

Interview With Hobert Fox

Interviewed by Dean Bones

29 April 2002

Originally typed by Cynthia Chinn, but as the original word-processed copy cannot be found, retyped by Dean Bones 2022

db - Okay, let's say your name first.

HF - Hobert Fox

db - And the date.

HF - April 29, 2002

db - And you attended the school at Hemlock.

HF - Yes.

db - All eight years?

HF - Yes.

db - Okay. And we know where the school was. You were in the school that's still there, or was it the prior school?

HF - It's the old school that was setting clear at the back of the lot, probably 50 - 60 feet from the new building. I went there in '27. I had to miss the first year because I when I turned 6 was in November, so I had to start when I was almost 7. The school lot must have gone way back to the east.

db - So I haven't had anyone describe that building yet. What was it like?

HF - Well, it was one room. All 8 grades were in that room. The name of the teacher was Mrs. Curl - she was the teacher at that time. You went in through a kind of a porch. Wood was stacked on it. That was my job to build and keep the fire up most of the time. You walked through there, and then there was a place for your lunch pails and all that. Then you walked through the other door into the big school room. On the back end of it, on the east side, it had a platform built on it for the teacher or anybody that sang or like that. It was like a stage. The blackboard was on the side. The windows on one side and in the back.

db - So as you are looking east, were the windows on the south or ?

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HF - They were on the south . . . no, the west really. It faced east and west the length of it 'cause they had, right on the corner next to the highway there was a small home.

db - Any idea who lived in that home?

HF - I don't have any idea what their name was now. Clear in the back, back where Bear Creek Artichokes have a greenhouse there was a beautiful big home. You could see it from the highway, but it burned.

db - Was there a bell on the old school?

HF - No, just the one the teacher had, the hand bell for calling the class in. And I had to walk to school all those years.

db - Did you walk from the Fox place that's across the creek north of Beaver?

HF - Yeah, my . . . rain, snow, and everything else.

db - Is that about 2 miles or almost 2 miles of walking?

HF - It was a mile and a 3/4. It was a long walk. I started out there when I was almost 7.

db - You walked alone?

HF - Yeah. There was no one to walk with me. It got a little exciting at times . . . animals and stuff like that.

db - Like what animals?

HF - There was cougar, and I ran into one bear. But he left me alone. He went on across the creek. There were deer and elk.

db - Were there ever any other kids that walked that direction?

HF - Not 'til I got up to the cheese factory at Hemlock, Hemlock Cheese Factory. Darrel Hopkins . . . his dad owned it. (*Hemlock? or East Beaver Cheese Factory?*
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db - Did he live in the cheese factory house?

HF - Yeah, him and his sister, Twila. I didn't know any of the rest of them. We used to deliver our milk there.

HF - The new school was built, I don't know, I think I was in the 6th grade or something when they built that 'cause I remember the first Christmas I had to get up on the stand and sing. They had the school partitioned off. Part of it was for the younger ones up to 4th or 5th grade, I think. The back part was for the upper grades.

db - Now that partition, did I understand that it was a wooden folding door?

HF - Yes, it was a folding door.

db - So you had a program and you sang.

HF - Yeah, I tried to. I didn't like that one bit.

db - Okay, so you mentioned Mrs. Curl. And there was somebody else teaching too.

HF - Yes, Edith Creecy, and her sister taught there too some. Gilbert. Erma Gilbert was her sister's name. And I had one more teacher. I think it was Alice Weens. She was an 8th grade teacher.

db - Oh, I haven't heard her name before. Great! In your first building was there running water or anything?

HF - There was water in there, yeah. That was all there was, and they finally built a play-shed on the north side. It was pretty good size. It had a roof over it. It had a dirt floor to start with, and then they finally planked it. But it was not a place to play basketball or anything like that.

db - What about when they built the new school . . . what was the old school used for . . . anything?

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HF - I think it was storage for awhile. They kept the play-shed 'cause otherwise they wouldn't have anything outside. That school was destroyed when I was overseas during the war.

db - Do you mean it was torn down or something else?

HF - Yeah, they tore it down.

db - Did you have any playground equipment at all?

