

**Oral History Interview of
Bob Bitsche**

**Interviewed by: Andy Wilkinson
October 25, 2018
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:
*Agriculture Interviews***

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Transcript Overview:

This interview features Bob Bitsche as he discusses working with pesticides and cotton crops. He also outlines his background information and World War II service.

Length of Interview: 01:16:36

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Introduction and background information; being in the Navy during WWII	05	00:00:00
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Keywords

Agriculture, pesticides, cotton industry, World War II

Andy Wilkinson (AW):

And let me say to start with, this is Andy Wilkinson with Bob—

Bob Bitsche (BB):

Bitsche [bih-shee].

AW:

Bitsche. I wanted to get that right. And it's October 25, 2018. We're at your house in the early afternoon. I'm going to set this kind of right here so it will pick you up. It'll be good. It'll be good there. And I'm going to make a note or two just to keep things going. But let's start. You were telling me before I got the recorder turned on that you were born in Chickasha, Oklahoma?

BB:

Yes, sir.

AW:

What was your date of birth?

BB:

10/18/24. October the eighteenth. I just turned a hundred and four years old. No, ninety-four years old.

AW:

10/18 of?

BB:

Nineteen twenty-four.

AW:

Nineteen twenty-four. Man, that's an achievement. And happy birthday.

BB:

Well, thank you. I just had one last week. Had a great time.

AW:

Yeah. So did you grow up in Chickasha also?

BB:

Yeah. Up until World War II started.

AW:

Did your family farm? Were you—

BB:

Well, my dad was Bitsche Seed Company.

AW:

Uh-huh.

BB:

Bitsche Seed House, is what they called it. And he was the seed business. When Wall Street crashed he had quite a bit of money and things were going good. But they locked all the banks down and here he was without any—he had plenty of money in the bank and couldn't get a penny of it.

AW:

Yeah. Yeah, boy, that was a—

BB:

And he turned that over to his nephew. I had four brothers and four sisters. And he turned that over to his nephew, which is Ross Seed now. And the Ross's are pretty famous all around for—

AW:

Ross Seed?

BB:

R-o-s-s. Ross Seed. And they're still doing business in Chickasha and El Reno.

AW:

Pardon me for asking—interrupting you—what kind of seed was the principal thing? Did he sell all kind, like cotton and wheat and mallow?

BB:

I don't even think they sold cotton seed. The gins handled all that through the oil mills. I don't recall that they ever mentioned selling cotton seed. It was mostly wheat and barley. There wasn't that much cotton in Oklahoma at that time.

AW:

Really?

BB:

In central Oklahoma. And then they got a lot more cotton just shortly later. But the Wooten's out of the Chickasha Cotton Oil Company had interests in the cotton industry for a long time. So they were good friends of ours.

AW:

Yeah. When you were growing up was that dry land?

BB:

Yeah. It was nearly all dry land. They'd run in to irrigate it, I guess until we got out here. They dug those big wells and had irrigation ditches and they used tubes—

AW:

Siphons?

BB:

--to run it down the roads. And a lot of it lost to evaporation.

AW:

Oh yeah. We used to—when I was a kid growing up outside of Slaton, we had—we would ditch water. We didn't have a concrete ditch, but just a—you know you dig a ditch and then we'd use those siphons and move them along.

BB:

Yeah.

AW:

Yeah.

BB:

Yeah. Pump that thing and then throw it down the row.

AW:

So did you—you grew up in Chickasha, and you said you didn't come out here until after the second World War. Were you in the war?

BB:

Oh yeah. Navy.

AW:

Navy? And what was your assignment? What was your duty station?

BB:

I was an aviation store keeper. I ordered parts for the airplanes that were shot up at Midway and Lake and those places.

AW:

Really?

BB:

Early part of the war. That was the turning point of the war. We were losing it up until then. At least the air battles. And then I had bookkeeping and inventory experience and all that from high school. I was sent to Kaneohe Naval Air Station in Hawaii. So I missed Iwo Jima and some of the real bad battles. But every screw had a part number, and if you get parts out on an aircraft carrier in the middle of the ocean the screws might keep just like the nail kept the horseshoe on. So I did that for fifteen months.

AW:

So when did you go into the military? How old were you?

BB:

About twenty-one or twenty-two. Eighteen October. Yeah, I was still twenty-one, I guess, when I got out.

AW:

Yeah.

BB:

And, well, let's see. No, no. Couldn't have been.

AW:

Because the war started in 19—

BB:

I guess I could. I was in there three years. And—but I went from that job on an aircraft carrier. Then we transported troops back home after the war was over. But we transported troops to the invasion occupation of Japan. And I was involved in that. From Okinawa to Sasebo to Japan. We were scheduled to take the only warm water Navy base that Japan had. And if they hadn't have dropped the bomb on Nagasaki across the mountain I wouldn't have been here. Thousands and

thousands of us would have been killed. A lot more than the bomb got. So it was—I had mixed emotion about that. I hated to see that country all just as flat as it could be. But anyway, they signed the peace treaty after we dropped that bomb and we were able to go in without a shot being fired. I had gunning placements all the way around that ring of mountains. You come through Sasebo Bay just barely gotten room to get a ship through.

AW:
Yeah.

BB:
Then there's a—like San Francisco Bay—there's a big bay there. All their navy carriers and everything were down there. Just waiting. Finally, when they dropped the bomb, they said they mean business. So they didn't fire any shots. They signed the peace treaty. I'll put it that way.

AW:
So you were in the Navy for a time after the war, if you were—

BB:
We had to get all the troops back home. And that was a—we drove from Seattle or San Francisco and those places up around the loop, down past the Aleutian Islands, and you go down, picking up troops and bringing them home. And that hot bunk system they had, they're only allowed to stay in their bunks eight hours a day. The rest of the time they had to be stand-up only around on the ship.

AW:
So the other people could—

BB:
Playing poker and various kinds of games and telling lies. [laughter] It was interesting. But I made several trips across the Pacific at about six miles an hour.

AW:
Yeah, you saw a lot of the Pacific that way, didn't you?

BB:
Yeah, I did. I saw the Philippines and Okinawa and those later islands down there. But I was lucky enough to stay out of most of the real bad war.

AW:
Yeah. Yeah. Well, when you got out of the service what did you do?

BB:

I went to school at Oklahoma State.

AW:

Did you?

BB:

Yeah.

AW:

Good school. What did you study? What did you study?

BB:

Oh well I majored in, to start with and journalism. And then advertising.

