd give me the stuff to deaden it with. He'd go right in up the tail, where the tail -- that joint... He couldn't feel it. He didn't know anything was going on.

MARK: I'll be darned. What did it look like when it came out?

DAVID: Oh, it was just a little piece of -- maybe a...

CATHERINE: Looked like a pebble?

DAVID: Well, yeah, but it was uh...

MARK: Like a crystal?

DAVID: Lime -- a little lime stone, just a little...

MARK: So you called them water bellies because he couldn't [00:34:00] urinate...

DAVID: That's right. And then you'd -- if you didn't get it right away, the bladder'd break and they'd all get down in the belly of the hide. That's why they call them water bellies.

MARK: Well, if the urinary bladder broke, then he'd be a  
goner, wouldn't he?

DAVID: No, not necessarily. Not necessarily. We saved them.

MARK: Interesting. Well, what happened? I'm trying to get  
into your military life here, but this is... When did  
you go into the military?

DAVID: 1942, September 14, I think.

MARK: You were 22. OK. Why did you go in? Some of the  
guys went in right after Pearl Harbor. Were you thinking  
about going in?

DAVID: Well, yeah. I knew I was going to have to go. I  
wanted to fly. [00:35:00] So I went over to Fort Meade  
and enlisted. How many of us went over there? Five?

CATHERINE: Five or six of you boys.

DAVID: Six of us guys from here. All of us.

MARK: Fort Meade, North Dakota?

DAVID: Fort Meade, South Dakota.

MARK: Bis--? Not Bismarck...

DAVID: Sturgis.

MARK: Is that where it was?

DAVID: And we signed up for the Air Force.

MARK: Let's step back. Why were you interested in aviation  
in the first place?

DAVID: I always liked the -- I'd say, if you could see them -  
- Hell, I wanted to fly. That's the only reason.

MARK: What were you thinking?

DAVID: (laughs) Don't ask me.

MARK: Well, let me tell you what [Clyde Ice?] told me -- and you know this story. He was sitting under a tree, tending the cattle, and he was looking up in the sky, and he said, "I wonder what it'd be like if those cattle had wings, and I could ride one of them into the sky."

[00:36:00] Can you believe that? (laughter)

DAVID: I hadn't heard that, but I don't doubt but what Clyde said it.

MARK: Well, I didn't exactly say it the way he said it. But when did you get your first interest in flight?

DAVID: Well, I don't know. I always kind of had an interest in flying. The first time I ever seen an airplane, I guess. The neighbors -- the Tavegies over there -- they had a son-in-law who was a barber. And he flew out there. He had somebody fly him out there to ranch. And he flew around the school and down, and I guess maybe -- I don't know -- if that's what started it or not. But I always had an interest in flying.

MARK: So tell me the story, now. You were going to enlist in the Air Force?

DAVID: I did.

MARK: But it was the Army Air Force at that [00:37:00] time.

DAVID: Yeah. Yes, it was.

MARK: And you were studying to be a pilot?

DAVID: Yes. And I -- right away -- they just took off right away -- and down at Spearfish... We done our ground school and our flying at the Spearfish Airport under Clyde Ice.

MARK: What was your first impression of Clyde Ice?

DAVID: Clyde? I don't know. He was a nice, big jolly -- just a good nice fellow. He's the kind of fellow that you'd like to have fly for you if you was going to fly. That was Clyde.

MARK: Do you have any stories about him?

DAVID: Well, I don't have many, no. I know a few, but...

MARK: Can you give me one? [00:38:00] Or two?

DAVID: Well, I know one and it's in that other book. He flew out to Velpoos, and picked a woman up who was having trouble having a baby, and brought her back to the hospital. The only thing he had to fly by was a telephone line. But he done her. That was his long suit -- and Clyde always said -- what did he always say? -- no-nonsense flying, that's what he always said. But he pulled reels like that. He didn't think that was nonsense. Hell, he -- he flew. Good pilot.

MARK: He was a brave man.

DAVID: He was a good pilot. Had a lot of luck, too, I think.

[00:39:00] But, he was a good pilot.

MARK: What kind of a teacher was he?

DAVID: I didn't have Clyde as a teacher. Actually, his son -  
- I had him for a teacher.

MARK: This was Randall, you're talking about.

DAVID: Randall. Yeah, everybody the class or two ahead of me said, "Boy, we hope you don't get Randall, because he's tough." Randall never was tough to me. He taught you. If you didn't get it the first time, he went through it again. When you got her... One thing I specifically remember: we was out -- we was out about three or four thousand feet -- and he said, "David, I want you to make me a climb and turn." So I kicked her into a climb and turn. Now he said, "I want you to steepen it up. [00:40:00] Steepen it up a little; steepen it up a little." Finally I got it steep enough to where she stalled out, over the top. You never seen such a damn tail spin in your life. (laughter) But I got it right out of it. He said, "Did you feel that? Did you feel that shake before she went over the top?" He said, "I wanted you to know what that felt like because," he said, "before you get done flying you're going to feel it again." And that's the kind of instructor he was. That's the kind of fellow he was. And Randall was the kind of a fellow that... We wasn't supposed to go into bars, but if you walked into the bar and Randall was in there, you went out the back door. He never seen you. That's the kind of fellow he was. [00:41:00] And Cecil

was there, but I never had Cecil for an instructor...

What's the boy you talking about?

MARK: Howard.

DAVID: I never knew Howard. I may have met him, sometime or other, but I never knew Howard.

MARK: Are any of those fellows still alive?

DAVID: Cecil may be over around [Pierre?] yet -- if he isn't -- I've got it in my mind, he's over there around Pierre someplace yet. Cecil. But I know Howard's not alive, and I know Randall's not alive.

MARK: Do you remember your first solo -- your first flight?

DAVID: Yes, I do. I had a fellow by the name of -- can't remember his name. Anyway, he said, "You just getting so reckless" -- he said -- "I can't fly with you [00:42:00] anymore." And he just got out. Well, when I took off, that old plane felt like as if I give her right rudder enough to keep her straight, or she's going to tip her over. Well, I kind of went out of there like this... I got back on the ground and, boy, he eat me up. "I don't want no more of that." And it made me mad. The next time I went down the runway... I had no trouble from then on. And landing was a cinch. I never had no trouble with landing. My depth perception was great. Can't remember what his name was now.

MARK: So then, actually, you became a pilot?

DAVID: Oh, yes. I've got my pilot's license. Oh, yes.

MARK: Did you fly in the Air Force, then?

DAVID: Yes. I was in the Air Force, but that wasn't what I done in the Air Force. [00:43:00] I was an engineer, on a B-26. But if they needed somebody in the right seat, I had enough training I could fly it.

MARK: So did you get all your training at Spearfish?

DAVID: Well, first, secondary, and cross-country. And then, we went on from then, I went to Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, and got my Army training. And then we went up to Chanute field and that's where we got into flying.

MARK: Chanute -- is that in Illinois?

DAVID: Illinois, yeah.

MARK: And then -- you were flying B-26s at the time?

DAVID: Well, we went in the B-26. We flew some, but we didn't have no -- we didn't have a lot of B-26s there, but we flew them. Then, from Chanute Field -- where'd I go? Jacksonville.

CATHERINE: Yeah.

DAVID: Jacksonville, Florida. [00:44:00] And we flew A-20s out of their submarine patrol.

MARK: They called them A-20s?

DAVID: Yeah.

MARK: What was the "A" for?

DAVID: Attack. But they were kind of like the 26 -- kind of -- not really as hot as the 26 was, but they were... And

we used them for submarine patrol. I was there June, July, and August. Hottest goddamn time in the world.

MARK: In Jacksonville? I can imagine.

DAVID: They just went into a slew there, and dug us a runway... God. We went to the flight line with our shoes and our shorts on. [00:45:00] Just 110 degrees in the shade, and there wasn't any shade.

MARK: And humid, I'll bet.

DAVID: Oh, humid, oh dear.

MARK: So where did you go from Jacksonville?