HF - All we had was just baseball. Played baseball, and we had teeters. They built big frames out of cedar timbers for the swings. Then they had parallel bars with it.

db - Was there a bell on the new school?

HF - No, it was on the old school. (?)

db - How far down Sandlake Road did the kids come from to attend Hemlock?

HF - That I don't know 'cause I don't remember any of it until they stated having the bus. I must have been 6th or 7th grade before they had a bus there.

db - Now was it an actual bus, or was it a panel of some type.

HF - It was a panel of some sort. The Tohl kids over on Sandlake Road and Webb, a few of them, rode the bus.

db - One school that we don't have any information on is Sunnyside, District #36. It was about 2 miles down Sandlake Road. There were Tohls who went to that school also.

HF - Verna and Carl were the two I went to school with. They lived there on the long straight stretch at the end of it on the right. They had a dairy farm there.

db - That's where I heard that Sunnyside school was also, at the end of the straight stretch just before the road goes up a hill.

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db - You mentioned that you walked to school. What are some other ways that students got to school?

HF - I imagine their folks brought them because I know that cars pulled up in front of the school. There was a fence out there so the kids wouldn't go out on the road.

db - Were you in school when the Phelps' kids were in school at Hemlock? No, that was probably way before your time there.

HF - I don't know. I left home when I was graduated in '41 because I lost a year in high school.

db - You lost a year in high school?

HF - I had chicken pox, scarlet fever, measles and whooping cough.

db - In one year? I guess you might as well do it all and get it over with.

HF - Got it over with.

db - At what time did the school start each day, and what time did it dismiss.

HF - think it started at 8:00, and I think it was about 4 when it quit.

db - That was a long day.

HF - Oh yeah, we had an hour for lunch.

db - How long did it take you to walk to and from school one way?

HF - It probably took me about 45 minutes.

db - Wow! So from the moment you left home and you walked, what did you do when you got to school? Did you wait for the teacher to ring the bell, or did you go right in?

HF - It depended on the weather especially when we didn't have the play-shed there yet. We went right in the school and went right to our desks.

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db - Was there a first thing that the teacher did every day?

HF - We pledged allegiance to the flag and then, oh, she talked to the kids. It was a kind a get-acquainted deal first thing in the morning. They were really good teachers. After that we'd get down to work.

db - Did you sit in different rows depending on the grade you were in?

HF - Yes. As you graduated each grade to another you moved back a notch.

db - How did the teachers teach the students if they were kids from different grades? Did she call them up to her desk in front or what?

HF - No, she'd give them their paper and things like that so she could teach them to write and things like that. She would work through the whole school.

db - How many students went to the whole school, Hemlock School, when you were there?

HF - I don't know. There must have been at least 15.

db - That few!

HF - 'Cause we had John Blanchard, and Tom came in later. Then _____ and his sister. Then where that old house that burnt down there by the berries patch. There is a mobile home in there now. Adamae Stretch lived there so we'd leave school and drop off them and then drop of _____ and Twila, and then I'd head home.

db - Stretch? What did you say that last name was?

HF - Adamae Stretch. Stretch. She got hit by a car right there in front of her house one time. She just kinda rolled off the fenders. We got her in and off the road, _____ and I did. She didn't have any broken bones. She was sure scared. So were we.

db - About how old was she?

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HF - I imagine we were probably in the 7th grade.

db - Tom Blanchard shared about walking to school and a circus was coming to town and drove by him, and the elephant's trunk came out at him! It was trying to grab his lunch pail or something.

HF - We used to have the circuses in town out across from where the hospital is now back in the field. There were no homes back in there. I used to get a job going in there and help set up tents, driving in pegs and what not. I was about, oh, probably 11 - 12 years old.

db - How would you get in there to the circus?

HF - Dad worked at Coats' Mill for 25 years.

db - Okay, if somebody misbehaved at school what were some of the punishments?

HF - A ruler across the knuckles. They'd not hit you hard, but you'd know that they meant business. They'd set you in the corner and set your face to the corner.

db - If your parents ever found out that you'd been in trouble, what would they do?

HF - Oh Dad would find out what the trouble was, and he would just say, "Well, you know better."

db - Do you remember ever having much homework?