AW:

What drew you to journalism and advertising, coming from your folks having a seed store?

BB:

Well, I had four brothers. They had to have something to do. I had pretty good bookkeeping experience and all that. So I got into advertising. And nothing works without—if you don't tell them. If you're going to sell them, you've got to tell them. I'll put it that way. So when I was with chemical companies I put out newsletters at least twice a month to all the important people in that trade. My first job was with Cal Spray—California Spray Chemical Division of Standard Oil of California.

AW:

Did you work—were you still in Oklahoma when you went to work for them?

BB:

I was living there at Oklahoma City, but most of my work in those days—I did a little field work, but most of it I was helping getting their [inaudible] [0:09:31.8] jobs. Get the cotton sprayed and everything. In 1950 I graduated and went to work. No wheels got to be a problem, so I worked for Cal Spray. We were putting calcium arsenate dust in those airplanes and putting it onto cotton fields. And the boll weevil supposedly had long enough snout when he walked out across the limb he picked up enough arsenic to kill him. It didn't get a real high percentage like the later [inaudible] [0:10:02.6] did. But that was where we started out. And we—for bollworms and some of those leaf worms anyway, we put arsenic and lead. But then—we had plenty of rain in the fifties. Halfway through '51. We ran into a drought that started then and we had to change everything because the pastures were getting down to nothing and they needed cattle feed so they

had to make sure that they were able to use the cottonseed cake to feed their cattle. So that's where the—before that cotton was just considered—your dad could have told you—just kind of a lint to make clothing and sheets out of. Well it got to be a big business selling cottonseed cake to the ranchers to keep their prize herds going—breed herds and everything.

AW:

Well, it's high in protein and cattle like it, you know?

BB:

Yeah. Yeah, the cottonseed cake was real—that was probably the most valuable part of cotton back in those days.

AW:

Yeah, that—well you know the oil, until soy bean, soy took over, the oil was pretty valuable too.

BB:

Oh yeah. The fry cook—what do they call them? Quick restaurants or whatever—all the hamburger joints and all that were using cottonseed oil. And it's got a good flavor. To me it tastes better than that other stuff we're using now.

AW:

Yeah, growing up of course we had plenty of cottonseed oil at our house. We liked it.

BB:

Yeah. My mother wouldn't use anything else or use a little hog lard if there was any left over. It was an interesting thing to see everything. Each time the weather consist of or something called [?] change. So then we went to 3-5-40 cotton dust.

AW:

What is 3-5-40?

BB:

3-5-40 was benzene hexachloride and DDT and sulfur. Then we went to 3-10-40. Got a little resistance buildup in there. Went to 3-10-40. Then 5-10-40. And then we had—came along with—I'm showing my age now. I sold thousands of gallons of it.

AW:

Well, just while you're thinking of that—

BB:

Toxaphene.

AW:

So 3-5—three would be parts per thousand or parts per million?

BB:

Three percent of the weight of the dust. We built cotton mixing plants. Most of the carrier was the 40 percent sulfur. We had one down here at Brownsville. One of the first ones in west Texas. West Texas didn't have quite as many problems as they did off the cap rock.

AW:

Um-hm. Because it's drier here.

BB:

We had to work with the beneficial insects as long as we could. And we had economic thresholds set up with certain numbers per square foot or per square yard on wheat or anything else that we sprayed. We get to that point, we'd recommend they'd spray it. That's when I sent all the newsletters out to everybody. And I worked with the distributors. Most of the distribution of chemicals was through gins. So I'd hold meetings for all of them and tell them where—what the—

AW:

So you traveled around to different gins?

BB:

I worked half the cotton acers of the United States.

AW:

Really?

BB:

Nobody realizes it. Bayer thought I was lying to them when I kept telling them that. Well then they—we had the drought. Cotton got about this high. Had one blue, one gold, one square, and that was eighteen or twenty inches high. So they said, "Well, we've paid you for a year, and you haven't sold very much. We're going to send you to South Bend, Indiana." Well, I was a Notre Dame fan, but I wasn't Notre Dame enough to put up with that winter. So that winter started and I thought, Hey, I'm going back to Oklahoma. And I still was living in Oklahoma working all the way out there on a border.

AW:

Oh wow. That's a long stretch.

BB:

I had a big territory. Of course I worked vegetables and other crops all the time too.

AW:

So it wasn't all just cotton?

BB:

Am I talking too much or?

AW:

No. In fact what I'm going to do though—I was just looking at my battery. I'm going to stop for one moment.

BB:

Okay.

AW:

So don't say anything smart while I've got this stopped. And I'm going to put a new set of batteries in here.

BB:

I'm having to depend on my memory and that's—

AW:

No, you're doing good. [Pause in recording] Well, it was a sad thing. And in fact, I was named for him. But my grandparents were so distraught they left Brownwood and moved out here. My grandad had taught math in high school but had gone to work for the post office during the Depression. And so a postal job opened up in Slaton and they moved out here. And so when my father got out of the service he came to Slaton and he wound up getting a job at the cotton oil mill in Slaton. And so that started his career. So we would have been there—I was born in '48 in Slaton, so he would've been working at the oil mill by 1947. So he would have been out here while you were.

BB:

Yeah. I didn't get here until early June.

AW:

Of?

BB:

And was out here working Russian aphids and wheat. And boll weevils started landing all over my clothes. I said, "They don't like boll weevils up on the High Plains." So I checked with them and I tried to get them to quarantine the area to keep from getting a lot of boll weevils up here in all the cotton acres. Because they were just plowing up acres—pastures—by the square sections. This City Bank here in Lubbock—that man had five thousand acres of cotton, I guess, at one time. Of course I concentrated on the big growers as much as possible.

AW:

Yeah. Did you—when you said you meant—did these meetings at gins, one of the things that was a big issue for my father at Anderson, Clayton was independent gins who were their customers, versus the co-op gins who sent their cottonseed to Plains Co-Op and other co-op oil mills. Did you work both co-op gins and independent gins?

BB:

I worked everybody that grew anything. Of course that was before I was with Bayer I did those.

AW:

So you were with the California company when they sent you to Notre Dame, to South Bend?

BB:

Yes, sir.

AW:

And then you decided to leave there?