DAVID: We went from Jacksonville to Mitchel Field, New York. And from Mitchel Field, New York, I got a 10-day furlough. I came up to Wyoming and married that gal right there.

MARK: When was that?

DAVID: One of the smartest things I ever done. (laughter)

It was the eighth day of September in...

CATHERINE: Forty-three.

DAVID: Forty-three.

MARK: That was just after I was born. That's a nice compliment, isn't it, Catherine? What he just said. Did you hear what he said?

CATHERINE: What?

MARK: He said it was the best thing he did.

CATHERINE: Oh, yes. [00:46:00] He's told me that several times.



DAVID: And that's true; there's no B.S. about it. It's  
factual.

MARK: What attracted you two? Or how did you meet?

DAVID: We've talked about that several times, haven't we?

CATHERINE: What?

DAVID: Well, what attracted us.

CATHERINE: I don't know --

DAVID: You know, you got married --

CATHERINE: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) anything  
valuable in it -- you know, I was out there with another  
fellow. (laughter)

DAVID: You got married... We didn't know anything about each  
other. But over several years, it kind of --

CATHERINE: We went together a few years, I guess we knew a  
little.

DAVID: -- melded together.

MARK: Do you know what she's thinking?

DAVID: No. (laughter)

MARK: Do you know what he's thinking?

DAVID: Ah, pretty much we do.

CATHERINE: I think I know more about what he's thinking than  
he knows what I'm thinking. (laughter)

MARK: Okay. [00:47:00] Sometimes, you know, people get to  
thinking alike and can answer each other's questions.

DAVID: Well, we pretty much think alike.

MARK: My wife and I have been married now 47 years, and I'll go to the store -- we might not go to the store all week, but all of a sudden she goes to the store, and I go to the store, and we don't know that the other person's going to the store, and we come back with the same stuff.

CATHERINE: Yeah. Well, we'd probably do that, too especially if it was groceries. (laughter)

MARK: Yeah, exactly.

DAVID: Yeah, we'd probably be the same.

MARK: OK, so we got you in New York; you got a 10-day furlough to come home. You had known your wife -- you had known Catherine before that, then...

DAVID: Oh, yes. Several years.

CATHERINE: Oh, yeah. Well, we went there for two years before --

DAVID: I danced a hundred miles with her before that.

MARK: Is that how you met?

DAVID: Well, yes, actually, it was. Wasn't it?

CATHERINE: Yeah, it was at a dance.

DAVID: We met at a dance. And then in them days, that's about all there was to do. We had -- we went to a dance every Saturday night.

MARK: Where at? [00:48:00]

DAVID: Oh --

CATHERINE: In various places. We had one in Clarendon.

DAVID: Clarendon's where we met. We had a hall within a hundred yards of the house, there: Skull Creek Hall. We had the Round-House up on the prairie. We had Buckhorn down on the Beaver Creek. No, not Beaver Creek, Coal Creek. We'd come in here, we'd go to -- just, wherever there was a good dance, that's where we went.

CATHERINE: That was about the only entertainment, so they did have a lot of dances.

MARK: Were you a good dancer, Catherine?

CATHERINE: Yes, I was.

DAVID: Was she a good dancer? She's still good -- she'd still be a good dancer, if she danced.

CATHERINE: My dad and my uncle taught all of us to dance, and they were both good dancers. My dad and two of my uncles taught us. They made a point of teaching all of their daughters and nieces and stuff to dance. [00:49:00]

DAVID: Well, everybody did, though. Most everybody did.

CATHERINE: Oh yeah, everybody.

DAVID: You know, out there at the Skull Creek Hall -- God -- we danced with them young girls -- neighbors -- just take one of them off the bench and away we'd go. Here about -- I don't know how many years ago -- Catherine and I went to a dance down in Newcastle, down at the --

CATHERINE: Senior Center.

DAVID: -- Senior Center, and there was a gal there that I knew. They lived right up above us for years. A gal

there -- I went and asked her to dance. She jumped right up. She said, "You bet I'll dance with you, David." She said, "You know, you and Lyle Hamilton taught me to dance."

CATHERINE: (laughs)

DAVID: Lyle was another neighbor there.

MARK: You never told me why they call it Skull Creek. Is there a story behind it?

DAVID: You ask me, I can't tell you. I asked my father [00:50:00] -- and he came there in '83 -- and he said, "I can't tell you." I don't know why they called it Skull Creek. Now the story is -- and I've heard it -- but Dad said, "I never -- I was there and I never seen all these skulls." See, somebody seen some skulls someplace. Bu--

MARK: Maybe buffalo skulls.

DAVID: --Buffalo skulls. But my dad said, "I never seen it." He said, "I been all over there and I never seen that." So he said, "I don't know." I tried to pin him down on why it was Skull Creek, but that's what it was. Skull Creek. Still Skull Creek.

MARK: Where did you guys get married?

DAVID: Sheridan.

MARK: Why Sheridan?

DAVID: Well, there's a story that goes with that, too. Had to have a blood test. A blood test from here to Sheridan and back took three days. But we could go to Sheridan

and get a blood test this morning and get married that afternoon.

CATHERINE: The thing was, if you got it here they sent [00:51:00] it to Cheyenne. They didn't send it to Sheridan.

DAVID: I don't know where they sent it.

CATHERINE: Yeah, it went to Cheyenne, and it took two or three days (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

DAVID: But up there you could get your blood test, and get your blood test, and get married that evening. That's why we went there. Because I didn't have a lot of time, after I took 10 ten days from Mitchel Field here by trail -- by rail...

MARK: Where did you get married?

DAVID: In the parsonage.

CATHERINE: -- of the Presbyterian Church. Well, not in his parsonage but it was a Presbyterian minister. His daughter had taught school when -- I had gone to school with her.

DAVID: She had gone to school with this fellow's daughter.

CATHERINE: That's home come we...

DAVID: That's how we come and got him for a...

MARK: Who stood up for you? Who was the best man?

DAVID: Well, I took -- we took Catherine and her brother, Ernest, and I got my sister Marguerite from over in

Powell. [00:52:00] When I got there, they thought maybe Ernest was too young.

CATHERINE: He was sixteen.

DAVID: See? So my sister was well-acquainted with a guy there that run a typewriter shop, and she just called him up, and he come up and stood with us. But her dad and mother, and my dad and mother were there.

MARK: So on a furlough you didn't have much of a honeymoon.

DAVID: No. No.

CATHERINE: No.

MARK: Probably one night in a hotel on the way back.

DAVID: We didn't even (inaudible) in a hotel.

CATHERINE: No, we took his sister back to Cody and --

DAVID: Stayed all night with a lady there --

CATHERINE: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) and then we came home.

DAVID: -- and then I come home and we stayed at the ranch.

CATHERINE: We were darned lucky we were alive, or we'd have --  
- (laughs) it's a wonder we didn't kill ourselves the first night.

DAVID: Yeah. (laughter) Well, I was taking my sister back to Cody. We got on top of the Bighorns [00:53:00] and I was sailing along alone at that time -- you know, 55 was the speed limit -- but I was making it. Come over this little raise near at about 75, hit an elk right there in the middle of the road. Well, I had Catherine down under

the cowl here and my sister down under the back seat, and I don't -- tell you the truth, I don't know how in hell we got through. We never touched a hair. The good Lord was with us.

MARK: Mm-hmm. This was on top of the Bighorns?

DAVID: Going down towards [Shell?]. You hit the top going down towards Shell.

MARK: Yeah. That's a windy road.

DAVID: And like this -- and we went over them little humps, and there they was.

MARK: Man. That could have been the end of it, right there.

[00:54:00]

DAVID: Could have.

MARK: So when you got back home, you went back to the ranch for just a matter of days, right? Because you had to take off?

DAVID: Oh, yeah -- when I was on furlough, yeah.

MARK: OK. So then what? What did you do? Were you shipped off?

DAVID: Got on the train and went back to New York.