HF - Not in grade school. Usually I did what I had to do there at school.

db - Did either school building ever have a telephone?

HF - No.

db - And then when it was a dark day, was it dark inside, or did you sit by the window?

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HF - No, it wasn't dark. They had big windows. Well, they're all painted now in the new school. On the other school from noon on we got the sunlight. On dark days, I don't remember any lights in there at all.

db - Was there any kind of parents support club, or where parents involved in the school in any way?

HF - Not that I know of. If anything came up they got in touch with the folks.

db - What about programs? You used to have the Christmas program, right.

HF - That's where I got in trouble.

db - And you mentioned singing. What else would happen at these programs? They would have little plays . . . skits?

HF - We'd go through all of that, and then Santa Claus would come.

db - And you'd get candy?

HF - Yes.

db - And what were the games you remember being played at recess?

HF - Mostly tag, and we'd go to the swings, rain or shine. When we went into the new school then we started having baseball games out there. The teeters were set out back of the school. Then we had the play-shed. You could go in during weather or stay outside.

db - What stories do you remember about your schools like anything happening to any student or teacher?

HF - Oh, we had one kid that was hurt on the teeter. One kid jumped off, and it came down and hurt his back for a while. I don't remember who it was, but his folks came and got him. He must have been alright because he was back to school in a couple of days.

I got hit in the back of the head with a baseball bat. I was catching. I got too close to the batter who swung that bat and hit me right in the back of the head.

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There was a big puddle there, and into the puddle I went head first. Mrs. Creecy got mad about that. She took me into the school. I laid there for a while and finally came to, you know.

db - Did you just walk home that day?

HF - Oh yeah,

db - Any other stories that you can think of?

HF - It seems like someone fell of the parallel bars or something like that, but nobody was really hurt.

db - When and where were you born?

HF - I was born in Albany, Oregon, on November 3, 1921.

db - So why did your family move here to this area?

HF - My dad grew up in Mill City. He was born in Ashville, Oregon. That's down out of Yachats some place in there. I've only been there one time, and it's a little tiny berg. My momma, I think she was born in Oregon City. But she lived in Albany, and that's where I was born. Somehow they got together there and moved over here in 1923. I think Dad's mother had the place up here, and something happened. I don't know what that was, but Dad had to quit school and come over her to take care of the ranch. My dad's father was Jim Fox, and I can't remember what his mother's name was.

db - And they had the Fox place north of Beaver across Beaver Creek?

HF - Oh yeah. I've got a picture of the old home before the bridges were there. We had 3 bridges wash out of there due to floods.

db - Floods! That's kind of high there where the bridge is.

HF - Oh yeah, the bridges were high. We had a lot of snow those years.

db - Do you know your ancestry?

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HF - Dad was Scotch, and mother was Irish.

db - Any stories you remember them sharing about your ancestors?

HF - I know that Dad's grandfather, a Baltimore, used to catch salmon. There was no limit then. And he would take what he wanted and can the salmon over a great fire in the pot with a canner and the whole works.

db -What were your chores or responsibilities when you were growing up?

HF - Well, after Dad and Mom divorced I stayed at some people's place in Pleasant Valley. I spent about 4 years with them, the Desmonds. Charlie Desmond. They were the nicest people, and when he remarried in the morning's I'd get up and feed rabbits. I'd go out and pull up grass for them in the rain, snow, frost, whatever. And I had chickens to feed. As I grew I helped Dad. Well, it snowed so much there that Dad used to get mad at me. He'd tunnel out to the barn and make a big deal. He'd go to back me out of the barn. I'd kick snow down on him, and he'd get so mad at me.

db - You're talking a lot of snow.

HF - Oh, we had lots of snow back then. We had that for years even when I worked in the woods. We'd get run out. We'd have snow up to here.

db - So how old were you when your parents did divorce?

HF - I was a little over 3 1/2 years.

db - And then when you went to live with the Desmonds, why was that?

HF - He had no one to take care of me. They, I guess he knew them.

db - Did your mom leave the area?