BB:

I quit, came back, and went to work for Niagara Chemical Division of MC. And I worked for them one year and they sent me to Middleport, New York to be the national sales manager. I stayed three winters and I said, "I'm going to have to go back to Oklahoma and Texas." They said, "What would it cost to get you to stay?" I said, "There's not enough money in New York to get me to spend another,"—they'd get thirty-five below zero and the snow drifts be thirty-five feet high. Just about every half mile or quarter mile is what they did, they'd push an area out for cars to pull in and park—let one another pass. And I wouldn't put up with that. I grew up in the warm country.

AW:

Yeah. Where is that town in New York?

BB:

Middleport, New York. It's on the Erie Canal halfway between Niagara Falls and—what was the big town up there?

AW:

Not Schenectady?

BB:

It was right on the Erie Canal. You could hear those tugboats going all night long.

AW:

Was it Buffalo? Does the canal come out at Buffalo? I can't—

BB:

No, Buffalo was back toward Lake Erie more. Buffalo was way back over south of—

AW:

Yeah. The lake.

BB:

--Niagara Falls. Yeah.

AW:

Well, that's—I can look it up—but that's interesting. So you're up there three years and you wanted to come back. What did you do?

BB:

Well, I came back. I had a job before I came back. I could get a job anyplace I wanted to then, because I worked at it real hard. I'd been spraying insects in the nursery business back in the early thirties, because the stock market crashed in '29, and in 1930, of course Dad was—he got out of the nursery business—I mean, the seed business—and had already gotten into the nursery flower business. Because his sister needed a job and he opened the flower shop for her. But that doesn't make any—

AW:

Well, that's interesting that you'd been familiar with spraying for since you were a kid?

BB:

I've been working with pesticides for over forty-eight years. No, over sixty-eight years! But I worked for chemical companies for over forty-eight years. And I still did some consulting.

AW:

Really?

BB:

It's healthy work. You know, you're out in the fresh air and sunshine. You don't ever get any internal parasites.

AW:

[laughter] I bet that's right.

BB:

But you have to be careful. All the blames they get for people dying. I'd say 80 percent of them were smokers and they'd handled that chemical, they'd smoke, and their lips would start tingling and then they'd lick their lips. And I gave safety talks nearly constantly. That was part of every talk I ever gave, was a safety of handling pesticides. But we had to adjust everything so they could use the cottonseed oil and the cottonseed cake. And that's why I came in contact with your father, I'm sure.

AW:

Yeah. I'm sure.

BB:

Because that name just really rung a bell.

AW:

Yeah, his name was Richard Wilkinson. But he was with Anderson Clayton when he retired, and then moved back to Lubbock to be a broker of meal and hulls after he had retired from the firm. So he was involved with ginners in particular his whole working career.

BB:

Yeah. Well, I tried to get them to put quarantines on these areas that didn't have any—so many insects.

AW:

Boll weevils?

BB:

We always had plenty of thrips. What was the other? And the sulfur pretty well took care of that. Mildew and something else. Then we started adding heavier pesticides. We got into toxaphene and toxaphene DDT mixtures. And then that got into the organic phosphates, parathions and all those. So it—those, about two weeks after you put them on you can go ahead and use it for feed.

AW:

Right.

BB:

You couldn't arsenic. Arsenic was there forever.

AW:

Yeah.

BB:

We had to move away from cotton dust. Lockett Seed Company had stormproof cotton that went up for out here. And it held the bolls in tight and when you'd get a rain they wouldn't all string out all over the ground. So we worked a lot with them and with—

AW:

So that would make a difference in what kind of application you'd put on that tight boll, didn't it?

BB:

Yeah. Well, that made it easier to control insects, the tight boll. Of course boll weevils wouldn't get at them. Well, boll weevils, they could reproduce in them. But the boll worms would get in them pretty bad. And when soybeans came along we started getting—what was the other? Heliothis. Fine, but a little different than your regular boll weevil. And budworms is what we called them.

AW:

Yeah. Budworms?

BB:

Yeah.

AW:

Now were nematodes a problem out here?

BB:

Oh in some areas. But I don't know that—later I worked with the seed traders selling Di-syston, which is an organic phosphate seed treater. And it controlled a lot of that early stuff.

AW:

Yeah, by the application on the seed itself? Before it was planted?

BB:

Yes, on the seed. That's what got one of them sick. Stirring that seed with their hands in the planter box delivering out.

AW:

Yeah, I remember the seed—they were purple, weren't?

BB:

But it really wasn't as bad as what they all claimed it. This guy the other day filed a big lawsuit. His granddaughter can't get pregnant because he handled pesticides when he was young.

[Laughter] And this was fifty years later. But that's true for anything now. People are not as honest as they used to be.

AW:

No. You mentioned something to me on the phone that is really interesting. Thinking about this controversy over pesticides and now with the genetically modified crops and being able to really hit them with some of these chemicals and the overspray and all those kinds of issues. But you mentioned on the phone to me a couple times about—and then just a little bit ago—about how you worked with beneficial insects?

BB:

We never put a drop of any kind of chemical that would kill the insects—I mean the beneficial insects—until we had to. And that was our main program all the way through. That's why we always controlled a lot of the business.

AW:

Yeah, and that was when you were later with Bayer?

BB:

Well, I've only came with Bayer in 1974. I guess I worked out of Oklahoma for a year or two. I was with the original ChemAgro, you might have heard of?

AW:
ChemAgro?

BB:
And they were both by Bayer. And then they had a joint venture with Monsanto, because Monsanto killed the weeds and we killed all the insects. And so they called it Mobay. So for years I was with Mobay Chemical, jointly owned by Monsanto and Bayer.

AW:
M-o-b-a-y?

BB:
Yeah.

AW:
Yeah.

BB:
In fact, I've still got—I used to get a new card every nine months because I covered so much territory. I'd have sixty-five thousand miles or more. That was the name of the company right there.

AW:
Oh yeah.

BB:
I've never taken it off my keychain. But anyway. They got along great together and then Bayer bought them out.

AW:
When did you move out here?

BB:
I moved out here Easter Sunday morning, 1974. And I've been here ever since. I wouldn't let them transfer me. I said, "No. I've quit everybody else when they tried to transfer me. I love it out here. I'm going to stay here." So. And they've been good to me and I've been good to them. And then I wrote up all the growers over four or five hundred acres, plus all the salesman, entomologists, and everybody involved in the business for mailing lists so that they could keep them all informed of what was going on in different areas. And I kept telling them I had over half the continental United States and Bayer people wouldn't believe me. "Hell no. You don't have

Alabama and Mississippi and Georgia. And I said, "Yes, I do too." So I gave them a breakdown of every major crop by county and by acres in Texas. And that's what got them interested in coming out here.