MARK: Which one? The Burlington train -- the Chicago-Burlington? And Quincy.

DAVID: Burlington to -- yeah, I was going to Burlington...

CATHERINE: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) Did you go to Chicago?

DAVID: Where did I go?

CATHERINE: I don't know. Did you go to Omaha?

DAVID: Well, I suppose. Got -- can't remember -- got on Union Pacific, though, from there to wherever I went. I don't remember.

MARK: Now you've got to tell me: did you two write each other every day?

CATHERINE: Oh, yeah. Just about.

MARK: Do you still have the letters?

CATHERINE: I've got the ones he wrote me. He got rid of his. Overseas, of course, he didn't have much of a place to keep them.

DAVID: Oh, hell -- how would you keep them in an army?

MARK: Yeah, but she's your [00:55:00] new wife, now.

DAVID: I know it. And she kept track of me, see?

CATHERINE: I've got a whole little cedar chest full of...

DAVID: What, the V-- V-let--

CATHERINE: No, they had these... What did they call them?

DAVID: What did they call them?

MARK: V-mail.

CATHERINE: Yeah, yeah.

DAVID: Yeah. And of course you couldn't say anything because nobody -- you couldn't say a word what you was doing, or anything like that.

MARK: It was censored.

DAVID: Censored. Everything went thought the whole...

MARK: Did you get a letter from him every day, then?



CATHERINE: Well, not every day, but pretty often.

DAVID: Pretty -- pretty much.

CATHERINE: I'd get kind of worried if I didn't hear from him for a week, because, you know... But then, sometimes it would happen. I suppose the mail just didn't go through...

DAVID: Or, maybe I was moving and the mail hadn't caught up, see?

CATHERINE: Well (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)... You didn't write every day and I didn't write every day.

DAVID: Pretty close. [00:56:00]

CATHERINE: Well, my problem was, I was way out in the country teaching school. If I'd have written five letters, they'd have probably all gotten mailed the same day.  
(laughter)

DAVID: Yeah, that's the truth. That's the truth.

MARK: OK, so you went to New York, and then what did you do? You boarded a famous ship, didn't you?

DAVID: Yeah. I rode the Queen Mary.

MARK: What a privilege. Or was it? (laughter)

DAVID: It was a troop ship. Eleven thousand men and seven thousand mules.

MARK: Where'd they put all the mules?

DAVID: Down... below -- I don't know.

MARK: Seven thousand mules?

DAVID: That's what they told us. When we boarded -- I boarded the ship at about 9:00 or 9:30, and down there they was leading mules in, one right after the other. And we waited for the rest of the mules to get loaded before we pulled out [00:57:00] the next morning. And they took -- there's a thing or two I always remembered, but... Of course, you couldn't land at South Hampton. Hell, that was where the Mary stopped. Oh, no, that channel was so full of U-boats that you couldn't land there.

MARK: It's a wonder you got across the Atlantic.

DAVID: Well, now, maybe that's true. Some of them didn't. But I did. Anyway, we sailed up between Ireland and Scotland. And they took us off with tugboats from the Queen Mary into Greenwich, Scotland. That's where we got off. And I always wondered where they -- the heck they did with them mules. They was to go to the mountain [00:58:00] troops in Italy.

CATHERINE: You wonder how they got there. (laughs)

DAVID: I always wondered how in hell they got them mules to Italy. Because I know they took us off with tugboats.

MARK: Well, I don't know. My boss probably could have told you -- Ned Frost was my boss. He was from Cody, and he was in the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain. He was in an artillery -- I don't know if it was a brigade, or what you call it -- but he was with the West Coast Artillery boys, and he

wanted to fight. He wanted to go overseas, and so they finally got him into the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division. And because he was an outfitter, he knew how to handle animals. So he got his wish, and he was in Italy, fighting the Italians and the Germans.

DAVID: Well, I sure always wondered how they got them mules unloaded because, you know, seven thousand mules takes up quite a lot of area. [00:59:00]

MARK: Must have been like Noah's Ark.

DAVID: Well, they had them on there...

MARK: Could you smell them?

DAVID: No, they were down below us, way down.

CATHERINE: Must have had a good job cleaning up after the war was over. (laughter)

MARK: That's what I was thinking.

CATHERINE: I wonder who had to clean down there.

MARK: I don't know.

DAVID: I bet they cleaned that damned thing every day. I mean, hell, they cleaned up on -- behind them mules just like, you know, like you would a cow barn.

MARK: I suppose.

DAVID: And of course, hell, they could throw it out at that time; the EPA didn't care. You could throw her out.  
(laughter)

MARK: So then, tell me about the rest of your service duty, now, from -- you're over in Scotland...

DAVID: Well, we're in Scotland. They took us down into --  
Scorton, I think the name of that place. You're taxing  
my memories [01:00:00] quite a little, because there's a  
lot of things I can't remember.

CATHERINE: [Ravenwood?] was one name; I can remember that.

DAVID: Huh?

CATHERINE: Ravenwood was one name.

DAVID: [Raydon?] -- that's where we went.

CATHERINE: OK.

DAVID: Down between Ipswich and Colchester. We had the first  
base in from occupied France. We picked up a lot of the  
cripples. And that's where we picked up our planes, was  
right there. When we got there the base wasn't done.  
The engineers was still working on the base. Our  
druggist in Newcastle was the commander of the engineers.  
Catherine's cousin was sergeant in charge of the grading  
crews and the construction. And then another kid there  
from Osage -- and every time I went to see him, he was  
peeling potatoes. [01:01:00] (laughter) He said, "You'd  
think I own this thing." And I can imagine what he done  
to get to peel potatoes, but anyway... So they was just  
-- then they sent me to London on 29 trucks and a jeep  
driver, going to Wimbledon Stadium to get all the  
equipment for the base. Well, went up there and I asked  
the MP where in the hell Wimbledon Stadium was, and he  
said, "Well, boy, you go up there to the roundabout," he

said, "and you go round and you go over here..." OK.  
Well, we went around and around Wimbledon Stadium several times. Finally I run into an American MP. "Oh," he said, "you just go right up --" I said, "You go and I'll follow you. [01:02:00] (laughter) By God, you take me there." Well, and then we got loaded, and we went back in the night. They had little damn -- what do you call them -- on the backside they were metal, a knot here with just a little jewel. And we had those -- oh, what do they call them? -- lights, anyway, on the trucks.

MARK: Oh, not... spotlights?

DAVID: No, no. No, no.

MARK: Running lights?

CATHERINE: It'll come pretty soon. Takes a while.

MARK: Yeah, same here.

DAVID: Anyway, they shined on these damned little jewels.

But they couldn't see it from the air, and they couldn't see your lights. They were shielded so [01:03:00] it -- and that's why we went back.

MARK: Now did you say you supplied -- after the Normandy invasion you supplied the troops? Or was this before the Normandy invasion?

DAVID: No, no, this was way after the Normandy invasion. No, way before the Normandy invasion --

CATHERINE: Yeah.

DAVID: -- this was -- when I first got there. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) No, I was there a year and a half before the Normandy invasion.

CATHERINE: He went over there in '43.

DAVID: Yeah.

MARK: Were you ever in the London Blitz?

DAVID: Well, I don't know what you call the London Blitz.

Every night -- every night down there where we was, the Germans were over there going into London. And everything that they didn't get dropped in London, [01:04:00] they dropped on us on the way back. But we never had any problem, really. We found several duds stuck in the ground back over where our billet area was. I don't remember a bomb ever went off.

MARK: Were you flying at the time or were you working as an engineer?

DAVID: No, I was an engineer, and we hadn't got our planes yet at that time.

MARK: Your B-24s?

DAVID: Sixes.

MARK: B-26s. What was the basic difference between a B-24 and a B-26?

DAVID: B-24 had four engines. Was a big, heavy bomber. B-26 had two engines, and it was fast. It was a good -- we cruised 240, and that was pretty unheard-of in them days.

MARK: Would that outrun a fighter plane?