HF - Yes, she went back to Oregon City where her folks were at. She worked in different stores up there. And then she went to Alaska up there for 25 years. She worked for the Vitafoods Corporation. She had remarried to George Servele. They retired out of Vitafoods when they hit 65. That lasted about 3 years for both of them, and then they were gone.,

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db - It must have been a horribly hard time for you.

HF - It was rough. I had no shoes in them days. I had one pair of shoes to wear to school. The rest of the time I went barefoot. I'd go up in the hills in the morning to get the cows in frost, snow or whatever barefoot. It was rough.

db - You were pretty young.

HF - Then the later years I helped Dad milking there. Then I worked for Howard Warmoth who lived across from us. I milked their cows. I worked for Ed Anderson. He was the county commissioner. And then Ben Becker, I worked for him down on his ranch.

db - Was Warmoth related to the teacher, Mrs. Warmoth? She taught in Beaver.

HF - That was her husband, yeah. Skip Bailey lives now where the Andersons lived.

db - What was the best advice you got from your dad growing up?

HF - Be honest with everybody. Treat them like I wanted to be treated. He was a good man.

db - Please tell me again, what was his name?

HF - Royal Fox.

db - Tell about your occupations throughout your life.

HF - When I left home I started out in a small mill where the Hammonds live at now. It was a little alder mill. That's all there was around the part there. And I worked on the pond and inside the dry kiln shed. Then I went to work for Stone Logging Company. I worked there 'til, well I got run out of the woods. Too much snow. So I went to work for Saven's Bakery in Tillamook. And I worked there until I went in the service.

db - What did you do at Saven's Bakery?

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HF Baked, glazed, sliced bread . . . just about everything.

db - Then you went into the service.

HF - I went in the service June the 10th, 1942. And then June the 10th, 1943, I hit South Africa. Then I went into the Sicily invasion. That was two June the 10ths. I went from there into Salerno and then on to Anzio. Then I got pulled out of there just like I had a stroke. My right side was gone with no feeling, no nothing. They put me in the hospital in Naples and then took me onto a hospital ship off of Anzio.

I had gotten blown up. A 500 lb. bomb went off about from here to the computer. It didn't mark me up or anything. But it just blew me up right off of the ground. I was on the hospital ship until the middle of February.

Then I got out of the hospital there, and they sent me home. They had a point system. I had more points than I needed. So they went me home. I gradually came out of it pretty good.

I was in the hospital twice over there. They figured I had malaria. They stuck me outside the first aid station. They wouldn't even let me in there. They filled me full of atabrine and put a cot out there and a blanket. They said that if you're here in the morning we'll send you on. They didn't think I was going to live 'cause they figured I had malaria. The next morning I got up and staggered back to camp. I went back to my outfit because I was a squad leader there. I had my own squad. It was an anti-tank squad.

db - I think it's really important that we remember those war experiences. My dad never talked about his war stories until just recently. And he's been taping them himself telling war stories now. At some point I might ask if we can talk to you again.

When you came back from the war, what kinds of jobs did you have?

HF I was back home for about 10 days, and the outfit that I had worked for in the woods called me back and wanted to know if I wanted to go to work. So I went to work. Then I got smashed up over the years. I worked for several outfits up there.

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db - Logging?

HF - Yeah, Stone, Wolf Creek, Hines Brothers . . . I got my back broke - busted up in 1946. June the 10th 1946! It was another June the 10th. I was shy of them for a few years. We, Peterman Logging Co., were working up the Trask. Up there was what they called the "Damn Hole" (Dam hole?). You come around a big spot like that round. Of course in those days you had the old air brakes, you know, and there was a guy sitting on a culvert down there. There was no way to get through. I had just loaded him. If it went to the right it would have killed both of us outright right there because of the bank. He hit the car. It bent the fender against the wheel and went into the river. I was thrown out and then dumped. One log hit me in the back, and then a couple rolled over me. So I got out of there. How? I don't know. The truck went into the river. It went between the alders. He laid down on the floorboards, the driver did. It went down right between those trees. Somehow I got out of there. I crawled clear up on the road. That's where they found me.

db - Your back was broken?