AW:

Yeah. Well, I remember we always took pride in saying that this was the—this twenty-five county area was the largest contiguous cotton producing area in the world.

BB:

Yeah. We had more cotton in a hundred mile radius of Lubbock, Texas than they had in the whole continental south. And we stole their markets from them. But there's nobody with Bayer anymore. They've all died that knew how much I did out here.

AW:

Yeah.

BB:

So, but I hold my breath every time I get a letter from them. Uh-oh, they're going to cut out my retirement pay. Because I've been retired forty-one years.

AW:

Well, I was about to ask. Because you were just saying you were still doing some consulting. When did you retire?

BB:

I've been retired from them thirty-one years. I'm sorry. Instead of forty-one. But I've actually been working nearly daily with pesticides for sixty-eight years.

AW:

Well when you get a call now to do some consulting, what does that mean? What do you do for somebody?

BB:

Well, they call and tell me what they've got and how many they've got per foot of row.

AW:

What kind of insect?

BB:

What?

AW:

What kind of insect they have?

BB:

What kind of insect. Yeah. And if they don't know I just get in the car and go out there. But I've—being ninety-four I don't get out into the hot sun quite as much as I used to. But I'll get out there all day long. A lot of days it got up over a hundred and five with no wind blowing. But it was interesting. It was healthy work. I'm real healthy now except for my hands. I've got arthritis from my thumb out on two hands. The rest of them—the doctors say, "What'd you do for a living?" I said, "I worked with pesticides all my life." They say, "What?" I says, "Yeah, I don't have any internal parasites, do I?" It's a wonderful organization. Everybody in that business is pretty friendly and they understand what's going on. The secret was to know how many you had per square foot of row of grass. Then we could count the bolls and see how much the potential—we did never have them spray more than they had the money to pay for.

AW:

Yeah.

BB:

So. Am I running you out of time?

AW:

No, no, no. I'm just looking to make sure everything's going good on my recorder. If someone said to you, as I'm about to say, what's been the biggest change in that business? Pesticide business?

BB:

Where they sent me to live.

AW:

Where they sent you to live? Not the business itself?

BB:

It's all been the same.

AW:

It has?

BB:

Yeah. The thing that I went to them and told them, "You've got to quarantine West Texas, because we're getting insects that we never had before." And I had the experience in Oklahoma, Arkansas, North Texas. "Well, we can't tell them where to gin their cotton." I said, "Well, you can too because you won't have any cotton to gin if you don't be careful." And out there were two major distributors for cotton pesticides were Producers Cooperative Oil Mill. That's all of cotton produces. And the Chickasha Cotton Oil. That was probably seventy five or eighty percent of the business. And then there were independents and we worked with the big independents.

AW:

Producers, that was in Fort Worth?

BB:

Well, they had an office out here too. I imagine they probably had one between Fort Worth and Dallas down in there. I didn't—I only called on them in this office out here. I didn't go down there. In fact I never did work Dallas-Fort Worth office except back when World War II was over they used to take a fifty pound bag of wet or [?] [0:30:56.0] powder or dust and scoop it up, put it a couple brown paper bags like they put groceries in and weigh up a pound. Dust was flying in your face. EPA came over and said, "You will not do that anymore." And there for about two years in the office seasons when I wasn't working in the field those puffer dusters that—for rows—we controlled the builders and all that. But in promoting those I had clerk training programs for Sears, Wolfe Nurseries, and Montgomery Ward and all those big companies. And told them the value of tie-in sales. If they buy a rose bush, "Well, do you have shears to cut those beautiful roses with?", "Well, no.", "Well, you better get one because you'll need them." So they put that in there and say, "We got a little discount on them." And then we go to the—we'd already have sold them on the pesticides. And what else—in other words, we tried to get them to make tie-in sales on whatever sale they made and that carried on into their other tools and things. Sears, Montgomery Ward, those people they loved to have me into Chicago and New York and places like that and hold clerk training programs.

AW:

Yeah. It seems—it's interesting that you got your degree in your advertising, but you know a lot about chemicals and plants and now selling as well.

BB:

Well, and the by-products of these crops. Well, it all has to work together. The more information you gather, the better your sales are. I led the nation for several years in a row with different companies. But I'm bragging now. But my dad brought me up that way. Made me know everything there was to know about every plant and every insect and all that. So I could go up

against the biggest distributor in the United States and know exactly what I was talking about. It was a great bunch of people to work with. Gardeners are generally are interested in most things and they're real cordial. And it's just a big open market. Big value market. And I wouldn't change my life a bit if I had to do it over again. I can see myself being a big writer for some newspaper or somebody. Well, they didn't pay hardly anything. They had about minimum wage is all they paid for reporters. And I got out of that real quick. And I knew the advertising and I knew you had to sell them. You had to tell them if you wanted to sell them. And that was my motto. But the whole country and the people have been wonderful to me. I've had the nicest, most wonderful life that you could imagine.

AW:

I think—I mean, with my father, knowing the people that he worked with—I was always struck with how in the cottonseed products business everybody knew everybody. All over the nation.

BB:

Well, there weren't that many in those days. But we had hotspots like Lubbock. Before that we had the Vernon, Childress, Altus, Oklahoma and all that little area in there was main land. I'd go to Arkansas occasionally and different ones on different insect outbreaks. But my biggest company for several years, besides oil and northern wheat country in Oklahoma, was from Childress to Vernon to Lockett and all the way over to Fort Worth. And I didn't hardly ever get to Dallas.

AW:

And as you said earlier, it was not just cotton. There were a lot of other crops as well?

BB:

Oh yeah. I didn't really get much business out of soy beans, but cotton was always my number one. And vegetable crops I worked a lot. For canneries. It didn't take very long. It all hit—I gave a crop about the same time you go in and have—buy their dinner and have a few sales meetings to the salesmen and turn it over to them. But I had I guess 40 percent of the wheat acres of the United States at one time. In the early fifties. And then they were converting a lot of that to cotton. The wheat pastures and everything else.

AW:

Was the conversion because the price was better or because of the advent of irrigation?

BB:

Well, wheat didn't have as many insect problems out here as they did out in countries where it rained all the time and everything.

AW:

Yeah. So you could grow cotton a little easier if you didn't have the insect problem to start with?

BB:

Yeah, it didn't cost probably a fourth as much to grow cotton out here for the same insects as it did down there.