DAVID: Well, it would if they wanted -- they couldn't furnish us fighter cover [01:05:00] because they couldn't crisscross and keep up with us. When we got into the target area -- just before we got to the target area, the B-38s was the fastest ones they had. They'd come in and cover us over the target. But they couldn't keep up with us and furnish cover. So they'd come in and they'd do a -- over the top of us, to keep the Luftwaffe off of us. But they couldn't keep up with us and do that... Now, the B-17s and the -24s, they had cover all the way in because the fighters could keep up with them, see? One crew would take them partway and then another crew would pick them up, and that's the way they'd come in.

MARK: Did you get shot at while you were up there?

DAVID: Oh, I patched a few holes.

MARK: Oh, you didn't fly, actually. [01:06:00]

DAVID: Huh?

MARK: You weren't flying...

DAVID: Oh, yes I was. Forty-six missions.

MARK: You patched up holes while you were flying?

DAVID: No, no. No, no. When we'd get back on the ground, we'd have holes, and we'd patch them up and go again. But I never got hurt, never got -- nothing. We were very lucky.

MARK: Isn't it interesting -- interesting you call it luck. Did you believe in God at that time?

DAVID: Well, sure, I believed in God all my life. But I don't know whether he had anything to do with it or not. But anyway, I come home.

MARK: Did anybody get hit while you were up there?

DAVID: Not in my plane, but a lot of the other planes didn't get back, yeah.

MARK: Now, David, what was -- you flew 46 missions. What was your job [01:07:00] on those missions? You said you could fly, if you wanted to fly...

DAVID: I was an engineer.

MARK: What did the engineer do?

DAVID: He took care of the engines. He took care of the gasoline -- what am I trying to say? -- your consumption. And how to mix the engine -- clean out the engine to draw the least consumption and still keep your flights...

MARK: Didn't you have some hair-raising experiences?

DAVID: Well, yeah, I guess maybe we did, but -- you know, we was all kids. We never paid any attention to it.

MARK: I think you explain one, either in the book or in an article I read... I didn't quite understand what that was.

DAVID: Well, this was after the war. This was after the war was over. [01:08:00] And we went to [Schweinfurt?], Germany, and we picked up a Red Cross girl. See, we were fast, so they used us for a lot of currier work, or if they had to move to move -- if they went on the C-47,



they'd have cruised about 140 miles an hour. They got on the B-46, they cruised 240, see? So we did a lot of courier work. We carried a lot of big-shots, because it was fast. Anyway, this particular time I think you're talking about, we picked up a Red Cross girl and headed for Marseille. They had a rest camp down at Marseille, France. We's flying right over the left-hand side of the -- or the west side of the Alps, and my starboard engine started to slow down. [01:09:00] Well, God, my carburetor air heat wasn't working. So, she started to ice up -- the carburetor. So, I feathered it -- shut it off and feathered it, and the pilot said, "Now you go back and tighten up that chute on the Red Cross girl." Because, you know if a chute wasn't tight it'd just choke the hell out of you. So I went back and tightened up the chute on her, and I sat her and the bomb -- radio operator on the bomb bay. This was all we had aboard, just a radio operator and -- I was flying the right seat. And he said, "Now if the other engine starts to slow down, we'll take them out and then we'll get out." Well, we flew on a ways and the other engine did start to slow down. [01:10:00] So, he said, "Well -- let them go, and then we'll get out." Well, on that B-26, you had hydraulics on the bomb bay doors. But you also had an accumulator that had 1200 pounds of air on it, so in case you got your hydraulics shot out, you could open the bomb

bays. OK. I just reached up right up here and grabbed her and those bomb bays (inaudible) -- and they was gone. Hell, he said, "Now you get out, and I'll follow you." Well, I never liked to walk very good. (laughter) So, I knew that when that old engine stopped drawing on air, the heat from the engine would heat the ice out of the carburetor. That's what my job was, see? [01:11:00] So I reached up and primed it, hit the starter, and she fired right now. I just shoved her in, and when we got to going, the old port engine got slowing down, we just feathered it and went on into Marseille. We dropped some, too -- we dropped some altitude, too. But, yeah, went on into Marseille. Saved an airplane. Somebody said, "Well, I'd have jumped." I said, "Well, you might have. I didn't really care to jump." I wanted to save my old airplane, had been with me for a long time. I didn't want to lose it. So that's that story you're talking about.

MARK: What about the two people that jumped out?

DAVID: Well, they landed right along the side of a highway. And there was a rest -- infantry outfit, going down to Marseille to the rest [01:12:00] camp. Dropped whole truckloads of them. And they seen them, and they picked them up, brought them in. They got in about 2:00, and the pilot and I got in about 10:00. We wasn't just

exactly -- popular. (laughter) But, it was one of them deals.

MARK: This plane you said you felt close to -- do you feel like there's some sort of symbiotic relationship between people and --

DAVID: Absolutely. Sure you do. Just like a brother. That old plane, you know its every -- everything about it. Every quirk, you knew. You better know. That was your life. So we learned it, and that's what we did.

MARK: What was the name of the plane?

DAVID: What was the name [01:13:00] of the plane? You want me to tell you?

MARK: Yeah.

DAVID: Well, I went -- come home and got married. Went back over there. Then they finally -- they said, "Well, you can put names on the planes now." I called mine Cowboy's Sweetheart. Any reason not to? (laughter)

MARK: Well, yeah, you could have put Catherine on there.

DAVID: Well, I could have, but -- but Cowboy's Sweetheart, that's what it was. And I flew it -- thousands of hours. Hundreds of them.

MARK: How many hours do you think you were in the air?

DAVID: I could have told you at one time, but I can't tell you now.

MARK: Forty-six missions is a lot of missions.

DAVID: Yeah, it took us about six hours, see, with that plane  
-- that fast. [01:14:00]

MARK: Six hours to do what?

DAVID: In the air.

MARK: Oh, on each mission. Where were your missions -- what  
was the objective of your missions?

DAVID: Oh, whatever. You see, the B-17s, and the B-24s, and  
the old, big Halifaxes -- they pattern-bombed. They just  
went in, and they just all dropped their bombs. But with  
the -- we were strategical. We went from the 8<sup>th</sup> Air  
Force to the 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force. See, 8<sup>th</sup> is strategical, 9<sup>th</sup>  
was tactical. And we went in, and if they say, "We want  
this bridge taken out," you went in and got it.

[01:15:00] We were -- or, "We want this rail station  
taken out." We went in and got it.

MARK: Did you bomb the ball-bearing factories in  
Schweinfurt?

DAVID: We hit the ball-bearing factory in Schweinfurt.

MARK: Did you know Tom Bell? He's an outdoor writer who  
lives in Lander.

DAVID: No.

MARK: He was on one of those planes.

DAVID: No, I don't think so. The 17s tore the hell out of  
them, I'll tell you that. It was just -- at Schweinfurt.  
Yeah, we were at Schweinfurt for a while.

MARK: You didn't see any -- well, I don't want to insult you here, but you didn't see any death and destruction [01:16:00] because you weren't on the ground. But what was your feeling when you were up there?

DAVID: Well, of course you knew what was happening. You knew if this guy didn't get there, you knew what was happening. But at that time, I guess, you knew it was going to happen, so you really didn't -- you just kind of numbed it out. Just like my neighbor, [Merle?] Tavegie - - he was in the cavalry -- the mechanized cavalry -- he come all the way out through. And his brother got killed in a car accident. Somebody said, "Well, Merle, ain't you going to go look at Shorty?" And he said, "No. I've seen hundreds [01:17:00] of them." You just kind of numbed it out, see? I don't know.

MARK: If you'd have thought about it you probably would have gone crazy.

DAVID: Well, yeah, I'd think, or you probably would have made a mistake. And that mistake would have been all it would have taken. See?

MARK: Now that lady's up for another 20 minutes. We haven't touched your flying career since the war, right?