HF - It wasn't broke, but it broke all the short ribs off, and, of course, it's been messed up all these years. That's the worst one I had. Then I had body casts on 'til about October. Then the outfit, Hines Brothers, they couldn't raise a tree. You used to put your lines on them and then raise them up - pad them on the bottom. They didn't know how to do that so, I think Hank Waymeyer was my boss, and he told them to get a hold of me. He's raise it. So I got the cat's line out and all the lines on. We raised that tree. And I was there in the body cast. I worked for them or about a week and a half, and then I busted it again.

db - So you've been wounded quite a bit throughout your life.

HF - Yeah, my back's all messed up now.

db - Do you suffer from pain in it now?

HF - Oh yeah. I've pulled a muscle at the base of my spine twice. There was two accidents there on the hog. Had one on one side of the mill went up. They started putting it up. They had a foreman there that was something else. Had us working that day and got fish-tailed from the cuttin' like that. They got the ends. Well, it wound up in there. So I was down there punching them. He turned the

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switch on when I was down there. It came around and hit me on the head like that. I went over. I didn't think . . . I was just about ready to say, "Good bye." And finally it moved enough. I got my head turned around like that, and I finally got it pulled back. I went out of there, and that boss and I had trouble. I run him out of the mill.

And the other one. I got caught in the feed chain. They had chains and gears and everything running right here, and they wouldn't cover them. And the feed chains pulled me in there. I still have knots on my arm when it pulled me in there. I finally yanked my arm out. It pulled off the ends of my fingers. I made it to the other end of the mill before I passed out.

db - What did people do to help you? Did they haul you to Tillamook?

HF - It WAS in Tillamook. I was working down there on First Street at the end. Aberdeen Ply and then Ferdsetter - that was the one I was trying to think of. The one I was trying to work for was Spalding. It was up the Trask. Ferdsetter was the boss there. I always had a job there, the pond or whatever. And then summer would come. Logging would open up again. I'd go back to the same outfit I was working for before.

db - So what jobs did you have when you were logging?

HF - I did everything but run a yarder, loader and choker setter. I started out in the old jerk wire steam whistles 'cause they had the steam yarders then. Big old 12/13 Willamettes is what I started out on. String that jerk wire out there where you could hear the head rigger, and then I went from rigging all through it 'til I run a loading pot. But I never got on the big yarders.

db - Was that dangerous work?

HF - Oh yeah. A lot of guys got hurt up there. Lines break and stuff like that.

I worked for _____ (Christensen? db) Meat Company north of Tillamook. I wanted to get in on the cutting. My uncle worked there, Bob Getchell. And my aunt Rachel Cain worked there. I quit there and moved I moved from here in '50 to Forest Grove, and I got in with the Kummer Meat Company. I worked for them, oh probably 6 - 8 months. And then I'd work one week and be off two.

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So a buddy came up from Eugene and said he had a job for me. I went down to Eugene in April. The job was cat loggin'. He was a nice guy to work for. I guess it was January that I went down. I worked there 'til the first of May. Then I never worked another lick until the 31st of October that year. Everything was dry. They shut all the logging down. I picked hops, beans and everything else. I finally got a job in the mill there, Mt. June Forest Products. I stayed there several years . . . working in the woods and the mill back and forth.

db - Where did you live when you lived in Tillamook County?

HF - I graduated high school on Friday night, and on Monday morning I was gone.

I went to Coats Camp with a buddy. Coats Camp was west of South Prairie. Turn off of 101 to the left just north of South Prairie and then go left back in there.

Then I moved to Tillamook and lived in the apartments over there where the bakery was at. I stayed there 'til I went into the service.

Then I came back. I got out of the service October 31, 1945. And I got married. Then I went to Cheyenne, Wyoming. And then I started having health trouble. I got terrible headaches. I got hit on the side of my head and had my head cracked open over there. I lit in the hospital at Walla Walla, Washington. I stayed there for about 8 months until I got squared around.

Then I came back home. Ten days later I was back in the woods again.

My wife's folks come from Estacada and moved to Garibaldi. They were at Hobsonville for years. And then they moved into Tillamook. He was a saw filer for Coats Lumber Company. We moved out to Kites Trailer park there where the trailer park is on the Trask now. There were about 3 cabins, a trailer and their house. That's all that was there then.