AW:

Yeah. And cotton brought more dollars per acre in sales, did it not? Than wheat, for instance?

BB:

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, they were plowing up pastures and all kinds of crops. And then cotton rotated good with wheat, because they dig the cotton out and planted the wheat and have winter grazing—

AW:

And planted winter wheat?

BB:

And harvest the wheat before the cotton had to be planted.

AW:

And I know my grandfather who, besides working the post office here in Slaton, he had a small farm that he liked to work. And he was a big one on rotating. It seems to me like in recent years there's been a lot less rotation and a lot more sticking with one crop?

BB:

Well, people are lazier than they used to be. They're not as aggressive. If you don't do it for them they won't do it sometimes. That's why I didn't mind working, because I'd worked hard all my life. But I could relate to about anything out there.

AW:

You came out here just about the time that the American ag movement started, and the Tractorcade and the issues about the farm crisis. That Tractorcade was in 1979, it was five years after.

BB:

Well, see I moved in here—I've been here forty-two years. I moved here in the—well, Easter Sunday morning I bought this house. I had been working this area out of Oklahoma City and the mileage was eating me up on the weekends I'd get so tired. But I worked this area. At least—

well, I worked it real thoroughly for forty-two years. And before that I was working part time at Oklahoma and Childress and Altus and Frederick, Oklahoma and all that area in around Vernon, Texas. So it's—you didn't have to go very far to find something wrong with some part of agriculture.

AW:

Yeah, that's right. Were you married when you moved down here to Lubbock?

BB:

Finally. Yeah.

AW:

And you had a family?

BB:

I didn't get married until I was twenty-nine. My kids were all small when I moved out here. And that's what I told them. I was never going to move again. I started to have a family when I was in New York. And I couldn't visualize my kids bundling up like that every day to go around the corner.

AW:

Yeah. Thirty-five below. Wow.

BB:

Yeah. And if people don't know any better they wouldn't do that now. You have to have somebody living back there. But gosh, this is—

AW:

Doesn't have to be you?

BB:

Lubbock—I've worked foreign countries and other places—Lubbock is the best place in the whole world to work.

AW:

Really? Why?

BB:

I don't care what anybody says really. The people are great. There's a little bit of dope going on, stuff like that. We didn't have any dope when I came out here. My kids all enjoyed life and

didn't have to worry about where they were and everything. And I just—I can't say enough about Lubbock being the best place in the whole world to live.

AW:

Where are your kids now?

BB:

Well, every time they graduated from Tech I'd fill their gas tank, and they'd drive until they ran out of gas. [laughter] I've got one in Houston, one in Austin, and one in Kansas City. We were there for a while. We worked for American [inaudible] [0:40:35.0] Company, running a fertilizer and chemical plant in Kansas. And then I got one in Indiana. And where are the rest of them?

AW:

How many children do you have?

BB:

Getting pretty close. And that's—the one in Indiana is the furthest away. She's only about sixty miles east of Terre Haute, Indiana. Oh she's living in Illinois, actually. Sixty miles east of Terre Haute, Indiana. In Charleston, Illinois. But they love Lubbock. If they could they'd move back out here. But they're making good money where they are. In fact, they're starting to retire now.

AW:

Really?

BB:

I've got two that are retirement age and they're going to plan to drop it after this season.

AW:

Yeah. Are they—are any of your kids in agriculture?

BB:

No. Well, four of them are girls and two are boys. They're interested. Even the girls are interested in agriculture. But they—well one of them got into landscape design and landscaping.

AW:

Landscape architecture?

BB:

She's the one in Kansas City. I was running a big fertilizer and chemical plant for them in Belle Plaine, Kansas, near Wichita. We were about as far as we are across the street from the grade

school with those oxidizer type chemicals. When they had the big blow up that killed all the people down south of Waco; well then they shut all the plants down. And mine had a high school about from here to Quaker. Well, actually from here to Peoria.

AW:
Yeah.

BB:
Away. And the grade school was about as far as from here to the house across the street. They told me that I could go anyplace I wanted to go, but they're going to have to shut that plant down. So I helped them shut it down and get everything under control. And I had a job already in my pocket. And that's when I went with Bayer. But it was—

AW:
And came out here?

BB:
--it was Mobay. It was called Mobay. No, I worked it out of Oklahoma City for sixteen years.

AW:
Okay. Got it.

BB:
But I just—when I got to Lubbock I thought, What did I do wrong to be sent to Lubbock, Texas? And after I was out here about six weeks or more I loved it out here and it got better all the time. And I didn't have to worry about my kids as much. These were old farm—honest farm country people.

AW:
Yeah. Yeah. I grew up out here too, and I know what you're talking about. We lived elsewhere and then moved back when we started having kids.

BB:
Yeah. Well, my kids love it out here. They all came for a family reunion about three months ago, and we had a great time. Had great-grandkids and grandkids. As far as getting into the agriculture business I worked a lot of long hours, and I worked from before they got out of bed until they were already asleep when I got home lots of days. And most of the guys didn't do that. They'd be at the golf course and places like that.

AW:

Yeah. But there are fewer jobs in agriculture today, too, though. Aren't there? I mean, if your kids had wanted to go in there's not as many opportunities, just numerically?

BB:

Yeah. The ones in the business that stayed in it worked real hard. Long hours. I know one time my wife got real mad at me. Not the one I have. That wife lasted forty-seven years. I worked at Columbus, New Mexico. Southwest of El Paso. Working on a Friday night. I didn't get paid any extra for overtime. With flashlights and car lights, checking fields down there. I think I got finished around two o'clock in the morning and I didn't get home until after noon the next day. That's a long drive.

AW:

It is.

BB:

I know a lot of that. It was over a hundred miles an hour a big part of that. [laughter] Nobody out there.

AW:

Yeah, except you.

BB:

I imagine I have about two million miles on there. Three million miles on the road.

AW:

I believe it.

BB:

Because I couldn't even drive a car either when the model changed. They just traded automatically when we got to fifty-five or fifty-six thousand miles on it. They traded easier. I know the two Clarence superintendent of schools here bought one. And nobody had hardly ever sat in that car but me on the driver's side, and I took pretty good care of it. And I had a hundred and five thousand miles on that car. They traded it in, and he only paid four thousand dollars—forty thousand dollars for it. And it looked like a brand new, big eight—Buick with a big grill and everything. Straight eight. Next year they came out with V8's. But that was a running car. I get out on those open roads, I'd just let it go. God took good care of me.