DAVID: Well, I flew --

CATHERINE: Didn't have any... (laughs)

DAVID: -- I flew for the Civil Air Patrol for a year or two,  
but that's it. I got a brother that's 89 years old and  
he just lost his pilot's license.

MARK: He just lost it?

DAVID: Yeah, his heart...

MARK: Oh...

CATHERINE: Couldn't pass his physical.

DAVID: Couldn't pass his physical. He's 89 years old.

[01:18:00]

MARK: When's the last time you flew?

DAVID: When was the last time I flew?

CATHERINE: After you come home.

DAVID: Oh, yeah. You mean -- what do you mean?

MARK: Actually flew a plane.

DAVID: Anywhere, or flew the plane itself?

MARK: No, flew the plane itself.

DAVID: Oh, God, I know it was with Bob. We went back to  
Minnesota with Bob and I flew his plane.

CATHERINE: I don't know what year that would have been,  
either.

DAVID: But, you know, I had an opportunity here, a month or  
so ago -- fellow said, "I bought a 182 Cessna by the  
Canadian border, but you go back and fly her back for  
me." I said, "No." Ain't a doubt in my world, I could  
have got in that thing and took her off and come down,  
but I'm smart enough to know I'm not as quick or as

[01:19:00] damn sharp as I should be, so I said, "No. No way I'm even going to try it."

MARK: When you got out of the service, did you have a plane?

DAVID: No.

CATHERINE: No. Didn't have money enough for anything like that. (laughs)

DAVID: Yeah, I didn't have money enough to get an airplane.

MARK: What did you do when you came back?

DAVID: Ranched.

MARK: You went right back to the ranch? And did you become a ranch-wife then, Catherine?

CATHERINE: (inaudible)

DAVID: She was a school teacher when I married her.

MARK: Yeah, you weren't exactly a... Well --

CATHERINE: I was at school all the time he was gone.

MARK: You what?

CATHERINE: I taught school while he was in the service.

MARK: But you were raised on a ranch, so it wasn't like it was a foreign occupation.

CATHERINE: Yeah...

DAVID: No, no.

CATHERINE: I taught country school for these little small children three years, and then I taught in Osage and had just first and second grade for two years.

DAVID: But you was --

MARK: How'd you like it?

DAVID: You was principal [01:20:00] down there.

CATHERINE: Yeah. The last year I was the principal. I'll tell you, during the war you didn't have to have much education to be a school teacher because they took anything they could get. (laughs)

MARK: Were you a good teacher?

DAVID: I'll bet she was the best.

CATHERINE: Oh, I don't know. I worked at it, anyhow.

DAVID: All the kids liked her. All the kids liked her.

MARK: Why didn't you decide to go into -- you had all this flying experience -- why didn't you decide to go into flying instead of going back to the ranch?

DAVID: That's a good question. I don't know. I liked to ranch. I was poor all my life, but I liked to... I raised five kids there. Every one of them got a college education. All of them are good, healthy citizens. All [01:21:00] their kids is the same way. And I think it all came from the ranch life.

MARK: Well, you weren't going to make a lot of money on that.

DAVID: No, you didn't get rich. But, you know --

CATHERINE: (laughs) Definitely not. The kids worked for their education, I can tell you that.

DAVID: I had a wife. I got five good kids, and my grandkids -- I don't know, what do we got? Six or seven?

CATHERINE: Seven.



DAVID: And they're all good citizens; there are no drinkers or smokers or dopers in the bunch. And I'm the richest man in the world.

MARK: You truly feel that way.

DAVID: I do. Money don't make you rich. You know that? Money don't make you rich. But things like that does. You're rich, you bet. And I've felt that way, [01:22:00] long way back. We were poor, oh yes, we was poor, but we always had plenty to eat. And I was 4-H leader for 30-some years. I taught hunter safety for 40-some years. I been a Farm Bureau member for -- how many years?

CATHERINE: Well, since you come home from (inaudible). Well, you were a Farm Bureau member before you went.

DAVID: Since '37 -- since 1937, I've been a Farm Bureau member.

MARK: So what would you do differently, if you could live your life again?

DAVID: I don't know. I can't tell you. You know, we worked like hell, and we never had much money, but we were always [01:23:00] happy. And we grew these kids up, all of them good... Two of them -- three of them -- no, two of them is retired now...

MARK: Is there any crossover between flying and living your life? I know that sounds kind of like a stupid question, but I'm trying to draw the connection between your

practical ability -- your common sense -- your engineering ability -- with flying.

DAVID: Well, of course, yeah. You've got to keep... Like I said, you learn that old airplane from one squeak to the next, every one of them. It was just like your brother. I mean, you knew exactly what happened. So yeah,  
[01:24:00] I kind of grew like a brother to it. And I shed a tear or two when I put her up in the boneyard.

MARK: Oh, you did? You actually put that ship up into the boneyard?

DAVID: Oh, yeah. We flew them in, and I'll bet they had -- oh, I'm going to say two hundred acres of airplanes.

MARK: Where? Was that down in Arizona?

DAVID: I don't remember. No, no, in Germany. And we just booked them in, one wing behind the other, all the way -- just stacked them in there. I don't know what they ever did with them. I don't know what they did with them. I suppose some Jew bought them and made a million dollars out of them. I don't know.

MARK: So what does it take to be a good pilot?

DAVID: To be a good pilot? You have to have good judgment.

[01:25:00] You have to have -- what am I trying to say?

CATHERINE: Devil-may-care. (laughs)

DAVID: You can't be color-blind -- I mean, you've got to be -  
- and you've got to have good depth-perception. And then, beside that, you've got to have a level head. If

you ain't got a level head, you ain't got no business being up there.

MARK: What do mean by a level head?

DAVID: Well, you can't let anything really bother you. If something happens, you straighten it out. And if you couldn't, you probably crashed her.

MARK: You kept a level head when you feathered that engine.

DAVID: Right. See, that was my business. That's what I was there for. And that's what I [01:26:00] mean, you got a level head, and the pilot's the same way.

MARK: Would you say that that was -- that business that you were describing -- or that event -- was that the worst thing that ever happened to you in an airplane?

DAVID: No. No. You see, I went up -- they sent some of us -- I can't remember how many now -- first-string engineers up to Scorton, Northern England. They sent Black Widows over there with engineers and they were having them work on 2800 engine. Why, I don't have any idea. And they had the same engine in that the B-26 had, see, so they went up there and trained them boys. And we come in one night, after we'd strafed -- we used to go on missions [01:27:00] with them -- and we got a tree with the wing at night. The only B-61 that I know of, that ever crashed, that every man walked out of.

MARK: How did you do it?

DAVID: Pilot. Had a good pilot.

MARK: But you were spinning on the ground as you were landing.

DAVID: Yes, yes.

MARK: So tell me what the best feeling was in your flying career.

DAVID: Oh, the best feeling you had is when she pulled off of the ground and you folded your wheels up and you was still flying. That was the best feeling there was.

CATHERINE: (laughs)

MARK: Why?

DAVID: Why? If you wasn't flying, you was [01:28:00] in the ground. (laughter)

MARK: OK. So the wheels are up, and you're pretty much -- you're airborne.

DAVID: Yep. That's the best feeling, when you get airborne. Now at Buke? We flew with bomb loads over 2800 feet of pierced plank.

MARK: At what?

DAVID: Twenty-eight hundred feet of pierced plank.

MARK: Pierced plank?

DAVID: Pierced plank was what they used for a runway if they had to lay one in a hurry. And it was steel and it had holes in it, about like that, punched in. And underneath they had -- oh, I'm going to say it was that thick, but I don't know how thick it was -- of tarpaper. So it -- it was water -- so it sat solid. When we went off the end

of that runway, within a hundred yards -- 300 feet -- of the end of that runway, we pulled [01:29:00] the wheels up. You better be flying. We pulled the wheels up. And out there -- I can still see it -- out there about a quarter of a mile, or maybe a little further, I don't know -- was a hedge. About -- I'd guess 10 feet tall. And from that hedge, the ground sloped off down. You made that hedge, then you dropped her down and picked up single-engine speed in a hurry, in case you had to kill an engine or something. But that's the best feeling you ever had, when that thing comes loose from the ground and she was still flying.