And then we moved to Bay City. We bought a place there. Then we moved out to Forest Grove and rented a place out there. Next we went to Eugene and rented a place down there on Franklin. Then we moved to Springfield. I was still working in the woods and mill, everything. Next I bought a place out in Thurston. We was out there for, I think, 8 years. Then dad got sick up here, so we moved

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back and went to Netarts. Next we moved into Tillamook. From Tillamook we moved to Pleasant Valley and bought a piece of land from Jim (Fox) when he sold the store in Pleasant Valley. And then we moved to . . . that was a watery thing there. All them lines like that from the cheese factory and the store and everything flooded there in the winter time. We bailed out of there.

db - Where was the cheese factory?

HF - It was just across from where the store used to be on the corner as you go around the corner on your left. There's a road that goes there. That's where I lived right at the end of the road. Right there, Desmonds. The cheese factory was right on the side of it there. So we moved there, and we bought a trailer at the Kennedy Trailer Park, and we ended up out here.

db - How long have you been here?

HF - Almost 22 years - 22 years the 1st of October.

db - 22 years! That many! I just wondered all this time why I didn't know you very much from my childhood. But I can see now that you've lived just about everywhere.

HF - Yeah, just about everywhere! You've got to follow the work when you're raising a family. Work comes first. I mean, the family comes first, but you've got to have money coming in to take care of them.

db - Are there any community or religious activities that you would want to tell about?

HF - No, that's one thing. I was banned from going to church. That wasn't Dad's idea, and then after I left home I went to a Presbyterian church. Then when I went in the service that was a Christian church down there.

db - So you're saying that a certain person here wouldn't let you go to church?

HF - Yes, my step-mother. I was going to Hemlock, and then she pulled me out of there. So then I never went to church until I went in the service. Then I went back.

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db - What's it been like living in this area all the different times you've lived her?

HF - I like it better than any other place.

db - Because?

HF - Just, oh, everybody is friends. I've known most of the people around here, of course. When I left here and went into the service and then came back a lot of the kids I knew were gone. Some of them were killed in the service. And a lot of them from Cloverdale . . . Darrell, he was in Portland. John (Blanchard), I've known him and Tom and all for years. And I knew their folks really well.

It's just . . . I'm used to it. I've hunted and fished and everything right here. And then when I moved back here I had a heart attack. I worked for BLM at the Job Corps. When I messed up my back one time, pulled all the muscles in my back, I couldn't work for two years. The state finally cut me loose as the doctors wouldn't; so I finally got a job out there at the Job Corps. And I worked in the kitchen doing the bookwork. Then I would go in and help in the kitchen.

db - Where was that?

HF - Out at the base.

db - Oh yes, I had forgotten they had Job Corps out there.

HF - Then I took care of all the inventory and did the purchasing for all the groceries including meats and stuff. And I helped with running the kids and the kitchen.

I got one scar out of it, a knife (laughter). Yeah, he was going to kill the fella that was working for me. He got me with the knife in the chow line. Brought in a knife. I told him he couldn't go in there with that knife. He said, "I'm going!" I said, "You're not!" He just nicked my hand. That's the only scar I got out of there.

db - That sounds horrible. So pretend that you are sitting here with your grandchildren, and they want to hear some stories about your life or perhaps some stories told by your parents. Can you think of any other stories you might share?

Interview With Hobert Fox

Interviewed by Dean Bones

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HF - Oh, stories mainly about growing up. You know, you get to complain a little bit, you know. You kinda work on how it was in those days. Sometimes kids thought maybe you were kidding a little bit. These kids didn't see the snow we've had here. My grandson, he was just like me. He liked to fish and everything like that. A grand-daughter did too. We never seemed to get out to do any fishing. Same with Elaine, she liked to fish. It just, things went haywire when she got married. She never got to go out like that. And trying to work . . . the first thing I'd do was get hurt and wind up in the hospital.

But I just tried to teach them things that I had, you know, over life, give them kind of an insight of what to look for in life. Elaine was a good mother. She was really good with Angie.

db - You've been very interesting to listen to, Hobert. Thank you!