AW:

My grandparents had a Pontiac with a straight eight. I think it's probably the same motor.

BB:

Yeah, they were great cars too. They really were. And they were big and they were comfortable. You couldn't do a Ford or Chevy that way. It'd wear you out. But we just locked into the speed limit or higher if you wanted to go that. Sometimes they'd pick me up and wouldn't even give me a ticket. I just explained to them why. Patrolmen were a lot more courteous in those days than they are now.

AW:

Yeah. And what would you tell them? That you were trying to get home?

BB:

Yeah, I'd just tell them that I had a long, long week and I needed to get home. They'd say, "Well, you've got to be more careful." I said, "Well, how many cars are out here?", "Well, not many cars out here this time of night." I said, "Well, I'm driving very careful. I put new tires on my car about every two or three months. And I just wanted to get back home and spend some time with my kids." I don't think I ever got over three tickets my whole life.

AW:

Really? That's pretty good for all that many miles.

BB:

Yeah. Yeah. Well, I worked out of Oklahoma City for a long time. But then we moved to Lubbock. It was easier. But that night I worked until ten o'clock, ten thirty checking insects in Thomas, New Mexico. I was already living here.

AW:

Yeah. That's still a long way.

BB:

My wife was telling me how the neighbors—one of the neighbors lived across the street was with Bayer and he was out playing golf and everything. Spending time at home. When I got busy I was busy. And the rest of the time I'd load the kids in the car and we'd go to California or Bakersfield. I had a lot of relatives in Bakersfield. Wyoming. Yellowstone National Park. I had a sister in Wyoming. I had four brothers and four sisters. There were plenty of us to go around. I didn't get much into the business part of that. The cotton oil and the cottonseed cake was a big part of what I worked for too.

AW:

Yeah.

BB:

And we had new chemicals coming along every two years or so, and we had to—we'd go out. Invite them all in for dinner. Have a couple slide shows. Tell them the whole picture with plenty of time to harvest, and what they need to be looking out for and what could get the most sales in. That was what we concentrated on eventually [?] [0:49:47.2]

AW:

So you really spent a lot of your time teaching?

BB:

Oh yeah. Big part of it. And when I was out in the field I wouldn't go unless they'd go with me. I'd teach them constantly. I'd guess at least sixty percent of my time was teaching insect management. And diseases. I worked mildews, and black spot, and various diseases like that. But it was just a real pleasant life and it was what I grew up in. I don't think I was wrong very many times in my life about plant materials and controls and various things. Everything has a life cycle and if you figure the life cycle—when it starts, when it usually ends—why, it's pretty easy to do.

AW:

Well, it's interesting how you picked up so much of the technical or biological and chemical aspects of your job, coming from not a science background but an advertising background.

BB:

Yeah. Well, I'd had that before I got into advertising, see?

AW:

Because you'd grown up with your dad's—

BB:

Nursery and greenhouse. We'd plant and spray rosebushes, and [inaudible] [0:51:10.0]. I gave meetings for the rose clubs in the cities, things like that. The old Cal Spray—the Ortho—used to control about half the business of the garden industry on mildews and diseases—I mean, other diseases—black spot. And we had the capabilities to do it. I've enjoyed every bit of it. Plus, makes you feel better when you go and help somebody develop a real beautiful flower or plant or something and they'd come back and tell you how much they appreciate it. And that's what kept me going the whole time. Well, you know, back in the thirties there just weren't a whole lot of people into gardening. And as we've got on into the forties more people got interested in it and planted more rosebushes and all that kind of stuff. There weren't very many things that I didn't have answers for. From experience.

AW:
Yeah.

BB:
My father was that way. He taught me everything I needed to know the whole time growing up.

AW:
Was there something that I've not asked you about that I should have?

BB:
Well, just enjoyable work and there's plenty of it there if you look for it. [Laughter]

AW:
Yeah. There sure is. Did you keep any correspondence or did you have time? It sounds like you didn't have time to keep diaries or journals—

BB:
No, I—

AW:
--or records of your travels?

BB:
I've got every expense account I ever filled out in my attic up here.

AW:
Really? You know, when you want to that's the kind of stuff that we're interested in archiving. And here's the reason; if you think about someone a hundred years from now being interested in what kind of work was being done, there's the date and the information that talks about how that was done.

BB:
I believe I've got receipts for taking people out to dinner and giving them a big program, color slide show. In fact, I've even got enough color slide shows to run that from sitting in this rocking chair. I saved all the round trays you use.

AW:
Yeah, those slide trays.

BB:

From up there. Set it on automatic and just talk it through, just like—it was just like movies but we didn't have films much and stuff. Now Bayer has a lot of films now.

AW:

Yeah.

BB:

But I was just a dumb country boy. They didn't think much of me for a long time. But my sales were real good and they wanted to know why. [AW laughs] [pause] I'll be you there's not ten people in the Bayer organization that know who I am anymore. I've been retired thirty-one years.

AW:

Yeah, that's—no, some of them have probably come and gone in that time period.

BB:

Oh a lot of them have come and gone. [Pause] Well, the youngest one to die in our family was seventy-nine years old, of my older brothers and sisters. And there are three of us living now that are over ninety.

AW:

Wow, that's pretty impressive.

BB:

And my mother lived over a hundred years. And Dad lived ninety-four. And the reason he died, he got Alzheimer's and he couldn't remember not to breathe when he was swallowing his food.

AW:

Oh gosh.

BB:

And he inhaled food. Got it in his lungs. Got pneumonia.

AW:

Where did your folks come from? Where did they grow up?

BB:

Well, Dad was a farm boy and—I'll get it in a minute. Well, hell. Up north. He was eight years old when they opened up Oklahoma for Indian Territory for—

AW:

Oh really? And he came down with his family?

BB:

His family moved down during the land runs for land in Oklahoma. They came out of Iowa. They came to the United States and got a farm in western Pennsylvania, built it up real nice, sold it and went to Sioux City, Iowa and was in the land run up there. Converting Indian Territory to agriculture. And then he went from there to Oklahoma with the land run in Oklahoma. And then he liked it so well he stayed there. And that was still Indian Territory then when he came down, 1889. He was an Eighty-Niner.

AW:

Wow. What—for our records, do you want me just to say Bob Bitsche? Or do you go by Robert?

BB:

I go by Bob everywhere.

AW:

Well, I'm going to ask you to sign permission to let us let people listen to your interview.

BB:

Okay. You'll have to edit it and take a lot of that stuff out of it.