MARK: Who was the best pilot you ever saw?

DAVID: I don't know. I'm going to tell you, I had --

[01:30:00] he was a terrific pilot. He really was. And he scared me to death -- the first time we ever flew together, he scared me to death, and I guess I scared him. (laughter) He was a little fellow, not too big, and he couldn't pull that B-26 off with one hand. Well, when you shove the throttle head, you never take your hands off from the throttle till she's airborne. Never. But Bob couldn't pull her off with one hand. So he'd set the brakes on the throttles, and then he'd shove them up, and then he'd take his hand off. When he took his hands off, I grabbed it.

MARK: You grabbed the throttle?

DAVID: Held them. Of course, we got off, and we got off, and we got back on the ground, he said, "You scared me when you grabbed them throttles." I said, "You scared me when you took your hands off, too." (laughter) And we understood each other, [01:31:00] see? And that's the way we flew after that. He shoved her up, and I'd hold her over until he was ready to take her over. And we went hours and hours and hours in the air, and we was good friends ever since, wasn't we? We went back to see him back in Connecticut. He stayed in and flew 26s back in Korea. He stayed in the Air Force.

MARK: I didn't know they flew those in Korea.

DAVID: Oh, they didn't have the Marauder in there. They had a -- what they called a -- I think Republic built it. They called it a -- I don't know what they did call it. But it was kind of slab-sided. And it was a 26 -- I think they called it the AT-26 or something like that. I don't remember what they called it. Republic built it. Martin built the old Marauder. [01:32:00]

MARK: Did you have to pull those engines apart, piece by piece, to understand them?

DAVID: I could, yeah. Oh, yeah, before I got my engineers -- yeah. We went through them.

MARK: You did your own maintenance work?

DAVID: Just light maintenance. No, we had an outfit that would come on the base -- they called in an R&R outfit --

and they'd move in there with three or four semis. And they had their lays and they had everything on them. And they did all the overhauling and heavy maintenance and all that.

MARK: And I imagine that those planes had to be looked at after just so many hours, right?

DAVID: Well, depended. Depended. I [01:33:00] mean, they were kind of like automobiles. Some of them engines stayed with you -- you could tell when it was starting to getting a little slack, well then you went in. And I had the fastest engine change crew in the European Theater.

MARK: Really? Did they have contests?

DAVID: No, but you kept track of your time. We could change an engine and have her ready for slow time in four hours.

MARK: Slow time. What's --

DAVID: Yeah. When you change an engine, then you took a pilot -- he probably wasn't a regular -- what am I trying to say? -- one that went out on missions. But he'd take her out and he'd give her about four [01:34:00] hours of slow time. Not -- don't push it, you know -- come back in. We could do her in four hours. But we moved up the base in Germany, and we had some German engineers -- mechanics -- there. And they had on the base these planes all mocked up -- engines, propellers, everything on them. And we asked one of them how long it took him to change an engine. He said, "Twenty minutes."

MARK: (laughs) These were Germans?

DAVID: Yeah.

MARK: Are they talking about their planes, or your planes?

DAVID: Their planes.

MARK: Twenty minutes?

DAVID: Yeah. They had three bolts, fastening them to the frame. They had an oil line and a fuel line and -- what did he tell me? Oh, the cannon plug that run the -- [01:35:00] all the other parts of it. That's all they had to do. They didn't even have to take the cowls off. The cowls was all on there. See, they was a little smarter than we was. We had to take the ring cowl off and --

MARK: But you guys were better... Oh, I'm sorry, go ahead. You were going to finish...

DAVID: Well, we just had to do that. We had to take the ring cowl off and go in there and fasten all your stuff up, see? Then after we got it on then we had to put the propeller on.

MARK: You wonder why the Germans didn't win the war, with that kind of know-how.

DAVID: (laughs)

CATHERINE: The Americans had ingenuity. They really did, I think. And they were daredevils. A lot more so than a lot of the other -- all those guys were (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)...



MARK: I think that's a good point. I've read that, where --

CATHERINE: Yeah, I think that --

DAVID: Well, we was all kids. We didn't give a damn for anything.

CATHERINE: And they tried anything.

DAVID: Yeah. I remember -- one thing I remember, and this wasn't [01:36:00] my outfit, but they had a bunch of liaison pilots -- you know liaison pilot? Well, they used L-5s and L-4s -- Piper Cubs -- and L-5 was a little bigger Piper Cub. And they carried messages, and they did this and the other thing, and they would just... And so, they didn't have anything to do one day -- this was over in Africa, now -- they didn't have anything to do one day, so a couple of these old kids got them a couple of bazookas fastened to the wings. (laughter) Took package string to the triggers, and they went out looking for a tank. (laughter) Well, they come over the hill and here was this tank, so what did they do? Boom! And he was gone. (laughter) Well, hell, the Germans wasn't looking [01:37:00] for anything like that. And that's the reason we won the war. They sent a bunch of them L-5s back over to [Werton Wood?] and mounted bazookas on the wings. Damn right.

MARK: (laughs) Well, there is a good -- I think, a good reason for that. If you're raised in an authoritarian...

CATHERINE: You don't know how to think for yourself.

MARK: Yeah. You're told what to do, and then you don't learn for yourself.

DAVID: I think you're right, yeah.

MARK: And that's exactly what your wife was saying. I think it's a cultural thing. You know, hell, out in the west, in Wyoming, you got -- on the ranch -- you got to make do, right?

DAVID: You didn't know there was anything you couldn't do. You didn't know there was anything you couldn't do. Hell, you tried her. I could tell you a story -- and this hasn't got nothing to do with the Air Force or anything else. [01:38:00] A couple of years ago, I was working on a little engine out here, and I went to start it. And I was starting with an electric drill, see? Wrapping it with an electric drill. Reached down to choke it, and it backfired and shot a string of gas right up my arm. Oh, God, what a burn that was. Anyway, while I was recuperating, well, my sister-in-law had a hundred birthday, and the girls was all here -- my daughters. Well then, her family had a --

CATHERINE: Family reunion.

DAVID: -- family reunion then in about a week or 10 days, so the girls all stayed. So I was sitting there in that chair, and they come. Well, I had painted this deck out here, and I didn't like it -- Catherine did. And it looked like hell -- the paint come off and... [01:39:00]

Here come the girls. "Dad, we're going to redo your porch step." "OK." Pretty quick, here they come in.

"Dad, we think it'd be easier to rebuild it than it would be to take that finish off and try to redo it." "OK." I never said anything. Catherine couldn't figure me out, because I'm usually in the middle of everything, see?

CATHERINE: (laughs) (inaudible)

DAVID: And so they was takin' me to Gillette every day to therapy -- so the two girls loaded me in the pickup. Up the road we went. They said, "Now, Dad, you got to promise us one thing. You don't tell Mother what this is going to cost till it's all done." (laughter)

[01:40:00] So, I didn't. But them girls went into that -- they none of them ever had any experience, other than just around... And, by God, you look at that step --

MARK: Yeah, it looks good.

DAVID: It's perfect.

MARK: It looks good. Well, is that genetic?

DAVID: I suppose some.

CATHERINE: Oh, they'll tackle anything. All four of them will. And our son, too. I mean, they'll tackle -- they'll try anything.

MARK: Well then, that's maybe a little culturally bred into them? You think?

DAVID: Well, maybe. Maybe.

MARK: Well, your dad --

DAVID: Yeah, of course Dad was --

CATHERINE: And they were brought up to work. They all know how to work.

DAVID: Oh, you bet. They all knew how to work. Every one of them -- boy, didn't make any difference what you had to do. They'd do her.

CATHERINE: Well, I wouldn't say that. One daughter wouldn't milk the cows. (laughter)

DAVID: No, no, she wouldn't milk.

MARK: She wouldn't milk the cows?

CATHERINE: (laughs) Then she got married and [01:41:00] went out -- I don't know -- bought a bunch of goats, and she would --

DAVID: Milk the goats. God, I couldn't understand that. (laughter) But that's...

MARK: Well, listen, it's getting late here. I got one minute and they're going to shut the door. So --

DAVID: What door?

MARK: To the motel.

DAVID: Oh, hell, they'll come and open it again, won't they?

MARK: Yeah, they will.

CATHERINE: Well, if they shut you out, come back up and we'll give you a bed. (laughs)

MARK: Oh, thanks. No, no, that's okay. Well, I would love to come back and talk to you guys again sometime. Is there anything we haven't covered?

DAVID: I don't know. You ask the questions, I don't...

MARK: Well, have you ever talked this much before in an interview?

DAVID: Well, yeah, I think -- what's-her-name interviewed me...

MARK: Womack? Jennifer Womack?

DAVID: Yeah, Jennifer's a good gal.

CATHERINE: Was she the one that --

DAVID: Do you know her?

MARK: No, I talked to her over the phone, [01:42:00] though. She seems --

CATHERINE: Somebody else interviewed you for the one for the...

DAVID: Yeah, the gal from Laramie interviewed me -- can't think what her name was.

MARK: Yeah. Well, Jennifer I talked to, and she tried to help me every way she could. I think she's working on a ranch herself, isn't she?

DAVID: Yeah, they got a r-- I don't think they got a ranch, but they work on a ranch.

MARK: Do you know anybody else, David, that I should talk to? Any women that were in the women's Air Force, or the WACs, or the... There isn't any women pilots around here, is there?

DAVID: I don't -- not that I know of -- no, no. Robert was the pilot, wasn't he?

CATHERINE: Yeah, but he don't live here anymore. I had a cousin that flew in the war. [Goss?] -- his name was Goss -- Robert Goss.

MARK: G-O-S-S?

CATHERINE: I don't remember what he flew, but he flew -- he flew those big --

DAVID: He flew the 24s. [01:43:00] And who was --

CATHERINE: -- lost a brother (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

DAVID: -- somebody else flew the 24s --

MARK: You what?

CATHERINE: I lost a brother-in-law.

MARK: In P-38?

CATHERINE: P-38.

DAVID: Yeah. Was his wife that introduced me to her.

MARK: Oh, OK.

DAVID: Yeah, he was up there. We all went and signed up at the same time. He and I and a cousin -- Jack [Chapman?].

CATHERINE: Jack washed out. Jack didn't get very far. He had too much (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) allergies -- and everything like that.

DAVID: Yeah, Jack washed out because he didn't have any depth perception. There's five or six went over there and signed up at the same time.

MARK: When you look back -- you're both about 93, right?

DAVID: Yeah.

CATHERINE: What?

MARK: He's 93, and you're...

CATHERINE: I will be, next month.

MARK: OK. You'll be 93 next month. I'm curious about this, because it seems like [01:44:00] I've packed a lot into my life. Do you feel like you've packed a lot into your life, or it's gone too quick?

DAVID: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) too quick, what do you mean?

CATHERINE: Well, we've sure done a lot of things. We've packed a lot into our life, yeah.

MARK: Oh, yes, we have.

CATHERINE: After we got our kids raised, then we did quite a lot of traveling. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

DAVID: Yeah, we did a lot of traveling. That's after I --

CATHERINE: Not too much in the east. We flew back to east -- pilots -- but we haven't driven much in the east, we just --

DAVID: No, no. Went all over the west. And we're not done yet.

MARK: Really? You're going to keep travelling? What's your --

CATHERINE: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) have a little problem. Our kids think we're getting kind of old...

DAVID: Our kids think we're too damned old.

CATHERINE: (laughs) Well, they think they have to go with us.

DAVID: They're too old.

MARK: Well, you know, it's always nice to have a little help.

DAVID: Yeah, but sometimes you want [01:45:00] to be on your own, too. (laughter)

MARK: I think you guys -- you two -- looking at you, I think you're perfectly capable of going wherever you want to go.

CATHERINE: Well, we both still have our driver's licenses.

DAVID: We've made two trips to Alaska, up the Al-Can highway.

MARK: Oh, have you? Uh-huh.

DAVID: And I'd go again if I could find somebody to go with me. I mean, some younger person that -- you know.

MARK: Through Banff? Through Banff National Park, up that way?

CATHERINE: Well, no, we didn't go through Banff. We come back --

DAVID: Well... We come back through Banff.

CATHERINE: When we went up with my brother.

DAVID: We come through Banff, and we hit the damndest blizzard you ever -- this was in the middle of July (laughter) and you couldn't see as far from here to the street. A blizzard! Forty or 50 miles, or 60 or 70 miles of it!



CATHERINE: (laughs) We didn't see much of it, I'll tell you.

DAVID: No, we didn't see much of Banff. (laughter) And this  
in the middle of July.

MARK: Oh, I can't believe it.

DAVID: Yeah, sure was. But we [01:46:00] had a great time.  
Her brother --

CATHERINE: We drove up there and back twice. (overlapping  
dialogue; inaudible) cousin and his wife...

DAVID: My cousin and his wife -- we went up 193 with a cousin  
and his wife. And then, about 99, why, Catherine's  
brother said, "You know, I'd sure like to go to Alaska."  
And I said, "Just get your clothes packed." (laughter)  
He had a pickup and a trailer, so I said, "Just pack your  
clothes. By God, we'll go." And we did -- we took off.  
And we just had -- he's passed away, but we just had  
dinner with his widow -- yeah, today -- we just had  
dinner with her.

MARK: So you guys just could take off on a lark, just like  
that?

CATHERINE: Well, you have to do a little planning when you go  
off and leave your house. You have to have somebody take  
care of it while you're gone. (laughter)

DAVID: Well, we had somebody mow the [01:47:00] lawn and  
stuff, but the water's automatic. But, yeah -- well, we  
got to the point where we were kind of independent, you  
know?

MARK: When did you move off the ranch, did you say?

Ninety...

DAVID: Five.

CATHERINE: It was '95. We (overlapping dialogue;  
inaudible)...

MARK: You've been here almost 20 years.

DAVID: Yeah.

MARK: Do you like Upton?

DAVID: It's a place to live, I guess.

CATHERINE: Well, we'd kind have liked to go on to Sheridan,  
and didn't think we had enough money. (laughs)

DAVID: There's places I'd sooner be than -- I think outside  
of --

CATHERINE: But he didn't want to go to Newcastle, and if you  
aren't going to go a long ways, you'd better stay where  
you have some friends.

DAVID: I haven't -- I don't know what to tell you. But I'd  
like to be someplace where if I wanted to go see a play,  
I could go. Now, [01:48:00] I haven't got a bit of  
interest in all these modern musicians. I don't have any  
interest in them. Come in and they're so loud and  
(inaudible) that you can't hear them anyway.

MARK: Well, I think your wife has a good point. You know,  
[Ardith?] and I have thought about moving from Cheyenne,  
but that's your life. You know people, and do you want  
to start all over? Well, at our age -- at 71 -- I don't

think so. At your age -- at 93 -- do you want to start all over? Making new friends, and...

DAVID: Well, we'll have to, one of these years because we're going to be in the manor. (laughter)

MARK: Well, that'll be a little different! You'll know all of those people.

DAVID: I know a lot of them because I go down there and play for them twice a month.

MARK: You play for them? Play what?

DAVID: Guitar.

MARK: You play the guitar?

DAVID: Got [01:49:00] a cousin of Catherine's that plays the saxophone.

CATHERINE: And the banjo.

DAVID: And the banjo. And a lady out here -- her dad and I grew up together, just like brothers. She plays the piano for us. Then we got a fellow that plays the harmonica and the banjo. And we go down there and play twice a month.

MARK: What kind of music do you play?

DAVID: Oh, 40's and 50's... stuff that they understand.