AW:

No, we like it just the way it is. We like the way it came out from you. And I'm going to leave you a copy of this so you know what you signed.

BB:

I could talk for days for all the experiences I had, but you don't need to know all that.

AW:

No, we—I'm interested in whatever you'd like to.

BB:

Well, I—

AW:

Just—you only have to sign one of them, if you would. And that blank spot right down there at the bottom—

BB:

On the signature?

AW:

Yeah. What are some other experiences that you'd like to talk about?

BB:

Well, that I just enjoyed my life. [Pause] And I put Bob out here in parenthesis.

AW:

Okay.

BB:

That's what everybody knows me as. That all right?

AW:

That's perfect.

BB:

I can't write very well like I used to.

AW:

Whoops. Thank you.

BB:

See, I can't even turn loose of a pen. [inaudible] [0:5822.3]

AW:

I'm going to leave this. This is your copy. And I'm going to leave my card. You've already got my number, but I'm going to leave a card with it in case.

BB:

Oh yeah. That's great.

AW:

Now, I've mentioned that if you are interested in your—those receipts that you were talking about—your records of your travels [coughs]—excuse me. Those slide shows of your presentations?

BB:

Well, I wouldn't want to give them up probably.

AW:

Well, at some point when you think you're ready to, we would be interested in archiving them for people in the future.

BB:

Well, I could make you up out of extra slides I have presentations for cotton. And not so much into the marketing of cotton, but for insect management. A little bit on fertilizer.

AW:

Well, we would be interested in that. I mean, the way that you presented it. Because that was—it seems to me listening to you—that that was a large part of your success, was being able to teach.

BB:

Well, my dad had his own soil testing lab.

AW:

Oh really? Along with the garden?

BB:

And the nursery and greenhouse business and everything else. Yeah. And he recommended fertilizer. The old fashioned kind. How many tons per acre you need on this one. And a lot of things do well on neutral. A lot of them acid soils, the other on alkaline soils. You read about that all the time.

AW:

Yes.

BB:

But I knew all of that stuff. And most all insect control—when I was growing up during my junior high and high school years. When I was five years old I was holding the hose while my dad sprayed, even for mosquitoes and things, so it wouldn't get on people's flowers. And we worked with the oil people—I should mention that, I guess—that had plenty of money. Oklahoma got into the oil deal.

AW:

Yeah, pretty early.

BB:

And I knew them and the people like Chickasha Cotton Oil Company. All those families. Went to school with their kids and everything. So we just kind of grew up under that kind of atmosphere. And my dad loved to teach us every part of everything that he did. Tell us why and how to do it and what you're going to run into. Of course we got our hands dirty a lot. We didn't think that we was quite as good as some of the people did—wore their fancy clothes and everything. But we had lots of fun and enjoyed life. Everybody in our family—the girls and all—four brothers and four sisters—bothered Dad, and his sister ran the flower shop. Two of my daughters—two of my sisters helped her in the flower shop. So it was just a complete education all the way through. I could decorate for weddings or funerals or whatever they needed.

AW:

Out of the eight children, where did you fall in the chronology?

BB:

I was right in the middle.

AW:

In the middle?

BB:

It was an amazing family. The oldest was a boy, and every two years about there was a boy and a girl, a boy and a girl, all the way down. The older ones would teach us and we'd teach the younger ones.

AW:

Yeah. Yeah.

BB:

And we made it a point—we didn't have any money very much. We worked hard. But we had country dances in Oklahoma in those—the musicians would take turns dancing and then they'd go play real good music. A lot better than you hear now.

AW:

Yeah.

BB:

Nice swings and waltzes and real gentle. We did that. We had at least two dances a week like they do in Lubbock sometimes. A lot of times I've had people tell me, "Well, I always thought that it was a sin to dance. You make it look like a lot of good, clean fun." We always wanted to

be the smoothest and the best looking one on the floor. And then we'd teach our—I taught my younger sister that. She's ninety-two now. She lives in Indiana. That was one I didn't mention. We were a family that entertained one another. Mother and Dad made it a point to see that we did.

AW:

Yeah. Did your other brothers and sisters go to college as well?

BB:

Oh. Yeah, I guess every one of them got a degree in college. Now my children—one has got a master's out of Notre Dame, and her granddaughter—I mean, her daughter, my granddaughter—has a master's out of Notre Dame, is a [cough]—in Haiti doing missionary work.

AW:

Wow.

BB:

And she's—what am I trying to say? Interpreter for doctors and different people that come in there. Church people and other type people. And she takes care of that. I've got one of my brother's has—one of my son's, excuse me—has a master's out of Texas University. He thinks he's a little bit better than we are. [AW Laughs] But he's all right. He's pretty good. Not near as bad as some of them.

AW:

How did your folks—coming out of the Depression and the Dust Bowl—how did they send eight kids to college?

BB:

Well, we worked our way through. We worked for them and we worked at other things. It didn't cost a whole lot for college in those days. We didn't any of us come out with any money. We worked. The girls worked as waitresses at night and worked at the greenhouse a lot of times during the day. We had four greenhouses, side by side, that were forty feet wide and about a hundred feet long. Whole rows of them. You've seen them like that places.

AW:

Yes.

BB:

And then we could—we used natural gas. It was cheap in Oklahoma. Dad didn't believe in owing anything to anybody or having us owe anything. My mother was going to Oklahoma

College for Women. She was a farm girl that came from Kansas down to Walters, Oklahoma. And she was up at—my dad's sister had a pretty good size house and she rented rooms to ladies to go to Oklahoma College for Women. That's the Oklahoma College of Liberal Arts now. And it was in Chickasha. So Dad met her when she was staying with his sister. And they fell in love, got married. Took Dad—took twenty years to find out what was causing those babies. [laughter] I was blessed in so many ways. And they used to tease us about being those prolific Catholics, but we didn't mind. One thing about it we didn't commit any sins that way.

AW:

Yeah. Well, you know I grew up as a Methodist but I was born in Mercy Hospital in Slaton. So I thought for a long time I was Catholic because I was born in the Catholic hospital. [laughter]

BB:

Yeah, Slaton is a real good town for that. Well, our town in Chickasha was that way.

AW:

Was it?

BB:

Nobody had much money and we had quite a few Methodists and a few Baptists. I'd always said if I ever changed church I'd want to be a Methodist. And of course we partied together and everything all the time. Nobody had any money back in the thirties.

AW:

Yeah. Well, you live just right down the street from a Catholic church. Is that one of the reasons you picked this place?