CATHERINE: Just what those people enjoy.

DAVID: Yeah, you know, stuff that they grew up with. The other -- gal, 102 years old -- the other day, I said, "Eva, got to have a hug." I always tell her that. "Eva, got to have a hug." OK. She said, "David, that's the

kind of music we used to dance to." I said, "Yeah, that's right, Eva. It is." Sure.

MARK: She's still pretty sharp?

CATHERINE: She's all right.

DAVID: Well, she's (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) a little.

CATHERINE: Her mind's okay, but she doesn't see very much.

DAVID: Her eyes is bad.

CATHERINE: Yeah, her eyes are bad. Her hearing's very good.

DAVID: I [01:50:00] think Eva is slowing down a little, don't you think?

CATHERINE: Well, of course, but then who wouldn't, at that age? (laughter)

DAVID: But she's 102 and she comes in every time we play, boy, and sets right there.

MARK: Do you practice the guitar?

DAVID: Huh?

MARK: Do you practice much?

DAVID: Nah. I just hacking on it, anyway; I just sit in the chair.

MARK: Yeah, right. Well, listen, you two, this has been fun.

DAVID: And we sing.

MARK: Yeah?

DAVID: We sing -- God, everything. We just -- we have a lot of fun. We're not good. We have a lot of fun. We make

mistakes. This gal that plays the piano for us, the first time -- we tried to get her to play for us several times. Finally said, "Well, I'll go once." She's never missed one since. [01:51:00] (laughter) But we played though a piece -- just a nice piece, I don't remember what it was -- stopped, and she just laughed and laughed and laughed. She said, "You know, this is the first time I ever played with anybody else?"

MARK: Really?

CATHERINE: She taught herself to play. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

DAVID: She taught herself to play.

MARK: What was she playing?

DAVID: She played piano. Oh, and she's good. Of course, I've got a daughter that's just as good as she is and plays just like she does.

CATHERINE: Yeah.

DAVID: But, yeah. She's just good, that's all there is to it.

MARK: How many grandkids do you have? Six or seven, did you say?

CATHERINE: We have seven grandkids and...

MARK: Any great-grandkids?

CATHERINE: We've got great-grandkids. We've got...

DAVID: Three or four?

CATHERINE: We've got five what you'd call blood ones, and then we've got about five or six step ones. (laughs)

MARK: Can you remember all their birthdays?

CATHERINE: Well, I do, all except the... There's three of these are boys [01:52:00] and they're grown and gone, and I don't pay any attention to them. The rest of them I do, yeah. All these little ones...

DAVID: All the littler ones, yeah.

CATHERINE: The oldest great-grandchild's 13, and they all get a birthday card from Grandma.

MARK: So, you're going to travel, maybe, but what is it you have left to do? Where would you like to go?

DAVID: Oh, hell, I don't know. Just travel. Just see things.

CATHERINE: Probably go back and look at some of the same things again. (laughs)

DAVID: You know, when people tell me, "By gosh, I'd fly up to Alaska. I wouldn't try to drive all the way." Well, that's the fun. You seen all the country. You seen everything. You seen the moose, and you seen the bears, and you seen the -- everything that there was there. You seen all the vegetation, all the -- why, I just loved it. And then, when you go to Alaska, they have a -- every mile -- they have a signpost. And you [01:53:00] get a book called *Milepost*. And you go to Alaska with a *Milepost*.

CATHERINE: And one person drives, and the other person sits with the *Milepost* on their lap. (laughter)

MARK: That's right. My wife and I did that. I'm going to go back up this summer.

DAVID: To Alaska?

MARK: Yes, I just bought a *Milepost* magazine. Thirty-four dollars.

CATHERINE: Are they?

DAVID: Oh, yes, I think so.

CATHERINE: I think we paid 29 for mine. (laughs)

DAVID: I think, yeah.

MARK: They've gone up.

CATHERINE: Well, yeah, I think they would.

DAVID: Probably.

MARK: But yeah, I'm going to ride a bike from Anchorage to Whitehorse. You know where Whitehorse is? It's a pretty good-sized town on the Yukon. And I'm going to --

CATHERINE: Well, you've got quite a trip if you're going from Anchorage to...

MARK: Yeah, 700 miles. But I'm going to cheat. I'm going to do it on an electric bicycle. It's going to have an electric assist, and you'd find this interesting, David -

-

CATHERINE: What's your wife do, drive behind you?

MARK: She normally does, but not right behind me. She'll stay in town and shop around at the thrift stores, and

then she'll move ahead [01:54:00] of me and wave to me as she passes me. But this year she's not going to go. She says she's had it; I can go with somebody else. And so my brother-in-law and I are going to go together. He's going to drive the truck, and he's kind of like you. He's got this natural -- this innate mechanical ability. And he's a good guy, and he's going to be a fun partner on this trip. But, because I have oxygen -- I need oxygen -- I'm going to have c--

CATHERINE: (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

MARK: I'll carry oxygen on my waist like you saw me tonight. But in the past, I've had a concentrator -- a battery-powered, lithium-ion, battery-powered concentrator on the back rack, and that's how I travel. But yeah, she depended on that *Milepost*. She'd put that on her lap.

DAVID: Oh, it's great. Oh, I'll tell you, I loved that trip. And that last trip we had, of course, had her brother and his wife, [01:55:00] and we just done everything we wanted to do. I mean, we was up there seven weeks. Oh, God, we had a good trip.

CATHERINE: And there's still things we didn't see.

DAVID: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

MARK: Oh, you can't see it all.

CATHERINE: I'd go again, and there's some several things that I want to, if I went again... We never did get down around Juno. We never got down into all that area.



MARK: Well, that -- there's no highway that connects all those cities.

CATHERINE: Yeah, no, I know (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) if you go down in there --

DAVID: And we didn't go out...

CATHERINE: The thing I didn't do I wished I'd have done was rode the train at Skagway, and if I ever go again, I'm going to ride that train if I don't do anything else.  
(laughter)

MARK: You know what you guys would enjoy is that inland passage ride. That boat ride up through, past Juno and Sitka...

DAVID: Yeah, yeah -- would, but it costs like hell.

MARK: Oh, I -- yeah.

DAVID: Four or five thousand dollars.

MARK: Yeah, and it -- well, I don't know.

CATHERINE: I don't know what it is. [01:56:00] We went up the first time and it didn't cost us five thousand dollars. I mean, we were up there for six weeks. It was four thousand and something (overlapping dialogue; inaudible). I think gas went up while we were...  
(laughter)

DAVID: Oh, yeah. Yeah, it didn't cost us so much. Now, I don't know, with gasoline at \$4 a gallon and -- for diesel...

MARK: More than that up there.

CATHERINE: Yeah, that's what we're saying.

DAVID: When we got to Alaska, the guy in the --

CATHERINE: Border patrol.

DAVID: -- border patrol, he said, "You're going to find cheaper gas and better highways." When we went into Alaska. (laughter)

MARK: Yeah. Right.

DAVID: And that was true the first time. Now, the second time, the highways was good. I think gas was a little higher, but the highways was good, all the way.

MARK: There's so much heating and thawing on that highway, it's going to be roly-poly and then in some places it's going to break down, you know. Well, you [01:57:00] guys ran into that.

DAVID: Yeah.

MARK: OK, well, listen. We've got to get -- it's been two hours here.

DAVID: Oh, what the hell.

MARK: I've enjoyed it. I've enjoyed it a lot. Thank you for inviting me in the house.

CATHERINE: Yes.

DAVID: You're welcome. I hope you got some good out of it. If you didn't, send me a piece of it and I'll see if it -  
- "David," I'll tell you, "don't throw it away."  
(laughter)

MARK: Well, you know, two hours, you're going to have...

I'll be glad to send you anything you want, but I don't know if you're going to want to sit around and listen to us yak for two more hours. (laughter)

DAVID: Oh, all the good stuff, that'd be alright.

MARK: Yeah, OK. I'll put this stuff away.

END OF AUDIO FILE