BB:

Yeah, that's why we came here.

AW:

Yeah. Yeah.

BB:

And to tell you how God takes care of you; we got transferred out here. I'd been working there out of Oklahoma City. And really didn't care too much about the thought of coming out here. The church—just half of was there, you might say. Just the main vestibule. And caliche parking lot on Sunday morning that caliche be boring in your eyes until you couldn't hardly read the prayer book when you got in there. But we got out here and got used to it. Just loved it.

AW:

I know when I was going to high school here—I went to Monterey High, but I had lots of friends that went to Christ the King High School.

BB:

Well, my kids all went to Monterey.

AW:

Did they?

BB:

And the reason being—

AW:

Well, they closed the high school for a while. The Christ the King.

BB:

Yeah, but they went to school over here and there were a lot of pretty snooty people that thought they were better than we were. They didn't treat my kids very well. We moved out here Easter Sunday so that they could meet people to run with during the summer that were the type that they wanted to associate with. The people didn't accept them very well. And they were very religious, very courteous. They had good training in Oklahoma City. The biggest Catholic school was there. And they didn't want to go to school over here. So I didn't—I was glad they wanted to go to school, so I just said, "You pick your school." All of them graduated from Monterey.

AW:

Yeah. Well, I know in the mid-sixties when I graduated that was a great school.

BB:

Let's see when did our first graduate? I can't remember now. Somewhere around 1980. Before or after. But my kids were all about two years apart. The first three were girls. I wondered what I was doing wrong. [AW laughs] I got a boy and then I got another girl, and that boy—I came home and he had pink fingernail polish on his fingers. [laughter] I said, "Whoa, that's not going to work." So I tried again and got another boy. They all line down the hall there.

AW:

Oh good. I'll look at them as I go out. And speaking of which, I probably have to get on back.

BB:

Oh yeah. I took a lot of your time.

AW:

This had been really good. No, no, no. I've really enjoyed this. It's good to get to know you and hear the stories. I'm really serious. When you're ready to turn loose some of those slides and your receipts and the evidence of all that work, we would be a place that would like to have them.

BB:

I'm not supposed to climb ladders anymore.

AW:

We could bring somebody out to climb a ladder to do that for you.

BB:

And no, my wife wouldn't put up with that, I don't think.

AW:

Okay.

BB:

But I don't know. I've got copies of the people that came to our meetings. We'd buy their dinner and tell them all they'd need to know about a given thing. I think they're still—I don't believe the roof has ever leaked any—so I think they're still in pretty good shape.

AW:

Well, I mean, I really am serious. That kind of information, it doesn't sound all that exciting to a lot of people, but again, if you think about a hundred years from now and someone wants to know how the business was being conducted in this country in this time, what better information would there be than that kind of information that you have?

BB:

Yeah. And the various companies that paid for it and all that. Well, if—

AW:

Talk it over with your bride.

BB:

If I get a couple of my kids home here some weekend I'll keep it in mind and I'll bring everything out of the attic. It doesn't need to be—I had saved all that for tax purposes.

AW:

Sure. Yeah. Well, when you talk to your kids, if they have questions have them give me a call. I'd love to visit with them about it.

BB:

Okay.

AW:

You know there's a saying we have in our archive business that the history that's in the history books is the history of the materials that weren't thrown away. [Laughs] So I'd like to think—I'd like for you to think about that a little bit.

BB:

Yeah. I'll try and see. I can't remember what your company was.

AW:

Well, it's Texas Tech.

BB:

Oh, it's Texas Tech?

AW:

Yeah. It's the university. We have an archive. In fact, when your kids get to town if you wanted to let me know we'd give you a tour of the archive and show you what we mean about saving all these papers.

BB:

Yeah. Well, they all went to Texas Tech but one. And she went to University of Kansas. They'd be interested in helping you on something like that or telling about their experiences.

AW:

Yeah. We'd love to do that.

BB:

They all went someplace else to get their master's degrees.

AW:

Yeah, that's kind of how people do. They go one place for one thing and another place for the other.

BB:

They did improve their education after they graduated at Tech. Well, I thought you were with some—like Anderson, Clayton or one of those.

AW:

No, no, no. No. I'm with the university. And I got your name from our mutual friend Emerson Tucker, whom I've known for a long time. I was talking to him about his experiences, and he said, "Well, the guy you've got to talk to is Bob."

BB:

Well, I talk a lot.

AW:

That's good.

BB:

But I usually back it up.

AW:

Well, that's—it wouldn't be a very interesting interview if I turned on the machine and you never said anything.

BB:

If we keep the dollar volume sales of various companies out of it it might be you could go through some of my work in sales promotions or advertising or something like that. But they wouldn't want to discuss any of the money.

AW:

No. Right. In fact, in business records like that, Bob, we do what we call redact information. Such as if you're keeping it and you happen to have a social security number or driver's license number. We get rid of that. We don't disclose any sales figures for a company, because they don't want—as you said—they don't want that. But showing people how you worked. You know, you mentioned your receipts from taking people out to dinner. Well, that dinner was connected with the sales education that you were doing.

BB:

Yeah. And then we had reports of sales as a result of those meetings.

AW:

Right. That's really—that's really good information.

BB:

Yeah.

AW:

So talk it over with your kids and your wife. Think about—

BB:

This wife is—I've only been married to her nineteen years.

AW:

"Only" nineteen years?

BB:

She married me on my seventieth—seventy-fifth birthday. Sometimes don't even think what I'm saying. But she has to be a wonderful person to marry an old man on his seventy-fifth birthday. We have been so happy and everything. Wonderful together. God blessed me every way I can think of. He's protected me under dangerous conditions. I'm also half a slow pilot [?]
[1:15:40.4], I should say.

AW:

Really?

BB:

Half fast. That's slow, isn't it?

AW:

Yeah. So did you learn to fly connected with the work?

BB:

I flew—after I got out of the Navy I flew in the backseat of dive bombers sometimes. Out searching for submarines. There were a lot of submarines in the shipping lines that U-boats. Of course we traveled in different directions all the time. The submarines would have to raise their periscopes trying to get in position to shoot U-boats. To shoot torpedoes at us. It'd be a whole convoy of ships.

AW:

Right.

BB:

Ten or twelve ships. So we'd be flying up overhead and we'd pick up a wake out there of a submarine, and we'd just peel off, go down, and drop five hundred pound depth charges on them. Well, for a while we could—

End of Recording



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